

Conflict and Power

Considerations for Healthy Dialog



Conflict

The process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party



The Impact of Conflict

Individual Effects

- Anger
- Hostility
- Frustration
- Stress
- Guilt
- Low job satisfaction
- Embarrassment

Behavioral Effects

- Reduced motivation
- Reduced productivity
- Avoidance
- Venting
- Aggression

Interpersonal Effects

- Distrust
- Misunderstandings
- Inability to see other's perspective
- Questioning other's intentions
- Negative attitudes toward others

The Two Sides of Conflict

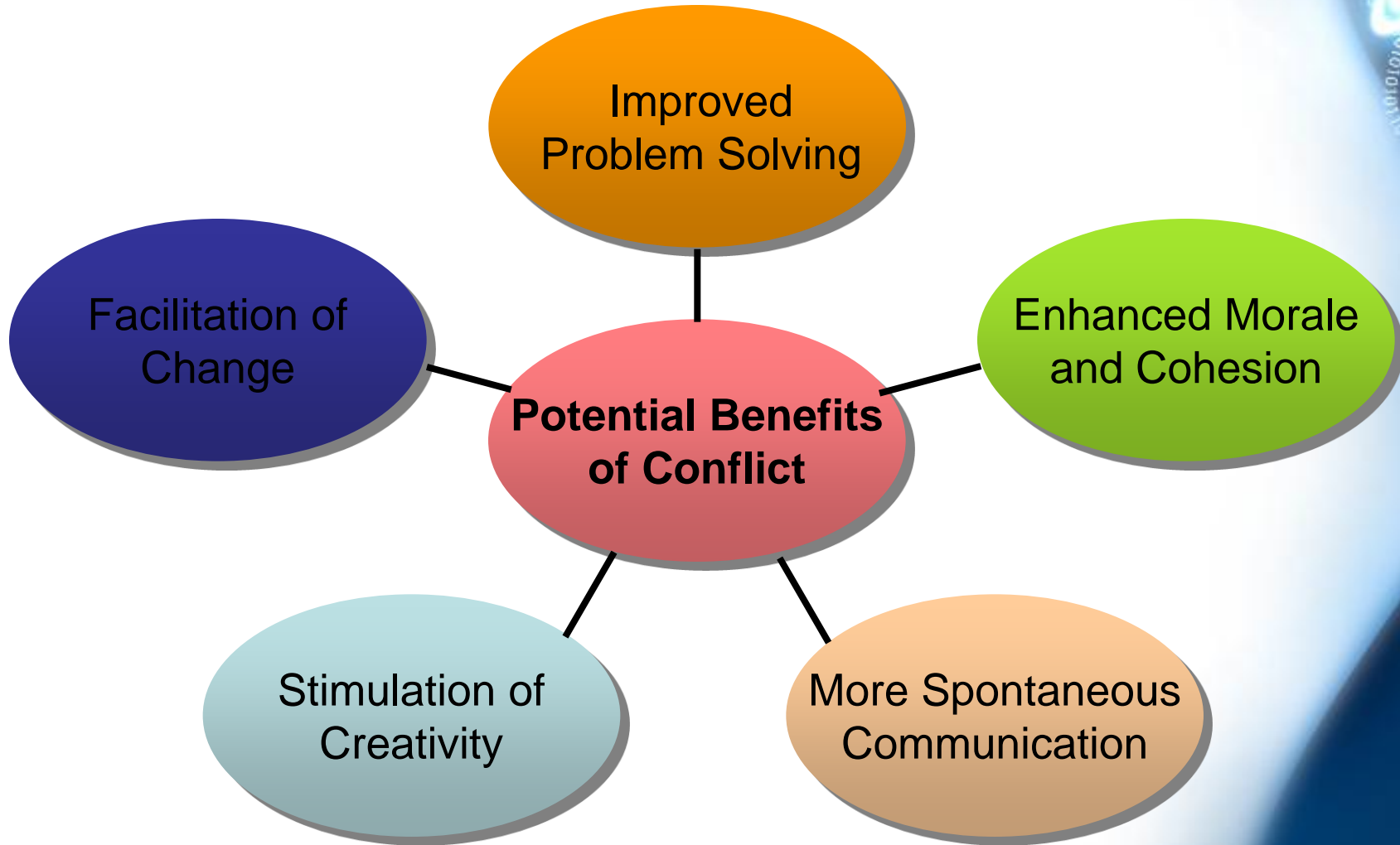
1. Dysfunctional conflict

Conflict that is *detrimental* to organizational goals and objectives

2. Functional conflict

Conflict that is *beneficial* to organizational goals and objectives

Functional Conflict Outcomes



Types of Conflict

Relationship Conflict

Relationship conflict

Conflict that arises out of personal differences between people, such as differing goals, values, or personalities

Task Conflict

Task conflict

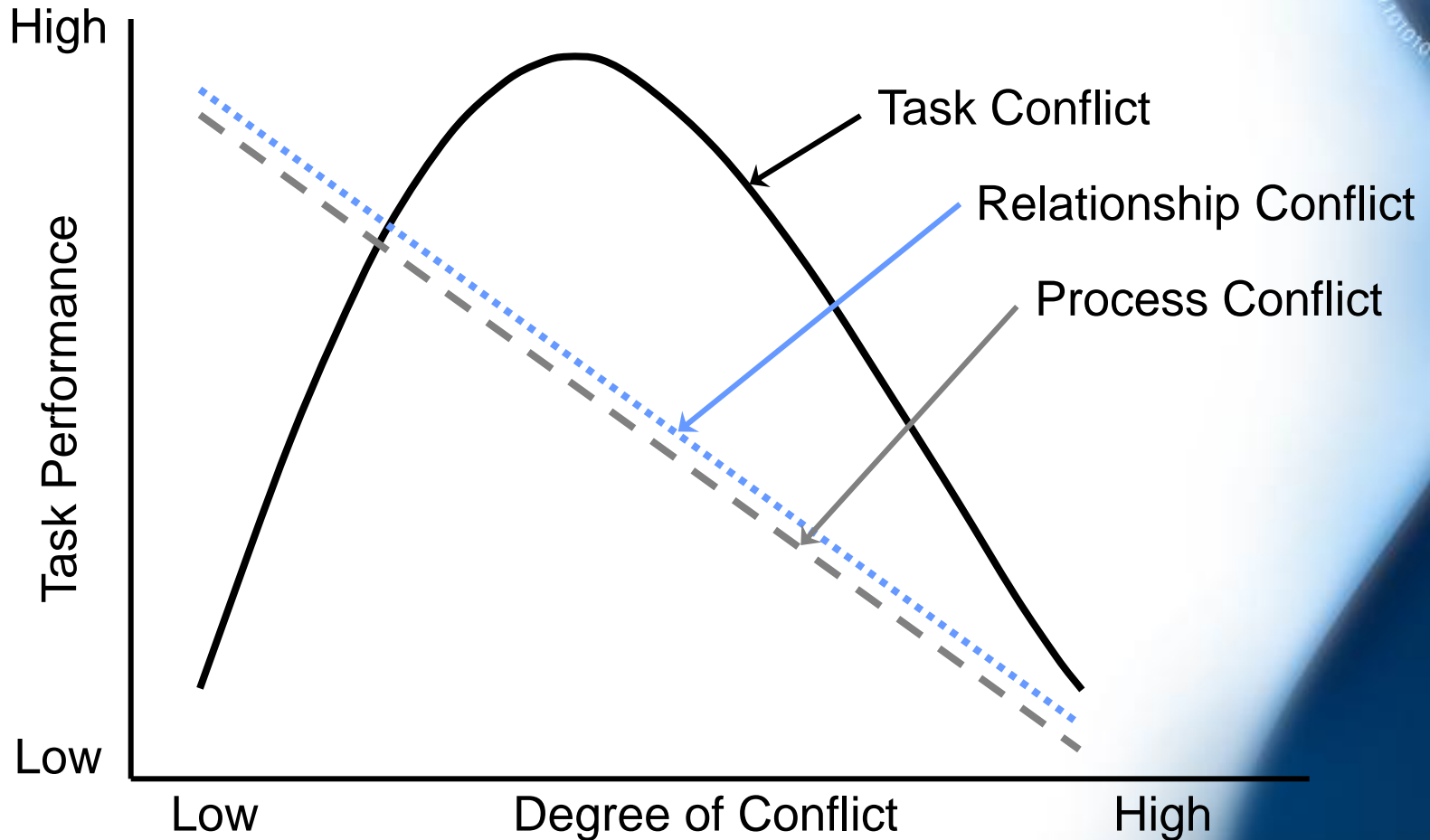
Conflict that involves work content and goals

Process Conflict

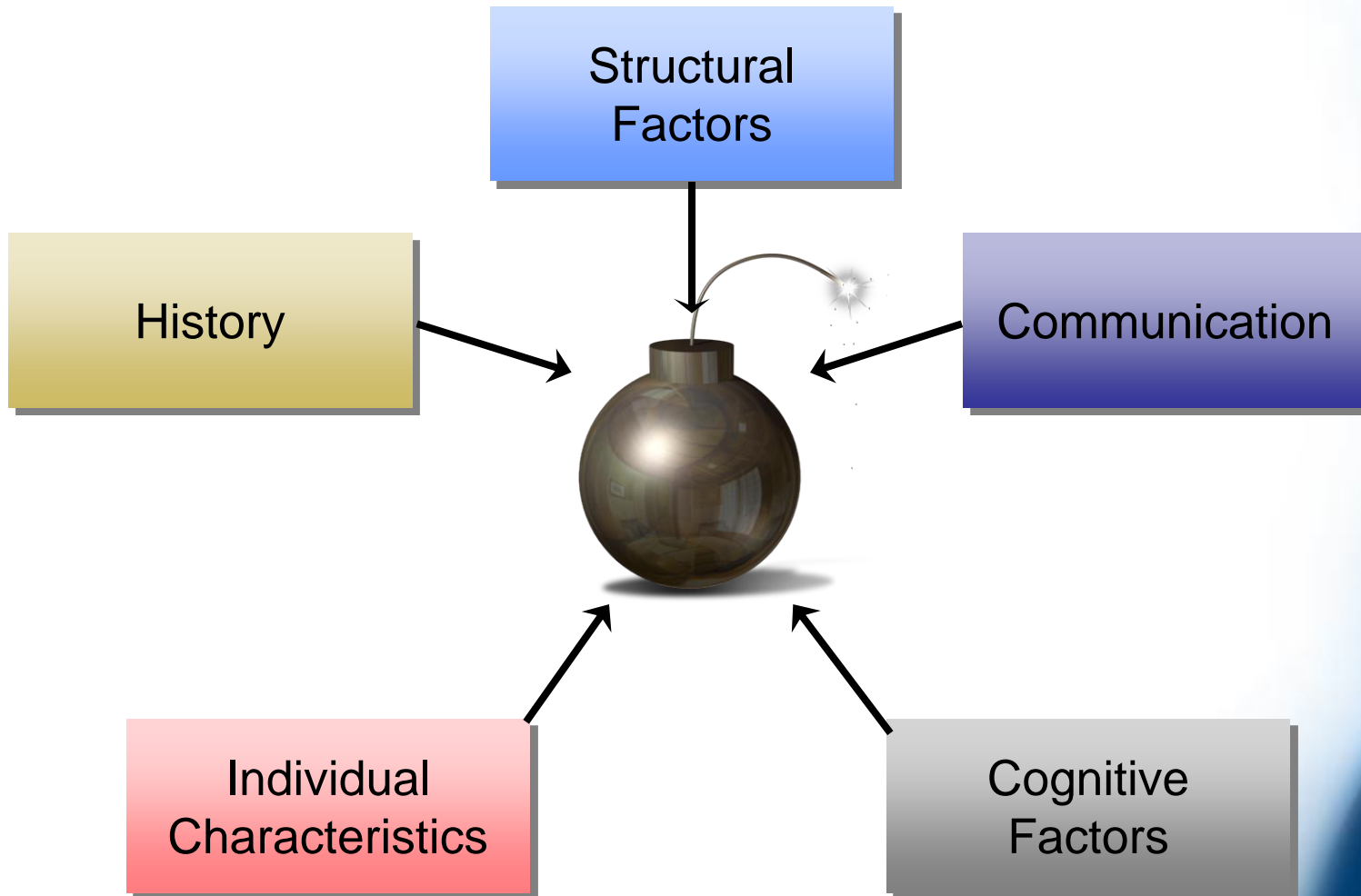
Process conflict

Conflict that arises over responsibilities and how work should be completed

Effects of Conflict on Task Performance



Causes of Conflict



Causes of Conflict

Structural Factors

Structural Factors

- Increased specialization
- Interdependence among parties
- Physical layout
- Centralization versus decentralization

Communication

Communication

- Breakdown and/or avoidance
- Insensitivity
- One-sided
- “Shame and Blame”

Cognitive Factors

Cognitive Factors

- Differing expectations
- Perceptions of the other party

Individual Characteristics

Individual Characteristics

- Personality
- Value differences
- Goals

History

History

- Past performance
- Previous interactions

Conflict Escalation

Conflict escalation

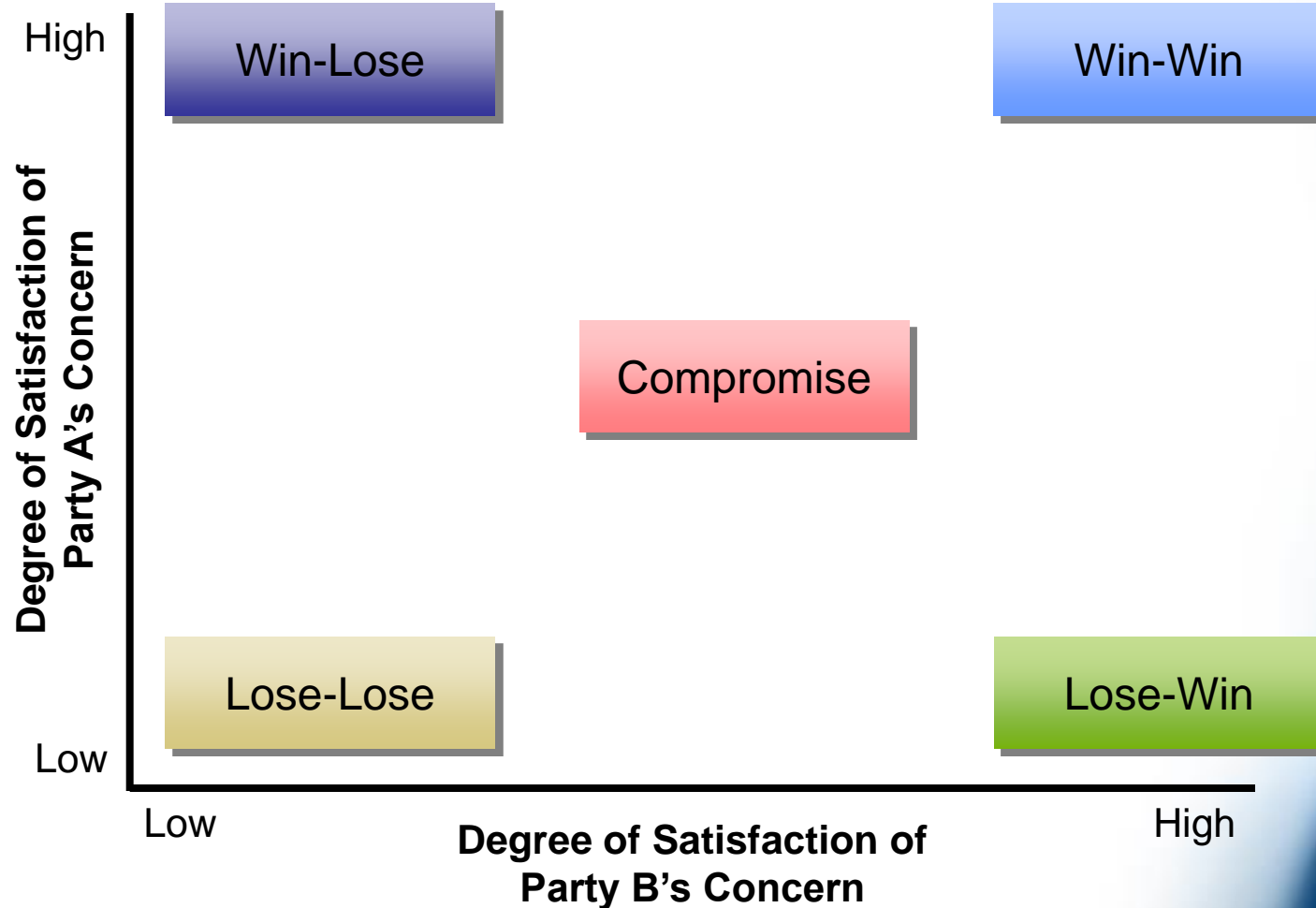
- Process whereby a conflict grows increasingly worse over time

Escalation of conflict is more likely when

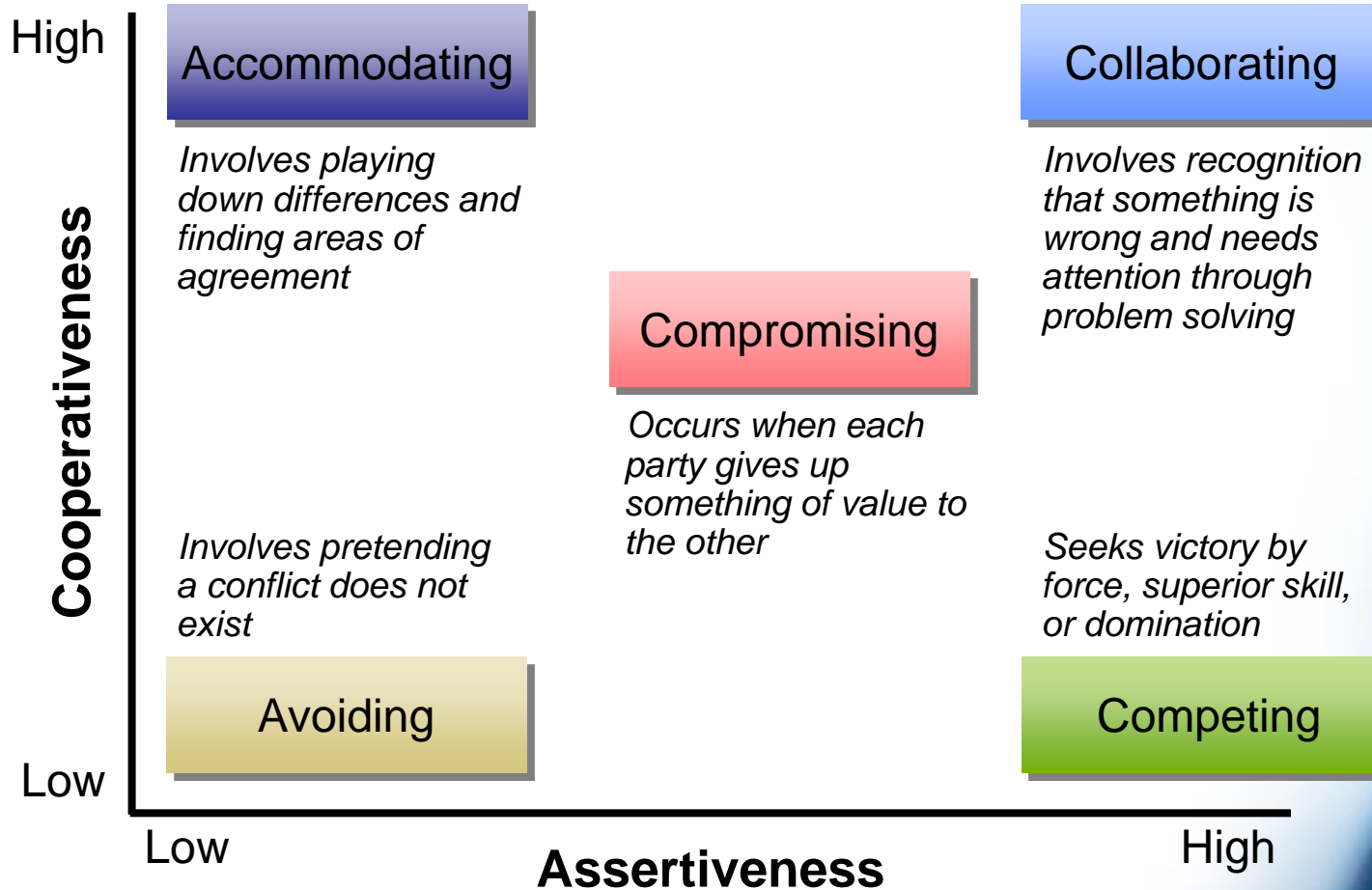
- Cultural differences exist between the parties
- The parties have a history of antagonism
- The parties have insecure self-images
- Status differences between parties are uncertain
- Parties have strong ties to each other
- The parties do not identify with one another
- One or both parties has the goal of beating the other party



Conflict Outcomes



Responses to Conflict



Conflict Resolution Steps

Make Diagnosis

Make a diagnosis

- Diagnosis best carried out by third party not involved in the conflict
- Is conflict functional or dysfunctional?
- What is the cause of the conflict?
- What are the expectations of the parties?

Conflict Resolution Steps



Make Diagnosis

Select conflict-management response

Select appropriate conflict-management response

- Determine situational factors
- Have parties select response that will help them resolve the conflict
- Competing, accommodating, avoiding, compromising, collaborating?

Conflict Resolution Steps



Make Diagnosis

The diagram shows three yellow rectangular boxes stacked vertically. The top box is labeled 'Make Diagnosis'. The middle box is labeled 'Select conflict-management response'. The bottom box is labeled 'Select conflict-resolution tactics'. On the left side, there are three L-shaped arrows pointing from the left edge of each box to the right edge of the box below it, indicating a sequential flow from top to bottom.

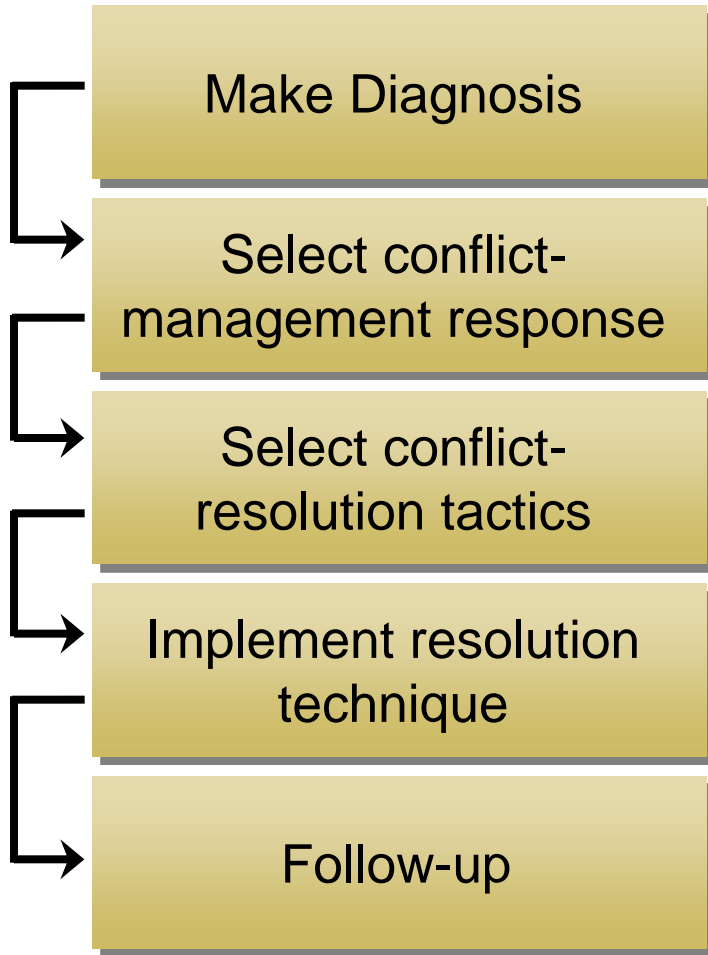
Select conflict-management response

Select conflict-resolution tactics

Select appropriate conflict-resolution response

- Those that can be used to achieve win-lose or lose-win
- Those that can be used to achieve win-win
- Those that can be used to compromise or collaborate

Conflict Resolution Steps



Implement resolution technique

- Conflict situations are highly sensitive and require expertise for resolution
- Often calls for the use of an experienced third party

Follow-up

- Managers and associates must monitor the solution and follow up to ensure that the conflict has been, in fact, resolved

Power

Power

- The ability of those who hold it to achieve outcomes they desire

Bases of individual power

- Legitimate power (formal authority)
- Reward power
- Coercive power
- Expert power
- Referent power



Power

Power is a function of dependency . . .



$$P = f(\text{Dependency})$$

And can be easily abused

Conflict and Power

Considerations for Healthy Dialog

Let's Begin

The background features a dark blue gradient with white and light blue wavy lines. A central graphic depicts an atom with a dark blue nucleus and three glowing blue elliptical orbits. Binary code (0s and 1s) is scattered across the scene, following the curves of the wavy lines.