



Conflict Management Styles

OWL Collaborating *I win, you win*



Owls highly value their own goals and relationships. They view conflict as a problem to be solved and to seek solution that achieves both their goals and the goals of the other person. Owls see conflicts as a means of improving relationships by reducing tensions between two persons. They try to begin a discussion that identifies the conflict as a problem. By seeking solutions that satisfy both themselves and the other person, owls maintain the relationship. Owls are not satisfied until a solution is found that achieves their goals and the other person's goals. They are not satisfied until the tensions and negative feelings have fully resolved.

Pros: creates mutual trust, maintains positive relationships, builds commitments.

Cons: time consuming, energy consuming

Turtle Avoiding *You bend, I bend*



Turtles withdraw into their shells to avoid conflicts. They give up their goals and relationships, they stay away from the issues over which the conflict is taking place and from the persons they are in conflict with. Turtles believe it is easier to withdraw from a conflict than to face it.

Pros: does not escalate conflict, postpones difficulty.

Cons: unaddressed problems, unresolved problems.

Shark Competing *I win, you lose*



Sharks try to overpower opponents by forcing them to accept their solution to the conflict. Their goals are highly important to them, and relationships are of minor importance. They seek to achieve their goals at all costs. They are not concerned with the needs of others and do not care if others like or accept them. Sharks assume that conflicts are settled by one person winning and one person losing. They want to be a winner. Winning gives sharks a sense of pride and achievement. Losing gives them a sense of weakness, inadequacy and failure. They try to win by attacking, overpowering, overwhelming, and intimidating.

Pros: goal oriented, quick

Cons: may breed hostility



Teddy Bear Accommodating *I lose, you win*



To Teddy Bears, the relationship is of great importance while their own goals are of little importance. Teddy Bears want to be accepted and liked by others. They think that conflict should be avoided in favor of harmony and that people cannot discuss conflicts without damaging relationships. They are afraid that if the conflict continues, someone will get hurt and that would ruin the relationship. Teddy Bears say “I’ll give up my goals and let you have what you want, in order for you to like me.” Teddy Bears try to smooth over the conflict out of fear of harming the relationship.

Pros: minimizes injury when we are outmatched, relationship are maintained

Cons: breeds resentment, exploits the weak



Fox Compromising *You bend, I bend*

Foxes are moderately concerned with their own goals and their relationship with others. Foxes seek a compromise; they give up part of their goals and persuade the other person in a conflict to give up part of their goals. They seek a conflict solution in which both sides gain something; the middle ground between two extreme positions. They are willing to sacrifice part of their goals and relationships in order to find agreement for the common good.

Pros: useful in complex issues without simple solutions, all parties are equal in power.

Cons: no one is every really satisfied, less than optimal solutions get implemented.