

CONFLICT STYLES

When to Use Which Style?

Competing

Often Appropriate When:

- an emergency looms
- you're sure you're right, and being right matters more than preserving relationships
- the issue is trivial and others don't really care what happens

Often Inappropriate When:

- collaboration has not yet been attempted
- cooperation from others is important
- used routinely for most issues
- self-respect of others is diminished needlessly

Collaborating

Often Appropriate When:

- the issues and relationship are both significant
- cooperation is important
- a creative end is important
- reasonable hope exists to address all concerns

Often Inappropriate When:

- time is short
- the issues are unimportant
- you're over-loaded
- the goals of the other person certainly are wrong

Compromising

Often Appropriate When:

- cooperation is important but time or resources are limited
- when finding some solution, even less than the best, is better than a complete stalemate.
- when efforts to collaborate will be misunderstood as forcing

Often Inappropriate When:

- finding the most creative solutions possible is essential
- when you can't live with the consequences

Avoiding

Often Appropriate When:

- the issue is trivial
- the relationship is insignificant
- time is short and a decision not necessary
- you have little power but still wish to block the other person

Often Inappropriate When:

- you care about both the relationship and the issue involved
- used habitually for most issues
- negative feelings may linger
- others would benefit from caring confrontation

Accommodating

Often Appropriate When:

- you really don't care about the issue
- you're powerless but have no wish to block the other person
- when you realize you are wrong

Often Inappropriate When:

- you are likely to harbor resentment
- used habitually in order to gain acceptance (outcome: depression and lack of self-respect)
- when others wish to collaborate and will feel like enforcers if you accommodate