



# INTEGRATE TO LIVE

Restore Resilience. Cultivate Community. Impact your World

## Week 29 Transcript: Conflict Styles

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This week, we continue to increase our relational skills, and support our process of developing healthy boundaries, by learning about the different conflict styles.

Conflict can arise when there are incompatible desires, expectations, needs and perspectives. No two people share these completely, so experiencing conflict is a natural part of interacting with others.

We all have ways we relate while in different conflict situations. Becoming more aware of this gives us opportunity to pause, assess the best response, and pivot toward a more effective and productive choice.

The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument is a great tool to help us understand how we typically behave in conflict and increase our awareness around how these behaviors impact interpersonal and group dynamics.

It's not likely that you will identify with only one of these conflict styles, but you may realize that you use a specific one primarily. Each of us has the capacity to respond with a different style within unique circumstances. Every mode of engaging in conflict can be effective and ineffective; it just depends on how it's applied and when.

Knowing when to use each conflict-handling mode, and how to use it effectively, will allow you to move toward resilient choice while in conflict. So, let's look at the 5 Thomas-Kilmann Conflict-Handling Modes:

Competing is when we try to get what we want at the other person's expense. It's assertive and uncooperative. We take on a power-over position and use whatever leverage we can to be victorious in the argument. When we compete our goal is to win. I win, you lose.

Competing can be effective when there needs to be a definitive decision made quickly and there isn't time to deliberate. But, can be experienced as domineering and overpowering.



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Accommodating is when we attempt to satisfy the other person's concerns at our own expense. It's unassertive and cooperative. We take on a self-sacrificing position and choose to be considerate, but neglect our own needs. When we accommodate our goal is to yield. I lose, you win.

Accommodating can be effective when building bridges and when conformity is necessary. It's also important when we realize we are wrong, that there is a learning opportunity, and to put an end to damaging competition that has become unproductive. But, resentment can build up within us when we consistently accommodate to satisfy someone else's concerns.

Avoiding is when we dodge conflict without attempting to resolve anyone's concerns. It's unassertive and uncooperative. We take on a passive position and withdraw relationally. When we avoid our goal is to delay. I lose, you lose.

Avoiding can be effective when there needs to be some time to cool off or gather more information before resolving the issue. It's also useful when others can better resolve the conflict or the costs of engaging in the conflict outweigh the benefits of a possible resolution. It becomes problematic when this is the go-to behavior and we disappear in our relationships.

Compromising is when we try to come to an acceptable arrangement that only partially satisfies each person's concerns. It's moderate in both assertiveness and cooperativeness. When we compromise our goal is to find middle ground. We win some, we lose some.

Compromising can be effective when our personal agenda is less important than preventing the divisions caused by more assertive conflict styles. It's also beneficial when we need to quickly resolve a complex issue, or when neither of us are willing to back down on our goals concerning the conflict.

Collaborating is when we try to find a win-win solution where all people completely get their concerns met. It's both assertive and cooperative. We take on a position of equality, curiosity and exploration. When we collaborate our goal is mutual participation and satisfaction. I win, you win.



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Collaborating can be effective when attempting to perspective take and understand another person's point of view. It's also practical when working toward being on the same page in a resolution where everyone's feelings and insights are considered and integrated.

Understanding our default conflict mode, and choosing to practice alternative ways of engaging in conflict, will improve all of our relationships including family, loved ones, co-workers, strangers and even the conflicts within ourselves. Be sure to download the action guide to support this process and share what you are learning on our group page.