

BOX 14.1 Put Yourself to the Test

What Is Your Conflict Style?

Think about the last few times you and a relational partner disagreed. How did you behave? Use the following scale to determine your typical conflict style: 1 = Disagree strongly, 7 = Agree strongly.

	<i>Disagree</i> ←————→ <i>Agree</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. I discuss the problem to try to reach a mutual understanding.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I keep arguing until I prove my point.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I show my partner that I am angry or upset without saying a word.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I sometimes sacrifice my own goals so my partner can meet her or his goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I try to find a new solution that will satisfy all our needs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I usually try to win arguments.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I do not like to talk about issues of disagreement.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I am willing to give up some of my goals in exchange for achieving other goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I try to get my concerns and my partner's concerns all out in the open.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I try to get back at my partner by giving the silent treatment or holding a grudge.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. I usually try to forget about issues of disagreement so I don't have to confront my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I try to think of a solution that satisfies some needs of us both.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Sometimes I find myself attacking my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. I use facial expressions to let my partner know I am angry or upset.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. It is important to get both our points of view out in the open.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. Sometimes I criticize my partner to show that he or she is wrong.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. I try to meet my partner halfway.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. If the issue is very important to my partner, I usually give in.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. I attempt to work with my partner to find a creative solution we both like.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Disagree ←————→ Agree						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. I tend to show negative feelings with facial expressions rather than talking about how I feel.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. I usually let my partner take responsibility for bringing up conflict issues.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. I would rather not get into a discussion of unpleasant issues.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. I give in to my partner to keep my relationship satisfying.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. I try to make my partner see things my way.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. I avoid bringing up certain issues if my arguments might hurt my partner's feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. I might agree with some of my partner's points to make my partner happy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. I am likely to give my partner cold or dirty looks as a way of expressing disagreement.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. I avoid talking with my partner about disagreements.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. I try to find a "middle ground" position that is acceptable to both of us.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. I believe that you have to "give a little to get a little" during a disagreement.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

To obtain your results, add your scores for the following items:

- 4, 18, 23, 25, 26 (Yielding) _____
- 7, 11, 21, 22, 28 (Avoiding) _____
- 1, 5, 9, 15, 19 (Collaborating) _____
- 2, 6, 13, 16, 24 (Competitive fighting) _____
- 8, 12, 17, 29, 30 (Compromising) _____
- 3, 10, 14, 20, 27 (Indirect fighting) _____

Higher scores indicate that you possess more of a particular conflict style.

when it is important to deal with a particular conflict issue. For instance, if one partner does not want to talk about a critical problem (such as how to deal with the financial fallout of the wife being laid off from her job), the other partner may engage in competing behaviors to force the partner to confront the

issue. In other cases (such as finding out one's partner flirted with an ex-lover all night at a party), people may be justified in expressing anger or leveling accusations at their partners. Usually, however, competitive fighting leads to an escalation of conflict and harms relationships, especially if such