

HOW YOU ACT IN CONFLICTS

(Johnson & Johnson, Joining Together, 1994, pages 334-339.)

The proverbs listed below can be thought of as descriptions of some of the different strategies for resolving conflicts. Proverbs state traditional wisdom, and these proverbs reflect traditional wisdom for resolving conflicts. Read each of the proverbs carefully. 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 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

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'll 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 a majority opinion.**
- 11. He or she who fights and runs away lives to fight another day.**
- 12. He or she hath conquered well that hath made their 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.**

Scores

A.	B.	C.	D.	E.
<u>1.</u>	<u>2.</u>	<u>3.</u>	<u>4.</u>	<u>5.</u>
<u>6.</u>	<u>7.</u>	<u>8.</u>	<u>9.</u>	<u>10.</u>
<u>11.</u>	<u>12.</u>	<u>13.</u>	<u>14.</u>	<u>15.</u>
<u>16.</u>	<u>17.</u>	<u>18.</u>	<u>19.</u>	<u>20.</u>
<u>21.</u>	<u>22.</u>	<u>23.</u>	<u>24.</u>	<u>25.</u>
<u>26.</u>	<u>27.</u>	<u>28.</u>	<u>29.</u>	<u>30.</u>
<u>31.</u>	<u>32.</u>	<u>33.</u>	<u>34.</u>	<u>35.</u>
Total: <u> </u>	Total: <u> </u>	Total: <u> </u>	Total: <u> </u>	Total: <u> </u>

NOTES:

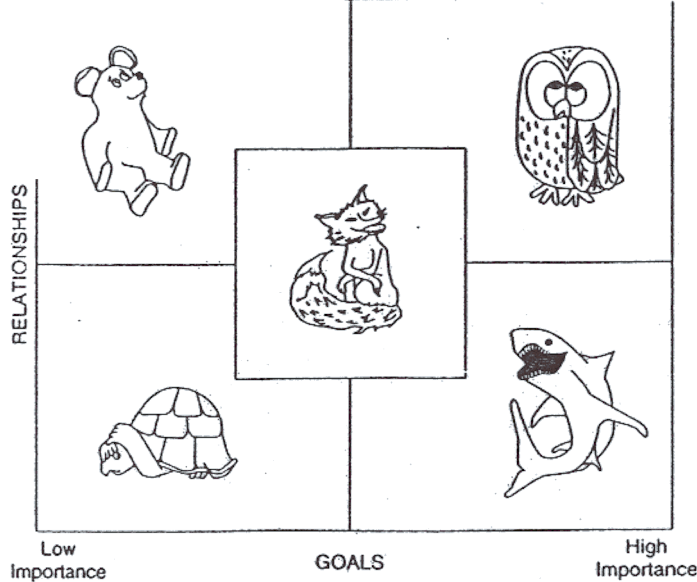


Figure 8.1 Strategies for managing conflicts

Scores

1. *The Turtle (Withdrawing)*. Turtles withdraw into their shells to avoid conflicts. They give up their personal goals and relationships. They stay away from the issues over which the conflict is taking place and from the persons they are in conflict with. Turtles believe it is hopeless to try to resolve conflicts. They feel helpless. They believe it is easier to withdraw (physically and psychologically) from a conflict than to face it.
2. *The Shark (Forcing)*. Sharks try to overpower opponents by forcing them to accept their solution to the conflict. Their goals are highly important to them, and relationships are of minor importance. They seek to achieve their goals at all costs. They are not concerned with the needs of others. They do not care if others like or accept them. Sharks assume that conflicts are settled by one person winning and one person losing. They want to be the winner. Winning gives sharks a sense of pride and achievement. Losing gives them a sense of weakness, inadequacy, and failure. They try to win by attacking, overpowering, overwhelming, and intimidating others.
3. *The Teddy Bear (Smoothing)*. To teddy bears, the relationship is of great importance, while their own goals are of little importance. Teddy bears want to be accepted and liked by others. They think that conflict should be avoided in favor of harmony and that people cannot discuss conflicts without damaging relationships. They are afraid that if the conflict continues, someone will get hurt, and that would ruin the relationship. They give up their goals to preserve the relationship. Teddy bears say, "I'll give up my goals and let you have what you want, in order for you to like me." Teddy bears try to smooth over the conflict out of fear of harming the relationship.
4. *The Fox (Compromising)*. Foxes are moderately concerned with their own goals and their relationships with others. Foxes seek a compromise; they give up part of their goals and persuade the other person in a conflict to give up part of his goals. They seek a conflict solution in which both sides gain something—the middle ground between two extreme positions. They are willing to sacrifice part of their goals and relationships in order to find agreement for the common good.
5. *The Owl (Confronting)*. Owls highly value their own goals and relationships. They view conflicts as problems to be solved and seek a solution that achieves both their own goals and the goals of the other person. Owls see conflicts as a means of improving relationships by reducing tension between two persons. They try to begin a discussion that identifies the conflict as a problem. By seeking solutions that satisfy both themselves and the other person, owls maintain the relationship. Owls are not satisfied until a solution is found that achieves their own goals and the other person's goals. And they are not satisfied until the tensions and negative feelings have been fully resolved.