Communication Model Fact Sheet

What is the purpose of a visual model?

Visual models are a long-standing component of the communication discipline and offer a way to "see" what is happening when we communicate. We all communicate everyday of our lives, but can we truly identify the elements or forces at play when communication is occurring? A visual model of communication provides a picture of what happens when people are communicating, and they also give insight into the various influences on communication exchanges.

The most well-known model of communication is referred to as the Transactional Model of Communication. This model highlights what happens when two people are communicating. This visual framework contains five influential elements, including: the people communicating, the messages being sent, the channel of communication, noise, and fields of experience.

A Transaction Model of Communication
Elements of the Model Defined

**Person A**
This is one of the people involved in the communication transaction and is indicated by the circle on the left hand side of the diagram.

**Person B**
This is the second person involved in the communication transaction and is indicated by the circle on the right hand side of the diagram.

**Message**
The message is at the heart of the communication exchange, and is indicated by the rectangle in the center of the model. The message is the *content* and the ideas we are exchanging. For example, when telling your co-worker how to process a claim, the steps you describe are the message. This is referred to as a “content” message.

It is important to note that we also send messages regarding how we feel about the other person, the relationship, or the situation. These are known as *relational messages*, and are more often than not, are communicated nonverbally. Returning to the example above, if you describe the steps in processing a claim in a sarcastic voice, while rolling your eyes, you are sending a relational message of annoyance, irritation, etc. The same content message could also be delivered in supportive tone of voice and body language that conveys a sense of respect.

Finally, notice that the message is represented by a two-way arrow. This illustrates that the people involved are constantly sending and receiving messages, giving feedback both verbally and nonverbally, and adjusting to each other accordingly.

**Channel**
In communication, the channel can be defined as the pathway or the medium through which a message is exchanged. Therefore, the channel is represented by the diamond shape between the message and the communicators. Some examples of communication channels include: face-to-face, phone calls, text messages, emails, and social networks. In the modern technological age, it becomes even more important to consider which messages are appropriate for which channel.

**Noise**
In communication, noise is defined as anything that inhibits the flow of communication or distracts the people involved. Because noise is a disruption, it is represented in the model by arrows that flow from top to bottom, breaking up the movement of the message to the communicator at several points in the model. Noise is more than just loud sounds. In fact, there are three categories of noise:
Physical Noise – This is the first type that comes to mind. For example, loud music in another room or students talking at the next table would qualify as physical noise.

Physiological Noise – Distractions the come from within a person’s physiology or body. Being hungry, tired, or having a headache are all examples of physiological noise.

Psychological Noise – Mental chatter that becomes a distraction; worrying about a test you have later in the day. For example, thinking about an argument that you had with a co-worker is psychological noise.

Fields of Experience

The last elements of the model are represented by the large oval shapes encircling each person. This is sometimes referred to as a communicator’s environment; however, this label is insufficient in some ways. It often leads people to think about the physical location only, when there is much more involved. In everyday language, fields of experience can be explained as “where you are coming from” or “everything that makes you who you are.” A person’s environment, or field of experience, includes aspects such as: upbringing, work experience, education, religion, culture, past experiences in groups, and more.

Summary

Models of communication provide a visual representation of what happens when people are communicating. The most well-known model is the Transactional Model of Communication. Although this model most closely illustrates interpersonal communication, it provides a starting point for considering what elements should be included in order to represent communication in other contexts.
Introduction to Group and Team Communication

Excerpt from....


Introduction

Have you ever had this happen to you in a college class? At the beginning of the semester your professor hands out the syllabus and explains that a group project is part of the course requirements. You, and others in the class, groan at the idea of this project because you have experienced the difficulties and frustrations of working in a group, especially when your grade depends on the work of others. Does this sound familiar? Why do you think so many students react negatively to these types of assignments? The reality is that group work can be fraught with complications. But, the reality is, many companies are promoting groups as the model working environment.

Case In Point

Don’t think knowing how to participate in groups or teams really matters outside of college? Think again. The Atlanta Business Chronicle reports that many companies are using group incentives and team-based pay to “reinforce and reward individuals who contribute to the success of the group as a whole.” This kind of pay structure is meant to reward group outcome, not individual performance in a group. Next time you don’t want to work in a group, remember you are practicing skills that may help you earn more money.

Chances are that a class assignment is not your first and only experience with groups. We are quite certain that you have already spent, and will continue to spend, a great deal of your time working in groups. You may be involved with school athletics in which you are part of a specialized group called a team. You may be part of a work or professional group. Many of you participate in social, religious, and/or political groups. The family in which you were raised, regardless of the configuration, is also a group. No matter what the specific focus—sports, profession, politics, or family—all groups share some common features.
While group communication is growing in popularity and emphasis, both at the academic and corporate levels, it is not a new area of study. The emergence of group communication study came about in the mid 1950s, following World War II and has been a focus of study ever since. Group communication is often closely aligned with interpersonal communication and organizational communication which is why we have placed it as a chapter in between these two areas of specialization. In your personal, civic, professional lives, you will engage in group communication. Let’s take a look at what constitutes a group or team.

Group Communication Then

The first study that was published on group communication in the New School era of communication study was credited to Edwin Black in 1955. He studied the breakdowns in group interactions by looking at communication sequences in groups. However, it wasn’t until the 1960s and 70s that a large number of studies in group communication began to appear. Between 1970 and 1978 114 articles were published on group communication and 89 more were published by 1990 (Salwen & Stacks, 1996, p. 360). Study in group communication is still important over a decade later as more and more organizations focus on group work for achieving their goals.

Defining Groups and Teams

To understand group and team communication, we must first understand the definition of a group. Many people think that a group is simply a collection of people, but that is only part of it. If you walk out your front door and pull together the first ten people you see, do you have a group? No! According to Wood (2003) a group must have, “three or more people who interact over time, depend on each other, and follow shared rules of conduct to reach a common goal” (p. 274). Gerald Wilson defines a group as, “a collection of three or more individuals who interact about some common problem or interdependent goal and can exert mutual influence over one another” (2002, p. 14). He goes on to say that the three key components of a group are, “size, goal orientation, and mutual influence” (p. 14). Interpersonal communication is often thought about in terms of dyads. That is, we often communicate interpersonally in pairs. Organizational communication might be thought of as a group that is larger than 12 people. While there are exceptions, for the most part, group size is often thought of in terms of 3-12 people. So, if the ten people you gathered outside of your front door were all neighbors working together as part of “neighborhood watch” to create safety in the community, then you would indeed have a group.

For those of you who have participated on athletic teams you’ll notice that these definitions also fit the idea of a team. All of the qualities of groups hold true for teams, but teams have additional qualities not necessarily present for all groups. Wood explains that a team “is a special kind of group characterized by different and
complimentary resources of members and by a strong sense of collective identity” (p. 275). While all members of a team share some athletic ability and special appreciation for a particular sport, members of a football team, for example, have highly specialized skills as indicated in the various positions on the team—quarterback, receiver, and running back. Research suggests that members of an organized team feel and exhibit a strong sense of belonging and commitment to one another (Lumsden & Lumsden, 1997) as a result of combining these specialized skills to achieve particular outcomes. Besides athletic teams, work and professional teams also share these qualities. Now that you know how to define groups and teams, let’s look at characteristics of groups and teams, as well as the different types of groups and teams.

Characteristics of Groups

- **Interdependence.** Groups cannot be defined as a number of people simply talking to each other or meeting together. Instead, a primary characteristic of groups is that members of a group are dependent on the others for the group to maintain its existence and achieve its goals. In essence, interdependence is the recognition by those in a group of their need for the others in the group (Cragon & Wright, 1999; Harris & Sherblom, 2008; Lewin, 1951). Imagine playing on a basketball as an individual against the five members of another team. Even if you’re considered the best in the world, it’s highly unlikely you could win a game against five other people. You must rely on four other teammates to make it a successful game.

- **Interaction.** It probably seems obvious to you that there must be interaction for groups to exist. However, what kind of interaction must exist? Since we all communicate every day, there must be something that distinguishes the interaction in groups from other forms of communication. Cragon and Wright (1999) state that the primary defining characteristic of group interaction is that it is purposeful. They go on to break down purposeful interaction into four types: problem solving, role playing, team building, and trust building (p. 7). Without purposeful interaction a true group does not exist. If you’re put into a group for a class assignment, your first interaction probably centers around exchanging contact information, settings times to meet, and starting to focus on the task at hand. It’s purposeful interaction to achieve a goal.

- **Synergy.** One advantage of working in groups and teams is that they allow us to accomplish things we wouldn’t be able to accomplish on our own. Remember back to our discussion of Systems Theory in Chapter 5. Systems Theory suggests that “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” This is the very idea of synergy (Morris, 1981; Harris & Sherblom, 2008). Think of an orchestra or band. Each person is there to perform in order to help the larger unit make music in a way that cannot be accomplished without each member working together.

- **Common Goals.** Having interaction and synergy would be relatively pointless in groups without a common goal. People who comprise groups are brought
together for a reason or a purpose. While most members of a group have individual goals, a group is largely defined by the common goals of the group. Think of the example at the beginning of the chapter. Your common goal in a class group is to learn, complete an assignment, and earn a grade. While there may be differences regarding individual goals in the group (what final grade is acceptable for example), or how to achieve the common goals, the group is largely defined by the common goals it shares.

- **Shared Norms.** Because people come together for a specific purpose, they develop shared norms to help them achieve their goals. Even with a goal in place, random interaction does not define a group. Group interaction is generally guided by norms a group has established for acceptable behavior. Norms are essentially expectations of the group members, established by the group. Norms can be conscious and formal, or unconscious and informal. One example of norms that we often witness as professors is the expectation of our students' groups that all members show up at group meeting times. When members of a group violate this norm, we notice how frustrated the other group members get. We'll spend more time later in the chapter looking at group norms.

- **Cohesiveness.** One way that members understand of the idea of communicating in groups and teams is when they experience a sense of cohesiveness with other members of the group. When we feel like we are part of something larger, it creates a sense of cohesion or wholeness, a purpose that is bigger than our own individual desires and goals. It is the sense of connection and participation that characterizes the interaction in a group as different from the defined interaction among loosely connected individuals. If you've ever participated in a group that achieved its goal successfully, you are probably able to reflect back on your feelings of connections with the other members of that group.

**Types of Groups**

Not all groups are the same or brought together for the same reasons. Bilhart and Galanes (1998) categorize groups “on the basis of the reason they were formed and the human needs they serve” (p. 9). Let’s take a look!

- **Primary Groups.** Primary groups are ones we form to help us realize our human needs like inclusion and affection. They are not generally formed to accomplish a task, but rather, to help us meet our fundamental needs as relational beings like acceptance, love, and affection. These groups are generally longer term than other groups and include family, roommates, and other relationships that meet as groups on a regular basis (Bilhart & Galanes).

- **Secondary Groups.** We form secondary groups to accomplish work, perform a task, solve problems, and make decisions (Bilhart & Galanes; Harris & Sherblom; Cragan & Wright). Larson and LaFasto (1989) state that secondary groups have “a specific performance objective or recognizable goal to be attained; and coordination of activity among the members of the team is required for attainment
of the team goal or objective” (p. 19). Bilhart and Galanes divide secondary groups into four different types.

- **Activity Groups.** Activity Groups are ones we form for the purpose of participating in activities. I’m sure your campus has many clubs that are organized for the sole purpose of doing activities. One example on our campus is the campus group devoted to disc golf.

- **Personal Growth Groups.** We form Personal Growth Groups “to come together to develop personal insights, overcome personal problems, and grow as individuals from the feedback and support of others” (Bilhart & Galanes, p. 11). An example that is probably familiar to you is Alcoholics Anonymous. There are many personal growth groups available for helping us develop as people through group interaction with others.

- **Learning Groups.** Learning Groups “are concerned primarily with discovering and developing new ideas and ways of thinking” (Harris & Sherblom, p. 12). If you have ever been assigned to a group in a college class, most likely it was a learning group whose purpose was to interact in ways that help those in the group learn new things about the course content.

- **Problem-Solving Groups.** These groups are created for the express purpose of solving a specific problem. The very nature of organizing people into this type of group is to get them to collectively figure out effective solutions to the problem they have before them. Committees are an excellent example of people who are brought together to solve problems.

After looking at the various types of groups, it’s probably easy for you to recognize just how much of your daily interaction occurs within the contexts of the various types of groups. The reality is, we spend a great deal of time in groups, and understanding the types of groups you’re in, as well as their purpose, goes a long way toward helping you function as a whole member.

**The Importance of Studying Communication in Groups and Teams**

One of the reasons communication scholars study groups and teams is because of the overwhelming amount of time we spend interacting in groups in professional contexts. More and more professional organizations are turning to groups and teams as an essential way of conducting business and getting things done. Even professions that are seemingly independent, such as being a college professor, are heavily laden with group work. Your authors spend a significant amount of time outside the classroom working on committees that make decisions about all aspects of the campus. The process of writing this book was a group effort as the authors worked with colleagues, then with a group from the publishing company to bring the book to you. Each of us had specific roles and tasks to perform to produce this textbook. Moreover, we were committed to each other and the project, making the decision to spend our weekends...
writing rather than hanging out with friends because we knew others were counting on us.

Another vital area of group communication concerns the study of social change or social movement organizations. Groups such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the National Organization of Women (NOW) are all groups bound together by a shared social and political commitment—to promote the rights of nonhuman animals, African-Americans, and women respectively. While individuals can be committed to these ideas, the social, political, and legal rights afforded to groups like these would not have been possible through individual action alone. It was when groups of like-minded people came together with shared commitments and goals, pooling their skills and resources, that change occurred.

The study of social movements reveals the importance of groups for accomplishing goals. Bowers and Ochs (1971) in The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control explain seven progressive and cumulative strategies through which movements progress as they move toward success. Three of the seven strategies focus explicitly on group communication—promulgation, solidification, and polarization. Promulgation refers to the “tactics designed to win social support for the agitator’s position. [For N]o movement can be successful unless it attracts a sufficient number of members …” (p. 20). Without a sufficient group the actions of individual protestors are likely to be dismissed. The strategy of solidification “occurs mainly inside the agitating group” and is “primarily used to unite followers” (p. 23-4). The point is to unite group members and provide sufficient motivation and support. The communication that occurs through the collective action of singing songs or chanting slogans serves to unite group members. Because the success of social movements depends in part on the ability to attract a large number of followers, most employ the strategy of polarization, which is designed to persuade neutral individuals or “fence sitters” to join a group. The essence of this strategy is captured in the quote from Eldridge Cleaver, “You are either part of the problem or part of the solution.” Taken together these three strategies stress that the key to group success is the sustained effort of group members working together through communication.

Case In Point: The Power of Women’s Groups

In the 1970s groups of women started gathering in private homes to discuss what they believed were shared personal frustrations. However, in the group setting they realized that their frustrations were shared by many and that the personal really had political and cultural roots; thus, the term “the personal is political” was born. Further, they came to understand that their “personal problems” were neither personal nor problems, but manifestations of living in a sexist culture. Together, they realized that collective action on the part of these “consciousness raising groups” all over the country could help transform a sexist society into a more egalitarian one. As a result, such consciousness raising groups became a hallmark of the 1970s women’s movement or second wave.
Not only do Communication scholars focus on work and social movements, we are also interested in the role that one’s cultural identity and membership plays in our communicative choices and how we interpret the communication of others. This focus sheds interesting insights when we examine membership and communication in groups and teams. One reason for this is that different cultures emphasize the role of individuals while other cultures emphasize the importance of the group. For example, **collectivist cultures** are ones that *place high value on group work because they understand that outcomes of our communication impact all members of the community and the community as a whole, not just the individuals in the group*. Conversely, **individualistic cultures** are ones that *place high value on the individual person above the needs of the group*. Thus, whether we view group work as favorable or unfavorable may stem from our cultural background. The U.S. is considered an individualistic culture in that we value the work and accomplishments of the individual because of ideals of being able to “pull yourself up by the bootstraps” and create success for yourself. However, you’ve probably encountered the influence of collectivist cultures like Japan that value the collective group. For example, many of the ways we work in groups within organizations are borrowed from Japanese organizations that have long-valued group-based work environments.

Given the complexity of group interaction, it’s short-sighted to try to understand group communication without looking at notions of power (think back to Critical Theories and Research Methods!). **Power** influences how we interpret the messages of others and determines the extent to which we feel we have the right to speak up and voice our concerns and opinions to others. Take a moment to reflect on the different ways you think about power. What images come to mind for you when you think of power? Are there different kinds of power? Are some people inherently more powerful than others? Do you consider yourself to be a powerful person? We highlight three ways to understand power as it relates to group and team communication. The word “power” literally means “to be able” and has many implications.

If you associate power with control or dominance, this refers to the notion of power as **power-over**. According to Starhawk (1987), “power-over **enables one individual or group to make the decisions that affect others, and to enforce control**” (9). Control can and does take many forms in society. Starhawk explains that, *This power is wielded from the workplace, in the schools, in the courts, in the doctor’s office. It may rule with weapons that are physical or by controlling the resources we need to live: money, food, medical care; or by controlling more subtle resources: information, approval, love. We are so accustomed to power-over, so steeped in its language and its implicit threats, that we often become aware of its functioning only when we see its extreme manifestations.* (9)
When we are in group situations and someone dominates the conversation, makes all of the decisions, or controls the resources of the group such as money or equipment, this is power-over. **Power-from-within** refers to a more personal sense of strength or agency. Power-from-within manifests itself when we can stand, walk, and speak “words that convey our needs and thoughts” (Starhawk, p. 10). In groups, this type of power “arises from our sense of connection, our bonding with other human beings, and with the environment” (p. 10). As Heider explains in The Tao of Leadership, “Since all creation is a whole, separateness is an illusion. Like it or not, we are team players. Power comes through cooperation, independence through service, and a greater self through selflessness” (p. 77). If you think about your role in groups, how have you influenced other group members? Your strategies indicate your sense of power-from-within.

Finally, groups manifest **power-with**, which is “the power of a strong individual in a group of equals, the power not to command, but to suggest and be listened to, to begin something and see it happen” (Starhawk, p. 10). For this to be effective in a group or team at least two qualities must be present among members: 1) All group members must communicate respect and equality for one another, and 2) The leader must not abuse power-with and attempt to turn it into power-over. Have you ever been involved in a group where people did not treat each others as equals or with respect? How did you feel about the group? What was the outcome? Could you have done anything to change that dynamic?

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**Group Communication Now**

Technology is changing so many things about the ways we communicate. This is also true in group communication. One of the great frustrations for many people in groups is simply finding a time that everyone can meet together. However, computer technology has changed these dynamics as more and more groups “meet” in the virtual world, rather than face-to-face. But, what is the impact of technology on how groups function? For example, Flanagin, Tiyaamornwong, O’Connor, and Seibold (2002) examined how men and women communicated in computer mediated groups where each person was anonymous, and therefore, participants did not know one another’s gender. We have a lot to learn about the ways communication technologies are changing our notions of working in groups and individual communication styles.

**References**


Defining Communication and Communication Study


Chapter Objectives:

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Explain Communication Study.
- Define Communication.
- Explain the linear and transactional models of communication.
- Discuss the benefits of studying Communication.

You are probably reading this book because you are taking an introductory communication class at your college or university. Many colleges and universities around the country require students to take some form of communication course in order to graduate. Introductory communication classes include courses on public speaking, interpersonal communication, or a class that combines both. However, a new trend is beginning to emerge. Many Communication departments are now offering an introductory course that explains what Communication is, how it is studied as an academic field, and what areas of specialization make up the field of Communication. That is our goal in this text.

Defining Communication Study

When we tell others that we teach Communication, people often ask questions like, “Do you teach radio and television?” “Do you teach public speaking?” “Do you do news broadcasts?” “Do you work with computers?” “Do you study Public Relations?” “Is that Journalism or Mass Communication?” But, the most common question we get is, “What is that?” It’s interesting that most people will tell us they know what communication is, but they do not have a clear understanding of what we study and teach as an academic discipline. In fact, many professors in other departments on our campus also ask us what it is we study and teach. If you’re a Communication major, you’ve probably been asked the same question, and like us, had a hard time answering it succinctly. If you memorize the definition below, you will have a quick and simple answer to those who ask you what you study as a Communication major.

Bruce Smith, Harold Lasswell, and Ralph D. Casey (1946) provided a good and simple answer to the question, “What is communication study?” They state that
communication study is an academic field whose primary focus is “**who says what, through what channels (media) of communication, to whom, [and] what will be the results**” (p. 121).

**Communication Study**
- Who?
- What?
- What Channel?
- To Whom?
- What Are the Results?

Although they gave this explanation over 60 years ago, it still succinctly describes the focus of Communication scholars and professionals. As professors and students of communication we extensively examine the various forms and outcomes of human communication. In 1995, the National Communication Association (NCA), our national organization, stated that communication study “**focuses on how people use messages to generate meanings within and across various contexts, cultures, channels and media. The field promotes the effective and ethical practice of human communication**” (NCA, 1995). Now, if people ask you what you’re studying in a Communication class, you have an answer!

We use Smith, Lasswell, and Casey’s definition to guide how we discuss the content in this book. Part I of this book sets the foundation by explaining the historical development of how we came to this definition, the “what” and “channels” (verbal and nonverbal communication), and the “whom” and “results” (theories and research methods). Before we get into those chapters, it is important for you to know how we define the actual term communication to give you context for our discussion of it throughout the book.

**Defining Communication**

Now that you know how to define communication study, are you able to develop a simple definition of communication? Try to write a one-sentence definition of communication!

**Communication Study Then**

*Aristotle The Communication Researcher*

Aristotle said, “Rhetoric falls into three divisions, determined by the three classes of listeners to speeches. For of the three elements in speech-making -- speaker, subject, and person addressed -- it is the last one, the hearer, that determines the speech’s end and object.”
For Aristotle it was the “to whom” that determined if communication occurred and how effective it was. Aristotle, in his study of “who says what, through what channels, to whom, and what will be the results” focused on persuasion and its effect on the audience. Aristotle thought it was extremely important to focus on the audience in communication exchanges.

What is interesting is that when we think of communication we are often, “more concerned about ourselves as the communications source, about our message, and even the channel we are going to use. Too often, the listener, viewer, reader fails to get any consideration at all (Lee, 1993).

Aristotle’s statement above demonstrates that humans who have been studying communication have had solid ideas about how to communicate effectively for a very long time. Even though people have been formally studying communication for a long time, it is still necessary to continue studying communication in order to improve it.


We’re guessing it’s more difficult than you think. Don’t be discouraged. For decades communication professionals have had difficulty coming to any consensus about how to define the term communication (Hovland, 1948; Morris, 1946; Nilsen, 1957; Sapir, 1933; Schramm, 1948; Smith, 1950; Stevens, 1950). Even today, there is no single agreed-upon definition of communication. In 1970 and 1984 Frank Dance looked at 126 published definitions of communication in our literature and said that the task of trying to develop a single definition of communication that everyone likes is like trying to nail jello to a wall. Over twenty years later, defining communication still feels like nailing jello to a wall.

We recognize that there are countless good definitions of communication, but we feel it’s important to provide you with our definition. We are not arguing that this definition of communication is the best, but you will understand the content of this text better if you understand how we have come to define communication. For the purpose of this text we define communication as the process of using symbols to exchange meaning.

Let’s examine two models of communication to help you further grasp this definition. Shannon and Weaver (1949) proposed a Mathematical Model of Communication (sometimes called the Linear Model) that serves as a basic model of communication. This model suggests that communication is simply the transmission of a message from one source to another. Watching television serves as an example of this. You act as the receiver when you watch television, receiving messages from the source (the television program). To better understand this, let’s break down each part of this model.

The Mathematical or Linear Model of Communication is a model that suggests communication moves only in one direction. The Sender encodes a Message, then
uses a certain Channel (verbal/nonverbal communication) to send it to a Receiver who decodes (interprets) the message. Noise is anything that interferes with, or changes, the original encoded message.

• A sender is someone who encodes and sends a message to a receiver through a particular channel. The sender is the initiator of communication. For example, when you email a friend, ask a sales clerk a question, or wave to someone you are the sender of a message.

• A receiver is the recipient of a message. The receiver must decode messages in ways that are meaningful for him/her. For example, if you see your friend make eye contact, smile, wave, and say “hello” as you pass, you are receiving a message intended for you. When this happens you must decode the verbal and nonverbal communication in ways that are meaningful.

• A message is the particular meaning or content the sender wishes the receiver to understand. The message can be intentional or unintentional, written or spoken, verbal or nonverbal, or any combination of these. For example, as you walk across campus you may see a friend walking toward you. When you make eye contact, wave, smile, and say “hello,” you are offering a message that is intentional, spoken, verbal and nonverbal.

• A channel is the method a sender uses to send a message to a receiver. The most common channels humans use are verbal and nonverbal communication which we will discuss in detail in Chapters 2 and 3. Verbal communication relies on language and includes speaking, writing, and sign language. Nonverbal communication includes gestures, facial expressions, paralanguage, and touch. We also use communication channels that are mediated (such as television or the computer) which may utilize both verbal and nonverbal communication. Using the greeting example above, the channels of communication include both verbal and nonverbal communication.

• Noise is anything that interferes with the sending or receiving of a message. Noise is external (a jack hammer outside your apartment window or loud music in a nightclub), and internal (physical pain, psychological stress, or nervousness about an upcoming test). External and internal noise make encoding and decoding messages more difficult. Using our ongoing example, if you are on your way to lunch and listening to your ipod when your friend greets you, you may not hear your friend say “hello,” and you may not wish to chat because you are hungry. In this case, both internal and external noise influenced the communication exchange. Noise is in every communication context, and therefore, NO message is received exactly as it is transmitted by a sender because noise distorts it in one way or another.

A major criticism of the Linear Model is that it suggests communication only occurs in one direction. It also does not show how context, or our personal experiences, impact communication. Television serves as a good example of the linear model. Have you ever talked back to your television while you were watching it? Maybe you were
watching a sporting event or a dramatic show and you talked at the people in the television. Did they respond to you? We’re sure they did not. Television works in one direction. No matter how much you talk to the television it will not respond to you. Now apply this idea to your relationships. It seems ridiculous to think that this is how we would communicate with each other on a regular basis. This example shows the limits of the linear model for understanding communication, particularly human to human communication.

Given the limitations of the Linear Model, Barnlund (1970) adjusted the model to more fully represent what occurs in most human communication exchanges. The Transactional Model demonstrates that communication participants act as senders AND receivers simultaneously. Communication is not a simple one-way transmission of a message: The personal filters and experiences of the participants impact each communication exchange. The Transactional Model demonstrates that we are simultaneously senders and receivers, and that noise and personal filters always influence the outcomes of every communication exchange.

**The Transactional Model of Communication** adds to the Linear Model by suggesting that *both parties in a communication exchange act as both sender and receiver simultaneously, encoding and decoding messages to and from each other at the same time.*

While these models are overly simplistic representations of communication, they illustrate some of the complexities of defining and studying communication. Going back to Smith, Lasswell, and Casey we may choose to focus on one, all, or a combination of the following: senders of communication, receivers of communication, channels of communication, messages, noise, context, and/or the outcome of communication. We hope you recognize that studying communication is simultaneously detail-oriented (looking at small parts of human communication), and far-reaching (examining a broad range of communication exchanges).

**Communication Study and You**

If you think about Smith, Lasswell, and Casey’s statement that those of us who study communication investigate, “who says what, through what channels (media) of communication, to whom, [and] what will be the results” you should realize how truly complex a task we perform (p. 121).

Studying communication is exciting because there are so many possibilities on which to focus. For example, you might study celebrity gender images in magazine advertising (Stafford, Spears & Chung-Kue, 2003); the effect of political advertising and news on people’s perceptions of political candidates (Tasperson & Fan, 2004); the various ways teachers communicate power and credibility in the classroom (Teven & Herring, 2005); how sons and daughters communicate disappointment (Miller-Day & Lee, 2001); how power is communicated and challenged in corporations (Patel & Xavier, 2005); the impact of intercultural communication and its effects on the “global village” (Young, 2005); or how women make sense of, and enact, their role as both professional and
mother (Buzzanell, Meisenbach, Remke, Liu, Bowers & Conn, 2005).

The above examples demonstrate just a small taste of what we can examine through the lens of communication. In reality, studying communication has almost limitless possibilities. That’s what makes this field so dynamic and exciting! When you think about the infinite number of variables we can study, as well as the infinite number of communication contexts, the task of studying “who says what, through what channels (media) of communication, to whom, [and] what will be the results?” is open to countless possibilities. The study of communication has proven helpful to us as social beings as we work to better understand the complexities of our interactions and relationships.

As a student taking an introductory Communication course, you might be thinking, “Why does this matter to me?” One reason it is important for you to study and know communication is that these skills will help you succeed in personal, social, and professional situations. A survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers found that “College students who wish to separate themselves from the competition during their job search would be wise to develop proficiencies most sought by employers, such as communication, interpersonal, and teamwork skills.” In fact, in 2004, three of the top six qualities employers looked for in employees were “communication skills,” “interpersonal skills,” and “teamwork skills.” Whether you major in Communication or not, the more you understand communication, the greater potential you have to succeed in all aspects of your life. Another important reason for studying communication is that in can lead to a variety of career opportunities.

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**Communication Study and You**

*Careers with a Communication Degree*

The kind of skills developed by Communication majors are highly valued by all kinds of employers. Courses and activities in Communication departments both teach and make use of the skills ranked consistently high by employers. Students with a degree in Communication are ready to excel in a wide variety of careers. Below are listed some broad categories that most commonly come to mind:

- Education (including elementary, high school, and college)
- Law
- Dispute Resolution
- Business Management
- Marketing
- Sales
- Advertising
- Public Relations
- Social Advocacy
- Communication Consulting
- Computer Services
- Radio Broadcasting
- TV Broadcasting
- Administration
- Politics
- Corporate Training and Development

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Summary
In this chapter you have learned that the purpose of this book is to introduce you to the academic field of Communication by setting a foundation of communication history and study in the first six chapters, followed by the chronological presentation of some of the major specializations that make up this academic field.

Smith, Laswell, and Casey offer a simple definition of communication study: “who says what, through what channels (media) of communication, to whom, [and] what will be the results” (p.121). Now you can provide an answer to those who ask you what Communication study is about. Our definition of communication, the process of using symbols to exchange meaning, allows you to understand how we use this term throughout the book. The linear and transactional models of communication act as a visual representations of both communication study and communication. Finally, you are now aware of the importance of studying communication: that it impacts your personal, social, and professional life.

Discussion Questions
1. According to our definition, what is communication? What do we not consider to be communication?
2. Using our definition of communication study, explain how Communication is different from other majors such as Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, etc?
3. Name three people who you feel use communication effectively in their jobs? In what ways do they communicate effectively using verbal and nonverbal communication?

Key Terms
- channel
- communication
- communication study
- linear model
- message
- noise
- receiver
- sender
- transactional model

References


Stages of Group Development


Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing

American organizational psychologist Bruce Tuckman presented a robust model in 1965 that is still widely used today. Based on his observations of group behavior in a variety of settings, he proposed a four-stage map of group evolution, also known as the forming-storming-norming-performing model. Later he enhanced the model by adding a fifth and final stage, the adjourning phase. Interestingly enough, just as an individual moves through developmental stages such as childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, so does a group, although in a much shorter period of time. According to this theory, in order to successfully facilitate a group, the leader needs to move through various leadership styles over time. Generally, this is accomplished by first being more directive, eventually serving as a coach, and later, once the group is able to assume more power and responsibility for itself, shifting to a delegator. While research has not confirmed that this is descriptive of how groups progress, knowing and following these steps can help groups be more effective. For example, groups that do not go through the storming phase early on will often return to this stage toward the end of the group process to address unresolved issues. Another example of the validity of the group development model involves groups that take the time to get to know each other socially in the forming stage. When this occurs, groups tend to handle future challenges better because the individuals have an understanding of each other’s needs.

Forming

In the forming stage, the group comes together for the first time. The members may already know each other or they may be total strangers. In either case, there is a level of formality, some anxiety, and a degree of guardedness as group members are not sure what is going to happen next. “Will I be accepted? What will my role be? Who has the power here?” These are some of the questions participants think about during this stage of group formation. Because of the large amount of uncertainty, members tend to be polite, conflict avoidant, and observant. They are trying to figure out the “rules of the game” without being too vulnerable. At this point, they may also be quite excited and optimistic about the
task at hand, perhaps experiencing a level of pride at being chosen to join a particular
group.

Group members are trying to achieve several goals at this stage, although this may not
necessarily be done consciously. First, they are trying to get to know each other. Often
this can be accomplished by finding some common ground. Members also begin to
explore group boundaries to determine what will be considered acceptable behavior.
“Can I interrupt? Can I leave when I feel like it?” This trial phase may also involve
testing the appointed leader or seeing if a leader emerges from the group. At this point,
group members are also discovering how the group will work in terms of what needs to
be done and who will be responsible for each task. This stage is often characterized by
abstract discussions about issues to be addressed by the group; those who like to get
moving can become impatient with this part of the process. This phase is usually short
in duration, perhaps a meeting or two.

**Storming**

Once group members feel sufficiently safe and included, they tend to enter the storming
phase. Participants focus less on keeping their guard up as they shed social facades,
becoming more authentic and more argumentative. Group members begin to explore
their power and influence, and they often stake out their territory by differentiating
themselves from the other group members rather than seeking common ground.
Discussions can become heated as participants raise contending points of view and
values, or argue
over how tasks should be done and who is assigned to them. It is not unusual for group
members to become defensive, competitive, or jealous. They may even take sides or
begin to form cliques within the group. Questioning and resisting direction from the
leader is also quite common. “Why should I have to do this? Who designed this project
in the first place? Why do I have to listen to you?” Although little seems to get
accomplished at this stage, group members are becoming more authentic as they
express their deeper thoughts and feelings. What they are really exploring is “Can I truly
be me, have power, and be accepted?”

During this chaotic stage, a great deal of creative energy that was previously buried is
released and available for use, but it takes skill to move the group from storming to
norming. In many cases, the group gets stuck in the storming phase.

**Avoid Getting Stuck in the Storming Phase!**

There are several steps you can take to avoid getting stuck in the storming phase of
group development. Try the following if you feel the group process you are involved in is
not progressing:
• Normalize conflict. Let members know this is a natural phase in the group-formation
  process.
• Be inclusive. Continue to make all members feel included and invite all views into the
  room. Mention how diverse ideas and opinions help foster creativity and innovation.
• Make sure everyone is heard. Facilitate heated discussions and help participants understand each other.
• Support all group members. This is especially important for those who feel more insecure.
• Remain positive. This is a key point to remember about the group’s ability to accomplish its goal.
• Don’t rush the group’s development. Remember that working through the storming stage can take several meetings.

Once group members discover that they can be authentic and that the group is capable of handling differences without dissolving, they are ready to enter the next stage, norming.

**Norming**

“We survived!” is the common sentiment at the norming stage. Group members often feel elated at this point, and they are much more committed to each other and the group’s goal. Feeling energized by knowing they can handle the “tough stuff,” group members are now ready to get to work. Finding themselves more cohesive and cooperative, participants find it easy to establish their own ground rules (or norms) and define their operating procedures and goals. The group tends to make big decisions, while subgroups or individuals handle the smaller decisions. Hopefully, at this point the group is more open and respectful toward each other, and members ask each other for both help and feedback. They may even begin to form friendships and share more personal information with each other. At this point, the leader should become more of a facilitator by stepping back and letting the group assume more responsibility for its goal. Since the group’s energy is running high, this is an ideal time to host a social or team-building event.

**Performing**

Galvanized by a sense of shared vision and a feeling of unity, the group is ready to go into high gear. Members are more interdependent, individuality and differences are respected, and group members feel themselves to be part of a greater entity. At the performing stage, participants are not only getting the work done, but they also pay greater attention to how they are doing it. They ask questions like, “Do our operating procedures best support productivity and quality assurance? Do we have suitable means for addressing differences that arise so we can preempt destructive conflicts? Are we relating to and communicating with each other in ways that enhance group dynamics and help us achieve our goals? How can I further develop as a person to become more effective?” By now, the group has matured, becoming more competent, autonomous, and insightful. Group leaders can finally move into coaching roles and help members grow in skill and leadership.
Adjourning

Just as groups form, so do they end. For example, many groups or teams formed in a business context are project oriented and therefore are temporary in nature. Alternatively, a working group may dissolve due to an organizational restructuring. Just as when we graduate from school or leave home for the first time, these endings can be bittersweet, with group members feeling a combination of victory, grief, and insecurity about what is coming next. For those who like routine and bond closely with fellow group members, this transition can be particularly challenging. Group leaders and members alike should be sensitive to handling these endings respectfully and compassionately. An ideal way to close a group is to set aside time to debrief (“How did it all go? What did we learn?”), acknowledge each other, and celebrate a job well done.

Cohesion

Cohesion can be thought of as a kind of social glue. It refers to the degree of camaraderie within the group. Cohesive groups are those in which members are attached to each other and act as one unit. Generally speaking, the more cohesive a group is, the more productive it will be and the more rewarding the experience will be for the group’s members. Members of cohesive groups tend to have the following characteristics: They have a collective identity; they experience a moral bond and a desire to remain part of the group; they share a sense of purpose, working together on a meaningful task or cause; and they establish a structured pattern of communication.

The fundamental factors affecting group cohesion include the following:
• Similarity. The more similar group members are in terms of age, sex, education, skills, attitudes, values, and beliefs, the more likely the group will bond.
• Stability. The longer a group stays together, the more cohesive it becomes.
• Size. Smaller groups tend to have higher levels of cohesion.
• Support. When group members receive coaching and are encouraged to support their fellow team members, group identity strengthens.
• Satisfaction. Cohesion is correlated with how pleased group members are with each other’s performance, behavior, and conformity to group norms.

As you might imagine, there are many benefits in creating a cohesive group. Members are generally more personally satisfied and feel greater self-confidence and self-esteem when in a group where they feel they belong. For many, membership in such a group can be a buffer against stress, which can improve mental and physical well-being. Because members are invested in the group and its work, they are more likely to regularly attend and actively participate in the group, taking more responsibility for the group’s functioning. In addition, members can draw on the strength of the group to persevere through challenging situations that might otherwise be too hard to tackle alone.
Steps to Creating and Maintaining a Cohesive Team

• Align the group with the greater organization. Establish common objectives in which members can get involved.
• Let members have choices in setting their own goals. Include them in decision making at the organizational level.
• Define clear roles. Demonstrate how each person’s contribution furthers the group goal—everyone is responsible for a special piece of the puzzle.
• Situate group members in close proximity to each other. This builds familiarity.
• Give frequent praise. Both individuals and groups benefit from praise. Also encourage them to praise each other.

This builds individual self-confidence, reaffirms positive behavior, and creates an overall positive atmosphere.
• Treat all members with dignity and respect. This demonstrates that there are no favorites and everyone is valued.
• Celebrate differences. This highlights each individual’s contribution while also making diversity a norm.
• Establish common rituals. Thursday morning coffee, monthly potlucks—these reaffirm group identity and create shared experiences.

Can a Group Have Too Much Cohesion?

Keep in mind that groups can have too much cohesion. Because members can come to value belonging over all else, an internal pressure to conform may arise, causing some members to modify their behavior to adhere to group norms. Members may become conflict avoidant, focusing more on trying to please each other so as not to be ostracized. In some cases, members might censor themselves to maintain the party line. As such, there is a superficial sense of harmony and less diversity of thought. Having less tolerance for deviants, who threaten the group’s static identity, cohesive groups will often excommunicate members who dare to disagree. Members attempting to make a change may even be criticized or undermined by other members, who perceive this as a threat to the status quo. The painful possibility of being marginalized can keep many members in line with the majority.

The more strongly members identify with the group, the easier it is to see outsiders as inferior, or enemies in extreme cases, which can lead to increased insularity. This form of prejudice can have a downward spiral effect. Not only is the group not getting corrective feedback from within its own confines, it is also closing itself off from input and a cross-fertilization of ideas from the outside. In such an environment, groups can easily adopt extreme ideas that will not be challenged. Denial increases as problems are ignored and failures are blamed on external factors. With limited, often biased, information and no internal or external opposition, groups like these can make disastrous decisions. Groupthink is a group pressure phenomenon that increases the risk of the group making flawed decisions by allowing reductions in mental efficiency, reality testing, and moral judgment. Groupthink is most common in highly cohesive groups.

Cohesive groups can go awry in much milder ways. For example, group members can
value their social interactions so much that they have fun together but spend little time on accomplishing their assigned task. Or a group’s goal may begin to diverge from the larger organization’s goal and those trying to uphold the organization’s goal may be ostracized (e.g., teasing the class “brain” for doing well in school). In addition, research shows that cohesion leads to acceptance of group norms. Groups with high task commitment do well, but imagine a group where the norms are to work as little as possible? As you might imagine, these groups get little accomplished and can actually work together against the organization’s goals.

**Social Loafing**

Social loafing refers to the tendency of individuals to put in less effort when working in a group context. This phenomenon, also known as the Ringelmann effect, was first noted by French agricultural engineer Max Ringelmann in 1913. In one study, he had people pull on a rope individually and in groups. He found that as the number of people pulling increased, the group’s total pulling force was less than the individual efforts had been when measured alone.

Why do people work less hard when they are working with other people? Observations show that as the size of the group grows, this effect becomes larger as well. The social loafing tendency is less a matter of being lazy and more a matter of perceiving that one will receive neither one’s fair share of rewards if the group is successful nor blame if the group fails. Rationales for this behavior include, “My own effort will have little effect on the outcome,” “Others aren’t pulling their weight, so why should I?” or “I don’t have much to contribute, but no one will notice anyway.” This is a consistent effect across a great number of group tasks and countries. Research also shows that perceptions of fairness are related to less social loafing. Therefore, teams that are deemed as more fair should also see less social loafing.

**Tips for Preventing Social Loafing in Your Group**

When designing a group project, here are some considerations to keep in mind:

- Carefully choose the number of individuals you need to get the task done. The likelihood of social loafing increases as group size increases (especially if the group consists of 10 or more people), because it is easier for people to feel unneeded or inadequate, and it is easier for them to “hide” in a larger group.
- Clearly define each member’s tasks in front of the entire group. If you assign a task to the entire group, social loafing is more likely. For example, instead of stating, “By Monday, let’s find several articles on the topic of stress,” you can set the goal of “By Monday, each of us will be responsible for finding five articles on the topic of stress.” When individuals have specific goals, they become more accountable for their performance.
- Design and communicate to the entire group a system for evaluating each person’s contribution. You may have a midterm feedback session in which each member gives feedback to every other member. This would increase the sense of accountability individuals have. You may even want to discuss the principle of social loafing in order to
discourage it.
• Build a cohesive group. When group members develop strong relational bonds, they are more committed to each other and the success of the group, and they are therefore more likely to pull their own weight.
• Assign tasks that are highly engaging and inherently rewarding. Design challenging, unique, and varied activities that will have a significant impact on the individuals themselves, the organization, or the external environment. For example, one group member may be responsible for crafting a new incentive-pay system through which employees can direct some of their bonus to their favorite nonprofits.
• Make sure individuals feel that they are needed. If the group ignores a member’s contributions because these contributions do not meet the group’s performance standards, members will feel discouraged and are unlikely to contribute in the future. Make sure that everyone feels included and needed by the group.

Establishing Team Norms

Team Norms
Norms are shared expectations about how things operate within a group or team. Just as new employees learn to understand and share the assumptions, norms, and values that are part of an organization’s culture, they also must learn the norms of their immediate team. This understanding helps teams be more cohesive and perform better. Norms are a powerful way of ensuring coordination within a team. For example, is it acceptable to be late to meetings? How prepared are you supposed to be at the meetings? Is it acceptable to criticize someone else’s work? These norms are shaped early during the life of a team and affect whether the team is productive, cohesive, and successful.

Team Contracts
Scientific research, as well as experience working with thousands of teams, show that teams that are able to articulate and agree on established ground rules, goals, and roles and develop a team contract around these standards are better equipped to face challenges that may arise within the team.

Having a team contract does not necessarily mean that the team will be successful, but it can serve as a road map when the team veers off course. The following questions can help to create a meaningful team contract:

• Team Values and Goals
  ○ What are our shared team values?
  ○ What is our team goal?

• Team Roles and Leadership
  ○ Who does what within this team? (Who takes notes at the meeting? Who sets the agenda? Who assigns tasks? Who runs the meetings?)
- Does the team have a formal leader?
  - If so, what are his or her roles?

- Team Decision Making
  - How are minor decisions made?
  - How are major decisions made?

- Team Communication
  - Who do you contact if you cannot make a meeting?
  - Who communicates with whom?
  - How often will the team meet?

- Team Performance
  - What constitutes good team performance?
  - What if a team member tries hard but does not seem to be producing quality work?
  - How will poor attendance/work quality be dealt with?
What Is Power?

We'll look at the aspects and nuances of power in more detail in this chapter, but simply put, power is the ability to influence the behavior of others to get what you want. Gerald Salancik and Jeffery Pfeffer concur, noting, "Power is simply the ability to get things done the way one wants them to be done."

If you want a larger budget to open a new store in a large city and you get the budget increase, you have used your power to influence the decision. Power distribution is usually visible within organizations. For example, Salancik and Pfeffer gathered information from a company with 21 department managers and asked 10 of those department heads to rank all the managers according to the influence each person had in the organization. Although ranking 21 managers might seem like a difficult task, all the managers were immediately able to create that list. When Salancik and Pfeffer compared the rankings, they found virtually no disagreement in how the top 5 and bottom 5 managers were ranked. The only slight differences came from individuals ranking themselves higher than their colleagues ranked them. The same findings held true for factories, banks, and universities.

Positive and Negative Consequences of Power

The fact that we can see and succumb to power means that power has both positive and negative consequences. On one hand, powerful CEOs can align an entire organization to move together to achieve goals. Amazing philanthropists such as Paul Farmer, a doctor who brought hospitals, medicine, and doctors to remote Haiti, and Greg Mortenson, a mountaineer who founded the Central Asia Institute and built schools across Pakistan, draw on their own power to organize others toward lofty goals; they have changed the lives of thousands of individuals in countries around the world for the better.

On the other hand, autocracy can destroy companies and countries alike. The phrase, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely" was first said by English historian John Emerich Edward Dalberg, who warned that power was inherently evil and its holders were not to be trusted. History shows that power can be intoxicating and can be devastating when abused, as seen in high-profile cases such as those involving Enron Corporation and government leaders such as the impeached Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich in 2009. One reason that power can be so easily abused is because individuals are often quick to conform. To understand this relationship better, we will examine three famous researchers who studied conformity in a variety of contexts.
Conformity

Conformity refers to people’s tendencies to behave consistently with social norms. Conformity can refer to small things such as how people tend to face forward in an elevator. There’s no rule listed in the elevator saying which way to face, yet it is expected that everyone will face forward. To test this, the next time you’re in an elevator with strangers, simply stand facing the back of the elevator without saying anything. You may notice that those around you become uncomfortable. Conformity can result in engaging in unethical behaviors, because you are led by someone you admire and respect who has power over you.

Guards at Abu Ghraib said they were just following orders when they tortured prisoners. People conform because they want to fit in with and please those around them. There is also a tendency to look to others in ambiguous situations, which can lead to conformity. The response to “Why did you do that?” being “Because everyone else was doing it” sums up this tendency. So, does conformity occur only in rare or extreme circumstances? Actually, this is not the case. Three classic sets of studies illustrate how important it is to create checks and balances to help individuals resist the tendency to conform or to abuse authority. To illustrate this, we will examine findings from the Milgram and Zimbardo studies.

The Milgram Studies

Stanley Milgram, a psychologist at Yale in the 1960s, set out to study conformity to authority. His work tested how far individuals would go in hurting another individual when told to do so by a researcher. A key factor in the Milgram study and others that will be discussed is the use of confederates, or people who seem to be participants but are actually paid by the researchers to take on a certain role. Participants believed that they were engaged in an experiment on learning. The participant (teacher) would ask a series of questions to another “participant” (learner). The teachers were instructed to shock the learners whenever an incorrect answer was given. The learner was not a participant at all but actually a confederate who would pretend to be hurt by the shocks and yell out in pain when the button was pushed. Starting at 15 volts of power, the participants were asked to increase the intensity of the shocks over time. Some expressed concern when the voltage was at 135 volts, but few stopped once they were told by the researcher that they would not personally be held responsible for the outcome of the experiment and that their help was needed to complete the experiment. In the end, all the participants were willing to go up to 300 volts, and a shocking 65% were willing to administer the maximum of 450 volts even as they heard screams of pain from the learner.

The Zimbardo Study

Philip Zimbardo, a researcher at Stanford University, conducted a famous experiment in the 1970s. While this experiment would probably not make it past the human subjects committee of schools today, at the time, he was authorized to place an ad in the paper that asked for male volunteers to help understand prison management. After excluding any volunteers with psychological or medical problems or with any history of crime or
drug abuse, he identified 24 volunteers to participate in his study. Researchers randomly assigned 18 individuals to the role of prisoner or guard. Those assigned the role of “prisoners” were surprised when they were picked up by actual police officers and then transferred to a prison that had been created in the basement of the Stanford psychology building. The guards in the experiment were told to keep order but received no training. Zimbardo was shocked with how quickly the expected roles emerged. Prisoners began to feel depressed and helpless. Guards began to be aggressive and abusive. The original experiment was scheduled to last 2 weeks, but Zimbardo ended it after only 6 days upon seeing how deeply entrenched in their roles everyone, including himself, had become. Next we will examine the relationship between dependency and power.

The Relationship Between Dependency and Power

Dependency
Dependency is directly related to power. The more that a person or unit is dependent on you, the more power you have. The strategic contingencies model provides a good description of how dependency works.

Dependency is power that a person or unit gains from their ability to handle actual or potential problems facing the organization. You know how dependent you are on someone when you answer three key questions that are addressed in the following sections.

Scarcity
In the context of dependency, scarcity refers to the uniqueness of a resource. The more difficult something is to obtain, the more valuable it tends to be. Effective persuaders exploit this reality by making an opportunity or offer seem more attractive because it is limited or exclusive. They might convince you to take on a project because “it’s rare to get a chance to work on a new project like this,” or “You have to sign on today because if you don’t, I have to offer it to someone else.”

Importance
Importance refers to the value of the resource. The key question here is “How important is this?” If the resources or skills you control are vital to the organization, you will gain some power. The more vital the resources that you control are, the more power you will have. For example, if Kecia is the only person who knows how to fill out reimbursement forms, it is important that you are able to work with her, because getting paid back for business trips and expenses is important to most of us.

Substitutability
Finally, substitutability refers to one’s ability to find another option that works as well as
the one offered. The question around whether something is substitutable is “How
difficult would it be for me to find another way to this?” The harder it is to find a
substitute, the more dependent the person becomes and the more power someone else
has over them. If you are the only person who knows how to make a piece of equipment
work, you will be very powerful in the organization. This is true unless another piece of
equipment is brought in to serve the same function. At that point, your power would
diminish. Similarly, countries with large supplies of crude oil have traditionally had
power to the extent that other countries need oil to function. As the price of oil climbs,
alternative energy sources such as wind, solar, and hydropower become more attractive
to investors and governments. For example, in response to soaring fuel costs and
environmental concerns, in 2009 Japan Airlines successfully tested a blend of aircraft
fuel made from a mix of camelina, jatropha, and algae on the engine of a Boeing 747-
300 aircraft.

Possessing any of the three aspects of a resource could make others depend on you,
two would make you extremely needed, and having all three could make you
indispensable.

Bases of Power
Having power and using power are two different things. For example, imagine a
manager who has the power to reward or punish employees. When the manager makes
a request, he or she will probably be obeyed even though the manager does not
actually reward the employee. The fact that the manager has the ability to give rewards
and punishments will be enough for employees to follow the request. What are the
sources of one’s power over others? Researchers identified six sources of power, which
include legitimate, reward, coercive, expert, information, and referent. You might earn
power from one source or all six depending on the situation.

Legitimate Power
Legitimate power is power that comes from one’s organizational role or position. For
example, a boss can assign projects, a policeman can arrest a citizen, and a teacher
assigns grades. Others comply with the requests these individuals make because they
accept the legitimacy of the position, whether they like or agree with the request or not.
Steve Jobs has enjoyed legitimate power as the CEO of Apple. He could set deadlines
and employees comply even if they think the deadlines were overly ambitious. Start-
up organizations often have founders who use their legitimate power to influence
individuals to work long hours week after week in order to help the company survive.

Reward Power
Reward power is the ability to grant a reward, such as an increase in pay, a perk, or an
attractive job assignment. Reward power tends to accompany legitimate power and is
highest when the reward is scarce. Anyone can wield reward power, however, in the
form of public praise or giving someone something in exchange for their compliance.
When Steve Jobs ran Apple, he had reward power in the form of raises and promotions.
Another example of reward power comes from Bill Gross, founder of Idealab, who has the power to launch new companies or not. He created his company with the idea of launching other new companies as soon as they could develop viable ideas. If members could convince him that their ideas were viable, he gave the company a maximum of $250,000 in seed money, and gave the management team and employees a 30% stake in the company and the CEO 10% of the company. That way, everyone had a stake in the company. The CEO’s salary was capped at $75,000 to maintain the sense of equity. When one of the companies, Citysearch, went public, all employees benefited from the $270 million valuation.

**Coercive Power**

In contrast, coercive power is the ability to take something away or punish someone for noncompliance. Coercive power often works through fear, and it forces people to do something that ordinarily they would not choose to do. The most extreme example of coercion is government dictators who threaten physical harm for noncompliance. Parents may also use coercion such as grounding their child as punishment for noncompliance. Steve Jobs has been known to use coercion—yelling at employees and threatening to fire them. When John Wiley & Sons Inc. published an unauthorized biography of Jobs, Jobs’s response was to prohibit sales of all books from that publisher in any Apple retail store.

In other examples, John D. Rockefeller was ruthless when running Standard Oil Company. He not only undercut his competitors through pricing, but he used his coercive power to get railroads to refuse to transport his competitor’s products. American presidents have been known to use coercion power. President Lyndon Baines Johnson once told a White House staffer, “Just you remember this. There’s only two kinds at the White house. There’s elephants and there’s ants. And I’m the only elephant.”

**Expert Power**

Expert power comes from knowledge and skill. Steve Jobs has expert power from his ability to know what customers want—even before they can articulate it. Others who have expert power in an organization include long-time employees, such as a steelworker who knows the temperature combinations and length of time to get the best yields. Technology companies are often characterized by expert, rather than legitimate power. Many of these firms utilize a flat or matrix structure in which clear lines of legitimate power become blurred as everyone communicates with everyone else regardless of position.

**Information Power**

Information power is similar to expert power but differs in its source. Experts tend to have a vast amount of knowledge or skill, whereas information power is distinguished by access to specific information. For example, knowing price information gives a
person information power during negotiations. Within organizations, a person’s social network can either isolate them from information power or serve to create it. As we will see later in this chapter, those who are able to span boundaries and serve to connect different parts of the organizations often have a great deal of information power. In the TV show Mad Men, which is set in the 1960s, it is clear that the switchboard operators have a great deal of information power as they place all calls and are able to listen in on all the phone conversations within the advertising firm.

Referent Power
As the 44th elected president of the United States, Barack Obama has legitimate power. As commander-in-chief of the U.S. Armed Forces, he also has coercive power. His ability to appoint individuals to cabinet positions affords him reward power. Individuals differ on the degree to which they feel he has expert and referent power, as he received 52% of the popular vote in the 2008 election. Shortly after the election, he began to be briefed on national security issues, providing him with substantial information power as well. Referent power stems from the personal characteristics of the person such as the degree to which we like, respect, and want to be like them. Referent power is often called charisma—the ability to attract others, win their admiration, and hold them spellbound. Steve Jobs’s influence as described in the opening case is an example of this charisma.

What Is Influence?
Starting at infancy, we all try to get others to do what we want. We learn early what works in getting us to our goals. Instead of crying and throwing a tantrum, we may figure out that smiling and using language causes everyone less stress and brings us the rewards we seek.

By the time you hit the workplace, you have had vast experience with influence techniques. You have probably picked out a few that you use most often. To be effective in a wide number of situations, however, it’s best to expand your repertoire of skills and become competent in several techniques, knowing how and when to use them as well as understanding when they are being used on you. If you watch someone who is good at influencing others, you will most probably observe that person switching tactics depending on the context. The more tactics you have at your disposal, the more likely it is that you will achieve your influence goals.

Al Gore and many others have spent years trying to influence us to think about the changes in the environment and the implications of global warming. They speak, write, network, and lobby to get others to pay attention. But Gore, for example, does not stop there. He also works to persuade us with direct, action-based suggestions such as asking everyone to switch the kind of light bulbs they use, turn off appliances when not in use, drive vehicles with better fuel economy, and even take shorter showers. Ironically, Gore has more influence now as a private citizen regarding these issues than he was able to exert as a congressman, senator, and vice president of the United States.
Do You Have the Characteristics of Powerful Influencers?
People who are considered to be skilled influencers share the following attributes. How often do you engage in them? 0 = never, 1 = sometimes, 2 = always.

- present information that can be checked for accuracy
- provide a consistent message that does not change from situation to situation
- display authority and enthusiasm (often described as charisma)
- offer something in return for compliance
- act likable
- show empathy through listening
- show you are aware of circumstances, others, and yourself
- plan ahead

If you scored 0–6: You do not engage in much effective influencing behavior. Think of ways to enhance this skill. A great place to start is to recognize the items on the list above and think about ways to enhance them for yourself.

If you scored 7–12: You engage in some influencing behavior. Consider the context of each of these influence attempts to see if you should be using more or less of it depending on your overall goals.

If you scored 13–16: You have a great deal of influence potential. Be careful that you are not manipulating others and that you are using your influence when it is important rather than just to get your own way.

Commonly Used Influence Tactics
Researchers have identified distinct influence tactics and discovered that there are few differences between the way bosses, subordinates, and peers use them, which we will discuss at greater depth later on in this chapter. We will focus on nine influence tactics. Responses to influence attempts include resistance, compliance, or commitment. Resistance occurs when the influence target does not wish to comply with the request and either passively or actively repels the influence attempt. Compliance occurs when the target not only agrees to the request but also actively supports it as well. Commitment occurs when the target does not necessarily want to obey, but they do. Commitment occurs when the target not only agrees to the request but also actively supports it as well. Within organizations, commitment helps to get things done, because others can help to keep initiatives alive long after compliant changes have been made or resistance has been overcome.

1. Rational persuasion includes using facts, data, and logical arguments to try to convince others that your point of view is the best alternative. This is the most commonly applied influence tactic. One experiment illustrates the power of reason. People were lined up at a copy machine and another person, after joining the line asked, “May I go to the head of the line?” Amazingly, 63% of the people in the line agreed to let the requester jump ahead. When the line jumper makes a slight change in
the request by asking, "May I go to the head of the line because I have copies to make?" the number of people who agreed jumped to over 90%. The word because was the only difference. Effective rational persuasion includes the presentation of factual information that is clear and specific, relevant, and timely. Across studies summarized in a meta-analysis, rationality was related to positive work outcomes.

2. Inspirational appeals seek to tap into our values, emotions, and beliefs to gain support for a request or course of action. When President John F. Kennedy said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country," he appealed to the higher selves of an entire nation. Effective inspirational appeals are authentic, personal, big-thinking, and enthusiastic.

3. Consultation refers to the influence agent’s asking others for help in directly influencing or planning to influence another person or group. Consultation is most effective in organizations and cultures that value democratic decision making.

4. Ingratiation refers to different forms of making others feel good about themselves. Ingratiation includes any form of flattery done either before or during the influence attempt. Research shows that ingratiation can affect individuals. For example, in a study of résumés, those résumés that were accompanied with a cover letter containing ingratiating information were rated higher than résumés without this information. Other than the cover letter accompanying them, the résumés were identical. Effective ingratiation is honest, infrequent, and well intended.

5. Personal appeal refers to helping another person because you like them and they asked for your help. We enjoy saying yes to people we know and like. A famous psychological experiment showed that in dorms, the most well-liked people were those who lived by the stairwell—they were the most often seen by others who entered and left the hallway. The repeated contact brought a level of familiarity and comfort. Therefore, personal appeals are most effective with people who know and like you.

6. Exchange refers to give-and-take in which someone does something for you, and you do something for them in return. The rule of reciprocation says that “we should try to repay, in kind, what another person has provided us.” The application of the rule obliges us and makes us indebted to the giver. One experiment illustrates how a small initial gift can open people to a substantially larger request at a later time. One group of subjects was given a bottle of Coke. Later, all subjects were asked to buy raffle tickets. On the average, people who had been given the drink bought twice as many raffle tickets as those who had not been given the unsolicited drinks.

7. Coalition tactics refer to a group of individuals working together toward a common goal to influence others. Common examples of coalitions within organizations are unions that may threaten to strike if their demands are not met. Coalitions also take advantage of peer pressure. The influencer tries to build a case by bringing in the unseen as allies to convince someone to think, feel, or do something. A well-known psychology experiment draws upon this tactic. The experimenters stare at the top of a
building in the middle of a busy street. Within moments, people who were walking by in a hurry stop and also look at the top of the building, trying to figure out what the others are looking at. When the experimenters leave, the pattern continues, often for hours. This tactic is also extremely popular among advertisers and businesses that use client lists to promote their goods and services. The fact that a client bought from the company is a silent testimonial.

8. Pressure refers to exerting undue influence on someone to do what you want or else something undesirable will occur. This often includes threats and frequent interactions until the target agrees. Research shows that managers with low referent power tend to use pressure tactics more frequently than those with higher referent power. Pressure tactics are most effective when used in a crisis situation and when they come from someone who has the other’s best interests in mind, such as getting an employee to an employee assistance program to deal with a substance abuse problem.

9. Legitimating tactics occur when the appeal is based on legitimate or position power. “By the power vested in me…”: This tactic relies upon compliance with rules, laws, and regulations. It is not intended to motivate people but to align them behind a direction. Obedience to authority is filled with both positive and negative images. Position, title, knowledge, experience, and demeanor grant authority, and it is easy to see how it can be abused. If someone hides behind people’s rightful authority to assert themselves, it can seem heavy-handed and without choice. You must come across as an authority figure by the way you act, speak, and look. Think about the number of commercials with doctors, lawyers, and other professionals who look and sound the part, even if they are actors. People want to be convinced that the person is an authority worth heeding. Authority is often used as a last resort. If it does not work, you will not have much else to draw from in your goal to persuade someone.

Impression Management
Impression management means actively shaping the way you are perceived by others. You can do this through your choice of clothing, the avatars or photos you use to represent yourself online, the descriptions of yourself on a résumé or in an online profile, and so forth. By using impression management strategies, you control information that make others see you in the way you want to be seen. Consider when you are “being yourself” with your friends or with your family—you probably act differently around your best friend than around your mother.

On the job, the most effective approach to impression management is to do two things at once—build credibility and maintain authenticity. As Harvard Business School Professor Laura Morgan Roberts puts it, “When you present yourself in a manner that is both true to self and valued and believed by others, impression management can yield a host of favorable outcomes for you, your team, and your organization.” There may be aspects of your “true self” that you choose not to disclose at work, although you would disclose them to your close friends. That kind of impression management may help to achieve group cohesiveness and meet professional expectations. But if you try to win social approval
at work by being too different from your true self—contradicting your personal values—you might feel psychological distress.

It’s important to keep in mind that whether you’re actively managing your professional image or not, your coworkers are forming impressions of you. They watch your behavior and draw conclusions about the kind of person you are, whether you’ll keep your word, whether you’ll stay to finish a task, and how you’ll react in a difficult situation. Since people are forming these theories about you no matter what, you should take charge of managing their impressions of you. To do this, ask yourself how you want to be seen. What qualities or character traits do you want to convey? Perhaps it’s a can-do attitude, an ability to mediate, an ability to make a decision, or an ability to dig into details to thoroughly understand and solve a problem.

Then, ask yourself what the professional expectations are of you and what aspects of your social identity you want to emphasize or minimize in your interactions with others. If you want to be seen as a leader, you might disclose how you organized an event. If you want to be seen as a caring person in whom people can confide, you might disclose that you’re a volunteer on a crisis helpline. You can use a variety of impression management strategies to accomplish the outcomes you want.

Here are the three main categories of strategies and examples of each:

• Nonverbal impression management includes the clothes you choose to wear and your demeanor. An example of a nonverbal signal is body art, including piercings and tattoos. While the number of people in the United States who have body art has risen from 1% in 1976 to 24% in 2006, it can hold you back at work. Vault.com did a survey and found that 58% of the managers they surveyed said they would be less likely to hire someone with visible body art, and over 75% of respondents felt body art was unprofessional. Given these numbers, it should not be surprising that 67% of employees say they conceal body art while they are at work.

• Verbal impression management includes your tone of voice, rate of speech, what you choose to say and how you say it. We know that 38% of the comprehension of verbal communication comes from these cues. Managing how you project yourself in this way can alter the impression that others have of you. For example, if your voice has a high pitch and it is shaky, others may assume that you are nervous or unsure of yourself.

• Behavior impression management includes how you perform on the job and how you interact with others. Complimenting your boss is an example of a behavior that would indicate impression management. Other impression management behaviors include conforming, making excuses, apologizing, promoting your skills, doing favors, and making desirable associations known. Impression management has been shown to be related to higher performance ratings by increasing liking, perceived similarity, and network centrality.

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Creating an effective agenda is one of the most important elements for a productive meeting. Here are some reasons why the meeting agenda is so important.

**The Agenda**

- communicates important information such as:
  - topics for discussion
  - presenter or discussion leader for each topic
  - time allotment for each topic
- provides an outline for the meeting (how long to spend on which topics)
- can be used as a checklist to ensure that all information is covered
- lets participants know what will be discussed if it’s distributed before the meeting. This gives them an opportunity to come to the meeting prepared for the upcoming discussions or decisions.
- provides a focus for the meeting (the objective of the meeting must be clearly stated in the agenda)

**How to Create an Effective Agenda**

You're responsible for planning your project meeting this month. Arrghh!! What to do? Now you understand how important an agenda is to the effectiveness of the meeting, but don't know how to create one. Breathe easy! All you have to do is follow the steps outlined below.

1. Send an e-mail stating there will be a meeting, the goal of the meeting as well as the administrative details such as when and where it will be. Ask those invited to accept or decline the meeting. Make it clear that once they have accepted the meeting, they are expected to attend.

2. Ask participants requesting an agenda item to contact you no less than two days before the meeting with their request and the amount of time they will need to present it.

3. Once all of the agenda requests have been submitted to you, summarize them in a table format with the headings Agenda Item, Presenter and Time. It’s your
responsibility to ensure that each agenda item is directly related to the goals of this particular meeting. If an inappropriate request is made, suggest that person send an e-mail or memo instead or recommend that this agenda item be discussed in another meeting. Also, you must be realistic in the amount of time you allocate to each presenter. Don’t cram an unrealistic number of agenda items into an hour meeting. When people accept an hour meeting, they expect to be finished in an hour. When meetings go over time, people generally tend to get uneasy. It’s better to schedule 50 minutes of discussion into an hour time slot. This way you have 10 minutes to spare and if you get done a little early, people will be pleased.

4. Send the agenda to all the meeting participants the day before the meeting with a reminder of the meeting goals, location, time and duration. At this time, ask the presenters if they are happy with the order in which they will be speaking and the amount of time they have been allocated.

5. Of course, the most important part of creating an effective agenda is to follow it during the meeting!

Six Tips for More Effective Meetings


1. Don't Meet

Avoid a meeting if the same information could be covered in a memo, e-mail or brief report. One of the keys to having more effective meetings is differentiating between the need for one-way information dissemination and two-way information sharing. To disseminate information you can use a variety of other communication media, such as sending an e-mail or posting the information on your company’s intranet. If you want to be certain you have delivered the right message, you can schedule a meeting to simply answer questions about the information you have sent. By remembering to ask yourself, "Is a meeting the best way to handle this?" you’ll cut down on wasted meeting time and restore your group's belief that the meetings they attend are necessary.
2. Set Objectives for the Meeting

Set objectives before the meeting! Before planning the agenda for the meeting, write down a phrase or several phrases to complete the sentence: *By the end of the meeting, I want the group to...* Depending on the focus of your meeting, your ending to the sentence might include phrases such as: *...be able to list the top three features of our newest product, ...have generated three ideas for increasing our sales, ...understand the way we do business with customers, ...leave with an action plan, ...decide on a new widget supplier, or ...solve the design problem.* One benefit of setting objectives for the meeting is to help you plan the meeting. The more concrete your meeting objectives, the more focused your agenda will be. A second important benefit of having specific objectives for each meeting is that you have a concrete measure against which you can evaluate that meeting. Were you successful in meeting the objectives? Why or why not? Is another meeting required? Setting meeting objectives allows you to continuously improve your effective meeting process.

3. Provide an Agenda Beforehand

Provide all participants with an agenda before the meeting starts. Your agenda needs to include a brief description of the meeting objectives, a list of the topics to be covered and a list stating who will address each topic and for how long. When you send the agenda, you should include the time, date and location of the meeting and any background information participants will need to know to hold an informed discussion on the meeting topic. What's the most important thing you should do with your agenda? Follow it closely!

4. Assign Meeting Preparation

Give all participants something to prepare for the meeting, and that meeting will take on a new significance to each group member. For problem-solving meetings, have the group read the background information necessary to get down to business in the meeting. Ask each group member to think of one possible solution to the problem to get everyone thinking about the meeting topic. For example, to start a sales meeting on a positive note, have all participants recall their biggest success since the last meeting and ask one person to share his success with the group. For less formal meetings or brainstorming sessions, ask a trivia question related to the meeting topic and give the correct answer in the first few minutes of the meeting. These tips are sure-fire ways to warm up the group and direct participants’ attention to the meeting objectives.

5. Assign Action Items

Don't finish any discussion in the meeting without deciding how to act on it. Listen for key comments that flag potential action items and don't let them pass by without addressing them during your meeting. Statements such as *We should really..., that's a topic for a different meeting..., or I wonder if we could...* are examples of comments that should trigger action items to get a task done, hold another meeting or further examine a particular idea. Assigning tasks and projects as they arise during the meeting means
that your follow-through will be complete. Addressing off-topic statements during the meeting in this way also allows you to keep the meeting on track. By immediately addressing these statements with the suggestion of making an action item to examine the issue outside of the current meeting, you show meeting participants that you value their input as well as their time.

6. Examine Your Meeting Process
Assign the last few minutes of every meeting as time to review the following questions: What worked well in this meeting? What can we do to improve our next meeting? Every participant should briefly provide a point-form answer to these questions. Answers to the second question should be phrased in the form of a suggested action. For example, if a participant's answer is stated as Jim was too long-winded, ask the participant to rephrase the comment as an action. The statement We should be more to-the-point when stating our opinions is a more constructive suggestion. Remember – don't leave the meeting without assessing what took place and making a plan to improve the next meeting!

To Meet or NOT to Meet – That is the Question!


The biggest waste of time is meeting when it's not necessary. You'd be surprised by how many of your weekly meetings can be eliminated when you decide to meet only when it's absolutely necessary. Here are some tips for deciding if a meeting is worth your time.

Has a Goal Been Set for the Meeting?
Is there a purpose for meeting, a goal to achieve? Every meeting should have an objective and if the one you've been asked to attend doesn't, consider recommending that a memo or e-mail be sent instead.
Has an Agenda Been Created Ahead of Time?
An agenda is the basis for an effective meeting. Creating and distributing the meeting agenda one or two days before the meeting begins gives participants an opportunity to prepare for the meeting. Having an agenda during the meeting also focuses the discussion and helps your group stay on track.

Will the Appropriate People Be Attending?
If the appropriate people aren’t present, then important decisions get put on hold. It will also take time to update key individuals on what took place in the meeting they missed. It’s better to put the meeting on hold until all of the right people can be in the room.

Could the Information Be Covered in an E-mail or Memo?
The purpose of most meetings is sharing information and updating others. If possible, make an effort to substitute these types of meetings with an e-mail or memo! Simply send one e-mail to all the people who would have attended the meeting. This will save everyone time, they’ll still be up-to-date on what’s happening and they’ll be grateful for having one less meeting to attend that week.

Citations for Meeting Module Readings


Cultural Taxonomies

**Individualism/Collectivism** is a taxonomy that classifies cultures according to their “self” or “group” orientation.

**Individualist Cultures**

- See a person as a separate, unique individual who should be self-sufficient and independent.
- Believe the individual should take care of him/herself & immediate family first.
- Members have many flexible group memberships; friends are based on shared interests & activities.
- Individual achievement & initiative is rewarded.
- Individual choice is encouraged.
- Autonomy is valued as are change, youthfulness & equality.
- Truth telling & straight talk is preferred.
- Emphasis on clarity & directness.
- Tendency to see the world in terms of dichotomies (right & wrong, good & bad, happy & sad).
- United States, Australia, Great Britain, the Netherlands.

**Collectivist Cultures**

- Have greater concern for the “group” as a whole than the individual person.
- A person should take care of extended family before self.
- Emphasis is on belonging to a very few permanent in-groups which have a strong influence over the person.
• Members are rewarded for contributing to group goals.
• Group decisions are valued and honored; credit & blame are shared.
• Communication is indirect.
• Emphasize concern for others’ feelings, “saving face.”
• A high value is placed on duty, order, tradition, age, group security, status & hierarchy.
• Most Asian & Latin American cultures are collectivist.
• is a taxonomy that classifies cultures according to how equality and/or power is distributed within the members of a particular culture.

**High Power Distance/Low Power Distance**

• High Power Distance cultures accept inequality as the cultural norm.
• Have hierarchies.
• Have more oppressed behaviors.
• Use formalized rituals which signal respect, attentiveness, agreement, etc.
• Philippines, Mexico, India, Hong Kong, France, Columbia.
• Low Power Distance cultures - equality more or less distributed evenly among members.
• A conscious attempt is made to treat people equally.
• Have less oppression of people.
• Australia, Israel, Denmark, New Zealand, Ireland, Norway, Finland, most European countries.

**Masculine/Feminine**

Masculine/Feminine is a taxonomy that distinguishes cultures based on how they perceive relationships vs. success or competitiveness vs. cooperation.

• Feminine cultures stress nurturing of relationships.
- They promote sexual equality and fluid gender roles.
- Interdependence and androgynous behavior is more the norm.
- Quality of life is more important than the acquisition of material goods/wealth.
- Masculine cultures emphasize achievement.
- Members are expected to be competitive, assertive—even aggressive.
- Material success/wealth is a primary goal.
- Gender roles are distinct and separate in the traditional sense.

**High/Low Uncertainty Avoidance**

High/Low Uncertainty Avoidance is a taxonomy that differentiates cultures based on how comfortable members are with change and progress.

**High Uncertainty Avoidance**

- Rules and traditions are established in order to keep things as they are.
- Rituals & ceremonies also tend to help keep life as it has been.
- There is little tolerance for deviation and change.
- There is a strong likelihood that a hierarchical system is in place.

**Low Uncertainty Avoidance**

- There is tolerance for new ideas and deviation from the norm.
- Change is embraced.
- Change is viewed as inevitable.
- The tendency is to be less focused on a hierarchical system.

**High/Low Context Communication**

High/Low Context is a taxonomy that distinguishes between cultures that use direct
communication and cultures that use indirect communication.

**High Context Cultures**

- Specific info is not given—you are *expected* to know what to do.
- People rely more on non-verbal cues than spoken instruction.
- Members live easily with silence & ambiguity.
- Avoid causing embarrassment to others.
- Some High Context cultures are: Japan, Mexico, African-American, China

**Low Context Cultures**

- Provide specific info about procedures; directions are spelled out.
- Members want *precise* meanings.
- Members do not like what they do not understand.
- Members are more forgiving of mistakes.
- Mainstream North America, German, English.
Dealing with Different Personalities

Allowing team members to play to their strengths sets the foundation for a successful project.

**Problem**

Ineffectively managing a team of individuals with different personalities and working styles can result in unnecessary challenges and lead to the failure of a project.

**Solution**

Successfully manage a project by structuring project meetings and tasks in a manner that supports the strengths of all team members.

**Discussion**

Based on the writings of theorist Carl Jung, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator assessment groups individuals into one of 16 personality types along four scales. The system is used frequently by organizations to understand the working styles of employees, balance teams, and circumvent conflict.

In the Myers-Briggs assessment, personality characteristics are categorized along four continuums: Introvert/Extrovert; Sensing/Intuition; Thinking/Feeling; and Judging/Perceiving.

*Introvert/Extrovert*

The category of introversion/extroversion measures how an individual draws their energy—internally (from their own thoughts and ideas) or externally (from their interactions with others). Introverts tend to be introspective, analytical, and cautious team members. Extroverts are typically vocal, active, and comfortable expressing their ideas. Whereas introverted team members need extroverts to initiate spontaneous verbal discussions, extroverts value an introvert’s capability for problem solving based on careful reflection and consideration of all ideas.

*Sensing/Intuition*

The sensing/intuition continuum measures how a person processes information—whether through their physical senses or instinctual processes. A sensing person tends to be visual and fact-oriented, while an intuitive person might approach life in a more open and creative manner. In a team environment, intuitive members need sensing personalities to remind them of facts and limitations. Conversely, sensing individuals need intuitive members to remind them to think outside of the box.
Thinking/Feeling
The thinking/feeling category refers to the manner by which a person makes decisions. Whereas a thinker reaches conclusions based on external standards and rules, feelers are more concerned with protecting feelings and values. As team members, thinkers are effective in articulating logical reasons behind decisions, while feelers can bring people together.

Judging/Perceiving
This final category assesses how people approach their life. Judging personalities tend to be highly organized and structured about their daily activities, while perceiving personalities are more spontaneous and flexible. A team needs the right mix of judging and perceiving personalities to ensure adaptability as well as adherence to project boundaries and deadlines.
While all personality continuums hold relevance for team dynamics, managing introverts and extroverts can be a particular challenge.

Managing Introverts and Extroverts Within a Team Environment

Managing a team consisting of introverts and extroverts demands forethought and creativity. While introverts find group discussions draining and stressful, extroverts regard such meetings energizing and productive. Through awareness and planning, project managers can create conditions that support the working styles of both sides of the continuum.

Organize Team Meetings around Documentation
Meetings are an integral component of project development and planning. For extroverts, meetings provide a venue for thought-provoking discussion and problem-solving. Introverts, on the other hand, need sufficient time to research, plan and prepare for substantive discussions.
As a manager, meet the needs of both groups by providing written information in advance of team meetings, such as an agenda, report, or discussion questions. This practice allows introverts time to organize their thoughts and feel more comfortable bringing their ideas to the table. Extroverts, energized by direct interaction, will welcome their contributions.

Conduct Team Exercises in Pairs
Organize a brainstorming exercise where the group is broken up into pairs (an introvert with an extrovert, if possible). A smaller scale of interaction will appease an extrovert’s need for face-to-face communication, while reducing the anxiety an introvert may feel speaking in front of a group.

Facilitate an Inclusive Discussion: Look and Listen
Sometimes an introvert would like to state a viewpoint, but lacks the assertiveness to jump into an active discussion. Extroverts can become so involved in a conversation that they miss the nonverbal cues of their introverted counterparts. As the project leader, observe both verbal and nonverbal cues when facilitating project discussions.
Assign a Private Project Journaling Exercise
Journaling allows team participants to explore their project ideas and reactions on paper, providing a safety zone for free thought, creativity and introspection. Encourage participants to use this tool to brainstorm ideas and organize their thoughts before a meeting.

Utilize Technological Resources
Help bridge the communication gap by utilizing technology to provide a variety of interaction opportunities. While the traditional sit-down meeting will appeal to extroverts, many introverts come alive with the faceless communication opportunities provided by email, Internet discussion boards, and conference calls. By incorporating technology as a meeting tool, the sit-down meeting is merely an extension of a running virtual dialogue. As any group is enriched by diversity, a variety of personalities can make for a stronger team. By nurturing the strengths of all participants, managers can increase performance, creativity, and harmony within the team.

References:

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10 Ways Men and Women Communicate Differently


It's the middle of the day during a long drive. He's sitting at the wheel, cruising along. She's sitting in the passenger seat, reading, glancing up now and then at the passing scenery. Suddenly, she turns to him and cries, "Talk to me!"

She's not stir crazy; he's not ignoring her. They're just living the classic divide in communication between men and women. She's more discussion-oriented; he's all action. One reason for these differences stems from the way relationships develop during childhood.

Girls' friendships focus on making connections -- talk is essential to this process. Sharing secrets, relating experiences, revealing problems and discussing options are essential during girls' development. Boys generally take another approach to friendship. Their camaraderie is not less profound; it's just different. Buddy groups tend to be larger, focusing on activities rather than conversation.

This differentiation in youth leads to dissimilar communication styles in adulthood. Women communicate through dialogue, discussing emotions, choices and problems. Males remain action-oriented -- the goal of communication is to achieve something.

Research indicates that these are the general, even common, tendencies of men and women, but these divides are not absolute. There are certainly men who want to chat about their feelings and women who quickly tire of discourse. But one way to classify male-female interactions is to examine them through the lens of childhood: talk versus deeds. With that in mind, here is a list of 10 ways that (most) men and women communicate differently and how these differences affect their interactions [source: Tannen].

**Interrupting**

"Where are the bandages? I cut my-"
"Huh?"
"I was working on the-"
"Ooh, it's bleeding a lot."
"I know, that's why-"
"Here are the bandages. Do you want-"
"I'll do it."
"I could."
"What are we doing for dinner?"

Most people dislike being interrupted, but most people do it at one time or another. Women interrupt to show concern, but they think men disrupt the discussion by shifting
the subject. Men do try to control the conversation by disrupting it. They also believe a woman’s supportive interjections (for example, "go on") are interruptions.

Frequent interruptions, no matter the cause, no matter the target, can lead to frustration. This can build to anger and, unless the guilty party gets things under control, the discussion will come to a screeching halt. Or perhaps just screeching [source: Cowie].

**Chatterbox**

Who talks more, men or women? Take into consideration all interactions during the day, with family, work, friends and businesses. Would you guess women are more loquacious? A lot of people would. And a lot of people would be wrong.

Research indicates that there is no significant difference between women and men in the amount of words spoken, although, when they do talk, men tend to use more words at a time. The major difference appears to be when men and women do their talking. Women spend more talking time with family and close friends, expressing support and discussing experiences. Men tend to talk more at work and in formal and social settings, and their goal is the exchange of information, even when conversing with a buddy.

At home, women do talk more and become perturbed with less responsive partners. Women try to work on their relationships, while men see little need to speak unless there is a specific purpose -- a problem to solve, a decision to make [source: Tannen].

**Getting Your Way**

"Where should we go for vacation?"
"I want to go to the ocean."
"Really? What do you think of the mountains? Don't you think they're beautiful this time of year?"
"Yeah, but I'd like to do some fishing and sailing."
"You like hiking, don't you? Why don't we do some mountain biking, too?"
"Yeah, whatever."

Looks like there might be separate vacations this year. Men and women have very different ways of trying to get what they want, which can make it difficult to come to an agreement. Women are typically in conversation mode; they are more likely to ask questions. Their goal is to get others to acquiesce through agreement. Men often interpret this approach as manipulation. They will make statements rather than suggestions. Their objective is to get their way directly and quickly. If that doesn't work, they'll exit the discussion; they may either be angry or simply less passionate about the subject.

These discussions, then, often do not go smoothly. Men are resentful, believing women are trying to trick them. If men won't participate in back and forth negotiations, women feel slighted. This could easily turn into an argument-something that no one intended [source: Tannen].
Problem Solving
The car died. Again. It’s time to buy a new car. He suggests a slightly used car because cars depreciate quickly. She says she’d like to ask her friends how they like their cars. He wants to look at car reviews on-line. She’s worried about the car payment. He offers to go right then to a few dealerships. She relates a story about the first time she bought a car and how exciting it had been. He declares he wants to look at hybrids.

This is not problem solving at its finest but at its most common. Men and women approach an analytical discussion differently. As just illustrated, men tend to focus on facts and seek immediate resolutions; action is the conversational goal. Women desire more extensive talk about problems, sharing feelings and finding common experiences.

Even if there’s a mutual dilemma to resolve, such diverse communication goals can lead to frustration. Men don’t understand why women don’t want to solve problems, why they seem ungrateful for direct help. Women are hurt by the perceived disregard for emotions and frustrated when they believe they are being pushed to acquiesce too quickly [source: Torppa].

Giving Compliments
Well, if the apology doesn't go well, maybe a compliment is in order. But that path is also tricky.

Scene: A dog park. Several owners are there with their pets. One woman is there with her new golden retriever. A conversation ensues:
Airedale owner (woman): "Oh, your lab is so adorable. What a lovely coat!"
Golden owner (woman): "Thanks. Your boy is very sweet, too." (To a man standing nearby, watching his beagle.) "What do you think of my little girl here?"
Man: "Hmm … looks a little on the small side. How old is she?"
Once again, gender variations are making things difficult. From a young age, females learn to give compliments; it's almost reflexive. Compliments are a way of reaching out to one another, an offer of affirmation and inclusion. Men are more likely to volunteer evaluations instead of handing out compliments. Similarly, they will not seek out compliments because they want to avoid being critiqued themselves. Naturally, these differing approaches complicate communication. If a woman asks a question with the hope of being praised or flattered, a man may well see it as a way to offer advice. This affects their relative power: The advice-giver is automatically shifted to a higher position, with the woman having lower status [source: Tannen].

Apologizing
"I'm sorry I made such a big deal about which restaurant to go to."
"Uh-huh."
"It doesn't really matter."
"Uh-uh."
"We've both had long days; we just need a good meal."
"Uh-huh."
"Do you want to eat by yourself tonight?!
"Huh?"

After the argument comes the apology. Maybe. You might suspect that women and men handle apologies differently, and you'd be right. Women use apologies to try to create or maintain connections. Men, on the other hand, are concerned with what an apology might do: it might lower them to a subordinate position, a place where they've never wanted to be since boyhood.

After a male-female quarrel, gender differences can prolong negative feelings. If a man fears losing power and avoids apologizing, a woman might consider this insensitive behavior, becoming offended and annoyed. Thus the argument continues [source: Tannen].

Arguments

"Why do we have to eat here?"
"It's convenient."
"Are there any quieter restaurants nearby?"
"Not close by."
"I wonder if this place has been inspected lately?"
"Let's go in."

In a nutshell, that conversation snippet summarizes each gender's argumentation style. Women often try to get their point across by asking many types of questions: defiant, informational and rhetorical. The questions are designed to present an opposition or gather data. Men's contributions to arguments are often simple and direct. They're so straightforward, in contrast to women's questions, that men might not even realize that a conflict is occurring.

When, finally, both parties realize they are disagreeing, their communication styles have great impact. Men are concerned with being right and less concerned about anyone else's feelings. This perceived lack of compassion upsets women. Men dislike questions, interpreting them as censure, and they react by closing down emotionally. This pattern leads women to become increasingly suspicious and wary. Time to go to separate corners [source: Booher, Whitworth].

Body Orientation

Picture this: It's happy hour after work. On one side of the room, there's a group of women, deep in conversation. Their chairs are all turned toward each other, and they continually make eye contact. On the other side of the room, there's a group of four men. They sit at angles to each other. During much of their discussion, their eyes roam around the room, glancing at each other infrequently. Each cluster is engaged in its preferred style of talk. It's great for tonight, but when group members are engaged with the other gender these preferences may cause problems.
One specific aspect of nonverbal communication is body orientation. If a man won't make eye contact or face his female conversational partner, she (perceiving conversation as integral to relationships) may interpret this as a lack of interest. He may become annoyed that she is rejecting his efforts; to him, his relaxed body position is actually helping him concentrate. The vast differences in physical alignment can make it difficult for talkers to reconcile the two styles [source: Tannen].

**Nonverbal Communication**

Fingers tapping. Eyes squinting. Legs crossing. Hands fluttering. Heads nodding. Nonverbal communication involves varying levels of body expression, with women usually functioning at high intensity. Faces are animated and hands are in motion, often touching others. Men are more conservative in facial movement and body contact. However, they do tend to be unreserved in sitting styles: sprawling, stretching and spreading out. The intensity level for women drops for the sitting position -- they tend to draw in, keeping arms and legs close to their bodies.

How does nonverbal communication impact male and female communication? Women's actions focus on maintaining the relationship: providing attention and encouraging participation. The goal for men, however, depends upon the task. Want to appear in charge? Use the body to control the discussion space. Want to preserve calm and prevent emotional escalation? Keep the face quiet and impassive [source: McManus].
Test Yourself for Hidden Bias


Psychologists at Harvard, the University of Virginia and the University of Washington created "Project Implicit" to develop Hidden Bias Tests — called Implicit Association Tests, or IATs, in the academic world — to measure unconscious bias.

About Stereotypes and Prejudices

Hidden Bias Tests measure unconscious, or automatic, biases. Your willingness to examine your own possible biases is an important step in understanding the roots of stereotypes and prejudice in our society.

The ability to distinguish friend from foe helped early humans survive, and the ability to quickly and automatically categorize people is a fundamental quality of the human mind. Categories give order to life, and every day, we group other people into categories based on social and other characteristics.

This is the foundation of stereotypes, prejudice and, ultimately, discrimination.

Definition of terms

A stereotype is an exaggerated belief, image or distorted truth about a person or group — a generalization that allows for little or no individual differences or social variation. Stereotypes are based on images in mass media, or reputations passed on by parents, peers and other members of society. Stereotypes can be positive or negative.

A prejudice is an opinion, prejudgment or attitude about a group or its individual members. A prejudice can be positive, but in our usage refers to a negative attitude. Prejudices are often accompanied by ignorance, fear or hatred. Prejudices are formed by a complex psychological process that begins with attachment to a close circle of acquaintances or an "in-group" such as a family. Prejudice is often aimed at "out-groups."

Discrimination is behavior that treats people unequally because of their group memberships. Discriminatory behavior, ranging from slights to hate crimes, often begins with negative stereotypes and prejudices.

How do we learn prejudice?

Social scientists believe children begin to acquire prejudices and stereotypes as toddlers. Many studies have shown that as early as age 3, children pick up terms of racial prejudice without really understanding their significance.
Soon, they begin to form attachments to their own group and develop negative attitudes about other racial or ethnic groups, or the "out-group". Early in life, most children acquire a full set of biases that can be observed in verbal slurs, ethnic jokes and acts of discrimination.

**How are our biases reinforced?**

Once learned, stereotypes and prejudices resist change, even when evidence fails to support them or points to the contrary.

People will embrace anecdotes that reinforce their biases, but disregard experience that contradicts them. The statement "Some of my best friends are _____" captures this tendency to allow some exceptions without changing our bias.

**How do we perpetuate bias?**

Bias is perpetuated by conformity with in-group attitudes and socialization by the culture at large. The fact that white culture is dominant in America may explain why people of color often do not show a strong bias favoring their own ethnic group.

Mass media routinely take advantage of stereotypes as shorthand to paint a mood, scene or character. The elderly, for example, are routinely portrayed as being frail and forgetful, while younger people are often shown as vibrant and able.

Stereotypes can also be conveyed by omission in popular culture, as when TV shows present an all-white world. Psychologists theorize bias conveyed by the media helps to explain why children can adopt hidden prejudices even when their family environments explicitly oppose them.

**About Hidden Bias**

Scientific research has demonstrated that biases thought to be absent or extinguished remain as "mental residue" in most of us. Studies show people can be consciously committed to egalitarianism, and deliberately work to behave without prejudice, yet still possess hidden negative prejudices or stereotypes.

"Implicit Association Tests" (IATs) can tap those hidden, or automatic, stereotypes and prejudices that circumvent conscious control. Project Implicit — a collaborative research effort between researchers at Harvard University, the University of Virginia, and University of Washington — offers dozens of such tests.

We believe the IAT procedure may be useful beyond the research purposes for which it was originally developed. It may be a tool that can jumpstart our thinking about hidden biases: Where do they come from? How do they influence our actions? What can we do about them?
Biases and behavior
A growing number of studies show a link between hidden biases and actual behavior. In other words, hidden biases can reveal themselves in action, especially when a person's efforts to control behavior consciously flags under stress, distraction, relaxation or competition.

Unconscious beliefs and attitudes have been found to be associated with language and certain behaviors such as eye contact, blinking rates and smiles. Studies have found, for example, that school teachers clearly telegraph prejudices, so much so that some researchers believe children of color and white children in the same classroom effectively receive different educations.

A now classic experiment showed that white interviewers sat farther away from black applicants than from white applicants, made more speech errors and ended the interviews 25% sooner. Such discrimination has been shown to diminish the performance of anyone treated that way, whether black or white.

Experiments are being conducted to determine whether a strong hidden bias in someone results in more discriminatory behavior. But we can learn something from even the first studies:
- Those who showed greater levels of implicit prejudice toward, or stereotypes of, black or gay people were more unfriendly toward them.
- Subjects who had a stronger hidden race bias had more activity in a part of the brain known to be responsible for emotional learning when shown black faces than when shown white faces.

Leading to discrimination?
Whether laboratory studies adequately reflect real-life situations is not firmly established. But there is growing evidence, according to social scientists, that hidden biases are related to discriminatory behavior in a wide range of human interactions, from hiring and promotions to choices of housing and schools.

In the case of police, bias may affect split-second, life-or-death decisions. Shootings of black men incorrectly thought to be holding guns — an immigrant in New York, a cop in Rhode Island — brought this issue into the public debate.

It is possible unconscious prejudices and stereotypes may also affect court jury deliberations and other daily tasks requiring judgments of human character.

People who argue that prejudice is not a big problem today are, ironically, demonstrating the problem of unconscious prejudice. Because these prejudices are outside our awareness, they can indeed be denied.
The Effects of Prejudice and Stereotypes

Hidden bias has emerged as an important clue to the disparity between public opinion, as expressed by America’s creed and social goals, and the amount of discrimination that still exists.

Despite 30 years of equal-rights legislation, levels of poverty, education and success vary widely across races. Discrimination continues in housing and real estate sales, and racial profiling is a common practice, even among ordinary citizens.

Members of minorities continue to report humiliating treatment by store clerks, co-workers and police. While an African American man may dine in a fine restaurant anywhere in America, it can be embarrassing for him to attempt to flag down a taxi after that dinner.

A person who carries the stigma of group membership must be prepared for its debilitating effects.

Studies indicate that African American teenagers are aware they are stigmatized as being intellectually inferior and that they go to school bearing what psychologist Claude Steele has called a "burden of suspicion." Such a burden can affect their attitudes and achievement.

Similarly, studies found that when college women are reminded their group is considered bad at math, their performance may fulfill this prophecy.

These shadows hang over stigmatized people no matter their status or accomplishments. They must remain on guard and bear an additional burden that may affect their self-confidence, performance and aspirations. These stigmas have the potential to rob them of their individuality and debilitate their attempts to break out of stereotypical roles.

What You Can Do About Unconscious Stereotypes and Prejudices

Conscious attitudes and beliefs can change. The negative stereotypes associated with many immigrant groups, for example, have largely disappeared over time. For African-Americans, civil rights laws forced integration and nondiscrimination, which, in turn, helped to change public opinion. But psychologists have no ready roadmap for undoing such overt and especially hidden stereotypes and prejudices.

Learned at an early age

The first step may be to admit biases are learned early and are counter to our commitment to just treatment. Parents, teachers, faith leaders and other community leaders can help children question their values and beliefs and point out subtle stereotypes used by peers and in the media. Children should also be surrounded by cues that equality matters.
In his classic book, *The Nature of Prejudice*, the psychologist Gordon Allport observed children are more likely to grow up tolerant if they live in a home that is supportive and loving. "They feel welcome, accepted, loved, no matter what they do." In such an environment, different views are welcomed, punishment is not harsh or capricious, and these children generally think of people positively and carry a sense of goodwill and even affection.

**Community matters**
Integration, by itself, has not been shown to produce dramatic changes in attitudes and behavior. But many studies show when people work together in a structured environment to solve shared problems through community service, their attitudes about diversity can change dramatically.

By including members of other groups in a task, children begin to think of themselves as part of a larger community in which everyone has skills and can contribute. Such experiences have been shown to improve attitudes across racial lines and between people old and young.

There also is preliminary evidence that unconscious attitudes, contrary to initial expectations, may be malleable. For example, imagining strong women leaders or seeing positive role models of African Americans has been shown to, at least temporarily, change unconscious biases.

**'Feeling' unconscious bias**
But there is another aspect of the very experience of taking a test of hidden bias that may be helpful. Many test takers can "feel" their hidden prejudices as they perform the tests.

They can feel themselves unable to respond as rapidly to (for example) old + good concepts than young + good concepts. The very act of taking the tests can force hidden biases into the conscious part of the mind.

We would like to believe that when a person has a conscious commitment to change, the very act of discovering one's hidden biases can propel one to act to correct for it. It may not be possible to avoid the automatic stereotype or prejudice, but it is certainly possible to consciously rectify it.

**Committing to change**
If people are aware of their hidden biases, they can monitor and attempt to ameliorate hidden attitudes before they are expressed through behavior. This compensation can include attention to language, body language and to the stigmatization felt by target groups.
Common sense and research evidence also suggest that a change in behavior can modify beliefs and attitudes. It would seem logical that a conscious decision to be egalitarian might lead one to widen one's circle of friends and knowledge of other groups. Such efforts may, over time, reduce the strength of unconscious biases. It can be easy to reject the results of the tests as "not me" when you first encounter them. But that's the easy path. To ask where these biases come from, what they mean, and what we can do about them is the harder task.

Recognizing that the problem is in many others — as well as in ourselves — should motivate us all to try both to understand and to act.
Personality Types (Adapted from Myers Briggs Personality Test)


Q1. Which is your most natural energy orientation?

Every person has two faces. One is directed towards the OUTER world of activities, excitements, people, and things. The other is directed inward to the INNER world of thoughts, interests, ideas, and imagination. While these are two different but complementary sides of our nature, most people have an innate preference towards energy from either the OUTER or the INNER world. Thus one of their faces, either the Extraverted (E) or Introverted (I), takes the lead in their personality development and plays a more dominant role in their behavior.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extraverted Characteristics</th>
<th>Introverted Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Act first, think/reflect later</td>
<td>● Think/reflect first, then Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Feel deprived when cutoff from interaction with the outside world</td>
<td>● Regularly require an amount of &quot;private time&quot; to recharge batteries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Usually open to and motivated by outside world of people and things</td>
<td>● Motivated internally, mind is sometimes so active it is &quot;closed&quot; to outside world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Enjoy wide variety and change in people relationships</td>
<td>● Prefer one-to-one communication and relationships.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Choose which best fits: Extraversion (E) Introversion (I)

Q2. Which way of Perceiving or understanding is most "automatic" or natural?

The Sensing (S) side of our brain notices the sights, sounds, smells and all the sensory details of the PRESENT. It categorizes, organizes, records and stores the specifics from the here and now. It is REALITY based, dealing with "what is." It also provides the specific details of memory & recollections from PAST events. The Intuitive (N) side of our brain seeks to understand, interpret and form OVERALL patterns of all the information that is collected and records these patterns and relationships. It speculates on POSSIBILITIES, including looking into and forecasting the FUTURE. It is imaginative and conceptual. While both kinds of perceiving are necessary and used by all people, each of us instinctively tends to favor one over the other.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensing Characteristics</th>
<th>Intuitive Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Mentally live in the Now, attending to present opportunities
- Using common sense and creating practical solutions is automatic-instinctual
- Memory recall is rich in detail of facts and past events
- Best improvise from past experience
- Like clear and concrete information; dislike guessing when facts are "fuzzy"

Mentally live in the Future, attending to future possibilities
- Using imagination and creating/inventing new possibilities is automatic-instinctual
- Memory recall emphasizes patterns, contexts, and connections
- Best improvise from theoretical understanding
- Comfortable with ambiguous, fuzzy data and with guessing its meaning.

| Choose which best fits: | Sensing (S) | iNtuition (N) |

Q3. Which way of forming Judgments and making choices is most natural?

The Thinking (T) side of our brain analyzes information in a DETACHED, objective fashion. It operates from factual principles, deduces and forms conclusions systematically. It is our logical nature. The Feeling (F) side of our brain forms conclusions in an ATTACHED and somewhat global manner, based on likes/dislikes, impact on others, and human and aesthetic values. It is our subjective nature. While everyone uses both means of forming conclusions, each person has a natural bias towards one over the other so that when they give us conflicting directions - one side is the natural trump card or tiebreaker.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thinking Characteristics</th>
<th>Feeling Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Instinctively search for facts and logic in a decision situation.</td>
<td>• Instinctively employ personal feelings and impact on people in decision situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Naturally notices tasks and work to be accomplished.</td>
<td>• Naturally sensitive to people’s needs and reactions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Easily able to provide an objective and critical analysis.</td>
<td>• Naturally seek consensus and popular opinions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Accept conflict as a natural, normal part of relationships with people.</td>
<td>• Unsettled by conflict; have almost a toxic reaction to disharmony.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Choose which best fits: | Thinking (T) | Feeling (F) |
Q4. What is your "action orientation" towards the outside world?

All people use both **judging** (thinking and feeling) and **perceiving** (sensing and intuition) processes to store information, organize our thoughts, make decisions, take actions and manage our lives. Yet one of these processes (Judging or Perceiving) tends to **take the lead** in our relationship with the **outside world** . . . while the other governs our inner world. A **Judging (J)** style approaches the outside world **WITH A PLAN** and is oriented towards organizing one’s surroundings, being prepared, making decisions and reaching closure and completion. A **Perceiving (P)** style takes the outside world **AS IT COMES** and is adopting and adapting, flexible, open-ended and receptive to new opportunities and changing game plans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judging Characteristics</th>
<th>Perceiving Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Plan many of the details in advance before moving into action.</td>
<td>● Comfortable moving into action without a plan; plan on-the-go.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Focus on task-related action; complete meaningful segments before moving on.</td>
<td>● Like to multitask, have variety, mix work and play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Work best and avoid stress when able to keep ahead of deadlines.</td>
<td>● Naturally tolerant of time pressure; work best close to the deadlines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Naturally use targets, dates and standard routines to manage life.</td>
<td>● Instinctively avoid commitments which interfere with flexibility, freedom and variety.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Choose which best fits:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judging (J)</th>
<th>Perceiving (P)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Your Personality Type is:  

___   ___   ___   ___
Personality Type Descriptions


ISTJ
Serious and quiet, interested in security and peaceful living. Extremely thorough, responsible, and dependable. Well-developed powers of concentration. Usually interested in supporting and promoting traditions and establishments. Well-organized and hard working, they work steadily towards identified goals. They can usually accomplish any task once they have set their mind to it.

ISTP
Quiet and reserved, interested in how and why things work. Excellent skills with mechanical things. Risk-takers who they live for the moment. Usually interested in and talented at extreme sports. Uncomplicated in their desires. Loyal to their peers and to their internal value systems, but not overly concerned with respecting laws and rules if they get in the way of getting something done. Detached and analytical, they excel at finding solutions to practical problems.

ISFJ
Quiet, kind, and conscientious. Can be depended on to follow through. Usually puts the needs of others above their own needs. Stable and practical, they value security and traditions. Well-developed sense of space and function. Rich inner world of observations about people. Extremely perceptive of other's feelings. Interested in serving others.

ISFP
Quiet, serious, sensitive and kind. Do not like conflict, and not likely to do things which may generate conflict. Loyal and faithful. Extremely well-developed senses, and aesthetic appreciation for beauty. Not interested in leading or controlling others. Flexible and open-minded. Likely to be original and creative. Enjoy the present moment.

INFJ
Quietly forceful, original, and sensitive. Tend to stick to things until they are done. Extremely intuitive about people, and concerned for their feelings. Well-developed value systems which they strictly adhere to. Well-respected for their perseverance in doing the right thing. Likely to be individualistic, rather than leading or following.

INFP
Quiet, reflective, and idealistic. Interested in serving humanity. Well-developed value system, which they strive to live in accordance with. Extremely loyal. Adaptable and
laid-back unless a strongly-held value is threatened. Usually talented writers. Mentally quick, and able to see possibilities. Interested in understanding and helping people.

**INTJ**

Independent, original, analytical, and determined. Have an exceptional ability to turn theories into solid plans of action. Highly value knowledge, competence, and structure. Driven to derive meaning from their visions. Long-range thinkers. Have very high standards for their performance, and the performance of others. Natural leaders, but will follow if they trust existing leaders.

**INTP**

Logical, original, creative thinkers. Can become very excited about theories and ideas. Exceptionally capable and driven to turn theories into clear understandings. Highly value knowledge, competence and logic. Quiet and reserved, hard to get to know well. Individualistic, having no interest in leading or following others.

**ESTP**

Friendly, adaptable, action-oriented. "Doers" who are focused on immediate results. Living in the here-and-now, they're risk-takers who live fast-paced lifestyles. Impatient with long explanations. Extremely loyal to their peers, but not usually respectful of laws and rules if they get in the way of getting things done. Great people skills.

**ESTJ**

Practical, traditional, and organized. Likely to be athletic. Not interested in theory or abstraction unless they see the practical application. Have clear visions of the way things should be. Loyal and hard-working. Like to be in charge. Exceptionally capable in organizing and running activities. "Good citizens" who value security and peaceful living.

**ESFP**

People-oriented and fun-loving, they make things more fun for others by their enjoyment. Living for the moment, they love new experiences. They dislike theory and impersonal analysis. Interested in serving others. Likely to be the center of attention in social situations. Well-developed common sense and practical ability.

**ESFJ**

Warm-hearted, popular, and conscientious. Tend to put the needs of others over their own needs. Feel strong sense of responsibility and duty. Value traditions and security. Interested in serving others. Need positive reinforcement to feel good about themselves. Well-developed sense of space and function.

**ENFP**
Enthusiastic, idealistic, and creative. Able to do almost anything that interests them. Great people skills. Need to live life in accordance with their inner values. Excited by new ideas, but bored with details. Open-minded and flexible, with a broad range of interests and abilities.

**ENFJ**
Popular and sensitive, with outstanding people skills. Externally focused, with real concern for how others think and feel. Usually dislike being alone. They see everything from the human angle, and dislike impersonal analysis. Very effective at managing people issues, and leading group discussions. Interested in serving others, and probably place the needs of others over their own needs.

**ENTP**
Creative, resourceful, and intellectually quick. Good at a broad range of things. Enjoy debating issues, and may be into "one-up-manship". They get very excited about new ideas and projects, but may neglect the more routine aspects of life. Generally outspoken and assertive. They enjoy people and are stimulating company. Excellent ability to understand concepts and apply logic to find solutions.

**ENTJ**
Assertive and outspoken - they are driven to lead. Excellent ability to understand difficult organizational problems and create solid solutions. Intelligent and well-informed, they usually excel at public speaking. They value knowledge and competence, and usually have little patience with inefficiency or disorganization.

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Personality Type Information


Personality typing is a tool with many uses. It's especially notable for its helpfulness in the areas of growth and self-development. Learning and applying the theories of personality type can be a powerful and rewarding experience, if it is used as a tool for discovery, rather than as a method for putting people into boxes, or as an excuse for behavior.

The sixteen personality types which we use in our assessment are based on the well-known research of Carl Jung, Katharine C. Briggs, and Isabel Briggs Myers. Carl Jung first developed the theory that individuals each had a psychological type. He believed that there were two basic kinds of "functions" which humans used in their lives: how we take in information (how we "perceive" things), and how we make decisions. He believed that within these two categories, there were two opposite ways of functioning. We can perceive information via 1) our senses, or 2) our intuition. We can make decisions based on 1) objective logic, or 2) subjective feelings. Jung believed that we all use these four functions in our lives, but that each individual uses the different functions with a varying amount of success and frequency. He believed that we could identify an order of preference for these functions within individuals. The function which someone uses most frequently is their "dominant" function. The dominant function is supported by an auxiliary (2nd) function, tertiary (3rd) function, and inferior (4th) function. He asserted that individuals either "extraverted" or "introverted" their dominant function. He felt that the dominant function was so important, that it overshadowed all of the other functions in terms of defining personality type. Therefore, Jung defined eight personality types:

1. Extraverted Sensing (modern types: ESFP, ESTP)
2. Introverted Sensing (modern types: ISTJ, ISFJ)
3. Extraverted Intuition (modern types: ENFP, ENTP)
4. Introverted Intuition (modern types: INFJ, INTJ)
5. Extraverted Thinking (modern types: ESTJ, ENTJ)
6. Introverted Thinking (modern types: ISTP, INTP)
7. Extraverted Feeling (modern types: ESFJ, ENFJ)
8. Introverted Feeling (modern types: INFP, ISFP)

Katharine Briggs expounded upon Jung's work, quietly working in silence and developing his theories further. But it was Katharine's daughter Isabel who was really responsible for making the work on Personality Types visible. Isabel, using her mother's work and Jung's work, asserted the importance of the auxiliary function working with the dominant function in defining Personality Type. While incorporating the auxiliary function into the picture, it became apparent that there was another distinctive preference which hadn't been defined by Jung: Judging and Perceiving. The developed theory today is that every individual has a primary mode of operation within four categories:

1. our flow of energy
2. how we take in information
3. how we prefer to make decisions
4. the basic day-to-day lifestyle that we prefer

Within each of these categories, we "prefer" to be either:
1. Extraverted or Introverted
2. Sensing or iNtuitive
3. Thinking or Feeling
4. Judging or Perceiving

We all naturally use one mode of operation within each category more easily and more frequently than we use the other mode of operation. So, we are said to "prefer" one function over the other. The combination of our four "preferences" defines our personality type. Although everybody functions across the entire spectrum of the preferences, each individual has a natural preference which leans in one direction or the other within the four categories.

Our Flow of Energy defines how we receive the essential part of our stimulation. Do we receive it from within ourselves (Introverted) or from external sources (Extraverted)? Is our dominant function focused externally or internally?

The topic of how we Take in Information deals with our preferred method of taking in and absorbing information. Do we trust our five senses (Sensing) to take in information, or do we rely on our instincts (iNtuitive)?

The third type of preference, how we prefer to Make Decisions, refers to whether we are prone to decide things based on logic and objective consideration (Thinking), or based on our personal, subjective value systems (Feeling).

These first three preferences were the basis of Jung's theory of Personalty Types. Isabel Briggs Myers developed the theory of the fourth preference, which is concerned with how we deal with the external world on a Day-to-day Basis. Are we organized and purposeful, and more comfortable with scheduled, structured environments (Judging), or are we flexible and diverse, and more comfortable with open, casual environments (Perceiving)? From a theoretical perspective, we know that if our highest Extraverted function is a Decision Making function, we prefer Judging. If our highest Extraverted function is an Information Gathering function, we prefer Perceiving.

Personality Types Today

The theory of Personality Types, as it stand today, contends that:
An individual is either primarily Extraverted or Introverted
An individual is either primarily Sensing or iNtuitive
An individual is either primarily Thinking or Feeling
An individual is either primarily Judging or Perceiving

The possible combinations of the basic preferences form 16 different Personality Types.
This does not mean that all (or even most) individuals will fall strictly into one category or another. If we learn by applying this tool that we are primarily Extraverted, that does not mean that we don’t also perform Introverted activities. We all function in all of these realms on a daily basis. As we grow and learn, most of us develop the ability to function well in realms which are not native to our basic personalities. In the trials and tribulations of life, we develop some areas of ourselves more thoroughly than other areas. With this in mind, it becomes clear that we cannot box individuals into prescribed formulas for behavior. However, we can identify our natural preferences, and learn about our natural strengths and weaknesses within that context.

The theory of Personality Types contends that each of us has a natural preference which falls into one category or the other in each of these four areas, and that our native Personality Type indicates how we are likely to deal with different situations that life presents, and in which environments we are most comfortable.

Learning about our Personality Type helps us to understand why certain areas in life come easily to us, and others are more of a struggle. Learning about other people’s Personality Types help us to understand the most effective way to communicate with them, and how they function best.

**Practical Application for Personality Types**

**Career Guidance** What types of tasks are we most suited to perform? Where are we naturally most happy?

**Managing Employees** How can we best understand an employee’s natural capabilities, and where they will find the most satisfaction?

**Inter-personal Relationships** How can we improve our awareness of another individual’s Personality Type, and therefore increase our understanding of their reactions to situations, and know how to best communicate with them on a level which they will understand?

**Education** How can we develop different teaching methods to effectively educate different types of people?

**Counselling** How we can help individuals understand themselves better, and become better able to deal with their strengths and weaknesses?
Stereotypes and Prejudices


Stereotypes

A "stereotype" is a generalization about a person or group of persons. We develop stereotypes when we are unable or unwilling to obtain all of the information we would need to make fair judgments about people or situations. In the absence of the "total picture," stereotypes in many cases allow us to "fill in the blanks." Our society often innocently creates and perpetuates stereotypes, but these stereotypes often lead to unfair discrimination and persecution when the stereotype is unfavorable.

For example, if we are walking through a park late at night and encounter three senior citizens wearing fur coats and walking with canes, we may not feel as threatened as if we were met by three high school-aged boys wearing leather jackets. Why is this so? We have made a generalization in each case. These generalizations have their roots in experiences we have had ourselves, read about in books and magazines, seen in movies or television, or have had related to us by friends and family. In many cases, these stereotypical generalizations are reasonably accurate. Yet, in virtually every case, we are resorting to prejudice by ascribing characteristics about a person based on a stereotype, without knowledge of the total facts. By stereotyping, we assume that a person or group has certain characteristics. Quite often, we have stereotypes about persons who are members of groups with which we have not had firsthand contact.

Television, books, comic strips, and movies are all abundant sources of stereotyped characters. For much of its history, the movie industry portrayed African-Americans as being unintelligent, lazy, or violence-prone. As a result of viewing these stereotyped pictures of African-Americans, for example, prejudice against African-Americans has been encouraged. In the same way, physically attractive women have been and continue to be portrayed as unintelligent or unintellectual and sexually promiscuous.

Stereotypes also evolve out of fear of persons from minority groups. For example, many people have the view of a person with mental illness as someone who is violence-prone. This conflicts with statistical data, which indicate that persons with mental illness tend to be no more prone to violence than the general population. Perhaps the few, but well-publicized, isolated cases of mentally ill persons going on rampages have planted the seed of this myth about these persons. This may be how some stereotypes developed in the first place; a series of isolated behaviors by a member of a group which was unfairly generalized to be viewed as a character of all members of that group.

Discrimination

When we judge people and groups based on our prejudices and stereotypes and treat them differently, we are engaging in discrimination. This discrimination can take many
forms. We may create subtle or overt pressures which will discourage persons of certain minority groups from living in a neighborhood. Women and minorities have been victimized by discrimination in employment, education, and social services. We may shy away from people with a history of mental illness because we are afraid they may harm us. Women and minorities are often excluded from high echelon positions in the business world. Many clubs have restrictive membership policies which do not permit Jews, African-Americans, women, and others to join.

In some cases, the civil and criminal justice system has not been applied equally to all as a result of discrimination. Some studies indicate that African-Americans convicted of first degree murder have a significantly higher probability of receiving a death penalty than whites convicted of first degree murder, for example. When political boundaries have been drawn, a process known as "gerrymandering" has often been used to provide that minorities and other groups are not represented in proportion to their population in city councils, state legislatures, and the U.S. Congress.

Racism
Anthropologists, scientists who study humans and their origins, generally accept that the human species can be categorized into races based on physical and genetic makeup. For example, many, but certainly not all African-Americans have physical differences from Caucasians beyond their dark skin, such as wiry hair. Virtually all scientists accept the fact that there is no credible scientific evidence that one race is culturally or psychologically different from any other, or that one race is superior to another. Past studies which reached conclusions other than that have been found to be seriously flawed in their methodology or inherently biased.

Yet despite overwhelming scientific evidence to the contrary, there are people who maintain that their own race is superior to all others. These people, known collectively as "racists," are the most likely to engage in discrimination, persecution, and violence against those they deem to be members of "inferior" races.

In 19th century Europe, Jews were classified as an "inferior" race with specific physical and personality characteristics. Some thinkers believed these traits would disappear if Jews received political and social emancipation and could assimilate into the broader society. Others felt that these traits were genetically passed on and could not be changed. Racial theory, distorted into a pseudo-science, sanctioned negative stereotypes existing from classical and Christian anti-Semitism (see Chapter 4). An increasing emphasis on nationalism also highlighted the Jews as a "foreign element," which could contaminate the native stock and culture and potentially dominate the native population economically and politically (see Chapter 5). This long-standing history provided a seed-bed for the Nazi ideology and program of genocide.

In North America, African-Americans were brought from Africa as slaves, and their descendants have endured centuries of oppression. During the Civil War, slaves were freed and granted citizenship. Discrimination continued. "Jim Crow" laws in the South required separate bathrooms, buses, and nursing homes for African-Americans. Poll
taxes and literacy tests were required solely for the purpose of disenfranchising minorities. Before the landmark 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision of Brown vs. Board of Education (Topeka, Kansas), segregation of school systems was legal. Decades later, many school systems remain segregated.

Racism against African-Americans is still prevalent in the United States. Despite laws and other protections against discrimination, African-Americans still face discrimination in housing, employment, and education. African-Americans are still victimized by insurance red-lining, and the racism of whites and others is exploited by block-busting, a practice which is illegal in Pennsylvania and many other states. Although racist organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan have small memberships, they have been actively recruiting and holding rallies in Pennsylvania and other states and spreading their messages of hate against African-Americans, Jews, Catholics, and other minorities.

Civil rights laws have been passed at the local, state, and federal levels to combat racism and the persecution and discrimination which racism promotes. While the First Amendment to the Constitution protects the rights of everyone to assemble peaceably and speak freely, racist messages universally bring a response of condemnation from responsible members of the communities that racists visit. The international community universally has condemned the apartheid policies of the government of South Africa, and the debate on sanctions against this government is a continuing public policy issue before the U.S. Congress.
No matter who you are or where you live, problems are an inevitable part of life. This is true for groups as well as for individuals. Some groups—especially work teams—are formed specifically to solve problems. Other groups encounter problems for a wide variety of reasons. Within a family group, a problem might be that a daughter or son wants to get married and the parents do not approve of the marriage partner. In a work group, a problem might be that some workers are putting in more effort than others, yet achieving poorer results. Regardless of the problem, having the resources of a group can be an advantage, as different people can contribute different ideas for how to reach a satisfactory solution.

Once a group encounters a problem, the questions that come up range from “Where do we start?” to “How do we solve it?” While there are many ways to approach a problem, the American educational philosopher John Dewey’s reflective thinking sequence has stood the test of time. This seven-step process[1] has produced positive results and serves as a handy organizational structure. If you are member of a group that needs to solve a problem and don’t know where to start, consider these seven simple steps in a format adapted from Scott McLean: [2]

1. Define the problem
2. Analyze the problem
3. Establish criteria
4. Consider possible solutions
5. Decide on a solution
6. Implement the solution
7. Follow up on the solution

Let’s discuss each step in detail.

**Define the Problem**

If you don’t know what the problem is, how do you know you can solve it? Defining the problem allows the group to set boundaries of what the problem is and what it is not and to begin to formalize a description or definition of the scope, size, or extent of the challenge the group will address. A problem that is too broadly defined can overwhelm the group. If the problem is too narrowly defined, important information will be missed or ignored.

In the following example, we have a Web-based company called Favorites that needs to
increase its customer base and ultimately sales. A problem-solving group has been formed, and they start by formulating a working definition of the problem.

Too broad: “Sales are off, our numbers are down, and we need more customers.” More precise: “Sales have been slipping incrementally for six of the past nine months and are significantly lower than a seasonally adjusted comparison to last year. Overall, this loss represents a 4.5 percent reduction in sales from the same time last year. However, when we break it down by product category, sales of our nonedible products have seen a modest but steady increase, while sales of edibles account for the drop off and we need to halt the decline.”

**Analyze the Problem**

Now the group analyzes the problem, trying to gather information and learn more. The problem is complex and requires more than one area of expertise. Why do nonedible products continue selling well? What is it about the edibles that is turning customers off?

Let’s meet our problem solvers at Favorites.

Kevin is responsible for customer resource management. He is involved with the customer from the point of initial contact through purchase and delivery. Most of the interface is automated in the form of an online “basket model,” where photographs and product descriptions are accompanied by “buy it” buttons. He is available during normal working business hours for live chat and voice chat if needed, and customers are invited to request additional information. Most Favorites customers do not access this service, but Kevin is kept quite busy, as he also handles returns and complaints. Because Kevin believes that superior service retains customers while attracting new ones, he is always interested in better ways to serve the customer. Looking at edibles and nonedibles, he will study the cycle of customer service and see if there are any common points—from the main Web page, through the catalog, to the purchase process, and to returns—at which customers abandon the sale. He has existing customer feedback loops with end-of-sale surveys, but most customers decline to take the survey and there is currently no incentive to participate.

Mariah is responsible for products and purchasing. She wants to offer the best products at the lowest price, and to offer new products that are unusual, rare, or exotic. She regularly adds new products to the Favorites catalog and culls underperformers. Right now she has the data on every product and its sales history, but it is a challenge to represent it. She will analyze current sales data and produce a report that specifically identifies how each product—edible and nonedible—is performing. She wants to highlight “winners” and “losers” but also recognizes that today’s “losers” may be the hit of tomorrow. It is hard to predict constantly changing tastes and preferences, but that is part of her job. It’s not all science, and it’s not all art. She has to have an eye for what will catch on tomorrow while continuing to provide what is hot today.

Suri is responsible for data management at Favorites. She gathers, analyzes, and presents information gathered from the supply chain, sales, and marketing. She works with vendors to make sure products are available when needed, makes sales
predictions based on past sales history, and assesses the effectiveness of marketing campaigns. The problem-solving group members already have certain information on hand. They know that customer retention is one contributing factor. Attracting new customers is a constant goal, but they are aware of the well-known principle that it takes more effort to attract new customers than to keep existing ones. Thus, it is important to insure a quality customer service experience for existing customers and encourage them to refer friends. The group needs to determine how to promote this favorable customer behavior.

Another contributing factor seems to be that customers often abandon the shopping cart before completing a purchase, especially when purchasing edibles. The group members need to learn more about why this is happening.

**Establish Criteria**

Establishing the criteria for a solution is the next step. At this point, information is coming in from diverse perspectives, and each group member has contributed information from their perspective, even though there may be several points of overlap.

Kevin: Customers who complete the postsale survey indicate that they want to know (1) what is the estimated time of delivery, (2) why a specific item was not in stock and when it will be available, and (3) why their order sometimes arrives with less than a complete order, with some items back-ordered, without prior notification. He notes that a very small percentage of customers complete the postsale survey, and the results are far from scientific. He also notes that it appears the interface is not capable of cross-checking inventory to provide immediate information concerning back orders, so that the customer “buys it” only to learn several days later that it was not in stock. This seems to be especially problematic for edible products, because people may tend to order them for special occasions like birthdays and anniversaries. But we don’t really know this for sure because of the low participation in the postsale survey.

Mariah: There are four edible products that frequently sell out. So far, we haven’t been able to boost the appeal of other edibles so that people would order them as a second choice when these sales leaders aren’t available. We also have several rare, exotic products that are slow movers. They have potential, but currently are underperformers.

Suri: We know from a zip code analysis that most of our customers are from a few specific geographic areas associated with above-average incomes. We have very few credit cards declined, and the average sale is over $100. Shipping costs represent on average 8 percent of the total sales cost. We do not have sufficient information to produce a customer profile. There is no specific point in the purchase process where basket abandonment tends to happen; it happens fairly uniformly at all steps.

**Consider Possible Solutions to the Problem**

The group has listened to each other and now starts to brainstorm ways to address the
challenges they have addressed while focusing resources on those solutions that are more likely to produce results.

Kevin: Is it possible for our programmers to create a cross-index feature, linking the product desired with a report of how many are in stock? I’d like the customer to know right away whether it is in stock, or how long they may have to wait. As another idea, is it possible to add incentives to the purchase cycle that won’t negatively impact our overall profit? I’m thinking a small volume discount on multiple items, or perhaps free shipping over a specific dollar amount.

Mariah: I recommend we hold a focus group where customers can sample our edible products and tell us what they like best and why. When the best sellers are sold out, could we offer a discount on related products to provide an instant alternative? We might also cull the underperforming products with a liquidation sale to generate interest.

Suri: If we want to know more about our customers, we need to give them an incentive to complete the post sale survey. How about a 5 percent off coupon code for the next purchase to get them to return and to help us better identify our customer base? We may also want to build in a customer referral rewards program, but it all takes better data in to get results out. We should also explore the supply side of the business by getting a more reliable supply of the leading products and trying to get discounts that are more advantageous from our suppliers, especially in the edible category.

**Decide on a Solution**

Kevin, Mariah, and Suri may want to implement all the solution strategies, but they do not have the resources to do them all. They’ll complete a cost-benefit analysis, which ranks each solution according to its probable impact. The analysis is shown in Table 19.6 "Cost-Benefit Analysis".

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Proposed Solution</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>Integrate the cross-index feature</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Many of our competitors already have this feature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Volume discount</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>May increase sales slightly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Free Shipping</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>This has a downside in making customers more aware of shipping costs if their order doesn’t qualify for free shipping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
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<td>-----</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mariah</strong></td>
<td><strong>Hold a focus group to taste edible products</strong></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td><strong>Difficult to select participants representative of our customer base</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Search for alternative products to high performers</strong></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td><strong>We can't know for sure which products customers will like best</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Liquidate underperformers</strong></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>** Might create a “bargain basement” impression inconsistent with our brand**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suri</strong></td>
<td><strong>Incentive for postsale survey completion</strong></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td><strong>Make sure the incentive process is easy for the customer</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Incentive for customer referrals</strong></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td><strong>People may feel uncomfortable referring friends if it is seen as putting them in a marketing role</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Find a more reliable supply of top-selling edibles</strong></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td><strong>We already know customers want these products</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negotiate better discounts from vendors</strong></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td><strong>If we can do this without alienating our best vendors, it will be a win-win</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now that the options have been presented with their costs and benefits, it is easier for the group to decide which courses of action are likely to yield the best outcomes. The analysis helps the group members to see beyond the immediate cost of implementing a given solution. For example, Kevin’s suggestion of offering free shipping won’t cost Favorites much money, but it also may not pay off in customer goodwill. And even though Mariah’s suggestion of having a focus group might sound like a good idea, it will be expensive and its benefits are questionable.

A careful reading of the analysis indicates that Kevin’s best suggestion is to integrate the cross-index feature in the ordering process so that customers can know immediately whether an item is in stock or on back order. Mariah, meanwhile, suggests that searching for alternative products is probably the most likely to benefit Favorites, while Suri’s two supply-side suggestions are likely to result in positive outcomes.

**Implement the Solution**
Kevin is faced with the challenge of designing the computer interface without incurring unacceptable costs. He strongly believes that the interface will pay for itself within the
first year—or, to put it more bluntly, that Favorites’ declining sales will get worse if the Web site does not have this feature soon. He asks to meet with top management to get budget approval and secures their agreement, on one condition: he must negotiate a compensation schedule with the Information Technology consultants that includes delayed compensation in the form of bonuses after the feature has been up and running successfully for six months.

Mariah knows that searching for alternative products is a never-ending process, but it takes time and the company needs results. She decides to invest time evaluating products that competing companies currently offer, especially in the edible category, on the theory that customers who find their desired items sold out on the Favorites Web site may have been buying alternative products elsewhere instead of choosing an alternative from Favorites’s product lines. Suri decides to approach the vendors of the four frequently sold-out products and ask point blank, “What would it take to get you to produce these items more reliably in greater quantities?” By opening the channel of communication with these vendors, she is able to motivate them to make modifications that will improve the reliability and quantity. She also approaches the vendors of the less popular products with a request for better discounts in return for their cooperation in developing and test-marketing new products.

Follow Up on the Solution

Kevin: After several beta tests, the cross-index feature was implemented and has been in place for thirty days. Now customers see either “in stock” or “available [mo/da/yr]” in the shopping basket. As expected, Kevin notes a decrease in the number of chat and phone inquiries to the effect of, “Will this item arrive before my wife’s birthday?” However, he notes an increase in inquiries asking, “Why isn’t this item in stock?” It is difficult to tell whether customer satisfaction is higher overall.

Mariah: In exploring the merchandise available from competing merchants, she got several ideas for modifying Favorites’ product line to offer more flavors and other variations on popular edibles. Working with vendors, she found that these modifications cost very little. Within the first thirty days of adding these items to the product line, sales are up. Mariah believes these additions also serve to enhance the Favorites brand identity, but she has no data to back this up.

Suri: So far, the vendors supplying the four top-selling edibles have fulfilled their promise of increasing quantity and reliability. However, three of the four items have still sold out, raising the question of whether Favorites needs to bring in one or more additional vendors to produce these items. Of the vendors with which Favorites asked to negotiate better discounts, some refused, and two of these were “stolen” by a competing merchant so that they no longer sell to Favorites. In addition, one of the vendors that agreed to give a better discount was unexpectedly forced to cease operations for several weeks because of a fire.

This scenario allows us to see that the problem may have several dimensions as well as
solutions, but resources can be limited and not every solution is successful. Even though the problem is not immediately resolved, the group problem-solving pattern serves as a useful guide through the problem-solving process.
Decision Making


What Is Decision Making?

Decision making refers to making choices among alternative courses of action—which may also include inaction. While it can be argued that management is decision making, half of the decisions made by managers within organizations fail. Therefore, increasing effectiveness in decision making is an important part of maximizing your effectiveness at work. This chapter will help you understand how to make decisions alone or in a group while avoiding common decision-making traps.

Individuals throughout organizations use the information they gather to make a wide range of decisions. These decisions may affect the lives of others and change the course of an organization. For example, the decisions made by executives and consulting firms for Enron ultimately resulted in a $60 billion loss for investors, thousands of employees without jobs, and the loss of all employee retirement funds. But Sherron Watkins, a former Enron employee and now-famous whistleblower, uncovered the accounting problems and tried to enact change. Similarly, the decisions made by firms to trade in mortgage-backed securities is having negative consequences for the entire U.S. economy. Each of these people made a decision, and each person, as well as others, is now living with the consequences of his or her decisions. Because many decisions involve an ethical component, one of the most important considerations in management is whether the decisions you are making as an employee or manager are ethical. Here are some basic questions you can ask yourself to assess the ethics of a decision.

- Is this decision fair?
- Will I feel better or worse about myself after I make this decision?
- Does this decision break any organizational rules?
- Does this decision break any laws?
- How would I feel if this decision was broadcast on the news?

Types of Decisions

Despite the far-reaching nature of the decisions in the previous example, not all decisions have major consequences or even require a lot of thought. For example, before you come to class, you make simple and habitual decisions such as what to wear, what to eat, and which route to take as you go to and from home and school. You probably do not spend much time on these mundane decisions. These types of straightforward decisions are termed programmed decisions; these are decisions that occur frequently enough that we develop an automated response to them. The automated response we use to make these
decisions is called the decision rule. For example, many restaurants face customer complaints as a routine part of doing business. Because this is a recurring problem for restaurants, it may be regarded as a programmed decision. To deal with this problem, the restaurant might have a policy stating that every time they receive a valid customer complaint, the customer should receive a free dessert, which represents a decision rule. Making strategic, tactical, and operational decisions is an integral part of the planning function in the P-O-L-C (planning-organizing-leading-controlling) model.

However, decisions that are unique and important require conscious thinking, information gathering, and careful consideration of alternatives. These are called nonprogrammed decisions. For example, in 2005, McDonald’s became aware of a need to respond to growing customer concerns regarding foods high in fat and calories. This is a nonprogrammed decision because for several decades, customers of fast-food restaurants were more concerned with the taste and price of the food, rather than the healthiness. In response, McDonald’s decided to offer healthier alternatives, such as substituting apple slices in Happy Meals for French fries and discontinuing the use of trans fats.

A crisis situation also constitutes a nonprogrammed decision for companies. For example, the leadership of Nutrorim was facing a tough decision. They had recently introduced a new product, ChargeUp with Lipitrene, an improved version of their popular sports drink powder, ChargeUp. But a phone call came from a state health department to inform them that several cases of gastrointestinal distress had been reported after people consumed the new product. Nutrorim decided to recall ChargeUp with Lipitrene immediately. Two weeks later, it became clear that the gastrointestinal problems were unrelated to ChargeUp with Lipitrene. However, the damage to the brand and to the balance sheets was already done. This unfortunate decision caused Nutrorim to rethink the way decisions were made under pressure so that they now gather information to make informed choices even when time is of the essence.

Decision making can also be classified into three categories based on the level at which they occur. Strategic decisions set the course of organization. Tactical decisions are decisions about how things will get done. Finally, operational decisions are decisions that employees make each day to run the organization. For example, remember the restaurant that routinely offers a free dessert when a customer complaint is received. The owner of the restaurant made a strategic decision to have great customer service. The manager of the restaurant implemented the free dessert policy as a way to handle customer complaints, which is a tactical decision. And, the servers at the restaurant are making individual decisions each day evaluating whether each customer complaint received is legitimate to warrant a free dessert.

In this chapter, we are going to discuss different decision-making models designed to understand and evaluate the effectiveness of nonprogrammed decisions. We will cover four decision-making approaches starting with the rational decision-making model, moving to the bounded rationality decision-making model, the intuitive decision-making
Making Rational Decisions

The rational decision-making model describes a series of steps that decision makers should consider if their goal is to maximize the quality of their outcomes. In other words, if you want to make sure you make the best choice, going through the formal steps of the rational decision-making model may make sense.

Let’s imagine that your old, clunky car has broken down and you have enough money saved for a substantial down payment on a new car. It is the first major purchase of your life, and you want to make the right choice. The first step, therefore, has already been completed—we know that you want to buy a new car. Next, in step 2, you’ll need to decide which factors are important to you. How many passengers do you want to accommodate? How important is fuel economy to you? Is safety a major concern? You only have a certain amount of money saved, and you don’t want to take on too much debt, so price range is an important factor as well. If you know you want to have room for at least five adults, get at least 20 miles per gallon, drive a car with a strong safety rating, not spend more than $22,000 on the purchase, and like how it looks, you’ve identified the decision criteria. All of the potential options for purchasing your car will be evaluated against these criteria. Before we can move too much further, you need to decide how important each factor is to your decision in step 3. If each is equally important, then there is no need to weight them, but if you know that price and gas mileage are key factors, you might weight them heavily and keep the other criteria with medium importance. Step 4 requires you to generate all alternatives about your options. Then, in step 5, you need to use this information to evaluate each alternative against the criteria you have established. You choose the best alternative (step 6) and you go out and buy your new car (step 7). Of course, the outcome of this decision will be related to the next decision made; that is where the evaluation in step 8 comes in. For example, if you purchase a car but have nothing but problems with it, you are unlikely to consider the same make and model in purchasing another car the next time!

While decision makers can get off track during any of these steps, research shows that limiting the search for alternatives in the fourth step can be the most challenging and lead to failure. In fact, one researcher found that no alternative generation occurred in 85% of the decisions studied. Conversely, successful managers are clear about what they want at the outset of the decision-making process, set objectives for others to respond to, carry out an unrestricted search for solutions, get key people to participate, and avoid using their power to push their perspective.

The rational decision-making model has important lessons for decision makers. First, when making a decision you may want to make sure that you establish your decision criteria before you search for all alternatives. This would prevent you from liking one option too much and setting your criteria accordingly. For example, let’s say you started browsing for cars before you decided your decision criteria. You may come across a car that you think really reflects your sense of style and make an emotional bond with the...
car. Then, because of your love for this car, you may say to yourself that the fuel economy of the car and the innovative braking system are the most important criteria. After purchasing it, you may realize that the car is too small for all of your friends to ride in the back seat when you and your brother are sitting in front, which was something you should have thought about! Setting criteria before you search for alternatives may prevent you from making such mistakes. Another advantage of the rational model is that it urges decision makers to generate all alternatives instead of only a few. By generating a large number of alternatives that cover a wide range of possibilities, you are likely to make a more effective decision in which you do not need to sacrifice one criterion for the sake of another.

Despite all its benefits, you may have noticed that this decision-making model involves a number of unrealistic assumptions. It assumes that people understand what decision is to be made, that they know all their available choices, that they have no perceptual biases, and that they want to make optimal decisions. Nobel Prize–winning economist Herbert Simon observed that while the rational decision-making model may be a helpful tool for working through problems, it doesn’t represent how decisions are frequently made within organizations. In fact, Simon argued that it didn’t even come close!

Think about how you make important decisions in your life. Our guess is that you rarely sit down and complete all eight steps in the rational decision-making model. For example, this model proposed that we should search for all possible alternatives before making a decision, but this can be time consuming and individuals are often under time pressure to make decisions. Moreover, even if we had access to all the information, it could be challenging to compare the pros and cons of each alternative and rank them according to our preferences. Anyone who has recently purchased a new laptop computer or cell phone can attest to the challenge of sorting through the different strengths and limitations of each brand, model, and plans offered for support and arriving at the solution that best meets their needs.

In fact, the availability of too much information can lead to analysis paralysis, where more and more time is spent on gathering information and thinking about it, but no decisions actually get made. A senior executive at Hewlett-Packard admits that his company suffered from this spiral of analyzing things for too long to the point where data gathering led to “not making decisions, instead of us making decisions.” Moreover, you may not always be interested in reaching an optimal decision. For example, if you are looking to purchase a house, you may be willing and able to invest a great deal of time and energy to find your dream house, but if you are looking for an apartment to rent for the academic year, you may be willing to take the first one that meets your criteria of being clean, close to campus, and within your price range.

Making “Good Enough” Decisions
The bounded rationality model of decision making recognizes the limitations of our decision-making processes. According to this model, individuals knowingly limit their options to a manageable set and choose the best alternative without conducting an exhaustive search for alternatives. An important part of the bounded rationality approach is the tendency to satisfice, which refers to accepting the first alternative that
meets your minimum criteria. For example, many college graduates do not conduct a national or international search for potential job openings; instead, they focus their search on a limited geographic area and tend to accept the first offer in their chosen area, even if it may not be the ideal job situation.

Satisficing is similar to rational decision making, but it differs in that rather than choosing the best choice and maximizing the potential outcome, the decision maker saves time and effort by accepting the first alternative that meets the minimum threshold.

**Making Intuitive Decisions**

The intuitive decision-making model has emerged as an important decision-making model. It refers to arriving at decisions without conscious reasoning. Eighty-nine percent of managers surveyed admitted to using intuition to make decisions at least sometimes, and 59% said they used intuition often. When we recognize that managers often need to make decisions under challenging circumstances with time pressures, constraints, a great deal of uncertainty, highly visible and high-stakes outcomes, and within changing conditions, it makes sense that they would not have the time to formally work through all the steps of the rational decision-making model. Yet when CEOs, financial analysts, and healthcare workers are asked about the critical decisions they make, seldom do they attribute success to luck. To an outside observer, it may seem like they are making guesses as to the course of action to take, but it turns out that they are systematically making decisions using a different model than was earlier suspected. Research on life-or-death decisions made by fire chiefs, pilots, and nurses finds that these experts do not choose among a list of well-thought-out alternatives. They don’t decide between two or three options and choose the best one. Instead, they consider only one option at a time. The intuitive decision-making model argues that, in a given situation, experts making decisions scan the environment for cues to recognize patterns. Once a pattern is recognized, they can play a potential course of action through to its outcome based on their prior experience. Due to training, experience, and knowledge, these decision makers have an idea of how well a given solution may work. If they run through the mental model and find that the solution will not work, they alter the solution and retest it before setting it into action. If it still is not deemed a workable solution, it is discarded as an option and a new idea is tested until a workable solution is found. Once a viable course of action is identified, the decision maker puts the solution into motion. The key point is that only one choice is considered at a time. Novices are not able to make effective decisions this way because they do not have enough prior experience to draw upon.

**Making Creative Decisions**

In addition to the rational decision making, bounded rationality models, and intuitive decision making, creative decision making is a vital part of being an effective decision maker. Creativity is the generation of new, imaginative ideas. With the flattening of organizations and intense competition among organizations, individuals and
organizations are driven to be creative in decisions ranging from cutting costs to creating new ways of doing business. Please note that, while creativity is the first step in the innovation process, creativity and innovation are not the same thing. Innovation begins with creative ideas, but it also involves realistic planning and follow-through. The five steps to creative decision making are similar to the previous decision-making models in some keys ways. All of the models include problem identification, which is the step in which the need for problem solving becomes apparent. If you do not recognize that you have a problem, it is impossible to solve it. Immersion is the step in which the decision maker thinks about the problem consciously and gathers information. A key to success in creative decision making is having or acquiring expertise in the area being studied. Then, incubation occurs. During incubation, the individual sets the problem aside and does not think about it for a while. At this time, the brain is actually working on the problem unconsciously. Then comes illumination or the insight moment, when the solution to the problem becomes apparent to the person, usually when it is least expected. This is the “eureka” moment similar to what happened to the ancient Greek inventor Archimedes, who found a solution to the problem he was working on while he was taking a bath. Finally, the verification and application stage happens when the decision maker consciously verifies the feasibility of the solution and implements the decision.

A NASA scientist describes his decision-making process leading to a creative outcome as follows: He had been trying to figure out a better way to de-ice planes to make the process faster and safer. After recognizing the problem, he had immersed himself in the literature to understand all the options, and he worked on the problem for months trying to figure out a solution. It was not until he was sitting outside of a McDonald’s restaurant with his grandchildren that it dawned on him. The golden arches of the “M” of the McDonald’s logo inspired his solution: he would design the de-icer as a series of M’s! This represented the illumination stage. After he tested and verified his creative solution, he was done with that problem except to reflect on the outcome and process.

How Do You Know If Your Decision-Making Process Is Creative?
Researchers focus on three factors to evaluate the level of creativity in the decision-making process. Fluency refers to the number of ideas a person is able to generate. Flexibility refers to how different the ideas are from one another. If you are able to generate several distinct solutions to a problem, your decision-making process is high on flexibility. Originality refers to an idea’s uniqueness. You might say that Reed Hastings, founder and CEO of Netflix, is a pretty creative person. His decision-making process shows at least two elements of creativity. We do not exactly know how many ideas he had over the course of his career, but his ideas are fairly different from one another. After teaching math in Africa with the Peace Corps, Hastings was accepted at Stanford University, where he earned a master’s degree in computer science. Soon after starting work at a software company, he invented a successful debugging tool, which led to his founding the computer troubleshooting company Pure Software in 1991. After a merger and the
subsequent sale of the resulting company in 1997, Hastings founded Netflix, which revolutionized the DVD rental business through online rentals with no late fees. In 2007, Hastings was elected to Microsoft’s board of directors. As you can see, his ideas are high in originality and flexibility. Some experts have proposed that creativity occurs as an interaction among three factors: (1) people’s personality traits (openness to experience, risk taking), (2) their attributes (expertise, imagination, motivation), and (3) the context (encouragement from others, time pressure, and physical structures).

For example, research shows that individuals who are open to experience, are less conscientious, more self-accepting, and more impulsive, tend to be more creative. There are many techniques available that enhance and improve creativity. Linus Pauling, the Nobel prize winner who popularized the idea that vitamin C could help build the immunity system, said, “The best way to have a good idea is to have a lot of ideas.” One popular way to generate ideas is to use brainstorming. Brainstorming is a group process of generated ideas that follows a set of guidelines that include no criticism of ideas during the brainstorming process, the idea that no suggestion is too crazy, and building on other ideas (piggybacking). Research shows that the quantity of ideas actually leads to better idea quality in the end, so setting high idea quotas where the group must reach a set number of ideas before they are done, is recommended to avoid process loss and to maximize the effectiveness of brainstorming. Another unique aspect of brainstorming is that the more people are included in brainstorming, the better the decision outcome will be because the variety of backgrounds and approaches give the group more to draw from. A variation of brainstorming is wildstorming where the group focuses on ideas that are impossible and then imagines what would need to happen to make them possible.

**Ideas for Enhancing Organizational Creativity**

We have seen that organizational creativity is vital to organizations. Here are some guidelines for enhancing organizational creativity within teams.

**Team Composition (Organizing/Leading)**
- Diversify your team to give them more inputs to build on and more opportunities to create functional conflict while avoiding personal conflict.
- Change group membership to stimulate new ideas and new interaction patterns.
- Leaderless teams can allow teams freedom to create without trying to please anyone up front.

**Team Process (Leading)**
- Engage in brainstorming to generate ideas—remember to set a high goal for the number of ideas the group should come up with, encourage wild ideas, and take brainwriting breaks.
- Use the nominal group technique in person or electronically to avoid some common group process pitfalls.
- Consider anonymous feedback as well.
- Use analogies to envision problems and solutions.

Leadership (Leading)
- Challenge teams so that they are engaged but not overwhelmed.
- Let people decide how to achieve goals, rather than telling them what goals to achieve.
- Support and celebrate creativity even when it leads to a mistake. But set up processes to learn from mistakes as well.
- Model creative behavior.

Culture (Organizing)
- Institute organizational memory so that individuals do not spend time on routine tasks.
- Build a physical space conducive to creativity that is playful and humorous—this is a place where ideas can thrive.
- Incorporate creative behavior into the performance appraisal process.

And finally, avoiding groupthink can be an important skill to learn.

The four different decision-making models—rational, bounded rationality, intuitive, and creative—vary in terms of how experienced or motivated a decision maker is to make a choice. Choosing the right approach will make you more effective at work and improve your ability to carry out all the P-O-L-C functions. No matter which model you use, you need to know and avoid the decision-making traps that exist. Daniel Kahnemann (another Nobel prize winner) and Amos Tversky spent decades studying how people make decisions. They found that individuals are influenced by overconfidence bias, hindsight bias, anchoring bias, framing bias, and escalation of commitment.

**Potential Challenges to Decision Making**

**Overconfidence Bias**
Overconfidence bias occurs when individuals overestimate their ability to predict future events. Many people exhibit signs of overconfidence. For example, 82% of the drivers surveyed feel they are in the top 30% of safe drivers, 86% of students at the Harvard Business School say they are better looking than their peers, and doctors consistently overestimate their ability to detect problems. Much like a friend who is always 100% sure he can pick the winners of this week’s football games despite evidence to the contrary, these individuals are suffering from overconfidence bias. People who purchase lottery tickets as a way to make money are probably suffering from overconfidence bias. It is three times more likely for a person driving 10 miles to buy a lottery ticket to be killed in a car accident than to win the jackpot. To avoid this bias, take the time to stop and ask yourself whether you are being realistic in your judgments.

**Hindsight Bias**
Hindsight bias is the opposite of overconfidence bias, as it occurs when looking
backward in time where mistakes made seem obvious after they have already occurred. In other words, after a surprising event occurred, many individuals are likely to think that they already knew this was going to happen. This may be because they are selectively reconstructing the events. Hindsight bias becomes a problem especially when judging someone else’s decisions. For example, let’s say a company driver hears the engine making unusual sounds before starting her morning routine. Being familiar with this car in particular, the driver may conclude that the probability of a serious problem is small and continue to drive the car. During the day, the car malfunctions, stranding her away from the office. It would be easy to criticize her decision to continue to drive the car because, in hindsight, the noises heard in the morning would make us believe that she should have known something was wrong and she should have taken the car in for service. However, the driver may have heard similar sounds before with no consequences, so based on the information available to her at the time, she may have made a reasonable choice. Therefore, it is important for decision makers to remember this bias before passing judgments on other people’s actions.

Anchoring
Anchoring refers to the tendency for individuals to rely too heavily on a single piece of information. Job seekers often fall into this trap by focusing on a desired salary while ignoring other aspects of the job offer such as additional benefits, fit with the job, and working environment. Similarly, but more dramatically, lives were lost in the Great Bear Wilderness Disaster when the coroner declared all five passengers of a small plane dead within five minutes of arriving at the accident scene, which halted the search effort for potential survivors, when, in fact, the next day two survivors walked out of the forest. How could a mistake like this have been made? One theory is that decision biases played a large role in this serious error; anchoring on the fact that the plane had been consumed by flames led the coroner to call off the search for any possible survivors.

Framing Bias
Framing bias refers to the tendency of decision makers to be influenced by the way that a situation or problem is presented. For example, when making a purchase, customers find it easier to let go of a discount as opposed to accepting a surcharge, even though they both might cost the person the same amount of money. Similarly, customers tend to prefer a statement such as “85% lean beef” as opposed to “15% fat”! It is important to be aware of this tendency because, depending on how a problem is presented to us, we might choose an alternative that is disadvantageous simply because of how it is framed.

Escalation of Commitment
Escalation of commitment occurs when individuals continue on a failing course of action after information reveals this may be a poor path to follow. It is sometimes called sunk costs fallacy because the continuation is often based on the idea that one has already invested in this course of action. For example, imagine a person purchases a used car that turns out to need another repair every few weeks. An effective way of dealing with this situation might be to sell the car without incurring further losses, donate the car, or drive it without repairing it until it falls apart. However, many people spend hours of their time and hundreds, even thousands of dollars repairing the car in the hopes that they
will justify their initial investment in buying the car. A classic example of escalation of commitment from the corporate world may be Motorola’s Iridium project. In 1980s, the phone coverage around the world was weak—it could take hours of dealing with a chain of telephone operators in several different countries to get a call through from, say, Cleveland to Calcutta. Thus, there was a real need within the business community to improve phone access around the world. Motorola envisioned solving this problem using 66 low-orbiting satellites, enabling users to place a direct call to any location around the world. At the time of idea development, the project was technologically advanced, sophisticated, and made financial sense. Motorola spun off Iridium as a separate company in 1991. It took researchers 15 years to develop the product from idea to market release. However, in the 1990s, the landscape for cell phone technology was dramatically different from the 1980s, and the widespread cell phone coverage around the world eliminated a large base of the projected customer base for Iridium. Had they been paying attention to these developments, the decision makers would probably have abandoned the project at some point in the early 1990s. Instead, they released the Iridium phone to the market in 1998. The phone cost $3,000 and it was literally the size of a brick. Moreover, it was not possible to use the phone in moving cars or inside buildings! Not surprisingly, the launch was a failure and Iridium filed for bankruptcy in 1999. The company was ultimately purchased for $25 million by a group of investors (whereas it cost the company $5 billion to develop its product), scaled down its operations, and modified it for use by the Department of Defense to connect soldiers in remote areas not served by landlines or cell phones.

Why does escalation of commitment occur? There may be many reasons, but two are particularly important. First, decision makers may not want to admit that they were wrong. This may be because of personal pride or being afraid of the consequences of such an admission. Second, decision makers may incorrectly believe that spending more time and energy might somehow help them recover their losses. Effective decision makers avoid escalation of commitment by distinguishing between when persistence may actually pay off versus when persistence might mean escalation of commitment. To avoid escalation of commitment, you might consider having strict turning back points. For example, you might determine up front that you will not spend more than $500 trying to repair the car and will sell the car when you reach that point. You might also consider assigning separate decision makers for the initial buying and subsequent selling decisions. Periodical evaluations of an initially sound decision to see whether the decision still makes sense is also another way of preventing escalation of commitment. This becomes particularly important in projects such as the Iridium where the initial decision is not immediately implemented but instead needs to go through a lengthy development process. In such cases, it becomes important to assess the soundness of the initial decision periodically in the face of changing market conditions. Finally, creating an organizational climate where individuals do not fear admitting that their initial decision no longer makes economic sense would go a long way in preventing escalation of commitment, as it could lower the regret the decision maker may experience. Motorola
released the Iridium phone to the market in 1998. The phone cost $3,000 and was literally the size of a brick. This phone now resides at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in Dulles, Virginia.

So far we have focused on how individuals make decisions and how to avoid decision traps. Next we shift our focus to the group level. There are many similarities and many differences between individual and group decision making. There are many factors that influence group dynamics and also affect the group decision-making process. We will discuss some of them in the next section.

**When It Comes to Decision Making, Are Two Heads Better Than One?**

The answer to this question depends on several factors. Group decision making has the advantages of drawing from the experiences and perspectives of a larger number of individuals. Hence, they have the potential to be more creative and lead to a more effective decision. In fact, groups may sometimes achieve results beyond what they could have done as individuals. Groups also make the task more enjoyable for members in question. Finally, when the decision is made by a group rather than a single individual, implementation of the decision will be easier because group members will be invested in the decision. If the group is diverse, better decisions may be made because different group members may have different ideas based on their background and experiences. Research shows that for top management teams, groups that debate issues and that are diverse make decisions that are more comprehensive and better for the bottom line in terms of profitability and sales.

Despite its popularity within organizations, group decision making suffers from a number of disadvantages. We know that groups rarely outperform their best member. While groups have the potential to arrive at an effective decision, they often suffer from process losses. For example, groups may suffer from coordination problems. Anyone who has worked with a team of individuals on a project can attest to the difficulty of coordinating members' work or even coordinating everyone's presence in a team meeting. Furthermore, groups can suffer from social loafing, or the tendency of some members to put forth less effort while working within a group. Groups may also suffer from groupthink, the tendency to avoid critical evaluation of ideas the group favors. Finally, group decision making takes a longer time compared with individual decision making, given that all members need to discuss their thoughts regarding different alternatives.

Thus, whether an individual or a group decision is preferable will depend on the specifics of the situation. For example, if there is an emergency and a decision needs to be made quickly, individual decision making might be preferred. Individual decision making may also be appropriate if the individual in question has all the information needed to make the decision and if implementation problems are not expected. However, if one person does not have all the information and skills needed to make the decision, if implementing the decision will be difficult without the involvement of those who will be affected by the decision, and if time urgency is more modest, then decision making by a group may be
more effective.

**Groupthink**

Have you ever been in a decision-making group that you felt was heading in the wrong direction, but you didn’t speak up and say so? If so, you have already been a victim of groupthink. Groupthink is a group pressure phenomenon that increases the risk of the group making flawed decisions by leading to reduced mental efficiency, reality testing, and moral judgment. Groupthink is characterized by eight symptoms that include:

1. Illusion of invulnerability shared by most or all of the group members that creates excessive optimism and encourages them to take extreme risks.
2. Collective rationalizations where members downplay negative information or warnings that might cause them to reconsider their assumptions.
3. An unquestioned belief in the group’s inherent morality that may incline members to ignore ethical or moral consequences of their actions.
4. Stereotyped views of out-groups are seen when groups discount rivals' abilities to make effective responses.
5. Direct pressure on any member who expresses strong arguments against any of the group’s stereotypes, illusions, or commitments.
6. Self-censorship when members of the group minimize their own doubts and counterarguments.
7. Illusions of unanimity based on self-censorship and direct pressure on the group; the lack of dissent is viewed as unanimity.
8. The emergence of self-appointed mindguards where one or more members protect the group from information that runs counter to the group’s assumptions and course of action.

Avoiding groupthink can be a matter of life or death. In January 1986, the space shuttle Challenger exploded 73 seconds after liftoff, killing all seven astronauts aboard. The decision to launch Challenger that day, despite problems with mechanical components of the vehicle and unfavorable weather conditions, is cited as an example of groupthink. While research on groupthink has not confirmed all of the theory, groups do tend to suffer from symptoms of groupthink when they are large and when the group is cohesive because the members like each other.

The assumption is that the more frequently a group displays one or more of the eight symptoms, the worse the quality of their decisions will be. However, if your group is cohesive, it is not necessarily doomed to engage in groupthink.

**Recommendations for Avoiding Groupthink**

Groups Should:

- Discuss the symptoms of groupthink and how to avoid them.
- Assign a rotating devil’s advocate to every meeting.
- Invite experts or qualified colleagues who are not part of the core decision-making group to attend meetings, and get reactions from outsiders on a regular basis and share these with the group.
• Encourage a culture of difference where different ideas are valued.
• Debate the ethical implications of the decisions and potential solutions being considered.

Individuals Should:
• Monitor their own behavior for signs of groupthink and modify behavior if needed.
• Check themselves for self-censorship.
• Carefully avoid mindguard behaviors.
• Avoid putting pressure on other group members to conform.
• Remind members of the ground rules for avoiding groupthink if they get off track.

Group Leaders Should:
• Break the group into two subgroups from time to time.
• Have more than one group work on the same problem if time and resources allow it. This makes sense for highly critical decisions.
• Remain impartial and refrain from stating preferences at the outset of decisions.
• Set a tone of encouraging critical evaluations throughout deliberations.
• Create an anonymous feedback channel where all group members can contribute to if desired.

Tools and Techniques for Making Better Decisions
Nominal Group Technique (NGT) was developed to help with group decision making by ensuring that all members participate fully. NGT is not a technique to be used at all meetings routinely. Rather, it is used to structure group meetings when members are grappling with problem solving or idea generation. It follows four steps. First, each member of the group engages in a period of independently and silently writing down ideas. Second, the group goes in order around the room to gather all the ideas that were generated. This goes on until all the ideas are shared. Third, a discussion takes place around each idea and members ask for and give clarification and make evaluative statements. Finally, individuals vote for their favorite ideas by using either ranking or rating techniques. Following the four-step NGT helps to ensure that all members participate fully and avoids group decision-making problems such as groupthink.

Delphi Technique is unique because it is a group process using written responses to a series of questionnaires instead of physically bringing individuals together to make a decision. The first questionnaire asks individuals to respond to a broad question, such as stating the problem, outlining objectives, or proposing solutions. Each subsequent questionnaire is built from the information gathered in the previous one. The process ends when the group reaches a consensus. Facilitators can decide whether to keep responses anonymous. This process is often used to generate best practices from experts. For example, Purdue University professor Michael Campion used this process when he was editor of the research journal Personnel Psychology and wanted to determine the qualities that distinguished a good research article. Using the Delphi Technique, he was able to gather responses from hundreds of top researchers from around the world without ever having to leave his office and distill them into a checklist of criteria that he could use to evaluate articles submitted to the journal.
Majority rule refers to a decision-making rule where each member of the group is given a single vote, and the option that receives the greatest number of votes is selected. This technique has remained popular, perhaps because of its simplicity, speed, ease of use, and representational fairness. Research also supports majority rule as an effective decision-making technique. However, those who did not vote in favor of the decision will be less likely to support it.

Consensus is another decision-making rule that groups may use when the goal is to gain support for an idea or plan of action. While consensus tends to take longer in the first place, it may make sense when support is needed to enact the plan. The process works by discussing the issues, generating a proposal, calling for consensus, and discussing any concerns. If concerns still exist, the proposal is modified to accommodate them. These steps are repeated until consensus is reached. Thus, this decision-making rule is inclusive, participatory, cooperative, and democratic. Research shows that consensus can lead to better accuracy, and it helps members feel greater satisfaction with decisions and to have greater acceptance. However, groups take longer with this approach and groups that cannot reach consensus become frustrated.

Group decision support systems (GDSS) are interactive computer-based systems that are able to combine communication and decision technologies to help groups make better decisions. Organizations know that having effective knowledge management systems to share information is important. Research shows that a GDSS can actually improve the output of group collaborative work through higher information sharing. Organizations know that having effective knowledge management systems to share information is important, and their spending reflects this reality. According to a 2002 article, businesses invested $2.7 billion into new systems in 2002 and projections were for this number to double every five years. As the popularity of these systems grows, they risk becoming counterproductive. Humans can only process so many ideas and information at one time. As virtual meetings grow larger, it is reasonable to assume that information overload can occur and good ideas will fall through the cracks, essentially recreating a problem that the GDSS was intended to solve that is to make sure every idea is heard. Another problem is the system possibly becoming too complicated. If the systems evolve to a point of uncomfortable complexity, it has recreated the problem of the bully pulpit and shyness. Those who understand the interface will control the narrative of the discussion, while those who are less savvy will only be along for the ride. Lastly, many of these programs fail to take into account the factor of human psychology. These systems could make employees more reluctant to share information due to lack of control, lack of immediate feedback, the fear of “flaming” or harsher than normal criticism, and the desire to have original information hence more power. Healthy communication and trust are key elements to effective group decision making.

Decision trees are diagrams in which answers to yes or no questions lead decision
makers to address additional questions until they reach the end of the tree. Decision trees are helpful in avoiding errors such as framing bias. Decision trees tend to be helpful in guiding the decision maker to a predetermined alternative and ensuring consistency of decision making—that is, every time certain conditions are present, the decision maker will follow one course of action as opposed to others if the decision is made using a decision tree.

Perform a Project “Premortem” to Fix Problems Before They Happen

Doctors routinely perform postmortems to understand what went wrong with a patient who has died. The idea is for everyone to learn from the unfortunate outcome so that future patients will not meet a similar fate. But, what if you could avoid a horrible outcome before it happened by identifying project risks proactively—before your project derails? Research suggests that the simple exercise of imagining what could go wrong with a given decision can increase your ability to identify reasons for future successes or failures by 30%.

A “premortem” is a way to imagine and to avoid what might go wrong before spending a cent or having to change course along the way. Gary Klein, an expert on decision making in fast-paced, uncertain, complex, and critical environments, recommends that decision makers follow this six-step premortem process to increase their chances of success.

1. A planning team comes up with an outline of a plan, such as the launching of a new product.
2. Either the existing group or a unique group is then told to imagine looking into a crystal ball and seeing that the new product failed miserably. They then write down all the reasons they can imagine that might have led to this failure.
3. Each team member shares items from their list until all the potential problems have been identified.
4. The list is reviewed for additional ideas.
5. The issues are sorted into categories in the search for themes.
6. The plan should then be revised to correct the flaws and avoid these potential problems.

The premortem technique allows groups to truly delve into “what if” scenarios. For example, in a premortem session at a Fortune 50 company, an executive imagined that a potential billion-dollar environmental sustainability project might fail because the CEO had retired.
Do you feel organized, or confined, in a clean workspace? Are you more productive when the sun is shining than when it’s gray and cloudy outside? Just as factors like weather and physical space impact us, so does the communication climate influence our interpersonal interaction. Communication climate is the “overall feeling or emotional mood between people” (Wood, 1999, p. 245). If you dread going to visit your family during the holidays because of tension between you and your sister, or you look forward to dinner with a particular set of friends because they make you laugh, you are responding to the communication climate—the overall mood that is created because of the people involved and the type of communication they bring to the interaction. Let’s look at two different types of communication climates: Confirming and Disconfirming climates.

Communication Climate

Excerpt From:

Communication Now

“Sticks and Stones Can Beak my Bones, But Words Can Hurt Me Too”

In a study published in the journal Science, researchers reported that the sickening feeling we get when we are socially rejected (being ignored at a party or passed over when picking teams) is real. When researchers measured brain responses to social stress they found a pattern similar to what occurs in the brain when our body experiences physical pain. Specifically, “the area affected is the anterior cingulated cortex, a part of the brain known to be involved in the emotional response to pain” (Fox, 2003). The doctor who conducted the study, Matt Lieberman, a social psychologist at the University of California, Los Angeles, said, “It makes sense for humans to be programmed this way. . .Social interaction is important to survival.”

Confirming and Disconfirming Climates

Positive and negative climates can be understood along three dimensions—recognition, acknowledgement, and endorsement. We experience confirming climates when we receive messages that demonstrate our value and worth from those with whom we have a relationship. Conversely, we experience Disconfirming Climates when we receive messages that suggest we are devalued and unimportant. Obviously, most of us like to be in confirming climates because they foster emotional safety as well as personal and relational growth.
However, it is likely that your relationships fall somewhere between the two extremes. Let’s look at three types of messages that create confirming and disconfirming climates.

- **Recognition Messages**: Recognition messages either confirm or deny another person’s existence. For example, if a friend enters your home and you smile, hug him, and say, “I’m so glad to see you,” you are confirming his existence. If you say “good morning” to a colleague and she ignores you by walking out of the room without saying anything, she is creating a disconfirming climate by not recognizing you as a unique individual.

- **Acknowledgement Messages**: Acknowledgement messages go beyond recognizing another’s existence by confirming what they say or how they feel. Nodding our head while listening, or laughing appropriately at a funny story, are nonverbal acknowledgement messages. When a friend tells you she had a really bad day at work and you respond with, “Yeah, that does sound hard, do you want to go somewhere quiet and talk?” you are acknowledging and responding to her feelings. In contrast, if you were to respond to your friend’s frustrations with a comment like, “That’s nothing. Listen to what happened to me today,” you would be ignoring her experience and presenting yours as more important.

- **Endorsement Messages**: Endorsement messages go one step further by recognizing a person’s feelings as valid. Suppose a friend comes to you upset after a fight with his girlfriend. If you respond with, “Yeah, I can see why you would be upset” you are endorsing his right to feel upset. However, if you said, “Get over it. At least you have a girlfriend” you would be sending messages that deny his right to feel frustrated in that moment. While it is difficult to see people we care about in emotional pain, people are responsible for their own emotions. When we let people own their emotions and do not tell them how to feel, we are creating supportive climates that provide a safe environment for them to work through their problems.
From Complaints to Requests

Excerpt from:


SUMMARY

Translate your (and other people’s) complaints and criticisms into specific requests, and explain your requests.

In order to get more cooperation from others, whenever possible ask for what you want by using specific, action-oriented, positive language rather than by using generalizations, “why’s,” “don'ts” or “somebody should’s.” Help your listeners comply by explaining your requests with a “so that…”, “it would help me to… if you would…” or “in order to…”. Also, when you are receiving criticism and complaints from others, translate and restate the complaints as action requests.

Why many people have a hard time making requests. It often feels easier to say, “You’re wrong.” than it is to say “I need your help.” Making requests leaves us much more vulnerable in relation to our conversation partners than making criticisms or complaints. So people have a tendency to complain rather than to request. If we make a request, the other person could turn us down or make fun of us, and the risk of disappointment and loss of face is hard to bear. If we complain, on the other hand, we stand on the emotional high ground and our listener is usually on the defensive. However, to improve our chances of getting cooperation from another person, we need to ask for what we want and risk being turned down. With practice we can each learn to bear those risks more skillfully and gracefully.

Why criticisms usually don’t get the positive result we want: Whenever we place people on the defensive, their capacity to listen goes down. Their attention and energy will often go into some combination of defending their position, saving face and counter-attacking. Only when they feel safe are they likely to listen and consider how they might meet our needs. The truth of the complaint is not the issue. Because mutual imitation or emotional “echoing” is so much a part of ordinary conversation, a criticism from one partner, no matter how justified, tends to evoke a criticism from the other, bogging the pair down in a spiral of accusations. To avoid this trap, you can to approach the other person not as a problem maker and adversary in a debate but as a problem-solving partner. By translating your complaint into a request, you “transform” the role you are asking the other person to play.
Specific action requests help to focus your listener’s attention on the present situation. Focus on the actions you want to take and the actions you want others to take in the present and future. (For example, use verbs and adverbs, such as “meet our deadlines regularly.”) Avoid proposing changes in a person’s supposed character traits (nouns and adjectives, such as “slow worker” or “bad team player”). “How can we solve this problem quickly?” will generally produce much better results than, “Why are you such an awful slow-poke?” In the latter kind of statement, I am actually suggesting to my conversation partner that the behavior I want changed is a fixed and perhaps unchangeable part of their personality, thus undermining my own goals and needs.

Talking about specifics will help to keep the current conversation from becoming one more episode in whatever unresolved conflicts might be in the background of your conversations. Your listener, like all of us, may sometimes be in the grip of feelings of embarrassment, resentment or self-doubt unrelated to the present situation. The more vague and open-ended a criticism is, the easier it is for your listener to hear it as part of those other conflicts. Instead of saying something like “Why does it always take you so long to get things done?”, try saying things like “I would like you to fix the faucet in Apartment #4 by five o’clock, so the tenants can use the kitchen sink when they get home tonight?” Of course, your tone of voice is important here. It’s important that you yourself are not carrying forward old complaints. Life is lived best one day at a time.

“We criticize people for not giving us what we ourselves are afraid to ask for.”
Marshall Rosenberg, PhD

Explanatory clauses can move people to cooperate. Research in social psychology has revealed that many people respond more positively to explained requests than to unexplained requests, even when the supposed explanation is obvious or doesn’t actually explain much of anything. Notice the difference between the following two ways of expressing requests:

“Will you please open the window?”

“May I please have a glass of water?”

AND…

“Will you please open the window so that we can get more fresh air in here?”

“May I please have a glass of water? I’m really thirsty.”

For many people the second form of the requests is much more inspiring. Why this is so is not certain. My hunches include that by explaining the reason, the speaker is treating the listener as a social equal, worthy of being persuaded and informed as to why a
request is being made. The listener is invited to comply with a request to accomplish the stated goal rather than simply to submit to the will of the speaker. Another possibility is that since many requests are linguistically ambiguous and could easily be taken as orders, the explanation emphasizes that the statement is a real request. Whatever the reason, explaining your request makes it more likely that your listener will cooperate.

**Explanatory clauses allow your conversation partners to imagine new solutions.** While any sort of explanatory clause seems to help, a real explanation of your goal allows your conversation partners to understand the context and purpose of your request. When for some reason they cannot meet your needs in the way you have asked, they may be able to meet your needs in some way that you had not thought of. (For an inspiring discussion of this topic, see *Getting to Yes*, by Fisher, Ury and Patton. They suggest that if you explain your overall goals rather than sticking to a very specific bargaining position, your negotiating adversaries may be able to propose mutually beneficial solutions that satisfy more of the needs of all parties. One main idea of the book is to turn your adversaries into problem-solving partners)

**Exercise 4-1: Working on your life situations.**

Think of some complaints that are current in your life at home, at work or in your community and translate them into specific action requests that include an explanation. (I have included a few “warm up” examples.)

“Don’t be so inconsiderate!” could be restated as:  
*Please close the door quietly so Aunt Mary can sleep."

“Somebody ought to order some copy paper.” could be restated as:  
*Would you order two reams of copy paper today so that we don’t run out."

“Turn down that music!” could be restated as:  
*Hi. I live upstairs and your music is really booming through the walls up there. Would you please turn it down so we can hear our TV?"

Try some of your own now:
Nonverbal Communication


Chapter Objectives:

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Define nonverbal communication and explain its main characteristics.
- Explain the differences between verbal and nonverbal communication.
- Describe the eight types of nonverbal communication.
- Describe the functions of nonverbal communication.

Your brother comes home from school and walks through the door. Without saying a word, he walks to the fridge, gets a drink, and turns to head for the couch in the family room. Once there, he plops down, stares straight ahead, and sighs. You notice that he sits there in silence for the next few minutes. In this time, he never spoke a word. Is he communicating? If your answer is yes, what meanings would you take from these actions? What are the possible interpretations for how he is feeling? What types of nonverbal communication was your brother using?

Like verbal communication, nonverbal communication is essential in our everyday communication. Remember that verbal and nonverbal communication are the two primary channels we study in the field of Communication. While nonverbal and verbal communication have many similar functions, nonverbal communication has its own set of functions for helping us communicate with each other. Before we get into the types and functions of nonverbal communication, let’s define nonverbal communication to better understand how it is used in this text.

Defining Nonverbal Communication

Like verbal communication, we use nonverbal communication to share meaning with others. Just as there are many definitions for communication and verbal communication, there are also many ways to define nonverbal communication.

Burgoon, Buller, and Woodall (1996) define nonverbal communication similar to how we defined verbal communication in Chapter 2. They state that nonverbal behaviors are “typically sent with intent, are used with regularity among members of a social community, are typically interpreted as intentional, and have consensually recognized interpretations” (p. 113). We disagree with this definition because to us it sounds too much like verbal communication, and might best be described as symbolic and systematic nonverbal communication.
Mead (1934) differentiated between what he termed as “gesture” versus “significant symbol,” while Buck and VanLear (2002) took Mead’s idea and argued that “gestures are not symbolic in that their relationship to their referents is not arbitrary,” a fundamental distinction between verbal and nonverbal communication (p. 524). Think of all the ways you unconsciously move your body throughout the day. For example, you probably do not sit in your classes and think constantly about your nonverbal behaviors. Instead, much of the way you present yourself nonverbally in your classes is done so unconsciously. Even so, others can derive meaning from your nonverbal behaviors whether they are intentional or not. For example, as professors we watch our students’ nonverbal communication in class (such as slouching, leaning back in the chair, or looking at their watch) and make assumptions about them (such as they are bored, tired, or worrying about a test in another class). These assumptions are often based on acts that are typically done unintentionally.

While we certainly use nonverbal communication consciously at times to generate and share particular meanings, when examined closely, it should be apparent that this channel of communication is not an agreed-upon rule-governed system of symbols. Rather, nonverbal communication is most often spontaneous, unintentional, and may not follow formalized symbolic rule systems.

With this in mind, we define nonverbal communication as any meaning conveyed through sounds, behaviors, and artifacts other than words. To help explain this idea, it is useful to consider some of the differences between verbal and nonverbal communication.

**Differences Between Verbal and Nonverbal Communication**

The first difference between verbal and nonverbal communication is that we use a single channel (words) when we communicate verbally versus multiple channels when we communicate nonverbally. Try this exercise! Say your first and last name at the same time. You quickly find that this is an impossible task. Now, pat the top of your head with your right hand, wave with your left hand, smile, shrug your shoulders, and chew gum at the same time. While goofy and awkward, our ability to do this demonstrates how we use multiple nonverbal channels simultaneously to communicate.

In Chapter 2 we learned how difficult it can be to decode a sender’s single verbal message due to the arbitrary, abstract, and ambiguous nature of language. But, think how much more difficult it is to decode the even more ambiguous and multiple nonverbal signals we take in like eye contact, facial expressions, body movements, clothing, personal artifacts, and tone of voice at the same time. Despite this difficulty, Motley (1993) found that we learn to decode nonverbal communication as babies. Hall (1984) found that women are much better than men at accurately interpreting the many nonverbal cues we consider.

A second difference between verbal and nonverbal communication is that verbal communication is distinct (linear) while nonverbal communication is continuous (in constant motion and relative to context). Distinct means that messages have a clear beginning and end, and are expressed in a linear fashion. We begin and end words and sentences in a linear way to make it easier for others to follow and understand. If you pronounce the word “cat” you begin with the letter “C” and proceed to finish with “T.” Continuous means that messages are ongoing and work in relation to other nonverbal and verbal cues.
Case In Point
The digital clock is read in a linear fashion. Likewise, when the time changes, the read-out changes because one number is replaced with another. When we speak, we do so in a linear fashion, replacing one letter/word with another as we move along.

In contrast, the analog clock is constantly in motion. It never stops. We understand the time by understanding the moving relationship between the three hands of the clock and the position they are in on the clock. When we use nonverbal communication, it is an ongoing movement of multiple channels in relationship to one another and context.

Think about the difference between analog and digital clocks. The analog clock represents nonverbal communication in that we generate meaning by considering the relationship of the different arms to each another (context). Also, the clock’s arms are in continuous motion. We notice the speed of their movement, their position in the circle and to each other, and their relationship with the environment (is it day or night?).

Nonverbal communication is similar in that we evaluate nonverbal cues in relation to one another and consider the context of the situation. Suppose you see your friend in the distance. She approaches, waves, smiles, and says “hello.” To interpret the meaning of this, you focus on the wave, smile, tone of voice, her approaching movement, and the verbal message. You might also consider the time of day, if there is a pressing need to get to class, etc.

Now contrast this to a digital clock, which functions like verbal communication. Unlike an analog clock, a digital clock is not in constant motion. Instead, it replaces one number with another to display time (its message). A digital clock uses one distinct channel (numbers) in a linear fashion. When we use verbal communication, we do so like the digital clock. We say one word at a time, in a linear fashion, to express meaning.

A third difference between verbal and nonverbal communication is that we use verbal communication consciously while we generally use nonverbal communication unconsciously. Conscious communication means that we think about our verbal communication before we communicate. Unconscious communication means that we do not think about every nonverbal message we communicate. If you ever heard the statement as a child, “Think before you speak” you were being told a fundamental principle of verbal communication. Realistically, it’s nearly impossible not to think before we speak. When we speak, we do so consciously and intentionally. In contrast, when something funny happens, you probably do not think, “Okay, I’m going to smile and laugh right now.” Instead, you react unconsciously, displaying your emotions through these nonverbal behaviors. Nonverbal communication can occur as unconscious reactions to situations. We are not claiming that all nonverbal communication is unconscious. At times we certainly make conscious choices to use or withhold nonverbal communication to share meaning. Angry drivers use many conscious nonverbal expressions to communicate to other drivers! In a job interview you are making conscious decisions about your wardrobe, posture, and eye contact.

A fourth difference between verbal and nonverbal communication is that some nonverbal communication is universal (Hall, Chia, and Wang, 1996). Verbal communication is exclusive to the users of a particular language, whereas some nonverbal communication is recognized across cultures. Although cultures most certainly have particular meanings and uses for nonverbal communication, there are universal nonverbal behaviors that almost everyone
recognizes. For instance, people around the world recognize and use expressions such as smiles, frowns, and the pointing of a finger at an object.

Now that you have a definition of nonverbal communication, and can identify the primary differences between verbal and nonverbal communication, let’s examine what counts as nonverbal communication. In this next section, we show you eight types of nonverbal communication we use regularly: kinesics, haptics, appearance, proxemics, environment, chronemics, paralanguage, and silence.

**Types of Nonverbal Communication**

**Kinesics** is the study of how we use body movement and facial expressions. We interpret a great deal of meaning through body movement, facial expressions, and eye contact. Many people believe they can easily interpret the meanings of body movements and facial expressions in others. But the reality is, it is almost impossible to determine an exact meaning for gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact. Even so, we rely a great deal on kinesics to interpret and express meaning. We know that kinesics can communicate liking, social status, and even relational responsiveness (Mehrabian, 1981). Facial expressions are a primary method of sharing emotions and feelings (Ekman & Friesen, 1967). For example, imagine yourself at a party and you see someone across the room you are attracted to. What sort of nonverbal behaviors do you engage in to let that person know? Likewise, what nonverbal behaviors are you looking for from them to indicate that it’s safe to come over and introduce yourself? We are able to go through exchanges like this using only our nonverbal communication. As you probably know, some exchanges are more successful than others!

**Haptics** is the study of touch. Touch is the first type of nonverbal communication we experience as humans and is vital to our development and health (Dolin & Booth-Butterfield, 1993). Those who don’t have positive touch in their lives are less healthy both mentally and physically than those who experience positive touch. We use touch to share feelings and relational meanings. Hugs, kisses, handshakes, or even playful roughhousing demonstrate relational meanings and indicate relational closeness. In western society, touch is largely reserved for family and romantic relationships. Generally girls and women in same-sex friendships have more liberty to express touch as part of the relationship than men in same-sex friendships. However, despite these unfortunate social taboos, the need for touch is so strong that men are quite sophisticated at finding ways to incorporate this into their friendships in socially acceptable ways. One such example is wrestling among adolescent and young-adult males. Do you ever wonder why you don’t see as many women doing this? Perhaps it’s because wrestling is socially acceptable for men whereas women are more likely to hug, hold hands, and sit touching one another. Perhaps one day we will progress beyond these arbitrary gender constructs, and everyone can engage in needed touching behaviors in ways that are comfortable to them.

**Personal Appearance, Objects, and Artifacts** are also types of nonverbal communication we use to communicate meaning to others. Consider your preferences for hair-style, clothing, jewelry, and automobiles, as well the way you maintain your body. Your choices express meanings to those around you about what you value and the image you wish to put forth. As with most communication, our choices for personal appearance, objects, and artifacts occur within cultural contexts, and are interpreted in light of these contexts.
**Proxemics** is the study of how our use of space influences the ways we relate with others. It also demonstrates our relational standing with those around us. Edward Hall (1959, 1966) developed four categories of space we use in the U.S. to form and maintain relationships. Intimate space consists of space that ranges from touch to eighteen inches. We use intimate space with those whom we are close (family members, close friends, and intimate partners). Personal space ranges from eighteen inches to four feet and is reserved for most conversations with non-intimate others (friends and acquaintances). Social space extends from four to twelve feet and is used for small group interactions such as sitting around a dinner table with others or a group meeting. Public space extends beyond twelve feet and is most often used in public speaking situations. We use space to regulate our verbal communication and communicate relational and social meanings. A fun exercise to do is to go to a public space and observe people. Based on their use of the above categories of space, try to determine what type of relationship the people are in: Romantic, Family, or Friends.

**Case In Point: Feng Shui**

Feng Shui, which means wind and water, is the ancient Chinese art of living in harmony with our environment. Feng Shui can be traced as far back as the Banpo dwellings in 4000 BCE. The ideas behind Feng Shui state that how we use our environment and organize our belongings affects the energy flow (chi) of people in that space, and the person/people who created the environment. The inclusion or exclusion, and placement, of various objects in our environments are used to create a positive impact on others. The theory is to use the five elements of metal, wood, water, fire and earth to design a space. Feng Shui is applicable to cities, villages, homes, and public spaces. The Temple of Heaven in Beijing, China is an example of Feng Shui architecture. To keep harmony with the natural world, the Temple houses the Hall of Annual Prayer which is comprised of four inner, 12 middle, and 12 outer pillars representing the four seasons, 12 months, and 12 traditional Chinese hours.

Our environment acts as another type of nonverbal communication we use. Think of your home, room, automobile, or office space. What meanings can others perceive about you from these spaces? What meanings are you trying to send by how you keep them? Think about spaces you use frequently and the nonverbal meanings they have for you. Most educational institutions intentionally paint classrooms in dull colors. Why? Dull colors on walls have a calming effect, theoretically keeping students from being distracted by bright colors and excessive stimuli. Contrast the environment of a classroom to that of a fast food restaurant. These establishments have bright colors and hard plastic seats and tables. The bright colors generate an upbeat environment, while the hard plastic seats are just uncomfortable enough to keep patrons from staying too long (remember, it’s FAST food). People and cultures place different emphasis on the use of space as a way to communicate nonverbally.

**Chronemics** is the study of how people use time. Are you someone who is always early or on-time? Or, are you someone who arrives late to most events? Levine (1997) believes our use of time communicates a variety of meanings to those around us. Think about the person you know who is most frequently late. How do you describe that person based on their use of time? Now, think about someone else who is always on time. How do you describe that person? Is there a difference? If so, these differences are probably based on their use of time. In the U.S., we place high value on being on time, and respond more positively to people who are punctual. But, in many Arab and Latin American countries, time is used more loosely, and punctuality is
not necessarily a goal to achieve. You may have heard the expression, “Indian time” to refer to “the perception of time [that] is circular and flexible” (Shutiva, 2004, p.134). Here the belief is that activities will commence when everyone is present and ready; not according to an arbitrary schedule based on a clock or calendar. Neither approach is better than the other, but the dissimilar uses of time can create misunderstandings among those from different cultural groups.

**Paralanguage** is the term we use to describe **vocal qualities such as pitch, volume, inflection, rate of speech, and rhythm**. While the types of nonverbal communication we’ve discussed so far are non-vocal, some nonverbal communication is actually vocal. How we say words often expresses greater meaning than the actual words themselves. Sarcasm and incongruency are two examples of this. The comedian Stephen Wright bases much of his comedy on his use of paralanguage. He talks in a completely monotone voice throughout his act and frequently makes statements such as, “I’m getting really excited” while using a monotone voice, accompanied by a blank facial expression. The humor lies in the incongruency—his paralanguage and facial expression contradict his verbal message. Whenever you use sarcasm, your paralanguage is intended to contradict the verbal message you say. Your authors have found that using sarcasm in the classroom can backfire when students do not pick up our paralinguistic cues and focus primarily on the verbal message. We have learned to use sarcasm sparingly so as not to hurt anyone’s feelings.

**Nonverbal Communication Now: Women In Black**

An organization of women called Women in Black uses silence as a form of protest and hope for peace; particularly, peace from war and the unfair treatment of women. Women in Black began in Israel in 1988 by women protesting Israel's Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Women in Black continues to expand and now functions in the United States, England, Italy, Spain, Azerbaijan and Yugoslavia. Women gather in public spaces, dressed in black, and stand in silence for one hour, once a week. Their mission states, “We are silent because mere words cannot express the tragedy that wars and hatred bring. We refuse to add to the cacophony of empty statements that are spoken with the best intentions yet have failed to bring lasting change and understanding, or to the euphemistic jargon of the politicians which has perpetuated misunderstanding and fear that leads to war….our silence is visible.”

Finally, **silence** serves as a type of nonverbal communication. Have you ever experienced the “silent treatment” from someone? What meanings did you take from that person’s silence? Silence is powerful because the person using silence may be refusing to engage in communication with you. Likewise, we can use silence to regulate the flow of our conversations. Silence has a variety of meanings and, as with other types of nonverbal communication, context plays an important role for interpreting the meaning of silence.

You should now recognize the infinite combination of verbal and nonverbal messages we can share. When you think about it, it really is astonishing that we can communicate effectively at all. We engage in a continuous dance of communication where we try to stay in step with one another. With an understanding of the definition of nonverbal communication and the types of nonverbal communication, let’s consider the various functions nonverbal communication serves in helping us communicate. (Ekman, 1965; Knapp, 1980; Malandro & Barker, 1983).
Functions of Nonverbal Communication

In the last chapter you learned that we use verbal communication to express ideas, emotions, experiences, thoughts, objects, and people. But what functions does nonverbal communication serve as we communicate (Blumer, 1969)? Even though it’s not through words, nonverbal communication serves many functions to help us communicate meanings with one another more effectively.

- **We use nonverbal communication to duplicate verbal communication.** When we use nonverbal communication to duplicate, we use nonverbal communication that is recognizable to most people within a particular cultural group. Obvious examples include a head-nod or a head-shake to duplicate the verbal messages of “yes” or “no.” If someone asks if you want to go to a movie, you might verbally answer “yes” and at the same time nod your head. This accomplishes the goal of duplicating the verbal message with a nonverbal message. Interestingly, the head nod is considered a “nearly universal indication of accord, agreement, and understanding” because the same muscle in the head nod is the same one a baby uses to lower its head to accept milk from its mother’s breast (Givens, 2000). When the daughter of one of your authors was two years old, she was learning the duplication function of nonverbal communication, and didn’t always get it right. When asked if she wanted something, her “yes” was shaking her head. However, her “no” was the same head-shake, accompanied with the verbal response “no.” So, when she was two, she thought that the duplication was what made her answer “no.”

- **We use nonverbal communication to replace verbal communication.** If someone asks you a question, instead of a verbal reply “yes” and a head-nod, you may choose to simply nod your head without the accompanying verbal message. When we replace verbal communication with nonverbal communication, we use nonverbal behaviors that are easily recognized by others such as a wave, head-nod, or head-shake. This is why it was so confusing at first for your author to understand his daughter when she simply shook her head in response to a question. This was cleared up when he asked her if she wanted something to eat and she shook her head. When your author didn’t get her anything, she began to cry. This was the first clue that the replacing function of communication still needed to be learned. Consider the following examples of the universality of the head shake as an indicator of disbelief, disapproval, and negation: used by human babies to refuse food or drink; rhesus monkeys, baboons, bonnet macaques and gorillas turn their faces sideways in aversion; and children born deaf/blind head shake to refuse objects or disapprove of touch (Givens, 2000b).

- **We use nonverbal cues to complement verbal communication.** If a friend tells you that she recently received a promotion and a pay raise, you can show your enthusiasm in a number of verbal and nonverbal ways. If you exclaim, “Wow, that’s great! I’m so happy for you!” while at the same time smiling and hugging your friend, you are using nonverbal communication to complement
what you are saying. Unlike duplicating or replacing, nonverbal communication that complements cannot be used alone without the verbal message. If you simply smiled and hugged your friend without saying anything, the interpretation of that nonverbal communication would be more ambiguous than using it to complement your verbal message.

- **We use nonverbal communication to accent verbal communication.** While nonverbal communication complements verbal communication, we also use it to accent verbal communication by emphasizing certain parts of the verbal message. For instance, you may be upset with a family member and state, “I’m very angry with you.” To accent this statement nonverbally you might say it, “I’m VERY angry with you,” placing your emphasis on the word “very” to demonstrate the magnitude of your anger. In this example, it is your tone of voice (paralanguage) that serves as the nonverbal communication that accents the message. Parents might tell their children to “come here.” If they point to the spot in front of them dramatically, they are accenting the “here” part of the verbal message.

### Nonverbal Communication and Romance

If you don’t think the things that Communication scholars study (like nonverbal communication) applies to you, think again! A quick search of nonverbal communication on google will yield a great many sites devoted to translating nonverbal research into practical guides for your personal life. One example on iVillage.com is the article “Top 10 Signs He’s Interested in You” written by Text in the City creator Matt Titus. In the article, Titus outlines 10 nonverbal cues to read to see if someone is interested in you romantically. While we won’t vouch for the reliability of these types of pieces, they do show the relevance of studying areas like nonverbal communication has in our personal lives.

- **We use nonverbal communication to regulate verbal communication.** Generally, it is pretty easy for us to enter, maintain, and exit our interactions with others nonverbally. Rarely, if ever, would we approach a person and say, “I’m going to start a conversation with you now. Okay, let’s begin.” Instead, we might make eye contact, move closer to the person, or face the person directly -- all nonverbal behaviors that indicate our desire to interact. Likewise, we do not generally end conversations by stating, “I’m done talking to you now” unless there is a breakdown in the communication process. We are generally proficient enacting nonverbal communication such as looking at our watch, looking in the direction we wish to go, or being silent to indicate an impending end in the conversation. When there is a breakdown in the nonverbal regulation of conversation, we may say something to the effect, “I really need to get going now.” In fact, one of your authors has a friend who does not seem to pick up on the nonverbal cues that your author needs to end a phone conversation. Your author has literally had to resort to saying, “Okay, I’m hanging up the phone right now” followed by actually hanging up the phone. In this instance, there was a breakdown in the use of nonverbal communication to regulate conversation.
• **We use nonverbal communication to contradict verbal communication.** Imagine that you visit your boss’s office and she asks you how you’re enjoying a new work assignment. You may feel obligated to respond positively because it is your boss asking the question, even though you may not truly feel this way. However, your nonverbal communication may contradict your verbal message, indicating to your boss that you really do not enjoy the new work assignment. In this example, your nonverbal communication contradicts your verbal message and sends a mixed message to your boss. Research suggests that when verbal and nonverbal messages contradict one another, receivers often place greater value on the nonverbal communication as the more accurate message (Argyle, Alkema & Gilmour, 1971). One place this occurs frequently is in greeting sequences. You might say to your friend in passing, “How are you?” She might say, “Fine” but have a sad tone to her voice. In this case, her nonverbal behaviors go against her verbal response. We are more likely to interpret the nonverbal communication in this situation than the verbal response.

• **We use nonverbal communication to mislead others.** We can use nonverbal communication to hide deception. We also focus on a person’s nonverbal communication when trying to detect deception. Recall a time when someone asked your opinion of a new haircut. If you did not like it, you may have stated verbally that you liked the haircut and provided nonverbal communication to further mislead the person about how you really felt. Conversely, when we try to determine if someone is misleading us, we generally focus on the nonverbal communication of the other person. One study suggests that when we only use nonverbal communication to detect deception in others, 78% of lies and truths can be detected (Vrij, Edward, Roberts, & Bull, 2000). However, other studies indicate that we are really not very effective at determining deceit in other people (Levine, Feeley, McCornack, Hughes, & Harms, 2005), and that we are only accurate 45 to 70 percent of the time when trying to determine if someone is misleading us (Kalbfleisch, 1992). When trying to detect deception, it is more effective to examine both verbal and nonverbal communication to see if they are consistent (Vrij, Akehurst, Soukara, & Bull, 2000; Neiva & Hickson Ill, 2003). Even further than this, Park, Levine, McCornack, Morrison, & Ferrara (2002) argue that people usually go beyond verbal and nonverbal communication and consider what outsiders say, physical evidence, and the relationship over a longer period of time.

### Nonverbal Communication and You

### Nonverbal Communication and Getting a Job

You may be thinking that getting the right degree at the right college is the way to get a job. Think again! It may be a good way to get an interview, but once at the interview, what matters?
College Journal reports that, "Body language comprises 55% of the force of any response, whereas the verbal content only provides 7%, and paralanguage, or the intonation -- pauses and sighs given when answering -- represents 38% of the emphasis." If you show up to an interview smelling of cigarette smoke, chewing gum, dressed inappropriately, and listening to your iPod, you're probably in trouble.

About.Com states that these are some effective nonverbal practices during interviews:

- Make eye contact with the interviewer for a few seconds at a time.
- Smile and nod (at appropriate times) when the interviewer is talking, but, don't overdo it. Don't laugh unless the interviewer does first.
- Be polite and keep an even tone to your speech. Don't be too loud or too quiet.
- Don't slouch.
- Do relax and lean forward a little towards the interviewer so you appear interested and engaged.
- Don't lean back. You will look too casual and relaxed.
- Keep your feet on the floor and your back against the lower back of the chair.
- Pay attention, be attentive and interested.
- Listen.
- Don't interrupt.
- Stay calm. Even if you had a bad experience at a previous position or were fired, keep your emotions to yourself and do not show anger or frown.
- Not sure what to do with your hands? Hold a pen and your notepad or rest an arm on the chair or on your lap, so you look comfortable. Don't let your arms fly around the room when you're making a point.

- **We use nonverbal communication to indicate relational standing** (Mehrabian, 1981; Burgoon, Buller, Hale, & deTurck, 1984; Sallinen-Kuparinen, 1992). Take a few moments today to observe the nonverbal communication of people you see in public areas. What can you determine about their relational standing from their nonverbal communication? For example, romantic partners tend to stand close to one another and touch one another frequently. On the other hand, acquaintances generally maintain greater distances and touch less than romantic partners. Those who hold higher social status often use more space when they interact with others. In the U.S., it is generally acceptable for women in platonic relationships to embrace and be physically close while males are often discouraged from doing so. Contrast this to many other nations where it is custom for males to greet each other with a kiss or a hug, and hold hands as a symbol of their friendship. We make many inferences about relational standing based on the nonverbal communication of those with whom we interact and observe. Your authors were walking in Manhattan and saw a couple talking to each other across a small table. They both had faces that looked upset, had red eyes from crying, had closed body positions, were leaned into each other, and they were whispering emphatically. Upon seeing this, we both looked at each other and simultaneously said, "Breakup conversation!" We didn't know if that was the case, but we used nonverbal cues to come to that conclusion almost instantly.
• **We use nonverbal communication to demonstrate and maintain cultural norms.** We’ve already shown that some nonverbal communication is universal, but the majority of nonverbal communication is culturally specific. For example, in the predominant U.S. culture, people place high value on their personal space. In the U.S. people maintain far greater personal space than those in many other cultures. On a recent trip to New York City, one of your authors observed that any time someone accidentally touched her on the subway he/she made a special point to apologize profusely for the violation of personal space. Cultural norms of anxiety and fear surrounding issues of crime and terrorism appear to cause people to be more sensitive to others in public spaces; thus, this example highlights the importance of culture and context. Contrast this example to norms in many Asian cultures where frequent touch in crowded public spaces goes unnoticed because space is not used in the same ways. While teaching in China, one of your authors went grocery shopping in Beijing. As a westerner, she was shocked that shoppers would ram their shopping carts into others’ carts when they wanted to move around them in the aisle. She learned that this was not an indication of rudeness, but a cultural difference in the negotiation of space. She quickly learned to adapt to using this new approach to personal space, even though it carries a much different meaning in the U.S. Nonverbal cues such as touch, eye contact, facial expressions, and gestures are culture specific and reflect and maintain the values and norms of the cultures in which they are used.

• **We use nonverbal communication to communicate emotions.** While we can certainly tell people how we feel, we more frequently use nonverbal communication to express our emotions. Conversely, we tend to interpret emotions by examining nonverbal communication. One study suggests that it is important to use and interpret nonverbal communication for emotional expression, and ultimately relational attachment and satisfaction (Schachner, Shaver, & Mikulincer, 2005). Research also underscores the fact that people in close relationships have an easier time reading the nonverbal communication of emotion of their relational partners than those who aren’t close. Likewise, those in close relationships can more often detect concealed emotions (Sternglanz & Depaulo, 2004).

**Summary**

In this chapter, you have learned that we define nonverbal communication as any meaning shared through sounds, behaviors, and artifacts other than words. Some of the differences between verbal and nonverbal include the fact that verbal communication uses one channel while nonverbal communication occurs through multiple channels simultaneously. As a result, verbal communication is distinct while nonverbal communication is continuous. For the most part, nonverbal communication is enacted at an unconscious level while we are almost always conscious of our verbal communication. Finally, some nonverbal communication is considered universal and recognizable by people all over the world, while verbal communication is exclusive to particular languages.
There are many types of nonverbal communication including kinesics, haptics, appearance, objects, artifacts, proxemics, our environment, chronemics, paralanguage, and silence. Finally, we concluded by discussing how nonverbal communication serves many functions to help us share meanings in our interactions. Now that you have a basic understanding of verbal and nonverbal communication as a primary focus of study in our field, let’s look at how theory helps us understand our world.

Discussion Questions

1. Think of a time you made a conscious decision to use nonverbal communication. What prompted you to use nonverbal communication consciously instead of unconsciously?
2. How good do you think you are at detecting deception through others’ use of nonverbal communication? What things do you look for?
3. Have you ever used nonverbal communication to deceive? If so, what nonverbal activities did you focus on to do this?
4. Which do you consider has greater weight when interpreting a message from someone else, verbal or nonverbal communication? Why?

Key Terms

- chronemics
- conscious
- context
- continuous
- distinct
- environment
- haptics
- kinesics
- nonverbal communication
- paralanguage
- personal appearance
- proxemics
- silence
- unconscious

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Imagine for a moment that you have no language with which to communicate. It’s hard to imagine isn’t it? It’s probably even harder to imagine that with all of the advancements we have at our disposal today, there are people in our world who actually do not have, or cannot use, language to communicate.

Nearly 25 years ago, the government of Nicaragua started bringing deaf children together from all over the country in an attempt to educate them. These children had spent their lives in remote places and had no contact with other deaf people. They had never learned language and could not understand their teachers or each other. Likewise, their teachers could not understand them. A short while after bringing these students together, the teachers noticed that the students communicated with each other in what appeared to be an orderly and organized fashion: they had literally brought together the individual gestures they used at home and organized them into a new language. Although the teachers still did not understand what the kids were saying, they were astonished at what they were witnessing—the birth of a new language in the late 20th century!

Realizing that some humans still do not have language was an unprecedented discovery. In 1986 American linguist Judy Kegl went to Nicaragua to find out what she could learn from these children without language. She contends that our brains are open to language until the age of 12 or 13, and then language becomes difficult to learn. She quickly discovered approximately 300 people in Nicaragua who did not have language and says, “They are invaluable to research--among the only people on Earth who can provide clues to the beginnings of human communication.”

Adrien Perez, one of the early deaf students who formed this new language (referred to as Nicaraguan Sign Language), says that without verbal communication, "You can't express your feelings. Your thoughts may be there but you can't get them out. And you can't get new thoughts in." As one of the few people on earth who has experienced life with and without verbal communication his comments speak to the heart of communication: it is the essence of who we are and how we understand our world. We use it to form our identities, initiate and maintain relationships, express our needs and wants, construct and shape world-views, and achieve personal goals (Pelley, 2000). In this chapter, we want to provide and explain our definition of verbal communication, highlight the differences between written and spoken verbal communication, and demonstrate how verbal communication functions in our lives.
Defining Verbal Communication

When people ponder the word communication, they often think about the act of talking. We rely on verbal communication to exchange messages with one another and develop as individuals. The term verbal communication often evokes the idea of spoken communication, but written communication is also part of verbal communication. Reading this book you are decoding the authors’ written verbal communication in order to learn more about communication. Let’s explore the various components of our definition of verbal communication and examine how it functions in our lives.

Verbal communication is about language, both written and spoken. In general, verbal communication refers to our use of words while nonverbal communication refers to communication that occurs through means other than words, such as body language, gestures, and silence. Both verbal and nonverbal communication can be spoken and written. Many people mistakenly assume that verbal communication refers only to spoken communication. However, you will learn that this is not the case. Let’s say you tell a friend a joke and he or she laughs in response. Is the laughter verbal or nonverbal communication? Why? As laughter is not a word we would consider this vocal act as a form of nonverbal communication. For simplification, the box below highlights the kinds of communication that fall into the various categories. You can find many definitions of verbal communication in our literature, but for this text, we define **Verbal Communication** as an agreed-upon and rule-governed system of symbols used to share meaning. Let’s examine each component of this definition in detail.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbal Communication</th>
<th>Nonverbal Communication</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral</td>
<td>Spoken Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Oral</td>
<td>Written Language/Sign Language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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A System of Symbols

Symbols are **arbitrary representations of thoughts, ideas, emotions, objects, or actions used to encode and decode meaning** (Nelson & Kessler Shaw, 2002). Symbols stand for, or represent, something else. For example, there is nothing inherent about calling a cat a cat. Rather, English speakers have agreed that these symbols (words), whose components (letters) are used in a particular order each time, stand for both the actual object, as well as our interpretation of that object. This idea is illustrated by C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richard’s triangle of meaning (1923). The word “cat” is not the actual cat. Nor does it have any direct connection to an actual cat. Instead, it is a symbolic representation of our idea of a cat, as indicated by the line going from the word “cat” to the speaker’s idea of “cat” to the actual object.
Symbols have three distinct qualities: they are arbitrary, ambiguous, and abstract. Notice that the picture of the cat in the triangle more closely represents a real cat than the word “cat.” However, we do not use pictures as language, or verbal communication. Instead, we use words to represent our ideas. This example demonstrates our agreement that the word “cat” represents or stands for a real cat AND our idea of a cat. The symbols we use are arbitrary and have no direct relationship to the objects or ideas they represent. We generally consider communication successful when we reach agreement on the meanings of the symbols we use (Duck, 1993).

Not only are symbols arbitrary, they are ambiguous -- that is, they have several possible meanings. Imagine your friend tells you she has an apple on her desk. Is she referring to a piece of fruit or her computer? If a friend says that a person he met is sick, does he mean that person is ill or a great person? The meanings of symbols change over time due to changes in social norms, values, and advances in technology. You might be asking, “If symbols can have multiple meanings then how do we communicate and understand one another?” We are able to communicate because there are a finite number of possible meanings for our symbols, a range of meanings which the members of a given language system agree upon. Without an agreed-upon system of symbols, we could share relatively little meaning with one another. A simple example of ambiguity is represented on a street sign one of your authors sees when he cycles on rural roads. Every time he passes one of these signs he chuckles at the various meanings that he infers from it. We all can agree that the sign is intended to warn drivers that children are playing in the area and to drive slowly. However, it can also be interpreted to mean that there are slow moving children in the area (Imagine children playing tag in slow motion!). It could also be interpreted as a euphemism to describe mentally-challenged children who are playing. Even a simple word like slow can be ambiguous and open to more than one interpretation.

The verbal symbols we use are also abstract, meaning that, words are not material or physical. A certain level of abstraction is inherent in the fact that symbols can only represent objects and ideas. This abstraction allows us to use a phrase like the public in a broad way to mean all the people in the United States rather than having to distinguish among all the diverse groups that make up the U.S. population. Abstraction is helpful when you want to communicate complex concepts in a simple way. However, the more abstract the language, the greater potential there is for confusion.

Rule-Governed
Verbal communication is rule-governed. We must follow agreed-upon rules to make sense of the symbols we share. Let’s take another look at our example of the word cat. What would happen if there were no rules for using the symbols (letters) that make up this word? If placing these symbols in a proper order was not important, then cta, tac, tca, act, or atc could all mean cat. Even worse, what if you could use any three letters to refer to cat? Or still worse, what if there were no rules and anything could represent cat? Clearly, it’s important that we have rules to govern our verbal communication. There are four general rules for verbal communication, involving the sounds, meaning, arrangement, and use of symbols.
Case In Point

Sound It Out!

1. The bandage was wound around the wound.
2. The farm was used to produce produce.
3. The dump was so full that it had to refuse more refuse.
   4. We must polish the Polish furniture.
   5. He could lead if he would get the lead out.
6. The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert.
7. A bass was painted on the head of the bass drum.
8. When shot at, the dove dove into the bushes.
9. I did not object to the object.
10. The insurance was invalid for the invalid.
11. There was a row among the oarsmen about how to row.
12. The were too close to the door to close it.
13. The buck does funny things when the does are present.
14. The seamstress and a sewer fell down into a sewer line.
15. To help with planting, the farmer taught his sow to sow.
16. The wind was too strong to wind the sail.
17. After a number of injections my jaw got number.
18. Upon seeing the tear in the painting I shed a tear.
19. I had to subject the subject to a series of tests.
20. How can I intimate this to my most intimate friend?

- **The study of speech sounds** is called **phonology**. The pronunciation of the word *cat* comes from the rules governing how letters sound, especially in relation to one another. The context in which words are spoken may provide answers for how they should be pronounced. When we don’t follow phonological rules, confusion results. One way to understand and apply phonological rules is to use syntactic and pragmatic rules to clarify phonological rules.

- **Semantic rules** help us understand the **difference in meaning between the word cat and the word dog**. Instead of each of these words meaning any four-legged domestic pet, we use each word to specify what four-legged domestic pet we are talking about. You’ve probably used these words to say things like, “I’m a cat person” or “I’m a dog person.” Each of these statements provides insight into what the sender is trying to communicate. The statements in the “Sound It Out” box not only illustrate the idea of phonology, but also semantics. Even though many of the words are spelled the same, their meanings vary depending on how they are pronounced and in what context they are used.

We attach meanings to words; meanings are not inherent in words themselves. As you’ve been reading, words (symbols) are arbitrary and attain meaning only when people give them meaning. While we can always look to a dictionary to find a **standardized definition of a word**, or its **denotative meaning**, meanings do not always follow standard, agreed-upon definitions when used in various contexts. Consider the word *bitch*. The denotative meaning is, “A female canine animal,
especially a dog.” However, connotative meanings, the meanings we assign based on our experiences and beliefs, are quite varied. It’s likely that you most often hear the term bitch used connotatively as a derogatory descriptor of women (and sometimes men) rather than denotatively to literally define a female dog. A more recent connotative meaning of bitch is that of sisterhood and solidarity among women. When asked why she would “choose to glamorize the unappealing female stereotype of the bitch,” Andi Zeisler, co-founder of Bitch magazine replied: “When we chose the name, we were thinking, well, it would be great to reclaim the word “bitch” for strong, outspoken women, much the same way that “queer” has been reclaimed by the gay community” (Solomon, 2006, p. 13). Used in this sense, women, who historically have been at the brunt of this derogatory word, have reclaimed it for their own purposes. They have challenged the mainstream connotative use of the term by assigning a new connotative meaning to it.

Case In Point: McDonalds vs. Websters

McDonald’s says it deserves a break from the unflattering way the latest Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary depicts its job opportunities. Among some 10,000 new additions to an updated version released in June was the term “McJob,” defined as “low paying and dead-end work.” In an open letter to Merriam-Webster, McDonald’s CEO Jim Cantalupo said the term is “an inaccurate description of restaurant employment” and “a slap in the face of the 12 million men and women who work in the restaurant industry. The company e-mailed the letter to media organizations Friday, and it was also published in the Nov. 3 edition of an industry trade publication. Cantalupo also wrote that “more than 1,000 of the men and women who own and operate McDonald’s restaurants today got their start by serving customers behind the counter.” McDonald’s, the world’s largest restaurant chain, has more than 30,000 restaurants and more than 400,000 employees. Walk Riker, a spokesman for McDonald’s, said the Oak Brook Ill., fast-food giant also is concerned that “McJob” closely resembles McJOBS, the company’s training program for mentally and physically challenged people.

--San Francisco Chronicle, November 10th, 2003

- The study of language structure and symbolic arrangement is known as syntactics. Syntactics focuses on the rules we use to combine words into meaningful sentences and statements. We speak and write according to agreed-upon syntactic rules to keep meaning coherent and understandable. Think about this sentence: “The pink and purple elephant flapped its wings and flew out the window.” While the content of this sentence is fictitious and unreal, you can understand and visualize it because it follows syntactic rules for language structure.

- The study of how people actually use verbal communication is pragmatics. For example, as a student you probably speak more formally to your professors than to your peers. It’s likely that you make different word choices when you speak to your parents than you do when you speak to your friends. Think of the words “bowel movements,” “poop,” “crap,” and “shit.” While all of these words have essentially the same denotative meaning, people make choices based on context and audience regarding which word they feel comfortable using. These differences illustrate the pragmatics of our verbal communication. Even though
you use agreed-upon symbolic systems and follow phonological, syntactic, and semantic rules, you apply these rules differently in different contexts. Each communication context has different rules for “appropriate” communication. We are trained from a young age to communicate “appropriately” in different social contexts.

It is only through an agreed-upon and rule-governed system of symbols that we can exchange verbal communication in an effective manner. Without agreement, rules, and symbols, verbal communication would not work. The reality is, after we learn language in school, we don’t spend much time consciously thinking about all of these rules, we simply use them. However, rules keep our verbal communication structured in ways that make it useful for us to communicate more effectively.

Spoken versus Written Communication: What’s the Difference?

While both spoken and written communication function as agreed-upon rule-governed systems of symbols used to convey meaning, there are enough differences in pragmatic rules between writing and speaking to justify discussing some of their differences. Imagine for a moment that you’re a college student who desperately needs money. Rather than looking for a job you decide that you’re going to ask your parents for the money you need to make it through the end of the semester. Now, you have a few choices for using verbal communication to do this. You might choose to call your parents or talk to them in person. You may take a different approach and write them a letter or send them an email. You can probably identify your own list of pros and cons for each of these approaches. But really, what’s the difference between writing and talking in these situations? Let’s look at four of the major differences between the two: formal versus informal, synchronous versus asynchronous, recorded versus unrecorded, and privacy.

The first difference between spoken and written communication is that we generally use spoken communication informally while we use written communication formally. Consider how you have been trained to talk versus how you have been trained to write. Have you ever turned in a paper to a professor that “sounds” like how you talk? How was that paper graded compared to one that follows the more formal structures and rules of the English language? In western societies like the U.S., we follow more formal standards for our written communication than our spoken communication. With a few exceptions, we generally tolerate verbal mistakes (e.g. “should of” rather than “should have”) and qualifiers (e.g. “uh” “um” “you know,” etc.) in our speech, but not our writing. Consider a written statement such as, “I should of, um, gone and done somethin’ ‘bout it’ but, um, I I didn’t do nothin’.” In most written contexts, this is considered unacceptable written verbal communication. However, most of us would not give much thought to hearing this statement spoken aloud by someone. While we may certainly notice mistakes in another’s speech, we are generally not inclined to correct those mistakes as we would in written contexts.

While writing is generally more formal and speech more informal, there are some exceptions to the rule, especially with the growing popularity of new technologies. For
the first time in history, we are now seeing exceptions in our uses of speech and writing. Using text messaging and email, people are engaging in forms of writing using more informal rule structures, making their writing "sound" more like conversation. Likewise, this style of writing often attempts to incorporate the use of "nonverbal" communication (known as emoticons) to accent the writing. Consider the two examples in the box. One is an example of written correspondence using email while the other is a roughly equivalent version following the more formal written guidelines of a letter.

Case In Point

Email Version
dude… fyi were having… party friday. btw its byod so bring whatwhatever you want. remember last time you spiled all that stuff on floor I was rofl! J that was so funny everyone was lol anway imho this should be the funnest party this year
CU there
-F

Letter Version

Bob,
For your information, we are having a party this Friday. By the way, we are making it a Bring Your Own Drink party. So, bring what you want. Remember last time when you spilled those drinks on the floor? I was rolling on the floor laughing. That was so funny. Everyone was laughing out loud. Anyway, in my humble opinion, this party should be the most fun one of the year.
See you there,

Notice the informality in the email version. While it is readable, it reads as if Frank was actually speaking in a conversation rather than writing a document. Your authors have noticed that when their students turn in written work that has been written in email programs, the level of formality of the writing decreases. Email is a relatively new written medium, and it’s beginning to blur the lines of formality between writing and speech. However, when students use a word processing program like Microsoft Word, the writing tends to follow formal rules more often. As we continue using new technologies to communicate, new rule systems for those mediums will continue altering the rule systems in other forms of communication.

The second difference between spoken and written forms of verbal communication is that spoken communication or speech is almost entirely synchronous while written communication is almost entirely asynchronous. Synchronous communication is communication that takes place in real time, such as a conversation with a friend. When we are in conversation and even in public speaking situations, immediate feedback and response from the receiver is the rule. For instance, when you say "hello" to someone, you expect that the person will respond immediately. You do not expect that the person will get back to you sometime later in response to your greeting. In contrast, asynchronous communication is communication that is not immediate and
occurs over longer periods of time, such a letters or email messages. When someone writes a book, letter, or even email, there is no expectation from the sender that the receiver will provide an immediate response. Instead, the expectation is that the receiver will receive the message, and respond to it when he/she has time. This is one of the reasons people sometimes choose to send an email instead of calling another person, because it allows the receiver to respond when he/she has time rather than “putting him/her on the spot” to respond right away.

Just as new technologies are changing the rules of formality and informality, they are also creating new situations that break the norms of written communication as asynchronous and spoken communication as synchronous. Answering machines and voicemail have turned the telephone and our talk into asynchronous forms of communication. Even though we speak in these contexts, we understand that if we leave a message on an answering machine or voice mail system, we will not get an immediate reply. Instead, we understand that the receiver will call us back at his/her convenience. In this example, even though the channel of communication is speaking, there is no expectation for immediate response to the sent message. Similarly, text messaging is a form of written communication that follows the rules of spoken conversation in that it functions as synchronous communication. When you type a text message to someone you know, the expectation is that they will respond almost immediately. Even expectations regarding how quickly people should respond to emails seem to be changing. For example, one of your authors had a student email him asking for advice at 11:40 p.m. The student requested in her email that your author respond to her by midnight, a twenty-minute expectation for response. Needless to say, your author was at home asleep, not attentively monitoring his email in his office twenty minutes before midnight. In an attempt to reduce misunderstandings that can result from differing expectations of response, some professors state on their syllabi that they will respond to emails during traditional business hours of 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

The third difference between spoken and written communication is that written communication is generally archived and recorded for later retrieval, while spoken communication is generally not recorded. When we talk with friends, we do not tend to take notes or tape record our conversations. Instead, conversations tend to be ongoing and catalogued into our personal memories rather than recorded in an easily retrievable written format. On the other hand, it is quite easy to reference written works such as books, journals, magazines, newspapers, and electronic sources such as web pages and emails for long periods after the sender has written them. Your authors routinely keep emails years after they have read them. This way, we are able to reference our correspondence.

Verbal Communication Then

Historians have come up with a number of criteria people should have in order to be considered a civilization. One of these is writing, specifically for the purposes of governing and pleasure. Written verbal communication is used for literature, poetry,
religion, instruction, recording history and governing. Influential written verbal communication from history includes:

1. The *Ten Commandments* that Jews used as a guide to their faith.
2. *Law Code of Hammurabi* which was the recorded laws of the Ancient Babylonians.
3. The *Quran* which is core to the Islam faith.
4. The *Bible* which is followed by Christians.
5. The *Declaration of Independence* which declared the U.S. independent from Britain.
6. *Mao’s Little Red Book* which was used to promote communist rule in China.

-Global Virtual Classroom

As with the previous rules we have discussed, new technologies are changing many of the dynamics of speech and writing. For example, many people use email informally like spoken conversation, as an informal form of verbal communication. Because of this, they often expect that email operates and functions like a spoken conversation with the belief that it is a private conversation between the sender and receiver. However, many people have gotten into trouble because of what they have “spoken” about others through email. The corporation Epson (a large computer electronics manufacturer) was at the center of one of the first lawsuits regarding the recording and archiving of employee use of email correspondence. Employees at Epson assumed their email was private and therefore used it to say negative things about their bosses. What they didn’t know was their bosses were saving and printing these email messages, and using the content of these messages to make personnel decisions. When employees sued Epson, the courts ruled in favor of the corporation, stating that they had every right to retain employee email for their records. While most of us have become accustomed to using technologies such as email and instant messaging in ways that are similar to our spoken conversations, we must also consider the repercussions of using communication technologies in this fashion because they are often archived and not private.

As you can see, there are a number of differences between spoken and written forms of verbal communication. Both forms are rule-governed as our definition points out, but the rules are often different for the use of these two types of verbal communication. However, it’s apparent that as new technologies provide more ways for us to communicate, many of our traditional rules for using both speech and writing will continue to blur as we try to determine the “most appropriate” uses of these new communication technologies. As Chapter 2 pointed out, practical problems of the day will continue to guide the directions our field takes as we continue to study the ways technology changes our communication. As more changes continue to occur in the ways we communicate with one another, more avenues of study will continue to open for those interested in being part of the development of how communication is conducted. Now that we have looked in detail at our definition of verbal communication, and the differences between spoken and written forms of verbal communication, let’s explore what our use of verbal communication accomplishes for us as humans.
Functions of Verbal Communication

Our existence is intimately tied to the communication we use, and verbal communication serves many functions in our daily lives. We use verbal communication to define reality, organize, think, and shape attitudes.

- **Verbal communication helps us define reality.** We use verbal communication to define everything from ideas, emotions, experiences, thoughts, objects, and people (Blumer, 1969). Think about how you define yourself. You may define yourself as a student, employee, son/daughter, parent, advocate, etc. You might also define yourself as moral, ethical, a night-owl, or a procrastinator. Verbal communication is how we label and define what we experience in our lives. These definitions are not only descriptive, but evaluative. For example, one rainy day, one of your authors was running errands with his two-year-old and four-year-old daughters. Because of the gray sky and rain, he defined the day as dingy and ugly. Suddenly, his older daughter commented from the back seat, “Dad, this is a beautiful day.” Instead of focusing on the weather, she was referring to the fact that she was having a good day by hanging out with her dad and older sister. This statement reflects that we have choices for how we use verbal communication to define our realities. We make choices about what to focus on and how to define what we experience and its impact on how we understand and live in our world.
Verbal Communication Now

Being able to communicate effectively through verbal communication is extremely important. No matter what you plan to do as a career, effective verbal communication helps you in all aspects of your life. Former President Bush was often chided (and even chided himself) for the verbal communication mistakes he made. Here is a list of his “Top 10” according to About.com.

10) "Families is where our nation finds hope, where wings take dream." —LaCrosse, Wis., Oct. 18, 2000

9) "I know how hard it is for you to put food on your family." —Greater Nashua, N.H., Jan. 27, 2000

8) "I hear there's rumors on the Internets that we’re going to have a draft." —second presidential debate, St. Louis, Mo., Oct. 8, 2004

7) "I know the human being and fish can coexist peacefully." —Saginaw, Mich., Sept. 29, 2000

6) "You work three jobs? … Uniquely American, isn't it? I mean, that is fantastic that you’re doing that." —to a divorced mother of three, Omaha, Nebraska, Feb. 2005

5) "Too many good docs are getting out of the business. Too many OB-GYNs aren’t able to practice their love with women all across this country." —Poplar Bluff, Mo., Sept. 6, 2004

4) "They misunderestimated me." —Bentonville, Ark., Nov. 6, 2000

3) "Rarely is the questioned asked: Is our children learning?" —Florence, S.C., Jan. 11, 2000

2) "Our enemies are innovative and resourceful, and so are we. They never stop thinking about new ways to harm our country and our people, and neither do we." —Washington, D.C., Aug. 5, 2004

1) "There's an old saying in Tennessee — I know it's in Texas, probably in Tennessee — that says, fool me once, shame on — shame on you. Fool me — you can't get fooled again." —Nashville, Tenn., Sept. 17, 2002
- **Verbal communication helps us organize complex ideas and experiences into meaningful categories.** Consider the number of things you experience with your five primary senses every day. It is impossible to comprehend everything we encounter. We use verbal communication to organize seemingly random events into understandable categories to make sense of our experiences. For example, we all organize the people in our lives into categories. We label these people with terms like, friends, acquaintances, romantic partners, family, peers, colleagues, and strangers. We highlight certain qualities, traits, or scripts to organize outwardly haphazard events into meaningful categories to establish meaning for our world.

- **Verbal communication helps us think.** Without verbal communication, we would not function as thinking beings. The ability most often used to distinguish humans from other animals is our ability to reason and communicate. With language, we are able to reflect on the past, consider the present, and ponder the future. We develop our memories using language. Try recalling your first conscious memories. Chances are, your first conscious memories formed around the time you started using verbal communication. The example we used at the beginning of the chapter highlights what a world would be like for humans without language.

- **Verbal communication helps us shape our attitudes about our world.** The way you use language shapes your attitude about the world around you. Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf developed the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis to explain that language determines thought. People who speak different languages, or use language differently, think differently (Mandelbaum, 1958; Maxwell, 2004; Whorf, 1958). The argument suggests that if a native English speaker had the exact same experiences in his/her life, but grew up speaking Chinese instead of English, his/her worldview would be different because of the different symbols used to make sense of the world. When you label, describe, or evaluate events in your life, you use the symbols of the language you speak. Your use of these symbols to represent your reality influences your perspective and attitude about the world. It makes sense then that the more sophisticated your repertoire of symbols is, the more sophisticated your world view can be for you.

While we have over-simplified the complexities of verbal communication for you in this chapter, when it comes to its actual use—accounting for the infinite possibilities of symbols, rules, contexts, and meanings—studying how humans use verbal communication is daunting. When you consider the complexities of verbal communication, it is a wonder we can communicate effectively at all. But, verbal communication is not the only channel humans use to communicate. In the next chapter we will examine the other most common channel of communication we use: nonverbal communication.
Summary
In this chapter we defined verbal communication as an agreed-upon and rule-governed system of symbols used to share meaning. These symbols are arbitrary, ambiguous, and abstract. The rules that dictate our use and understanding of symbols include phonology, semantics, syntactics, and pragmatics. As you recall there are distinct differences between written and spoken forms of verbal communication in terms of levels of formality, synchronicity, recording, and privacy. Yet, new technologies are beginning to blur some of these differences. Finally, verbal communication is central to our identity as humans and it allows us to define reality, organize ideas and experiences into categories, help us think, and shape our attitudes about the world.

Discussion Questions
1. In what ways do you define yourself as a person? What kinds of definitions do you have for yourself? What do you think would happen if you changed some of your self-definitions?
2. How do advances in technology impact verbal communication? What are some examples?
3. How does popular culture impact our verbal communication? What are some examples?
4. When you use text messages or email, are you formal or informal?

Key Terms
- abstract
- ambiguous
- arbitrary
- archived
- asynchronous
- connotative meaning
- context
- denotative meaning
- formal
- informal
- phonology
- pragmatics
- reclaim
- rule-governed
- semantics
- symbols
- synchronous
- syntactics
- verbal communication

References


Contingency (Situational) Theory


Contingency theories are based on the idea that there is no single best style of leadership but that the most effective style depends upon the circumstances. The aspects of the circumstances identified as significant are:

- the leader's characteristics and style (thus absorbing the two earlier theories).
- the subordinates' expectations and experience.
- the nature of the task and the organisational environment.

For example, Fiedler's contingency theory (Fiedler, 1967) focuses on the degree of structuring in the task and the leader's organisational power (i.e. the power to reward and punish). He finds that where the task is highly structured, and the leader liked, trusted and powerful, then the most effective leadership style is a directive, task-oriented style. Similarly, where the task is ambiguous and the leader is in a weak position, then the same directive, task-oriented style is most effective. In intermediate situations where the task is ambiguous and the leader liked and respected, then a participative, person-centred style is found to be most effective. These findings are summarised in Figure 11.
Other theories in this category focus on other aspects of the context; however, they have the same sort of structure, namely recommending different styles of leadership in different contexts.

Locke's Goal Setting Theory


Understanding SMART Goal Setting

Goal setting is a powerful way of motivating people, and of motivating yourself. The value of goal setting is so well recognized that entire management systems, like Management by Objectives, have goal setting basics incorporated within them.

In fact, goal setting theory is generally accepted as among the most valid and useful motivation theories in industrial and organizational psychology, human resource management, and organizational behavior.

Many of us have learned – from bosses, seminars, and business articles – to set SMART goals. It seems natural to assume that by setting a goal that's Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound, we will be well on our way to accomplishing it.

But is this really the best way of setting goals? To answer this, we look to Dr Edwin Locke’s pioneering research on goal setting and motivation in the late 1960s. In his 1968 article "Toward a Theory of Task Motivation and Incentives," he stated that employees were motivated by clear goals and appropriate feedback. Locke went on to say that working toward a goal provided a major source of motivation to actually reach the goal – which, in turn, improved performance.

This information does not seem revolutionary to us some 40 years later. This shows the impact his theory has had on professional and personal performance. In this article, we look at what Locke had to say about goal setting, and how we can apply his theory to our own performance goals.
Goal Setting Theory

Locke’s research showed that there was a relationship between how difficult and specific a goal was and people’s performance of a task. He found that specific and difficult goals led to better task performance than vague or easy goals.

Telling someone to "Try hard" or "Do your best" is less effective than "Try to get more than 80% correct" or "Concentrate on beating your best time." Likewise, having a goal that's too easy is not a motivating force. Hard goals are more motivating than easy goals, because it's much more of an accomplishment to achieve something that you have to work for.

A few years after Locke published his article, another researcher, Dr Gary Latham, studied the effect of goal setting in the workplace. His results supported exactly what Locke had found, and the inseparable link between goal setting and workplace performance was formed.

In 1990, Locke and Latham published their seminal work, "A Theory of Goal Setting and Task Performance." In this book, they reinforced the need to set specific and difficult goals, and they outlined three other characteristics of successful goal setting.

Five Principles of Goal Setting

To motivate, goals must have:

1. Clarity.
2. Challenge.
3. Commitment.
5. Task complexity.

Let's look at each of these in detail.

1. Clarity

Clear goals are measurable and unambiguous. When a goal is clear and specific, with a definite time set for completion, there is less misunderstanding about what behaviors will be rewarded. You know what's expected, and you can use the specific result as a source of motivation. When a goal is vague – or when it's expressed as a general instruction, like "Take initiative" – it has limited motivational value.

To improve your or your team's performance, set clear goals that use specific and measurable standards. "Reduce job turnover by 15%" or "Respond to employee suggestions within 48 hours" are examples of clear goals.

When you use the SMART acronym to help you set goals, you ensure the clarity of the goal by making it Specific, Measurable and Time-bound.
2. Challenge

One of the most important characteristics of goals is the level of challenge. People are often motivated by achievement, and they'll judge a goal based on the significance of the anticipated accomplishment. When you know that what you do will be well received, there's a natural motivation to do a good job.

Rewards typically increase for more difficult goals. If you believe you'll be well compensated or otherwise rewarded for achieving a challenging goal, that will boost your enthusiasm and your drive to get it done.

Setting SMART goals that are Relevant links them closely to the rewards given for achieving challenging goals. Relevant goals will further the aims of your organization, and these are the kinds of goals that most employers will be happy to reward.

When setting goals, make each goal a challenge. If an assignment is easy and not viewed as very important – and if you or your employee doesn't expect the accomplishment to be significant – then the effort may not be impressive.

Note: It's important to strike an appropriate balance between a challenging goal and a realistic goal. Setting a goal that you'll fail to achieve is possibly more de-motivating than setting a goal that's too easy. The need for success and achievement is strong, therefore people are best motivated by challenging, but realistic, goals. Ensuring that goals are Achievable or Attainable is one of the elements of SMART.

3. Commitment

Goals must be understood and agreed upon if they are to be effective. Employees are more likely to "buy into" a goal if they feel they were part of creating that goal. The notion of participative management rests on this idea of involving employees in setting goals and making decisions.

One version of SMART – for use when you are working with someone else to set their goals – has A and R stand for Agreed and Realistic instead of Attainable and Relevant. Agreed goals lead to commitment.

This doesn't mean that every goal has to be negotiated with and approved by employees. It does mean that goals should be consistent and in line with previous expectations and organizational concerns. As long as the employee believes that the goal is consistent with the goals of the company, and believes the person assigning the goal is credible, then the commitment should be there.

Interestingly, goal commitment and difficulty often work together. The harder the goal, the more commitment is required. If you have an easy goal, you don't need a lot of motivation to get it done. When you're working on a difficult assignment, you will likely encounter challenges that require a deeper source of inspiration and incentive.
As you use goal setting in your workplace, make an appropriate effort to include people in their own goal setting. Encourage employees to develop their own goals, and keep them informed about what's happening elsewhere in the organization. This way, they can be sure that their goals are consistent with the overall vision and purpose that the company seeks.

4. Feedback
In addition to selecting the right type of goal, an effective goal program must also include feedback. Feedback provides opportunities to clarify expectations, adjust goal difficulty, and gain recognition. It's important to provide benchmark opportunities or targets, so individuals can determine for themselves how they're doing.

These regular progress reports, which measure specific success along the way, are particularly important where it's going to take a long time to reach a goal. In these cases, break down the goals into smaller chunks, and link feedback to these intermediate milestones.

SMART goals are Measurable, and this ensures that clear feedback can be provided. With all your goal setting efforts, make sure that you build in time for providing formal feedback. Certainly, informal check-ins are important, and they provide a means of giving regular encouragement and recognition. However, taking the time to sit down and discuss goal performance is a necessary factor in long-term performance improvement. See our article on Delegation for more on this.

5. Task Complexity
The last factor in goal setting theory introduces two more requirements for success. For goals or assignments that are highly complex, take special care to ensure that the work doesn't become too overwhelming.

People who work in complicated and demanding roles probably have a high level of motivation already. However, they can often push themselves too hard if measures aren't built into the goal expectations to account for the complexity of the task. It's therefore important to do the following:

- Give the person sufficient time to meet the goal or improve performance.
- Provide enough time for the person to practice or learn what is expected and required for success.

The whole point of goal setting is to facilitate success. Therefore, you want to make sure that the conditions surrounding the goals don't frustrate or inhibit people from accomplishing their objectives. This reinforces the "Attainable" part of SMART.

Key Points
Goal setting is something most of us recognize as necessary for our success. By understanding goal setting theory, you can effectively apply the principles to goals that
you or your team members set. Locke and Latham’s research confirms the usefulness of SMART goal setting, and their theory continues to influence the way we measure performance today. Use clear, challenging goals, and commit yourself to achieving them. Provide feedback on goal performance. Take into consideration the complexity of the task. If you follow these simple rules, your goal setting process will be much more successful, and your overall performance will improve.

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs is a theory in psychology, proposed by Abraham Maslow in his 1943 paper A Theory of Human Motivation.[2] Maslow subsequently extended the idea to include his observations of humans’ innate curiosity. His theories parallel many other theories of human developmental psychology, all of which focus on describing the stages of growth in humans. Maslow use the terms Physiological, Safety, Belongingness and Love, Esteem, and Self-Actualization needs to describe the pattern that human motivations generally move through.

Maslow studied what he called exemplary people such as Albert Einstein, Jane Addams, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Frederick Douglass rather than mentally ill or neurotic people, writing that "the study of crippled, stunted, immature, and unhealthy specimens can yield only a cripple psychology and a cripple philosophy."[3] Maslow studied the healthiest 1% of the college student population.[4]

Maslow’s theory was fully expressed in his 1954 book Motivation and Personality.[5] Note that Maslow never personally used a pyramid to describe these levels in any of his writings on the subject.

Hierarchy
Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is often portrayed in the shape of a pyramid, with the largest and most fundamental levels of needs at the bottom, and the need for self-actualization at the top.[1][6]

The most fundamental and basic four layers of the pyramid contain what Maslow called "deficiency needs" or "d-needs": esteem, friendship and love, security, and physical needs.

With the exception of the most fundamental (physiological) needs, if these "deficiency needs" are not met, the body gives no physical indication but the individual feels
anxious and tense. Maslow’s theory suggests that the most basic level of needs must be met before the individual will strongly desire (or focus motivation upon) the secondary or higher level needs. Maslow also coined the term Metamotivation to describe the motivation of people who go beyond the scope of the basic needs and strive for constant betterment.[7]

Metamotivated people are driven by B-needs (Being Needs), instead of deficiency needs (D-Needs).
The human mind and brain are complex and have parallel processes running at the same time, so many different motivations from different levels of Maslow's pyramid usually occur at the same time. Maslow was clear about speaking of these levels and their satisfaction in terms such as "relative" and "general" and "primarily", and says that the human organism is "dominated" by a certain need[8], rather than saying that the individual is "only" focused on a certain need at any given time. So Maslow acknowledges that many different levels of motivation are likely to be going on in a human all at once. His focus in discussing the hierarchy was to identify the basic types of motivations, and the order that they generally progress as lower needs are reasonably well met.

**Physiological needs**

For the most part, physiological needs are obvious – they are the literal requirements for human survival. If these requirements are not met, the human body simply cannot continue to function.

Physiological needs are the most prepotent of all the other needs. Therefore, the human that lacks food, love, esteem, or safety would consider the greatest of his/her needs to be food.

Air, water, and food are metabolic requirements for survival in all animals, including humans. Clothing and shelter provide necessary protection from the elements. The intensity of the human sexual instinct is shaped more by sexual competition than maintaining a birth rate adequate to survival of the species.

**Safety needs**

With their physical needs relatively satisfied, the individual's safety needs take precedence and dominate behavior. In the absence of physical safety – due to war, natural disaster, or, in cases of family violence, childhood abuse, etc. – people (re-)experience post-traumatic stress disorder and trans-generational trauma transfer. In the absence of economic safety – due to economic crisis and lack of work opportunities – these safety needs manifest themselves in such things as a preference for job security, grievance procedures for protecting the individual from unilateral authority, savings accounts, insurance policies, reasonable disability accommodations, and the like. This level is more likely to be found in children because they have a greater need to feel safe.
Safety and Security needs include:
- Personal security
- Financial security
- Health and well-being
- Safety net against accidents/illness and their adverse impacts

Love and belonging
After physiological and safety needs are fulfilled, the third layer of human needs are interpersonal and involve feelings of belongingness. The need is especially strong in childhood and can over-ride the need for safety as witnessed in children who cling to abusive parents. Deficiencies with respect to this aspect of Maslow's hierarchy – due to hospitalism, neglect, shunning, ostracism etc. – can impact individual's ability to form and maintain emotionally significant relationships in general, such as:
- Friendship
- Intimacy
- Family

Humans need to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance, whether it comes from a large social group, such as clubs, office culture, religious groups, professional organizations, sports teams, gangs, or small social connections (family members, intimate partners, mentors, close colleagues, confidants). They need to love and be loved (sexually and non-sexually) by others. In the absence of these elements, many people become susceptible to loneliness, social anxiety, and clinical depression. This need for belonging can often overcome the physiological and security needs, depending on the strength of the peer pressure; an anorexic, for example, may ignore the need to eat and the security of health for a feeling of control and belonging.[citation needed]

Esteem
All humans have a need to be respected and to have self-esteem and self-respect. Esteem presents the normal human desire to be accepted and valued by others. People need to engage themselves to gain recognition and have an activity or activities that give the person a sense of contribution, to feel self-valued, be it in a profession or hobby. Imbalances at this level can result in low self-esteem or an inferiority complex. People with low self-esteem need respect from others. They may seek fame or glory, which again depends on others. Note, however, that many people with low self-esteem will not be able to improve their view of themselves simply by receiving fame, respect, and glory externally, but must first accept themselves internally. Psychological imbalances such as depression can also prevent one from obtaining self-esteem on both levels.

Most people have a need for a stable self-respect and self-esteem. Maslow noted two versions of esteem needs, a lower one and a higher one. The lower one is the need for the respect of others, the need for status, recognition, fame, prestige, and attention. The higher one is the need for self-respect, the need for strength, competence, mastery, self-confidence, independence and freedom. The latter one ranks higher because it
rests more on inner competence won through experience. Deprivation of these needs can lead to an inferiority complex, weakness and helplessness.

Maslow also states that even though these are examples of how the quest for knowledge is separate from basic needs he warns that these “two hierarchies are interrelated rather than sharply separated” (Maslow 97). This means that this level of need, as well as the next and highest level, are not strict, separate levels but closely related to others, and this is possibly the reason that these two levels of need are left out of most textbooks.

**Self-actualization**

“What a man can be, he must be.”[9] This forms the basis of the perceived need for self-actualization. This level of need pertains to what a person’s full potential is and realizing that potential. Maslow describes this desire as the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming.[10] This is a broad definition of the need for self-actualization, but when applied to individuals the need is specific. For example one individual may have the strong desire to become an ideal parent, in another it may be expressed athletically, and in another it may be expressed in painting, pictures, or inventions.[11] As mentioned before, in order to reach a clear understanding of this level of need one must first not only achieve the previous needs, physiological, safety, love, and esteem, but master these needs.

**Self-transcendence**

Viktor Frankl later added Self-transcendence [12] to create his own version of Maslow's Hierarchy.

**Research**

Recent research appears to validate the existence of universal human needs, although the hierarchy proposed by Maslow is called into question. [13] [14]

Other research indicates that Maslow’s explanations of the hierarchy of human motivation reflects a binary pattern of growth as seen in math. The individual's awareness of first, second, and third person perspectives, and of each one's input needs and output needs, moves through a general pattern that is basically the same as Maslow’s described pattern.[15]

**Criticisms**

In their extensive review of research based on Maslow’s theory, Wahba and Brudwell found little evidence for the ranking of needs Maslow described, or even for the existence of a definite hierarchy at all.[16] Chilean economist and philosopher Manfred Max-Neef has also argued fundamental human needs are non-hierarchical, and are ontologically universal and invariant in nature—part of the condition of being human;
poverty, he argues, may result from any one of these needs being frustrated, denied or unfulfilled.[citation needed]

The order in which the hierarchy is arranged (with self-actualization as the highest order need) has been criticised as being ethnocentric by Geert Hofstede.[17] Hofstede's criticism of Maslow's pyramid as ethnocentric may stem from the fact that Maslow's hierarchy of needs neglects to illustrate and expand upon the difference between the social and intellectual needs of those raised in individualistic societies and those raised in collectivist societies. Maslow created his hierarchy of needs from an individualistic perspective, being that he was from the United States, a highly individualistic nation. The needs and drives of those in individualistic societies tend to be more self-centered than those in collectivist societies, focusing on improvement of the self, with self actualization being the apex of self improvement. Since the hierarchy was written from the perspective of an individualist, the order of needs in the hierarchy with self actualization at the top is not representative of the needs of those in collectivist cultures. In collectivist societies, the needs of acceptance and community will outweigh the needs for freedom and individuality.[18]

Some of these criticisms may be really about Maslow's choice of terminology, especially with the term "self-actualization". "Self-actualization" might not effectively convey his observations that this higher level of motivation is really about focusing on becoming the best person one can possibly become, in the service of both the self and others: "A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be ultimately at peace with himself. What a man can be, he must be. He must be true to his own nature. This need we may call self-actualization."[19] At these higher levels of motivation, what we do generally benefits everyone, but Maslow's term might not be as good at clarifying that as it could have been.

Maslow's hierarchy has also been criticized as being individualistic because of the position and value of sex on the pyramid. Maslow's pyramid puts sex on the bottom rung of physiological needs, along with breathing and food. It views sex from an individualistic and not collectivist perspective: i.e., as an individualistic physiological need that must be satisfied before one moves on to higher pursuits. This view of sex neglects the emotional, familial and evolutionary implications of sex within the community.[20][21]

**Business Marketing**

Courses in marketing teach Maslow's hierarchy as one of the first theories as a basis for understanding consumers' motives for action. Marketers have historically looked towards consumers' needs to define their actions in the market. If producers design products meeting consumer needs, consumers will more often choose those products over those of competitors. Whichever product better fills the void created by the need will be chosen more frequently, thus increasing sales. This makes the model relevant to transpersonal business studies.
International business
Understanding the strengths and weakness of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is important in the field of international business. Evaluating the different needs, values, drives and priorities of people from different countries – individualistic or collectivist – is incredibly valuable in cross-cultural communications, and especially within the workplace. It also illustrates how differences in values can greatly affect work atmosphere and work ethic between cultures: "For example, societal cultures in many individualistic countries, such as the United States, may lead to an advantage in technological research and development. Many collectivistic societal cultures, such as that in Japan, may result in an advantage in workforce organization, quality control of products and service, and establishment of good relationships among contractees, suppliers and customers".[22]

Effect of Stress on the Changes of Importance and Satisfaction of Needs Across Cultures
The higher-order (self-esteem and self-actualization) and lower-order (physiological, safety, and social) needs classification of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is not universal and may vary across cultures due to individual differences and available resources in the region or geopolitical entity/country.

Tang and his colleagues challenged Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, the higher-order (self-esteem and self-actualization) and lower-order (physiological, safety, and social) classification of the needs, in particular and explored the levels of needs for importance and satisfaction during peacetime and wartime across cultures during and after the first Persian Gulf War. First of all, regarding the importance of needs, there were two levels of needs during real peacetime (1993–94) in the US. The retrospective peacetime measure was established and collected during the Persian Gulf War in 1991 when people in the US were asked to recall the importance of needs one year ago in 1990. Again, only two levels of needs were identified. Therefore, people do have the ability and competence to recall and estimate the importance of needs retrospectively. In addition, two levels of needs regarding satisfaction during peacetime in the US also emerged. In short, there are two levels of needs regarding importance and satisfaction during peacetime in the US. However, these two levels of needs were different from that of Maslow's model: Social needs were associated with self-esteem and self-actualization (psychological needs).

Second, for citizens in the Middle East (Egypt and Saudi Arabia), there were three levels of needs during retrospective peacetime (1990) regarding importance and satisfaction. These three levels were completely different from those individuals in the US. For example, due to significant differences in natural resources across countries, during peacetime, water was the least important need for people in the US, but was the most important need for those in the Middle East. Third, changes regarding the importance and satisfaction of needs from the retrospective peacetime to the wartime due to stress varied significantly across cultures (the US vs. Middle East). For people in the US, there was only one level of needs regarding the importance of needs during the war because due to stress, people considered all needs equally important. For example, the most significant increase regarding the importance of needs from peacetime to
wartime was the security and safety of the country because people have taken that (the safety of the country) for granted during peacetime. Regarding satisfaction of needs during the war in the US, there were three levels: (1) physiological needs, (2) safety needs, and (3) the psychological needs (social, self-esteem, self-actualization). The satisfaction of physiological needs and safety needs (combined as one during peacetime) were separated into two independent needs during the war. For people in the Middle East, the satisfaction of needs changed from three levels during peacetime to two levels during the war. It is also interesting to note that self-esteem was the least satisfied needs for people in the US and in the Middle East, a rare, common finding.

The importance and satisfaction of people's needs were different across cultures and the changes of human needs from peacetime to wartime did vary across cultures. Therefore, human needs are unique, dynamic, and changing.

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The word motivation is often defined as "getting someone moving." Motivation theory breaks down these forces into internal or intrinsic motivation, and external or extrinsic motivation. If you're in a leadership role, then it's important to understand how employees are motivated, and what you can do as a leader to keep them motivated.

Motivation Theory
When we motivate ourselves, or someone else, we are developing those incentives or conditions that we believe will help move a person to a desired behavior. Whether it is through intrinsic motivation or extrinsic motivation, most individuals are moved by their beliefs, values, personal interests, and even fear.

Additional Resources
- Effective Leadership
- Ethical Leadership
- Leadership in Sports
- Motivation Theory and Leadership
- HYPERLINK "http://www.money-zine.com/Career-Development/Leadership-Skill/Presentation-Skills/" Presentation Skills

One of the more difficult challenges to a leader is to learn how to effectively motivate those working for them. One of the reasons it's so difficult is because motivation can be so personal. Typically, inexperienced leaders believe that the same factors that motivate themselves will motivate others too.

Another misconception held by inexperienced leaders is that the same factors that motivate one employee will work on another. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. As we will learn later on, one size does not fit all when it comes to motivation.

Intrinsic or Self Motivation
Fundamentally, all motivation comes from within. So the most common concepts of motivation are those of self motivation, internal motivation, or intrinsic motivation. All of these terms are used interchangeably to describe the same motivational factors that come from within a person.
Later, we will describe a second form of motivation, which is extrinsic or external motivation. While it is certainly recognized that external factors can motivate us, this is a secondary factor. For external forces to be effective in motivating us, they must be in harmony with one of our intrinsic motivational factors.

In fact, several theorists such as Combs (1982), or Purkey & Stanley (1991), maintain that there is only a single kind of intrinsic motivation. That motivation is one that can be described as engaging in activities that enhance or maintain a person's self-image or concept of oneself.

Other theorists such as Malone and Lepper (1987) define self motivation in broader and perhaps more useful terms. Malone and Lepper believe that motivation is simply what people will do without external influence. Said another way, self motivation or intrinsically motivating activities, are those in which people will partake in for no reward other than the enjoyment that these activities bring them.

Malone and Lepper have integrated a large amount of motivational research into a summary of seven ways we, as the leadership of our organizations, can design environments that are self motivating.

**Motivation through Challenges**

Individuals are motivated when they are working towards personally meaningful goals. Attainment of those goals must require activity that is increasingly difficult, but attainable. In other words, people like to be challenged, but they must feel their goals are achievable to stay motivated. This can be accomplished by:

- Establishing goals that are personally meaningful
- Making those goals possible
- Providing feedback on performance
- Aligning goals with the individual's self esteem

**Motivation through Curiosity**

In this concept of self motivation, we are talking about providing something in the individual's environment that arouses their curiosity. This can be accomplished by presenting the individual with something that connects their present knowledge or skills with a more desirable level - if the person were to engage in a certain activity. So to motivate someone through curiosity, the environment must stimulate their interest to learn more.

**Motivation through Control**

Most people like to feel they are in control of their destiny. They want to feel in control of what happens to them. To stay motivated, individuals must understand the cause and effect relationship between an action they will take and the result. To motivate individuals through the use of control you can:
● Make the cause and effect relationship clear by establishing a goal and its reward
● Allow individuals to believe that the work they do makes a difference
● Allow individuals to choose what they want to learn and how to go about learning it

**Motivation through Fantasy**

Another intrinsic motivating factor comes via fantasy. That is individuals can use mental images of things and/or situations that are not actually present to motivate themselves. You can foster motivation through fantasy by helping individuals imagine themselves in situations that are motivating.

For example, if you know that someone is highly motivated by the thought of being in control, then you can talk to them about a future point in time when they might be in charge of a large and important business operation.

**Motivation through Competition**

Individuals can also be motivated by competition. That’s because we gain a certain amount of satisfaction by comparing our performance to that of others. This type of competition can occur naturally as well as artificially. When using competition to foster motivation, keep in mind the following:

● Competition is more motivating to some than others
● Losing in a competition de-motivates more than winning motivates
● Competitive spirits can sometimes reduce the likelihood of being helpful to competitors

**Motivation through Cooperation**

Cooperating with others or the feeling that you can help others is very motivating. Most individuals feel quite satisfied when helping others achieve their goals. As was the case with competition, motivation through cooperation can occur naturally or artificially. When using cooperation to motivate, keep in mind:

● Cooperation is more important to some individuals than others
● Cooperation is a valuable skill that can be used in many different situations
● Interpersonal skills are important for cooperation

**Motivation through Recognition**

Finally, individuals are motivated through recognition. When their accomplishments are recognized by others, then they feel motivated. You need to make sure that recognition is distinguished from competition. With recognition you do not compare their achievements to those of others as you might with a competition.

**Extrinsic or External Motivation**

As previously mentioned, extrinsic or external motivation is the term used to describe external factors that stimulate our internal motivation. The concept of externally motivating someone is not at odds with the fact that motivation comes from within. The
point here is that it is possible to provide others with situations, or an external environment, that is motivating.

Perhaps the most useful lesson for the leader then becomes how to motivate employees that report directly or indirectly to the leader. If you understand the intrinsic motivational factors previously described, then a game plan can be developed to foster motivation among employees.

**Employee Motivation**

Some of the most effective ways for managers and leaders to motivate their staff includes recognition, providing positive performance feedback, and by challenging employees to learn new things. Many new managers make the mistake of introducing de-motivating factors into the workplace such as punishment for mistakes, or frequent criticisms.

When followers feel they are being supported, and they have the ability to remain in control of their workplace, they stay motivated. Leaders can foster this feeling by allowing employees to take on added responsibility and accountability for making decisions.

The important thing to keep in mind is that motivation is individual, and the degree of motivation achieved through one single strategy will not be the most effective way to motivate all employees. The most effective way to determine what motivates others is through carefully planned trial and error.

**Figuring Out What Motivates Others**

That being said, we'll finish up with some tips on how to determine what motivates others:

- Talk to your employees, not about what motivates them because they may not realize it themselves, but what they value. This will give you insights into which of the seven motivational factors might be high on their list.
- Test a factor on an employee. For example, if you think that recognition might help motivate an employee then try using that factor.
- Check in with employees about their feelings. It's always a good idea to get feedback from your employees. Make sure you're getting the reaction you're looking for.
- Be on the lookout for signs of de-motivation. Make sure you're not inadvertently introducing something into the work environment that is being counter-productive to your goal - motivated employees.
Roles in Groups


Every member of a group plays a certain role within that group. Some roles relate to the task aspect of the group, while others promote social interaction. A third set of roles are self-centered and can be destructive for the group. Read about the roles group members play and then complete the activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task-Oriented Roles</th>
<th>Researchers Benne and Sheats identified several roles which relate to the completion of the group's task:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Initiator-contributor: Generates new ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Information-seeker: Asks for information about the task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Opinion-seeker: Asks for the input from the group about its values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Information-giver: Offers facts or generalization to the group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Opinion-giver: States his or her beliefs about a group issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Elaborator: Explains ideas within the group, offers examples to clarify ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Coordinator: Shows the relationships between ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Orienter: Shifts the direction of the group's discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Evaluator-critic: Measures group's actions against some objective standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Energizer: Stimulates the group to a higher level of activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Procedural-technician: Performs logistical functions for the group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recorder: Keeps a record of group actions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Roles</th>
<th>Groups also have members who play certain social roles:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Encourager: Praises the ideas of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Harmonizer: Mediates differences between group members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Compromiser: Moves group to another position that is favored by all group members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Gatekeeper/expediter: Keeps communication channels open.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Standard Setter: Suggests standards or criteria for the group to achieve.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
● Group observer: Keeps records of group activities and uses this information to offer feedback to the group.
● Follower: Goes along with the group and accepts the group’s ideas.

Individualistic Roles

These roles place the group member above the group and are destructive to the group.

● Aggressor: Attacks other group members, deflates the status of others, and other aggressive behavior.
● Blocker: Resists movement by the group.
● Recognition seeker: Calls attention to himself or herself.
● Self-confessor: Seeks to disclose nongroup related feelings or opinions.
● Dominator: Asserts control over the group by manipulating the other group members.
● Help seeker: Tries to gain the sympathy of the group.
● Special interest pleader: Uses stereotypes to assert his or her own prejudices.

Style Theory


Style theories are based on the assumption that it is the style of leadership that matters. The alternative styles are generally phrased in terms of ‘task centred’ or ‘person centred’; these have also been called ‘structuring’ and ‘supporting’ styles, corresponding roughly to the ‘scientific’ and ‘social relations’ styles of management.

The leadership styles are not mutually exclusive and can be represented in the form of a grid, as in Figure 10. Thus it is possible for an individual to be strongly person centred or strongly task centred or both, or neither of these. Although leaders may change from one style to another, they tend to adopt a preferred style.
Trait Theory


Trait theories are based on the assumption that the determining factor in an effective leader is a set of personal characteristics. It is also assumed that the way to discover these characteristics is to study successful leaders and determine which characteristics they have in common. However, despite innumerable studies, only about 5 per cent of the characteristics identified in successful leaders have been found to be widely shared. Of these, three stand out as significant:

- above average intelligence, but not at the level of a genius;
- initiative – a combination of independence, inventiveness and an urge to get things done;
- self-assurance – a blend of self-confidence, self-esteem and high personal expectations.

Clearly, while these are important characteristics, they do not provide the clear-cut distinction between good and bad leaders sought by the theory. (Such a distinction may, in fact, be unattainable.) There are also significant exceptions: some individuals with all three characteristics are ineffective leaders, and some who lack these characteristics are very effective leaders. Despite these criticisms, trait theories continue to influence, albeit implicitly, many organisational procedures for selecting leaders.
7 Types of Power in the Workplace


There’s a quote by Margaret Thatcher that says, “Power is like being a lady…if you have to tell people you are, you aren’t.” Personally, I find the study of power fascinating. Dictionary.com defines power as “a person or thing that possesses or exercises authority or influence”. So in essence when we use power; we’re utilizing our authority to get something.

Everyone has power. And, I don’t believe that power is a bad thing. The issue becomes what kind of power a person has and how someone uses that power. Here are some of the common types of power found in the workplace.

- **Coercive power** is associated with people who are in a position to punish others. People fear the consequences of not doing what has been asked of them.
- **Connection power** is based upon who you know. This person knows, and has the ear of, other powerful people within the organization.
- **Expert power** comes from a person’s expertise (duh!). This is commonly a person with an acclaimed skill or accomplishment.
- A person who has access to valuable or important information possesses **informational power**.
- **Legitimate power** comes from the position a person holds. This is related to a person’s title and job responsibilities. You might also hear this referred to as positional power.
- People who are well-liked and respected can have **referent power**.
- **Reward power** is based upon a person’s ability to bestow rewards. Those rewards might come in the form of job assignments, schedules, pay or benefits.

Now, stop being modest and thinking to yourself…I don’t have any power. As you can see, there are lots of different ways power can manifest itself. And for that reason, it’s important to realize that power exists in *all of us*. It’s also possible that you have different kinds of power with different groups or situations.

Now, the two biggest mistakes I see with people’s use of power revolve around (1) trying to use power they don’t have and (2) using the wrong kind of power to achieve results.

To help you identify your ‘power zone’, take a moment and think about how you try to influence action from others. You could use the descriptions above as a pseudo self-assessment. Rate yourself on a scale of 1-5 in each of the different kinds of power with 1 being not at all characteristic of you and 5 being quite characteristic.
This can be a (sorry for the pun) powerful exercise. If you’re honest with yourself, I hope you’ll find the results helpful. Not only for the way you tend to use power but in the way others use power with you.
Stages of the Listening Process Explained


SIX STAGES OF LISTENING PROCESS:

The six stage include hearing, attending, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding. These stages occur in sequence, but they generally performed with little awareness an often rapid succession.

a. **HEARING** - It refers to the response caused by sound waves stimulating the sensory receptors of the ear; it is physical response; hearing is perception of sound waves; you must hear to listen, but you need not listen to hear (perception necessary for listening depends on attention).

b. **ATTENTION** - Brain screens stimuli and permits only a select few to come into focus - this selective perception is known as attention, an important requirement for effective listening; strong stimuli like bright lights, sudden noise…are attention getters; attention to more commonplace or less striking stimuli requires special effort; postural adjustments are aided by physical changes in sensory receptor organs; receptor adjustments might include tensing of the ears tympanic muscle for better response to weak sounds.

c. **UNDERSTANDING** - To understand symbols we have seen and heard, we must analyze the meaning of the stimuli we have perceived; symbolic stimuli are not only words but also sounds like applause… and sights like blue uniform…that have symbolic meanings as well; the meanings attached to these symbols are a function of our past associations and of the context in which the symbols occur; for successful interpersonal communication, the listener must understand the intended meaning and the context assumed by the sender.

d. **REMEMBERING** - It is important listening process because it means that an individual has not only received and interpreted a message but has also added it to the mind’s storage tank; but just as our attention is selective, so too is our memory - what is remembered may be quite different from what was originally seen or heard.
e. **EVALUATING** - It is a stage in which active listeners participate; it is at this point that the active listener weigh evidence, sorts fact from opinion, and determines the presence or absence of bias or prejudice in a message; the effective listener makes sure that he or she doesn’t begin this activity too soon; beginning this stage of the process before a message is completed requires that we no longer hear and attend to the incoming message-as a result, the listening process ceases.

f. **RESPONDING** - This stage requires that the receiver complete the process through verbal and/or nonverbal feedback; because the speaker has no other way to determine if a message has been received, this stage becomes the only overt means by which the sender may determine the degree of success in transmitting the message.

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**Bad Listening Habits**


There are many ways to listen badly, sometimes affected by the listener and sometimes by the environment.

**Common habits**

Bad listening is common, but is seldom really intended. The way that it effectively works is that we fall into the thoughtless repeating patterns of habits.

Here are some of the bad habits as suggested by several authors. It is scary how many of these may be recognized in oneself...

Nichols and Stevens (1957) offer the following list as poor listening habits.

1. Calling the subject uninteresting
2. Criticizing the speaker &/or delivery
3. Getting over-stimulated
4. Listening only for facts (bottom line)
5. Not taking notes or outlining everything
6. Faking attention
7. Tolerating or creating distractions
8. Tuning out difficult material
9. Letting emotional words block the message
10. Wasting the time difference between speed of speech and speed of thought

Robertson (1994) describes the following list as the ten most common bad listening habits.
1. Lack of interest in the subject
2. Focus on the person, not on the content
3. Interrupting
4. Focus on the detail, missing the big picture
5. Force-fitting their ideas into your mental models
6. Body language that signals disinterest
7. Creating or allowing distractions
8. Ignoring what you do not understand
9. Letting emotions block the subject
10. Daydreaming

Barker and Watson (2000) suggest the following as irritating listening habits:
1. Interrupting the speaker.
2. Not looking at the speaker.
3. Rushing the speaker and making him feel that he's wasting the listener's time.
4. Showing interest in something other than the conversation.
5. Getting ahead of the speaker and finishing her thoughts.
6. Not responding to the speaker's requests.
7. Saying, "Yes, but . . .," as if the listener has made up his mind.
8. Topping the speaker's story with "That reminds me. . ." or "That's nothing, let me tell you about. . ."
9. Forgetting what was talked about previously.
10. Asking too many questions about details.

Key issues
It is interesting to note the overlaps and differences in the above lists. Key underlying aspects about these include:
- Lack of respect for the speaker
- Stuck in own head; trapped by own thoughts
- Hearing only what is superficially said; missing the real meaning
- General ignorance about social politeness
See also

Ineffective Listening Habits

Active listening doesn’t come easy to most people. What’s ironic is that many believe themselves to be better listeners than they actually are. As humans living in a fast-paced, technology-doused, individualist society, it’s no wonder that we’ve developed numerous ways to not listen. In fact, most folks have developed listening habits that may actually inhibit their ability to actively listen. The Chinese character for listening indicates that we listen with our minds, our hearts, our ears and our eyes. Listening is challenging!

The Chinese characters that make up the verb “to listen” tell us something about this skill.
The following listening habits shouldn’t be considered “bad.” They are actually natural, and in some cases, survival skills. For example, you can probably think of a time when you pretended to listen because someone was saying something inconsistent with your values such as expressing negative feelings toward a particular culture, religion or race. Just know that some of our listening habits can interfere with our ability to maintain strong relationships and perform well in school and on the job. Let’s take a look at some of the most common listening habits so we can identify when we use them and avoid this behavior when we should actually be listening.

**Pseudolistening**: We may be indicating we are listening with nonverbal cues such as nodding our head or making eye contact but the message is not going in. We are simply pretending to listen. Think of the times you’ve sat in class looking at your instructor with your mind elsewhere. That’s pseudolistening!

**Stagehogging**: Interrupting, one-upping, constantly steering the conversation to self – these are all behaviors of someone who is stagehogging. The stagehogger also may be thinking of what he or she is going to say while the speaker is talking. A person who is stagehogging is not so much interested in hearing what is being said but in being heard or “being on center stage.”

**Selective Listening**: A person who is practicing selective listening only tunes into a message if it involves something they are interested in. They ignore information that doesn’t pertain to them and “select” the information they want to hear.

**Insulated Listening**: Most of us have ignored information we didn’t want to know. Perhaps someone was trying to warn us about the dangers of excessive dieting or giving us negative information about someone we were interested in dating. In ignoring this information, we were protecting or “insulating” ourselves. Sometimes it’s difficult to discern selective listening from insulated listening. Selective listening is choosing what to listen to. Insulated listening is choosing what not to listen to - usually in an attempt to protect oneself or one’s perspective.

**Cynical Listening**: We’ve all met someone who doubted or argued with everything we said. Some people cynical listen when they’re listening to a message from a communicator for whom they hold strong disapproval such as a politician or other public figure. The cynical listener finds fault in everything that is said. Cynicism is different than skepticism. Being skeptical is questioning information. Cynical listening is doubting a message with no evidence that the information is false.

**Ambusher**: This type of listener “lies in wait” for the sender to say something they can attack. Some people may use this type of listening in conflict situations. The ambusher waits for something to argue with or criticize and responds with a passive-aggressive or aggressive attack.
**True Believer:** Sometimes when we possess strong positive feelings or loyalty toward a person or idea, we forget to think critically about what is being said. We swallow the message hook, line and sinker. We are listening as true believers. Some people behave like true believers when listening to advertisements about products or services that are the “answer” to their particular problem. For example, if you desperately want to motivate your child to read more, you may believe an infomercial claiming a product will magically make your child fall in love with reading.

These listening habits probably sound all too familiar. Now that we have new ways to think about listening behavior, we may be able to identify our own ineffective listening habits and change them to not only benefit ourselves but those around us.

**Listening Responses**

- **Prompting / Silent listening** – Listener offers no verbal response/may offer nonverbal responses that “prompt” the speaker to continue speaking such as head nodding.

- **Questioning** – Listening asks questions to clarify, show interest, and/or help the speaker solve a problem by getting more information. Be careful of “counterfeit” questions or questions that are asked to “make a point” or state what the listener thinks is obvious.

- **Paraphrasing** – Listener responds by stating the speaker’s sentiments in their own words.

- **Supporting** – Listener will respond with statements of agreement, praise, sympathy, diversion, anything that shows the listener is on their side.

- **Analyzing** – The analyzing response focuses on the content of the message. The listener responds with what they “think” about the situation/event/person. The analyzer attempts to “figure out” the situation/event/person.

- **Advising** – Listener offers speaker advice. Guideline: Make sure speaker is looking for advice.

- **Judging / Evaluating** – Listener provides their judgment of the situation/event/person the speaker is discussing. Often, this is a response that deems the situation/event/person as “good” or “bad,” “wrong” or “right.”
On listening


“I have nothing to live for.” Helen spoke softly. A bright and articulate woman at 86, this was the first time in 20 years that I had heard these words from her. She suffered from chronic osteoarthritic pain in her joints, and fatigue and dizziness related to difficult-to-control congestive heart failure. Her nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs had been withdrawn because of heart failure and her cardiac medications resulted in symptomatic hypotension. Her medication regimen involved a delicate trade-off between effective treatment and adverse effects.

“I can no longer travel. I can hardly walk. My kids are grown and have moved away. They don't need me anymore. I sometimes wonder why we are trying so hard to keep me around. My life has no purpose, no meaning.”


Helen replied. “My newest grandchild from Denmark. My son will be visiting this afternoon.” She paused. “I do look forward to holding him. But … they don't need me. All my life I've cared for others. I can't do that anymore.”

Lisa's words reminded me of some of my own, perhaps 20 years ago. I can well remember the discomfort of wanting to fix problems for which there were no fixable solutions, of wanting to provide comfort to the suffering patient but not knowing the “right” words to use. Those awkward periods of silence. The biomedical model of my medical training in the 1980s provided little help with this.

I have learned over time that sometimes, we simply need to listen.

Charon writes, “A scientifically competent medicine alone cannot help a patient grapple with the loss of health or find meaning in suffering. Along with scientific ability, physicians need the ability to listen to the narratives of the patient, grasp and honor their meanings, and be moved to act on the patient's behalf.”

Honouring the patient's meaning requires that we refrain from imposing our own meaning and values on to their story. Mezirow describes the frames of reference adults acquire through experience, which define their life world. These frames of reference shape expectations, perceptions, cognition and feelings, and create a specific point of view that will differ for each of us. Meaning must therefore be the patient's own and determined in the context of the patient's life.
Nichols writes of the importance of listening. “By momentarily stepping out of his or her own frame of reference and into ours, the person who listens well acknowledges and affirms us. That affirmation, that validation is absolutely essential for sustaining the self-affirmation known as self-respect. Without being listened to, we are shut up in the solitude of our own hearts.”

Nichols emphasizes the importance of making listening an active process that involves a deliberate effort to suspend our own needs and reactions — in essence, a suspension of self — and to immerse in the other. To listen well, we must hold back what we have to say and control the urge to interrupt or argue. “You need to be silent. You need to be selfless.”

Nichols writes, “A lot of failed listening takes the form of telling other people not to feel the way they do.” The effect is to not acknowledge their feelings. “Reassuring the person that there’s nothing to worry about is not responsive to him; it’s responsive to the listener’s own uneasiness.”

So, how does good listening help with healing? When patients are allowed to tell their story, they are no longer isolated in their suffering. The telling of their story may also help them to achieve a critical distance from their pain. Frank writes, “people tell the stories they need to tell in order to work through the situation they are in.... When experience becomes an object for what is now a mutual involvement, the teller gains some distance between what is being lived and what is being told. Only at this distance can actions — including interpretations — be perceived as possibly having alternatives, thus making change imaginable.”

So I pulled up a chair beside Helen.

I sat and I listened. Being half her age, I did not have her life experience or knowledge of her perspectives as the basis for making assumptions about how she might feel or ought to feel. It was important to accept her story and in doing so, honour and validate her suffering. I encouraged her to share her thoughts on meaning and purpose, spirituality, supports and hope.

Over time, I have become aware that a humanistic orientation benefits not only the patient, but the physician as well. In truly listening, in suspending our own perspectives and agenda, we are offered the privilege of learning how others deal with, and make sense of, suffering. Frank believes that “humans do have to suffer; call it our existential destiny. But there are better ways to suffer; call those ways grace.”

In medicine, we often bear uncomfortable witness to the reality of what experience has in store for many of us. In listening to our patients, we learn invaluable lessons from those making their journey ahead of us.


References

Understanding Conflict

Let's take a closer look at these social issues such as conflict to understand how they can derail companies and individuals alike—and what to do to prevent such consequences from happening to you. In this chapter, you'll see that managing conflict and engaging in effective negotiation are both key for effective organizational behavior within organizations as well as daily life. Conflicts range from minor annoyances to outright violence. For example, one million workers (18,000 people per week) are assaulted on the job in the United States alone. [1] One of the major ways to avoid conflicts escalating to these levels is through understanding the causes of conflict and developing methods for managing potential negative outcomes. Negotiation is one of the most effective ways to decrease conflict and will also be examined in depth in this chapter.

Similar to how conflicts can range from minor to major, negotiations vary in terms of their consequences. A high-stakes negotiation at work might mean the difference between a company’s survival and its demise. On the other end of the spectrum, we deal with minor negotiations on a regular basis, such as negotiating with a coworker about which movie to see. Maybe you make a concession: “OK, we'll watch what you want but I get to pick where we eat.” Maybe you hold tough: “I don’t want to watch anything except a comedy.” Perhaps you even look for a third option that would mutually satisfy both parties. Regardless of the level, conflict management and negotiation tactics are important skills that can be learned.

First, let’s take a deeper look at conflict. Conflict is a process that involves people disagreeing. Researchers have noted that conflict is like the common cold. Everyone knows what it is, but understanding its causes and how to treat it is much more challenging. [2] As we noted earlier, conflict can range from minor disagreements to workplace violence. In addition, there are three types of conflict that can arise within organizations. Let’s take a look at each of them in turn.

Types of Conflict

Intrapersonal Conflict
Intrapersonal conflict arises within a person. For example, when you’re uncertain about what is expected or wanted, or you have a sense of being inadequate to perform a task, you are experiencing intrapersonal conflict. Intrapersonal conflict can arise because of differences in roles. A manager may want to oversee a subordinate’s work, believing that such oversight is a necessary part of the job. The subordinate, on the other hand, may consider such extensive oversight to be micromanagement or evidence of a lack of trust. Role conflict, another type of intrapersonal conflict, includes having two different job descriptions that seem mutually exclusive. This type of conflict can arise if you’re the head of one team but also a member of another team. A third type of intrapersonal conflict involves role ambiguity. Perhaps you’ve been given the task of finding a trainer for a company’s business writing training program. You may feel unsure about what kind of person to hire—a well-known but expensive trainer or a local, unknown but low-priced trainer. If you haven’t been given guidelines about what’s expected, you may be wrestling with several options.

Interpersonal Conflict
Interpersonal conflict is among individuals such as coworkers, a manager and an employee, or CEOs and their staff. For example, in 2006 the CEO of Airbus S.A.S., Christian Streiff, resigned because of his conflict with the board of directors over issues such as how to restructure the company. This example may reflect a well-known trend among CEOs. According to one estimate, 31.9% of CEOs resigned from their jobs because they had conflict with the board of directors. CEOs of competing companies might also have public conflicts. In 1997, Michael Dell was asked what he would do about Apple Computer. “What would I do? I’d shut it down and give the money back to shareholders.” Ten years later, Steve Jobs, the CEO of Apple Inc., indicated he had clearly held a grudge as he shot back at Dell in an e-mail to his employees, stating, “Team, it turned out Michael Dell wasn’t perfect in predicting the future. Based on today’s stock market close, Apple is worth more than Dell.” In part, their long-time disagreements stem from their differences. Interpersonal conflict often arises because of competition, as the Dell/Apple example shows, or because of personality or values differences. For example, one person’s style may be to “go with the gut” on decisions, while another person wants to make decisions based on facts. Those differences will lead to conflict if the individuals reach different conclusions. Many companies suffer because of interpersonal conflicts. Keeping conflicts centered around ideas rather than individual differences is important in avoiding a conflict escalation.

Intergroup Conflict
Intergroup conflict is conflict that takes place among different groups. Types of groups may include different departments or divisions in a company, and employee union and management, or competing companies that supply the same customers. Departments may conflict over budget allocations; unions and management may disagree over work rules; suppliers may conflict with each other on the quality of parts. Merging two groups together can lead to friction between the groups—especially if there are scarce resources to be divided among the group. For example, in what has been called “the most difficult and hard-fought labor issue in an airline merger,” Canadian Air and Air Canada pilots were locked into years of personal and legal conflict when the two airlines’ seniority lists were combined following the merger. [6] Seniority is a valuable and scarce resource for pilots, because it helps to determine who flies the newest and biggest planes, who receives the best flight routes, and who is paid the most. In response to the loss of seniority, former Canadian Air pilots picketed at shareholder meetings, threatened to call in sick, and had ongoing conflicts with pilots from Air Canada. The conflicts with pilots continue to this day. The history of past conflicts among organizations and employees makes new deals challenging.

Is Conflict Always Bad?
Most people are uncomfortable with conflict, but is conflict always bad? Conflict can be dysfunctional if it paralyzes an organization, leads to less than optimal performance, or, in the worst case, leads to workplace violence. Surprisingly, a moderate amount of conflict can actually be a healthy (and necessary) part of organizational life. [7] To understand how to get to a positive level of conflict, we need to understand its root causes, consequences, and tools to help manage it. The impact of too much or too little conflict can disrupt performance. If conflict is too low, then performance is low. If conflict is too high, then performance also tends to be low. The goal is to hold conflict levels in the middle of this range. While it might seem strange to want a particular level of conflict, a medium level of task-related conflict is often viewed as optimal, because it represents a situation in which a healthy debate of ideas takes place.
Task conflict can be good in certain circumstances, such as in the early stages of decision making, because it stimulates creativity. However, it can interfere with complex tasks in the long run. [8] Personal conflicts, such as personal attacks, are never healthy because they cause stress and distress, which undermines performance. The worst cases of personal conflicts can lead to workplace bullying. At Intel Corporation, all new employees go through a 4-hour training module to learn “constructive confrontation.” The content of the training program includes dealing with others in a positive manner, using facts rather than opinion to persuade others, and focusing on the problem at hand rather than the people involved. “We don’t spend time being defensive or taking things personally. We cut through all of that and get to the issues,” notes a trainer from Intel University. [9] The success of the training remains unclear, but the presence of this program indicates that Intel understands the potentially positive effect of a moderate level of conflict. Research focusing on effective teams across time found that they were characterized by low but increasing levels of process conflict (how do we get things done?), low levels of relationship conflict with a rise toward the end of the project (personal disagreements among team members), and moderate levels of task conflict in the middle of the task timeline. [10]

Causes and Outcomes of Conflict

There are many potential root causes of conflict at work. We’ll go over six of them here. Remember, anything that leads to a disagreement can be a cause of conflict. Although conflict is common to organizations, some organizations have more than others.

Causes of Conflict

Organizational Structure
Conflict tends to take different forms, depending upon the organizational structure. [1] For example, if a company uses a matrix structure as its organizational form, it will have decisional conflict built in, because the structure specifies that each manager report to two bosses. For example, global company ABB Inc. is organized around a matrix structure based on the dimensions of country and industry. This structure can lead to confusion as the company is divided geographically into 1,200 different units and by industry into 50 different units. [2]

Limited Resources
Resources such as money, time, and equipment are often scarce. Competition among people or departments for limited resources is a frequent cause for conflict. For example, cutting-edge laptops and gadgets such as a BlackBerry or iPhone are expensive resources that may be allocated to employees on a need-to-have basis in some companies. When a group of employees have access to such resources while others do not, conflict may arise among employees or between employees and management. While technical employees may feel that these devices are crucial to their productivity, employees with customer contact such as sales representatives may make the point that these devices are important for them to make a good impression to clients. Because important resources are often limited, this is one source of conflict many companies have to live with.

**Task Interdependence**

Another cause of conflict is task interdependence; that is, when accomplishment of your goal requires reliance on others to perform their tasks. For example, if you’re tasked with creating advertising for your product, you’re dependent on the creative team to design the words and layout, the photographer or videographer to create the visuals, the media buyer to purchase the advertising space, and so on. The completion of your goal (airing or publishing your ad) is dependent on others.

**Incompatible Goals**

Sometimes conflict arises when two parties think that their goals are mutually exclusive. Within an organization, incompatible goals often arise because of the different ways department managers are compensated. For example, a sales manager’s bonus may be tied to how many sales are made for the company. As a result, the individual might be tempted to offer customers “freebies” such as expedited delivery in order to make the sale. In contrast, a transportation manager’s compensation may be based on how much money the company saves on transit. In this case, the goal might be to eliminate expedited delivery because it adds expense. The two will butt heads until the company resolves the conflict by changing the compensation scheme. For example, if the company assigns the bonus based on profitability of a sale, not just the dollar amount, the cost of the expediting would be subtracted from the value of the sale. It might still make sense to expedite the order if the sale is large enough, in which case both parties would support it. On the other hand, if the expediting negates the value of the sale, neither party would be in favor of the added expense.

**Personality Differences**

Personality differences among coworkers are common. By understanding some fundamental differences among the way people think and act, we can better understand how others see the world. Knowing that these differences are natural and normal lets us anticipate and mitigate interpersonal conflict—it’s often not about “you” but simply a different way of seeing and behaving. For example, Type A individuals have been found to have more conflicts with their coworkers than Type B individuals. [3]

**Communication Problems**
Sometimes conflict arises simply out of a small, unintentional communication problem, such as lost e-mails or dealing with people who don’t return phone calls. Giving feedback is also a case in which the best intentions can quickly escalate into a conflict situation. When communicating, be sure to focus on behavior and its effects, not on the person. For example, say that Jeff always arrives late to all your meetings. You think he has a bad attitude, but you don’t really know what Jeff’s attitude is. You do know, however, the effect that Jeff’s behavior has on you. You could say, “Jeff, when you come late to the meeting, I feel like my time is wasted.” Jeff can’t argue with that statement, because it is a fact of the impact of his behavior on you. It’s indisputable, because it is your reality. What Jeff can say is that he did not intend such an effect, and then you can have a discussion regarding the behavior.

In another example, the Hershey Company was engaged in talks behind closed doors with Cadbury Schweppes about a possible merger. No information about this deal was shared with Hershey’s major stakeholder, the Hershey Trust. When Robert Vowler, CEO of the Hershey Trust, discovered that talks were underway without anyone consulting the Trust, tensions between the major stakeholders began to rise. As Hershey’s continued to underperform, steps were taken in what is now called the “Sunday night massacre,” in which several board members were forced to resign and Richard Lenny, Hershey’s then current CEO, retired.[4] This example shows how a lack of communication can lead to an escalation of conflict. Time will tell what the lasting effects of this conflict will be, but in the short term, effective communication will be the key. Now, let’s turn our attention to the outcomes of conflict.

Outcomes of Conflict

One of the most common outcomes of conflict is that it upsets parties in the short run. [5] However, conflict can have both positive and negative outcomes. On the positive side, conflict can result in greater creativity or better decisions. For example, as a result of a disagreement over a policy, a manager may learn from an employee that newer technologies help solve problems in an unanticipated new way.

Positive outcomes include the following:
- Consideration of a broader range of ideas, resulting in a better, stronger idea
- Surfacing of assumptions that may be inaccurate
- Increased participation and creativity
- Clarification of individual views that build learning

On the other hand, conflict can be dysfunctional if it is excessive or involves personal attacks or underhanded tactics. Examples of negative outcomes include the following:
- Increased stress and anxiety among individuals, which decreases productivity and satisfaction
- Feelings of being defeated and demeaned, which lowers individuals’ morale and may increase turnover
- A climate of mistrust, which hinders the teamwork and cooperation necessary to get work done
Conflict Management

There are a number of different ways of managing organizational conflict, which are highlighted in this section. Conflict management refers to resolving disagreements effectively.

Ways to Manage Conflict

Change the Structure
When structure is a cause of dysfunctional conflict, structural change can be the solution to resolving the conflict. Consider this situation. Vanessa, the lead engineer in charge of new product development, has submitted her components list to Tom, the procurement officer, for purchasing. Tom, as usual, has rejected two of the key components, refusing the expenditure on the purchase. Vanessa is furious, saying, “Every time I give you a request to buy a new part, you fight me on it. Why can’t you ever trust my judgment and honor my request?” Tom counters, “You’re always choosing the newest, leading-edge parts—they’re hard to find and expensive to purchase. I’m supposed to keep costs down, and your requests always break my budget.” “But when you don’t order the parts we need for a new product, you delay the whole project,” Vanessa says. Sharon, the business unit’s vice president, hits upon a structural solution by stating, “From now on, both of you will be evaluated on the total cost and the overall performance of the product. You need to work together to keep component costs low while minimizing quality issues later on.” If the conflict is at an intergroup level, such as between two departments, a structural solution could be to have those two departments report to the same executive, who could align their previously incompatible goals.

Change the Composition of the Team
If the conflict is between team members, the easiest solution may be to change the composition of the team, separating the personalities that were at odds. In instances in which conflict is attributed to the widely different styles, values, and preferences of a small number of members, replacing some of these members may resolve the problem. If that’s not possible because everyone’s skills are needed on the team and substitutes aren’t available, consider a physical layout solution. Research has shown that when known antagonists are seated directly across from each other, the amount of conflict increases. However, when they are seated side by side, the conflict tends to decrease. [1]

Create a Common Opposing Force
Group conflict within an organization can be mitigated by focusing attention on a common enemy such as the competition. For example, two software groups may be vying against each other for marketing dollars, each wanting to maximize advertising money devoted to their product. But, by focusing attention on a competitor company, the groups may decide to work together to enhance the marketing effectiveness for the company as a whole. The “enemy” need not be another company—it could be a concept, such as a recession, that unites previously warring departments to save jobs during a downturn.

**Consider Majority Rule**
Sometimes a group conflict can be resolved through majority rule. That is, group members take a vote, and the idea with the most votes is the one that gets implemented. The majority rule approach can work if the participants feel that the procedure is fair. It is important to keep in mind that this strategy will become ineffective if used repeatedly with the same members typically winning. Moreover, the approach should be used sparingly. It should follow a healthy discussion of the issues and points of contention, not be a substitute for that discussion.

**Problem Solve**
Problem solving is a common approach to resolving conflict. In problem-solving mode, the individuals or groups in conflict are asked to focus on the problem, not on each other, and to uncover the root cause of the problem. This approach recognizes the rarity of one side being completely right and the other being completely wrong.

**Conflict-Handling Styles**
Individuals vary in the way that they handle conflicts. There are five common styles of handling conflicts. These styles can be mapped onto a grid that shows the varying degree of cooperation and assertiveness each style entails. Let us look at each in turn.

**Avoidance**
The avoiding style is uncooperative and unassertive. People exhibiting this style seek to avoid conflict altogether by denying that it is there. They are prone to postponing any decisions in which a conflict may arise. People using this style may say things such as, “I don’t really care if we work this out,” or “I don’t think there’s any problem. I feel fine about how things are.” Conflict avoidance may be habitual to some people because of personality traits such as the need for affiliation. While conflict avoidance may not be a significant problem if the issue at hand is trivial, it becomes a problem when individuals avoid confronting important issues because of a dislike for conflict or a perceived inability to handle the other party’s reactions.

**Accommodation**
The accommodating style is cooperative and unassertive. In this style, the person gives in to what the other side wants, even if it means giving up one’s personal goals. People who use this style may fear speaking up for themselves or they may place a higher value on the relationship, believing that disagreeing with an idea might be hurtful to the other person. They will say things such as, “Let’s do it your way” or “If it’s important to you, I can go along with it.” Accommodation may be an effective strategy if the issue at hand is more important to others compared to oneself. However, if a person perpetually uses this style, that individual may start to see that personal interests and well-being are neglected.

Compromise
The compromising style is a middle-ground style, in which individuals have some desire to express their own concerns and get their way but still respect the other person’s goals. The compromiser may say things such as, “Perhaps I ought to reconsider my initial position” or “Maybe we can both agree to give in a little.” In a compromise, each person sacrifices something valuable to them. For example, in 2005 the luxurious Lanesborough Hotel in London advertised incorrect nightly rates for £35, as opposed to £350. When the hotel received a large number of online bookings at this rate, the initial reaction was to insist that customers cancel their reservations and book at the correct rate. The situation was about to lead to a public relations crisis. As a result, they agreed to book the rooms at the advertised price for a maximum of three nights, thereby limiting the damage to the hotel’s bottom line as well as its reputation. [2]

Competition
People exhibiting a competing style want to reach their goal or get their solution adopted regardless of what others say or how they feel. They are more interested in getting the outcome they want as opposed to keeping the other party happy, and they push for the deal they are interested in making. Competition may lead to poor relationships with others if one is always seeking to maximize their own outcomes at the expense of others’ well-being. This approach may be effective if one has strong moral objections to the alternatives or if the alternatives one is opposing are unethical or harmful.

Collaboration
The collaborating style is high on both assertiveness and cooperation. This is a strategy to use for achieving the best outcome from conflict—both sides argue for their position, supporting it with facts and rationale while listening attentively to the other side. The objective is to find a win–win solution to the problem in which both parties get what they want. They’ll challenge points but not each other. They’ll emphasize problem solving and integration of each other’s goals. For example, an employee who wants to complete an MBA program may have a conflict with management when he wants to reduce his work hours. Instead of taking opposing positions in which the employee defends his need to pursue his career goals while the manager emphasizes the company’s need for the employee, both parties may review alternatives to find an integrative solution. In the end, the employee may decide to pursue the degree while taking online classes, and the company may realize that paying for the employee’s tuition is a worthwhile investment. This may be a win–win solution to the problem in which no one gives up what is personally important, and every party gains something from the exchange.

**Which Style Is Best?**

Like much of organizational behavior, there is no one “right way” to deal with conflict. Much of the time it will depend on the situation. However, the collaborative style has the potential to be highly effective in many different situations.

We do know that most individuals have a dominant style that they tend to use most frequently. Think of your friend who is always looking for a fight or your coworker who always backs down from a disagreement. Successful individuals are able to match their style to the situation. There are times when avoiding a conflict can be a great choice. For example, if a driver cuts you off in traffic, ignoring it and going on with your day is a good alternative to “road rage.” However, if a colleague keeps claiming ownership of your ideas, it may be time for a confrontation. Allowing such intellectual plagiarism to continue could easily be more destructive to your career than confronting the individual. Research also shows that when it comes to dealing with conflict, managers prefer forcing, while their subordinates are more likely to engage in avoiding, accommodating, or compromising. [3] It is also likely that individuals will respond similarly to the person engaging in conflict. For example, if one person is forcing, others are likely to respond with a forcing tactic as well.

**What If You Don’t Have Enough Conflict Over Ideas?**
Part of effective conflict management is knowing when proper stimulation is necessary. Many people think that conflict is inherently bad—that it undermines goals or shows that a group or meeting is not running smoothly. In fact, if there is no conflict, it may mean that people are silencing themselves and withholding their opinions. The reality is that within meaningful group discussions there are usually varying opinions about the best course of action. If people are suppressing their opinions, the final result may not be the best solution. During healthy debates, people point out difficulties or weaknesses in a proposed alternative and can work together to solve them. The key to keeping the disagreement healthy is to keep the discussion focused on the task, not the personalities. For example, a comment such as “Jack’s ideas have never worked before. I doubt his current idea will be any better” is not constructive. Instead, a comment such as “This production step uses a degreaser that’s considered a hazardous material. Can we think of an alternative degreaser that’s nontoxic?” is more productive. It challenges the group to improve upon the existing idea.

Traditionally, Hewlett-Packard Development Company LP was known as a “nice” organization. Throughout its history, HP viewed itself as a scientific organization, and their culture valued teamwork and respect. But over time, HP learned that you can be “nice to death.” In fact, in the 1990s, HP found it difficult to partner with other organizations because of their culture differences. During role plays created to help HP managers be more dynamic, the trainers had to modify several role-plays, because participants simply said, “That would never happen at HP,” over the smallest conflict. All this probably played a role in the discomfort many felt with Carly Fiorina’s style as CEO and the merger she orchestrated with Compaq Computer Corporation, which ultimately caused the board of directors to fire Fiorina. On the other hand, no one is calling HP “too nice” anymore.

How Can You Stimulate Conflict?

1. Encourage people to raise issues and disagree with you or the status quo without fear of reprisal. An issue festering beneath the surface, when brought out into the open, may turn out to be a minor issue that can be easily addressed and resolved.
2. Assign a devil’s advocate to stimulate alternative viewpoints. If a business unit is getting stagnant, bring in new people to “shake things up.”
3. Create a competition among teams, offering a bonus to the team that comes up with the best solution to a problem. For example, have two product development teams compete on designing a new product. Or, reward the team that has the fewest customer complaints or achieves the highest customer satisfaction rating.
4. Build some ambiguity into the process. When individuals are free to come up with their own ideas about how to complete a task, the outcome may be surprising, and it allows for more healthy disagreements along the way.

Negotiations
A common way that parties deal with conflict is via negotiation. Negotiation is a process whereby two or more parties work toward an agreement. There are five phases of negotiation, which are described below.

**The Five Phases of Negotiation**

**Phase 1: Investigation**
The first step in negotiation is the investigation, or information gathering stage. This is a key stage that is often ignored. Surprisingly, the first place to begin is with yourself: What are your goals for the negotiation? What do you want to achieve? What would you concede? What would you absolutely not concede? Leigh Steinberg, the most powerful agent in sports (he was the role model for Tom Cruise’s character in *Jerry Maguire*), puts it this way: “You need the clearest possible view of your goals. And you need to be brutally honest with yourself about your priorities.” [1]

During the negotiation, you’ll inevitably be faced with making choices. It’s best to know what you want, so that in the heat of the moment you’re able to make the best decision. For example, if you’ll be negotiating for a new job, ask yourself, “What do I value most? Is it the salary level? Working with coworkers whom I like? Working at a prestigious company? Working in a certain geographic area? Do I want a company that will groom me for future positions or do I want to change jobs often in pursuit of new challenges?”

**Phase 2: Determine Your BATNA**

One important part of the investigation and planning phase is to determine your BATNA, which is an acronym that stands for the “best alternative to a negotiated agreement.” Roger Fisher and William Ury coined this phrase in their book *Getting to Yes: Negotiating without Giving In*.

Thinking through your BATNA is important to helping you decide whether to accept an offer you receive during the negotiation. You need to know what your alternatives are. If you have various alternatives, you can look at the proposed deal more critically. Could you get a better outcome than the proposed deal? Your BATNA will help you reject an unfavorable deal. On the other hand, if the deal is better than another outcome you could get (that is, better than your BATNA), then you should accept it.

Think about it in common sense terms: When you know your opponent is desperate for a deal, you can demand much more. If it looks like they have a lot of other options outside the negotiation, you’ll be more likely to make concessions. As Fisher and Ury said, “The reason you negotiate is to produce something better than the results you can obtain without negotiating. What are those results? What is that alternative? What is your BATNA—your Best Alternative To a Negotiated Agreement? That is the standard against which any proposed agreement should be measured.” [2]
The party with the best BATNA has the best negotiating position, so try to improve your BATNA whenever possible by exploring possible alternatives. [3] Going back to the example of your new job negotiation, consider your options to the offer you receive. If your pay is lower than what you want, what alternatives do you have? A job with another company? Looking for another job? Going back to school? While you’re thinking about your BATNA, take some time to think about the other party’s BATNA. Do they have an employee who could readily replace you?

Once you’ve gotten a clear understanding of your own goals, investigate the person you’ll be negotiating with. What does that person (or company) want? Put yourself in the other party’s shoes. What alternatives could they have? For example, in the job negotiations, the other side wants a good employee at a fair price. That may lead you to do research on salary levels: What is the pay rate for the position you’re seeking? What is the culture of the company?

Greenpeace’s goals are to safeguard the environment by getting large companies and organizations to adopt more environmentally friendly practices such as using fewer plastic components. Part of the background research Greenpeace engages in involves uncovering facts. For instance, medical device makers are using harmful PVCs as a tubing material because PVCs are inexpensive. But are there alternatives to PVCs that are also cost-effective? Greenpeace’s research found that yes, there are. [4] Knowing this lets Greenpeace counter those arguments and puts Greenpeace in a stronger position to achieve its goals.

**BATNA Best Practices**

1. Brainstorm a list of alternatives that you might conceivably take if the negotiation doesn’t lead to a favorable outcome for you.
2. Improve on some of the more promising ideas and convert them into actionable alternatives.
3. Identify the most beneficial alternative to be kept in reserve as a fall-back during the negotiation.
4. Remember that your BATNA may evolve over time, so keep revising it to make sure it is still accurate.
5. Don’t reveal your BATNA to the other party. If your BATNA turns out to be worse than what the other party expected, their offer may go down, as PointCast learned in the opening case.


**Phase 3: Presentation**
The third phase of negotiation is presentation. In this phase, you assemble the information you’ve gathered in a way that supports your position. In a job hiring or salary negotiation situation, for instance, you can present facts that show what you’ve contributed to the organization in the past (or in a previous position), which in turn demonstrates your value. Perhaps you created a blog that brought attention to your company or got donations or funding for a charity. Perhaps you’re a team player who brings out the best in a group.

Phase 4: Bargaining
During the bargaining phase, each party discusses their goals and seeks to get an agreement. A natural part of this process is making concessions, namely, giving up one thing to get something else in return. Making a concession is not a sign of weakness—parties expect to give up some of their goals. Rather, concessions demonstrate cooperativeness and help move the negotiation toward its conclusion. Making concessions is particularly important in tense union-management disputes, which can get bogged down by old issues. Making a concession shows forward movement and process, and it allays concerns about rigidity or closed-mindedness. What would a typical concession be? Concessions are often in the areas of money, time, resources, responsibilities, or autonomy. When negotiating for the purchase of products, for example, you might agree to pay a higher price in exchange for getting the products sooner. Alternatively, you could ask to pay a lower price in exchange for giving the manufacturer more time or flexibility in when they deliver the product.

One key to the bargaining phase is to ask questions. Don’t simply take a statement such as “we can’t do that” at face value. Rather, try to find out why the party has that constraint. Let’s take a look at an example. Say that you’re a retailer and you want to buy patio furniture from a manufacturer. You want to have the sets in time for spring sales. During the negotiations, your goal is to get the lowest price with the earliest delivery date. The manufacturer, of course, wants to get the highest price with the longest lead time before delivery. As negotiations stall, you evaluate your options to decide what’s more important: a slightly lower price or a slightly longer delivery date? You do a quick calculation. The manufacturer has offered to deliver the products by April 30, but you know that some of your customers make their patio furniture selection early in the spring, and missing those early sales could cost you $1 million. So, you suggest that you can accept the April 30 delivery date if the manufacturer will agree to drop the price by $1 million. “I appreciate the offer,” the manufacturer replies, “but I can’t accommodate such a large price cut.” Instead of leaving it at that, you ask, “I’m surprised that a 2-month delivery would be so costly to you. Tell me more about your manufacturing process so that I can understand why you can’t manufacture the products in that time frame.” “Manufacturing the products in that time frame is not the problem,” the manufacturer replies, “but getting them shipped from Asia is what’s expensive for us.”
When you hear that, a light bulb goes off. You know that your firm has favorable contracts with shipping companies because of the high volume of business the firm gives them. You make the following counteroffer: “Why don’t we agree that my company will arrange and pay for the shipper, and you agree to have the products ready to ship on March 30 for $10.5 million instead of $11 million?” The manufacturer accepts the offer—the biggest expense and constraint (the shipping) has been lifted. You, in turn, have saved money as well. [5]

**Phase 5: Closure**

Closure is an important part of negotiations. At the close of a negotiation, you and the other party have either come to an agreement on the terms, or one party has decided that the final offer is unacceptable and therefore must be walked away from. Most negotiators assume that if their best offer has been rejected, there’s nothing left to do. You made your best offer and that’s the best you can do. The savviest of negotiators, however, see the rejection as an opportunity to learn. “What would it have taken for us to reach an agreement?”

Recently, a CEO had been in negotiations with a customer. After learning the customer decided to go with the competition, the CEO decided to inquire as to why negotiations had fallen through. With nothing left to lose, the CEO placed a call to the prospect’s vice president and asked why the offer had been rejected, explaining that the answer would help improve future offerings. Surprisingly, the VP explained the deal was given to the competitor because, despite charging more, the competitor offered after-sales service on the product. The CEO was taken by surprise, originally assuming that the VP was most interested in obtaining the lowest price possible. In order accommodate a very low price, various extras such as after-sales service had been cut from the offer. Having learned that the VP was seeking service, not the lowest cost, the CEO said, “Knowing what I know now, I’m confident that I could have beaten the competitor’s bid. Would you accept a revised offer?” The VP agreed, and a week later the CEO had a signed contract. [6]

Sometimes at the end of negotiations, it’s clear why a deal was not reached. But if you’re confused about why a deal did not happen, consider making a follow-up call. Even though you may not win the deal back in the end, you might learn something that’s useful for future negotiations. What’s more, the other party may be more willing to disclose the information if they don’t think you’re in a “selling” mode.

**Negotiation Strategies**

**Distributive Approach**
The distributive view of negotiation is the traditional fixed-pie approach. That is, negotiators see the situation as a pie that they have to divide between them. Each tries to get more of the pie and “win.” For example, managers may compete over shares of a budget. If marketing gets a 10% increase in its budget, another department such as R&D will need to decrease its budget by 10% to offset the marketing increase. Focusing on a fixed pie is a common mistake in negotiation, because this view limits the creative solutions possible.

Integrative Approach
A newer, more creative approach to negotiation is called the integrative approach. In this approach, both parties look for ways to integrate their goals under a larger umbrella. That is, they look for ways to expand the pie, so that each party gets more. This is also called a win–win approach. The first step of the integrative approach is to enter the negotiation from a cooperative rather than an adversarial stance. The second step is all about listening. Listening develops trust as each party learns what the other wants and everyone involved arrives at a mutual understanding. Then, all parties can explore ways to achieve the individual goals. The general idea is, “If we put our heads together, we can find a solution that addresses everybody’s needs.” Unfortunately, integrative outcomes are not the norm. A summary of 32 experiments on negotiations found that although they could have resulted in integrated outcomes, only 20% did so. [7] One key factor related to finding integrated solutions is the experience of the negotiators who were able to reach them. [8]

Avoiding Common Mistakes in Negotiations

Failing to Negotiate/Accepting the First Offer
You may have heard that women typically make less money than men. Researchers have established that about one-third of the gender differences observed in the salaries of men and women can be traced back to differences in starting salaries, with women making less, on average, when they start their jobs. [9] Some people are taught to feel that negotiation is a conflict situation, and these individuals may tend to avoid negotiations to avoid conflict. Research shows that this negotiation avoidance is especially prevalent among women. For example, one study looked at students from Carnegie-Mellon who were getting their first job after earning a master’s degree. The study found that only 7% of the women negotiated their offer, while men negotiated 57% of the time. [10] The result had profound consequences. Researchers calculate that people who routinely negotiate salary increases will earn over $1 million more by retirement than people who accept an initial offer every time without asking for more. [11] The good news is that it appears that it is possible to increase negotiation efforts and confidence by training people to use effective negotiation skills. [12]
Thinking only about yourself is a common mistake, as we saw in the opening case. People from the United States tend to fall into a self-serving bias in which they overinflate their own worth and discount the worth of others. This can be a disadvantage during negotiations. Instead, think about why the other person would want to accept the deal. People aren’t likely to accept a deal that doesn’t offer any benefit to them. Help them meet their own goals while you achieve yours. Integrative outcomes depend on having good listening skills, and if you are thinking only about your own needs, you may miss out on important opportunities. Remember that a good business relationship can only be created and maintained if both parties get a fair deal.

**Having Unrealistic Expectations**
Susan Podziba, a professor of mediation at Harvard and MIT, plays broker for some of the toughest negotiations around, from public policy to marital disputes. She takes an integrative approach in the negotiations, identifying goals that are large enough to encompass both sides. As she puts it, “We are never going to be able to sit at a table with the goal of creating peace and harmony between fishermen and conservationists. But we can establish goals big enough to include the key interests of each party and resolve the specific impasse we are currently facing. Setting reasonable goals at the outset that address each party’s concerns will decrease the tension in the room, and will improve the chances of reaching an agreement.” [13] Those who set unreasonable expectations are more likely to fail.

**Getting Overly Emotional**
Negotiations, by their very nature, are emotional. The findings regarding the outcomes of expressing anger during negotiations are mixed. Some researchers have found that those who express anger negotiate worse deals than those who do not, [14] and that during online negotiations, those parties who encountered anger were more likely to compete than those who did not. [15] In a study of online negotiations, words such as *despise, disgusted, furious,* and *hate* were related to a reduced chance of reaching an agreement. [16] However, this finding may depend on individual personalities. Research has also shown that those with more power may be more effective when displaying anger. The weaker party may perceive the anger as potentially signaling that the deal is falling apart and may concede items to help move things along. [17] This holds for online negotiations as well. In a study of 355 eBay disputes in which mediation was requested by one or both of the parties, similar results were found. Overall, anger hurts the mediation process unless one of the parties was perceived as much more powerful than the other party, in which case anger hastened a deal.[18] Another aspect of getting overly emotional is forgetting that facial expressions are universal across cultures, and when your words and facial expressions don’t match, you are less likely to be trusted. [19]

**Letting Past Negative Outcomes Affect the Present Ones**
Research shows that negotiators who had previously experienced ineffective negotiations were more likely to have failed negotiations in the future. Those who were unable to negotiate some type of deal in previous negotiation situations tended to have lower outcomes than those who had successfully negotiated deals in the past. [20] The key to remember is that there is a tendency to let the past repeat itself. Being aware of this tendency allows you to overcome it. Be vigilant to examine the issues at hand and not to be overly swayed by past experiences, especially while you are starting out as a negotiator and have limited experiences.

**Tips for Negotiation Success**

1. **Focus on agreement first.** If you reach an impasse during negotiations, sometimes the best recourse is to agree that you disagree on those topics and then focus only on the ones that you can reach an agreement on. Summarize what you've agreed on, so that everyone feels like they're agreeing, and leave out the points you don’t agree on. Then take up those issues again in a different context, such as over dinner or coffee. Dealing with those issues separately may help the negotiation process.

2. **Be patient.** If you don’t have a deadline by which an agreement needs to be reached, use that flexibility to your advantage. The other party may be forced by circumstances to agree to your terms, so if you can be patient you may be able to get the best deal.

3. **Whose reality?** During negotiations, each side is presenting their case—their version of reality. Whose version of reality will prevail? Leigh Steinberg offers this example from the NFL, when he was negotiating the salary of Warren Moon. Moon was 41 years old. That was a fact. Did that mean he was hanging on by a thread and lucky to be employed in the first place? “Should he be grateful for any money that the team pays him?” Steinberg posed, “Or is he a quarterback who was among the league leaders in completions and attempts last year? Is he a team leader who took a previously moribund group of players, united them, and helped them have the best record that they’ve had in recent years?” All those facts are true, and negotiation brings the relevant facts to the forefront and argues their merit.

4. **Deadlines.** Research shows that negotiators are more likely to strike a deal by making more concessions and thinking more creatively as deadlines loom than at any other time in the negotiation process.

5. **Be comfortable with silence.** After you have made an offer, allow the other party to respond. Many people become uncomfortable with silence and feel they need to say something. Wait and listen instead.


**When All Else Fails: Third-Party Negotiations**
Alternative Dispute Resolution

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) includes mediation, arbitration, and other ways of resolving conflicts with the help of a specially trained, neutral third party without the need for a formal trial or hearing. [21] Many companies find this effective in dealing with challenging problems. For example, Eastman Kodak Company added an alternative dispute resolution panel of internal employees to help them handle cases of perceived discrimination and hopefully stop a conflict from escalating. [22]

Mediation

In mediation, an outside third party (the mediator) enters the situation with the goal of assisting the parties in reaching an agreement. The mediator can facilitate, suggest, and recommend. The mediator works with both parties to reach a solution but does not represent either side. Rather, the mediator’s role is to help the parties share feelings, air and verify facts, exchange perceptions, and work toward agreements. Susan Podziba, a mediation expert, has helped get groups that sometimes have a hard time seeing the other side’s point of view to open up and talk to one another. Her work includes such groups as pro-choice and pro-life advocates, individuals from Israel and Palestine, as well as fishermen and environmentalists. According to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, “Mediation gives the parties the opportunity to discuss the issues raised in the charge, clear up misunderstandings, determine the underlying interests or concerns, find areas of agreement and, ultimately, to incorporate those areas of agreements into resolutions. A mediator does not resolve the charge or impose a decision on the parties. Instead, the mediator helps the parties to agree on a mutually acceptable resolution. The mediation process is strictly confidential.” [23] One of the advantages of mediation is that the mediator helps the parties design their own solutions, including resolving issues that are important to both parties, not just the ones under specific dispute. Interestingly, sometimes mediation solves a conflict even if no resolution is reached. Here’s a quote from Avis Ridley-Thomas, the founder and administrator of the Los Angeles City Attorney’s Dispute Resolution Program, who explains, “Even if there is no agreement reached in mediation, people are happy that they engaged in the process. It often opens up the possibility for resolution in ways that people had not anticipated.” [24] An independent survey showed 96% of all respondents and 91% of all charging parties who used mediation would use it again if offered. [25]

You Know It’s Time for a Mediator When...

1. The parties are unable to find a solution themselves.
2. Personal differences are standing in the way of a successful solution.
3. The parties have stopped talking with one another.
4. Obtaining a quick resolution is important.


Arbitration
In contrast to mediation, in which parties work with the mediator to arrive at a solution, in arbitration the parties submit the dispute to the third-party arbitrator. It is the arbitrator who makes the final decision. The arbitrator is a neutral third party, but the decision made by the arbitrator is final (the decision is called the “award”). Awards are made in writing and are binding to the parties involved in the case. [26] Arbitration is often used in union-management grievance conflicts.

**Arbitration-Mediation**

It is common to see mediation followed by arbitration. An alternative technique is to follow the arbitration with mediation. The format of this conflict resolution approach is to have both sides formally make their cases before an arbitrator. The arbitrator then makes a decision and places it in a sealed envelope. Following this, the two parties work through mediation. If they are unable to reach an agreement on their own, the arbitration decisions become binding. Researchers using this technique found that it led to voluntary agreements between the two parties 71% of the time versus 50% for mediation followed by arbitration. [27]

**Conflict in the Work Environment**


The word “conflict” produces a sense of anxiety for many people, but it is part of the human experience. Just because conflict is universal does not mean that we cannot improve how we handle disagreements, misunderstandings, and struggles to understand or make ourselves understood. Joyce Hocker and William Wilmot [1] offer us several principles on conflict that have been adapted here for our discussion:

- Conflict is universal.
- Conflict is associated with incompatible goals.
- Conflict is associated with scarce resources.
- Conflict is associated with interference.
- Conflict is not a sign of a poor relationship.
- Conflict cannot be avoided.
- Conflict cannot always be resolved.
- Conflict is not always bad.
Conflict is the physical or psychological struggle associated with the perception of opposing or incompatible goals, desires, demands, wants, or needs. When incompatible goals, scarce resources, or interference are present, conflict is a typical result, but it doesn’t mean the relationship is poor or failing. All relationships progress through times of conflict and collaboration. How we navigate and negotiate these challenges influences, reinforces, or destroys the relationship. Conflict is universal, but how and when it occurs is open to influence and interpretation. Rather than viewing conflict from a negative frame of reference, view it as an opportunity for clarification, growth, and even reinforcement of the relationship.

**Conflict Management Strategies**

As professional communicators, we can acknowledge and anticipate that conflict will be present in every context or environment where communication occurs. To that end, we can predict, anticipate, and formulate strategies to address conflict successfully. How you choose to approach conflict influences its resolution. Joseph DeVito offers us several conflict management strategies that we have adapted and expanded for our use.

**Avoidance**

You may choose to change the subject, leave the room, or not even enter the room in the first place, but the conflict will remain and resurface when you least expect it. Your reluctance to address the conflict directly is a normal response, and one which many cultures prize. In cultures where independence is highly valued, direct confrontation is more common. In cultures where the community is emphasized over the individual, indirect strategies may be more common. Avoidance allows for more time to resolve the problem, but can also increase costs associated with problem in the first place. Your organization or business will have policies and protocols to follow regarding conflict and redress, but it is always wise to consider the position of your conversational partner or opponent and to give them, as well as yourself, time to explore alternatives.

**Defensiveness versus Supportiveness**

Jack Gibb discussed defensive and supportive communication interactions as part of his analysis of conflict management. Defensive communication is characterized by control, evaluation, and judgments, while supportive communication focuses on the points and not personalities. When we feel judged or criticized, our ability to listen can be diminished, and we may only hear the negative message. By choosing to focus on the message instead of the messenger, we keep the discussion supportive and professional.

**Face-Detracting and Face-Saving**
Communication is not competition. Communication is the sharing of understanding and meaning, but does everyone always share equally? People struggle for control, limit access to resources and information as part of territorial displays, and otherwise use the process of communication to engage in competition. People also use communication for collaboration. Both competition and collaboration can be observed in communication interactions, but there are two concepts central to both: face-detracting and face-saving strategies.

Face-detracting strategies involve messages or statements that take away from the respect, integrity, or credibility of a person. Face-saving strategies protect credibility and separate message from messenger. For example, you might say that “sales were down this quarter,” without specifically noting who was responsible. Sales were simply down. If, however, you ask, “How does the sales manager explain the decline in sales?” you have specifically connected an individual with the negative news. While we may want to specifically connect tasks and job responsibilities to individuals and departments, in terms of language each strategy has distinct results.

Face-detracting strategies often produce a defensive communication climate, inhibit listening, and allow for little room for collaboration. To save face is to raise the issue while preserving a supportive climate, allowing room in the conversation for constructive discussions and problem solving. By using a face-saving strategy to shift the emphasis from the individual to the issue, we avoid power struggles and personalities, providing each other space to save face. [5]

In collectivist cultures, where the community’s well-being is promoted or valued above that of the individual, face-saving strategies are a common communicative strategies. In Japan, for example, to confront someone directly is perceived as humiliation, a great insult. In the United States, greater emphasis is placed on individual performance, and responsibility may be more directly assessed. If our goal is to solve a problem, and preserve the relationship, then consideration of a face-saving strategy should be one option a skilled business communicator considers when addressing negative news or information.

**Empathy**
Communication involves not only the words we write or speak, but how and when we write or say them. The way we communicate also carries meaning, and empathy for the individual involves attending to this aspect of interaction. Empathetic listening involves listening to both the literal and implied meanings within a message. For example, the implied meaning might involve understanding what has led this person to feel this way. By paying attention to feelings and emotions associated with content and information, we can build relationships and address conflict more constructively. In management, negotiating conflict is a common task and empathy is one strategy to consider when attempting to resolve issues.

**Gunnysacking**
George Bach and Peter Wyden discuss gunnysacking (or backpacking) as the imaginary bag we all carry into which we place unresolved conflicts or grievances over time. If your organization has gone through a merger, and your business has transformed, there may have been conflicts that occurred during the transition. Holding onto the way things used to be can be like a stone in your gunnysack, and influence how you interpret your current context.

People may be aware of similar issues but might not know your history, and cannot see your backpack or its contents. For example, if your previous manager handled issues in one way, and your new manager handles them in a different way, this may cause you some degree of stress and frustration. Your new manager cannot see how the relationship existed in the past, but will still observe the tension. Bottling up your frustrations only hurts you and can cause your current relationships to suffer. By addressing, or unpacking, the stones you carry, you can better assess the current situation with the current patterns and variables.

We learn from experience, but can distinguish between old wounds and current challenges, and try to focus our energies where they will make the most positive impact.

Managing Your Emotions
Have you ever seen red, or perceived a situation through rage, anger, or frustration? Then you know that you cannot see or think clearly when you are experiencing strong emotions. There will be times in the work environment when emotions run high. Your awareness of them can help you clear your mind and choose to wait until the moment has passed to tackle the challenge.

“No speak or make decision in anger” is one common saying that holds true, but not all emotions involve fear, anger, or frustration. A job loss can be a sort of professional death for many, and the sense of loss can be profound. The loss of a colleague to a layoff while retaining your position can bring pain as well as relief, and a sense of survivor’s guilt. Emotions can be contagious in the workplace, and fear of the unknown can influence people to act in irrational ways. The wise business communicator can recognize when emotions are on edge in themselves or others, and choose to wait to communicate, problem-solve, or negotiate until after the moment has passed.

Evaluations and Criticism in the Workplace
Mary Ellen Guffey wisely notes that Xenophon, a Greek philosopher, once said, “The sweetest of all sounds is praise.” We have seen previously that appreciation, respect, inclusion, and belonging are all basic human needs across all contexts, and are particularly relevant in the workplace. Efficiency and morale are positively related, and recognition of good work is important. There may come a time, however, when evaluations involve criticism. Knowing how to approach this criticism can give you peace of mind to listen clearly, separating subjective, personal attacks from objective, constructive requests for improvement. Guffey offers us seven strategies for giving and receiving evaluations and criticism in the workplace that we have adapted here.
Listen without Interrupting
If you are on the receiving end of an evaluation, start by listening without interruption. Interruptions can be internal and external, and warrant further discussion. If your supervisor starts to discuss a point and you immediately start debating the point in your mind, you are paying attention to yourself and what you think they said or are going to say, and not that which is actually communicated. This gives rise to misunderstandings and will cause you to lose valuable information you need to understand and address the issue at hand. External interruptions may involve your attempt to get a word in edgewise, and may change the course of the conversation. Let them speak while you listen, and if you need to take notes to focus your thoughts, take clear notes of what is said, also noting points to revisit later. External interruptions can also take the form of a telephone ringing, a “text message has arrived” chime, or a coworker dropping by in the middle of the conversation.

As an effective business communicator, you know all too well to consider the context and climate of the communication interaction when approaching the delicate subject of evaluations or criticism. Choose a time and place free from interruption. Choose one outside the common space where there may be many observers. Turn off your cell phone. Choose face-to-face communication instead of an impersonal e-mail. By providing a space free of interruption, you are displaying respect for the individual and the information.

Determine the Speaker’s Intent
We have discussed previews as a normal part of conversation, and in this context they play an important role. People want to know what is coming and generally dislike surprises, particularly when the context of an evaluation is present. If you are on the receiving end, you may need to ask a clarifying question if it doesn’t count as an interruption. You may also need to take notes and write down questions that come to mind to address when it is your turn to speak. As a manager, be clear and positive in your opening and lead with praise. You can find one point, even if it is only that the employee consistently shows up to work on time, to highlight before transitioning to a performance issue.

Indicate You Are Listening
In mainstream U.S. culture, eye contact is a signal that you are listening and paying attention to the person speaking. Take notes, nod your head, or lean forward to display interest and listening. Regardless of whether you are the employee receiving the criticism or the supervisor delivering it, displaying listening behavior engenders a positive climate that helps mitigate the challenge of negative news or constructive criticism.

Paraphrase
Restate the main points to paraphrase what has been discussed. This verbal display allows for clarification and acknowledges receipt of the message.
If you are the employee, summarize the main points and consider steps you will take to correct the situation. If none come to mind or you are nervous and are having a hard time thinking clearly, state out loud the main point and ask if you can provide solution steps and strategies at a later date. You can request a follow-up meeting if appropriate, or indicate you will respond in writing via e-mail to provide the additional information.

If you are the employer, restate the main points to ensure that the message was received, as not everyone hears everything that is said or discussed the first time it is presented. Stress can impair listening, and paraphrasing the main points can help address this common response.

**If You Agree**
If an apology is well deserved, offer it. Communicate clearly what will change or indicate when you will respond with specific strategies to address the concern. As a manager you will want to formulate a plan that addresses the issue and outlines responsibilities as well as time frames for corrective action. As an employee you will want specific steps you can both agree on that will serve to solve the problem. Clear communication and acceptance of responsibility demonstrates maturity and respect.

**If You Disagree**
If you disagree, focus on the points or issue and not personalities. Do not bring up past issues and keep the conversation focused on the task at hand. You may want to suggest, now that you better understand their position, a follow-up meeting to give you time to reflect on the issues. You may want to consider involving a third party, investigating to learn more about the issue, or taking time to cool off.

Do not respond in anger or frustration; instead, always display professionalism. If the criticism is unwarranted, consider that the information they have may be flawed or biased, and consider ways to learn more about the case to share with them, searching for a mutually beneficial solution.

If other strategies to resolve the conflict fail, consider contacting your human resources department to learn more about due process procedures at your workplace. Display respect and never say anything that would reflect poorly on yourself or your organization. Words spoken in anger can have a lasting impact and are impossible to retrieve or take back.

**Learn from Experience**
Every communication interaction provides an opportunity for learning if you choose to see it. Sometimes the lessons are situational and may not apply in future contexts. Other times the lessons learned may well serve you across your professional career. Taking notes for yourself to clarify your thoughts, much like a journal, serve to document and help you see the situation more clearly.
Recognize that some aspects of communication are intentional, and may communicate meaning, even if it is hard to understand. Also, know that some aspects of communication are unintentional, and may not imply meaning or design. People make mistakes. They say things they should not have said. Emotions are revealed that are not always rational, and not always associated with the current context. A challenging morning at home can spill over into the work day and someone’s bad mood may have nothing to do with you.

Try to distinguish between what you can control and what you cannot, and always choose professionalism.

Improving Assertive Behavior


What is assertive behavior?

Assertive behavior is:
- Standing up for one's rights no matter what the circumstance.
- Correcting the situation when one's rights are being violated.
Seeking respect and understanding for one's feelings about a particular situation or circumstance.

Interacting in a mature manner with those found to be offensive, defensive, aggressive, hostile, blaming, attacking or otherwise unreceptive.

Direct, upfront—not defensive or manipulative—behavior. Those using assertive behavior confront problems, disagreement, or personal discomforts head-on, and their intent is unmistakable to others.

Verbal "I" statements, where individuals tell others how they feel about a situation, circumstance or the behavior of others.

Taking the risk of being misunderstood as being aggressive, abrasive or attacking.

Being able to protect one's rights while protecting and respecting the rights of others.

Risk-taking behavior that is not ruled by fear of rejection or disapproval, but is directed by the rational belief that "I deserve to stand up for my rights."

Rational thinking and the self-affirmation of personal worth, respect and rights.

A healthy style in which to conduct interpersonal relationships.

Finding a "win-win" solution in handling problems between two individuals. The "you win and I lose" solution is a passive solution where one individual gives up his rights to another. The "you lose and I win" solution is an aggressive solution where one individual ignores the rights of another in order to get his way. The "you lose and I lose" solution is a total passive solution where both individuals give up their rights. A healthy resolution is impossible. The "you win and I win" solution is an assertive solution where the rights of both parties are recognized, respected and utilized in reaching a healthy compromise.

Ten Assertive Rights of an Individual

Assertive Right 1: I have the right to judge my own behavior, thoughts and emotions and to take the responsibility for their initiation and consequence. The behavior of others may have an impact upon me, but I determine how I choose to react and/or deal with each situation. I alone have the power to judge and modify my thoughts, feelings and behavior. Others may influence my decision, but the final choice is mine.

Assertive Right 2: I have the right to offer neither reason nor excuse to justify my behavior. I need not rely upon others to judge whether my actions are proper or correct. Others may state disagreement or disapproval, but I have the option to disregard their preferences or to work out a compromise. I may choose to respect their preferences and consequently modify my behavior. What is important is that it is my choice. Others may try to manipulate my behavior and feelings by demanding to know my reasons and by trying to persuade me that I am wrong, but I know that I am the ultimate judge.
Assertive Right 3: I have the right to judge whether I am responsible for finding solutions to others' problems. I am ultimately responsible for my own psychological well-being and happiness. I may feel concern and compassion and good will for others, but I am neither responsible for nor do I have the ability to create mental stability and happiness for others. My actions may have caused others' problems indirectly; however, it is still their responsibility to come to terms with the problems and to learn to cope on their own. If I fail to recognize this assertive right, others may choose to manipulate my thoughts and feelings by placing the blame for their problems on me.

Assertive Right 4: I have the right to change my mind. As a human being, nothing in my life is necessarily constant or rigid. My interests and needs may well change with the passage of time. The possibility of changing my mind is normal, healthy and conducive to self-growth. Others may try to manipulate my choice by asking that I admit error or by stating that I am irresponsible; it is nevertheless unnecessary for me to justify my decision.

Assertive Right 5: I have the right to say "I don't know."

Assertive Right 6: I have the right to make mistakes and be responsible for them. To make a mistake is part of the human condition. Others may try to manipulate me, having me believe that my errors are unforgivable, that I must make amends for my wrongdoing by engaging in proper behavior. If I allow this, my future behavior will be influenced by my past mistakes, and my decisions will be controlled by the opinions of others.

Assertive Right 7: I have the right to be independent of the good will of others before coping with them. It would be unrealistic for me to expect others to approve of all my actions, regardless of their merit. If I were to assume that I required others' goodwill before being able to cope with them effectively, I would leave myself open to manipulation. It is unlikely that I require the goodwill and/or cooperation of others in order to survive. A relationship does not require 100 percent agreement. It is inevitable that others will be hurt or offended by my behavior at times. I am responsible only to myself, and I can deal with periodic disapproval from others.

Assertive Right 8: I have the right to be illogical in making decisions. I sometimes employ logic as a reasoning process to assist me in making judgments. However, logic cannot predict what will happen in every situation. Logic is not much help in dealing with wants, motivations and feelings. Logic generally deals with "black or white," "all or none" and "yes or no" issues. Logic and reasoning don't always work well when dealing with the gray areas of the human condition.

Assertive Right 9: I have the right to say "I don't understand."

Assertive Right 10: I have the right to say "I don't care."

**Journal Exercise on 10 Assertive Rights**
Answer the following questions in your journal. They are designed to help you assess your level of assertiveness.

A. How can I keep myself and others from being judgmental? Why is it so easy to judge another? How does my fear of judgment reduce my assertiveness?
B. Why do people demand a reason for others' behavior? How does constant rationalizing and defending my behavior affect my relationship with others?
C. How do I feel about being blamed for others' problems? How fair is this? What is the usual outcome of such blaming?
D. How comfortable am I with allowing others to have a change of mind? Why is it so important for others to be predictable? What is the worst thing that could happen if I changed my position midway through an argument?
E. How comfortable am I living in a situation in which the outcome is unknown? Why do I have such a great need for certainty in my decision making? How comfortable am I in taking risks?
F. Why is it so hard to admit to making a mistake? How well do I accept another's admission of making a mistake? What is the benefit of allowing others to make mistakes?
G. How easily do I express disapproval to others? How easily do I become devastated by such expressions of disappointment when they are pointed at me? Why does prior approval by others have to be a prerequisite before I take action?
H. What part does logic play in my life? Why does logic become so important in my arguments? How comfortable am I with the "gray areas" in life?
I. How important is mind reading in my life? How has unclear communication with others, assumptions and jumping to wrong conclusions affected me in the past? How freely do I admit I don't understand the other person?
J. Why is perfection so important to me? How can I learn to live with another's imperfections? Why does it bother me to say, "I don't care?"

Six Myths That Encourage Non-Assertive Behavior

Myth 1, Anxiety: Some people believe that overt signs of anxious behavior indicate weakness or inadequacy. These individuals assume that if they were to exhibit anxiety, they would be ridiculed, rejected or taken advantage of by others. This is self-defeating, for the harder people try to camouflage anxious feelings, the harder it is to conceal the accompanying symptoms of trembling, sweating, flushing, etc.

One method of reducing anxiety is to acknowledge that anxious feelings are present. One may discover that others experience similar feelings under certain circumstances. If people can disclose their feelings of discomfort safely, they will find it unnecessary to expend so much energy disguising them; therefore, the anxiety will no longer interfere with the task at hand or impair their ability to cope in life.

Myth 2, Modesty: This myth consists of three parts:
(1) The inability to acknowledge or say positive things about oneself.
(2) The inability to accept compliments from others.
(3) The inability to give compliments to others.

Some people fear that positive self-statements seem egocentric. They fail to discriminate between the accurate representation of accomplishments and over exaggeration. Additionally, they may fear that once asserting themselves, they will have to live up to these expectations 100 percent of the time. Inability to self-disclose positively may hinder their opportunities. If they don’t believe in themselves, it is unrealistic to expect others to believe in them.

People who are unable to receive compliments are indirectly damaging their self-respect. After several unsuccessful attempts, most people trying to give genuine compliments will hesitate, feeling uncomfortable in giving positive feedback. The intended recipient of the praise, no longer hearing positive feedback, may begin to question their self-worth.

Sometimes others may use insincere praise as a manipulative tool ("You are such a great worker; by the way, could you cut the lawn.") However, assuming that all positive feedback is insincere, manipulative or misleading will hinder both the development of a healthy lifestyle and a positive self-concept. Positive feedback is a powerful tool in this sense.

Some people are unable to provide others with positive feedback. They may be unaware of the potential positive effects, e.g., greater rapport or satisfaction in life. Sometimes others have difficulty delivering praise because they fear making themselves vulnerable. They may be unable to elicit feelings easily and openly. Perhaps this is an alien behavior because they have never received positive feedback themselves. Or, maybe there is a risk involved in developing more honest, open relationships.

For whatever reason, modesty does not enhance mutually satisfying, spontaneous interpersonal relationships.

Myth 3, Good Friend: This myth assumes that others can read my mind based upon our past relationship, e.g.: "She should have known how I felt" or "My husband should have known how hard I have been working and given me Saturday morning free."

Lack of good, facilitative communication is apparent here. One must remember that individuals don’t always respond in the same manner to the same situation.

This type of expectation will undoubtedly lead to guilt, resentment, hurt feelings and misunderstanding within a relationship, assuming that others have known you long enough to know your mind or how you are thinking.
Myth 4, Obligation: This myth indicates that some people disregard their personal needs and rights due to a belief in personal obligations to others. These people put others ahead of themselves. Obviously the others' needs cannot always be met; however, those who routinely neglect to express their needs and rights, and who find themselves imposed upon quite frequently, are being restrained by this belief in the myth of obligation. They are often unable to make requests of others they project that others feel the obligation to meet their needs, too.

This myth, along with the others, facilitates neither self-respect nor the development of open, healthy relationships.

Myth 5, Gender role myths: Sometimes people behave in a particular manner due to various gender role expectations. This has been especially true for women. Is it feminine to be assertive or outspoken? The myth of obligation fits into this category, too. Due to erroneous expectations, many women are unable to refuse requests, even unreasonable ones. This may be true regardless of whether the request would interfere with their needs and rights.

Men have been encouraged to act upon their needs and rights aggressively, to fill the "macho" or controlling role in a relationship. Gender role expectations can color behavior, often to the opposite extreme. Some men may be inappropriately passive, while social pressures often call for men to take an aggressive stand.

Gender role expectations limit people's options for acting appropriately upon their beliefs, needs and rights. They close the door to spontaneous, sincere interactions.

Myth 6, Strength of an issue: It is sometimes risky to take a stand, even on issues about which people might feel quite strongly. It may be interpreted as pressuring others to accept one's beliefs, especially when discussing a controversial issue. People may not choose to take the risk of alienating themselves from others.

People who cannot discuss their beliefs assertively are closing the door to honest expression. The opportunity for a potentially stimulating exchange, which may afford them an opportunity for self-growth, will not happen.

Steps to Improve Personal Assertiveness

Step 1: Read the material in this chapter. Study the following behavioral strategies involved in self-assertion training.

Three types of individual behavior are listed.

1. Non-assertive behavior: The act of withdrawing from a situation. This is a passive approach to a situation (life), resulting in:
   a. Denial of one's feelings/opinions
b. Allowing others to choose for you

c. Guilt, anger

d. Examples of non-assertive language:
   i. "Oh, it's nothing"
   ii. "Oh, that's all right; I didn't want it anymore"
   iii. "Why don't you go ahead and do it; my ideas aren't very good anyway"

2. Aggressive behavior: The act of over reacting emotionally to a situation.
   Aggression can also take the form of a lie or a misrepresentation of the facts.
   This is a self-enhancing, egotistical approach to a situation (life) resulting in:
   a. "Put down" feelings on the receiver's part
   b. Not allowing others to choose for themselves, but choosing for them
   c. Hostility, defensiveness on the aggressor's part and hurt, humiliation on the receiver's part

d. Examples of aggressive language
   i. "You are crazy!"
   ii. "Do it my way!"
   iii. "You make me sick!"
   iv. "That is just about enough out of you!"
   v. Others include sarcasm, name-calling, threatening, blaming, insulting.

3. Assertive behavior: The act of declaring that this is what I am, what I think and feel, and what I want. This is a non-egotistical, active, rather than passive, approach to a situation (life) resulting in:
   a. Open, direct self-expression of your thoughts and feelings.
   b. Allowing others to choose for themselves.
   c. Mutual satisfaction at achieving a desired goal.

Assertion strategies:

1. Make known your desires and feelings. Don't be side tracked by others. Make a short, clear, assertive statement of your goal, taking into account what others are saying by persistently repeating your goal: Yes, I understand [other's response] but I still want [state your goal].

2. Express feelings about a situation without threatening others:
   1. Identify the situation: When you put me down ________.
   2. Identify how you feel about it: I feel angry ____________.
   3. Identify what you want: When you put me down, I feel angry. I want you to know that and to stop putting me down.

3. Make a non-assertive person open up. The topic should be pursued in a gentle, probing manner: "I don't understand why you are so up tight."

Body language as related to assertive behavior:
1. Eye contact and facial expression: Maintain direct eye contact, appear interested and alert, but not angry.
2. Posture: Stand or sit erect, possibly leaning forward slightly.
3. Distance and contact: Stand or sit at a normal conversational distance from the other.
5. Voice: Use a factual, not emotional tone of voice. Sound determined and full of conviction, but not overbearing.
6. Timing: Choose a time when both parties are relaxed. A neutral site is best.

Further tips on assertiveness:

1. Assertive responses are characterized by the use of "I" statements instead of "You" statements.
2. Assertive responses are usually effective in getting others to change or reinforce behavior.
3. Assertive responses run a low risk of hurting a relationship.
4. Assertive responses neither attack the other’s self-esteem nor put him on the defensive.
5. Assertive behavior prevents "gunny sacking," i.e., saving up a lot of bad feelings.

Step 2: Read the following sample situations and record in your journal whether each of the three responses given is aggressive, non-assertive or assertive (the answer key is at the end of this step).

Situation 1: Cousin Jessie, with whom you prefer not to spend much time, is on the phone. She says that she is planning to spend the next three weeks with you.
(1) We'd love to have you come and stay as long as you like.
(2) We'd be glad to have you come for the weekend, but we cannot invite you for longer. A short visit will be very nice for all of us.
(3) The weather down here has been terrible (not true), so you'd better plan on going elsewhere.

Situation 2: You have bought a toaster at a local discount house, and it doesn't work properly.
(1) I bought this toaster, and it doesn't work; I would like my money back.
(2) What right do you have selling me junk like this?
(3) You silently put it in the closet and buy another one.

Situation 3: One of your children has come in late consistently for the last 3 or 4 days.
(1) I have noticed that for the last few days you have been a little late, and I am concerned about that.
(2) The next time you are late, you are moving out.
(3) You mumble to yourself and give dirty looks, hoping she/he will be on time tomorrow.
Situation 4: You are at the dinner table and someone starts smoking, which offends you.
(1) Hey, that smoke is terrible!
(2) You suffer the smoke in silence.
(3) I would appreciate it if you wouldn't smoke here.
Situation 5: You are across the room and someone is talking to you but not quite loud enough for you to hear.
(1) You continue straining to hear but end up daydreaming.
(2) You yell out, "Speak up! I can't hear you if you talk to yourself."
(3) You stop, get the person's attention, and say, "Would you mind speaking a little louder, please?"

Answer Key for Step 2:
Situation 1: 1-Non-assertive, 2-Argetive, 3-Aggressive
Situation 2: 1-Assertive, 2-Aggressive, 3-Non-assertive
Situation 3: 1-Assertive, 2-Aggressive, 3-Non-assertive
Situation 4: 1-Aggressive, 2-Non-assertive, 3-Assertive
Situation 5: 1-Non-assertive, 2-Aggressive, 3-Assertive

Step 3: Read the following role-playing situations and play a role in the various self-assertion techniques with a friend or your significant other. Give yourself plenty of time to complete this step.

Ten role-playing situations for assertion training:

Each of these situations involves a need for assertive behavior. Role play each of these situations. Be sure to spend at least 5 minutes on each role.

a. You just got home from work and your friend wants to go to the movies, but you would rather not.
b. Your friend has begun smoking in the house, and it bothers you.
c. You always run out of cash by Thursday. You are embarrassed about this and need to get more money from the person who controls the family finances.
d. You are at a restaurant and you ordered a $15 steak that is tough; your friend is encouraging you to return it, but you don't like being pressured into doing such things.
e. You and your friend are going to your parent's hometown for a vacation. Your friend has booked the flight for you; however, when you get to the airport you discover that you aren't booked, and that there are no seats available. You then find out that your friend forgot to book the flight.
f. You have made a mistake in balancing the checkbook. Your partner finds the mistake and starts telling you off in front of your children (or neighbor).
g. It is your turn to do the dishes. Before you even get up from the table your friend begins to tell you that the last time you did the dishes they remained dirty and crusty, and the kitchen was still a mess when you got through.
h. You have been home from work for over an hour. You notice that your friend has been unusually quiet and distant with you.
i. You and your friend are discussing religion, and your friend says something with which you strongly disagree.

j. You are trying to watch an intense and absorbing movie on cable TV. Your friend is talking loudly on the telephone to a relative, and you are having trouble hearing the TV.

Step 4: After you and your partner complete the role play activity in Step 3, answer the following questions in your journal:

a. How comfortable am I in being assertive?

b. What new behaviors do I need to develop to be more assertive?

c. How awkward is it to confront my true feelings in a situation?

d. What part does my need for approval and fear of rejection play in my non-assertive behavior?

e. Why is it easier to role play being assertive than actually being assertive in real life?

f. Which of the myths concerning non-assertiveness do I hold to? How can I overcome these?

g. What roadblocks to assertiveness are present in my current behavior? How can I overcome these?

h. What are the differences between my assertive and my aggressive behavior? How can I ensure my assertive behavior is not really aggressive?

i. What body language cues do I need to develop in order to improve my assertive style?

j. What do I need to do to increase my assertive behavior further?

Step 5: If after completing Steps 1 through 4 you still lack healthy, assertive behavior, return to Step 1 and begin again.