

PRODUCTIVE CONFLICT PROFILE



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WILEY

INTRODUCTION

What is conflict?

Scott, when you think of workplace conflict, what comes to mind? Arguing? Compromise? Finding solutions? Do you think of gossiping and hurt feelings? Or colleagues taking ownership for mistakes?

Whatever you think of, conflict comes down to **a difference of opinions involving strong emotions**. It can range from brief, explosive disputes to subtle, long-lasting issues. Either way, conflict triggers different behaviors in each of us, from destructive to productive responses. And while conflict can be very uncomfortable, it is a natural and inevitable part of relationships.

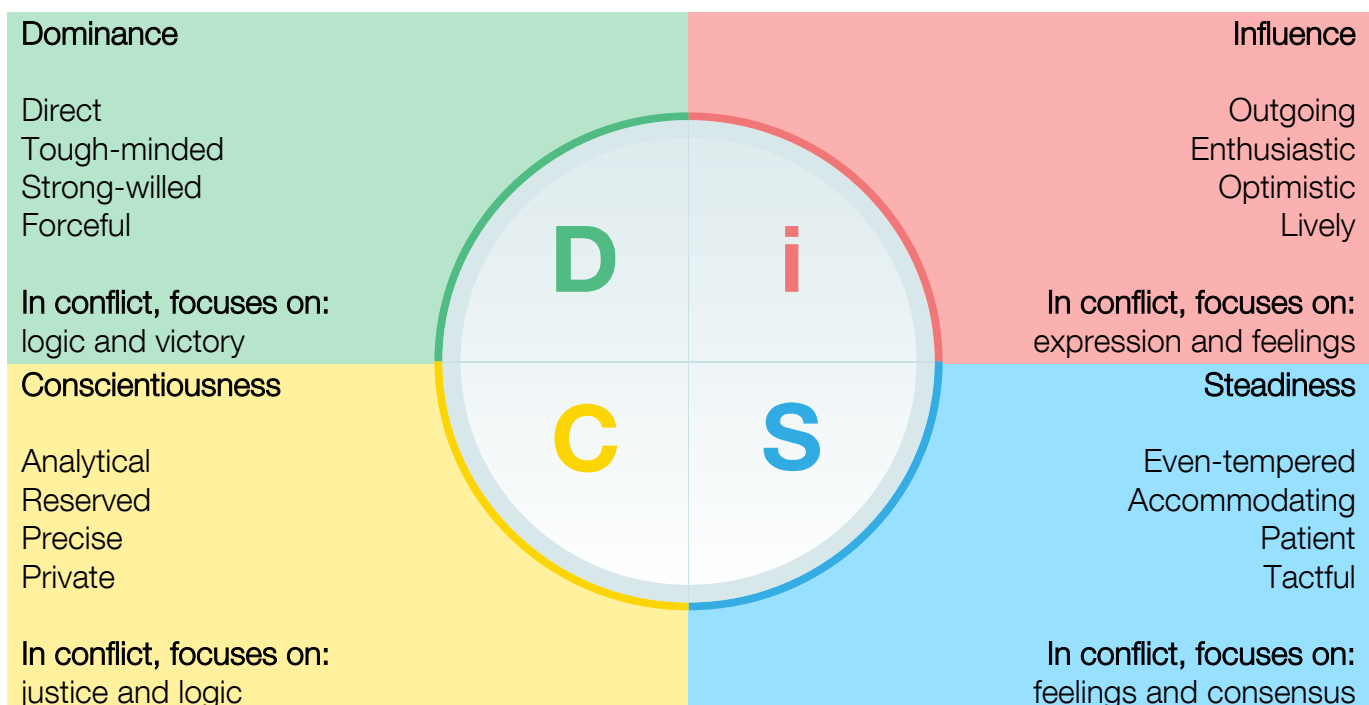
Because conflict will look different depending on the people and situations involved, there is no one-size-fits-all answer to making it productive. Instead the solution starts with you.

Everything DiSC® Productive Conflict is designed to improve self-awareness around conflict behaviors. It isn't about conflict resolution; rather, it's focused on helping you curb destructive thoughts and behaviors so that conflict can become more productive, improving your workplace results and relationships.

Cornerstone Principles

- ▶ Conflict is an **inevitable** part of workplace relationships, and it can also be **productive**.
- ▶ Your conflict interactions may be influenced by **other factors**: hierarchy, culture (organizational or social), business atmosphere, personal experiences, etc.
- ▶ Your response to conflict situations is **in your own control**. You cannot control how others respond to conflict.
- ▶ Learning about other people's DiSC® styles can help you **understand their conflict behaviors** and how they may differ from your own.
- ▶ You can have **productive conflict** by using DiSC to more effectively engage with others.

The DiSC® model



YOUR DiSC® STYLE IN CONFLICT

Your DiSC® style: Di

Scott, your dot and shading say a lot about how you respond in conflict. Because your dot is located in the D region, but near the i region, you have a Di style. Your shading indicates your priorities and where you focus your energy. During conflict, you prioritize assertion, expression, and control.

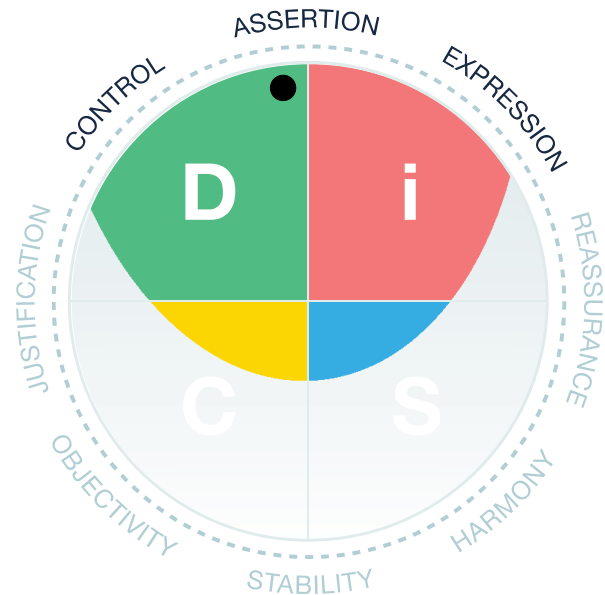
As someone with the Di style, you're likely driven and ambitious, which can lead you to be **assertive** with your opinions. In conflict, you can often be quite direct and strong-willed. There is a healthy side to this trait because it lets others know when a line has been crossed. However, when you're angry, your assertiveness may turn into aggressiveness, which can intimidate others. This feeling of intimidation can erode trust and discourage your coworkers from communicating directly with you.

Most likely, your communication skills often help you charm and influence others into your line of thinking. However, in the midst of some conflict situations, your tendency to **express** intense emotions can provoke others or make matters seem worse than they really are. In the heat of the moment, you may say things that you wouldn't say in a calmer state. And, when others respond to you emotionally, you may attempt to match or supersede their intensity, which may escalate the situation. However, when you can keep your passion in check, you have an ability to create very persuasive arguments.

Similar to others with a Di style, you likely accomplish goals quickly because you value results and will take **control** of what needs to be done. Similarly, you're probably inclined to be competitive, and when opinions differ, you may say whatever you think will win the argument. This may mean that you're willing to make statements that are only "roughly" true in order to illustrate a point, stay on the offensive, or make your argument more powerful. While your willingness to challenge others and take the lead can help keep the focus on important tasks, this approach of needing to run the show may also lead some people to feel overpowered, causing them to withdraw from you.

You've likely found yourself to be effective at shaping your environment in order to get what you want. This success is due, in part, to your clear vision and self-assured opinions. Because you can see your vision so clearly, you may, at times, be reluctant to step back and consider other points of view. As a result, your natural instinct may be to become quickly frustrated when someone is at odds with you, leading you to stubbornly and aggressively push your perspective.

While conflict can be uncomfortable and unwanted, it can help solve problems, as long as everyone feels heard and issues are resolved in a healthy way. When used constructively, your willingness to assert and passionately express your ideas as well as your inclination to take control of situations to ensure results can be great assets in resolving conflict.



Your dot location is near the edge of the circle, so you probably relate well to the characteristics associated with the Di style.

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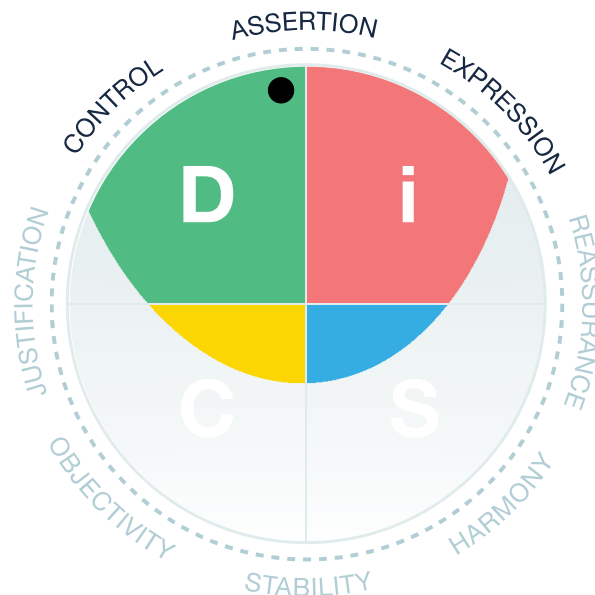
YOUR DiSC® STYLE IN CONFLICT

What is important to you during conflict?

Different people find different aspects of conflict to be most significant. For instance, like other people with the Di style, you probably value asserting your opinions, making sure they are heard. In fact, this type of self-expression may be particularly important to you since it helps you to influence or win over any opposition. And, ultimately, having this level of control, in any situation, can help you get closer to your goals.

You may **value** many of the following approaches during conflict:

- Standing up for your point of view
- Having authority
- Persuading others
- Saying what's on your mind
- Going out on a limb to address problems
- Encouraging others to speak their minds
- Keeping the conversation moving
- Making it clear when you're upset
- Coming out on top



What drains your energy during conflict?

Then there are also those aspects of conflict that are particularly stressful for you. Because you tend to be up-front and assert your opinions, you may become annoyed if people clam up and refuse to engage in a useful discussion. You may also find it frustrating if people overanalyze the situation or point out arbitrary details. In addition, you may get tense in situations where your autonomy or power is limited.

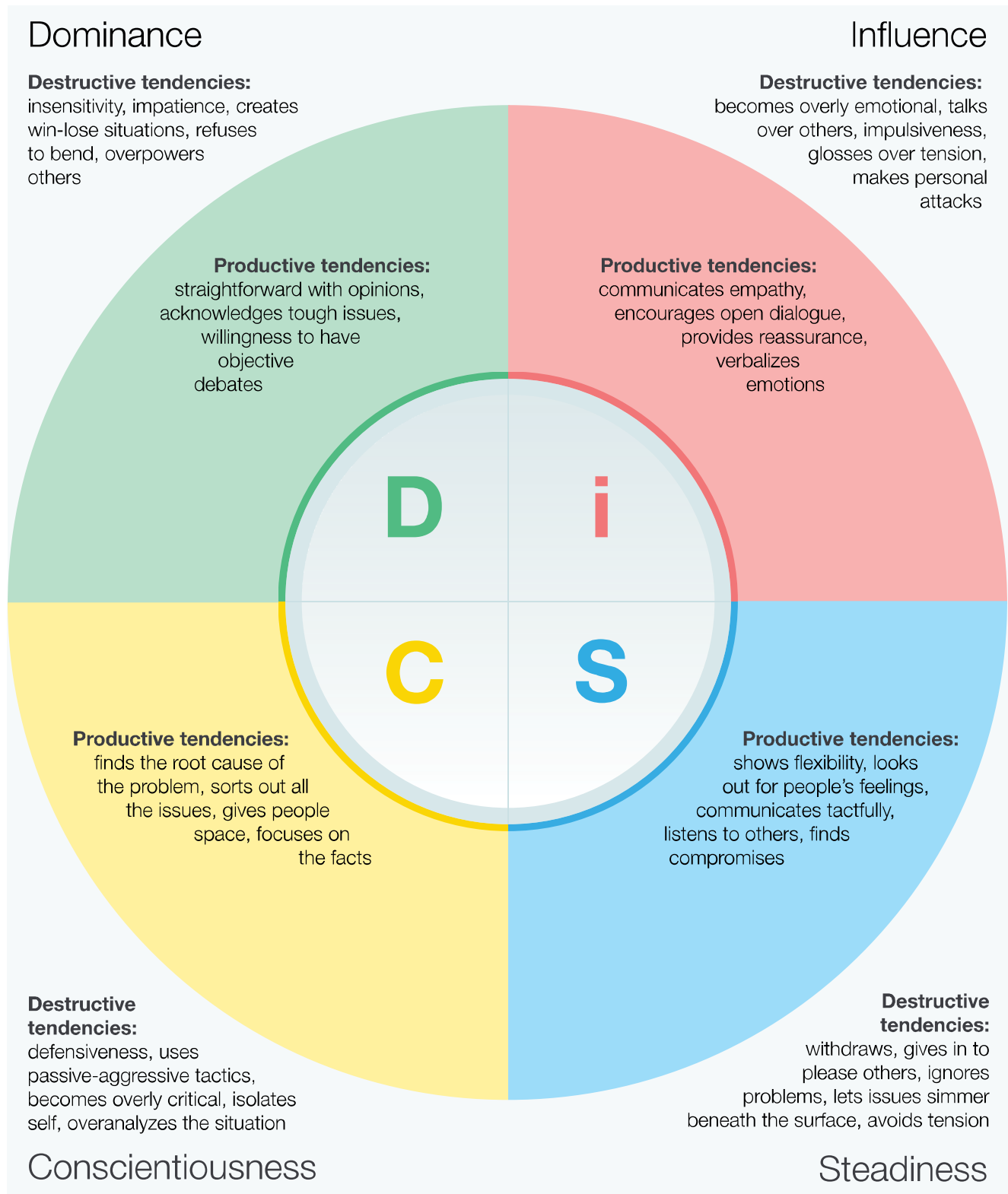
Many of the following approaches or behaviors may be **stressful** for you during conflict:

- Not having your side of the story heard
- Having to moderate what you say
- Dealing with people who hide their true thoughts or feelings
- Lacking control over situations
- Being forced to give up when you know you're right
- Having your ideas or authority challenged
- Being unable to interrupt or to defend yourself
- Dealing with people who are overly sensitive
- Being limited in how much you can assert your opinions and beliefs

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OVERVIEW OF DiSC® IN CONFLICT

Just like DiSC® can help you understand how you handle conflict, it can also help you understand others. The overview below shows the destructive and productive conflict tendencies that are typical for each DiSC style.



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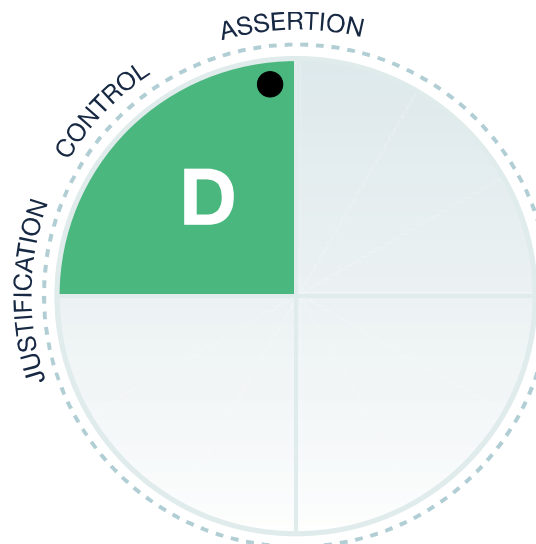
CONFLICT WITH THE D STYLE

What drives the D style in conflict?

Imagine you're entangled in a conflict with someone who has the D style and shares your priority of having **control**. She cuts right to the chase and pushes really strongly for her opinions. You probably have no trouble relating to her straightforward approach. However, because you both want to take charge of the discussion, you may interrupt or talk over each other.

Like you, this individual tends to **assert** herself during conflict. When she sees a problem, she's not afraid to tackle it head-on. She doesn't spend a lot of time hemming and hawing over what should be said or done—she just takes care of it. Since you like things to be done swiftly, you probably appreciate the immediacy she places on facing tough issues.

Furthermore, you may observe that she seems somewhat more interested in **justifying** her point of view than you are. She is good at logically dissecting and dismantling arguments, so she's unlikely to accept your side of the story at face value. Her tendency to question everything you say may seem excessive and confrontational to you.



Compared to you

Compared to you, people with the D style tend to be:

- More likely to question others' conclusions
- Similarly prone to control the discussion
- Just as likely to get right to the point
- Equally likely to address issues head-on
- Similarly direct or straightforward
- Less likely to express feelings

How can you have productive conflict with the D style?

Like you, your "D" coworkers tend to be very direct and opinionated, often saying exactly what's on their minds. However, they don't like to muddy the waters with a lot of emotions and feelings, while you can become quite passionate in heated situations. Therefore, to have productive conflict with the D style, consider the following:

- Keep your emotions in check if they disagree with you.
- Refrain from dismissing their ideas until you have given them a fair chance.
- Focus on finding a resolution rather than winning.

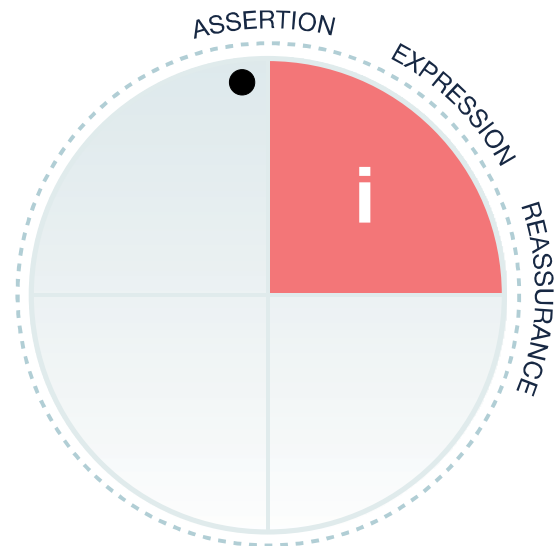
CONFLICT WITH THE i STYLE

What drives the i style in conflict?

Now, imagine you are in a conflict with someone who has an i style. He does his best to keep things friendly and upbeat. However, like you, he feels it's important to be able to **express** his honest thoughts and feelings. While you are both willing to listen, when things get heated, it may come second to talking. Since you both want to be heard, the situation may escalate.

You'll probably notice that he comes across as more accepting and warm than you tend to be. Because being on good terms and well-liked is important to him, he'll want **reassurance** during or after the conflict that your relationship is still okay. You don't tend to hang on to resentment or hurt feelings, so his desire for emotional support probably seems needy or over-the-top to you.

Like you, this individual tends to easily **assert** his opinions during disagreements. He is usually confident and optimistic about his perspectives and willing to share what's on his mind. In this way, the two of you are likely to be up-front about tough issues. However, as things intensify, neither of you may be likely to step back and objectively reflect on the issue.



Compared to you

Compared to you, people with the i style tend to be:

- More concerned about interpersonal turmoil
- Just as likely to speak up with opinions
- Similarly likely to become impassioned
- Similarly likely to let frustration show
- Equally likely to share thoughts and emotions
- Less likely to stay on topic

How can you have productive conflict with the i style?

Like you, people with the i style may find it natural to openly express their feelings and opinions during conflict. However, if you disagree with their perspectives, you may be blunt about it and show less empathy than they expect. Therefore, to have productive conflict with the i style, consider the following:

- Be honest about your feelings, but not blunt.
- Give them room to express themselves without interruption.
- Try to see their side, and calmly explain your differing opinion.

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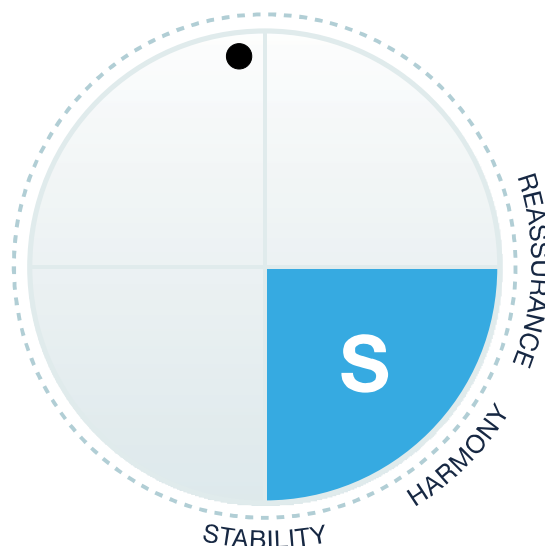
CONFLICT WITH THE S STYLE

What drives the S style in conflict?

Now, imagine you're in conflict with someone who has the S style. He prioritizes **harmony**, so there is probably nothing he wishes more than to *not be* in a disagreement with you. While you're willing to address problems, he'd rather turn the other cheek. So when you argue for your side of the story, he will likely cave in quickly, even if he doesn't really agree with what you say.

You probably notice that he makes attempts to smooth things over with you during and after conflict. This is because providing and receiving **reassurance** is important to him. While you tend to let go of and move on from conflict quickly, he tends to dwell on hurt feelings and may worry that your relationship has been irreparably damaged.

Furthermore, he prioritizes **stability**, so when tension arises, he may want to return things to normal as soon as possible. He isn't comfortable with the unknowns inherent in conflict—both in the altercation itself and the outcomes it brings. On the other hand, tumultuous exchanges do little to unnerve you, so you'll likely address problems with little hesitation.



Compared to you

Compared to you, people with the S style tend to be:

- More concerned about hurting people's feelings
- More likely to spend more time listening than talking
- More focused on remaining calm
- Less concerned about winning the argument
- Less likely to address sticky topics
- Less passionate and expressive

How can you have productive conflict with the S style?

People with the S style want to be agreeable and cooperative. They also want to spare people's feelings, so they choose their words carefully, while you tend to be candid about both your feelings and your ideas. Therefore, to have productive conflict with the S style, consider the following:

- Give them time and space to make decisions.
- Consider their input rather than overselling your ideas.
- Keep control over your emotions.

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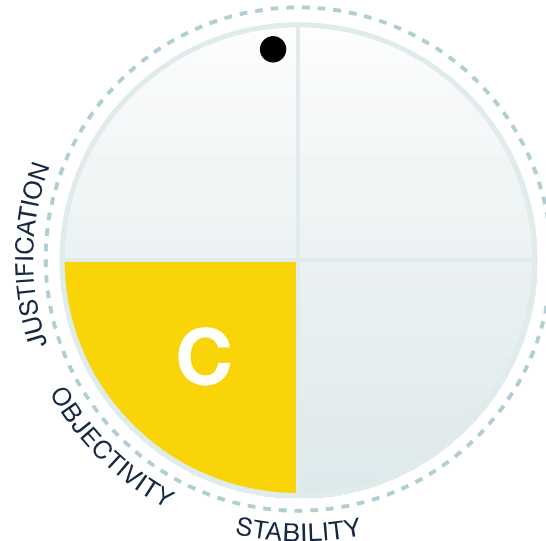
CONFLICT WITH THE C STYLE

What drives the C style in conflict?

Finally, imagine you're in conflict with someone who has the C style and places a priority on staying **objective**. You may notice that she keeps emotions out of the discussion and tends to stick to the facts instead. However, you often go with your gut and can get quite passionate about issues. She may continue to reason logically with you until things become too intense, and then she'll likely withdraw.

At the same time, this individual tends to **justify** her claims and dig for answers rather than just accept other people's arguments at face value. She prides herself on her critical-thinking skills and carefully crafts a rational defense. Therefore, your tendency to summarize information may give her the impression that you're being dismissive of her argument, while you may see her as too nitpicky.

This individual also prizes **stability**, so she does her best to avoid the unpredictability of conflict. During a disagreement, she may concede, even if she doesn't think she's wrong in her way of thinking, simply to calm the waters. This is especially likely to happen if you raise your voice or attempt to overpower her.



Compared to you

Compared to you, people with the C style tend to be:

- More likely to question others' motives
- More analytical and logic-focused
- More likely to keep emotions in check
- Less communicative and easy-to-read
- Less interested in controlling outcomes
- Less likely to rely on intuition or gut instinct

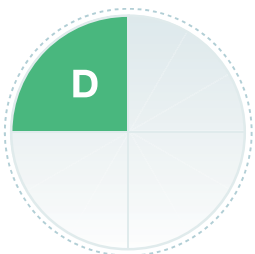
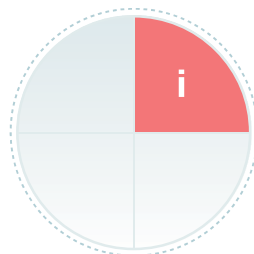
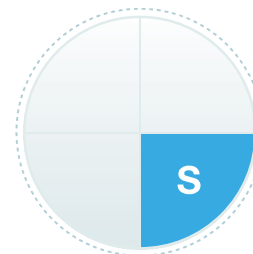
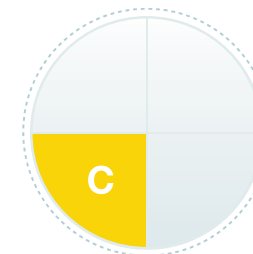
How can you have productive conflict with the C style?

In conflict, people with the C style prefer to tell their side of the story in a clear and logical way, which you may appreciate. Yet, because you usually embrace bold ideas, you may become frustrated with their slow, careful analysis. Therefore, to have productive conflict with the C style, consider the following:

- Allow them to step back and look at the situation analytically.
- Remember that they need time to process before making decisions.
- Make an effort to go over solutions carefully to search for flaws.

Part
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SUMMARY OF DiSC® IN CONFLICT

D Style in conflict	i Style in conflict	S Style in conflict	C Style in conflict
			
Goals: Victory, results, personal accomplishment	Goals: Approval, understanding, openness	Goals: Agreement, acceptance, peace	Goals: Fairness, rational decisions, accuracy
Overuses: The need to win, impatience, bluntness	Overuses: Passion, impulsivity, outspokenness	Overuses: Passive resistance, compromise	Overuses: Restraint, analysis, rigidness
Fears: Being taken advantage of, appearing weak	Fears: Rejection, not being heard, disapproval	Fears: Letting people down, facing aggression	Fears: Being wrong, strong displays of emotion

Reflection

Think of a conflict situation you were in that you wish you would have handled better. Briefly describe it below.

What impact do you think your DiSC® style had on the situation?

Part
2

DESTRUCTIVE RESPONSES

Now that you know more about DiSC® and conflict, let's look at why we sometimes respond destructively instead of productively to conflict. For most of us, conflict situations are threatening, and it's our instinct to protect ourselves. We may react so quickly that we don't even think about what we're doing. But beneath the surface, there's a process playing out: a conflict event triggers an automatic thought, which in turn triggers a destructive response.



What are some common destructive responses?

To change our responses in conflict, we need to recognize both the automatic thoughts that lead to the behaviors and the responses themselves. Let's start by looking at typical destructive behaviors.

- First, put a **checkmark in the circle** next to the three behaviors **others** do that bother you the most in conflict.
- Then, put a **star** next to the three behaviors that **you do most often** in conflict.

Note: You can learn more about these destructive responses on pages 12–17.

Arguing	☐	☐	Gossiping/ complaining about someone
Belittling	☐	☐	Becoming hypercritical
Caving in	☐	☐	Overpowering
Defensiveness	☐	☐	Passive-aggression
Dismissing others' opinions	☐	☐	Revenge/looking to even the score
Becoming overly dramatic	☐	☐	Sabotage/ introducing obstacles
Exaggerating the problem	☐	☐	Sarcasm
Exclusion/ leaving people out	☐	☐	Stonewalling/ becoming non-receptive
Finger-pointing/ blaming/scapegoating	☐	☐	Withdrawing

WHY DO I DO THIS?

Destructive responses can range from immediate reactions in the heat of the moment to delayed or drawn-out responses that prolong the conflict. The following descriptions provide information about what's behind the behaviors listed on page 11, as well as some common automatic thoughts that might lead to each response.



Arguing

Exchanging differing points of view in a heated or tense way

Arguing is unhealthy when it becomes about winning and losing, when the emphasis is no longer on getting at the truth or the best solution, when we try to protect our ego and put other people in their place. And so, like any competition, the “best” strategy is to give up as little ground as possible to your adversary. As a result, any chance for empathy goes out the window. Like others with the Di style, you probably resort to arguing during conflict in an attempt to gain control of the situation and ultimately come out on top. So, in the midst of an argument, one of the most important things you can do is be honest with yourself about your motivation. What emotions are fueling me right now? How much is this about winning?

Automatic thoughts that may lead to this response:

- There's no way I'm backing down
- I don't get it/you; I'm obviously right



Belittling

Making someone or something feel unimportant

Because you, like others with the Di style, often have a passionate and urgent vision of how things should be, you may become frustrated when others challenge your ideas. And when challenged, you may resort to belittling because it's a powerful way to shut others down and retake control of the debate. By belittling others, we create a demeaning, one-dimensional caricature that diminishes them and makes it easier to dismiss what they have to say. Even if you know that belittling crosses the line, you may occasionally find yourself so caught up in the emotion of the moment and your need to assert your views that it's hard to resist.

Automatic thoughts that may lead to this response:

- I'm going to make you look like a fool
- I'm going to show you that your idea doesn't matter



Caving in

Giving in to something after originally opposing it

Caving in can be particularly tempting because it often feels like the absolute quickest path to ending a disagreement. Even though it typically means sacrificing our legitimate rights, the pain of being in a conflict can be so excruciating that we take immediate shelter in this option. Of course, this short-term gain is often at the expense of long-term satisfaction and can eventually create very unbalanced, unhealthy power dynamics within a relationship. Given your assertive Di style, caving in may not be the norm for you. Nevertheless, there are times for all of us when we simply want the fastest way to escape an emotional, chaotic, or just plain messy situation.

Automatic thoughts that may lead to this response:

- I don't want to upset anyone
- Putting up a fight just isn't worth it

WHY DO I DO THIS?



Defensiveness

Becoming anxious or protective in the face of criticism

When we trust that things will be okay no matter what the outcome of the conflict, there's no reason to be defensive. We can be open to different opinions. On the other hand, at the heart of defensiveness is insecurity. We don't want to admit failure or shortcomings. When our brain is telling us that the stakes are incredibly high, we cover up any vulnerabilities or weaknesses. As someone with the Di style, you may sometimes see conflict as a win-lose situation and, so, may find yourself getting defensive when you sense another person is gaining the upper hand. Even when you do recognize your defensiveness, it can still be difficult to ask yourself what, beneath it all, you're really afraid of.

Automatic thoughts that may lead to this response:

- I shouldn't be blamed for this
- This isn't my fault



Dismissing opinions

Treating other people's views as unworthy or unimportant

Like others with the Di style, in some conflict situations you may be prone to dismissing others' opinions to not only ensure that your ideas are fully expressed and heard, but also to swing the outcome in your favor. That's what dismissing opinions is—a blocking strategy to win an argument. But it's also a common way to protect our ego. We do this when we're scared of the thoughts or views expressed by another person. We are afraid to give them space to paint a picture that we don't like. And because we feel challenged, insecure, or fearful, we adopt the strategy of overriding the other person. We exude absolute certainty in our position and effectively relieve ourselves of any obligation to hear the other side of the story. And by making the conversation as one-sided as possible, we feel empowered and righteous.

Automatic thoughts that may lead to this response:

- Nothing that anyone says will change my mind
- There's really no other way to think about this



Drama

Displaying an over-the-top reaction to a situation

On the surface, melodrama may seem like a simple inability to rein in one's emotions, but this behavior is not always about yelling or acting out. In essence, when we create drama, we are drawing attention to a situation that is troubling for us. This attention validates that the dilemma is, in fact, extremely important and that the injustice that's been done to us is, in fact, extremely unjust. Creating drama can also produce a feeling of control in a situation where we otherwise feel powerless. In fact, given that people with your Di style often feel the need to gain the upper hand during conflict, you may resort to drama as a last-ditch effort to assert yourself.

Automatic thoughts that may lead to this response:

- Everyone hates me!
- This situation is awful/hopeless

WHY DO I DO THIS?



Exaggerating

Representing something as being worse than it really is

For many, exaggeration is a way of making a situation sound as bad as it feels. But for someone with the Di style, exaggeration can also be a powerful tool to persuade people to see things through your eyes. By making a situation or person's behavior seem worse than it is, you can make your own case that much more powerful or defensible. This may be particularly tempting at times because you tend to feel so passionately about your ideas and want to bring others around to your way of thinking. In the intensity of the moment, convincing people to see things from your perspective may justify overstating your case.

Automatic thoughts that may lead to this response:

- I need to get your attention
- This needs to sound as bad as it feels



Exclusion

Deliberately leaving someone out

During a conflict, it's not uncommon to exclude someone because we simply don't want to spend time with them. But even if we don't want to admit it, exclusion is also a means to emotionally hurt the other person and an attempt to damage their connection to other people in the group. Given your Di style, you may use exclusion in conflict to control your surroundings and assert yourself within the relationship. By disrupting another person's standing in the group, you likely gain support for your side of the story by shaping how people perceive the conflict. We're most likely to use this strategy if we have greater social status than the other person.

Automatic thoughts that may lead to this response:

- Maybe you'll get the message if I don't invite you
- Leaving you out will prove that everyone's on *my* side



Finger-pointing

Blaming someone for a particular situation or issue

As someone with the Di style, in the heat of conflict you want to be right and, so, pointing the finger or blaming is a way to make sure others know they are in the wrong. Finger-pointing feels like a very aggressive behavior, but it usually stems from defensiveness. We're diverting attention away from our own shortcoming or failure by pointing it out in someone else. Often, we'll home in on one particular action of the other person that contributed to a problem. The goal is to make this action seem as awful as possible, to make it seem like this action is, in fact, the *heart* of the problem. As a result, our contributions don't seem nearly as bad. By shifting the blame, we've saved our reputation in the short term, but may have also unwittingly damaged our integrity.

Automatic thoughts that may lead to this response:

- I shouldn't get in trouble for this...it's all their fault
- This is because of you, not me

WHY DO I DO THIS?



Gossiping

Engaging in idle talk about someone else's private affairs

Gossiping can feel good for a lot of reasons. First of all, venting our frustrations can be cathartic. And because we tend to gossip with people we trust, they usually validate our opinion. Not to mention, it can be deeply satisfying to tear down someone who has hurt us. But gossip can also be about power, and since you have the Di style, you may be tempted to gossip during conflict as a way to guarantee that your side of the story is heard early on. Gossiping can help rally people to your side by getting your perspective out into the world first and most convincingly. For people who are insecure about their status in the organization, gossiping can create a perceived sense of authority as coworkers turn to them for inside knowledge.

Automatic thoughts that may lead to this response:

- I'm going to tell everyone what so-and-so did to me
- I probably shouldn't say anything, but they deserve it



Hypercriticism

Becoming overly judgmental about someone else's work or actions

Hypercriticism is an attempt to undermine someone by objecting to as much as possible about them: shooting down their suggestions, finding holes in their logic, scrutinizing their output for mistakes. Because conflict tends to bring out your competitive instincts, you and others with the Di style may resort to this strategy to take the other person down a peg so you can come out on top. When challenged, you may go into "attack mode," preventing the other person from scoring a point while also scanning for weaknesses or opportunities to take your shots. Not only does this help you gain control over a debate, but it also serves as a way to vent anger.

Automatic thoughts that may lead to this response:

- I need to knock you down a peg or two
- I need to look like the smartest one here



Overpowering

Overwhelming others with superior force

Overpowering draws on all the sources of power at our disposal to defeat someone during a conflict. Sometimes that power comes from social status or organizational authority, but for you and others with the Di style, this may be about using the force of your personality to dominate the debate. You may have found that the same passion and outward energy you bring to convincing others to embrace your ideas can also be used to overwhelm them in conflict. And you may sense, consciously or unconsciously, that if you create an intense enough whirlwind of emotion, most people will bow out to escape the chaos, particularly if they know from experience that you'll keep escalating until you get what you want.

Automatic thoughts that may lead to this response:

- I won't quit until I win; I don't care what it takes
- I'll use intimidation to get my way

WHY DO I DO THIS?



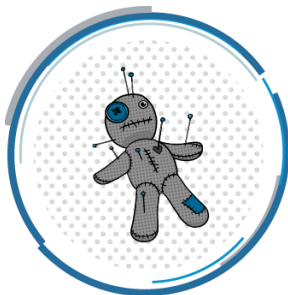
Passive-aggression

Expressing negative feelings in a subtle or indirect way

We can all think of occasions when we desperately wanted to express anger at someone, but didn't want to be direct about it. Passive-aggression can feel like the perfect solution. We get to subtly punish someone—enough that they notice, but not so much that they can call us on it. Its many forms (e.g., ignoring, eye-rolling, nit-picking) make it endlessly flexible, and it often gives us more satisfaction than we care to admit. Sometimes, the goal is to bother someone enough that they initiate the confrontation, at which point we have invitation to let loose on them. In fact, since you, like others with the Di style, don't generally shy away from direct confrontation, you may turn to passive-aggression to bring others into a contentious situation so that you have a chance to assert yourself.

Automatic thoughts that may lead to this response:

- I'm going to make my point without looking like the bad guy
- I don't want to talk about it, but I can't act like nothing happened



Revenge

Looking to even the score or get retribution for a wrongdoing

Revenge in the workplace is usually fairly subtle, but we do it to restore justice and/or reassert ourselves. And even though taking revenge is technically an external action, it's usually the end result of some pretty deep internal rumination. We stew over being hurt or mistreated, and fantasizing about getting even can feel good—even if we don't like to admit it. Of course, acting on those fantasies takes things to a whole different level. Most of us recognize that overt revenge won't be tolerated, but this still leaves plenty of creative, backhanded, and petty ways to inflict damage on someone. Of course, given that people with the Di style typically want to deal with issues head-on, you may only be tempted toward revenge when all of your other options have been cut off.

Automatic thoughts that may lead to this response:

- I need to get even
- You're going to regret what you did to me



Sabotage

Deliberately obstructing or destroying someone's work

Sabotage is about making sure someone else fails. It can be social in nature (e.g., lying, spreading rumors) or can actually involve physical tampering. Sometimes we choose this extreme path when we lack the power to truly confront the other person and sometimes it's simply because we want to express our anger without a direct clash. Either way, there is usually satisfaction in seeing the other person fail. Ultimately, sabotage usually requires us to suspend our normal understanding of right and wrong so that we can rationalize a behavior that, under normal circumstances, we would find reprehensible. While sabotage is an atypical response for people with the Di style, when used, it likely stems from your competitive drive to ultimately win a conflict.

Automatic thoughts that may lead to this response:

- You should be punished for what you did to me
- I have to regain the upper hand

WHY DO I DO THIS?



Sarcasm

Ridiculing someone using mockery or derision

In conflict, sarcasm is a close cousin to passive-aggression. It allows us to take a shot at someone or express our hostility without being too obvious about our real motivations. It's for when we're not quite committed enough to yell at someone, but still want to take them down a peg or two. And sarcasm is such a tempting tool in the midst of conflict because we can always claim that "I'm just joking...seriously, lighten up." Like others with the Di style, you may actually see sarcasm as a useful way to soften the blow after you've been overly assertive during conflict. In particular, you may feel like the "just kidding" excuse gives you immunity after subtly attacking or demeaning someone.

Automatic thoughts that may lead to this response:

- That idea is obviously ridiculous
- Why would anyone say something so stupid?



Stonewalling

Refusing to answer, show emotion, or respond to someone

As someone with the Di style, you may be tempted to stonewall only after you've burned through your initial flare of anger and passion in an argument. When we stonewall, we make it clear to the other person that communication is completely shut down. We deliberately let them know that their behavior is so unacceptable that we are unwilling to compromise or even discuss a resolution. And although we may hate to admit it, stonewalling can be gratifying. We get to punish the other person while telling ourselves that our behavior is strong and dignified. This can become a self-preservation strategy when we feel overwhelmed by a swirl of uncomfortable emotions.

Automatic thoughts that may lead to this response:

- You don't get to know what I'm feeling
- I'm not responding to this



Withdrawing

Drawing back or removing oneself from a situation

Not many people actually enjoy conflict, but it is much more painful to some of us than others. We may not even know why conflict is so uncomfortable. It just feels like a whirling jumble of anxiety, anger, insecurity, and danger. Every instinct is urging us to return to stability and safety. Withdrawing or clamming up can provide immediate relief by simply shutting out the turmoil. Of course, given your assertive Di style, retreating may not be your first instinct. For certain people with this style, however, the chaos and emotional messiness of conflict can be exhausting. Not to mention, the chaos diverts attention away from other important projects. Withdrawing is a way of signaling "I don't have time for this." It not only calms the nerves, but it can feel more efficient in the moment.

Automatic thoughts that may lead to this response:

- This needs to end as soon as possible
- I'm just going to stay quiet until this thing is over

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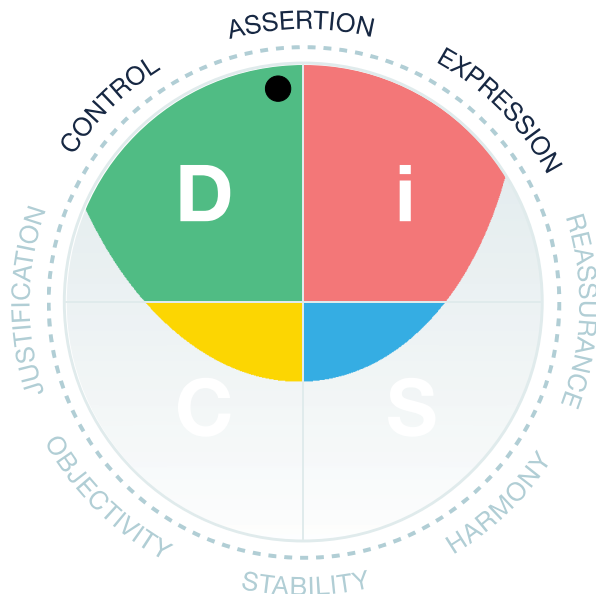
Part
2

RECOGNIZING AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS

Your Di style and automatic thoughts

Scott, like others with the Di style, you may find some common themes shaping your automatic thoughts, such as projecting strength, being respected, and having control. Take a look at the list below. When you find yourself tempted toward a destructive reaction, which (if any) of the following automatic thoughts do you sometimes find going through your head?

- Why don't you get that I'm right?
- I'm right, and I'll argue until you get that.
- I can't give you the satisfaction of winning.
- You're being completely unreasonable.
- I need to get control of this again.
- You're showing me no respect.
- I can use intimidation to win.
- I won't quit until I win.
- You're not in charge of me.
- I can't back down.
- If you push me, I'll push back harder.



Reflection

Think back to the conflict situation you described on page 10. What were some automatic thoughts you had?

What was your response to the situation? How did your automatic thoughts influence that response?

CHANGING YOUR RESPONSE

If automatic thoughts can lead to knee-jerk responses, how do we change our behaviors? As shown in the diagram below, the trick is to disrupt this process—to stop our automatic thoughts before they push us toward a destructive response. If we can **step back** from the automatic thought and the emotions around it, we can then **reframe** it. Doing so will put us back in control, so we can choose a more productive path forward.



Stepping back from your emotions

It's tough to step back in the midst of a conflict, but it becomes easier if we first acknowledge our emotions and how they might influence our judgment. During conflict, our emotions can sometimes cloud our perspective and hinder our ability to make choices that are healthy and in our long-term best interests. Many of the emotions at play during conflict fall into two broad categories: **anger** and **anxiety**. Scott, your Di style can give some key insights into how these two emotions may affect you.

Anger and your Di style

Anger: frustration, resentment, outrage, aggression

Anger is a normal emotion that compels us to stand up for our rights. But in its unhealthy form, it can cause us to erupt and lash out at the person who we think has wronged us. Given your Di style, it may be particularly difficult to resist this temptation because you have such a strong desire to assert and defend yourself. When you're angry, you may sometimes use your persuasiveness to convince your opponents that they're wrong and you're right. In fact, because you probably feel entitled to your anger, stepping back from it may require a great deal of willpower.

Anxiety and your Di style

Anxiety: fear, panic, worry, upheaval, disorientation

For people with the Di style, anxiety may be less noticeable than the more overt feeling of anger. Even so, anxiety may sometimes linger in the background and compel you to avoid a topic or a person. And so, if you find yourself doing this, you can take it as a sign that your feelings of frustration or resentment might be covering up a trace of fear or worry. Using this insight can help you better identify your automatic thoughts.

Part
3

CHANGING YOUR RESPONSE

Are you sure?

Once we're able to step back from any anger or anxiety that may be driving our automatic thoughts, the next step is to **reframe**—to change the way we think about the situation. The following questions can help us in this process.

1. Is this thought actually valid/true?
2. Am I overreacting or exaggerating the problem?
3. Is there another way I could look at the situation?

Reframing your automatic thoughts

Scott, because you have the Di style, it's unlikely that you'll have trouble telling your side of the story, and you probably encourage others to do the same. However, you may sometimes be so opinionated that you dismiss other perspectives before giving them a fair chance. Before you get caught up in the moment, or rush past it, challenge yourself to step back and re-evaluate the situation. Below are two **examples** of automatic thoughts that are common for your Di style and ways to reframe them.

Automatic thought: Why don't you get that I'm right?
Reframed thought: We need to figure out what we agree on.

Automatic thought: You're showing me no respect.
Reframed thought: There's some serious miscommunication going on here.

Thinking about your own experiences, **choose two automatic thoughts** that resonate with you. (For reference, you may want to look back at the "Why Do I Do This?" section on pages 12–17 or the list of automatic thoughts and the Reflection activity on page 18.) Like in the examples above, come up with a way to reframe each automatic thought. Is there another way you could think about it?

Automatic thought:

Reframed thought:

Automatic thought:

Reframed thought:

Part
3

CHOOSING PRODUCTIVE RESPONSES

Once you have reframed your automatic thought, you can choose to respond in a more productive way. There are many different ways to respond productively to conflict, and some behaviors are probably easier for you than others. Given your Di style, you may find, for example, that seeking an active resolution comes more naturally to you than stepping back to reflect. Take a moment to rate how easy each behavior listed below is for you. This can help you identify behaviors you'd like to work on as well as productive responses you can call on during future conflicts.

On each continuum, plot how easy or difficult each productive response is for you.

	Easy	Difficult		Easy	Difficult
Apologizing	←	→	Finding compromises	←	→
Determining the root of the problem	←	→	Communicating openly and honestly	←	→
Stepping back to reflect	←	→	Separating emotions from facts	←	→
Taking ownership of your part in the situation	←	→	Showing flexibility	←	→
Giving people time and space	←	→	Revisiting unresolved issues	←	→
Acknowledging others' feelings	←	→	Communicating respectfully	←	→
Seeking active resolution	←	→	Introspecting/being aware of your feelings	←	→
Giving reassurance	←	→	Listening	←	→

Reflection

Think back again to your conflict situation from page 10 and the automatic response you described on page 18. How could you reframe your automatic thought(s)?

With your new way of thinking, what productive response might you have chosen? (Refer to the list above or choose a different productive response.) How would that response have changed the conflict?

HEY! YOU'RE NOT DONE YET.

It may be tempting to ignore this page, but getting better at productive conflict takes time and continuous practice. Use this page to log and reflect on the next conflicts you have. Learning to step back and reframe your thoughts will ultimately help you have more productive conflict in the workplace.

Part 1	Briefly describe your conflict situation.		
Part 2	What were your automatic thoughts? What was your response?	Part 3	How did you reframe your automatic thoughts? Could you have done better?

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