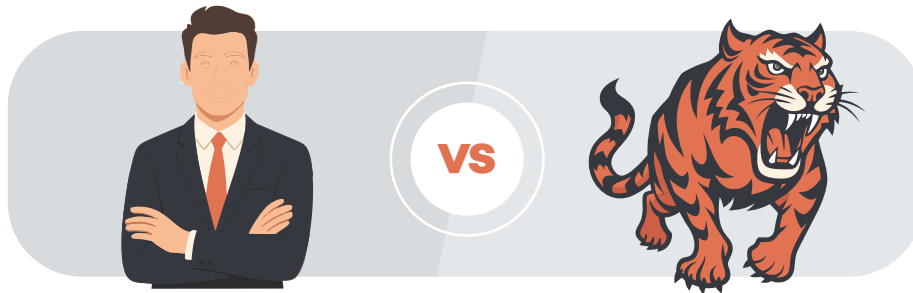




FLOODING: THIS IS YOUR BRAIN ON CONFLICT

Conflict can often bring up strong emotions. We are hard wired to react to strong emotions as threats just like physical ones. We may be in a hard conversation with our supervisor or colleague, but our brain makes us feel like we're being chased by a tiger. We become flooded and our **fight, flight, freeze** or **fawn** response kicks in.



FIGHT

Leaning into the conflict head on through destructive forms of verbal and nonverbal communication. This could look like raised voices, intimidating postures, or sharp language.

FLIGHT

Getting away from the conflict as quickly as possible and conflict avoidance generally. This could look like physically leaving the room, changing the subject, or using excuses to avoid engaging.

FREEZE

Shutting down from the conflict and being unable to engage. This could look like physical stiffness, becoming speechless, or the inability to think clearly or make decisions.

FAWN

Prioritizing others' needs in the conflict over and above your own. This could look like over-apologizing, taking responsibility for others' mistakes, being overly agreeable, or hyper-awareness towards others' emotions.

Although none of these responses put us in the best position to make sound decisions and engage in meaningful conversation, being aware of how we tend to react in moments of stress can help us find the right strategies for navigating conflict productively.



Our natural tendencies in moments that seem threatening lean toward fight or flight rather than listen and speak.”

Joseph Grenny et al.

References

Crucial Conversations, 3rd edition by Joseph Grenny et al.