

Conflict Management Styles

Donna Schilder, MCC,
Executive Coach & President
Glacier Point Solutions, Inc.



Conflict Management Styles Topics

- Choosing The Right Conflict Style for the Situation
- Increasing Your Use of the Collaborative Leadership Style
- How to Respond to Being Confronted With Conflict
- Confronting Others Successfully
 - The Win-Win Walk
- Reducing the Emotional Impact of Conflict



Conflict Management Styles

- If you understand the Conflict Management Styles* you can choose the style that's best suited for the situation
- Each style is effective in some situations
- Most leaders should use Collaborating and Compromising most of the time
- Competing and Avoiding are the least effective styles for most leaders, but are necessary in some situations

*Reference: [Thomas Kilmman Conflict Modes](#)



Conflict Management Styles*

There are 5 Conflict Management Styles

1. Competing
- 2. Collaborating**
- 3. Compromising**
4. Avoiding
5. Accommodating



*Reference: [Thomas Kilmman Conflict Modes](#)



Competing

- Aggressive and uncooperative, the individual pursues their own concerns at the other person's expense (Win-Lose)
- Uses:
 - In emergency situations (someone would be harmed)
 - On vital or time-sensitive issues (a customer's urgent need)
 - When the team can't come to consensus
 - In one-shot high impact situations (buying an expensive piece of equipment)

*Reference: Thomas Kilmman Conflict Modes



Collaborating

- Assertive and cooperative, attempting to find a solution which satisfies the needs of both parties (A True Win-Win)
- Uses:
 - To merge the insights from both parties (finding creative solutions)
 - To work through hard feelings (when the relationship is ongoing)
 - To ensure consensus is reached so that both parties support it (for process changes that require buy-in from all parties)

*Reference: [Thomas Kilmman Conflict Modes](#)



Compromising

- Intermediate level of assertiveness and cooperation, seeking a solution that satisfies both parties, where one or both give up some concessions (Almost Win-Win)
- Uses:
 - To arrive at a solution quickly (e.g., a manufacturing line that can't be down)
 - When goals are moderately important (e.g., when the goal doesn't impact the customer directly)
 - When two opponents have equal power (e.g., a conflict between Sales and Operations)

*Reference: [Thomas Kilmman Conflict Modes](#)



Avoiding

- Unassertive, uncooperative (and sometimes a passive aggressive) approach, the individual avoids the conflict and doesn't address the other's needs (Win-Lose or Lose-Lose)
- Uses:
 - When the issue is trivial
 - When you perceive no chance of satisfying your concerns
 - When the damage from confrontation outweighs the benefits of resolution

*Reference: [Thomas Kilmman Conflict Modes](#)



Accommodating

- Unassertive and cooperative, the individual neglects their own needs to satisfy the concerns of the other (Lose-Win)
- Uses:
 - When the issue is more important to the other person
 - To build up social credit for later use on issues that are more important to you
 - When preserving harmony is important

*Reference: [Thomas Kilmman Conflict Modes](#)



Recap – The Conflict Styles*

1. Competing
2. **Collaborating**
3. **Compromising**
4. Avoiding
5. Accommodating

*Reference: [Thomas Kilmman Conflict Modes](#)



Questions for Reflection on the 5 Conflict Styles

- Which style do you use most often?
- Can you think of a situation where the style you used was not effective?
- Where can you change to another style and get a better outcome?
- How can you use the other styles more often?
- When is it appropriate to use each style in your job?
- We tend to use Competing and Avoiding when we're emotional.
 - How can you dissipate your emotion and use a more effective style?
- How can you Coach your team to match their conflict style to the situation?
- How can you help your team move from Competing or Avoiding to Collaborating more of the time?



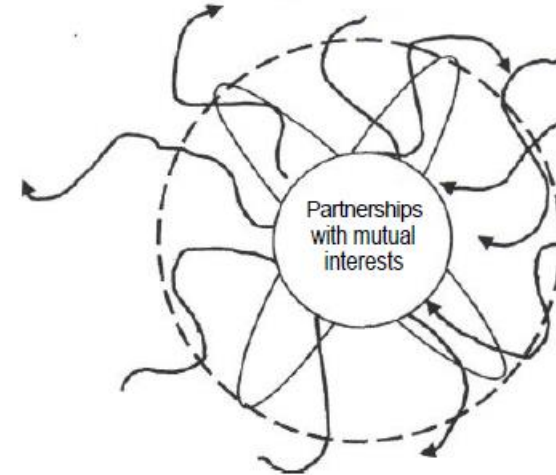
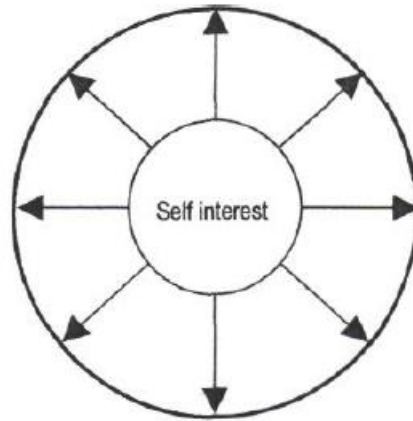
A Process for Managing Confrontation

1. Actively listen
2. Manage your emotions
 - They adversely impact your ability to see the whole picture
3. Try to understand the confronter's viewpoint
4. Avoid explaining or making excuses
5. Empathize
 - “I can see you are *frustrated* by this” – use a feeling word
6. Explore how to make the confronter feel better
 - You can help the person feel better even if their view isn't the whole truth
7. Look for personal growth opportunities



Becoming a More Collaborative Leader

Adapted From: @2003 Corporate Coach U



Competitive Approach	Collaborative Approach
Defensive	Partnering
Rigid Boundaries	Fluid Boundaries
Limited Creativity	Open Space, Free Flowing, Synergistic, Creative
Win-Lose	Win-Win
Limiting	Exponential





What a Non-Collaborative (Competitive) Environment Looks Like

- People do not have equal status and worth
- Reward and recognition is tied to individual performance, not the team's performance
- Work is directed and controlled by management
- Leadership is transactional
- Decisions originate from and accountability is retained by management

What Collaborative Leadership Looks Like

- Every individual is a valued contributor
- Everyone owns business results
- Multiple perspectives are better than one
- Differences are valuable and add to creativity and innovation
- The people in the organization drive the bottom line
- There is value in open, honest relationships
- Trust in oneself and trust in others to do their best creates a safe atmosphere for people to contribute 100%
- The outcome produced by the group is superior to that which could be produced by any individual



Collaborative Organizational Culture

- People are partners with a shared mission
- People are self-managing
- Work gets done in cross-functional, virtual, or other lateral teams
- Reward and recognition is tied to team-based performance
- Work is directed by colleagues as well as formal leaders



Confronting Conflict Collaboratively

- The Win Win Walk

1. Imagine standing across from the person you're in conflict with and look at the situation
2. Imagine you are standing in their shoes and look at the situation
3. Imagine you are walking side-by-side with the person and look at the situation

Walking side-by-side creates a space for Collaboration. Here's a script to follow:

- We have a conflict (Across)
- Let me look at it from your point of view (From their Shoes)
- How can we find a way to meet your needs and my needs? (Walking Side-By-Side: "The Win-Win Walk")



Reducing the Emotional Impact of Conflict

- Conflict often elicits emotions.
- Here are some strategies to manage your emotions:
 - Take a 5 deep breaths
 - Take time to cool off
 - Acknowledge and accept your emotions
 - Give yourself time to process your emotions
 - Address your fears
 - Let go of your emotions so that you are open to new possibilities & solutions



Reducing the Emotional Impact of Conflict

- Embrace conflict as a way to:
 - Generate creative solutions
 - Understand the needs of others
 - Increase your emotional intelligence
 - Make personal growth

- NOTE: Forgive yourself for any shortcomings you perceive that you have



Summary – Conflict Styles

- There are 5 Conflict Styles (Competing, **Collaborating**, **Compromising**, Avoiding, Accommodating)
- Effective Leaders Select the Most Effective Conflict Style for the Situation
 - Leaders Should Use the Collaborative Style as Much as Possible
 - Confront Conflict Collaboratively With the: “Win-Win Walk”
- Reduce the Emotional Impact of Conflict

