



We cannot negotiate with people who say what's mine is mine and what's yours is negotiable

John F Kennedy

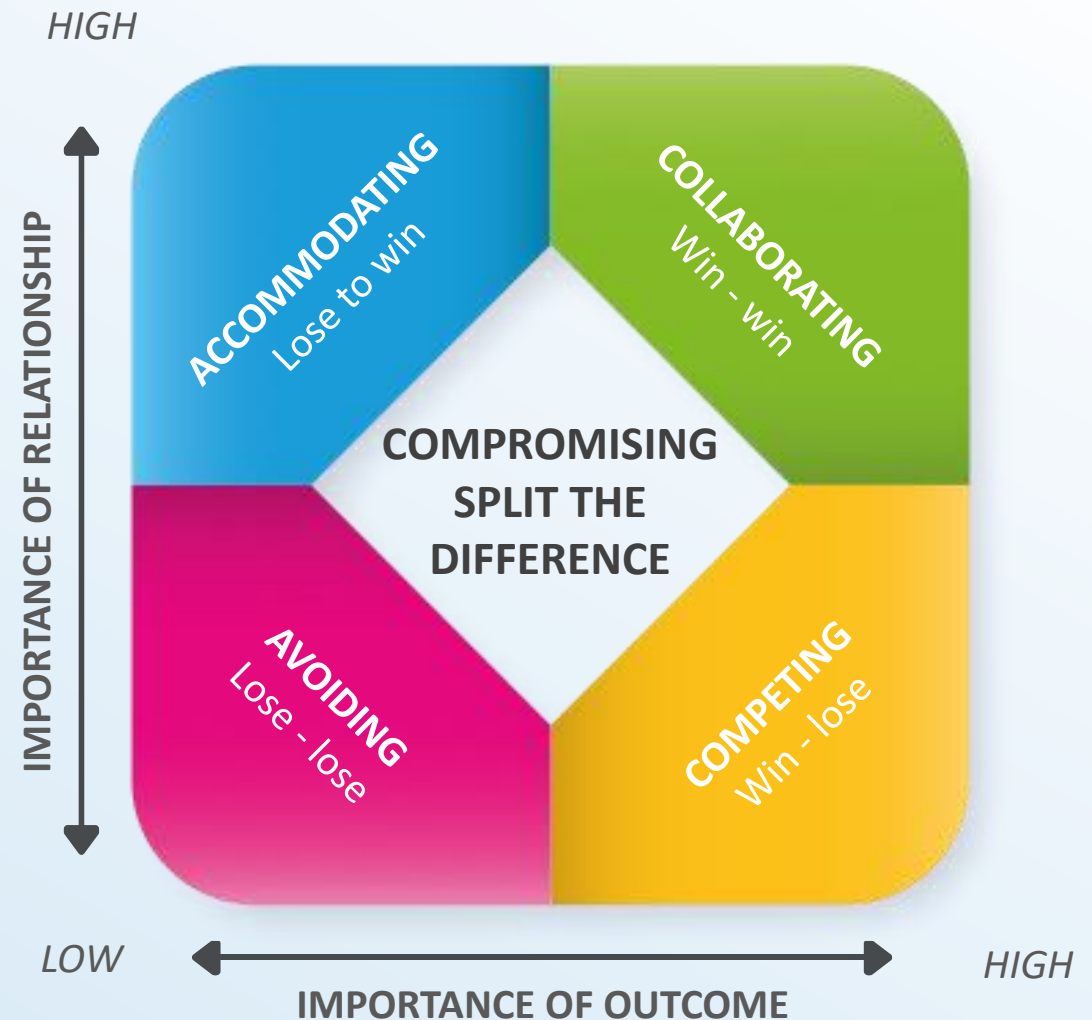


The most successful business (and personal) relationships are built on mutual respect, give and take, finding a middle ground and negotiation. Sometimes, when the outcome is very important to us, but our ideas are in conflict with the other person's, we may try to persuade and/or influence them.

A negotiation is 'a discussion aimed at reaching an agreement'; a win-win for both sides. When this works well, everyone comes out of the interaction feeling psychologically safe and the relationship is more likely to move forward, than if one side has a sense of one-upmanship.



The Thomas-Kilmann Model shows what can happen, in terms of relationships and outcomes, when we adopt a particular approach to conflict:



NEGOTIATION, PERSUASION AND INFLUENCE

READ

THE FIVE CONFLICT MODELS

COLLABORATING

This is both an assertive and co-operative approach. Individuals work together to find a creative solution that suits them both. For example, any disagreements are explored, so that they can understand the other's point of view.

COMPROMISING

The aim of compromise is to find a mutually acceptable solution that partly satisfies both people. It looks at issues directly, but doesn't explore them in as much depth as working collaboratively.

ACCOMMODATING

One person loses, so that the other wins. This can be self-sacrifice, e.g. for the greater good, if the matter is not of as much importance to them. It can also be at the instruction of the other person or giving in to their point of view.

COMPETING

This is an assertive and uncooperative approach. One person puts their own interests ahead of the other's, using whatever power they deem appropriate to win. It might mean standing up for their rights or defending a viewpoint that they strongly believe in.

AVOIDING

This is when the person doesn't address their own, or the other person's, concerns; they avoid any conflict. This can mean that everyone loses, or it could be that an issue is postponed until a better time or that a threatening situation is avoided.

HOW TO BEGIN WORKING IN A COLLABORATIVE WAY

1. Invitation to engage

I would like to look at ways to resolve...

If we aim to think about ... (chunking it down)

I want to check with you about how ...

2. Expressing your purpose

I want us to express our different points of view about ...

I want to hear how you see ...

I want to reach an agreement on how to go forward with...

3. Describing the gap

At this point it is important to describe the gap between both parties – exactly where the gaps are.

Is it parts, or all of the negotiation? Can you agree some common ground?

4. The question

End your opening statement with a question that invites the other person to present how they see the problem.

For example, “Do I have this right or am I missing something?” **LISTEN!**

5. Creating the third story

You have your story and they have their story. It is important not to get locked into your stories. You need to shape or develop a ‘third story’ that describes the problem as a difference. This creates a common ground.

HOW TO BEGIN WORKING IN A COLLABORATIVE WAY (CONITNUED...)

6. Invitation to engage

Small children have amazing imaginations. They have no (or very little) sense of fear and they're not that bothered about what their peers think. Lucky them!

As adults, we often believe that we can no longer come up with imaginative solutions to problems. So, have you ever tried to solve a new problem, using the same unsuccessful strategy that you've tried before? We're thinking about that flat-pack furniture, brute force and ignorance. It didn't work when you tried to assemble the wardrobe, and it won't work on the chest of drawers now!

The great news is that we can all think more creatively and come up with solutions that work, if we try (see the I section of FLIP It Thinking in Leading and Improving).

You've heard the expression 'two heads are better than one' and this is the case if we want to imaginatively and positively resolve a conflict. It is much easier and better for our long-term relationship, if both people are working together on the 'third story' rather than trying to resolve personal agendas and becoming competitive.

