

## **BEHAVIORAL SKILLS AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION**

### **UNIT – 2**

#### **CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS**

- 1. DECISION MAKING**
- 2. PROBLEM SOLVING**
- 3. NEGOTIATION SKILLS**
- 4. CONFLICT RESOLUTION**
- 5. CREATIVE THINKING**
- 6. BLOOM'S TAXONOMY**

## **UNIT – 2:CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS**

### **1. DECISION MAKING SKILLS**

#### **1.1 What are decision-making skills?**

Decision-making skills are about your ability to choose a good option out of two or more alternatives. As a type of problem-solving skill, there are three main ways to approach decision-making: using intuition, reasoning, or a combination of both.

Intuition is your default response, or the gut feeling you get when presented with a problem or decision to make. This first reaction comes from a combination of things you've learned, experiences you've had, and opinions you hold, so everyone's intuition is different. Using intuition allows you to base your decision off of your lived experiences, so it can be subjective.

Reasoning, on the other hand, is rooted in data. You reason when you use the data available to you and only base a decision off of facts and figures instead of your instinctive reaction. This is a more objective way to come to a decision and it's usually how bigger decisions are made.

Typically, decisions are made with both intuition and reasoning. Using both is a good way to check and make sure your choice is logical. Since we make decisions all the time, we usually don't stop to think about whether we should make intuition-based or reason-based decision, instead we naturally use a combination of the two.

Decisions are largely about intuition and reasoning, but other skills come into play too. If you're good at making decisions, then you're also good at a host of other skills required to come to a logical choice.

Reasoning, processing information, using intuition, asking questions, analyzing potential outcomes, and more are all required to make a good decision. Employers look for good decision-making skills since it encapsulates so many other necessary skills to thrive in a professional environment.

#### **1.2 Types of decision-making skills**

Decision-making is such an important skill since it requires many other key skills in order to be a good decision-maker. Let's take a look at other skills you can build to help you make the best decisions.

- **Problem-solving.** The number one skill you need to be an effective decision-maker is problem-solving. Since decisions are just a type of problem (determining which option is the best), having strong problem-solving skills is definitely an asset. If you approach a decision from a logical mindset, as if it were a problem to solve, odds are that the solutions you come up with and your final decision will be stronger.

- **Collaboration.** Decisions can't always be made by one person. You need to have good collaboration and compromise skills to make the best decision sometimes when it involves a group. Even when you're making a decision on your own, getting extra input from friends or co-workers can help you brainstorm the best outcome. Collaboration is your friend, both when you need to make a group decision and when you're the one responsible for making the decision.
- **Emotional intelligence.** Emotional intelligence, or EQ, is the ability to observe and understand your own emotions and the emotions of the people around you. Being able to take emotions into account will make you a stronger decision maker. Think of this as related to intuitive decision-making. It's your ability to balance facts, figures, and emotions to come to a good decision.
- **Logical reasoning.** This skill is key for the middle steps of the decision-making process. Being able to fully evaluate and analyze your information, options, and decisions will make your decisions stronger. This skill is more closely related to reasoning, the side of decision-making that relies on facts and figures instead of on emotions.

### **1.3 More decision-making skills**

While the skills listed above are the key skills of decision-making- meaning you can't make any decision without using those skills- there are many more that will help you sharpen your ability to make good decisions. Take a look at this list and see what you're already good at and where you could improve.

- **Organization.** Being organized can help you keep all of your background information, options, and other tools in order.
- **Time management.** Making decisions in a timely manner isn't just about making a quick, hasty decision. Managing your time to properly work through the seven steps is a skill that will put you above everyone else.
- **Leadership.** When collaborating and making a group decision, someone needs to take charge and make sure the decision is implemented, which is when good leadership skills are needed.
- **Creativity.** The more creative you are in your problem-solving, the better options and potential outcomes you'll have to work with, as well as having creative ways to implement your decision.
- **Ethics.** Making ethical decisions is a necessary skill to have, so knowing how to weigh the ethical pros and cons is key.
- **Research.** The better research you can gather in the first steps of the decision-making process, the better prepared you'll be to make a good decision.
- **Analysis.** Having strong analytical skills will help you ensure that your decisions are logical and reasonable.

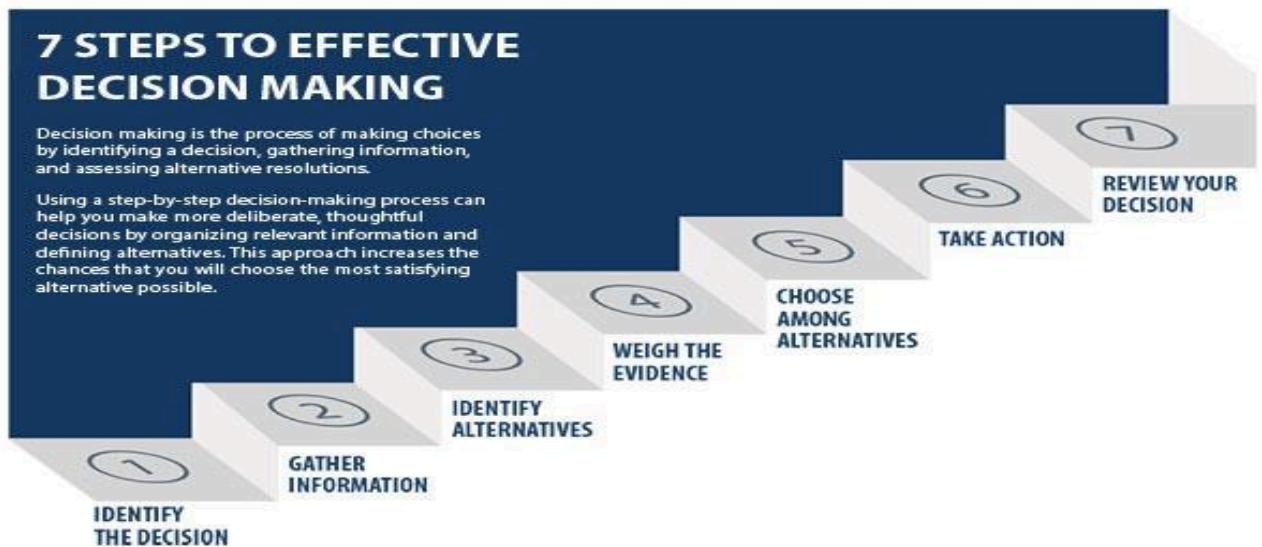
- **Flexibility.** Quick-thinking and flexibility are your friends when it comes to making decisions since sometimes you'll have to compromise or new constraints will pop up, changing how you approach a decision.

#### **1.4 The decision-making process**

Effective decision-makers use a **seven-step process** to tackle decision-making. While it's not necessary to go through these exact steps when you make a basic decision, like what to cook for dinner, it can be a great way to check your thinking as you make a big work decision, like which strategy will lead to better sales.

1. **Identify the problem.** First, you need to see the decision that you need to make and understand what will go into making that decision. This step is crucial since everything else builds upon what you do here. Make sure you properly understand the situation, what's being asked of you, and what tools you have available to you before moving to the next step.
2. **Do some digging.** For any decision you'll need some background information to help you choose the right option. Sometimes this means just thinking back to details from meetings, or it can be doing more sophisticated research. You should be able identify what information you'll need to make a good decision.
3. **Think creatively.** In this step you want to think of as many solutions as possible. It doesn't matter if they're good or bad, you just want to consider all of your options. Feel free to be as creative in your thinking as you want with this step. There are no bad options here, since you want to think of every possible outcome. You'll have a chance to check all of your brainstormed options later.
4. **Evaluate your options.** Here's the part where you'll give all your potential outcomes a second check. Go through the list of solutions you came up with in step three and test which ones feel better or sound more logical to you. Don't forget to keep your end goal in mind when you consider all the choices, that way you're sure to make a good decision.
5. **Make the decision.** It's time to pick one of the options you came up with. Keep in mind that you can choose a solution you came up with or even combine solutions to make the best decision possible. Reflect back on your process for step four and pick the decision you feel best about.
6. **Act on your decision.** Once you've decided what to do, you need to start taking the actions that will help you implement the decision. These can be big or small steps, but stay focused and resolved to get the job done. Don't be afraid to bring other people into your process in this step. Especially for large workplace decisions you might want to call on your co-workers to help you get things done.
7. **Look back.** When your decision is made and you've had some time to see its effects, take a second to evaluate that decision. Think about whether the decision had the outcome you wanted it to, or if it wasn't so successful. Taking this time to reflect on your decision-making is a great way to not only improve your ability to make a good decision, but also to

learn more about yourself. You can even ask other people for their opinion on the effects of a decision to see how your perception of the impacts line up with others' opinions.



## 1.5 Types of decision making

Generally speaking, there are three ways in which you can make a decision:

### 1. *Intuition*

This is used to describe when you have a 'gut feeling' about something.

This type of decision making is handy when you have to make a decision quickly, or you have a considerable amount of experience that enables you to make a snap judgment of the situation.

### 2. *Logic*

In comparison to intuition, logic requires the person to come to an informed choice based on all the facts presented to them.

Before making a decision, that person will have been presented with large amounts of information surrounding it, and it will be their job to decide which is the most suitable decision based on all of the disadvantages and advantages of the options that they have available to them.

The ability to use **logical reasoning** is especially useful within certain types of employment, such as the **legal sector** and **consulting**.

### 3. *Cognitive Bias*

Inherent bias can both disrupt and distort the decision-making process. The most common cognitive biases include **confirmation**, **anchoring**, **the halo effect** and **over-confidence**:

- **Confirmation** is when a decision maker will seek out evidence that confirms their previously held belief, while discounting any evidence in support of other conclusions.
- **Anchoring** is over-reliance on a single piece of evidence or experience to reach certain judgements.
- **The halo effect** is an overall impression of a company, individual, brand or product which has a direct impact on an individual's feelings and thoughts.
- **Over-confidence** occurs when someone overestimates how reliable their judgements are.

## **1.6 Factors Leading to Poor Decision Making**

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There are a number of factors that can negatively impact decision making, including:

- **Inadequate information.** If you do not have sufficient information, decisions can be made without considering all of the facts. Take time to collect the necessary data even if you have a particularly short timescale.
- **Information overload.** Too much information than you know how to handle can also prove detrimental to the decision-making process. This can be overcome by a department or team coming together and deciding what information is the most important and the reasons for this.
- **Too many people.** Reaching a decision by committee can be difficult, as everyone has their own views and values. Although it is important to take these into consideration, it's usually best to designate someone to make a decision.
- **Vested interest.** If any of the decision makers has an incentive to reach one particular result, a fair decision-making process could be compromised.
- **Resistance to change.** People are often attached to a business - particularly those in the management team – and for some the prospect of change can be difficult.
- **No attachment.** On the other hand, some decisions cannot be made because the decision maker doesn't mind one way or the other. In this instance, a structured decision-making process can be beneficial.

This framework for the decision-making process can help:

- Break up more complex decisions into easier-to-manage steps;
- Identify how decisions are made;
- Effectively plan decision making.

## **1.7 Examples of Workplace Scenarios That Require Decision Making**

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Within the workplace there are many instances where decision-making skills will need to be applied. Even if you do not occupy a management or supervisory role, decisions will need to be made as a matter of course by any professional.

The scenarios below are examples that may arise:

- Recognising that there is a problem with the production process and identifying a faulty machine which is causing the issue
- Creating concepts during a brainstorming session for the launch of a new product
- Understanding the impact of increasing store opening hours following a staff survey
- Selecting the best firm to lead a marketing campaign through the completion of a detailed analysis of competing proposals
- Identifying ways to save costs reviewing multiple business areas

### In Conclusion

Apart from within Group Discussions you will also be tested indirectly on your decision-making skills within any **aptitude tests** that you may be required to take as part of an **assessment** or selection procedure by the organization during placements.

Tests such as **verbal reasoning** will require you to make informed choices based on extracts of information, and so you will need to have a good sense of logic to be successful in them.

Finally, while you can use certain techniques to improve your decision-making as a general **competency**, the best way to demonstrate it within a professional environment is by either attending mock interviews and **placement tests** at your college, or asking family and friends to help you practice.

## **2. PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Problem solving is all about using logic, as well as imagination, to make sense of a situation and come up with an intelligent solution. In fact, the best problem solvers actively anticipate potential future problems and act to prevent them or to mitigate their effects.

Problem-solving skills help you determine why an issue is happening and how to resolve that issue. They help solve issues quickly and effectively. It's one of the key skills that employers seek in job applicants, as employees with these skills tend to be self-reliant. Problem-solving skills require quickly identifying the underlying issue and implementing a solution.

Learning problem-solving techniques is a must for working professionals in any field. No matter your title or job description, the ability to find the root cause of a difficult problem and formulate viable solutions is a skill that employers value. Learning the soft skills and critical thinking techniques that good problem solvers use can help anyone overcome complex problems.

Problem-solving abilities are connected to a number of skills like:

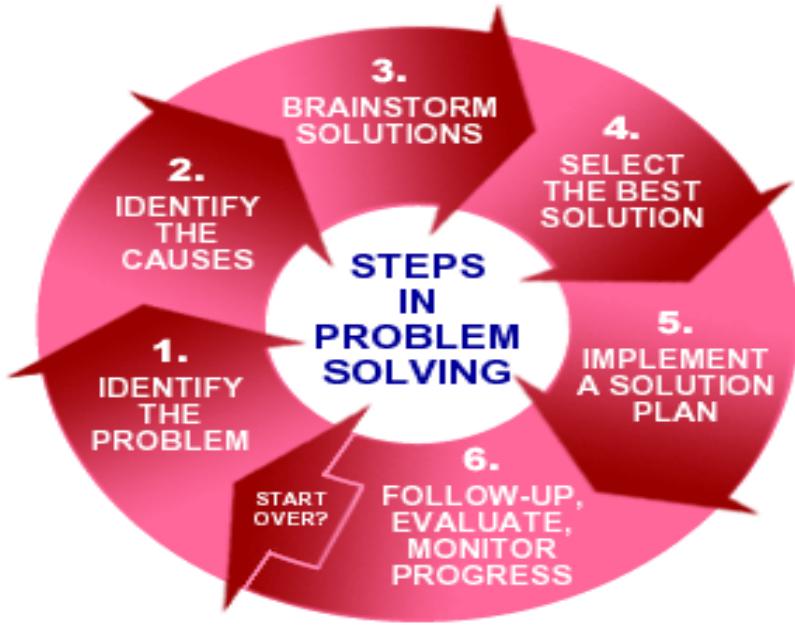
- Analytical skills
- Innovative and creative thinking
- A lateral mindset
- Adaptability and flexibility
- Leve-headedness
- Initiative
- Resilience (in order to reassess when your first idea doesn't work)
- Teamworking (if problem solving is a team effort)
- Influencing skills (to get colleagues, clients and bosses to adopt your solutions)

Problem-solving involves diagnosing the possible causes of a problem and developing an action plan that solves that problem. People use problem-solving skills all the time, both in their personal and professional lives. Effective problem-solving in the workplace often requires following a step-by-step process and using a designated problem-solving framework.

### **2.2 Steps in Problem-Solving Process**

Problem-solving requires a methodical step-by-step approach to a challenge. Here are some **six basic steps of problem-solving** that you can follow when approaching a problem in your personal life or the workplace:

1. **Identify the problem.** Whether you're dealing with a complex problem or a relatively simple one, it's vital that you have a clear understanding of what it is that you're hoping to solve. If you're trying to tackle a number of problems (even if they're relatively simple problems) the task becomes much harder. If you're working on a team, it's all the more important that you have a shared understanding of the single problem you're addressing.
2. **Do your research.** Once you have a clear definition of the problem you're solving, you'll want to do some fact-finding and research regarding the nature of the problem and possible causes. This research process might include looking into the causes of similar problems that have been resolved in the past, or it might require devising interview questions to ask those involved in the issue.
3. **Look for possible solutions.** After researching the problem, it's time to start thinking about possible solutions. This stage requires creativity and brainstorming as you think of a few ideal solutions, as well as some alternative solutions should your first set fail. Solving problems usually involves creating some contingency plans in order to contain further problems.
4. **Make a decision.** Once you have a list of possible solutions, methodically narrow down your list to the best solution. If you're working as a team, try to make decisions together and arrive at a consensus solution.
5. **Put that decision into action.** Implement your chosen solution in a planned and deliberate way. Avoid rushing to action, as this will often lead to a botched solution that doesn't achieve its intended result.
6. **Await results.** Observe how your solution is working and decide if further action needs to be taken. It's best to decide on a time frame for observation before you follow up and decide whether or not to make changes to your plan.



### 2.3 Improving problem-solving skills

- **Focus on the solution.** It's easy to become hyperfocused on the conditions that created the problem. Shifting your focus away from the current problem to possible outcomes and solutions can give you a more positive outlook and open your eyes to new solutions.
- **Clearly define the problem.** It's hard to solve a nebulous problem you never took the time to clearly define. No workplace is perfect, and there are usually a variety of interrelated problems that can be solved at any one time. If you find yourself getting overwhelmed and distracted during the problem-solving process, go back to step one and make sure you are approaching a singular problem.
- **Agree on a process.** If you're problem-solving as part of a team, it's very important that you agree to basic ground rules and procedures before you start the problem-solving process. This will streamline the process and help you prevent conflict down the road.
- **Be sure to use active listening.** The best problem solvers are great listeners. Problem-solving requires you to take in a variety of inputs and opinions and carefully analyze them. It's important that people involved in the process feel heard.

### 2.4 Need for problem-solving skills in the workplace

Some careers revolve around finding solutions – for example, engineering, management consulting, scientific research and technology. Graduates in other careers, meanwhile, will be expected to solve problems that crop up in the course of their jobs: for

example, trainee managers should deal with operational problems (such as delays in supply chain) or resolve conflict between team members.

In fact, the ability to solve problems is an essential part of any employee's skill set, even if it isn't specified on the job description.

## **2.5 How will employers assess problem-solving skills?**

Your problem-solving abilities can be assessed in **three** ways: by asking for examples of times when you previously solved a problem; by presenting you with certain hypothetical situations and asking how you would respond to them; and by seeing how you apply your problem-solving skills to different tests and exercises.

### **1. Competency-based application and interview questions about problem solving**

You may be asked for an example of when you solved a problem on an application form – for instance, an engineering firm's application form has previously included the question 'Please tell us about a time when you have used your technical skills and knowledge to solve a problem'. But these questions are more likely at interview. Typical problem-solving competency-based questions include:

- Give me an example of a time when you ran into a problem on a project. What did you do?
- Give me an example of a difficult problem you had to solve outside of your course. How did you approach it?
- Tell me about a time you worked through a problem as a team.
- Have you ever had a disagreement with a team member? How was it resolved?
- Give me an example of a time when you spotted a potential problem and took steps to stop it becoming one.
- Give me an example of a time when you handled a major crisis.
- Give me an example of your lateral thinking.

### **2. Hypothetical interview questions about problem solving**

Interviewers will also be interested to know how you would approach problems that could arise when you are in the workplace. The precise interview questions will vary according to the job, but common ones include:

- How would you deal with conflict in the workplace? (This is especially likely to be asked of trainee managers and graduate HR professionals.)
- What would you do if there is an unexpected delay to one of your projects because of supply chain issues? (This is particularly likely to be asked in construction, logistics or retail interviews).
- What would you do if a client or customer raised a complaint?

- What would you do if you noticed that a colleague was struggling with their work?
- How would you react if given negative feedback by a manager on an aspect of your performance?
- How would you judge whether you should use your own initiative on a task or ask for help?

### **3. Problem solving exercises and tests**

Following are few of the Problem-solving exercises and tests that employers set to gauge the Problem solving skills of a candidate:

- **Online aptitude, psychometric and ability tests.** These are normally taken as part of the application stage, although they may be repeated at an assessment centre. The tests that are most likely to assess your problem-solving skills are situational judgement tests and any that assess your reasoning, such as inductive reasoning or diagrammatic reasoning tests.
- **Video ‘immersive experiences’, game-based recruitment exercises or virtual reality assessments.** Not all of these methods are widely used yet but they are becoming more common. They are usually the recruitment stage before a face-to-face interview or assessment centre.
- **Case study exercises.** These are common assessment centre tasks. You'd be set a business problem, typically related to the sector in which you'd be working, and asked to make recommendations for solving it, either individually or in groups. You'll also usually be asked to outline your recommendations in either a presentation or in written form, a task that assesses your ability to explain your problem-solving approach.
- **In-tray (or e-tray) exercises.** These always used to be set at an assessment during campus placements but nowadays can also be part of the online testing stage. In-tray exercises primarily test your time management skills, but also assess your ability to identify a potential problem and take actions to solve it.
- **Job-specific or task-specific exercises.** These are given at an assessment centre or at an interview. If set, these will be related to the role you are applying for and will either require you to devise a solution to a problem or to spot errors. Civil and structural engineering candidates, for example, will often be required to sketch a design in answer to a client's brief and answer questions on it, while candidates for editorial roles may be asked to proofread copy or spot errors in page proofs (fully designed pages about to be published)

## **2.6 Problem-solving technique**

Bransford and Stein in their book Ideal Problem Solver, described the **IDEAL** model that helps in breaking down the problem into stages to tackle it efficiently.

- **Identify** the issue
- **Define** the obstacles
- **Examine** your options
- **Act** on an agreed course of action
- **Look** at how it turns out, and whether any changes need to be made.

### **In conclusion**

Effective **problem-solving skills** result in “happier, more confident, and more independent” individuals. When children tackle **problems** on their own, or in a group, they become resilient. They learn to look at challenges from a fresh perspective that helps them individually and professionally. So one should explore the resources to develop Problem solving skills.

### **3. NEGOTIATION SKILLS**

#### **3.1 Brief History**

The word 'Negotiation' is derived from the Latin word 'Negotiationem' meaning Bargaining. The act of Negotiation is synonymous with the evolution of the needs and wants of human individuals. There are absolute evidences that suggest that the early men used the act of negotiation in conveying their thoughts and ideologies towards the member of their clans. They used it to acquire possession of a particular need, keeping in view of others priority as well. The civilization of man soon manifested in powerful negotiations to bring in harmony and co-operation among them. The act of bargaining soon evolved into Consultation. The further democratic development of Consultation led to Negotiation. The history provided evidences relating to the negotiations taking place between buyer and seller, kings of territories, social gatherings, etc

#### **3.2 What is Negotiation?**

Negotiation is the process of two individuals or groups reaching joint agreement about differing needs or ideas. Negotiation is a method by which people settle differences. It is a process by which compromise or agreement is reached while avoiding argument and dispute. In any disagreement, individuals understandably aim to achieve the best possible outcome for their position (or perhaps an organisation they represent). However, the principles of fairness, seeking mutual benefit and maintaining a relationship are the keys to a successful outcome. It is a dialogue between two or more people or parties intended to reach a beneficial outcome over one or more issues where a conflict exists with respect to at least one of these issues.

Negotiation applies knowledge from the fields of communications, sales, marketing, psychology, sociology, politics, and conflict resolution. Negotiations become an important aspect of business communication when resolving issues. Business negotiations can range from a worker's request for higher pay to discussions of an international business deal.

#### **3.3 Negotiation Styles:**

There are basically 2 kinds of Negotiation ideologies being followed up in business communications:

**(a) Competitive:** Competitive strategies assume a "win-lose" situation in which the negotiating parties have opposing interests. Hostile, coercive negotiation tactics are used to force an advantage, and pre negotiation binding agreements are not allowed. Concessions, distorted communication, confrontational tactics, and emotional ploys are used. It is also called as adversarial, non cooperative, distributive bargaining, positional, or hard bargaining— is used to divide limited resources; the assumption is that the pie to be divided is finite.

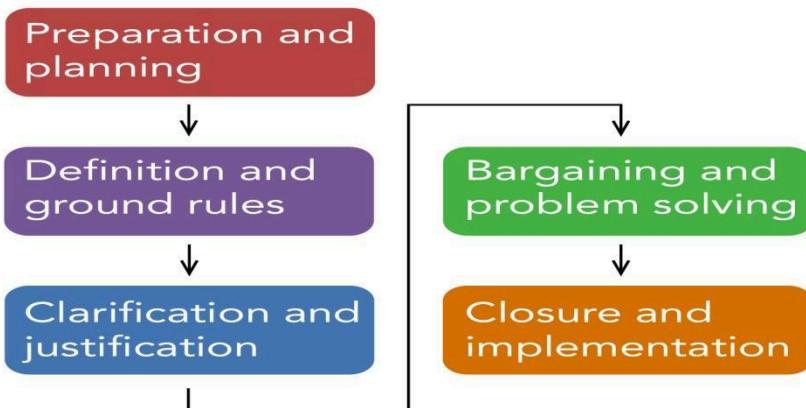
**(b) Cooperative:** Negotiation is based on a win-win mentality and is designed to increase joint gain; the pie to be divided is perceived as expanding. Attributes include reasonable and open communication; an assumption that common interests, benefits, and needs exist; trust building; thorough and accurate exchange of information; exploration of issues presented as problems and solutions; mediated discussion; emphasis on coalition formation; pre negotiation binding agreements; and a search for creative alternative solutions that bring benefits to all players. This Negotiation is also called integrative problem solving or soft bargaining.

The goal of business negotiations should be to obtain a win-win outcome. A win-win outcome leaves all parties of a negotiation satisfied. The first step in achieving this outcome involves knowing what the other party wants.

### 3.4 Stages of Negotiation

In order to achieve a desirable outcome, it may be useful to follow a structured approach to negotiation. For example, in a work situation a meeting may need to be arranged in which all parties involved can come together.

The process of negotiation includes the following stages:



#### Stage 1: Preparation and Planning

In the preparation and planning stage, you (as a party in the negotiation) need to determine and clarify your own goals in the negotiation. This is a time when you take a moment to define and truly understand the terms and conditions of the exchange and the nature of the conflict. What do you want to walk away with?

You should also take this moment to anticipate the same for the other party. What are their goals in this negotiation? What will they ask for? Do they have any hidden agendas that may come as a surprise to you? What might they settle for, and how does that differ from the outcome you're hoping for?

This is a time to develop a strategy for the negotiation.

## **Stage 2: Definition of Ground Rules**

After the planning and strategy development stage is complete, it's time to work with the other party to define the ground rules and procedures for the negotiation. This is the time when you and the other party will come to agreement on questions like

- Who will do the negotiating—will we do it personally or invite a third party?
- Where will the negotiation take place?
- Will there be time constraints placed on this negotiation process?
- Will there be any limits to the negotiation?
- If an agreement can't be reached, will there be any specific process to handle that?

Usually it's during this phase that the parties exchange their initial positions.

## **Stage 3: Clarification and Justification**

Once initial positions have been exchanged, the clarification and justification stage can begin. Both you and the other party will explain, clarify, bolster and justify your original position or demands. For you, this is an opportunity to educate the other side on your position, and gain further understanding about the other party and how they feel about their side. You might each take the opportunity to explain how you arrived at your current position, and include any supporting documentation. Each party might take this opportunity to review the strategy they planned for the negotiation to determine if it's still an appropriate approach.

This doesn't need to be—and should not be—confrontational, though in some negotiations that's hard to avoid. But if tempers are high moving into this portion of the negotiation process, then those emotions will start to come to a head here. It's important for you to manage those emotions so serious bargaining can begin.

## **Stage 4: Bargaining and Problem Solving**

This is the essence of the negotiation process, where the give and take begins.

You and the other party will use various negotiation strategies to achieve the goals established during the preparation and planning process. You will use all the information you gathered during the preparation and planning process to present your argument and strengthen your position, or even change your position if the other party's argument is sound and makes sense.

The communication skills of active listening and feedback serve the parties of a negotiation well. It's also important to stick to the issues and allow for an

objective discussion to occur. Emotions should be kept under control. Eventually, both parties should come to an agreement.

### **Stage 5: Closure and Implementation**

Once an agreement has been met, this is the stage in which procedures need to be developed to implement and monitor the terms of the agreement. They put all of the information into a format that's acceptable to both parties, and they formalize it.

Formalizing the agreement can mean everything from a handshake to a written contract.

## **3.5 PRACTICE QUESTION**

### **SALESCO**

Let's take a look at this process in action. A team from a retail organization, Salesco, is looking to purchase widgets for resale directly to the consumer. You lead a team from WholesaleCo and are interested in negotiating an offer to sell these widgets to them at a wholesale cost.

- **Preparation and Planning.** You know that WholesaleCo will be going up against OtherCompany, who is likely to outbid you on price. You research, as best you can, the price and quantity OtherCompany is willing to come to the table with. You also know, from your earlier research, that Salesco is a company that values quality and if they're going to say no to OtherCompany, it'll be because they have a reputation for skimping on quality. Your company produces the better, but more expensive, widget. Armed with this information, you put together your proposal.
- **Definition of Ground Rules.** Salesco, as your customer, has let you know that they expect widgets to be manufactured and delivered in the first quarter of the following year. They'd like to sign with a 25% deposit. Your company usually requires 50% down, but you counter with 30%, provided you have a signed contract before the end of the year, which is approaching quickly. You offer Salesco your proposal. Salesco does not share OtherCompany's offer.
- **Clarification and Justification.** Salesco wants to understand more about your deposit requirements, and you'd like to know if your offer is otherwise in the ballpark for them. You reiterate that you provided them the best price you could for the quality product you produce. Salesco assures you your offer is good but they'll review it further with their legal team.
- **Bargaining and Problem Solving.** Salesco understands that WholesaleCo is not providing them the best price but that the quality they look to provide their customers will only come from WholesaleCo, and never OtherCompany. They'd still like to go with a 25% deposit because that's all they have budgeted for the remainder of the fiscal year. As a representative of Wholesale, you offer to go with a 25% deposit if a second

payment can be made at the beginning of the next quarter, which would allow them to pay it out of next year's budget. Agreements are made.

- **Closure and Implementation.** WholesaleCo makes changes to the contract for the widgets and a representative from Salesco signs. The new contract outlines the changes in the deposit structure, and a full delivery schedule of widgets to Salesco' distribution centers by an agreed-upon date.

The negotiation process is complete.

Learning how to communicate using a formal negotiation language gives you an advantage. May you be a professional or a business owner, you can use this skill in different situations. If you are targeting to deal with a foreign company, venture into the export market or enter into foreign trade, knowing how to communicate in the international market effectively will increase your chances of being successful. Part of going global is encountering people that are speaking a language different from you, hence requires you to use a bridge language to be able to interact and negotiate with them. Since much global business is conducted in English, it is best to learn how to negotiate using it.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES : ONLY FOR REFERENCE**

### **3.6 Useful English Phrases for Business Negotiations**

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To have better cross-cultural communication and improve your side of a deal, there are certain phrases in English which you can use in business. Knowing what to say in certain turning points of negotiations will help you and your counterpart accurately understand each other. To increase your chances of getting the best deal possible for yourself or for your company here are some general negotiation phrases you can use during a negotiation.

#### **▪ Welcoming and establishing a rapport**

Fostering a positive image even at the start of the negotiation will help you to lay the groundwork for a positive relationship. People become more agreeable

when they see that you are considerate and welcoming. Also, business owners prefer to do business with companies with which they have a good relationship. Interacting with professionals in a positive and inviting way creates an encounter that they will want to repeat. People naturally want to deal with companies that have earned a good impression during a meeting.

- “I would like to welcome you to...”
- “How was your trip?”
- “Did you have a good journey?”
- “Is this your first visit to...?”
- “Would you like anything to drink?”

- **Setting the negotiation agenda**

The way you begin the discussion sets the tone for the entire negotiation meeting. Breaking the ice with a light small talk could help reduce any tense atmosphere. You may do this by agreeing on the agenda and stating the positive goals that both parties want to achieve for the meeting. To start a negotiation, here are some of the phrases you can use.

- “Before we begin, shall we have a look at the main points on the agenda?”
- “Should we have a look at the main points for today’s discussion?”
- “To start with, I think we should establish the overall procedure”
- “I’d like to outline our aims and objectives.”

- **Asking if the other party is in agreement**

After laying down the agenda, it is best to ask if the other party is in agreement. This shows your consideration on your counterpart and helps you to confirm whether there is something more to include in the discussion. Some of the questions you can use are listed below.

- “How do our objectives compare to yours?”
- “Is it acceptable to you?”
- “Is there anything you’d like to add?”

- **Making proposals**

After formally setting up the agenda, the next phase is delivering a value proposition. This has to be presented in an effective way to increase the chances of your success. To introduce your proposal you may use the following phrases below.

- “We’d like to propose that...”
- “Concerning your proposal, our basic position is...”
- “We’ve got several options...”

- **Effective questioning for proposals**

To better understand what is being proposed, you would have to get further information. This will help you to identify possible opportunities and repercussions, uncover the needs and find alternative options that you can use when making a decision. Some of the questions you can use when asking further details are listed below.

- “What are your views on...?”
- “How do you feel about...?”
- “Could you be more specific?”
- “Would you like to suggest a course of action for...?”

- **Responding to suggestions**

At some points in the negotiation, you would have to provide suggestions and solutions to the proposal that have been presented. This is especially needed when a deadlock has been reached to avoid being stuck. When providing your suggestion, here are some phrases you can use:

- “Considering that I would like to suggest...”
- “Now that you mentioned it...”
- “Maybe it would be better to...”
- “Perhaps a better idea would be...”
- “I’d like to make an alternative offer. I propose that...”
- “From where we stand, a better solution might be...”

- **Reasoning**

After introducing your suggestion, it is best to justify it by supporting it with good arguments. If the arguments are sound and make sense for both parties,

it will possibly be the option that can be taken. You may use the following phrases below to present your reasons.

- “One of the key reasons for this is...”
- “This is because...”
- “I am basing my solution on three ideas/points/reasons: first,... second,... lastly...”

#### ▪ **Expressing priorities**

Conveying your priorities at certain points of the discussion will help in making the other party understand your target. Knowing what aspect you give importance to the most will enable them to consider your preferences and needs. This will help you to come up with an agreement that works best for both of you. You may express your clear goals by using the following phrases:

- “We might like to...”
- “Our main priority is...”
- “Our intention is...”
- “The most important issue for us is...”

#### ▪ **Giving clarification**

To avoid taking the negotiation in the wrong direction, it is best to ask for clarification on the spot when a detail presented seems ambiguous or vague to you. Use any of the phrases below to clarify a detail.

- “What exactly do you mean by...?”
- “Are you suggesting that...?”
- “Could you clarify one point for me?”
- “Could you be more specific?”
- “In other words, you feel that...”

#### ▪ **Expressing agreement**

When an acceptable suggestion or proposal has been presented, express that you are in agreement with it. This will help you to come to a favorable negotiation outcome. You may convey your understanding or agreement on a point by using any of the phrases below:

- “I agree with you on that point.”

- “You have a strong point there.”
- “I think that would be acceptable.”
- “That’s a fair suggestion.”
- “That sounds great to us.”
- “I am with you on that.”

- Expressing disagreement and giving reasons**

Disagreements are part of negotiating and should be expressed to let the other party know that you are not on the same page. However, this does not have to sound hostile but should be conveyed in a tactful and polite manner. Utilize the following phrases below to express your disagreement while using a diplomatic tone.

- “I understand where you’re coming from, however,...”
- “I can’t quite agree with you on that.”
- “I’d have to disagree with you there.”
- “I’m afraid we have some reservations on that point...”
- “I’m afraid that doesn’t work for me.”
- “I’m afraid I had something different in mind.”
- “That’s not exactly how I look at it.”

- Compromising**

On certain occasions, you would need to compromise during a negotiation. You have to meet your partner halfway to come up with a mutually beneficial outcome. In this case, you have to tell them what are the acceptable alternatives to you, what are you willing to trade and what are you not prepared to budge. To express your willingness to compromise, use the following phrases below.

- “We might be able to work on... if you could...”
- “We are ready to accept your offer; however, there would be one condition.”
- “Would you be willing to accept a compromise?”
- “In return for this, would you be willing to...?”

- “Could you meet us halfway?”

- Bargaining**

Part of the negotiation is talking about the conditions, transaction or price. It is normal to debate about these aspects to get the best possible deal. However, you must be firm and be able to justify offers. Some of the bargaining phrases you can use are:

- “I’m afraid we can only go as low as...”
- “From where we stand an acceptable price would be...”
- “Our absolute bottom line is...”

- Delaying**

On occasions when you need some time to study both the opportunities and repercussions of an offer or when you need to consult or wait for the approval of someone, it is best to delay a decision. Here are some ways to express a request for a delay in decisions.

- “I have to admit that we will have to study this. May we get back to you on this point later?”
- “I’ll have to consult with my bosses back in the office.”
- “I will need to think about it more and return to you again later.”
- “I am not entitled to make decisions of that kind by myself.”

- Refusing a proposal while maintaining goodwill**

Not all negotiations can result in successful deals. Some do not get completed since one of the parties may be dissatisfied with the proposal or incapable of providing the requirements of the agreement. In this case, refusing a proposal must still be expressed gracefully to ensure that goodwill is still maintained. Here are some ways to express it:

- “I am afraid I can’t agree with that.”
- “With all due respect, I must kindly decline your offer.”
- “That’s not really a viable option for us.”
- “That would be very difficult for us because...”

- Accepting the proposal**

When the deal is good for both parties, accepting the negotiation proposal must be expressed. Some of the ways you can express your acceptance are listed below.

- “This agreement is acceptable to us.”
- “I think we have reached an agreement here.”
- “That sounds reasonable.”
- “I think we have a deal.”
- “I believe we have an agreement.”
- “I can agree to that.”

#### ▪ **Concluding**

Before the negotiation ends, it is best to summarize the points that have been agreed or disagreed on. This will help to formally clarify the points and a chance to ensure that both parties are amenable to the agreements discussed and are willing to take the respective actions for it. Some of the ways to recapitulate the negotiation discussion are the following:

- “Let’s look at the points we agree on...”
- “Shall we try to sum up the main points of our discussion?”
- “Have I left anything out?”
  
- “I think you’ve covered everything.”
- “Let’s just confirm the details, then.”
- “This is where we currently stand...”

#### ▪ **Closing**

Regardless that the negotiation has been successful or not. It is best to close the discussion properly. Here are some ways to close the negotiation.

- “Let’s leave it this way for now.”
- “I’m willing to work with that.”
- “I think we both agree to these terms.”
- “I’m satisfied with this decision.”
- “I think we should get this in writing.”
- “Would you be willing to sign a contract right now?”
- “Let’s meet again once we’ve had some time to think.”

Once you learn these basic phrases, you will feel much more confident when communicating during a negotiation. Remember to listen and consider what others are saying to ensure that you respond correctly and use the phrases appropriately at the right time. Also, don't forget to treat the other party with respect and prepare thoroughly to increase your chances of success.

### **3.7 Seven Things You Should Never Say in a Negotiation**

Negotiation is a delicate balancing act. As an employee, you straddle the space between helping your prospect find a solution that works for them, and protecting your company's interests.

By the time you've reached the negotiation phase of the sales process, you and your prospect have a common goal: getting your company's product into their hands. It's a joint effort, and you should be working with your buyer -- not fighting with them -- to reach an ideal solution.

This doesn't mean you're at your prospects' mercy. Negotiation isn't a battle, but you can still win. If you can establish and maintain a strong position throughout the conversation, you'll be able to strike a deal that's good for both your customer and for you.

By definition, **a negotiation is multiple parties talking to each other** -- so be careful of what you say. Avoid the following problematic words and phrases to increase your chances of a successful outcome.

#### **1) "This call should be pretty quick."**

Assuring your prospect the negotiation will be quick and easy won't put them at ease -- in fact, it'll do the opposite. In a negotiation, people feel more comfortable knowing there's plenty of time to discuss the terms and come to a decision. If they feel like the clock is ticking, they'll become more guarded and tense. You don't want that: Once your prospect is in risk-aversion mode, they will make conservative choices.

Want the buyer to stay open? Start by saying, "We've got [X minutes] on the agenda. That should be enough time, but I'm happy to discuss further if we need to."

#### **2) "Between."**

If you give your prospect a price range from \$12,500 to \$15,000, guess what's going to happen? They're going to ask for \$12,500. Not to mention that the lower price "anchors" your prospect's perception of your product's value. They may have previously thought \$15,000 was a good price, but as soon as you say \$12,500, the higher number will seem extravagant.

### **3) “What about a lower price?”**

You’re not always going to be able to sell your product at full price, and that’s okay -- with one big caveat. If you offer a price cut, make sure you’re getting something in return. Will they sign today? Will they commit to a longer contract?

Keep in mind that offering a discount should never be your first play. Your product is priced the way it is for a reason, so don’t lose sight of its value in your desire to get the deal done. Is there another lesser concession you can make that will encourage the prospect to sign? Exhaust all other available freebies before you drop the price. Buyers equate cost with value, so if you slash the price tag prematurely, you might unwittingly devalue your product in their eyes.

### **4) “I have the final say.”**

It might seem like a good strategy to position yourself as the ultimate approver to show your strength, but it’s not -- even if you are.

“You do not want the opposing negotiators to know that you are the final decision maker, just in case you get cornered as the conversation develops,” Mike Hofman writes in an Inc article.

Keeping your approval power to yourself gives you an out if you need one, and that can be crucial in high-stakes deals.

Sometimes, you’ll need to time to step back from the negotiation to review the deal in front of you, especially if you’ve already made several concessions. Are these terms truly acceptable to you and your company? Telling your buyer that you need to run new requests by another stakeholder gives you the time you need to make a deliberate and informed decision.

### **5) “Let’s work out the details later.”**

They say the devil’s in the details for a reason. You wouldn’t hire a contractor to build you a house without signing a statement of work. Similarly, you shouldn’t agree to a price without understanding exactly what your prospect expects you to provide.

### **6) “I really need to get this done.”**

Maybe it’s the last day of the month and you need this one final deal to make your quota. We’ve all been there.

But if you openly admit that you need to close this deal not tomorrow, not next week, but today? Your prospect will have you on the proverbial ropes.

Revealing that you’re under pressure to close the sale means your prospect doesn’t have to concede as much as they might have otherwise. They might also try to sneak in a few audacious asks. After all, if they know that you’re

desperate to get a contract inked by midnight, why shouldn't they push you to lower your price or offer expanded services for free?

This isn't to say that expressing urgency is always a bad thing. For instance, the prospect might have discussed a drop-dead date that they need to have a solution in place by. Working backwards from that date and accounting for installation and training, the salesperson can pinpoint the ideal contract sign date. And if that day is today? Time to turn up the heat.

#### 7) "Let's split the difference."

Splitting the difference means substantially decreasing your margins. It also makes your product appear dramatically less valuable.

Try to resolve the difference another way. Even a small concession can help you bridge a stand-off, since it makes your prospect feel like they've successfully "won" something and makes you seem more reasonable. Maybe you can help them migrate their data, market the product to the end users, or personally teach them how to use the product so they don't need to pay for the same level of support. Get creative.

### **3.8 Profesional Skills of a Successful Negotiator**

Every professional understands the importance of negotiation. Whether you're a job candidate discussing your potential salary or a CEO trying to land your company's next business deal, you will have far more luck in your endeavors if you've mastered the art of negotiation.

It takes time and practice, but with dedication, anyone can get better at negotiating. To help you in your efforts, 14 [Forbes Coaches Council](#) members shared the most important skills and qualities every successful negotiator must have.

#### **1. Empathy**

If you're going to negotiate a win-win agreement, it's essential to understand and appreciate what the other party is looking to gain from the deal. Such empathy will enable you to identify what's important to the person across the table and offer a solution that will be appealing and mutually beneficial.

#### **2. Clarity On Your Goals**

Be clear on what you desire for all aspects of the negotiations. For example, what financial parameters are important to meet your needs and desires? Next, what are you willing to compromise that could compensate for not meeting those financial requirements? Finally, when are you willing to walk away? Having clarity gives you confidence. Your confidence and clarity will be evident to others too.

#### **3. A Relaxed Attitude**

Make sure you come across as someone who has other options. This is radiated through attitude rather than any explicit verbalization. Eager to get to the next steps as soon as possible? Be just a tiny bit relaxed instead. The other

party may start to worry that you have other plans and they might lose you or the deal unless they move quickly.

#### **4. Knowing How To Add Value**

By asking, "What can I do to add value to the other party?" you're moving the conversation from win-lose competition to win-win collaboration. Together, the parties can achieve more if they openly share resources, break down silos and create a culture where vulnerability and generating value is the status quo. Negotiation is the art of hearing what isn't said and delivering that value repeatedly.

#### **5. Listening And Asking Questions**

Listening is paramount. Getting clear on what each party wants, needs and would like out of the negotiation—that's done by actively listening and asking questions with follow-up questions. This helps create a great connection with the other person and makes them feel heard and seen. Sometimes negotiation feels like bullying; it should be a collaborative conversation.

#### **6. Situational Awareness**

Regardless of the objectives in negotiations, the single most important factor to ensure the greatest possibility of success is a total awareness of the opponent's situation. Essentially, knowing the "why, how and where" combined with assessing the motivations of the counterpart allows for both tactical and strategic moves that render the opponent's leverage less impactful.

#### **7. Reading Between The Lines**

Classic negotiation focuses on comparing positions and stance. But the most important skill in a negotiator is the ability to listen to subtle cues of intonation, tacit references to people and concerns outside the room and to the varying emotional content of your counterpart's words. When you can hear the subtext rather than a pretext, you can address the real issues and succeed at getting more.

#### **8. Embracing 'The Pause'**

In order to become successful in your negotiations, it is most important that you tighten up your communication. You do this by using fewer words, knowing when to stop and embrace the pause. In fact, you need to become comfortable with the pause, allowing your counterpart to digest the information and ultimately bring you to a win-win transaction for both parties.

#### **9. Knowing Your Value**

If you don't think deep down that you are worth the salary (and compensation package) you are asking for, your new company won't think so either. If you are an entrepreneur and you feel uncomfortable charging what you are worth, your clients will sense it and ask you to discount your fees. It's important to know your value, then ask for what you want. Invariably, you will get it.

#### **10. A Collaborative Mindset**

Avoid a competitive agenda. Establish awareness that both parties can win. The "you, me, we" approach is simple and builds rapport and trust. Because it's honest and transparent, no one wastes energy trying to outguess or

outmaneuver the other party. For example: "You want X and I want Y. Although we differ in some ways, we both want Z. Let's work together to figure out how that can happen."

### **11. Emotional Detachment**

When negotiating, everyone has an outcome to reach, but attaching emotion to a single result may dilute your effectiveness. If you want something too much, it can appear desperate or cloud your perspective. By detaching from those feelings, you will see more possibilities and opportunities. Detachment involves knowing your needs and remaining objective so you can stay focused and work your process.

### **12. Self-Awareness**

Increasing your self-awareness puts you in a powerful negotiating position, better able to tune in to your intuition. You'll pick up on subtle signs from the people you're negotiating with—where they are open, closed, concerned and even bluffing. Your confidence, which is perhaps your greatest negotiating tool, will be enhanced as you navigate your way to an agreement.

### **13. A Strategic Mindset**

When you have a strategic mindset, you understand that "no" is the beginning of the conversation. Every obstacle in a negotiation is an opportunity to learn and to gather more data. With more information, you have the power to create alternative solutions. With multiple solutions, there's a higher probability that you can find alignment with your negotiation partner. Don't be afraid of hearing no.

### **14. Emotional Intelligence**

It's not just the words, it is the emotion people bring to the words. What they say is important—the emotion with which they say it is vital. Don't kid yourself that business decisions are made based on hard data alone. Data is critical. Emotions are no less data than finances. Being able to set aside your own emotions to listen to the others' emotions strengthens your own position.

#### **3.9 The impact of emotions in negotiation**

The emotions you feel when entering a negotiation can have a profound impact on the outcomes you achieve.

To explore this relationship, Wheeler conducted a study with colleagues, which involved in-depth interviews with experienced negotiators regarding their thoughts and feelings about the bargaining process. Participants were asked to assemble collages of images they associated with negotiation.

The study revealed that even experienced professionals have mixed and conflicted feelings about negotiation, including anxiety over unknowns and self-doubt about performance. They also described a feeling of pessimism regarding the other party's trustworthiness and self-doubt about their own ability to perform.

These findings have been tied to research by HBS Professor Alison Wood Brooks, who found that anxious negotiators tend to make more modest first offers, have lower expectations in deal-making discussions, and exit situations early, among other pitfalls.

While strong negative emotions can come with high costs at the bargaining table, not all emotions are detrimental to negotiation. Positive emotions can actually help facilitate a more favorable outcome, and feelings like anxiety or nervousness can be channeled to achieve success. Brooks's work shows that when people tell themselves they're excited, rather than anxious, before important tasks, they're more engaged and perform better.

Whether you're a practiced negotiator or someone who typically shies away from the bargaining table, this insight is important to keep in mind.

*"There's a way you can take that adrenaline raised by stress and anxiety, and instead of working hard to push it down, you can use it as excitement and engagement,"* Wheeler says. *"When you feel the little upwelling of anxiety, name it—even though you know it's a gambit. 'I am excited.' It will help inoculate you against the problem."*

### **3.10 Emotional Intelligence in negotiation**

In addition to understanding how your own emotions affect negotiation, it's important to read the emotions of the other parties involved. Having a strong sense of emotional intelligence is critical to successfully doing business.

Chris Voss, a former FBI hostage negotiator who's featured in Negotiation Mastery, needed this skill in his career. His time working for a suicide hotline taught him to "listen between the lines" and pick up on what callers were implying, rather than explicitly stating, with their words. This enabled him to more quickly guide people through their decision-making processes and navigate their emotions.

Exercising emotional intelligence has also played an important role in the career of Erin Egan, who currently works at Amazon. In her previous role with Airbus, Egan learned a lot about negotiation dynamics by observing how people behaved during meetings.

"What's interesting is what's not said, and body language," Egan says. "You can learn a lot when someone says something and watching how other people on their own team respond. That's extremely telling. You can understand if everybody is aligned."

These examples demonstrate how critical emotional intelligence is to negotiation. In order to be successful, you need to not only identify the emotions that you and others are experiencing, but effectively understand, use, and manage them.

### **3.11 How to emotionally prepare for negotiation**

To help you put emotional intelligence into practice, here are six questions you should ask yourself before engaging in your next negotiation:

1. What do you want to feel going into the negotiation?
2. Why do you want to feel that?
3. What's the best thing you can do beforehand to feel that way?
4. What could throw you off balance in the midst of negotiation?
5. What can you do to recover your poise?
6. What do you want to feel when you're done?

Even if you're short on time, running through these questions can help you calibrate your mindset and improve your likelihood of success.

*"You always want to be well prepared at the bargaining table," Wheeler says. "That means running the numbers. It means getting a sense of whom it is you're going to be negotiating with. Reading the contract language; the proposals back and forth with great care. But you also need to be in the right frame of mind."*

### **3.12 Using emotions to your advantage in negotiation**

Although emotions have the potential to get the better of you during negotiations, having a clear understanding of how emotions impact the situation can give you an advantage. As Wheeler and Brooks's research suggests, channeling feelings of stress or anxiety into excitement can increase the likelihood of a favorable outcome, and having strong emotional intelligence skills can help you understand how the people you're negotiating with are feeling.

#### **In Conclusion**

Negotiations are present everywhere in life. You'll negotiate little things, like who takes the trash out, and big things, like how much money you'll be making at a new company. Getting the most out of life depends, at least partially, on your ability to negotiate.

There are tons of articles already in circulation about how to be a better negotiator, but there's a common fault point I've found with most of them. They all contain information on what you should do leading up to the negotiation, such as doing background research, and best practices on what you should do in the middle of a negotiation, such as maintaining good posture and starting higher than your actual goal. These are phenomenal pieces of advice, but they can only help you in the context of one negotiation. How can you make yourself a better negotiator in general?

Like anything else, the solution is with practice, and you need practical exercises if you want to condition yourself to be a better negotiator, in any area of life. These five exercises are ones I've found to be extraordinarily rewarding in this regard:

**Practice saying no.**

**Learn body language cues.**

**Listen to other people.**

**Conduct better research.**

**Negotiate everything.**

These five exercises, if repeated regularly and with a commitment to self-improvement, will help you become a better negotiator in all areas of your life. This isn't free reign to negotiate everything, nor should it develop a compulsion in you to strive for more than you deserve. Instead, use your new skills responsibly and remember that negotiation is a two-way street.

## **4. CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

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### **4.1 Introduction**

Where there are people, there is conflict. We all bring our different values, needs and idiosyncrasies either in relationships or to the workplace – and they can sometimes clash with those of others.

Left unchecked, conflict brews and can lead to animosity. Teamwork can break down, morale drops, and tasks grind to a halt. But conflict can be resolved. What's more, it can be healthy – bringing issues to light, strengthening relationships, and sparking innovation.

### **4.2 What is conflict?**

Conflict is a normal part of any healthy relationship. After all, two people can't be expected to agree on everything, all the time. The key is not to fear or try to avoid conflict but to learn how to resolve it in a healthy way.

When conflict is mismanaged, it can cause great harm to a relationship, but when handled in a respectful, positive way, conflict provides an opportunity to strengthen the bond between two people. Whether experiencing conflict at home, work, or school, learning these skills can help resolve differences in a healthy way and build stronger, more rewarding relationships.

- **A conflict is more than just a disagreement.** It is a situation in which one or both parties perceive a threat (whether or not the threat is real).
- **Conflicts continue to fester when ignored.** Because conflicts involve perceived threats to our well-being and survival, they stay with us until we face and resolve them.
- **We respond to conflicts based on our perceptions** of the situation, not necessarily to an objective review of the facts. Our perceptions are influenced by our life experiences, culture, values, and beliefs.
- **Conflicts trigger strong emotions.** If you aren't comfortable with your emotions or able to manage them in times of stress, you won't be able to resolve conflict successfully.
- **Conflicts are an opportunity for growth.** When you're able to resolve conflict in a relationship, it builds trust. You can feel secure knowing your relationship can survive challenges and disagreements.

#### **4.3 Causes of conflict in a relationship**

Conflict arises from differences, both large and small. It occurs whenever people disagree over their values, motivations, perceptions, ideas, or desires. Sometimes these differences appear trivial, but when a conflict triggers strong feelings, a deep personal need is often at the core of the problem. These needs can range from the need to feel safe and secure or respected and valued, to the need for greater closeness and intimacy.

Think about the opposing needs of a toddler and a parent. The child's need is to explore, so venturing to the street or the cliff edge meets that need. But the parent's need is to protect the child's safety, a need that can only be met by limiting the toddler's exploration. Since these needs are at odds, conflict arises.

The needs of each party play an important role in the long-term success of relationships. Each deserves respect and consideration. In personal relationships, a lack of understanding about differing needs can result in distance, arguments, and break-ups. In the workplace, differing needs can result in broken deals, decreased profits, and lost jobs.

#### **4.4 Causes of Conflict at Work**

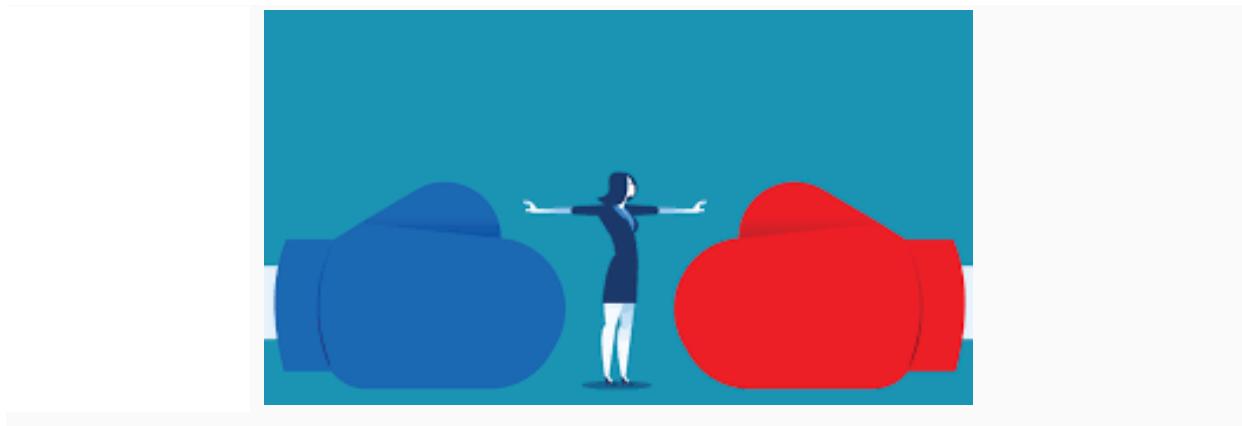
Some of the most common causes of workplace conflict are:

- **Unclear responsibilities.** Some team members may feel they do more work than others, or resent those who seem to have fewer responsibilities. Blame and frustration can build due to duplicated work or unfinished tasks.
- **Competition for resources.** Time, money, materials, equipment and skillsets are finite resources. Competition for them can lead to conflict.
- **Different interests.** People may focus on personal over organizational goals. Or be held up and frustrated by others who they rely on to do their jobs effectively

#### **4.5 Types of Conflict at Workplace**

Generally, workplace conflicts fall into two camps:

- **Personality conflict** or disagreements between individuals. These clashes are driven and perpetuated by emotions such as anger, stress and frustration. A study found that "personality clashes and warring egos" account for nearly half of all workplace conflicts.
- **Substantive conflict** is tangible and task-related, like the decisions leaders make, the performance of a team member, or your company's direction. If unaddressed, both can spiral into wider conflict between teams, departments or businesses.



#### **4.6 What is conflict resolution?**

Conflict, arguments, and change are natural parts of our lives, as well as the lives of every agency, organization, and nation.

Conflict resolution is a way for two or more parties to find a peaceful solution to a disagreement among them. The disagreement may be personal, financial, political, or emotional.

When a dispute arises, often the best course of action is negotiation to resolve the disagreement.

The goals of negotiation are:

- To produce a solution that all parties can agree to
- To work as quickly as possible to find this solution
- To improve, not hurt, the relationship between the groups in conflict

Conflict resolution through negotiation can be good for all parties involved. Often, each side will get more by participating in negotiations than they would by walking away, and it can be a way for your group to get resources that might otherwise be out of reach.

#### **4.7 Why should you resolve conflict?**

The main goal of negotiation with your opposition is to come to an agreement that benefits all parties.

Some other good reasons to negotiate are:

- To understand more about those whose ideas, beliefs, and backgrounds may be different from your own. In order to resolve a conflict, you'll need to look at the conflict from your opponent's point of view and learn more about this person or group's perspective and motivations.
- To ensure that your relationships with opponents continue and grow. If you make peace with your opponents, you increase your own allies in the community. Successful negotiations pave the way for smooth relationships in the future.
- To find peaceful solutions to difficult situations. Full-blown battles use up resources -- time, energy, good reputation, motivation. By negotiating, you avoid wasting these resources, and you may actually make new allies and find new resources!

#### **4.8 When should you resolve conflict?**

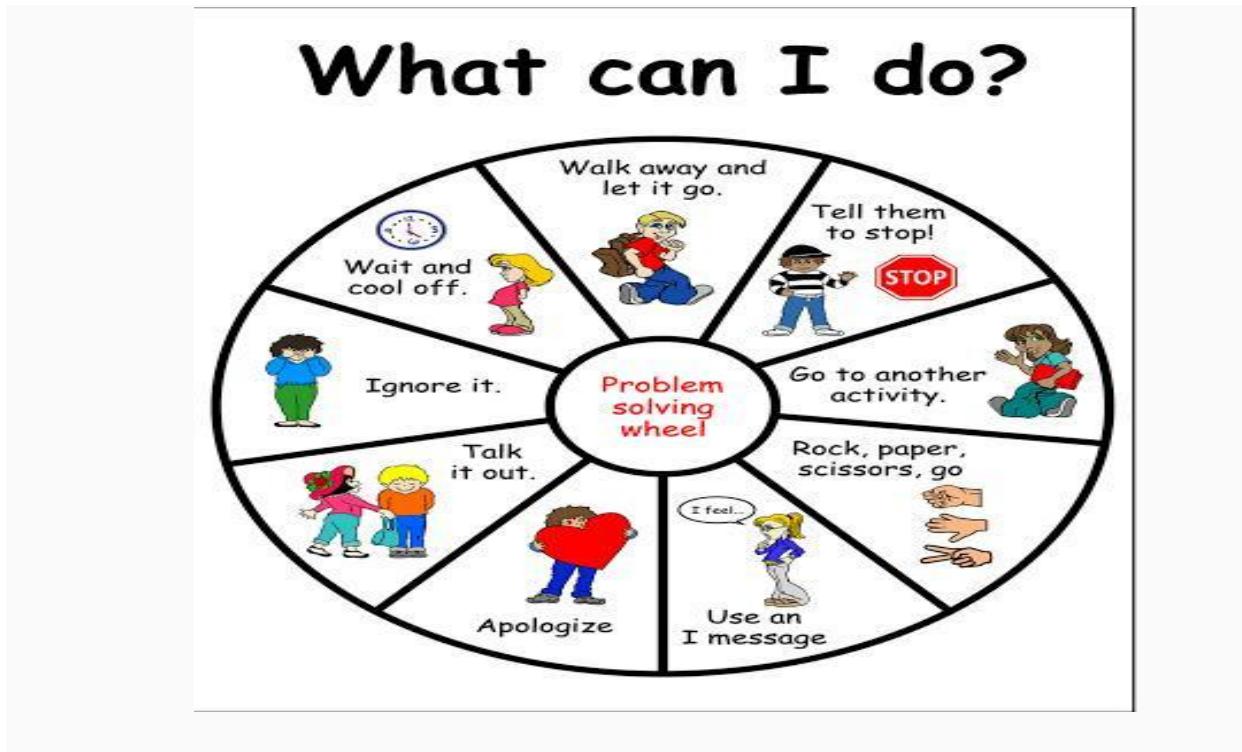
Conflict resolution is appropriate for almost any disagreement. Our daily lives offer plenty of opportunities for negotiation - between parents and children, co-workers, friends, etc., and as a result, you probably already have a variety of effective strategies for resolving minor conflicts. But for more serious conflicts, and conflicts between groups rather than individuals, you may need some additional skills. How, for example, should you structure a meeting between your group and your opponent? When should you settle, and when should you fight for more? How should you react if your opponent attacks you personally? Read on for more information on specific conflict resolution techniques.

#### **4.9 How should you resolve conflict?**

There are seven steps to successfully negotiating the resolution of a conflict:

1. Understand the conflict

2. Communicate with the opposition
3. Brainstorm possible resolutions
4. Choose the best resolution
5. Use a third party mediator
6. Explore alternatives
7. Cope with stressful situations and pressure tactics



### 1. UNDERSTAND THE CONFLICT

Conflicts arise for a variety of different reasons. It is important for you to define clearly your own position and interests in the conflict, and to understand those of your opponent. Here are some questions to ask yourself so that you can better define the conflict.

#### Interests

- What are my interests?
- What do I really care about in this conflict?
- What do I want?
- What do I need?
- What are my concerns, hopes, fears?

#### Possible Outcomes

- What kinds of agreements might we reach?

### **Legitimacy**

- What third party, outside of the conflict, might convince one or both of us that proposed agreement is a fair one?
- What objective standard might convince us that an agreement is fair?  
For example: a law, an expert opinion, the market value of the transaction.
- Is there a precedent that would convince us that an agreement is fair?

### **Their Interests**

- What are the interests of my opposition?
- If I were in their shoes, what would I really care about in this conflict?
- What do they want?
- What do they need?
- What are their concerns, hopes, fears?

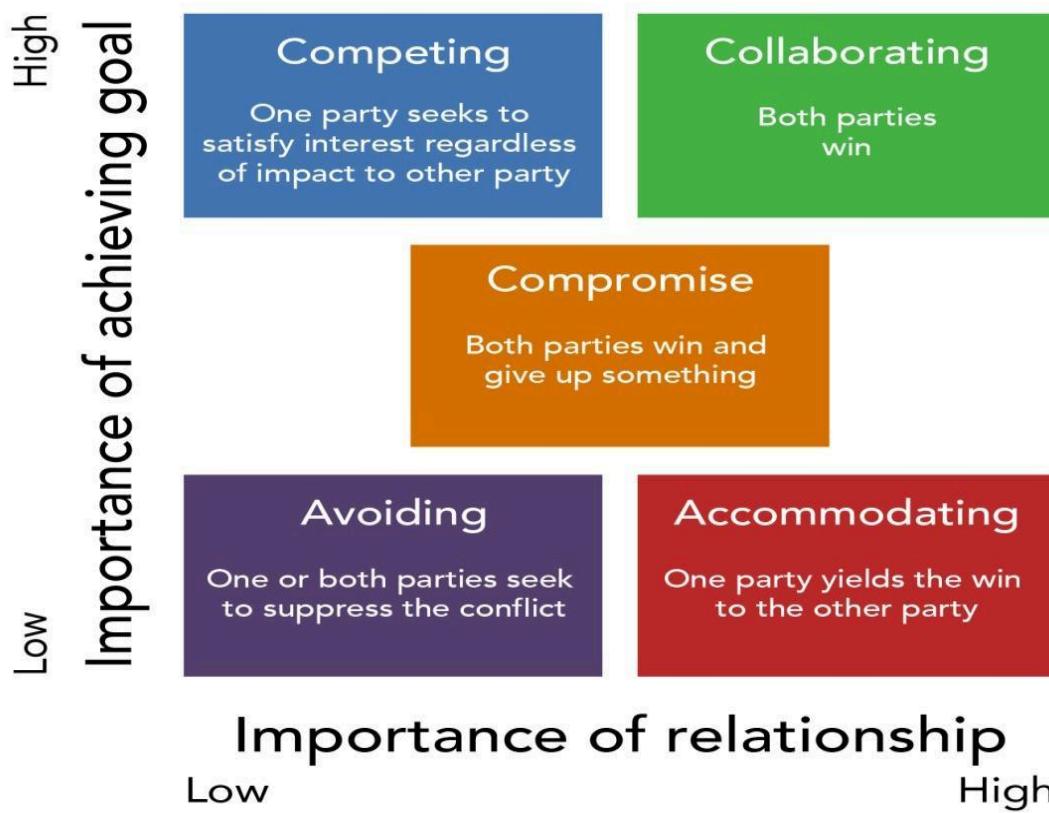
Interests play an important role in better understanding conflict. Often, groups waste time "bargaining over positions." Instead of explaining what the interests of their position are, they argue about their "bottom line." This is not a useful way to negotiate, because it forces groups to stick to one narrow position. Once they are entrenched in a particular position, it will be embarrassing for them to abandon it. They may spend more effort on "saving face" than on actually finding a suitable resolution. It is usually more helpful to explore the group's interests, and then see what positions suit such interests.

## **2. COMMUNICATE WITH THE OPPOSITION**

Now that you have thought through your own interests and those of the other party, you can begin to communicate directly with your opposition. Here are some tips for productive talks:

- **Listen.** Their opinions are important to you, because their opinions are the source of your conflict. If something is important to them, you need to recognize this. Recognizing does not mean agreeing, of course!
- Let everyone participate who wants to. People who participate will have a stake in a resolution. They will want to find a good compromise.
- Talk about your strong emotions. Let the other side let off steam.
- Don't, however, react to emotional outbursts! Try an apology instead of yelling back. Apologizing is not costly, and is often a rewarding technique.

- Be an active listener. Rephrase what you're hearing as a question: "Let me see if I'm following you. You're saying that... Have I got that right?" You can still be firm when you're listening.
  - Speak about yourself, not the other party. In the textbook example, you might say, "I feel angry to know that my children are reading this old-fashioned textbook," rather than, "How could you choose such a racist book?"
  - Be concrete, but flexible. Speak about your interests, not about your position.
  - Avoid early judgments. Keep asking questions and gathering information.
  - Don't tell the opposition, "It's up to you to solve your problems." Work to find a solution for everyone.
  - Find a way to make their decision easy. Try to find a way for them to take your position without looking weak, but don't call it a way for them to "save face." Egos are important in negotiations!



### **3. BRAINSTORM POSSIBLE RESOLUTIONS**

Now that you know what the interests of both parties are, and how to better communicate with the opposition, you can start thinking about solutions. Look at all of the interests you have listed, for you and for your opponents, and look

for common interests. Often both parties share many interests -- for example, both groups may want stability and public respect.

Before you hold a brainstorming meeting, think carefully about how you'll set up the meeting. Write a clear purpose statement for the meeting. Try to choose a small group of 5-8 people total. Hold the meeting in a different environment from your usual setting. Make sure the setting is an informal one where people feel comfortable and safe. Find an unbiased facilitator, someone who can structure the meeting without sharing his or her own feelings about the conflict.

- To begin brainstorming, decide whether you want to brainstorm with your opposition, or with only your group. In either case, you will want to establish some ground rules.
- Work on coming up with as many ideas as possible. Don't judge or criticize the ideas yet -- that might prevent people from thinking creatively.
- Try to maximize (not minimize) your options.
- Look for win-win solutions, or compromises, in which both parties get something they want.
- Find a way to make their decision easy
- During the meeting, seat people side by side, facing the "problem"-- a blank chalkboard or large pad of paper for writing down ideas. The facilitator will remind people of the purpose of the meeting, review the ground rules, and ask participants to agree to those rules. During the brainstorming session, the facilitator will write down all ideas on the chalkboard or pad.

#### **4. CHOOSE THE BEST RESOLUTION**

After the meeting, you will need to decide which resolution is best. Review your brainstorm ideas. Star the best ideas - these are what you will work with during the conflict resolution process. Set a time to discuss them and determine which idea is the best.

The goal here is to use both groups' skills and resources to get the best result for everyone. Which resolution gives both groups the most? That resolution is probably the best one.

#### **5. USE A THIRD PARTY MEDIATOR**

As you are brainstorming and choosing a good resolution, you may want to use a third party mediator. This is a person who is not from your group or your opponent's group, but whom you both trust to be fair. Your mediator can help both sides agree upon a standard by which you'll judge your resolution.

Standards are a way to measure your agreement. They include expert opinions, law, precedent (the way things have been done in the past), and accepted principles.

***For example:***

Let's say you're building a new playground for your town's elementary school. You disagree with the superintendent about what kinds of materials you'll use to build the playground. The superintendent wants to use chemical-treated wood, but you feel it's unsafe. A mediator might read the current guidelines of the lumber industry and tell you which kinds of wood are considered safe for children. Maybe you and the superintendent will agree to follow the lumber industry's advice--in other words, to use that as the standard.

Your mediator could also, for example, run your brainstorming session.

Here are some other possible jobs for a mediator:

- Setting ground rules for you and your opponent to agree upon (for example, you might both agree not to publicly discuss the dispute)
- Creating an appropriate setting for meetings
- Suggesting possible ways to compromise
- Being an "ear" for both side's anger and fear
- Listening to both sides and explaining their positions to one another
- Finding the interests behind each side's positions
- Looking for win-win alternatives
- Keeping both parties focused, reasonable, and respectful
- Preventing any party from feeling that it's "losing face"
- Writing the draft of your agreement with the opposition

Perhaps Harri is considering quitting her job because her boss wants to transfer her to another office. The mediator might say, "It sounds like Harri doesn't care about transferring to the downtown office. What she's worried about is losing rank. Harri, do you agree with that? Ms. Snell, do you understand Harri's concern? How can we assure Harri that she won't lose rank if she agrees to transfer?"

## **6. EXPLORE ALTERNATIVES**

There may be times when, despite your hard work and good will, you cannot find an acceptable resolution to your conflict. You need to think about this possibility before you begin negotiations. At what point will you decide to walk away from negotiations? What are your alternatives if you cannot reach an agreement with your opponent?

It is important that you brainstorm your alternatives to resolution early on in the negotiation process, and that you always have your best alternative somewhere in the back of your mind. As you consider possible agreements with your opponent, compare them to this "best" alternative. If you don't know what the alternative is, you'll be negotiating without all the necessary information!

In order to come up with an alternative, start by brainstorming. Then, consider the pros and cons of each alternative. Think about which alternative is realistic and practical. Also think about how you can make it even better.

At the same time, don't forget to put yourself in the shoes of your opposition. What alternatives might they have? Why might they choose them? What can you do to make your choice better than their alternative?

Roger Fisher and Danny Ertel call this alternative your BATNA -- Best Alternative To a Negotiated Agreement. You can read more about BATNA in their book Getting Ready to Negotiate.

## 7. COPE WITH STRESSFUL SITUATIONS AND PRESSURE TACTICS

So far, we've talked about how to negotiate with a fairly reasonable opponent. However, you need to be prepared to negotiate with all kinds of opponents, both reasonable and unreasonable. What if your opponent is more powerful and influential than you are? What if they refuse to meet or talk with you?

All of these situations are stressful, and intended to put extra pressure on you to make a quick decision in the opposition's favor. When a situation like this takes place, stay calm and go slow. Don't get angry or make a rushed decision. Instead, talk about the pressure tactic without judging.

### HERE ARE SOME POSSIBLE SITUATIONS:

#### *□ My opponent is more powerful*

If you have already decided on your best alternative, you have nothing to fear. You can walk away at any time, and go that route instead. Think about everything that you can do, and that your mediator can do. Although you may be less powerful, at least you will be negotiating with all the available information.

#### *□ My opponent won't budge*

In a situation like this, you may be tempted to do the same thing: "If you won't change your mind, neither will I!" However, you will fail if you insist on sticking to your position. Instead, treat your opponent's position as a real possibility. Ask lots of questions. Listen to their logic. Understand what their interests are, and what it is that they really want. Learn what their criticisms of your idea are. The more you know about where they're coming from, the better a resolution you can create.

### In conclusion

In conflict resolution, the best solution is the solution that is best for both sides. Of course, that's not always possible to find, but you should use all your resources to solve your conflict as smoothly as you can.

## 5. CREATIVE THINKING

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### 5.1 Introduction

Have you ever wondered why some can come up with amazing ideas while others can't? The ability to connect the dots and see the larger picture rests in a certain skill – creative thinking.

Creative thinking is our ability to look at ideas presented or a scenario, and find new alternatives that solves the problem. Best of all this skill is, it isn't bound to the creative people like designers, musicians, or other artists. A lot of people can benefit from thinking this way from time to time. They can also receive a number of benefits on top of a wide variety of ideas that can spark change.

### 5.2 What is Creative thinking?

It is important to start with a clear definition of what we mean by creativity, as there are two completely different types. The first is **technical creativity**, where people create new theories, technologies or ideas. The second is **artistic creativity**, which is more born of skill, technique and self-expression.

Defined by the Business Dictionary, creative thinking is

A way of looking at problems or situations from a fresh perspective that suggests unorthodox solutions. Creative thinking can be stimulated both by an unstructured process such as brainstorming, and by a structured process such as lateral thinking.

Creativity is, therefore, our ability to form something new out of what's presented. It's our ability to think differently and provide new angles and perspectives to a solution. This can translate into a new solution that wasn't there or even the realization that a problem doesn't need a solution at the moment or at all.

### 5.3 The Importance of Creative Thinking

True that many people may not care so much about new solutions or angles but that's the point. Our brains have a natural tendency to fall into certain 'shortcuts'.

Have you ever been in a situation where you hear or learn one piece of information and you use it all the time?

I bet you have, since we don't need to relearn how to use a knife or a fork.

That way of thinking does have its perks in those situations but has some drawbacks in other situations. This is especially true with problem-solving.

Creative thinking and creative thinkers are needed in those situations because it pushes out of that linear way of thinking. It encourages us to look at other perspectives and even open up to the idea of new solutions.

### **Creative thinking is also important for other reasons:**

#### ***□ Thinking creatively provides immense freedom.***

When we create, we have the opportunity to engage with the world without judging ourselves. It's similar to what we felt when we were a child. Back then we didn't care what people thought of us.

#### ***□ Creative thinking provides self-awareness.***

We start to think with authenticity as we use our own thoughts, feelings and beliefs. This creates biases in our ideas, but we can learn to set those aside and deeply learn about ourselves.

#### ***□ We become more confident in our ideas.***

Maybe right now, you don't present ideas or your ideas get shut down. By tapping into creative thinking, we can build our confidence in our ideas and start to contribute to the group and our work at large.

## **5.4 What Are the Creative Thinking Skills?**

Creative thinking isn't barred to those who learn in creative fashions. Anyone can pick up creative thinking skills and use them to enrich their lives and those around them. Some of the Creative Thinking skills are:

### **1. Perception & Empathy**

Feeling surprised that this is one of the creative thinking skills? Being perceptive and empathetic works hand in hand with creative thinking. Being able to read the mood of a meeting or a discussion you're having with people can help immensely.

This is key because there are times and places to share ideas. Specifically, you may find the best opportunities to share ideas when:

- You're facing a major problem or issue and can't seem to find a way to proceed and solve it.
- During times of change, when the future is more obscure than usual and you're thinking of possibilities.
- When there is a clear divide between what people think needs to happen. It's especially needed when no compromises can happen without considerable effort.

- When something new is needed and hasn't been tried before.

Empathy also helps with how an idea is presented. Maybe in your workgroup, people aren't always receptive to your ideas. However, there is that one person who always has a plan and people support.

Empathy is letting that person take "ownership" of that idea and be the voice behind the idea. In these sorts of scenarios, you build up more than empathy. It also builds the belief that your idea will prevail in the hands of someone else.

## **2. Analytical**

Analytical skills help us in understanding many other situations outside of the social environment. Being able to read text or data and have a deeper understanding of what they mean will serve you in a variety of ways.

With creative thinking, the first step is being able to intake information and digest it in various ways. Being able to analyze information is often the first step in the creative thinking process.

## **3. Open-Mindedness**

Once you've taken in the information, it's important that you have an open mind. This means you need to set aside your biases or assumptions and encourage yourself to look at a problem in a new way.

Biases and assumptions are some of the mental barriers we'll face. But looking at the other barriers, they often stem from that sort of thinking. A strict and "this is how it should be" way of thinking. Other examples of limitations are that we're thinking of a problem too logically or that creative thinking is somehow breaking the rules.

These are limiting because we know that to have an open mind is to succeed. Every successful entrepreneur in the world today had to break rules at some point in their lives. Consider Richard Branson or Elon Musk whose work revolutionized or created an entirely new industry. All because they didn't back down to how things were. You can do the same thing within your own group in some fashion.

## **4. Organized**

The last thing people associate creative thinkers are, is that they're organized. While we think of great minds have messy rooms or desks, that's not the case at all.

Being organized plays a crucial role in creative thinking in that it allows you to better organize our ideas. Not only that, but it also helps to present it as well.

When we present ideas, it's similar to a speech. There ought to be a structure, a vision, and have it easy to follow and understand.

Furthermore, if your idea is given the green light, you'll need to form an action plan, set goals, and have specific deadlines. Being organized will keep you on your toes and prepared for almost anything.

## **5. Communication**

Communication plays a vital role in all this as well. You can't sell your ideas to a group or an individual if you can't communicate effectively. This applies to both written and verbal communication skills.

This goes back to empathy a bit in that you need to understand the situation you're in. This also means you need to be a good listener and being able to ask the right questions.

## **6. Dissect Ideas**

The last skill to offer is a challenging one but can pay off in many ways. Sometimes creative thinking means taking two ideas and merging them.

This helps because in most situations ideas in their base form might not be able to satisfy the original goal or problem. That or maybe the idea is outright terrible but, there are some good pieces of information in it.

The ability to look at ideas and be able to break them down and dissect them and merge with other ideas is a great skill to have. This could easily help solve disputes and help to find a middle ground.

## **Some Examples of Creative Thinking**

The list of creative thinking examples is endless. In most situations, these examples will boost your creative thinking as well so I encourage you to try them out yourself:

- Designing anything from a logo, to a simple webpage layout, to a poster and more
- Creating a lesson plan for a group training course
- Writing in a journal, a blog, or any social platforms
- Creating a test or quiz from scratch just for fun
- Brainstorming project ideas at work, or decor/renovation ideas at home
- Finding procedures to improve the quality of a product or service
- Suggesting solutions to improve a product or service

## **5.5 How do you develop creative thinking?**

Employing creative ideas can take you far in your career. If this talent doesn't come naturally to you, there are several techniques you can use to train yourself and others to employ creativity in their work processes.

### **1. Brainstorm ideas.**

Brainstorming sessions can go a long way in generating ideas. They can be especially effective if you have a large team because you'll be able to generate more ideas. Make sure to include all members of the group or team, even people who aren't directly involved in the project or whose jobs don't usually entail problem-solving. These members could have unique insights because they're coming from different perspectives and may have different ways of approaching the problem from your usual methods.

#### **How to start**

When you gather a group to brainstorm ideas, establish some ground rules. Some typical rules include allowing everyone to have a say, valuing all ideas equally (although you probably can't proceed with every single one, you should write down every idea that team members voice), and avoiding any criticism or disparaging of individual ideas.

You'll also want to follow some crucial steps and techniques to ensure that the brainstorming sessions are productive. Establish the purpose for the session and explain why you're looking for new ideas. You might want to ask some open-ended questions to get everyone's creative juices flowing. Don't come in knowing you're probably going to follow an idea you previously developed, or you're just wasting everyone's time. You could also be missing out on the larger group's creativity and innovation; other people might have important thoughts to contribute. Once you gather the group, you might ask that every person offers an initial idea and encourage everyone to speak up. You also might record ideas on a large whiteboard or piece of paper, writing down everyone's contribution to demonstrate that all ideas are valuable.

Through brainstorming, you'll be able to produce many different ideas and will ultimately be able to choose the ones that seem most appropriate for your project.

### **2. Role-play scenarios.**

Role-playing is a common training method in the military and emergency response groups. Some businesses have begun using the method to train new employees as well.

Role-playing doesn't need to be limited to new employees, though. When you act out different situations and scenarios, you may develop new ways of looking at an issue and come up with potential solutions. You'll also help team members develop confidence and become more comfortable when dealing with unfamiliar situations since they'll need to respond quickly and think on their feet.

Role-playing involves two or more members of a group acting out a situation. It might concern dealing with a new client, giving a presentation, interviewing, or resolving conflicts. Essentially, you can role-play any situation that might be difficult and improved with rehearsal.

When people are able to role-play a scenario before encountering the situation in real life, they'll have some practice developing resolutions quickly on their feet. You can also view the scenario in a different way and end up with unique ways of solving problems.

### **How to start**

When beginning a role-play scenario, start by explaining the task and what you hope to gain from the session. Introduce the problem and describe why role-playing might help, so people in the group will start considering how they'll approach it. Make it clear that you and other members of the team aren't here to judge approaches; instead, you want the group to develop solutions and ways of handling different scenarios that might occur in their work. Assign roles and act out the situation.

After the role-playing session, debrief. Have the group members discuss what went well and what could be improved. If the goal of the session is to come up with new ideas for a project or situation, you might write down the various ideas people contribute.

### **3. Reframe the issue.**

Reframing a problem or situation can help you reinterpret it. When you present the issue in a new way, you'll open up different possibilities for how people react, feel, and examine the situation, which can ultimately lead to new solutions. Consider alternative meanings, contexts, and perspectives for the situation at hand. Also, think about what the problem can teach you. Once you've examined these different angles, you might see the situation in a new light and discover a new approach.

You might ask others to reframe the issue for you as well. This can increase the number of angles from which you'll be able to consider the problem and potential solutions.

### **4. Make the most of creative flow.**

When you become completely absorbed in a project to the point at which you're so fully immersed that you don't notice other distractions, you're in a state of creative flow. This state is correlated with strong creative performance, meaning you might produce some of your best ideas when you're immersed in it.

While you can't induce flow, since there are actual changes in the chemistry and activity of your brain while you're in this state, you can seek out experiences that will cause you to produce your best work. Creative flow occurs when

you're deeply involved in an activity that engages you and brings you pleasure, so if you're passionate about a project, you're more likely to find yourself in this state.

Creative people make the most of the insights and ideas they develop while in a state of creative flow, so it can be an important part of your creative process. Your thoughts during this state could represent some of your greatest work.

### **5. Stay open-minded and flexible.**

One consistent quality of creative people is that they tend not to see boundaries where others might; boundaries only impede innovation. If you're constantly noticing the limitations of what you can do, you won't be able to develop solutions that are off the beaten path. That is, after all, what it means to think outside the box.

Instead of limiting themselves to what the rules allow, people who are innovative thinkers don't see solutions as limited to what can happen within the confines of rules. Instead, they employ creative problem-solving skills to see the possibilities as virtually limitless.

If you want to improve your creative process and skills, be open-minded to solutions that may extend beyond the parameters with which you're familiar. Also appreciate the ideas of others, which may involve problem-solving processes that are unfamiliar or atypical for you and your team.

### **6. Keep your ego out of it.**

You may and likely will encounter setbacks in your career and life. Not all your ideas are going to pan out. What will set you apart is your ability to see failures as temporary, rather than permanent. If you keep trying, you'll eventually achieve success—you might just need to find a new approach to achieving it. Bestselling suspense author Mary Higgins Clark received 40 rejection letters over six years before publishing her first short story. Today, the suspense writer is the author of 51 novels, and every one of them has been a bestseller.

Also, have the confidence in your ideas and yourself to award credit where credit is due. If a team member or report came up with an idea that led to success, let other people know. Part of being a great leader and thinker is recognizing the accomplishments of others and allowing them to have their moment in the spotlight.

### **In conclusion**

The number of examples of creative thinking is endless but they are all challenging. This is a good thing as the world continues to change and grow. This pushes us to learn new skills, to think differently, and to start asking the more important questions. "Why?" and "Why not?"

These are skills and abilities that can change the world and that anyone can adopt. So long as you have the patience to learn and develop yourself, you too can be a creative thinker

## 6. BLOOM'S TAXONOMY

### 6.1. What is Bloom's taxonomy?

Bloom's taxonomy is a framework for learning, teaching and educational achievement in which each level depends on the one below. It is often depicted in the form of a pyramid—like Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

### 6.2. The history of Bloom's taxonomy

#### □ Original Bloom's taxonomy from 1956

In the 1940s, Benjamin Bloom, along with his collaborators Max Englehart, Edward Furst, Walter Hill and David Krathwohl, devised Bloom's taxonomy to place educational goals into specific categories, with the belief that this classification would be useful to better assess college student performance. Each year for the following 16 years, Bloom and his colleagues revised and refined the framework at the American Psychological Association convention. In 1956, the final version was published as the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, showing the path of educational attainment through six orders of learning.

*“After forty years of intensive research on school learning in the United States as well as abroad, my major conclusion is: What any person in the world can learn, almost all persons can learn if provided with appropriate prior and current conditions of learning.”* - Benjamin Bloom

The original taxonomy has served as the backbone of many teaching philosophies ever since. While it initially aided in the assessment of students, it quickly became a tool for teachers to devise their curriculum, outline clear learning objectives, and design classroom activities. It has been adapted for use in classrooms from school to college and at the university level.

- Benjamin Bloom and several of his peers developed Bloom's Taxonomy in 1956 to better assess college student performance.
- Bloom's Taxonomy consists of six different levels of learning that build on one another to guide students and educators through the stage of educational attainment.

#### □ Revised Bloom's taxonomy from 2001

In 2001, a group of cognitive psychologists, curriculum theorists, instructional researchers and testing assessment specialists led by Lorin Anderson, a colleague of Krathwohl's and former student of Bloom's, aimed to reorganize and create a revised Bloom's taxonomy. This involved putting together a series of more dynamic concepts for the classification system as compared to the original static, one-dimensional levels of educational objectives.

At the core of the revision of Bloom's taxonomy is the use of verbs to replace nouns—providing learners with clearer objectives for what is expected of them.

<b>Older version</b>	<b>Revised Bloom's taxonomy</b>
Knowledge	Remember
Comprehension	Understand
Application	Apply
Analysis	Analyze
Synthesis	Evaluate
Evaluation	Create

The new revision swaps the two final Bloom's taxonomy levels of learning, Synthesis/Evaluation, making them clearer and emphasizing the application of knowledge, which is the end goal of effective learning.

Additionally, Bloom's revised taxonomy separates the cognitive domain, which consists of all the levels involved in learning noted above, into four distinct types within a matrix: factual, conceptual, procedural and metacognitive.

Factual knowledge is characterized by terminology and discrete facts. Conceptual by categories, principles, theories, and models, looking at the relationships among all elements within a larger structure that helps it work together. Procedural is the knowledge of a specific technique, process, or methodology: essentially, how to do something. Finally, metacognitive defines a student's self-assessment of their ability and knowledge of different skills and techniques. The question this attempts to answer is this: Is the student aware of their cognition or learning?

The matrix organization of the revised version of Bloom's taxonomy is designed to be a more precise form of thinking about learning, making it easier for educators to create clear objectives for lesson planning and student evaluation. It also makes it simpler for students to understand what is expected of them.



- Revised Bloom's Taxonomy focuses on the use of verbs and action words to provide learners with a clearer understanding of what is expected of them.
- Bloom's revised taxonomy separates the cognitive domain into four distinct types within a matrix: factual, conceptual, procedural and metacognitive.

### 6.3 Action verbs used in Bloom's Taxonomy

Older version	Revised version

01 <b>KNOWLEDGE:</b> Define, Identify, Describe, Recognize, Tell, Explain, Recite, Memorize, Illustrate, Quote	02 <b>UNDERSTAND:</b> Summarize, Interpret, Classify, Compare, Contrast, Infer, Relate, Extract, Paraphrase, Cite	03 <b>APPLY:</b> Solve, Change, Relate, Complete, Use, Sketch, Teach, Articulate, Discover, Transfer	04 <b>ANALYZE:</b> Contrast, Connect, Relate, Devise, Correlate, Illustrate, Teach, Distill, Conclude, Categorize, Take Apart	05 <b>EVALUATE:</b> Criticize, Reframe, Judge, Defend, Appraise, Value, Prioritize, Plan, Grade, Reframe	06 <b>CREATE:</b> Design, Modify, Role-Play, Develop, Rewrite, Pivot, Modify, Collaborate, Invent, Write	BLOOM'S TAXONOMY DIGITAL PLANNING VERBS
						

#### 6.4. Why is Bloom's taxonomy important?

Bloom's taxonomy has been actively used by school teachers to college instructors for over five decades. Yet it is still just as important today as it was in the 1950s.

At the heart of Bloom's taxonomy framework is the ability to create achievable learning goals that teachers and students understand and build a definitive plan to meet them. Instructors are encouraged to view learning objectives in behavioural terms, such that they can see what students are capable of as a direct result of the instruction they have received at each level, without the need for class-wide generalizations.

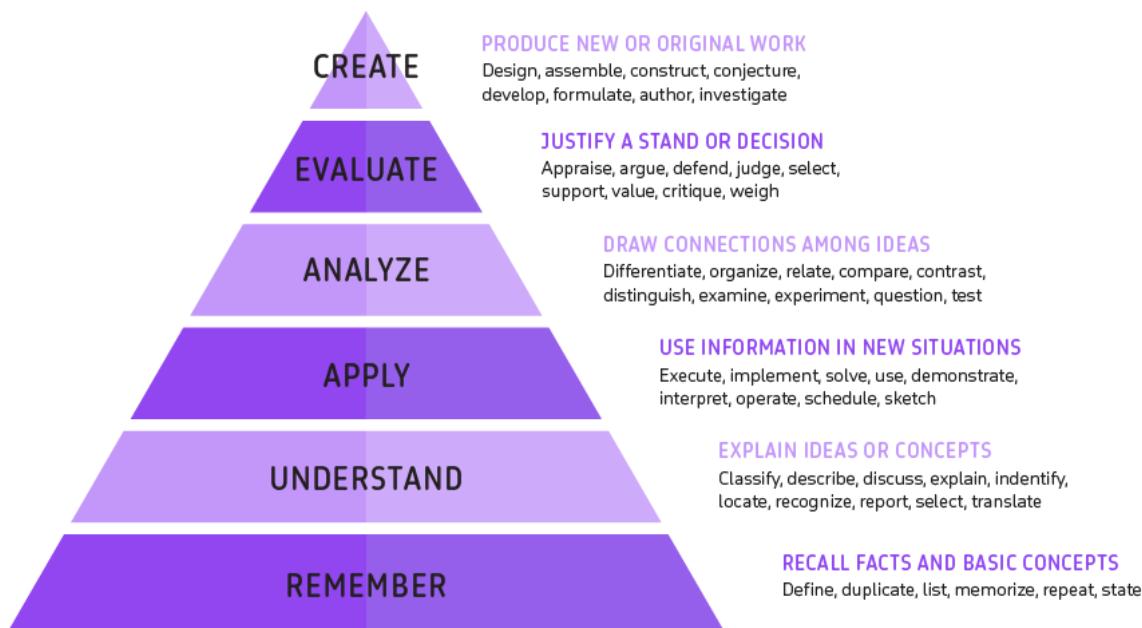
Using the categorization, educators can more effectively organize objectives and create lesson plans with appropriate content and instruction to lead students up the pyramid of learning. Educators can also design valid assessment tools and strategies to ensure each category is met in turn, and that each part of the course material is in line with the level's objectives, whether it's basic knowledge at the beginning of a course (e.g., remembering and recalling basic concepts), or applying that knowledge towards the middle of a school year (e.g. using the learned information in specific settings by solving problems.) For students, Bloom's levels bridge the gap between what they know now, and what they need to learn to attain a higher level of knowledge.

At the end of the learning process, the goal with Bloom's taxonomy is that a student has honed a new skill, level of knowledge, and/or developed a different

attitude towards the subject. And that teachers can effectively assess this learning on an ongoing basis, as the course moves through each stage of the framework.

- Bloom's Taxonomy is essential because it helps educators identify achievable learning goals and develop plans to meet them.
- The Bloom's Taxonomy framework allows educators to assess learning on an ongoing basis, encouraging students to reflect on their progress.

## 6.5. The levels of thinking in Bloom's taxonomy



This pyramid, courtesy of the Vanderbilt University Centre for Teaching, represents the revised Bloom's taxonomy framework and educational objectives and outlines the key levels of thinking.

It starts with the most basic level of knowledge at the bottom, **Remembering**, whereby students recall facts and basic concepts, and moves up towards the pinnacle: **Create**, where new or original work is produced in some fashion.

In any learning environment, according to Bloom's taxonomy, it is critical to start from the bottom level and work your way up. The lower-order skills require less cognitive process but provide an important base for learning. Meanwhile, the higher Bloom's levels require deeper learning and a greater degree of cognitive processing, which, presumably, can only be achieved once the lower-order skills have been mastered.

*Bloom's Taxonomy is a hierarchical framework that encourages learners to work their way up towards higher-order thinking and cognitive tasks.*

## **6.6 How to use the levels of thinking**

Each level of Bloom's taxonomy should be addressed before moving on to the next. When course planning, bear in mind the implications—how quickly to introduce new concepts, when to reinforce them and how to test them.

The first stage, Remember, is about recalling facts and concepts. A student can define and duplicate, make a list, memorize points, repeat information, and make valid statements. But this does not prove comprehension.

This is where Understand, the next level comes in. The student explains ideas and concepts, discusses and describes a topic in detail, explains what it means, recognizes it and translates the facts in some way. They can paraphrase a point or compare and contrast information.

Once this level is conquered, students move up the pyramid to the next stage of learning: Apply. They use the information they have learned in new situations, whether to solve a problem, demonstrate an idea, interpret, schedule, sketch—which ever method works for the specific type of learning, course of study, and/or class environment.

Then, they must draw connections between ideas in the Analyze level of Bloom's taxonomy, and differentiate, organize, relate, compare, contrast, examine, question or test their knowledge. Critical thinking finally comes into play, as the student distinguishes between fact and opinion, and breaks information down into component parts.

In the evaluate stage, the student can justify a stand or decision by appraising a situation, arguing, defending, judging, critiquing, supporting, or weighing in with thoughts based on the knowledge and application they have acquired thus far. In the original version of Bloom's taxonomy, this was considered the pinnacle of learning. But in the revised version, create (which Bloom originally called Synthesis) is at the top of the pyramid. There, students produce new or original work.

Something cannot be understood without first remembering it; cannot be applied without understanding it; must be analyzed before evaluating it; and an evaluation needs to have been conducted before making an accurate conclusion.

Using verbs and actions allows educators to encourage success through each level of thinking in Bloom's taxonomy, and accurately measure learning. Do so by defining learning outcomes and breaking them down as parts of a lecture. Use three key pillars to achieve this: condition (the resource being used), performance (what students should accomplish by the end), and criteria (the method of measuring success).

Importantly, some education-related words like include, understand and learn cannot be measured in a meaningful way. Following the framework of Bloom's taxonomy makes performance actionable and effective, using verbs that set clear expectations that can be specifically measured.

*Students' progress their way through Bloom's Taxonomy levels sequentially with activities that quantifiably measure their progress towards learning objectives.*

## **6.7 Levels of Blooms Taxonomy**

### **Level 1: Remembering**

In the first stage of Bloom's taxonomy, you might ask students to recite something you have taught them, quoting information from memory based on previous lectures, reading material, and notes. Educators can use verbs like define, describe, identify, label, list, outline, recall, and reproduce to effectively measure success in this stage. It's the most basic level in Bloom's taxonomy, but represents an important foundation, a stepping stone toward deeper learning. A basic way to test learning on this level is simple questions and answer periods, or multiple-choice questions. This shows that the student can memorize facts and recall them. But it does not yet suggest that students understand the material.

*The first level of Bloom's Taxonomy is remembering. This level helps build a solid foundation and acts as a steppingstone towards more complex learning. At this level, students are asked to memorize and recall facts.*

### **Level 2: Understanding**

Ask students to discuss a problem or idea in their own words, to evaluate their comprehension from the "remembering" stage of Bloom's taxonomy. For example, they might have to paraphrase a story or definition, explain a concept in their own words, tell a story that relates to it, or provide analogies. To measure this, we can use verbs like defend, explain, generalize, paraphrase, summarize and translate. A student who reaches this level can interpret the materials and demonstrate comprehension of the material.

*The second level of Bloom's Taxonomy is understanding. This level asks students to explain course concepts in their own words.*

### **Level 3: Applying**

The student will now have to take what they have learned and apply it to a scenario outside of the classroom. For example, they can use a math formula they have learned to calculate a family budget in the real world or apply a legal ruling to a specific case in the news headlines. Verbs to use in this stage of Bloom's taxonomy include apply, demonstrate, predict, show, solve or use. That could come in the form of collaborative group projects or the composition of a blog.

*The third level of Bloom's Taxonomy is applying. This level encourages students to extend their learning outside the classroom by finding similarities and differences in the real world.*

#### **Level 4: Analyzing**

Now it's time to reach the higher half of the learning levels in Bloom's taxonomy. Here, students can draw connections between ideas, utilize critical thinking, and break down knowledge into the sum of its parts. This can include using logical deduction to figure out how a piece of equipment works or finding fallacies in the reasoning of an argument. Key verbs for measurement include analyze, break down, compare, contrast, differentiate, deconstruct and infer. Upon achieving this level of Bloom's taxonomy, a student can demonstrate that they fully understand the material overall, and its component parts. They might be able to draw diagrams or deconstruct thought processes.

*The fourth level of Bloom's Taxonomy is Analyzing. This level allows students to use their critical thinking skills to understand how or why different concepts work together.*

#### **Level 5: Evaluating**

Here is where the student makes an educated judgment about the value of the material they have just learned, applied and analyzed, to be able to tell the difference between fact and opinions or inferences. That could include finding an effective solution to a problem or justifying a specific decision and being able to back up that justification with knowledge. Appraise, conclude, critique, evaluate, support and summarize are all good verbs to use in this level of Bloom's taxonomy. Tools like surveys and blogs can help in this level.

*The fifth level of Bloom's taxonomy is Evaluating. This level asks students to make value judgments about the material they have learned.*

#### **Level 6: Creating**

In the final level of Bloom's taxonomy, the student demonstrates full knowledge by applying what they've learned, analyzed and evaluated, and building something, either tangible or conceptual. That could include writing a manual or report on a particular topic, designing a piece of machinery, or revising a process to improve the results. Verbs to use include categorize, combine, compile, devise, design, generate, modify and write. Projects can range from detailed essays that put parts of the learning together to form a whole concept or idea, or networking with others to discuss the merits of a study.

*The sixth level of Bloom's Taxonomy is Creating. This level encourages students to demonstrate their knowledge by building something tangible or conceptual.*

### **6.8 Learning objectives in Bloom's taxonomy**

Bloom's taxonomy is further divided into three distinct learning objectives, or domains of educational activities: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. These are also referred to by the acronym KSA, for Knowledge (cognitive), Skills (psychomotor), and Attitudes (affective). The goal is that by the end of a learning session, the student will have acquired new knowledge, skills and attitudes towards a subject.

### **6.9. Domains of Blooms Taxonomy**

Bloom's taxonomy consists of three domains of educational activities. These domains are cognitive, psychomotor and affective. Instructors are encouraged to design learning plans so that students will have acquired new knowledge, skills and attitudes towards a subject.

#### **Domain 1: The cognitive domain in Bloom's taxonomy**

Knowledge and development of intellectual skills is at the heart of the cognitive domain of Bloom's taxonomy, whereby a student can recall or recognize facts, patterns, and concepts that will serve as a foundation for deeper learning. This is where the six key facets of Bloom's taxonomy—Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis and Evaluation—come in.

#### **Domain 2: The affective domain in Bloom's taxonomy**

In this domain, students have new feelings or emotions about the subject, and/or themselves. They should be able to place more value on something, and have a greater appreciation for it, along with different motivations and attitudes. In a medical or caregiving setting, students might be able to demonstrate empathy towards patients or children. Students can be assessed in several ways when it comes to the affective domain, such as their ability to listen with respect and provide their unwavering attention, actively participate in class discussions, resolve conflicts and exhibit consistent and pervasive behaviors that reflect their internalized values.

#### **Domain 3: The psychomotor domain in Bloom's taxonomy**

The psychomotor domain is one of the later additions to Bloom's taxonomy, as the original team did not believe they had sufficient knowledge in teaching such skills at the post-secondary level. In this domain of Bloom's taxonomy, students develop manual or physical skills. There are three versions: physical movement, coordination and the use of motor skills. A student in a medical setting might demonstrate psychomotor development by properly stitching a wound; a student of construction through an understanding of how to operate a backhoe. Psychomotor skills can represent basic manual tasks, like washing a car or planting a garden, as well as more complex activities, like operating heavy machinery or following choreographed dance steps. Psychomotor skills are measured in terms of speed, precision, distance, procedures and technique.

## **6.10 Bloom's taxonomy for STEM Classes**

[STEM refers to the academic disciplines of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.]

With so much emphasis on ensuring students meet math and science standards, particularly in introductory courses, higher-order thinking skills are sometimes deprioritized. With most STEM assessments consisting of multiple-choice questions, which tend to focus on the lower levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, there just does not seem to be enough time to cover higher levels. Unfortunately, much of what students will need in order to be successful outside the classroom requires them to proficiently apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information.

The good news is that STEM subjects lend themselves well to Bloom's Taxonomy's higher levels. Educators can help students internalize course concepts by designing engaging activities in which they practice learning through higher-order question stems. They will not only perform better on assessments, but they will also be better prepared to apply their learnings outside the classroom as well.

## **6.11 Bloom's taxonomy questions**

Bloom's revised taxonomy gives educators the ability to construct a curriculum to assess objective learning outcomes. Pre-created **Bloom's taxonomy questions** make engaging students in each of these levels easier. This way, educators can plan opportunities for students to learn, reflect and assess their learning in motivating and creative ways throughout the term.

## **6.12 Problems with Bloom's taxonomy**

Bloom's taxonomy is by no means a hard and fast rule book that needs to be followed to a tee; it is a theoretical construct that can be interpreted in many ways to fit individual teaching styles, courses, and lesson plans. Some believe that it is only appropriate for the lower Bloom's taxonomy levels of learning and that it fails to address more recent developments in cognitive psychology, including the ability for students to create knowledge in their minds throughout the learning process. Some also frown on the idea that students must start at the lowest level and work their way up before engaging in a meaningful dialog about facts, which is not always necessarily the case.

### **Problem 1: Creativity as a goal, not as a tool**

Sometimes, creativity is not just a goal, it is a tool that can be effectively used to further learning. You could ask students to create something in the first lesson, like a mock advertisement in a marketing class, or a proposed solution to global warming. Educators can deconstruct and compare the results with them, and use that creative project to introduce facts, concepts, and basic knowledge of the topic. In that respect, while the components of the framework are always the same, it is not always necessarily organized neatly into a pyramid, as with the original Bloom's taxonomy. Bloom's taxonomy structure can morph into everything from a circle to a web, a flower, or even a mandala

in design, showing each level of learning feeding into one another and occurring at different points in the process. No matter which way you slice (or organize) Bloom's taxonomy, though, it always uses the six key principles to result in deeper learning.

### **Problem 2: Over-reliance**

As with any construct, there's always room for improvement. With Bloom's taxonomy, the 21st-century revision proved there was further refinement and adjustments necessary to make the framework relevant for future decades. Sticking to the template without thinking about the reasons behind it can lead to an over-reliance on the literal interpretation of Bloom's taxonomy. Just because a student can defend a position, for example, does not mean they are doing so in anything more than a superficial way. And the ability to come up with a detailed plan is not evidence that the plan itself is the result of good judgment and analysis. There is more than meets the eye to learning and education but using Bloom's taxonomy as a guide to ensure all six of Bloom's taxonomy levels of learning are covered, in whichever way works best, can put you on the right path to success.

### **In conclusion**

The most important use of Bloom's Taxonomy is that is a good heuristic for teachers to understand the varying levels of cognitive, psychomotor, and affective demand that teachers have as outcomes for students. It also helps with assessments in terms of matching your assessment items to the level of your objectives.