

Understanding your natural conflict style is the starting point for all development. Most people have one dominant disposition — a default way of engaging with conflict that shows up across contexts, relationships, and situations. This handout introduces the four conflict dispositions used in the Conflict Management Space assessment framework.

THE DISTANCER

Needs space and time before engaging

Distancers instinctively create space when conflict arises — for themselves and for others. This is not avoidance in the negative sense; it is a reflective approach that often prevents premature escalation.

YOUR GIFT	YOUR DEVELOPMENTAL EDGE	A PRACTICE TO TRY
Perspective and calm in charged situations. The capacity to step back protects everyone from reactive escalation.	Learning to step in — not back — at the critical moment when your voice is most needed.	Give yourself space but name it. 'I need a moment to think before I respond' keeps you present without forcing premature action.

THE HARMONIZER

Prioritizes relationship and peace above all

Harmonizers read the emotional temperature of a room before most people notice it has changed. They are natural peacekeepers who understand that relationships are the foundation of everything.

YOUR GIFT	YOUR DEVELOPMENTAL EDGE	A PRACTICE TO TRY
Warmth, empathy, and genuine care. Harmonizers build trust quickly and make others feel genuinely seen and valued.	Learning to hold tension rather than resolve it too quickly. Sometimes discomfort is exactly what transformation requires.	Practice sitting with unresolved tension for longer than feels comfortable. The pause you resist is often where the real conversation begins.

THE BARGAINER

Seeks workable compromise and fair outcomes

Bargainers believe that workable solutions are always within reach. They bring a strong sense of equity and practical intelligence to conflict — they want things to be fair, and they are willing to give ground to get there.

YOUR GIFT	YOUR DEVELOPMENTAL EDGE	A PRACTICE TO TRY
Pragmatism, fairness, and the ability to move people forward. Bargainers find the middle ground and keep things moving.	Going deeper — learning to work with the interests and values underneath positions, not just the positions themselves.	Before proposing any compromise, ask: 'What matters most to you about this?' That question opens more durable solutions.

THE PUZZLER

Digs into complexity to understand what's really happening

Puzzlers find conflict genuinely interesting. They are drawn to the complexity underneath the surface — the patterns, the history, the unspoken dynamics — and they are rarely satisfied with quick fixes.

YOUR GIFT	YOUR DEVELOPMENTAL EDGE	A PRACTICE TO TRY
Depth, curiosity, and analytical rigor. Puzzlers see what others miss and bring systems-thinking to conflict.	Translating insights into action. People need to feel moved, not just understood.	Share your observations as a question rather than a conclusion. 'I'm wondering if what's really happening here is...' invites the room in.

WORKING WITH YOUR SECONDARY DISPOSITION

Most people have a primary disposition and a secondary one that emerges under different conditions. Your secondary tells you as much about your development edge as your primary.

Take the full assessment at conflictmanagementspace.com to discover your primary and secondary conflict disposition.