

Communication Styles: It's Your Choice!



Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center



Avoiding (Ostrich)

“No Way”

The Avoiding style is unassertive. The individual does not pursue his or her own concerns or those of the other person. Avoiding might take the form of diplomatically sidestepping an issue, postponing an issue until a better time, withdrawing from a threatening situation, or neglecting one's own concerns to satisfy those of another.

Uses:

- When an issue is trivial, of only passing importance, or when other more important issues are pressing.
- When you perceive no chance or great difficulty in satisfying your concerns (policies, power structure)
- When the potential damage of confronting a conflict outweighs the benefits of its resolution.
- To let people cool down—to reduce tensions to a productive level and to regain perspective and composure.
- To build up social credits for later issues which are important to you.
- When preserving harmony and avoiding disruption are especially important.



Competing (Lion)

“My Way”

The Competing style is assertive and non-cooperative. An individual pursues his or her own concerns at the other person's expense. This is a power-oriented mode, in which one uses whatever strategy seems appropriate to succeed. Competing might mean standing up for your rights, defending a position that you believe is correct, or simply trying to win.

Uses:

- When quick, decisive action is necessary (ex. in emergencies).
- On important issues in which unpopular courses of action need to be implemented (ex. cost cutting, enforcing unpopular rules, discipline).
- In matters of welfare or safety, when you know you're right
- To protect yourself or others from those who would take advantage or exploit



Collaborating (Honey Bee)

“Our Way”

The Collaborating style is both assertive and cooperative. Collaborating involves an attempt to work with the other person to find a solution that satisfies the concerns of both. It often means digging deeper into an issue or going below the surface to identify underlying needs.

Collaborating might take the form of exploring a disagreement to learn from one another's insights, changing a condition which would otherwise have you competing for resources, or trying to find a creative solution to an interpersonal problem.

Uses:

- To find an integrative solution when both sets of concerns are too important to be compromised.
- When your objective is to learn, test your assumptions, **or** understand others' views.
- To merge insights from people with different perspectives on a problem.
- To work through hard feelings which have been interfering with a relationship