Conflict Styles Overview

In 1974, researchers Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann developed the first conflict styles model. The model is an analytical framework we can use to better understand and manage conflict, and it continues to be the most widely used model out there. The table below provides a brief overview of the model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict Style</th>
<th>Concerns</th>
<th>Assertiveness</th>
<th>Cooperativeness</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Competing      | • My concerns are fully satisfied  
                • Your concerns are not satisfied | High           | Low             | • Persuade  
                • Instruct  
                • Boundary set  
                • Flip a coin  
                • Elect  
                • Debate  
                • Win  
                • Honk  
                • Order  
                • Defend  
                • Argue  
                • Legal action  
                • Get even |
| Accommodating  | • My concerns are not satisfied  
                • Your concerns are fully satisfied | Low            | High            | • Apologize  
                • Favour  
                • Sacrifice  
                • Obey  
                • Lip service |
| Avoiding       | • Both my concerns and your concerns are not satisfied | Low            | Low             | • Ignore  
                • Distract  
                • Take a break  
                • Flee  
                • Ghost  
                • Passive aggressive |
| Compromising   | • Both my concerns and your concerns are partially satisfied | Medium         | Medium          | • Bargain  
                • Negotiate |
| Collaborating  | • Both my concerns and your concerns are fully satisfied | High           | High            | • Meaningful, cooperative conversations |
Please note all conflict styles have a time and a place. That said, there are some examples of conflict styles that should be used sparingly and only under certain conditions (e.g. arguing), and others that are never appropriate (e.g. getting even).

To learn more about conflict styles, register for Conflict Coaching or Exploring Conflict Styles.

To learn more about the collaborative approach, check out Conflict Management 101.