

CONFLICT STRATEGIES (Johnson and Johnson 2002)

The Owl – Problem-Solving Negotiations

Owls highly value their own goals and relationships. When both the goal and the relationship are highly important to you, you initiate problem-solving negotiations to resolve the conflict. Solutions are sought that ensure both you and the other person fully achieve your goals and resolve any tensions and negative feelings between the two of you. This strategy requires risky moves, such as revealing your underlying interests while expecting others to do the same.

The Teddy Bear (Smoothing)

To teddy bears the relationship is of great importance whereas their own goals are of little importance. When the goal is of no importance to you but the relationship is of high importance, you give up your goals in order to maintain the relationship at the highest quality possible. When you think the other person's interests are much stronger or important than yours, you smooth and give the other person his or her way.

The Shark (Forcing or Win-Lose Negotiations)

Sharks try to overpower opponents by forcing them to give in. When the goal is very important but the relationship is not, you seek to achieve your goal by forcing or persuading the other to yield. You compete for a win. Tactics used to force the other to yield include making threats, imposing penalties that will be withdrawn if the other concedes, and taking preemptive actions designed to resolve the conflict without the other's consent. Tactics to persuade the other to yield include presenting persuasive arguments, imposing a deadline, committing oneself to an 'unalterable' position, or making demands that far exceed what is actually acceptable.

The Fox (Compromising)

Foxes are moderately concerned with their own goals and their relationships with others. When both the goal and the relationship are moderately important to you, and it appears that both you and the other person cannot get what you want, you may need to give up part of your goals and sacrifice part of the relationship in order to reach an agreement. Compromising may be meeting in the middle so each gets half or flipping a coin to let chance decide who will get his or her way. Compromising is often used when disputants wish to engage in problem-solving negotiations but do not have the time to do so.

The Turtle (Withdrawing)

Turtles withdraw into their shells to avoid conflicts. When the goal is not important and you do not need to keep a relationship and with the other person, you may wish to give up both your goals and relationship and avoid the issue and the other person. Avoiding a hostile stranger, for example, may be the best thing to do. Sometimes you may wish to withdraw from a conflict until you and the other person have calmed down and are in control of your feelings.