Conflict Styles Quiz [PART 2]
Kristina Taylor PhD; Feb 28th, 2013

And Your Style Is… [**]

If you selected mostly:

A’s – Your primary conflict style [may tend to be] Avoidance

Avoiders tend to deny conflict, change the subject, use humor to dodge issues, and withdrawal from situations to avoid engaging in conflict.

You might avoid conflict because it causes anxiety/fear, you don’t feel you can get what you want/need by engaging, or because you don’t feel you have the skills to resolve conflict another way.

Advantages of this style:

· Avoidance can provide time to think of another response/solution, especially if “thinking on the fly” is not a strong suite of yours

· If the issue/relationship is not important to you, it can be prudent to not get involved (e.g. you are not wasting time or resources on the conflict, you are staying out others’ business, or you are not needed to resolve the issue)

· Avoidance can keep you from harm in a potentially dangerous/hostile situation

· You can limit influence from others if you avoid the situation entirely

Disadvantages of this style:

· Avoidance demonstrates to others that you are not able or do not care enough to get involved

· Avoidance prolongs the conflict, allows it to simmer and grow, and can lead to conflict escalation

· By always avoiding conflict, you are reinforcing unhelpful beliefs that conflict is bad/scary and that you are incapable of finding successful resolutions

· Avoidance allows you (and others) to go your own way, denying any sort of influence, when in reality, we are always being influenced by others and influencing them in turn

· Avoidance in significant relationships often results in decreased satisfaction for both parties

· Constant avoidance has been linked to health issues and diminished well-being

[SOURCE: http://wwwbuiltinchicago.org/blog/conflict-styles-quiz]
B’s – Your primary conflict style [may tend to be] **Competition**

Competitors try to out-power others, using aggressive and uncooperative behavior. Those with this style often pursue their own goals at the expense of others and try to gain power through direct confrontation. Those with this style can take self-expression to the extreme, always stating an opinion and/or taking a side.

You view conflict as a battleground where the goal is to win at any cost. You can use assertive strategies at times, but when stressed or emotional, tend to allow more aggressive tactics to prevail. You might feel being aggressive is the only way to get what you want/need.

**Advantages of this style:**

- Competition can be helpful in situations when a quick, decisive action needs to be made (e.g. emergencies)
- Competition can lead to creative ideas and quick actions in situations where others respond well to competition or are rewarded for this behavior
- Competition is useful when the goal/outcome is more important than the person/relationship (e.g. in short-term, non-continuous relationships)
- A strong degree of commitment to an issue can be viewed as dedication/passion and shows the issue is important
- Competition is useful in situations where this type of response is expected (e.g. games, sports, courtrooms) and using another style of conflict response might be detrimental

**Disadvantages of this style:**

- Competition can harm relationships since the focus is on external goals/outcomes rather than maintaining the association
- Resolving conflicts using competition can cause the other party to resort to disrespectful, deceitful, and/or covert means to “win”
- Competition reduces outcomes to only two options, where there is always a “winner” and a “loser”
- An extremely competitive style can lead to aggressive, bully-like, even violent behavior, causing others to feel like victims

[SOURCE: http://wwwbuiltinchicago.org/blog/conflict-styles-quiz]
C’s – Your primary conflict style [may tend to be] **Compromise**

Compromisers believe in "give and take" and that you can be satisfied with only part of what you want. This style is moderately assertive and cooperative. This style requires shared power, as both parties need to give up something in order to gain something else.

Our society tends to value compromise. However, when power is not equal, one party ends up giving-in or giving-up. Often with compromise, you have to give up something valuable to show you are committed to the relationship, or in order to get the other side to give up something important as well.

**Advantages of this style:**

- Compromise can reduce conflict in a short time if both sides are willing to give up certain priorities
- Compromise reinforces feelings of shared power and equality
- Compromise is often used as a back-up solution in conflict situations when other strategies fail
- As stated, compromise is valued and supported in our society, so it seems to be a reasonable/rational way to handle disputes

**Disadvantages of this style:**

- Compromise can be over-used and an “easy way out” when parties don’t want to spend time thinking of more creative solutions
- Compromise entails some loss. You will not get everything you want/need
- Compromise can be used a form of avoidance to come to a quick solution rather than discussing more deeply the issues at hand
- Compromise can be limiting since it is familiar and easy to use. It can prevent you from taking the time to think of more flexible and creative alternatives

[SOURCE: http://www.builtinchicago.org/blog/conflict-styles-quiz]
D’s – Your primary conflict style [may tend to be] Accommodation

Accommodators put the needs of others before their own. They would rather keep the peace and cooperate than get what they truly want/need. Accommodators are people-pleasers, but may harbor resentment and anger at feeling they always have to give in to the needs of others.

You often feel you are fulfilling the needs of the group (family, friends, co-workers) by sacrificing your wants or by letting others decide. However, groups are usually better served when everyone is committed and plays an active role in decision-making.

Advantages of this style:

- Accommodating to others (especially if you find out you were wrong) is seen as being reasonable
- If an issue is very important to the other person, and not very important you, giving in can reduce conflict quickly
- If keeping peace and harmony are the most important goals of the relationship/situation, accommodation allows the relationship to continue as-is without conflict
- Accommodating a more senior or experienced person can be seen as a sign of respect

Disadvantages of this style:

- Accommodation can lead to competition if you are always trying to “one-up” the other person by showing how nice and reasonable you can be
- Constantly acquiescing to others means your needs are never met, which can lead to feelings of anger, resentment, and depression
- If you always give in to another, both your and their commitment to the relationship/situation is never tested
- Accommodation can provide a sense of resolution without a real resolution being reached, making it more likely the situation will escalate at a later point
- By always curbing your needs for the needs of others, you may feel you lack the power to resolve conflict any other way or to express your wants/needs, keeping you from fully engaging in a situation/relationship

[source: http://www.builtinchicago.org/blog/conflict-styles-quiz]
E’s – Your primary conflict style [may tend to be] **Collaboration**

Collaborators value their needs/goals and the needs/goals of others. They want a successful outcome and a better relationship. This shows a high level of concern for and commitment to both sides.

Collaboration has similarities to compromise but differs in that collaborators try to find creative solutions that meet all needs of both parties, rather than relying on both sides giving up something in order for both to be happy.

Collaboration takes a lot of effort. Both parties have to be willing to actively engage in problem-solving and creative solution-making that will maximize outcomes for both.

**Advantages of this style:**

- Collaboration results in joint benefits for those involved and leads to constructive outcomes
- Collaborative outcomes result in greater satisfaction for those involved
- Collaborators come up with new, creative ideas to problems
- Collaboration shows respect and requires everyone to be committed
- Collaboration is a long-term, relationship-building (both personal and professional) style that actively reinforces the importance of the relationship to both parties
- Collaboration builds a team/partnership approach to conflicts and prevents the other party from using aggressive, destructive means to resolve the dispute

**Disadvantages of this style:**

- Collaboration requires a high-energy, long-term commitment, and more time and resources than other ways of resolving disputes
- If the relationship or situation is trivial, collaboration may not be worth the time and effort
- If you only use this style, you can become inflexible when situations are better suited to other methods of problem-solving

**SOURCE:** [http://www.builtinchicago.org/blog/conflict-styles-quiz]
Now that you know your primary style, your secondary conflict style is the style you selected the next most frequently. It is important to learn about this style as well. This may be a style you are trying to adopt or that your current environment has forced you to adopt. Our primary style is the style we will use most often and the one we will revert to when under stress.

While it is great to strive for collaboration when possible as this style allows for a win-win outcome where both sides get their needs met, it is important to note that no one style is perfect or best for all situations. All the styles have advantages and disadvantages.

Keeping a flexible conflict resolution style is optimal as it allows you to meet the needs of the situation, rather than staying rigidly attached to only one style.

The most important thing is to become more aware of your style, how you use it, and when it comes into play. By learning how you, and those you interact with most frequently, tend to resolve disputes, you can have greater awareness of and control over conflict situations.

So, next time you find yourself in the middle of a dispute, take a moment to reflect on what style you and the other person are using to resolve the problem and ask yourself:

- Is this the most constructive approach to solving this conflict?
- How will resolving this conflict in this way affect my relationship with this person (and do I care)?
- Is it possible to find a collaborative solution?

And, if you were not able to stop yourself in the middle of the conflict (as it can be quite challenging at times!), take time to reflect after the fact, asking yourself the same questions. Then think about how the outcome could have been different if a different approach were used.


[*] DAU Note: No instrument is perfect. It is important that you explore your baseline results and validate them through introspection and with inputs from those around you. Instruments such as this “Conflict Styles Quiz” should only serve as points of departure for further personal reflection and refinement of relevant personal skills and behaviors to achieve optimal situational results.

[source: http://www.builtinchicago.org/blog/conflict-styles-quiz]