

Basic Conflict Styles

Avoidance

Wilmot & Hocker pp. 139-145

Characterized by

- denial of the conflict
- equivocation, changing and avoiding topics
- being noncommittal
- joking rather than dealing with the conflict at hand

Avoidance - Advantages

Advantages

- can supply time to think
- if issue is trivial and not worth attention
- if the relationship is not important
- if others can handle the conflict w/o my involvement
- keeps other party from harmfully influencing me

Avoidance - Disadvantages

- says, "I don't care enough to confront"
- gives impression one cannot change
- allows conflict to simmer and heat up
- keeps one from working through a conflict
- reinforces notion conflict is terrible and best avoided
- preserves the conflict and sets the stage for a later explosion or backlash

Competition

Wilmot & Hocker pp. 145-156

Characterized by

- direct confrontation
- aggression usually creeps in
- trying to win the argument w/o adjusting to the other's goals and desires
- expressiveness
- can be expressive rather than aggressive and not have berating, ridiculing, or damaging of the other
- each boy adamantly claims he should get the orange

Competition - Advantages

- useful when one has to make a quick, decisive decision
- can generate creative ideas when others respond well to it
- useful if the external goal is more important than the relationship with the other person
- it informs the other of one's degree of commitment to the issue and importance of the issue
- useful when everyone in the situation agrees competitive behavior is a sign of strength

Competition - Disadvantages

- can harm the relationship between parties
- continued escalation in marriages is related to unhappiness with the marriage
- harmful if one party is unwilling or unable to deal with conflict head on
- can encourage the losing party to go underground and use passive aggression

Compromise

Wilmot & Hocker pp. 156-158

Characterized by

- some gains and some losses for each party
- the boys agree to cut the orange in half

Compromise - Advantages

- sometimes lets conflict parties accomplish important goals w/less time than collaboration
- reinforces a power balance that can be used to achieve temporary or expedient settlements in time-pressured times
- backup method when other styles fail
- it appears reasonable to most parties

Compromise - Disadvantages

- can become an easy way out
- to some it always seems to be a loss
- it prevents creative new options
- can be a sophisticated form of avoidance

Accomodation

Wilmot & Hocker pp. 158-160

Characterized by

- not asserting individual needs
- prefer a cooperative and harmonizing approach
- may think serving the good of the group
- sometimes becomes a martyr, bitter complainer, whiner, or saboteur
- hard to study because it is seen as being kind
- each boy says, "Give the orange to the other boy"

Accommodation - Advantages

- good to do when you are wrong
- if the issue is not important to you, you can give a little to gain a lot
- can prevent one party from harming the other
- a way of betting on the more experienced person's judgment

Accommodation - Disadvantages

- can foster an undertone of competitiveness
- reduces creative options
- commitment to the relationship is not tested
- can be a pseudosolution that will boomerang later
- can further one's lack of power

Collaboration

Wilmot & Hocker pp. 160-165

Characterized by

- conflict does not conclude until both parties are reasonably satisfied and can support the solution
- involves making descriptive and disclosing statements and soliciting disclosure and criticism from the other party
- The boys both state their reasons for wanting the orange. One boy is really hungry and wants to eat it. The other boy needs the peeling for an art project. They both get what they really want.

Collaboration - Advantages

- satisfies both parties
- solutions are reality based
- high energy style for long-term, committed relationships

Collaboration - Disadvantages

- can get stuck in a rut if it is only style used
- if investment in relationship is low, it is not worth the time
- verbally skilled people can use it in a manipulative way
- negative views of other styles can become a "one up manship"
- higher power people can use pseudocollaboration to maintain a power imbalance
- "Working together effectively cannot be rushed" (Wilmot & Hocker, p. 68).

TRIP Interests – Philippians 2:4

1. Tangible
 1. What does each person want?
 2. The external thing (what you can see, touch, smell, hear, etc.) that is typically what ignites a conflict
2. Relationship/Roles
 1. What is my position in relation to the other person in this conflict? (Ex: Boss, Father, Child, Friend, Co-Worker, etc.)
 2. Who are we to each other?
 3. What is my role in resolving this conflict?
 4. Is this the time to give advice or take orders?
 5. Who decides?
3. Identity
 1. Who do I tell myself that I am?
 2. Ground your identity
 1. I am one in whom Christ dwells, I am a child of God, I am loved by God regardless of_____.
 2. A side effect of loving Jesus is that the closer I get to Jesus, the less I feel a need to defend myself – Identity (Mark 12:28-31)
 3. Becoming aware of your identity issues helps you spot them during a conversation and can help get to the root of conflict more quickly.
 4. Let go of all-or-nothing-thinking
 5. 1 Peter 5:5-11 – Identity is one of the biggest ways Satan tries to attack us. God is the one who restores us, makes us strong, lifts us up, and cares for us.
4. Process
 1. Which of the 5 conflict styles is best to resolve this disagreement?
 2. Matthew 18:15-20
 1. Can we resolve ourselves, or do we need to bring someone else in to help mediate?

Tools for Conflict Resolution

➤ **Listening - James 1:19-20**

1. Reflective Listening
 1. Tentative opening
 2. Acknowledge Emotions
 3. Rephrase or Reframe Content
 1. Rephrase is repeating back to them what they said without using the same words.
 2. Reframing is repeating back to them what they said with a positive future outlook.
 3. Be careful to not make assumptions
2. Nonverbal Cues
 1. SOLAR
 1. Sensitive Seating
 2. Open Posture
 3. Leaning forward
 4. Appropriate eye contact
 5. Relaxing
 2. TEA
 1. Touching
 2. Environment
 3. Accommodating differences

➤ **Fault/Blame vs Contribution – Ephesians 4:15**

1. Fault/Blame
 1. Is about judging
 2. Looks at the past
 3. Creates defensiveness, argumentativeness, etc.
2. Contribution
 1. Is about understanding
 2. Looks forward to solutions
 3. Admits that everyone involved contributes to the conflict.
3. Owning Contribution does not mean:

1. I should focus only on my contribution
2. I should put aside my feelings
3. Take on the other persons contribution
4. Avoid using extreme statements
 1. "You Always", "You never", "You make me"
 2. Adopting the "And" Stance
 3. Speaking the truth in love