

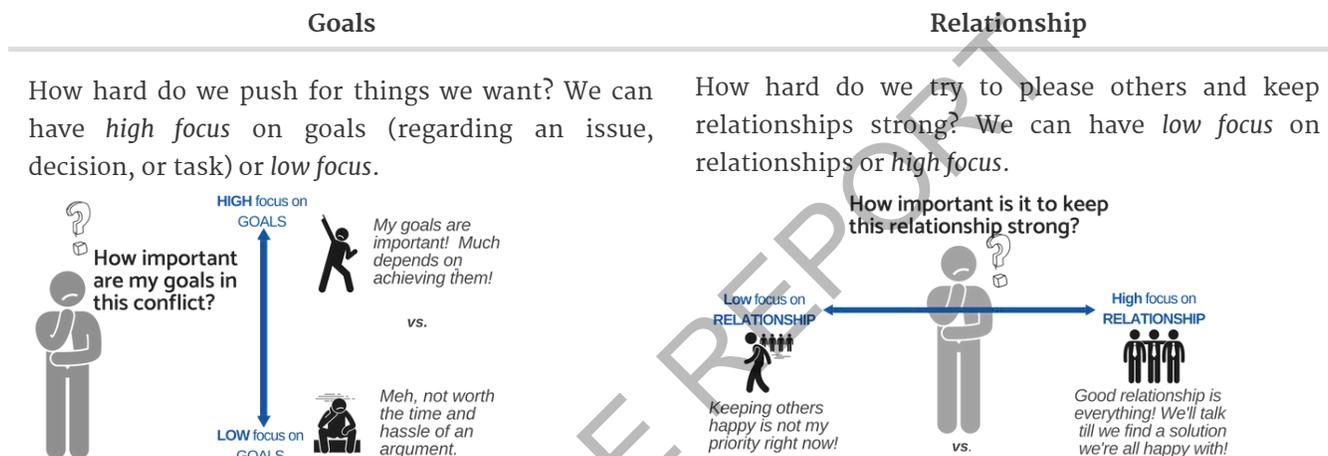


The Kraybill Conflict Style Inventory

Report for Tyler Bottom

INTRO TO CONFLICT STYLES

This report tallies your answers to show your patterns in conflict. It's designed around two key choices in conflict:



These two factors interact to give five styles of responding to conflict. Note how they interact and the five styles that result in the circle chart below. Each style has important benefits; each also has significant costs if over-used. In conflict you use one or more of these styles, depending on your focus. Your scores below indicate the styles you use most and least. If you're online, you can [view a short visual presentation of the styles here](#) and [review the benefits and dangers of each style here](#).

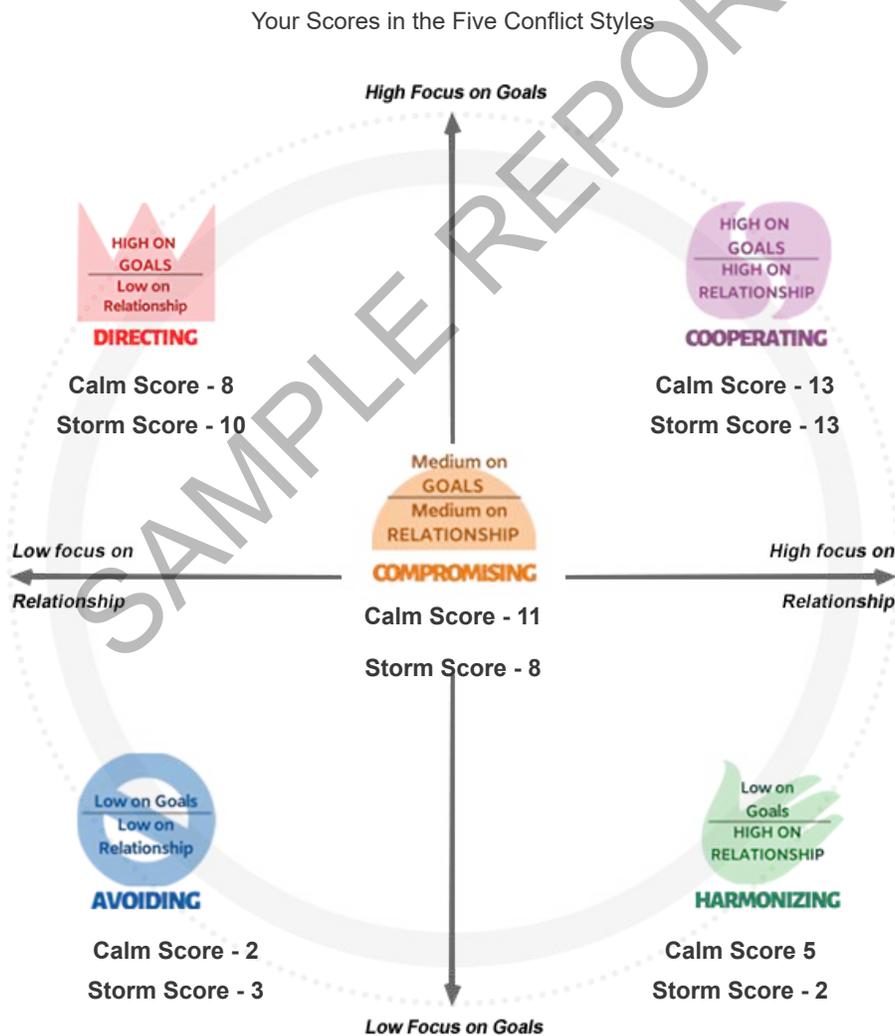


OVERVIEW OF YOUR SCORES

You chose Instruction Set A in answering questions, which directed you to think about your general pattern in conflict. The Calm Scores reflect your responses in the early stages of conflict when emotions are not yet high. Storm Scores reflect your responses after there has been effort to resolve things without success and tension is rising.

Calm When differences first arise and emotions are moderate.	Storm When early efforts have failed and anxiety has increased.
Cooperating-13	Cooperating-13
Compromising-11	Directing-10
Directing-8	Compromising-8
Harmonizing-5	Avoiding-3
Avoiding-2	Harmonizing-2

The table above groups your scores in Calm and Storm. The graphic below arranges scores by conflict style.



YOUR PREFERRED STYLE : The style you use the most in Storm is: **13 Cooperating**

YOUR LEAST PREFERRED STYLE: The style you use the least in Calm is: **2 Avoiding**

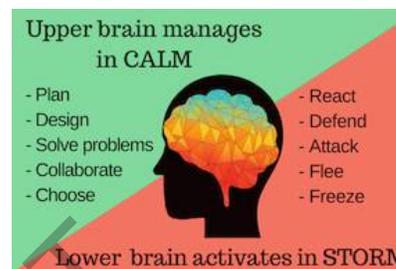
YOUR STORM SHIFT: The style that changes most for you when you shift from Calm into Storm mode is: Compromising Style goes down by 3.

You will learn more about your scores in the report that follows, [in the tutorial on the Riverhouse site](#), or from your trainer if you are taking a workshop.

Take the numbers lightly. You are more than whatever was in your mind when you answered the twenty questions. Use the scores to think about your choices in conflict, not to define who you are. Better yet, ask family and friends who know you well for feedback.

YOUR RESPONSES IN STORM

The graphic above shows your conflict style scores in two settings, Calm and Storm. We focus in this section on your Storm numbers, when early resolution of conflict has failed and stress is high.



Problem-solving ability fades in high stress; in emotional storms the lower brain steps forward with unplanned reactions. In the image above, stress bends you from green towards red. Those red responses are useful *sometimes*, but aim to *choose* them, not fall thoughtlessly into them. Retaining access to your green responses will make you more effective when you must use red responses.

High self awareness is a great asset here. This score report will help you *choose your responses* in conflict so stress will have less power to shove you into the red triangle. With practice you can retain access to both green and red functions, even in Storm environments.



YOU FAVOR COOPERATING in Storm

This suggests that when things get tense you try to create a discussion in which both sides openly present their views and then work intensively to find solutions that fully address needs of both. Cooperating has particular strengths and weaknesses you should be aware of.

Cooperating has Important Uses

Strengths associated with wise use of this style include:

- **Confidence and optimism.** People who favor Cooperating have unusual confidence that "we can work things out". Their hopefulness can be a gift to others.
- **Leads to strong teams.** Cooperating is committed to both task and relationship. Partners and teams who use it well become strong units; the work gets done in a thorough way and the people involved enjoy good relationships.
- **Innovation and creativity.** Solutions that nobody had thought of before often emerge in the intense, interactive, respectful probing typical of the Cooperating style.
- **Skill at talking things through.** It's impossible to use Cooperating well without strong skills for talking things through. Though they are not always even aware they have them, people good at Cooperating often possess these skills, learned from the modeling of parents or teachers, by trial and error, or training in conflict resolution or communication.

- **Endurance.** People who score high in Cooperating often have unusual stamina for talking things through. They know it takes time to find solutions that work well for everyone. They have the confidence to present their own views and the courage to keep talking even when others disagree. They help others not to lose hope in the possibility of finding peace even in the midst of big differences.
- **Personal growth.** Since they engage deeply, people who use Cooperating a lot are constantly exposed to new ideas and perspectives. They learn and grow from this and tend to develop confidence in their abilities and optimism for solving problems. Their confidence and their attitude towards others encourages similar growth in those around them.
- **Trust between people.** When teams or groups use Cooperating successfully, confidence in each other grows. The feeling is: We can work through our issues.

But Don't Over-Use It

Though it has wonderful strengths, like all styles, Cooperating has its limits. Overuse of Cooperating is likely to bring:

- **Failure to get other more important things done.** Not all conflicts merit the intense time and effort required to Cooperate. Applied to too many trivial issues, Cooperating backfires, as people weary of "too much processing".
- **Increased conflict and misunderstanding,** if used without consideration of status. This style involves being "up front" about what you want. A junior secretary should not use it with the company CEO, nor should a CEO assume others will feel free to use it with him or her. Cooperating can be tricky when power and status are unequal.
- **Discouragement, low morale, sense of failure,** if attempted without realistic awareness of the time and skills required on difficult issues.
- **Exhaustion and burnout.** People who over-use Cooperating may run out of time and energy for all the intense conversations that result. No matter how good the intention or skill, constant intense problem-solving with others has costs. Sometimes it is necessary to protect your core mission by limiting your use of Cooperation.
- **A bad name for "conflict resolution", "dialogue", "peace processes".** If Cooperating is pursued too long with an opponent who takes an unyielding Directing or Avoiding stance, it may create "evidence" that talk and problem-solving efforts don't work. Yes, a patient Cooperating approach *often* brings forth a Cooperating response in others, but it does not *always* do so. If you persist anyway and hold out unrealistic expectations, people may lose confidence in Cooperating as a useful response. Over-using Cooperating may thus damage the cause of peace.

Take Steps to Maintain Balance with Cooperating

This is a highly constructive but energy-intensive conflict style. You can take special measures so you experience more of the benefits of wise use of Cooperating and fewer of the costs of overuse.

- **Expand your use of other styles** so you are less likely to over-use Cooperating.
- **Choose your battles.** Think carefully about which issues, relationships, and situations deserve the time and effort required for Cooperating. If you use it too often you'll run out of time and energy for people and causes you truly care about and you could even be in danger of burnout.

- **Consider dynamics of status and power.** To the extent inequality is present, use a two-step approach. If you are a higher status person in a given conflict, begin with affirmation or appreciation of the other person. As a lower status person, thank or otherwise acknowledge your senior for being willing to meet to resolve things. Only after these preliminaries should you move to the open discussion typical of Cooperating.
- **Pay careful attention to timing and readiness.** Recognize when the skills and attitudes required for Cooperating are present, and when they are not. Then choose your response style appropriately. Sometimes it is better to use a different strategy for a while until you or others are ready for Cooperating.
- **Do good process design.** If the conflict involves numerous people, *plan the process together*. Usually it is not hard to agree on with whom, where, when, in what sequence things will be discussed. This "agreement on the process" will ease the discussion.
- **Monitor the length and intensity of discussion.** People who favor Cooperating tend to have more energy for intense discussion than others (with the exception of Directors, who may equal Cooperators in this). Monitor your volume and intensity; offer a break from discussion, or scheduling continuation in a second round.

Support Strategies for Cooperators



The most painful and time-consuming conflicts often come with those close to us, our partners and colleagues in life, work or organizations. Conflict style awareness can be a big help here, for if partners understand each other's style preferences they can avoid needless trouble over how to approach differences. This section is for partners who want to help you function at your best or for you in thinking through your preferences.

With someone who prefers Cooperating as a conflict style, others are more likely to get a favorable response if they:

- **Provide good listening.** Feeling heard helps all styles, but Cooperators respond particularly well to efforts to structure conversation around listening. Hear them out fully and you are likely to be surprised at how well even an angry Cooperator will listen in response. If you know the skill of "active listening" or paraphrasing, use it.
- **Are candid, without being rude or insulting.** Most Cooperators *respect directness and candor* in others so long as it is polite. Saying what you want and need will be appreciated, particularly if you manage to *say it in an attitude of "providing information about what matters most to me"* rather than criticizing or making demands.
- **Stay connected and do not back down too quickly.** Cooperators are assertive and make their views and needs known. But they see this as only one part of the process. They truly want to hear other voices too. If you are silent or too quick to agree, the Cooperator ends up feeling like a Director, which is not at all the intention. Others who favor Harmonizing and Avoiding, in particular, should resist the inclination that comes with those styles to back down from an assertive Cooperator.
- **Make both task and relationship a priority.** Whereas Directors give priority to task and Harmonizers to relationship, Cooperators give priority to *both*. Approach things in ways that honor both. For example, take moments to check in personally with a Cooperator and ask, "How's it going?" When work gets done or concessions are made, notice it and voice your appreciation.

- **Provide information about your own emotional responses in a non-emotional way.** Like the Directing style, Cooperators particularly appreciate information about what is going on, and tend to become anxious or upset if others pull away without signalling their intentions. Withdrawing if you need space is fine, so long as you give a clear explanation that you are committed to ongoing conversation, such as, "I want to go for a walk for half an hour to think things through. Then I'll come back and we can talk some more."
- **Communicate your own needs proactively.** For example, an Avoider who needs to step back and prepare inwardly for a difficult conversation that is being requested by a Cooperator might say, "I want you to know that I recognize we need to talk this through. I want to be at my best when we do that, and I'd like to ask that we plan to discuss it tomorrow at 2 after the staff meeting."
- **Signal continuity of discussion.** If you need a rest or time to think, assure the Cooperator you're committed to the discussion. Eg: "I'm worn out by this discussion. Could we take a break and continue tomorrow evening?"

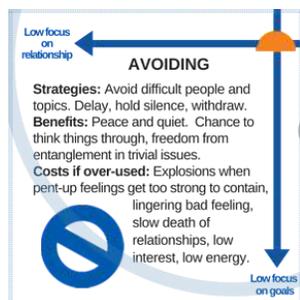


YOUR RESPONSES IN CALM

Now we turn to settings of Calm, when differences are apparent but emotions are not yet greatly stirred. Here we will pay special attention to your *lowest* scores. These suggest "low-hanging fruit" for expanding your options and sense of control in the midst of differences.

Each of the five styles has a valuable role to play in the life of every person. When you score low in a style, you may be under-using that style.

The Calm stage of conflict is a great time to experiment with responses different from your usual ones. We normally function "on autopilot" in this stage and respond from habit. Yet since we are not highly stressed we have access to our best inner resources of reflection. Change is relatively easy when we stop yielding to habit and make a point of *choosing* our responses. By experimenting with greater use of styles you are less comfortable with, you may be able to rather quickly increase your sense of control in the midst of differences.



Try using *Avoiding* more 

You scored lower in this style in Calm settings than in other styles. This suggests that in early stages of conflict, when things are not yet emotional, you use Avoiding less than other styles. This spares you some of the weaknesses of Avoiding. For example, if people chronically avoid difficult discussion in a long-term partnership, bad feelings fester and grow. Energy and enthusiasm may fade. Too much avoidance endangers relationships.

But Avoiding also has important uses you may be missing out on. You'll be most effective in conflict if you are good at all five styles. So increased use of the arts of stepping back and avoiding conflict might be beneficial, especially if there is a gap of 3 points or more between your lowish Avoiding score and your highest score in Calm.

When to Avoid

In Avoiding, you respond to differences by withdrawing from interaction. Neither person gets what they want; you just avoid the topic or the person. Although it has limits, Avoiding is wise, and indeed necessary, at times.

Conflict takes time and energy, and it's stressful. If we take on every battle, we run out of time and energy for the things most important to us. Consider avoiding when:

- The *topic is too trivial* to merit an argument.
- You have *no time or energy* to talk things through.
- The conflict is with someone you have *no long-term relationship* with. Why waste the energy?
- Key people are *stressed or anxious*. High stress reduces ability to think well and self-regulate emotions. Sometimes it's wise to delay till people have their best inner resources.
- When you're not powerful or strong enough to actively resist the demands of a more powerful party, yet need a *passive form of resistance*.
- When it might be *dangerous physically or emotionally* to get in an argument.
- When *timing or sequence* is wrong for discussion. Eg: Maybe you need to review the budget before debating a controversial purchase.
- When you need time to think things through, gather more information, consult with others, etc., in preparation for discussion.

Ideas for Strengthening your Ability to Avoid

Since Avoiding seems not to come naturally for you, you might try experimenting with avoidance responses. For example:

- **Look before you leap** into intense exchanges with people. Consider: 1) Whether you have the time and energy required to talk things through; 2) Whether the issue is *worth* the time and energy required.
- **Dial back responsiveness**. It's not necessary to accept every invitation to an argument. Experiment with simply sitting in thoughtful silence as others express views you disagree with. If silence is difficult for you, start by holding silence on something small, just for the practice of it.
- **Delay or schedule conflict**. For example, "Interesting idea, but could we talk about that some other time?" Or "Could I give you my views on that when we've got the time to really thresh it out?" Agree that certain topics are off-limit in certain times or places. Agree to discuss certain conflict-fraught topics, such as finances in a domestic partnership, on a regular basis, such as every second Saturday morning, but not at any other time.
- **Learn verbal responses for Avoiding**. Memorize some diplomatic crutch phrases for Avoiding: "You know, I see it a bit differently, but I respect where you are coming from...." Or "I agree we need to discuss this, but could we set this topic aside until tomorrow morning so we can focus on other things right now?" Or "You see things one way and I see them a different way. Let's just leave it at that for now."

The styles you scored high in are valuable. Keep using them! But if you ratchet up your use of Avoiding, you may have more time and energy for the things you care about most.



YOUR STORM SHIFT

Your Storm Shift is 3, Which is Just Big Enough to Pay Attention to It.

Scores in Calm reflect behavior in dealing with differences when anger and frustration are low. Scores in Storm reflect behavior when disagreements persist, when you are frustrated and probably angry. Your "Storm Shift" is the change in your behavior from Calm to Storm.

As a general principle, the bigger your Storm Shift, the more attention you should pay to it, for a large Storm Shift means that other people are probably surprised, shocked, or hurt by unexpected changes in your behavior. The biggest shift for you in the transition from Calm to Storm conditions, your score in Compromising Style goes down by 3 points. This is moderate, just big enough that you may benefit from the suggestions on the Riverhouse website about [Weathering the Storm Shift](#).



FOR FURTHER STUDY

There are numerous resources on the Riverhouse ePress site for further study:

- [Compendium of tips for all five styles](#). Get tips for each of the five styles, including those not covered in your score report.
- [Tutorial](#) for learning key concepts of conflict styles and how to interpret your scores
- Interpreting scores – [principles and suggested Learning Activities](#) to assist in understanding scores.
- [Support strategies for each style](#), to help you understand your own needs in conflict and know how to support other people with different styles.
- [Tool to easily create a list of support strategies](#) tailored to your own specific needs.
- [Guidelines for Weathering the Storm Shift](#), a special concern if you have a large shift from Calm to Storm in any of your leading styles.
- [Tips on choosing the right style](#), so you know when and when not to use each style.
- [Web resources on conflict styles](#).
- [Anger Management](#) – A review of key concepts.
- [Principles underlying conflict style management](#) and this inventory.
- [Discussion questions](#) for groups large or small wanting to reflect on conflict styles.
- Essay on [culture and conflict](#).



Having taken *Style Matters* and read this report, you've already given more thought to your patterns of conflict resolution than the vast majority of human beings. Conflict is part of life for everyone, yet few people invest in improving their skills. Imagine how different the world could be if everyone learned a few basics for handling conflict, just like we learn to read and write!

If this report speaks to you, you can extend its value by engaging others in conversation about it. [See this short essay for discussion questions and exercises](#) you can use as a trainer, team leader, or participant in conversations about conflict and conflict styles.

Conversation with people with whom you live or work and know to be trustworthy is especially valuable. To prepare, mark in the report those *points that seem especially true* for you or are *especially helpful in understanding you*. Also mark ideas with special appeal in the Support section of the report. Then sit down and talk about the things you marked up. To make this a two-way exchange, your partner can [click here](#) to purchase *Style Matters* for themselves at modest cost.

Your ability to work together, appreciate differences, and manage them successfully is likely to expand as a result.

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SAMPLE REPORT