



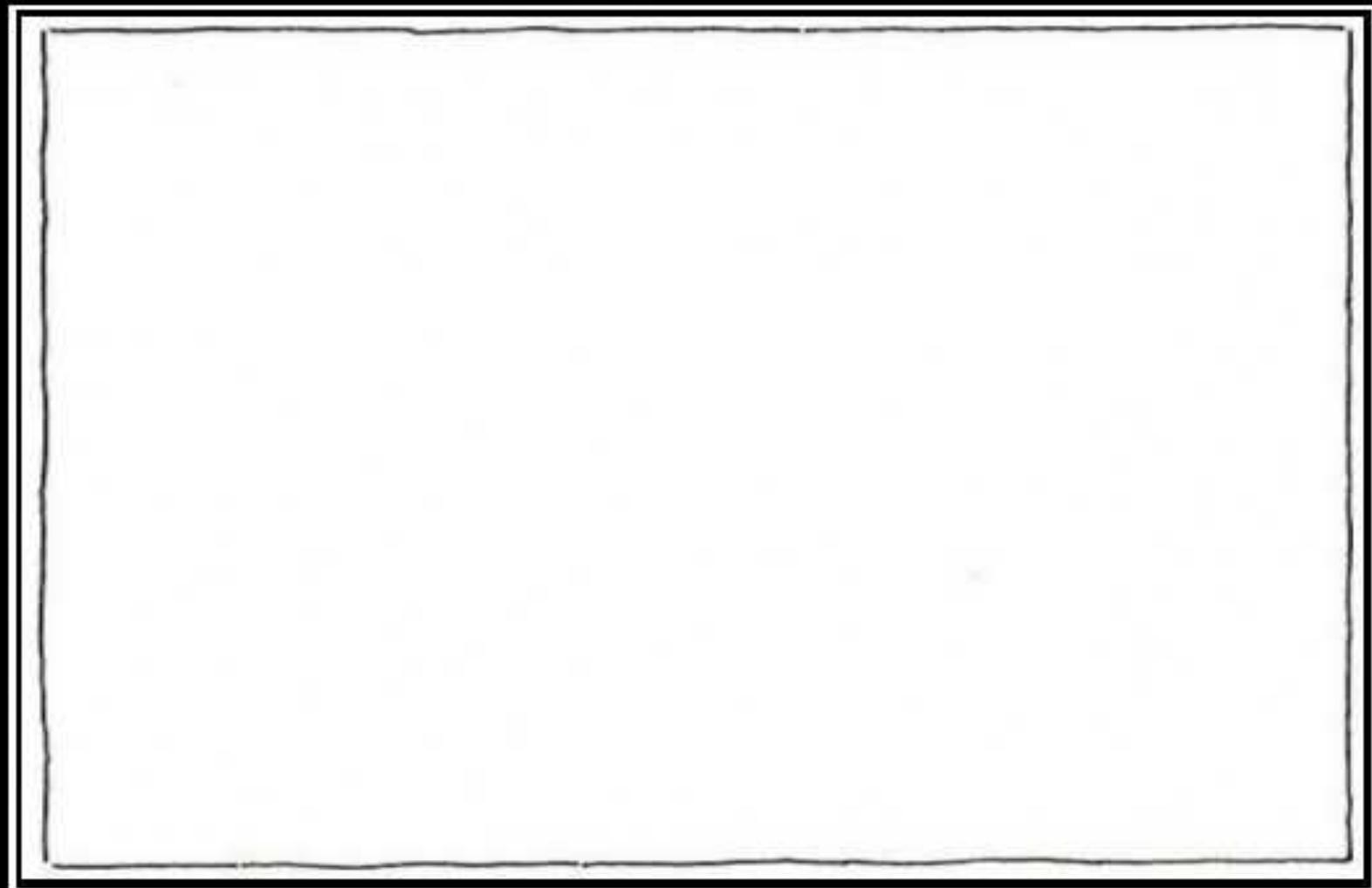
# Difficult Discussions In the Workplace

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# THIS CARTOON

It's a culturally, ethnically, religiously, and politically correct one.

Please enjoy it responsibly.

Thank you.

# Political Correctness

- **Has created more inclusive workplaces**
- **...but has also erected barriers to constructive communication and collaboration**
- **Recommended practices**
  - Abandon need to be “right” about perceived offenses or to be “innocent” of prejudice
  - Learn what is fueling the tension and how you might interact more productively
  - Adopt learning mind-set: honestly question your assumptions and encourage others to challenge your beliefs and behaviors.

# Key Skills for Conversation Across Difference

- Listen effectively
- **Self-Disclose:** Be transparent about your intentions and goals for the conversation
- Inquire about the other's perspective on the situation
- Take an *alliance attitude* (as opposed to adversarial attitude) toward direct reports
  - Wanting the direct report to be successful
  - Willingness to foster a strong working relationship with the direct report
- **Be proactive in surfacing issues of diversity**
  - Being willing to risk being seen as unskilled or even offensive
- **Problem-solve together**



# Three Things

- **Defusing conflict**
- **The whole story on bringing your whole self to work**
- **The more we know...**



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# Types of Conflict

## ■ Task

- Awareness of differences in viewpoints and opinions pertaining to a task. Controversy about the job or project that the group is working on. Pertains to conflict about ideas and differences of opinion.

## ■ Relationship

- Awareness of interpersonal incompatibilities. Involves personal issues such as dislike among group members and feelings such as annoyance, frustration, and irritation.

## ■ Process

- Awareness of controversies about aspects of how task accomplishment will proceed. Pertains to issues around who is responsible for what, and how things should be delegated.

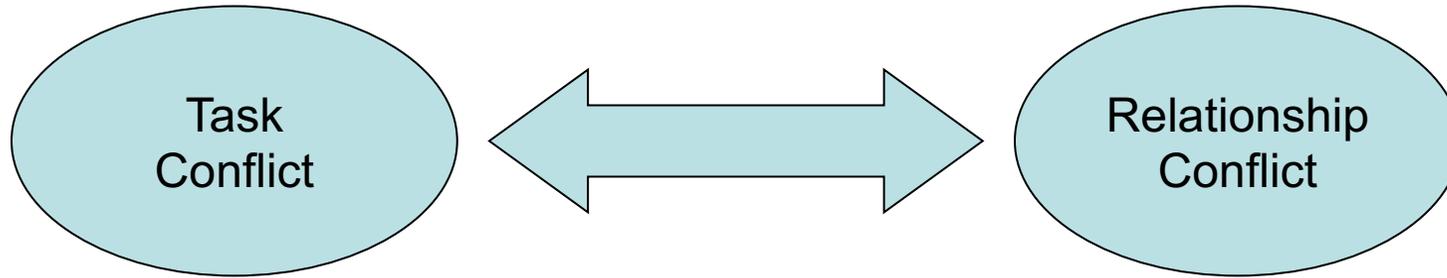


# Outcomes of Different Types of Conflict

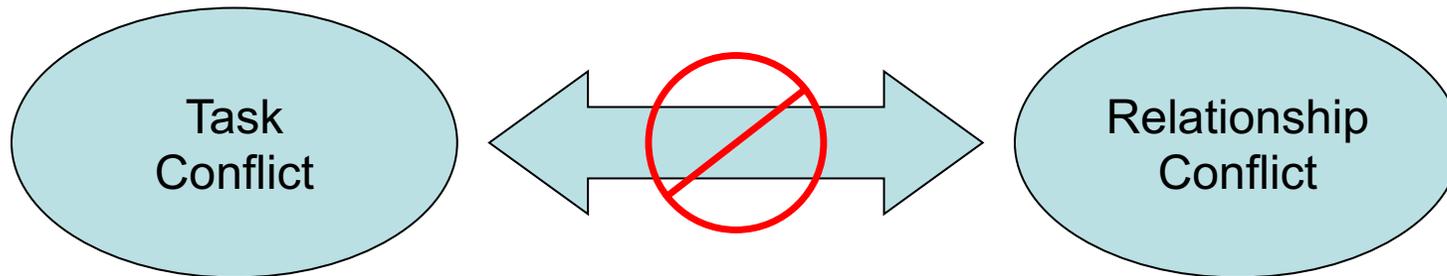
- **Task Conflict:** Group performance may increase through improved consideration for different alternatives and group problem solving
  - Moderate Task Conflict → Higher Performance
  - High Task Conflict → Low Satisfaction
- **Relationship Conflict:** Group performance suffers due to a focus on interpersonal issues, which largely detracts from group performance because of misspent time and effort
  - High Relationship Conflict → Low Satisfaction and Low Performance
- **Process Conflict:** Group performance suffers due to a focus on perceived procedural unfairness and role ambiguity
  - High Process Conflict → Low Satisfaction and Low Performance

# Impact of Trust

## Low Trust



## High Trust



# Role of Diversity in Conflict

## □ Surface-level

- Generally immutable
- Almost immediately observable
- Measured in simple and valid way
- Examples: race/ethnicity, sex, age

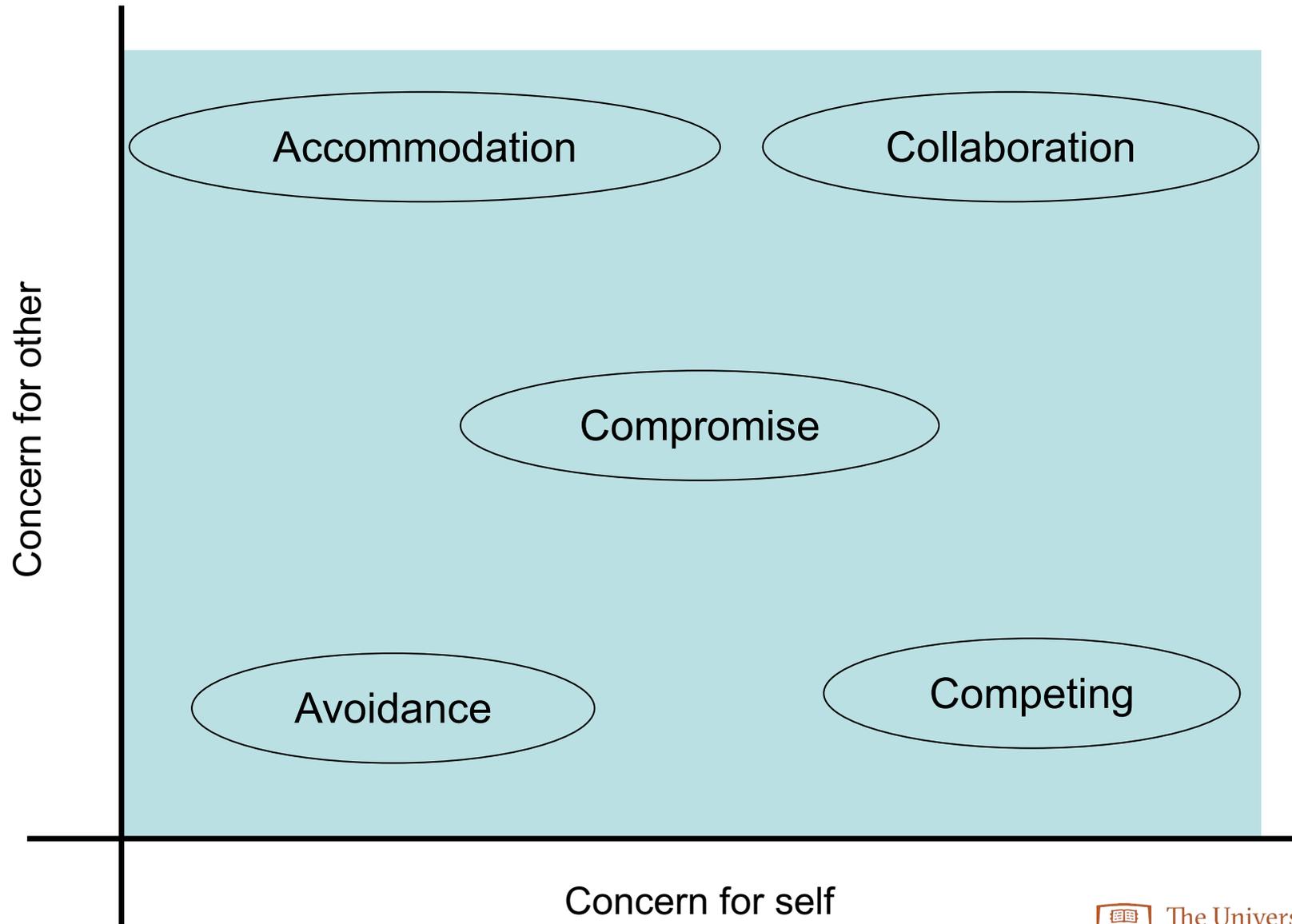
## □ Deep-level

- Subject to more construal
- More mutable
- Examples: attitudes, knowledge, values, skills

Source: Harrison, D. A., Price, K. H., & Bell, M. P. 1998. Beyond relational demography: Time and the effects of surface-and deep-level diversity on work group cohesion. *Academy of Management Journal*, 41(1): 96-107.



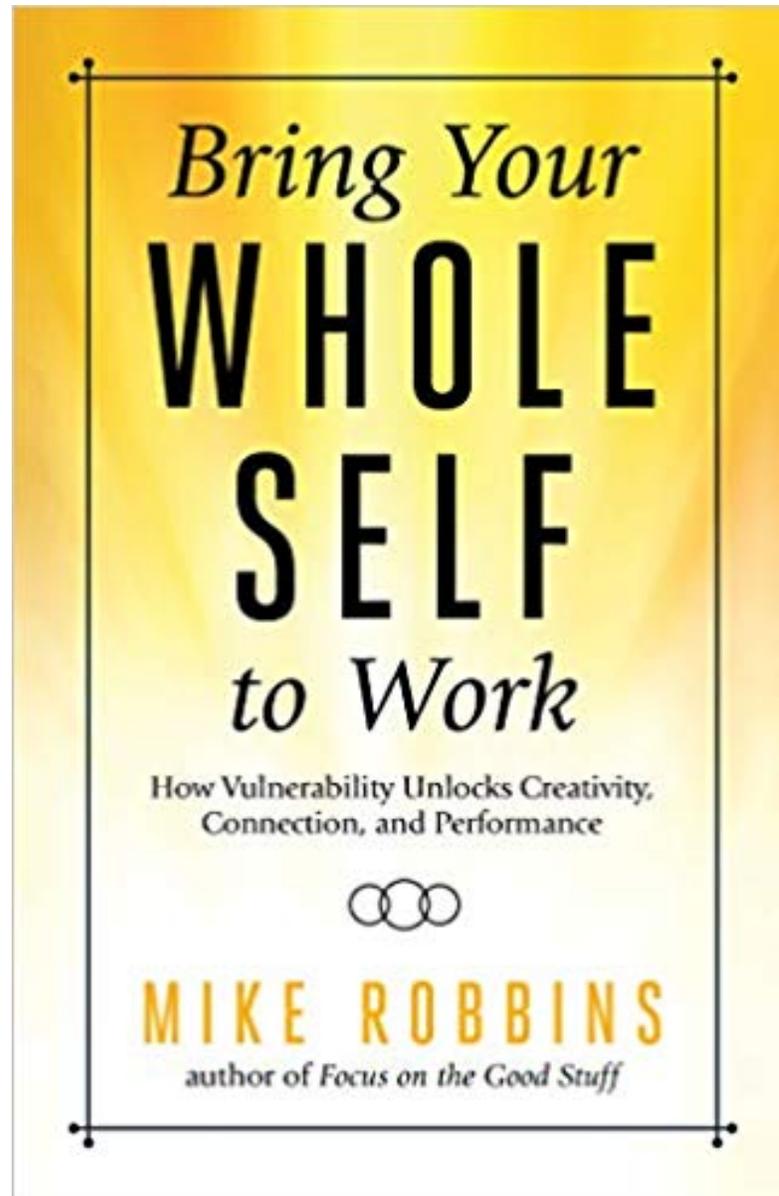
# Conflict Resolution Styles



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# Self-disclosure is complicated

- **Blurring work/personal identities may hurt cohesion for demographic minorities**
  - Highlights deeper level differences
- **Facades of conformity** - false representations created by employees to appear as if they embrace organizational values (Hewlin 2003)
  - More likely for employees who are a minority status
  - More likely when boss has high integrity
  - Associated with higher intentions to quit



# Three Things

- Defusing conflict
- The whole story on bringing your whole self to work
- **The more we know...**





A financial adviser who was recently highlighted in an article in *The New York Times* as the only Goldman Sachs employee to contribute to Donald J. Trump's presidential campaign has been placed on administrative leave.

## IS SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY BIASED AGAINST REPUBLICANS?



“I can’t begin to tell you **how difficult it was for me in graduate school because I am not a liberal Democrat.** As one example, following Bush’s defeat of Kerry, **one of my professors would email me every time a soldier’s death in Iraq made the headlines; he would call me out, publicly blaming me for not supporting Kerry in the election.** I was a reasonably successful graduate student, but the political ecology became too uncomfortable for me. Instead of seeking the professorship that I once worked toward, **I am now leaving academia for a job in industry.**” – Jonathan Haidt (NYT, 2011)



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# **IDEOLOGICAL MISFIT? POLITICAL AFFILIATION AND EMPLOYEE DEPARTURE IN THE PRIVATE-EQUITY INDUSTRY**

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*What Starts Here Changes The World*

