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## Context to the nugget

In the previous nugget, Jen speaks about each of us defaulting to one of 4 conflict types. When we are in conflict with another person, they often have one dominant conflict type out of 4. That lends itself to 16 permutations. Jen, however, states that most of the conflict patterns in pairs end up falling into 5 frequently found permutations. She speaks about why this might be the case.

## Transcription

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Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): And as I was reading your book, Jen, what I found interesting was, you know, mathematically speaking if we sort of take the fact that we could fall into one of the four conflict habits and the person on the other side could be one of the four, it leads to 16 sort of permutations. But I noticed that in your book, you say that there are five patterns which are more common than the rest, blame shame, blame shutdown, relentlessly collaborate shutdown, shutdown shutdown and blame blame. As I eyeballed it, I got the sense that blame and shutdown are possibly more commonly found among people than the rest, would that be a fair way of understanding the context here?

Dr. Jennifer Goldman (JG): I thought that was such an interesting insight, you wrote me that before we spoke and I remember that and I think that is a really interesting insight, I have to say I do not know. I have not done the analysis on people who have taken the quiz to see if there are major differences and I can and should potentially do that, all the data is completely anonymous and we do have the data, so I should look at it and do that analysis, my sense though just anecdotally having worked with thousands of people who are my students at Columbia and also clients in all kinds of corporate and academic and non-profit and governmental environments, is that feels to me like that is a pretty even break down. So I have, over the last 10 years, done an exercise on the first night of the three-day workshop that I gave at Columbia for graduate students on Optimal Outcomes and I have people self-identify, this was before I created the quiz online and so, people would self-identify in one of these four conflict habits groups. And generally speaking, those four corners of the room that I would send people to, were pretty evenly distributed. So I am not sure that it is about that. The best thing I can chalk it up to is that there are certain patterns that are easier to get locked into than others. And so for example blame shame is a perfect example of this where if you have a conflict habit of you shame yourself, you blame yourself, you might be naturally drawn to someone to be in relationship with someone who is a blamer. That is a very natural pattern to get stuck in, the blamer will be naturally attracted to you and you will be naturally attracted to them because you are already shaming yourself and you are going to find someone who is going to kind of lay it on you, that is what you attract and a blamer needs someone who is going to allow them to blame them, allow the person to blame. So I think that is more how it works. Same thing with blame blame, you know, like in my family and I talk about this very honestly in the book, my mom and I were stuck in a

blame blame pattern for many many years and, you know, that was not fun or easy but it does kind of make sense. I grew up in my parents' home and there was a lot of screaming and yelling. And so as much as I had my grandma Florence as that model of how to deal with conflict which was to stay calm and allow, you know, she was the eye of the storm for others, I also had this model of blaming and anger and so I know how to do that really well too. And so I think blamers can also find each other and that is a really sticky pattern conflict loop to get stuck in as well. So those were just two examples, does that help, is that helpful...?

DJ: Yeah absolutely. I think that is a great insight. It is not so much about the incidence of these five types but probably the stickiness of these kinds of conflict patterns which possibly makes them stand out for you. So I think that is an interesting nuance. I had not quite processed it that way.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: Thank you for listening. For more please visit [playtopotential.com](http://playtopotential.com).

## End of nugget transcription

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### Dr. Jennifer Goldman - Nuggets

- 73.00 Dr. Jennifer Goldman - The Full Conversation
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- 73.02 Dr. Jennifer Goldman - Why some conflict patterns are common
- 73.03 Dr. Jennifer Goldman - Listening to understand the nuances

- 73.04 Dr. Jennifer Goldman - Engaging our senses
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- 73.09 Dr. Jennifer Goldman - Pattern breaking behaviour and Camp David

### **About Deepak Jayaraman**

Deepak seeks to unlock the human potential of senior executive's / leadership teams by working with them as an Executive Coach / Sounding Board / Transition Advisor. You can know more about his work [here](#).

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