

Conflict & Dispute Resolution

Conflict Strategies & Strategic Choice

As you read the material for our next class, keep the questions below in mind. To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages. Keep in mind that there are two basic kinds of information that you need to look for in the reading:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?
2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, *it is information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible conclusion about an issue, rather than another.

Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently about these issues at our next class meeting.

Reading

- Dean G. Pruitt & Sung Hee Kim, *Social Conflict*, chapter 3 (only read pages 37–55).

Questions

1. What are the four (or five) different strategies people tend to use for handling a conflict? What is the difference between them?
2. What is meant by strategic choice? Are the various models of strategic choice in this chapter primarily *descriptive* (describing *actual* behavior during conflict) or *normative* (prescribing how people *should* behave)?
3. What is the dual concern model? How does it predict which strategy a person is likely to adopt during a conflict? The two principle elements of the dual concern model are self-concern and other-concern. What are some conditions influencing self-concern? What are some conditions influencing other-concern?
4. What is the perceived feasibility perspective? According to this perspective, what are some conditions influencing the choice of strategies and tactics during conflict?
5. What is blame direction and how does blame tend influence the choice of strategies and tactics during conflict?

When responding to 3, 4, and 5, fill out the table posted on the website. I've already done the first row for you. Please print out and bring this table to class, so we can go over it together as a group.