

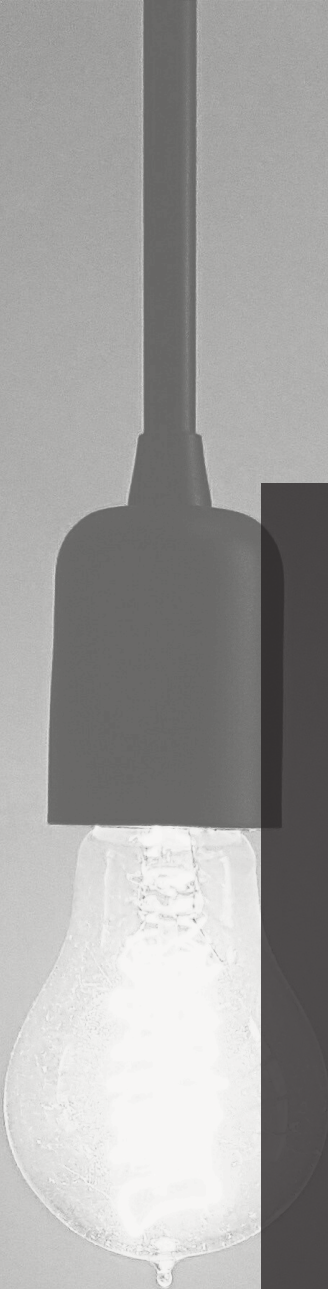
COMPLEMENTARY

THE 7 SHADOWS OF CONFLICT

Conflict is not just a “fight”; it’s any sustained friction in relationships, teams, or organisations where values, goals, or perceptions clash.

THE SHADOWS TOOLKIT

COPYRIGHT AYANDA ZACA 2025



ABOUT THE SELF ASSESSMENT

This base assessment helps you reflect on your conflict behaviours through the 7 Shadows of Conflict™, score those Shadow behaviours and reflect on them..

From the complete assessment, your scores will give you a Shadow Sub-score, a Light Sub-score, and an integrated Shadow-Light Index™ (SLI).

The aim is not judgment, but awareness and direction- moving step-by-step from Shadow to Light.

A QUICK WORD ABOUT THE SHADOWS

Stress as a source of conflict

In South Africa (and elsewhere), workplace tensions are rising- not only because of economic pressure and organisational change, but also because employees are carrying higher emotional loads than ever before.

When stress levels rise, so does the likelihood of conflict- whether it's expressed openly or in subtle, destructive ways. At home and work.

Stress → Emotional Reactivity → Conflict

Elevated stress and undiagnosed mental health issues often lower resilience and heighten emotional responses- leading to disagreements, miscommunications, and escalated interpersonal conflict.

Stigma → Poor Disclosure → Misinterpretation

When employees hesitate to disclose mental health challenges, their behaviour may be misinterpreted as disengagement or poor performance- sparking conflict instead of compassion.

Leadership Gaps → Conflict Amplification

Supervisors unprepared for mental health issues can struggle to de-escalate situations or accommodate needs, resulting in unresolved tensions and damaged relationships.

Organisational Risk:

Unaddressed mental health and conflict issues can lead to increased absenteeism, turnover, and performance decline- undermining morale and productivity.

Link to the 7 Shadows of Conflict

High stress and low resilience tend to push people into Shadow behaviours more quickly.

- The 7 Shadows of Conflict provides **non-clinical, non-judgemental language** for identifying negative and destructive patterns and moving to healthier alternatives.
- It is equipping individual and leaders to spot patterns of destructive conflict, regardless of the cause, and respond with skill.



- It is not diagnosing or treating mental health issues.
- It gives a shared language for identifying patterns.
- It focuses on observable behaviour, not personal labels.
- It moves the conversation toward constructive, trust-building alternatives.
- It builds emotional intelligence, encourages constructive alternatives, and fits conflict scenarios seamlessly.

“We're here to build conflict awareness and resolution skills that will serve in all high-pressure situations- including when stress, burnout, or personal challenges are affecting behaviour.”

THE 7 SHADOWS EXPLAINED

The Core 4Ds- Common but Destructive Behaviors

Shadow	How it Shows Up	Why It's Harmful	Healthy Alternative
Deny	"That's not true." / Ignoring emotions or facts.	Invalidates the other person's reality; creates confusion and resentment.	Acknowledge facts and feelings, even if you disagree.
Deflect	"It's not my fault, it's yours."	Escalates conflict; avoids responsibility.	Own your part and focus on the shared solution.
Diminish	"You're overreacting."	Shames the other person; lowers self-worth.	Validate the experience before responding.
Distance	Walking away, going silent, or disengaging.	Breaks connection and trust.	Stay present and communicate boundaries constructively.

THE 7 SHADOWS EXPLAINED

The Toxic 3Ds- Deeply Harmful Behaviour Traits

Shadow	How it Shows Up	Why It's Harmful	Healthy Alternative
Discredit	Spreading doubt about someone's credibility.	Damages reputation; breeds distrust.	Address issues directly, and with respect.
Dismiss	Ignoring or refusing to engage in discussion.	Creates emotional abandonment.	Be willing to listen and respond.
Deceive	Withholding or twisting information.	Creates betrayal and insecurity.	Practise honesty and transparency.



THE SHADOW-LIGHT INDEX™ (SLI)- SELF-ASSESSMENT

This assessment helps you reflect on your conflict behaviours through the 7 Shadows of Conflict™ and their constructive Light alternatives. Your scores will give you a Shadow Sub-score, a Light Sub-score, and an integrated Shadow-Light Index™ (SLI). The aim is not judgment, but awareness and direction- moving step-by-step from Shadow to Light.

INSTRUCTIONS

**Read each statement and rate how true it feels for you.
Use a scale of 1–5.**

**1 = Never true,
2 = Rarely true,
3 = Sometimes true,
4 = Often true,
5 = Always true**

Answer honestly- this is for your growth.

**There are 70 questions*:
35 measure Shadow tendencies,
35 measure Light tendencies.**

**At the end, you'll calculate your scores and interpret them
using the scoring guide.**

Important Note:

This free assessment includes only the Shadows.
The Complete Toolkit (including the Lights) is available for purchase.
See Page 16.

SHADOW-LIGHT INDEX™ (SLI)- SELF-ASSESSMENT (SHADOWS)

		SCORE 1-5
01	When mistakes happen, I tend to downplay or ignore them.	☐
02	I sometimes avoid admitting when I've been wrong.	☐
03	I find it easier to move past problems without addressing them directly.	☐
04	I tend to justify my actions instead of acknowledging a fault.	☐
05	I often leave issues unresolved, hoping they fade with time.	☐
06	I sometimes shift attention away from my role in a problem.	☐
07	When challenged, I redirect the focus to another person or factor.	☐
08	I tend to explain things in a way that minimises my responsibility.	☐
09	I occasionally protect myself by changing the subject during conflict.	☐
10	I am more comfortable pointing to external causes than reflecting inward.	☐

SHADOW-LIGHT INDEX™ (SLI)- SELF-ASSESSMENT (SHADOWS)

		SCORE 1-5
11	I occasionally make light of other people's concerns.	☐
12	When someone shares a struggle, I might suggest they're overreacting.	☐
13	I tend to think some issues are "not a big deal."	☐
14	I may overlook the seriousness of someone's feelings or complaints.	☐
15	I sometimes minimise the impact of conflict situations.	☐
16	I prefer to withdraw from difficult conversations.	☐
17	I avoid emotional topics or conflict by becoming quiet.	☐
18	I sometimes cut myself off from people when things get tense.	☐
19	When I feel uncomfortable, I retreat rather than engage.	☐
20	I tend to put space between myself and others during tension.	☐

SHADOW-LIGHT INDEX™ (SLI)- SELF-ASSESSMENT (SHADOWS)

		SCORE 1-5
21	I occasionally question the credibility of people I disagree with.	☐
22	In conflict, I sometimes highlight someone's weaknesses to prove a point.	☐
23	I may use sarcasm or criticism to gain an advantage.	☐
24	I have undermined another person's ideas instead of addressing them fairly.	☐
25	I sometimes struggle to give full respect to those I oppose.	☐
26	I sometimes overlook perspectives that differ from my own.	☐
27	I tend to end conversations when I don't value the input.	☐
28	I may tune out when I feel the other person is "wrong."	☐
9	I've brushed aside someone's concerns without fully considering them.	☐
30	I find myself impatient when listening to others' problems.	☐

SHADOW-LIGHT INDEX™ (SLI)- SELF-ASSESSMENT (SHADOWS)

		SCORE 1-5
31	I sometimes withhold details that could change how others see me.	☐
32	I may choose not to share uncomfortable truths.	☐
33	I occasionally bend facts to make myself look better.	☐
34	I avoid full transparency when I think it might cause conflict.	☐
35	I may shape a story differently depending on who I'm speaking to.	☐

SCORING GUIDE

STEP 1- CALCULATE SHADOW SUB-SCORE

Shadows Sub-score (Q1-35):
Add all responses. Range = 35-175.

Divide the total by 5 to get an easy-to-read average out of 35.

STEP 2: REVIEW SCORES

SHADOW SCORE: _____/35

STEP 3: EXPLORE THE SHADOWS

The shadow with the highest personal score is...

This shadow usually shows up in my relationships in this way...

ACTION PLAN

This shadow usually shows up in my work life in this way...

Awareness of Use: When I notice others using this shadow on me, "I sometimes feel..."

Awareness of Use: The shadow I identify most easily in others is...

Awareness of Use: The shadow I am most reactive to in others is...

STEP 4: 30-DAY COMMITMENT TO REDUCE SHADOWS

MY
PRACTICE
FOR THE
NEXT 30
DAYS IS:

ONE DAILY
REMINDER
(WORD,
SYMBOL,
OR
PHRASE):

MY ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER TO
HELP ME SEE THIS PLAN THROUGH IS...

PARTNER NAME:

GET IT HERE

TURN YOUR SCORE INTO MOMENTUM...

Your Shadow score is a starting line.
You can also explore the Complete Toolkit-
available for purchase.

THE COMPLETE SHADOW-LIGHT TOOLKIT

Includes:

- The Shadows Assessment (/35)
- The Lights Assessment (/35)
- The full Shadow-Light Index™ (/70)
- The full SLI Interpretation Guide
- The 6-Zone Shadow-Light Placement
- The complete 30-day Action Plan
- ...and more.

Available for only R299.

Prefer to dive right in?
Take the 7 Shadows of Conflict Course.
Online & Self-Paced.

Register for the Course [Here!](#)