

COMPROMISE vs. CONSENSUS

Some people think that **Compromise** and **Consensus** are one in the same. There are very important differences between the two, especially when it comes to individual self-care and to Parenting.

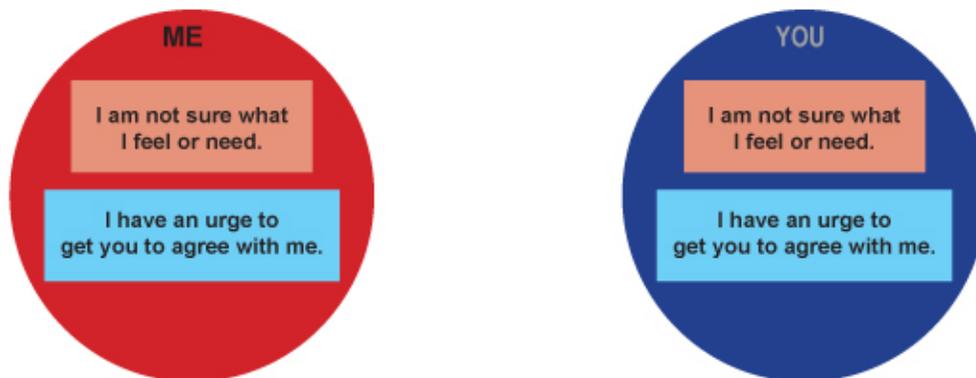
COMPROMISE

COMPROMISE (Wikipedia)

kohm-pruh-mahyz

To compromise is to make a deal between different parties where each party gives up part of their demand. In arguments, compromise is a concept of finding agreement through communication, through a mutual acceptance of terms—often involving variations from an original goal or desire.

In modern family situations the idea of **Compromise** is usually based upon competing demands and some willingness to give up some part of the demands. However, in modern life, people tend to be so focused outside themselves making demands that neither party really knows what they actually feel or what they actually need. But modern people think they know what they want. They usually want the other person to make some sacrifice that will indicate to observers a loss of face. Each party **says** they are willing to give up on getting a portion of their demands to get the other to make an agreement. If there is agreement they feel like they lost or won but neither party trusts the other to follow through. The compromise soon collapses and is often forgotten. This leaves both parties with an increasing sense of powerlessness, bitterness and distrust. As both parties co-escalate the blame the families needs go unmet.



For the purposes of Parenting and Family Leadership COMPROMISE doesn't work at all. The structure of Compromise is manipulative and co-dependent:

1. I give away something for the moment.
2. To get something I need from you.
3. Later I will seek to modify the agreement or I will behave as if there is no agreement.

Both parties in the "agreement" know that manipulation is happening so both tend to ratchet up the anxiety and the process often becomes aggressive.

We are both being **manipulative** and **controlling**, the two pillars of co-dependence. We feel increasingly anxious, increasingly impulsive, and increasingly powerless. If we knew there was a better way perhaps we would try it out.

CONSENSUS

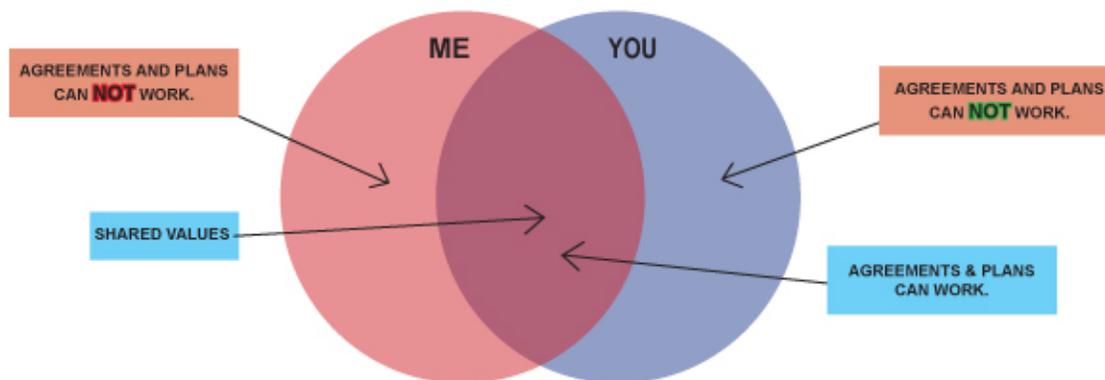
CONSENSUS (Wikipedia)

con-sen-sus

Consensus decision-making is a group decision making process that seeks the consent, not necessarily the agreement of participants and the resolution of objections. Consensus is defined by Merriam-Webster as, first, general agreement, and second, group solidarity of belief or sentiment. It has its origin in the Latin word *cōnsēnsus* (agreement), which is from *cōnsentiō* meaning literally **feel together**. It is used to describe both the decision and the process of reaching a decision. Consensus decision-making is thus concerned with the process of reaching a consensus decision, and the social and political effects of using this process.

The idea of Consensus is based upon the reality of overlapping interests. People who have chosen to live together for some time almost certainly have a long list of values in common, especially if they are parenting children. Things may have become very difficult but there are strengths in the relationship derived by the strengths of each individual. These strengths usually represent a good portion of the Shared Values.

In Consensus we realize we can stop trying to get people to agree about stuff they do not agree about. We can instead focus on finding agreement to solve problems in any area of common interest. What do we agree about? What has kept us together so far? What brought us together. What do you feel? What do I feel? Among humans there is usually a good amount of shared feelings about important components of life.



For the purposes of Family Healing **Skagit Family Study Center** further defines Consensus as follows:

- Not agreeing until we actually do agree. Only saying, "I agree" when we honestly do agree.
- Noticing (through "active listening") what feelings and needs we share in common and basing each agreement upon those common feelings and needs.
- To become aware of feelings and needs individually, then to share feelings and needs, to think individually, then share the thoughts. To offer plans. To listen. To reject respectfully then take responsibility for the next attempt. To accept only when you feel you can keep agreements. Then, when the agreements don't work, go back to the beginning and keep investing feelings, needs and plans until it works better. Then maintain the agreement by continuing to invest feelings and needs in gradually improving plans.
- Each person exercises their freedom and authority to make judgments and decisions within the framework of commitment to agreements.
- Each person has equal input into the process. Each person can table, amend and [veto](#) or "block" proposals.
- Each person is free to say, "NO."

Consensus emphasizes the need for common agreement in situations where independent activity leads to failure of the couple, family, children, group or community.

ACTIVE LISTENING

PLEASE READ: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Active_listening