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Introduction to Soft Skills

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This is an introductory booklet on Soft Skills. This is prepared and presented for the benefit of teachers, students and others. Please read these pages and use the booklet for purposes of training your students. You may also use the booklet in your interpersonal conversations. Add suitable examples from your own contexts.

Business communication and transactions require effective soft skills. Mutual respect to the participants of transactions must be clearly shown, using appropriate language and gestures. Please consider this book as a beginning exercise and continue to develop your soft skills all through your career.

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- 1. Definition of Soft Skills**
- 2. Job Seekers and Soft Skills**
- 3. Employability Skills**
- 4. Soft Skills for First Generation Students, Teachers and Professionals**
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On Defining and Describing the Scope of Soft Skills

Definition

- Personal attributes that enhance an individual's interactions, job performance and career prospects.

- Soft skills are broadly applicable, irrespective of specific jobs, economic, social and political positions, etc.
- Soft skills vs. Hard skills

Some Personal Attributes

- Optimism
- Common sense
- Responsibility
- A sense of humor
- Integrity • Time-management • Motivation, etc.

Interpersonal abilities, such as:

- empathy
- leadership
- communication
- good manners
- sociability
- the ability to teach.

Hard Skills

- Hard skills will get you an interview but you need soft skills to get (and keep) the job.
- Hard skills are specific, teachable abilities that may be required in a given context, such as a job or university application.
- Unlike hard skills, which tend to be specific to a certain type of task or activity, soft skills are broadly applicable.

Some Examples of Hard Skills

- Knowledge and application of your subject.
- Accessory skills such as library referencing, note taking, report writing, statistical analysis, original research and publication of your research, facility with spreadsheets, typing, proficiency with software applications, proficiency in the medium (language) using which you need to carry out your duties, etc.

Where Do We Get Our Soft Skills From?

- Parents
- Peers
- Caste
- Religion
- Elders
- Literature
- Didactic Works
- Exposure and experience
- Through Hard Learning, Misfortunes, Tragedies, and Happy Ending Events, etc.

- **There are severe limitations to such sources: mere knowledge, difficulty with obedience, harsh language, poor application, irrelevance, emerging strong individualism, do it myself attitudes, etc.**
- **Strong tendency toward Compartmentalization**

A Tentative List of Soft Skills

1. Managing Yourself
2. Communication
3. Organizational Savvy
4. Self Promotion
5. Dealing With Differences
6. Handling Others
7. Corporate Skills
8. Employability Skills
9. Life Skills

Some 60 Soft Skills!

Courtesy. Honesty, Grammar, Reliability, Flexibility, Team skills, Eye contact, Cooperation, etc.

How Many Soft Skills Do You Have!

In what soft skills are you proficient?

In what soft skills are you deficient?

Have you ever felt the need for any soft skill/s in your interactions with others, departments, etc.?

Have you ever consciously developed any soft skill/s?

How do you rate yourself in the use of soft skills? Do you have any evidence/fact to support your assessment?

Do you know how others rate your soft skills?

How and when did you know others' assessment?!

Job Seekers and Soft Skills

10 Top Soft Skills for Job Seekers - Have and Demonstrate these Skills!

- 1. Strong Work Ethic.** Are you motivated and dedicated to getting the job done, no matter what?
Will you be conscientious and do your best work?
- 2. Positive Attitude.** Are you optimistic and upbeat? Will you generate good energy and good will?
- 3. Good Communication Skills.** Are you both verbally articulate and a good listener? Can you make your case and express your needs in a way that builds bridges with colleagues, customers and vendors?
- 4. Time Management Abilities.** Do you know how to prioritize tasks and work on a number of different projects at once? Will you use your time on the job wisely?
- 5. Problem-Solving Skills.** Are you resourceful and able to creatively solve problems that will inevitably arise? Will you take ownership of problems or leave them for someone else?

6. **Acting as a Team Player.** Will you work well in groups and teams? Will you be cooperative and take a leadership role when appropriate?
7. **Self-Confidence.** Do you truly believe you can do the job? Will you project a sense of calm and inspire confidence in others? Will you have the courage to ask questions that need to be asked and to freely contribute your ideas?
8. **Ability to Accept and Learn From Criticism.** Will you be able to handle criticism? Are you coachable and open to learning and growing as a person and as a professional?
9. **Flexibility/Adaptability.** Are you able to adapt to new situations and challenges? Will you embrace change and be open to new ideas?
10. **Working Well Under Pressure.** Can you handle the stress that accompanies deadlines and crises? Will you be able to do your best work and come through in a pinch? From [Kate Lorenz](#)

Employability Skills

Employability Skills

- 3 Skills - Basic academic skills, Higher order thinking skills, Personal qualities
- Employability skills are teachable skills.

Basic Academic Skills – Reading, Writing, Science, Math, Oral Communication, Listening

Higher Order Thinking Skills – Learning, Reasoning, Thinking Creatively, Decisions Making, Problem Solving

Personal Qualities - Responsible, Self Confidence, Self Control, Social Skills, Honest , Have Integrity Adaptable and Flexible, Team Spirit, Punctual and Efficient, Self Directed, Good Work Attitude, Well Groomed, **Cooperative**, Self Motivated, Self Management , etc.

1. **Employability skills** are teachable skills and may be taught in both school and employment settings.
 - Goals and objectives for teaching employability skills should be set.
 - **Instruction** should be designed to ensure **those** goals and objectives are reached.

Teach employability skills using a democratic approach so that students' awareness of values, attitudes, and worker responsibilities is increased.

Supervisors, trainers and teachers should set good examples of the desired behavior.

Students should have the opportunity to observe the type of work place behavior that is being required of them.

Replicate - When possible, classrooms should replicate the features of real work settings.

- Set and communicate high expectations and hold students responsible for their behavior.

Soft Skills for First Generation Students, Teachers and Professionals

- *First Generation Learners* – Not a new term.
- Once there were only mostly FGL!
- So, not much importance given then.
- Now, a political necessity to recognize and help this important segment of population – a delayed, wise step.

Characteristics of FGLs - First Generation Learners

- Inferiority complex, leading on to lack of participation, unwillingness and hesitation to be part of a group/team, internal conflict, satisfied with low level performance, ultimate defeat and selfdestruction, etc. Fatalism.
- Difficulty with appropriate etiquette demanded in “city” contexts, Dress and Table Manners, etc.
- Difficulty with appropriate language.
- Difficulty with appropriate Nonverbal Communication.
- Lack of sensitivity to the context.
- Fear and hesitation. Fuming with internal anger.
- Finding one’s direction in career is hard for the FLGs, especially when they come from little educated or illiterate families.

Modern Office and FGLs

1. Communication via English.
2. Appropriate Dress Code.
3. Appropriate facial expression.
4. Participation in group activities.
5. Keeping appointments on time.
6. Keeping the Desk/Table tidy.
7. Appropriate greetings.
8. Avoidance of body odor.
9. Toilet habits: frequency, cleanness, etc
10. Seating posture.
11. Gender relations.
12. Avoidance of hurtful humor, comments and gestures, etc.
13. An Exercise: Prepare an Office, provide scenes, enact a variety of Office Activities.
14. For this visit a variety of offices, both public and private, business, etc.
15. Practice with attention to details helps.
16. Develop sensitivity to context, learn from face and nonverbal expressions.
17. Develop skills in expression through language and non-language means.
18. Remember most of us came originally from FGLs families. Be sympathetic, do not mock at or mimic FGLS. Learn to love others!

Soft Skills for Effective Communication

Use of Language

- Mother tongue speaking style. Avoiding Mother tongue – a fashion. Will it help?
- Need to avoid extreme colloquialisms to help others understand your statements.
- No swear words, or caste disparaging.
- Choose standard Mother tongue to express yourself.
- Mastery of any language will be appreciated and found useful in business communication.
- Use your country's language with confidence. If you are not confident, avoid using it.
- Develop comprehension to a great extent.
- Speaking is useful but comprehension is more useful and helpful to create better friendship.
- Do not use your language in the presence of others who cannot understand it.
- Use only that language often which is commonly used for communication at work.

Use of Language as Identity

- Language identity is a double-edged sword. It can easily harm you, especially when there is transfer of power.
- Use language identity briefly and without any flourish. Especially on social occasions, and in very private conversations.

Build an image that you transcend language identity.

- Bilingual/multilingual identities reveal caste and ethnic backgrounds. Use such identities without causing excessive concern among others.
- Remember you cannot escape from identities that you bring with you.
- Develop sensitivity as to when such identities should be revealed or hidden.
- Open display and declaration will be harmful.
- Language identity is a double-edged sword. It can easily harm you, especially when there is transfer of power.
- Use language identity briefly and without any flourish. Especially on social occasions, and in very private conversations.
- Build an image that you transcend language identity.

English Is Important!

1. Fluency or Correctness?
 - i. Choose fluency to begin with and then to correctness – simultaneous awareness.
2. Consider your Accent!
 - i. Role in comprehension.
 - ii. Role in personality development/revealing.
 - iii. Role in persuasion.
3. You cannot escape from your native language influence! Can be controlled!
4. Your goal should be to make yourself understood. How?
5. Learn to pronounce words clearly, audibly and slowly.
6. Use Plain English
 - i. Simple words
 - ii. Short Sentences
 - iii. Give pause between sentences.

Delivery of English

- iv. Transition from one word to another to be clear.
- v. Avoid long, complex sentences.
- vi. Do not continuously imitate newspaper language. vii. Learn to take turns in conversation.
- vii. Be patient to allow others to complete their sentences.
- viii. Do not interrupt others. ix. Choose your words carefully.
- x. What is clear to you may not be clear to others. What is humorous to you may not be humorous to others!

Use Appropriate Tone

Learn to question, learn to wonder, learn to raise voice in disagreement, not in anger, learn to speak to affirm, learn to say negation with correct connotation, learn to ask for repetition, learn to repeat the same meaning in different ways, etc.

- **Avoid** idioms learned in English class – these are mostly archaic and bookish, not really current, which should be your goal.
- **Use** idioms used in spoken language – learn these from spoken media. Idiom is not essential to begin with. With more time into your career, idioms will signify your competence.
- Learn to go from one point to another in a cogent and coherent manner.

- If you must, memorize some jokes with appropriate tone and intonation. A difficult task.

Writing

9. Learn to write just as you speak.
10. Read as many types of correspondence as you can to familiarize yourself with the formats.
11. Understand the structure of correspondences. Practice writing these correspondences.
12. Proofread using spell and grammar check.
13. Always write in short paragraph, one paragraph for one short point.
14. Write with space between words and sentences.
15. India writing in English and speaking in English are more or less identical:
 - i. Advantages
 - ii. Disadvantages – lack of naturalness, lacks expressions that deal with emotions, etc.
 - iii. Need to blend both.

Code Mixing & Code Shifting

- i. Avoid mixing mother tongue or your country's language words excessively.
- ii. Avoid shifting from English to your languages.
- iii. Speak fully constructed English words with your co-workers.
- iv. Fear, shyness, and hesitation in speaking English must be overcome.
- v. Develop talent in speaking & writing direct descriptive language.

Practice is the Key!

- Listen to Native English TV News broadcasts.
- Watch Native English movies regularly for total immersion.
- Speak silently the sentences you hear.
- Imitation in privacy and approximation in public should be your goal.

Do not impose motives!

- Always go by what the speaker or writer reports literally.
- Do not go beyond what is expressed literally for ordinary conversations.

It is OK to analyze and identify motives, if any, and then make a conclusion for yourself, but it is not appropriate to get behind and find out "original intent or motives" to develop better understanding and friendship.

Modern Practices Require ...!

- Avoid gender, caste, religion, region and language-oriented abusive remarks.
- Avoid gender bias-prejudice in language use.
- Avoid disparaging words relating to differently challenged populations.
- Avoid abusive words describing professional groups.

Soft Skills for Personal Development

- Soft skills are those tools that influence attitude, behavior and character in a positive way. Soft-skills in accountability, speaking, writing, prioritizing, and organizational skills are needed for personal development .
- Body language is communication beyond words.
- Body language helps individuals in many areas such as communication skills, leadership skills, customer services, sales skills, etc.
- Body language is highly visual and the best way to learn is by imitation, observing case studies and roleplays.

Learn Some Universal Gestures

- Smile with approval.
- Recognize people.
- Learn to nod or shake your head appropriately to express agreement or disagreement.
- Learn to wish people in various ways: smiling, say *vanakkam*, etc., say *hello, how are you?*, shake hands, *kumbidu*, wave hand, etc.
- Stand up when required as mark of respect.

How to Read Body Language?

1. Facial expressions
2. Tone
3. Willingness to continue conversation
4. Sitting posture
5. Standing posture
6. Voice volume and voice modulation
7. Warmth of hand shake
8. Warmth of initial greetings
9. Does the person you meet with focus on many jobs at the same time? Or exclusively to you?
10. Focus of eyes
11. Voice modulation
12. Space between you and the person – how the office furniture is arranged, etc.
13. Does he/she offer a seat?
14. Use of endearments, or absence of any recognition act.
15. Prepare a list of gestures and expressions that are relevant in your community and work situations.
16. Work situations offer a variety that may or may not be acceptable to you.
17. From the beginning choose that which is respectable, which recognizes your self-respect, recognizes you as a *person*.

Learn from your culture & co-workers

How to avoid misinterpretation and deliberate faking?

- Positive versus negative body language
Confidence and frustration
Eye contacts and eye cues
Different types of looks
Lies, dishonesty, doubts and thinking

Power, Domination, Intimidation, etc

Recognizing Power, politics, domination and show of status What are intimidation gestures?

Touch in Indian or Asian/African society and in corporate situations How to show that you mean it?

How to turn the table if you are consistently dominated?

- How to appear serious and in charge?
- How to know if someone will be argumentative just based on how they sit on a chair?
- How personal zones affect our behaviour just about everywhere?
- Why people in large cities appear cold?
- How to join a group of strangers confidently?
- How to sit in a meeting room to get best results?
- How to engage the audience effectively using body language?

Anger Management

1. We can be offended by people's words, behaviour or attitude and feel anger and resentment.
2. We need to know how we react to the feeling of anger, how we can control our emotions and how we can communicate our points of view without the trace of anger our points of view.
3. We become unpopular if we do not control our anger and temper.
4. Those who have a temper can explode and have significant difficulties to communicate with others.
5. People keep their distance from such individuals and this in itself leads them to become more isolated and angry.

A Solution

Difficulties in anger control come from the lack of emotional skills and not knowing how to respond to challenges and confrontations.

- The solution is not to stop getting angry, but to learn how to control the response and use assertive communication.
- **In this process, anger is canalized for some constructive purposes.**
- We need to learn how to control our temper when we find ourselves challenged or in conflicts.
- People who suffer from repetitive expressions of anger need to systematically address their behaviour.
- Question why do you become angry.
- Recognize how anger affects your emotions.

- We express anger in several ways. We know that what makes one person angry might not make someone else angry.
- Dictionaries define anger with **words such as extreme hostility, indignation, wrath, and rage.**
- We can channel the energy of anger into rage, or assault, or internal stress, or a host of other damaging behavior patterns.

Being in charge of one's own anger.

- Part of self power comes from being in charge of how we express anger.
- Rather than choosing to feel guilty about feeling anger and suppressing it, rather allowing our anger to consume us and take command of our behavior, **we do have the power to take charge of anger's energy and make it serve a constructive purpose.**
- Hear the other party's anger;
Then, rather than acting defensively, focus on what is within the anger that both parties can do something about to resolve the conflict.

How we can express anger constructively?

- Expressing anger constructively involves several keys.
 - a. Share responsibility for your anger; don't put the cause for your anger completely on the other party.
 - b. Try not to personalize your anger by attacking the other person or group;
 - c. Focus instead on the behavior that angers you.

Identify the sequence of events leading to aggression or temper.

- Understand your anger cues and find ways to respond to them.
- You can remain silent, or speak slow, or change topic, or introduce an anecdote, ask about how things are with your partner, who has induced anger in you.

10 Steps from Experts!

1. Take a 'timeout.' Although it may seem cliché, counting to 10 before reacting really can defuse your temper.
2. Get some space. Take a break from the person you're angry with until your frustrations subside a bit.
3. Once you're calm, express your anger. It's healthy to express your frustration in a nonconfrontational way. Stewing about it can make the situation worse.
4. Get some exercise. Physical activity can provide an outlet for your emotions, especially if you're about to erupt. Go for a brisk walk or a run, swim, lift weights or shoot baskets.
5. Think carefully before you say anything. Otherwise, you're likely to say something you'll regret. It can be helpful to write down what you want to say so that you can stick to the issues. When you're angry, it's easy to get sidetracked.
6. Identify solutions to the situation. Instead of focusing on what made you mad, work with the person who angered you to resolve the issue at hand.
7. Use 'I' statements when describing the problem. This will help you to avoid criticizing or placing blame, which can make the other person angry or resentful — and increase tension. For instance, say, "I'm upset you didn't help with the housework this evening," instead of, "You should have helped with the housework."

8. Don't hold a grudge. If you can forgive the other person, it will help you both. It's unrealistic to expect everyone to behave exactly as you want.
9. Use humor to release tensions. Lightening up can help diffuse tension. Don't use sarcasm, though — it's can hurt feelings and make things worse.
10. Practice relaxation skills. Learning skills to relax and de-stress can also help control your temper when it may flare up. Practice deep-breathing exercises, visualize a relaxing scene, or repeat a calming word or phrase to yourself, such as "Take it easy." Other proven ways to ease anger include listening to music, writing in a journal and doing yoga.

Assertive Skills

You Feel Upset about Yourself!

Have you ever felt intimidated by others?

How many times have you told yourself that you could have done better when handling a conversation only to repeat the same mistakes again?

Do you like to stay out of conflicts and keep to yourself? Do people take advantage of you?

What is Assertiveness?

- Assertiveness is a way of thinking and behaving that allows a person to stand up for his or her rights while respecting the rights of others.
- Passive individuals are not committed to their own rights and are more likely to allow others to infringe on their rights than to stand up and speak out.

Aggressive Individuals

- Aggressive persons are very likely to defend their own rights and work to achieve their own goals but are also likely to disregard the rights of others.
- Aggressive individuals insist that their feelings and needs take precedence over other people's.
- They also tend to blame others for problems instead of offering solutions. So, be assertive and not aggressive!

Assertive listening

- The goals of assertive listening are:
 1. To let the other know that you want to understand his or her point of view;
 2. To understand accurately what another is saying;
 3. To let the other know that he or she has been understood.

Remember that understanding is different from agreement. You can understand what another is saying but still disagree with him or her.

Let Others Know You're interested in Listening and Understanding

- I'd like to hear your views on....

- I'd like to understand your views on....
- Could you tell me about them?
- I'm confused about your stand on....
- Would you tell me more about how you see the situation?
- I think we are approaching this from two different perspectives.
- What does the situation look like from your perspective?
- I'd like to hear your thoughts on
- **Add your own creative expressions here!**

What It Means?

- Looking directly at the other shows you are giving him, or her your attention.
- Leaning forward slightly communicates interest.
- While a relaxed, open posture communicates receptiveness to what the other party is saying.
- Add Here Your Postures for Receptivity – nodding, smiling, clapping, bright eyes, comment in appreciation, etc.
- Postures of Disapproval? ...

Listening

Listening for accuracy takes concentration and requires you to give your full attention to what the other is saying. It is easier to listen for accuracy when you feel relaxed.

- **Assertive Listening.** You can test whether or not you have understood the other party by summarizing your understanding of what was said and asking for verification.
- If I understand you correctly....
- Is that what you meant?
- I heard you say _____, did I understand you correctly?
- I heard you say _____, did I understand you correctly?
- Your view is _____, is that right?

Nonverbal Assertiveness

- Even when we are silent we communicate a lot -- through our eyes, facial expression, posture, gestures and personal appearance.
- Through these nonverbal behaviors we communicate who we are and how we feel.
- Others draw conclusions about our sincerity, credibility and emotional state based on our nonverbal behavior.
- Poor eye contact, slouching, nervous gestures and other nonassertive behaviors can convince others that what we have to say can be safely ignored.

Elements of Nonverbal Behavior

- Nonverbal behaviors are harder to control than verbal behaviors.

- Eye contact. Eye contact means looking directly at another, focusing on his or her eyes. Direct eye contact is assertive.

Eye Contact

- Looking directly at another while you are speaking strongly suggests, even demands, that you be listened to and taken seriously.
- Looking down while speaking to another suggests timidity and weakens you in the eyes of others.
- Looking to the side as you speak suggests avoidance and insincerity and jeopardizes your credibility.
- Maintaining eye contact while the other is speaking shows your interest in listening.

Posture

- The moment you walk into a room, your posture and carriage communicate messages about your confidence, how you expect to relate to others, your energy level and emotional state.
- Slouching may say "Don't notice me" or "I'm tired and can be easily worn down" or "I'm not interested in being here". Slouching does not invite the other to take you seriously.
- A tense and rigid posture communicates you are in a heightened emotional state. It may be interpreted as anxiety or anger depending on your other nonverbal behaviors. This kind of posture makes you look out of control.
- An erect and relaxed posture while standing and sitting communicates confidence, self-control, energy and an expectation that you be taken seriously.
- When sitting, leaning forward slightly communicates interest and a sense of purpose.
- Leaning back communicates disinterest or disagreement.
- Crossing your arms and legs suggests a tense and closed attitude while uncrossed arms and legs suggests a relaxed and open attitude.

Facial Expression

- We say a lot through our facial expressions.
- Our face tells others the degree to which we are alert, interested, in agreement, or relaxed.
- It reveals the types of emotions we feel. It is best to keep your facial expression as neutral as possible.

<http://www.headinjury.com/assertskills.html>

A Few Additional Tips

- Assertiveness frequently means using "I statements" combined with a word that describes "what" you want. For example, "I want", "I need", "I would prefer", "I do not like", "I am upset about", etc.

Be careful **not to minimize such statements** by couching them with questions that subordinate your needs. Example: "I don't want to go to the store with you – do you mind?" or "I'm tired, can you do the dishes tonight — is that okay with you?"

http://cars.unm.edu/PDFs/resources/Assertiveness_Skills.pdf

A Formula

Each time an opportunity occurs to be assertive make notes in a small notebook. Consider keeping it in your pocket or purse.

Record: (1) the specific event that called for an assertiveness response; (2) what personal right was involved (i.e., the right to say “no”); (3) how you responded. What did you say? (4) what you did well in this situation; and, (5) reminders to yourself about what you will do next time to be assertive if this situation is repeated. http://cars.unm.edu/PDFs/resources/Assertiveness_Skills.pdf

Decision Making

What Is Decision-making?

1. Decision making is the study of identifying and choosing alternatives based on the values and preferences of the decision maker.
2. Decision making is the process of sufficiently reducing uncertainty and doubt about alternatives to allow a reasonable choice to be made from among them.

Kinds of Decisions

1. **Decisions whether.** This is the yes/no, either/or decision that must be made before we proceed with the selection of an alternative. Should I buy a new TV?
2. **Decisions which.** These decisions involve a choice of one or more alternatives from among a set of possibilities.
3. **Contingent decisions.** ... If

Decision making is a nonlinear, recursive process.

That is, most decisions are made by moving back and forth between the choice of criteria (the characteristics we want our choice to meet) and the identification of alternatives (the possibilities we can choose from among).

The alternatives available influence the criteria we apply to them, and similarly the criteria we establish influence the alternatives we will consider.

Many decision makers have a tendency to seek more information than required to make a good decision.

4. **Delaying a decision** as long as reasonably possible.

Delaying a decision involves several risks - overwhelmed with too much information, alternatives might become unavailable, a competitive environment, etc.

The decision must meet the stated objectives most thoroughly and completely, and most efficiently.

5. **Acceptance.** Those who must implement the decision or who will be affected by it must accept it both intellectually and emotionally.

The decision must take into account valuable byproducts or indirect advantages.

Approaches to Decision Making

- The authoritarian method in which an executive figure makes a decision for the group and the group method in which the group decides what to do.
- **free discussion, developmental discussion or structured discussion.**
- **Risk taking: Only the risk takers are truly free. There is really no such thing as permanent security.** <http://www.virtualsalt.com/crebook5.htm> by Robert Harris

Time Management

- Time management skills are your abilities to recognize and solve personal time management problems.
- At the heart of time management is an important shift in focus: *Concentrate on results, not on being busy.*
- http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newHTE_00.htm

Prioritizing Tasks

- Start by writing down all of the tasks that you need to complete.
- If they are large, break them down into their component elements. If these still seem large, break them down again.
- Do this until you have listed everything that you have to do, and until tasks will take no more than 1-2 hours to complete.

- This may be a huge and intimidating list, but our next step makes it manageable!

Allocate Priorities

- Run through these jobs allocating priorities from A (very important, or very urgent) to F (unimportant, or not at all urgent).
- If too many tasks have a high priority, run through the list again and demote the less important ones.
- Once you have done this, rewrite the list in priority order.

Brief Techniques

- Time Management Technique #1: Recognize you can't do it all.
- Time Management Technique #2: Prioritize.
- Time Management Technique #3: Learn to say "Yes" and "No".
- Time Management Technique #4: Unplug.
- Time Management Technique #5: Take time off.

The 4 Ds of Self Time Management

- * **Do it** - This cannot wait and needs to be taken care of now.
- * **Delegate it** - It needs to be done, but someone else can take care of it.
- * **Dump it** - This is not important, thrash it.
- * **Defer it** - This needs to be done, but it can wait until later.

<http://www.business-personal-coaching.com/time-management-techniques.html>

Which One to Do First? Easy or Difficult?

Schedule the Big Rocks, Let the Small Stuff Flow.

Get all the big stuff into place, and let everything else fit around it.

- Schedule blocks of time for writing that report or having that essential meeting that keeps getting postponed.
- You'll find plenty of time to take care of your emails in between.

Easy to Difficult

- **Do The Worst Task First**
Instead of dallying through easy tasks in the morning with the spectre of an essay looming, I got on with the essay first.
- **Don't Over-Commit Yourself**
One of the biggest reasons we have time-management struggles is because we're simply trying to do too much.
- **Do not have far more work than you can cope with in a typical workday.** No better system for handling email will suddenly let you accomplish everything.

Presentation Skills

1. List and prioritize the top three goals that you want to accomplish with your audience.
2. Be really clear about who your audience is and about why it is important for them to be in the meeting.
3. List the major points of information that you want to convey to your audience.
4. Be clear about the tone that you want to set for your presentation, for example, hopefulness, celebration, warning, teamwork, etc. Consciously identifying the tone to yourself can help you cultivate that mood to your audience.
5. Design a brief opening (about 5-10% of your total time presentation time) that:
 - a. Presents your goals for the presentation.
 - b. Clarifies the benefits of the presentation to the audience.
 - c. Explains the overall layout of your presentation.
6. Prepare the body of your presentation (about 70-80% of your presentation time).
7. Design a brief closing (about 5-10% of your presentation time) that summarizes the key points from your presentation.
8. Design time for questions and answers (about 10% of the time of your presentation).
9. If you plan to project your slides from a computer onto a projection screen, then be sure to check out the computer system before people come into the meeting room, if at all possible.
10. Use a consistent layout, or organization of colors and images, on your materials.
11. If you use transparencies on an overhead projector, then allocate one slide for every 3-5 minutes of your presentation. Include 5-8 lines of bulleted phrases on each slide.
12. If you provide the supplemental information during your presentation, then your audience will very likely read that information during your presentation, rather than listening to you.

Therefore, hand out this information after you have completed your presentation. Or, hand it out at the beginning of your presentation and ask them not to read it until you have completed your presentation.

Basic Guidelines About Your Delivery

1. If you're speaking to a small group (for example, 2-15 people), then try to accomplish eye contact with each person for a few seconds throughout your delivery.
2. Look up from your materials, or notes, every 5-10 seconds, to look into the audience.
3. Speak a little bit louder and a little bit slower than you normally would do with a friend. A good way to practice these guidelines is to speak along with a news anchor when you're watching television.
4. Vary the volume and rate of your speech. A monotone voice is absolutely toxic to keeping the attention of an audience.
5. Stand with your feet at shoulder-length apart.
6. Keep your hands relatively still. <http://managementhelp.org/commskls/presntng/basics.htm>

Personal Impact

- Having a strong and positive presence can open up doors, get people to listen, pay attention, to buy, to commit and to support you.
- This, in turn, can boost your confidence, increase your chances of success and prepare you to face new challenges.
- It takes a combination of self confidence, positive personal impact, outstanding performance, communication skills and interpersonal competence to succeed in your career and life.
- People who are successful in their lives and careers have mastered all of these five elements, and excel in one or two of them.

Five Secrets of Making Impact

Make an impact in meetings

If you sometimes struggle to think on your feet in meetings, prepare ahead of time.

What if you don't have much to say? You can still make an impression by supporting others ("That sounds like a great suggestion" or making sure the meeting stays on track ("Are we going off the point here?").

Speak as early as you can, certainly in the first five minutes. If you wait too long, you'll feel rising pressure for your contribution to be brilliant – and may end up saying nothing at all.

Impress Them in the Interview

The first few seconds of an interview are crucial.

Do everything you can to make a positive first impression. Look the part. Smile. Use open body language. Make sure your handshake is neither limp nor crushing.

Sell yourself. Give specific examples of what you've achieved rather than vaguely describing yourself as 'dynamic' or 'reliable'.

Do your homework. Know the company inside out.

Give powerful presentations!

- Most presentations are worthy but dull, so it doesn't take much to make a positive impact.
- Have a powerful intro that gets attention and makes people want to sit up and listen.
- Rather than starting with 'Hello my name is...' begin with a brief anecdote, striking fact or rhetorical question.
- Then go onto tell them 'what's in it for them' – why should they bother listening to you.

Network your way to success

- Act confident at networking events such as conferences. Approach people directly. Don't hover – you appear indecisive and lack impact.

- People on their own are the easiest to approach. Avoid pairs – they may be having a private conversation.

Networking

- Sooner or later someone will ask, ‘What do you do?’.
- Have a crisp, concise personal introduction that you can deliver with confidence. Don’t just give your company and job title, bring your role to life and give a sense of the value you add.
- If you sometimes struggle with small talk, ask lots of questions.
- The more interested you are in others the more interesting you’ll seem to them. Balance the questions by revealing something about yourself, or it will seem like an interrogation.
- **Build satisfying personal relationships**
If personal impact is important in business, it’s essential when it comes to personal relationships.
- You need to be able to connect with people, establish rapport and build trust.
- Eye contact is crucial. If there’s too little you seem shifty. Match the other person non-verbally – their body language, their voice tone, their overall energy – can help create a sense of intimacy.

Networking – Apply

Some of these ideas are simple – obvious even when you read them – yet it’s surprising how few people apply them on a daily basis.

Put them into practice and you’ll be astonished what a big difference small changes can make.

<http://www.pearsoned.co.uk/bookshop/article.asp?item=1100>

Report Writing

As you write and rewrite:

- You can evaluate what you are doing by considering specific questions:
- Have you achieved your purpose?
- Have you considered your audience?
- Have you made your point clear by stating it in a thesis or unmistakably implying it?
- Have you supported your point with enough reliable evidence to persuade readers?

Writing Process

- Have you arranged your ideas logically so that each follows from, supports, or adds to the one before it?
- Have you made the connections among ideas clear to a reader?
- Have you established an appropriate tone?
- All writers do similar things: They generate ideas. They plan, draft, and develop their papers. They revise and edit.

Role of Writing

- The ability to communicate clearly is an important skill. Many of today's inter-personal communication take place through writing.
- **Targeted, concise and persuasive text** can make all the difference when trying to convince someone of your ideas, services or products.
- Record keeping role, etc.

Variety of Reports and Your Ability

- Achieving results through proposals, reports, technical texts, emails, memos, etc. depends on your ability to successfully persuade your readers and help them understand your ideas and act on them.

Your Audience

- The initial audience is the first audience to get your message. Sometimes the initial audience tells you to write the message.
- A gatekeeper has the power to stop your message instead of sending it on to other audiences.

Gatekeeper

- The gatekeeper therefore controls whether your message even gets to the primary audience.
- Sometimes the supervisor who assigns the message is also the gatekeeper; sometimes the gatekeeper is higher in the organization.

In some cases, gatekeepers may exist outside the organization.

The Primary Audience

- The **primary audience will decide whether to accept your recommendations** or will act on the basis of your message.
- **You must reach the primary audience to fulfill your purposes in any message.**

The Secondary Audience

- The **secondary audience may be asked to comment on your message or to implement your ideas** after they've been approved.
- Secondary audiences also include lawyers who may use your message—perhaps years later—as evidence of your organization's culture and practices.

The Watchdog Audience

- A **watchdog audience, though it does not have the power to stop the message** and will not act directly on it, has political, social, or economic power.
- The watchdog pays close attention to the transaction between you and the primary audience and may base future actions on its evaluation of your message.

Types of People and Persuasion

Introverted type

- Write a memo and let the reader think about your proposal before responding.
- Introverts prefer to think before they speak.
- Written documents give them the time they need to think through a proposal carefully.

Extraverted type

- Try out your idea orally, in an informal setting.
- Extraverts like to think on their feet.
- They are energized by people; they'd rather talk than write.

Intuitive type

- Present the big picture first. Stress the innovative, creative aspects of your proposal.
- Intuitive types like solving problems and being creative. They can be impatient with details.

Thinking type

- Use logic, not emotion, to persuade.
- Show that your proposal is fair, even if some people may be hurt by it. Thinking types make decisions based on logic and abstract principles.
- They are often uncomfortable with emotion.

Feeling type

- Show that your proposal values the people needs of the organization as well as the rupees-and-paisas needs of the organization.
- Feeling types are very aware of other people and their feelings. They are sympathetic and like harmony.

Perceiving type

- Show that you've considered all the alternatives. Ask for a decision by a specific date.
- Perceiving types want to be sure they've considered all the options.
- They may postpone coming to closure.

Judging type

- Present your request quickly. Judging types are comfortable making quick decisions.
- They like to come to closure so they can move on to something else.
- There are also other traits to this type.

Persuasive Strategy in Writing

Choosing a Persuasive Strategy

1. What Do You Want People to Do?
2. What Objections, If Any, Will the Audience Have?
3. How Strong Is Your Case?
4. What Kind of Persuasion Is Best for the Organization and the Culture?

Persuasive Messages Include

- Orders and requests, proposals and recommendations, sales and fund-raising letters, job application letters, and efforts to change people's behavior, such as collection letters, criticisms or performance appraisals where you want the subordinate to improve behavior, and publicservice ads designed to reduce drunk driving, drug use, and so on.
- **Reports are persuasive messages if they recommend action.**

When you are not an expert

When you don't yet have the credibility that comes from being an expert or being powerful, build credibility by the language and strategy you use:

- **Be factual. Don't exaggerate. If you can test your idea ahead of time, do so,** and report the results. Facts about your test are more convincing than opinions about your idea
- **Be specific. If you say "X is better," show in detail how it is better. Show** the reader exactly where the savings or other benefits come from so that it's clear that the proposal really is as good as you say it is.

- **Be reliable.** If you suspect that a project will take longer to complete, cost more money, or be less effective than you originally thought, tell your audience *immediately*. *Negotiate a new schedule that you can meet.*

Corporate Culture

- Corporate culture (p. 61) isn't written down; it's learned by imitation and observation.
- What style do high-level people in your organization use? When you show a draft to your boss, are you told to tone down your statements or to make them stronger? Role models and advice are two ways organizations communicate their culture to newcomers.

Different Cultures

Different cultures also have different preferences for gaining compliance.

- In one study, students who were native speakers of American English judged direct statements ("Do this"; "I want you to do this") clearer and more effective than questions ("Could you do this?") or hints ("This is needed").
- Students who were native speakers of Korean, in contrast, judged direct statements to be *least effective*. *In the Korean culture, the clearer a request is, the ruder and therefore less effective it is.*
- What is the position in India? Discuss.

Direct and Persuasive

- Supervisors typically use direct requests as their persuasive strategy with employees.
- This pattern makes sense because the message is clear and employees consider their role in the company to include following their supervisor's directions.
- Even so, supervisors can be more persuasive if they follow these guidelines when making requests:
- Explain requests completely, even if the explanation includes bad news.
- If possible, when directing employees to correct a problem, give them some latitude in how to solve it. People are more committed to a solution they feel is their own.
- Be honest. If a task will be difficult, don't try to make it sound easy. Emphasize benefits without exaggerating them.

Oral and Paper Messages

- Messages on paper are more formal than e-mail messages. E-mail messages are appropriate for routine interchanges with people you already know.
- Paper is better for someone to whom you're writing for the first time.

Oral messages make it easier to

- Use emotion to help persuade the audience.
- Focus the audience's attention on specific points.
- Answer questions, resolve conflicts, and build consensus.
- Modify a proposal that may not be acceptable in its original form.
- Get immediate action or response.

Oral and written messages have many similarities. In both, you should

- Adapt the message to the specific audience.
- Show the audience how they would benefit from the idea, policy, service, or product.
- Overcome any objections the audience may have.
- Use you-attitude and positive emphasis.
- Use visuals to clarify or emphasize material.
- Specify exactly what the audience should do.

Meeting Skills

- A large amount of time of an office worker is spent in meetings, a large portion of which is dealing with colleagues, students and customers.
- Quite critical for anyone to improve their student/colleague/customer management skills.

Not Enough to Copy Skills!

- Many of us learn this skill on the job.
- Right from day one when we join a new company, we are invited to meetings.
- We simply observe and copy the behaviour of others in our future meetings. We take others' behaviour as the norm.
- However, a company culture set by socially dominant people may not be the most efficient way to handle customers/students.

Learn about the Structure of Meeting!

- Members of the committee wishing to contribute to the discussion usually raise their hand, are acknowledged by the Chair and are asked to speak.
- The member normally addresses the Chair in making their contribution to the discussion.
- Members may also address a question to another member of the committee via the Chair. The formality of the committee's discussion relates to the task the committee is undertaking.

Some Procedures!

- Use the question mode to clarify points of the discussion • Restrict comments to issues of precedent and procedure • Not offer a personal opinion unless invited by the committee.

Chairperson!

- The Chair should summarise regularly the key points of the discussion, rehearse the arguments for and against certain courses of action, encourage members to put a motion/s and vote on the motion (if there is not consensus).
- At the conclusion of the discussion the Chair should state the recommendation which was supported, so there is no doubt about the committee's resolution on the item.

Secretary!

The committee secretary assists the Chair by:

- identifying the main points of the discussion and providing those to the Chair for the purpose of summing up the discussion
- contributing to the discussion on issues of precedent and procedure
- being aware of the members who wish to speak on a particular item and the order of the speakers
- identifying reference points in the papers before the committee
- suggesting a strategy for proceeding if the committee has reached a stalemate on a particular issue
- ensuring the committee arrives at a conclusion in its deliberations
- knowing which members can vote on a motion and counting the votes
- bringing to the meeting spare copies of the agenda and minutes
- ensuring relevant reference materials are available such as files
- bringing a set of minutes for confirmation and signing
- If certain people are dominating the conversation, make a point of asking others for their ideas.
- At the end of each agenda item, quickly summarize what was said, and ask people to confirm that that's a fair summary. Then make notes regarding follow-up.
- Note items that require further discussion.

Watch body language and make adjustments as necessary. Maybe you need a break, or you need to stop someone from speaking too much.

- Ensure the meeting stays on topic.
- List all tasks that are generated at the meeting. Make a note of who is assigned to do what, and by when.
- At the close of the meeting, quickly summarize next steps and inform everyone that you will be sending out a meeting summary.
- After the meeting is over, take some time to debrief, and determine what went well and what could have been done better.
- Evaluate the meeting's effectiveness based on how well you met the objective.
- This will help you continue to improve your process of running effective meetings.

Tips for Participation

Tip 1 Attend only if needed.

- Some use meetings as a weapon in their office politics arsenal. They attended to be seen and heard whether they need to be there or not.
- If you're not going to contribute to the discussion or if the outcomes do not affect you, don't attend. Too many non-essential participants can extend the length of the meeting.

Tip 2 Get There On time.

- Do not start a meeting late for the sake of the person who wanders in five-minutes past start time; mostly to prove they are too busy and important to get to a meeting on time.
- It is discourteous to the chair and to those who make the effort to be on time.

Tip 3 Be prepared with your contribution.

- If you've given up attending meetings where your contribution is not needed, it stands to reason all the meetings you attend require participation.
- Prepare whatever information you anticipate needing. Go overboard. Bring twice as much data as you think you'll need.
- Just don't spew the whole works. If you have information to hand out, get it to participants a day or two before the meeting.

Tip 4 Pay attention.

- There will always be people focused on their opinion and they will not be really listening to what the others are saying!
- Listen actively to the discussion. You don't want to merely parrot or repeat another participant's contribution.

Tip 5 Get involved in the discussion.

- Review the agenda and clarify your thoughts prior to the meeting.
- Make some notes.
- Being prepared will make it more likely that you will have some energy behind your points of view and, therefore, be more likely to express them.

Tip 6 Be courteous.

- You're not likely to agree with everything said at a meeting.
- Never interrupt anyone – even if you disagree strongly.
- Note what has been said and return to it later with the chair's permission.
- The point of most meetings is to reach agreements.
- If the participants are combative, the meetings will drag on. Look for ways to build consensus.
- So ... If you are attending a meeting, ensure that you respect the time of other attendees by being well prepared, attentive, concise and respectful.
- <http://www.ismckenzie.com/6-tips-for-effective-participation-in-meetings/>

Handling Difficult People

Problem Persons

- Dealing with difficult people and maintaining ongoing negative relationships is actually detrimental to our health.
- It's a good idea to diminish or eliminate relationships that are filled with conflict.
- But what do you do if the person in question is a family member, co-worker, or someone you otherwise can't easily eliminate from your life?

Suggestion 1

- Avoid discussing divisive and personal issues, like religion and politics, or other issues that tend to cause conflict.

- If the other person tries to engage you in a discussion that will probably become an argument, change the subject or leave the room.

Suggestion 2

- In dealing with difficult people, don't try to change the other person.
- You will only get into a power struggle, cause defensiveness, invite criticism, or otherwise make things worse.
- It also makes *you* a more difficult person to deal with!

Suggestion 3

- Change your response to the other person; this is all you have the power to change.
- For example, don't feel you need to accept abusive behavior.
- You can use assertive communication to draw boundaries when the other person chooses to treat you in an unacceptable way.

Suggestion 4

- Remember that most relationship difficulties are due to a *dynamic* between two people rather than one person being unilaterally "bad."
- Here's a list of things to avoid in dealing with conflict. Do you do any of them?

A List

- Try to look for the positive aspects of others, especially when dealing with family, and focus on them.
- The other person will feel more appreciated, and you will likely enjoy your time together more.
- However, don't pretend the other person's negative traits don't exist.
- Don't tell your secrets to a gossip, rely on a flake, or look for affection from someone who isn't able to give it.
This is part of accepting them for who they are.
- Get your needs met from others who are able to meet your needs.
- Tell your secrets to a trustworthy friend who's a [good listener](#), or process your feelings through [journaling](#), for example.
- Rely on people who have proven themselves to be trustworthy and supportive. This will help you *and* the other person by taking pressure off the relationship and removing a source of conflict.
- Know when it's time to distance yourself, and do so.
- If the other person can't be around you without antagonizing you, minimizing contact may be key.
- If they're continually abusive, it's best to cut ties and let them know why.
- Explain what needs to happen if there ever is to be a relationship, and let it go. (If the offending party is a boss or co-worker, you may consider switching jobs.)
- Try not to place blame on yourself or the other person for the negative interactions. It may just be a case of your two personalities fitting poorly.
- Remember that you don't have to be close with everyone; just being polite goes a long way toward getting along and appropriately dealing with difficult people.

- Remember that you don't have to be close with everyone; just being polite goes a long way toward getting along and appropriately dealing with difficult people.
- Work to maintain a sense of humor-- difficulties will roll off your back much more easily.
- Be sure to cultivate other more positive relationships in your life to offset the negativity of dealing with difficult people.
- Unsolicited advice can be helpful, but often it's just annoying, and repeated offers of unwanted advice can be stressful.
- Try to discern where the advice is coming from. Is the person coming from a helpful place, or is the advice more about their needs, and not really appropriate to your situation?
- Sources of Advice: Altruism, Friendliness, Excitement of discovery
http://stress.about.com/od/relationships/ht/handle_advice.htm
- Try not to place blame on yourself or the other person for the negative interactions. It may just be a case of your two personalities fitting poorly.
- Remember that you don't have to be close with everyone; just being polite goes a long way toward getting along and appropriately dealing with difficult people.

How to Influence People

Five European Techniques

- Reward.
- Coercive/Punishment.
- Legitimate (authority).
- Referent (charisma) and • Expertise.

Compare the Above with Indian or Asian/African Values Traditionally Used.

Additional Focus on **Coaching Vision, Relationship, and Persuasion.**

9 best tricks to be persuasive and influence others:

Framing

Framing is a technique often used in politics. A popular example of framing is inheritance taxes. Politicians who are opposed to inheritance taxes will call them death taxes. By using the word death instead of inheritance, all kinds of negative connotations come to mind. Framing is quite subtle, but by using emotionally charged words, like death, you can easily persuade people to your point of view. Rajaji's *Sales Tax*

Mirroring

Mirroring someone is when you mimic their movements.

The movement can be virtually anything, but some obvious ones are hand gestures, leaning forward or away, or various head and arm movements. We all do this unconsciously, and if you pay attention you'll probably notice yourself doing it.

Remember to be subtle about it and leave a delay between the other person's movement and your mirroring, 2-4 seconds works best.

Scarcity

This is one that advertisers use a lot.

Opportunities, whatever they are, seem a lot more appealing when there is a limited availability.

Reciprocation

It's the old saying, "Do unto others...". When someone does something for us, we feel compelled to return the favor.

So, if you want someone to do something nice for you, why not do something nice for them first? In a business setting, maybe you pass them a lead. If at home, maybe it's you letting the neighbor borrow the lawn mower. It doesn't matter where or when you do it, the key is to compliment the relationship.

In a business setting, maybe you pass them a lead. If at home, maybe it's you letting the neighbor borrow the lawn mower. It doesn't matter where or when you do it, the key is to compliment the relationship.

Timing

People are more likely to be agreeable and submissive when they're mentally fatigued.

Before you ask someone for something they might not be quick to agree to, try waiting until a more opportune time when they've just done something mentally taxing.

This could be at the end of the work day when you catch a co-worker on their way out the door. Whatever you ask, a likely response is, "I'll take care of it tomorrow."

Congruence

We all try, subconsciously, to be consistent with previous actions.

One great example is a technique used by salespeople.

A salesperson will shake your hand as he is negotiating with you. In most people's minds, a handshake equates to a closed deal, and so by doing this before the deal is reached, the salesperson is much more likely to negotiate you in to a closed deal!

Fluid Speech

When we talk, we often use little interjections and hesitant phrases such as "ummm" or "I mean" and of course there is the ubiquitous "like".

These little conversation *quirks* have the unintended effect of making us seem less confident and sure of ourselves, and thus less persuasive.

Herd Behavior

We are all natural born followers. It's sad (?) but true.

We constantly look to those around us to determine our actions; we have the need for acceptance.

A simple, effective way to use this to your advantage is to be a leader, let the herd follow you.

Conflict Management

Conflict is when two or more values, perspectives and opinions are contradictory in nature and haven't been aligned or agreed about yet, including:

1. Within yourself when you're not living according to your values;
2. When your values and perspectives are threatened; or
3. Discomfort from fear of the unknown or from lack of fulfillment.

Ways People Deal With Conflict

There is no one best way to deal with conflict. It depends on the current situation. Here are the major ways that people use to deal with conflict.

- 1. Avoid it.** Pretend it is not there or ignore it.
 - Use this approach when it simply is not worth the effort to argue. Usually this approach tends to worsen the conflict over time.
- 2. Accommodate it.** Give in to others, sometimes to the extent that you compromise yourself. •
Use this approach very sparingly and infrequently, for example, in situations when you know that you will have another more useful approach in the very near future.
 - Usually this approach tends to worsen the conflict over time, and causes conflicts within yourself.

3. Competing. Work to get your way, rather than clarifying and addressing the issue. Competitors love accommodators.

- Use when you have a very strong conviction about your position.

4. Compromising. Mutual give-and-take.

- Use when the goal is to get past the issue and move on.

5. Collaborating. Focus on working together.

- Use this when the goal is to meet as many current needs as possible by using mutual resources.
- This approach sometimes raises new mutual needs.
Use this when the goal is to cultivate ownership and commitment.

Conflict

- Words that carry the notion of *conflict*: Fight, anger, pain, war, impasse, destruction, fear, mistake, avoid, lose, control, hate, loss, bad, wrongdoing.
- The word *conflict* seems to bring similarities in meaning across cultures.
- Throughout human history, only ineffective ways have been used to resolve conflict: Killing of people, segregating people, exile, beating, etc.

Some Additional Ways People Deal With Conflict

1. Conflict is inescapable in competitive and litigious society.
2. Conflicts need to be dealt with effectively so that individual and societal life will not be severely affected.
3. Traditional approaches to deal with conflict: negotiation, mediation, and arbitration.
4. These approaches reward the party who could find a way to get more of his or her demands met, who could make fewer concessions, or who could perform better in the conflict resolution competition.
5. Temporary agreements are reached, but the relationship between the parties does not improve.
6. Getting parties to give an equal number of concessions does not result in resolution.

Ingredients of Conflict

- i. Diversity and Differences.
- ii. Needs
- iii. Perceptions.
- iv. Power.
- v. Values and Principles.
- vi. Feelings and Emotions.
- vii. Feelings and Emotions.

Popular Approaches to Conflict Resolution

- i. Conquest.
- ii. Avoidance.
- iii. Bargaining.
- iv. The Quick Fixer or Band-aid Approach.
- v. Role Player.

Five Basic Principles

- i. We, not I versus You.
- ii. Conflicts are dealt with in the context of the overall relationship. iii. Effective conflict resolution should improve the relationship. Short term and long term. iv. Effective conflict resolution results in mutual benefits.
- v. Relationship-building and conflict resolution are connected.

Eight Essential Steps to Conflict Resolution

- I. Create an effective atmosphere. II. Clarify perceptions.
- III. Focus on individual and shared needs.
- IV. Build shared positive power.
- V. Look to the future, then learn from the past. VI. Generate options.
- VII. Develop “doables” – stepping-stones to action.
- VIII. Make mutual-benefit agreements.

Seven steps to resolving conflict:

1. IF THERE IS CONFLICT

2. YOU

3. GO

4. TO THE PERSON

5. IN PRIVATE

6. AND DISCUSS THE PROBLEM

7. FOR THE PURPOSE OF RECONCILIATION!

1. Acknowledge the conflict. Conflict is normal; it is a part of human nature. Lack of conflict does not equal maturity.

2. You must do something about it. Why don't we face up to resolving conflict? Pride. Fear. Stubbornness.

3. **Go** means go or approach. Go does not mean avoid or pray or think or forget. But before going, ask yourself:

A. Why am I angry? There are three major reasons that we get angry:

- Hurt
- Frustration
- Fear

B. What do you want?

4. Go directly to the person involved. NO third parties, no mediators, no friends. Conflict is inevitable. Resentment is optional. Resolution is up to you.
5. Talk in private. Be sensitive. Approach the other person as you would like to be approached.
 - A. Anger Myth: The best way to handle anger is to ventilate it.
 - B. Reality: Ventilation only reinforces anger. It is also not appreciated by those ventilated on. It accomplishes nothing positive in either person.
6. Use direct communication.
 - A. Describe clearly what you observed. (Example: "You didn't listen to what I said.")
 - B. Explain how it hurt you. (Example: "My opinion doesn't matter to you.")
 - C. Tell what the consequences have been. (Example: "I'm feeling quite resentful." or maybe "I feel like smashing you one when you treat me like that.")
 - D. Ask for what change you would like. Change implies more than simply an apology, although an apology is often a good place to start.

Leadership Skills

- a. Good leadership is a result of the careful application of 11 skills that any post leader or officer can learn to use.
- b. Each individual in the group has certain needs and characteristics.
- c. What a Leader Should Know:
 1. A leader should understand his or her own needs and characteristics.
 2. A leader should understand the needs and characteristics of each participant of the group. This helps the leader to deal with each person as an individual, to treat that individual with respect, and to help the person grow.
- d. Communicating
- e. To improve your skills in *getting information*:
 - Pay attention and listen carefully.
 - Make notes and sketches.
 - Ask questions and repeat your understanding of what was said.
- f. To improve your skills in *giving information*:
 - a. Be sure others are listening before you speak.
 - b. Speak slowly and clearly.
 - c. Draw diagrams, if needed. Ask those receiving information to take notes.
 - d. Have the listeners repeat their understanding of what was said. Encourage questions.

g. Planning

- a. Consider the task and objectives. What do you want to accomplish?
- b. Consider the resources—equipment, knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
- c. Consider the alternatives. Brainstorm.
- d. Reach a decision, evaluating each option.
- e. Write the plan down and review it with the post/group.
- f. Execute the plan.
- g. Evaluate the plan.

Execute

- Continually observe the group. Know what is happening and the attitude of the group.
- Make your instructions clear and pertinent.
- Pitch in and help when necessary.
- Quickly deal with disruption. Guide the post toward self-discipline.

Evaluating

Getting the job done— •

Was the job done?

- Was the job done right?
- Was the job done on time?

Keeping the Group Together

- Were relationships between group participants helped or hurt?
- Was participation equally distributed among group participants?
- Did the group enjoy the activity?
- Did the group handle conflicts well?

Setting the Example

- Setting the example is probably the most important leadership skill.
- Sharing the Responsibility
- He or she offers leadership opportunities to post participants and teaches them the skills they need.

Successful Interview Skills

10 Interview Tips

Checkout the Company

How much do you know about the company that just contacted you to schedule an interview? It should be plenty, and all the information you need is available online.

Use Your Contacts

Who you know at the company you are interviewing with really does matter.

Get information from your contacts.

Practice Interviewing

Taking the time to review typical interview questions you will probably be asked during a job interview will help give you a framework for your responses and will help calm your frazzled nerves, because you won't be scrambling for an answer while you're in the interview hot seat.

Practice interviewing with a friend or family member ahead of time and it will be much easier when you're actually in a job interview.

Improve Your Interview Technique

- Know Facts about you!
- Review your work history - and make sure what you say matches what's on your resume.
- Take the time to learn about the company and about the job you're applying for.
- What you don't say can - and will - be used against you in a job interview.

What You Don't Say

What you don't say can - and will - be used against you in a job interview.

If you come to an interview chewing gum or drinking coffee, you will already have one strike against you.

Too much perfume or not enough deodorant won't help either.

Not being dressed appropriately or having scuffed shoes will give you a second strike.

What You Do Say

Your verbal communications are important. Don't use slang. Speak clearly and definitely.

If you need to think about a response to an interview question, that's fine. It's better to think before you talk than to stumble over your words.

Practice answering some interview questions so you're comfortable responding to the basics.

Listen

It can be easy to get distracted during a job interview.

It's stressful and you're in the hot seat when it comes to having to respond to questions.

That said, if you do your best to listen to what the interviewer is asking, it will be easier to frame appropriate responses.

Using Nonverbal Communication

What you don't say during an interview is as important as what you do say.

What's important, when interviewing, is to appear professional and attentive throughout the interview process.

What You Do Say

Your verbal communications are important. Don't use slang. Speak clearly and definitely.

If you need to think about a response to an interview question, that's fine. It's better to think before you talk than to stumble over your words.

Practice answering some interview questions so you're comfortable responding to the basics.

Dress for success

The first judgement an interviewer makes is going to be based on how you look and what you are wearing.

That's why it's always important to dress professionally for a job interview.

Handle Group Interview

The first judgment an interviewer makes is going to be based on how you look and what you are wearing.

That's why it's always important to dress professionally for a job interview.

Bring a copy of your resume for each interviewer.

Handle Group Interview

Bring a notepad and pen and take notes. Again, it will be easier to keep track of the interview if you are able to jot down some notes.

Connect with the group as well as the individual interviewers. When one panelist asks a question, respond directly to him or her, but also make eye contact with the rest of the group as you're answering.

The more engaged you are - with everyone - the better impression you'll make.

Handle Group Interview

Pay attention to the group dynamics. How does everyone get along? What type of interaction do they have? Is it positive?

If you're not comfortable with the synergy between the panelists, think about what it will be like to work with them when making a decision on accepting a job offer.

Follow Up After the Interview

Ask for business cards and send a thank you note to everyone you interviewed with.

If you don't get a chance to collect business cards, send a thank you note to the person who arranged the interview.

<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/interviewquestionsanswers/a/interviewquest.htm>

Interview Questions

1. Work History
2. Questions About You
3. Questions About the New Job and the Company
4. Questions About the Future

Work history

1. Name of company, position title and description, dates of employment.
2. What were your expectations for the job and to what extent were they met?
3. What were your starting and final levels of compensation?
4. What were your responsibilities?
5. What major challenges and problems did you face? How did you handle them?
6. What did you like or dislike about your previous job?
7. Which was most / least rewarding?
8. What was the biggest accomplishment / failure in this position?
9. Questions about your supervisors and co-workers.
10. What was it like working for your supervisor?
11. What do you expect from a supervisor?
12. Who was your best boss and who was the worst?
13. Why are you leaving your job?
14. What have you been doing since your last job?
15. Why were you fired?

Job Interview Questions About You

1. What did you like or dislike about your previous job?
2. Which was most / least rewarding?
3. What was the biggest accomplishment / failure in this position?
4. Questions about your supervisors and co-workers.
5. What was it like working for your supervisor?
6. What do you expect from a supervisor?
7. Who was your best boss and who was the worst?
8. Why are you leaving your job?
9. What have you been doing since your last job?
10. Why were you fired?
 - What is your greatest weakness?
 - What is your greatest strength?
 - Describe a typical work week.
 - Do you take work home with you?
 - How many hours do you normally work?
 - How would you describe the pace at which you work?
 - How do you handle stress and pressure?
 - What motivates you?
 - What are your salary expectations?
 - What do you find are the most difficult decisions to make?
 - Tell me about yourself.
 - What has been the greatest disappointment in your life?
 - What are you passionate about?
 - What are your pet peeves?
 - What do people most often criticize about you?
 - How do you evaluate success?
 - If you know your boss is 100% wrong about something how would you handle it?
 - Describe a difficult work situation / project and how you overcame it.
 - Describe a time when your workload was heavy and how you handled it.
 - More job interview questions about your abilities.
 - More job interview questions about you.

THE NEW JOB

1. What interests you about this job?
2. Why do you want this job?
3. What applicable attributes / experience do you have?
4. Are you overqualified for this job?
5. What can you do for this company?
6. Why should we hire you?
7. Why are you the best person for the job?
8. When was the last time you were angry? What happened?

9. If you could relive the last 10 years of your life, what would you do differently?

10. If the people who know you were asked why you should be hired, what would they say?

11. Do you prefer to work independently or on a team?

12. Give some examples of teamwork.

13. What type of work environment do you prefer?

14. What do you know about this company?

15. Why do you want to work here?

16. What challenges are you looking for in a position? -

17. What can you contribute to this company?

18. Are you willing to travel?

19. What is good customer service?

20. Is there anything I haven't told you about the job or company that you would like to know?

THE FUTURE

1. What are you looking for in your next job? What is important to you?
2. What are your goals for the next five years / ten years?
3. How do you plan to achieve those goals?
4. What are your salary requirements - both short-term and long-term?

Questions about your career goals.

1. What will you do if you don't get this position?
2. How many hours a day/week do you need to work to get the job done?
3. If you stayed with your current company, what would be your next move?
4. How do you measure success?
5. Describe your dream job.
6. What are you looking for in your next job? What is important to you?
7. What are your goals for the next five years / ten years?
8. How do you plan to achieve those goals?
9. Where do you see yourself 5 years from now?

<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/interviewquestionsanswers/qt/aboutgoals.htm>

Stress Management

Take a Deep Breath

- Taking a deep breath or two adds oxygen to your system, which almost instantly helps you relax.
- Count to ten (or more or less as the situation warrants!)
- Stand up and stretch. Remember relaxation is the opposite of stress.
- Stand up and smile. Try it! You'll feel better!
- Take a short walk. If you're at work, take a bathroom break or get a glass of water. Do something that changes your focus. When you come back to the problem, chances are it won't seem nearly as insurmountable.
- In the book *Gone With the Wind*, Scarlett O'hara says, "I can't think about that right now. If I do, I'll go crazy. I'll think about that tomorrow." Good advice!

What will happen?

- Stressful events can build up, wall us in, and eventually stop us from enjoying the good things in life.
- Stop and Smell the Roses!

Useful, Doable Steps

- Take the time.
- Sleep on it.
- Every cloud has a silver lining.
- We need to know our limitations: So, say No, when needed.
- Acquit yourself. Declare your innocence emphatically. Quit blaming yourself.
- When you need help, get help.
- Get a good night's rest. Eat healthily.
- Listen to your favorite music.
- Exercise, participate in a sport or engage in fun activity.
- Plan out your time and prioritize.
- Talk to a friend about your problems, don't hold it in.
- Get a massage. Take a nap.
- Take a warm bath.
- Read a book or watch TV.

Identify the sources of stress in your life

- Look closely at your habits, attitude, and excuses.
- Do you explain away stress as temporary (“I just have a million things going on right now”) even though you can’t remember the last time you took a breather?
- Do you define stress as an integral part of your work or home life?
- (“Things are always crazy around here”) or as a part of your personality (“I have a lot of nervous energy, that’s all”).
- Do you blame your stress on other people or outside events, or view it as entirely normal and unexceptional?
- Until you accept responsibility for the role you play in creating or maintaining it, your stress level will remain outside your control.

Start a stress journal ▪

Write down:

- What caused your stress (make a guess if you’re unsure).
- How you felt, both physically and emotionally.
- How you acted in response.
- What you did to make yourself feel better.

Look at how you currently cope with stress

- Think about the ways you currently manage and cope with stress in your life.
- Your stress journal can help you identify them.
- Are your coping strategies healthy or unhealthy, helpful or unproductive?
- Unfortunately, many people cope with stress in ways that compound the problem.

Unhealthy ways of coping with stress

- Smoking
- Drinking too much

- Overeating or under-eating
- Zoning out for hours in front of the TV or computer ▪ Withdrawing from friends, family, and activities.
- Using pills or drugs to relax
- Sleeping too much
- Procrastinating
- Filling up every minute of the day to avoid facing problems
- Taking out your stress on others (lashing out, angry outbursts, physical violence)

Learning healthier ways to manage stress

- Many healthy ways to manage and cope with stress, but they all require change.
- You can either change the situation or change your reaction.
- When deciding which option to choose, it's helpful to think of the four As: avoid, alter, adapt, or accept.

Dealing with Stressful Situations: The Four A's ▪

Change the situation:

- Avoid the stressor.
- Alter the stressor.
- **Change your reaction:**
- Adapt to the stressor.
- Accept the stressor.

Stress management strategy #1: Avoid unnecessary stress

- Learn how to say "no"
- Avoid people who stress you out
- Take control of your environment
- Avoid hot-button topics
- Pare down your to-do list

Stress management strategy #2: Alter the situation ▪

Express your feelings instead of bottling them up.

- Be willing to compromise. ▪ Be more assertive.
- Manage your time better.

Stress management strategy #3: Adapt to the stressor

- **Reframe problems** (a more positive perspective).
- **Look at the big picture**(Will it matter in a month,etc.).
- **Adjust your standards.** Perfectionism is a major source of avoidable stress.
- **Focus on the positive.** When stress is getting you down, take a moment to reflect on all the things you appreciate in your life, etc.

Stress management strategy #4: Accept the things you can't change

- **Don't try to control the uncontrollable ▪ Look for the upside.**

- **Share your feelings.**
- **Learn to forgive.** Accept the fact that we live in an imperfect world and that people make mistakes.

Stress management strategy #5: Make time for fun and relaxation

- Beyond a take-charge approach and a positive attitude, you can reduce stress in your life by nurturing yourself.
- If you regularly make time for fun and relaxation, you'll be in a better place to handle life's stressors when they inevitably come.

Healthy ways to relax and recharge ▪

Go for a walk.

- Spend time in nature.
- Call a good friend.
- Sweat out tension with a good workout.
- Write in your journal. ▪ Take a long bath.
- Light scented candles
- Savor a warm cup of coffee or tea.
- Play with a pet.
- Work in your garden.
- Get a massage.
- Curl up with a good book.
- Listen to music.
- Watch a comedy – *Sirippoli*, etc.

Stress management strategy #6: Adopt a healthy lifestyle ▪

Exercise regularly.

- Eat a healthy diet.
- Reduce caffeine and sugar.
- Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs.
- Get enough sleep.
- http://helpguide.org/mental/stress_management_relief_coping.htm

Stress management strategy #7: Accept the things you can't change

- Don't try to control the uncontrollable ▪ Look for the upside.
- Share your feelings.
- **Learn to forgive.** Accept the fact that we live in an imperfect world and that people make mistakes.

Negotiation Skills

Five Ways to Negotiate More Effectively

1. Learn to flinch.

- The flinch is one of the oldest negotiation tactics but one of the least used.
- A flinch is a visible reaction to an offer or price.
- The objective of this negotiation tactic is to make the other people feel uncomfortable about the offer they presented.

2. Recognize that people often ask for more than they expect to get.

- This means you need to resist the temptation to automatically reduce your price or offer a discount.
- "I once asked for a hefty discount on a pair of shoes hoping to get half of what I asked for. I was pleasantly surprised when the shop owner agreed to my request."
- Not applicable in India?
- What is the process of Indian Negotiation?

3. The person with the most information usually does better.

- You need to learn as much about the other person's situation. This is a particularly important negotiation tactic for sales people.
- Ask your prospect more questions about their purchase. Learn what is important to them as well as their needs and wants.
- Develop the habit of asking questions such as;
- "What prompted you to consider a purchase of this nature?"
- "Who else have you been speaking to?"
- "What was your experience with...?"
- "What time frames are you working with?"
- "What is most important to you about this?"
- It is also important to learn as much about your competitors as possible. This will help you defeat possible price objections and prevent someone from using your competitor as leverage.

4. Practice at every opportunity.

- Most people hesitate to negotiate because they lack the confidence. Develop this confidence by negotiating more frequently. Ask for discounts from your suppliers. As a consumer, develop the habit of asking for a price break when you buy from a retail store.
- Here are a few questions or statements you can use to practice your negotiation skills:
- "You'll have to do better than that."
- "What kind of discount are you offering today?"
- "That's too expensive." Wait for their response afterwards.
- Learn to flinch.
- Be pleasant and persistent but not demanding.
- Condition yourself to negotiate at every opportunity will help you become more comfortable, confident and successful.

5. Maintain your walk away power.

- It is better to walk away from a sale rather than make too large a concession or give a deep discount your product or service.

- However, it is particularly challenging to do when you are in the midst of a sales slump or slow sales period.

<http://sbinfoCanada.about.com/cs/marketing/a/negotiationkr.htm>

- Negotiating is a way of life in some cultures. And most people negotiate in some way almost every day.
- Apply these negotiation strategies and you will notice a difference in your negotiation skills almost immediately.
- Compare different stores/trades in India.

Six Additional Steps

- **The First Tip.** Never discuss settlement terms until the end of the process, when both parties are committed to trying to resolve the situation. Get to know each other, find out what you can about possible competitors,
 - learn as much as possible about the issue at hand, determine if this is really what you need or want,
 - wait until they indicate that they really want or need to settle.
- **The Second Tip.** The purpose of negotiating is to discover the term parameters of the other person.
 - You want to know the most the other person will pay for something or the least they are willing to sell for
 - so you can couch your initial offer or response to strategically position your offer or proposal.
- **The Third Tip.** Try to get the other person to make the first offer or proposal. Knowing how to bracket your response will let you move the final outcome toward your goal.
 - But the starting point is a critical step in getting there.
 - Manipulating the other person into making the opening proposal allows you to set the parameters of the negotiation to your advantage.
- **The Fourth Tip.** Prepare before meeting by considering why you are negotiating,
 - what you expect to gain, why that is important to you, and what you expect to have to offer.
 - If you fully understand your needs and wants you will be able to quickly determine if continuing a negotiation is worth your time.
- **The Fifth Tip.** Test the market before sitting down.
 - Get comparables, talk with others, and establish reasonable parameters for the negotiation .
 - The key to a successful negotiation is keeping your proposals and counters within a range of reasonableness.
 - Do not undermine your credibility by appearing ill-informed or overly aggressive.
- **The Sixth Tip.** Be aware when it is time to bring the negotiation to a close.
 - Don't let the discussion drag on as the other person may lose interest, patience or the desire to commit.

- Over negotiating often kills deals or agreements that should have been made.
- http://www.how-to-negotiate.com/archives/2009/02/six_basic_negotiating_tips_.html

Telephone Skills

- To use your telephone effectively, you need to manage its use.
- Outward calls should be scheduled to suit your timetable and that of your respondent.
- Inward calls should be filtered, if possible, so that you are not interrupted in the middle of other work.
- Once you are using the telephone you need to develop some procedures that ensure you get the most out of each call and that you do not waste time.

Scheduling outward calls At the beginning of each day:

- make a list of the calls you have to make
- put them in order of priority (essential, desirable, those that can be rescheduled if necessary)
- allocate times for each call trying, if possible, to bunch them and to bear in mind when each call is likely to be suitable for your respondent.

Inward Calls

- For inward calls, decide when you are able to take calls without having the flow of your other work interrupted.
- By scheduling your calls in this way, you will be able to give your full attention to them.

Appropriate Greetings and endings

- Appropriate greetings and endings to calls help build a good rapport and avoid misunderstandings and wasting time.
- The three elements of an appropriate greeting are: identifying your company, giving your name and job title/department, asking how you can help the caller.
- When you close the call you should: make sure that the caller has no more queries, thank the caller and let the caller put down the receiver first so they don't feel you have cut them off.

Gathering information

- A telephone call is a purposeful activity. Your caller will have some objective in mind and you will need to elicit this objective as quickly and as clearly as possible.
- In a simple information-seeking call, all you need to do is ask for the caller's name, address, telephone and fax numbers.
- In more complex situations, you need to develop your questioning techniques so that you obtain the salient facts.

A Situation Example

- Let's assume your caller has a complaint about a product your company has sold them. You need to:
- Ascertain the nature of the problem
- Verify that the product is one of yours and that warranty cover still applies
- Discover how the caller has been using the product and what steps they have taken to rectify the problem.

Listening Skills

- The ability to listen properly.
- Passive listening is simply allowing the caller to talk and not taking any action to ensure we have the right message.
- By actively listening we mean first indicating to the caller that we are listening by interrupting in an encouraging manner—interruptions could be 'yes', 'I see', 'Okay', 'right', 'I know what you mean', or they could be prompts to encourage the caller to say more: 'is that true?', 'are you sure?', etc.

Obtain Accuracy

- Asking questions or using prompts to ensure that the caller gives precise information so that the message we receive is accurate.
- This can be done by the use of wh- questions:
- What color?/how many?/when will you arrive?/where shall we meet?
- And by techniques such as echoing and reformulating.

Suggesting and verifying a course of action

- Once you have an accurate picture of the situation, you are in a position to propose a course of action to your caller.
- You should:
- outline the proposal and check that it is acceptable to the caller
- confirm that they understand what is to be done.

Take notes

- If you handle a lot of calls each day, then it is essential to log each one under date and time.
- For **all** calls you should make a note of who rang, for what reason, and the action you agreed with times and details of address, telephone number etc.
- Maintaining a record in writing is very important. And such a record should cover major points.

Dealing with Difficult Callers

- Sometimes a caller is very difficult, especially if complaining.
- First remember that this caller is a client, or potential client, so your handling of the call could result either in more business for your company or in the caller going to a competitor.
- Whatever the nature of the problem, don't try to put the caller off by disclaiming personal responsibility or by trying to pass the buck.

What You Should Do?

- Listen without interrupting
- Gather the facts and make a note of them
- Take their details so you can get back to them
- Sympathize with them and offer to act as fast as you can
- Apologize if you have made the mistake
- Stay calm even though the caller is angry and possibly abusive.

Telephone etiquette

Just because you can't see the caller, it doesn't mean you have the right to suspend the normal rules of politeness.

- Be helpful to the caller even if the subject of the call is not strictly speaking your field of responsibility.
- This means trying to find someone who can help now, or someone who can ring them back later.
- Don't put the caller on hold and then leave them suspended there indefinitely.
- Remember too that you give out subliminal signals by the tone of your voice, the clarity with which you speak, how fast you speak, the pitch of your voice.
- You should always devote your full attention to the call; mistakes and misunderstandings will arise if you are doing something else at the same time.
- Even if the call is a difficult or heated one, stay calm; try to be helpful and never slam the phone down.

Don't do these!

It's easy to fall into the trap of believing that because your caller can't see you, they won't be affected by what you are doing and what's going on around you.

- Let it not ring more than four times
- Don't eat and drink while talking on the phone
- Don't be too familiar
- Don't talk to someone else in your office
- Don't have too much background noise
- Don't speak too quietly or too loudly or speak too quickly.

Top 10 Skills Revisited

1. Telephone Responsibility
2. The Greeting
3. Telephone Etiquette
4. Scheduling Appointments
5. Placing Callers on Hold
6. Transferring Calls – Inform the caller when and why you are transferring their call to another employee.
7. Leaving and Taking Messages
8. Handling the Unhappy Caller

9. Handling Tough Questions
10. Personal Calls

What You Should Do?

- Listen without interrupting
- Gather the facts and make a note of them
- Take their details so you can get back to them
- Sympathize with them and offer to act as fast as you can
- Apologize if you have made the mistake
- Stay calm even though the caller is angry and possibly abusive.

Texting Skill and Etiquette

1. **Common courtesy still rules. Contrary to popular belief, composing an SMS while you're in a face-to-face conversation with someone is just about as rude as taking a voice call.**
2. **Remember that SMS is informal. SMS shouldn't be used for formal invitations or to dump your girlfriend or boyfriend. The casualness of SMS diminishes the strength and meaning of the message.**
3. **Don't get upset if you don't get a reply. Before you text someone and get frustrated at the lack of a response, be sure that they're familiar with how to use the service, and that their carrier will accept messages from yours.**
4. **Be aware of your tone. It is extremely difficult to discern tone in text messages, just as in e-mail. What seems to you to be a completely innocuous message may be grossly misinterpreted by the recipient, causing certain discomfort if not irreparable harm.**
5. **Don't SMS while you're driving. Talking on the phone is bad enough. You won't know what hit you - or what you hit - if you are pounding out a message on your keyboard.**
6. **Leave the slang to the kids. Don't expect your stodgy superiors at work to be hip to the lingo of the SMS streets. And don't expect to win points with your kids by trying to be cool, either.**
7. **Remember that SMS can be traced. Anonymous messages - if you must send them - are still best sent from Web sites.**
8. **Be conscientious of others' schedules. Don't assume that because you are awake, working, not busy, or sober that the person you're texting is as well. Many a pleasant slumber has been interrupted by recurring "beep-beep...beep-beeps" of messages.**
9. **If it's immediate, make a voice call. If you can't get through and your text message is ignored, there's probably a good reason. There are still some times when people don't even have a thumb free to respond.**

10. Remember that your phone does have an off button. There are very, very few things in the world that absolutely cannot wait.

<http://www.wirelessdevnet.com/newswire-less/thefeature04.html>

Avoid Biases - An Important Soft Skill

All of us have our own preferences, prejudices and biases. Let us first recognize the fact that there is no one who is without bias or prejudice. However, we can have our biases and prejudices under check and not be influenced by these in our deliberations, transaction and decision-making processes. We can train ourselves in such a way that we do not publicly show these biases and prejudices. And through this step we may go to next level of eliminating most of these from our day-to-day living. This needs conscious training and self-discipline.

When we realize that our biases and prejudices can harm others' as well as our own interests, we take the initial step to ultimately keep our biases and prejudices under check. This realization may be imparted to us by our parents, peers, our own reading, religious teaching, and other types of instruction, etc.

Many a time we acquire our biases and prejudices as part of our upbringing. We may have been raised in a social environment which focuses more on our own distinctive features and preservation of our rights and privileges, etc. Caste affiliation, religious sanctions relating to ranking of individuals and communities based on several factors including the professions practiced, levels of education, attire, language or dialect or slang used, dietary preferences and eating habits, etc. Geographical distribution and location of various communities in a town or village also may contribute to the growth and practice of biases and prejudices. Actually, there is no limit to the number of things, events, individuals, social groups, etc., which may contribute to the emergence and practice of prejudices and biases.

Political bias, Gender bias, racial or ethnic bias, religious bias and age bias are some of the major biases that get reflected in our language use and inter-personal contacts.

Our textbooks and classroom teaching should do their best to point out these errors and help students and teachers to overcome these biases and prejudices.

Achieving Coherence in Your Writing

Effective writing proceeds in some sensible order, each sentence following naturally from the one before it. Yet even well-organized prose can be hard to read unless it is coherent. To make your writing coherent, you can use various devices that tie together words in a sentence, sentences in a paragraph, paragraphs in an essay.

DEVICES THAT CREATE COHERENCE

Transitional Words and Sentences. You use transitions every day to help your readers and listeners follow your train of thought. ... Many words and phrases specify connections between or within sentences.

Transition Paragraphs. Transitions may be even longer than sentences. In a long and complicated essay, moving clearly from one idea to the next will sometimes require a short paragraph of transition.

Repetitions. Another way to clarify the relationship between two sentences, paragraphs, or ideas is to repeat a key word or phrase. Such purposeful repetition almost guarantees that readers will understand how all the parts of a passage fit together.

Pronouns. Because they always refer back to nouns or other pronouns, pronouns serve as transitions by making readers refer back as well.

Abbreviations of Prefix-Titles

Abbreviations

Abbreviations enable a writer to include necessary information in capsule form. Limit abbreviations to those common enough for readers to recognize, or add an explanation so that a reader does not wonder, "What does this mean?"

If ever you're unsure about whether to abbreviate a word, remember: when in doubt, spell it out. Use abbreviations for some titles with proper names.

Mr. and Mrs. Swaraj Pandey, Dr. Dharani Kumar
Ms. Raji Narasimhan, St. Ramalinga Swamy, St. Thomas

Write out other titles in full, including titles that are unfamiliar to readers of English, such as M. (for the French Monsieur) or Sr. (for the Spanish Señor).

Spell out most titles that appear without proper names.

When an abbreviated title (such as an academic degree) follows a proper name, set it off with commas.

An academic degree that appears without a proper name can be abbreviated, but it is not set off with commas.

My brother has a BA in economics.

Avoid repeating different forms of the same title before and after a proper name. You can properly refer to a doctor of dental surgery as either Dr. Ramraj Arasu or Rani Arasi, DDS, but not as Dr. Rani Arasi, DDS.

What is My Address?

How do we write our address?

Do we follow any systematic presentation? Such as our name (Certainly it is a problem to solve or reconcile, especially with South Indian names: where do our initials go? Before our given name or after our given name?

What other elements are included in our personal name?). How about giving our degrees? After all, hard work enabled us to get those high-sounding degrees, and we certainly want these fully exhibited.

But should we really have all those diplomas? Presenting these long lists of diploma abbreviations after our names may actually leave little space for our own personal names in a prominent manner! Is there a way we may like to highlight only some of the higher education degrees?

But, again, this is a personal decision, especially in India where high-sounding degrees and diplomas seem to have their own niche.

Then, what about our designation (In the US, designation is often referred to as Title.)? Does the quality of our research actually depend on our designation? There must be several issues. But let us not get into such problems here. Let the writer decide on his or her own what is best for him or her!

Some of us want to announce to the world that we are proud owners of success in some examinations by the UGC (I think) that makes us eligible for a job, hopefully in the near future.

How about our departmental name?

Why should one really type out Dept. instead of Department?

Do we really save space and time by adopting this abbreviation which may perhaps confuse scholars from other countries as to its real reference.

Some of us go one step further. We simply abbreviate the name of our department/s or subject/s dealt with. For example, HHS. Perhaps it is crystal clear for those working in that particular institution. But, for others, and for readers from other places, states and nations, should we not clearly give the full name so that we get some credit and others recognize our specialization?

Now, what is the name of our college, university, institute, or school, etc.? Does the whole world already know the name of our institution when some of us indulge in economy, I mean, presenting the abbreviation of our institution?

Suppose we expand the abbreviations, will it not give us as well as our institution some recognition and notice? We are used to refer to institutions around us with brief phrases or letters, etc. However, many may not recognize such names.

Then, let us consider the street name. Perhaps here brevity in the form of abbreviations may help or may not create much problem. If there is not proper order of presentation such as the door number,

street name, the place name followed immediately by the pin code, and then the name of the district or the major post office and then the state name, there may be some problem for others to figure out what our full address is.

Why is it that some of us do not bring in any order in these aspects? Why even after the introduction of the system of pin code for each town/village which has a primary post office more than two decades ago, some of us still use the age-old numbers, not the actual pin code introduced?

Then there is the question of keeping and presenting several e-mail addresses under our names. It is a personal preference. But readability and memorability are ensured if we stick to one or two addresses so that free storage is still ensured and easy access is maintained!

A Capital Idea!

Writing in Indian languages has several advantages. For example, we don't have to use any capital letter at all. Perhaps even the notion of capital letters is a foreign notion for Indian languages. On the other hand, the other Indian language, English, depends heavily on the correct use of capital letters.

Students and teachers need to know the nuances of using capital letters, if we want our writing to be accepted.

1. Capitalize proper names and adjectives made from proper names.
2. Capitalize a title or rank before a proper name. Academic degrees should be capitalized.
3. Capitalize a family relationship only when it is part of a proper name or when it substitutes for a proper name.
4. Capitalize the names of religions, their deities, and their followers.
5. Capitalize proper names of places, regions, and geographic features. We need not capitalize north, south, etc. But when these are part of a proper name, these should be capitalized. South Kolkata, North Kolkata, South Chennai, etc.
6. Capitalize days of the week, months, and holidays, but not seasons or academic terms.
7. Capitalize historical events, periods, and documents.
8. Capitalize the names of schools, colleges, departments, and courses.

9. Capitalize the first, last, and main words in titles. Generally speaking all substantive words in titles may be capitalized. Do not capitalize articles, conjunctions, and prepositions. But you need to capitalize these if these occur as the first word in the title.

10. Capitalize the first letter of a quoted sentence.

There are other conventions as well. Look for these and use these conventions consistently.

E-mail addresses

1. Avoid underscore in your e-mail address, because when an e-mail address is cited it is underlined and the underscore does not appear in the address clearly.

2. Choose an address that is easy for others to identify your name with your address.

3.

(i) Some use their father's or husband's name as their e-mail address.

(ii) Some use their favorite expressions as their e-mail address.

(iii) Some use their religious slogans part of their e-mail address.

(iv) Some use political slogans as part of their e-mail address.

(v) Some add their year of birth in their e-mail address.

(vi) Some follow numerology predictions. If easy and readable communication is your goal, it is better to have a simple e-mail address, using your own name. True, sometimes our names are already taken as email address by someone else.

(vii) Find a way to still keep your full name while adding additional elements to your address. It is your personal e-mail and so it should present direct and adequate descriptive identity.

Please make it a point to check your e-mails on a regular basis!

===== M.

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