Strengthening Solidarity

What's Your Conflict Management Style?

Directions

Listed below are 15 statements. Each situation provides a possible strategy for dealing with a conflict. Give each a numerical value. Don't answer as you think you should; answer as you actually behave.

Learning Objectives	
	▪ Strengthen self-awareness ▪ Understand conflict management styles ▪ Identify your conflict management style ▪ Explore areas of growth

> **1 = Always 2 = Very often, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Not very often, 5 = Rarely, if ever**

Value	Strategy
	a. I argue my case with peers, colleagues and coworkers to demonstrate the merits of the position I take.
	b. I try to reach compromises through negotiation.
	c. I attempt to meet the expectation of others.
	d. I seek to investigate issues with others in order to find solutions that are mutually acceptable.
	e. I am firm in resolve when it comes to defending my side of the issue.
	f. I try to avoid being singled out, keeping conflict with others to myself.
	g. I uphold my solutions to problems.
	h. I compromise in order to reach solutions.
	i. I trade important information with others so that problems can be solved together.
	j. I avoid discussing my differences with others.
	k. I try to accommodate the wishes of my peers and colleagues.
	l. I seek to bring everyone's concerns out into the open in order to resolve disputes in the best way.
	m. I put forward middle positions in efforts to break deadlocks.
	n. I accept the recommendations of colleagues, peers, and coworkers.
	o. I avoid hard feelings by keeping my disagreements with others to myself.

Scoring: The 15 statements you just read are listed under five categories. Each category contains the letters of three statements. Record the number you placed next to each statement. Calculate the total under each category.

Competitive Shark		Collaborative Owl	
a.		d	
e.		i.	
g.		l.	
Total		Total	

Avoidant Turtle		Accommodating Teddy Bear	
f.		c.	
j.		k.	
o.		n.	
Total		Total	

Compromising Fox			
b.			
h.			
m.			
Total			

My dominant style is _____ (Your **LOWEST** score)

My back-up style is _____ (Your **second lowest** score)

Conflict Management Style

Competitive Shark	**The Competitive Shark** Sharks use a forcing or competing conflict management style. They are highly goal-oriented, and relationships often are a lower priority. Sharks do not hesitate to use aggressive behavior to resolve conflicts. Sharks can be autocratic, authoritative, uncooperative, threatening and intimidating. Sharks have a need to win; therefore, others must lose. Advantage: If the shark's decision is correct, a better decision without compromise can result. Disadvantage: May breed hostility and resentment toward the shark. **Appropriate times to use a Shark style** ✔ when conflict involves personal differences that are difficult to change ✔ when fostering intimate or supportive relationships is not critical ✔ when others are likely to take advantage of noncompetitive behavior ✔ when conflict resolution is urgent ✔ when decision is vital in crisis ✔ when unpopular decisions need to be implemented
Collaborative Owl	**The Collaborative Owl** Owls use a collaborative or problem confronting conflict management style. Owls value their goals and relationships. Owls view conflicts as problems to be solved and find solutions agreeable to all sides. Advantage: Both sides get what they want and negative feelings are eliminated. Disadvantage: Takes a great deal of time and effort. **Appropriate times to use an Owl style** ✔ when maintaining relationships is important ✔ when time is not a concern ✔ when peer conflict is involved ✔ when trying to gain commitment through consensus building ✔ when learning and trying to merge differing perspectives

Avoidant Turtle	### The Avoidant Turtle Turtles adopt an avoidant or withdrawn conflict management style. Turtles would rather hide and ignore conflict than resolve it—this leads them to be uncooperative and unassertive. Turtles tend to give up personal goals and display passive behavior. Advantage: May help to maintain relationships that would be hurt by conflict resolution. Disadvantage: Conflicts remain unresolved and others may take advantage of the turtle. **Appropriate times to use a Turtle style:** ✓ when the stakes are not high or the issue is trivial ✓ when confrontation will hurt a working relationship ✓ when there is little chance of satisfying your wants ✓ when disruption outweighs the benefit of conflict resolution ✓ when gathering information is more important than an immediate decision ✓ when others can more effectively resolve the conflict ✓ when time constraints demand a delay
Accommodating Teddy Bear	### The Accommodating Teddy Bear Teddy bears use a smoothing or accommodating conflict management style with emphasis on human relationships. Teddy bears ignore their own goals and resolve conflict by giving in to others. They are unassertive and cooperative. Advantage: Accommodating maintains relationships. Disadvantage: Giving in may not be productive, or the bear may be taken advantage of. **Appropriate times to use a Teddy Bear style** ✓ when maintaining the relationship outweighs other considerations ✓ when suggestions/changes are not important to the accommodator ✓ when minimizing losses in situations where outmatched or losing ✓ when time is limited or when harmony and stability are valued

Compromising Fox	The Compromising Fox Foxes use a compromising conflict management style. They are concerned about goals and relationships. Foxes are willing to sacrifice some of their goals while persuading others to give up part of theirs. Compromise is assertive and cooperative. Advantage: Relationships are maintained and conflicts are removed. Disadvantage: Compromise may create less than ideal outcome and game playing can result. Appropriate times to use a Fox style ✓ when important/complex issues leave no clear or simple solutions ✓ when all conflicting people are equal in power and have strong interests in different solutions ✓ when there are no time constraints