Railway Executives' Guide to

# Soft Skills, Communication & Personality Development


by

**Hari Shankar Verma, IRTS**

Director General, IRITM

and

**Krishna Tiwari, IRTS**

Professor (Admin) & OSD to DG, IRITM






भारतीय रेल परिवहन प्रबंधन संस्थान

INDIAN RAILWAYS INSTITUTE OF TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT

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**Hari Shankar Verma, IRTS**
**Director General, IRITM,**
Author of "Railway Executives' Guide to Soft Skills, Communication and Personality Development" as reading material at IRITM.

# PREFACE

Soft Skills are important character traits and interpersonal skills, which influence the overall personality of an executive. Traditionally, we are more focused on hard skills as we think, those are important requirements for our job but in present time it is not enough. To be successful in our career, we need to learn a wide range of skills as diverse as communication, teamwork, time management, empathy, delegation, etc. The importance of these soft skills is often undervalued and there is less training in the subject but now world over soft skills are very much needed for performing the job efficiently with good support of team and management.

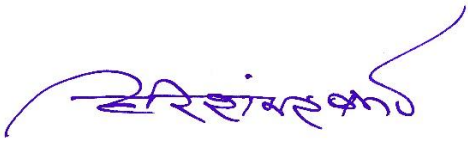
In Indian Railways, the importance of soft skills is immense as no work in railway can be performed single handedly. We need to require co-operation and support of our colleagues, seniors and communicate with sub-ordinate effectively. This book is aligned to serve that purpose. In market, hundreds of books are available, and a plethora of reading material is available in internet but there is paucity of a book which cover most of the subject in a single book and also focus on the topics which generally required by trainee officers, but not taught in business schools like How to handle self-criticism, Difficult people, Difficult boss, and some lesson in problem solving.

The outline of this book has been kept practical and covered almost all the topics in soft skills, which an executive in railway needs in day-to-day working. The book starts with introduction of soft skill and cover communication, art of listening and public speaking, time management, work ethics, etc. The subjects like How to avoid procrastination and laziness in work have been dealt practically as we face these problems often. Similarly, after learning the interpersonal

skills and manner and etiquettes, one can master the social circle and become successful. Some lessons in dealing with stress, how to survive tough time, and build resilience and how to deal with blackmailer or any anti-social element make this book a worth read.

I have collected the material from various sources, and my earlier notes, topics from internet and books in order to write this work. Writing a book while collecting all my previous notes and reading materials written by me for my learning was a difficult task. I have also written my experience for better understanding of the reader, which I have had observed in fields while working in different capacities in Indian Railways. I hope trainee officers and faculty will appreciate my efforts and convey the honest feedback to improve the reading material further.

I would like to thank Mr. Rohit Yadav, Mrs. Seema for typing, proofreading, and formatting the contents into printable format. I am also grateful to Shri Rajesh Kumar, IRTS, Sr. Professor (Admin.) and Miss Krishna Tiwari, IRTS, Professor Administration and OSD to Undersigned for getting it published. A thank to Shri Kishore Mehta and Mr. Mohd. Mohsin Quadir also deserves to be conveyed for arranging the printing in shorter time.



**Hari Shankar Verma, IRTS**
**Director General**
Indian Railways Institute of Transport Management (IRITM),
Lucknow, UP, India.
**Sunday, 31.03.2024**

## TRAINING NEED ANALYSIS (TNA)
## for Workshop on Soft Skills and other Courses Run for Officers and Supervisors

1. **Organization goals**
   Improved Teamwork and Collaboration
   Enhanced Customer Service
   Increased Productivity and Efficiency
2. **Target Audience**
   Railways officers up to SAG level from all Railway departments, HR, Stores, RPF, Medical, Traffic and Accounts.
3. **FRACing**
   Framework of Roles, Activities and Competency (FRAC) is key to Mission Karmayogi which guides all CTIs. FRACing has been done with respect to the roles of officers discharging their duties in various executive positions in Indian Railways. The common set of requirements which emerge from the FRAC analysis is as under:
   - Need to have effective communication.
   - Understand communications dynamics of verbal and non-verbal.
   - Written and Presentation Skills.
   - Communication for conflict resolution.
4. **Learning Objectives**
   - Effective Communication.
   - Conflict Resolution.
   - Verbal and non-verbal communications.
   - Written and presentation skills.
5. **Goal/Rationale**
   The implementation of a soft skills training program in the Railway serves important goals, contributing to the overall efficiency, safety and customer satisfaction within the organization Here are key goals and rationales for initiating a soft skills training program in the Railways:

- Improved Customer Experience
- Increased Operational Efficiency
- Enhanced Safety
- Reduced Employee Turnover and Increased Morale
- Increased Productivity and Efficiency

6. **Basic Information**
    - Course name and number:
    - Meeting time and place. Onsite at IRITM/LKO
    - Instructors: In-house faculty and Visiting faculty,
    - Contact information: Will be listed on course brochure/letters.
    - Office hours: 09:30-18:00 hrs.
    - Instructional support staff information included in course brochure/letter.
7. **Course Content**
    This would be a regular course. This course will cover the following topics:
    - Effective Communication.
    - Conflict Resolution.
    - Verbal and non-verbal communications.
    - Written and presentation skills.
    - Team Building.
8. **Student Responsibilities:**
    Expected to participate in case study-based discussions and group discussions They also need to go through the reading material shared with them.
9. **Grading Method**
    Ungraded
10. **Materials and Access:**
    PPTs of faculty members, case studies and AV material.
11. **Teaching Philosophy**
    Through case studies and interaction with experienced serving and retired officers.

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# INTRODUCTION OF SOFT SKILLS

# 1

Soft skills are character traits and interpersonal skills that characterize a person's relationships with other people. In the workplace, soft skills are a complement to hard skills, which refer to a person's knowledge and occupational skills. Sociologists may use the term "soft skills" to describe a person's emotional intelligence quotient (EQ) as opposed to intelligence quotient (IQ).

Soft skills have more to do with who people are than what they know. As such, they encompass the character traits that decide how well one interacts with others and usually are a definite part of an individual's personality.

1. Soft skills include attributes and personality traits that help employees interact with others and succeed in the workplace.
2. Examples of soft skills include the ability to communicate with prospective clients, mentor your co-workers, lead a team, negotiate a contract, follow instructions, and get a job done on time.
3. Hard skills are measurable and usually obtained through formal education and training programs.
4. Workers with good soft skills can help companies achieve higher levels of efficiency and productivity.

5. In contrast to hard skills, soft skills are more difficult to acquire through training.

Some of the Important Soft skills are as under:

1. Communication
2. Teamwork
3. Problem-solving
4. Time management
5. Critical thinking
6. Decision-making
7. Organizational
8. Stress management
9. Adaptability
10. Conflict management
11. Leadership
12. Creativity
13. Resourcefulness
14. Persuasion
15. Openness to criticism

## 1.1 Why are soft skills important?

In current job market, the companies most often require the skills which help them to get work done in an efficient way. If some company is in marketing business than they may require "communication skills", negotiation power and art of persuasion. Similarly, if when two candidates have a similar academic and professional background, you're more likely to hire the one who's more collaborative and flexible. If any organization give importance to accountability than they should hire the person, who has ability to take initiative, it's important to look for candidates who are not afraid to take ownership of their job, who are decisive and have a problem-solving aptitude.

## 1.2 Understanding Soft Skills

Employers look for a balance of hard skills and soft skills when making hiring decisions. For example, employers value skilled workers with a track record of getting jobs done on time. Employers also value workers with strong communication skills

and a strong understanding of company products and services. When communicating with prospective clients, workers with soft skills can put together compelling presentations even if their specific job is not in sales or marketing. Another valued soft skill is the ability to coach fellow co-workers on new tasks.

Company leaders often are most effective when they have strong soft skills. For example, leaders are expected to have good speaking abilities, but great leaders are also good at listening to workers and to other leaders in their fields.

Negotiation is a big part of the job for many company leaders. When negotiating with employees, clients, or associates, leaders need to be skilled in staying considerate of what others want while remaining focused on pushing for what they want. Good leaders also need to know how to make their own work most efficient by strategically delegating tasks to workers.

## 1.3 Valuable Soft Skills for Employees

Soft skills benefit businesses when they are practiced on a company-wide basis. For example, a collaborative spirit among workers is important. Team members who are able to work well with people of different generations and backgrounds are generally more productive and better able to focus on common priorities. Efficiency and output improve when workers collaborate by sharing knowledge and tools to get jobs done. The ability to learn new methods and technologies is also a desired soft skill for all workers.

Companies that value learning as a soft skill recognize various learning styles and encourage workers to pursue the methods that work best for them. Good troubleshooting is a soft skill that also is valuable to companies. For example, companies can operate more efficiently and increase productivity when all workers know how to troubleshoot software problems instead of relying on the information technology (IT) department for every fix.

Soft skills can also be thought of as people skills. These can include good communication and interpersonal skills, leadership, problem solving, your work ethic, time management, and teamwork. These are characteristics that can be carried over to any position.

What is the difference between a soft skill and a hard skill?
Why are soft skills important?
How well you interact and treat others is crucial for career success. Trust develops through positive interactions and relationships, and productivity increases in environments where soft skills flourish.

## 1.4 Hard Skills

Hard skills are technical skills required for a job. They are learned abilities acquired and enhanced through education and experience. Hard skills are important for your resume, as employers look for them when hiring.

Hard skills alone don't translate into success, as employees also need other skills, such as soft skills. Unlike soft skills, hard skills can be quantified. For example, a hard skill might be proficiency in a second language, while a soft skill could be the ability to work well on a team.

1. Hard skills are technical skills required for a job.
2. Hard skills are acquired through education and experience.
3. Soft skills are behavioural, such as being a team player.
4. Unlike soft skills, hard skills can be easily quantified.
5. Employers typically look for a combination of hard and soft skills.

## 1.5 Understanding Hard Skills

Hard skills are technical skills needed to perform a job or land a new one. They are typically industry specific. For example, a financial analyst would need a different set of hard skills from a carpenter. But hard skills can also be valuable across industries. For example, fluency in a second language could potentially benefit both the analyst and the carpenter.

Employers and recruiters look for hard skills listed on your resume and during the interview process. It's best to back up your hard skills with a certificate, degree, or other qualification that shows a level of achievement.

Experience is also seen as a qualification that validates expertise in hard skills. Some prospective employers test the hard skills of

job candidates. Someone interviewing for an editing job, for example, might have to take an editing test.

Hard skills focus on practical abilities and skills, whereas soft skills focus on behaviours and personalities, such as social and communication skills. Soft skills are less tangible and harder to teach.

Employers typically look for a hybrid of hard and soft skills. Soft skills are more intrinsic to personality and more difficult to judge quickly, but they may be as important on the job over time.

## 1.6 Types of Hard Skills

The types of hard skills needed to be qualified and successful in a job depend on the industry. Employers typically list hard skills required in job descriptions. Common hard skills include:

1. Computer software knowledge,
2. Graphic design,
3. Data analysis,
4. Project management
5. Marketing
6. Copywriting
7. Computer programming
8. Foreign languages
9. Search engine optimization (SEO)
10. Customer service
11. Sales
12. Accounting
13. Business development
14. Marketing
15. Digital marketing
16. Sales management
17. Finance
18. Social media
19. Sales and marketing
20. Financial analysis
21. Engineering
22. Social media marketing
23. Structured query language (SQL)

## 1.7 Hard Skills vs. Soft Skills

Hard skills generally have rules that remain the same regardless of the business, industry, or even culture in which they are practiced. The rules of soft skills can change depending on company culture and the expectations of colleagues. For example, the rules for how a programmer creates code are the same regardless of where the programmer works. However, a programmer may communicate effectively to other programmers about technical details but struggle when communicating with senior managers about a project's progress or support needs.

1. Hard skills can be learned via education, training, or apprenticeships, and on the job.
2. The levels of competency can be defined, and there is a direct path for achieving them.
3. Soft skills are not often found in the curriculum of a school or college. But they are taught in programs that help people develop communication skills, teamwork, or people-management skills.
4. Hard skills are the measurable skills acquired through training, education, and practice.
5. They are the abilities needed to perform a specific task or job.
6. Soft skills are behavioural and interpersonal skills that relate to how effectively people interact with others and handle situations.

## 1.8 Example of Hard Skills

Accounting is a profession that requires a relatively rigid set of hard skills. Proficiency in the Microsoft Office suite, especially Excel, is a given. Familiarity with industry-specific software, such as tax preparation software and Intuit's QuickBooks, is also required. Accountants need to know how to prepare and interpret financial statements and other accounting reports, develop efficient financial reporting mechanisms, and plan and implement accounting controls. Some of the other skills that accountants need might be categorized as soft skills. They must be able to communicate effectively with clients and be diplomatic when

dealing with external auditors. If you are listing hard skills on a resume, include any technical skills you have acquired and any foreign languages. List hard skills relevant to the position for which you are applying. These are typically spelled out in job postings.

You can acquire hard skills by taking online or in-person classes at a university or other training program, practicing these skills before applying them to a job, and gaining experience by using the hard skills in the workplace.

Critical thinking is an important soft skill. You can study and practice critical thinking, but it cannot be "learned" in the same way you can teach yourself to use accounting software.

Every job, from firefighting to being a marketing executive, calls for a specific skill set often made up of a combination of hard and soft skills. Whether you are considering a new job or applying for your first job, knowing which hard skills are needed, and obtaining those skills, means you will have a better chance of being hired or promoted in your field of choice.

Some hard skills—such as being proficient in using a computer, analysing data, or understanding at least the basics of using social media—will often be useful in many different jobs and careers. Many trades call for particular hard skills that are required for employment in construction, architecture, plumbing and electric, and engineering.

To get hired and be successful in the workplace, you'll need a combination of hard and soft skills, both of which you can continually build on and develop more than just technical expertise and knowledge. As the nature of work continues to evolve, it is important for individuals to possess attributes and abilities that allow them to collaborate with teams and colleagues otherwise known as soft skills.

From communication and collaboration to adaptability and problem-solving, soft skills are the foundation of effective teamwork and organizational success.

In today's fast-paced world, success in the workplace requires more than just technical expertise and knowledge. As the nature of work continues to evolve, it is important for individuals to possess attributes and

abilities that allow them to collaborate with teams and colleagues-otherwise known as soft skills.

From communication and collaboration to adaptability and problem-solving, soft skills are the foundation of effective teamwork and organizational success.

## 1.9 What Are Soft Skills?

Soft skills also known as "people skills" or "interpersonal skills are a set of personal attributes and abilities that allow individuals to effectively interact with others in a professional setting. At their core, these include the ability to collaborate effectively, manage time and communicate with clarity, among others.

Soft skills are difficult to measure or quantify however, they are essential for success in a wide range of industries and professions. Whether you are working with colleagues from diverse cultural backgrounds or communicating with customers and clients around the world-the ability to navigate complex interpersonal dynamics and build strong relationships is the key to success.

Following are essential soft skills, which requires to be learned.

### 1.9.1 Communication

Effective communication is essential to build strong relationships with colleagues, clients, and stakeholders. Not only does this involve the ability to convey messages in a clear and compelling way, but also the ability to understand the needs of others and respond to feedback.

Employers want people who can build professional relationships with colleagues, which is especially important when working with teams.

Communication is often evaluated in the workplace through informal feedback, such as verbal or written comments from colleagues and supervisors. An alternative method is a formal evaluation or assessment.

The ability to communicate effectively is often considered a critical component of professional success and is highly valued by employers in a wide range of industries and

professions.

Here are some examples of communication skills:

1. Active listening
2. Verbal communication
3. Nonverbal communication
4. Written communication
5. Presentation Skills

### 1.9.2 Leadership

A good leader has the ability to inspire their team to achieve greatness. They are able to set a clear vision, communicate it effectively and create a culture of accountability and excellence. More importantly, they're able to inspire and influence team members to achieve shared goals and objectives.

The ability to lead effectively is often considered a critical component of professional success and is highly valued by employers in a wide range of industries and professions. Because most employees work in teams, leadership is widely recognized as a critical attribute for success in the modern workplace.

Here are some examples of leadership skills:

1. Problem-solving
2. Coaching and mentoring
3. Management
4. Strategic thinking

### 1.9.3 Teamwork

Teamwork involves the ability to work with others toward a shared goal. It requires communication, collaboration and a shared commitment to work in a group. Individuals who are able to work collaboratively with others are more likely to achieve their professional goals, and to contribute to the success of their organizations.

In a professional setting, good teamwork can help to foster creativity and innovation because it encourages members to share ideas, brainstorm new solutions and collaborate on new

initiatives. Working as part of a collaborative team can also enhance job satisfaction and contribute to a positive work environment.

Here are some examples of teamwork skills:

1. Conflict resolution
2. Mediation
3. Accountability
4. Collaboration

### 1.9.4 Creativity

Creativity involves the ability to think outside the box and come up with ideas that challenge assumptions. Needless to say, it requires a mindset of curiosity, risk-taking and a willingness to embrace ambiguity and uncertainty.

On another front, creativity is essential for effective problem-solving, meaning it allows individuals to tackle issues from new and different angles. Creative individuals also give organizations a competitive edge by enabling them to develop new products and

systems that set them apart from their competition.

Here are some examples of creative skills:

1. Brainstorming
2. Imagination
3. Curiosity
4. Experimentation

### 1.9.5 Time management

Time management involves the ability to set priorities, organize tasks and allot time across different activities. It requires discipline and a willingness to avoid distractions and low-priority tasks.

Naturally, good time management skills can help individuals avoid the stress and anxiety that can arise from missed deadlines. But more importantly, those who can manage their time effectively are more likely to be seen as reliable and efficient, which allows them to stand out in the workplace.

Here are some examples of time management skills:

1. Planning
2. Goal setting
3. Delegation
4. Time blocking

### 1.9.6 Adaptability

In today's rapidly changing business landscape, adaptability is a key soft skill that enables individuals to stay ahead of the curve. An employee with this skill can adjust to changing circumstances, for example, and learn new skills and technologies to remain relevant in the workplace.

Because it's impossible to avoid unexpected challenges, having adaptable employees allows organizations to bounce back from setbacks much faster. Plus, they can also read situations quickly and adjust their approach to adapt based on the situation.

Here are some examples of adaptability skills:

1. Flexibility
2. Resilience
3. Growth mindset
4. Analysis

### 1.9.7 Problem-solving

Problem-solving involves the ability to come up with alternative solutions. This skill is crucial to identifying and addressing complex challenges and opportunities in a variety of contexts.

Problem-solving also makes it easier to make more informed decisions because employees are able to analyze situations and identify the best course of action. As a result, teams are able to get more done in less time.

Here are some examples of problem-solving skills:

1. Critical thinking
2. Analysis
3. Strategic thinking
4. Initiative

### 1.9.8 Work ethic

Work ethic demonstrates an individual's commitment to their job. Having a strong work ethic makes you seem more reliable and dependable, which improves your credibility in the workplace.

There are a lot of ways to demonstrate a strong work ethic. Some examples include arriving on time for meetings, meeting deadlines consistently and being accountable for your actions. If you encounter any challenges in the workplace, you should also maintain a positive demeanour and adapt to changing situations.

Here are some examples of work ethic skills:

1. Punctuality
2. Reliability
3. Professionalism
4. Discipline

### 1.9.9 Critical thinking

Critical thinking enables individuals to approach problems and challenges with a strategic and analytical mindset. When making informed decisions. this skill allows you to weigh available options and consider potential outcomes.

A critical thinker can evaluate the strength of arguments and identify flaws in reasoning. They consider multiple perspectives, which makes them more likely to pinpoint the short-term and long-term consequences of their decisions. Additionally, they can also identify the root cause of a problem and generate multiple solutions.

Here are some examples of critical thinking skills:

1. Analysis
2. Evaluation
3. Deductive reasoning
4. Synthesis

### 1.9.10 Conflict management

Not every employee can get along with colleagues every time. As a team tackles obstacles, conflict and opposing

ideas could arise every now and then.

Conflict management is the process of addressing disputes or disagreements in a constructive and effective manner. Often, this requires good communication skills, active listening, empathy, negotiation skills and a willingness to collaborate and find common ground.

When managing conflict, it is important to identify common goals and interests for all parties involved. This can help to establish a sense of unity and collaboration, and even lead to better outcomes for everyone involved. Being open to different ideas and perspectives can also make individuals feel motivated to work towards resolution.

Here are some examples of conflict management skills:

1. Empathy
2. Negotiation
3. Mediation
4. Conflict resolution

### 1.9.11 Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to recognize and understand one's own emotions and those of others. In today's collaborative work environments, this skill enables employees to navigate complex social dynamics and work effectively within teams.

It also allows them to provide constructive feedback in a way that is sensitive to the emotions of others, leading to more successful outcomes and stronger relationships.

Effective leaders often have the ability to motivate others and navigate challenging situations with grace and empathy.

Hard skills are the technical expertise and knowledge needed for a job. Soft skills are interpersonal qualities, also known as people skills, and personal attributes that one possesses. Business executives consider soft skills a very important attribute in job applicants. Employers want

new employees to have strong soft skills, as well as hard skills. This study, identified the top 10 softs kills as perceived the most important by business executives:

1. Integrity,
2. Communication,
3. Courtesy,
4. Responsibility,
5. Social Skills,
6. Positive Attitude,
7. Professionalism
8. Flexibility
9. Teamwork
10. Work Ethic.

In one of the studies, following ten soft skills are attributed to young managers as under:

1. **Communication –** oral, speaking capability, written, presenting, listening
2. **Courtesy –** manners, etiquette, business etiquette, gracious, says please and thank you, respectful
3. **Flexibility –** adaptability, willing to change, lifelong learner, accepts new things, adjusts, teachable
4. **Integrity –** honest, ethical, high morals, has personal values, does what's right
5. **Interpersonal Skills –** nice, personable, sense of humour, friendly, nurturing, empathetic, has self-control, patient, sociability, warmth, social skills
6. **Positive Attitude –** optimistic, enthusiastic, encouraging, happy, confident
7. **Professionalism –** businesslike, well-dressed, appearance, poised
8. **Responsibility –** accountable, reliable, gets the job done, resourceful, self-disciplined, wants to do well, conscientious, common sense
9. **Teamwork –** cooperative, gets along with others, agreeable, supportive, helpful, collaborative
10. **Work Ethic –** hard working, willing to work, loyal, initiative, self-motivated, on time, good attendance

# MASTERING THE ART OF COMMUNICATION

# 2

Communication, at its simplest, is the act of transferring information from one place to another. It may be vocally (using voice), written (using printed or digital media such as books, magazines, websites, or emails), visually (using logos, maps, charts, or graphs) or non-verbally (using body language, gestures and the tone and pitch of voice). In practice, it is often a combination of several of these.

Communication skills may take a lifetime to master—if indeed anyone can ever claim to have mastered them. There are, however, many things that you can do easily to improve your communication skills and ensure that you are able to transmit and receive information effectively.

## 2.1 The Importance of Good Communication Skills

Developing your communication skills can help all aspects of your life, from your professional life to social gatherings and everything in between.

The ability to communicate information accurately, clearly, and as intended, is a vital life skill and something that should not be overlooked. It's never too late to work on your communication skills and by doing so, you may well find that you improve your quality of life.

Communication skills are needed in almost all aspects of life:

- **Professionally, if you are applying for jobs or looking for a promotion with your current employer, you will almost certainly need to demonstrate good communication skills.**
  Communication skills are needed to speak appropriately with a wide variety of people whilst maintaining good eye contact, demonstrate a varied vocabulary and tailor your language to your audience, listen effectively, present your ideas appropriately, write clearly and concisely, and work well in a group. Many of these are essential skills that most employers seek.

  As your career progresses, the importance of communication skills increases; the ability to speak, listen, question, and write with clarity and conciseness are essential for most managers and leaders.
- **In your personal life, good communication skills can improve your personal relationships by helping you to understand others, and to be understood.**
  It is almost a cliché that personal relationships need communication. Failure to talk has been blamed for the breakdown of any number of partnerships and relationships—but the ability to listen is also an important element. Communication is also vital in wider family relationships, whether you want to discuss arrangements for holidays, or ensure that your teenage children are well and happy.

If this area is of particular interest, you may want to read our pages on Communicating with Teenagers, Talking to Teenagers about Contraception, Pornography and Consent, and Talking to Teenagers about Sex and Relationships. Our pages on Personal and Romantic Relationship Skills also contain a number of pages touching on communication.

- **Communication skills can also ensure that you are able to manage interactions with businesses and organisations**
  Over the course of your lifetime, you are likely to have to interact with a wide range of organisations and institutions, including shops, businesses, government offices, and schools. Good communication skills can ease these interactions and ensure that you are able to get your point across calmly and clearly, and also take on board the responses.
  Being able to complain effectively is an important skill, for example, as is handling criticism yourself.

**2.2 Communication is a two-way process**

Communication is not the same as broadcasting, or simply sending out information.

It is a two-way process. In other words, it involves both the sending and receiving of information.

It therefore requires both speaking and listening, but also—and perhaps more crucially—developing a shared understanding of the information being transmitted and received.

1. **If you are the 'sender' of information,** this means communicating it clearly to start with (whether in writing or face-to-face), then asking questions to check your listeners' understanding. You must also then listen to their replies, and if necessary, clarify further.

2. **If you are the recipient,** it means listening carefully to the information, then checking that you have understood by reflecting back, or asking questions to ensure that you both have the same understanding of the situation.

It is, therefore, an active process. There is nothing passive about communication, in either direction.

## 2.3 Developing Communication Skills

Good communication skills can improve the way that you operate through life, smoothing your way in your relationships with others. Poor communication skills, on the other hand, can sour relationships from business to personal, and make your life significantly harder.

Some people seem to understand how to communicate without even trying. They are able to tailor their language, tone and message to their audience, and get their point across quickly and succinctly, in a way that is heard. They are also able to pick up the messages sent to them rapidly, understanding both what is said, and what has not been said.

This may seem effortless, but the chances are that they have spent plenty of time honing their skills.

Along the way, they have probably also developed a good understanding of themselves (called self-awareness) and habits of reflecting on success and failure, and the actions that have led to one or the other.

Developing excellent communication skills is probably best thought of as a long-term project.

The chances are that you will continue to learn about communication throughout your life. Few, if any, of us would ever say that we had nothing left to learn on the subject.

That is not, however, to say that it is not worth starting the journey. There are many small, easy things that you can do immediately that will help you to communicate more effectively.

## 2.4 Interpersonal Communication Skills

Interpersonal skills are the skills we use when engaged in face-to-face communication with one or more other people.

For a good general introduction to the topic of interpersonal communication skills, you may like to read our pages on Interpersonal Communication Skills, What is Communication? and Principles of Communication. They will help you to understand the basics and start to be aware of what you might need to improve.

Our pages on Barriers to Communication and The Ladder of Inference give you some ideas about what may be going wrong in your personal communication processes. Improving Communication provides information about how you might start to address those issues. There may, in particular, be issues relating to Intercultural communication, especially if you work or interact with people from other cultures on a regular basis.

Our more specific pages on interpersonal communication skills are divided broadly into Verbal Communication, Non-Verbal Communication and Listening.

## 2.5 Verbal Communication

Verbal communication is all about what we say, which is an important way of getting our message across.

The words that we choose can make a big difference to whether other people understand us. Consider for example, communicating with a young child, or with someone who does not speak our own language very well. Under those circumstances, you need to use simple language, short sentences, and check understanding regularly. It is quite different from a conversation with an old friend whom you have known for years, and with whom you may not even need to finish your sentences. Equally, a conversation with a friend is very different from a business discussion, and the words that you choose might be considerably more technical when talking to a colleague.

Reflection and clarification are both common techniques used in

verbal communication to ensure that what you have heard and understood is what was intended. Reflection is the process of paraphrasing and restating what the other person has just said, to check that you have understood. Clarification is the process of seeking more information to inform your understanding, for example, by asking questions. You can find out more on our pages on Reflecting and Clarification.

Questioning skills are one very important area of verbal communication, often used in clarification, but also to extract more information, and as a way to maintain a conversation. Find out more in our pages on Questioning Skills and Types of Questions.

Finally, two specific areas where you will need verbal communication skills, and which are worth considering separately are making a speech, and in conversation.

## 2.6 Non-verbal Communication

Using our voice is only the tip of the iceberg.

We actually communicate far more information using Non-verbal Communication. This includes non-verbal signals, gestures, facial expression, body language, tone of voice, and even our appearance. These can serve to either reinforce or undermine the message of our spoken words, so are worth considering carefully.

> "If you want to say something outrageous, wear a suit.
> The late Dr Joe Jaina, Organisational Psychologist at Cranfield School of Management."

## 2.7 Listening

Listening is also a vital interpersonal communication skill.

As we said above, communication is a two-way process. Listening is an essential part of receiving information. When we communicate, we spend 45% of our time listening. Most people take listening for granted, but it is not the same as hearing and should be thought of as a skill.

Our Listening Skills page acts as an introduction to the subject and

you may also be interested in the Ten Principles of Listening.

Our page on Active Listening provides a lot more information about how to listen effectively and can also help you to avoid misunderstandings, while Types of Listening explains more about the theory of listening.

We also have pages on Ineffective Listening and Listening Misconceptions. It is always worth thinking about what you should not do, as well as what you should do, when trying to develop your skills. You may find that you recognise some of the bad habits you or other people have picked up when listening.

## 2.8 Using Communication Skills

Interpersonal communication skills are important in a wide range of circumstances and environments: probably, in fact, anywhere where we may meet and interact with other people.

We have a number of pages on how to use communication skills. For example, they are essential for starting to build relationships, both professionally and at home. You may find our page on Building Rapport helpful, and also advice on being interviewed (Interview Skills) and interviewing others (Interviewing Skills).

Good communication skills can also help you to provide feedback effectively, and in a way that will not cause offence: a vital skill throughout life.

Good interpersonal communication skills enable us to work more effectively in groups and teams, which may be either formal or informal. Our pages on Groups and Teams explain more about working in groups, and the skills required.

## 2.9 Other Communication Skills

Communication skills encompass far more than simple verbal and non-verbal communication, even in a wide range of circumstances. SkillsYouNeed also includes pages on some more specific forms of communication skills, such as:

## 2.10 Presentation Skills

Many of us only use presentation skills infrequently. However, there will probably be times in your life when you need to present information to a group of people, either in a formal or informal setting.

Presentations are far more than simply standing up in front of a screen and talking your way through a set of slides. They also include the ability to get your point across in meetings, both small and large, and even pitching your business idea to a potential investor.

## 2.11 Writing Skills

Communication skills are not limited to direct interaction with other people and the spoken word.

The ability to write clearly and effectively is also key to communication.

This set of skills should not be limited to journalists or professional authors. Poor written communication can be frustrating for the reader and potentially damaging for the author – would you buy a product from a website peppered with spelling mistakes, or full of incomplete or unclear sentences?

Browse our pages on Writing Skills to help you to understand and overcome common mistakes and improve how you communicate using the written word.

You may also be interested in our pages on Study Skills. Not just for students, these are the skills you need to enable you to learn, communicate your ideas and understand the ideas of others more effectively. They can, in particular, help you to read more critically, and retain more information by making notes: improving the process of receiving written communication.

## 2.12 Personal Skills

Personal Skills are the skills that we use to maintain a healthy body and mind. But they can also enhance communication.

For example, Improving Your Self-Esteem and Building Your Confidence can help you to feel more positive about yourself and your abilities - including your ability to communicate. And feeling positive is the first step to acting more positively, and therefore effectively.

By having a deeper understanding of yourself and a more relaxed and positive outlook on life you are more likely to be charismatic, a trait that can further aid the communication process. Our page What is Charisma? explains this in more detail. Good communication is also linked to assertiveness, or standing up for what you believe. Our section on Assertiveness explains more.

### 2.13 Communication is a complex subject with many areas and skills to consider.

Being able to communicate effectively is also a skill like any other. It too can be learned, given time. Anyone can make a start on improving their communication skills at any time, and the investment of time and effort is likely to pay off rapidly.

## 2.14 What Are Communication Skills?

Communication skills are the abilities you use when giving and receiving different kinds of information. Some examples include communicating new ideas, feelings or even an update on your project. Communication skills involve listening, speaking, observing and empathising. It is also helpful to understand the differences in how to communicate through face-to-face interactions, phone conversations and digital communications like email and social media. There are different types of communication skills you can learn and practice to help you become an effective communicator. Many of these skills work together making it important to practice communication skills in different contexts whenever possible.

**Active listening:** Active listening means paying close attention to the person who is speaking to you. People who are active listeners are well-

regarded by their co-workers because of the attention and respect they offer others. While it seems simple, this is a skill that can be hard to develop and improve. You can be an active listener by focusing on the speaker, avoiding distractions like cell phones, laptops or other projects and by preparing questions, comments or ideas to thoughtfully respond.

**Adapting your communication style to your audience:** Different styles of communication are appropriate in different situations. To make the best use of your communication skills, it's important to consider your audience and the most effective format to communicate with them.

For example, if you are communicating with a potential employer, it's better to send a formal email or call them on the phone. Depending on the situation, you may even need to send a formal, typed letter over other forms of communication. In the workplace, you may find it's easier to communicate complex information in person or via a video conference than in a long, dense email.

**Friendliness:** In friendships, characteristics such as honesty and kindness often foster trust and understanding. The same characteristics are important in workplace relationships. When you're working with others, approach your interactions with a positive attitude, keep an open mind and ask questions to help you understand where they're coming from. Small gestures such as asking someone how they're doing, smiling as they speak or offering praise for work well done can help you foster productive relationships with both colleagues and managers.

**Confidence:** In the workplace, people are more likely to respond to ideas that are presented with confidence. There are many ways to appear confident such as making eye contact when you're addressing someone, sitting up straight with your shoulders open and preparing ahead of time so your thoughts are polished. You'll find confident communication comes in handy not just on the job but during the job interview process as well.

**Giving and receiving feedback:** Strong communicators can accept critical feedback and provide constructive input to others. Feedback should answer questions, provide solutions, or help strengthen the project or topic at hand.

**Volume and clarity:** When you're speaking, it's important to be clear and audible. Adjusting your speaking voice so you can be heard in a

variety of settings is a skill and it's critical to communicating effectively. Speaking too loudly may be disrespectful or awkward in certain settings. If you're unsure, read the room to see how others are communicating.

**Empathy:** Empathy means that you can understand and share the emotions of others. This communication skill is important in both team and one-on-one settings. In both cases, you will need to understand other people's emotions and select an appropriate response. For example, if someone is expressing anger or frustration, empathy can help you acknowledge and diffuse their emotion. At the same time, being able to understand when someone is feeling positive and enthusiastic can help you get support for your ideas and projects.

**Respect:** A key aspect of respect is knowing when to initiate communication and respond. In a team or group setting, allowing others to speak without interruption is seen as a necessary communication skill. Respectfully communicating also means using your time with someone else wisely staying on topic, asking clear questions and responding fully to any questions you've been asked.

**Understanding nonverbal cues:** A great deal of communication happens through nonverbal cues such as body language, facial expressions and eye contact. When you're listening to someone, you should be paying attention to what they're saying as well as their nonverbal language. By the same measure, you should be conscious of your body language when you're communicating to ensure you're sending appropriate cues to others.

**Responsiveness:** Whether you're returning a phone call or sending a reply to an email, fast communicators are viewed as more effective than those who are slow to respond. One method is to consider how long your response will take. Is this a request or question you can answer in the next five minutes? If so, it may be a good idea to address it as soon as you see it. If it's a more complex request or question, you can still acknowledge that you've received the message and let the other person know you will respond in full later.

## 2.15 How to Improve Your Communication Skills?

With experience and practice, you can learn and improve communication skills. Start by identifying your strengths and then practice and develop those areas.

1. **Ask a close friend or colleague for constructive criticism**
   It can be hard to know how you are perceived as a communicator. To get an objective opinion, ask a trusted friend for their honest feedback. Understanding your areas of improvement for communication can help you identify what to focus on.
2. **Practice improving communication habits**
   Many communication skills are habits you have developed over time. You can improve those skills by practising new habits that make you a better communicator. That might include being more responsive to communications when they are sent, reminding yourself to make eye contact, practising giving positive feedback and asking questions in conversations.
3. **Attend communication skills workshops or classes**
   There are several online and offline seminars, workshops and classes that can help you become a better communicator. These classes may include instruction, role play, written assignments, and open discussions.
4. **Seek opportunities to communicate**
   Seek opportunities, on and off the job, that require you to use communication skills. This will help you improve existing skills and allow you to practice new ones.

## 2.16 Communicating Effectively in The Workplace

While there are several communication skills you will use in different scenarios, there are few ways you can be an effective communicator at work.

1. **Be clear and concise**
   Making your message as easy to consume as possible reduces the chance of misunderstandings, speeds up projects and helps others quickly understand your goals. Instead of speaking in long, detailed sentences, practice reducing your message to its core meaning. While providing context is helpful, it is best to give the most necessary information when trying to communicate your idea, instruction, or message.
2. **Practice empathy**
   Understanding your colleague's feelings, ideas and goals can help

you when communicating with them. For example, you might need help from other departments to get a project started. If they are not willing to help or have concerns, practising empathy can help you position your message in a way that addresses their apprehension.

3. **Assert yourself**
   At times, it is necessary to be assertive to reach your goals whether you are asking for a raise, seeking project opportunities, or resisting an idea you don't think will be beneficial. While presenting with confidence is an important part of the workplace, you should always be respectful in conversation. Keeping an even tone and providing sound reasons for your assertions will help others be receptive to your thoughts.
4. **Be calm and consistent**
   When there is a disagreement or conflict, it can be easy to bring emotion into your communications. It is important to remain calm when communicating with others in the workplace. Be aware of your body language by not crossing your arms or rolling your eyes. Maintaining consistent body language and keeping an even tone of voice can help you reach a conclusion peacefully and productively.
5. **Use and read body language**
   Body language is a key part of communications in the workplace. Pay close attention to the messages people are sending with their facial expressions and movements. You should also pay close attention to the way you might be communicating (intentionally or not) with your body language.

## 2.17 How to Highlight Communication Skills?

You will use your communication skills in every step of the job search and on the job. Everything from your resume to the job interview and beyond will require different types of communication skills. Here are a few ways you can highlight those skills at each step.

1. **Communication skills for resume**
   A well-written resume is a demonstration of strong communication skills. Ensure that your resume is structured appropriately and free of spelling and grammar errors. Additionally, you may also want to

include some positive communication skills in your resume skills section, especially if the job post calls for specific communication skills in the job description. You can add skills to your Indeed Resume for employers searching for candidates with your skillset.

2. **Communication skills for cover letter**
   Your cover letter is a great opportunity to elaborate on your communication skills. While you can talk more directly about how effectively you communicate here, your cover letter is one of the employer's first impressions of your skills. You will want to make your cover letter brief, well-written, free of typos and spelling errors and tailored to the position you're applying for.
3. **Communication skills for the job interview**
   The first, most important way you can communicate in your interview is your presentation of yourself. Show up for the interview 10–15 minutes early and dress appropriately for the job you're applying for. Pay attention to the nonverbal cues you're displaying through body language.
   Avoid actions such as slouching or looking at your phone during the interview. Looking your interviewer in the eye, employing active listening skills, and displaying confidence are all positive ways to communicate in your interview.
   Almost everything you do, both on the job and in life, can be seen as a form of communication. By identifying your strengths and weaknesses and regularly practising good habits, you can improve the way you connect and communicate with others.

# THE ART OF LISTENING

# 3

Listening is the single most crucial skill in communicating and building your business. Listening increases productivity, boosts confidence and reduces errors. Listening can have numerous benefits, including making you popular, building your personal brand and expanding your relationship network.

So, why is listening in danger of extinction? According to Seth Horowitz, an auditory neuroscientist from Brown University, "Listening is a skill we're in danger of losing in a world of digital distractions and information overload." In fact, researchers (registration required) estimate that we only remember 25–50% of what we hear. Successful people hone this important life skill.

## 3.1 Stop Hearing, Start Listening

Hearing is different from listening. Hearing is when you are only partially interacting in the conversation because you already have an agenda in mind and are waiting for the chance to go into "sales mode." Active listening makes you influential because you are leaning into the person and trying to understand, build trust and empathize before developing solutions and recommendations.

To actively listen you have to shut out distractions — put your cell phone on mute, tune out the noise, tune in to the person and focus on their story. This applies to your personal life, as well as your work. Try these tips to engage successfully:

1. **Make Eye Contact**
   You're at a business event talking to someone and glance away when you notice someone else you want to speak to. You've broken a cardinal rule because, in that instant, you've not only made the person you're speaking to feel unimportant, but you've also made a negative impression that will be difficult to overcome.
2. **Take Time to Connect**
   When a conversation starts, it takes time to find common ground and bond with the other person. For me, if I actively listen to someone, I have just met for a full five minutes, that is typically enough time to learn and perhaps establish a connection. Some may want longer or shorter depending on your personality, but either way, you have to get past the pleasantries to get to know that person.
3. **Reflect What You Hear**
   Mirroring (repeating back) or paraphrasing what you hear can ensure that you have listened correctly and gives the other person an opportunity to clear up any confusion. People want to feel like they are heard and understood.
4. **Ask Questions**
   You don't have to be the most intelligent, funny or even charismatic person in the room. The smartest person in the room is the one who asks great questions and then listens to the response with rapt attention. The person who listens always gets invited back.
   When we listen, we connect the dots between people. One of the most fulfilling parts of my job is bringing people together. That only comes when you're listening and asking insightful questions.
5. **Conduct Surveys**
   Surveys are another way to listen to employees and customers. Surveys can be a predictor of behavior, help an employee feel heard

and be a vehicle for changing behavior. At my company, we are strategic about polling our members and group leaders to make sure we are providing the right tools for everyone to be successful. What works in Los Angeles may not be appropriate in Texas, so we look not only at national trends but also regional preferences so we can customize programs and resources for each group.

## 3.2 Make the Most of Every Conversation

Business doesn't just happen in the office or from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. When you're having a conversation outside of work, you need to know who you are talking with and be aware of your environment, immersed in the interaction and fully engaged in thinking about the topic discussed. Some of my best friendships and longest business relationships have not been a result of my business acumen -- they came from being open to chatting with people and seeing how we all fit into the business ecosystem.

The power of listening is imperative to the success of any business. Having a voice and being able to convey your ideas is important, but listening to your customers and your audience is crucial to understanding their needs. Spending time developing skills to help with listening is valuable for the development of your staff and organization.

1. **Be Curious**
   Think about the other person and practice deep listening. You should be interested in the person and how they tick. If you truly listen and seem to care about the person and what they have to say, it will build a relationship that is based on familiarity and respect.
2. **Points of View**
   We all have different points of view because we have all come from different backgrounds and have had different experiences as we have grown. Just because someone may have a different point of view doesn't mean their view is wrong or that you even agree. The importance lies in validating their point of view and trying to understand them and their basis for their beliefs.
3. **Listen for Slips**
   Often people will truly tell you what they believe, which may be

through a slip of the tongue. Listen to what they are saying and some of the unconscious actions they may be taking during their speech. Be careful when they state something about not meaning to say what they just did; chances are they did mean it.

4. **Recite**
   Imagine that the conversation you are having will be recited back to someone play by play. This will ensure you are actively listening and taking mental notes as the conversation continues. Listening to others for content and meaning is a great way to ensure you are paying attention to the details.
5. **Keep Distractions Away**
   There are many things that can grab our attention when someone is having a conversation. Try to put electronics down and maintain eye contact with the person you are listening to during the conversation. Try to focus all your attention on the speaker and their words and avoid others that may try to interrupt or grab your attention.
6. **Ask Questions**
   Obviously, if you are unclear of a statement or comment, please ask a question to clarify. Try not to excessively interrupt during the conversation but remember that questions can actually enhance the power of the conversation and lead to deeper conversations.
7. **Listen Without Jumping**
   Many of us only partially listen as we try to develop responses or opinions to the topic at hand. Try to actively listen and not consider your own spin to the story or things you would like to interject. Wasting time developing your own thoughts is counterproductive to the listening process.
8. **Listen to your Team.**
   Make sure you are giving your employees a voice in the organization. Let them discuss the issues and provide ideas to help with the organization as a whole. Listen to the ideas and develop plans in response to those ideas in your business.

# HOW TO WRITE A RESUME

# 4

Learning how to write a resume is a crucial skill for job seekers—it's how you market yourself to potential employers.

A well-crafted resume summarizes your professional experience, skills, and achievements. It should grab the hiring manager's attention and show them why:

**YOUR RESUME SHOULD SHOW WHY:**
You're the perfect match for the job.
The skills you have will make the company money.
You're qualified to solve the company's problems.
You'll be worth your salary.
Your accomplishments can be measured and verified.

But in today's job market, it's not enough to write an effective resume. You must also tailor each one to the job you're applying for. Why? Because most companies today use applicant tracking systems, or ATS, to sort and filter the large volume of resumes they receive.

If you're resume doesn't contain the specific keywords hiring

managers are searching for; it won't be found—even if you're qualified for the job!

In this guide, you'll learn how to write a resume that stands out in today's job market. We'll show you how to present yourself as the ideal candidate, highlight the skills that will benefit potential employers, and ensure your resume is compatible with ATS.

### 4.1 How to write a resume that gets interviews.

Here's a quick overview of the basic steps for writing a professional resume. Follow these steps to make your resume clear, concise, and appealing.

### 4.2 10 steps to a perfect resume

1. Gather all relevant data about your work experience, skills, achievements, and education.
2. Select a format that's right for you, whether it's chronological, functional, or hybrid.
3. Clearly list your name, phone number, email, and key social media profiles.
4. Create a compelling headline that includes the job title you're applying for.
5. Write a brief statement that summarizes your key achievements and value you offer.
6. List the skills you have that align closely with the job requirements.
7. Detail your past job roles, responsibilities, and accomplishments.
8. Include your educational degrees, certifications, and relevant training.
9. Showcase any relevant honors, awards, and volunteer work.
10. Tailor your resume by focusing on the experiences and skills that are most relevant to the job.

Before you start working on your resume, remember that your resume is not your biography. You're not telling the story of your life. Instead, your resume should be a targeted document meant to showcase the skills and experiences that match the job you want.

This means that if something is not relevant to your targeted job, leave it out. With this in mind, let's start building your resume!

1. **Gather your essential information before you start-**
   Before diving into the actual resume writing, it's crucial to collect all the necessary information you'll need. This preparatory step ensures that the resume writing process is smooth and that you don't miss any important details.

**KEY PIECES OF INFORMATION TO GATHER:**

1. **Significant achievements:** List standout accomplishments from previous roles that demonstrate your contributions and successes.
2. **Skills:** Compile a list of your soft, hard, and technical skills that align with those required by the job you're targeting.
3. **Employment history:** Provide detailed information about past employers, including their names, your dates of employment, locations, job titles, and a clear description of your duties.
4. **Education:** Document your academic qualifications like college degrees, certifications, or licenses that prove your expertise in relevant fields.
5. **Volunteer work:** Include any voluntary engagements where you developed skills pertinent to the job you are seeking.
6. **Awards and honors:** Mention any notable recognitions you've received that underscore your exceptional talents and commitment.

When you gather your information, include everything you can think of. You can cut information that's not relevant to a specific job later.

2. **Choose a resume format that's right for you-**
   A resume format is the way you organize, or lay out, your information. There are no one-size fits all resume format. Instead, there are three different types of formats to choose from – chronological, functional, and hybrid. Which format you choose depends on your particular situation.

**The chronological resume format:**

This is the most traditional resume format, especially for job seekers with lots of relevant experience.

The chronological resume format lists your work history **in reverse chronological order**, with your most recent jobs listed first. Your skills and education should come after your work history in this format.

**YOU SHOULD USE THE CHRONOLOGICAL FORMAT IF YOU:**

1. **Have a strong work history** showing steady career growth without significant employment gaps.
2. **Are staying in the same field** and want to highlight your experience and advancements within that field.
3. **Want to highlight career progression** and professional achievements over time.

## The functional resume format:

This resume format focuses on your skills rather than your work history. It helps you downplay your lack of experience in a particular field.

In this format, your skills and education should be emphasized over your work history.

**YOU SHOULD USE THE FUNCTIONAL FORMAT IF YOU:**

1. **Are changing careers** and want to emphasize transferable skills over past job titles.
2. **Have gaps in employment** and want to focus on skills rather than work experience.
3. **Are new to the workforce** and want to highlight skills, coursework, and internships.

**NOTE:** Generally speaking, we don't recommend the functional resume format. Recruiters want to see some kind of work history. Instead of the functional format, try the next resume format—the hybrid.

## The hybrid resume format

A hybrid resume is a combination of the chronological resume and the functional resume. It showcases both your work history and your skills.

In this format, your skills come before your work history. But your

work history is still the heart of your resume, just like in the chronological format.

**YOU SHOULD USE THE HYBRID FORMAT IF YOU:**

1. **Have lots of skills** that are relevant to the job you are targeting.
2. **Are climbing the career ladder** within the same field.
3. **Are changing roles within the same industry** and want to highlight vour relevant skills.

We like hybrid resumes because they offer the best of both worlds, combining the strengths of the chronological and the functional resume formats.

3. **Put your contact information at the top of your resume.** This section might appear simple, but it's important. If hiring managers can't contact you, you won't get an interview.

**YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION SHOULD INCLUDE YOUR:**

- Name
- Phone number.
- Location (City, State, Zip Code)
- Email Address
- LinkedIn profile URL

It's surprising how often job seekers forget a crucial piece of contact information. Double-check to make sure it's as easy as possible for recruiters to contact you for a job interview.

**Contact information dos and don'ts.**

**Do**

1. Include your full name, including your middle initial.
2. Include a link to your professional website or online portfolio.
3. Create a strong LinkedIn profile and be sure to include the URL on your resume.

**Don't**

1. Don't write your full address, only your city, state, and zip code.
2. Don't include a work phone number, only your personal number.
3. Don't add a photo of yourself. This can lead to bias or discrimination.

4. **Create a compelling resume headline-**
   Your resume headline comes right after your contact information. At the very least, your headline should clearly identify the title of the job you're applying for.

   Is putting the job title in the headline necessary? Yes! "Think of your resume as a maze," says resume expert Laura DeCarlo. "It has to have a visible entrance, or no one would ever get started." Without a headline, "the prospective employer won't know for which position you are applying."

**Resume headline dos and don'ts.**

**Do**

1. Tailor your headline to each job you apply for.
2. Keep your headline under ten words to make sure it packs a punch.
3. Position yourself as an expert in your field.

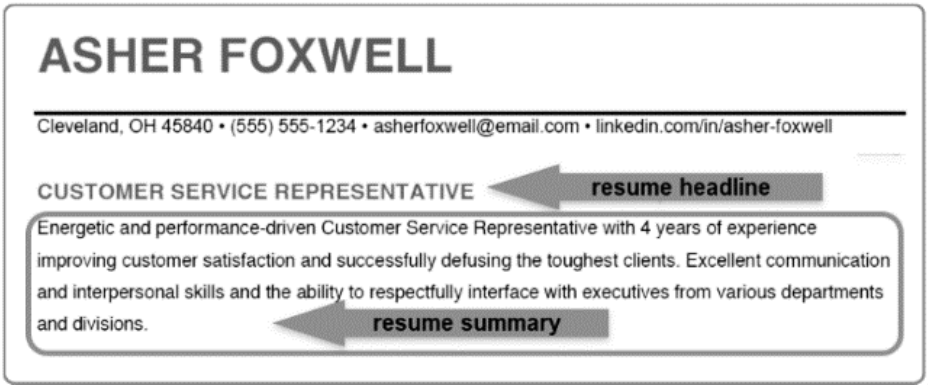
**Don't**

1. Don't use clichés such as "hard worker" or "team player." Be specific.
2. Don't be too salesy. Focus on giving a snapshot of your skills and experience.
3. Don't make your headline too long. Cut to the chase.

5. **Write your resume summary-**
   A resume summary is a brief paragraph that provides an overview of your qualifications for the role you're applying for. Most expert resume writers today highly recommend using a summary.

   "One of the most common mistakes I see in resumes is the absence of a targeted introductory paragraph at the beginning of the resume," says career coach Suzanne Berger. "Keep in mind that recruiters or hiring managers only spend 10 to 20 seconds reviewing your resume, so it is important to make an impact from the start."

   As you can see from the following example, your summary goes right under your resume headline:




Your resume summary should include a concise overview of your key qualifications, professional achievements, and skills that are relevant to the job you are applying for.

Here's a formula you can use to write your summary, followed by an example:

**Resume summary formula:**
**[Your Professional Title]** with **[Years of Experience]** years of experience. Proven track record in **[Top Achievement 1]** and **[Top Achievement 2].** Skilled in **[Skill 1], [Skill 2],** and **[Skill 3].** Known for **[Unique Value or Strength].**
**Example:**
**Marketing Manager** with **8 years of experience**. Proven track record in **increasing online engagement by 40%** and **boosting lead generation by 30%.** Skilled in **content creation, data analysis, and strategic planning.** Known for **exceptional organizational skills and the ability to manage and inspire teams to exceed corporate objectives.**

**Resume summary dos and don'ts.**
**Do**

1. Use numbers to show that you are able to produce tangible outcomes.
2. Incorporate keywords from the job description whenever possible.
3. Write your resume summary last because you'll then have a fuller

picture of your experiences and skills.

**Dont**

1. Don't just list your job duties; instead focus on your accomplishments.
2. Don't use personal pronouns (I, me, or my).
3. Don't make your summary too long; keep it to no more than 3-4 sentences.

6. **Create your skills section-**

   When we talk about keywords, we are mostly talking about skills.

   There are two main types of skills—hard and soft. Hard skills are specific abilities you learn through education or training, like using certain software or speaking a foreign language. Soft skills are more about how you work and interact with others, such as teamwork, communication, and flexibility.

You should place your skills section under your resume summary. List your skill set using bullet points, either in columns or in a bullet-point format. Try to include 10 to 20 key skills in this section.

**IMPORTANT!** The way the same skill is worded in a job description can vary from company to company. This is why it's crucial to tailor each resume to the job you're applying to.

For example, here are three different ways of listing essentially the same skill:

1. **Customer Service**
2. **Client Relations**
3. **Customer Support**

If the job description lists "customer support" and you have "customer service" on your resume, the hiring manager might not find your resume when searching through the ATS database — even though you do have that skill.

To make sure you're using the right keyword skills, run your resume through Jobscan's resume scanner. It compares your

resume to the job description and tells you which skills to use.

You'll also receive a resume score which tells you how closely your resume matches the job description. The higher your score the more likely you are to get an interview.

The skills in red are missing from the resume. Add them to increase the resume score.

**7. Create a compelling work history section.**

Now it's time to get to the heart of your resume – the work experience section. This is the section employers will spend the most time looking at when they consider their resume.

Why is this section so critical? Because it's where you provide the proof to support what you said about yourself in your resume headline, summary, and skills section.

Each job should include the following information and be listed in reverse-chronological order (latest job first).

**EACH JOB SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:**

- **Company name and location –** Include the full name of the company you worked for followed by the city and state of its location.
- **Job title –** Be as specific as possible to ensure that employers know exactly what your role was within the company.
- **Start and end dates –** Include the month and year for each position. If you only list the year, it may appear as though you are omitting information.
- **Achievements and responsibilities –** These can be listed using bullet points. Include hard numbers and metrics wherever possible.

One of the biggest mistakes people make when writing a resume is only listing their job responsibilities. These are tasks that you're expected to perform as part of your job.

Listening to your job responsibilities gives a potential employer an idea of what you did day-to-day. But it doesn't reveal how well you did it.

This is why it's important to highlight your specific accomplishments. For example, if you increased sales, reduced costs, or implemented new processes or technologies, be sure to mention these accomplishments.

**Work experience dos and don'ts.**

**Do**

1. Use numbers to quantify your achievements whenever possible.
2. Use action verbs to describe how you did something.
3. Use the mm/yyyy format for resume dates.

**Dont**

1. Don't list more than 10 years of work experience unless it's highly relevant.
2. Don't use the passive phrase "responsible for." Instead, use active voice.
3. Don't list every single task you worked on; include only the most relevant.

**8. Create your education and certification section-**

Your education section should appear after your work experience. If you're applying to a job that requires extensive education (like medicine, law, or academia), you'll need to be more detailed. But most job seekers can get away with providing only the following information on their resume:

**Education section dos and don'ts**

**Do**

1. Bold your degree so that it stands out.
2. List your education in reverse-chronological order.
3. Include any relevant coursework, skills training, licenses, and certifications.

**Dont**

1. Don't mention your high school if you have a college degree.
2. Don't disclose your GPA unless you graduated recently and had a very impressive academic career (3.5 GPA plus).
3. Don't list an advanced degree if the job doesn't require it.

**9. Showcase honors, awards, and volunteer work.**

The key to this section is to only include honors and awards

that are relevant to the job you're applying for.

This can get a little tricky because if you do have honors or awards that are highly relevant, consider including them in your summary section. Otherwise, hiring managers might miss them if you only list them at the bottom of your resume.

If you have any volunteer experience, it's generally a good idea to add it to your resume.

According to a LinkedIn survey, 20% of employers say they have hired a candidate because of their volunteer experience. The survey also showed that job seekers who volunteer are 27% more likely to be hired than non-volunteers!

10. **How can you tailor your resume to a specific job position?**

Tailoring your resume to each specific job is not just recommended; it's imperative. This is because most companies today use ATS computer software to manage and filter the enormous amount of resumes they receive.

When you submit your resume, it goes into an ATS database. Hiring managers search the ATS database for suitable resumes by typing keywords, or skills, into the ATS search bar. If your resume contains these keywords, it will be found. If it doesn't contain the right keywords, your resume will remain in the ATS database, unseen.

To tailor your resume, you must first read the job description. This is where you'll find the keywords to add to your resume. Make sure you add those keywords exactly as they are written in the job description.

Unfortunately, tailoring each resume to the job description takes time and effort. The best way to speed up this process is to use an online tool like Jobscan's resume scanner.

Just paste in your resume and the job description and click scan. You'll receive a match report telling you how closely your resume matches the job ad.

## 4.3 Effective resume formatting tips

Properly formatting your resume makes it easy for hiring managers to find what they're looking for. At the same time, good formatting helps the ATS understand your resume.

Remember, if the ATS can't read your resume you won't get the job!

## 4.4 Ten resume formatting tips

1. Choose a professional, easy-to-read font like Arial, Calibri, or Times New Roman in size 10 to 12 for text and 14 to 16 for headings.
2. Clearly distinguish section headings with a larger font size, bold text, or underlining to guide the reader's eye effectively through your resume.
3. Set your margins to at least 0.7 inches all around, ensuring that your resume looks balanced and does not appear overcrowded.
4. Avoid complex graphics, tables, headers, and footers, which can confuse ATS software.
5. Break up blocks of text. A paragraph should never be longer than 5 lines.
6. Use standard headings like "Work Experience," "Education," and "Skills." These are immediately recognizable to both hiring managers and ATS.
7. Use the same style of bullets, text alignment, and line spacing throughout your document.
8. Align your text to the left. A correctly aligned or justified text can create irregular spacing between words, making your resume harder to read.
9. Save your resume file as a PDF to preserve your formatting across different platforms.
10. Proofread carefully! One grammatical error can ruin your chances of getting a job.

# ART OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

# 5

Public speaking is a skill that holds immense power. It is the art of conveying a message verbally to an audience. Whether you are conveying that message in person or through digital technology. Public speeches can cover a wide variety of topics and serve various purposes. Topics such as education, entertainment, or influence are common themes in public speaking. The goal is to deliver a memorable oration that captivates the audience and effectively communicates the intended message.

The benefits of being a good public speaker are far-reaching and can positively impact your personal and professional life. Here we can explore some of these advantages, shared challenges people face when speaking in public, and valuable tips to improve your public speaking skills.

## 5.1 Benefits of Public Speaking

1. **Improved Communication Skills:**
   Public speaking enhances your ability to articulate thoughts clearly, express ideas effectively, and engage with others.

2. **Increased Confidence:**
   Mastering public speaking can boost your self-confidence and self-esteem, enabling you to tackle various challenges with poise.
3. **Career Advancement:**
   Strong public speaking skills are highly valued in many professions. Being an effective communicator can open doors to new opportunities and help you stand out among your peers.
4. **Influence and Persuasion:**
   Public speakers have the power to influence, inspire, and motivate others. By delivering compelling speeches, you can shape opinions, drive change, and make a lasting impact.
5. **Expanded Network:**
   Engaging in public speaking often exposes you to diverse audiences, allowing you to connect with like-minded individuals, industry experts, and potential mentors or collaborators.
6. **Enhanced Leadership Abilities:**
   Public speaking is a fundamental leadership skill. It equips you with the tools to lead teams effectively, convey visions, and rally support for your ideas.
7. **Critical Thinking:**
   Preparing speeches requires analyzing information, organizing thoughts logically, and presenting coherent arguments. These processes foster critical thinking skills.
8. **Personal Development:**
   Overcoming the challenges of public speaking promotes personal growth by pushing you outside your comfort zone and encouraging continuous learning.
9. **Effective Storytelling:**
   Public speakers often incorporate storytelling techniques to captivate audiences emotionally and deliver memorable

messages.

10. **Positive Influence on Others:**
    A skilled public speaker can inspire and empower individuals by sharing knowledge, experiences, and valuable insights.

The advantages of public speaking are manifold and have the potential to enhance both our professional and personal realms. However, if public speaking were a skill easily acquired, we would witness a multitude of individuals passionately delivering impromptu speeches on street corners, passionately debating the superiority of various condiments for sandwiches. It is important to acknowledge that public speaking comes with its unique set of challenges. Every individual person possesses their own set of strengths and weaknesses when it comes to addressing an audience. Let us explore some of the common hurdles encountered in the world of public speaking.

## 5.2 Common Challenges in Public Speaking

Public speaking can be a daunting task for many people, leading to various challenges:

1. Anxiety and fear of speaking in front of a crowd: It is normal to feel nervous before a speech, but excessive anxiety can lead to inferior performance and lack of confidence.
2. Lack of preparation: Inadequate preparation can lead to disorganized thoughts, lack of focus, and difficulty in delivering the intended message.
3. Poor body language: Nonverbal cues such as eye contact, posture, and gestures play a crucial role in public speaking. Poor body language can distract the audience and undermine the speaker's credibility.
4. Lack of audience engagement: A speech that fails to engage the audience can be dull and uninteresting. It is essential to connect with the audience by using humor, storytelling, or other effective techniques.

5. Going blank or waffling: Losing track of thoughts or forgetting key points can be frustrating and embarrassing for the speaker.
6. Inattention to the audience: Focusing too much on oneself or one's message can lead to ignoring the audience's needs and interests.

## 5.3 Tips for Improving Public Speaking Skills

Overcoming these challenges and becoming an exceptional public speaker requires practice and preparation. Here are some valuable tips to help you improve your public speaking skills:

1. **Establish Trust with Your Audience:**
   Establishing credibility is crucial. Speak with an authoritative voice, maintain eye contact, and demonstrate that you understand your audience.
2. **Work on Your Confidence:**
   Build confidence by practicing deep breathing and maintaining positive thoughts. Remember that confidence is key when speaking in front of a large audience.
3. **Prepare Thoroughly:**
   Prepare your speech by going over your notes multiple times and practicing extensively. Videotape yourself or ask a friend to critique your performance.
4. **Structure Your Presentation:**
   Create a framework for your speech by organizing your thoughts and ensuring a clear message. Having a well-structured presentation helps you deliver your message effectively.
5. **Pay Attention to Body Language:**
   Nonverbal cues such as eye contact, posture, and gestures play a crucial role in public speaking. Practice good body language to engage the audience and establish credibility.
6. **Engage the Audience:**
   Connect with the audience by using humor, storytelling, or

other effective techniques. Engaging the audience makes your speech more interesting and memorable.

Public speaking skills are highly versatile and can benefit you in various aspects of everyday life. Anything from socializing in groups to leading projects and expressing ideas to people can be accomplished with these skills. By honing them you can enhance your communication abilities, build confidence, and become more effective in personal and professional scenarios.

To further develop your public speaking skills, consider exploring the following resources:

1. **Toastmasters:**
   An international organization dedicated to helping people enhance their public speaking skills.
2. **TED Talks:**
   A collection of inspiring and informative speeches by experts in various fields.
3. **"Lend Me Your Ears:**
   Great Speeches in History" (Book): Features famous speeches throughout history, providing insights into effective oration.
4. **TED Blog:**
   Offers valuable tips, advice, and insights on public speaking and communication.
5. **The Public Speaking Project:**
   Provides free resources, including tutorials, videos, and exercises, to improve public speaking skills.
6. **MindTools:**
   An online platform offering a wide range of resources to enhance communication and presentation skills.
7. **Dale Carnegie's "The Art of Public Speaking" (Book):**
   A classic book that offers practical advice and techniques for effective public speaking.

8. **University of Washington's "Intro to Public Speaking" on Coursera:**
   A comprehensive online course that covers the fundamentals of public speaking.

Remember that practice is key to improving public speaking skills. Engaging in activities such as joining public speaking clubs, participating in debates, or taking courses can provide valuable opportunities for growth and development. With time and effort, you can become a more confident and persuasive communicator.



# ADAPTIBILITY

# 6

## 6.1 Adaptability skills that'll help you grow professionally.

Your team lead calls a meeting to let you all know they're changing the normal workflow. Instead of only running your work by the product department, you must also gain the marketing team's approval. You want to offer a better cadence, but they already approved and implemented the new approval process.

Sudden workflow changes like this can send you out of your comfort zone. You must decide whether to embrace this change with positivity and go with the flow or dig your heels in, stick to the old way, and retreat in the face of a new challenge.

But this second option isn't viable in most work situations as you'll slow down everyone's workflow and impede your professional development. Instead, you can foster several types of adaptability skills to take on any process change or challenge that comes your way.

## 6.2 What are adaptability skills?

Adaptability skills are proficiencies you can use to adjust to new situations and change your actions as needed. This involves privileging strategic thinking and being open-minded when encountering obstacles.

Constructive criticism, unexpected changes, and worst-case scenarios happen in any work environment. That's why adaptability skills are important. They aid your decision-making and help you decide how to set goals. If you're adaptable, you can continue moving forward instead of dwelling on the issues you face.

While both are equally valuable, adaptability differs from flexibility because it demands new circumstances. Working later or accommodating team members suggests flexibility and openness to adjust. But adapting means you're facing a unique situation, no matter how prepared you are.

## 6.3 Seven types of adaptability skills

Adaptability skills are often either cognitive, personality-based, or emotional.

Cognitive adaptability involves processing new information and adjusting your thinking accordingly. This adaptability type draws on your ability to learn, curiosity, and open-mindedness.

Personality-based adaptability means seeing a situation for what it is and adapting your behaviour to respond accordingly. This relies on resourcefulness, communication, and teamwork skills, and is helpful in the workplace.

Emotional adaptability focuses on acknowledging, accepting, and moving past changes, which draws on your resilience. Let's dive deeper into the adaptability skills you can cultivate to improve your work performance.

**1. Curiosity**

Curiosity fosters open-mindedness and a growth mindset. With an inquisitive spirit, you're more likely to embrace new situations and view challenges as opportunities for growth and exploration. You'll approach tasks with curiosity to develop your skills and promote innovative thinking in your workplace.

Here are a few related skills that enhance your curiosity:

a. **Calculated risk-taking:** Taking well-informed risks teaches you to learn from your mistakes embrace failure, and think outside the box.
b. **A positive attitude:** Greet challenges with a positive outlook to see them as growth opportunities instead of setbacks.
c. **Creative thinking:** Consider unique solutions to everyday problems to help your company supersede the competition.

**2. Learning**

Whether you learn independently or through collaboration, the ability to learn new things means you quickly acquire and retain knowledge, skills, and perspectives that help you adapt to new situations.

A few skills related to your ability to learn include:

a. **Critical thinking:** Effective learning habits rely on critical thinking skills, including analysing information, evaluating arguments, and making informed decisions.
b. **Continuous learning:** When you make a deliberate effort to continuously learn, you actively seek out new experiences and information, creating a feedback loop of development.
c. **Feedback acceptance:** Being more receptive to feedback improves your ability to learn as you'll transform potential problems into possibilities for growth.

**3. Resourcefulness**

Resourcefulness refers to the ability to effectively solve problems and find solutions in the face of challenges or limited resources when working toward team or personal goals.

This requires creativity and innovation to develop unique and effective solutions and is particularly valuable in the workplace, as it allows individuals to navigate and overcome obstacles, even when resources are scarce.

Show resourcefulness by drawing upon the following skills:

a. **Creative thinking:** Come up with original ideas to approach problems from a fresh perspective.
b. **Problem-solving:** Identify, analyse, and resolve problems systematically and effectively.
c. **Budgeting:** Take the initiative to set and stay within a budget to demonstrate you're aware of a new challenge's constraints and are stepping up to meet them with the resources at hand.

**4. Communication skills**

Communication skills like being a good listener and understanding nonverbal signals enable you to build stronger relationships and effectively navigate complex and ever-changing situations.

Upskill the following items to strengthen your communication skills:

1. **Emotional intelligence:** Recognize and manage your emotions and others' to communicate effectively and empathize with your team.
2. **Active listening:** This involves paying attention and being present when others speak

to understand what they're saying instead of focusing on when you can interject.

3. **Nonverbal communication:** Good communication skills don't stop at listening and speaking. Understanding nonverbal cues like gestures, facial expressions, and posture helps you pick up on how a person truly feels.

**5. Organizational skills**

Being organized ensures you know what resources are available to you, whether personal contacts, time, or energy. Organizational skills also help you determine what's necessary to achieve your goals or finish your work.

Key related skills include:

1. **Project management:** Manage your tasks to balance your workload by breaking larger items into less overwhelming ones and creating checklists to monitor progress.
2. **Time management:** Keep tabs on how much time you take to complete tasks so you can adapt to changing project schedules and due dates.

**6. Teamwork skills**

When you work as a team, personality types and opinions might clash. But that won't matter if everyone sees the value of having diverse people and perspectives at work. Conflict may occur, but you'll be able to adapt and address the situation well thanks to your teamwork skills.

Here are a few of the best ones to foster:

1. **Leadership skills:** Adaptable leaders inspire others to thrive under pressure and effectively collaborate to solve complex issues.
2. **Compromise:** You're working with your team to achieve a common goal — don't lose sight

of that. Teamwork requires a willingness to compromise and understanding how to set aside your preferences for the greater good.

3. **Conflict resolution:** This draws upon your communication skills to manage and resolve conflicts within a team. Use this skill to find common ground and remind everyone of overarching objectives.

**7. Resilience**

Resilience allows you to address obstacles straight-on. You'll bounce back from setbacks, adapt quickly to change, and persevere through tough times.

Here are three related skills that'll improve your resilience:

1. **Self-confidence:** Having a strong sense of self-esteem and belief in your abilities will help you take on challenges, persist through difficulties, and learn from your experiences.
2. **Determination:** Maintaining a solid resolve will help you stay motivated and accomplish more goals.
3. **Diligence:** Apply consistent effort and attention to your responsibilities to ensure you steadily move toward success.

## 6.4 How to know if you're an adaptable employee.

While there's always room for improvement, you might already use many of the skills listed above. Here are five signs you're an adaptable person:

1. **You're present:** Rather than dwell on the past or worry too much about the future, you put mindfulness to the test and embrace change as it happens.
2. **You use positive self-talk:** You use positive thinking like "I can do this with a little hard

work" rather than thoughts of self-doubt to motivate you.

3. **You see the bigger picture:** When challenges arise, you quickly remember your overall objectives, so you don't feel discouraged or distracted.
4. **You like to experiment:** Doing things the same way forever doesn't level you up and gets boring. Instead, you look for new ways of doing your work and learn something in the process.
5. **You exhibit empathy:** You're an understanding individual who recognizes the importance of emotional and cognitive empathy when responding to teammates as they react to challenging situations.

How to teach adaptability

If you hold a leadership role, it's advantageous for you to teach adaptability skills to your coworkers. Here are a few ways you can do so:

1. Have them visualize one thing they could be more adaptable about professionally.
2. Give them a tour of all the resources they have access to
3. Hold monthly seminars where you practice problem-solving challenges together.
4. Create a board (virtual or physical) where you share new findings or exciting information regarding adaptability or team member progress.
5. Set up specific, organized lines of communication, like Slack channels called #questions, for them to use.

The importance of adaptability for mental health.

Adaptability is essential for your mental health, no matter your occupation. Students, teachers, and professional athletes all face similar struggles, like change and uncertainty.

But if you're more rigid in your thinking, new and scary situations might throw you off kilter, and you won't feel prepared and supported to address them.

One study found that life satisfaction, the ability to adapt, and one's support system are all connected. People adapted better to change with a solid social support system to help them. As these participants' environments changed and new things came their way, they could adapt easier.

With resources and help at your fingertips — like easily accessible communication platforms and a helpful manager — you'll feel confident and willing to embrace change and combat the stress and anxiety it might bring with it.

Patience and adaptability will get you closer to your goals.

Fostering adaptability is all about practice. The next time a challenge arises, or a change surprises you, consider the types of adaptability skills you can employ — like positive thinking and communication skills — to effectively address this situation.

Every time you do so, you're strengthening these skills and making them habitual.

Eventually, you won't need to think about how to approach a situation that puts you out of your comfort zone — you'll have adaptability locked in.

# TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS

# 7

Learning how to effectively manage your time enables you to meet deadlines, explore new ideas, and find a healthy work-life balance. If you feel overwhelmed and overworked, learning a few time management tools may help you reduce stress and plan how to meet your goals.

In this article, we'll outline seven skills that, when developed, can give a big boost to your productivity.

## 7.1 What is time management?

Time management is the art of effectively planning your time. This allows you to efficiently and productively complete the activities and tasks you need to in the appropriate amount of time. Time management also involves prioritizing your to-do list so that you complete urgent or important tasks before others. This helps to avoid missing important deadlines or rushing through important tasks.

## 7.2 Seven-time management skills

If you're ready to take control of your time, work on developing these seven-time management skills.

1. **Prioritization.**

   To effectively manage your time, you will need to decide in which order you should complete your tasks. Reviewing your schedule each day and labeling your to-do list with whether tasks are urgent, important, or neither can help you decide when and how to manage your time throughout the day. In general, you will want to prioritize your urgent tasks in the order of their importance. Following this, you can complete your non-urgent tasks in the same manner. This makes sure you complete critical tasks with the needed attention and time.

   One key difference when prioritizing tasks will be between "urgent" and "important" tasks. Urgent tasks are ones that you must complete as soon as possible, while important tasks are those that matter, and not doing them may lead to negative consequences, but there is more flexibility when they get done.

   For example, picking up your prescription from the pharmacy is an important task because you likely need the medication, and waiting too long could have negative health consequences. However, you may have freedom over the next couple of days as to when you pick up the prescription. If you are expecting an important phone call and your phone rings, then picking up the phone call is an urgent task. This is because it is a task that demands your immediate attention.

2. **Goal setting**

   Goals give a measurable way to determine progress toward the end product. Setting goals can help you organize your to-do list and determine the priority of your tasks. If you have a goal set for the end of each week or month, then you can create a priority list specifically for each goal. This can reduce the feeling of being stressed or overwhelmed when working toward larger goals.

3. **Planning**

   Writing down your schedule can give you a realistic idea of how

much time you have to allocate to different tasks. For example, you may have a standard 9-to-5 workday and assume you have eight hours to complete your five project-based tasks of the day. Let's say you then write down your schedule, and see you have an hour-long lunch meeting, a 30-minute internal meeting on a different floor and have to leave 30 minutes early to pick up your kids from school. When you write this down, you see you actually have six hours outside of meetings.

By breaking down your schedule, you'll realize each meeting is a 10-minute walk from your office. In addition to this, you know it takes you at least 10 minutes to get organized at your desk before beginning work each time you return, and you will need a 30-minute break in the day to recharge. You now realize you have to factor in 40 minutes of walking time and 50 minutes of non-working time at your desk. This leaves you 4.5 hours of working time for your project-based tasks.

By writing down your schedule, you can better allocate time for each task and make reasonable plans for your day.

4. **Delegation**

   Delegating tasks is an important skill to avoid being overwhelmed. If you have the capacity to delegate tasks within your workplace, consider assigning certain projects to team members that have the capacity to take them on. This gives you time to focus on more challenging tasks.

5. **Setting boundaries and saying "no"**

   If your supervisor or colleague asks you to complete a task and you do not have the time, practice being assertively honest about your work capacity and current workload. Taking on too many responsibilities can prevent us from completing important work and contributes to missing deadlines. If you are repeatedly assigned more tasks than you are able to effectively complete, consider scheduling a meeting with your supervisor to discuss the limits of your role and how you can best perform in your current position.

6. **Focus**

   Creating an organized workspace can help you focus on your assignments and prevent wasting time on distractions. To work

productively, make sure you are able to find needed materials, a place where nobody will interrupt you, and a comfortable space.

Instead of trying to complete several tasks at once, focus on one task at a time. This may improve the quality of completed tasks and allow you to reduce distractions.

7. **Automation**

Many technologies exist to automate common workplace tasks. Depending on your profession, using project management software, human resource software, email templates, or scheduling software may be able to help streamline your workload.

## 7.3 Benefits of good time management

There are many benefits of managing your time well in the workplace. In general, those with good time management skills will experience the following benefits compared to professionals with poor time management skills:

| | |
|---|---|
| • Lower levels of stress<br>• Lower anxiety levels<br>• Improved reputation in the workplace<br>• Better focus<br>• More productivity<br>• Improved decision-making<br>• Attainment of goals | • Increased ability to meet deadlines<br>• Improved work quality<br>• Better work-life balance<br>• Increase professional confidence<br>• More free time<br>• More energy for personal activities |

## 7.4 Next steps

Empower yourself to reach your goals at home and at work with Achieving Personal and Professional Success from the University of Pennsylvania's The Wharton School. Learn how to define success, communicate more effectively, and use your influence through hands-on exercises, surveys, and case studies, all at your own pace.

# UNDERSTANDING EMOTINAL INTELLIGENCE
AND HOW TO IMPROVE IT

# 8

Emotional intelligence (also known as emotional quotient or EQ) is the ability to understand, use, and manage your own emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathize with others, overcome challenges, and defuse conflict.
Emotional intelligence helps you build stronger relationships, succeed at school, work, and achieve your career and personal goals. It can also help you to connect with your feelings, turn intention into action, and make informed decisions about what matters most to you.

## 8.1 The 4 Key Skills to Emotional intelligence:

1. **Self-management:**
   You're able to control impulsive feelings and behaviors, manage your emotions in healthy ways, take initiative, follow through on commitments, and adapt to changing circumstances.
2. **Self-awareness:**
   You recognize your own emotions and how they affect your thoughts and behavior. You know your strengths and weaknesses and have self-confidence.

3. **Social awareness:**
   You have empathy. You can understand the emotions, needs, and concerns of other people, pick up on emotional cues, feel comfortable socially, and recognize the power dynamics in a group or organization.
4. **Relationship management:**
   You know how to develop and maintain good relationships, communicate clearly, inspire and influence others, work well in a team, and manage conflict.

## 8.2 The importance of emotional intelligence (EQ)

As we know, it's not the smartest people who are the most successful or the most fulfilled in life. You probably know people who are academically brilliant and yet are socially inept and unsuccessful at work or in their personal relationships. Intellectual ability or your intelligence quotient (IQ) isn't enough on its own to achieve success in life. Yes, your IQ can help you get into college, but it's your EQ that will help you manage the stress and emotions when facing your final exams. IQ and EQ exist in tandem and are most effective when they build off one another.

## 8.3 Emotional intelligence affects:

1. **Your performance at school or work:**
   High emotional intelligence can help you navigate the social complexities of the workplace, lead and motivate others, and excel in your career. In fact, when it comes to gauging important job candidates, many companies now rate emotional intelligence as important as technical ability and employ EQ testing before hiring.
2. **Your physical health:**
   If you're unable to manage your emotions, you are probably not managing your stress either. This can lead to serious health problems. Uncontrolled stress raises blood pressure, suppresses the immune system, increases the risk of heart

attacks and strokes, contributes to infertility, and speeds up the aging process. The first step to improving emotional intelligence is to learn how to manage stress.

3. **Your mental health:**
   Uncontrolled emotions and stress can also impact your mental health, making you vulnerable to anxiety and depression. If you are unable to understand, get comfortable with, or manage your emotions, you'll also struggle to form strong relationships. This in turn can leave you feeling lonely and isolated and further exacerbate any mental health problems.
4. **Your relationships**
   By understanding your emotions and how to control them, you're better able to express how you feel and understand how others are feeling. This allows you to communicate more effectively and forge stronger relationships, both at work and in your personal life.
5. **Your social intelligence**
   Being in tune with your emotions serves a social purpose, connecting you to other people and the world around you. Social intelligence enables you to recognize friend from foe, measure another person's interest in you, reduce stress, balance your nervous system through social communication, and feel loved and happy.

## 8.4 Building emotional intelligence: Four key skills to increasing EQ.

The skills that make up emotional intelligence can be learned at any time. However, it's important to remember that there is a difference between simply learning about EQ and applying that knowledge to your life. Just because you know you should do something doesn't mean you will—especially when you become overwhelmed by stress, which can override your best intentions.

In order to permanently change behavior in ways that stand up under pressure, you need to learn how to overcome stress in the moment, and in your relationships, in order to remain emotionally aware.

The following 4 key skills can help you build your EQ and improve your ability to manage emotions and connect with others.

**Skill 1: Self-management to build EQ.**

In order for you to engage your EQ, you must be able to use your emotions to make constructive decisions about your behavior. When you become overly stressed, you can lose control of your emotions and the ability to act thoughtfully and appropriately.

Think about a time when stress overwhelmed you. Was it easy to think clearly or make a rational decision? Probably not. When you become overly stressed, your ability to both think clearly and accurately assess emotions—your own and other people's—becomes compromised.

Emotions are important pieces of information that tell you about yourself and others, but in the face of stress that takes us out of our comfort zone, we can become overwhelmed and lose control of ourselves. With the ability to manage stress and stay emotionally present, you can learn to receive upsetting information without letting it override your thoughts and self-control. You'll be able to make choices that allow you to control impulsive feelings and behaviors, manage your emotions in healthy ways, take initiative, follow through on commitments, and adapt to changing circumstances.

**Skill 2: Self-awareness for EQ.**

Managing stress is just the first step to building emotional intelligence.

The theory of attachment indicates that your current emotional experience is likely a reflection of your early life experience. Your

ability to manage core feelings such as anger, sadness, fear, and joy often depends on the quality and consistency of your early life emotional experiences. If your primary caretaker as an infant understood and valued your emotions, it's likely your emotions have become valuable assets in adult life. But, if your emotional experiences as an infant were confusing, threatening, or painful, it's likely you've tried to distance yourself from your emotions.

But being able to connect to your emotions—having a moment-to-moment connection with your changing emotional experience—is the key to understanding how emotion influences your thoughts and actions.

**Do you experience feelings that flow,** encountering one emotion after another as your experiences change from moment to moment?

**Are your emotions accompanied by physical sensations that you experience** in places like your stomach, throat, or chest?

**Do you experience individual feelings and emotions,** such as anger, sadness, fear, and joy, each of which is evident in subtle facial expressions?

**Can you experience intense feelings** that are strong enough to capture both your attention and that of others?

**Do you pay attention to your emotions?** Do they factor into your decision making?

If any of these experiences are unfamiliar, you may have "turned down" or "turned off" your emotions. In order to build EQ—and become emotionally healthy—you must reconnect to your core emotions, accept them, and become comfortable with them. You can achieve this through the practice of mindfulness.

Mindfulness is the practice of purposely focusing your attention on the present moment—and without judgment. The cultivation of

mindfulness has roots in Buddhism, but most religions include some type of similar prayer or meditation technique. Mindfulness helps shift your preoccupation with thought toward an appreciation of the moment, your physical and emotional sensations, and brings a larger perspective on life. Mindfulness calms and focuses you, making you more self-aware in the process.

**Developing emotional awareness**

It's important that you learn how to manage stress first, so you'll feel more comfortable reconnecting to strong or unpleasant emotions and changing how you experience and respond to your feelings. You can develop your emotional awareness by using one of the best books on Emotional Intelligence.

**Skill 3: Social awareness for EQ.**

Social awareness enables you to recognize and interpret the mainly nonverbal cues others are constantly using to communicate with you. These cues let you know how others are really feeling, how their emotional state changes from moment to moment, and what's truly important to them.

When groups of people send out similar nonverbal cues, you're able to read and understand the power dynamics and shared emotional experiences of the group. In short, you're empathetic and socially comfortable.

**Using mindfulness to build social awareness**

To build social awareness, you need to recognize the importance of mindfulness in the social process. After all, you can't pick up on subtle nonverbal cues when you're in your own head, thinking about other things, or simply zoning out on your phone. Social awareness requires your presence in the moment. While many of us pride ourselves on an ability to multitask, this means that you'll

miss the subtle emotional shifts taking place in other people that help you fully understand them.

1. You are actually more likely to further your social goals by setting other thoughts aside and focusing on the interaction itself.
2. Following the flow of another person's emotional responses is a give-and-take process that requires you to also pay attention to the changes in your own emotional experience.
3. Paying attention to others doesn't diminish your own self-awareness. By investing the time and effort to really pay attention to others, you'll actually gain insight into your own emotional state as well as your values and beliefs. For example, if you feel discomfort hearing others express certain views, you'll have learned something important about yourself.

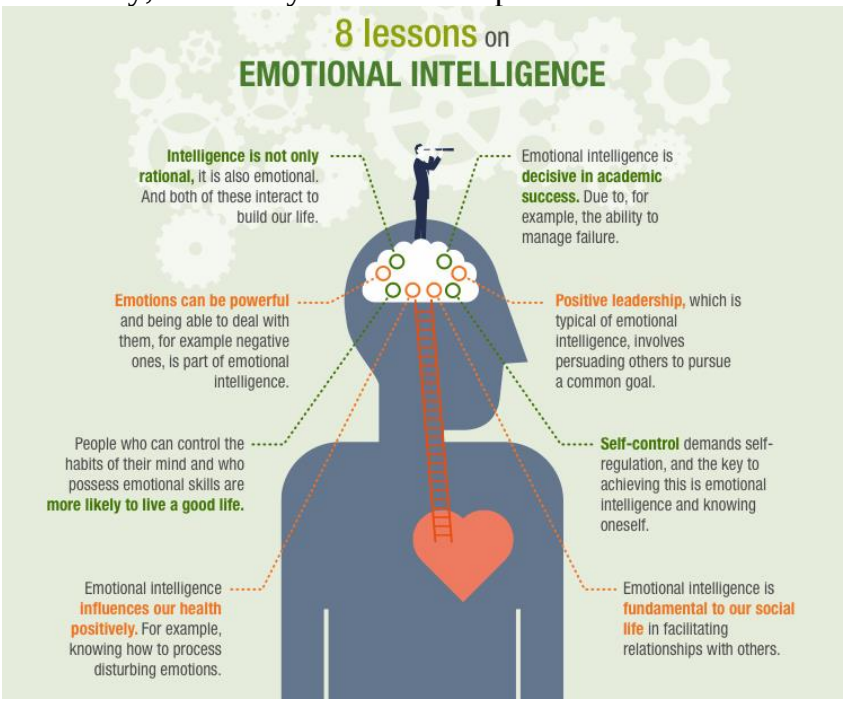
**Skill 4: Relationship management for EQ.**

Working well with others is a process that begins with emotional awareness and your ability to recognize and understand what other people are experiencing. Once emotional awareness is in play, you can effectively develop additional social/emotional skills that will make your relationships more effective, fruitful, and fulfilling.

1. **Become aware of how effectively you use nonverbal communication:**

   It's impossible to avoid sending nonverbal messages to others about what you think and feel. The many muscles in the face, especially those around the eyes, nose, mouth and forehead, help you to wordlessly convey your own emotions as well as read other peoples' emotional intent. The emotional part of your brain is always on—and even if you ignore its messages—others won't. Recognizing the nonverbal messages that you send to others can play a huge part in improving your relationships.

2. **Use humor and play to relieve stress:**
   Humor, laughter and play are natural antidotes to stress. They lessen your burdens and help you keep things in perspective. Laughter brings your nervous system into balance, reducing stress, calming you down, sharpening your mind and making you more empathic.
3. **Learn to see conflict as an opportunity to grow closer to others:**
   Conflict and disagreements are inevitable in human relationships. Two people can't possibly have the same needs, opinions, and expectations at all times. However, that needn't be a bad thing. Resolving conflict in healthy, constructive ways can strengthen trust between people. When conflict isn't perceived as threatening or punishing, it fosters freedom, creativity, and safety in relationships.



# HOW TO AVOID PROCRASTINATION AND LAZINESS

# 9

## 9.1 The secret to stop procrastinating at work

If you've landed on this page, you're probably looking for a way to stop procrastinating. But quick gimmicks to force motivation won't work. That's because your problem with procrastination isn't actually a problem with motivation—it's a problem with clarity.

Clarity is something we think about a lot at Asana—because achieving clarity is the key to getting good results. The problem is clarity isn't always guaranteed. You need a dedicated tool and a good framework for visibility in order to prevent silos and unblock high-impact, meaningful work. In this article, we'll show you how lack of clarity about why your work matters is leading to procrastination and what to do to stop that.

## 9.2 Why we procrastinate at work

Procrastination is a form of time-inconsistency—the unconscious preference for immediate gratification over potential future rewards. Even if you know you shouldn't procrastinate because you need to get something done, it's more appealing to do

something now—and experience the immediate gratification—than to work towards a longer-term goal.

Part of solving this is bringing immediate gratification into longer-term projects. As a team lead, you can do this by implementing appreciation and feedback into your daily work. With Asana, we've taken this a step further and added celebrations right into the product itself. After all, everyone could use a unicorn flying across their screen every now and again.

**What is procrastination?**
Procrastination is the habit of delaying or postponing the work you need to get done, either by doing other, less important things or by distracting yourself with non-work activities, like checking social media or watching a tv show.

## 9.3 Procrastination doesn't mean laziness

Depending on who you talk to, people cite many different reasons as to why they procrastinate at work. Reasons typically include:

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|---|---|
| • Laziness | • Feeling like work isn't urgent |
| • Lack of self-control | • Confusion about requirements |
| • Fear of failure | • Negative self-talk |
| • Built-up bad habit | • Fear of complex or overwhelming projects |
| • Perfectionism | • Multitasking |

Nearly all of these reasons stem from one, central blocker that leads to procrastination at work: lack of clarity. If you've developed a procrastination habit, chances are, you don't have a clear connection to why your work matters. That isn't laziness talking—it's a fixable issue.

## 9.4 The problem with procrastination

Time-inconsistency plays a huge role in procrastination at work. Oftentimes, the work you're doing is contributing to a larger project or organizational purpose. But, depending on your role, that goal can seem far from your day-to-day work. Without insight into why your work matters, it's hard to motivate yourself to get that work done.

What's missing is clarity. When you clearly understand—and can draw a direct line between—the work you're doing and how it impacts your team or organization, you're more motivated. But this is hard to achieve. In fact, according to our research, only 26% of employees have a very clear understanding of how their work relates to company goals.

Understanding how your work is laddering up to company goals leads to more clarity about how you're making an impact at your team and company. This simplifies decision making. You can mindfully prioritize important tasks based on the initiatives that make the most impact on your company goals. Make sure these goals aren't too far off or amorphous, though. To combat procrastination, you need a clear line of sight from your work to company goals.

## 9.5 Solving the clarity problem

To solve the clarity problem, you can do one of two things:

1. **Create team or department goals**
   If you or your team members have a hard time seeing how your individual work connects to broad company goals, consider creating department or team goals. That way, it's easier to draw a line between your work and your team's goals and understand the impact you have.
2. **Clearly connect your personal work to company goals.**
   Even if you can't create team or company goals, look for a way to visualize how your work is directly connected to broader company goals. For example, understanding how your work impacts a project that's driving towards a larger company objective can help you better understand the impact your work has. You can do this with a goal management platform, like Asana.

## 9.6 7 tips to stop procrastinating

To combat procrastination at work, create shorter-term team and department goals, or draw a line between your personal work and broader company goals. Try these seven tips to get started:

1. **Connect work to goals**

   The best way to stop procrastinating is to clearly understand how your work is contributing to team and company goals. When you have this level of clarity, work becomes meaningful. Instead of doing work for the sake of working, you're contributing to a larger vision.

   Ideally, this vision is something you feel passionate about. But even if it isn't, simply understanding how your work connects to something larger helps it become more meaningful. Instead of struggling with time-inconsistency, the work you'd typically procrastinate on now has clear value.

2. **Clarify priorities**

   Inevitably, deadlines change. This could happen because a project suffers from scope creep, another project gets prioritized, or your team lead reallocates resources based on last-minute needs. But if you know what work is most important, you're more prepared to actively manage your priorities. Then, when deadlines and timelines do shift, you have the clarity to deliver the work that drives meaningful results.

   Clarifying priorities is a good anti-procrastination method because it helps you clearly see which work is most important. With clear priorities, you know you aren't working on unimportant tasks. Instead of feeling like you're wasting time at work, you see why your work matters.

3. **Use goals to fight perfectionism**

   Sometimes, chronic procrastinators are actually perfectionists. In such a case, the pressure of doing perfect work is overwhelming—which leads to procrastination. But

perfectionism, like most other types of procrastination at work, can be solved through clarity.

**Focus on impact**

If you struggle with perfectionism, it helps to have a clear sense of the impact of your work. Instead of aiming for perfection, focus on completing the task at hand so it supports company goals in the best way possible. Here's what we mean:

Imagine you're working on an educational animation for your website's home page. Many people will see this work—which is causing the perfectionist in you to panic. That's because you're focusing on the outcome and thinking about all of the people who will see the video. Instead, focus on the video's goals and impact. The animation's goal is to communicate the benefits of your company's product to people who aren't familiar with the product—and the impact is education. By re-orienting your priorities around the impact, you reduce the pressure of perfectionism and get right to work.

**Define "done"**

Another good strategy to fight perfectionism is to define what "done" means. This is a technique that Scrum teams use to move quickly. By defining—and sticking to—what "done" means, you have a point at which you can stop working, regardless of whether the work is 100% perfect. When in doubt, keep in mind that done is better than perfect.

4. **Break big initiatives into smaller tasks**

Sometimes it's hard to clearly see how and when you'll complete a big project. As a result, it's tempting to just put it off. The scope of the initiative makes it difficult to grasp all of the moving parts and connect those back to your larger goals. Instead of getting overwhelmed by the enormity of the task (or project), break the work down into smaller chunks, then use a project management tool to track and organize your work.

Breaking big pieces of work into smaller chunks is also helpful because you're probably not responsible for every aspect of a large initiative. For example, if you're writing an ebook, you're responsible for outlining, drafting, and copyediting the work. But there's probably someone else designing the ebook, plus an editor to approve the ebook. Breaking up the initiative "Create ebook" into multiple tasks not only makes it easier to get started, but also gives you clarity into who's doing what by when.

5. **Capture every to-do**

   Even if you're not working on complex initiatives, it's still helpful to list each to-do out. Without a clear way to visualize what's on your plate, it's easy to get overwhelmed and lose track of everything you have to do. And you're not alone. According to our research, 26% of deadlines are missed each week.

   Capturing every to-do is a tactic from the Getting Things Done (GTD) method. Once you clearly see what's on your plate, you can more easily organize, prioritize, and execute work. Make sure you're tracking your work in a to-do list app, not a written checklist. While it's fun to cross things off a list, tracking your work in an app helps you sort and prioritize work, add additional context to important to-dos, and share those to-dos with team members.

   To build a great virtual to-do list, read our article about 15 secrets for making a to-do list that actually works.

6. **Set deadlines**

   Without a clear sense of when things are due, it's tempting to put that work off. Clear deadlines make it easier for you to understand exactly when a task needs to be completed. You can then plan accordingly to make sure it's done on time. After all, you can't get good work done if you don't know when that work is due in the first place.

Once you've captured all of your to-dos in a to-do list tool, make sure each item has an associated deadline. This is also a chance for you to identify work that isn't a high priority for you. If you come across such a task, defer the work until you're more available or delegate the task to someone else.

Don't just do this once. Quickly triage work at the end of the day and set due dates for any new tasks. That way, when you get into work the next day, you're better equipped to get stuff done.

**7. Try these time management strategies**

Once you have clarity, you're more likely to feel motivated. Yet there are still days where you need a little extra support to stay on task. If that's the case, try a time management strategy to reduce multitasking and get into flow state.

1. **Getting Things Done (GTD) method**
   The GTD method is based on the idea that the more information you're mentally keeping track of, the less productive and focused you are. Instead of relying on your brain, the GTD methodology encourages you to store all of your work information in an external, organized source of truth.
2. **Pomodoro technique**
   The pomodoro technique alternates between work and break sessions. A pomodoro is a 25-minute work session, after which there's a five-minute break. After doing four pomodoros, you take a long break. By working in short spurts, you're more likely to be productive while staying motivated.
3. **Time blocking**
   Time blocking is a time management strategy where you schedule out every part of your day. With time blocking, you're effectively breaking the work week into bite-sized time slots where you check your email, work on projects, take a break, or even exercise.
4. **Timeboxing**
   Timeboxing is a goal-oriented time management strategy to

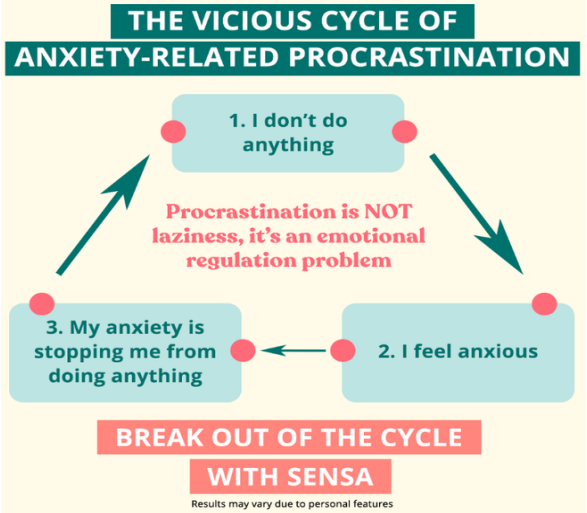
help you increase productivity and reduce procrastination. A timebox represents a goal to finish a particular task within a certain time frame.

5. **2-minute rule**
   The 2-minute rule is a simple time management strategy: If a task takes less than two minutes to accomplish, do it now. This methodology focuses on small tasks, with the belief that if you get them out of the way quickly, you have more time—and more brainpower—to get your higher-impact work done.

## 9.7 Don't procrastinate creating clarity

While you can try to brute-force your way out of procrastination and adopt a "just do it" attitude, these strategies are only effective in the short term, at best. In the long run, the most effective way to stop procrastinating is to connect your work to larger goals.

Like other personal development skills, stopping yourself from procrastinating takes time. If this is a habit you've built up, don't expect it to go away overnight. Instead, dedicate yourself to creating clarity—for yourself and your team—over a period of time. Slowly, you'll find you're more motivated to get work done when you can clearly see why your work matters.



# WORK ETHICS

# 10

Work ethics definition could be termed as moral guidelines that an organization as a whole, and the individuals who comprise it, follow to comply with state and federal laws. Ethics also are the basis of cohesive, supportive company culture and an important way for a company to build a strong relationship with its customers. Employees may also find it challenging and uncomfortable to survive and work for the long term in businesses where a strong work ethic is lacking.

Many companies make their work ethics into marketing points, such as Chipotle advertising that it does not source meat from suppliers that use artificial hormones or antibiotics in their meat production. Similarly, lush's commitment to minimizing waste by using recycled materials for its labels and paper packaging is based on their ethics.

## 10.1 What are some examples of Work Ethics?

In most cases, work ethics in an organization are derived from secular values like:

1. trustworthiness
2. integrity

3. fairness
4. responsibility
5. accountability
6. loyalty
7. camaraderie
8. citizenship
9. respect
10. caring

In many industries, workplace ethics are derived from laws and industry regulations. In the United States, employers are required to comply with the safety laws enforced by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and anti-discrimination laws enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The protections these laws offer to employees can be used as a springboard to create workplace ethics, such as:

1. anti-discrimination policies
2. anti-harassment policies
3. policies for interactions with clients
4. safety policies

## 10.2 Why are Work Ethics important?

Workplace ethics are important because they keep all members of an organization accountable for their actions. Maintaining a strong, ethical code creates a sense of security through boundaries for employees. It also enables management to make decisions that benefit the company as a whole while meeting consumer and employee needs.

By creating boundaries for employees at all levels, workplace ethics help employees feel valued. In a workplace with no ethical standards, an employee might feel like she cannot speak to a supervisor about her sexual harassment experience, or as if she has no guidance on how to manage interactions with a difficult customer. Just as in romantic and family relationships, ethics serve to create healthy relationships between colleagues.

Workplace ethics matter outside the workplace, too. In today's online world, every company is under close public scrutiny. Maintaining ethical standards helps companies maintain strong relationships with consumers by setting precedents in their industries that command respect.

## 10.3 What are the types of Work Ethics in an organization?

1. **Reliability**
   A dependable employee is an excellent teammate. The person you hire will be dependable if they have a high work ethic, and they'll deliver to the best of their ability on every project they work on. These employees also know how to prioritize tasks and make sure that everything is completed on time and correctly.

2. **Dedication**
   Commitment and dedication are important parts of a good work ethic. These employees are focused on the tasks at hand, even when they're interrupted. They stay on task and work until they finish their duties.
   These employees usually don't leave one company for long periods of time, but they're usually loyal to one company for years or decades as well.

3. **Discipline**
   A highly disciplined employees is someone who meets or exceeds expectations, seeks opportunities to learn skills and improve their performance, and does not take the job for granted.

4. **Productivity**
   Outstanding productivity is the result of a strong work ethic. Employees that are productive generally outperform their peers. They finish tasks ahead of schedule and go above and beyond the call of duty.

   Discipline is an essential part of a good work ethic. Highly disciplined employees show determination and commitment to the job. They strive to meet or exceed expectations, seeking opportunities to learn new skills that will help them perform better.

**5. Cooperation**

Employees who coordinate freely on initiatives frequently disseminate a healthy work ethic people around them. Team building ensures that they work well together and immediately aid others when required.

**6. Integrity**

Maintaining professional integrity entails adhering to strong moral ideas. Those with a high work ethic also have exceptional integrity. They are truthful, respectful, and kind to others.

**7. Responsibility**

A strong workplace ethic necessitates a sharp feeling of responsibility. Ethical and responsible people hold themselves accountable for their conduct. They will accept responsibility for errors they have caused and will strive diligently to resolve these issues.

**8. Professionalism**

Professionalism is usually always maintained by employees that have a strong work ethic. They demonstrate a professional demeanour in the way they dress, speak, and conduct themselves. They're respectful, focused, organized, and neat.

In conclusion, workplace ethics are an essential factor in any company's success. Without setting clear standards of ethical behaviour and holding employees to those standards, the company will suffer in terms of both employee morale and productivity. From respecting one's colleagues to dealing honestly with customers, good work ethics lead to a healthier business environment, which in turn leads to a successful organization.

# MANNERS AND ETIQUETTES FOR OFFICERS

# 11

Manners are based essentially on consideration for others, feelings, and comfort. It is no slur on peoples' habits to accept what is good in others without losing what is essentially good in themselves. Young officers should seek to develop a cosmopolitan outlook, poise, and self-assurance. The cultivation of manners now widely accepted as appropriate in any society helps to do so. Good manners in general and correct social behaviour on all occasions ought to be the hallmark of a good officer.

1. The instructions that follow seek to cover every situation in which a young officer may find himself, but it is necessary first to draw attention to certain personal matters. If details, even unpleasant ones, are touched upon, this is to ensure that no essential point is lost.

## 11.1 Personal

1. Toilet should always be completed in privacy. Noses should be cleared, fingernails cut, and ears cleaned at home and not in company. Natural functions like belching, yawning,

sneezing and coughing, clearing of throat and nose should be done as silently as possible with hand to the mouth and with an 'excuse me' if in company. If possible, use a handkerchief to sneeze or cough into and always use it for clearing the nose. Attention to body cleanliness and especially of the mouth needs on emphasis.

2. Sharing a room and bathroom or compartment with others imposes special obligations. A golden rule is always to leave things as you would like to find them left for you. Bathroom floors must be washed clean, basins emptied and soapy water rinsed and commodes properly flushed or covered after use. Litter must be thrown into waste-paper baskets and ash trays must be used for ash or to stub out a cigarette.
3. Calls are both a social and official obligation. It is one of the first duties to be performed on joining a training institution or a new station or visiting Headquarters for the first time. Visiting cards of appropriate size should be obtained and the service of the officers is all that needs to be indicated.

**11.2 Social Calls**

1. Calls may be made single or together during evenings unless some other time has been arranged by appointment.
2. Do not go away if you find visitors already present, knock if the door is closed, tap loud enough to be heard or ring the bell if there is one and send in your card or enter.
3. The question of whether a senior officer should make a social call first on a junior officer often arises. This depends on the circumstances. Generally, the junior should call first. Calls should never be made before 9 AM and after 7.30 PM except on prior appointments.
4. Calls should be made between 6 PM depending on the season. The first calls should not last more than 15 or 20 minutes. Later, when friendly calls are made, these may last as long as may be appropriate for the occasional ways providing that you

do not overstay and keep your hosts from meals or other engagements. It is a good idea to ask in due course whether you are keeping them from any engagement.

5. Calls should be returned in person as early as conveniently possible. If there is a great difference in status, their turn call will usually take the form of an invitation to a meal.

## 11.3 Official Calls

1. It is the duty of a junior officer on first joining his post, to call on his senior in his department and other officials like the Commissioner and Collector.
2. The visitors' book at the residence of the Governors must be signed soon after you arrive at the Station.

## 11.4 Drawing Room Manners

1. Young officers will rise when ladies or their seniors enter a room. Never accept an introduction, even to a junior, when seated and always rise for the arrival and departure of other guests.
2. The introduction is made as follows: Gentlemen are introduced to ladies, juniors to seniors and young persons to old, with the exception in the case of VIPS, to whom others are always introduced. The person making the introduction should say some such words as "May I Introduce.....: or "Let me introduce Mr".
3. Shaking hands on being introduced is quite normal but not with ladies unless they make the first move. Otherwise, a Namastey or an equivalent word is quite sufficient. Never shake hands with gloves, though ladies can exercise this privilege.

   The reply to a greeting like 'How does you do" is "Pleased to meet you" or "How do you do", never" Quite well, thank you" or fine".
4. It may sometimes be necessary to introduce yourself in a large gathering such as at a Club or mess. Do it in a pleasant

manner, saying "Good evening, my name is ".

5. If you wish to smoke in company especially in the presence of the ladies or elders, always say, "Do you mind if I smoke?" Offer your companion a cigarette and a light. The cigarette should be offered in a packet or case and never individually. Always hold your cigarette between the first two fingers and never in the cup of your hand or between your teeth. Deposit ash only in ash trays and when slubbing a cigarette do so completely to prevent it continuing to give out smoke.
6. Try to avoid unsociability at all costs and conduct a conversation with your neighbors. As far as possible, avoid talking 'shop', and when dining avoids criticizing the food. An educated young officer should have sufficiently wide interests to start and sustain a conversation on many subjects.

## 11.5 Receiving Visitors

1. Receive your visitors at the door or, if they are important enough, on the drive as they descend from their cars. Open the door from them, then into the house, offer them a seat and, after a while, cigarettes, and drinks, giving them a choice. See that you conduct a conversation with them and do not leave them mute. At the conclusion of the visit see your visitors off with some such words as "thank you for coming", or "glad you come". When seeing them off in a car, hold the door open, make sure everybody is in and clear of the door and then close it gently. No car owner likes his doors being banged.
2. If you are a senior office-bearer of a club or a mess, stand near the door and receive your visitors and see them off. See that nobody is missed in greeting them or saying farewell.

## 11.6 Receiving House Guests

1. Having received your guest, show him to his room, which should be clean and tidy, with new linen, towels and fresh soap provided. Offer him a cup of tea on arrival ask when he

bell, if any, for summoning servants. Tell him the time of your meals and ask his convenience, especially with regard to morning tea. Be sure he has a bed, sidelight, books or magazines and a jug or water and tumbler for the night.

## 11.7 As House Guests

1. As a house guest cause as little inconvenience, readjustment, and trouble as possible to your host. Ask the time of all meals and adjust your day to his convenience. Use only your own room or the common ones in the house. Never peep or try to look behind curtains. Never also make embarrassing requests, for instance, for bread if none is served. There may only be chappaties in the house.
2. On leaving, express your personal thanks. Follow it by letter an arriving home saying how much you enjoyed your stay, apologizing for any inconvenience you may have caused and expressing the hope that you may return such hospitality someday. If you are not likely to be able to repay your host's hospitality you may, if you consider it appropriate, sent him a small gift. Servants should be tipped only with the permission of the host.

## 11.8 As Guests at a Party

1. If by appointment, arrive in time, punctuality is the 'politeness of kings' and should be cultivated as a habit. Search out your host if it is a big party and say good evening.
2. The question of drinks soon arises. A good host will usually name the drinks available. Make your choice and say, "May I have a ----------", please" or "I will have a ", thank you". Do not mutter or say: I don't mind." Never omit the "Please" or "thank you". After adding sugar and milk to your coffee or tea, do not keep the bearer waiting while you stir it in the tray. Remove your cup at once and let him move on.
3. Do not start on your drink straightaway. Put it down on a peg-

table and sip it from time to time. If "short eats" are served the bearer will usually offer you a small place and serviette. Hold the latter under the plate while helping yourself. Place the plate on the peg-table when done with.

4. Do not suck in your drink with a noise sip it silently; while eating a sandwich, cake top other "short eats" hold it by finger on top and thumb below.
5. On leaving, never fail to say "goodbye" and "thank you" to your host. In any case, avoid long post-scripts, though of course there should be no abruptness.

## 11.9 Conversation

1. Be sure you know whom you are talking to and who the other members in the circle are. Do not monopolize the conversation or express your views in an authoritative manner. On the other hand, do not be mute, lest you think ignorant or impolite. Speak softly but so as to avoid having to repeat what you say. If addressed by a person you do not know, first introduce yourself, most probably he will do the same.
2. Do not boast of either your attainments or your connections. Avoid personal queries about family and income. Never discuss someone who has just left the circle and never make invidious mention of a lady's name. Never talk with your hands in your pockets or on your hips or with a cigarette in your mouth. If you have to withdraw from the company, say, "excuse me", while doing so.

## 11.10 Road Manners

1. If walking, keep well to the side of the road, especially if in a group. Do not edge others off the middle of the road. Do not stop talking in the middle of a road or a sidewalk.
2. If accompanying a lady always keep between her and the traffic. You may offer to carry her coat but not her bag. Never stare, especially at a lady, and never pass a lady you know or

superior officer with a cigarette in your mouth.

3. Greetings on the road may be doffing your hat with a 'Good Morning' or by saying 'Namastey' or any appropriate greeting. If you have a friend with you and you stop talking, you should normally introduce him. If for some reason, you do not wish to do say "excuse me a moment". He will talk slowly; in which case you should get through your conversation as soon as possible. Always be properly dressed on the street even if you have gone out only for a short errand. Never wander about in corridors in Pyjama-suits or bare bodies, put on a dress gown in such cases.

## 11.11 Driving Manners

1. The rules of the road have been designed for the convenience and safety of others and observing them is not only in keeping to the law but is also good manners. Learn the rules of the road and observe them.
2. Always stop to enquire from stranded people or broken-down vehicles whether they require help. Never drive fast through puddles or dust when passing people. Put yourself in their place on such occasions.
3. Always dip your lights for on coming vehicles and when necessary, even for pedestrians. Never indulge in a contest with other vehicles in an effort to "outglare" them.

## 11.12 Trams and Buses

1. Always queue up if necessary for trams and buses. If a lady is with you, help her to enter first and then get in. On descending reverse the process, i.e., get down first and help the lady down.
2. Avoid smoking in trams and buses. Do not occupy more than your fair share of seating space. Keep your baggage either under your seat or at any other place provided on the tram or bus. Always seek permission or consent to open or close windows and manipulate fans or lights.

## Social Correspondence

### 11.13 Invitations

1. Formal invitations from VIPs are usually on printed cards in third person. These should also be acknowledged in the third person. Invitations to private dinners are written in the first person on good stationery. All invitations should be issued at least three days beforehand.
2. The lady of the house writes to the wife of the other party, or to the gentleman if he is unmarried, bachelors are not expected to entertain ladies at home, but may do so at a club or restaurant. If you are on friendly terms with the other party, invitations by telephone are now in order. Do not, however, phone him through a third party or accept invitations similarly.
3. If the party is for your birthday, do not mention this as it may be taken as a hint for presents. Your letter paper and envelope should be in good taste. Letter paper should not have letterheads with your degree or other accomplishments. Your service crest, however, would be quite in order. Script should be arranged symmetrically and not confined to half the paper.

### 11.14 Accepting invitations.

1. If from VIPs invitations must be accepted unless there are very special reasons for not doing so. Mention when replying that you feel honored by the invitation, and if you are unable to accept, give your reasons in brief.
2. Reply immediately after you have received the invitation, as your host will want time to plan the occasion. Your reply should express your thanks and then your acceptance and indicate that you have got the date, time and occasion correct. In reply to your seniors head it "Dear Shri....."and not" My dear".
3. Always arrive punctually and particularly before your seniors and the chief guest arrive.

4. Presents are in order for marriages or birthdays etc. but should be confined to those you know well. (For various forms of invitations to suit different occasions please see Annexure I).

## 11.15 Table Manners

1. There may be some initial difficulty in acquiring table manners, but they are accepted as a necessity.

## 11.16 Preliminaries at a large gathering

1. In large gatherings, do not cluster in small groups of intimate friends, but keep moving about and mixing with others, especially guests. You may have to arrange the table plan a formal dinner. The following points should be observed:
   (a) The Host will sit in the middle of one side of the table and his wife opposite him. The chief gentle man guest will sit on the right of the hostess. The Chief lady guest will sit on the right of the host. On the left of the host and hostess respectively will be seated the next senior most lady and gentleman guest. The junior most officers sit at the head and foot of the table.
   (b) Should the guest of honor be equal to or higher than the host in rank, he will sit opposite the host and the hostess will sit on his right.
2. Study the table plan and find out who the ladies are on either side of you. The lady on your right will be looked after by you. Get introduced to her or introduce yourself.
3. Draw her chair back for her and push it forward as she sits down. Sit down only after all ladies and the chief guest and host have done so.
4. Draw your own chair as close to the table as convenient. This will enable you to sit upright throughout as you should.
5. Place your napkin half-folded on your lap. Say a few words to the ladies on either side of you before addressing anyone else.
6. Offer the ladies on either side of your butter, condiments or other dishes on the table before helping yourself. (Even if ladies are not present the same courtesies apply.)

7. Do not start before the chief guest, the host, or ladies on either side of you have started. If the ladies near your delay, say some such words as "shall we start?".

## 11.17 Cutleries

1. Cutlery is always laid in the order of use starting from outside. Dessert spoons and forks are placed at the top of the plate.
2. The soup spoon has a round bowl. Take up soup with the spoon in a movement away from you and if necessary, tilt the plate in the same direction. Drink the soup out of the side of the spoon. Do not draw it in with a hiss or a 'slurry' but till it into the mouth.
3. Fish has its own cutlery. There are no separate spoons and forks for the vegetarian equivalent of the fish curry, so use the fish knife and work for this. It is quiet in order to use only a fork for soft dishes. In that case, hold the fork in the right hand, cut the food with its sedge and convey it to the mouth.
    a. The larger knife and fork are intended for the meat dish or its vegetable equivalent. With the help of the knife in the right hand, build up the food on the back of the fork. Hold them so that the ends touch the center of the palms, the fore fingers support their neck and the prongs or the knife-edge face downwards.
4. For butter there will be another smaller knife for buttering the bread. Help yourself to butter with the knife provided with the butter dish. But spread It with your own knife. Do not spread it on the whole slice of the bread but break your bread or toast into smaller pieces one at a time with the left hand. Butter with knife and convey it to the mouth. Never bite a piece off the slice.
5. When the quantity left in the serving bowls is too little, request for replenishment.
6. Chappaties, parathas, puries may be eaten by hand but wipe your hands on the serviette before doing so.
7. The piece of bread or chappati may also be broken and placed

in the main plate and used as a sort of platform on which to place other item like meat or vegetable. But be sure that it is firmly placed on the fork to avoid mishap between plate and mouth.

8. The tip of the fork or spoon may be used for removing small bones from the mouth and if this is not possible, the fingers may be used as delicately as possible, preferably with the other hand covering the mouth. The knife should never be taken to the mouth.
9. Curry and rice may be eaten with spoon and fork or fork alone in the right hand. Use the back of the fork to push the rice into the spoon. When conveying the latter to the mouth, hold it much as you would a pen.
10. Forks are used for sweet dishes where these are solid. Liquids or semi-liquids like ice-cream are taken with a large or small spoon. On completion put the spoon down on the plate below the ice-cream cup and not in the cup itself.
11. Fingerbowls are usually served on a fruit knife and fork crossed at the back of it. Remove the doily and bowl, place them to the left-front, then arrange fruit knife and fork to right and left of the plate.
12. After fruit or dessert, dip the tips of the fingers into the water, apply them to the lips and dab with the serviette.

## 11.18 General

1. Do not heap your plate, scrape, or bang it.
2. Do not brandish cutlery when not in use.
3. Do not search around in the dish for the choicest bites or thumb through chappaties till you come to a hot one. Take what comes first and not much of it.
4. At buffet lunches or suppers, be sure to hold your plate well over the edge of the dish from which you help yourself. Otherwise, you are certain to spill something on the tablecloth, making it an unsightly mess. Similarly, at buffet,

please be careful when pouring out tea or coffee that it does not drop on the tablecloth. It only needs a little care and thoughtfulness.

5. Guests may be allowed to serve themselves first. When your turn comes, do not crowd around the table, quietly serve yourself and move away.
6. Do not clamp down with your teeth on spoon or for to take food into the mouth. Close the lips gently over it.
7. Do not open your mouth wide long before the food is near it. Open it just before putting the food in.
8. Do not get down to your food. Sit upright at all times. However, lean slightly forward each time to convey the food to the mouth so that if, by accident, it drops from the fork or spoon it will fall onto your plate and not on your lap. Do not place your elbows on the table at any time during the meal.
9. Do not move your hands sideways when cutting meat lest your elbows strike your neighbor. Move them diagonally. Take proper care while cutting to ensure that food does not jump out of your plate.
10. Never talk with your mouth full. say 'excuse me' if addressed and talk only when you are able to reply.
11. Never talk loudly. It is a coarse habit and shows inconsideration for others.
12. Do not over-stuff the mouth. Take only a manageable quantity each time. Chew with your lips closed and without noise. Never use a toothpick during meals. While at the dining table, avoid belching and move your tongue over your teeth to clear them of food. Should it become necessary, you can cover your mouth with the serviette and remove the irritation.

    (a) Plates and cutlery are usually removed after each course. However, at some dinners where a mixture of Western and Indian dishes is served, it may be necessary to switch from spoon and fork

to knife or vice versa with the same plate. In that case place the article not being used at the side of the main plate or on the side plate.

13. In between mouthfuls, or when waiting for another helping place spoon and fork diagonally on the plate. This also is a sign to the waiter that you would like a second helping. When finishing, place fork, knife of spoon together. The waiter will then remove your plate.
14. When handing a meal is taken with the hands, it is usual to use a wash basin to wash your fingers. Do not splash water on the wall or unduly dirty the soap or towel. See that no solid matter gets into the basin. This only chokes the lead-off pipe.
15. Formal dinners are occasions when maximum formality has to be observed in all your activities. They are more in the nature of ceremonies than opportunities to satisfy your hunger for food.
16. For every course in a formal dinner do not start eating till the chief guest or guests at your table have started eating.

**11.19 Toasts**

1. It is customary to propose toasts to the President on the occasion of the formal dinners. These are very solemn occasions and deserve to be treated as such.
2. Good turn our is always important whether attending office or during social get togethers. The right clothes in the right combination enhance an officer's personality and lend himself assurance.
   (a) Clothes should be appropriate to the occasion. Winter or summer civilian dinner dress or national dress must be worn when so indicated. Black leather shoes and plain black socks are essential with dinner clothes.
   (b) Lounge suits should be worn for semiformal engagements.

(c) Sports-costs or blazers and flannel slacks are appropriate for such outdoor occasions as sports or athletics meets, informal evenings at clubs, etc. If taking part in games, suitable games kit will, of course, be worn.

## 11.20 The right combination

1. In any case avoid the wrong combination. Always wear socks but never a tie with tennis shoes. Wear a scarf instead. Never fail to wear socks whenever you wear a coat. Sandals and suits, however, never go together. A tie must be worn with a western style suit.
2. The color of the coat usually sets the color tone of the rest of the dress. Socks and ties should always match. With a blue blazer or a blue or grey suit, wear a blue or grey patterned tie and socks and black shoes. However, some contrasts are permissible, e.g. a deep red tie with a grey suit, for instance. With suits or combinations of browns or fawns wear tie and socks of a similar background and brown shoes. Avoid white neckties and light-colored shoes.
3. The cut and fall of clothes are important. Choose a good tailor, paying a little more, if necessary. If you are running to paunch, use a pair of braces. Never go to the extremes of informality for wearing drainpipe trousers, dowry sweaters and bathroom slippers.

## 11.21 General

(a) Always button up Jodhpuri coats or sherwanis to the full-on formal occasions.

1. If it is very cold and you have to wear a long-sleeved pullover with a formal dress, do this preferably under your shirt. And do not let its sleeves show.
2. Always wear sock-suspenders if your socks do not have elastic tops. If the elastic gives out, renew it at once.

Never let your socks fall on your ankles. Socks must be washed at regular intervals.

3. Government officers are not expected to drink in public. It is worthwhile familiarizing yourself with Government instructions on this point. Even if you drink in private, you are expected to do so in moderation. If you are a teetotaler, do not refuse invitations to cocktail parties only on that account. When offered alcoholic drinks, you can always say, "No, thank you. I do not drink. But I will have something soft". Correspondingly never press alcoholic drinks on those who do not drink.
4. At large parties it is not necessary to take leave of everyone present individually. It is enough if you take leave of the person with when you may be sitting or talking and of the host and the hostess. Leave taking should be brief and unobtrusive. Do not give the impression of a VIP departure nor slink away.
5. Always adhere to the golden rule: 'Never accept hospitality which you cannot return within a reasonable period'. Never get into the habit of acting always as guest, never as host.
6. Never smoke in rooms or other places where it is specifically prohibited.

## Part II-Ceremonials

### 11.22 Introductory

1. Rituals and ceremonies form an important part of the life of an individual as well as a community. From birth, through marriage, till death, a number of ceremonies are associated with various stages of human life. In official life ceremonials and formalities are quite closely associated in the observance of functions. Officers in the districts as well as heads of offices will have to plan for and conduct these ceremonial

functions in their official capacity. This note intends to give a brief idea and guidelines on various functions which are observed in a ceremonial manner in an official or semi-official capacity.

2. Ceremonials in Government and Semi-Government functions achieve the following:
    a. They promote a feeling of regard and respect for certain national institutions, functions, and personages.
    b. They infuse a sense of distinctive pride with respect to the national days, the National Flag, and raise these functions above the ordinary and the mundane functions in the minds of the people.
    c. They satisfy the basic human need for rituals and ceremonies; and
    d. When uniformed elements take part in the functions, a certain degree of formality and ceremony becomes essential. Therefore, official participation and its various nuances should be understood and appreciated by the trainee officers at the earliest stage. It should not be left to be learnt in remote and far-off districts or offices by the trial-and-error method.
3. Some of the points which need to be borne in mind while arranging, observing, or participating in functions of a ceremonial nature are:
    a. Conduct and bearing should be correct, poised, and sober; on such occasions no flippancy nor triviality or brash humor should be permitted.
    b. Sobriety in dress and behaviors is important because it sets the tone for the function.

Gentlemen officers should wear sherwanis or closed collar coats and trousers or national dress; lady officers should wear Sarees in plain white, pastel shades or other sober colors. On sports functions, depending on weather blazers and scarf or service ties may be worn.

c. At ceremonial functions the strictest punctuality must be observed. Late arrival will mean discourtesy to the public gathered for the functions and to the uniform units who may be taking part in the function.

d. If speeches are made, they should preferably be in Hindi, or the regional language concerned and should be short, concise and at national functions informality of content or tone should be avoided. speeches should be reduced to writing or at least points jotted down before going to the function. Till they get accustomed to taking part in such ceremonial functions, officers will do well to rehearse their part a few times before the final day.

4. Two important functions in which the officers are likely to take a leading part are the Republic Day and the Independence Day. Independence Day functions comprise of flag hoisting on official and semi-official buildings or by public bodies or institutions; sports arrangements or decorative lighting on public building; symposia, debates or poetry recital functions with some such theme as national integration etc. It may however be mentioned that functions arranged on Independence Day are more in the nature of introspective occasions rather than public demonstration of national fervor. It is Republic Day which is celebrated in a more elaborate manner and public expression to national aspirations is given

in a number of functions arranged on this occasion.

5. The main function organized on Republic Day is the morning parade where uniformed elements belonging to the police, NCC, Home Guards, Fire Brigades, etc. are arranged at the district and divisional headquarters and also at the State headquarters. In some places where there are defense forces units, they may also take part in these parades. These parades consist of flag hoisting ceremonies, march past by the troops and possibly distribution of prizes for best turn-out etc. In Delhi and in some of the State capitals, the parade is followed by an exhibition of tableaus etc. Important points to be borne in mind regarding flag hoisting and taking salute at the march past are:

**A. Flag Hoisting**

1. The flag to be unfurled should be carefully tied up by somebody who knows the proper knot, the rope to be pulled should be distinctively marked, as pulling the wrong rope, or pulling both the ropes is likely to end up in confusion.
2. If there is a VIP who has been invited to unfurl the flag he may be briefed regarding the correct procedure; an assistant may remain present to help in case the flag is not broken at the first attempt; but the unfurling must be done by the VIP.
3. The National Anthem will be played as soon as the flag is unfurled and everyone including the VIP will give a salute to the flag and the National Anthem if wearing a head gear and stand at attention if not. Uniformed troops and their officers with arms or swords, as the case may be, will pay compliments as laid down. The National Anthem will generally be played by a police or a service band. In case it is sung, the VIP and the audience may join. On no

account should Gramophone Records of National Anthem be played at ceremonial functions.

**B. Taking Salutes**

Civilian Officers both ladies and gentlemen required to take salutes at parades by uniformed formations or at guards of honor, will return the compliments as follows:

a. When wearing Indian head-dress or none at all, by raising the right hand to the forehead with the fingers slightly inclined, the obverse of the palm facing the right eye, and the reverse outwards. This is different from the rigid military salute, in which the reverse of the palm faces inward, and the obverse outwards, and the elbow is raised in line with the shoulder.

b. When wearing European head-dress, by raising the hat with the righthand.

In both (a) and (b) the hand or hat should be lowered only after the troops have marched past, or after each group has marched past, where there is more than one.

c. While receiving a salute from an officer, who is carrying a sword do not attempt to shake hands with him for obvious reasons, as he will be carrying the sword in his right hand.

d. If the inspection of the Parade to be done, only the front rank will be inspected and avoid the use of jeeps or other conveyance unless it is a very large parade. The parade is usually inspected by uniformed offices in slow March, while the band plays appropriate tunes. Parade Commander will also walk in slow March. Civilian officers or VIPs, however, need not walk in slow March but they should take slow and measured steps so that

the parade commander and uniformed officer can keep in pace with him.

e. Do not make long speeches, especially when men are facing the sun or have been standing too long or weather is inclement.

## 11.23 Meeting Uniformed Personnel

1. Occasionally after the parade civilian officers may be invited to meet the troops either for encouragement or for introduction. At such informal meetings remember that the uniformed units have a code of conduct of their own and their training indiscipline and propriety will make it difficult to establish informality to the same degree as among the civilians. They also have a more rigid hierarchical structure and any attempt at upsetting that is to be avoided. Try to make them at home with a joke or an anecdote or an opportune but do not labour too hard and too obviously to create humor where none exists. In all circumstances be natural.

   Attending Rashtrapati Bhawan or Government House at Home:

2. Do not forget a sign the Visitor's Register in the Government house when you visit or are posted to the State capitals. Invitations from Government house is like commands, which must be honored unless for extremely unavoidable reasons regrets have to be sent. In any case do not forget or postpone sending acceptance, regrets as soon as invitations are received. The dress should always be in conformity with the occasion. Occasions would also determine the style of speaking, mood and even vocabulary used in speeches.

## 11.24 Distributional Prizes

1. Unless it is very embarrassing to refuse, do not agree to giving away prizes. However, if it has to be done, do it correctly with dignity and poise, making occasional remarks to some of the prize winners but do not delay the proceedings by too long

conversations with the individual prize winner. Do not attempt to shake hands with ladies' prize winners unless they make the first move. In the case of lady officers giving away prizes it is advisable not to shake hands at all. When giving away "multistorey" cups see that different parts of such cups do not tumble down in process of being handed over to the recipient.

## 11.25 Visits of Dignitaries and High Personages

1. Warrants of procedure issued by the Government of India and by the State Government should be consulted for according to correct precedence to invitees at the time of introduction at Airports, Railway Stations, etc. The same warrants of precedents will apply in the case of seating arrangements, sending invitations etc., for meals and other functions. For holders of posts mentioned in the same column in the warrant of precedence, the date from which the office holder entered that column would be taken into account for fixing his order of precedence.

## 11.26 Days of Mourning

1. On the demise of holder of a high office in government or a very venerable public figure State mourning will be declared by the Government concerned. Such declaration will always specify the number of days for which mourning is to be observed. During such mourning period flags will fly at half most at all Government buildings and officials or semi-official functions will be cancelled.

## 11.27 Other occasions

(II) (I) While visiting quarters guards or unit lines of army/police/NCC/Home Guards Units, compliments should be properly received and given. Adopt the proper saluting procedure as already mentioned. Do not just receive the salute with a flick of the head or a casual raising of the hand while moving away from the quarter guard. If compliments are paid,

they should be received properly while standing at attention. When the salute is given by the armed guard, they will present arms 'Salami Shastra' to the visiting VIP. It should be remembered that the 'Salami Shastra' consists of three distinct, separate movements. The salute by the VIP in return should be synchronized with the last movement. Similarly, after the salute the guard will do 'Order Arms' (Bazu Shastra). This also consists of two distinct, separate movements. The hand raised in salute should come down to synchronize with the last movement of' Bazu Shastra'. After the guard has been inspected the VIP should give the order 'Visarjan' (dismiss) when the guard will give another salute, which will be returned in the manner described above. This procedure, however, will not apply when the complete guard does not turn out but only a butt salute is given by the sentry. After compliments are received and returned, a few words of praise and encouragement to the uniformed personnel are in order When calling on or visiting army police messes, remember:

(a) To sign the Visitors' Register.
(b) Hospitality in service and police messes, particularly alcoholic drinks, should not be abused in any way. Observe propriety in drinking if drinks are offered. If you do not drink, ask for the available soft drink. Do not be fussy. If you accept drinks, do not accept more than one or two drinks.
(c) Observe proper courtesies and etiquette and be careful about the correct turn-out as far as dress is concerned as uniformed officers are usually great sticklers for these things.
(d) Every formation mess would usually have certain mess formalities to be observed. If these are not known, request a briefing from the Adjutant or the Mess Secretary or some other concerned Officer.

# 37 CONVERSATION RULES for GENTLEMEN (1875)

The excerpt below comes from a book published in 1875:
*A Gentleman's Guide to Etiquette* by Cecil B. Hartley.

Hartley's rules may be over 100 years old, but they're just as true today as they ever were. There are some real gems here — some of which truly gave me a chuckle.



1. Even if convinced that your opponent is utterly wrong, yield gracefully, decline further discussion, or dexterously turn the conversation, but do not obstinately defend your own opinion until you become angry…Many there are who, giving their opinion, not as an *opinion* but as a *law,* will defend their position by such phrases, as: "Well, if *I* were president, or governor, I would," — and while by the warmth of their argument they prove that they are utterly unable to govern their own temper, they will endeavour to persuade you that they are perfectly competent to take charge of the government of the nation.

2. Retain, if you will, a fixed political opinion, yet do not parade it upon all occasions, and, above all, do not endeavour to *force* others to agree with you. Listen calmly to their ideas upon the same subjects, and if you cannot agree, differ politely, and while your opponent may set you down as a bad politician, let him be obliged to admit that you are a *gentleman.*
3. Never interrupt anyone who is speaking; it is quite rude to officiously supply a name or date about which another hesitates unless you are asked to do so. Another gross breach of etiquette is to anticipate the point of a story which another person is reciting, or to take it from his lips to finish it in your own language. Some persons plead as an excuse for this breach of etiquette, that the reciter was spoiling a good story by a bad manner, but this does not mend the matter. It is surely rude to give a man to understand that you do not consider him capable of finishing an anecdote that he has commenced.
4. It is ill-bred to put on an air of weariness during a long speech from another person, and quite as rude to look at a watch, read a letter, flirt the leaves of a book, or in any other action show that you are tired of the speaker or his subject.
5. In a general conversation, never speak when another person is speaking, and never try by raising your own voice to drown that of another. Never assume an air of haughtiness or speak in a dictatorial manner; let your conversation be always amiable and frank, free from every affectation.
6. Never, unless you are requested to do so, speak of your own business or profession in society; to confine your conversation entirely to the subject or pursuit which is your own specialty is low-bred and vulgar. Make the subject for conversation suit the company in which you are placed. Joyous, light conversation will be at times as much out of place as a sermon would be at a dancing party. Let your conversation be grave or gay as suits the time or place.
7. In a dispute, if you cannot reconcile the parties, withdraw from them. You will surely make one enemy, perhaps two, by taking

either side, in an argument when the speakers have lost their temper.

8. Never, during a general conversation, endeavour to concentrate the attention wholly upon yourself. It is quite as rude to enter into conversation with one of a group, and endeavour to draw him out of the circle of general conversation to talk with you alone.
9. A man of real intelligence and cultivated mind is generally modest. He may feel when in everyday society, that in intellectual acquirements he is above those around him; but he will not seek to make his companions feel their inferiority, nor try to display this advantage over them. He will discuss with frank simplicity the topics started by others, and endeavour to avoid starting such as they will not feel inclined to discuss. All that he says will be marked by politeness and deference to the feelings and opinions of others.
10. It is as great an accomplishment to listen with an air of interest and attention, as it is to speak well. To be a good listener is as indispensable as to be a good talker, and it is in the character of listener that you can most readily detect the man who is accustomed to good society.
11. Never listen to the conversation of two persons who have thus withdrawn from a group. If they are so near you that you cannot avoid hearing them, you may, with perfect propriety, change your seat.
12. Make your own share in conversation as modest and brief as is consistent with the subject under consideration and avoid long speeches and tedious stories. If, however, another, particularly an old man, tells a long story, or one that is not new to you, listen respectfully until he has finished, before you speak again.
13. Speak of yourself but little. Your friends will find out your virtues without forcing you to tell them, and you may feel confident that it is equally unnecessary to expose your faults yourself.
14. If you submit to flattery, you must also submit to the imputation of folly and self-conceit.

15. In speaking of your friends, do not compare them, one with another. Speak of the merits of each one, but do not try to heighten the virtues of one by contrasting them with the vices of another.
16. Avoid, in conversation all subjects which can injure the absent. A gentleman will never calumniate or listen to calumny.
17. The wittiest man becomes tedious and ill-bred when he endeavours to engross entirely the attention of the company in which he should take a more modest part.
18. Avoid set phrases and use quotations but rarely. They sometimes make a very piquant addition to conversation, but when they become a constant habit, they are exceedingly tedious, and in bad taste.
19. Avoid pedantry; it is a mark, not of intelligence, but stupidity.
20. Speak your own language correctly; at the same time do not be too great a stickler for formal correctness of phrases.
21. Never notice it if others make mistakes in language. To notice by word or look such errors in those around you is excessively ill-bred.
22. If you are a professional or scientific man, avoid the use of technical terms. They are in bad taste, because many will not understand them. If, however, you unconsciously use such a term or phrase, do not then commit the still greater error of explaining its meaning. No one will thank you for thus implying their ignorance.
23. In conversing with a foreigner who speaks imperfect English, listen with strict attention, yet do not supply a word, or phrase, if he hesitates. Above all, do not by a word or gesture show impatience if he makes pauses or blunders. If you understand his language, say so when you first speak to him; this is not making a display of your own knowledge, but is a kindness, as a foreigner will be pleased to hear and speak his own language when in a strange country.
24. Be careful in society never to play the part of buffoon, for you will soon become known as the "funny" man of the party, and no character is so perilous to your dignity as a gentleman. You

lay yourself open to both censure and bad ridicule, and you may feel sure that, for every person who laughs with you, two are laughing at you, and for one who admires you, two will watch your antics with secret contempt.

25. Avoid boasting. To speak of your money, connections, or the luxury at your command is in very bad taste. It is quite as ill-bred to boast of your intimacy with distinguished people. If their names occur naturally in the course of conversation, it is very well; but to be constantly quoting, "my friend, Gov. C," or, "my intimate friend, the president," is pompous and in bad taste.
26. While refusing the part of jester yourself, do not, by stiff manners, or cold, contemptuous looks, endeavour to check the innocent mirth of others. It is in excessively bad taste to drag in a grave subject of conversation when pleasant, bantering talk is going on around you. Join in pleasantly and forget your graver thoughts for the time, and you will win more popularity than if you chill the merry circle or turn their innocent gayety to grave discussions.
27. When thrown into the society of literary people, do not question them about their works. To speak in terms of admiration of any work to the author is in bad taste; but you may give pleasure, if, by a quotation from their writings, or a happy reference to them, you prove that you have read and appreciated them.
28. It is extremely rude and pedantic, when engaged in general conversation, to make quotations in a foreign language.
29. To use phrases which admit of a double meaning, is ungentlemanly.
30. If you find you are becoming angry in a conversation, either turn to another subject or keep silence. You may utter, in the heat of passion, words which you would never use in a calmer moment, and which you would bitterly repent when they were once said.
31. "Never talk of ropes to a man whose father was hanged" is a vulgar but popular proverb. Avoid carefully subjects which may be construed into personalities and keep a strict reserve upon family matters. Avoid, if you can, seeing the skeleton in your friend's closet, but if it is paraded for your special benefit,

regard it as a sacred confidence, and never betray your knowledge to a third party.

32. If you have travelled, although you will endeavour to improve your mind in such travel, do not be constantly speaking of your journeyings. Nothing is more tiresome than a man who commences every phrase with, "When I was in Paris," or, "In Italy I saw…"
33. When asking questions about persons who are not known to you, in a drawing-room, avoid using adjectives; or you may enquire of a mother, "Who is that awkward, ugly girl?" and be answered, "Sir, that is my daughter."
34. Avoid gossip; in a woman it is detestable, but in a man it is utterly despicable.
35. Do not officiously offer assistance or advice in general society. Nobody will thank you for it.
36. Avoid flattery. A delicate compliment is permissible in conversation, but flattery is broad, coarse, and to sensible people, disgusting. If you flatter your superiors, they will distrust you, thinking you have some selfish end; if you flatter ladies, they will despise you, thinking you have no other conversation.
37. A lady of sense will feel more complimented if you converse with her upon instructive, high subjects, than if you address to her only the language of compliment. In the latter case she will conclude that you consider her incapable of discussing higher subjects, and you cannot expect her to be pleased at being considered merely a silly, vain person, who must be flattered into good humour.

# How to Travel Like a Gentleman: Advice from 1875

The excerpt below comes from a book published in 1875: A Gentleman's Guide to Etiquette by Cecil B. Hartley. Hartley has previously edified us with some incisive and amusing conversation rules.

Cecil B. Hartley offers tips on how to travel like a gentleman, especially when going abroad. While it's no longer advisable to refer to the common folk in the countries you visit as "the peasantry," the bulk of Hartley's advice still holds true.



If you are going to travel in other countries, in Europe, especially, I would advise you to study the languages, before you attempt to go abroad. French is the tongue you will find most useful in Europe, as it is spoken in the courts, and amongst diplomatists; but, in order fully to enjoy a visit to any country, you must speak the language of that country. You can then visit in the private houses, see life among the peasantry, go with confidence from village to town, from city to city, learning more of the country in one day from familiar intercourse with the natives, than you would learn in a year from guidebooks or the explanations of your courier.

The way to really enjoy a journey through a strange land, is not to roll over the highways in your carriage, stop at the hotels, and be led to the points of interest by your guide, but to shoulder your knapsack, or take up your valise, and make a pedestrian tour through the hamlets and villages. Take a room at a hotel in the principal cities if you will and see all that your guidebook commands you to seek, and then start on your

own tour of investigation, and believe me you will enjoy your independent walks and chats with the villagers and peasants, infinitely more than your visits dictated by others. Of course, to enjoy this mode of traveling, you must have some knowledge of the language, and if you start with only a very slight acquaintance with it, you will be surprised to find how rapidly you will acquire the power to converse, when you are thus forced to speak in that language or be entirely silent.

Your pocket, too, will be the gainer by the power to arrange your own affairs. If you travel with a courier and depend upon him to arrange your hotel bills and other matters, you will be cheated by everyone, from the boy who blacks your boots, to the magnificent artist, who undertakes to fill your picture gallery with the works of the "old masters." If Murillo, Raphael, and Guido could see the pictures brought annually to this country as genuine works of their pencils, we are certain that they would tear their ghostly hair, wring their shadowy hands, and return to the tomb again in disgust. Ignorant of the language of the country you are visiting, you will be swindled in the little villages and the large cities by the innkeepers and the hack-drivers, in the country and in the town, morning, noon, and evening, daily, hourly, and weekly; so, again I say, study the languages if you propose going abroad.

In a foreign country nothing stamps the difference between the gentleman and the clown more strongly than the regard they pay to foreign customs. While the latter will exclaim against every strange dress or dish, and even show signs of disgust if the latter does not, please him, the former will endeavour, as far as is in his power, to "do in Rome as Romans do."

Accustom yourself, as soon as possible, to the customs of the nation which you are visiting, and, as far as you can without any violation of principle, follow them. You will add much to your own comfort by so doing, for, as you cannot expect the whole nation to conform to your habits, the sooner you fall in with theirs the sooner you will feel at home in the strange land.

Never ridicule or blame any usage which seems to you ludicrous or wrong. You may wound those around you, or you may anger them, and it cannot add to the pleasure of your visit to make yourself unpopular. If

in Germany they serve your meat upon marmalade, or your beef raw, or in Italy give you peas in their pods, or in France offer you frog's legs and horse steaks, if you cannot eat the strange viands, make no remarks, and repress every look or gesture of disgust. Try to adapt your taste to the dishes, and if you find that impossible, remove those articles you cannot eat from your plate, and make your meal upon the others, but do this silently and quietly, endeavouring not to attract attention.

The best travellers are those who can eat cats in China, oil in Greenland, frogs in France, and macaroni in Italy; who can smoke a meerschaum in Germany, ride an elephant in India, shoot partridges in England, and wear a turban in Turkey; in short, in every nation adapt their habits, costume, and taste to the national manners, dress and dishes.

Do not, when abroad, speak continually in praise of your own country, or disparagingly of others. If you find others are interested in gaining information about America, speak candidly and freely of its customs, scenery, or products, but not in a way that will imply a contempt of other countries. To turn up your nose at the Thames because the Mississippi is longer and wider, or to sneer at any object because you have seen its superior at home, is rude, ill-bred, and in excessively bad taste. You will find abroad numerous objects of interest which America cannot parallel, and while abroad, you will do well to avoid mention of "our rivers," "our mountains," or, "our manufactories." You will find ruins in Rome, pictures in Florence, cemeteries in France, and factories in England, which will take the lead and challenge the world to compete; and you will exhibit a far better spirit if you candidly acknowledge that superiority, than if you make absurd and untrue assertions of "our" power to excel them.

You will, of course, meet with much to disapprove, much that will excite your laughter; but control the one and keep silence about the other. If you find fault, do so gently and quietly; if you praise, do so without qualification, sincerely and warmly.

Study well the geography of any country which you may visit, and, as far as possible, its history also. You cannot feel much interest in localities or monuments connected with history, if you are unacquainted with the events which make them worthy of note.

Converse with any who seem disposed to form an acquaintance. You may thus pass an hour or two pleasantly, obtain useful information, and you need not carry on the acquaintance unless you choose to do so. Amongst the higher circles in Europe, you will find many of the customs of each nation in other nations, but it is among the peasants and the people that you find the true nationality.

You may carry with you one rule into every country, which is, that, however much the inhabitants may object to your dress, language, or habits, they will cheerfully acknowledge that the American stranger is perfectly amiable and polite.





# HOW TO IMPROVE INTERPERSONAL SKILLS IN THE WORKPLACE

# 12

Interpersonal skills encompass what we use to interact, communicate, and work effectively with others. These skills are not only about talking but also about listening, understanding, and connecting with people. By developing these skills, you can build healthier, more positive relationships in both your personal and professional life.

1. **Communication:**
   Good communication is a key component of strong interpersonal skills. It means you can express your thoughts and ideas clearly and understand what others are saying. Communication can involve your tone of voice, body language, and even the way you write an email.
2. **Empathy:**
   Empathy means understanding someone else's feelings and perspectives. This skill is crucial in building trust and strong relationships.
3. **Negotiations and conflict resolution:**
   When disagreements happen, conflict resolution helps find a peaceful solution where everyone can agree. It can involve

understanding different viewpoints, negotiation, and compromise to reach an agreement where everyone feels heard and respected.

4. **Positive attitude:**
   A positive attitude means facing challenges with optimism and encouraging others to do the same.
5. **Team-oriented vision:**
   Understanding, valuing, and supporting each team member's contribution to the organization is vital for success.
6. **Collaborative attitude:**
   Working together to achieve a common goal involves sharing ideas, being open to others' suggestions, and working together.
7. **Motivation:**
   Motivation is the drive that keeps you going. It can also inspire others to achieve their best.
8. **Persuasion:**
   Persuasion is the act of convincing others about an idea or plan in a way that's respectful and considerate of others' opinions.

## 12.1 The different types of interpersonal skills in the workplace

All workplaces contain a mix of personalities, roles, and responsibilities where the importance of interpersonal skills can't be overstated. To navigate this environment successfully, certain types of interpersonal skills become particularly valuable. These skills can help build strong teams and collaboration, resolve conflicts, and create an atmosphere where everyone feels valued and understood.

Interpersonal skills can be learned and improved over time, which can benefit your professional relationships and contribute to personal growth and job satisfaction.

1. **Coaching skills**
   Coaching skills are about helping others to grow and succeed.

It involves offering guidance, sharing knowledge, and providing constructive feedback. When you coach a colleague, you're not telling them what to do, you're helping them discover their strengths and how to use them effectively.

2. **Communication skills**
   These skills are the lifeblood of a healthy workplace. Effective communication is about conveying your ideas clearly, listening to others, and ensuring that everyone's goals are aligned. It's also about being able to read non-verbal cues and understanding the best ways to communicate with different individuals.
3. **Emotional intelligence**
   Being aware of your own emotions and those of your colleagues can allow you to navigate workplace dynamics sensitively and professionally. High emotional intelligence can help you manage stress, address conflicts calmly, and create a positive work environment.

## 12.2 Nine simple ways to improve interpersonal skills at work and beyond.

Enhancing your interpersonal skills can transform your work environment and personal life by making both a more enjoyable place to be. The key to developing these skills is consistency and a genuine desire to connect with others.

### 12.2.1 Try to maintain a positive outlook:

Start by focusing on the good in situations and people. This approach promotes a positive work environment and encourages others. For example, when faced with a challenge, try to view it as an opportunity to learn and grow.

- Improving interpersonal skills takes time. Remind yourself of the progress you're making by keeping a positive attitude and learn how to Track the Positive interactions you're experiencing.

### 12.2.2 Control your emotional reactions:

Practice pausing before you react to stressful situations. This

helps in responding more thoughtfully and maintaining peace. A simple way to start is by taking deep breaths when you feel overwhelmed, giving yourself a moment to collect your thoughts before you speak.

- Take three minutes to check in with yourself and Breathe into Relaxation before responding to a difficult situation.

**12.2.3 Value other people's expertise:**

Acknowledge and appreciate the skills and experience your colleagues have. This can be as simple as thanking a coworker for their input in a meeting or asking for their advice on a project.

**12.2.4 Show genuine interest in coworkers:**

Ask about their ideas, thoughts, and feelings. Start a conversation during a coffee break or chat about their weekend plans.

- Practice Holding Space for your coworkers to show that you care about their thoughts and interests.

**12.2.5 Spotlight positive traits in others:**

Regularly recognize and compliment the strengths and achievements of your colleagues. A compliment on a well-executed presentation or a job well done can go a long way.

**12.2.6 Practice active listening:**

Listen to understand, not just to reply. This means focusing entirely on the speaker to acknowledge their words and respond thoughtfully. During conversations, try to summarize what the other person said to ensure you understand their point of view.

- Listen Up and practice your mindful listening skills in order to communicate better.

**12.2.7 Communicate with confidence:**

Express your ideas and needs clearly and respectfully. Begin by voicing your opinions in meetings or offering suggestions for improvements in your work area.

- Develop your communication by focusing on Kind Communication and placing an emphasis on empathy, listening, and vulnerability in conversation.

### 12.2.8 Exercise empathy:

Try to understand things from your colleagues' perspectives. This could mean considering how they might feel about changes at work, or recognizing the challenges they might be facing.

- Spend a few moments practicing Empathy to help you connect with your colleagues in a more meaningful way.

### 12.2.9 Build and nurture interpersonal relationships:

Invest time in getting to know your colleagues. This can be achieved through regular, casual conversations or through team-building activities.

## How to improve interpersonal skills FAQs

### What activities improve interpersonal skills?

Activities that encourage interaction, communication, and teamwork are great for boosting interpersonal skills.

1. **Team-building exercises** like group problem-solving tasks or outdoor activities can help improve cooperation and communication.
2. **Role-playing scenarios** can allow you to practice responding to different social situations in a controlled environment.
3. **Workshops or training sessions** focused on communication skills can provide valuable techniques and insights.
4. **Simple daily interactions,** like striking up conversations with new people, can sharpen your interpersonal abilities.

### How can I improve my intrapersonal skills?

Intrapersonal skills involve understanding and managing your own emotions and thoughts. To improve these skills, start by practicing self-reflection.

1. Spend some time each day thinking about your feelings, why you react to certain situations in specific ways, and how you can handle emotions more effectively.
2. Mindfulness practices, like meditation, can help you become more aware of your thoughts and feelings.
3. Keep a journal to help you track your emotional responses and patterns over time.

Developing these skills can help you understand yourself better, leading to improved interpersonal interactions.

## What are the 5 ways to develop good interpersonal relationships?

The following methods create a foundation of trust and understanding, which are key in building strong interpersonal relationships.

1. **Effective communication:** Clearly express your thoughts and actively listen to others.
2. **Active listening:** Pay attention and show interest in what others are saying.
3. **Empathy:** Try to understand and share the feelings of others.
4. **Respect:** Treat others with consideration and understand their viewpoints.
5. **Consistent and positive interactions:** Regularly engage with others in a positive and friendly manner.

## How can I improve my interpersonal skills?

Start by becoming more aware of how you interact with others and how they respond to you.

1. **Seek feedback** from trusted colleagues or friends about your communication style.
2. **Engage in active listening,** where you focus entirely on the speaker, understand their message, and respond thoughtfully.
3. **Practice empathy** by considering others' perspectives and feelings.
4. **Participate in group activities** or workshops that focus on communication and teamwork.

## How to build interpersonal relationships?

Building interpersonal relationships involves several key steps:

- Communicate openly and regularly with others.
- Show genuine interest in their lives and experiences.
- Be reliable and follow through on commitments and promises.
- Offer support and assistance when needed.
- Celebrate others' successes and be there during challenging times.

# HOW TO WRITE A REPORT

WRITING SKILLS FOR GOOD REPORT

**13**

In technical terms, the definition of a report is pretty vague: any account, spoken or written, of the matters concerning a particular topic. This could refer to anything from a courtroom testimony to a grade schooler's book report.

Really, when people talk about "reports," they're usually referring to official documents outlining the facts of a topic, typically written by an expert on the subject or someone assigned to investigate it. There are different types of reports, explained in the next section, but they mostly fit this description.

What kind of information is shared in reports? Although all facts are welcome, reports, in particular, tend to feature these types of content:

1. Details of an event or situation
2. The consequences or ongoing effect of an event or situation
3. Evaluation of statistical data or analytics
4. Interpretations from the information in the report
5. Predictions or recommendations based on the information in the report.

6. How the information relates to other events or reports

Reports are closely related to essay writing, although there are some clear distinctions. While both rely on facts, essays add the personal opinions and arguments of the authors. Reports typically stick only to the facts, although they may include some of the author's interpretation of these facts, most likely in the conclusion.

Moreover, reports are heavily organized, commonly with tables of contents and copious headings and subheadings. This makes it easier for readers to scan reports for the information they're looking for. Essays, on the other hand, are meant to be read start to finish, not browsed for specific insights.

### 13.1 Types of report formats

There are a few different types of reports, depending on the purpose and to whom you present your report. Here's a quick list of the common types of reports:

1. **Academic report:**
   Tests a student's comprehension of the subject matter, such as book reports, reports on historical events, and biographies.
2. **Business reports:**
   Identifies information useful in business strategy, such as marketing reports, internal memos, SWOT analysis, and feasibility reports.
3. **Scientific reports:**
   Shares research findings, such as research papers and case studies, typically in science journals.

Reports can be further divided into categories based on how they are written. For example, a report could be formal or informal, short, or long, and internal or external. In business, a **vertical report** shares information with people on different levels of the hierarchy (i.e., people who work above you and below you), while

a **lateral report** is for people on the author's same level, but in different departments.

There are as many types of reports as there are writing styles, but in this guide, we focus on academic reports, which tend to be formal and informational.

### 13.2 What is the structure of a report?

The report format depends on the type of report and the requirements of the assignment. While reports can use their own unique structure, most follow this basic template:

1. **Executive summary:**
   Just like an abstract in an academic paper, an executive summary is a standalone section that summarizes the findings in your report, so readers know what to expect. These are mostly for official reports and less so for school reports.
2. **Introduction:**
   Setting up the body of the report, your introduction explains the overall topic that you're about to discuss, with your thesis statement and any need-to-know background information before you get into your own findings.
3. **Body:**
   The body of the report explains all your major discoveries, broken up into headings and subheadings. The body makes up the majority of the entire report; whereas the introduction and conclusion are just a few paragraphs each, the body can go on for pages.
4. **Conclusion:**
   The conclusion is where you bring together all the information in your report and come to a definitive interpretation or judgment. This is usually where the author inputs their own personal opinions or inferences.

If you're familiar with how to write a research paper, you'll notice that report writing follows the same introduction-body-conclusion

structure, sometimes adding an executive summary. Reports usually have their own additional requirements as well, such as title pages and tables of content, which we explain in the next section.

### 13.3 What should be included in the report?

There are no firm requirements for what's included in this report. Every school, company, laboratory, task manager, and teacher can make their own format, depending on their unique needs. In general, though, be on the lookout for these particular requirements—they tend to crop up a lot:

1. **Title page:**
   Official reports often use a title page to keep things organized; if a person has to read multiple reports, title pages make them easier to keep track of.
2. **Table of contents:**
   Just like in books, the table of contents helps readers go directly to the section they're interested in, allowing for faster browsing.
3. **Page numbering:**
   A common courtesy if you're writing a longer report, page numbering makes sure the pages are in order in case of mix-ups or misprints.
4. **Headings and subheadings:**
   Reports are typically broken up into sections, divided by headings and subheadings, to facilitate browsing and scanning.
5. **Citations:**
   If you're citing information from another source, the citations guidelines tell you the recommended format.
6. **Works cited page:**
   A bibliography at the end of the report lists credits and the legal information for the other sources you got information from.

As always, refer to the assignment for the specific guidelines on each of these. The people who read the report should tell you which style guides or formatting they require.

## 13.4 How to write a report in 7 steps.

Now let's get into the specifics of how to write a report. Follow the seven steps on report writing below to take you from an idea to a completed paper.

### 13.4.1 Choose a topic based on the assignment.

Before you start writing, you need to pick the topic for your report. Often, the topic is assigned to you, as with most business reports, or predetermined by the nature of your work, as with scientific reports. If that's the case, you can ignore this step and move on.

If you're in charge of choosing your own topic, as with a lot of academic reports, then this is one of the most important steps in the whole writing process. Try to pick a topic that fits these two criteria:

a) There's adequate information: Choose a topic that's not too general but not too specific, with enough information to fill your report without padding, but not so much that you can't cover everything.
b) It's something you're interested in: Although this isn't a strict requirement, it does help the quality of a report if you're engaged by the subject matter.

Of course, don't forget the instructions of the assignment, including length, so keep those in the back of your head when deciding.

### 13.4.2 Conduct research.

With business and scientific reports, the research is usually your own or provided by the company—although there's still plenty of digging for external sources in both.

For academic papers, you're largely on your own for research, unless you're required to use class materials. That's one of the reasons why choosing the right topic is so crucial; you won't go far if the topic you picked doesn't have enough available research.

The key is to search only for reputable sources: official documents, other reports, research papers, case studies, books from respected authors, etc. Feel free to use research cited in other similar reports. You can often find a lot of information online through search engines, but a quick trip to the library can also help in a pinch.

### 13.4.3 Write a thesis statement.

Before you go any further, write a thesis statement to help you conceptualize the main theme of your report. Just like the topic sentence of a paragraph, the thesis statement summarizes the main point of your writing, in this case, the report.

Once you've collected enough research, you should notice some trends and patterns in the information. If these patterns all infer or lead up to a bigger, overarching point, that's your thesis statement.

For example, if you were writing a report on the wages of fast-food employees, your thesis might be something like, "Although wages used to be commensurate with living expenses, after years of stagnation they are no longer adequate." From there, the rest of your report will elaborate on that thesis, with ample evidence and supporting arguments.

It's good to include your thesis statement in both the executive summary and introduction of your report, but you still want to figure it out early, so you know which direction to go when you work on your outline next.

### 13.4.4 Prepare an outline.

Writing an outline is recommended for all kinds of writing, but it's especially useful for reports given their emphasis on organization. Because reports are often separated by headings and subheadings, a solid outline makes sure you stay on track while writing without missing anything.

Really, you should start thinking about your outline during the research phase, when you start to notice patterns and trends. If

you're stuck, try making a list of all the key points, details, and evidence you want to mention. See if you can fit them into general and specific categories, which you can turn into headings and subheadings respectively.

### 13.4.5 Write a rough draft.

Actually, writing the rough draft, or first draft, is usually the most time-consuming step. Here's where you take all the information from your research and put it into words. To avoid getting overwhelmed, simply follow your outline step by step to make sure you don't accidentally leave out anything.

Don't be afraid to make mistakes; that's the number one rule for writing a rough draft. Expecting your first draft to be perfect adds a lot of pressure. Instead, write in a natural and relaxed way, and worry about the specific details like word choice and correcting mistakes later. That's what the last two steps are for, anyway.

### 13.4.6 Revise and edit your report.

Once your rough draft is finished, it's time to go back and start fixing the mistakes you ignored the first time around. (Before you dive right back in, though, it helps to sleep on it to start editing fresh, or at least take a small break to unwind from writing the rough draft.)

We recommend first rereading your report for any major issues, such as cutting or moving around entire sentences and paragraphs. Sometimes you'll find your data doesn't line up, or that you misinterpreted a key piece of evidence. This is the right time to fix the "big picture" mistakes and rewrite any longer sections as needed.

If you're unfamiliar with what to look for when editing, you can read our previous guide with some more advanced self-editing tips.

### 13.4.7 Proofread and check for mistakes.

Last, it pays to go over your report one final time, just to

optimize your wording and check for grammatical or spelling mistakes. In the previous step you checked for "big picture" mistakes, but here you're looking for specific, even nitpicky problems.

A writing assistant like Grammarly flags those issues for you. Grammarly's free version points out any spelling and grammatical mistakes while you write, with suggestions to improve your writing that you can apply with just one click. The Premium version offers even more advanced features, such as tone adjustments and word choice recommendations for taking your writing to the next level.



# CREATING AN EFFECTIVE POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

# 14

A top-notch presentation possesses the power to drive action. From winning stakeholders over and conveying a powerful message to securing funding — your secret weapon lies within the realm of creating an effective presentation.

Being an excellent presenter isn't confined to the boardroom. Whether you're delivering a presentation at work, pursuing an academic career, involved in a non-profit organization or even a student, nailing the presentation game is a game-changer.

These valuable presentation tips cater to individuals from diverse professional backgrounds, encompassing business professionals, sales and marketing teams, educators, trainers, students, researchers, non-profit organizations, public speakers, and presenters.

No matter your field or role, these tips for presenting will equip you with the skills to deliver effective presentations that leave a lasting impression on any audience.

## 14.1 Ten qualities of a good presentation

When it comes to giving an engaging presentation that leaves a lasting impression, it's not just about the content — it's also about how you deliver it. Wondering what makes a good presentation? Well, the best presentations I've seen consistently exhibit these 10 qualities:

### 14.1.1 Clear structure

No one likes to get lost in a maze of information. Organize your thoughts into a logical flow, complete with an introduction, main points, and a solid conclusion. A structured presentation helps your audience follow along effortlessly, leaving them with a sense of satisfaction at the end.

Regardless of your presentation style, a quality presentation starts with a clear roadmap.

### 14.1.2 Engaging opening

Hook your audience right from the start with an attention-grabbing statement, a fascinating question or maybe even a captivating anecdote. Set the stage for a killer presentation!

### 14.1.3 Relevant content

Make sure your content aligns with their interests and needs. Your audience is there for a reason, and that's to get valuable insights. Avoid fluff and get straight to the point, your audience will be genuinely excited.

### 14.1.4 Effective visual aids

Picture this: a slide with walls of text and tiny charts, yawn! Visual aids should be just that—aiding your presentation. Opt for clear and visually appealing slides, engaging images and informative charts that add value and help reinforce your message.

You can import data from CSV or Google Sheets seamlessly and create stunning charts, graphs, and icon

stories effortlessly to showcase your data in a captivating and impactful way.

### 14.1.5 Clear and concise communication

Keep your language simple and avoid jargon or complicated terms. Communicate your ideas clearly, so your audience can easily grasp and retain the information being conveyed. This can prevent confusion and enhance the overall effectiveness of the message.

### 14.1.6 Engaging delivery

Spice up your presentation with a sprinkle of enthusiasm! Maintain eye contact, use expressive gestures, and vary your tone of voice to keep your audience glued to the edge of their seats. A touch of charisma goes a long way!

### 14.1.7 Interaction and audience engagement

Turn your presentation into an interactive experience — encourage questions, foster discussions and maybe even throw in a fun activity. Engaged audiences are more likely to remember and embrace your message.

Engage your audience with interactive content that lets them explore and interact with your presentation for a truly immersive experience.

### 14.1.8 Effective storytelling

Who doesn't love a good story? Weaving relevant anecdotes, case studies or even a personal story into your presentation can captivate your audience and create a lasting impact. Stories build connections and make your message memorable.

A great presentation background is also essential as it sets the tone, creates visual interest, and reinforces your message. Enhance the overall aesthetics of your presentation with these 15 presentation background examples and captivate your audience's attention.

### 14.1.9 Well-timed pacing

Pace your presentation thoughtfully with well-designed presentation slides, neither rushing through nor dragging it out. Respect your audience's time and ensure you cover all the essential points without losing their interest.

### 14.1.10 Strong conclusion

Last impressions linger! Summarize your main points and leave your audience with a clear takeaway. End your presentation with a bang, a call to action or an inspiring thought that resonates long after the conclusion.

In-person presentations aside, acing a virtual presentation is of paramount importance in today's digital world. Check out this guide to learn how you can adapt your in-person presentations into virtual presentations.

## 14.2 Step-by-step guide on how to prepare an effective presentation.

Preparing an effective presentation starts with laying a strong foundation that goes beyond just creating slides and notes. One of the quickest and best ways to make a presentation would be with the help of good presentation software.

Otherwise, let me walk you to how to prepare for a presentation step by step and unlock the secrets of crafting a professional presentation that sets you apart.

1. **Understand the audience and their needs**
   Before you dive into preparing your masterpiece, take a moment to get to know your target audience. **Tailor your presentation to meet their needs and expectations,** and you'll have them hooked from the start!
2. **Conduct thorough research on the topic**
   Time to hit the books (or the internet)! Don't skimp on the research with your presentation materials — **dive deep into the subject matter and gather valuable insights.** The more

you know, the more confident you'll feel in delivering your presentation.

3. **Organize the content with a clear structure**
   No one wants to stumble through a chaotic mess of information. **Outline your presentation with a clear and logical flow**. Start with a captivating introduction, follow up with main points that build on each other and wrap it up with a powerful conclusion that leaves a lasting impression.
   Delivering an effective business presentation hinges on captivating your audience. With thoughtfully structured layouts, these templates enhance your message's clarity and coherence, ensuring a memorable and engaging experience for your audience members.
   Don't want to build your presentation layout from scratch? pick from these 5 foolproof presentation layout ideas that won't go wrong.
4. **Develop visually appealing and supportive visual aids**
   Spice up your presentation with eye-catching visuals! **Create slides that complement your message, not overshadow it.** Remember, a picture is worth a thousand words, but that doesn't mean you need to overload your slides with text.
   Well-chosen designs create a cohesive and professional look, capturing your audience's attention and enhancing the overall effectiveness of your message. Here's a list of carefully curated PowerPoint presentation templates and great background graphics that will significantly influence the visual appeal and engagement of your presentation.
5. **Practice, practice and practice**
   Practice makes perfect — **rehearse your presentation and arrive early to your presentation to help overcome stage fright.** Familiarity with your material will boost your presentation skills and help you handle curveballs with ease.

6. **Seek feedback and make necessary adjustments**
   **Don't be afraid to ask for help and seek feedback from friends and colleagues.** Constructive criticism can help you identify blind spots and fine-tune your presentation to perfection.
   Group members can access and work on the presentation simultaneously and edit content side by side in real-time. Changes will be reflected immediately to the entire team, promoting seamless teamwork.
7. **Prepare for potential technical or logistical issues**
   **Prepare for the unexpected by checking your equipment, internet connection and any other potential hiccups.** If you're worried that you'll miss out on any important points, you could always have notecards prepared. **Remember to remain focused and rehearse potential answers to anticipated questions.**
8. **Fine-tune and polish your presentation**
   As the big day approaches, give your presentation one last shine. **Review your talking points, practice how to present a presentation and make any final tweaks.** Deep breaths — you're on the brink of delivering a successful presentation!
   In competitive environments, persuasive presentations set individuals and organizations apart. To brush up on your presentation skills, read these guides on how to make a persuasive presentation and tips to presenting effectively.

## 14.3 Nine effective techniques to deliver a memorable presentation.

Whether you're an experienced presenter or a novice, the right techniques will let your presentation skills soar to new heights!
From public speaking hacks to interactive elements and storytelling prowess, these 9 effective presentation techniques will empower you to leave a lasting impression on your audience and make your presentations unforgettable.

### 14.3.1 Confidence and positive body language

Positive body language instantly captivates your audience, making them believe in your message as much as you do. Strengthen your stage presence and own that stage like it's your second home! Stand tall, shoulders back and exude confidence.

### 14.3.2 Eye contact with the audience

Break down that invisible barrier and connect with your audience through their eyes. Maintaining eye contact when giving a presentation builds trust and shows that you're present and engaged with them.

### 14.3.3 Effective use of hand gestures and movement

A little movement goes a long way! Emphasize key points with purposeful gestures and don't be afraid to walk around the stage. Your energy will be contagious!

### 14.3.4 Utilize storytelling techniques.

Weave the magic of storytelling into your presentation. Share relatable anecdotes, inspiring success stories or even personal experiences that tug at the heartstrings of your audience. Adjust your pitch, pace, and volume to match the emotions and intensity of the story. Varying your speaking voice adds depth and enhances your stage presence.

### 14.3.5 Incorporate multimedia elements

Spice up your presentation with a dash of visual pizzazz! Use slides, images, and video clips to add depth and clarity to your message. Just remember, less is more—don't overwhelm them with information overload.

Turn your presentations into an interactive party! Involve your audience with questions, polls or group activities. When they actively participate, they become invested in your presentation's success. Bring your design to life with animated elements.

### 14.3.6 Utilize humor strategically.

Laughter is the best medicine—and a fantastic presentation enhancer! A well-placed joke or lighthearted moment can break the ice and create a warm atmosphere, making your audience more receptive to your message.

### 14.3.7 Practice active listening and respond to feedback.

Be attentive to your audience's reactions and feedback. If they have questions or concerns, address them with genuine interest and respect. Your responsiveness builds rapport and shows that you genuinely care about their experience.

### 14.3.8 Apply the 10-20-30 rule.

Apply the 10-20-30 presentation rule and keep it short, sweet and impactful! Stick to ten slides, deliver your presentation within 20 minutes and use a 30-point font to ensure clarity and focus. Less is more, and your audience will thank you for it!

### 14.3.9 Implement the 5-5-5 rule.

Simplicity is key. Limit each slide to five bullet points, with only five words per bullet point and allow each slide to remain visible for about five seconds. This rule keeps your presentation concise and prevents information overload.

Simple presentations are more engaging because they are easier to follow.



# CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

# 15

Creativity is typically centered around original thought and knowledge, which unleashes potential and is an integral part of idea generation. Innovation, on the other hand, is used to turn the creative idea that you come up with into a viable solution.

Innovation is the process of turning a new concept into commercial success or widespread use. Invention is the creation of a new idea or concept. Creativity is the act of turning new and imaginative ideas into reality.

Change is the basic law that governs the entire nature. In this fast-paced world, technology is changing rapidly, i.e. nobody can assure you that the world is going to be the same, five years later, as everything changes with the blink of an eye. So, if one wants to go along with the world, then the only requirement is to be creative and innovative. While **Creativity is related to 'imagination', but innovation is related to 'implementation'**.

## 15.1 Definition of Creativity

The primary difference between creativity and innovation is that the former refers to conceive a fresh idea or plan, whereas the latter implies initiating something new to the market, which is not introduced earlier. You can get a better understanding of the two topics, and their differences.

Creativity is the characteristic of a person to generate new ideas, alternatives, solutions, and possibilities in a unique and different way. Creativity is the ability to conceive something unpredictable, original, and unique. It must be expressive, exciting, and imaginative.

It is the mirror of how beautifully a person can think in any given circumstance. It is not genetic but can be developed if someone keeps on learning and comprehending things with a rare and exclusive perception. Creativity is a brainstorming and mind-blogging activity in which a person has to think beyond his imagination for bringing something worthwhile. It is an activity of unveiling something which was previously hidden.

## 15.2 Definition of Innovation

Innovation is an act of application of new ideas to which creates some value for the business organization, government, and society as well. Better and smarter ways of doing anything are innovation. It could be the introduction of:

- New technology.
- New product line or segment.
- A new method of production.
- An improvement to the existing product.

Innovation is closely tied to creativity i.e. putting creative ideas into action is an innovation, whose consequences should be positive. It is the process of doing something better for the first time, which was not previously done by any entity. It can also be termed as a change which can bring a new edge to the

performance and productivity of the company. It is of two types i.e. evolutionary and revolutionary.

## 15.3 Key Differences Between Creativity and Innovation

The following are the major differences between Creativity and Innovation:

1. The quality of thinking about new ideas and putting them into reality is creativity. The act of executing creative ideas into practice is innovation.
2. Creativity is an imaginative process as opposed to innovation is a productive process.
3. Creativity can never be measured, but Innovation can be measured.
4. Creativity is related to the generation of ideas which are new and unique. Conversely, Innovation is related to introduce something better into the market.
5. Creativity does not require money. On the other hand, innovation requires money.
6. There is no risk involved in creativity, whereas the risk is always attached to innovation.

## Comparison Chart

| BASIS FOR COMPARISON | CREATIVITY | INNOVATION |
|---|---|---|
| **Meaning** | Creativity is an act of creating new ideas, imaginations, and possibilities. | Innovation is the introduction of something new and effective into the market. |
| **Process** | Imaginative | Productive |
| **Quantifiable** | No | Yes |
| **Related to** | Thinking something new | Introducing something new |
| **Money Consumption** | No | Yes |
| **Risk** | No | Yes |

## 15.4 How to Be More Creative: -

1. **Commit yourself to Creativity:**
   The first step to increasing creativity is to devote yourself to developing your creative abilities. Do not put off your efforts. Set goals, enlist the help of others, and put aside time each day to develop your skills. For example, if you are interested in painting, schedule time regularly to learn and practice your skills.
2. **Become an Expert:**
   One of the best ways to develop creativity is to become an expert in this area. By having a rich understanding of the topic, you will be better able to think of novel or innovative solutions to problems. One way to develop expertise is by reading about creative people and listening to them speak.
3. **Reward your curiosity:**
   One common roadblock to developing creativity is the sense that curiosity is an indulgence. Rather than reprimanding yourself for following an internet rabbit hole, reward yourself when you are curious about something. Give yourself the opportunity and the time to explore new topics.
4. **Take risks:**
   When it comes to building your creative skills, you must be willing to take risks to advance your abilities. Although your efforts may not lead to success every time, you will still be boosting your creative talents and building skills that will serve you well in the future. For example, sharing your work in a creative writing course might feel intimidating. But the critique you receive from classmates and teachers can be invaluable.
5. **Build your confidence:**
   Insecurity in your abilities can suppress creativity, which is why it is important to build confidence. Note your progress,

commend your efforts, and always be on the lookout for ways to reward your creativity.

6. **Make time for Creativity:**
   You won't be able to develop your creative talents if you don't make time for them. Schedule some time each week to concentrate on some type of creative project.
7. **Overcome a Negative Attitude:**
   Focus on eliminating negative thoughts or self-criticisms that may impair your ability to develop strong creative skills. Recognize these as roadblocks and work to overcome them.
8. **Fight Fear of Failure:**
   The fear that you might make a mistake or fail in your efforts can paralyze progress. Whenever you find yourself harbouring such feelings, remind yourself that mistakes are simply part of the process. While you may occasionally stumble on your path to creativity, you will eventually reach your goals.
9. **Brainstorm New Ideas:**
   Brainstorming is a common technique in both academic and professional settings, but it can also be a powerful tool for increasing creativity. Start by suspending your judgment and self-criticism. Then start writing down related ideas and possible solutions. The goal is to generate as many ideas as possible in a relatively short span of time. Next, focus on clarifying and refining your ideas in order to arrive at the best possible choice.
10. **Explore Multiple Solutions:**
    The next time you approach a problem, try looking for a variety of solutions. Instead of simply going with the first idea you have, take the time to think of other possible ways to approach the situation. This simple activity is a great way to build both problem-solving and creative thinking skills.

**11. Keep a Creativity Journal:**

Start keeping a journal to follow your creative process and track the ideas you produce. A journal is a great way to reflect back on what you have accomplished and look for other possible solutions. This journal can be used to save ideas that can later serve as future inspiration.

**12. Use Mind Maps and Flow Charts**

A mind map is a way to connect ideas and look for innovative answers to questions. Create a mind map by writing down a central topic or word. Next, link related terms or ideas around the central word. While similar to brainstorming, this technique allows for branching ideas and offers a very visual way of seeing how ideas are linked.

As you start to develop a new project, create a flow chart to track the project from start to finish. Look for various paths or sequences of events that might occur. A flow chart can help you visualize the final product, eliminate potential problems, and create unique solutions.

**13. Challenge Yourself and Create Opportunities**

Once you have developed some basic creative skills, it is important to continually challenge yourself to further advance your abilities. Look for more difficult approaches, try out new things, and avoid always returning to the same solutions you have used in the past.

**14. Try the Six Hats Technique**

The "six hats" technique involves looking at a problem from six differing perspectives. By doing this, you can produce more ideas than you might have had you only looked at the situation from one or two points of view.

- **Black hat:** Use a negative perspective. Which elements of the solution won't work?
- **Blue hat:** Think broadly. What is the best overall solution?

- **Green hat:** Think creatively. What are some alternative ideas?
- **Red hat:** Look at the situation emotionally. What do your feelings tell you?
- **White hat:** Look at the situation objectively. What are the facts?
- **Yellow hat:** Use a positive perspective. Which elements of the solution will work?

15. **Look for Inspiration:**

    Never expect creativity to just happen. Look for new sources of inspiration that will give you fresh ideas and motivate you to generate unique answers to questions. Read a book, visit a museum, listen to your favorite music, or engage in a lively debate with a friend.

    Use whatever strategy or technique works best for you. Do you enjoy video games? Research indicates that playing video games can help increase your creativity.

16. **Consider Alternative Scenarios**

    When approaching a problem, ask "what if..." questions to consider each possible scenario. If you take a specific approach, what will the outcome be?

    By looking at these alternatives beforehand, you'll be better able to develop creative solutions to problems.

17. **Try the Snowball Technique**

    Have you ever noticed how one great idea often leads directly to another? You can take advantage of this by using a "snowball technique" when you are generating ideas for a project. If an idea isn't appropriate for your current work, set it aside to work on later, or implement it in a future project.

## 15.5 Example

The invention of the motorcycle was the biggest innovation over scooters. In the early centuries, people used to travel with scooters, for which they have to make lots of efforts to start it like they

needed to strike the kick and knee down from either side if it doesn't start. So, years and years passed away, and nobody even thought of the invention of bikes. The invention of the motorcycle makes them realize that they can also ride bikes without making any extra effort, they just have to click the switch and it starts automatically. In this example, the thought of creation of a new traveling motorcycle is creative, but the actual invention of it is innovation.

## 15.6 Conclusion

There is always a dispute between creativity and innovation as both are important for an organization to last longer. The existence of both can lead to success. After a huge discussion, let's know about how we can be creative – by asking questions, drawing conclusions, experimenting & exploring new ideas and widening the areas of thinking. For being innovative, a person must have the ability to take risks, experimenting, asking questions, and observing things.



# PROBLEM SOLVING

# 16

Good problem-solving skills empower managers in their professional and personal lives. Good problem-solving skills seldom come naturally; they are consciously learnt and nurtured. The repertoire of good problem-solving skills includes:

1. developing creative and innovative solutions.
2. developing practical solutions.
3. showing independence and initiative in identifying problems and solving them.
4. applying a range of strategies to problem-solving.
5. applying problem-solving strategies across a range of areas.

## 16.1 What is problem?

### 16.1.1 A problem is an opportunity for improvement.

"Every problem has a gift for you in its hands," says Richard Bach. Someone coined the word **"probortunity"** – an acronym combining the words **"problem"** and **"opportunity".** A probortunity is a reminder to look at problems as possible opportunities. An optimist looks at challenging or problematic events as potential opportunities

for improvement. He is seen always seeking answers for the questions such as:

1. Is there more than one probortunity?
2. Is it my personal probortunity?
3. Is it the organization's probortunity?
4. Is it an actual probortunity or just an annoyance?
5. Is this the real probortunity, or merely a symptom of a larger one?

**16.1.2 A problem is the difference between the actual state and desired state.**

A problem could also be the result of the knowledge that there is a gap between the actual and desired or ideal state of objectives. Clarity of the problem is determined by the clarity of the knowledge of what precisely one wants and what one has. Greater clarity of the problem helps in finding a better and effective solution.

**16.1.3 A problem results from the recognition of a present imperfect and the belief in the possibility of a better future.**

The belief that one's hopes can be achieved will give one the will to aim towards a better future. Hopes to challenge one's potential, and challenge is another definition of a problem.

**16.2 How to deal with a problem?**

When confronted with a problem, according to Robert Harris ("Introduction to Problem Solving"), people are likely to adopt either of the two approaches – spot it or mop it.

1. **Stop It**
   A stop-it approaches seeks to solve a problem, so that the problem no longer exists. Its three forms are prevention, elimination, and reduction.
2. **Prevent It.**
   Preventing a problem from occurring or recurring is the most ideal solution. The prevention approach is often a difficult one to apply because it requires

predictive foresight ("this might be a problem someday if we don't act now"). For example, by preventing a cold, or an automobile accident, one can avoid the need to deal any further with a problem or its effects.

3. **Eliminate It**

   Eliminating a problem once and for all is also an ideal way of attacking a problem. If a tank were leaking, an elimination solution would be to plug/seal or otherwise repair the leak, the cause of the problem. To solve by eliminating should be considered in nearly every problem situation.

4. **Reduce It**

   The magnitude of any problem can be lessened by reducing its size. Suppose the tank is leaking and a repair (an elimination-solution) is not possible until a day or two later. The problem could be reduced by turning off the incoming water. Without line pressure on the tank, the leak would slow down; that would be better than a full force leak.

5. **Mop It**

   A mop-it approaches focuses on the effects of a problem. Instead of treating the leak itself, the water on the floor is mopped up - the effects of the problem.

6. **Treat It**

   Here the damage caused by the problem is repaired or treated. The water on the floor is mopped up and the damaged floor is fixed. But it should be noted that:

   1. by itself a treat-it solution is not going to be nearly as effective as some form of stop-it solution and
   2. treat-it solutions are often needed in addition to an elimination or reduction form of solution.

7. **Tolerate It**
   In this form of mop-it approaches, the effects of the problem are put up with. In the leaky water example, one might install a drain in the floor, or waterproof the floor. The effects are taken for granted and measures are taken to endure them.
8. **Redirect It**
   Here the problem is deflected. Sometimes the problem will simply be redefined as not a problem. It is hard to think of a legitimate redirection for the leaking water problem but suppose that the leak is small, and the floor is not being damaged. One might say, "Well, I need the humidity; the leak is actually a good thing." It should be remembered that a problem is a problem only when someone defines it as such.
9. **Ignore It**
   If problem is trivial and does not have any long-term bearing on your working, then it is prudent that one can ignore the problem.

Managers must take cognizance of the fact that problem solving is an ongoing activity. Prof. Jeff Malpas ("Problem solving for Managers") says:

> "No problem is ever totally solved. Every problem has a solution, but every solution with it brings a new problem. Some well-known management techniques emphasize the idea of continuous improvement and successful problem-solving is seen as part of such continuous improvement."

Managers should know that problem-solving is less a matter of continuous improvement as of continuous adjustment. Every solution will have unintended consequences. Every effective

system gives rise to friction and failure. Good management and effective problem-solving depend upon a willingness to adapt to the situation and recognize the ongoing and partial character of all attempts to manage or to solve.

> "Most people spend more time and energy going around problems than trying to solve them."
>
> **Henry Ford**

Norman Vincent Peale, the author of the bestseller, The Power of Positive Thinking had said that how you think about a problem is more important than the problem itself. So always think positively. We have to accept that problems are a part of our lives.

## 16.3 Scientific Attitude for Problem Solving

As scientific attitude is the precondition for adopting scientific method, let us discuss it first. What is meant by scientific attitude? What is its relevance for problem solving? Scientific attitude is complex with several attributes. These attributes are too numerous to be listed. Hence, it is difficult to define scientific attitude. However, some of the important attributes that constitute scientific attitude are the following and you may think of some more:

1. **Having faith in cause-and-effect relationships:** For example, low grades in the term end examination may be traced back to improper study habits.
2. **Having objectivity:** This implies being free of all kinds of biases, while considering something. For example, the reaction to information should not be coloured by its source or any other thing. The information itself should only matter. For example, while assessing an assignment, neither the student who has submitted it nor anything else except the assignment should matter.
3. **Emphasis on empirical evidence:** Information supported by evidence may only be believed. Hence reactions should be elicited only by authentic information, rather than rumors, gossip and informal messages from grapevines.
4. **Open-minded, i.e. being receptive to novel ideas;** having a disposition to review earlier beliefs: For

example, even after several decades of successful distance education, there are many who refuse to believe in it. Are they being open-minded?

5. **Critical thinking:** It is the ability to reflect, think rationally and originally, analyze, and synthesize. Critical thinking actually requires both objectivity as well as open-mindedness.

## 16.4 Developing Scientific Attitude for Problem Solving

As a provider of student support services, if you can develop a scientific attitude in your learners, they will be equipped to solve many of the problems on their own. How can you develop it in your learners? Developing scientific attitude may take a long time as it may involve unlearning unscientific attitudes. A lecture on the importance of scientific attitude may not suffice but may nevertheless be a beginning. You may also encourage students to carry out activities that can lead to the development of attributes comprising scientific attitude. Some of the activities are the following:

1. **Discussions:**
   You may hold a discussion among your students during which they are encouraged to narrate anecdotes and experiences from real life supporting scientific attitude for problem solving.
2. **Debates:**
   Participation in debates necessitates thought processes, listening, logically putting up arguments and counterarguments, placing arguments logically and in the proper sequence, being open to diverse but rational views and the like. This encourages critical thinking, essential for scientific attitude.
3. **Brainstorming:**
   It brings out the originality of thought and encourages creative solutions. This technique also encourages participation of various members of the team.

For effective brainstorming, debates, and discussions, you will have to create an environment that encourages freedom of thought and expression and at the same time moderate discussions so that the focus is not lost and there is no unpleasantness among the participants.

4. **Exercises requiring inductive and deductive reasoning:**
   Logical thinking is essential for problem solving. Hence, providing learners with real and hypothetical situations and asking them to identify and state the problem in clear terms, bring out the specificities and arrive at a solution, examine it and then infer, will develop the abilities to analyze and synthesize.
5. **Root Cause Analysis:**
   The objective of this technique is to help in arriving at the root of the problem. In this method you may present hypothetical problematic situations to your learners and ask them **"Why"** several times till they reach the fundamental cause of the problem. For example, a student confused about the course on which to enroll, may be asked several times 'why' till she sorts out the conflicting and confusing choices and clarity emerges.
6. **Establishing Cause and Effect:**
   As a subsequent step to root cause analysis, you may ask your learners to prepare a flow chart to represent the relationship between an effect (the problem) and its potential causes. The diagram may help in drawing out the factors blocking the solution.
7. **Pareto Charts:**
   A Pareto Chart is basically a bar graph and factors leading to a problem may be represented as different bars. The height of the bars represents frequency, which may be construed as the intensity of the factor. The plotting is done in a descending manner with the smaller ones towards the right. It helps to analyze the causes of a problem by identifying the factors

leading to it. It is not necessary that all the factors leading to the problem be eliminated as some of them may be important. In this example of a Pareto chart there is a hypothetical situation in which the problem is the lack of time for studying. There are various criteria like being in-service to poor study habits that consume/waste time. These criteria may be studied to determine those that cannot be helped and those that can be mitigated/eliminated. Thus, it helps in analyzing the problem and in looking for a long-term solution.

## 8. Applying SWOT for Problem Solving

SWOT analysis is used in business to analyze the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the business environments. It is a tool for reflection (Dess, Lumpkin and Taylor, 2005). The principle underlying strategic management process may also be applied for solving problems faced by individuals.

Strategic management process consists of the following five steps (Bratton and Gold, 2003):

1. **Mission and goals** describe the values and aspirations.
2. **Environmental analysis:** Environmental analysis searches the internal environment for strengths **(S),** weaknesses **(W)** and the external environment for opportunities **(O)** and threats **(T).**
3. **Strategy formulation:** involves the evaluation of interactions among strategic factors and making strategic choices for meeting the goals.
4. **Strategy implementation:** involves the implementation of the strategy.
5. **Strategy evaluation:** determines the extent to which the actual change and performance match the desired change and performance.

These strategic factors are summarized by the acronym SWOT. While Strengths and weaknesses are internal factors, opportunities and threats are in the external environment.

Learners may be guided to analyze their situation along the dimensions of SWOT. You may ask your students to list their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Let us try to understand this with the following example.

**Problem:** Lack of motivation in distant learners
**Strengths**: Sound previous knowledge required for the course in which enrolled.
**Weakness:** Not having enough confidence to study in isolation from peers and teachers.
**Threats:** Limited access to library, social commitments.
**Opportunities:** Availability of adequate self-learning material in different media, scope for learning at own pace, time, and place.

Even if we are aware of our goals, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, articulating and listing them helps in bringing them to the fore and addressing them. Hence, the learners may be asked to carry out this. Now the focus has to be on how best to tap the strengths, utilize the opportunities, overcome the weaknesses and face the threats. Thereafter the strategy to attain the goals may be fixed in the light of the SWOT.

## 16.5 Problem Solving through Decision Making process

Now let us discuss yet another aspect of problem solving, i.e. decision making. As stated by **Ritchie and Thompson (1988),** problem solving includes decision making activities, which include the following steps as given in the following figure.

**Activity:** Read about scientific method and its utility in research.

**Check Your Progress**

**Notes:**

1. Write your answers in the space given below.

2. Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.
3. Think of a problematic situation commonly faced by distant learners. Explain how approaching the problem with a scientific attitude can lead to the solution.
4. Critically evaluate any one method discussed for developing skills for problem solving.

In the perspective of the programme in which you have enrolled, list the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities as perceived by you.

Many of the problems could be solved if the right decisions were taken. Let us study this example.

**Problem:** Medium chosen is Hindi but the learner is facing problem in comprehending the content in the study materials as the language used is replete with difficult words, not used in daily life.

**Step I: Problem identification:** Difficulty in comprehending the content in the study materials.

**Step II: Generation of alternatives:**

1. Opt for a change to English medium.
2. Buy a Hindi dictionary and continue with Hindi medium.

**Step III: Evaluation and selection of alternatives:**

First option: Not having adequate communication skills in English. Hence rejected.

Second option: better to continue with Hindi medium and use dictionary. Hence selected.

**Step IV:** Implementation of the chosen solution, with a few units.

**Step V:** Monitoring the results.

In the light of the results the process may be repeated with the other alternatives.

# THE ART OF CRITICAL THINKING

# 17

## 17.1 Critical Thinking: Where to Begin

"Critical thinking is self-guided, self-disciplined thinking which attempts to reason at the highest level of quality in a fair-minded way. People who think critically attempt, with consistent and conscious effort, to live rationally, reasonably, and empathically. They are keenly aware of the inherently flawed nature of human thinking when left unchecked. They strive to diminish the power of their egocentric and sociocentric tendencies. They use the intellectual tools that critical thinking offers – concepts and principles that enable them to analyze, assess, and improve thinking. They work diligently to develop the intellectual virtues of intellectual integrity, intellectual humility, intellectual civility, intellectual empathy, intellectual sense of justice and confidence in reason. They realize that no matter how skilled they are as thinkers, they can always improve their reasoning abilities and they will at times fall prey to mistakes in reasoning, human irrationality, prejudices, biases, distortions, uncritically accepted social rules and taboos, self-interest, and vested interest.

They strive to improve the world in whatever ways they can and contribute to a more rational, civilized society. At the same time, they recognize the complexities often inherent in doing so. They strive never to think simplistically about complicated issues and always to consider the rights and needs of relevant others. They recognize the complexities in developing as thinkers and commit themselves to life-long practice toward self-improvement. They embody the Socratic principle: The unexamined life is not worth living, because they realize that many unexamined lives together result in an uncritical, unjust, dangerous world."

**~ Linda Elder, September 2007**

## 17.2 Why Critical Thinking?

### The Problem:

Everyone thinks; it is our nature to do so. But much of our thinking, left to itself, is biased, distorted, partial, uninformed, or down-right prejudiced. Yet the quality of our lives and that of what we produce, make, or build depends precisely on the quality of our thought. Shoddy thinking is costly, both in money and in quality of life. Excellence in thought, however, must be systematically cultivated.

### A Brief Definition:

Critical thinking is the art of analysing and evaluating thinking with a view to improving it.

### The Result:

A well-cultivated critical thinker:

1. raises vital questions and problems, formulating them clearly and precisely.
2. gathers and assesses relevant information, using abstract ideas to interpret it effectively.
3. comes to well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against relevant criteria and standards.

4. thinks open-mindedly within alternative systems of thought, recognizing and assessing, as need be, their assumptions, implications, and practical consequences; and
5. communicates effectively with others in figuring out solutions to complex problems.

Critical thinking is, in short, self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored, and self-corrective thinking. It requires rigorous standards of excellence and mindful command of their use. It entails effective communication and problem-solving abilities, and a commitment to overcoming our native egocentrism and sociocentrism.

## 17.3 The Essential Dimensions of Critical Thinking

**Critical Thinking Routinely**
**Apply Intellectual Standards**
**To the Elements of Reasoning In**
**Order to Develop Intellectual Traits**

| THE STANDARDS | |
|---|---|
| Clarity | Precision |
| Accuracy | Significance |
| Relevance | Completeness |
| Logicalness | Fairness |
| Breadth | Depth |

**Must be applied to**

| THE ELEMENTS | |
|---|---|
| Purpose | Inferences |
| Questions | Concepts |
| Points of view | Implications |
| Information | Assumptions |

**As we learn To develop**

| INTELLECTUAL TRAITS | |
|---|---|
| Intellectual Humility | Intellectual Perseverance |
| Intellectual Autonomy | Confidence in Reason |
| Intellectual Integrity | Intellectual Empathy |
| Intellectual Courage | Fairmindedness |

Our conception of critical thinking is based on the substantive approach developed by Dr. Richard Paul and his colleagues at the Center and Foundation for Critical Thinking over multiple decades. It is relevant to every subject, discipline, and profession, and to reasoning through the problems of everyday life. It entails five essential dimensions of critical thinking:

1. The analysis of thought.
2. The assessment of thought.
3. The dispositions of thought.
4. The skills and abilities of thought.
5. The obstacles or barriers to critical thought.

At the left is an overview of the first three dimensions. In sum, the elements or structures of thought enable us to "take our thinking apart" and analyze it. The intellectual standards are used to assess and evaluate the elements. The intellectual traits are dispositions of mind embodied by the fair-minded critical thinker. To cultivate the mind, we need command of these essential dimensions, and we need to consistently apply them as we think through the many problems and issues in our lives.

## 17.4 The Elements of Reasoning and Intellectual Standards

To learn more about the elements of thought and how to apply the intellectual standards, check out our interactive model. Simply click on the link below, scroll to the bottom of the page, and explore the model with your mouse.

## 17.5 Open the "Elements and Standards" Online Learning Model.

## Why the Analysis of Thinking Is Important

If you want to think well, you must understand at least the rudiments of thought, the most basic structures out of which all thinking is made. You must learn how to take thinking apart.

## Analysing the Logic of a Subject

When we understand the elements of reasoning, we realize that all subjects, all disciplines, have a fundamental logic defined by the structures of thought embedded within them. Therefore, to lay bare a subject's most fundamental logic, we should begin with these questions:

- What is the main purpose or goal of studying this subject? What are people in this field trying to accomplish?
- What kinds of questions do they ask? What kinds of problems do they try to solve?
- What sorts of information or data do they gather?
- What types of inferences do they usually draw? What types of judgments do they typically make? (Judgments about…)
- How do they go about gathering information in ways that are distinctive to this field?
- What are the most basic ideas, concepts, or theories in this field?
- What do professionals in this field take for granted or assume?
- How should studying this field affect my view of the world?
- What viewpoint is fostered in this field?
- What implications follow from studying this discipline? How are the products of this field used in everyday life? How might they be used in ways they are not currently?

## Going Deeper...

While most critical thinking concepts are intuitive, to integrate and apply these concepts consistently and rationally takes concerted effort, study, and reflection. Just as professional athletes or musicians must practice mastering their sport or art, so too must thinkers practice mastering their minds. We invite you to return to our website often and explore the resources available to assist you in developing and cultivating your thinking.

**The Critical Thinking Bookstore**

Our online bookstore houses numerous books and teacher's manuals, Thinker's Guides, videos, and other educational materials.

**Learn From Our Fellows and Scholars**

Watch our Event Calendar, which provides an overview of all upcoming conferences and academies hosted by the Foundation for Critical Thinking. Clicking an entry on the Event Calendar will bring up that event's details, and the option to register.

For those interested in online learning, the Foundation offers accredited online courses in critical thinking for both educators and the general public, as well as an online test for evaluating basic comprehension of critical thinking concepts. We are in the process of developing more online learning tools and tests to offer the community.

**Utilizing this Website**

This website contains large amounts research and an online library of articles, both of which are freely available to the public. We also invite you to become a member of the Critical Thinking Community, where you will gain access to more tools and materials. If you cannot locate a resource on a specific topic or concept, try searching for it using our Search Tool. The Search Tool is at the upper-right of every page on the website.



# STRESS MANAGEMENT

# 18

Stress is part of being human, and it can help motivate you to get things done. Even high stress from serious illness, job loss, a death in the family, or a painful life event can be a natural part of life. You may feel down or anxious, and that's normal too for a while.

Talk to your doctor about if you feel down or anxious for more than several weeks or if it starts to interfere with your home or work life. Therapy, medication, and other strategies can help.

In the meantime, there are things you can learn to help you manage stress before it gets to be too much. These tips may help you keep stress at bay:

1. Keep a positive attitude.
2. Accept that there are events that you cannot control.
3. Be assertive instead of aggressive. Assert your feelings, opinions, or beliefs instead of becoming angry, defensive, or passive.
4. Learn to manage your time more effectively.
5. Set limits appropriately and say no to requests that would create excessive stress in your life.

6. Make time for hobbies and interests.
7. Don't rely on alcohol, drugs, or compulsive behaviours to reduce stress. Drugs and alcohol can stress your body even more.
8. Seek out social support. Spend enough time with those you love.
9. Seek treatment with a psychologist or other mental health professional trained in stress management or biofeedback techniques to learn more healthy ways of dealing with the stress in your life.

There's a lot more you can do to help manage stress. Consider these lifestyle changes:

**18.1 Exercise**

To start with, physical activity can help improve your sleep. And better sleep means better stress management. Doctors don't yet know exactly why, but people who exercise more tend to get better deep "slow wave" sleep that helps renew the brain and body. Just take care not to exercise too close to bedtime, which disrupts sleep for some people.

Exercise also seems to help mood. Part of the reason may be that it stimulates your body to release a number of hormones like endorphins and endocannabinoids that help block pain, improve sleep, and sedate you. Some of them (endocannabinoids) may be responsible for the euphoric feeling, or "runner's high," that some people report after long runs.

People who exercise also tend to feel less anxious and more positive about themselves. When your body feels good, your mind often follows. Get a dose of stress relief with these exercises:

1. Running
2. Swimming
3. Dancing
4. Cycling

5. Aerobics

If you don't have the time for a formal exercise program, you can still find ways to move throughout your day. Try these tips:

1. Bike instead of driving to the store.
2. Use the stairs instead of the elevator.
3. Park as far as you can from the door.
4. Hand-wash your car.
5. Clean your house.
6. Walk on your lunch break.

## 18.2 Diet

The benefits of eating healthy foods extend beyond your waistline to your mental health. A healthy diet can lessen the effects of stress, build up your immune system, level your mood, and lower your blood pressure. Lots of added sugar and fat can have the opposite effect. And junk food can seem even more appealing when you're under a lot of stress.

To stay healthy and on an even keel, look for complex carbohydrates, lean proteins, and fatty acids found in fish, meat, eggs, and nuts.

Antioxidants help too. They protect your cells against damage that chronic stress can cause. You can find them in a huge variety of foods like beans, fruits, berries, vegetables, and spices such as ginger.

Stick to a healthy diet with a few simple tips. Make a shopping list. Carry healthy snacks with you when you leave the house. Stay away from processed foods and try not to eat mindlessly.

Scientists have pinpointed some nutrients that seem to help lessen the effects of stress on the body and mind. Be sure to get enough these as part of a balanced diet:

1. Vitamin C

2. Magnesium
3. Omega-3 fatty acids

## 18.3 Sleep

A common side effect of stress is that you may struggle to fall asleep. If this happens three times a week for at least 3 months, you may have insomnia, an inability to fall and stay asleep. Lack of sleep can also add to your stress level and cause a cycle of stress and sleeplessness.

Better sleep habits can help. This includes both your daily routine and the way you set up your bedroom. Habits that may help include:

1. Exercise regularly.
2. Get out in the sunlight.
3. Drink less alcohol and caffeine close to bedtime.
4. Set a sleep schedule.
5. Don't look at your electronics 30-60 minutes before bed.
6. Try meditation or other forms of relaxation at bedtime.

The role of your bedroom in good sleep hygiene also is important. In general, your room should be dark, quiet, and cool. Your bed also plays an important role. Your mattress should provide support, space and most of all, comfort.

## 18.4 Relaxation Techniques

**Yoga:**

This is a form of exercise, but it can also be a meditation. There are many types of yoga. The ones that focus on slow movement, stretching, and deep breathing are best for lowering your anxiety and stress.

**Meditation:**

It has been around for over 5,000 years for a reason. Meditation works well for many people and has many benefits. It can lower stress, anxiety, and chronic pain as well as improve sleep, energy levels, and mood. To meditate, you will need to:

1. Find a quiet place.
2. Get comfortable (sitting or lying down).
3. Focus your attention on a word, phrase, object, or even your breath.
4. Let your thoughts come and go and do not judge them.

**Deep breathing:**

When you practice deep breathing, you turn on your body's natural ability to relax. This creates a state of deep rest that can change how your body responds to stress. It sends more oxygen to your brain and calms the part of your nervous system that handles your ability to relax.

**Try belly breathing:**

Get comfortable, close your eyes, and place one hand on your stomach and the other on your chest. Take a deep breath in through your nose. You should feel your belly rise more than your chest. Now, exhale through your nose and pay close attention to how your body relaxes. Repeat.

**Biofeedback:**

Learn how to manage your heart rate, muscle tension, and blood pressure when stress hits. Biofeedback gives you information about how your body reacts when you try to relax. Sensors are placed on your body that call out changes in everything from your brain-wave pattern to your muscle tone. Working with a biofeedback therapist, you can start to take control of the signals by changing how your body reacts to the sensor.

**Connect with people:**

Spend time with a friend or family member who will listen to you. It is a natural way to calm you and lower your stress. When you connect with people in person, your body releases a hormone that stops your fight-or-flight response. You relax.

**Behaviour:**

How you respond to people directly impacts your stress levels. Manage your response with these tips:

1. Try not to overcommit yourself
2. Share the responsibility
3. Count to 10 before you respond
4. Walk away from a heated situation
5. Distract yourself with music or podcasts

**Inner voice:**

Nothing affects your stress levels like the voice inside your head. The good news is you are in control. You can exchange negative thoughts for positive ones. There are more benefits to positive self-talk than reducing stress. These include a longer life, lower levels of depression, greater resistance to the common cold and cardiovascular disease, and better coping skills for when hard times hit.

**Laugh therapy:**

When you laugh, you take in more oxygen. Your heart, lungs, and muscles get a boost, and your body releases those feel-good hormones. Laughter also improves your immune system, lessens pain, and improves your mood for long periods of time.

**Talk therapy:**

Long-term talk therapy helps some people deal with stress. One approach, cognitive behavioral therapy, helps you change negative thought patterns. Your therapist can guide you toward other approaches that might be helpful.

## 18.5 Stress Management

### How to Cope with Stressors and Destress

While it may seem like there's nothing you can do about stress in your life, there are healthy steps you can take to destress and regain control.

### What is stress management?

Stress management provides techniques to deal with unhealthy levels of stress, cope with challenges and adversity, and build resilience. Stress management can help you break the hold stress

can have on your life, so you can be happier, healthier, and more productive.

It may seem like there's nothing you can do about stress—no way to avoid it and no way to destress completely when it hits. The bills won't stop coming, there will never be more hours in the day, and your work and family responsibilities will always be demanding. But the truth is, you have a lot more control over stress than you may think.

If you're living with high levels of stress, you're putting your entire well-being at risk. Stress wreaks havoc on your emotional equilibrium, as well as your overall physical and mental health. It narrows your ability to think clearly, function effectively, and enjoy life.

The ultimate goal of stress management is to build a balanced life, with time for work, relationships, relaxation, and fun—as well as building the resilience to hold up under pressure and meet challenges head on. But stress management is not one-size-fits-all. That's why it's important to experiment with our stress management tips and find out which works best for you.

### 18.6 Nine tips to manage stress.

Whether you're looking to ease your overall stress levels, avoid unnecessary stressors in your life, build resilience, or cope with stress in the moment, the following tips for de-stressing can help.

#### 18.6.1 Tip 1: Identify the causes of stress in your life.

Stress management starts with identifying the sources of stress in your life. This isn't as straightforward as it sounds. While it's easy to identify major stressors such as changing jobs, moving, or going through a divorce, pinpointing the sources of chronic stress can be more complicated. It's all too easy to overlook how your own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors contribute to your everyday stress levels.

Sure, you may know that you're constantly worried about work deadlines, but maybe it's your procrastination, rather than the actual job demands, that is causing the stress.

To identify what's really stressing you out, look closely at your habits, attitude, and excuses:

1. 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?
2. 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")?
3. 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**

A stress journal can help you identify the regular stressors in your life and the way you deal with them. Each time you feel stressed, make a note of it in your journal or use a stress tracker on your phone. Keeping a daily log will enable you to see patterns and common themes. Write down:

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

### 18.6.2 Tip 2: Avoid unhealthy ways of dealing with stress

Many of us feel so stressed out, we resort to unhealthy and unproductive ways to cope. A lot of these unhelpful strategies can temporarily reduce stress, but in the long run, they actually cause even more damage:

1. Smoking, drinking too much, or using drugs to relax.

2. Bingeing on junk or comfort food.
3. Zoning out for hours in front of the TV or phone.
4. Withdrawing from friends, family, and social activities.
5. Sleeping too much.
6. Filling up every minute of the day to avoid facing problems.
7. Procrastinating.
8. Taking out your stress on others (lashing out, angry outbursts, physical violence).

If your methods of coping with stress aren't contributing to your greater emotional and physical health, it's time to find healthier ones that leave you feeling calm and in control.

### 18.6.3 Tip 3: Practice the 4 A's of stress management

While stress is an automatic response from your nervous system, some stressors arise at predictable times: your commute to work, a meeting with your boss, or family gatherings, for example. When handling such predictable stressors, you can either change the situation or change your reaction.

When deciding which option to choose in any given scenario, it's helpful to think of the four A's: **avoid, alter, adapt, or accept.**

#### Avoid unnecessary stress

It's not healthy to avoid a stressful situation that needs to be addressed, but you may be surprised by the number of stressors in your life that you can eliminate.

1. **Learn how to say "no."**
   Know your limits and stick to them. Whether in your personal or professional life, taking on more than you can handle is a surefire recipe for stress.
2. **Avoid people who stress you out**
   If someone consistently causes stress in your life, limit the amount of time you spend with that person, or end the relationship.
3. **Take control of your environment**
   If the evening news makes you anxious, turn off the TV. If traffic

makes you tense, take a longer but less-travelled route. If going to the market is an unpleasant chore, do your grocery shopping online.

4. **Avoid hot-button topics**
   If you get upset over religion or politics, cross them off your conversation list. If you repeatedly argue about the same subject with the same people, stop bringing it up or excuse yourself when it's the topic of discussion.
5. **Pare down your to-do list**
   Analyze your schedule, responsibilities, and daily tasks. If you've got too much on your plate, distinguish between the "shoulds" and the "musts." Drop tasks that aren't truly necessary to the bottom of the list or eliminate them entirely.

## Alter the situation

If you can't avoid a stressful situation, try to alter it. Often, this involves changing the way you communicate and operate in your daily life.

1. **Express your feelings instead of bottling them up**
   If something or someone is bothering you, communicate your concerns in an open and respectful way. If you don't voice your feelings, resentment will build, and the stress will increase.
2. **Be willing to compromise**
   When you ask someone to change their behavior, be willing to do the same. If you both are willing to bend at least a little, you'll have a good chance of finding a happy middle ground.
3. **Be more assertive**
   Don't take a backseat in your own life. Deal with problems head on, doing your best to anticipate and prevent them. If you've got an exam to study for and your chatty roommate just got home, say up front that you only have five minutes to talk.
4. **Find balance**
   All work and no play is a recipe for burnout. Try to find a balance between work and family life, social activities and solitary pursuits, daily responsibilities and downtime.

## Adapt to the stressor

If you can't change the stressor, change yourself. You can adapt to stressful situations and regain your sense of control by changing your expectations and attitude.

1. **Reframe problems**
   Try to view stressful situations from a more positive perspective. Rather than fuming about a traffic jam, look at it as an opportunity to pause and regroup, listen to your favourite radio station, or enjoy some alone time.
2. **Look at the big picture**
   Take perspective of the stressful situation. Ask yourself how important it will be in the long run. Will it matter in a month? A year? Is it really worth getting upset over? If the answer is no, focus your time and energy elsewhere.
3. **Adjust your standards**
   Perfectionism is a major source of avoidable stress. Stop setting yourself up for failure by demanding perfection. Set reasonable standards for yourself and others and learn to be okay with "good enough."
4. **Practice gratitude**
   When stress is getting you down, take a moment to reflect on all the things you appreciate in your life, including your own positive qualities and gifts. This simple strategy can help you keep things in perspective.

## Accept the things you can't change.

Some sources of stress are unavoidable. You can't prevent or change stressors such as the death of a loved one, a serious illness, or a national recession. In such cases, the best way to cope with stress is to accept things as they are. Acceptance may be difficult, but in the long run, it's easier than railing against a situation you can't change.

**Don't try to control the uncontrollable.** Many things in life are beyond our control, particularly the behavior of other people. Rather than stressing out over them, focus on the things you can

control such as the way you choose to react to problems.

1. **Look for the upside**
   When facing major challenges, try to look at them as opportunities for personal growth. If your own poor choices contributed to a stressful situation, reflect on them, and learn from your mistakes.
2. **Learn to forgive**
   Accept the fact that we live in an imperfect world and that people make mistakes. Let go of anger and resentments. Free yourself from negative energy by forgiving and moving on.
3. **Share your feelings**
   Expressing what you're going through can be very cathartic, even if there's nothing you can do to alter the stressful situation. Talk to a trusted friend or make an appointment with a therapist.

### 18.6.4 Tip 4: Get moving

When you're stressed, the last thing you probably feel like doing is getting up and exercising. But physical activity is a huge stress reliever—and you don't have to be an athlete or spend hours in a gym to experience the benefits. Exercise releases endorphins that make you feel good, and it can also serve as a valuable distraction from your daily worries.

While you'll get the most benefit from regularly exercising for 30 minutes or more, it's okay to build up your fitness level gradually. Even very small activities can add up over the course of a day. The first step is to get yourself up and moving. Here are some easy ways to incorporate exercise into your daily schedule:

1. Put on some music and dance around.
2. Take your dog for a walk.
3. Walk or cycle to the grocery store.
4. Use the stairs at home or work rather than an elevator.
5. Park your car in the farthest spot in the lot and walk the rest of the way.
6. Pair up with an exercise partner and encourage each other as you work out.
7. Play ping-pong or an activity-based video game with your kids.

**Deal with stress with mindful rhythmic exercise.**

While just about any form of physical activity can help burn away tension and stress, rhythmic activities are especially effective. Good choices include walking, running, swimming, dancing, cycling, tai chi, and aerobics. But whatever you choose, make sure it's something you enjoy so you're more likely to stick with it.

While you're exercising, make a conscious effort to pay attention to your body and the physical (and sometimes emotional) sensations you experience as you're moving. Focus on coordinating your breathing with your movements, for example, or notice how the air or sunlight feels on your skin. Adding this mindfulness element will help you break out of the cycle of negative thoughts that often accompanies overwhelming stress.

### 18.6.5 Tip 5: Manage your time better.

Poor time management can cause a lot of stress. When you're stretched too thin and running behind, it's hard to stay calm and focused. Plus, you'll be tempted to avoid or cut back on all the healthy things you should be doing to keep stress in check, like socializing and getting enough sleep. The good news: there are things you can do to achieve a healthier work-life balance.

1. **Don't over-commit yourself**
   Avoid scheduling things back-to-back or trying to fit too much into one day. All too often, we underestimate how long things will take.
2. **Prioritize tasks**
   Make a list of tasks you have to do and tackle them in order of importance. Do the high-priority items first. If you have something particularly unpleasant or stressful to do, get it over with early. The rest of your day will be more pleasant as a result.
3. **Break projects into small steps**
   If a large project seems overwhelming, make a step-by-step plan. Focus on one manageable step at a time, rather than taking on everything at once.

4. **Delegate responsibility**
   You don't have to do it all yourself, whether at home, school, or on the job. If other people can take care of the task, why not let them? Let go of the desire to control or oversee every little step. You'll be letting go of unnecessary stress in the process.

### 18.6.6 Tip 6: Connect to others

There is nothing more calming than spending quality time with another human being who makes you feel safe and understood. In fact, face-to-face interaction triggers a cascade of hormones that counteracts the body's defensive "fight-or-flight" response. It's nature's natural stress reliever (as an added bonus, it also helps stave off depression and anxiety). So, make it a point to connect regularly—and in person—with family and friends.

Keep in mind that the people you talk to don't have to be able to fix your stress. They simply need to be good listeners. And try not to let worries about looking weak or being a burden keep you from opening up. The people who care about you will be flattered by your trust. It will only strengthen your bond.

Of course, it's not always realistic to have a pal close by to lean on when you feel overwhelmed by stress, but by building and maintaining a network of close friends you can improve your resiliency to life's stressors.

**Tips for building relationships**

1. Reach out to a colleague at work.
2. Help someone else by volunteering.
3. Have lunch or coffee with a friend.
4. Ask a loved one to check in with you regularly.
5. Call or email an old friend.
6. Go for a walk with a workout buddy.
7. Schedule a weekly dinner date.
8. Meet new people by taking a class or joining a club.
9. Confide in a clergy member, teacher, or sports coach.

10. Join a support group—either in-person or via on online therapy platform.

### 18.6.7 Tip 7: Make time for fun and relaxation

Beyond a take-charge approach and a positive attitude, you can reduce stress in your life by carving out "me" time. Don't get so caught up in the hustle and bustle of life that you forget to take care of your own needs. Nurturing yourself is a necessity, not a luxury. If you regularly make time for fun and relaxation, you'll be in a better place to handle life's stressors.

1. **Set aside leisure time.** Include rest and relaxation in your daily schedule. Don't allow other obligations to encroach. This is your time to take a break from all responsibilities and recharge your batteries.
2. **Do something you enjoy every day.** Make time for leisure activities that bring you joy, whether it be stargazing, playing the piano, or working on your bike.
3. **Keep your sense of humour.** This includes the ability to laugh at yourself. The act of laughing helps your body fight stress in a number of ways.
4. **Take up a relaxation practice.** Relaxation techniques such as yoga, meditation, and deep breathing activate the body's relaxation response, a state of restfulness that is the opposite of the fight or flight or mobilization stress response. As you learn and practice these techniques, your stress levels will decrease, and your mind and body will become calm and centered.

### 18.6.8 Tip 8: Maintain balance with a healthy lifestyle.

In addition to regular exercise, there are other healthy lifestyle choices that can increase your resistance to stress.

1. **Eat a healthy diet:** Well-nourished bodies are better prepared to cope with stress, so be mindful of what you eat. Start your day right with breakfast and keep your energy up and your mind clear with balanced, nutritious meals throughout the day.
2. **Reduce caffeine and sugar:** The temporary "highs" caffeine and sugar provide often end with a crash in mood and energy. By

reducing the amount of coffee, soft drinks, chocolate, and sugar snacks in your diet, you'll feel more relaxed, and you'll sleep better.

3. **Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs:** Self-medicating with alcohol or drugs may provide an easy escape from stress, but the relief is only temporary. Don't avoid or mask the issue at hand, deal with problems head on and with a clear mind.
4. **Get enough sleep:** Adequate sleep fuels your mind, as well as your body. Feeling tired will increase your stress because it may cause you to think irrationally.

### 18.6.9 Tip 9: Learn to relieve stress in the moment.

When you're frazzled by your morning commute, stuck in a stressful meeting at work, or fired from another argument with your spouse, you need a way to manage your stress levels right now. That's where quick stress relief comes in.

The fastest way to reduce stress is by taking a deep breath and using your senses—what you see, hear, taste, and touch—or through a soothing movement. By viewing a favorite photo, smelling a specific scent, listening to a favorite piece of music, tasting a piece of gum, or hugging a pet, for example, you can quickly relax and focus yourself.

Of course, not everyone responds to each sensory experience in the same way. The key to quick stress relief is to experiment and discover the unique sensory experiences that work best for you.

# MANAGING ANXIETY AND FEAR

# 19

**19.1 Fear is one of the most powerful emotions. It has a very strong effect on your mind and body.**

It's a human response that is vital for our survival. It helps us respond to emergencies or dangerous situations; for example, if there is a fire or we're being attacked. It can also occur in more every day, non-life-threatening events like exams, public speaking, a job interview, a date, or even a party. It's a natural reaction to events that put you under pressure.

**19.2 Anxiety is a word we use for fears about the threat of something going wrong in the future, rather than right now.**

Anxiety can last for a short time and then passes when whatever was causing you worry is over, but it can also last much longer and disrupt your life. Ongoing anxiety can affect your ability to eat, sleep, or concentrate. It can prevent you from enjoying life, travelling, or even leaving the house to go to work or school.

When anxiety holds you back from doing the things you want or need to do, it can also affect your health. Some people become

overwhelmed by fear and want to avoid situations that might make them frightened or anxious. It can be hard to break this cycle, but there are lots of ways to do it. You can learn to feel less fearful and to cope with anxiety so that it doesn't stop you from living.

### 19.3 What makes you afraid?

Lots of things make us feel afraid.

Being afraid of some things – like fires – can keep you safe. What you're afraid of and how you act when you're afraid of something can be different for every person. Knowing what makes you afraid and why can be the first step to overcoming anxiety.

Manage and reduce stress: **How can we manage and reduce stress?** - our free downloadable pocket guide offers you 101 tips.

### 19.4 What makes you anxious?

Because **anxiety** is a type of fear, the things we've described about fear above are also true for anxiety.

The word 'anxiety' tends to be used to describe worry, or when fear persists over time, often without any one cause. Anxiety is when fear is about something in the future or something that might happen, rather than what is happening right now.

Anxiety is a word often used by health professionals when they're describing persistent fear. The ways that you feel when you're frightened and anxious are very similar, as the basic emotion is the same.

### 19.5 What does fear, and anxiety feel like?

When you feel frightened or seriously anxious, your mind and body work very quickly.

These are some of the things that might happen:

1. Your heart beats very fast – maybe it feels irregular.
2. You breathe very fast.
3. Your muscles feel weak.

4. You sweat a lot.
5. Your stomach churns or your bowels feel loose.
6. You find it hard to concentrate on anything else.
7. You feel dizzy.
8. You feel frozen to the spot.
9. You can't eat.
10. You have hot and cold sweats.
11. You get a dry mouth.
12. You get very tense muscles.

These things occur because your body, sensing fear, is preparing you for an emergency. It makes your blood flow to the muscles, increases blood sugar, and gives you the mental ability to focus on the thing that your body perceives as a threat.

With anxiety, in the longer term, you may have some of the above symptoms as well as a more nagging sense of fear. You may get irritable, have trouble sleeping, develop headaches, or have trouble getting on with work and planning for the future; you might have problems having sex, and might lose self-confidence.

**19.6 Why do I feel like this when I'm not in any real danger?**

Early humans needed the fast, powerful responses that fear causes, as they were often in situations of physical danger. However, we no longer face the same threats in modern-day living.

Despite this, our minds and bodies still work in the same way as our early ancestors, and we have the same reactions to our modern worries about paying the bills, work, and social situations. But we can't run away from or physically attack these problems!

The physical feelings of fear can be scary in themselves – especially if you are experiencing them and you don't know why, or if they seem out of proportion to the situation. Instead of alerting you to a danger and preparing you to respond to it, your fear or anxiety can kick in for any perceived threat, which could

be imaginary or minor. This can cause you more problems than whatever triggered the reaction in the first place.

## 19.7 Why won't my fear go away and leave me feeling normal again?

Fear may be a one-off feeling when you are faced with something unfamiliar. But it can also be an everyday, long-lasting problem – even if you can't put your finger on why.

Some people feel a constant sense of anxiety all the time, without any particular trigger. There are plenty of triggers for fear in everyday life, and you can't always work out exactly why you are frightened or how likely you are to be harmed. Even if you can know how out of proportion a fear is, the emotional part of your brain keeps sending danger signals to your body. Sometimes you need mental and physical ways of tackling fear and anxiety.

## 19.8 What is a panic attack?

A **panic attack** is when you feel overwhelmed by the physical and mental feelings of fear – the signs are listed under 'What do fear, and anxiety feel like?'.

People who have panic attacks say that they find it hard to breathe, and they may worry that they're having a heart attack or are going to lose control of their body.

If you are experiencing symptoms like these, you should speak to a healthcare professional urgently to ensure there are no other underlying causes.

## 19.9 What is a phobia?

A phobia is an extreme fear of a particular animal, thing, place, or situation.

People with phobias have an overwhelming need to avoid any contact with the specific cause of the anxiety or fear. The thought of coming into contact with the cause of the phobia makes you

anxious or panicky.

## 19.10 How do I know if I need help?

Fear and anxiety are something that we will all experience now and then. It is only when it is severe and long-lasting that it can become a mental health problem.

If you feel anxious all the time for several weeks, if it feels like your fears or phobias are taking over your life, or if you're experiencing panic attacks, it's a good idea to ask your doctor for help. Alternatively, **try one of the websites or numbers listed at the bottom of this page**.

## 19.11 How can I help myself?

1. **Face your fear if you can:**
   If you always avoid situations that scare you, it might stop you from doing things you want or need to do, making you miss out on life. This means you won't be able to test whether the situation is as bad as you expect, so you also miss the chance to work out how to manage your fears and reduce your anxiety. Anxiety problems tend to increase if you get into this pattern.
   Exposing yourself to your fears can be an effective way of overcoming this anxiety. You can try setting yourself small, achievable goals for facing your fears.
2. **Know yourself:**
   Try to learn more about your fear or anxiety. Keep an anxiety diary to note down how you're feeling, what causes you to feel anxious, and what happens. When you understand how anxiety affects you, you'll be better able to manage the feelings.
   You could carry with you a list of things that help at times when you are likely to become frightened or anxious. This can be an effective way of addressing the underlying beliefs that are behind your anxiety.

3. **Talk to a trusted friend or family member:**
   It's very common to feel silly or even ashamed of fears and anxieties. This can lead us to hide what's going on from those we are close to. But there's no need for us to feel this way and you don't have to overcome your anxieties alone! If you have a friend or family member you feel confident will respond in a supportive way, it can often feel better to open up about what's going on. The act of talking about something can help reduce your anxiety levels and encourage you to get more support if needed.
4. **Exercise:**
   Try to increase the amount of **physical activity** you do. Exercise requires some concentration, and this can take your mind off your fear and anxiety. Remember, activity doesn't have to be vigorous; gentle stretches, seated exercises, or walking are all good for you.
5. **Relax:**
   Learning relaxation techniques can help you with the mental and physical feelings of fear. It can help just to drop your shoulders and breathe deeply. Or imagine yourself in a relaxing place.
   You could also try complementary therapies or exercise such as massage, Tai chi, yoga, mindfulness techniques, or meditation.
6. **4-7-8 breathing technique:**
   Close your mouth and quietly breath in through your nose, counting to four in your head. Hold your breath and count to seven. Breathe out through your mouth, making a whoosh sound while counting to eight. Repeat three more times for a total of four breath cycles.
7. **Healthy eating:**
   **Eat lots of fruit and vegetables** and try to avoid eating too much sugar as resulting dips in your blood sugar can give you

anxious feelings. Try to avoid drinking too much tea and coffee, as caffeine can also increase anxiety levels.

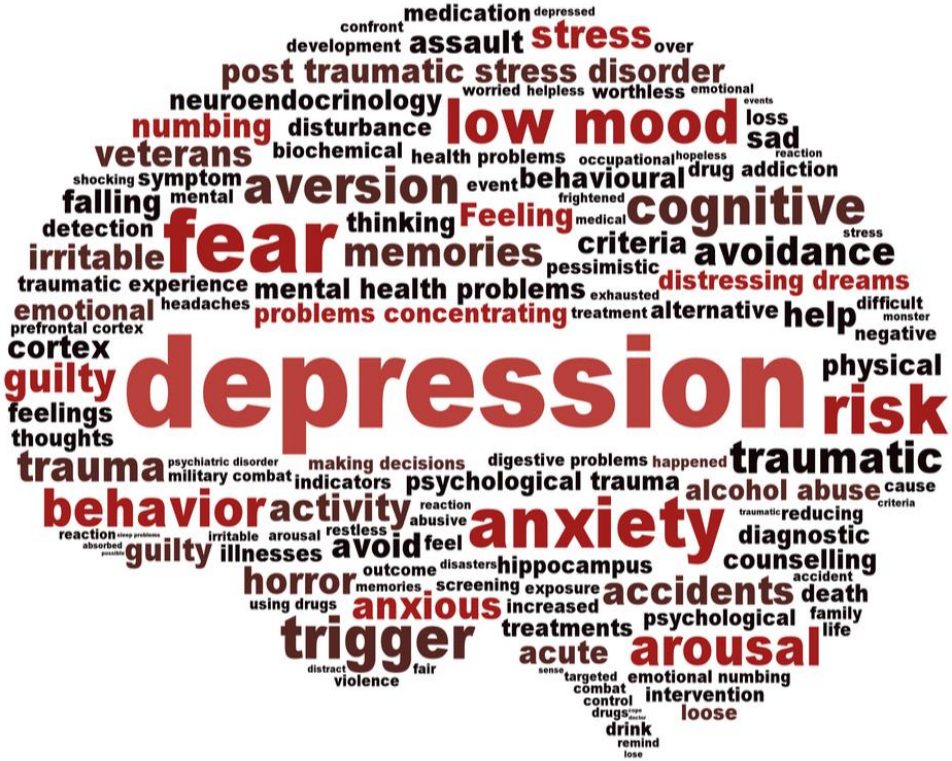
8. **Avoid alcohol, or drink in moderation:**
   It's very common for people to drink when they feel nervous. Some people call alcohol 'Dutch courage', but it's not good for you and the after-effects of alcohol can make you feel even more afraid or anxious.
9. **Faith/spirituality:**
   If you are religious or spiritual, this can give you a way of feeling connected to something bigger than yourself. Faith can provide a way of coping with everyday stress, and attending places of worship and other faith groups can connect you with a valuable support network.

## 19.12 How can I get help?

1. **Talking therapies:**
   **Talking therapies**, like counselling or **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)**, are very effective for people with anxiety problems. This includes Computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CCBT), which takes you through a series of self-help exercises on screen. **Contact your GP to find out more**.
   - In England, you can also refer yourself to **NHS Talking Therapies**.
   - In Scotland, you can access the **Living Life service**.
   - In Wales, you can access **Silver Cloud**.
   - In Northern Ireland, **see what is available in your Trust area**.
2. **Medication:**
   Drug treatments are used to provide short-term help, rather than looking at the root of the anxiety problems. Drugs may be most useful when they are combined with other treatments or support.

**3. Support groups:**

You can learn a lot about managing anxiety from asking other people who have experienced it. Local support groups or self-help groups bring together people with similar experiences so that they can hear each other's stories, share tips, and encourage each other to try out new ways to manage feelings of anxiety. Your doctor, library, or local Citizens Advice bureau will have details of support groups near you.



# WORKING WITH A TEAM AT A WORKPLACE

# 20

Teamwork is one of the most important tools when it comes to organizational efficiency. Though we can all agree that teamwork is important, not everyone realizes just how impactful it is in the workplace. Teamwork in the workplace is when a group of individuals work together toward a collective goal in an efficient manner. When multiple people work together toward a common goal, your business can flourish.

## 20.1 What is teamwork?

Teamwork is the process of working collaboratively with a group of people to achieve a specific goal. It involves the combined efforts of individual members who bring their unique knowledge and skills to the table. Effective teamwork in the workplace relies on key components such as ensuring listening and open communication and ensures each person's input contributes towards reaching the team's goals.

## 20.2 Why is teamwork important?

Teamwork in the workplace is important because it supports an organization's operational efficiency. Strong team dynamics enable individual members to divide complex projects into

manageable tasks, which enhance productivity and enable an organization to function more effectively. Moreover, successful teamwork creates a supportive network that can significantly enhance job satisfaction and employee morale.

When teamwork is functioning at its best, it encourages the generation of new ideas, leading to innovative solutions. It also helps individuals complete challenging tasks more effectively. Team leaders play an important role in promoting open communication and ensuring that each member's voice is heard, which can lead to better decision-making and a positive impact on your company's bottom line.

## 20.3 Benefits of teamwork in the workplace

1. **Teamwork cultivates effective communication:**

   Effective teamwork in the workplace starts with solid communication. In order to work together—whether when ideating or working on a new project—you need to communicate to create cohesion and clear goals.

   Communication starts by building camaraderie and team synergy. A great way to do this is by organizing team-building activities. This could be a quick icebreaker at the beginning of a meeting or a whole day spent solving fictional problems with teammates.

   A successful team that demonstrates clear communication is more efficient and productive. Not to mention it creates an enjoyable work environment.

2. **Teamwork improves brainstorming:**

   Brainstorming is a powerful method that helps teams think outside of the box. It involves individuals working together by communicating ideas for a number of initiatives. These could include projects, processes, products, and services.

   Good teamwork means your team communicates and feels comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas. Without teamwork, your brainstorming sessions could suffer, and, in

turn, so could your team's quality and performance.

Ultimately, the success of brainstorming sessions relies on solid teamwork in the workplace. By investing time to foster trust and open communication, every individual's potential can be maximized, benefiting the whole team. You can do this by connecting in a one-on-one setting regularly and encouraging team members to share their insights.

3. **Teamwork encourages a common goal:**

   Having a common goal in mind is essential when it comes to prioritizing projects and new initiatives. With multiple team members working on individual tasks, a project goal helps keep deliverables aligned and ensures objectives are met.

4. **Teamwork in the workplace improves problem solving skills:**

   Problems can be difficult to solve on your own. That's why working together as a team can offer quicker and often more effective solutions.

   Not only does this help create an efficient process for problem solving, but using teamwork creates shared goals.

   Problem solving example: Project manager Kat finds out there is an issue with image implementation that's postponing the project launch date. Instead of trying to solve it alone, she enlists her team in a brainstorming session to come up with solutions. Because she asked her team for help, she was able to co-create a solution in just an hour, as opposed to what could have taken days by herself.

5. **Teamwork helps build trust:**

   Trust in the workplace is something that is built over time. It takes transparent communication, one-on-one sessions, and support to build that trust with team members.

   A team that trusts each other feels comfortable communicating ideas, collaborating in the workplace, and growing individual strength. Not just that, but they also feel a

sense of belonging within the group.

The absence of teamwork in the workplace can lead to a breakdown in trust. This can result in team members feeling isolated and turning competitive, focusing on individual achievements over team success, which can undermine both morale and performance.

6. **Teamwork improves company culture:**

Most companies strive for a good organizational culture, but it's not as easy as having chats at the water cooler or a monthly pizza party. Company culture involves making your team members feel heard and empowered to do their best work while offering them work-life balance and an overall enjoyable work environment.

To build culture, encourage camaraderie and teamwork in the workplace. Spending time with one another can help build this bond and, in turn, improve working relationships and the culture around the (virtual) office.

7. **Teamwork creates efficiency:**

From communicating effectively to improving company culture, teamwork drives many benefits, including creating team efficiency. An efficient team works together to quickly manage problems and daily tasks. As a result, efficient teams use resources more effectively and reach their deliverables faster. When it comes to organizational growth, few strategies are as impactful as cultivating streamlined efficiency through teamwork in the workplace. Such cohesion is instrumental in fostering innovative solutions while maintaining consistent quality.

8. **Teamwork increases employee engagement:**

A little-known secret to fostering long-term happiness and engagement is to nurture teamwork in the workplace. When team members feel part of a supportive group, they're more likely to be content and involved, which naturally boosts their

work satisfaction over time.

To increase employee engagement, encourage teamwork inside and outside of work. Schedule time for your team to connect about more than just work. Your team will feel more open when working in a group, which leads to a higher retention rate.

9. **Teamwork motivates high performing teams:**
   Accountability is a powerful motivator, and teamwork in the workplace is a surefire way to instill this sense of responsibility. It spurs team members not just to meet expectations, but to exceed them and willingly contribute their best ideas to the group's endeavors. The higher performing each team member is, the higher performing your overall team will be, meaning you can create high quality work more efficiently. Not only is a high performing team good for your company, but it also helps job satisfaction, as doing well will motivate individuals to continue growing their skillset.
10. **Teamwork in the workplace develops individual strengths:**
    Teamwork isn't just about team success—it also supports individual development as well. Team members who grow their individual knowledge can then share that with others during future projects.

    The result: Individual team members grow their own strengths as well as the strengths of the team. These could include your ability to problem solve, effectively communicate, and combat procrastination—all of which are important skill sets to develop in the workplace.
11. **Teamwork improves decision making skills:**
    While problem solving and decision-making sound similar, decision-making skills are all encompassing. To be good at decision making, you need the confidence to make quick decisions based on the knowledge you've gathered in your role.

Teamwork in the workplace is invaluable for improving decision-making abilities. It creates an environment where team members are encouraged to tackle questions and make decisions promptly, which is essential for real-time problem-solving.

## 20.4 How to improve teamwork in the workplace.

Improving teamwork in the workplace is about fostering an environment that values the contributions of all team members and encourages collaborative efforts towards shared goals. It involves enhancing teamwork skills across the board. Here are seven steps you can take to foster great teamwork.

1. **Clarify roles and responsibilities:**
   Assign clear goals based on desired outcomes, allowing employees to understand their objectives. For instance, a designer might be tasked with improving user experience, as measured by customer feedback, rather than just completing a set number of designs.
2. **Establish outcome-based expectations:**
   Shift the focus from processes to results, which urges team members to think strategically about accomplishing their objectives. For example, this method could lead a sales team to prioritize closing deals that align with long-term business strategy over merely hitting short-term numbers.
3. **Set standards of excellence:**
   Define what high-quality work looks like for each position and establish performance benchmarks. A customer service rep, for example, would aim for swift resolution times and high satisfaction ratings, setting a clear target to strive towards.
4. **Provide time for self-reflection:**
   Allocate time for individuals to assess their strengths and passions. A software engineer might discover their knack for algorithm optimization, steering them towards new learning

opportunities.

5. **Align strengths with tasks:**
   Give individual team members roles that capitalize on their strongest skills. When a marketing analyst with a talent for data visualization is tasked with creating campaign performance reports, their skill set directly enhances the value of the work produced.
6. **Foster an atmosphere of trust and openness:**
   Cultivate an environment that values teamwork in the workplace through sharing and open communication between colleagues. By establishing regular "open floor" meetings, team members can freely exchange innovative ideas and feedback, bolstering team performance.
7. **Encourage continuous improvement:**
   Establish a routine of constructive feedback, supporting personal and professional growth. This approach might involve quarterly performance discussions that not only review past achievements but also set actionable objectives for skills and career development.

## 20.5 Characteristic of Teamwork Skills

Teamwork skills involve your ability to work cooperatively with others.[1] Regardless of your role, you need to be able to work well with others and convey your teamwork skills to hiring managers, recruiters, and prospective employers.

Scan any job listing, and you'll see that even ads that seek "self-starters" also inevitably use the phrase "team player." Those who have teamwork skills like communication, collaboration, leadership, and a positive attitude can help a team be more productive. Here are some examples of on-the-job teamwork skills:

1. Working as part of a team to achieve company goals.
2. Working well and developing effective relationships with diverse personalities.

3. Developing and maintaining good relationships with co-workers and managers.
4. Maintaining open lines of communication with others.
5. Observing and coaching other employees.
6. Assisting with training.
7. Leading, Influencing, motivating, and persuading others to achieve goals.
8. Looking for ways to help others and provide assistance.
9. Showing interest in others and their concerns.
10. Dealing with a wide range of people with flexibility and open-mindedness.
11. Listening to and considering the viewpoint of others.

## 20.6 Important Teamwork Skills

There are a variety of different teamwork skills, but they are all related to your ability to engage and work well with others. Being a successful member of a team requires excellent communication, listening, and conflict management skills.

Below is a list of the most important teamwork skills that employers seek in candidates.

### 1. Communication

Being a good team member means clearly communicating your ideas with the group. You must be able to convey information via phone, email, video, and in person. You want to make sure your tone is always professional but friendly. Both vernal and nonverbal communication are important when working within a group setting.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Advising | 11. Language |
| 2. Collaboration | 12. Management |
| 3. Contributing | 13. Persuading |
| 4. Coordination | 14. Research |
| 5. Creativity | 15. Team Management |
| 6. Creative Thinking | 16. Teaching |
| 7. Give Feedback | 17. Verbal Communication |
| 8. Goal Setting | 18. Visual Communication |
| 9. Guidance | 19. Written Communication |
| 10. Influencing | |

## 2. Conflict Management

An important teamwork skill is being able to mediate problems between team members. You need to be able to negotiate with your team members to settle disputes and make sure everyone is happy with the team's choices.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Collaborative | 10. Listening |
| 2. Conflict Management | 11. Logic |
| 3. Cooperation | 12. Logical Argument |
| 4. Critical Thinking | 13. Logical Thinking |
| 5. Defining Problems | 14. Mediation |
| 6. Empathy | 15. Negotiating |
| 7. Flexibility | 16. Problem Solving |
| 8. High Emotional Intelligence | 17. Team Building |
| 9. Leadership | 18. Team Building Activities |

## 3. Listening

Another important part of communication is listening. You must be able to listen to the ideas and concerns of your peers to be an effective team member. By asking questions for clarification, demonstrating concern, and using nonverbal cues, you can show your team that you care and that you understand their ideas or concerns.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Active Listening | 9. Interpreting |
| 2. Ask Clarifying Questions | 10.Listening |
| 3. Attentive | 11.Nonverbal Communication |
| 4. Critical Thinking | 12.Open Mind |
| 5. Eye Contact | 13.Patience |
| 6. Give Feedback | 14.Relaxed |
| 7. Group Decision Making | 15.Receive Feedback |
| 8. Hearing Concerns | 16.Summarize |

## 4. Reliability

You want to be a reliable team member so that your co-workers can trust you with time-sensitive tasks and company information. Make sure you stick to deadlines and complete any assigned work. This will help you gain your colleagues' trust.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Commitment | 9. Leadership |
| 2. Community Building | 10. Multitasking |
| 3. Confidence | 11. Participation |
| 4. Confidence Building | 12. Perform Tasks |
| 5. Dependability | 13. Responsibility |
| 6. Flexibility | 14. Team Oriented |
| 7. Helpfulness | 15. Task Management |
| 8. Honesty | 16. Trust |

### 5. Respectfulness

People will be more open to communicating with you if you convey respect for them and their ideas. Simple actions like using a person's name, making eye contact, and actively listening when a person speaks will make your team members feel appreciated.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Acknowledging Others | 10. Relationship Building |
| 2. Encouragement | 11. Sensitivity |
| 3. Expanding Ideas | 12. Sharing Credit |
| 4. Interpersonal | 13. Support |
| 5. Motivation | 14. Team Player |
| 6. Opinion Exchange | 15. Tact |
| 7. Oral Communication | 16. Understanding Feelings |
| 8. Patience | 17. Value Diversity |
| 9. Positive Attitude | |

### 6. More Teamwork Skills

Here are additional teamwork skills for resumes, cover letters, job applications, and interviews.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Ability to Build Rapport | 11. Persuasive |
| 2. Accountability | 12. Project Management |
| 3. Creative | 13. Project Planning |
| 4. Decision Making | 14. Receiving Feedback |
| 5. Delegating | 15. Presentation |
| 6. Encouraging | 16. Respect |
| 7. Influential | 17. Self-Awareness |
| 8. Innovative | 18. Supportive |
| 9. Instinctual | 19. Time Management |
| 10. Organizing | 20. Trustworthy |

# CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

# 21

Workplace conflict — though fairly common — is an uncomfortable situation that can quickly escalate to a major problem if left unaddressed. It can result in increased workplace stress, decreased job satisfaction, higher rates of absenteeism, lower productivity, and poor morale and quality of work.

But conflicts are inevitable. The idea is not to try to prevent them completely but to resolve and manage them effectively. When people use appropriate strategies to address issues, they're able to keep their differences from getting out of hand.

"Establishing conflict management processes in a company is fundamental, as it helps reduce conflict instances among employees," says Casper Hansen, an expert in resume writing from Resume That Works.

Below is a step-by-step process to help you manage and resolve conflict in the workplace.

1. **Acknowledge the problem.**
   Though the instinct may be to ignore the problem and hope it goes away, this strategy is rarely effective and often worsens the problem. Case in point: A 2019 survey of 30,000 employees found that nearly one in three people had left their jobs due to workplace conflicts.

   The best starting point is to accept that the problem exists. Face it head-on and commit to finding solutions.

2. **Gather initial information.**
   Take time and investigate the case. Do not prejudge or come up with a final verdict before you have all the information. Dig deeper and find out more about the events, involved parties, issues, and how people are feeling.

   Have an individual and confidential conversation with those involved and listen well to ensure you comprehend their viewpoints. You can do so by summarizing their statements and repeating them back to them.

3. **Clarify the source of the conflict.**
   Next, clarify the nature of the issue with the parties involved. According to the team lead of Edu Jungles writing company Kevin Smith, finding the source of conflict is the main step to solve any problem.

   Defining the root cause gives you important information of exactly what's going on in the situation without assuming anything. Common causes of workplace conflict are:
   1. **Poor Communication:** A lack of communication leads to feelings of exclusion or lack of control.
   2. **Lack of Skills:** An employee may lack certain skills that another employee expects them to have, leading to issues with the delivery of work and affecting morale and confidence.

3. **Insufficient Information:** If an employee doesn't have the necessary data to perform their job, they'll feel frustrated. Similarly, if the information they have is ambiguous or incomplete, resentment may become an issue.
4. **Remote Work:** In the case of remote working, where communication has become largely text-based, there's far more room for interpretation of tone than in face-to-face meetings.
5. **Differing Values:** A difference in opinion and personal values may stir up conflict, especially if two strong personalities have opposing views.

If none of the above seem to apply, try finding an underlying source that may not be obvious at first. For example, an HR professional may believe someone has a bad attitude about a project because it comes with a heavier-than-usual workload.

However, approaching the person to learn more might reveal frustration with a colleague in another time zone. Or perhaps the problem centers around "urgent" requests the disgruntled individual consistently receives 15 minutes before the end of their workday.

**4. Have a private and honest meeting.**

Before trying to resolve any issue, find a safe, private, and neutral place to talk so that all parties involved feel free to participate in an open and honest discussion. Don't choose the office of either party or a location near them.

Establish a positive and assertive approach. If necessary, set ground rules. Ensure that each side gets enough time to express their views — and feelings — regarding the matter. Creating time for people to publicly acknowledge hurt or anger can help them feel heard.

Then, get both parties to agree on what the issue is. Obtain as much information as possible on each side's outlook. Continue asking questions until you're confident that all the conflicting parties are on the same page.

5. **Determine a goal and develop a plan.**
Employees will find it easier to interact with one another if they realize that they have a common goal. Once that's established, both parties should collaborate to develop a solution for the problem.

People approach conflict in various ways. A person may have one or more methods they prefer and use regularly. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) is a psychological tool used to measure an individual's inclination towards a specific method of handling conflict.

These are the five conflict resolution strategies from TKI.

1. **Avoiding:** Someone ignores the conflict or withdraws from it in hopes it will resolve itself or die down eventually. Oftentimes, this strategy is used when the discomfort of confrontation overshadows the potential reward of resolving the conflict.
2. **Competing:** An individual resolves a conflict by asserting their own interests and "winning" at the expense of the other party. It only works in situations that are not amenable to collaboration.
3. **Accommodating:** One party sacrifices their own concerns to meet the needs of the other party. This approach can appear to be a gracious way to concede, but it may also lead to unresolved issues if used excessively to maintain peace or avoid conflict.
4. **Collaborating:** This strategy involves working together to find a solution that meets the needs of all parties involved. This style is most effective when there is a need to find a

mutually beneficial solution that requires a high degree of coordination.

5. **Compromising:** Parties that compromise are each willing to sacrifice something in order to reach an agreement. It's the middle ground between competing and collaborating. In this strategy, every party gives up a bit of what they want, and no one gets everything they want.

Find common ground and identify strategies each party can agree or compromise. Listen, communicate, and brainstorm together until you cover all options.

For example, maybe someone sensitive to noise says they need a quieter office mate. Start by figuring out which factors generate the biggest issues. Perhaps the person causing the bother simply has a voice that carries easily. If the upsetting sound level stems from a trait someone can't help, the best option is probably to relocate them elsewhere.

However, if it's behavior-based, maybe the person concerned could adjust their actions a bit. For example, the problem may be that a worker plays music through headphones, and the noise-sensitive person can still hear it. Asking the listener to turn down the volume, only listen to music for a half-day, or use an alternating quiet-hour system could offer possible compromises.

6. **Evaluate how things are going.**

Never presume that an issue is fully resolved after you set up a plan. Continue to keep an eye on the issue and assess if the solution is working. If necessary, schedule follow-up meetings to check progress.

Plan to meet about two weeks after finalizing an action plan to give everyone a chance to try out the solution and assess how it works. These gatherings should involve both parties and give

them ample time to discuss the actions they've taken to end or ease the tension.

Urging people to stay open and honest about what leads to progress can keep them on track. Notes about what's working well make it easier to motivate people to continue pursuing positive change, too.

But conflicts don't always resolve after the first attempt. So, if the issue isn't resolved or later resurfaces, take necessary action. This can include coming up with preventative strategies for the future.

7. **Identify and Implement Key Takeaways**
   Lastly, look for lessons you can learn from the conflict and how you handle it. Reflecting on the conflict's resolution process offers valuable insights into the dynamics of your team, the effectiveness of your communication, and the resilience of your organizational structure.

   You not only equip yourself with a better understanding of how to prevent future conflicts but also improve your ability to foster a more supportive work environment.

   And documenting these lessons and sharing them with your team can also help in building collective knowledge and perhaps even company policy and procedures.

## 21.1 Conflict Resolution Definition

Generally, workplace conflicts fall into two categories:

1. **Personality conflict** or disagreements between individuals. These clashes are driven and perpetuated by emotions such as anger, stress, and frustration.
2. **Substantive conflict** is tangible and task-related, like the decisions leaders make, the performance of a team member, or your company's direction.

If unaddressed, both can spiral into wider conflict between teams, departments, or businesses. Conflict resolution can be defined as the process of identifying, addressing, and resolving disagreements or disputes among employees in a professional setting, thereby fostering a positive and productive work environment.

## 21.2 What Causes Conflict at Work?

Some of the most common causes of workplace conflict are:

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

## 21.3 Five Conflict Resolution Strategies

When you find yourself in a conflict situation, these five strategies will help you to resolve disagreements quickly and effectively:

### 21.3.1 Raise the Issue Early

Keeping quiet only lets resentment fester. Equally, speaking with other people first can fuel rumors and misunderstanding.

So, whether you're battling over the thermostat or feel that you're being micromanaged, be direct and talk with the other party. However, if you're afraid of making that approach, or worry that it may make the problem worse, speak with your manager first, or your HR department if the other party is your manager.

Either way, be assertive (not aggressive) and speak openly. This will encourage others to do the same – and you can get to the root cause of a problem before it escalates.

### 21.3.2 Manage Your Emotions

Choose your timing when you talk to someone about the conflict. If you're angry, you may say something you'll regret and inflame the situation. Be careful to avoid playing the blame game.

So, stay calm, collect yourself, and ask, "What is it I want to achieve here?", "What are the issues I'm having?" and "What is it that I would like to see?"

### 21.3.3 Show Empathy

When you talk to someone about a conflict, it's natural to want to state your own case, rather than hear out the other side. But when two people do this, the conversation goes in circles.

Instead, invite the other party to describe their position, ask how they think they might resolve the issue, and listen with empathy.

Putting yourself in the other person's shoes is an essential part of negotiation. This helps you to build mutual respect and understanding – and to achieve an outcome that satisfies both parties.

### 21.3.4 Practice Active Listening

To identify the source of the conflict you have to really listen. To listen actively:
Paraphrase the other party's points to show you're listening and really understand them.

Look out for non-verbal signals that contradict what they are saying, such as a hesitant tone behind positive words. Bring these out into the open sensitively to address them together.

Use appropriate body language, such as nodding your head, to show interest and to make it clear that you're following them.

### 21.3.5 Acknowledge Criticism

Some of the things the other person tells you may be difficult to hear. But remember that criticism or constructive feedback is about job behaviors and not you as a person.

So, keep an open mind and use criticism to help you to identify areas to improve, perform better next time, and grow.

## 21.4 Glasers' Three-Step Strategy for Conflict Resolution

Conflict management consultants Peter and Susan Glaser recommend a three-step strategy for resolving conflict, and it draws on many of the skills we've looked at above. You can hear the Glasers talking about their model in our exclusive interview with them.

**The steps for these conflict resolution skills are:**

1. Prove that you understand their side.
2. Acknowledge that you are part of the problem.
3. Try again if the conversation didn't go well.

Let's try a training exercise and apply each step to a fictional conflict resolution scenario.

## 21.5 Conflict Resolution Training Example

Imagine that the heads of two departments are in conflict. Product Manager Sayid changed the price of a product without letting Marketing Manager Gayanne know. As a result, the marketing team sent out an email to customers with incorrect prices. They had to send out a follow-up email apologizing for the error and make good on the price some customers paid for the product.

1. **Prove That You Understand Their Side**
   Instead of blaming Sayid, Gayanne asks him how he came to make the decision. She uses her questioning and listening skills to get the information she needs and to show that she's truly hearing Sayid's response.
   She discovers that Sayid was pressured by a major client to drop the price or risk losing a contract. She empathizes, saying, "Yes, I've had difficulties with that client before, too."
   As Susan Glaser says, "Only when you believe that I understand you, will you be willing to try to understand my perspective."
2. **Acknowledge That You Are Part of the Problem**
   If you're in conflict with someone, it's unlikely you're free of all blame. So, admit your part in it. This leads to mutual trust, a better understanding of one another, and makes it easier to find a solution.
   In our scenario, Gayanne could say to Sayid, "I should have shared our marketing strategy and email send dates with you. I'll do that right away."
3. **Try Again if the Conversation Doesn't Go Well**
   Despite the progress they've made, relations between the two managers remain frosty, so Sayid calls Gayanne the following week. He says, "I was thinking about our conversation, and I'd like to try again because I'm not happy with how it went. I've had time to take your points on board, and I'd like to talk about how we can work together better going forward."
   Remember that you get more than one shot at resolving a conflict. Susan Glaser says, "There's a myth that if we have a bad conversation with someone it's over. In fact, 'do overs' are powerful."

# LEADERS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD LEADER

# 22

A good leader should have integrity, self-awareness, courage, respect, compassion, and resilience. They should be learning agile and flex their influence while communicating the vision, showing gratitude, and collaborating effectively. See how these key leadership qualities can be learned and improved at all levels of your organization.

Leaders shape our teams, organizations, communities, and world. We need good leaders to help guide us and make the essential decisions, big and small, that keep things moving forward.

Our society is usually quick to identify a bad leader, but how can you identify a good one? What would most people say are the qualities of a good leader?

## 22.1 What Good Leadership Looks Like

Based upon our decades of research and experience working with leaders at thousands of organizations around the world, we've found that the best leaders consistently possess certain fundamental qualities and skills. Here are 12 essential leadership traits.

## 22.2 Twelve Essential Leadership Qualities

1. Self-Awareness
2. Respect
3. Compassion
4. Vision
5. Communication
6. Learning Agility
7. Collaboration
8. Influence
9. Integrity
10. Courage
11. Gratitude
12. Resilience

### 22.2.1 Self-Awareness

While this is a more inwardly focused trait, self-awareness and humility are paramount qualities of leadership. The better you understand yourself and recognize your own strengths and weaknesses, the more effective you can be as a leader. Do you know how other people view you and understand how you show up at work and at home? Take the time to learn about the 4 aspects of self-awareness and how to strengthen each component.

### 22.2.2 Respect

Treating people with respect on a daily basis is one of the most important things a leader can do. It helps ease tensions and conflict, fosters trust, and improves your effectiveness. Creating a culture of respect is about more than just the absence of disrespect. Respectfulness can be shown in many different ways, but it often starts with showing you truly value others' perspectives and making an effort to build belonging in the workplace — both critical components of supporting equity, diversity, and inclusion.

### 22.2.3 Compassion

Compassion is one of the most powerful and important acts of leadership. It's more than simply showing empathy or even listening and seeking to understand — as compassion requires leaders to act on what they learn. After someone shares a concern or speaks up about something, they won't feel truly heard if their leader doesn't then take some type of meaningful action on the information, our researchers have found. This is the core of compassionate leadership, and it helps to build trust, increase collaboration, and decrease turnover across organizations.

### 22.2.4 Vision

Motivating others and garnering commitment are essential parts of leadership. Purpose-driven leaders ensure they connect their team's daily tasks and the values of individual team members to the overall direction of the organization. This can help employees find meaning in their work — which increases engagement, inspires trust, and drives priorities forward. You'll want to communicate the vision in ways that help others understand it, remember it, and go on to share it themselves.

### 22.2.5 Communication

Effective leadership and effective communication are intertwined. The best leaders are skilled communicators who can communicate in a variety of ways, from transmitting information and storytelling to soliciting input and using active listening techniques. They can communicate well both orally and in writing, and with a wide range of people from different backgrounds, roles, levels, geographies, and more. The quality and effectiveness of communication among leaders at your organization will directly affect the success of your business strategy, too.

### 22.2.6 Learning Agility

Learning agility is the ability to know what to do when you don't know what to do. If you're a "quick study" or are able to excel in unfamiliar circumstances, you might already be learning agile. But anybody can foster and increase learning agility through intentional practice and effort. After all, great leaders are really great learners.

### 22.2.7 Collaboration

The most effective leaders can work with a variety of colleagues of different social identities, locations, roles, and experiences. As the world has become more complex and interconnected, good leaders find themselves spanning boundaries and learning to work across various types of divides and organizational silos. When leaders value and embrace collaboration, whether within their teams or cross-functionally, several benefits arise — including increased innovation, higher-performing teams, and a more engaged and empowered workforce.

### 22.2.8 Influence

For some people, "influence" may sound unseemly. But as a leader, you must be able to influence others to get the work done — you cannot do it all alone. Being able to persuade people through thoughtful use of appropriate influencing tactics is an important trait of inspiring, effective leaders. Influence is quite different from manipulation, and it needs to be done authentically and transparently. It requires high levels of emotional intelligence and trust.

### 22.2.9 Integrity

Integrity is an essential leadership trait for the individual and the organization. It's especially important for top-level executives who are charting the organization's course and making countless other significant decisions. Our research has found that leader integrity is a potential blind spot for

organizations, so make sure you reinforce the importance of honesty and integrity to managers at all levels.

### 22.2.10 Courage

It can be hard to speak up at work, whether you want to voice a new idea, provide feedback to a direct report, or flag a concern for someone above you. That's part of the reason courage is a key leadership trait — it takes courage to do what's right! Leaders who promote high levels of psychological safety in the workplace enable their people to speak up freely and share candid concerns without fear of repercussions. This fosters a coaching culture that supports courage and truth-telling. Courage enables both team members and leaders to take bold actions that move things in the right direction.

### 22.2.11 Gratitude

Being thankful can lead to higher self-esteem, reduced depression and anxiety, and better sleep. Sincere gratitude can even make you a better leader. Yet few people regularly say "thank you" in work settings, even though most people say they'd be willing to work harder for an appreciative boss. The best leaders know how to show frequent gratitude in the workplace.

### 22.2.12 Resilience

Resilience is more than the ability to bounce back from obstacles and setbacks — it's the ability to respond adaptively to challenges. Practicing resilient leadership means you'll project a positive outlook that will help others maintain the emotional strength they need to commit to a shared vision, and the courage to move forward and overcome setbacks. A good leader focuses on resilience, both taking care of themselves and also prioritizing leading employee wellbeing, too — thereby enabling better performance for themselves and their teams.

## 22.3 Develop the Characteristics of a Good Leader in Yourself & Others

## Our 3 Core Beliefs About Leadership & Leadership Development

At the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL)®, we've been researching the qualities of a good leader and the role of leadership for over 5 decades. Here are 3 of our core beliefs about good leaders and effective leadership.

## 22.4 Good leaders are made, not born.

First, we believe that leaders are made, not born. Put another way, **leadership is a skill that can be developed.** Good leaders are molded through experience, continued study, intentional effort, and adaptation. So, you can strengthen any of these 12 characteristics of a good leader, if you're open to growth, use your experiences to fuel development, and put in the time and effort toward self-improvement.

Similarly, organizations can help their people hone these top leadership qualities by providing ample opportunities for training, offering support for learning from challenges, and providing access to coaching and mentoring programs.

## 22.5 Leadership is a social process.

It's also essential to recognize that **leadership is less about one strong or charismatic individual, and more about a group of people working collectively to achieve results together.** If you demonstrate several of the characteristics of a good leader, but fail to grasp this key point, chances are you won't get very far on your own. You may be well-liked and respected, but it will be challenging to accomplish team or organizational goals. At CCL, we like to say that the outcomes of leadership are about creating direction, alignment, and commitment, or DAC, within a group.

## 22.6 Good leadership never stops.

Also, we believe that **leadership isn't a destination, it's a journey** — it's something that you'll have to work at regularly throughout your career, regardless of what level you reach in your organization or what industry you work in. Different teams, projects, and situations will provide different challenges and require different leadership qualities and competencies to succeed. So, you will need to be able to continue to apply these leadership characteristics in different ways throughout your career. Just continually keep learning and growing, and you'll be an agile learner with a long career.

## 22.7 We Can Help You Develop the Qualities of a Good Leader

Organizations can strengthen leadership qualities and foster deeper levels of engagement at work through providing a variety of on-the-job learning experiences, mentoring, and formal development opportunities. At CCL, we have many award-winning leadership solutions with clients around the world, and we'd be honoured to work with you and your organization as well.

But individuals don't have to wait to begin strengthening these leadership characteristics within themselves. If you decide you want to work proactively on developing your leadership qualities and skills, download our action guide & visual summary of this content. And get our tips on how to convince your boss to make an investment in you and your future. We're here to support you every step of the way on your journey to becoming a better leader!

## 22.8 Ready to Take the Next Step?

After you download the 12 Characteristics of a Good Leader, keep on learning and growing: never miss our exclusive leadership insights and tips — subscribe to our newsletters to get our research-based articles, webinars, resources, and guides delivered straight to your inbox.


10 CHARACTERISTICS OF A
GOOD LEADER
Confidence
Optimism
Accountability
Integrity
Courage
Respect
Self-awareness
Humour
Communication
Empathy

# DEALING WITH SELF-CRITICISM

# 23

Dealing with criticism positively is an important life skill. At some point in your life you will be criticised, perhaps in a professional way. Sometimes it will be difficult to accept – but that all depends on your reaction. You can either use criticism in a positive way to improve, or in a negative way that can lower your self-esteem and cause stress, anger or even aggression. To deal with criticism positively may require good self-esteem and some assertiveness skills, you may find our pages: Improving Self-Esteem and Assertiveness useful.

There are two types of criticism - constructive and destructive – learning to recognize the difference between the two can help you deal with any criticism you may receive. Any fool can criticize, condemn, and complain but it takes character and self-control to be understanding and forgiving.

## 23.1 Constructive and Destructive Criticism

The difference between constructive criticism and destructive criticism is the way in which comments are delivered. Although both forms are challenging your ideas, character, or ability, when someone is giving destructive criticism, it can hurt your pride and

have negative effects on your self-esteem and confidence. Destructive criticism is often just thoughtlessness by another person, but it can also be deliberately malicious and hurtful. Destructive criticism can, in some cases, lead to anger and/or aggression.

**Constructive criticism**, on the other hand, is designed to point out your mistakes, but also show you where and how improvements can be made. Constructive criticism should be viewed as useful feedback that can help you improve yourself rather than put you down. When criticism is constructive it is usually easier to accept, even if it still hurts a little. In either scenario always try to remember that you can use criticism to your advantage. A man who refuses to admit his mistakes can never be successful.

### 23.2 The difference between destructive and constructive criticism

This is the first step to being able to deal with criticism. You have to know where the feedback is coming from and understand the intentions of the person who is giving it to you. If it's a teacher or a superior, then chances are the person only wants you to perform better; but when it's coming from a supposed friend, a frenemy, or even an enemy, then you have to wonder whether or not the person has your best interest in mind.

1. If you're sure that the criticism is completely invalid, totally off, and only meant to hurt you, then you can skip down to the second section to learn how to deal with destructive criticism.
2. Constructive criticism is, ideally, meant to help you. Destructive criticism is only intended to cause hurt.
3. Try to focus on the message as well as the delivery. It's hard to see that a person really is telling you something legitimate that you can work on if he or she is yelling at you or just acting like you're a nuisance.

### 23.3 Dealing with Constructive Criticism

**1. Understand what you're really being told**

If you want to deal with criticism, then you have to understand the message behind it. If you've determined that the criticism is

meant to be constructive, then you have to break it down so you can start figuring out what to do next. Sometimes, you may be focused on the hurtful aspects of the feedback and your pride may be too wounded for you to see what is right in front of you.

2. **See if there's some truth to it.**
   If the feedback is coming from a person who has your best interest in mind, then you have to consider the possibility that there really is some truth to those words. It's even more likely if you've heard similar comments before. If ten people told you were selfish, or if your last three girlfriends told you are emotionally distant, then they can't all be wrong, can they? Take a moment to consider the possibility that this person is really on to something.
3. **Make a game plan for addressing it**
   Okay, you've decided that your English teacher, boss, boyfriend, or best friend is completely right, or at least somewhat right. Now, you've got to write down the thing you need to work on and make a plan for addressing it. This can take a long time, and it's never too late to start. Once you come up with a plan, a way of adjusting your expectations and actions, you can begin to address the criticism and become a better person.
4. **Thank the person for being honest (if he's also being kind)**
   If you have received some criticism that was delivered in a friendly and helpful way, or just in a way that was meant to be honest and clear, then take the time to thank the person and to say that you appreciate the fact that the person told you something that can make you an even better friend, girlfriend, student, or professional. Thanking people who give you honest criticism is also a sign of maturity. Suck it up and say "thank you" even if you're gritting your teeth.
5. **Stop making excuses**
   If someone is giving you valid criticism, stop making excuses for why that person is completely wrong, especially if you know that

there is some truth to what he or she is saying. If you get defensive and make excuses, then the person won't be able to finish telling you exactly what he or she means, and you won't get the information you need to really improve. It's natural that we feel defensive and get the feeling that we can do no wrong, but it's important to hear people out before you cut them off to prove you're perfect.

1. If someone is in the middle of telling you something you can do to improve, don't say, "But actually, I already do that..." unless you feel like the person is really off base.
2. If your teacher says you need to work harder, don't give her a lame excuse for why you've been slacking off. Instead, note the feedback and try to address it.
3. It takes maturity to stay quiet instead of making excuses for why the person is wrong when you're getting valid feedback.

**6. Remember that constructive criticism can make you a better person.**

Sure, it's tough to deal with even the most well-meaning criticism, especially if you're convinced, you're perfect and that you can do no wrong. But if you're so invested in being an awesome person, then remind yourself that being aware of your flaws and shortcomings and planning for addressing them will make you an even more amazing person. The next time you hear some constructive criticism, embrace it! It's kind of like what Kelly Clarkson said: "Whatever (criticism) doesn't kill you makes you stronger."

## 23.4 Dealing with Destructive Criticism

**1. Understand the person's true motives**

If you have recognized the criticism as completely destructive and hurtful, then you can think about *why* the person might have said such a thing to make yourself feel better. Maybe the girl was jealous of your new outfit and said you dress like a skank. Maybe a guy said you're not a good writer because he's jealous that you just published a story. Maybe the person was just in a bad mood and felt like taking it out on someone.

Whatever the reason, remind yourself that it had little to do with who you are.

Put yourself in the person's shoes. Understand where he is really coming from. Though the words will still sting, it might make you feel better. If your coworker yelled at you for no reason, but you remember that he is going through a divorce, then you'll start to be a bit more understanding, won't you?

2. **Look for the grain of truth**

Okay, so maybe the criticism was delivered in a way that was completely mean, unnecessary, and hurtful, and most of the things that were said were way off base. Maybe your co-worker said you were "a complete mess" or your friend said you were "totally selfish" for what you think was no reason at all. Take a minute to think about it, though: do you need to brush up on your organizational skills? Have you been known to be a little selfish from time to time? If so, then maybe you should reconsider your actions without getting hurt by the way the criticism was given. Sure, it's very hard to take someone seriously if they are yelling at you, calling you names, or generally treating you with completely disrespect. This makes it nearly impossible to take a word they say seriously. But if you want to be the bigger person, try to find the underlying message if there is one.

3. **Remember that words can never hurt you**

What was that thing your mother told you about "sticks and stones" not being able to break your bones? Sure, you thought it was stupid in third grade, but now, you're a lot older, and it's starting to make sense. In the end, destructive criticism isn't made up of bullets, swords, or atomic bombs -- it's just a series of words connected together in a way designed to make *you* feel terrible. So, remind yourself that criticism only consists of a bunch of words.

Criticism can't steal your money, slap you across the face, or crash your car. So don't let it get to you.

4. **Stay confident**

   The most important thing you can do is maintain your confidence. No matter what people are saying about you, you have to stay strong, remember who you are, and not let other people influence your own self-worth. Being confident doesn't mean thinking that you're flawless, but it does mean loving who you are and how you look. If you're truly confident, then you won't let haters get you down and make you think less of yourself.

   1. If you're unhappy with who you are, ask yourself why. Make a list of a few things you don't like about yourself and figure out what you can change.
   2. Being confident also means accepting the things you cannot change about yourself. So, you don't like that you're so tall. Do you plan on slouching for the rest of your life, or will you start to love your long legs after all?
   3. Hanging out with people who make you feel good about yourself will also go a long way in making you feel more confident. If you're hanging with people who always bring you down, then yeah, you're not going to feel good about yourself.

5. **Keep doing what you're doing.** So, you've heard that someone said you're a brown-noser. Will you start participating less in class? Or your co-worker has told you you're too type A. Are you going to stop being who you are if it's working for you? Of course not. If you haven't received a valid criticism and know that what people are telling you is only being said because of jealousy, anger, or mean-spiritedness, then there's no need to change your routine to please people.

   1. If the criticism has no basis whatsoever, then the best thing you can do is to ignore it completely.

2. Don't feel bad if you're not able to push all of these negative words aside right away. It takes practice to stop caring about what people think.

**6. Accept that you're not perfect**

This is a great way to deal with criticism. If you want to be able to take a little bit of feedback, then you can't keep thinking that you can do no wrong. Nobody's perfect, so if you think you're perfect, then you're nobody. Okay, but seriously: every person has flaws, and if you don't see any of yours, then you're not analysing yourself as closely as you should.

1. Make a list of your 10 biggest flaws. That's right. 10! Can you think of 10 things that need improvement? How about 15? This exercise isn't meant to make you feel bad about yourself; it's only meant to make you see that you have room for improvement.
2. Think about all of the people you know. Can you name a single one who is perfect who isn't a movie star? And remember that even most movie stars have some flaws, however visibly small they may be.

**7. Work on being less sensitive.**

If you always find yourself crying, getting defensive, and feeling generally upset when someone gives you what was supposed to be helpful feedback, then you have to start thickening your skin. Work on accepting your flaws and being able to hear about some areas where you can improve. If you never improve, then you'll be flat-lining, and you don't want that, do you? Try to focus on the message and its intention to help you instead of focusing on all of the "mean" or "hurtful" things that were said to you.

1. Think about where the message is coming from. Chances are that your boss didn't just send you a terse email to be a jerk or to make you feel bad. He just probably wants you to do your job better.
2. Control your emotions. You don't have to tear up every time someone says a negative word.

3. Work on your reputation. If people think you are sensitive, they will be less likely to tell you the truth, and you don't want people to feel like they're walking around on eggshells whenever they talk to you.

## 23.5 How to handle criticism in 12 steps.

Giving and receiving constructive criticism is important for building positive work environments. Here are the steps to handle criticism at work:

1. **Listen actively to constructive criticism.**
   Active listening means focusing on the speaker and what they say to respond appropriately. It helps you prevent misconceptions. Practice active listening by repeating or rephrasing what you hear for confirmation. For example, you may respond with, "I hear you asking me to prioritize the editing tasks over starting the new batch of articles. Is that correct?"
2. **Control your Emotions.**
   Take a moment to understand the feedback you receive before you respond. Doing this enables you to control your body language and facial expression. Taking a deep breath and pausing to think also helps you respond and take actions that reflect your intentions. If you receive unexpected criticism, you may need more time. Ask the person involved whether you could reflect on the conversation before you discuss it further. Knowing how to control your emotions indicates maturity and professionalism.
3. **Try not to take it personally.**
   Recognize the good intent behind constructive criticism. While you may see your work as an extension of yourself, remember that mistakes don't reflect your character. Constructive criticism, especially in the workplace, is typically about your work, not your personality.
4. **Process the feedback you receive and respond graciously.**
   Next, take time to process constructive criticism. Avoid being defensive, giving excuses or justifying your actions. Instead, outline what you intend to do differently and how you plan to implement those changes. For example, if a manager says you need to respond

to emails more promptly, you may set reminders to check and respond to emails throughout the workday.

5. **Be kind to yourself.**
   Regardless of your work experience or how good you are at your job, there's always more to learn. See constructive criticism as a learning opportunity and a way to identify areas for improvement. Giving yourself grace makes it easier to implement changes and focus on the future.
6. **Show your appreciation.**
   While it may seem challenging when someone gives you feedback, it's important to acknowledge the person's honesty and delivery, especially if it is kind. For many people, giving criticism is as challenging as receiving it. You may appreciate the person verbally or send a thank-you email.
7. **Show humanity.**
   Be respectful as the person speaks to you, even if they didn't deliver the criticism well. Remember that there's some truth you can apply to your work, so try not to discount the criticism because of its delivery. If you give a humble response, you may also gain a valuable lesson and strengthen your relationship with the person. For example, be humble by seeking advice on improving the situation from the colleague who gave the feedback.
8. **Apologize conservatively.**
   When you have to apologize, try not to elaborate on a plan beyond what was asked. This can make the conversation feel awkward and uncomfortable. Also, make sure you use the right words when apologizing to avoid sounding defensive. For example, you may apologize by saying, “I apologize. This won’t happen again. I’m taking steps to improve my multitasking abilities.”
9. **Try not to dwell on criticism.**
   After receiving constructive criticism, you may replay the conversation in your mind and criticize your actions or decisions. Doing this distracts you from the lesson to learn from the experience. Instead, focus on your action plan to improve productivity or work quality. Move on after reflecting on the situation thoroughly.

Ways to change how you feel about criticism. If you have negative feelings about constructive criticism, use these tips to be more optimistic about receiving feedback:

**10. Think the best of the critic.**

When a coworker or supervisor gives constructive criticism about your work, see it as a favour. The critic cared about your growth and career development, so they decided to outline areas for improvement. By remembering this when handling feedback, you can accept criticism positively. You can also consider how their expertise makes them credible and how you can learn from them professionally.

**11. Respect negative criticism.**

Instead of seeing negative and positive feedback as opposites, think of them as equals. Negative criticism provides an opportunity to grow. Also, remember that receiving any feedback is typically better than no feedback at all.

**12. Be ready to learn and improve.**

While you may feel like you're losing credibility or confidence, always remember the lesson when someone criticizes your work. By seeing constructive criticism as assistance, you can become more appreciative when you receive it. Aside from gaining lessons from the feedback you receive, seek to learn how to deliver constructive criticism. For example, if someone gives you feedback in a way that encourages you to improve, note the words they use and their voice tone. Watch their body language and keep this information for the time when you might also need to critique someone's work. Navigating your workplace’s feedback culture.

# DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE

# 24

When it comes to dealing with difficult people, it can be tough to just "grin and bear it." A really unpleasant person or interaction can linger in your mind, even when you're not around them. Suppressing those interactions can start to take its toll on your mental health.

Many times, like at work, we have to be around these difficult people whether we want to or not. There are a few things, though, that we can do to lessen the impact that they have on us. Here's the lowdown on not-so-nice people, how to spot them, and how to deal with difficult people — both in and out of the workplace.

Everyone has their own personality types and quirks. In and of themselves, personality clashes don't make for difficult relationships. Usually, what ruins interpersonal relationships is poor communication, a lack of empathy, or criticism.

1. Poor communication
2. Lack of empathy
3. Criticism

1. **Poor communication**
   They might constantly talk over you, or never pay attention to what you have to say. They might be indirect, passive-aggressive, or really rude. Whatever it is, talking to them is never straightforward. And you never feel good about how the conversation went after you do. Poor communication skills can take a toll on any relationship.
2. **Lack of empathy**
   Some individuals never seem to care about anyone but themselves. This lack of empathy can make them especially challenging to deal with. They may have trouble understanding other people's emotions or circumstances. These people often come across as callous and uncaring.
3. **Criticism**
   Highly critical people can be among the most challenging to be around. It can seem like nothing, and no one meets their standards. Unfortunately, the closer you are to a highly critical person, the more their comments sting. This can be particularly upsetting in personal relationships.

## 24.1 How to spot a difficult person?

It would be much more convenient if difficult people walked around advertising their unpleasantness. But while they might not wear flashing neon signs, they do give off some clear warnings. Here are 11 ways to recognize a difficult person:

1. They insist on having everything their own way
2. They belittle you or insult you
3. They leave you out of important conversations
4. They always have an answer for everything
5. They have difficulty with emotional regulation
6. People seem to avoid them
7. They exhibit toxic traits, like being picky, bossy, or gossiping
8. They second-guess everything you say or do

9. Their private and public behaviour is inconsistent
10. You don't feel comfortable around them
11. They exhibit extreme jealousy, co-dependency, or other red flags in their relationships

Being around difficult people can have an impact on your relationships and on workplace culture. Because their behaviour can have such a detrimental effect on your well-being, it's important to take steps to prevent their behaviour from affecting you. Not "letting them get to you," however, might be easier said than done.

**24.2 How not to allow a difficult person to affect you?**

There's a saying that when you change, so do others. Working on ourselves first is the surest path to making sure things go the way we want them to. After all, it's pretty hard for only one person to get into an argument.

With that in mind, the first thing to do when faced with a challenging person is to look inside. Understanding why you're affected by them can help you determine the best way to handle their behaviour.

1. **Pay attention to how you react.**
   How does this person's behaviour make you feel? Do you feel frustrated, insulted, or dismissed? Being able to label the feelings helps to pull you out of reactivity mode and into curiosity — a much more productive (and less explosive) space.
2. **Stay calm.**
   Even when you're dealing with a difficult person, it usually doesn't help to blow up on them. Many times, they'll use your reaction (justified or unjustified) to recruit support, making you look like you were just "overreacting."
   When you find yourself getting exasperated with someone, start by taking one or more deep breaths. Don't feel like you have to engage with them right away. It's perfectly okay to take a step back, regroup, and follow up when you feel more centered.

3. **Do your own Inner Work**
   Sometimes, people bother us because they remind us of ourselves. If we're already frustrated — whether with ourselves or because of our own problems — their shortcomings will feel intolerable.

For me, working with a coach has been immensely helpful in navigating difficult situations. It gives me the opportunity to depersonalize what's happening and find out if there's a root conflict that's unrelated to that person at all. And if the person really is being difficult, it's nice to have someone validate that too.

There are 9 tips which I personally found to work alright for dealing with difficult people:

1. **Be calm**
   Losing your temper and flaring out at the other person typically isn't the best way to get him/her to collaborate with you. Unless you know that anger will trigger the person into action and you are consciously using it as a strategy to move him/her, it is better to assume a calm persona. Someone who is calm is seen as being in control, cantered and more respectable. Would you prefer to work with someone who is predominantly calm or someone who is always on edge? When the person you are dealing with sees that you are calm despite whatever he/she is doing, you will start getting their attention.
2. **Understand the person's intentions**
   I'd like to believe that no one is difficult for the sake of being difficult. Even when it may seem that the person is just out to get you, there is always some underlying reason that is motivating them to act this way. Rarely is this motivation apparent. Try to identify the person's trigger: What is making him/her act in this manner? What is stopping him/her from cooperating with you?

How can you help to meet his/her needs and resolve the situation?

3. **Get some perspective from others**
   In all likelihood, your colleagues, managers and friends must have experienced similar situations in some way or another. They will be able to see things from a different angle and offer a different take on the situation. Seek them out, share your story and listen to what they have to say. You might very well find some golden advice in amidst of the conversation.
4. **Let the person know where you are coming from**
   One thing that has worked for me is to let the person know my intentions behind what I am doing. Sometimes, they are being resistant because they think that you are just being difficult with them. Letting them in on the reason behind your actions and the full background of what is happening will enable them to empathize with your situation. This lets them get them on-board much easier.
5. **Build a rapport**
   With all the computers, emails and messaging systems, work sometimes turn into a mechanical process. Re-instil the human touch by connecting with your colleagues on a personal level. Go out with them for lunches or dinners. Get to know them as people, and not colleagues. Learn more about their hobbies, their family, their lives. Foster strong connections. These will go a long way in your work.
6. **Treat the person with respect**
   No one likes to be treated as if he/she is stupid/incapable/incompetent. If you are going to treat the person with disrespect, it's not going to be surprising if he/she treats you the same way as well. As

the golden rule says, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

7. **Use humour**
   Sometimes, we get into difficult conversations because we take things too seriously. If you're in conflict with another person, using (appropriate) humour can help diffuse tension. Cracking a joke — or even a smile — can help lower the stakes. It can remind you of shared common ground and even shift you into a more collaborative mood.
8. **Focus on what can be actioned upon**
   Sometimes, you may be put into hot soup by your difficult colleagues, such as not receiving a piece of work they promised to give or being wrongly held responsible for something you didn't do. Whatever it is, acknowledge that the situation has already occurred. Rather than harp on what you cannot change, focus on the actionable steps you can take to forward yourself in the situation.
9. **Ignore**
   If you have already tried everything above and the person is still not being receptive, the best way might be to just ignore. After all, you have already done all that you can within your means. Get on your daily tasks and interface with the person only where needed. Of course, this isn't feasible in cases where the person plays a critical role in your work - which leads us to our last tip.
10. **Escalate to a higher authority for resolution**
    When all else fails, escalate to your manager. This is considered the trump card and shouldn't be used unless you've completely exhausted your means. Sometimes, the only way to get someone moving is through the top-

down approach, especially in bureaucratic organizations. Be careful not to exercise this option all the time as you wouldn't want your manager to think that you are incapable of handling your own problems. While it's to be expected that you won't get along with everyone at work all the time, there are certain situations that should be handled by human resources. Don't hesitate to reach out to your manager, leader, or administrative team if a situation feels like it's getting out of control.

You should escalate conflicts with coworkers to HR when they involve:

1. Bullying
2. Harassment
3. Inappropriate sexual conduct or advances
4. Threats against you, your family, or your livelihood
5. Comments on someone's cast, religion or reason, language or any other discriminatory word which affect you or some colleagues of yours.
6. Violations of discrimination, disability, equal employment, or equal pay laws

In any of these instances, please contact human resources right away. Refrain from engaging with that coworker if you don't feel safe.

**11. When all else fails, eject.**

If you ever find yourself stuck dealing with someone you really can't stand, get out of there. Sometimes it's just not worth engaging. When our feelings are involved, we often feel drawn into the exchange. We're so absorbed that we forget we can just leave.

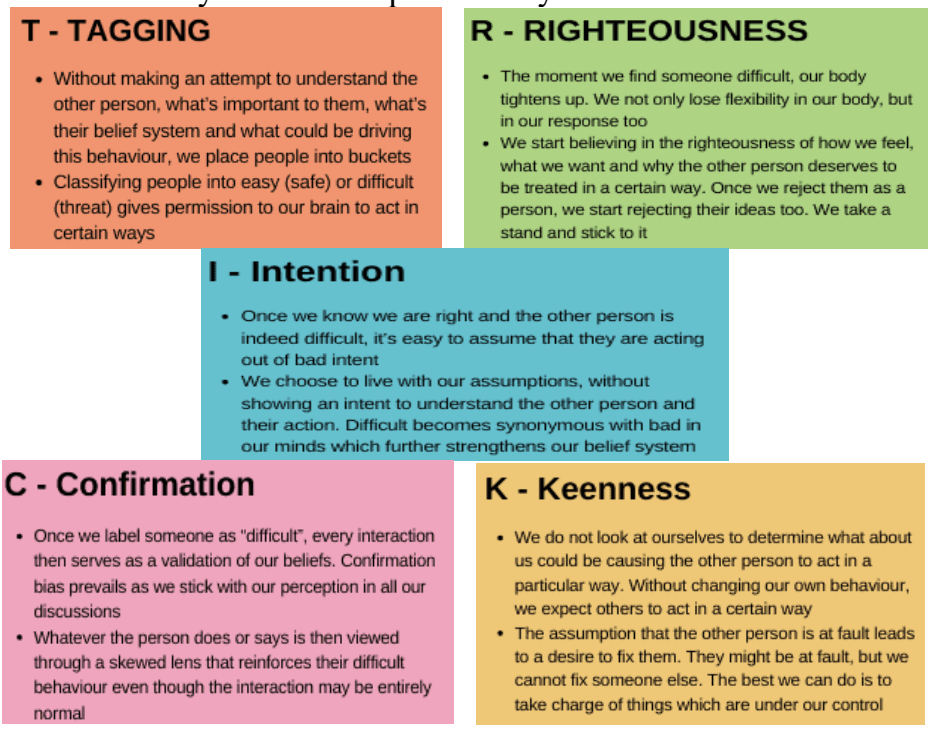
Years ago, I heard some advice from a sales trainer. He said that if the reps were ever on a sales call that was

going badly, they should just hang up. He explained that a swift disconnection could be glossed over as "tech issues." It would be much harder to unsay anything that you might regret after a moment's reflection.

The same is true for difficult people. If you're having a hard time dealing with them, hang up (log off, walk away, or whatever applies). Even if you're talking face-to-face, you can find a way to leave. Invent an emergency or important phone call and offer to pick up the conversation later.

12. **Create a buffer.**

Set limits on the amount of time you spend engaging with emotional vampires and other difficult types. If you have to meet with them, do it in a neutral space, connect virtually, or schedule something directly after so they don't take up much of your time.



# THE BOSS, THEIR TYPES AND HOW TO BECOME GOOD BOSS

# 25

A boss is an authoritative figure who manages or oversees a team of employees. In many workplaces, bosses are called managers, supervisors or team leads. They direct or supervise their employees and handle important tasks of the company, such as budgeting. Their key responsibilities often include making crucial decisions, such as hiring and training, and empowering employees to complete their assigned tasks to meet organizational goals.

As an employee, making a good impression on your manager can help you find satisfaction in your role and progress in your career. After starting a new job, you can learn your manager's leadership style and personality to determine the attributes they find desirable in their employees. This knowledge can help you maintain a good relationship with them.

## 25.1 Different types of bosses

Knowing the type of boss, you have can help you meet their expectations and be successful in your role. Here are 16 examples of different boss types with some tips to help you work with them:

1. **The coach**

   Managers with coach personalities strive to motivate their employees to achieve their full potential. They start challenging conversations and may encourage you to set goals to progress in your career. They often discuss plans and strategies to help you manage your assigned tasks effectively. This type of manager may help you identify ways to perform your duties faster or more efficiently.

   To work well with coach managers, you can:

   1. Be open about your needs, problems and issues around the workplace.
   2. Enlist their help to develop realistic, well-defined goals you can reasonably achieve.
   3. Take accountability for your mistakes and find ways to learn from them to improve your performance.

2. **The workaholic**

   A workaholic manager spends most of their time devoted to working. They consider work as one of their highest priorities, and they often work outside their scheduled hours, such as evenings and weekends. They may take limited vacation days or personal time because they prefer to be working.

   You can work effectively with this type of manager by:

   1. Handling your assigned workload without following their behavior of working excessively
   2. Finishing your work on time without postponing tasks may help you prove you can maintain a healthy work-life balance.
   3. Clearly stating your needs and work policies to ensure your manager understands your own priorities.

3. **The goal-setter**

   A goal-setter manager explains objectives and sets challenges to help their teams meet goals within a set period. They expect their employees to perform tasks to the best of their abilities

and produce high-quality results. They lead by example to show employees how their efforts can impact on their performance.

To maintain a good relationship with a goal-setter manager, you can:

1. Work hard to accomplish your assigned tasks and aim to produce the best results you can.
2. Ask for clarification when you get confused or require more explanation.
3. Share clear and frequent progress updates with them.

**4. The autocrat**

An autocrat manager often makes decisions with little input from other managers or team members. They make choices based on their ideas and judgments without taking advice from others. Autocratic leaders typically provide clear directions and expect their teams to follow the established rules.

To work well with this manager, you can:

1. Do all your work in a timely manner to meet your deadlines.
2. Focus on performing your tasks at a high quality to meet their expectations.
3. Approach them for clarification and guidance when you're unsure about a task or assignment.

**5. The empathetic**

An empathetic manager strives to understand their employees' viewpoints. They encourage team members to create connections and build collaborative relationships with each other. They understand how to manage conflict to help team members continue working toward their shared goals.

If you work with this type of manager:

1. Make an effort to develop and maintain positive relationships with your coworkers.
2. Provide input to help them understand your concerns or

ideas.

3. Accept their feedback graciously and use it to continue to improve.

**6. The participant**

A participant manager often wants to engage directly with the team to complete tasks or projects. They often perform duties outside of their job description to help the team achieve its goals. A participant manager typically provides motivation for other team members. They genuinely want to see the team or company succeed.

To work well with this type of manager, you can:

1. Keep them updated on the tasks you're working to complete.
2. Develop or improve your teamwork skills to work well with others.
3. Identify ways to continue improving your quality of work to help the team be successful.

**7. The traditionalist**

The traditionalist is a manager who has a fixed mindset about the best ways to lead a team. They focus on their ability to use power and influence to lead others, and they expect employees to have loyalty to their positions and what they represent, rather than to the leaders in departments. Traditionalist leaders often prefer to perform tasks in the same way, rather than enacting changes.

To perform well when working for this boss, ensure to:

1. Be clear on what you're working on at all times.
2. Observe protocols and policies to show your respect for the team or company.
3. Suggest changes by describing the ways new processes or tools could improve your performance or efficiency.

**8. The democrat**

A democratic manager wants input from every team member.

They strive to have a consensus on major decisions and identify a collaborative path for working together. This type of manager encourages teamwork and asks members to work together on shared goals.

When working with this manager, you can:

1. Be open to listening to your coworkers' ideas.
2. Always give your honest input during meetings to help your manager make decisions.
3. Ask questions that can provide more guidance for the entire team.

**9. The micromanager**

The micromanager boss often wants to be involved throughout your working process. They may provide little guidance or input to help you perform your tasks. This type of manager may expect you to complete detailed reports summarizing your progress on tasks or projects.

To perform well for this type of manager, you can:

1. Focus on accomplishing your work on time to avoid being micromanaged.
2. If possible, set terms of agreements with them to understand their expectations.
3. Set your own standards for your work to provide motivation to work toward your goals.

**10. The inexperienced**

An inexperienced manager may be new to their position and have little or no experience leading others. They may be unfamiliar with the industry or company and ask questions to help them understand policies or procedures. In some cases, an inexperienced manager may have lower qualifications than you.

You can work effectively with this type of manager by:

1. Performing tasks to the best of your abilities to show them your value as an employee.

2. Answering their questions to help them understand new concepts.
3. Focusing on earning their trust to develop a positive working relationship with them.

**11. The bold**

A bold manager typically thinks outside traditional conventions and challenges teams to achieve lofty goals. They believe in the company or team and their methods of accomplishing goals. They're often receptive to suggestions and encourage team members to try new processes to achieve higher-quality results.

To perform well under this type of manager, you can:

1. Be willing to try new processes or solutions for performing your tasks.
2. Study their behavior and know a strategy that works for them.
3. Communicate with them about your ideas to show your creativity and innovation.

**12. The leader**

Some managers earn their promotions because they exhibit natural leadership skills. A leader manager typically has various soft skills, such as communication and decision-making, to help them manage teams effectively. They use their leadership capabilities to set goals and inspire team members to work toward them.

To perform well with a leader manager, you can:

1. Respect their management style by showing confidence in their abilities.
2. Learn from them and accept their feedback to help you perform your tasks.
3. Share your own feedback or ideas during one-on-one meetings.

**13. The introvert**

Often, an introvert manager has advanced in their career because of their hard skills, rather than their communication or charisma. They may prefer to work alone and complete tasks independently. They often have strong introspection and listening skills, which can help make them effective leaders.

To work well with an introvert manager, try:

1. Setting your own goals to help you continue learning and growing in your position.
2. Asking for one-on-one meetings to ensure you have their full attention.
3. Using technologies, such as emails, phone calls and messaging systems, to communicate with them.

**14. The visionary**

A visionary manager sets goals to help the team or company achieve long-term success. While they communicate effectively to explain their goals, they may provide less direction about the methods for achieving those objectives. They believe in working as a team to identify strategies for accomplishing goals.

To work for a visionary manager, try to:

1. Ask questions if you're unclear about the objective you're trying to achieve.
2. Work well with your team members to develop efficient processes and workflows.
3. Schedule one-on-one meetings to gain insights into their expectations for your role.

**15. The experienced**

An experienced manager has often been working in their position for many years. They have a deep understanding of the company or industry. They often use their knowledge to develop efficient workflows or processes to keep a team progressing toward its goals.

You can work well with an experienced manager by:

1. Learning to be independent so you can accomplish tasks on your own with minimal input.
2. Seeking feedback when necessary to remain proactive and progress in your role.
3. Checking in with them regularly to ensure you're meeting their expectations.

**16. The best friend**

This type of manager wants to be friends with the employees they manage. They strive to make everyone on the team, including themselves, feel like equals. They typically have a friendly, warm demeanor and want to be well-liked by others.

You can work well with a best friend manager by:

1. Knowing how to balance your work with fun at the office.
2. Continuing to treat them as your superior, rather than a friend.
3. Always remain professional in your interactions with them.

## 25.2 Skills for a Good Boss

There are many ways to be a good manager, supervisor or executive, but there are also distinct characteristics that can help you become a trustworthy and capable leader. Here are some of the most apparent skills you can incorporate into your work responsibilities as someone in a leadership role to gain and maintain the respect of employees:

1. **Vision:**
   Great leaders have total confidence in their mission and ideas, as their vision guides all activities across the organization.
2. **Communication:**
   Leaders give directions, represent the brand externally and help an organization stay aligned, so written and verbal communication are critical.

3. **Active listening:**
   Strong leaders know how to listen intently to both verbal and nonverbal feedback to ensure they understand the state of the team and make decisions that reflect the team's true feelings.
4. **Empathy:**
   If you manage people, leading with empathy and compassion can help you earn your team's trust and develop productive relationships.
5. **Bravery:**
   Effective leaders can withstand challenges, make confident decisions, and take calculated risks for the sake of the company.
6. **Ability to delegate:**
   Successful leaders can identify their team member's strengths, assign tasks to them that align with those strengths and trust them to execute them to the best of their ability.

## 25.3 How to be a good boss.

Retaining valuable employees is also a crucial part of any successful company. The most productive staff members are more likely to stay with the company if they have a manager who motivates, respects, and rewards them for good work. Learn how to be a good leader with these 26 ideas:

1. **Be self-reflective.**
   When you're in charge, you may evaluate employee behavior and make tough decisions regarding their work lives. The best managers are just as diligent when scrutinizing their own performance. By setting standards for yourself and making sure you meet them, you keep yourself accountable.
2. **Resolve conflicts thoughtfully and decisively.**
   One of the most challenging skills to master as a great leader is finding the balance between listening to others and being authoritative. The best approach to decision-making is to be receptive and open to employee feedback during deliberation and to be resolute and direct once you have made a choice. Clear and final

guidance from the top makes work easier for everyone as it avoids uncertainty and mixed messages.

3. **Build trust.**

   Managing your staff effectively requires a deep understanding of your individual employees' goals, strengths, and performance processes. When you know your team members well, it becomes easier to make wise decisions when interacting with them. Almost every element of working as a manager, from offering praise and criticism to delegating assignments to employees, can benefit from a strong relationship with your team members.

   Dedicate time to developing trusting relationships with each person who reports to you. Treat them with empathy and show them you respect them. You might do this by offering to help them complete their tasks, checking in on their well-being and advocating for them when speaking with upper management. When they exceed expectations, consider offering them rewards, like lunches and public recognition, to show your appreciation.

4. **Master multiple motivational approaches**

   It's important to learn what kind of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation works best for each of your employees. Some employees may respond positively after making a mistake if you offer gentle reassurances, while others require a more direct approach. Similarly, one individual may prefer close oversight, while another is at their best when given a task and trusted to complete it on their own.

5. **Be willing to delegate.**

   Effective leaders are willing to step back and allow their staff to take on responsibilities. Micro-management is rarely the best approach to running a team of employees. Using the knowledge of your staff's abilities and preferences, it's your responsibility as the manager to delegate projects that set your employees up for success and make adjustments if expectations go unmet.

   When you entrust employees with progressive responsibilities, you empower them and help them develop professionally. Also, it's important to show the team that you trust them to achieve results independently or together.

6. **Set targets and track progress.**
   Although it's unnecessary to follow every project on a granular level, it's your responsibility to see that overall progress is meeting expectations and that all teams are hitting their goals. It's important that you can relay these goals and expectations clearly to the staff as well.
   Clear communication of goals and expectations ensures that employees can prepare for criticism because they know what the organization expects of them and how well they are meeting those expectations. As a manager or executive, you can monitor the benchmarks of all departments and make adjustments when needed to keep everyone meeting their targets.
7. **Maintain communication with your staff.**
   It's important to maintain regular and prompt communication with your team and make time for regular employee reviews and check-ins. A good leader also makes sure that employees always have the opportunity to communicate any concerns or questions they have.
8. **Provide actionable advice and instructions.**
   Whenever you give directives to your staff, communicate as clearly as possible. Misunderstandings and uncertainty can lead to a lack of clarity that results in inefficiency and negatively impacts motivation and performance. If employees have opportunities to improve, provide constructive criticism and be specific on how they can improve and why, while setting clear expectations and goals.
9. **Offer routes for professional advancement.**
   One of the most effective ways to keep staff happy is to offer professional development opportunities for those who excel. Promoting from within allows you to fill your important positions with your most reliable employees. This also shows other employees that there are options for advancement if they keep performing well at the company, and this could lead to higher employee retention.
10. **Treat all employees fairly.**
    Ensuring every staff member feels they're experiencing fair treatment and judgment on the value of their work can keep employee morale high. Treating employees consistently with

fairness develops trust and loyalty, strengthens morale, and ultimately increases productivity.

Always be receptive to employees who express dissatisfaction or evidence of unfair treatment. Then, take the time to investigate and assess the situation and take steps to correct it. Similarly, develop a culture of recognition. Offer credit publicly when team members take on extra responsibilities, surpass expectations and achieve results.

11. **Consider employees' perspectives.**

    Great leaders think about their teams before themselves. As a manager, you may balance your duty to your team members with your duty to upper management and shareholders. While it's important to act in the best interest of the company, try to honor your team members' feelings, wishes and needs, too.

12. **Address problems.**

    Rather than allowing recurring issues to go unaddressed, develop proactive solutions. When situations turn out differently than you expected, be transparent with your team about what happened and why. When you make a promise to fix a broken process or policy, follow through.

13. **Be a mentor.**

    Effective leaders share knowledge rather than protect it. When you see an opportunity to train a team member on how to perform a process or develop their professional skills, act as a mentor. Invite team members with leadership potential to expand their responsibilities and try new tasks to grow toward supervisory roles themselves.

14. **Keep relationships professional.**

    While it helps to have strong relationships with your team members, remember to maintain professional boundaries. View yourself as a guide, mentor, and supervisor rather than a friend. Share these expectations with teammates so they understand what their boundaries are, too.

15. **Identify and praise employees' strengths.**

    Managers often give constructive criticism, but it's important to balance it with positive feedback. Know your team member's

individual talents and strengths and vocalize them when you see them on display.

16. **Ask team members' input before sharing your own.**
    Leadership often requires you to prioritize others' opinions over yours. In team meetings, brainstorming sessions and client meetings, allow your team to speak before you share your thoughts. This shows your team you care what you think and allows you to guide them rather than control them.
17. **Take time off when you can.**
    It can be tempting to minimize breaks so you can have oversight over your team at all times. Rest is important to help you deliver your best performance, though. Schedule vacation time and be communicative with your team about what they can expect while you're away.
18. **Respond to messages quickly.**
    Managers typically receive a high volume of emails. You may receive copies of messages to your team members, frequent approval requests and questions. To keep your inbox manageable and ensure you're present for your team members' needs, try to respond briefly and quickly before unread messages add up.
19. **Be accessible when possible.**
    It's helpful to show your team members that they can reach you when your input is necessary but be transparent about your professional boundaries. For example, if you turn off your work phone at 6 p.m. each night, tell the team. Maybe they're welcome to contact you on your personal phone outside work hours, but you'd prefer they only do so in emergencies.
20. **Respect your team members' time.**
    Conversely, remember that your team members have responsibilities outside of work, too. For example, if you're working late and send an email out after hours, understand that some members may be unable to read it until the morning.
21. **Manage your stress.**
    Being a team leader can be stressful at times, so it's essential to develop coping strategies to process your emotions. This may include taking regular breaks and collecting your feelings before

you respond to colleagues during times of stress. This can help you protect morale and model effective stress management skills for your team.

**22. Offer to help when you can.**

Instead of isolating yourself from your team members and simply giving directions, try helping them with important tasks to build trust and show you're their equal. For example, if a client asked for last-minute revisions on advertising copy, as a creative director, you might stay late with your team to ensure it gets done before the deadline.

**23. Remain objective.**

When making workplace decisions, remember to limit personal bias. For example, if you're assessing two team members for a promotion and you've known one much longer than the other, try to ignore your relationship and focus exclusively on their qualifications. Making objective decisions that benefit the company can help you guide the organization toward success.

**24. Pursue leadership training.**

If you're a new manager, taking a course on leadership may help you adjust to your new role and gain critical skills. Some employers may offer managerial training, while others may offer reimbursement for leadership training you seek out on your own.

**25. Seek out diverse opinions.**

When making decisions with your team, prompt deeper thought by requesting conflicting opinions. For example, perhaps most team members agree that it's best to cut a software program to leave more room in the budget this quarter. Before assuming it's a unanimous decision, ask if anybody thinks differently. Give everybody a chance to speak and weigh varying opinions to reach the right conclusion.

**26. Believe in others' ideas.**

Be passionate about the ideas team member present. When leaders invest in everyone's ideas rather than just their own, they can help increase employee engagement and foster creativity.

# GETTING ALONG WITH DIFFICULT BOSS

# 26

One of the most common reasons employees quit their jobs is because of a difficult boss. If you find yourself in a situation where you find it nearly impossible to work with your boss, then it's time to take action to improve your relationship, or to think about further steps to take if you feel that the situation is out of your control. If you focus on being constructive and on keeping your cool, you may be surprised by how easy it is to handle a difficult boss after all.

## 26.1 Talk to your boss about it.

You may feel like the absolute last resort is to actually talk to your boss about the problems you're having, but that's where you're mistaken. If you really want to improve your relationship with your boss instead of waiting for things to get worse, then the best thing you can do is ask your boss if you can schedule a time to talk and be honest about your feelings while maintaining your professionalism. Once you have face time with your boss, make eye contact, speak clearly, and let him or her know what the problem is-

1. Make sure you focus on how your problem is with working with your boss, not your actual boss or some aspect of his or her personality. Talk about how you're having trouble communicating, which is making it more difficult to meet objectives, or say something else about how you're struggling to meet deadlines because of changing expectations. Frame the conversation so it sounds like you want your company to succeed, which can only happen if you and your boss work better together.
2. It's important to choose your words carefully. Avoid any personal attacks that may offend your boss and focus on discussing your work.
3. Picking a time to talk in advance will keep your boss from being caught off guard and will give the situation the seriousness that it deserves.

**26.2 Work with your boss instead of against him or her.**

If you really want to improve your relationship with your boss, then you should work with your boss to improve the state of your company, instead of against your boss. Though it may feel good to make your boss look stupid at a meeting or to send a passive-aggressive email to your boss, in the long run, this won't do any good for your relationship and it won't make you feel any better. Furthermore, making your relationship with your boss even worse will make it harder to get your work done, and at the end of the day, nothing is more counterproductive than that.

Help your boss achieve his goals by being helpful, present, and supportive. Even if he's difficult to deal with, your life will be easier if you move with the grain instead of against it.

**26.3 Keep track of all of your conversations.**

Keeping track of all of your conversations, whether it's through emails or memos, will help you be on top of your situation with your boss. Doing so will be helpful for two reasons. First, having a record or everything your boss said will help you in the event that your boss gives you confusing instructions or claims he or she

didn't say something that he or she really said; you can use the written communication as evidence. Second, having a record of everything your boss says to you can be helpful if your relationship is so problematic that you want to discuss the situation with a supervisor; in that case, you'll have written proof that something is off.

1. If you're really struggling to communicate with your boss, then try to make sure that all of your communication happens in front of someone else, so that you have evidence of what happened if your boss tries to deny it.
2. Document everything that you feel is relevant to your concerns with your boss. You may want to purchase a pocket planner so that you can enter the issues on the appropriate dates. Keep this private. You don't want to pull put the planner and scribble notes in front of him because that will cause more anger. You are keeping notes for your own sake, so that you have all your concerns backed up with facts.

**26.4 Anticipate problems before they come up.**

Another way to improve your relationship with your boss is to keep an eye out for problems that may arise, and to react to them with preparation and forethought. If you know that there was a bad traffic accident on the freeway and that your boss is going to come in late, try to delay the meeting until he gets there, or start it off for him. If you know your boss is going to be angry after meeting with a difficult client, give him or her some space instead of bringing up something upsetting, which may start an argument. If you know that your boss has difficulty accomplishing a certain task, try to keep yourself relatively free so you can be there to help out.

**26.5 Refrain from becoming emotional during any discussions with your boss.**

Even if your boss becomes emotional, you want to maintain your professional manner so that he cannot use anything against you.

Note that your boss may become even more aggravated by your calm and professional demeanour, and if this is the case, explain to your boss that you would like to continue the conversation, but the last thing you want is to upset him, so suggest picking up the issue at a later time. If you lose your cool, your boss can blame you, even if you're upset over something completely legitimate.

1. If you find yourself getting emotional in the middle of a conversation, excuse yourself and ask to resume the conversation at a later time.
2. If you hear yourself raising your voice, stop, slow down, and take a few deep breaths. If you can't keep the conversation at a normal level, then you should resume it later.

**26.6 Be prepared to discuss criticism of yourself when approaching a difficult boss with concerns.**

Of course, you have issues that you may want to discuss personally, but if he feels that you are criticizing him, he may turn the tables and place the focus on you. If this is the case, be professional. Listen to his concerns and tell him that you appreciate his feedback and that you will work on the issues, and then politely return to the problems you have. Don't get defensive or ignore anything he is telling you.

In fact, it can be helpful to ask yourself if you're doing everything you can correctly before you start a conversation with your boss. You may be having problems with your boss because you have been doing something wrong without realizing it. It's best to anticipate anything your boss might say, such as the fact that you're always late or that your reports need to be proofread more, before you start the conversation. Otherwise, you may be taken aback.

1. Don't interrupt your boss and wait for him to finish giving his feedback. You don't want him to think that you're above listening to him.

2. A difficult boss will be at their worst when you've made a major mistake, but you may be able to partly salvage the situation by handling failure at work with honesty and integrity.

**26.7 Understand that you cannot change your boss.**

If your boss is characteristically difficult to handle, not just for you but for others, then the likelihood of him changing is minimal. If this is the case, use the opportunity to simply make him aware of your issues. At least he cannot say that he was never informed of your concerns. Though you can't change your boss or his personality, hopefully talking to your boss will send him on the path to improvement. Furthermore, you can work on improving your relationship without changing your boss.

You and your boss may just not be compatible as people. If this is the case, then you'll have to find a new way to operate together unless you feel like you have exhausted all of your resources. Sometimes, you may have to accept your differences first before you move on.

**26.8 Remain professional when confronting your boss, even if you feel your blood boiling.**

Maintain a calm demeanour and be prepared to listen to any gripes or lectures that he or she may want to share with you. Don't use vulgar language or personal attacks, and don't be lewd or say anything you would say if you were fighting with a close friend. Remember that you have a professional relationship with this person, not a personal relationship. Even if your boss starts being unprofessional, don't use that as an excuse to follow suit.

If you have something specific to say to your boss, you may even want to write it down or rehearse it first to make sure that it comes off as professional. You don't want to start saying something and then realize that you're stepping out of your bounds halfway through your conversation.

**26.9 Do not go over your boss's head if you can avoid it.**

Not only will this cause hostility between you and your boss, but your boss's boss may refer you back to your boss, which may result in an even more unreceptive situation. You should go over your boss's head if you feel like you have tried everything with your boss, but nothing has worked. Additionally, you can go over your boss's head if you feel that your boss is being sexually inappropriate, discriminating against you based on your age, gender, race, or another external factor, and that further action needs to be taken outside of your boss's power.

If you go over your boss's head at the first sign of a conflict, then you will cause irreparable damage to your relationship. If you can try talking to your boss before talking to someone else, it can save your relationship, as well as your happiness at work.

**26.10 Talk to your supervisor if it's necessary.**

If you feel like you have tried everything on your own and need to talk to someone higher up, then it's time to arrange a meeting with a supervisor to discuss the problems you're having with your boss. There's no point in delaying the inevitable if you feel like you really can't work together with your boss. If you've tried everything and know that your relationship has reached a dead end, then it's time to talk to your supervisor about the situation. Don't be nervous and stick to discussing the facts instead of getting emotional. The more concrete examples you have, the more respect you'll get.

Make sure you use professional language and avoid bad-mouthing your boss in front of your supervisor. You don't want to say something that makes your supervisor lose respect for you, too. Remember that you want to look like the calm, reasonable one, and that your boss is the one who has been causing all the problems.

**26.11 Take action if you feel you've been discriminated against.**

If you truly feel that you've been discriminated against because of your age, race, gender, or something else beyond your control, then it may be time to take action. You can consult the EEOC for free or seek out an employee attorney for a fee if you think you've been discriminated against and are in a protected class. Don't be nervous about taking this measure if this is what's happening; though it won't be pleasant, this may be the best way to meet your needs. If you've witnessed fraud at your company and want to take action, remember that the False Claims Act requires you to first file your claim before you disclose it publicly.

**26.12 See if you can be transferred within your company.**

One option that isn't as extreme as leaving your company, but which can make you a lot happier at your workplace is to see if you can be transferred to a different department, or even transferred to a different boss. If you're truly having trouble with your boss and your supervisors or other people at the company completely understand where you're coming from, then they may be willing to accommodate your needs. If you make it pretty clear that you won't be able to stay on if you're stuck with your current boss, in spite of how much you like the company, then they may be able to find an arrangement that makes you happy.

Of course, all of this depends on your workplace culture and if such arrangements are typically — or even occasionally — made at your workplace. Do your research and see if such a thing has been done before and look out for tips on how to proceed. Of course, you should try to find this out without letting everyone know about the particular situation you find yourself in.

**26.13 Decide whether it's worth it to leave your workplace.**

Unfortunately, when it comes to today's job market, good jobs can be few and far between, depending on the industry you're working in. Before you decide to go on the job market again or to leave your current company, you should ask yourself if it's really

worth it for you to make this change. If your job is causing you mental and physical pain and you really feel like you can't be there another day and keep your sanity, then it may really be time to leave. However, if you're just mildly annoyed or frustrated, you may want to hold off, or you may want to explore your options before you resign.

1. Of course, if your boss is being inappropriate, discriminating against you, or doing other unreasonable things, then there's no question about it: you have to leave.
2. Ideally, you should be able to look for new work while maintaining your current position. Being employed will make you a more appealing candidate for other companies.

## 26.14 Do your research carefully before you take another job offer.

Though you may be bursting at the seams to leave your current work situation, you have to diligently do your research before you take a new offer. If you're too desperate to leave, you may jump at the chance to work at a new company, even if it ends up not being a good fit. You could end up at a company with a boss who is even more difficult (though this may be hard to imagine now) and will only make your own working life even worse. It's important to take the time and to make sure that you're leaving a hostile environment for a comfortable one before you make the transition.

1. As you interview for a new position, make sure you talk to other people at the company and get a strong sense of what your new boss will be like before you accept an offer. Though you won't know 100% what your new boss or job will be like until you start working there, you should follow your gut to see if something is off.
2. Though you may be rushing to take on a new offer because it'll mean you will have to spend less time at your current job, resist the temptation to take something that doesn't feel quite right just because it means you'll get to leave your current difficult boss. Tell yourself that it's a worthy time investment to search for a place where you can truly be happy in the long run.

# DEALING WITH TRADE UNIONS

# 27

Trade unions are independent, membership-based organisations of workers that represent and negotiate on behalf of working people. They give advice when their members have problems at work, represent members in discussions with employers, and help improve wages and working conditions by negotiating with employers. Unions also make sure that their members' legal rights are enforced, provide and broker education and learning opportunities for members, promote equal opportunities at work, fight against discrimination and help to ensure a healthy and safe working environment. Many unions provide services for their members, such as welfare benefits, personal legal help and financial services.

## 27.1 How unions work

It can be very difficult for a single worker to speak to management about a workplace problem (for example, forced overtime or late wages) and to resolve their difficulty individually – assuming they even have the confidence to raise the issue. Unions work on the principle that if all workers speak with the same voice, their concerns are more likely to be addressed. This involves union

members in the same workplace getting together to talk about common problems, democratically taking collective decisions on workplace issues, and putting these views to the employer.

Individual members usually elect someone to speak on their behalf – a shop 'steward' or 'representative' (rep) – and to discuss their concerns with management. Where the union has a recognition agreement with management (this is where the employer has agreed to negotiate with the union to set staff terms and conditions), they will have regular formal discussions. These negotiations are referred to as 'collective bargaining'. Unions are financed through the individual contributions of their members. Unions continually seek to recruit members (encouraging new members to join by 'organising') and to build an active membership, as this gives unions stronger bargaining power in negotiations with employers.

The benefits of working with a recognised trade union Employers around the world understand that working with a recognised trade union can bring many benefits to their company. In particular, trade unions can help employers to:

1. **Build trust among the workforces**
   Unions provide a mechanism for dialogue between workers and employers, which helps build trust and commitment among the workforce and ensures that problems can be identified and resolved quickly and fairly. This brings significant productivity benefits for companies. Recognising a union also means there is a single point of contact for negotiating terms and conditions for workers, which is simpler, more efficient for the employer and fairer than dealing with workers individually. Workers' performance will also improve where there is an independent means of dealing with problems rather than leaving them until they get worse.
2. **Ensure workplaces are safe**
   Union representatives help to lower accident rates at work by ensuring safe working practices and reducing

stress-related ill health caused by, for example, working long hours, being bullied, or working in poor quality environments. Evidence shows that unionised workplaces are safer workplaces – which has the added benefit for employers of significantly reducing the costs of ill health and accidents.

3. **Audit non-compliance with labour codes**
   Unions are a good source of information on workplace practice and are well placed to work with employers to identify and address poor working practices and non-compliance with labour standards. Unions can play a key part in enforcing labour standards. They can survey their members about workplace conditions, and coordinate efforts to monitor the effectiveness of new policies and procedures. Trade unions provide a route for workers to report non-compliance without fear of reprisal, and so it is more likely that violations of labour codes will be reported. By enabling workers to monitor and improve their own working conditions in a sustainable and empowering manner, trade unions can help reduce dependence on social audit.
4. **Improve staff retention**
   Trade unions negotiate on their members' behalf with employers to find solutions that meet business needs, while ensuring that workers are treated fairly. By giving employees, a voice and supporting them when they are unhappy at work, unions significantly improve staff retention and reduce absenteeism. Improved working conditions in unionised workplaces also give employees a powerful incentive to remain in their jobs for longer, and to use their time at work more productively.
5. **Make better business decisions**
   Unions represent not only the workers in particular businesses, but many others in similar, related organisations. This provides them with a broad perspective on many workplace issues, and industry knowledge that can be very useful to companies. Informing and consulting with experienced union representatives can also – with input from workers – help

companies take better-informed business decisions, for example in relation to shift patterns or the type of equipment to invest in.

6. **Promote equality**
   Trade unions actively fight discrimination and help to promote equal opportunities at work. Union representatives are well placed to identify incidences of discrimination, and to work with employers to ensure that anti-discrimination policies are properly implemented. This helps to make workplaces more attractive to workers – improving staff retention, absenteeism, and productivity – as well as reducing management time spent addressing grievances.
7. **Provide access to learning and skills**
   Helping members to access education and training is a key priority for unions. Research shows that union recognition has a consistently positive effect on the amount and range of training that is provided to employees. In turn, higher skilled employees bring productivity benefits for employers.
8. **Save money**
   Early identification of problems in the workplace can lead to significant savings, for example by reducing the costs employers face as a result of ill health (including reduced productivity, sick pay, temporary staff cover, and compensation payments from accidents) and reducing staff turnover. Unions also have a strong record of working with employers to identify efficiencies and cost savings – both employers and employees have a shared interest in business success.
9. **Increase productivity**
   Unions help build high-trust workplaces where workers are healthier, better skilled, and more able to resolve grievances – all of which lead to a more committed and productive workforce. Unions can also help maintain productivity during periods of employer innovation – collective bargaining arrangements provide an important means of consulting with workers over change and reducing the chances of staff resistance.

## 27.2 The art of Negotiation with trade union

### Consultation and communication

Some businesses, particularly larger ones, will have formal consultative arrangements with trade union representatives. Where these exist, it is important to make them effective, for example by:

1. Having a clear understanding of what issues can and can't be discussed and how they are to be dealt with
2. Following up on agreed actions
3. Being honest in the relationship – which may mean being clear why actions haven't been taken or why a particular approach is not possible.

In other businesses, consultation may be less formal, but it is still important to follow similar principles.

Messages to staff should be consistent across all of an organisation's voice and information and consultation arrangements. This means ensuring that staff receive similar messages whether this is individually or collectively, or in a formal setting, or via less formal channels, and whether they are union members or not. HR need to work closely with marketing/internal communications staff to ensure that information and communication approaches provide reliable and coherent information to all employees, as 'mixed messaging' can be one of the main causes of disputes and conflict.

Make sure there is an agreed rationale for setting up a formal consultation forum and agree its key aims with employee representatives. A forum can include trade union and non-trade union representatives.

HR professionals should consider how to develop effective personal relationships with local trade union representatives. This allows HR to gather 'intelligence' about issues that may exist in the workforce, and to develop solutions that avoid or minimise the scope for conflict. Such 'off the record' discussions can also be useful in exploring the reaction to different business options.

Developing this sort of relationship can take time and requires both sides to operate in good faith but can be a very helpful and practical way to develop HR expertise in managing collective working relationships. Handling negotiations and avoiding industrial action .

**Negotiation**

Negotiation of agreed solutions is key to an effective working relationship with trade unions. Unions do not want to strike or take other action any more than businesses want it, but if the sentiment is strong enough among their membership, action may result.

There are six principles to effective negotiation for an HR professional:

1. Be clear about what you ultimately want to achieve from the negotiation. For example, proposed changes to shift patterns or working hours to extend the hours that customers are able to contact you, means the ultimate objective is better customer service, not a specific shift or work pattern. A cost-effective solution that achieves this is the key aim, even if it is different to what you first proposed.
2. Be flexible and look for areas to create mutual gain. A win-win approach is always more effective than creating a win-lose position which will damage long-term relationships.
3. Compromise is not a weakness. It is a recognition that there are different points of view and that agreement on a way forward is always better than imposing a solution on unwilling staff.
4. Listen carefully. Not only will you fully understand concerns, but you will also be able to learn where compromise and mutual gain are possible.
5. Balance the long-term relationship with trade unions with the specific proposal. If something is seen as 'business-critical' then it may be necessary to accept a short-term setback in the relationship with union representatives to get it through. If not, then jeopardizing goodwill is likely to lead to a hardening of attitudes the next time you have

an issue to negotiate. It's always better to spend the time working towards an acceptable agreement if possible, and/or being creative and offering something in return on other terms and conditions if the proposal is accepted.

6. Have a fallback position. What will you do if the negotiations fail? Will you withdraw the proposal or seek to impose it? What are the implications of either approach?

Be aware that the trade union officials will have considered all of this from their own perspective and will have prepared accordingly, so it is essential that you do the same.

The overwhelming majority of negotiations will result in some form of agreement. The reasons why, in a small minority of cases, agreement cannot be reached include:

1. The sides being too far apart to allow for mutual gains. For example, in the above scenario if either side considered certain suggested changes to the shift pattern to be unacceptable and were unwilling to move on this point.
2. A 'take it or leave it' approach to a negotiation.
3. A lack of trust that the 'other side' will deliver its side of the agreement.

Where agreement cannot be reached, there are a number of steps that can be taken:

1. Bring in an external, impartial third-party mediator or conciliator such as Acas, who can often find a way forward where the parties appear to be deadlocked. The **Acas toolkit on collective conciliation** has some useful resources.
2. Take time out to review positions and develop revised proposals.
3. Implement the fall-back position. Bear in mind for a trade union, the fall-back position may be some form of industrial action.

**Official industrial action generally takes one of two forms**:

1. **Strike:** where workers withdraw their labour on specific dates and/or for specific periods (such as a 24 hour strike every Monday)
2. **Action short of strike:** this can include picketing, overtime bans, refusing to undertake duties outside of their specific role or not covering for absent colleagues. Historically this was known as 'working to rule'.

A less common type of industrial action is when an employer stops their employees from working or coming back to work during a dispute, called a 'lock out'.

There are numerous legal issues around industrial action, including:

1. Compliance with all the rules on balloting.
2. Notice of action and the roles of pickets.
3. The effect on employment rights of staff who take industrial action.
4. Pay deductions and how to handle them.
5. Non-victimization of those involved – or not involved – in the action.

**6 Top Tips for Managing Relationships with Trade Unions**

1. Treat unions as a key stakeholder in your business, with a legitimate viewpoint and interests.
2. Seek to understand their viewpoint – consider the cultural, historical, and business reasons why a proposal might not be welcomed.
3. Separate strategy from tactics (both from a business and a trade union perspective)
4. Be willing to negotiate and compromise to achieve your strategy.
5. Don't allow emotion to cloud your judgment (especially in a dispute)
6. Develop informal and trustworthy relationships with trade union representatives.

# HOW TO IMPROVE PUBLIC RELATION SKILLS

# 28

Public relations skills are essential for working in a variety of jobs that require regular communication with others. They typically include skills such as communication, research, and the ability to identify trends in public opinion. Knowing how to leverage these skills could make you a valuable contributor to a company's communications or marketing department.

Public relations skills are a wide range of capabilities and proficiencies that typically fall under the category of communications and marketing. These skills can be put to use for a variety of purposes, from introducing new products or services to enhancing the reputation of a company. In most cases, public relations skills help shape public opinion, which is especially helpful if a company wants to reshape its brand.

## 28.1 Important Public Relations Skills

Here are some public relations skills professionals most commonly use:

1. **Communication**

   Effective communication skills enable you to come up with

captivating content, engage with audiences and start compelling PR campaigns. Communication skills can also help you work more effectively as part of a team and express your ideas to your coworkers better. You may also use these skills to strengthen your interpersonal skills, which can help you relate to and interact with the company's audience and your colleagues.

2. **Social media**
   Much of public relations involves immersing yourself in social media. Knowing how your audiences are behaving on social media, what drives them to make decisions and what interests them can help you create more effective campaigns. You also can regularly keep up with social media trends and leverage them to your client's or company's advantage.
3. **Research**
   A great deal of your work as a PR professional may involve conducting research. It's helpful to know as much as you can about your clients, and it's equally important to understand how to captivate your audience. Thorough research can also help you determine the most effective approach to a particular campaign and to discover details that could be beneficial to your client.
4. **Time management**
   PR campaigns are often subject to strict time requirements. Launching and maintaining a campaign requires a lot of work, so it's important to have excellent time management skills. Effective time management can enable you to stay organized and achieve your goals while maintaining the necessary level of quality in your work. Developing time management skills can help you become more efficient and may lower work-related stress.
5. **Creativity**
   The ability to think creatively is essential for a successful PR campaign. Each PR situation is different, so it's helpful to be

able to apply different approaches and techniques to deal with every given scenario. Developing creative skills can help you solve problems and find unique ways to connect to the organization's audience.

## 28.2 How to improve public relations skills

Public relations are a fast-paced industry, so improving your skills regularly can help you remain competitive in the field. Here are some suggestions on how you can improve your public relations skills.

1. **Commit to continuous learning:**
   Public relations work can place you in many situations, which can provide many opportunities for continuous learning. You can use these situations as opportunities to learn new skills. It's also helpful to keep up to date knowledge of the industry by conducting research and building your professional network.
2. **Be aware of industry trends:**
   The longer you work in the PR industry, the more aware you may be of what other people are doing. Pay attention to what others are doing in your niche, as well as what is going on in the wider industry. It's beneficial to follow social media postings of prominent PR professionals and to regularly monitor trade sites and publications to stay current with new trends.
3. **Try different writing styles:**
   Experiment with different approaches to writing and voices you can use when communicating with the public. Over time, you may develop your own voice and gravitate toward it most of the time, which can give your writing a strong personal identity. Try spending some time every day writing and communicating with others to enrich your voice and help you become a more versatile PR professional.
4. **Set goals for personal and professional development:**
   Setting goals for yourself and striving to achieve them is an effective strategy for improving your skills as a public relations professional. For example, you could aspire toward better engagement over the

next few months or increase the view count of a particular video. Establishing personal and professional goals can give you something to work toward and help you measure your progress.

5. **Learn more about your client's focus:**
   Ultimately, public relations work is about helping your clients achieve their goals. Whether they are launching a new brand, signifying a change in company direction, or enhancing the company's reputation, your role is to help them meet these objectives effectively and efficiently. So, it's important to constantly strive to learn as much as you can about your client and how you can help them realize their goals.

## 28.3 Public relations skills in the workplace

There are many ways in which you can utilize and develop public relations skills in the workplace. Here are a few examples using some common public relations skills:

1. **Flexibility:**
   Being a public relations specialist requires you to adapt quickly to changing circumstances. Being flexible and able to adapt to new situations can help you become more effective in your role.
2. **Initiative:**
   Self-motivation is an important aspect of public relations work. This can help you quickly figure out how you can benefit your client, whether it involves learning about new communication strategies or doing industry research.
3. **Teamwork:**
   Public relations professionals rarely work alone. Being about to work well with others in high-pressure situations can help you lead more effective campaigns.
4. **Brand management:**
   Public relations work often involves enhancing the reputation of your company's brand. This skill allows you to leverage your brand's strengths and present them in a way that appeals to the public.

## 28.4 How to highlight public relations skills.

After you've developed the skills necessary to become an effective PR professional, the next step is to highlight these skills. Here are

some suggestions for highlighting your skills to prospective employers:

## 28.5 Public relations skills for a resume

Here are some ways to highlight public relations skills on your resume:

1. **Decide on the most relevant skills to present:**
   Make a list of your skills and take note of those that are most relevant to the role of a PR specialist. Focus on your ability to launch and maintain a publicity campaign, for example, as well as communication and organizational skills.
2. **Associate your skills with practical situations:**
   When outlining your skills, include details about how they apply to particular situations. If you mention communication skills, for example, detail how these skills helped you keep a PR team organized and focused on their tasks.
3. **Emphasize your most recent skills:**
   Try to showcase the skills that you have put to use recently. This can show prospective employers that your skill set remains relevant to current situations and that you can maintain a high level of professionalism throughout your work.

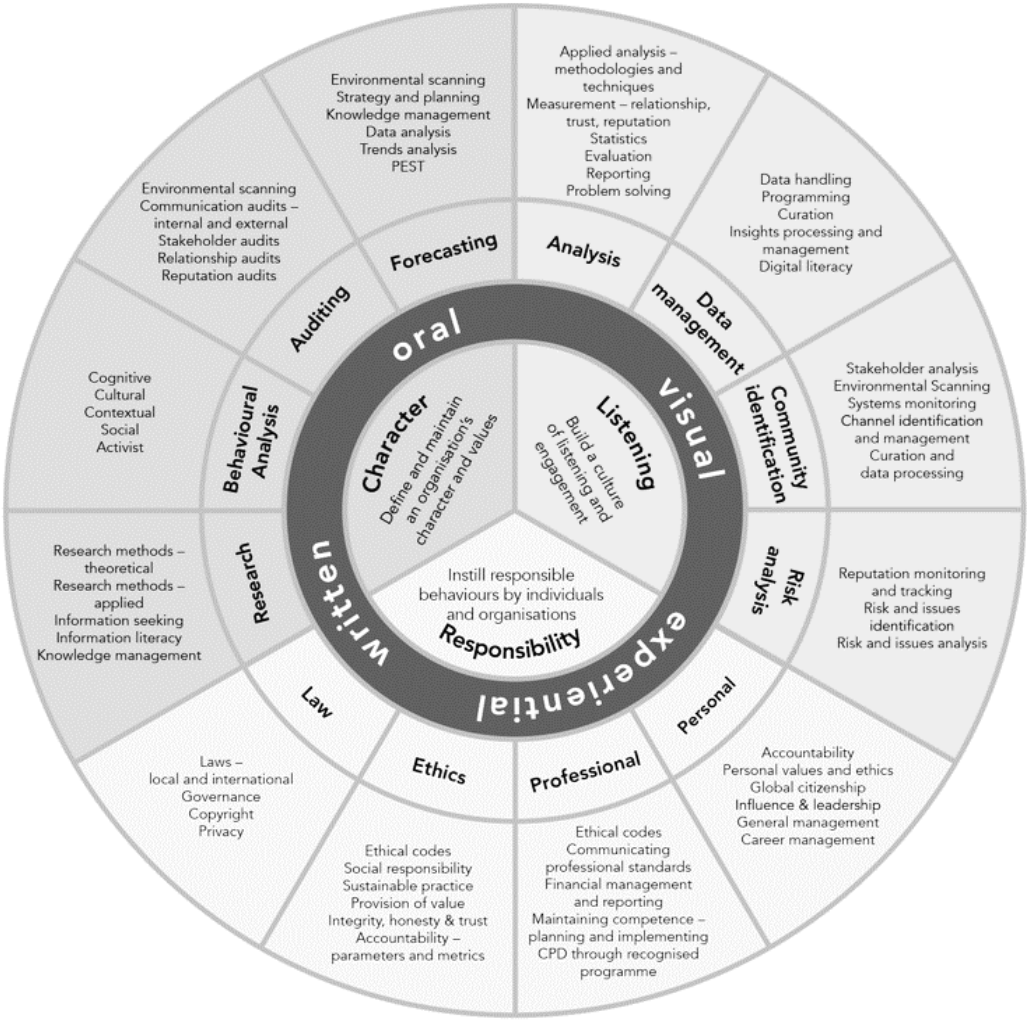
## 28.6 Public relations skills for an interview

Below are some steps you can take to effectively discuss your public relations skills during an interview.

1. **Provide in-depth information about your skills:**
   During your interview, be prepared to explain the skills you have outlined in your resume in more detail. Employers often want to know that you have a firm understanding of the skills required to be an effective PR specialist, so make sure you can explain the various aspects of your skills and how you can utilize them for the company.
2. **Detail the practical benefits of your skills:**
   Before your interview, make sure that any skills you chose to highlight can effectively benefit the company. Organizational skills can be useful for managing a long-term PR campaign, for example, while writing skills can help you engage with an audience more

effectively.

3. **Cover other relevant skills:**
   Though you might not list all your skills on your resume, you can still mention your other abilities. For example, might mention volunteer work in a social organization or your experience as the editor of a community paper.



# HOW TO SURVIVE TOUGH TIMES BY BUILDING RESILIENCE

# 29

Whether you're facing a global or personal crisis—or a mix of both—building resilience can help you cope with stress, overcome adversity, and enjoy the better days to come.

## 29.1 Experiencing hardship and adversity.

Lately, the world seems to be lurching from one crisis to another. We've experienced a global pandemic, dramatic changes to how we conduct our daily lives, economic uncertainty, and political and social turmoil, as well as an array of natural disasters. Then there are personal traumas that people are also dealing with, such as the loss of a loved one, declining health, unemployment, divorce, violent crime, or tragic accidents. For many of us, this is a time of unprecedented struggle and upheaval.

Whether the source of disruption in your life is a global emergency or a personal tragedy—or both—living through difficult times can take a heavy toll on your mood, health, and outlook. It can leave you feeling helpless and overwhelmed by stress and anxiety. You may be painfully grieving all that you've lost, flooded by a slew of difficult, conflicting emotions, or

uncertain about how to move on with your life. You may even feel that your life is totally out of control and you're powerless to affect whatever may happen next.

While there's no way to avoid sorrow, adversity, or distress in life, there are ways to help smooth the rough waters and regain a sense of control. Resilience is the ability to cope with the loss, change, and trauma that have been inevitable parts of life even before these extraordinary times. Building resilience can help you better adapt to life-changing events, cope with turbulent times, and bounce back from hardship and tragedy.

## 29.2 The role of resilience in times of crisis

Why do some people seem to be better able to cope in these troubling times than others? While everyone's situation is different, it is true that people with resilience tend to have a higher tolerance for the emotional distress generated by hard times. The more resilient you are, the better you're able to tolerate the feelings of stress, anxiety, and sadness that accompany trauma and adversity—and find a way to rebound from setbacks.

We all go through bad times, we all experience disappointment, loss, and change, and we all feel sad, anxious, and stressed at various times in our lives. But building resilience can help you to maintain a positive outlook, face an uncertain future with less fear, and get through even the darkest days.

## 26.3 Building resilience

If you're more sensitive to emotional distress and are finding it difficult to cope with hardship or adversity, it's important not to think of it as some kind of character flaw. Resilience isn't a macho quality, and it isn't fixed; it's an ongoing process that requires effort to build and maintain over time.

Unless you've faced adversity in your life before, it's unlikely you've had the need or opportunity to develop resilience. Drawing

on past experiences can help you cope with the challenges you're facing today. Even if you've struggled to cope with adversity in the past, you may at least be able to recognize some of the ways of coping that DON'T help, such as trying to numb your feelings with drugs or alcohol.

While it's often difficult to imagine anything good coming out of traumatic experiences, building resilience can help you find any positives in the difficulties you've faced. Surviving hardships can teach you important things about yourself and the world around you, strengthen your resolve, deepen your empathy, and in time enable you to evolve and grow as a human being.

Building resilience can also help you to:

1. Stay focused, flexible, and productive, in both good and bad times.
2. Feel less afraid of new experiences or an uncertain future.
3. Manage and tolerate strong emotions outside your comfort zone, even those you'd rather avoid like anger or despair.
4. Strengthen your relationships and improve your communication skills, especially under pressure.
5. Bolster your self-esteem.
6. Be confident you'll eventually find a solution to a problem, even when one isn't immediately apparent.

You can develop and improve these qualities of resilience at any time, regardless of your age, background, or circumstances. The following tips can help you face hardships with more confidence, better cope with these tumultuous times, and make it through to the brighter, more hopeful days ahead.

**Tip 1: Practice acceptance**

While we all react to stressful events in different ways, many of us try to protect ourselves by refusing to accept the truth of what's happening. After all, by denying that you're even experiencing a crisis, you can kid yourself that you still have some sense of

control over what usually uncontrollable events are.

While denial can have some positive functions—it can give you an opportunity to come to terms with the shock of a traumatic event, for example—over time, it will just prolong your pain. Staying in denial will prevent you from adapting to your new circumstances, stop you from seeking solutions or taking action, and stifle the healing process.

**Accept the situation:**

Change is an inevitable part of life, and many aspects of the changing world are outside your individual control. You can't control the spread of a virus, for example, the pace of social change, or how the economy behaves. While it can be tough to acknowledge, railing against events or circumstances outside your control will only drain you of energy and leave you feeling anxious and hopeless. Accepting your situation, on the other hand, can free you to devote your energy to the things that you do have control over.

1. **Focus on things within your control.** Make a list of all the things you can't control and give yourself permission to stop worrying about them. Instead, focus on the action that you can take. If you're unemployed, you can't control whether the ideal job appears in the wants ads or whether an employer will grant you an interview. But you can control how much time and effort you put into searching for work or brushing up on your skills. Similarly, if a loved one is facing a life-threatening illness, you may have to relinquish control to the medical experts, but you can still focus on providing your loved one with as much emotional support as possible.
2. **Accept change by looking to your past.** Looking back at examples where you've coped with uncertainty and change before can help you accept your current situation. Perhaps you suffered a painful breakup in the past and were eventually able

to move on with your life, or you lost a job and ended up finding a better one? Examining your past successes can also help you see past the current crisis and derive some confidence that you'll be able to pull through again.

**Accept your feelings:**

It's tempting to believe that the best way to get through hard times is by ignoring painful emotions and "putting on a brave face". But unpleasant emotions exist whether you choose to acknowledge them or not. Trying to prevent your emotions from surfacing will only fuel your stress, delaying acceptance of your new situation, and prevent you from moving on.

By allowing yourself to feel your emotions, you'll find that even the most intense, upsetting feelings will pass, the trauma of these tough times will start to fade, and you'll be able to find a path forward. Talk to someone you trust about what you're experiencing or use Help Guide's Emotional Intelligence Toolkit to reconnect with your emotions.

1. **Grieve your losses.** Undergoing tough times usually involves some kind of loss. Whether it's the loss of a loved one, the loss of a job, or the loss of your old life, it's important you allow yourself the opportunity to grieve. Only by facing your grief—acknowledging and mourning your losses—will you be able to heal and eventually move on with your life.

**Tip 2: Reach out to others.**

Connecting with friends and family when you're going through tough times can help ease stress, boost your mood, and make sense of all the change and disruption. Instead of feeling like you're facing your problems alone, you can draw strength and build resilience from having others to lean on.

The people you reach out to don't need to have answers to the

problems you're facing; they just need to be willing to listen to you without judging. In fact, what you talk about, or the words used are often unimportant. It's the human connection—eye contact, a smile, or a hug—that can make all the difference to how you're feeling.

1. **Prioritize relationships.** Nothing carries the same health benefits as connecting face-to-face with someone who is caring and empathetic. These days, however, it's not always possible to see friends and loved ones in person. If you're kept apart by geography, lockdown, or travel restrictions, for example, reach out to others via phone, video chat, or social media.
2. **Don't withdraw in tough times.** You may be inclined to retreat into your shell when you're facing challenges in your life. You may fear being a burden to friends and loved ones or feel too exhausted to reach out. But try to keep up with social activities even when you don't feel like it. Good friends won't consider you a burden—they're more likely to feel flattered that you trust them enough to confide in them.
3. **Try to avoid negative people.** Some friends are good listeners, kind and empathetic. Others seem to only fuel negative emotions, leaving you feeling even more stressed, anxious, or panicky. Try to avoid anyone who magnifies your problems, criticizes, or makes you feel judged.
4. **Expand your social network.** Even though relationships are vital for good mental health, building resilience, and getting through tough times, many of us feel that we don't have anyone to turn to in times of need. But there are plenty of ways to build new friendships and improve your support network. If you know others who are lonely or isolated, be the one to take the initiative and reach out.

**Tip 3: Invest in self-care.**

Living through tough times can be both mentally and physically draining. Constantly being in a heightened state of stress can lead to serious health problems, impact your immune and digestive systems, increase your risk of heart attack and stroke, and lead to burnout, a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion.

Since the body and mind are so closely linked, investing in self-care is an important part of building resilience and getting through times of great stress. When your body feels strong and healthy so, too, will your mind.

1. **Get enough exercise.** When you're dealing with chronic stress, you likely carry it somewhere in your body. Maybe your muscles are tense, you have back or neck pain, frequent headaches, insomnia, heartburn, or an upset stomach? Getting regular exercise not only releases powerful endorphins in the brain to improve your mood, but it can also help to ease tension in the body and counteract the physical symptoms of stress.
2. **Practice a "mind and body" relaxation technique.** Practices such as yoga, tai chi, and meditation blend deep breathing and body awareness to help you relieve stress and bring your nervous system back into balance. Try one of HelpGuide's audio meditations to boost your physical and emotional well-being.
3. **Improve your sleep.** When you're facing adversity, nothing wears down your resilience like missing out on a good night's sleep. Often, improving your daytime habits and taking the time to relax and unwind before bed can help you sleep better at night.
4. **Eat well.** There are no specific foods that can help build resilience and weather tough times. Rather, it's your overall

dietary pattern that's important. Eating lots of processed and takeout food can take a toll on your brain and mood, sapping your energy, and weakening your immune system. A healthy diet, on the other hand—one that's low in sugar and rich in healthy fats—can give you the energy and focus to tackle the challenges you're facing.

5. **Manage your overall stress levels.** Taking steps to manage your overall stress can break the hold it has over your life, improve your mood, and help you build the resilience you need to hold up under pressure at this time.

**Tip 4: Look for meaning and purpose.**

It's easy to get overwhelmed by frightening headlines or consumed by the crisis you're facing. But whatever your circumstances, it doesn't have to define you as a person. You are not your crisis. By pursuing activities that bring purpose and meaning to your life, you can keep your problems in perspective, prevent them from overwhelming you, and maintain your identity.

Everyone is different so we all have different ways of experiencing purpose and meaning. Don't limit yourself by others' expectations; pursue activities that are important to you and add satisfaction to your life.

1. **Give help to others.** When you're in the midst of a crisis, it's common to feel powerless and helpless. By proactively helping others, you can regain a sense of control as well as find purpose in your life. In fact, giving support can be just as beneficial as receiving support. Try volunteering, helping others in your neighborhood, giving blood, donating to a charity, or marching for a cause that's important to you.
2. **Pursue your hobbies and interests.** In turbulent times, it's important not to cast aside interests that nourish your spirit. For many of us, it's these things that define us as individuals

and bring meaning to our lives. Whether it's playing a sport, caring for a pet, an artistic or musical endeavor, home improvement projects, or spending time in nature, continuing to draw pleasure from your pastimes adds to your ability to cope with the stress of difficult times.

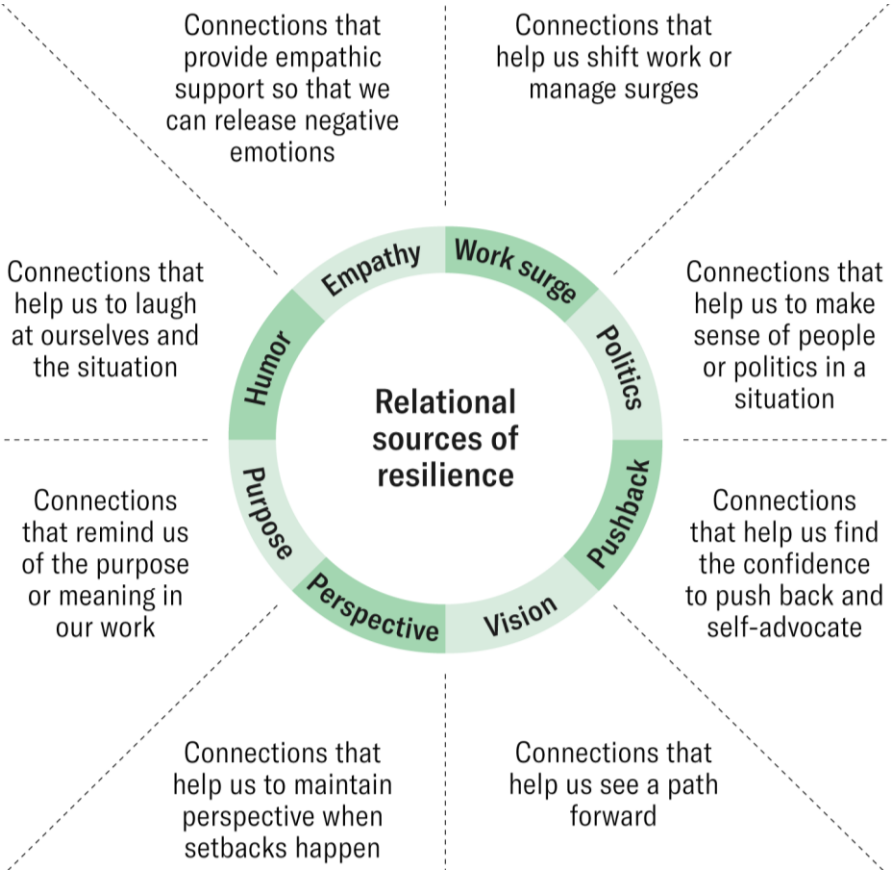
**Tip 5: Stay motivated.**

An important part of coping with adversity and making it through tough times is to foster qualities of persistence and endurance. Tough times don't last forever, but by their very nature they're rarely over quickly. As you plot a road through the darkness, you need to find ways to stay motivated and persevere.

1. **Deal with your problems one step at a time.** If a problem is too big to deal with all at once, try breaking it down into smaller, more manageable steps. If your problem seems to have no possible solution, you can still take action by drawing up a list, researching more about the subject, or seeking the advice of a trusted friend or loved one.
2. **Celebrate small wins.** To stay motivated and positive as you navigate stormy seas in life, take a moment to savor your small successes. If you're looking for work, for example, getting an interview isn't as meaningful as landing a job, but it's a sign of progress, a step in the right direction. Noting these small wins can give you a welcome break from all the stress and negativity you're facing and encourage you to keep going.
3. **Try to maintain a hopeful outlook.** While it's difficult to stay positive and hopeful in the midst of a crisis, many of us tend to blow our problems out of proportion and make them seem even more negative than they really are. Try taking a step back and examining your situation as an outsider. Are there rays of hope that you can focus on? Instead of worrying about what you fear may happen, try visualizing what you'd

like to happen instead.

4. **Express gratitude.** It may sound trite, but even when you're experiencing terrible times, it's usually possible to find one thing you can be grateful about—the love of a pet, for example, a beautiful sunset, or a caring friend. Taking a moment to acknowledge your gratitude for such small things can provide a respite from stress and really boost your mood.
5. **Be kind to yourself.** Everyone adjusts to change and upheaval differently. Don't criticize your coping skills or beat yourself up for every mistake you make. Self-compassion is an important part of building resilience, so go easy on yourself.



# HOW TO DEAL WITH BLACKMAIL OR ANTI-SOCIAL ELEMENT

# 30

Blackmail can trigger a lot of emotions, and you're likely feeling really stressed right now. Even though blackmail is a crime, you might not know how to get help. You've come to the right place! We're going to help you take back your power and get this blackmailer out of your life as quickly as possible. Keep reading to learn exactly what to do about their threats and how to report them to the authorities.

## 30.1 Initial Steps to Take: Regain Your Footing

1. **Do Not Engage:** Engaging with a blackmailer can escalate the situation. It's advisable to avoid communication, giving you time to assess the situation calmly and strategically.
2. **Preserve All Evidence:** Collect and preserve all forms of communication with the blackmailer. This includes emails, texts, social media messages, and any other correspondence. Documentation is critical for law enforcement and legal actions.
3. **Assess the Threat:** Understanding the nature and credibility of the threat is essential. Determine what

information the blackmailer has and the potential impact of its disclosure.

4. **Secure Your Privacy:** Immediately take steps to secure your digital footprint. Change passwords, enable two-factor authentication, and review privacy settings on all social platforms.
5. **Consult a Legal Professional:** Early legal advice can significantly impact your situation. A lawyer can provide guidance tailored to your specific case, including potential legal actions and strategies for dealing with the blackmailer.
6. **Report to Law Enforcement:** Despite the potential embarrassment, reporting the blackmail to law enforcement is crucial. They have the expertise and resources to handle such situations effectively.
7. **Reach Out for Support:** Facing blackmail can be isolated, but support is available. Lean on trusted friends, family, or professional counselors to navigate through this period.

## 30.2 Handling Blackmail

1. **Refuse to pay the blackmail:** You may be tempted to just give the blackmailer what they want so they'll go away. Unfortunately, that rarely works. Giving them money or doing special favors for them will only make them ask for more.

   Trust us, blackmailers will always come back for more if you pay up, so ignore their requests.

   - Some blackmailers will just go away when they realize you're not going to give them anything. On the other hand, others will follow through on their threats. There's no way to know what this blackmailer will do but giving them what they want will keep them coming back for more.
2. **End all contact with the blackmailer:** Your natural instinct will likely be to reach out to the blackmailer to ask for more information or beg them not to release anything about you. Unfortunately, talking to this person will likely make the

situation worse. Start taking back your power by refusing to engage with this person. They aren't worthy of your time.

- If you feel comfortable, talk to someone you trust about what's happening to you.
- It's not your fault that this person is blackmailing you, so try not to blame yourself.

3. **Block the blackmailer and ask your friends to do the same**: Many blackmailers give up when you block them. Additionally, getting your friends to block them will take away some of their leverage. It'll be harder for them to send your secrets or photos to your friends if they're blocked. Go ahead and block them on all platforms.
   - Tell your friends, "This person has been sending me hurtful messages. I'm hoping you'll block them so they can't get to me through you."
   - If someone has intimate photos of you and you're okay disclosing that to your friends, say, "This person has one of my nudes and is trying to send it to all of my friends. Could you please block them?"
4. **Change your privacy settings on Facebook to hide your friends:** A lot of cyber-blackmailers threaten to release your personal photos or secrets to your friends if you don't do what they want. You can make it a lot harder for them to do so by hiding your friends list. If you have Facebook, hide your friends by going under "settings" and clicking on "privacy." Go to the section that says, "Who can see your friends list?" and change it to "only me."
   - It's also a good idea to make your other social media accounts private, at least for the time being. Give this blackmailer as little access to your information as possible.
5. **Update your passwords on any compromised accounts:** Some blackmailers hack into your accounts to steal your

personal info or pics. If this happened to you, change your password so they'll be locked out of the account. If you used that password on any other accounts, go ahead and update those passwords, as well.

6. **Notify the platform the blackmailer used:** Some platforms will help you deal with a blackmailing threat. To do this, contact the customer support phone number or email for the platform you're using. Provide the blackmailer's username or email and explain that they're attempting to blackmail you. Hopefully, the platform can restrict their account. Here's how to contact popular platforms:
   - Gmail
   - Facebook
   - Instagram
7. **Put a Google alert for your name just in case:** Hopefully, your blackmailer will just go away. Just in case, set up a Google alert to quickly spot any photos or information that they post about you. That way, you can go on with your life without worrying about what the blackmailer is going to do.
   - Go to google.com/alerts to set it up. All you need to do is type your name in the search bar and press enter.

## 30.3 Reporting a Blackmailer

1. **Compile all the evidence you have of blackmail.** Keep everything the blackmailer sends you and document their username and any other identifying information. Take screenshots of all of their messages and anything they post so that you can show them to law enforcement. For each message, document:
   - The username or profile of who posted the information.
   - Where they posted it.
   - The date and time of the post.
   - What the message said.

2. **File a report with the local police.** Take your evidence to the local police station. Tell an officer what happened and ask to fill out a police report. If the crime is local, they'll likely start investigating it. If not, they can help you report the crime to Federal law enforcement.
    - Each state or country will have different laws when it comes to blackmail, but it's illegal in most places. In some areas, blackmail is considered extortion or coercion.
3. **Report the incident to Police and other investigating agencies**. Contact your local Police office and provide them with copies of the evidence you collected.
4. **Hire an attorney if you want representation.** You may have a court case against the person who's blackmailing you, especially if they post something harmful about you. A civil attorney can help you figure out if you have a case. Show your lawyer the evidence you've collected so they can help you build a case.
    - Your lawyer can also pressure law enforcement to pursue the case against your blackmailer.

## 30.4 Protecting Yourself from Blackmail

1. **Passwords protect all of your devices.** Cyber-blackmail is a common concern, and blackmailers may try to hack your accounts to steal private pics and information. Your first line of defense is a good password. Create a strong password that's a combination of letters, numbers, and symbols.
2. **Turn on two-factor authentication with your phone.** With two-factor authentication, websites send you a text message or email with a code anytime you try to log-in. Set it up to go through your phone because that way someone can only get into your account if they have your phone. It'll take a little longer for you to get into your accounts, but it'll be worth it.
    - Here's how to do it on Facebook, Instagram, and Gmail.

3. **Put a sticker over your webcam.** Cyber-blackmailers often try to obtain nude photos and videos of you that they can use for blackmail. Sometimes, they'll trick you into sending these images to them directly, but they also use hacking to get them. Since it's possible for someone to access your webcam, protect yourself by blocking the camera lens. Simply press a sticker over it or tape a slip of paper in front of it.
    - Some webcams come with a cover installed on your device. You can just use the cover if your computer or tablet has one.
4. **Use secured wi-fi networks.** When you're using an unsecured network, other people who are on the network may be able to access your data. To be on the safe side, use a secured network if there's one available, and don't look at your sensitive data while on an unsecured network. Additionally, change your home wi-fi network to a unique name and password to reduce the likelihood of someone accessing it.
    - It's always best to choose a unique password for your home wi-fi network because someone could obtain the default password for your wi-fi network.
5. **Verify that someone is legitimate before sending personal information.** Sometimes scammers use a technique called "phishing" to learn your personal info, which they can use to hack your accounts or steal your money. They'll usually call you or send you an email pretending to be someone you know or an organization that you use, like PayPal. Before you give out any personal info, check that you're only communicating with the official email and phone number for who is contacting you.
    - To be on the safe side, respond to organizations through the email or phone number provided on their website, not the one you receive in an email or phone call.

## 30.5 Removing Published Blackmail Materials

1. **Contact the website to ask them to remove your images:** Some websites will take down your photos or information if they find out it was posted by someone else. Go to the website's contact page and send a short message explaining your situation. Then, ask the site manager to remove what the blackmailer posted. Hopefully, the website owner will take it down.
    - Copyright your images to make it easier to get them removed. If you took the photos or video being used to blackmail you, you automatically own the copyright. Additionally, you may be able to copyright images of you that someone else took. Apply for a copyright by filling out and submitting this form.
2. **Report the images to Google:** Sometimes websites won't remove your images, but you have other options. Google may remove websites that contain your images or information from a website if you're being asked to pay to have it removed. You'll need the website URL to submit a report.
    - Fill out this short form to submit your request to Google.
3. **Bury the images in the search results by posting often:** You may struggle to completely erase blackmail information from the Internet. However, you can push it really far down in the search results.
    - Try to create as big of a digital footprint as possible so that the search results will go further and further down the list.
    - Present the image that you want for yourself to take back your power.

## 30.6 Legal Recourse: Empower Yourself

1. **Reporting to Law Enforcement:** Blackmail is a criminal offense, and law enforcement should be your first point of

contact. Provide a detailed account of the blackmail, including all evidence of communication and demands.

2. **The Role of Restraining Orders:** If the blackmailer's identity is known and poses a direct threat, a restraining order can provide legal protection by prohibiting any form of contact with you.
3. **Criminal Charges:** Depending on your jurisdiction, charges against a blackmailer can range from extortion to cybercrimes. Legal professionals can advise on the most appropriate charges based on your evidence and situation.
4. **Working with a Lawyer:** Engaging a lawyer who specializes in cyber law or criminal defense early in the process is invaluable. They can navigate the legal complexities, represent you in legal proceedings, and work towards securing the return of sensitive information or pursuing damages.

## 30.7 Working with Law Enforcement: A Collaborative Effort

When involved in law enforcement, come prepared with all collected evidence and a comprehensive account of the blackmail. Be honest and detailed in your report, as this information is crucial for a successful investigation. Ask questions about the investigation process and what to expect in terms of follow-up and case handling.

## 30.8 Self-Protection Strategies: Safeguard Your Well-being

1. **Emotional and Psychological Self-Protection:** The emotional impact of blackmail can be devastating. It's important to seek emotional support from friends, family, or professionals. Engaging in stress-reduction activities and focusing on your mental health is crucial.
2. **Digital and Informational Self-Protection:** Beyond immediate responses, consider long-term strategies to protect your digital presence. This includes regular reviews of privacy settings, being

cautious about the information you share online, and staying informed about digital security practices.

3. **Legal Self-Protection:** Keep detailed records of all interactions with the blackmailer and continue consulting with your legal advisor to understand your rights and the best course of action.
4. **Physical Self-Protection:** If there's any indication of a physical threat, take steps to ensure your safety. This might involve improving your home security, changing routines, or in extreme cases, relocating temporarily.

### 30.9 Preventive Measures: Strengthen Your Defense

Educating yourself about common blackmail tactics and improving your digital literacy can help prevent future incidents. Consider professional help for securing your online presence and be vigilant about the information you share and with whom you share it.

Facing blackmail is undeniably challenging, but with the right knowledge and resources, you can navigate this difficult time and emerge stronger. Remember, the law is on your side, and there are steps you can take to protect yourself and seek justice. By following the guidelines outlined in this article, you can take decisive action against blackmail, safeguard your privacy, and regain your sense of security.

**Remember,** you're not alone. Support is available, and taking legal steps can not only help you resolve the current situation but also empower you to protect yourself against future threats. Stay informed, stay supported, and take action to protect your well-being and rights.

## 30.10 Important Frequently Asked Questions

**What is considered blackmail?**

Blackmail involves threatening to reveal information about a person unless they meet

certain demands, usually for money or other benefits.

**Is blackmail a criminal offense?**

Yes, blackmail is a criminal offense and is treated seriously by law enforcement agencies.

**What should I do first if I'm being blackmailed?**

The first step is to not comply with the demands and contact local law enforcement immediately.

**Should I pay the blackmailer to stop them?**

Paying the blackmailer often doesn't stop the blackmail and can escalate the situation. It's advised not to pay.

**Can I be blackmailed with information that isn't true?**

Yes, blackmail can involve false information, but it's still considered a crime.

**What kind of evidence should I collect against the blackmailer?**

Collect all communications like texts, emails, voice messages, or any other evidence that shows blackmail.

**Is it important to have a lawyer if I'm being blackmailed?**

Yes, consulting with a lawyer experienced in such cases is important for legal advice and protection.

**Can I get a restraining order against my blackmailer?**

Depending on the circumstances, a restraining order may be possible to protect yourself from the blackmailer.

**Are there any online resources for blackmail victims?**

Many countries have resources and helplines dedicated to helping victims of blackmail and cybercrimes.

**What should I do if the blackmailer is anonymous?**

Report the blackmail to the authorities; they have methods to trace anonymous communications.

**Is it possible to sue someone for blackmailing me?**

Yes, you can sue the blackmailer for damages in civil court, apart from the criminal proceedings.

**How do I deal with the emotional stress of being blackmailed?**

Seek support from friends, family, or professional counselors to manage the emotional impact.

**What are the penalties for someone convicted of blackmail?**

Penalties vary by jurisdiction but can include fines, imprisonment, and a criminal record.

**Should I tell my family or employer about the blackmail?**

It depends on the situation, but sharing with trusted individuals can provide support and help in decision-making.

**Can blackmail affect my professional life?**

It can, especially if it involves your professional life. Being proactive in seeking legal help is crucial.

**How can I prevent being blackmailed in the future?**

Be cautious with personal information, strengthen online privacy, and avoid sharing sensitive information with untrusted parties.

**Is online blackmail more common than in-person blackmail?**

With the rise of the internet, online blackmail, especially through social media, has become more common.

**Can minors be victims of blackmail?**

Yes, minors can also be victims, and it's important for guardians to be vigilant and take immediate action if it occurs.

**How long do blackmail cases take to resolve?**

The duration varies based on the complexity of the case and the legal process in your jurisdiction.

**What if the blackmailer is in a different country?**

International cases can be more complex. Law enforcement agencies may work together across borders.

**Can deleted messages be used as evidence in blackmail cases?**

Yes, digital forensics can often recover deleted messages to use as evidence.

**Should I try to negotiate with the blackmailer?**

Negotiating with the blackmailer is generally not advised as it can worsen the situation.

**What is the difference between blackmail and extortion?**

Extortion typically involves threats of physical harm or coercion, whereas blackmail involves revealing or threatening to reveal damaging information.

**Can I anonymously report a case of being blackmailed?**

You can report anonymously, but providing your identity can assist in a more effective investigation.

**Are there specific laws against online blackmail?**

Many countries have laws specifically addressing online crimes, including blackmail.

**Can social media platforms help in cases of online blackmail?**

Social media platforms may assist in investigations, especially if their platforms were used for blackmail.

**What role do cyber security measures play in preventing blackmail?**

Strong cyber security can prevent unauthorized access to personal information that could be used for blackmail.

**Can therapy help victims of blackmail?**

Yes, therapy can be beneficial in dealing with the psychological impact of being blackmailed.

**Is it common for blackmailers to follow through on their threats?**

It varies, but many blackmailers may not follow through, especially if confronted with legal action.

**How can I educate myself and others about blackmail?**

Stay informed about personal security and share resources and information with your community to raise awareness.

# HOW TO ACCEPT DEFEAT GRACEFULLY

AND OVERCOME FOR A NEW STRUGGLE

# 31

To all of us, failure or defeat may be one of the outcomes of our efforts. It is not possible that we will succeed in all our endeavors and defeat is inescapable. But the people who deals with defeat will always win the battle or be successful. It is the total outcome of our mental and physical strength. It is not important to get defeated as it would come almost all of the people but the people who come over from that defeat are real heroes. There is always a distinction between getting defeated and feeling defeated. Getting defeated is not significant in life as it would pave the way for the next battle but feeling defeated is significant and one must avoid at all the cost.

One must put his or her energy into what went wrong, try to focus your attention on what you can do right next time. Remind yourself that this too shall pass. Try to let go of what you cannot change and do your best to be respectful toward whomever or whatever has defeated you.

1. **Letting Go**
   **Become aware of your emotions.**
   Think about what you just experienced and try to understand how you are currently responding to it. If you are angry, ask yourself why you are angry. If you are disappointed, ask yourself what you hoped to achieve. Before you accept or control your emotions, you must first understand them.
   a) Think about how you would have felt if you had not been defeated. Compare the two states and consider what remains the same between the two outcomes.
   b) Consider writing your thoughts down. Speak to a trusted friend or family member about your feelings. You probably know how you best process emotions – so do what you need to do to come to terms with the situation.
2. **Validate yourself.**
   Tell yourself that there is no way to "feel wrong". No emotion is inherently good or bad. They simply are, and it's healthy to embrace them. Acknowledge the fact that whatever you are feeling is entirely acceptable.
   **a)** Bear in mind that while it is important to embrace emotions, it may be unwise to follow certain feelings (such as anger or self-loathing) to their logical conclusions.
3. **Keep perspective.**
   You may not have been able to prevent your defeat, but you can control your reaction towards it. Take a deep breath and try to be as levelheaded as possible. Remind yourself that what has happened has happened, and that you cannot change it. This attitude will allow you to be flexible and adaptable – and you may find yourself better at handling negativity and loss in future situations.
   a) Remember that life goes on one defeat may not be important in the larger scheme of things.

4. **Don't take yourself too seriously.**
   A situation can always be worse. Consider whether there is a silver lining that you haven't yet seen. Try to find the humor in what has happened and keep a smile on your face – even though it may be hard for you to crack a natural smile. You may find that the situation is funnier, smaller, or more absurd once you take a step back from your personal investment.
5. **Let go of defeat.**
   When you fail, your emotions can distort your perspective. Do not linger on what happened, and do not let your defeat continue to defeat you. You might feel yourself welling up with anger, frustration, or indignation: feelings that, in this case, will only feed themselves. Learn to recognize these non-accepting emotions, catch hold of them, and cast them aside.
   a) You can move on by letting go, or you can move on by seeking retribution. Letting go will release you from your defeat, while the quest for retribution will only tie you to defeat.
   b) Let go of self-judgment. Accept that failure is merely a part of life. People have and will always deal with defeat – it is a matter of perspective.
   c) If your opponent is being a poor sport, don't lash out. It doesn't change the fact that they won, and it damages your image.
6. **Lose with grace.**
   Show respect to whomever or whatever has defeated you. Shake hands with your opponent and congratulate her on a job well done. Whether you lost a fight, a debate, or a competition, try not to resort to pettiness. You won't be able to reverse the results by complaining about them, or by acting bitter toward the winner. Be as polite and gracious as possible.
   a) Thank them for their time and congratulate them on their skills and their win. If you are a gracious loser, the victor will likely feel uncomfortable boasting about their win in

front of you. This changes the situation from a winner-loser game to a moment between two people who respect each other and have just finished an enjoyable pastime.

7. **Don't let judgment get to you.**
   If others will judge you for being defeated, let them do so. You know who you are, and you don't need to justify yourself to someone else who doesn't know your heart. Be your own center. Losing with class turns your loss into a much bigger victory than any win would.
   a) Others have a responsibility to encourage everyone to participate. If they forget their role, you must not forget yours. Be excited about pursuing your interests.
   b) If your opponent is mocking you, that means they're worried that you might be motivated by your loss. Ignore them; the more you listen to them, the more you accept their words as fact.
8. **Do not lay blame.**
   If you blame another person, group, or set of circumstances for your defeat, you will keep yourself from accepting what happened. If you blame yourself, you will make yourself miserable, and you'll miss out on the chance to grow from the experience. Try to take the situation exactly as it is what happened, happened, and no amount of blaming will reverse that.
   a) Think about what happened. Did practice prepare you for the situation you faced? Did your team communicate well? Whatever the case, try to address it at the next practice.
9. **Focus on admiring how well your opponent played rather than your own defeat.**
   Praise them for a particularly clever or effective move. This has the added benefit of letting you take effective strategies from them and figure out flaws in their strategy.

a) If your opponent cheated, wait until you've calmed down; then, talk to those in charge. Don't make a scene; after all, you're supposed to be the honorable one, and you may ruin your case if you act rashly.

**10. Admit that you were wrong.**

If you lost a debate or an argument, you could improve your image by admitting that you were wrong or defeated. Consider apologizing, acknowledging your mistake, or explaining how you were wrong; after all, it's more shameful and immature to cling to what's wrong than admitting someone else is right.

a) Consider that we all make mistakes and are wrong at many points in our lives. It's part of our development, and a large part of what helps us mature.

b) You will lose credibility if you handle the situation in a petty and immature way. If you respond positively, onlookers and your opponent will see that you can accept when you're wrong.

**11. Try to learn from what happened.**

If you can take loss as a learning experience rather than an abject failure, then you can transcend what happened and move on with your life. You may have been defeated, but you need not be defeatist. If you finish tall, reflect, and learn, and move on with a smile on your face, you haven't been defeated. You've grown, and you've been taught a lesson. If you carry yourself in the same way any other time you are defeated, you'll find it easier and easier every time – and you may come to realize that you've won in a different way: by improving yourself, and by learning.

a) Try to take it as a premise that failure has a role in your journey. Ask yourself about the purpose of this failure; what you can learn from it; and why it happened.

b) Think about why you failed, and whether you could have done anything. Ask yourself whether you unconsciously

forced yourself to fail because you are unsure of the goal you're trying to reach.

**12. Improve on your mistakes.**

Think back on what happened and look for lessons. Analyze the situation objectively. Figure out what you can realistically do to stop this from happening again – and make it actionable. Focus on the future.

a) The more you focus on your next win, the better you may feel about your last defeat. Not all winners have won their first match. If you don't accept defeat gracefully, you will act rashly. People may notice if you don't handle your loss in a mature way.

**13. Keep playing the game.**

No matter what led to your defeat, make sure that you don't let it stop you from doing what you love. Most people come up against failure at one point or another – including (and perhaps especially) winners. You'll never improve if you don't keep trying, and you may regret it later if you quit based on this one defeat.

a) Failure is an important part of growing and getting better at what you do. Many people fail on their way to success. Thomas Edison failed many times before inventing the light bulb, but he was able to persevere forward.

b) When you finally do win, take some time to reflect. How have your failures helped you? You'll feel far more satisfied when you have all that struggle behind you.

# HOW TO MASTER THE ART OF PERSUASION

# 32

The history of art of persuasion goes back to four centuries before the common era with Aristotle's work called *Rhetoric*. In his writing, he spoke about the power of words and how to use them for persuasion. In modern times, rhetoric is still the foundation for public speaking as it's a method of **persuasive communication**. Mastering the delicate art of convincing and engaging people is a powerful asset when speaking to a large audience.

## 32.1 Understanding Persuasion

Persuasion is a process in which one person or entity tries to influence another person or group of people to change their beliefs or behaviours. It is distinct from coercion, in that the people receiving the message have a choice about whether to act on it.

Persuasion can be a powerful force that affects the decisions and actions that people take. Persuasive messages are symbolic (using words, images, and sounds) and may be transmitted verbally or nonverbally, via media or face-to-face communication. Persuasion may be overt or subtle. Understanding how it works can help you

become more aware of how you are influenced by persuasive messages.

The art of persuasion is one of the essential soft skills by which one with the art of persuasion, you can make an audience agree with your point of view, engage with your presentation, and actively ask questions.

Persuasive speaking comes naturally to some people, while those who are eager to speak publicly in a **compelling way** can learn it. With the art of persuasion, you can make an audience agree with your point of view, engage with your presentation, and actively ask questions. You can have a real discussion with interested listeners.

An effective public speech aiming to convince must be succinct, straightforward, and argumentative. Moreover, you should **avoid complicated wording**, incomprehensive language, and academic terminology.

## 32.2 The principles of persuasion

Psychologists recognize six characteristics of persuasion, originally identified by Robert Cialdini, PhD, in 1984. These principles describe what makes persuasive messages influential and successful. Some persuasive efforts may use several of these tactics simultaneously.

1. Reciprocity
2. Scarcity
3. Authority
4. Consistency or Commitment
5. Social Proof
6. Liking

1. **Reciprocity**
   Reciprocity is a process of exchanging things with other people to gain a mutual benefit. The norm of reciprocity (sometimes referred to as the rule of reciprocity) is a social norm where, if someone does

something for you, you then feel obligated to return the favour.
As humans, we tend to want to repay others when they have done something for us. You might easily persuade a friend to do a favour for you if you have already done one for them. In a business context, reciprocity could mean being willing to provide your email address in order to receive a discount on your purchase.

2. **Scarcity**
   You might be persuaded to change your behaviour if you are convinced that you will lose access to something, or that there isn't enough of it to go around. You can see this principle in action when an airline alerts you that there are only a few seats left on a flight you're considering, or a retailer advertises a limited-time sale.
3. **Authority**
   If you believe that a person or other entity has expert knowledge, you may be more likely to be persuaded by their message. An advertiser or political candidate might use an authority figure, such as a physician, historian, or scientist, to support their argument.
4. **Consistency or Commitment**
   People have a tendency to continue their previous behaviour or stick with a decision they have made. In an interview, Cialdini gave an example of this involving a restaurant that struggled with no-shows. When a patron made a reservation, if the receptionist asked them to call if they needed to cancel (and got an affirmative reply), they were much less likely to miss their reservation. The patrons were effectively making a promise and were committed to keeping it.
5. **Social Proof**
   This is the "safety in numbers" principle. If we see that our friends or peers have made a purchase, supported a political candidate, or otherwise agreed with a persuasive message, we may be more likely to agree with it too.
6. **Liking**
   If you know and like the person (or even business, political party, or government agency) trying to persuade you of something, you will be more inclined to agree with their argument. This is similar to the "social proof" principle, but is more about the quality of the relationship, where social proof is about quantity.

## 32.3 Practical Techniques for Effective Persuasion

The main objective of persuasive public speaking is to inspire the audience to take a desired action by comprehensively explaining your viewpoint.

1. Believe in your credibility.
2. Master storytelling
3. Convince but don't trick listeners.
4. Show interest in your audience, and they will give it back to you.
5. Make yourself likable.
6. Use well-timed silence after key points.
7. Influence people's emotions.
8. Discuss pros and cons but use them to your advantage.
9. Paint a picture that sticks to the mind.
10. Finish off with something bold.

Let's see how to do that effectively:

1. **Believe in your credibility.**
   It's so much easier to present to others when you're confident in your authority as a public speaker. Showcase your expertise at the beginning slides of your presentation so your audience can assess you right away. However, start your speech with a hook, not your credentials. They'll see them in the slides anyway. We'll explain why in the next point.
2. **Master storytelling.**
   Everyone loves a good story. Use the first 30 seconds of your public speech to position yourself as an authority by telling a compelling story about yourself. A story related to the presentation topic will immediately grab the listeners' attention. The audience will be more likely to listen actively.
3. **Convince but don't trick listeners.**
   It's crucial to be honest with your audience and not be manipulative. Persuasion is all about what's in the best interest of those listening and letting them decide how to act. Conversely, manipulation is

tricking someone into doing something that won't benefit them. Be careful not to cross that line because you may appear dishonest.

4. **Show interest in your audience, and they will give it back to you.**
   We, humans, are most interested in ourselves. We constantly think about past, present, or future events in our own lives. When you leverage the power of reciprocity to compel others and show that you care about them, they are naturally inclined to do the same.
5. **Make yourself likable.**
   There's a fine line between being too humble and too competent — that's where likability lies. On the one hand, if the audience perceives you as humble, they might not trust you enough to take the action that you want them to. On the other hand, if you present yourself as overly competent, you may look arrogant. Becoming likable is the middle ground between the two.
6. **Use well-timed silence after key points.**
   Pauses are an old but highly impactful method that public speakers use to emphasize the importance of what they've just said, letting it sit in the listeners' minds a bit longer. That's how your audience will remember your speech's key points.
7. **Influence people's emotions.**
   Humans are emotional beings. There's a certain class of brain cells called mirror neurons. They make us mimic reactions in ourselves when we see them in other people. That being said, ask yourself what emotion you want to convey to your audience before starting your speech, and present with that feeling within yourself. Express excitement if you want them to feel excited. Go there first and they will follow you.
8. **Discuss pros and cons but use them to your advantage.**
   As a public speaker, you shouldn't be afraid of opposing statements. Instead, you should embrace and own them. You can use pros and cons infographic templates to display them in your presentation and go over each argument. Addressing counterarguments gives you more credibility as a speaker, and listeners will appreciate having options. Leave your audience to decide which statement to accept as true but subtly tell them to agree with you.
9. **Paint a picture that sticks to the mind.**

Using descriptive and sensory words paints a vivid picture in your listeners' minds, affecting them more than blunt language and data. This way, the audience becomes more connected to what you're saying. In addition, using analogies to explain complex concepts helps understand them better because the mind associates them with something familiar.

10. **Finish off with something bold.**
    After the "thank you," sign off with something meaningful and memorable like an inspirational quote. The ultimate goal in public speaking is to persuade, so exit with style — give them a bold finish that will stay with them after they leave.

## 33.4 Call to Action (CTA) in the Art of Persuasion

A call to action (CTA) should be used between facts and arguments **several times** in your persuasive speech. It shouldn't be a one-time message at the end of the presentation.

You can have it at various stages of your speech and in **different forms**. Have a variety of strong call-to-action phrases with diverse words and discrete angles. This way, you make the most of your CTAs and strengthen your statements.

Encourage the audience to take action **without being forceful**. You must convince them the smart way — by them voluntarily consenting and agreeing with you. That's a sign of a successful persuasive public speech.

With the art of persuasion, public speakers can subtly influence others and enhance their communication skills. To gain the audience's trust, a proficient persuader should believe in oneself first. With masterful storytelling and genuine interest, public speakers can lead the listener to share a viewpoint and act on it. At the end of the day, the speech will have been a rewarding experience for both parties.

# MASTERING THE ART OF PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING

# 33

Professional networking is building and maintaining meaningful relationships with other professionals in your industry and other related fields. You may consider these connections an essential career development tool based on mutual benefit. Fostering relationships based on trust and understanding each other's career goals can benefit both parties and provide long-term opportunities for career progression.

## 33.1 What is Professional Networking?

Professional Networking is the network, which we use in our day-to-day activities to get work done or getting better opportunity or seeking guidance about career or dealing with some problem. Networking is an ongoing process that requires time and commitment. Professional networking can be done in many different ways. However, its benefits are almost always similar across platforms and community types.

1. **An expanded network:** Access to a broader network, facilitating meaningful connections and collaboration opportunities.
2. **Accelerated professional development:** Leverage communities to

discover courses, webinars, podcasts, and meetups and refine your skills and industry knowledge.

3. **Enhanced visibility:** Increase your visibility as an independent professional and get in front of potential collaborators and clients.
4. **Access to new opportunities:** Networking exposes you to potential job opportunities, projects, recruiters, and partnerships that alleviate the stress of a job search.
5. **Knowledge sharing:** Interacting with peers allows for exchanging insights, best practices, and valuable industry knowledge.
6. **Referrals and recommendations:** Establish solid relationships with community members that lead to referrals and recommendations that geenrate new clients.
7. **Increased confidence:** Engage in networking activities that help train your networking skills, honing your communication and relationship-building.

## 33.2 Types of professional networking communities

Virtual or physical, networking communities are formed around common interests or needs.

1. **Industry-specific communities:** Focused on an industry or niche, brings together workers from common business environments.
2. **Platform-based communities:** Linked to specific freelancing platforms, these communities provide a space for users to connect and collaborate.
3. **Local/regional communities:** Geo-focused communities allow workers to network, share local insights, and collaborate on projects and initiatives.
4. **Social network groups:** Platforms like LinkedIn and Facebook provide a virtual space for people to discuss industry trends, share resources, and connect.
5. **Trade associations:** Professional organizations related to specific industries often offer networking opportunities, events, and resources to connect and learn.
6. **Business owner networks:** Communities designed for entrepreneurs and business owners to network and discuss business-related challenges and opportunities.

7. **Freelancer coworking spaces:** Physical spaces catering to freelancers, offer a shared workspace and networking events and workshops.
8. **Alumni networks:** Formed around educational institutions, alumni networks can serve as valuable resources for networking and collaboration.
9. **Mastermind groups:** Small groups of peers who meet to discuss challenges, share insights, and provide mutual support in achieving their goals.

## 33.3 Why is professional networking important?

There are a variety of reasons that networking in a professional setting can be essential for career progression. Here are some examples:

1. **Helping to find a job.**
   If you find yourself out of work, you may benefit from having an extensive network of contacts based inside and outside your industry. Reaching out to these contacts and letting them know you're available for work can mean you have multiple people helping you. If you've established strong professional relationships, your associates may likely refer you for roles they hear about or pass on the job details to you so you can apply. Your connections can significantly increase the number of opportunities you receive.
2. **Seeking referrals**
   Typically, having a reference from a person who's a trusted source can be helpful when applying for a role and may help you stand out against other candidates. If your relationships are solid, you may feel comfortable approaching appropriate contacts to seek a referral.
3. **Finding out about new opportunities**
   Being part of a professional network can sometimes provide access to information before it becomes public. For example, someone leaving an organisation or a job opening in your area. Finding out early about a job and having relationships with the right people can put you in a strong position when it's time to apply.
4. **Seeking professional guidance**
   Building relationships through networking can provide you with

opportunities to learn from those more experienced and enable you to seek their counsel if you experience a challenge. Having someone to seek guidance from outside your business can be valuable in getting a fresh perspective.

## 33.4 Tips for networking professionally

Networking can be an essential skill to master if you're looking to advance in your career. You may find the following tips helpful when aiming to expand your network:

1. **Set networking goals.**
   Before you contact people, it's important to set some goals about what you want from your professional network. Think about how you usually network, such as attending industry events. Develop goals that relate to the usual networking channels you utilise. Having a coherent plan can help you maximise the networking opportunity.
2. **Reach out to the right contacts.**
   Think about who might be a beneficial connection. These figures could be specific individuals or people who work in a role, industry, or organisation similar to yours. Consider contacting individuals that could introduce you to new skills or provide helpful advice. Include those in more senior roles as well as professionals holding the same position as you in different businesses. Having a diverse range of people within your network is often beneficial, as the right people can help you create a network that may aid your long-term career aspirations.
3. **Keep in touch.**
   Staying in touch with your network can help to maintain your relationships. Regular contact can mean you feel more comfortable reaching out to your networks when you need assistance. Keeping updated with your network also provides you with the latest news and opportunities.
4. **Help your network.**
   Professional networking requires effort from both parties. If you have the opportunity to help someone in your network, take the chance to assist. It can strengthen your relationship and improve your reputation as someone valuable to know.

5. **Attend networking events.**
   Face-to-face interaction can be an excellent way to build your professional network. Consider doing some research before attending events to discover if they are relevant to your job, and who else may be attending. If this is a suitable event for you to attend, it might also be useful to research the influential people scheduled to attend, so you can converse with them on relevant topics. You may also practise clear communication and active listening skills. These abilities allow you to lead an engaging conversation and ask specific questions.
6. **Learn to listen.**
   You can often learn a lot from listening. It can help you join a conversation at a networking event. For example, if you've listened to a group discussion, you can add something helpful or insightful to take part in the conversation. Listening is also crucial for one-on-one discussions to help show that you're genuinely interested in your new contact and their opinions.
7. **Stay up to date with industry information.**
   Staying up to date with recent developments in your industry and sharing relevant news with your network can develop trust and strengthen your relationships. It can also show influential contacts that you're organised and can stay updated on professional knowledge. Your connections may return the favour and inform you when they hear any news that might apply to you.

## 33.5 Who to include in your professional network.

Including the right people in your professional network can be essential to maximise your career advancement opportunities. The following list provides some suggestions for where you can start to build your network:

1. **Friends**
   Your friends can be an excellent place to start, as you already have a comfortable relationship. Your friends may also know of your career goals, meaning they can make recommendations or suggestions when helping to expand your network. These friends may work in a range of industries, which can also provide opportunities to help

increase your network outside of your industry.

2. **Classmates**
   Consider approaching your classmates from university or school about networking opportunities, particularly if you have studied similar subjects and are working in related industries. Already having an established relationship with them can make it easier to communicate confidently. If you both work in different organisations or sectors, you can share contacts to help you both grow your network.
3. **Teachers**
   You may add a teacher or lecturer to your professional network, depending on your relationship with them. Lecturers, in particular, may have solid industry contacts that could prove helpful in your specific sector. Many teachers can also have a lot of community connections that could prove beneficial for networking. Consider reaching out to them via email or through a professional social media site if they seem appropriate.
4. **Family members**
   Contacting family members can also be a good start when building your network. They are typically people you feel comfortable talking with and they may have a range of contacts in senior positions. You may ask family members if they can introduce you to people in their professional network or if they can recommend a potential mentor.
5. **Members of associations or clubs**
   You may access additional opportunities to increase your network if you, or your family, are members of an association or club. Members of clubs or associations typically come from a variety of backgrounds and span across various age groups.
6. **Colleagues**
   You're existing and previous colleagues can be one of the best sources for building your network. If you've worked closely with them, they are likely to have a good understanding of your abilities, work ethic and goals.

# THE ART OF RESOURCEFULNESS

# 34

Resourcefulness is a combination of soft skills, including problem-solving and creativity, that you can use to overcome challenges in the workplace. By becoming a more resourceful person, you can expand your skill set and show employers that you're determined to contribute to their organisation's success. The resourcefulness can be defined as “It is the ability to find quick and clever ways to overcome difficulties. Meaning, you are using what you have — rather than what you’d like to have — to succeed and scale. Almost like working smarter, not harder.”

Resourcefulness is the part-mindset, part-strategy, resourcefulness helps ambitious leaders to innovate, surface efficiencies, and unlock previously untapped solutions.

## 34.1 What are resourcefulness skills?

The term 'resourcefulness skills' refers to someone's ability to overcome challenges efficiently. It involves the ability to innovate, create and solve problems using various resources that you either have available or for which you intentionally search.

Resourcefulness is also what helps you stay motivated despite having no clear path to success. This skill makes it easier for you to realise that there's always someone you can ask for help or something you can do to achieve your initial goal. Here are some soft skills that make up resourcefulness:

1. Self-discipline.
2. Self-awareness.
3. Problem-solving.
4. Conflict resolution.
5. Creativity.
6. Networking.
7. Critical and innovative thinking.
8. Analytical skills.
9. Research skills.

## 34.2 Why are resourcefulness skills important?

Resourcefulness is a useful skill that can benefit you in everyday situations, regardless of your profession or role within an organisation. When you're resourceful, you more effectively optimise your resources to create new things or make the things you know better. This skill can be beneficial for you at any stage of your career. When you're just about to enter the workforce for the first time, you can use it to provide creative answers to questions in a job interview, which increases your chances of getting a job offer. When you arrive at work, resourcefulness can help you quickly adjust to a new environment and build long-lasting professional relationships with colleagues and managers. This is possible because by being resourceful, you simply learn where to look for and find good answers and solutions to everyday challenges that a new hire is likely to face. As your career progresses, you can use resourcefulness to become a better leader and more effectively manage the resources that you have available, including the team that you'd manage.

## 34.3 How to develop strong resourcefulness skills?

For some people, resourcefulness is a personality trait with which they're born, but it's also highly possible to develop this ability later in life. The skill of resourcefulness can be master with following techniques as under:

1. **Learn more about yourself.**
   Through learning more about yourself, you can discover your learning preferences and better define how you view certain things in life. This helps you understand what's your unique learning style and pattern, which helps maximise your resourcefulness. For example, you may find that you're more likely to find clever ways to overcome difficulties when you focus on how your solution might help improve the future outcome of a project. Similarly, you may decide that you're the most effective with your resourcefulness when you have a chance to discuss solutions in a group.
2. **Think creatively.**
   When you work on improving your creativity, you also invest in your ingenuity and imagination. These skills help you develop creative and innovative solutions to difficult situations even when there are no new resources available to you. This happens because creativity can inspire you to see things from a different perspective each time. To develop creativity, you may practise idea generation techniques like brainstorming or journaling. Completing a creative hobby, such as painting or writing, can also help you think more creatively.
3. **Stay open-minded.**
   Some people see resourcefulness as a mindset that helps them achieve difficult goals that they set for themselves. By seeing this skill this way, they can better prepare for any uncertainties or issues that they face along the way. As a result, they can use resourcefulness to be open-minded, stay proactive and regularly

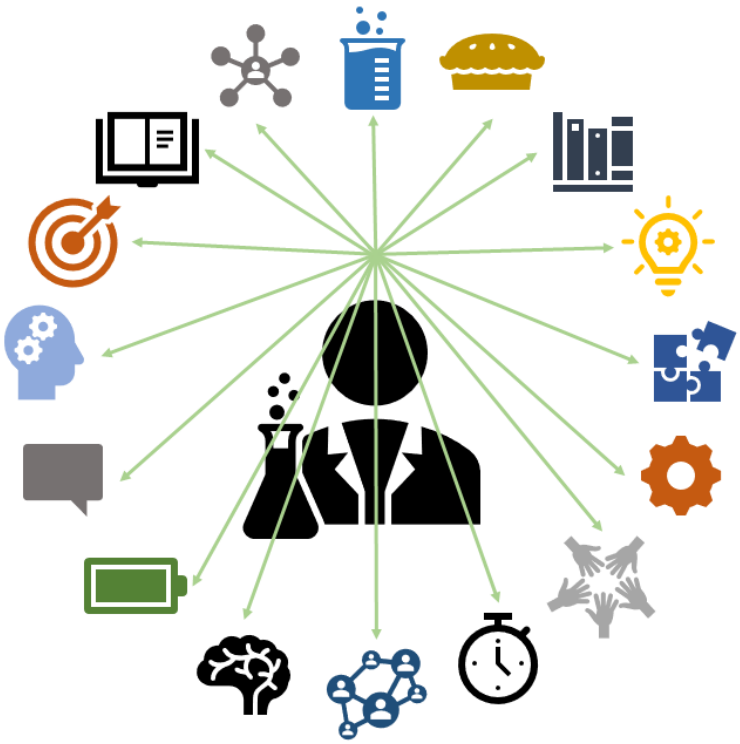
remind themselves of their aspirations and what they're capable of.

4. **Have an optimistic mindset.**
   Optimism is a helpful personality trait that can help you maximise the potential of your resourcefulness. It allows you to see challenges as opportunities or even advantages. When you remain optimistic in the workplace, you can present yourself to others as a positive and easily approachable person who's determined to perform well and can help others do the same. If being optimistic is challenging for you, try analysing the situation carefully to better understand the problem and gain more control over it. This can help you stay in the present moment and challenge any negative thoughts with facts. Also learning more about yourself and your skills allows you to focus on your vision of success and cultivate an attitude of gratitude, which can help you maintain an optimistic outlook on life or work.
5. **Be persistent.**
   If you want to maximise the potential that being resourceful gives you, it's critical that you keep trying until you succeed. When you're persistent, it's easier for you to trust the process despite not seeing the immediate results of your actions. By taking smaller steps, you invest in a long-term change that can improve the way you think and act. This is especially helpful in the workplace, as it allows you to create ambitious plans for yourself, for example, if you want to advance your career to a leadership position in the next five years.
6. **Learn from your mistakes.**
   Admitting that you've made a mistake and learning from it is another thing that can help you become more resourceful. Taking full ownership of your actions allows you to better understand how you act and adjust your processes to better match the positive mindset of a resourceful person. Whenever

you fail at work, make sure to analyse your mistake and ask yourself how you can avoid making the same mistake in the future. This way, you can also show your employer that you know how to engage in self-improvement and want to better yourself to help their organisation succeed.

7. **Don't be afraid to take initiative.**
   Resourcefulness is all about change and to make change happen, it's often necessary that you take initiative and lead your team to success. Taking initiative is an integral part of being resourceful, as it allows you to share insightful ideas and innovative suggestions with other people and help them think in a similarly creative way. When you succeed at taking initiative when working as a part of a team, you also show that you're reliable and have the potential to become a great leader in the future.
8. **Build your professional network.**
   Having a strong professional network gives you access to experienced, like-minded people who can support you if you're trying to overcome a particularly challenging situation at work. Through sharing their knowledge and expertise with you, they can help you look at things from a different perspective and give you access to new solutions that nurture your creativity. Networking and maintaining professional relationships is also a long-term investment in your career, as you never know when someone you know might offer you a better job opportunity that allows you to reach your career goals faster.
9. **Learn to talk about being resourceful:**
   If you've applied for a job, preparing for answering frequently asked questions about resourcefulness can help you impress a hiring manager during an interview. This happens because when you learn to openly discuss being resourceful, you can present yourself as a more self-aware person who knows their strengths and has a more positive mindset.

10. **Focus on one skill at a time:**
    Resourcefulness is a combination of specific skills, which means that focusing on improving them can also help you become a more resourceful person. When you're trying to do that, make sure to focus on one skill at a time, as this approach can be more effective because it wouldn't feel overwhelming.
11. **Demonstrate resourcefulness in your job application:**
    When a hiring manager notices that you describe yourself on your resume as a resourceful person, they may see you as a more interesting candidate even when you don't have much work experience yet. To demonstrate resourcefulness, you can list skills such as problem-solving or conflict resolution in your resume's skills section.



# MASTERING THE ART OF MINDFULNESS

# 35

Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us.

While mindfulness is something we all naturally possess, it's more readily available to us when we practice on a daily basis.

Whenever you bring awareness to what you're directly experiencing via your senses, or to your state of mind via your thoughts and emotions, you're being mindful. And there's growing research showing that when you train your brain to be mindful, you're actually remodelling the physical structure of your brain.

> *The goal of mindfulness is to wake up to the inner workings of our mental, emotional, and physical processes.*

## 35.1 The Art of Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the practice of gently focusing your awareness on the present moment over and over again.

It often involves focusing on sensations to root yourself in your body in the here and now. It can be practiced during formal meditation or during everyday activities, like cooking, cleaning, or walking. On the other hand, a full mind means you're not rooted in the present moment. It's the nature of the mind to think, analyze, and figure things out. That's its job. That means that left to its own devices, the mind will constantly seek out new stimuli, new things to think about, and new ways to check out from reality.

Mindfulness practice is a way to gently retrain the mind to settle into the present moment. It's kind of like becoming a parent to your mind rather than letting it control you. In the end, the mind is simply a willful toddler. By practicing mindfulness over and over with patience and compassion for yourself, you can teach the mind to be still.

Eventually, the mind may even dissolve altogether, meaning that there is no intellectual or conceptual overlay between you and what you're experiencing. Instead, you're fully immersed in and at one with the present moment. This experience is what's known as true presence.

**35.2 Benefits of Mindfulness**

The benefits of mindfulness have been well-documented in research.

Formal investigations into mindfulness in the Western world began in 1979 when John Kabat-Zinn developed what would become the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center.

Kabat-Zinn combined his studies of Hatha yoga with mindfulness practices and Buddhist principles he learned from his many teachers.

Since then, research into MBSR and general mindfulness has exploded, and the benefits are many.

This can include:

1. improving cognitive ability

2. slowing brain aging
3. reducing stress, anxiety, and depression symptoms
4. increasing a sense of well-being
5. helping with pain management
6. improving quality of life for those living with chronic conditions

**35.3 What is meditation and its relationship with mindfulness?**

Meditation is exploring. It's not a fixed destination. Your head doesn't become vacuumed free of thought, utterly undistracted. It's a special place where each and every moment is momentous. When we meditate, we venture into the workings of our minds: our sensations (air blowing on our skin or a harsh smell wafting into the room), our emotions (love this, hate that, crave this, loathe that) and thoughts (wouldn't it be weird to see an elephant playing a trumpet). Mindfulness meditation asks us to suspend judgment and unleash our natural curiosity about the workings of the mind, approaching our experience with warmth and kindness, to ourselves and others.

**35.4 How do I practice mindfulness and meditation?**

Mindfulness is available to us in every moment, whether through meditations and body scans, or mindful moment practices like taking time to pause and breathe when the phone rings instead of rushing to answer it.

**35.5 The Basics of Mindfulness Practice**

Mindfulness helps us put some space between ourselves and our reactions, breaking down our conditioned responses. Here's how to tune into mindfulness throughout the day:

1. **Set aside some time.** You don't need a meditation cushion or bench, or any sort of special equipment to access your mindfulness skills—but you do need to set aside some time and space.

2. **Observe the present moment as it is.** The aim of mindfulness is not quieting the mind or attempting to achieve a state of eternal calm. The goal is simple: we're aiming to pay attention to the present moment, without judgment. Easier said than done, we know.
3. **Let your judgments roll by.** When we notice judgments arise during our practice, we can make a mental note of them, and let them pass.
4. **Return to observing the present moment as it is.** Our minds often get carried away in thought. That's why mindfulness is the practice of returning, again and again, to the present moment.
5. **Be kind to your wandering mind.** Don't judge yourself for whatever thoughts crop up, just practice recognizing when your mind has wandered off, and gently bring it back.

That's the practice. It's often been said that it's very simple, but it's not necessarily easy. The work is to just keep doing it. Results will accrue.

## 35.6 How to Meditate

This meditation focuses on the breath, not because there is anything special about it, but because the physical sensation of breathing is always there, and you can use it as an anchor to the present moment. Throughout the practice you may find yourself caught up in thoughts, emotions, sounds—wherever your mind goes, simply come back again to the next breath. Even if you only come back once, that's okay.

## 35.7 A Simple Meditation Practice

1. **Sit comfortably.** Find a spot that gives you a stable, solid, comfortable seat.

2. **Notice what your legs are doing.** If on a cushion, cross your legs comfortably in front of you. If on a chair, rest the bottoms of your feet on the floor.
3. **Straighten your upper body**—but don't stiffen. Your spine has natural curvature. Let it be there.
4. **Notice what your arms are doing.** Situate your upper arms parallel to your upper body. Rest the palms of your hands on your legs wherever it feels most natural.
5. **Soften your gaze.** Drop your chin a little and let your gaze fall gently downward. It's not necessary to close your eyes. You can simply let what appears before your eyes be there without focusing on it.
6. **Feel your breath.** Bring your attention to the physical sensation of breathing: the air moving through your nose or mouth, the rising and falling of your belly, or your chest. **Notice when your mind wanders from your breath.** Inevitably, your attention will leave the breath and wander to other places. Don't worry. There's no need to block or eliminate thinking. When you notice your mind wandering gently return your attention to the breath.
7. **Be kind about your wandering mind.** You may find your mind wandering constantly—that's normal, too. Instead of wrestling with your thoughts, practice observing them without reacting. Just sit and pay attention. As hard as it is to maintain, that's all there is. Come back to your breath over and over again, without judgment or expectation.
8. **When you're ready, gently lift your gaze** (if your eyes are closed, open them). Take a moment and notice any sounds in the environment. Notice how your body feels right now. Notice your thoughts and emotions.

## 35.8 Mindful Practices for Every Day

As you spend time practicing mindfulness, you'll probably find yourself feeling kinder, calmer, and more patient. These shifts in your experience are likely to generate changes in other parts of your life as well.

Mindfulness can help you become more playful, maximize your enjoyment of a long conversation with a friend over a cup of tea, then wind down for a relaxing night's sleep. Try these 4 practices this week:

### 35.8.1 Observing Mindfulness while Walking. (Walking Meditation)



At some point of day, you may like to walk. If the activity of mindfulness is used while walking it can be a wonderful walking meditation. Walking is one of our greatest gifts, and when we manage early in life to use our legs to get around, it's cause for celebration. Parents call their parents just to report on the event. The very fact that walking— or whatever form of ambulation you use to get around—is so central to our lives makes it a ready focus for mindful, meditative attention. Here's a simple set of instructions for one form of walking meditation. There are many variations. This one relies on a pace that is close to how we might walk in everyday life, and in fact it can be adapted for walking in the street—just as long as you remember to pay attention to streetlights, other people, and not looking like a zombie.

1. Stand up STRAIGHT with your back upright but not stiff. Feel your feet touching the ground and let your weight distribute evenly.

2. Curl the THUMB of your left hand in and wrap your fingers around it. Place it just above your belly button. Wrap your right hand around it, resting your right thumb in the crevice formed between your left thumb and index finger. (This creates some balance for you and keeps your swinging arms from being a distraction.)
3. Drop your GAZE slightly. This helps you maintain focus.
4. Step out with your left FOOT. Feel it swing, feel the heel hit the ground, now the ball, now the toes.
5. FEEL the same as the right foot comes forward.
6. Walk at a STEADY pace, slightly slower than in daily life but not funereal. When your attention wanders, bring it back to the sensations of your feet touching the ground.

## 35.8.2 Mindfulness in Listening



We know we're in the presence of a good listener when we get that sweet, affirming feeling of really being heard. But sadly, it occurs all too rarely. We can't force others to listen, but we can improve our own listening, and perhaps inspire others by doing so.

Good listening means mindful listening. Like mindfulness itself, listening takes a combination of intention and attention. The intention part is having a genuine interest in the other person—their experiences, views, feelings, and needs. The attention part is being able to stay present, open, and unbiased as we receive the other's words—even when they don't line up with our own ideas or desires.

Paradoxically, being good at listening to others requires the ability to listen to yourself. If you can't recognize your own beliefs and

opinions, needs and fears, you won't have enough inner space to really hear anyone else. So, the foundation for mindful listening is self-awareness.

**How to Really Listen**

1. **Check inside:**
   "How am I feeling just now? Is there anything getting in the way of being present for the other person?" If something is in the way, decide if it needs to be addressed first or can wait till later.
2. **Feeling your own sense of presence.**
   Extend it to the other person with the intention to listen fully and openly, with interest, empathy, and mindfulness.
3. **Silently note your own reactions as they arise.**
   Thoughts, feelings, judgments, memories. Then return your full attention to the speaker.
4. **Reflect back what you are hearing.**
   Using the speaker's own words when possible, paraphrasing or summarizing the main point. Help the other person feel heard.
5. **Use friendly, open-ended questions.**
   To clarify your understanding and probe for more. Affirm before you differ. Acknowledge the other person's point of view—acknowledging is not agreeing! —before introducing your own ideas, feelings, or requests.

### 35.8.3 Mindfulness for Loving Ourselves and Kindness Practice



People often find some difficulty in caring for themselves, in receiving love, in believing they deserve to be happy.

Imagine for a moment the amount of energy you expend brooding over the future, ruminating about the past, comparing yourself to others, judging yourself, worrying about what might happen next. That is a huge amount of energy. Now imagine all of that energy gathered in and returned to you. Underlying our usual patterns of self-preoccupation, stinging self-judgment, and fear is the universal, innate potential for love and awareness.

Loving-kindness meditations point us back to a place within, where we can cultivate love and help it flourish. Developing care toward ourselves is the first objective, the foundation for later being able to include others in the sphere of kindness.

This loving-kindness practice involves silently repeating phrases that offer good qualities to oneself and to others.

1. **You can start by taking delight in your own goodness—** Calling to mind things you have done out of good-heartedness, and rejoicing in those memories to celebrate the potential for goodness we all share.
2. **Silently recite phrases that reflect what we wish most deeply for ourselves** in an enduring way.
   Traditional phrases are:
   a) May I live in safety.
   b) May I have mental happiness (peace, joy).

c) May I have physical happiness (health, freedom from pain).
d) May I live with ease.

3. **Repeat the phrases with enough space and silence between** so they fall into a rhythm that is pleasing to you. Direct your attention to one phrase at a time.
4. **Each time you notice your attention has wandered, be kind to yourself** and let go of the distraction. Come back to repeating the phrases without judging or disparaging yourself.
5. **After some time,** visualize yourself in the center of a circle composed of those who have been kind to you, or have inspired you because of their love. Perhaps you've met them, or read about them; perhaps they live now, or have existed historically or even mythically. That is the circle. As you visualize yourself in the center of it, experience yourself as the recipient of their love and attention. Keep gently repeating the phrases of loving kindness for yourself.
6. **To close the session,** let go of the visualization, and simply keep repeating the phrases for a few more minutes. Each time you do so, you are transforming your old, hurtful relationship to yourself, and are moving forward, sustained by the force of kindness.

### 35.8.4 Observing Mindfulness in Wind Down and Fall Asleep

As someone who works every day with patients struggling with insomnia, the most common thing I hear is once the head hits the pillow, the brain doesn't stop. They know sleep should come, but the brain just wants to think about both



pressing and mundane things, such as reviewing the day's events and tasks that need to be completed.

When we lose awareness of the present moment, our minds get stuck in maladaptive ways of thinking. For example, you might be trying to go to sleep, but your mind gets lost thinking about all the groceries you need to buy. Deep, relaxed breathing is forgotten. And once you realize sleep isn't happening, your muscles tense and your thought process quickly shifts to "I'm not falling asleep! I have XYZ to do this week and I won't be able to function tomorrow." The body seizes up, breathing and heart rate can both quicken, and falling sleep becomes more difficult.

> *When we lose awareness of the present moment, our minds get stuck in maladaptive ways of thinking.*

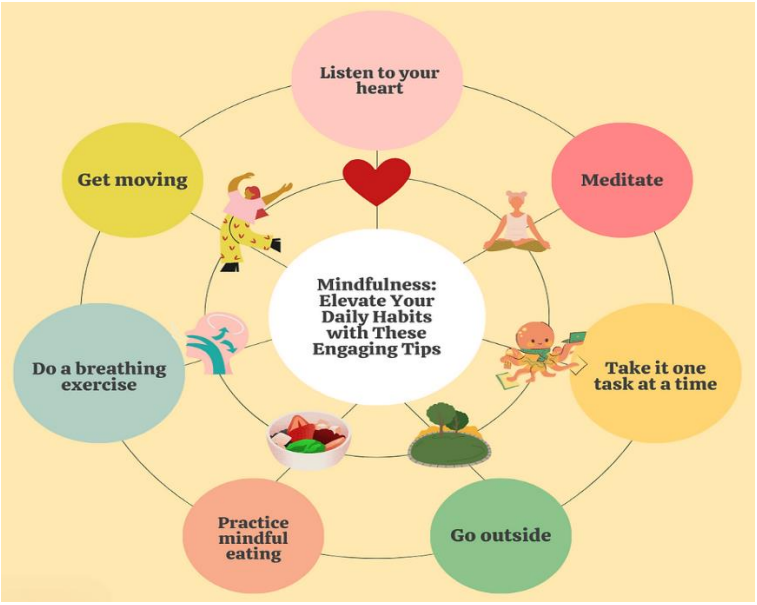
Newer models of insomnia treatment are beginning to incorporate mindfulness. Here's a grounding exercise to help you get some quality shut eye.

**A Five-Step Sleep Meditation**

1. **Dim the lights 1 hour before bedtime.**
   Start winding down the brain and body by dimming the lights. Engage in relaxing activities outside the bedroom that pass the time quietly.
2. **Avoid looking at anything with a screen.**
   Stow away your tablet, phone, computer, and TV for the night—the light can keep you awake and alert.
3. **Ten minutes before bedtime, begin a focused mindfulness exercise.**
   Sit in a comfortable chair in the same dimly lit room. Imagine the outline of your body and slowly trace it in your head. Keep in mind the amount of pressure you're feeling against the chair

or the ground and be mindful of where there's more pressure and where there's less. Start with your head. Is it touching the back of the chair? How heavy does it feel against the chair, wall, or just the air? Then slowly move down to your ear, then shoulder, arm, and leg. Work down to your feet and then back up the other side of your body. Take about five minutes for this exercise.

4. **If your mind begins to wander, notice that it wandered and get back on track.**
   Try to avoid judging yourself—your mind will indeed wander; the skill lies in getting it back on track.
5. **Get in bed and focus on your breath.**
   If you are unable to fall asleep, get up, sit in the comfortable chair again and repeat the exercise. Don't get back into bed until you're sleepy—and don't sleep in the chair!



# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

# 36

**Shri Hari Shankar Verma**, author of this book, is an officer of the 1987 examination batch of Indian Railway Traffic Service. He joined IRITM as Director General on 22.05.2023. Shri Verma was born in Village Akori, Bairagarh, District Jalaun, Headquarter Orai. He completed school education at the village and a nearby village Ait and later moved to District Headquarter Orai for Graduation. Later he moved to Banaras Hindu University (BHU) for higher education. He did M.Sc. in Agriculture with a specialization in Mycology and Plant Pathology. He secured distinction in the final examination and set a record.

Shri Verma has supported his family from the young age of nine. He succeeded in the family business and become quite prominent as young businessman. Later, with a change of mind, he moved to Banaras for higher study. During student days, he was actively engaged in student politics and won several College and University elections.

He has cleared the Civil Service Examination, 1987, in first attempt and joined the Indian Railway Traffic Service on 25.08.1988 at Lal Bahadar Shastri National Academy of

Administration (LBSNA), Mussoorie and later Railway Staff College [RSC and now National Academy of Indian Railway (NAIR)], Vadodara. He was initially allotted the Southern Railway as lien Railway and later the Railway lien changed to Western Railway.

He has been trained on Southern Railway, Western Railway and Central Railway. He had been given an initial posting at Jaipur, Western Railway (now North-Western Railway) as Assistant Commercial Superintendent, which later changed to Assistant Commercial Manager.

He had been posted on Central Railway as Divisional Operating Manager (DOM), Divisional Safety Officer (DSO), Jhansi Central Railway (now North Central Railway). On promotion to Junior Administrative Grade, he was posted as Principal Zonal Training Center (ZTC now ZRTI), Bhusawal, Central Railway. He has been Senior Divisional Operations Manager (Sr. DOM), Bhopal Central Railway and later West Central Railway. He has also worked as Senior Divisional Safety Officer (Sr. DSO), Central Railway, Mumbai. On promotion to Senior Administrative Grade, he had been posted as Chief Claim Officer (CCO), Chief Commercial Manager Freight Marketing (CCM/FM), Chief Passenger Traffic Manager (CPTM), Central Railway, Mumbai.

He has also worked as Additional Divisional Railway Manager (ADRM), Mumbai, Central Railway, Divisional Railway Manager/Salem/Southern Railway and Principal Chief Operations Manager (PCOM), South-Western Railway/ Hubballi. During his career spanning more than 35 years in the Railways, he has been decorated with several awards like Railway Minister award, General Manager award, Railway Minister's Silver Medal, and Certificate for promotion of Rajbhasha and a number of other awards and appreciation from seniors.



He is a pioneer in standardization and ISO certification in Operating Department. His efforts culminated in the ISO certification of ZTC, Bhusawal, which was the first ever for any training center in the country. Further, he also got ISO certification for the Divisional Control Office, Bhopal, Habib-Ganj railway station (now Rani Kamlapati Railway Station) and Habib-Ganj-Nizamuddin daily Express during his 5 years stint as Sr. DOM, Bhopal. Shri Verma excelled in each of his postings and achieved the highest targets of his time. As ADRM, Mumbai and later CPTM, he is credited with running of additional 278 daily suburban services in CR. He also started the first 15-car-rake on CR. It is noteworthy that all his achievements were marked by the maintenance of complete industrial peace.

As DRM, Salem he had been instrumental in easing traffic bottlenecks by way of yard remodelling, completion of long pending traffic facility works, restoration of Nilgiri Mountain Railway track, bridges and stations and infrastructural development of Salem Division Headquarter (as it was a newly

created division). During his tenure, Salem Division had received several Shields from the Zonal Headquarter.

As PCOM South-Western Railway, he had completed all long pending traffic facility works and facilitated doubling and construction of new lines. He achieved over performance in all operating parameters including highest ever loading, which was appreciated by MO&BD through a letter and a shield. He had been instrumental in making SWR the top performer amongst all Zonal Railways in Key Performance Indices (KPIs).

Over the last 11 months as DG IRITM, he has been instrumental in achieving quality in training and the standardization of the training process. **IRITM has been rated as 'Ati Utkrisht' (4 Stars)** as per the **National Standards for Civil Services Training Institutions** (NSCSTI) under the aegis of Capacity Building Commission of India (CBC). Chairman and CEO, Railway Board has personally appreciated his effort in this regard. Further, IRITM has also been awarded **ISO 21001, which is the latest Standard for Training Institute and named as Educational Organizations – Management System (EOMS)**.

He has written, designed and edited the reading material for first batch of Indian Railway Management Service (IRMS) probationary officers. Under his leadership, IRITM has been credited with conduction of training of first batch of as Indian Railway Management Service (IRMS) after Civil Service Examination, 2022. Following books has been authored or edited by him as under:

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