Chapter 6
Conflict Modes

ABSTRACT

There are basically five different ways or modes of handling conflict. Two underlying dimensions are at the basis of the model: assertiveness and cooperativeness. The first dimension, assertiveness, is the extent to which a person tries to satisfy his or her needs or concerns irrespective of those of others. The second dimension, cooperativeness, is the extent to which a person tries to satisfy another person's needs or concerns irrespective of his or hers. Combining the two dimensions in all ways results in five basic modes: Competing (high in assertiveness and low in cooperativeness), accommodating (low in assertiveness and high in cooperativeness), compromising (moderate in both assertiveness and cooperativeness), avoiding (low on both dimensions), and collaborating (high on both dimensions).

"10% of conflict is due to difference in opinion and 90% is due to delivery and tone of voice." – Unknown

Learning Objectives

- Identify the five different modes of handling conflict
- Summarize Assertiveness
- Describe Cooperativness
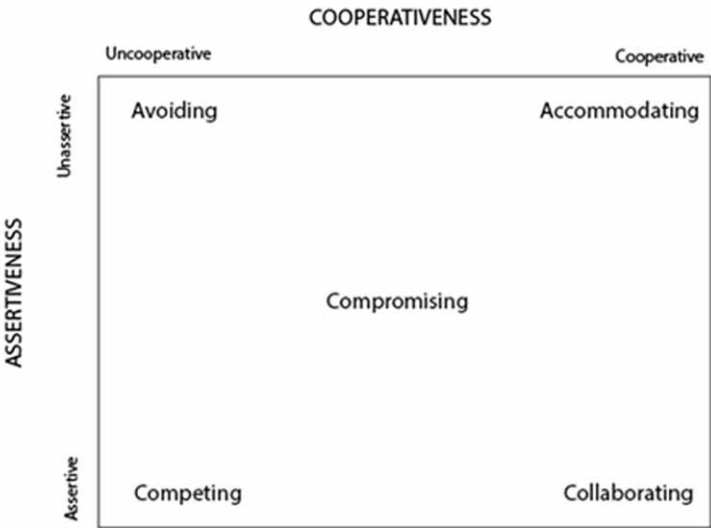- List key attributes of a conflict situation

INTRODUCTION

The Jungian Personality Framework does not of course exhaust all of the relevant attributes of a person's personality. Indeed, no single framework ever could. One of the most important aspects is how a person handles and responds to conflict. In this regard, the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Model (Kilman, 2021)is particularly relevant. For this reason, the student is especially encouraged to go online and take the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Assessment Instrument. Current academic discourse notes that the model is valuable for self-awareness and team dynamics but raises questions about its oversimplification of complex human interactions. Critics argue that cultural, gender, and power dynamics are not fully captured. Overall, the TKI remains a foundational tool, albeit with limitations recognized by the academic community.

Essentially, there are basically five different ways or modes of handling conflict. Two underlying dimensions are at the basis of the Model: Assertiveness and Cooperativeness. The first dimension, Assertiveness, is the extent to which a person tries to satisfy *his or her* needs or concerns irrespective of those of others. The second dimension, Cooperativeness, is the extent to which a person tries to satisfy *another* person's needs or concerns irrespective of his or hers.

Figure 1. The two dimensions of the TKI conflict model: Assertiveness and cooperativeness
(Kilman, 2021)

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