

## Your Results

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## Support

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Many people have learned Support strategies through training in helping professions. Often these strategies are called communication skills or active listening. The major assumption of this strategy is that the other is the one with the problem. In Collaboration and Negotiation the major assumption is that the parties share responsibility for "fixing" the difficulty. Not so with support. Here the assumption is that the other owns the problem and it is your task *not* to take responsibility for dealing with it, but to help the other deal with their problem while you encourage the other not to be dependent on you and your resources. This kind of strategy would be appropriate in a situation where two parties are in conflict with each other and one or both are trying to get you -- a third person -- to take a side. If one of the parties complains about the behaviour of the other, then it is not your problem -- but you can be helpful to one or the other by trying to help them function in a health and ethical manner toward the other.

Perhaps another way you define this strategy is to call it a situation where you don't believe then tension is motivated by the issues at hand.

Support strategies are also recommended when you are in conflict with someone who is not willing to come to the table, so to speak, and work the issues that are important to you both. The use of Support tactics to help the other feel safe with you and develop some trust may help establish an environment in which the other may, finally, join with you in a collaborative effort.

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## Probable Outcomes of Support

Support usually elicits good feelings. We all like to be listened to and cared about.

The potential problem of Support strategies is that the other may be disappointed that you did not take their side. Of course, there are times when we are looking for no more than a friendly and sympathetic ear. But at other times we would like very much to have an advocate, and we are unhappy that the supportive person is only supportive to the extent of being a good listener.

The best outcome from Support strategies is that the supported people are encouraged to be responsible for themselves. While this may not be what the supported person hoped for, it may well be the best thing for all concerned. Instead of helping people stay dependent, a supportive posture encourages them to take responsibility for themselves.