

Twelve Questions to Ask Ralph Kilmann About His New Book

Mastering the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI): Celebrating More Than 50 Years of Resolving All Kinds of Conflicts

1. What drew you to conflict in the first place?
2. Say more about what brought you and Ken Thomas together, and what prompted the two of you to develop the TKI Instrument?
3. Conflict seems to be on the rise with people taking even stronger positions with less tolerance of alternative perspectives. What are you seeing and what can we do about it?
4. Can you walk us through your TKI Conflict Model: the two underlying dimensions, the three diagonal dimensions, and the five conflict modes.
5. What might people hope to achieve (or experience) by improving their conflict-handling behavior?
6. It strikes me there's two skill sets around conflict management: the ability to sense what's going on in the environment, and then the ability to respond with the best approach to address those conflicts. Where do you suggest we start with individual development?
7. You link conflict modes to stress. Most people find conflict inherently stressful. What's your advice for how to manage the stress associated with conflict?
8. You also explore conflict in organizations and you have a different tool to assess that: the Kilmann Organizational Conflict Instrument. What's the aim of that self-report instrument when it comes to conflict in an organizational setting? Should we be building workplaces with less conflict, or be drawing conflict out into the open to then manage?

9. Organizations seem to vary dramatically in their appetite for conflict—whether to be polite and avoid conflict or to be aggressive in confronting conflict. If a leader wants to improve how their team approaches conflict, where should they start?
10. How do you find when applying the TKI assessment tool across cultures and countries? Is there anything we should be aware of when attempting to address conflict in different countries and cultures?
11. In the book, you discuss how the approach we take for addressing INNER conflicts plays a major role in the OUTER conflicts we face. Can you tell us more about that? Consider these four core INNER questions:
 - 11.1. Are you a physical body OR an energy body?
 - 11.2. Are you governed by your ego OR your soul?
 - 11.3. Is your inner self (as a combination of your ego and soul) separate from your surrounding systems OR an integral part of who you are?
 - 11.4. Have you healed your wounded boundaries from the past OR are you still distracted and drained in the present?
12. How can people learn more about you and your work?