

THOMAS-KILMANN CONFLICT MODES: **Interpreting Your Scores**

Your profile of scores indicates the repertoire of conflict handling skills that you possess and use in conflict situations. One of the most often asked questions is "What are the right answers?" In this type of test, there are no "right" answers. All five modes of handling conflict are useful in various situations, and each represents a set of useful social skills. The effectiveness of any handling of conflict depends on the requirements of the conflict and the skill that is employed.

Each of us is capable of using all five conflict modes, and none of us can be characterized as having a single rigid style of dealing with conflict. However, because of personality traits or by habit, individuals tend to use one or two modes at a greater frequency than the others.

	Competitive "The Shark"	Collaborative "The Owl"	Compromising "The Fox"	Avoiding "The Turtle"	Accommodating "The Teddy Bear"
<i>Description</i>	Sharks force others to accept their way, oblivious to needs or feelings of others. Sharks believe conflicts are settled by one person winning and one person losing. Sharks want to win and will fight at any cost to do so.	Owls confront openly and fairly. Optimistic about conflict, Owls are committed to their personal goals and to others goals. Owls begin discussion by identifying openly the wishes of both, and are never satisfied until a solution is found that satisfies both. "	Foxes compromise. A fox will give up some goals if you'll give up some of yours. The Fox is similar to the Owl, but less optimistic about conflict bringing an improved relationship.	Turtles believe it's hopeless to try to resolve conflict and avoid people and issues that may cause conflict. The turtle feels helpless in reaching personal goals and refuses to cooperate with others in reaching theirs.	The Teddy Bear soothes. More than anything else, Teddy Bears want others to like and accept them. Teddy Bears are quick to accommodate to others and to ignore their own needs because they believe asking others to meet personal needs will harm the relationship.
<i>Motto</i>	" <i>Might makes right.</i> "	" <i>Two heads are better than one.</i> "	" <i>Split the difference.</i> "	" <i>Leave well enough alone.</i> "	" <i>Kill your enemies with kindness.</i> "
<i>Conflict with this type might feel like . . .</i>	While you're talking, Sharks are thinking of the next argument to defeat you.	When Owls talk, they may come on strong, but when you talk, they are listening carefully and sympathetically.	When Foxes are talking, they're diplomatic but persuasive. When you talk, the Fox is trying hard to figure out some compromise.	Turtles neither talk nor listen. You seldom will get a chance to discuss the issues.	When Teddy Bears talk, everything sounds just fine. When you talk, they're listening and agreeing with everything you say.

Conflict Style	Situations where appropriate	Situations where inappropriate
Competing "Shark"	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Issue is trivial 2. Speed by decision is needed 3. Unpopular course of action is implemented 4. Necessary to overcome assertive subordinates 5. Unfavorable decision by the other party may be costly to you 6. Others lack expertise to make technical decision 7. Issue is important to you 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Issue is complex 2. Issue is not important to you 3. Both parties are equally powerful 4. Decision does not have to be made quickly 5. Subordinates possess high degree of competence
Collaborative "Owl"	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Issues are complex 2. Synthesis of ideas is needed to come up with better solutions 3. Commitment is needed from other parties for successful implementation 4. Time is available for problem solving 5. One party alone cannot solve the problem 6. Resources possessed by different parties are needed to solve their common problems 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Task or problem is simple 2. Immediate decision is required 3. Other parties are unconcerned about outcome 4. Other parties do not have problem solving skills
Compromising "Fox"	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Goals of parties are mutually exclusive 2. Parties are equally powerful 3. Consensus cannot be reached 4. Integrating or dominating style is not successful 5. Temporary solution to a complex problem is needed 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One party is more powerful 2. Problem is complex enough to need problem-solving approach
Avoiding "Turtle"	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Issue is trivial 2. Potential dysfunctional effect of confronting the other part outweighs benefits of resolution 3. Cooling off period is needed 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Issue is important to you 2. It is your responsibility to make decisions 3. Parties are unwilling to defer, issue must be resolved 4. Prompt attention is needed
Accommodating "Teddy Bear"	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You believe that you may be wrong 2. Issue is more important to the other party 3. You are willing to give up something in exchange for something from the other party in the future 4. You are in a position of weakness 5. Preserving relationship is important 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Issue is important to you 2. You believe that you are right 3. The other party is wrong or unethical