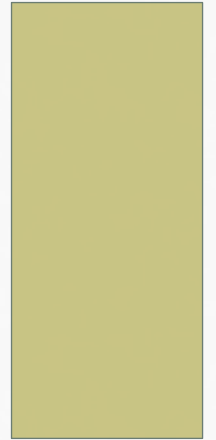


# DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

FEBRUARY 24, 2024



# AGENDA

- Conflict Styles
- Active Listening
- Centered Speaking
- Difficult Conversations

# UNDERSTAND YOUR OWN CONFLICT STYLE PREFERENCE



# CONFLICT STYLE PREFERENCES

- Learned from family of origin
- Learned from other workplaces
- Use at work
- Use in your personal network

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High Importance



Accommodation



Avoidance

Low Importance



Compromise

**GOAL**



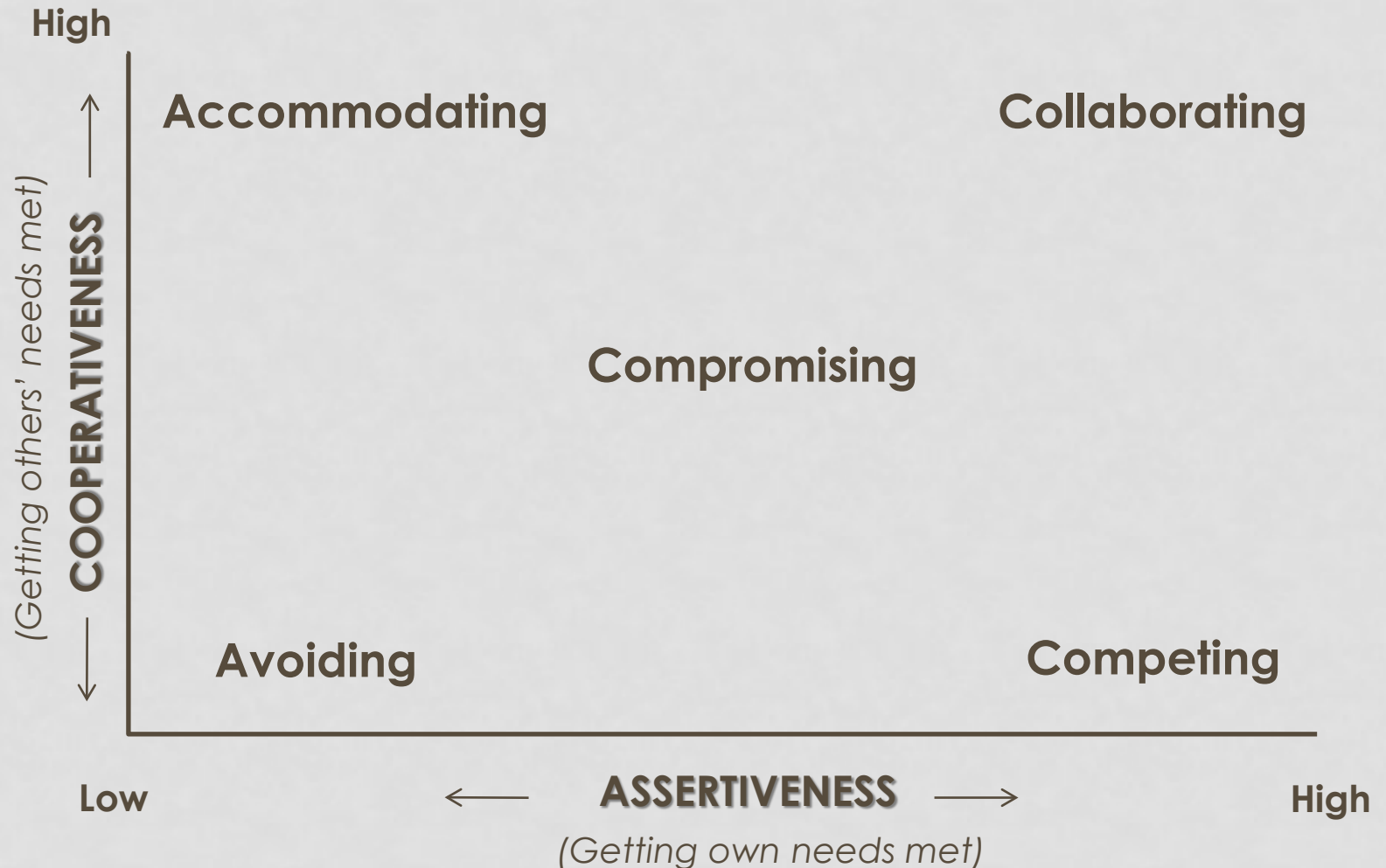
Collaboration



Competition

High Importance

# MODES/PREFERENCES FOR HANDLING CONFLICT: THOMAS-KILMANN INSTRUMENT RESULTS



# THE BASICS: EFFECTIVE LISTENING

- Indicates Respect
- Invites Disclosure
- Empowers the Speaker
- Listening to Understand
- Blocks to Empowering Others
  - Non-verbal- 60% of communication
  - Tone- 25% of communication
  - Verbal- 15% of communication

# THE BASICS: VERBAL BLOCKERS

- Advising: “Why don’t you...”; “Maybe you should...”; “Don’t take it so seriously.”
- Judging: “Don’t get so uptight”; “You’re the one with the problem.” “That isn’t constructive.”
- Analyzing: “What’s really bothering you is...”; “Maybe she reminds you of your mother.”
- Questioning: “Why did you do that?” “Are you being as kind as you could be?”
- Minimizing: “Don’t worry about, you’ll be fine”; “Stop fretting”; “Cheer up, things will get better”



# THE BASICS: ACTIVE LISTENING

- Supporting the Speaker
- Paraphrasing
  - Focus on the speaker
  - Restate in your own words
  - Reflect both content and feeling
- Open Questions
  - Probing Questions
  - Clarifying Questions
  - Justifying Questions
  - Consequential Questions

# THE BASICS: EXERCISE

- Groups of 3
- Speaker: Choose a time that you were frustrated or annoyed by someone else's behavior. Explain the situation and your frustration to your partner.
- Listener: Use open ended questions and paraphrasing to understand the speaker's position
- Observer: Make note of the impact of paraphrasing and open questions

# THE BASICS: CENTERED SPEAKING

- I-messages
  - Focus on yourself and own the message
  - Name the feelings
  - Name the behavior
  - Describe the impact on you
- Preference Statements
  - Communicate preference clearly but not as demands, not forcing others to guess
- Purpose Stating
  - Helps eliminate working at cross-purposes
  - Minimizes mis-understanding
- Agreement Stating
  - Identifying where there is overlap in preferences/positions

# THE BASICS: EXERCISE

- In Pairs
- Work with a partner to create a starting point for a conversation about something that bugs you.
  - Create an I message that includes
    - Focus on yourself and own the message
    - Name the feelings
    - Name the behavior
    - Describe the impact on you
- Feedback to each other

# DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

## **3 Simultaneous Conversations**

1. The “What Happened?” conversation
2. The “Feelings” conversation
3. The “Identity” conversation

# WHAT HAPPENED? CONVERSATION

- Usually disagreement about what happened or should happen
  - Who said what and who did what?
  - Who's right, who meant what, and who's to blame?

# THE “FEELINGS” CONVERSATION

Every difficult conversation also asks and answers questions about feelings:

- Are my feelings valid?
- Appropriate?
- Should I acknowledge or deny them?
- Put them on the table or check them at the door?
- What do I do about the other person's feelings?
- What if they are angry or hurt?

# THE “IDENTITY” CONVERSATION

The conversation we have with ourselves about what this situation means to us:

We conduct an internal debate

- Are we competent or incompetent?
- A good person or bad?
- Worthy of love or unlovable?
- What impact might it have on our self-image and self-esteem?
- Our future and our well-being?



# YOUR DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

## **In Pairs:**

1. Share a recent—past 6 months—situation in your lifewhen you felt pressured to have what you considered a “difficult” conversation (whether you had it or not).
2. What did you consider “difficult” about it?
3. What happened?
4. What were the 3 conversations within your example of the difficult conversation?

THANK YOU

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