

Team Conflict Converter

Even the best teams have times when they clash. In fact, it's important that you can clash so you can use the diversity of perspectives across your team to produce the best ideas, approaches and solutions. How we facilitate those disagreements together is what influences whether conflict is constructive or not.

Before we begin, let's reduce the stigma from conflict in teamwork, and instead see it as two or more approaches to creating a solution.

conflict *noun* [C or U] (ARGUING OR FIGHTING)

An active disagreement between people with opposing opinions or principles

How you can support more constructive conflict

- Understanding how conflict plays out for you personally is a great way to know how you can all adapt your style and support teammates too.
- Fill in the areas below for an analysis of where you're at now and what you can do to ensure conflict moves you forward rather than pushing you back.

Before we start, let's see how you feel about conflict. We've all got our own boundaries and interpretation of what conflict is. What can feel like a simple discussion to some of us, may feel like a confrontation to others. On the other hand, avoiding conflict may seem preferable to keep the peace for some of us, but to others it may appear distrustful and passively aggressive.

Writing out your thoughts is a great way to be more aware of your perspective.

Let's plot out your stance on conflict in teamwork

Imagine you hit a disagreement with a teammate on a project. How does it make you feel? Explain why.

Do you prefer to engage in conflict, or avoid it? Explain why.

Now let's plot out your preferred style during conflict

Knowing your personal strengths and potential downfalls is a great way to be more self-aware of how people perceive us, and where the line between effective and ineffective is during conflict.



Helping ourselves and those around us to remain in their Effective Aspects, rather than Overextended Aspects, is the aim of the game. People tend to overextend when they're feeling stressed, under pressure or simply overplaying their strengths. It's the role of leaders and teammates to support themselves and those around them to be in their effective way of being

Focusing again on imagining you've hit a disagreement with a teammate on a project. **What are two top Aspects of behaviour that teammates are likely to observe from you?** Pick from the following options and then fill in the table afterwards.

Inspiration Driven (Adaptable, Flexible, Spontaneous)



Encourages creativity, adaptability, and responsiveness to change, helping the team navigate challenges and seize opportunities. It fosters a dynamic and innovative work environment.



Overextension may result in a lack of focus, inconsistency, and chaotic work processes, leading to confusion and instability. It can cause conflicts over priorities, deadlines, and perceived lack of discipline.

Discipline Driven (Purposeful, Structured, Reliable)



Brings organisation, reliability, and clear expectations to the team, ensuring tasks are completed on time and to a high standard. It supports a structured and predictable work environment.



When Overextended, it can become inflexible and resistant to change, causing frustration and conflict with more adaptable team members. It can lead to conflicts over rigidity and micromanagement.

Big Picture Thinking (Conceptual, Imaginative, Radical)



Effective Big Picture Thinking promotes innovative solutions and visionary ideas, fostering unity and shared goals within the team. It encourages a forward-thinking approach, which can pre-empt potential issues.



When Overextended, it can lead to impractical or overly complex ideas, neglecting practical details and immediate concerns. This can cause frustration and misunderstandings among team members focused on execution.

Down to Earth (Practical, Evidence-Based, Cautious)



Grounded in reality, this Aspect ensures decisions are practical and based on evidence, providing clear direction and stability. It helps avoid conflicts by mitigating risks and uncertainties.



Overextension may result in excessive caution and resistance to new ideas, stifling creativity and causing friction with more innovative team members. It can lead to conflicts over missed opportunities and rigidity.

Extraverted (Sociable, Demonstrative, Takes Charge)



Promotes open communication, enthusiastic engagement, and effective leadership, fostering an inclusive and dynamic team environment. It helps prevent misunderstandings and builds strong relationships.



When Overextended, it can become overwhelming, dominate conversations, and impose ideas, causing feelings of being unheard or undervalued among introverted team members. This can lead to power struggles and resentment.

Introverted (Observing, Measured, Intimate)



Provides thoughtful and well-considered input, ensuring decisions are made with care and attention to detail. It supports deep, meaningful relationships and reflective problem-solving.



Overextension can result in withdrawal, lack of communication, and perceived detachment, causing misunderstandings and a sense of isolation. It can lead to conflicts due to unvoiced opinions and disengagement.

Outcome Focused (Tough, Competitive, Logical)



Drives the team towards achieving goals efficiently, ensuring high performance and accountability. It promotes clarity and directness in communication.



When Overextended, it can lead to overuse which can appear insensitive or overly critical, creating a hostile environment where team members feel pressured and undervalued. It can lead to conflicts over perceived harshness and lack of empathy.

People Focused (Accommodating, Collaborative, Empathetic)



Builds strong relationships, promotes a supportive team culture, and ensures everyone feels valued and heard. It reduces interpersonal conflicts and fosters cooperation.



When Overextended, it may lead to neglecting personal needs, avoiding necessary conflicts, and passive-aggressive behaviour. This can cause unaddressed issues to fester and create long-term resentment.

What are two top Aspects of behaviour that teammates are likely to observe from you?

Focusing again on imagining you've hit a disagreement with a teammate on a project, what are two top Aspects of behaviour that teammates are likely to observe from you?

Your Aspects

Your first top Aspect

How my teammates perceive me when I use this Aspect effectively

How my teammates might perceive me when I overextend this Aspect

What triggers this Overextension?
Consider behaviour from teammates or your environment

1.

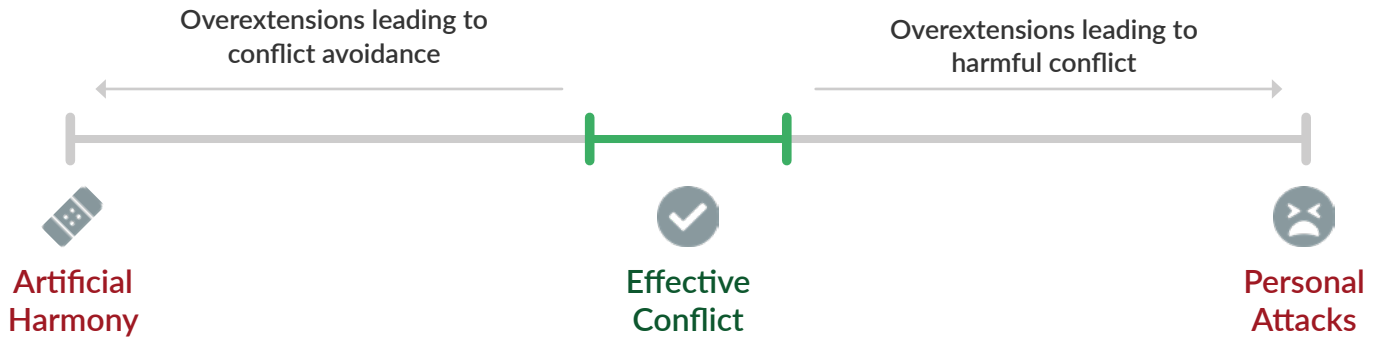
Your second top Aspect

2.



Whatever your response, there's no right or wrong. It's how you apply your personal style during disagreements that defines whether your approach moves conflict forward as a team or potentially sets it back.

Whether conflict is constructive often comes down to whether you're using your behaviours effectively or overextending them beyond what supports good discussion. Consider where you might sit on the conflict continuum below.



When Overextended, how do your top two Aspects lead to you either avoiding or seeking conflict?

Your first top Aspect

Avoid Conflict or Seek Conflict?

Avoid Conflict



Seek Conflict

Why?

Your second top Aspect

Avoid Conflict or Seek Conflict?

Avoid Conflict



Seek Conflict

Why?

Now let's map out the top-level behaviours in your team

We've looked at your personal style, but there are always two or more people at the table during a disagreement. What does constructive vs destructive conflict look like in your teammates? Picture that the pressure is on. You've got a key disagreement on how to move forward. What do you perceive in their behaviour?

Name	Their Top Aspect and what I value about it when used effectively in a disagreement with me?	What this Aspect looks like when Overextended during a disagreement with me?	What might I do that triggers their Overextension?
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During a disagreement, think about what you can do to help your team remain effective rather than Overextended. It might be using more of your top two Aspects maybe less, or trying a different Aspect entirely. It's also worth considering:

- Self-awareness is key to ensure your message is heard as intended. Are your teammates adapting their communication to the preferences of those they're clashing with?
- Valuing those with different personalities to you means your differences are your strengths. Are you and your team valuing the Effective Aspects of those you're clashing with, or jumping to assuming the Overextended worst?
- Psychological safety is crucial for open discussions. Do you have a common set of steps for having disagreements that create trust and openness?

What do you think?

Person 1

Person 2

Person 3

With all the previous exercises complete, you've hopefully now got a refreshed outlook on the common behaviours that come out in conflict during teamwork. Woohoo! So, let's put it into action.

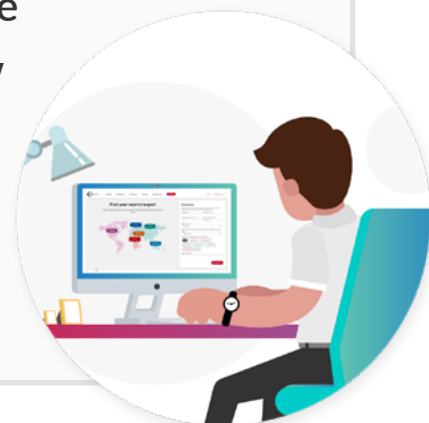
On the next page, pick a current disagreement you're currently facing in your team and have a go at writing a set of steps to help you. Articulate your goal as a collaborative solution with your team, rather than 'win an argument'.

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