

The Four C's of the Creative Use of Conflict or Disagreement

1. **Collaboration:** Partners in disagreement work with each other to achieve shared goals. Collaboration involves a deep, collective determination to reach a decision satisfying all parties. It requires valuing the relationship over our initial position, and being open to the power of transformation which can show us a way forward, fully supported by all; the intention to find a win-win outcome.

Example: When one person wants to paint a room blue and the other paint it yellow, together they find a third color they sincerely enjoy, perhaps even more than their original desires.

2. **Compromise:** Each side in a dispute gives up part of their demand. Compromise involves finding agreement each can live with even though they may not be 100% behind it. A couple can reach a compromise as either a permanent solution when unity is not possible, or may consider the compromise temporary as the couple continues to work toward unity.

Example: Agree to paint one wall blue, one yellow, and the other two white.

3. **Capitulation:** One partner yields or gives up resistance. This can happen with authentic integrity when one person cares less about an outcome than does the other. This is a decision each one makes for themselves and can become part of a final outcome. This is a gift to the other, but only if it is given without resentment! It is important to search one's heart for resentment before capitulating.

Example: For the person wanting yellow it is a mild attachment, easily given to the person who really wants blue.

4. **Coexistence:** Each person lives peacefully with the other, in spite of disagreements, because collaboration, compromise, or capitulation is not possible with integrity. Coexistence involves allowing each person to do as they will. An overuse of coexistence leads to disengagement and limited cohesion in a family. During a period of coexistence, the couple finds a way to continue functioning while using distinctly different approaches to the issue.

Example: The couple postpones painting the room until they can find unity on a way forward.