

# CONFLICT & DISPUTE RESOLUTION

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## 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

- Pruitt, D. G., & Kim, S. H. (2004). Strategic Choice. In *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., pp. 37–62). New York: McGraw-Hill.

### 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. A model is an abstract pattern of thought from which explanations or predictions of particular events can be derived. Why is it generally important for a good negotiator to understand the three models of strategic choice discussed by Pruitt and Kim?
3. What is meant by strategic choice? Are the various models of strategic choice presented by Pruitt and Kim primarily *descriptive* (describing actual behavior during conflict) or *normative* (prescribing how people should behave)?
4. What is the dual concern model? How does it predict strategic choices during a conflict? The two principle elements of the dual concern model are self-concern and other-concern. What are the various conditions influencing each of these types of concern?
5. What is the perceived feasibility perspective? According to this perspective, what are some conditions influencing the choice of strategies and tactics during conflict?
6. What is blame direction and how does blame tend influence the choice of strategies and tactics during conflict?

When responding to questions 4, 5, and 6, 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 discuss it together as a group.