

HOW YOU ACT IN CONFLICTS

The following proverbs can be thought of as descriptions of some of the different strategies for resolving conflicts. Proverbs state traditional wisdom; these reflect traditional wisdom for resolving conflicts. Read each carefully, and using the following scale, indicate how typical each proverb is of your actions in a conflict.

- 5 = very typical of the way I act in a conflict
- 4 = frequently typical of the way I act in a conflict
- 3 = sometimes typical of the way I act in a conflict
- 2 = seldom typical of the way I act in a conflict
- 1 = never typical of the way I act in a conflict

- _____ 1. It is easier to refrain than to retreat from a quarrel.
- _____ 2. If you cannot make a person think as you do, make him or her do as you think.
- _____ 3. Soft words win hard hearts.
- _____ 4. You scratch my back, I scratch yours.
- _____ 5. Come now and let us reason together.
- _____ 6. When two quarrel, the person who keeps silent first is the most praiseworthy.
- _____ 7. Might overcomes right.
- _____ 8. Smooth words make smooth ways.
- _____ 9. Better half a loaf than no bread at all.
- _____ 10. Truth lies in knowledge, not in majority opinion.
- _____ 11. He who fights and runs away lives to fight another day.
- _____ 12. He hath conquered well that hath made his enemies flee.
- _____ 13. Kill your enemies with kindness.
- _____ 14. A fair exchange brings no quarrel.
- _____ 15. No person has the final answer, but every person has a piece to contribute.
- _____ 16. Stay away from people who disagree with you.
- _____ 17. Fields are won by those who believe in winning.
- _____ 18. Kind words are worth much and cost little.
- _____ 19. Tit for tat is fair play.
- _____ 20. Only the person who is willing to give up his or her monopoly on truth can ever profit from the truths that others hold.
- _____ 21. Avoid quarrelsome people, as they will only make your life miserable.
- _____ 22. A person who will not flee will make others flee.
- _____ 23. Soft words ensure harmony.
- _____ 24. One gift for another makes good friends.
- _____ 25. Bring your conflicts into the open and face them directly; only then will the best solution be discovered.
- _____ 26. The best way of handling conflicts is to avoid them.
- _____ 27. Put your foot down where you mean to stand.
- _____ 28. Gentleness will triumph over anger.
- _____ 29. Getting part of what you want is better than not getting anything at all.
- _____ 30. Frankness, honesty, and trust will move mountains.
- _____ 31. There is nothing so important you have to fight for it.
- _____ 32. There are two kinds of people in the world, the winners and the losers.
- _____ 33. When one hits you with a stone, hit him or her with a piece of cotton.
- _____ 34. When both give in halfway, a fair settlement is achieved.
- _____ 35. By digging and digging, the truth is discovered.

Scoring

Withdrawing		Forcing		Smoothing		Compromising		Problem Solving	
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.	
Total		Total		Total		Total		Total	

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

Taken from **Joining Together; Group Therapy**; Ninth Edition Johnson and Johnson 2006

Provided by:
 Louise S Dunn
 Snowgoose Veterinary Management Consulting
 12 Snowgoose Cove
 Greensboro, NC 27455
 336-286-0878

teddy Bear	smoothing Accommodating style
Shark	forcing or win-lose negotiations Competitive style
Turtle	Withdrawing Avoidant style
Owl	problem-solving negotiations Collaborative style
Fox	compromising

1. **The owl** (*problem-solving negotiations*): Owls highly value the goal and the relationship. When both the goal and the relationship are highly important to you, you initiate problem-solving negotiations to resolve the conflict. Solutions are sought that ensure that both you and the other group member fully achieve your goals and resolve any tensions and negative feelings between the two of you. This strategy requires risky moves, such as revealing your underlying interests while expecting the other to do the same.

2. **The teddy bear** (*smoothing*): To teddy bears the relationship is of great importance, whereas the goal is of little importance. When the goal is of little importance to you but the relationship is of high importance, you give up your goal in order to maintain the relationship at the highest quality possible. When you think the other person's interests are much stronger or important than yours, you smooth and assist the other person in achieving his or her goal.

3. **The shark** (*forcing or win-lose negotiations*): Sharks see the relationship as of no importance and try to overpower opponents by forcing them to give in so the shark can achieve his or her goal. When the goal is very important but the relationship is not, you seek to achieve your goal by forcing or persuading the other to yield. Tactics used to win include making threats, physical and verbal aggression, imposing penalties that will be withdrawn if the other concedes, and taking preemptive actions designed to resolve the conflict without the other's consent (such as taking a book home that the other insists is his). Tactics to persuade the other to yield include presenting persuasive arguments, imposing a deadline, committing oneself to an "unalterable" position, or making demands that far exceed what is actually acceptable.

4. **The fox** (*compromising*): Foxes are moderately concerned with the goal and the relationship with the other member. When both the goal and the relationship are moderately important to you, and it appears that both you and the other person cannot get what you want, you may need to give up part of your goals and sacrifice part of the relationship in order to reach an agreement. Compromising may be meeting in the middle so each gets half, or flipping a coin to let chance decide who will get his or her way. Compromising is often used when disputants wish to engage in problem-solving negotiations but do not have the time to do so.

5. ***The turtle (withdrawing)***: Turtles withdraw into their shells to avoid conflicts, valuing neither the relationship nor the goal. When the goal is not important and you do not need to keep a relationship with the other person, you may wish to give up both your goal and the relationship and avoid the issue and the other person. Avoiding a hostile stranger, for example, may be the best thing to do. Sometimes you may wish to withdraw from a conflict until you and the other person have calmed down and are in control of your feelings.

Taken from **Joining Together; Group Therapy**; Ninth Edition Johnson and Johnson 2006

Provided by:
Louise S Dunn
Snowgoose Veterinary Management Consulting
12 Snowgoose Cove
Greensboro, NC 27455
336-286-0878