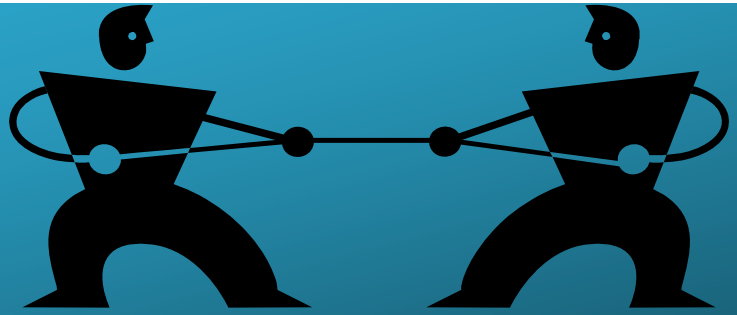


Effective Techniques for Resolving Conflict

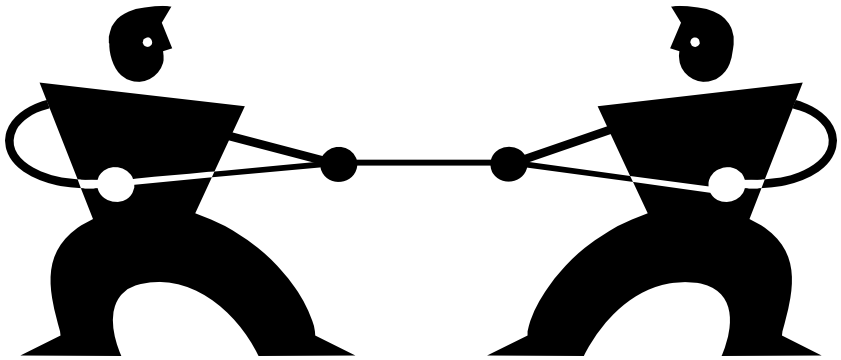
Introduction

- Conflict: a disagreement or clash between ideas, principles, or people
- Conflict is not “good” or “bad”
- How conflict is handled can have a significant impact on:
  - Ability to solve problems and work in teams
  - Employee morale, absenteeism and turnover
  - Work productivity

© 2007 Epicenter Development Group 216.702.0952

Sources of Conflict

- Limited Resources
- Differences in Goals/Objectives
- Taking Things Personally
- Differing Attitudes, Values and Perceptions
- Miscommunication
- False Assumptions



© 2007 Epicenter Development Group 216.702.0952

Conflict Handling Strategies

- There are several different strategies for handling conflict.
- Each strategy has short- and long-term benefits and potential drawbacks.
- A good manager can move between the different strategies depending upon the situation.

© 2007 Epicenter Development Group 216.702.0952

Conflict Handling Strategies

Strategy	Description
Avoiding (Withdrawal)	Choose to not deal with the issues or people.
Accommodating (Smoothing)	Being more concerned with maintaining the relationship than accomplishing a specific goal.
Passivity	Pretending that there is no conflict.
Compromising (Split the Difference)	Giving up part of your goal and relationship to reach an agreement.
Competing / Aggression (Forcing)	Achieving your goals at all costs even if it means sacrificing the relationship (“I win – you lose”).
Collaborating / Assertion / Problem-Solving	Working together towards a “win-win” solution.

People typically have a preferred style that they have learned but may not be aware of it.

© 2007 Epicenter Development Group 216.702.0952

Your Preferred Strategy Revealed

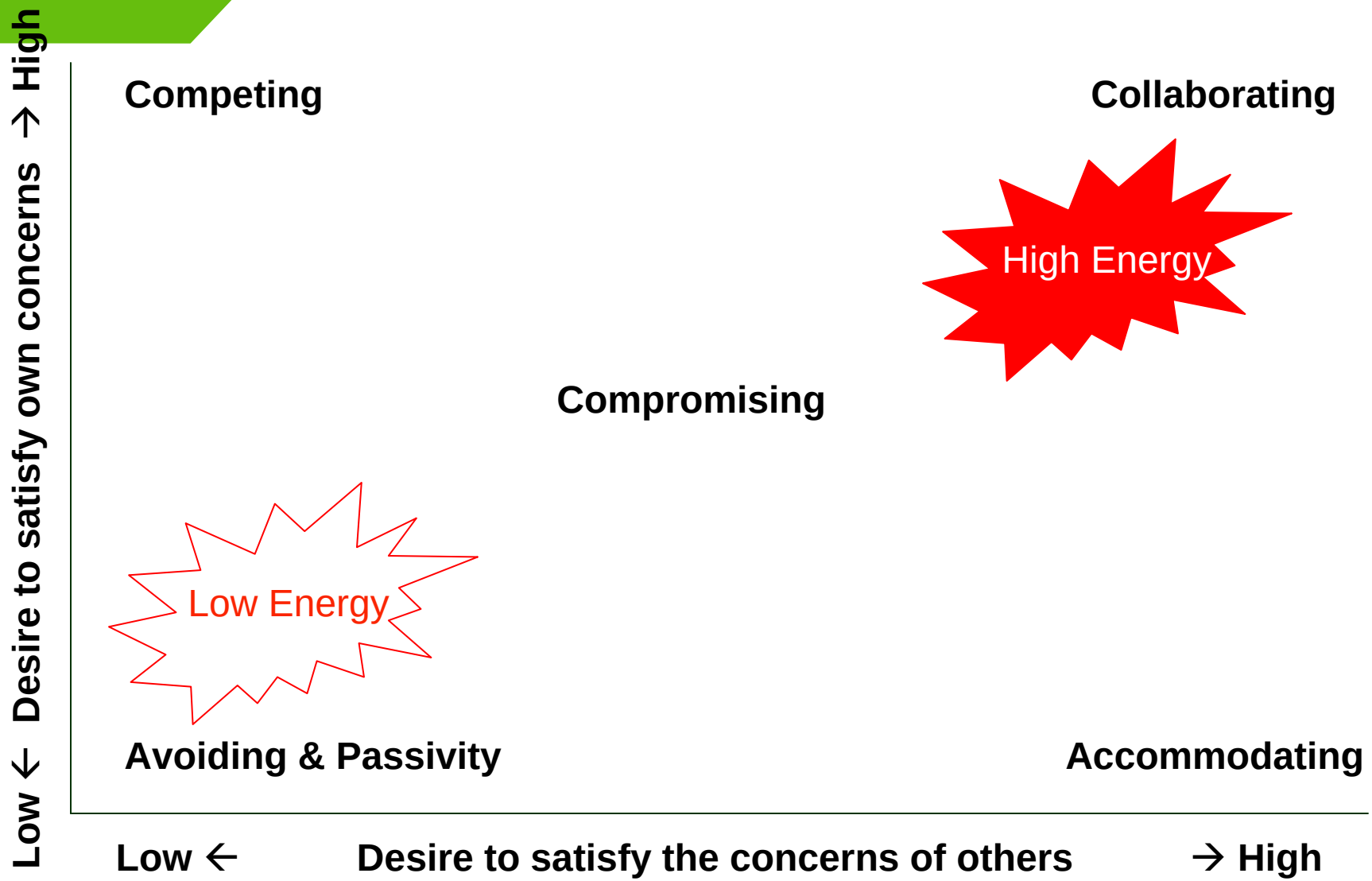
On your own, pick the strategy that you would most likely use:

1. You and your roommate are in disagreement over how clean to keep the apartment.
2. You have a teammate that has been not following through on their commitments.
3. You have an employee that is making personal calls while at work.

Strategy	Description
Avoiding (Withdrawal)	Choose to not deal with the issues or people.
Accommodating (Smoothing)	Being more concerned with maintaining the relationship than accomplishing a specific goal.
Passivity	Pretending that there is no conflict.
Compromising (Split the Difference)	Giving up part of your goal and relationship to reach an agreement.
Competing / Aggression (Forcing)	Achieving your goals at all costs even if it means sacrificing the relationship ("I win – you lose").
Collaborating / Assertion / Problem-Solving	Working together towards a "win-win" solution.

© 2007 Epicenter Development Group 216.702.0952

Conflict Handling Strategies



© 2007 Epicenter Development Group 216.702.0952

Strategies – Pros and Cons

Strategy	Gains	Losses
Avoiding & Passivity	"Pick your battles." No energy required.	Little understanding of others' needs, less understanding of environment.
Accommodating	No ruffled feathers, you're viewed as supportive.	Loss of power and self-esteem, not "going to bat" for others. Leads to resentment, bitterness and job dissatisfaction.
Compromising	"Keeps the peace," everyone gets something.	May lead to later conflict since resolution is not complete.
Competing	Chance to be the "Big Winner."	Chance to be the "Big Loser," alienates others and leads to potentially bigger issues in future.
Collaborating	Everyone wins, more creative solutions, builds and maintains strong relationships.	Takes time and energy, difficult to do.

Which one is the best?

© 2007 Epicenter Development Group 216.702.0952

Strategies – When to Use

Strategy	When to Use
Avoiding & Passivity	Trivial issues, emotions are high, no chance to satisfy your own concerns, others could resolve the issue better.
Accommodating	Maintaining harmony is more important than “winning.”
Compromising	Temporary solutions until there is adequate time for a more permanent solution.
Competing	Crisis situations when there are severe time limitations, issues that affect a person or organization’s welfare.
Collaborating	When there is adequate time and all parties want a solution that will satisfy everyone’s needs.

The key is to be flexible in your style and learn to assess the situation.

© 2007 Epicenter Development Group 216.702.0952