

Productive Conflict Profile

Keena Mosley

Tuesday, August 24, 2021

This report is provided by:

Dr. Keena R. Mosley
Momentum Leadership Group
www.KeenaMosley.com
drk@KeenaMosley.com
833-532-3238



WILEY

Introduction

WHAT IS CONFLICT?

Keena, 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.

OVERVIEW OF THE DiSC® MODEL

Dominance

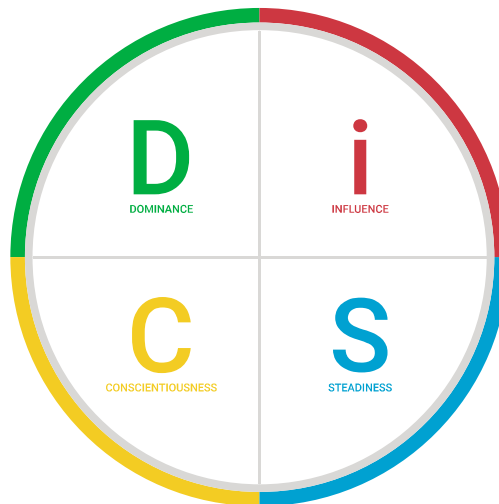
- Direct
- Tough-minded
- Strong-willed
- Forceful
- Firm

In conflict, focuses on:
logic and victory

Conscientiousness

- Analytical
- Reserved
- Precise
- Private
- Systematic

In conflict, focuses on:
justice and logic



influence

- Outgoing
- Enthusiastic
- Optimistic
- Lively
- High-Spirited

In conflict, focuses on:
expression and feelings

Steadiness

- Even-tempered
- Accommodating
- Patient
- Tactful
- Humble

In conflict, focuses on:
feelings and consensus

1 Part One

Your DiSC[®] Style in Conflict

Your DiSC Style: C

Keena, your dot and shading say a lot about how you respond in conflict. Because your dot is located in the middle of the C region, you have a C style. Your shading indicates your priorities and where you focus your energy. During conflict, you prioritize objectivity, justification, and stability.

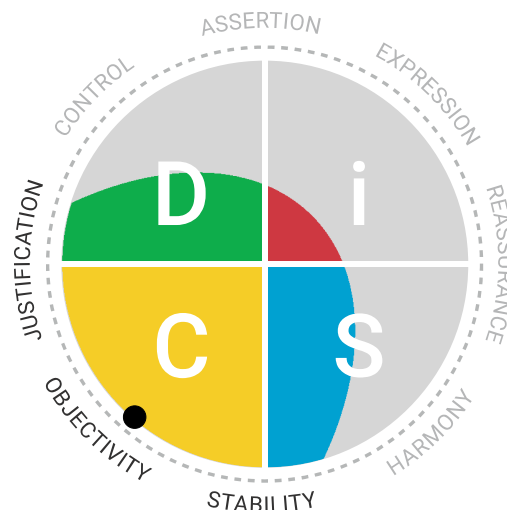
As someone with the C style, you tend to take an **objective** approach when engaging with others. You likely analyze things carefully so you can make precise, logical decisions. During conflict, you're probably good at separating emotions from facts. However, when this is taken too far, you may appear unsympathetic. And, because you don't like to be wrong, your instinct may be to use your prowess with logic to justify your position, overpower others with facts, or disregard other points that don't fit within your narrative.

Most likely, your desire for competency probably motivates you to be a subject-matter expert, always striving for quality in all aspects of your work. Since you've often done extensive background work before putting ideas forward, you're probably willing to **justify** your ideas through logic-based debates. Because of this, you may become defensive, critical, or even hold grudges when people challenge you. Internally, you may spend tremendous energy creating an airtight case for your side, which may close you off to considering someone else's logic.

Similar to others with the C style, you value **stability**. The last thing you want is for emotionally charged chaos to erupt. During tense situations, you may concede, even if you disagree, when you don't have enough specific information to object. You don't want to misspeak and open yourself up to criticism. However, these situations may linger with you and lead you, possibly out of resentment, to dismiss others' opinions or become passive-aggressive going forward. But, there is a more productive side to these tendencies, too. If you're especially troubled by the issue, you may bring it up again after you have put more thought into it and can broach the subject carefully and thoughtfully.

In most circumstances, you're likely willing to analyze and challenge ideas by pointing out flaws and questioning others when you aren't convinced by their arguments. At times, this can bring great value, but it may also result in some people seeing you as hypercritical, insensitive, and possibly dismissive. While you're willing to challenge others, you may be sensitive to people questioning your judgment or reasoning. When aggressively challenged, you may have a tendency to withdraw, especially if there is an emotional element involved. Although withdrawing can be a healthy way to regroup and revisit an issue at a later time, it can also be a destructive tactic when you refuse to engage in the issue, leaving it unresolved indefinitely.

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 ability to think matters through thoroughly and objectively, willingness to put in the work to justify your position, and focus on maintaining a stable and predictable working environment 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 C style.

1 Part One

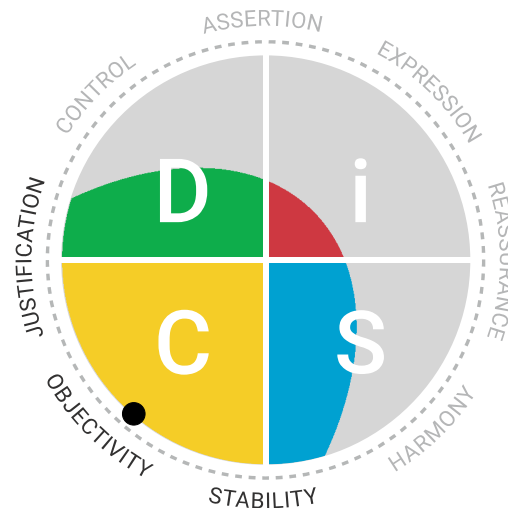
Your DiSC[®] Style in Conflict

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 C style, you probably prefer to work through disagreements in a stable setting where logic and objectivity are valued over passion and emotion. Most likely, you appreciate analytical debates and justifying an argument with evidence and reason.

You may value many of the following approaches during conflict:

- Separating personal emotions from facts
- Catching errors or flaws in arguments
- Determining the root of the problem
- Solving problems through logic
- Justifying your point of view
- Providing in-depth analysis
- Stabilizing the situation
- Staying objective
- Being right



WHAT DRAINS YOUR ENERGY DURING CONFLICT?

Then there are also those aspects of conflict that are particularly stressful for you. Because you tend to focus on logic, you may find it frustrating when people can't back up their claims with substantial reasoning. In addition, you dislike intense displays of emotion, which may cause you to become very uncomfortable. Further, it may frustrate you if people don't give you the time and space you need to process the situation.

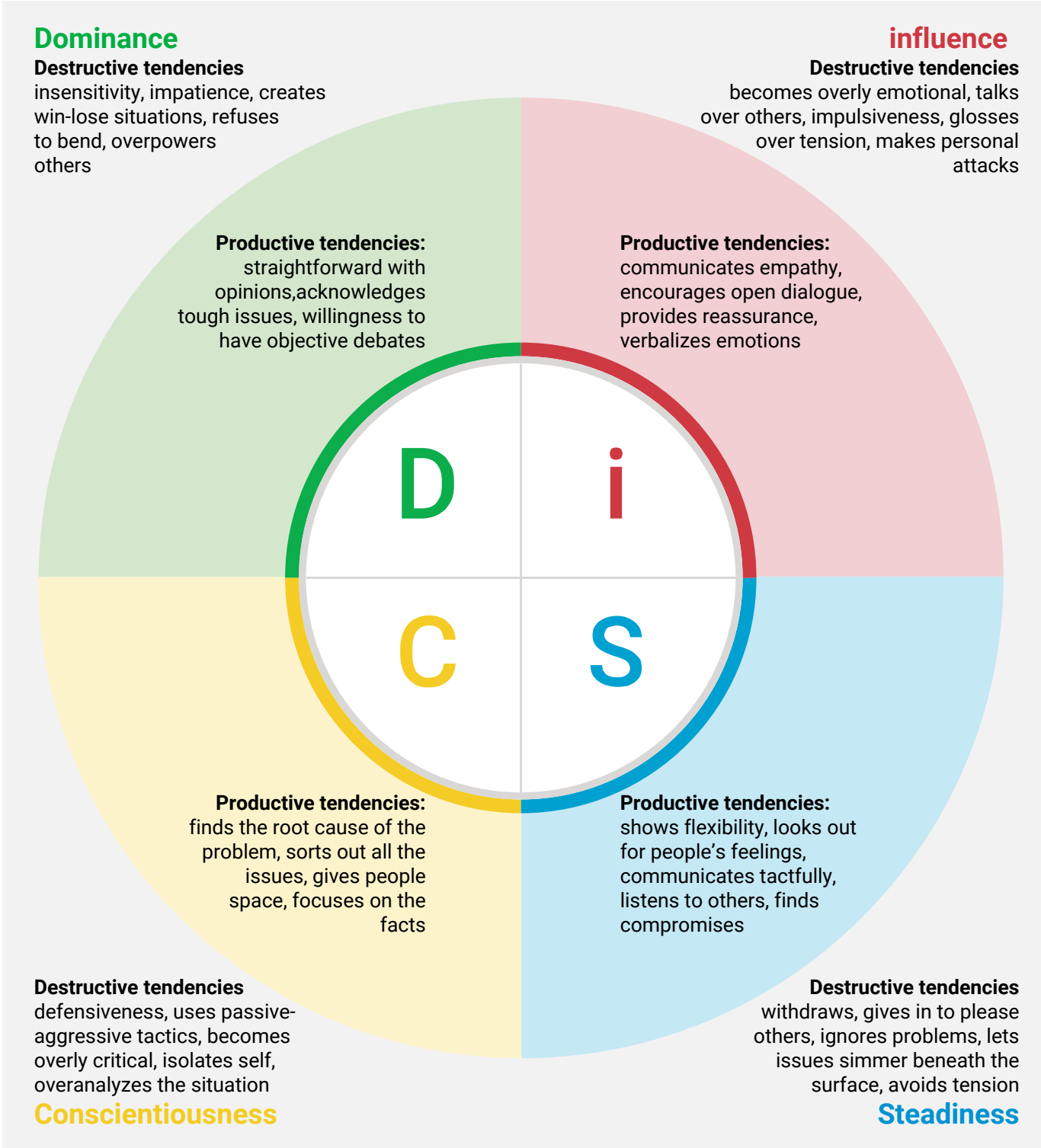
Many of the following approaches or behaviors may be stressful for you during conflict:

- Having little time to reflect
- Lacking the details or facts of a situation
- Being accused of being irresponsible or incompetent
- Dealing with illogical arguments
- Being in a chaotic situation
- Having to be forceful or insistent
- Witnessing exaggeration or emotional displays
- Dealing with sensitive or erratic people
- Watching strong personalities dominate a disagreement

1 Part One

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.



1 Part One

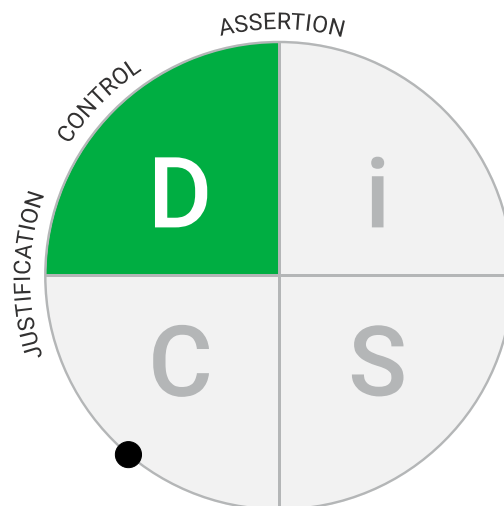
Conflict with the D Style

WHAT DRIVES THE D STYLE IN CONFLICT?

Imagine you're entangled in a conflict with someone who has the D style and places a priority on having **control**. She cuts right to the chase and pushes really hard for her opinions. She has a strong desire to take charge of the conversation, and if she begins to interrupt or talk over you, you may become frustrated and put up a wall or withdraw.

This individual tends to **assert** herself during conflict, which may clash with your tendency to approach controversy cautiously. 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. So, at times, she may grow impatient with your desire to step back for analysis and processing.

Furthermore, you may appreciate that she doesn't take things at face value. Her tendency to come up with airtight **justification** for her side of the story matches your own tendency to offer a rationale for your argument. Similarly, she may dissect and counter your position. And as long as things don't get too intense, you'll willingly engage in a debate.



COMPARED TO YOU

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

- More focused on controlling the discussion
- More likely to address problems directly
- Equally likely to be skeptical
- Similarly likely to be challenging
- Less focused on precision
- Less anxious about heated debates

HOW CAN YOU HAVE PRODUCTIVE CONFLICT WITH THE D STYLE?

Your "D" coworkers tend to be quite blunt, saying exactly what's on their minds. And since they usually expect the same from others, they may grow impatient if you exercise so much restraint or stay so objective that they don't know exactly where you stand. Therefore, to have productive conflict with the D style, consider the following:

- Don't prolong the conflict by withdrawing.
- Be open and frank about where you stand.
- Recognize the value of addressing the issue so that it can be resolved.

1 Part One

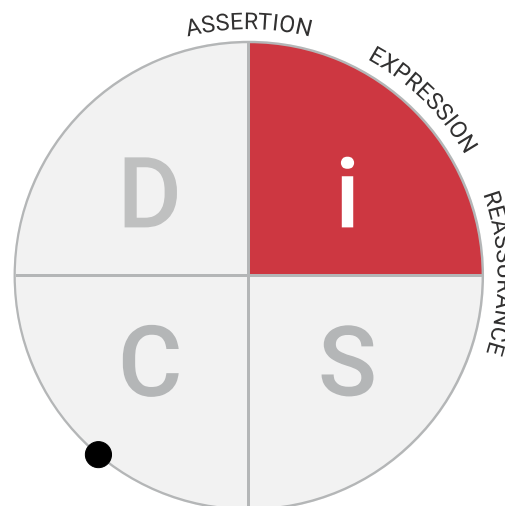
Conflict with the i Style

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, he's so focused on **expressing** himself that he's more likely to become emotional and lash out when he feels threatened. In contrast, you dislike emotionally charged situations and may withdraw or try to overpower him with logic when things get tense.

Furthermore, he may come across as somewhat more accepting and warm than you usually are. Because being well-liked and on good terms is important to him, he'll want **reassurance** during or after the conflict that your relationship is still okay. You're more reserved and interested in focusing on the task at hand, so his push for this level of warmth may seem irrelevant to 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. He pushes forward using his gut, which may not line up well with your preference to take matters slowly and to logically consider all the angles. So you may become frustrated, particularly during arguments with him.



COMPARED TO YOU

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

- More likely to assert opinions
- More animated and expressive
- More sensitive to people's emotional needs
- Less logic-focused and objective
- Less guarded
- Less likely to stay on topic

HOW CAN YOU HAVE PRODUCTIVE CONFLICT WITH THE i STYLE?

Unlike you, people with the i style tend to openly express their feelings and opinions. On the other hand, you probably choose your words carefully and tend to be uncomfortable in emotionally charged situations. Therefore, to have productive conflict with the i style, consider the following:

- Step back from the facts to consider their feelings.
- Let them express themselves, even if it's uncomfortable for you.
- Don't withdraw from discussions when they become heated.

1 Part One

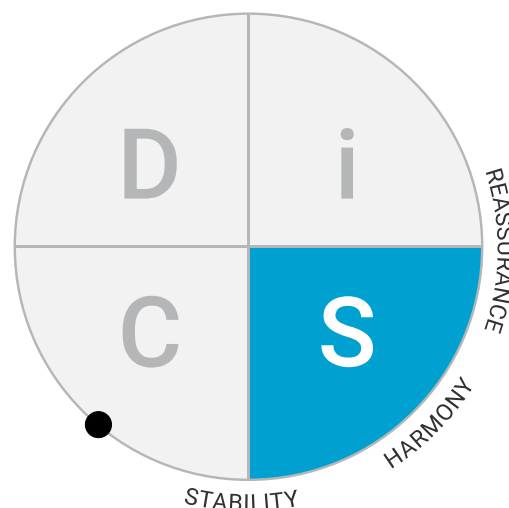
Conflict with the S Style

WHAT DRIVES THE S STYLE IN CONFLICT?

Now, imagine you're in conflict with someone who has the S style. He prioritizes **harmony** and wants everyone to get along. However, you usually want to solve problems, as long as you can keep emotions and dramatics out of it. If you point out issues or argue for your opinions, 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 attending to emotions may make you uncomfortable, he tends to hang on to hurt feelings and may worry about whether your relationship is still okay.

Furthermore, like you, he prioritizes **stability**, so when tension arises, you both may want to return things to normal as soon as possible. Neither of you is comfortable with the unknowns inherent in conflict—both in the altercation itself and the outcomes it brings. When the situation starts spiraling out of control, you'll both do your best to return a sense of order and calm as quickly as you can.



COMPARED TO YOU

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

- More worried about upsetting people
- More concerned about being well-liked
- Equally likely to remain calm
- Just as likely to be respectful and polite
- Less skeptical of people
- Less analytical and logic-focused

HOW CAN YOU HAVE PRODUCTIVE CONFLICT WITH THE S STYLE?

People with the S style want to be agreeable and cooperative, and, like them, you also want to avoid offending others. However, in the heat of conflict, you might turn the discussion into a logic competition, and they may cave in to keep the peace. Therefore, to have productive conflict with the S style, consider the following:

- Encourage them to express their ideas for resolution.
- Don't immediately dismiss ideas that seem illogical.
- Remember that they may feel personally attacked if you challenge their ideas.

1 Part One

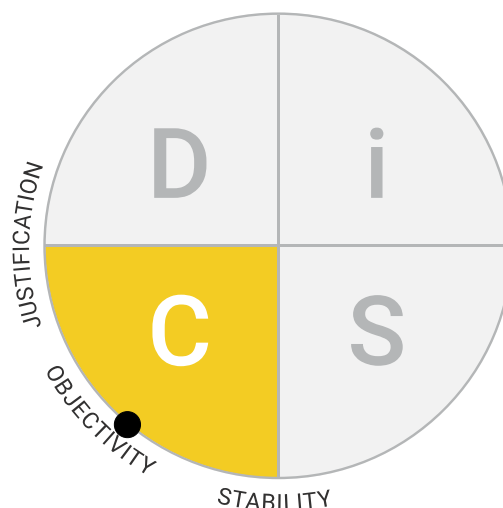
Conflict with the C Style

WHAT DRIVES THE C STYLE IN CONFLICT?

Finally, imagine you're in conflict with someone who has the C style and shares your priority of staying **objective**. You may appreciate that she keeps emotions out of the discussion and tends to stick to the facts instead. You both tend to step back and analyze the situation calmly and logically, without letting subjective feelings get in the way.

At the same time, like you, this individual tends to **justify** her claims and dig for answers rather than just accept other people's opinions at face value. You both probably pride yourselves on your critical-thinking skills. She will probably appreciate that you are usually well prepared for her questions and that you provide a logical, rational basis for your arguments.

Like you, this individual also prizes **stability**, so she does her best to avoid the unpredictability of conflict. During a disagreement, you both have a tendency to concede, even if you don't think you're wrong in your way of thinking, simply to avoid rocking the boat. Because of this, the two of you may maintain a sense of calm, but you may also fail to fully address and resolve issues.



COMPARED TO YOU

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

- Just as self-controlled and restrained
- Similarly analytical and logic-focused
- Just as adept at countering irrational arguments
- Equally likely to withdraw when things get heated
- Just as likely to avoid volatile situations
- Similarly focused on the objectivity of arguments

HOW CAN YOU HAVE PRODUCTIVE CONFLICT WITH THE C STYLE?

Like you, others with the C style prefer to tell their side of the story in a controlled and logical way. You both value personal space, but you may need to be careful that you don't give each other so much room that the issue remains unresolved. Therefore, to have productive conflict with the C style, consider the following:

- Allow time to reflect, but don't let the issue stall out.
- Use your analytical skills to help determine the best path forward.
- Be willing to compromise, even if you reach different logical conclusions.

1 Part One

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, rigidity
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?

2 Part Two

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 12–18.

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

2 Part Two

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 rather than reaching the best solution, when the focus shifts to protecting egos and putting others in their place. Although you likely prefer to avoid emotionally charged debates, you may be tempted to argue when the logic you pride yourself on is challenged. Like others with the C style, you tend to carefully justify your opinions. So when your reasoning is questioned, it may feel like an assault on your competency. This may spur you to push harder as the debate becomes a competition in which you need to ensure your reasoning triumphs. And the more heated the exchange becomes, the harder it can be to see any value in the other person's view.

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

Similar to others with the C style, you may occasionally be tempted to belittle others during conflict as an easy way to convey that another person's opinions are illogical or ridiculous. By belittling someone, we create a demeaning, one-dimensional caricature of them. Not only does this make it easier to dismiss their opinions, but it can feel extremely satisfying. The power of belittling often comes from putting a label on someone that sums up all of the negative attributes we want to call out. It channels all of the frustrations we have into a single powerful word. And once that succinct label is out there, we can use it to easily dismiss anything else the person has to say.

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

2 Part Two

Why Do I Do This?

CAVING IN



Giving in to something after originally opposing it

Caving in can be particularly tempting because it often feels like the absolute quickest way to end 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. Like others with the C style, you may occasionally be tempted to cave in during conflict as a way to keep the situation stable, particularly when emotions run high.

Automatic thoughts that may lead to this response:

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

DEFENSIVENESS



Becoming anxious or protective in the face of criticism

Like others with the C style, you probably work hard to meet high standards in everything you do. So if your work or ideas are being challenged in some way—if someone criticizes your logic, points out your mistakes, or suggests you've done something wrong—you may become defensive because it feels like your worth is being attacked. Even the slightest hint of criticism may evoke an immediate sense of anxiety that triggers defensiveness. It's hard to admit failure or shortcomings. When your brain is telling you the stakes are incredibly high, it's tempting to cover up any vulnerabilities or weaknesses. Even when you 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

Dismissing opinions is a blocking strategy to win an argument, but is 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. Of course, people with your C style aren't normally inclined to cut people off like this, but it may be tempting when you feel that the other person is being irrational or erratic.

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

2 Part Two

Why Do I Do 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. Of course, given your C style, drama probably isn't a go-to response for you. In fact, it may really only be tempting when your attempts to use logic and reason are repeatedly blocked. 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.

Automatic thoughts that may lead to this response:

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

EXAGGERATING



Representing something as being worse than it really is

Sometimes a minor offense can still make us extremely upset. In fact, sometimes it's tough to justify the intensity of our emotions given the actual situation. Exaggeration is a way of making a situation sound as bad as it feels. Exaggeration is also empowering. It makes our case seem that much more powerful and defensible because it makes the other person's behavior seem that much more awful. So, for people who value stability, like you and others with the C style, exaggeration can be a more subtle way to express irritation, compared to, for instance, yelling at someone.

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 C style, you may exclude others during conflict as a way to indirectly express and deal with challenging emotions that another person has created in you. By quietly disrupting their standing in the group, you 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

2 Part Two

Why Do I Do This?

FINGER-POINTING



Blaming someone for a particular situation or issue

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. You, like others with the C style, might be drawn to this behavior when you sense you're being blamed, even indirectly, for something. Since you probably hold yourself to high standards, even the suggestion that someone is questioning your competence can be deeply distressing. To protect yourself, you may be tempted to redirect fault onto someone else by zeroing in on how they contributed to the problem. Your ability to focus on objective facts comes in handy here, because it lets you identify exactly where someone is wrong. If you can call out this person's action as the source of the problem, the blame is less likely to land on you.

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

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. Since you have the C style, you may gossip during conflict as a way to process and objectively make sense of the situation while also seeking support to justify your position. But gossip can also be about power. It helps rally people to our side. We get our perspective out into the world first and most convincingly. And, 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 indirect strategy we use to get back at someone by objecting to as much as possible about the person: shooting down their suggestions, finding holes in their logic, scrutinizing their output for mistakes. With your C style, you may resort to this behavior when you want to express frustration with someone, but for one reason or another don't want to be direct about it. Because you likely take great satisfaction in your critical-thinking skills, you may be tempted to put them to use for you here identifying fault in the other person's work and ideas. You get to act out on your frustration, but on the surface, it just looks like you're focusing on objective facts and logic.

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

2 Part Two

Why Do I Do This?

OVERPOWERING



Overwhelming others with superior force

Overpowering draws on all the sources of power at our disposal to defeat someone during a conflict. For you and others with the C style, this might mean using your critical-thinking skills to overwhelm someone with logic. You might fire off a rapid succession of points to undermine the person, maybe even carefully crafting these arguments ahead of time to drill home your point. Here, logic may be used to throw others off balance and give you the upper hand from the start. And because people with your C style really, really don't like to be wrong, you may be particularly tempted by this strategy when your reasoning or ideas are challenged. And once you start down this path, it may be difficult to back down because the logic you take such pride in is on the line.

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

PASSIVE-AGGRESSION



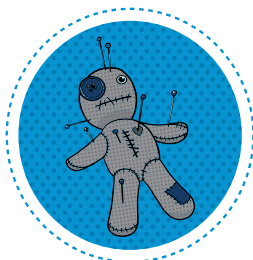
Expressing negative feelings in a subtle or indirect way

We can all think of occasions when we desperately wanted to express anger at someone, but didn't want a full-scale conflict. 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. As someone with the C style, since you likely have an easier time expressing facts rather than your feelings during conflict, you may become passive-aggressive as a way to indirectly express any difficult emotions. Its many forms (e.g., ignoring, eye-rolling, nit-picking) make it endlessly flexible. Sometimes the goal is to bother someone enough that they initiate the confrontation, at which point we have invitation to let loose on them. But whatever the end goal, we may take more satisfaction from it than we care to admit.

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. As someone with the C style, you may only resort to revenge as an extreme response to conflict when your opinions, ideas, and emotions have been repressed and you have ruminated on this for too long.

Automatic thoughts that may lead to this response:

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

2 Part Two

Why Do I Do This?

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. In fact, sabotage runs in direct opposition to what you and others with the C style value (e.g., fairness, justice), so it would probably only seem like an option under very extreme circumstances.

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

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." In particular, we may feel like the "just kidding" excuse gives us immunity after subtly attacking or demeaning someone. Like others with the C style, you may be tempted to use sarcastic remarks during a conflict to make your point without risking too much disruption.

Automatic thoughts that may lead to this response:

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

2 Part Two

Why Do I Do This?

STONEWALLING



Refusing to answer, show emotion, or respond to someone

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're unwilling to even discuss a resolution. Like others with the C style, you likely pride yourself on your high-quality work and logic, so you'll do whatever it takes to avoid being wrong. Stonewalling may sometimes be a tempting response because it lets you remove yourself from the conflict without having to concede or look weak. You can create a self-protective bubble that shields you from the chaos, without technically leaving the fray. And though it may be hard to admit, stonewalling can sometimes be gratifying because we get to punish the other person while feeling like our behavior is strong and dignified.

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's much more painful to some of us than others. Sometimes it feels like a whirling jumble of anxiety, anger, insecurity, and danger. Because you, like others with the C style, value stability and objectivity, you may find conflict to be particularly disorienting as emotions and tempers grow stronger—particularly if they're directed at you. During these times, every instinct might urge you to return to stability and safety, even if it means you don't get to assert your side. Withdrawing can provide immediate relief by letting you retreat and shut out the chaos. And since you often don't like to be wrong, withdrawing can be appealing because it takes you out of the conflict without having to admit blame.

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

Image credits: studiostoks/Shutterstock, Aquarell/Shutterstock, Kchung/Shutterstock, ivector/Shutterstock, jorgen mclemman/Shutterstock, Studio_G/Shutterstock, Alexander_P/Shutterstock, CataVic/Shutterstock

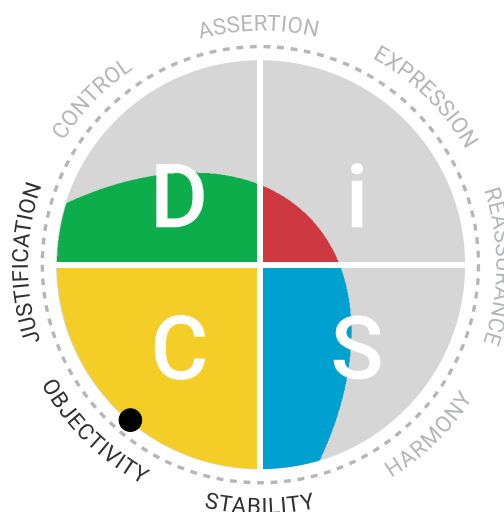
2 Part Two

Recognizing Automatic Thoughts

YOUR C STYLE AND AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS

Keena, like others with the C style, you may find some common themes shaping your automatic thoughts, such as focusing on logic, being right, and remaining cool and collected. 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?

- You're trying to blame me.
- I'll do whatever it takes to calm things down.
- You have no idea what you're talking about.
- I need to end this conversation as soon as possible.
- If I admit a mistake, I'll lose my credibility.
- You're an idiot for not seeing my side.
- I won't give you the satisfaction of getting a reaction out of me.
- You're trying to control me.
- You're being completely unreasonable.
- Showing feelings is undignified.
- If we get in an argument, it will be awful.



REFLECTION

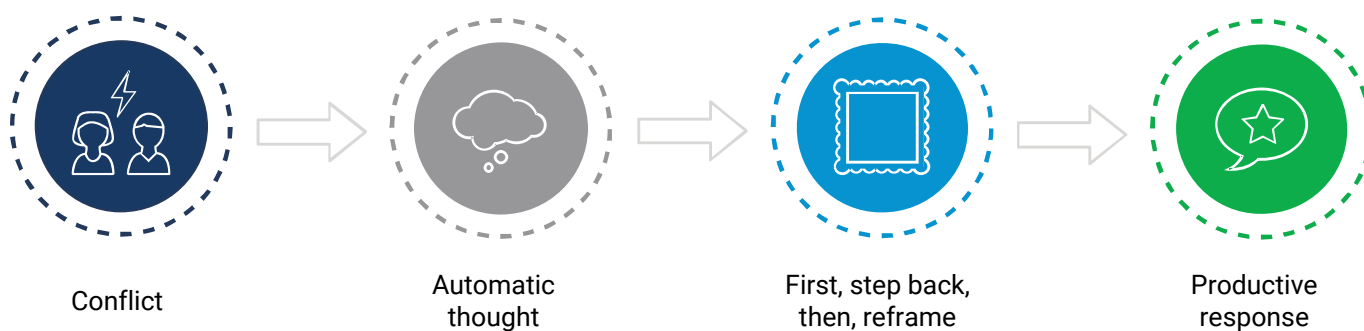
Think back to the conflict situation you described on page 10. What were some automatic thoughts you had?

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

3 Part Three

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**. Keena, your C style can give some key insights into how these two emotions may affect you.

Anger and your C style

Anger: frustration, resentment, outrage, aggression

Anger is a normal emotion that compels us to stick up for ourselves. But in its unhealthy form, it can eat away at us. As someone with the C style, you tend to generate extensive arguments about how your rights were violated, though these are often just churning in your head. Outwardly, you may become bitingly critical or give evasive replies. Even though we don't like to admit it, "stewing in anger" is empowering. So, stepping back may mean noticing that there is some pleasure in mulling over arguments that we deem to be stronger and better than the other person's.

Anxiety and your C style

Anxiety: fear, panic, worry, upheaval, disorientation

For people with the C style, anxiety in conflict may stem from a threat to predictability and calm. It takes you out of your comfort zone, sometimes even inciting a sense of panic. In fact, in particularly emotional situations, you might just freeze up, feeling like you're unable to respond. There are so many variables and it's so hard to predict the other person's responses, you would probably rather just put it out of mind or withdraw. Part of stepping back may be about reminding yourself that the anxiety you're feeling is normal, but that the situation is likely not nearly as awful as it feels.

3 Part Three

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

Keena, because you have the C style, reframing may come naturally to you since you often think through situations objectively. On the other hand, since you sometimes overanalyze and question motives, your thoughts may be influenced by your skepticism. So, once you've stepped back, challenge yourself to re-evaluate the situation. Below are two **examples** of automatic thoughts that are common for your C style and ways to reframe them.

Automatic thought: I won't give them the satisfaction of getting a reaction out of me.

Reframed thought: Letting them know how I feel may help us move on.

Automatic thought: If I admit a mistake, I'll lose my credibility.

Reframed thought: Admitting my mistake might actually build trust.

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 12–18 or the list of automatic thoughts and the Reflection activity on page 19.) 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:

3 Part Three

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 C style, you may find, for example, that separating emotions from facts comes more naturally to you than giving reassurance. 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.

<i>Easy</i>		<i>Difficult</i>
Apologizing	●————— —————●	
Determining the root of the problem	●————— —————●	
Stepping back to reflect	●————— —————●	
Taking ownership of your part in the situation	●————— —————●	
Giving people time and space	●————— —————●	
Acknowledging others' feelings	●————— —————●	
Seeking active resolution	●————— —————●	
Giving reassurance	●————— —————●	
		<i>Easy</i>
		<i>Difficult</i>
	●————— —————●	
	●————— —————●	
	●————— —————●	
	●————— —————●	
	●————— —————●	
	●————— —————●	
	●————— —————●	
	●————— —————●	
	●————— —————●	

REFLECTION

Think back again to your conflict situation from page 10 and the automatic response you described on page 19. 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.

1 Briefly describe your conflict situation.

2 What were your automatic thoughts? What was your response?

3 How did you reframe your automatic thoughts? Could you have done better?

1 Briefly describe your conflict situation.

2 What were your automatic thoughts? What was your response?

3 How did you reframe your automatic thoughts? Could you have done better?