8.9 Identifying Your Style(s) of Responding to Conflict

Purpose

To provide you with feedback on your preferred responses to interpersonal conflict.

Instructions

Read the 5 scenarios below. For each one, indicate which of the four possible responses you think it is most likely you would follow.

To score your conflict response inventory, turn to the key on the page following the inventory.

1. The person that you have been dating for 6 months tells she is upset by your lack of interest in spending time with her/his friends. You don't want to spend time with your partner's friends, but she/he sees this as an issue that the two of you need to resolve. In this situation, you would be most likely to

   A. Walk out on the conversation
   B. Tell her/him that the issue isn't important
   C. Say nothing and hope the issue will go away
   D. Actively work to find a resolution that satisfies both of you.

2. Last week a friend let you use his/her computer when yours crashed. Accidentally, you erased a couple of files on your friend's computer. Later, the friend confronts you about the erased files and the friend seems really angry. In this situation, you would be most likely to

   A. Tune out your friend's criticism and anger.
   B. Agree that you had made an error and ask how you could make it up to your friend.
   C. Say nothing and hope your friend's anger blows over and the friendship continues.
   D. Tell your friend that it's not a big deal since he/she always backs up the hard disk on diskettes.
3. Your roommate tells you that you are a slob and that she/he wants the two of you to agree to some ground rules about cleaning and putting things up. In this situation, you would be most likely to

A. Agree to be more neat, even though you don't think it's fair that you should have to operate by your roommate's standards.
B. Tell your roommate that cleaning is not a big deal in the big picture of living together.
C. Agree that the two of you differ in how you like the place to look and offer to work out some mutually acceptable rules.
D. Leave the situation and hope that your roommate will let the matter drop.

4. The person you have been dating for a while says that you are too critical and too negative, and she/he says she/he wants you to work on changing that aspect of your behavior. Although you realize this may be a fair criticism of you, you find it uncomfortable to hear. Further, you have no idea how you could eliminate or improve your tendency to be judgmental. In this situation, you would be most likely to

A. Agree with your dating partner's perceptions and ask if she/he has any suggestions for how you might reduce your critical, negative tendencies.
B. Shrug and ignore the criticism.
C. Say nothing and hope things get better.
D. Point out that being critical is not really a major issue in whether two people are compatible.

5. Your parents call you to criticize you for not staying in touch. They say they want you to come home more often and call a couple of times each week. You are very involved in the campus scene and don't want to be running home all the time. In this situation, you would be most likely to

A. Tell your parents they are creating a problem when none really exists
B. Agree that you haven't stayed in touch and promise to be better in the future; then follow through on your promise even though it isn't your preference.
C. Tell your parents that you want to work with them to come up with ways you can stay in better touch without separating you from the campus too much.
D. Tell your parents that you don't wish to discuss this and hang up the phone.
Scoring the Conflict Response Inventory

The four choices for your action in each scenario represent the responses of exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect.

**Scoring:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exit</th>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>Loyalty</th>
<th>Neglect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. D</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. D</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Processing**

Questions to consider in interpreting your scores:

1. Did you rely on a single response in 3 or more of the situations?

2. Did you rely more on exit and neglect (combined) than on voice and loyalty (combined)?

3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of your response style(s)?