

3.4.1

DISCOVERING

## What's Your Style?

**Scenario:** You're living with three roommates and one of them is constantly bringing over their boy/girlfriend. Their boy/girlfriend eats all of the food in the apartment and never asks permission or replaces the food. Everyone else is getting pretty upset but doesn't want to cause a conflict. How do you handle the situation?



# The Five Conflict Management Styles



## Collaborating

The cooperative approach.

Value both their goals and relationships. They view conflict as a problem to be solved and seek a solution that achieves both their goals and the goals of the other person.

**Pros:** Creates mutual trust, maintains positive relationships, builds commitments.

**Cons:** Time consuming, energy consuming.



## Avoiding

The non-confrontational approach.

Value avoiding confrontation more than either their goals or relationships. They often find it easier to withdraw from a conflict than to face it. This might even include completely giving up relationships or goals associated with the conflict.

**Pros:** Does not escalate conflict; postpones difficulty.

**Cons:** Unaddressed problems; unresolved problems.



## Competing

Authoritarian approach.

Value their goals over relationships, if forced to choose they would seek to achieve their goals even at the cost of the relationship. Typically more concerned with accomplishing their goals than with being liked by others.

**Pros:** Goal oriented; quick.

**Cons:** May breed hostility.



## Accommodating

Peace at all costs approach.

Value relationships over their own goals. If forced to choose, will often sacrifice their goals in order to maintain relationships. Generally want to be liked by others, and try to smooth over conflict to prevent damage to the relationship.

**Pros:** Minimizes injury when we are outmatched; relationships are maintained.

**Cons:** Breeds resentment; exploits the weak.



## Compromising

The middle ground approach.

Moderately concerned with both their goals and their relationships with others. Typically seek a compromise; give up part of their goals and persuade the other person in a conflict to give up part of their goals.

**Pros:** Useful in complex issues without simple solutions; all parties are equal in power.

**Cons:** No one is ever really satisfied; less than optimal solutions get implemented.

**What?**

What conflict style do you use most often?

**So what?**

How is this conflict style working for you? What would it take for you to change your conflict style?

**Now what?**

How would using a new style affect your relationships?