



Personal Conflict Experience

Part 1: Individual Exercise (10 mn.)

Directions: Take a few minutes to think back over the last two weeks. What conflict situations did you encounter? *Please list three conflict situations that you are willing to share with the group today.* Describe each situation using the following table. You may use the other party's name or a generic description, such as "co-worker" or "family member". Ignore the space ranking at this time.

Help: If you have difficulty thinking of examples, try asking yourself to think of situations in which one of the following occurred: (1) You wanted to do something, but someone else or some policy or rule got in your way. (2) Someone wanted you to do something that you did not want to do. (3) Someone did something or tried to do something that bothered you.

These are all examples of common forms of conflict.

Ranking	Who was the conflict with? (Example: co-worker)	What was the conflict about? (Example: who should stay late to close the store?)
	A.	
	B.	
	C.	
	D.	
	E.	

Directions (continued): Now that you have listed some conflict situations, read back over your list and **rank** them according to how important they were to you. Give the most important situation a number 1 ranking, and so on. (No ties, please; this is just an exercise, so absolute precision is unnecessary.)

Part 2: Satisfaction Rating/Scoring (10 to 20 mn.)

Directions: Re-examine your highest-ranked conflict situation. Decide how satisfied you were with the outcome, using the rating scale below.

Rating Scale	
5	= Very happy with the outcome
4	= Moderately happy
3	= indifferent; in the middle
2	= Moderately unhappy
1	= Very unhappy with the outcome

Determining Your Satisfaction Score

Your level of satisfaction with the conflict situation's outcome, as rated above, equals your Satisfaction score. A score above 3 means that you were at least partially happy.

Your Score: _____

Determining the Other Person's Score

Now rate the other party's degree of satisfaction. How satisfied do you think the other person was? Again, use the 5-point scale above.

Their Score: _____

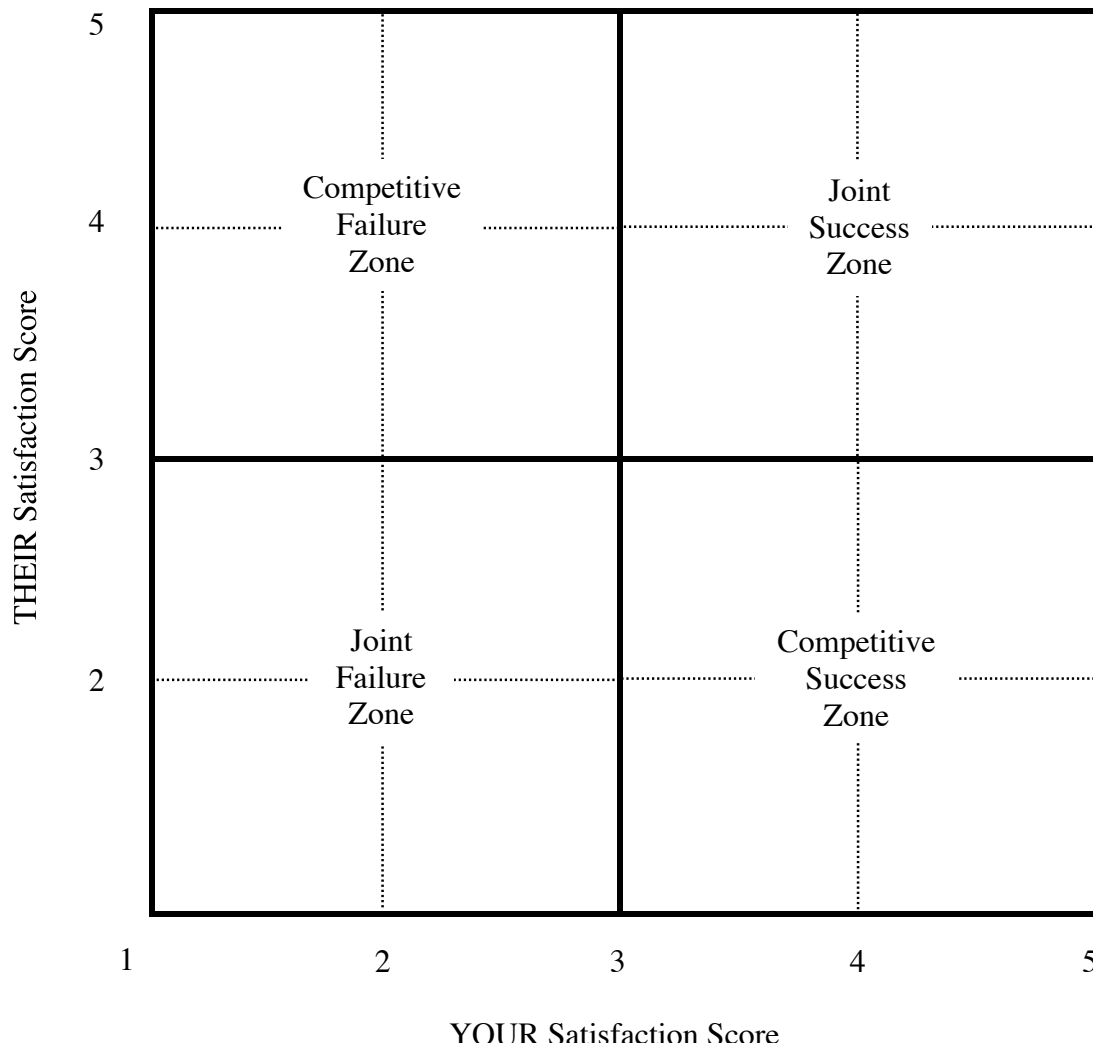
Determining the Average Score

Now add the two scores above; divide the sum by 2. This gives you an average of your score and their score. The average tells you whether the conflict was a win-win or not. A win-win means that both people got what they wanted, and it is represented by an average score of 4 or more. (Check the rating scale above to interpret this score.)

Average Score: _____

Part 3: Exploring the Outcomes Matrix

You can plot the outcomes of one of your conflict situations by using your Satisfaction scores from the previous page. First, circle the number on the horizontal axis that represents your satisfaction score and then draw a vertical line from the circled number up through the graph. Next, circle the number on the vertical axis that represents their Satisfaction and draw a horizontal line from it through the graph. Where the two lines meet, mark the intersection with a large X.



Part 4: Debriefing

What can we learn from this activity?

There are a number of useful things we can learn from this activity.

First, note that it is not difficult for most people to generate a list of conflict situations from just the last couple of weeks. As the group shared its experiences, you probably recalled many more conflict situations from your own experience. Because we often pursue our interests in a social context, we find ourselves in many and varied conflict situations as a matter of routine.

Second, you might have noticed that your recollection of conflict situations was poor when you first began this activity, but it grew rapidly once you got “in gear”. This is in part because we treat everyday conflicts in a routine manner, taking no special notice of them at the time. It takes a special effort to think back and recognize that they were indeed conflict situations. We tend to rely on ingrained habits or to follow the lead of the other party in the majority of our conflict situations, rather than designing a strategy for ourselves. And that means we are not necessarily making a conscious effort to optimize our outcomes—even in high-priority conflicts.

Third, the Satisfaction ratings probably spanned a considerable range because in many cases, people are not fully satisfied with the outcomes of their top-priority conflicts. Satisfaction scores are generally well under the maximum of 5; obviously, it is not easy to achieve a high level of satisfaction in conflict situations (which is why study and practices are important).

Thank you for participating in this activity.