

### Diversity, Problem-Solving, and Reconciliation

The quality, creativity, and inventiveness of problem-solving increase when diverse people work together. However, this diversity can cause misunderstandings and frustrations as cross-cultural dynamics play out. In some cases, the focus becomes more on how people perceive and manage problems differently than the actual problem.

There are three strategies to deal with differences in decision-making and problem-solving:

- Ignore or abandon one proposition in favor of another
- Compromise (sometimes your way, sometimes the other way)
- Reconcile

One approach is static and one-directional, creating winners and losers, while the other is integrative and moves between meanings. In successful global organizations, where diversity is everywhere, they have learned how to deal with differences through reconciliation which involves strengthening one side through its opposite, a kind of fusing of opposing viewpoints.

How does reconciliation work in practice?

Let's consider a hypothetical dilemma of Individualism and Teams and apply three steps of Fons Trompenaars' 'Dilemma Reconciliation Process, which results in a reconciliation statement.

**Step One:** Recognizing differences – highlight the value of both sides.

"On the one hand, I have individuals on my team who are original, independent, private and unconventional; on the other hand, most of my team members are working in a spirit of cooperation, support, and sharing."

**Step two:** Identifying the dilemma – describe both sides equally and positively.

"I have creative, innovative, autonomous team members that I would like to see working with the rest of the group cooperating, sharing information, and supporting each other."

**Step Three:** Reconciling differences - combine positive elements with opposites by respecting differences. The following is a reconciliation of our dilemma: "Through acknowledging the innovative contributions of our brilliant team members, we create team spirit, which we show by supporting each other, even when new ideas don't work out."

The above statement, simplified as it is, shows how we move from one position to another to reconcile the orientations of team and individual, which also strengthens how we work.

For information on dilemmas and the reconciliation process, please see: Fons Trompenaars, "Riding the Waves of Culture" (2022), or visit, [www.THTconsulting.org](http://www.THTconsulting.org)

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