

Inventory of Personal Conflict Management Styles

How Do I Respond to Conflict?

Instructions. Consider your response in situations where your wishes differ from those of another person. Note that statements A-J (Part One) deal with your initial response to disagreement; statements K-T (Part Two) deal with your response after the disagreement has gotten stronger. If you find it easier, you may choose one particular conflict setting and use it as a background for all the questions.

Please Note. The reflection this inventory can create is more important – and more reliable – than the numbers the tally sheet yields. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers, nor have we “standardized” this instrument. Some takers agree with the results; others disagree. Whether you like the results or not, you should rely on them for an accurate picture of yourself only after further self-scrutiny and discussion with others. The inventory is merely a tool to enable these larger tasks.

Part One

Circle one number on the line below each statement.

A. WHEN I FIRST DISCOVER THAT DIFFERENCES EXIST,

I make sure that all views are out in the open and treated with equal consideration, even if there seems to be substantial disagreement.

Not at all Characteristic ← 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 → *Very Characteristic*

B. WHEN I FIRST DISCOVER THAT DIFFERENCES EXIST,

I devote more attention to making sure others understand the logic and benefits of my position than I do to pleasing them.

Not at all Characteristic ← 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 → *Very Characteristic*

C. WHEN I FIRST DISCOVER THAT DIFFERENCES EXIST,

I make my needs known, but I tone them down a bit and look for solutions somewhere in the middle.

Not at all Characteristic ← 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 → *Very Characteristic*

D. WHEN I FIRST DISCOVER THAT DIFFERENCES EXIST,

I pull back from discussion for a time to avoid tension.

Not at all Characteristic ← 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 → *Very Characteristic*

E. WHEN I FIRST DISCOVER THAT DIFFERENCES EXIST,

I devote more attention to feelings of others than to my personal goals.

Not at all Characteristic ← 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 → *Very Characteristic*

F. WHEN I FIRST DISCOVER THAT DIFFERENCES EXIST,

I make sure my agenda doesn't get in the way of our relationship.

Not at all Characteristic ← 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 → *Very Characteristic*

G. WHEN I FIRST DISCOVER THAT DIFFERENCES EXIST,

I actively explain my ideas and just as actively take steps to understand others.

Not at all Characteristic ← 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 → *Very Characteristic*

H. WHEN I FIRST DISCOVER THAT DIFFERENCES EXIST,

I am more concerned with goals I believe to be important than with how others feel about things.

Not at all Characteristic ← 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 → *Very Characteristic*

I. WHEN I FIRST DISCOVER THAT DIFFERENCES EXIST,

I decide the differences aren't worth worrying about.

Not at all Characteristic ← 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 → *Very Characteristic*

J. WHEN I FIRST DISCOVER THAT DIFFERENCES EXIST,

I give up some points in exchange for others.

Not at all Characteristic ← 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 → *Very Characteristic*

Part Two

K. IF DIFFERENCES PERSIST AND FEELINGS ESCALATE,

I enter more actively into discussion and hold out for ways to meet the needs of others as well as my own.

Not at all Characteristic ← 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 → *Very Characteristic*

L. IF DIFFERENCES PERSIST AND FEELINGS ESCALATE,

I put forth greater effort to make sure that the truth as I see it is recognized and less on pleasing others.

Not at all Characteristic ← 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 → *Very Characteristic*

M. IF DIFFERENCES PERSIST AND FEELINGS ESCALATE,

I try to be reasonable by not asking for my full preferences, but I make sure I get some of what I want.

Not at all Characteristic ← 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 → *Very Characteristic*

N. IF DIFFERENCES PERSIST AND FEELINGS ESCALATE,

I don't push for things to be done my way, and I pull back somewhat from the demands of others.

Not at all Characteristic ← 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 → *Very Characteristic*

O. IF DIFFERENCES PERSIST AND FEELINGS ESCALATE,

I set aside my own preferences and become more concerned with keeping the relationship comfortable.

Not at all Characteristic ← 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 → *Very Characteristic*

P. IF DIFFERENCES PERSIST AND FEELINGS ESCALATE,

I interact less with others and look for ways to find a safe distance.

Not at all Characteristic ← 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 → *Very Characteristic*

Q. IF DIFFERENCES PERSIST AND FEELINGS ESCALATE,

I do what needs to be done and hope we can mend feelings later.

Not at all Characteristic ← 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 → *Very Characteristic*

R. IF DIFFERENCES PERSIST AND FEELINGS ESCALATE,

I do what is necessary to soothe the other's feelings.

Not at all Characteristic ← 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 → *Very Characteristic*

S. IF DIFFERENCES PERSIST AND FEELINGS ESCALATE,

I pay close attention to the desires of others but remain firm that they need to pay equal attention to my desires.

Not at all Characteristic ← 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 → *Very Characteristic*

T. IF DIFFERENCES PERSIST AND FEELINGS ESCALATE,

I press for moderation and compromise so we can make a decision and move on with things.

Not at all Characteristic ← 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 → *Very Characteristic*

Scoring & Interpretation

Transfer the number from each item to the tally sheet. For example, on item A, if you selected number 6, write 6 on the line designated for A on the tally sheet. Then add the numbers. Sample: B 1 + H 4 = 5.

This exercise gives you two sets of scores. Calm scores apply to your response when disagreement first arises. Storm scores apply to your response if things are not easily resolved and emotions get stronger.

The scores indicate your inclination to use each style. The higher your score in a given style, the more likely you are to use this style in responding to conflict.

Styles of Conflict Management

Collaborating

A _____ + G _____ = _____ *Calm*

K _____ + S _____ = _____ *Storm*

Assert your views while also inviting other views. Welcome differences; identify all main concerns; generate options; search for solution that meets as many concerns as possible; search for mutual agreement.

Perspective on Conflict. Conflict is natural, neutral. So affirm differences, prize each person's uniqueness. Recognize tensions in relationships and contrasts in viewpoint. Work through conflicts of closeness.

Compromising

C _____ + J _____ = _____ *Calm*

M _____ + T _____ = _____ *Storm*

Urge moderation; bargain; split the difference; find a little something for everyone; meet them halfway.

Perspective on Conflict. Conflict is mutual difference best resolved by cooperation and compromise. If each comes halfway, progress can be made by the democratic process.

Accommodating

E _____ + F _____ = _____ *Calm*

O _____ + R _____ = _____ *Storm*

Accept the other's view; let the other's view prevail; give in; support; acknowledge error; decide it's no big deal or it doesn't matter.

Perspective on Conflict. Conflict is usually disastrous, so yield. Sacrifice your own interests, ignore the issues, put relationships first, keep peace at any price.

Avoiding

D _____ + I _____ = _____ *Calm*

N _____ + P _____ = _____ *Storm*

Delay or avoid response; withdraw; be inaccessible; divert attention.

Perspective on Conflict. Conflict is hopeless; avoid it. Overlook differences, accept disagreement or

get out.

Forcing

B _____ + H _____ = _____ *Calm*

L _____ + Q _____ = _____ *Storm*

Control the outcome; discourage disagreement; insist on my view prevailing.

Perspective on Conflict. Conflict is obvious; some people are right and some people are wrong. The central issue is who is right. Pressure and coercion are necessary.

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Preferred and Backup Styles

Calm

Response when issues and conflicts first arise.

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Designed by Claassen to accompany Kraybill/
MCS Styles Assessment

Storm

Responses after the issues and conflicts have been unresolved for a time, and have grown in intensity.

Negotiating

- Participants are adversaries. The goal is victory. The issue is what is important.
- Participants need to be friends. The goal is agreement. It may be necessary to give in to preserve the relationship.
- Participants are adversaries. The goal is to get someone else to make the decision or get out.
- Participants are problem solvers. The goal is to win some and give some in order to find agreement.
- Participants are friendly problem solvers. The goal is a fair, wise, just outcome with mutual benefit. The process to reach the solution should be fair and respectful to all participants.

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Handling Negative Feelings

- I believe in getting my feelings out in the open, so I let people know what I think about them and what they are doing that irritates me. I may check it out with others also, and if they agree, I may invite the others to join with me.
- I try to overcome my feelings of hostility without letting others know I am upset. I strive to become more tolerant of other people.
- I prefer to avoid contacts with people with whom I am upset, but if this is impossible, I keep the relationship on a “strictly business” level.
- I check with others to see if they share my feelings. If they do, I may tell the individual a bit of how I feel; but I hold on to some of my negative feelings in case things aren’t worked out.
- When we agree to work on the problem, I describe my feelings with the persons with whom I am upset in order to clear up personal grievances and misunderstandings.

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