

# Career Headlines

**Monday, February 9, 2015**

## Expect Some Conflict at Work

Today's *Career Headlines* begins a new series on conflict. What you learned about your personality in previous *Career Headlines* can help you deal with conflict.

Conflict is good when it makes people think harder and better. It's harmful when it results in "winners" and "losers." Even the "winner" of a conflict may suffer from the stress and hostility that is caused.

Competing goals exist in every organization and may cause conflict. You will be admired when you find options that everyone can agree on, even if all aren't totally satisfied. Think about the following competing goals:



- The computers at a company are getting old and a department head wants new ones for her entire staff.
- The financial manager insists the company can't afford new computers for everyone.

Both goals seem good, but hostility is growing between these two. What if:

- The department head identifies employees whose work most needs new technology?
- The financial manager suggests an amount of money that can be spent on computers right now?
- A few, but not all, of the computers are replaced now and a plan is developed to buy others later?

No one prefers conflict on the job, but it can't always be prevented. If thinking about conflict stresses you, remember that the skills for handling conflict can be learned. You will learn about these skills in upcoming *Career Headlines*.

**Action: Answer honestly these questions about yourself. Use this scale:**

**5 - Very true of me   4 - Often true of me   3 - Occasionally true of me  
2 - Seldom true of me   1 - Never true of me**

- \_\_\_ 1. When people disagree with me, I think they're wrong.
- \_\_\_ 2. I don't care if people disagree, but I want them to think about my ideas.
- \_\_\_ 3. In an argument, I need to convince people I'm right.
- \_\_\_ 4. When people disagree with me, I try to understand their side.
- \_\_\_ 5. There is no middle ground to most arguments; what's right is right.
- \_\_\_ 6. When I agree to a solution, I take responsibility for it, even if I don't like it.
- \_\_\_ 7. When people argue with me, I have trouble expressing myself and get frustrated.
- \_\_\_ 8. Once a conflict is over, I get along fine with my opponent.

**If you answered Nos. 2, 4, 6, and 8 with threes or above, you probably do not become engaged in a great deal of conflict. If you answered Nos. 1, 3, 5, and 7 with threes or above, you need to develop conflict avoidance skills.**

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