

## HOW I ACT IN CONFLICTS

Read each of the sentences carefully. Use the scale to rate how you act in conflicts.

5 = Most of the time

4 = Quite often

3 = Sometimes

2 = Seldom

1 = Never

1. It is easier for you not to say anything during quarrels.
2. You try to convince others to think the same as you, or else try to get them to do as you think.
3. Using soft words in arguments, wins over the most stubborn of people.
4. You do something for me, and I'll do something for you.
5. In quarrels, the best way is to reason things out together.
6. When two quarrel, the one who stops arguing and stays quiet first is the best.
7. In conflict, forcefulness is more important than truth.
8. During arguments, soft, smooth words ease the conflict.
9. It is better to give up half of what you want than to give up everything.
10. You tend to stand firm rather than be swayed by majority opinion.
11. You get others all stirred up and then leave before the conflict is over.
12. You state your opinions and then stand by them until others give in or leave.
13. You believe kindness and soft words will sway the other person over to your side.
14. There is no quarrel if both sides treat each other fairly.
15. Everyone involved has a part to contribute and no one person had the final say.
16. You tend to stay away from people who disagree with you.
17. You believe in doing whatever it takes to win, in arguments.
18. You believe that kind words to another during conflict are worth lots and cost little.
19. In arguments, it is fair play to do whatever the other person does.
20. Only when you give up part of what you believe, can you benefit from what others believe.
21. You avoid quarrelsome people as they will only make your life miserable.
22. If you speak your mind and stand strong in conflicts, others will give up and leave.
23. You believe that using soft words will bring about harmony and peace.
24. Giving a gift in return for one makes good friends.
25. Facing your conflicts and talking them out will help discover the best solutions.
26. The best way of handling conflicts is to avoid them.
27. In conflicts, you stand by your beliefs and don't give in no matter what others say.
28. Gentleness will win over anger.
29. Getting part of what you want is better than not getting anything at all.
30. You believe positive solutions are found by using openness, honesty and trust.
31. There is nothing so important to you that you have to fight for it.
32. There are two kinds of people in the world, the winners and the losers.
33. You believe that when someone hurts you, you should return gentleness and understanding.
34. When both people give in halfway, a fair settlement is achieved.

35. You believe a conflict is resolved by digging and digging until a solution is found.

<u>Withdrawing</u>	<u>Forcing</u>	<u>Smoothing</u>	<u>Compromising</u>	<u>Confronting</u>
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
11.	12.	13.	14.	15.
16.	17.	18.	19.	20.
21.	22.	23.	24.	25.
26.	27.	28.	29.	30.
31.	32.	33.	34.	35.
<u>Total</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Total</u>

The higher the total score for each conflict strategy, the more frequently you tend to use it. The lower the total score, the less frequently you tend to use that strategy.

## CONFLICT STRATEGIES: WHAT ARE YOU LIKE?

Different people use different strategies for managing conflicts. These are usually learned in childhood, and they seem to function automatically. Usually, we are not aware of how we act in conflict situations. We just do whatever comes naturally. But we do have a personal strategy and because it was learned, we can always change it by learning new and more effective ways of managing conflicts.

When you become engaged in a conflict, there are two major concerns you have to take into account:

1. Achieving your personal goals. You are in conflict because you have a goal that conflicts with another person's goal. Your goal may be highly important to you, or it may be of little importance.
2. Keeping a good relationship with the other person. You may need to be able to interact effectively with the other person in the future. The relationship may be very important to you, or it may be of little importance.

How important your personal goals are to you and how important the relationship is to you affects how you act in conflict. Given these two concerns, five styles of managing conflicts can be identified:

1. The Turtle (Withdrawing) – Turtles withdraw into their shells to avoid conflicts. They give up their personal goals and relationships. They stay away from issues over which the conflict is taking place and from the people they are in conflict with. Turtles believe it is hopeless to try to resolve conflicts. They feel helpless. They believe it is easier to withdraw (physically and psychologically) from a conflict than to face it.
2. The Shark (Forcing) – Sharks try to overpower opponents by forcing them to accept their solution to a conflict. Their goals are highly important to them, and the relationship is of minor importance. They seek to achieve their goals at all costs. They are not concerned with the needs of other people. They do not care if other people like or accept them. Sharks assume that conflicts are settled by one person winning and one person losing. They want to be the winner. Winning gives sharks a sense of pride and achievement. Losing gives sharks a sense of weakness, inadequacy and failure. They try to win by attacking, overpowering, overwhelming and intimidating other people.
3. The Teddy Bear (Smoothing) – To Teddy Bears, the relationship is of great importance, while their goals are of little importance. Teddy Bears want to be accepted and liked by other people. They think that conflict should be avoided in favor of harmony and believe that conflicts cannot be discussed without damaging relationships. They are afraid that if conflict continues, someone will get hurt and that would ruin the relationship. They give up their goals to preserve the relationship. Teddy Bears say, "I'll give up my goals, and let you get what you want, in order for you to like me". Teddy Bears try to smooth over the conflict in fear of harming the relationship.

4. The Fox (Compromising) – Foxes are moderately concerned with their own goals and about their relationships with other people. Foxes seek a compromise. They give up part of their goals and persuade the other person in the conflict to give up part of his or her goals. They seek a solution to conflicts where 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 an agreement for the common good.
5. The Owl (Confronting) – Owls highly value their goals and relationships. They view conflict as problems to be solved and seek a solution that achieves both their own goals and the goals of other person in the conflict. Owls see conflicts as improving relationships by reducing tension between two people. 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 own goals and the other person's goals. And they are not satisfied until the tensions and negative feelings have been fully resolved.