

What is Your Conflict Management Style?

Conflict inevitably arises when people spend considerable amounts of time together. Most people spend 1/3 of their life on the job. Your true professionalism is reflected in how you deal with disputes in the workplace. An important first step in dealing with conflict is to understand your personal conflict management style. The following quiz provides some insight.

1. When someone offends you, which answer best describes your typical reaction:
 - A. I ignore it
 - B. I try to understand why they are behaving badly
 - C. I try to reason with the person
 - D. I let them know how firmly I feel

2. Conflict is brewing between two of your co-workers. You would be most likely to:
 - A. Avoid both of them until it's over
 - B. Observe the situation prior to acting
 - C. Act as a mediator
 - D. Let them know how disappointed you are

3. Your boss makes an unreasonable work request on a Friday afternoon that will take you most of the weekend to complete. What would you do?
 - A. Grin and bear it
 - B. Find out more about why it's necessary, then comply
 - C. Suggest alternatives to get the job done without working the weekend
 - D. Laugh and let the boss know you have a life outside of work

4. If a customer became angry and hostile, your reaction would be:
 - A. Remain quiet. After all the customer is always right
 - B. Hearing them out, trying to understand their perspective
 - C. Begin thinking about creative solutions to the problem
 - D. Ask them to calm down and then loudly explain my side

5. You've just had a huge misunderstanding with a co-worker. How do you resolve it?
 - A. Leave it alone
 - B. Wait a few days before initiating contact. Time will put things in perspective
 - C. Make an effort to talk through what happened
 - D. Try to get the person to understand my position

6. A co-worker is taking advantage of you. How do you react?
 - A. I just accept it
 - B. I try to figure why they are acting this way
 - C. I persuade them to change their ways
 - D. I "have it out" with them

7. A heated argument breaks out during a meeting. How would you handle it?
 - A. Adjourn the meeting and leave
 - B. Keep quiet and watch
 - C. I persuade them to change their ways
 - D. Take sides with the person who agreed with you

8. My co-workers usually describe me as:
 - A. Quiet
 - B. A good listener
 - C. Convincing
 - D. Bossy

9. One of my greatest strengths is:
 - A. The ability to stay out of trouble with people
 - B. Reading between the lines
 - C. Persuading others
 - D. Getting others to do what I want them to do

10. When having serious disagreements with someone, I often:
 - A. Remain quiet and hope it blows over soon
 - B. Listen and make sure I understand their point of view
 - C. Think of ways I can get the other side to understand my position
 - D. Continue talking until I am sure the other person understands

So, What is Your Conflict Management Style?

Add up all you're A, B, C, and D answers. Your conflict management style depends on which letter you chose most often:

A. Avoidance

You avoid conflict at all costs and go to great extremes to keep the peace. You often resent others, but actually keep your feelings hidden and repressed. Good assertiveness skills training would help you conquer your fear of conflict.

B. Analyzing

You have the ability to remain calm in the face of conflict and understand or analyze other viewpoints. Listening is one of your strengths, but you do have a tendency to cave in to keep harmony. If you work on clearly communicating your emotions to others, then both parties achieve a win-win solution

C. Assertive

You are persuasive and adept in matters of negotiation. You love to win people over to your side. Conflict does not scare you and you are adept in matters of negotiation. You view conflict as a challenge and do not shy away from opportunities to manage it effectively. To improve your conflict management skills, focus on improving your listening skills.

D. Aggressive

You like to have the upper hand. Conflict resolution is hampered by your need to control the situation. You tend to "steamroll" over quieter individuals. To increase your successful conflict outcomes, work on your approach and listening to others. Remaining calm will actually give you more power.