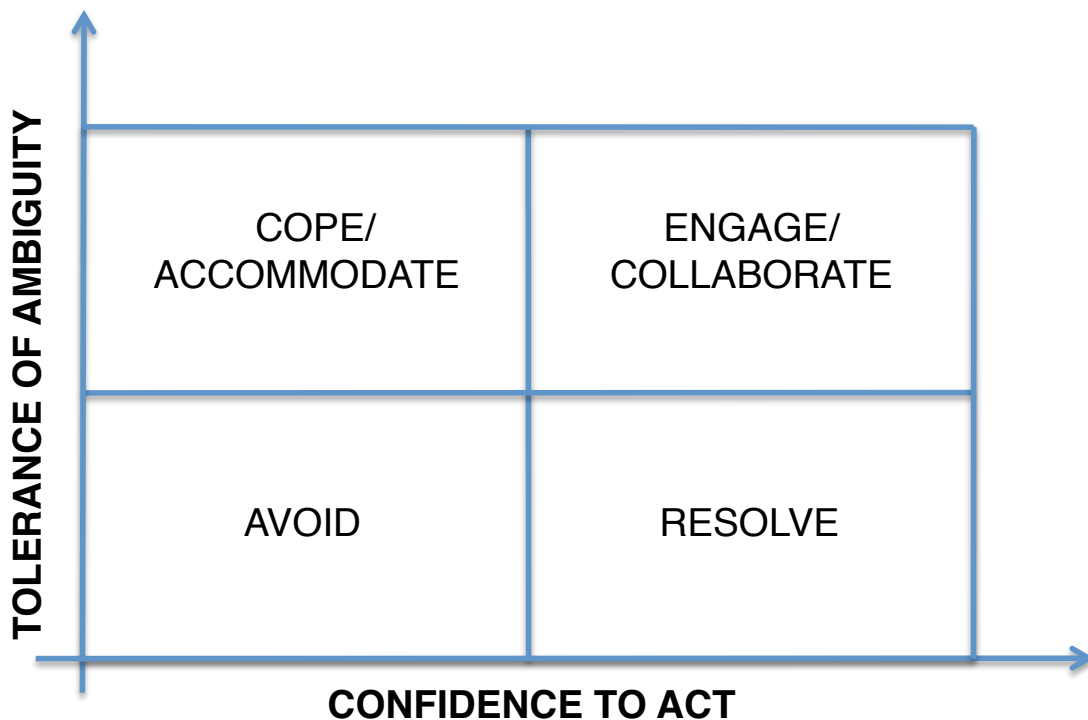


CONFIDENCE AND AMBIGUITY

Confidence is good and ambiguity bad – yes? After all, ambiguity leads to confusion, lack of clarity and uncertainty. Confidence gives a clear lead, encourages others and is decisive. We all want to be confident, and coaches spend quite a lot of their time coaching it. But there are times when ambiguity is inevitable: we feel in two minds about something, we are not sure what we can rely on when it comes to making a decision. How should we handle that?

If we look at the dimensions of 1. confidence to act, and 2. tolerance of ambiguity, some simple but interesting contrasts emerge:



If you are high in confidence and high in tolerance of ambiguity, you are likely to engage with the people and issues. If high on confidence and low on tolerance, you are likely to want resolution – but the risk here is that attempted resolution comes too early. Too early because others have not been engaged, listened to or sought out to collaborate; because facts have not been established.

This matrix can point both to your preferred way of acting, and to a way that might be more effective. And of course there is a risk of engaging too much, when what is needed is some resolution....