

Be successful using Five Type Fitness™

This paper introduces the idea that we all can benefit from the **skills** of negotiation. Individually and collectively we can gain a great deal from using the skills of being an **accommodator, collaborator, competitor, compromiser or avoider**. Most of us rely on one or two preferences from the five. We can be better off if we develop our repertoire of all five of these behavioural skills.

More on the author and his work in the end-note or at Jim Simpson Consultancy's [resource library](#)

Five Type Fitness

'Are you an accommodator, a collaborator, a competitor, or maybe a compromiser or an avoider?' Psycho-social instruments often shoe-horn you into one of these five styles or similar styles. It is useful to know which of these you slot into. It is more useful to appropriately **use all types** as **skills** in day-to-day life. Skills in these five areas are all necessary in day-to-day exchange, relationships and transactions between people and between organisations.

Though you will have your preferences it is useful to get all of your 5 types fit, healthy and in working order! When and how do I persuade others to buy, sell, agree with, disagree with, start to do something, stop doing something? and so on. The list of 'social verbs' here can go on and on. All these transactions warrant a negotiation 'position' plus the skills to put that position into place.

Please bear in mind that Five-type fitness is about the effectiveness of the group and the system not just the self, plus it deals with the positive elements of the five types not the negative connotations. There is more on this in a minute. First let us define terms:

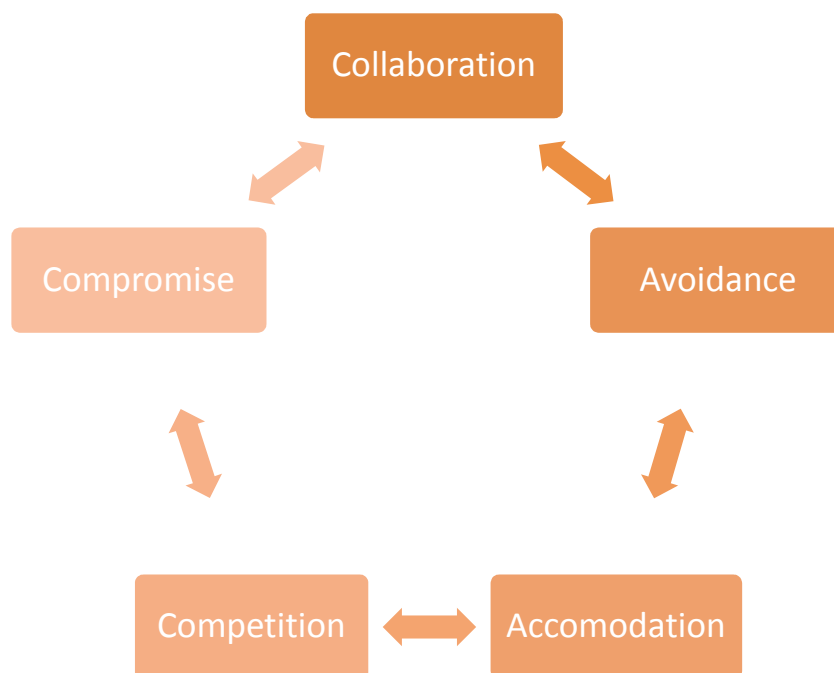
The Five Types of interaction are as below (plus in diagrammatic form on page 2):

- **Avoidance** is not necessarily stating what you want or keeping away from anything that presents difficulty, threat or danger.
- **Accommodation** is putting aside most of your interests in order to get along with others. It is co-operative and tolerant.
- **Competition** is winning without concern for others or suspending concern for their interests.
- **Collaboration** is actively working with your own interests and other people's interests. The 'win win' idea.
- **Compromise** is finding answers and solutions that take into account the needs and interests of all parties. Each party gets some of what it wants, but not all parties get all of what they want. Conciliatory behaviours are required.

The trick is:

- 1) to know **which strategy** or mix of strategies to use and **when**
- 2) to be able to **use all of them** at different times to facilitate the best strategies for getting what you want and need and what your organisation wants and needs.

The five types are all **behaviour strategies** and they can all be learned. Though we each have our preferences that doesn't mean that cool hard competitor can't achieve more by artful compromise sometimes; or the accommodator make progress by being a touch more pushy every now and then.



We all live with and work with difference in the whirl of our working, family and social lives – different values, interests, goals, experience, biology etc.

You might, deep down, like to get more out of your dealings with other people? Or are you pretty much content with what you want - calm, accepting and serene? There is no right or wrong answer of course, merely that your psychological make-up and motivation underpins your choices about what you negotiate and how. Similarly these preferences influence the behavior of organisational cultures, systems, dynamics and market mechanisms.

The five types in the above diagram are depicted as a process or journey. This is an interesting way of modeling the five types. A typical journey through a less certain negotiation for instance can be to avoid difference or confrontation at first; then try hard to accommodate difference. Often then we move to compete with one another in order to get

what we want. When competition does not work we may compromise and of course win or lose. When we discover mutual interests we collaborate.

The more skilled in negotiating you are the better. That is **negotiation everything** that involves anyone else. If you are reading this and you are skilled in all five types you might not read further as you are fit in using all five types already. Leaders in the broadest sense often are very Five Type competent. Similarly if you want to just stick to your type-preference than that is just fine. Most people and organisations want to be able to get a balance between the five types.

Effectively negotiating:

Negotiating things with other people successfully is more about **how you act** and less about **what you want**. So it is back to the behaviours you express and the skills you deploy. Knowing what you want is the easy bit compared to getting it. It is pretty easy to put your finger on what you want to do or achieve. Scoring 10 out of 10 in getting it all is another matter. For instance, I might want my colleagues to work more effectively and change what they are doing, or I might want to be less messed about by my boss. The what is easier to fathom - the how is trickier.

Back to your preferences:

Your behavioural preferences have a long stem right back to the roots of your childhood responses. Between 5 and 8 years-of-age particularly our behavioural responses will be tried, perfected and habituated. Personality is formed and core behaviors have been framed in our nurturing.

Anyway you probably know all that stuff. The point really is that as adults we all have massive knowledge about behaviours we just don't necessarily get **behaviorally fit and skilled** by using our knowledge. We all have seen others using all the five types and we have all used them to an extent. We observe that some people are more accommodating say, or more competitive, collaborative etc. As you have read this you'll be noticing your preference and the preferences that you like or don't like in others.

Whatever your situation is or your goals are it is useful to reflect on your preferred style; practice your 'less fit' styles; and use this tool to analyse situations and make plans.

Getting your five styles fit will help you and your organisation and help us all get along!

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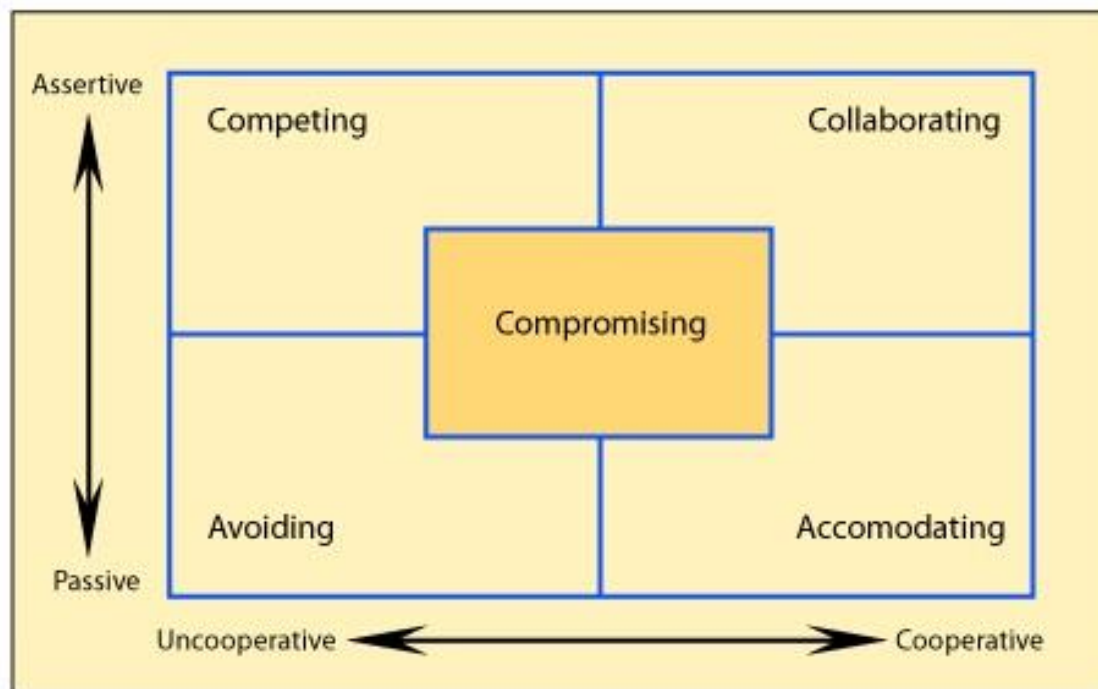
This is a sample from an emergent series I am producing. See the website for current materials available.

Jim Simpson

¹ This paper was written by Jim Simpson – consultant, evaluator, coach and writer. For more articles, tools and think-pieces look at www.jimsimpsonconsultancy.co.uk/resource-library plus services available and testimonials are on the site.

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Further reading and information: you can use part of the Conflict Mode Inventory modeled below and plot yourself or your situation. In the 1970's Thomas and Kilmann put the types together and developed the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode instrument along with many others who have put these types, behaviours or strategies together in different combinations.



The Conflict Mode Instrument can be found at:

<http://www.kilmanniagnostics.com/catalog/thomas-kilmann-conflict-mode-instrument>

Mind Tools has an introduction to conflict management at

http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_81.htm