

Personality Development and Behavioural Skills(PDBS)

UNIT-I: Personality Development: Definition-Various Aspects of Personality Development, Behavioural Traits. Importance of soft skills for personal and professional development. Success stories.

Personality Development: **Definition:**

Personality is concerned with the psychological pattern of an individual—the thoughts, emotions and feelings—that are unique to a person. In fact, the totality of character attributes and traits of a person are responsible for molding his personality.

Personality development is the development of the organized pattern of behaviours and attitudes that makes a person distinctive. It occurs by the ongoing interaction of temperament, character, and environment.

Definition of personality differs from a person to person; there are also lots of people who still think that personality is related to the physical appearance of a person and has got nothing to do with other skills. Everyone has their own viewpoints. If a person is well-built and wearing a good dress it is said that he/she has a good personality. But this is not a rational approach. Personality is not all about looks and beauty. In case the inner personality of a person is weak he/she will lose impact as soon as he/she speaks or acts, such a person fails to create a lasting impression on others, and rising in their career becomes a difficult task for them. Also, a good overall personality is very important in our social life too, it is a fact that everyone likes talking to a person with good communication skills and knowledge. Therefore, both the inner and the outer personality of a person should be strengthened.

Personality is an important thing in the life of a person that determines not only his professional success but also his overall behaviour and attitude in life. Personality as a whole means a combination of characteristics and appearance of an individual that includes the pattern of thought, feelings, attitude,

his behaviour, communication ability and physical features. It has been believed that a child inherits a lot of personality traits from its parents. Every individual is different from the other and possesses a personality of his own that is unique from the others in every form. You must have noticed that there are people who have a lot of friends in a school, college or office and there are also people in the same place who don't socialize much and have very few friends, this is difference is mainly due to the difference in thinking, characteristics and most importantly the difference in the personality of the people.

Our friends, surroundings, choices are determined to a great extent by our individual personality and the way we behave. Personality Development is a tool through which you bring out your capabilities and your strengths in making yourself aware of your inner self and become more confident to face the outside world. It has been believed that the personality of a person takes its basic formation in the beginning period of childhood. Childhood experiences in the family and the society are very crucial that helps an individual to develop certain traits and characteristics. Friends, teachers and the environment of the school have its own positive or negative impact. This personality is later moulded, based on the impact of various positive and negative factors in life. However, the significance of this understanding is that you can always keep improving your personality. Adults need to be very careful while rearing a child because of deep scars on the psychology of a child may have permanent marks. To develop positive thinking in the child parents must relate to each other in a positive way.

Personality development is something that was not given much importance a few years back, but from the past few years' personality developments has become very important from the career point of view. There are a lot of people that still underestimate the importance of having a pleasing personality and thinks that it just means being born good-looking, that there isn't anything much that an individual can do about it, which is simply not true. The reality is that the good looking is just a part of good personality and not everything. For a good personality, you need a lot of other characteristics like communication skills, politeness, good listening skills, vocabulary, and the art of engaging communication, neatness and attitude. These all combine together to make up a good personality.

Personality development has become an important tool today for developing overall skills within a person that help him to develop professionally as well as personally. A great personality includes knowing how to dress well, social graces, grooming, speech and interpersonal skills. Whatever your career, these are vital skills that will promote your objectives and also helps you in your day to day life. Everyone likes to interact with a person having an attractive personality. A lot of people have a misconception that these personality skills are inborn and cannot be developed, no matter how hard an individual may try to, which is totally baseless. With the help of good training a child or an adult can learn communication skills, different subjects, driving, improve vocabulary, pronunciation or computer operating that plays an important part in personality development. Similarly, a proper training in personality development enhances the general as well as unique traits or characteristics of a person. These days basic personality features like confidence, spoken skills as well as language skills are very important for making a mark professionally. A teacher of personality development helps a person to get a positive thought pattern, gain confidence, improve behaviour, learn better communication and develop a healthy physique.

Importance of Personality Development:

A great overall personality is very important in the life of an individual. Everyone is influenced by an attractive personality. Whether it is an interview for a job or having a conversation within your friend circle, there are certain traits and characteristics that you must possess to make your mark and have an impressive conversation. Without influencing others you can't get success in today's competitive world. It is difficult to achieve a job without influencing the interviewers with your personal as well as professional skills, also if you are business you need to influence your clients and make them believe in you. Therefore the importance of personality development has risen very much. These days every good public school is careful about the personality development of its students.

A few years ago the concept of personality development was not very common and parents rarely gave any importance to the personality development of their children. In fact, personality was just confined to having a good look and

wearing good clothes. Emphasis was given only on physical appearance and expertise in work-related skills. Earlier no one paid much attention to develop interpersonal skills. The interview also at those time were concentrated much towards the work efficiency of the person and not much importance was given to the personality. But now the time has changed. It is an age of competition and economic revolution. Although opportunities for progress are everywhere yet a student has to work very hard to climb the stairs of a brilliant career. The person having a good personality can move through the difficulties with more confidence. However, the importance of personality development includes:

- **Gives Confidence:** A great personality tends to give a boost to your confidence. When you know you are appropriately attired and groomed, this makes you less anxious when meeting a person. Knowing the right things to say and how to conduct yourself will increase your confidence. If you are in full confidence and well in command of the situation then it becomes really easy for you to give out your best performance. Confidence out of your personality gives you a boost that leads to a situation of easiness for you and you are able to control all your anxiety and fears and perform fearlessly. Also, your confidence enables you to have a hassle free conversation or if you are going to give a speech it is very important for you to be confident to engage your listeners.
- **Improves Communication Skills:** A lot of emphases is given to improving communication skills during personality development. Possessing good communication skills is very important both for personal and professional life. People are more receptive to what you say if they are impressed with your personality. Verbal communication skills are also part of personality development; improving your speech will strengthen the impact of your message. Also along with your speaking and language skills, a lot of emphases is laid on improving pronunciation and vocabulary. At the same time, effective communication also includes being a good listener.
- **Helps to develop Positive Attitude:** Positive attitude is really important for one to progress in life. A person with a positive attitude always looks at the brighter side and is always on a developmental path. An individual with a negative attitude finds a problem in every situation. Rather than cribbing and criticizing people around, analyze the whole situation and try to find an appropriate solution for the same. Remember, if there is a problem, there has to be a solution as well.

Never lose your cool. It would make the situation worse. Developing a positive attitude even in a hopeless situation is the part of personality developmental program.

- **Makes you Credible:** It is very important to have a proper dressing sense and picking up right dress for you. Despite the saying that you don't judge a book by its cover, people do tend to judge people by their clothing and how it is worn. Also, your dress plays a great deal of role in your overall looks and your confidence as well. This does not mean buying expensive clothes will do the whole job. You need to be very careful while picking up clothes for yourself. We all know people who look shabby in expensive clothes. There are also people who look great even if their attire is inexpensive. Because of this, you must know what to wear and you must be aware of other aspects of enhancing your physical features.
- **Improving Personality:** Competition is increasing day by day and there is no less of talented individuals possessing high academic results and willing to work hard to achieve their goals. You cannot win by talent and hard work alone these days apart from these two there is a strong need of good personality too. Personality development is a crucial ingredient for success that you must obtain to be successful in your life. Most of the people you see as models of great personality have taken a lot of effort in developing their natural features. Personality development helps you develop an impressive personality and makes you stand apart from the rest. As discussed earlier personality development also plays an essential role in improving one's communication skills and focus to be a good listener as well. Individuals ought to master the art of expressing their thoughts and feelings in the most desired way through personality development. Personality development makes you a confident individual who is appreciated and respected wherever he goes. However few tips to improve personality include:
 - **Gain Knowledge:** As the saying goes, knowledge is power. It is very true that knowledge is power, and is very important in today's competitive world. Nobody is impressed with a person who doesn't have the knowledge about his work as well as surroundings and doesn't even know what is happening around the world. These days if you are not informed, then you are considered to be a fool whom no wise man or woman would like to befriend or follow. Therefore, it becomes

necessary for an individual to enrich their general knowledge, and to master the field in which they are working. It is very important to keep yourself updated with the knowledge of events around the world, you can enhance your knowledge by reading a newspaper, watch informative programmes on television, news-channels, reading books and magazines and being part of active conversations within your friend circles.

- **A Healthy Body:** An important part of personality is your appearance and your physical health. It is very important to maintain a good physical health for a good personality as well as for a healthy life. A body burdened with a disease may get pity for others but it is very difficult for that person to maintain an attractive personality. It is very important to work out regularly and maintain a healthy physique. A healthy and smart look is absolutely essential to create an impact. And if you work on it you can easily attain it. Take exercise regularly, play games or go for a morning walk whatever suits your body and psychology. Eat a balanced diet with fresh fruits and vegetables.
- **Dress Smartly:** As told earlier, physical appearance plays an important role in your personality. A smartly dressed person is admired everywhere. It is not always that only expensive clothes are the best. You should pay a great deal of attention while choosing the right clothing for you ones that suits your physique and you are comfortable in wearing also. By observing successful people in any field, you will come to the conclusion that most of the successful people in almost every field have a keen taste for good dresses. At the same time it is also important that you should not try to copy someone else, instead, make a style statement of your own and choose the clothing that you feel comfortable with. Good dresses also prove a stimulus for the wearer, the person feels more confident and relaxed.
- **Speaking Style:** To have an engaging conversation, it is very important that you maintain a good speaking style and expressions as well. Most of the successful persons maintain a unique style of speaking. They speak clearly and forcefully. Be careful that you have a good command of the language you speak. Don't make grammatical mistakes else you may become a laughing stock. If necessary take training from a good teacher. Give extra care to your pronunciation. Speaking power is an essential trait of any good person. Give others also a chance to speak.

Aspects of Personality Development:

The five broad domains of personality are (OCEAN):

Openness to Experience,

Conscientiousness,

Extraversion,

Agreeableness and

Neuroticism

Openness to Experience:

This describes the open mindedness of an individual. A person who scores high here will enjoy trying new things. They tend to be imaginative and generally open minded about everything. On the other hand, others who score low would be close minded and prefer routine. They are resistant to change and would be very analytical. Those with an open mind will also tend to love the arts and think deeply too. An individual with this trait may fit in advertising, research while those who score low would enjoy jobs that require routine work. The sub traits here include: imagination, adventurous, emotionality, artistic interests, intellect and liberalism.

Conscientiousness:

This trait describes how an individual controls, regulates and directs their impulses. Individuals who score high with this personality trait tend to have

a high level of self discipline. They always follow a plan instead of acting on the spur of the moment. This makes them successful in their endeavours and able to achieve their goals. They are seen as responsible and reliable. They may also be workaholics and perfectionists which may make them boring and inflexible. The sub traits of this aspect include: achievement-driven, dutifulness, orderliness, self-efficacy, self-discipline and cautiousness. Individuals with this trait will always stay focused on their goals regardless of challenges and obstacles because they believe they will always succeed if they follow their plan. They will be able to fit in across different occupations. Their need for achievement is the constant driving force.

Extraversion:

This trait describes an individual's outgoing or social attitude. They are sometimes seen as the life of the party and enjoy hanging out with people, going out for social events and are generally full of life and energy. Those who are low in extraversion are less outgoing and prefer to stay by themselves. The introverts have less energy and love to be quiet. The ones who score high in it enjoy relating with people and are enthusiastic about life and very action-oriented. These are extroverts. Various types of jobs require different levels of extraversion and it will be useful in jobs that are related to teaching, sales and general interaction with people. The sub traits here include: cheerfulness, excited, activity level, assertiveness, gregariousness and friendliness.

Agreeableness:

This manifests itself in an individual's behaviour that shows kindness, sympathy, warmth and consideration for others. Those who score high here are very empathetic with others and accommodate them. They are also positive minded. The ones that score low are selfish and lack empathy. They seem to always be in competition with others and try to manipulate their way through situations instead of co-operating with others. Those with a high score here tend to desire harmonious living and put aside their own interests in order to please others. They believe that people are honest and

trustworthy. These individuals will enjoy team building activities and working harmoniously while those that score low would be good scientists, critics or soldiers. The sub-traits here include: sympathy, modesty, co-operation and trust.

Neuroticism:

This also means emotional stability. It describes an individual's ability to stay balanced and stable when faced with tough challenges. One who scores high in neuroticism has the tendency to experience negative emotions. On the other hand, those who score high in emotional stability react less emotionally and don't get upset easily. They are usually calm and stable, though it does not mean they experience a lot of positive feelings. Those who are high in neuroticism are emotionally reactive and feel threatened or get into bad moods even in a normal situation. They may also find it difficult to think clearly when they are stressed. Those with high emotional stability are preferred in most professions as they have control over their emotions while those with low stability can be distracted by deadlines, personal situations and pressure. The sub traits here include: anxiety, anger, depression, self-consciousness, vulnerability and immoderation.

Positive personality traits:

- ⊙ Being honest and taking responsibility for your actions are admirable qualities.
- ⊙ Adaptability and compatibility are great traits that can help you get along with others.
- ⊙ Drive and determination will help you keep going no matter what.
- ⊙ Compassion and understanding mean you relate well to others.
- ⊙ Patience is a virtue and also a good personality trait.
- ⊙ Courage will help you do what's right in tough situations.
- ⊙ Loyalty is a good quality to possess, making others trust you.

Behavioural Traits:

There is no shortage of thought around the behavioral traits that allow people to be successful in life. There are some very fundamental behaviours that everyone of us follow: value system, work ethic, positivity, grit, kindness, generosity, gratitude for others are fundamentals.

Behaviour in four key categories: Task-oriented behaviour, relationship-oriented behaviour, introverted behaviour, and extroverted behaviour.

Reviewing a list of words that describe behaviour can help you better understand how personality differences can occur, and help you better explain them.

Task-Oriented Behaviour:

Task-oriented behaviour describes how someone behaves when they are given a project or an assignment to work on. Do they make detailed plans for how to proceed? Do they prefer to jump right in and see where the work takes them?

Examples of words to describe task-oriented behavior with a positive connotation include:

- Active: always busy with something
- Ambitious: strongly wants to succeed
- Cautious: being very careful
- Conscientious: taking time to do things right
- Creative: someone who can make up things easily or think of new things
- Curious: always wanting to know things
- Logical: using clear and sound reasoning
- Organized: dealing with one's affairs efficiently
- Perfectionist: wants everything to be done right and perfectly
- Precise: careful and with great attention to detail

Some examples words to describe task-oriented behavior with negative connotation include:

- Anxious: worried, uneasy, or nervous
- Careless: not being careful; rushing into things
- Impatient: quickly irritated and easily provoked
- Lazy: unwilling to work or showing a lack of effort
- Rigid: being unwilling to change one's outlook, belief, or response
- Scatterbrained: inattentive and forgetful
- Slapdash: performing work quickly and carelessly
- Sober: serious, sensible, or solemn
- Undisciplined: lacking in discipline
- Volatile: changing moods very quickly

Relationship-Oriented Behaviour:

Relationship-oriented behaviour describes how someone acts around others. This can include behaviours with family, friends, coworkers, or strangers. Relationship-oriented behaviors can refer to how you express opinions, handle disagreements, or build connections.

Positive relationship-oriented behaviours may be described as:

- Altruistic: shows selfless concern for others
- Caring: desires to help people
- Compassionate: feels or shows sympathy or concern for others
- Considerate: thinks of others
- Faithful: being loyal
- Impartial: treats all persons equally; fair and just
- Kind: thoughtful, caring
- Pleasant: polite
- Polite: exhibiting good manners
- Sincere: being totally honest

Negative relationship-oriented behaviours may be described as:

- Aggressive: verbally or physically threatening
- Argumentative: often arguing with people
- Bossy: always telling people what to do
- Deceitful: doing or saying anything to get people to do what you want or to get what you want
- Domineering: constantly trying to control others
- Flaky: unstable and unreliable
- Inconsiderate: not caring about others or their feelings
- Manipulative: always trying to influence other people
- Rude: treating people badly; breaking social rules
- Spiteful: seeking revenge; hurting others because you didn't get what you want

Relationship-oriented behavior is often affected by gender stereotypes. For example, women are socialized to see themselves as nurturing and peacemaking in their relationships while men are taught to value displays of leadership and authority.

Introverted Behaviour:

Introverted behaviour refers to actions that reflect a desire to find satisfaction from internal factors. Words that describe introverted behaviour include:

- Guarded: cautious and reserved
- Loner: preferring not to socialize with others
- Maverick: unorthodox or independent
- Reflective: engaged in deep thought
- Reticent: not revealing one's thoughts easily
- Retiring: shy and fond of being alone
- Reserved: keeps thoughts and feelings to himself
- Self-aware: possessing in-depth knowledge of one's thoughts and feelings
- Sensitive: quick to detect or respond to slight changes, signals, or influences.
- Shy: quiet and reserved; lacking in confidence

Words that describe introverted behavior sometimes have a negative connotation, but the behaviors themselves are neutral. Introverted individuals do not dislike people. They simply prefer to spend the majority of their time engaged in solitary activities. Writers, artists, sculptors, scientists, and engineers often display introverted behaviors, yet make significant contributions to society with their work.

Extroverted behaviour:

Extroverted behavior refers to actions intended to achieve gratification from external factors.

Words that describe extroverted behavior include:

- Affable: friendly, good-natured, and easy to talk to
- Amiable: displays a friendly or pleasant manner
- Assertive: confident and forceful
- Authoritative: commanding and self-confident; someone who is likely to be respected or obeyed
- Charismatic: shows a compelling charm that inspires devotion in others
- Enthusiastic: showing intense excitement, interest, or approval
- Gregarious: fond of company, sociable
- Persuasive: able to convince others to do or believe something
- Self-assured: confident in one's character
- Talkative: fond of making conversation with others

Extroverted behaviours are neither inherently positive nor negative, but extroverted individuals often fall into leadership roles due to their enjoyment of being around large groups of people. Extroverts are comfortable being the center of attention, which is a prerequisite for any leadership position.

Importance of Soft Skills in Personal and Professional Development:

Soft Skills: Soft skills are character traits and interpersonal skills that characterize a person's relationships with other people. In the workplace, soft skills are considered to be a complement to hard skills, which refer to a person's knowledge and occupational skills.

Soft skills relate to how you work. Soft skills include interpersonal (people) skills, communication skills, listening skills, time management, and empathy, among others.

Alternate names: Interpersonal skills, essential skills, noncognitive skills

- Soft skills include attributes and personality traits that help employees interact with others and succeed in the workplace.
- Examples of soft skills include the ability to communicate with prospective clients, mentor coworkers, lead a team, negotiate a contract, follow instructions, and get a job done on time.
- Hard skills are measurable and usually obtained through formal education and training programs.
- Workers with good soft skills can help companies achieve higher levels of efficiency and productivity.
- Companies often like to hire employees who possess soft skills that mesh well with the rest of the staff, considering them to be a good cultural fit for the company.

Often referred to as soft skills, interpersonal skills allow people to communicate effectively, handle conflicts, and respond to others' needs accordingly. In an ever-changing job market, these skills teach workers and business owners how to be agile, solve complex problems, perform critical thinking on their feet, and manage diverse relationships both internally and externally. Measuring a potential employee's ability to interact with others in a respectful and appropriate manner determines how they are likely to thrive in a team-oriented environment.

Soft skills are the difference between adequate candidates and ideal candidates. In most competitive job markets, recruitment criteria are not limited to technical ability and specialist knowledge. Every job role requires some interaction with others, whether they are colleagues or customers, so soft skills will be important to most employers. Earlier in your career, recruiters will be looking for people who have the potential to become leaders. They won't expect you to have all the qualifications and experience from day one, but they will need to know that you have the qualities that will allow you to learn and grow in the role.

Here are some examples of the difference made by soft skills:

- A doctor is required to have an extensive repertoire of hard skills, especially the ability to diagnose and prescribe treatments for an array of ailments. But a doctor who does not have the soft skills of emotional intelligence, trustworthiness and approachability is not likely to be very highly regarded by their patients.
- A salesperson, who may have an unrivalled and exhaustive knowledge of their market, will find it difficult to close a deal and retain their clients if they lack the soft skills of interpersonal skills and negotiation.
- A customer services professional with amazing organisational skills will only do well if they are also able to interact professionally with customers, and have empathy and listening skills.

Soft skills are not just important when facing external customers and clients. They are equally important when it comes to interacting with colleagues. Employers value soft skills because they enable people to function and thrive in teams and organizations as a whole. A productive and healthy work environment depends on soft skills. After all, the workplace is an interpersonal space where relationships must be built and fostered, perspectives must be exchanged and, occasionally, conflicts must be resolved.

Key Soft Skills:

1. Communication:

Communication is one of the most important soft skills. Able communicators can adjust their tone and style according to their audience, comprehend and act efficiently on instructions, and explain complex issues to colleagues and clients alike.

A key, often forgotten, communication skill is listening. Whether you are dealing with a customer complaint or working with your colleagues, good listening skills will help you learn and respond correctly to the circumstance you have been presented with.

Equally as important are your verbal and non-verbal skills. Verbal skills are key to fostering relationships that are collaborative and respectful, and, ultimately, productive. This also applies to your written communication.

A lot of business communication is now played out by email, so it's important to know good email etiquette and give instructions clearly and concisely.

2. Self-Motivation:

Having a positive attitude and the initiative to work well without around-the-clock supervision is a vital soft skill for any employee. Not only does it demonstrate reliability and commitment, but it also shows that you can fit efficiently into an organizational structure without the need for constant supervision.

To demonstrate your motivation, think about these keys skills:

- Positivity
- Ambition
- Commitment
- Initiative

3. Leadership:

Leadership is a soft skill you can show even if you're not directly managing others. Those with strong leadership skills will have the ability to inspire others and lead teams to success. This is why it is a particularly sought-after skill.

People with good leadership skills will have a range of skills that are useful in the workplace, including:

- A positive attitude and outlook
- The ability to make quick and effective decisions
- Exemplary problem-solving or conflict management skills
- The ability to communicate effectively
- An aptitude for both self-motivating and motivating others

Even if you are applying for an entry-level role, don't be afraid to demonstrate your potential by showing how you have positively influenced others to take a project to success.

4. Responsibility:

Responsibility is a seldom talked-about but highly valued soft skill. Colleagues who fail to take responsibility for their work will be less productive and less successful overall.

To demonstrate a high level of responsibility, make sure you can master these skills:

- Trustworthiness
- Discipline
- Motivation
- Conscientiousness
- Accountability

Taking responsibility means taking ownership of not only your goals but the wider company goals. This will mean taking the initiative to make improvements,

accepting responsibility for any failures and really caring about working your way to success.

5. Teamwork:

Like leadership, good teamwork involves a combination of other soft skills.

Working in a team towards a common goal requires the intuition and interpersonal acumen to know when to be a leader and when to be a listener.

Good team players are perceptive, as well as receptive to the needs and responsibilities of others.

6. Problem Solving:

Problem solving does not just require analytical, creative and critical skills, but a particular mindset; those who can approach a problem with a cool and level head will often reach a solution more efficiently than those who cannot.

This is a soft skill which can often rely on strong teamwork, too. Problems need not always be solved alone.

The ability to know who can help you reach a solution, and how they can do it, can be of great advantage.

7. Decisiveness:

Decisiveness is characterised by the ability to make quick and effective decisions. It does not mean recklessness or impulsiveness. Decisiveness combines several different abilities:

- The ability to put things into perspective
- Weigh up the options
- Assess all relevant information
- Anticipate any consequences, good and bad

A decisive employee will take effective and considered action quickly, especially when under pressure.

They take responsibility for the consequences of their decision and can adapt when mistakes are made. This ensures that opportunities aren't missed by lengthy analysis or debate.

8. Ability to Work under Pressure and Time Management:

Many jobs come with demanding deadlines and, sometimes, high stakes. Recruiters prize candidates who show a decisive attitude, an unfaltering ability to think clearly, and a capacity to compartmentalise and set stress aside.

Time management is closely related to the ability to work under pressure, as well as within tight deadlines. Employees who manage their time well can efficiently prioritise tasks and organise their diaries while adopting an attitude which allows them to take on new tasks and deadlines.

9. Flexibility:

Flexibility is an important soft skill, since it demonstrates an ability and willingness to embrace new tasks and new challenges calmly and without fuss.

Flexible employees are willing to help out where needed, take on extra responsibilities and can adapt quickly when plans change.

Employers are looking for candidates who can show a willing and upbeat attitude, and who are unfazed by change.

10. Negotiation and Conflict Resolution:

This is another of those soft skills which employers look for in potential leaders.

To be an adept negotiator is to know how to be persuasive and exert influence, while sensitively seeking a solution which will benefit all parties.

Similarly, conflict resolution depends on strong interpersonal skills and the ability to establish a rapport with colleagues and clients alike.

How to show Your Soft Skills in Your Resume and at Interview:

As with hard skills, you should spend some time considering what your soft skills are (it may help to ask people who know you well) and **highlight them in your resume and in job interviews**. Hard skills can be shown via qualifications, but soft skills are more slippery.

It is important to fully research the company you are applying to and identify which of your soft skills are most relevant to the role. Once you have identified the soft skills that are most relevant to the role you are applying for, make sure you prepare to talk about them at interview and include them as keywords in your resume or cover letter. Since soft skills are necessarily abstract, you should reinforce any claims with examples of when you were able to use them to achieve positive outcomes.

These examples can be drawn from professional, personal or academic experiences:

- If you've been an undergraduate student, you will probably have experience of juggling various deadlines and extra-curricular responsibilities.
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- If you have previously worked in any job with a customer service element, you may have had to use your communication and conflict resolution skills to manage any complaints.
- On your resume, the easiest and most essential way to show your soft skills of communication and attention to detail is to proofread ruthlessly and eliminate any typos.
- In your interview, demonstrate your interpersonal skills by being professional, making eye contact, shaking hands, listening closely to the questions and answering them fully.

Can I Learn Soft Skills?

Even though soft skills are not as easily learnt as technical ability or passing an exam, they can certainly be developed and improved over time.

Improving your soft skills can be tricky as this requires quite a lot of introspection, which can be difficult or uncomfortable if you haven't done it before.

If you want to improve on your soft skills or have some you need to develop to work in a certain role, here are some tips to help:

- Participate in self-reflection. In order to improve, you must first be honest about where your shortcomings are. This isn't always easy. If you are struggling, ask a friend or family member to help you identify your true strengths and weaknesses.
- Look for online training. Once you have identified the areas you need to improve, look for some online courses that will help you learn skills that would be useful in the workplace.
- Observe others. Look to others who exemplify the soft skills you want to improve. If you have a relationship with them, ask for their advice or coaching.
- Practice. All soft skills will improve with practice. Once you have obtained training or coaching, practice using your new-found skills with friends or family before your interview. This will give you the confidence to take these skills into the workplace.
