

# Mapping your conflicts project



CM310-Communication and Conflict Unit 7: Case Study: Power Deborah Davis, Ph. D. The Hocker-Wilmot Conflict Assessment Guide (2007) is an eight-part approach to conflict resolution. It examines the attitudes of the persons in a conflict– how they feel and think about one another and the conflict. The Assessment Guide, a series of questions focused on discovering conflict triggers, gains expected by the conflicting parties, power struggles and tactics that change the conflict dynamics, and seeks to discover repetitive behavior patterns of behavior; and look at attempted solutions or options for change. In “ Eye to Eye” the conflict is a pretty typical and unavoidable part of living together. The dynamics are that of jumping to conclusions, indirect communication, a lack of listening skills, and partial avoidance. Past fears, future implications, and present attitudes are part of the problem, and “ holes” in the couple's communication styles back end the conversation. Their mutually restrictive behavior patterns will eventually cause the conflict to escalate. Keywords: conflict resolution, Hocker-Wilmot, conflict assessment, arguments and misunderstandings, conflict management Conflict Resolution – Seeing Eye to Eye Nature of Conflict The triggering incident of “ Eye to Eye” has a history. On a particular morning, a newly married couple is deciding how to spend their day. She exhibits excitement about spending the day with her husband, but he seems preoccupied. The first dynamic happens when she relinquishes power by giving in when he says “ let's see how the day goes first.” Her attention turns to the immediate need—household chores. She mentions it, awaits a response, but does not get it. In her mind, the lack of response means that their marriage is headed in the same direction as her parents, whom she says had plenty of 'loud discussions' over house work. His lack of response

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causes her to change the subject in an attempt to change the mood. Had she been more clear about her expectations, rather than reciting a laundry list of necessary chores, she may have gotten a direct response. Power Plays

Enrique shifts the power pendulum to himself in two slight moves: (a) not giving his wife a 'one way or the other' about their day; and (b) his lack of response to the “ unasked question” of helping her with the chores. When she changes the subject, she appears to repeat her mother's pattern of giving in, which reinforces his behavior. Tactics Monica changes the subject to avoid a perceived confrontation about the house work. The source of Enrique's preoccupation surfaces. He is worried about an upcoming job promotion, but rather than dwell on what is out their control, Monica returns her focus to the present. However, instead of asking what she means by “ forget about it,” he presumes that she is not taking his concerns seriously. He raises his voice in a flash of anger and that causes a semi-controlled environment to spiral out of control. She comments that he doesn't listen, he believes she will throw a “ temper tantrum” because of past experiences. The misunderstandings because of the slack communication are about to escalate. He believes he is taken for granted, she thinks she is being ignored. Neither of them have specifically communicated what they want, need, or expect. He attempts to resolve the conflict in a way that is not satisfactory to her; however, when he presupposes a tantrum, he decides to walk out and visit a friend. In this manner, the couple have made presumptions without full discussion, practiced avoidance behavior, and in some sense their “ need to win” makes it a competition instead of a discussion. The conflict remains unresolved because there is no attempt at collaboration of a mutually satisfying solution. References Wilmot, William <https://assignbuster.com/mapping-your-conflicts-project/>

W., & Hocker, Joyce L. (2001). Hocker-Wilmot Conflict Assessment Guide. Interpersonal Conflict, ch. 7. McGraw-Hill Higher Education, New York.