Rachel Bolt

Assignment 3

**Analysis of Conflict Style and Practice with Defensiveness Behavior Concepts**

**Assignment formatting instructions:**

**5.5** **Accommodating Score.**

**5.8** **Compromising Score.**

**6.6 Integrating Score.**

**3 Avoiding Score.**

**5** **Dominating Score.**

**Prompt #1:**

**What was your highest score? Do you agree with the assessment? Name the style and discuss your perceptions regarding this style with respect to your own thoughts regarding how you approach conflict situations. Provide an example from your own life of your experience with this style of conflict (either using the style yourself, or as employed by someone else in a conflict situation). Be specific.**

Conflict style is the way in which an individual typically responds to conflict. The results of my Conflict Style Inventory analysis were quite informative. My high score was Integrating Style with a 6.6 out of 7. Hamilton explains that individuals with a strong integrating style have,"a strong interest in supporting the relationship and/or the goals of the other person,"(page, 326). I try to approach every situation with every individual sensitively and originally. I think developing relationships with the people I work with is important in order for, not only their personal development and success, but mine as well. If I do not have a genuine relationship with someone I am having an intimate conversation with, they are going to be less likely to confide in me and it's going to be harder to get to know them personally.

I am proud to say that this is my highest score. I think it reflects what my style is very accurately. Just the other day one of my employees was shooting attitude in every direction altering everyone's moods. After about an hour I took her in private and just asked her if she was OK. She started crying before I even asked the full question. She admitted she was stressed from her other job and apologized for acting so miserable because it wasn't our fault. We had a short conflict, resolved it quickly casually heading back to work. I strongly agree that, "conflict is normal, healthy, and necessary for personal growth as well as relationship development and satisfaction."(page, 326). I confronted the fact that she was bringing us down and she confronted the issue that her unhappiness didn't stem from her current situation. We were able to resolve our issues with both parties benefiting.

**What was your second-highest score? Was it very close to your highest score, or significantly lower? Do you agree with the assessment? Discuss your perceptions regarding this style (and any interactions with your highest score) with respect to how you approach conflict situations. Provide an example from your own life of your experience with this style of conflict (either using the style yourself, or as employed by someone else in a conflict situation). Be specific.**

Looking back at my results, I found that my second-highest score was the Compromising Style of conflict resolution. I received a score of 5.8 in this conflict style. I favor this approach because I like to find middle ground in a resolution. When two parties cannot find common ground, by themselves, it is up to a mediator to help decide. Compromising occurs when two parties find a way of," 'meeting in the middle,' or each person getting part of what they want, but giving up a little something as well in the interest of a mutually satisfactory outcome."(page, 326). Compromising as a fair solution when both parties can't get every wish they desire.

When considering this style, I kind of apply it to a "better than nothing" type of outlook. I'll often give my employee's an option of what position they would like to attend to in the morning. I'm luck enough that most mornings the situation works itself out and I don't have to get involved in the dccision. However, there are some mornings all my employees want to be on the register position. In order to make both sides satisfied I must alter their positions halfway through their shift. This way both are happy they get the opportunity on bar but they are equally giving up some time for the other individual.

**Discuss one thing that works pretty well about your preferred conflict style; in other words, what is one advantage for you about it?**

In order to solve a problematic scenario it's important to have productive conversation. My theory is to identify an issue, confront it and solve it as soon as possible. I think it is best to just get it over and done with. A sour situation can tumbleweed into a bomb pretty quickly. The advantage comes when the bomb is disengaged before it explodes. People tend to internalize their feelings and after a certain amount of time it will surely lead to destruction. I also like developing such strong connects with individuals. I think everyone is interesting and maybe this is why I do things like, "openly discuss my viewpoints, listen careful to other's viewpoints, and put a great deal of effort into developing a creative solution that meets both parties' needs completely."(page, 326). I enjoy the challenge of a new problem to find a solution to make the work environment better for my employees and myself.

**Discuss one disadvantage you’ve found in using your preferred conflict style.** I've realized that my conflict resolution style is very emotionally demanding. I often get too involved in situations and take my work problems home with me. In order to cope with the burdens I bare, I take bi-weekly yoga classes to ease my mind and body. It helps me feel like I've received relief from the lack of control in my life. I plan vacations and small weekend getaways in order to separate myself from my work environment. I am not defined by my work but witnessing the hardships people have lived through makes me realize how important it is to have a life outside the walls of which I get paid.

**Source:**

Hamilton, V. (2007). Human Relations: The Art and Science of Building Effective

Relationships. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

**Prompt #2: INSTRUCTIONS: For each of the following five scenarios (a – e), identify at least one of Gibb’s categories of defense-arousing communication. Then rewrite the original statement in a way that replaces the defense-arousing statement with more supportive language. Then add two of your own scenarios (f – g) following a similar format, based on experiences.**

**Following are Gibb’s categories:**

**Evaluation vs. Description**

**Control vs. Problem Orientation**

**Strategy vs. Spontaneity**

**Neutrality vs. Empathy**

**Superiority vs. Equality**

**Certainty vs. Provisionalism**

**Example: Girl to her older brother:** “You don’t have a life. All you do is play on the computer!”

**Types of defense-arousing communication:** evaluation, certainty

**More supportive way of communicating:** “I’ve noticed that you’ve been playing on your computer several hours a day lately. I’m concerned that you might be neglecting the other aspects of your life. Can we talk about this?”

**1. Girl to her ex-boyfriend:** “You’re never going to graduate from high school, and you’ll just end up in a blue-collar job for the rest of your life!”

**Types of defense-arousing communication:** Evaluation,Certainty

**More supportive way of communicating: "**We both know how smart of a person you are. That's

why I'd like to talk to you about why you haven't been applying yourself lately in school. Is there

anything I can do to help?"

**2. One person to coworker:** “You keep whining about missing your girlfriend, and we’re tired of listening to you. Why don’t you just move to Arizona so you can be with her?”

**Types of defense-arousing communication:** Evaluation, Certainty **More supportive way of communicating:** "I've worked with you a long time and have never seen you so distraught about a woman. Have you ever considered moving to be with your girlfriend?"

**3. Girl to her brother:** “If I thought about business half as much as you do, I’d be 10 times more successful than you.” **Types of defense-arousing communication:** Evaluation, Certainty **More supportive way of communicating:** "Sometimes I think you could use a little help, maybe we should team up when it comes to business. Put me on the payroll, Bro!"

**4. One person to her brother:** “All you do is party. You’re wasting the money   
Mom and Dad are spending to put you through school.” **Types of defense-arousing communication:** Evaluation, Certainty **More supportive way of communicating: "**I've noticed you've been spending a lot of time with

your friends and it concerns me a bit. You and I both know how hard Mom and Dad work to pay for your

school. Do you think you need to reassess your decision in attending?"

**5. A boss to an employee:** “You’re always taking time off work to take care of your baby. I’m going to have to let you go if this continues.” **Types of defense-arousing communication:** Neutrality, Superiority **More supportive way of communicating:** "I know that your dedicated to being a good mother, and thats a great thing, but if it keeps effecting your work we're going to have to have a serious discussion."

**6. Student to another student while working on a project:** "I'll do all the drawings since we both know your handwriting looks like my past cellmate's." **Types of defense-arousing communication:** Control, Evaluation, Certainty **More supportive way of communicating: "**There's a lot of work to be done, we should probably

start delegating tasks. Since I love to doodle so much, do you mind if I do the drawings and you can work

on the computer portion?"

**7. Girlfriend to boyfriend:** "You're always flirting with other girls, I don't know why you don't just break up with me already."

**Types of defense-arousing communication:** Evaluation, Certainity, Neutrality  **More supportive way of communicating:** "Sometimes I notice you looking at other girls and it really makes me self-conscious. I just want to make sure that you're committed to me like I am you."

**Prompt #3: INSTRUCTIONS: For each of the following five scenarios (a – e), identify two different ways you could respond non-defensively to the speaker – then add two of your own scenarios (f – g) following a similar format, based on experiences.   
In your responses, choose from the following non-defensive response styles:**

**Ask for specifics**

**Guess about specifics**

**Paraphrase speaker’s ideas**

**Ask what the critic wants**

**Ask about the consequences**

**Ask what else is wrong of your behavior**

**Agree with the critic’s perception**

**Agree with the truth**

**Example:** A boss says to an employee: “Don’t ever treat a customer that way again!”

**One type of non-defensive response:** Ask what the critic wants

**How you could say it:** “What would you like me to do differently next time?”

**Second type of non-defensive response:** agree with the truth

**How you could say it:** “You’re right; I lost my temper. I’m sorry.”

**1. A mom says to her daughter:** “If you move in with those other girls you’ll just end up fighting with them because you have a hard personality to live with.” **Non-defensive response type:** Ask for specifics **How you could say it: "**Well, I'm not sure what you mean by that. What exactly about my personality makes me difficult to live with?" **Non-defensive response type:** Paraphrase speaker's ideas **How you could say it: "**I just want to make sure I'm understanding what your saying. You said my personality makes me difficult to live with and all you think I'll do is fight with the other girls?"

**2. A husband to his wife: “Must be nice to have a day off to just do whatever you want.”  
  
Non-defensive response type:** Agree with the truth **How you could say it:** "It is nice to be off, oh how I wish I could just do whatever I wanted, though!" **Non-defensive response type:** Ask what the critic wants

**How you could say it: "**It is nice to have the whole day off, is there something I can help you with

since I have time?"

**3. A guy to his girlfriend: “You spend way too much money on clothes.”  
  
Non-defensive response type:** Agree with the critic's perception **How you could say it: "**You're always with me when I make all my purchases!" **Non-defensive response type:** Agree with the truth **How you could say it: "**I know, I think I have a shopping addiction. Do you think I need help?"

**4. One roommate to another: “You’re neurotic!”**

**Non-defensive response type:** Agree with the critic's perception **How you could say it:** "Aren't we all?" **Non-defensive response type:** Ask for specifics **How you could say it: "**I'm sure I have my neuroses, which ones have you observed?"

**5. A girl to her boyfriend: “Your life is out of control—you have no direction!”**

**Non-defensive response type: Ask for specifics   
How you could say it:** "I'm trying to balance a lot right now, what aspect of my life are you referring to?" **Non-defensive response type: Ask what the critic wants  
How you could say it: "**Coming from you that means something. What can I do to change your opinion?"

**6. Dad to his daughter: "You're going to get pregnant!"**

**Non-defensive response type:** Ask about specifics **How you could say it: "**I really hope I can change your mind about that, what makes you think I'm so quick to get pregnant?" **Non-defensive response type:** Agree with the truth **How you could say it: "**Hopefully one day!"

**7. Girlfriend to boyfriend: "**You never hear me when I'm talking to you!" **Non-defensive response type:** Guess about specifics**'**

**How you could say it: "**I can see that I haven't been paying enough attention to you lately. Would you like to go to the park and sit and talk?" **Non-defensive response type:** Ask what else is wrong with your behavio

**How you could say it: "**Usually I think we communicate pretty well. Is there anything else that I'm doing that's bothering you?"

**CONFLICT STYLE INVENTORY (For Prompt #1)**

**PART 1**

INSTRUCTIONS: For each of the following statements, choose a number between 1 and 7 that represents the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement.

**(1=** **strongly disagree, 7**=**strongly agree)**

6 1. I generally try to satisfy the needs of my peers.

6 2. I try to work out a compromise that gives both of us some of what we want.

6 3. I try to work with my peers to find solutions that satisfy our expectations.

2 4. I usually avoid open discussions of differences with my peers.

3 5. I exert pressure on my peers to make decisions in my favor.

6 6. I try to find a middle course or compromise to resolve an impasse.

5 7. I use my influence to get my ideas accepted.

2 8. I use my authority to get decisions made in my favor.

5 9. I usually accommodate the wishes of my peers.

5 10. I give in to the wishes of my peers.

6 11. I bargain with my peers so that a middle ground can be reached.

6 12. I exchange information with my peers to solve a problem together.

6 13. I sometimes bend over backwards to accommodate the desires of my peers.

6 14. I sometimes take a moderate position so that a compromise can be reached.

6 15. I usually propose a middle ground for breaking deadlocks.

6 16. I negotiate with my peers so that a compromise can be reached.

4 17. I try to stay away from disagreement with my peers.

3 18. I avoid conflict situations with my peers.

4 19. I use my expertise to make others decide in my favor.

5 20. I often go along with the suggestions of my peers.

5 21. I try to give and take so that a compromise can be made.

7 22. I try to bring all our concerns out in the open so that the issues can be resolved in the best possible way.

7 23. I collaborate with my peers to come up with decisions acceptable to us.

6 24. I try to satisfy the expectations of my peers.

6 25. I sometimes use my power to win a competitive situation.

3 26. I try to keep my disagreement with my peers to myself in order to avoid hard feelings.

4 27. I try to avoid unpleasant exchanges with my peers.

2 28. I keep disagreements with my peers to myself to prevent disrupting our relationship.

7 29. I try to work with my peers for a proper understanding of a problem.

Source: Deborah Cai and Edward L. Fink, “Conflict Style Differences Between Individualists and Collectivists” Communication Monographs 69, pp. 67–87. Copyright 2002. Reprinted by permission of Taylor & Francis and the authors.

**PART 2: SCORING**

INSTRUCTIONS: Score your inventory by adding up sets of numbers as follows:

A. Add up your scores for 1, 9, 10, 13, 20, and 24; then divide the total by 6.

**6+5+5+6+5+6=33/6=5.5**

**This is your Accommodating Score.**

B. Add up your scores for 2, 6, 11, 14, 15, 16, and 21; then divide the total by 7.

**6+6+6+6+6+6+5=41/7=5.8**

**This is your Compromising Score.**

C. Add up your scores for 3, 12, 22, 23 and 29; then divide the total by 5.

**6+6+7+7+7=33/5=6.6**

**This is your Integrating Score.**

D. Add up your scores for 4, 17, 18, 26, 27, and 28; then divide the total by 6.

**2+4+3+3+4+2=3**

**This is your Avoiding Score.**

E. Add up your scores for 5, 7, 8, 19, and 25; then divide the total by 5.

**3+5+2+4+6=5**

**This is your Dominating Score.**