Conflict Styles: Compromising

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☰ WHAT'S COVERED

As you learned in a previous lesson, there are five different conflict styles. This lesson will discuss one of these styles, and how it presents itself in various situations. The areas of focus include:

1. Compromising as a Conflict Style

Recall that there are five different conflict styles.**Compromising** is a conflict resolution style in which parties agree to sacrifice some of their needs in exchange for having other needs met.

As a style, compromising is:

- Moderate in **cooperativeness**
- Moderate in **assertiveness**
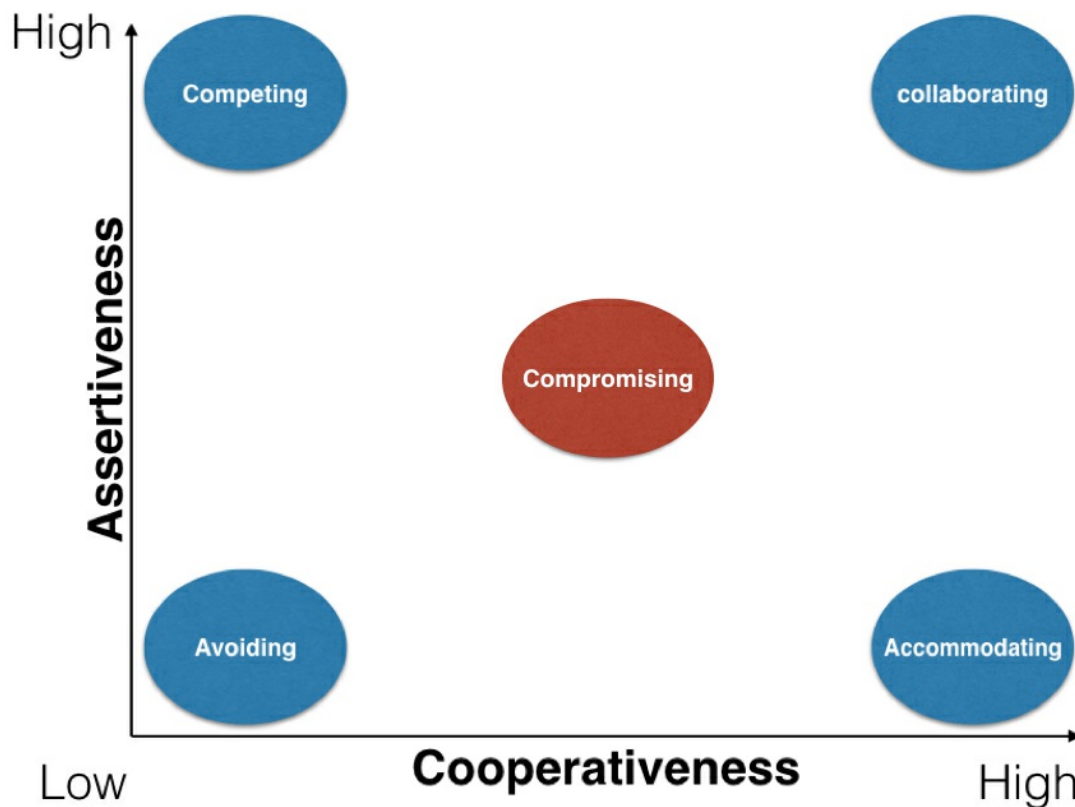
The nature of compromising positions is at the middle level of both behaviors. Let's look at two examples of compromising as a style.

EXAMPLE 1

With regards to politics, there is hope for compromise so that legislation can be passed. However, with Republicans on one side and Democrats on the other, both feel strongly about their particular positions. Many times, they might come to a stalemate, as we've seen happen in Congress. They reach a compromise, perhaps on taxes and spending, and pass legislation. A compromise might be that one side gives a little bit on taxes, and the other gives a little bit on spending.

EXAMPLE 2

You and your spouse are having a disagreement about whether to spend the holidays with your side of the family or with your spouse's side of the family. It seems like you always see your spouse's side of the family, but you never see your side of the family. Both involve travel, so you compromise. You decide that every other year you'll spend Thanksgiving with your spouse's family and vice versa. You give up a little bit of the holidays on your side, and your spouse does the same on his/her side. You'll alternate in order to divide things equally.

Compromising

A conflict resolution style in which parties agree to sacrifice some of their needs in exchange for having others met.

Cooperativeness

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

Assertiveness

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

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2. Positive/Negative Outcomes of Compromising

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 his or her needs and/or reducing the likelihood of further conflict.

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

Let's go back to the Congress scenario and the holiday travel scenario:

Scenario	Positive Outcome	Negative Outcome
Congress	Legislation gets passed and a stalemate is avoided.	Your particular constituents may think they've given up too much and there might be some repercussions to pay when they go back to your district.
Holiday travel	You get to see both sides of the family, and everybody is going to be included in the holidays this year or the next.	The year you're supposed to see your partner's family might end up being a special year in your family, and you're going to have to miss that. Or you feel really bad that you have to wait every other year; you really wish you could visit your family every year. You might feel like you've given up a bit too much.}}

⚙️ **THINK ABOUT IT**

Do you tend towards the compromising style as your preferred style? Can you think of a time when you responded to a conflict with this style? What was a positive and negative outcome of that conflict?

⭐ **BIG IDEA**

It's important to remember that while compromising might be the style that you tend towards and feel most comfortable with (your preferred style), that doesn't mean it's the only way that you can respond in a conflict. There are other conflict styles, and you, as well as anyone, can respond in any number of ways to a particular conflict.

📄 **TERM TO KNOW**

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).

📋 **SUMMARY**

In this lesson, you learned about **compromising as a style of conflict**, and what the **positive and negative outcomes** of using this style can be. You now understand that even though compromising may be your preferred style, you always have the ability to respond to conflict in a different way.

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📄 **TERMS TO KNOW**

Assertiveness

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Compromising

A conflict resolution style in which parties agree to sacrifice some of their needs in exchange for having others met.

Cooperativeness

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

Positive/Negative Outcomes

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