



## Be Wise About Conflict- Know How to Confront!

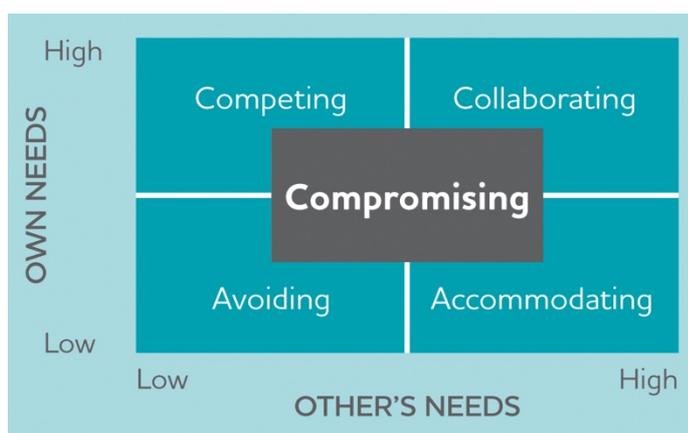
Conflict is part of everybody's life. However, facing a conflict is at times a more complex issue. With this guide we want to help you get clarity about the confusing subject of conflict and confrontation, as well as showing the different ways to confront. This way you can make a conscious decision depending on the situation.

### 1 Understanding Conflict & Confrontation

Conflict	Confrontation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A difference in needs, values, attitudes, views, beliefs, or opinions (any difference, in fact).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The airing or discussion of conflict in an attempt to resolve it.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An underlying situation.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An open act or behaviour.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Beneath the surface.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Out in the open.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Thoughts.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Words +/- actions.</li></ul>

If you adopt these as working definitions, not only do you avoid any confusion in terminology, but you also separate the situation into the issue (the “conflict”) and how you deal with it (the “confrontation”).

### 2 Confronting your conflict, with Thomas & Kilmann



Through understanding these basic responses, you can understand some of the behaviour you might observe in a conflict situation. You can also more easily decide on the best response to confront the situation.

### 3 In Detail:

**Competing** means an individual is standing up for their own rights, strongly defending a position, which they believe is correct, or simply trying to win. With this style of behaviour the individual will use whatever power seems appropriate to them – an ability to argue, a higher rank in the organisation or family, etc.

*May be appropriate when:*

- There's an emergency.
- They know they're right and being right is more important than preserving relationships. (Note: it's difficult to imagine an example when this might be true to this extent).
- The issue is trivial and others don't care what happens.
- *May be inappropriate when:*
- Collaboration hasn't been tried. Co-operation from others is important.

### OWN NEEDS

**Accommodating** is the opposite of competing, when an individual neglects their own concerns to satisfy the needs of the other person. You might see somebody openly agreeing with another's views or giving in to satisfy the concerns of another when it's obvious that they would prefer not to.

*May be appropriate when:*

- The issue isn't really important to the individual.
- Harmony is more important than meeting everybody's needs.
- *May be inappropriate when:*
- The issue is important.

There's a risk of committing to a course of action that not everybody agrees with.

**Avoiding** is when an individual side-steps the issue or conflict, effectively withdrawing from the situation. There is no confrontation here; the conflict is below the surface and it is going to stay there.

- *May be appropriate when:*
- Consensus isn't important.
- The discussion can be put off to another time.
- *May be inappropriate when:*
- Resolution of the issue is urgent.

The individual's expertise and input is needed.



**Collaborating** is the opposite of avoiding. It involves a concerted and positive attempt to work with the other person to find a solution, which satisfies each other's concerns (the classic definition of assertiveness – the win-win solution). This might be seen in the form of exploring a disagreement to establish what each person needs and how both sets of needs could be met.

*May be appropriate when:*

- The issues and the relationships are important.
- A new or creative solution is required.
- *May be inappropriate when:*
- Time is limited.

**Compromising** is about splitting the difference and agreeing a mutually acceptable solution. With this democratic style, nobody gets exactly what they want, instead they agree to an acceptable alternative or halfway measure.

*May be appropriate when:*

- Agreement is important, but time is limited.
- Any solution is better than none.
- *May be inappropriate when:*
- The situation demands the best possible solution.

- ✓ **More advice and solutions from our [Bounce Back Video Series on Conflict Management](#)**
- ✓ **Read about ways to confront and find advice on how to improve communication in our Ebook Bounce Back, available by [subscription](#) or on [Amazon](#).**

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