

# Competing

*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 competing style and how it presents itself in various situations. The areas of focus include:

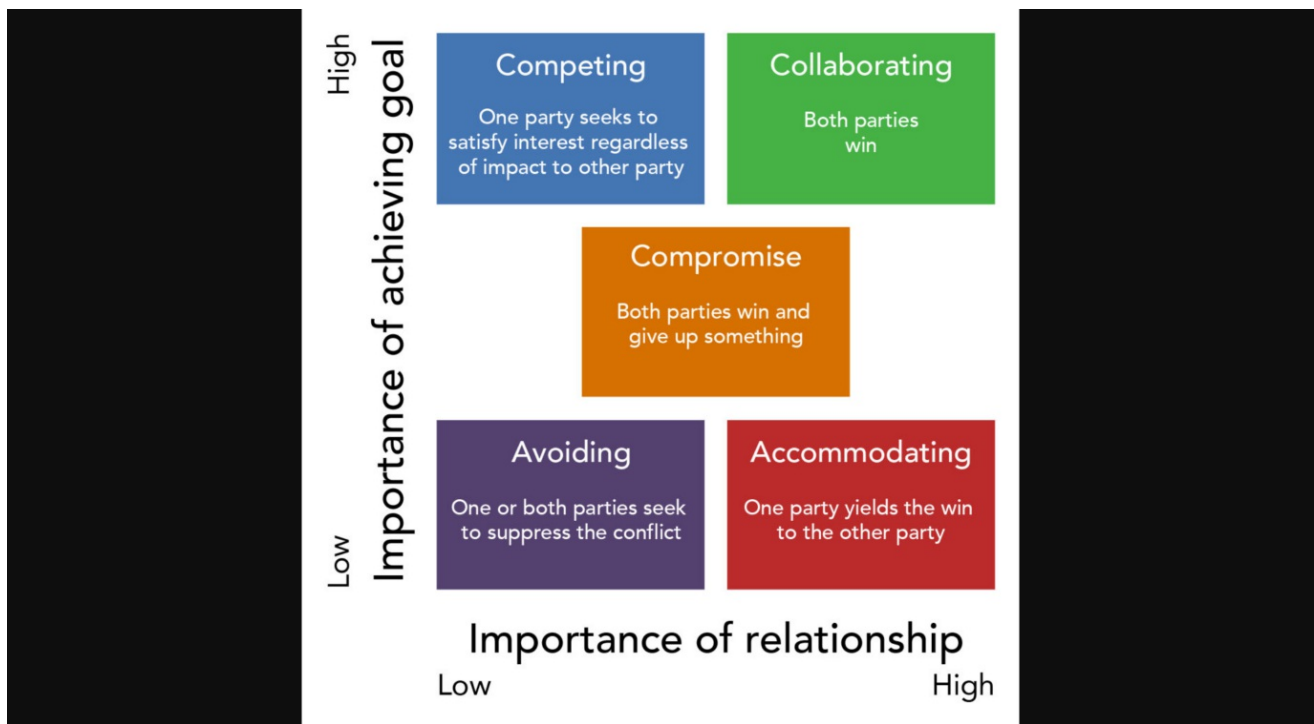
1. Competing as a Conflict Style
2. Positive/Negative Outcomes of Competing

## 1. Competing as a Conflict Style

As we've discussed before, **competing** is a conflict resolution style in which one party seeks to meet his or her own needs at the expense of another party's needs. It can occur in a conflict where the goals are very important to the parties, but the relationships involved are not important.

As a style, competing is:

- High in assertiveness
- Low in cooperation



➦ **EXAMPLE** Your brand new car is scratched in the parking lot by a stranger's car. The other driver isn't even apologetic and says it wasn't his fault. You start shouting at him because your car is important to you, and the stranger is being a jerk.

➦ **EXAMPLE** You are planning your wedding, and your cousin's kid is mad that she wasn't invited to bring a date. You have a limited guest list, and you aren't even that close to your cousin, let alone their kid; it doesn't really matter to you whether or not she even comes to the wedding, so you certainly don't want to let her bring a plus-one.

➦ **EXAMPLE** The city is changing their rules about street parking during snow storms, and the new rule would mean that you would have a much more inconvenient parking situation for your household during storms. You believe that it's the city council's job to think about the impact of all their decisions on homeowners, and you go to the city council meeting ready to let everyone know exactly what you think of this decision.



#### 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.

## 2. Positive/Negative Outcomes of Competing

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

A positive outcome is a resolution to a conflict that a party perceives as meeting their needs and/or reducing the likelihood of further conflict.

A negative outcome is a resolution that the party perceives as not meeting their needs and/or increasing the likelihood of further conflict.

↪ **EXAMPLE** Return to the example of your scratched car.

- *Positive outcome:* You might feel better about your scratched car after releasing some anger. Maybe you'll convince the other guy to apologize.
- *Negative outcome:* Your car won't become unscratched, and you might make an enemy who will retaliate or escalate the argument.

↪ **EXAMPLE** Consider the scenario of wedding invitations for your cousin's kid's plus-one.

- *Positive outcome:* Not only do you not have to offer a plus-one to your cousin's kid, but she decides not to come to your wedding at all, freeing up a place for someone you actually care about.
- *Negative outcome:* Your cousin is upset that you didn't care whether or not their kid was including in the family event, and they complain to their siblings, which include a cousin that you are actually close to. Your cousins are grumpy and unhappy at your wedding.

↪ **EXAMPLE** Return to the example of your visit to the city council after snowstorm parking rules were changed.

- *Positive outcome:* Maybe you can get the city council to change their mind!
- *Negative outcome:* The city council probably won't change their mind because a lot of thought and planning probably went into their decision. Your neighbors might come to think of you as a selfish blowhard who shouts at civil servants.



#### BIG IDEA

Competing conflict styles can burn bridges and lead to further conflict down the road, even if the original goals of the conflict are achieved.



#### SUMMARY

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

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.

##### **Competing**

A conflict resolution style in which one party seeks to meet his/her own needs at the expense of another party's needs.

##### **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).