

# Avoiding

*by Sophia Tutorial*



## WHAT'S COVERED

As you learned in a previous lesson, there are five different conflict styles:

- Accommodating
- Avoiding
- Competing
- Compromising
- Collaborating

This lesson will discuss the avoiding style and how it presents itself in various situations. The areas of focus include:

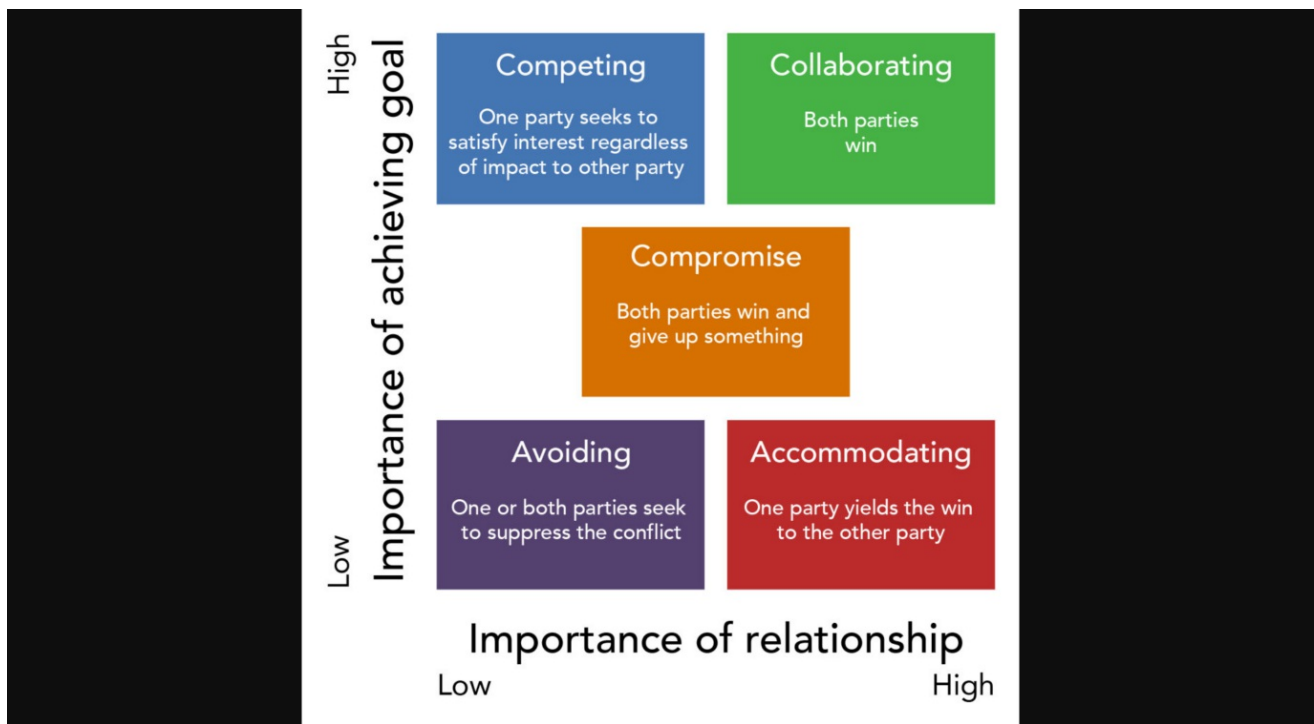
1. Avoiding as a Conflict Style
2. Positive/Negative Outcomes of Avoiding

## 1. Avoiding as a Conflict Style

As we've discussed before, **avoiding** is a conflict resolution style in which a party does not make any attempt to address or resolve the conflict. It can also occur when a conflict involves parties who don't highly value their relationship nor the goals of the conflict, and it might be easier to just dodge the conflict altogether than to bother resolving it.

As a style, avoiding is:

- Low in cooperativeness
- Low in assertiveness



➡ **EXAMPLE** Your colleagues are arguing over the best approach to a certain project, and they ask your opinion. You aren't assigned to the project, so you don't care very much about which approach they choose, and you don't want to be pulled into the middle of their argument. You avoid the conflict by pretending to be too busy to help and recommending that they ask someone else.

➡ **EXAMPLE** You are on a trip with some friends. You've saved up some money for this trip, but you notice that you're running low. You've eaten at a few more restaurants than expected. You know you're going to need to bring this up because it's going to make a difference in the trip in terms of some of the things you do. However, you keep avoiding it; you just don't talk about it.

➡ **EXAMPLE** While walking down the street in your neighborhood, you notice there's some kids at the end of the block. It looks like they're getting into a fight, and it's starting to get violent. You were walking right towards it, so you decide to cross the street and avoid the fight.

## TERMS TO KNOW

### Avoiding

A conflict resolution style in which a party does not make any attempt to address or resolve the conflict.

## 2. Positive/Negative Outcomes of Avoiding

This particular style of conflict has, as all styles do, both positive and negative outcomes.

➡ **EXAMPLE** Return to the example where you avoid getting involved in your colleagues' argument.

- *Positive outcome:* You are not put in a position where you might have one of your colleagues annoyed at you for siding against them. You get to avoid hearing about a problem that doesn't interest you.
- *Negative outcome:* Both your colleagues might be annoyed at your unwillingness to help. The project might have benefitted from your input.

↪ **EXAMPLE** Return to the trip example, where you're running low on money and you avoid talking about it.

- *Positive outcome:* You might enjoy a few more meals out with your friends on this trip.
- *Negative outcome:* When you come home, you realize you've far exceeded your budget because you didn't address it up front.

↪ **EXAMPLE** Go back to the scenario where you're walking down the street and see the kids in a fight at the end of the block, so you cross to the other side of the street.

- *Positive outcome:* You didn't risk your safety.
- *Negative outcome:* The kids might have gotten themselves hurt.



## SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about **avoiding as a style of conflict**, and what the **positive and negative outcomes** of using this style can be.

Source: Adapted from Sophia tutorial by Marlene Johnson.



## TERMS TO KNOW

### **Assertiveness**

Behavior in which a person confidently makes a statement without need of proof, affirming his/her rights without attacking another's.

### **Avoiding**

A conflict resolution style in which a party does not make any attempt to address or resolve the conflict.

### **Cooperativeness**

Behavior in which two parties work in concert to achieve their mutual and respective individual goals.

### **Positive/Negative Outcomes**

Resolutions to a conflict that a party perceives as meeting his/her needs and/or reducing likelihood of further conflict (positive) or not meeting his/her needs and/or increasing likelihood of further conflict (negative).