

CONFLICT MODES

There are five 'modes' people use when it comes to conflict. We use all five at different times, but we also have our favourites. We're better at some or more comfortable, so they tend to be our go-to strategy when conflicts arise.

ACCOMMODATE

You cooperate to a high-degree, and it may be at your own expense, and actually work against your own goals, objectives, and desired outcomes. This approach is effective when the other party is the expert or has a better solution. It can also be effective for preserving future relations with the other party. Operating too often in this space may lead to a sense of frustration and resentment as your own needs are minimised or not being met.

AVOID

You simply avoid the issue. You don't help the other party reach their goals, and you don't assertively pursue your own. This works when the issue is trivial or when you have no chance of winning. It can also be effective when the issue would be very costly. It's also very effective when the atmosphere is emotionally charged and you need to create some space. Issues rarely resolve themselves, and hope is not a strategy. In general, avoiding is not a good long-term strategy.

COLLABORATE

You partner with the other party to achieve both of your goals. You break free of the 'win-lose' paradigm and instead both seek to learn more about each other and the situation. This is effective for complex scenarios where you need to find a novel solution. This can also mean re-framing the challenge to create a bigger space and room for everybody's ideas. The challenge is that it requires a high degree of trust and reaching a consensus can require time and effort to get everybody on board and to synthesize all the ideas.

COMPETE

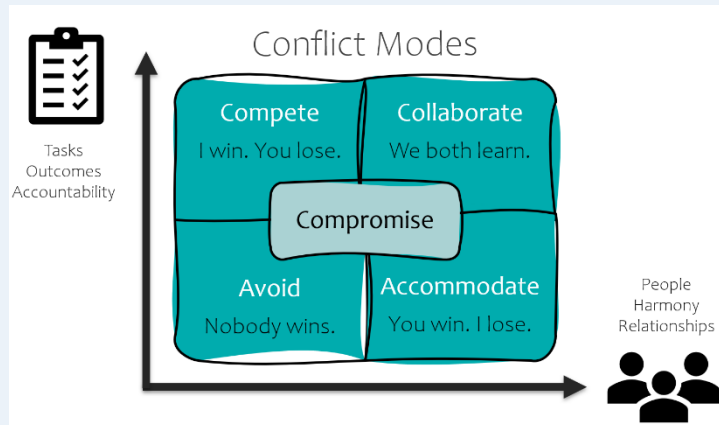
This is the 'win-lose' approach. You act in a very assertive way to achieve your goals, without seeking to cooperate with the other party, and it may be at the expense of the other party. This approach may be appropriate for emergencies when time is of the essence, or when you need quick, decisive action, and people are aware of and support the approach. Relying on this too often can undermine relationships and erode trust.

COMPROMISE

A lose-ish/win-ish scenario where neither party really achieves what they want. This requires a moderate level of assertiveness and cooperation. It may be appropriate for scenarios where you need a temporary solution, or where both sides have equally important goals or unwilling to shift their positions. The trap is to fall into compromising as an easy way out, when collaborating would produce a better solution.

For more about these ideas see:

[What is the Thomas Kilmann Conflict Management Model?](#)



Bruce Williams

www.brucewilliams.com.au