

# PRODUCTIVE CONFLICT PROFILE

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# INTRODUCTION

## What is conflict?

Ruby, 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.

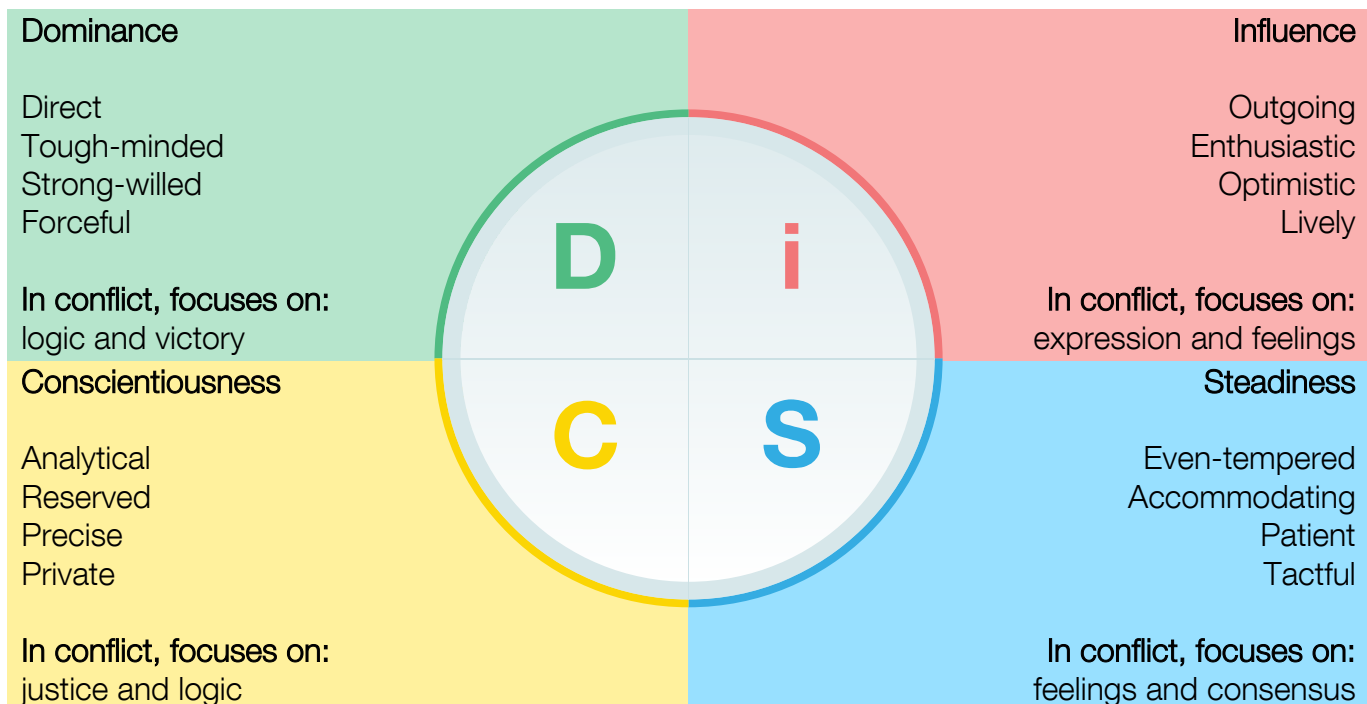
Because conflict will look different depending on the people and situations involved, there is no one-size-fits-all answer to making it productive. Instead the solution starts with you.

*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: D

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

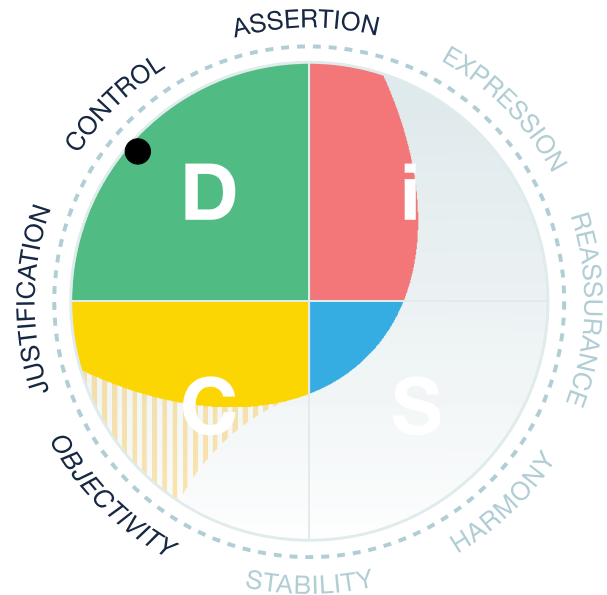
As someone with the D style, because you have a strong vision of how things should be, you likely have a desire to take **control** of conflict situations. Therefore, to prevent others from influencing your agenda, you may take charge of the conversation and do what needs to be done to stay in the driver's seat. Your candid and focused approach can help minimize any misunderstandings and help direct others to focus on the task at hand. At the same time, some people may withdraw or become defensive when you're perceived as dominating, impatient, or overly blunt. These reactions could ultimately stall progress, which is counter to your intent.

Most likely, you want to be seen as projecting strength and as someone of authority. Therefore, when there is a difference of opinions, your instinct may be to try to influence others by **asserting** your views in a forceful, dominant way. While this approach is likely due to the confidence you have in your ideas, others may feel overpowered or disregarded by this behavior at times.

Similar to others with a D style, you may have little self-doubt, and, as such, you tend to **justify** your side of the story while challenging or dismissing others' misgivings. In fact, you may handle differences with people in a competitive way, viewing the situation as a personal challenge that you want to win by finding ways to support your opinions. At times, this could lead to some destructive arguments where you may say things just to get the upper hand and uphold your position. However, your natural inclination to say exactly what's on your mind and challenge others can get people to not only focus on what needs to be done but also to acknowledge the tough issues, both of which can be very productive.

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 are 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 will often be to use your prowess with logic to justify your position, overpower others with facts, or disregard other points of view that you believe to be unsound.

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 take control and be assertive with your ideas as well as your ability to challenge others and justify your point of view 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 D style.

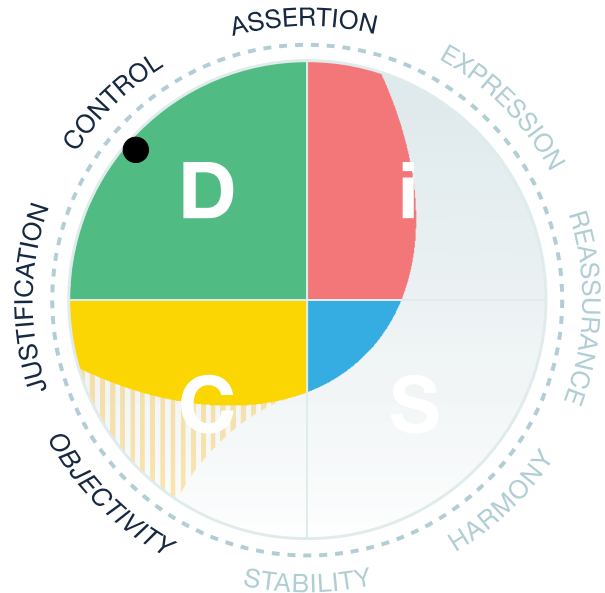
# YOUR DiSC® STYLE IN CONFLICT

## 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 D style, you probably feel it's important to take charge of discussions and have some level of control. You also want your opponent to justify their position, as you tend to do, in a convincing way. And, since you're prepared to hear it like it is, you also want the freedom to assert your opinions directly. Finally, you may also place more weight on arguments that are logical and objective, which is less typical of the D style.

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

- Standing up for your point of view
- Appearing confident or self-assured
- Having authority
- Calling it like you see it
- Convincing others
- Winning arguments
- Using sharp, critical-thinking skills
- Emphasizing objectivity and precision
- Using logic to solve problems



## What drains your energy during conflict?

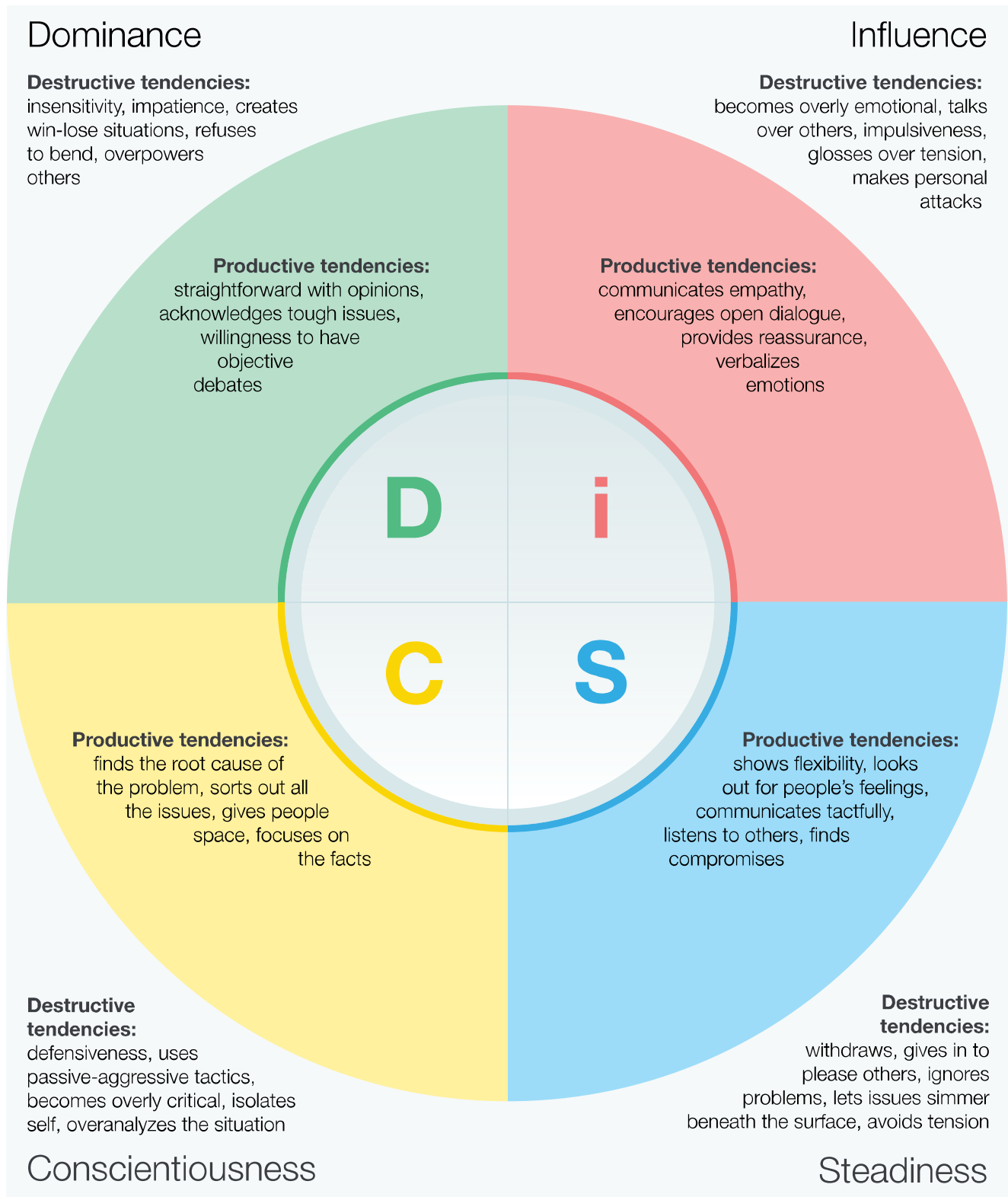
Then there are also those aspects of conflict that are particularly stressful for you. Because you tend to focus on the end result and achieving your goals, you may find it particularly frustrating when your authority is challenged or you feel you don't have control over the situation. In addition, you probably get irritated when you have to take time to deal with misunderstandings or people's hypersensitivity. At the same time, unlike others with the D style, you have a strong appreciation for objectivity during conflict. And so, when emotions die down, you may find it frustrating when people are still unwilling to separate feelings from facts.

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

- Feeling like you have to censor everything you say
- Being unable to interrupt or defend yourself
- Lacking control over situations
- Keeping opinions and skepticism to yourself
- Feeling like the argument keeps going around in circles
- Having your ideas or authority challenged
- Dealing with people who aren't straightforward
- Dealing with illogical arguments
- Being wrong or unprepared

# 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.



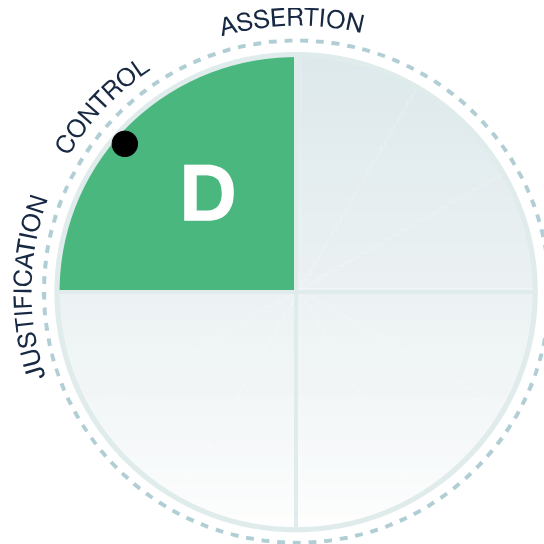
# CONFLICT WITH THE D STYLE

## 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. While you may appreciate her straightforward, no-nonsense approach, the two of you may compete to take charge of the conversation.

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. It's the same way with you, which is probably something you can appreciate about each other.

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 will often dissect and counter your position, which you will likely find fair and reciprocate.



## Compared to you

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

- Just as likely to address issues head-on
- Equally direct or blunt
- Similarly prone to control the discussion
- Equally focused on getting to the point
- Just as likely to question others' conclusions
- Similarly interested in compelling arguments

## 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. In fact, you both may be so focused on your own message that you don't stop to consider the other's point of view. Therefore, to have productive conflict with the D style, consider the following:

- Refrain from getting into a power struggle.
- Reflect on the situation and be willing to compromise.
- Take turns speaking, and avoid talking over each other.

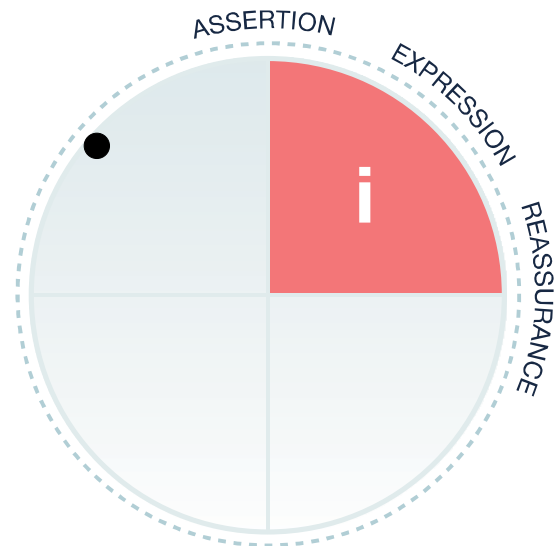
# CONFLICT WITH THE i STYLE

## 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, it's also important to him to be able to **express** his honest thoughts and feelings, while you prefer to keep emotions out of it. He may insist on being heard in confrontations and you may argue forcefully for your opinion, which could escalate the situation.

Whereas you may have a little bit of a skeptical or tough side, you'll probably notice that he comes across as more accepting and warm. 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. Since you tend to let go and move on from conflicts quickly, providing this comfort probably doesn't seem necessary 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, in your mutual desire to address problems, you may not encourage each other to take a step back and reflect on the disagreement.



## Compared to you

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

- More likely to verbalize feelings and emotions
- More worried about interpersonal turmoil
- Just as likely to speak up with opinions
- Similarly likely to let frustration show
- Less focused on winning
- Less blunt or aggressive

## How can you have productive conflict with the i style?

People with the i style may find it natural to openly express their feelings and opinions during conflict. They may appreciate that you say what's on your mind, but they also want to avoid tension and keep things chummy. Therefore, to have productive conflict with the i style, consider the following:

- Approach them informally and keep the dialogue light.
- Let them verbalize their thoughts and feelings.
- Don't focus so intently on your goal that they feel ignored or disrespected.

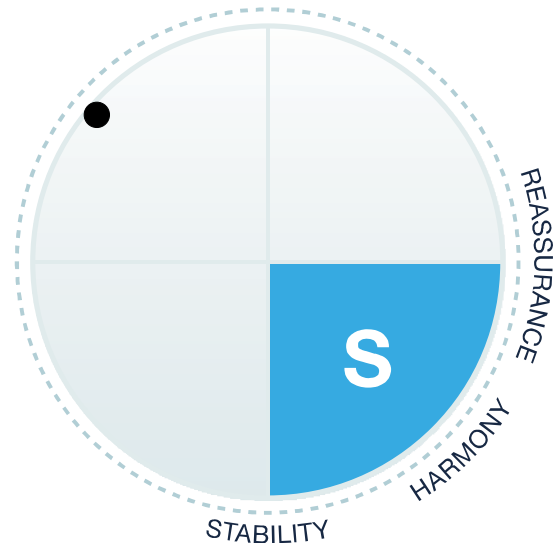
# CONFLICT WITH THE S STYLE

## 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 tend to address problems directly, he'd rather turn the other cheek. Therefore, when you confront him, 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 move past disagreements quickly, he tends to hang on to 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 exchange itself and the outcomes it brings. On the other hand, change and chaos do little to unnerve you, so you may handle disagreements with much more confidence than he does.



## 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 likely to initiate a tense discussion
- Less concerned about proving they're right
- Less skeptical of people

## How can you have productive conflict with the S style?

People with the S style want to be agreeable and cooperative. They choose their words carefully, which is contrary to your straightforward approach, and their tiptoeing around issues may baffle or even irritate you. Therefore, to have productive conflict with the S style, consider the following:

- Convince them of the value of differing opinions.
- Communicate calmly and with sincerity.
- Don't overpower them or dominate the discussion.



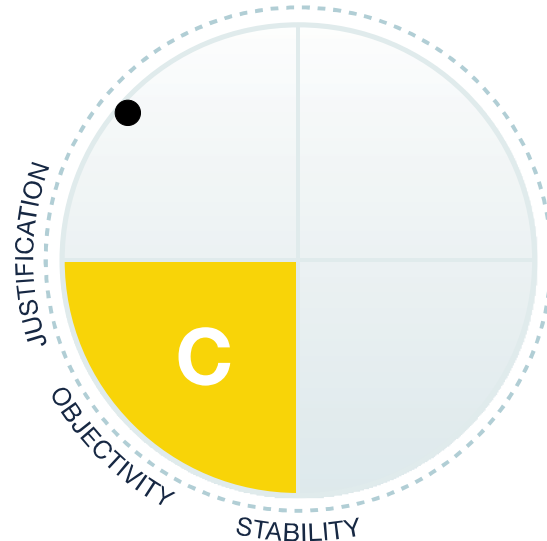
# CONFLICT WITH THE C STYLE

## 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**, which is not typical for someone who has the D style. You may appreciate that she keeps emotions out of the discussion and tends to stick to the facts instead. She will engage in a logical debate with you, but if you get angry and the situation escalates, she may put up a wall and refuse to engage further.

At the same time, like you, 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, so she may respond negatively if you contradict her. However, she probably appreciates that you answer her questions in a straightforward way.

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 forcefully push for your views.



## Compared to you

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

- More self-controlled and restrained
- Similarly analytical and logic-focused
- Just as good at breaking down irrational arguments
- Just as likely to question others' motives
- Less interested in controlling outcomes
- Less forthright and forceful

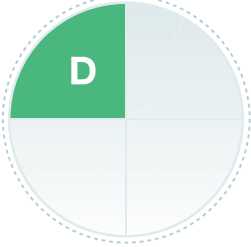
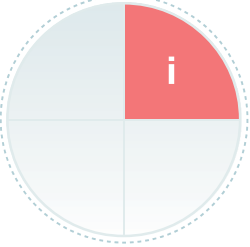

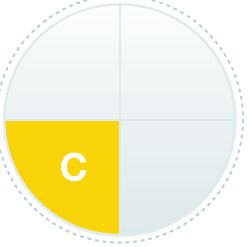




## How can you have productive conflict with the C style?

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. However, if you are too overpowering, they may become prickly and rigid, or withdraw completely while clinging to resentment. Therefore, to have productive conflict with the C style, consider the following:

- Use logic rather than force to make your points.
- Give them time and space to double-check their misgivings.
- Be prepared for their discomfort with ambiguity.

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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
			
<p><b>Goals:</b> Victory, results, personal accomplishment</p>	<p><b>Goals:</b> Approval, understanding, openness</p>	<p><b>Goals:</b> Agreement, acceptance, peace</p>	<p><b>Goals:</b> Fairness, rational decisions, accuracy</p>
<p><b>Overuses:</b> The need to win, impatience, bluntness</p>	<p><b>Overuses:</b> Passion, impulsivity, outspokenness</p>	<p><b>Overuses:</b> Passive resistance, compromise</p>	<p><b>Overuses:</b> Restraint, analysis, rigidity</p>
<p><b>Fears:</b> Being taken advantage of, appearing weak</p>	<p><b>Fears:</b> Rejection, not being heard, disapproval</p>	<p><b>Fears:</b> Letting people down, facing aggression</p>	<p><b>Fears:</b> Being wrong, strong displays of emotion</p>
			

## 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?