



CONFLICT PERSONALITY STYLES

Each of us has a personality style that impacts how we engage with others, especially with our spouse (significant other). It is important that we identify our conflict style and even determine in which ways it is effective or counterproductive. It is also important that we understand our partners conflict style in order to engage more effectively when working through conflict.

Researchers have identified 5 prominent conflict styles.

- Collaboration
- Competing
- Avoiding
- Accommodating
- Compromising

Animals are often used to help you remember each style. Check them out below:

(The following information is taken from www.theleadershiphub.com)

The Turtle (Avoiding Style)

Turtles withdraw into their shells to get away from conflict. They are willing to give up their personal goals and relationships in an attempt to avoid the stress that conflict causes them. They also stay away from the issues which cause conflict and from the people they are in conflict with. Because of this, they never develop conflict skills leading them to 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 because for them, it is. Although being a turtle is effective when conflict has escalated or when they need to take time to think things through prior to acting, it limits their ability to achieve their goals and strengthen relationships.

www.ibelieveinmarriage.com

The Shark (Competing Style)

Sharks do not shy away from conflict. Instead, they try to overpower opponents by forcing them to accept their solution to the conflict. Their goals are highly important to them and they seek to achieve their goals at all costs. Their relationships are less important to them and they are willing to sacrifice relationships to achieve their goals. This makes them very effective in situations where their focus and determination drives the success of an endeavor or when tough decisions need to be made. Sharks assume that one person winning and one person losing settle conflicts. Winning gives them a sense of pride and achievement and losing gives them a sense of weakness, inadequacy, and failure. Sharks may attempt to win by intimidating, overpowering, overwhelming, and personally attacking other people.

The Teddy Bear (Accommodating Style)

Teddy Bears are highly relational people who are willing to sacrifice their goals to preserve harmony in relationships. To them, the relationship is of great importance, while their own goals are of lesser value. Teddy Bears want and need to be liked and accepted by other people. Because they do not see the value in creating disharmony in relationships by getting the conflict out in the open, they tend not to develop conflict skills. They think that conflict should be avoided and believe that conflicts cannot be discussed without damaging relationships. They fear that if the conflict continues, someone will get hurt and that would ruin the relationship. Teddy Bears behavior says, "I'll give up my goals, and let you have what you want, if you will like me." They will attempt to smooth over the conflict so that the relationship does not get damaged in any way.

The Fox (Compromising Style)

Foxes are willing to give a little to get a little. They are somewhat concerned with their own goals and about their relationships with other people. Foxes seek balance and compromise. They do not avoid conflict, nor do they fully engage in resolving it to the complete satisfaction of both parties. They give up part of their own goals and persuade the other person in a conflict to give up part of his goals. They seek solutions to conflicts where both sides gain something so that they can arrive at the middle ground between two extreme positions. This way, they come to a "sorta win, sorta lose" compromise. They are willing to negotiate and to sacrifice part of their own goals and relationships to find agreement for the common good.

The Owl (Collaborating Style)

Owls place a high value on both their goals and relationships. They take a problem solving approach to conflicts and work to find a solution that achieves both their own goals and the goals of the other person in the conflict. Owls recognize that when handled effectively, conflicts can improve relationships by reducing the tension between two people. They try to begin a discussion that identifies the issues that are creating the conflict. They look for solutions that will satisfy both themselves and the other person, thereby preserving the integrity of the relationship. Owls will work diligently and are not satisfied until a solution is found that achieves their own goals and those of the other person. This also includes working at the conflict until all of the tension and negative feelings have been fully resolved.