

What is Negotiation?

Simply stated, negotiation is discussion aimed at reaching agreement. Powerful teamwork is a continual journey of creating agreements and acting on them.

You may think negotiation is about getting what you want. It is, yet keep in mind that your initial idea or solution may or may not be the best one (might be hard to imagine!). Skillful negotiation involves finding the best solution that meets everyone's interests.

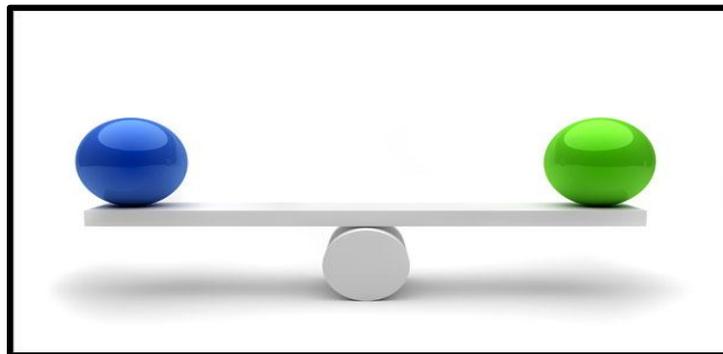
It might sound obvious, but the first thing that needs to happen is to create clear statement of WHAT is being negotiated. Start by determining:

- What is the goal of this conversation?
- What are we here to resolve?
- What decision(s) do we need to make?

To be a strong negotiator, it is essential not just to speak up, but also to skillfully listen to what others have to say. In fact, effective negotiators start not by talking, but by listening.

Loosen your grip on your own ideas, your own solutions, and allow yourself to be curious about what others have to say.

NEGOTIATION = A balance of LISTENING and ASSERTIVENESS



LISTENING

“Seek first to understand, then be understood” Stephen Covey

Negotiation begins with listening. When listening happens, expectations are shared, assumptions and misunderstandings are cleared up, and a deeper understanding of what really matters to everyone is revealed. In the end, a conversation that includes good listening leads to more potential options than the original solution that was proposed before the listening occurred.

Even better...when you demonstrate strong listening, others are then more willing to listen to you.

Practice three key listening skills: **Active Listening**, **Empathic Listening**, and **Deep Listening**

ACTIVE LISTENING

Active listening not only involves hearing someone speak, it involves DEMONSTRATING that you understand what they are saying. How can you actively show you understand?

1. Make eye contact. Let the person know you are focused on listening to what they have to say.
2. Listen as if you were going to tell someone else what you heard. PARAPHRASE* (not repeat) back what you heard.
3. Ask questions to learn more. Ask OPEN QUESTIONS**. Then PARAPHRASE* what you heard.
4. Check to see if your paraphrasing is accurate. If you didn't quite get it the first time, listen some more, ask further questions to clarify, and then PARAPHRASE* again.

***PARAPHRASE:** To express the meaning of what is being said using different words. (For example... "Let me share what I think you mean by that...")

****OPEN QUESTIONS:** Questions that require more thought than a one-word answer. An open question starts with "What" "How" "Where" or "When". Open questions help to bring out as much information as possible. A closed question is one that can be answered with "yes" or "no".

EMPATHIC LISTENING

Listening with Empathy (Empathic Listening)

Listening with empathy is the skill of simply listening to understand, without trying to evaluate, change, or fix a situation. We often hear that empathy is "putting yourself in the other person's shoes". Empathic Listening involves using your imagination to think and feel as if you ARE the other person.

You don't have to agree with someone's perception of their experience to be able to empathize with it. You simply need to imagine how they might be experiencing a situation.

When we are listened to with true empathy, we feel understood, and validated. Feeling understood and validated builds trust and a sense of psychological safety. This kind of listening will enhance the motivation to work together, creatively and effectively.

VIDEO: It's not about the nail.

DEEP LISTENING (THREE LEVELS)

Level One: Internal Listening (Conversational)

You are listening to what is being said, but you are actually more pre-occupied with your own internal thoughts. Whatever you hear, you either don't say anything, or you respond by talking about yourself, or something that matters to you. You might disagree or agree with a person, you might relate to what they are saying, and you might share your opinions. **This type of listening is more like a conversation rather than one person listening to understand another.**

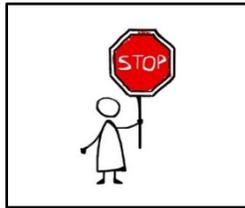
**"Most people do not listen with the intent to understand;
they listen with the intent to reply."** -Stephen Covey

Level Two: External Listening

You are listening to what is being said, focusing completely on what you are hearing, and asking questions to learn more. Your attention is given fully to the other person's words and the meaning behind the words. You stick to the topic they are talking about, and you don't talk about yourself or change the subject. You paraphrase to demonstrate to the person that you understand what they are saying, and you ask questions to learn more.

Level Three: Global Listening

You are listening to what is being said, and what is not being said. As well as the words you are hearing, you are reading the body language and the atmosphere (emotional tone) behind the words. You are also paying attention to what you feel about the conversation (your intuition or "gut feeling"). You are listening to discover what is important to the person - what they care about, what they value, what they are concerned about, what they hope for, what motivates them, and what they need. You are reflecting back to them the messages that you are receiving, and you are checking with them to see if your understanding is accurate. This is the deepest level of listening. Effective negotiators practice this regularly.



ONCE YOU HAVE FULLY LISTENED, RESIST THE URGE TO COME TO A DECISION! Because now it's your turn to share. First, ask if they are ready to hear from you. Now, speak assertively.

ASSERTIVENESS

When people engage in challenging dialogue there are two common patterns that emerge.

Win-Lose: AGGRESSIVE LANGUAGE/BEHAVIOUR

A person attempts to force their way to get what they want (stuck on being "right"), regardless of what the result is for the other person/people. This is the "I win, you lose" way of resolving disagreements. Speaking **aggressively** disregards and often disrespects others.

Lose-Win: PASSIVE LANGUAGE/BEHAVIOUR

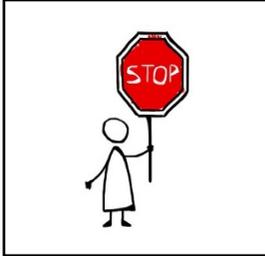
A person stops communicating, avoids a discussion, or agrees by not saying anything. This is the "You win, I lose" way of resolving disagreements. Acting or speaking **passively** disregards one's own needs, and can lead to resentment over time, due to not being satisfied with the outcome.

There is a third way, a middle ground...

"I win, you win = we win" ASSERTIVE LANGUAGE/BEHAVIOUR

Being assertive is speaking and behaving in a way that respects your own needs while also being respectful of the needs of others. It is a way of speaking directly and confidently about what is important to you, while also being aware of what matters to others and taking everything that has been shared into consideration when making decisions.

Effective negotiators observe their thinking. They notice if they are thinking aggressively or passively, and they commit instead to speak and act assertively. They encourage others to speak up for themselves, and they set boundaries so that they engage in respectful dialogue that does not allow for aggressive or disrespectful behaviour. If dialogue becomes highly reactive, with strong emotions arising, effective negotiators call for a break, and take time to collect their thoughts, and allow others to do the same, before starting a dialogue again.



AFTER ASSERTING YOURSELF - RESIST THE URGE TO COME TO A DECISION!

FIRST, SUMMARIZE WHAT EVERYONE HAS SAID. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THAT NEEDS TO BE SHARED? Listen, share, listen, share...

NEXT, LOOK FOR AREAS OF COMMONALITY AND AGREEMENT. YOUR DECISION(S) WILL BUILD ON THESE AREAS.

DECISION TIME

Assertive decision-making means fully listening and acknowledging what is important to everyone and **then** making a decision. Assertiveness is a key ingredient for collaborative teamwork.

A decision will be the best when it is owned by everyone. Invite everyone to generate ideas based on what your original goal was, and fully consider and evaluate all ideas before deciding.

Begin by building agreement in areas where there is common ground and common agreement.

In areas where there are still differences, consider trade-offs. What can each of you let go of that is lower priority, to ensure your highest priorities are included in the agreement?

Is there still an obstacle that you haven't overcome? [Examine that obstacle](#)

Work towards an outcome that will be the BEST decision that everyone can agree to, and that everyone can commit to acting on.

Additional Resources or Links:

Here's a great tool for making decisions as a team: [S.U.I.T.](#)

Getting to yes in the real world with William Ury.

William Ury is a fabulous speaker who co-authored the book *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*.