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Conflict Styles When To Use Which Style?

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I. 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.

II. 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.

III. 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.

V. 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 issues involved.
- used habitually for most issues.
- negative feelings may linger.
- others would benefit from caring.

IV. 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're wrong.

Often Inappropriate When:

- you're 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.

UNCOOPERATIVE ←

➤ COOPERATIVE

COOPERATIVENESS

*This two-dimensional model of conflict-handling behavior is adapted from "Conflict and Conflict Management" by Kenneth Thomas in *The Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, edited by Marvin Dunnette (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1976).