

DiSC Tips for Preparing for Courageous Conversations

DiSC - Under Stress / Tips when Tense

D STYLE	I STYLE	S STYLE	C STYLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May become more assertive, demanding, or impatient. Focuses on results and may dismiss emotions or details. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May become overly emotional, distracted, or seek reassurance. Tends to avoid conflict, focusing instead on maintaining relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May shut down, withdraw, or become overly accommodating to avoid conflict. Focuses on maintaining harmony and may suppress their own needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May become overly critical, rigid, or fixated on details. Struggles with uncertainty and may resist emotional displays.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be direct, concise, and focused on solutions. Avoid taking their assertiveness personally; it's often their way of regaining control. Offer clear options or actionable steps to resolve the situation. Show confidence and avoid appearing indecisive or overly emotional. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay positive and approachable; acknowledge their emotions without dismissing them. Emphasize collaboration and reassure them that relationships remain intact. Avoid being overly critical or harsh; focus on solutions and shared goals. Provide verbal affirmation or encouragement to ease their tension. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a calm, supportive space for discussion; avoid aggressive or high-pressure tactics. Gently encourage them to share their thoughts or concerns. Reassure them that their perspective matters and their input is valuable. Provide clear guidance and avoid sudden changes or ambiguity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay calm, logical, and professional; avoid emotional outbursts. Provide detailed explanations and facts to address their concerns. Be patient with their need for thorough analysis and accuracy. Avoid pressuring them to make quick decisions without sufficient data.

Problem Solving & DiSC

D STYLE	I STYLE	S STYLE	C STYLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure they have clear goals and outcomes to work toward. Encourage them to slow down and consider potential risks or long-term impacts. Provide concise, high-level information to keep them engaged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage them to balance creativity with practicality. Provide structure or assign someone to manage details and logistics. Involve them in team-based solutions where communication is key. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a calm, supportive environment for decision-making. Provide reassurance and time to process information. Encourage them to speak up and contribute their thoughtful insights. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide ample data, evidence, and time for analysis. Encourage them to trust their expertise and not get stuck in over analysis. Balance their need for precision with deadlines or decision-making timelines.

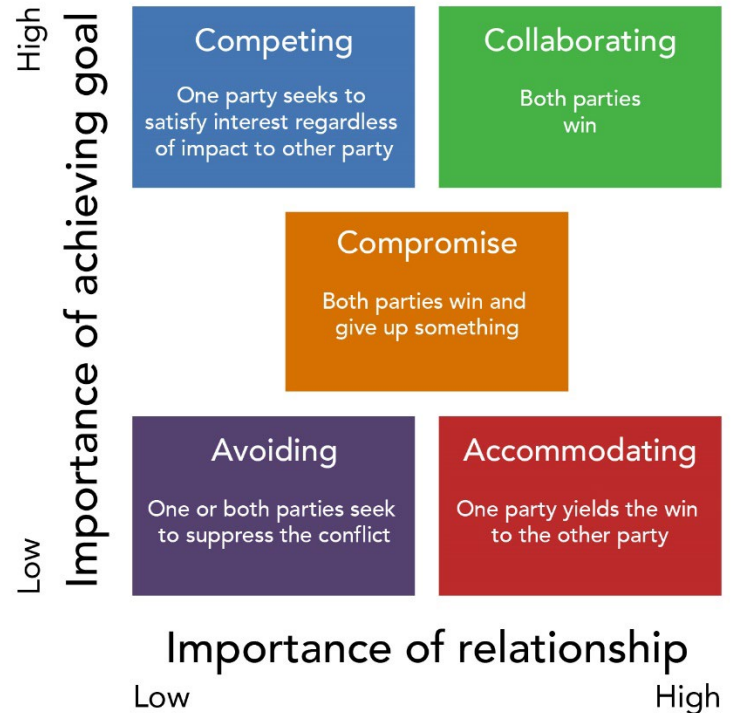
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TIPS TO REMEMBER

Conflict Styles

In a dispute, it's often easier to describe how others respond than to evaluate how we respond. Each of us has a predominant conflict style. In any conflict ask, "Is my preferred conflict handling style the very best I can use to resolve this conflict or solve this problem?"

- **Competing** -- A competitive style can be appropriate when you have to implement an unpopular decision, make a quick decision, the decision is vital in a crisis or it is important to let others know how important an issue is to you – "standing up for your right." However, relationships can be harmed beyond repair or others may feel they have to use covert methods to get their needs met.
- **Accommodating** -- Accommodation is useful when admitting you are wrong or when you want to minimize losses to preserve relationships. However, it can become competitive – "I am nicer than you are" – and may result in reduced creativity and increased power imbalances.
- **Avoiding** -- Avoidance can be appropriate when you need more time to think and process, time constraints demand a delay, or the risk of confrontation is not worth what might be gained. However, avoidance is destructive if the other person perceives that you don't care enough to engage. By not dealing with the conflict, this style allows the conflict to simmer, potentially resulting in angry or negative outbursts.
- **Compromising** -- Compromise maintains the relationship and can take less time than other methods but resolutions may focus on demands rather than needs or goals. The compromise is not necessarily intended to make all parties happy or result in a decision that makes the most business sense, but rather ensures the decision is just and equitable, even if it causes a loss for both parties.
- **Collaborating** -- Collaborators address the conflict directly and in a way that expresses willingness for all parties to get what they need. However, collaboration takes time so if the relationship is not important it may not be worth the time and energy to create a win-win solution.



Focus on Interests (Needs), Not Positions (Wants)

Understanding people's interests is not a simple task because we tend to communicate our positions – things that are likely to be concrete and explicit. Try to recognize the difference between positions and interests to assist in creative problem-solving. Using open-ended questions that encourage a person to "tell their story" helps you better understand their interests.

- **Positions** are predetermined solutions or demands that people use to describe what they want to happen on a particular issue. For example, "I want the report."
- **Interests** define the problem and may be intangible, unexpressed or inconsistent. They are the motivation behind the position—the "why." Conflict usually exists when motivations/needs are not understood or mismatched in some way.

ACTIVE LISTENING	VALIDATION / EMPATHY
<p>Active listening involves hearing more than the words of the speaker but taps into the deeper meaning, unspoken needs, and feelings conveyed. It is listening with all of your senses.</p> <p>Suspending judgment and being fully present with another person to understand his or her experience or point of view.</p>	<p>Validation is one of the most <i>transformative</i> communication skills in emotionally charged/reactive situations.</p> <p>Validation is about acknowledging our own as well as another person's emotions, thoughts, experiences, values, and beliefs as valid and legitimate.</p> <p><u>Validating Statements:</u> <i>I am here to listen.</i> <i>I can see you are upset.</i> <i>How can I support you?</i> <i>That must have been difficult.</i></p>

INTENTION SETTING FOR IMPORTANT CONVERSATIONS

Setting clear intentions before an important conversation can help you approach the discussion with clarity, focus, and a constructive mindset. Here are some key questions to ask yourself. By reflecting on these questions, you can enter the conversation with a clear, purposeful, and empathetic mindset, increasing the likelihood of a positive and productive outcome.

Clarify Your Purpose

1. **What is the primary purpose of this conversation?**
 - Are you seeking to resolve a conflict, provide feedback, negotiate terms, or simply understand the other person's perspective?
2. **What are the specific outcomes I hope to achieve?**
 - Define what success looks like for this conversation.

Understand Your Motivations

3. **Why is this conversation important to me?**
 - Reflect on your personal and professional reasons for having this discussion.
4. **How does this conversation align with my values and principles?**
 - Ensure that your intentions are consistent with your core beliefs and ethics.

Consider the Other Person's Perspective

5. **What might be the other person's goals and concerns?**
 - Put yourself in their shoes to anticipate their viewpoint and potential reactions.
6. **How can I show empathy and understanding?**
 - Think about ways to acknowledge their feelings and perspectives.

Plan Your Approach

7. **What key points do I need to communicate?**
 - Prepare a clear and concise outline of the main topics you want to address.
8. **How can I frame my points in a constructive and positive manner?**
 - Use language that fosters collaboration rather than defensiveness.

Emotional Preparation

9. **What emotions am I bringing into this conversation?**
 - Identify any feelings of anxiety, frustration, or excitement and consider how they might impact your communication.
10. **How can I manage my emotions to stay calm and focused?**
 - Develop strategies to remain composed, such as deep breathing or taking a moment to pause if needed.

Commitment to Action

11. **What am I willing to compromise on, and where do I need to stand firm?**
 - Know your boundaries and where you have flexibility.
12. **What steps will I take if the conversation doesn't go as planned?**
 - Prepare for various outcomes and have a contingency plan.

Follow-Up

13. **How will I follow up after the conversation to ensure progress?**
 - Plan for any necessary actions or communications after the meeting.
14. **What long-term impact do I want this conversation to have on our relationship?**
 - Consider how this discussion fits into the broader context of your ongoing interactions and relationship.