



APPROACHES TO CONFLICT

AVOID: “No Way”

Not addressing the conflict, either by withdrawing from the situation or postponing dealing with the issues.

ACCOMMODATE: “Your Way”

Giving in to another person’s point of view or paying attention to another person’s concerns, sometimes at the expense of your own needs.

CONTROL/COMPETE/PERSIST: “My Way”

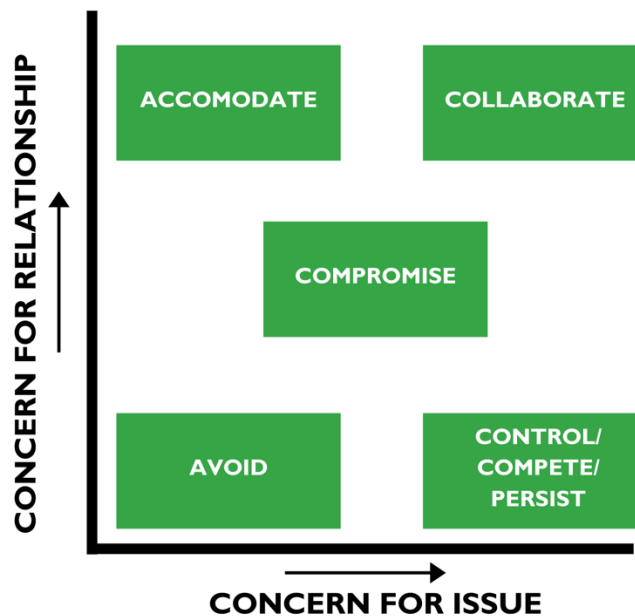
Pursuing personal concerns at another’s expense. Competing can also mean “standing up for your rights,” defending a position you believe is correct, or simply trying to win or control the situation in your favor.

COMPROMISE: “Half Way”

Looking for a middle ground by splitting the difference. The solution partly satisfies each person involved.

COLLABORATE: “Our Way”

Working together by talking about the issues, coming up with solutions, and agreeing up a solution that satisfies the needs of everyone.



This graph is a tool to help analyze what is the most appropriate approach to use in that circumstance.



Different approaches might work best depending upon how important the relationship and the issue are in the situation.

Notice that the vertical axis represents the importance of relationships.

- Approaches high on the vertical axis represent a high regard for the relationship.
- Those low on the vertical axis represent the opposite: low regard for the relationship during and after the conflict.
- An “important relationship” does not necessarily mean that you like the person. If you have to interact with them often, you are still interdependent with them.

The Horizontal axis represents the importance of attaining the goal.

- Approaches far to the right on the axis represent a high regard for the issue in the conflict. In other words, the goal of these approaches is to attain a certain outcome in the conflict.
- Approaches far to the left on the axis represent the opposite: low regard for achieving the goal.

Approaches best used when:

- Avoid – you have a low regard for the issues/goals and relationships.
 - If the situation is not a big deal and you will likely not see the other person again. You also want to use this approach if you are going to be physically hurt or if you or the person you are in conflict with is not calm enough to handle the situation well.
- Accommodate – you have low regard for the issues/goals and high regard for the relationships. You don’t really care about the outcome or care as much as the person you are in a conflict with.
 - If you and a friend are going to a movie, and they really want to see one and you kind of want to see another, you may go see the movie your friend wants to see.
- Compete/Control/Persist – you have high regard for the issues/goals and low regard for the relationships.
 - If someone is taking advantage of you or is not listening to you.
- Compromise – you have a medium regard both for the issues/goals and the relationships.
 - If there are limited resources (things): if you both want a cookie and there is only one left, you could split it.
- Collaborate – you have a high regard for the issues/goals and the relationships. Whenever the conflict is about something important and you have the time to come up with creative solutions.
 - If you have a conflict with a person about how to split up the work for a group project for school.

It is often necessary to use more than one approach in a single conflict. Example: if either you or the person you are in conflict with are too angry to productively talk with one another, you may need to avoid the conflict until you both have cooled down and are able to compromise or collaborate.