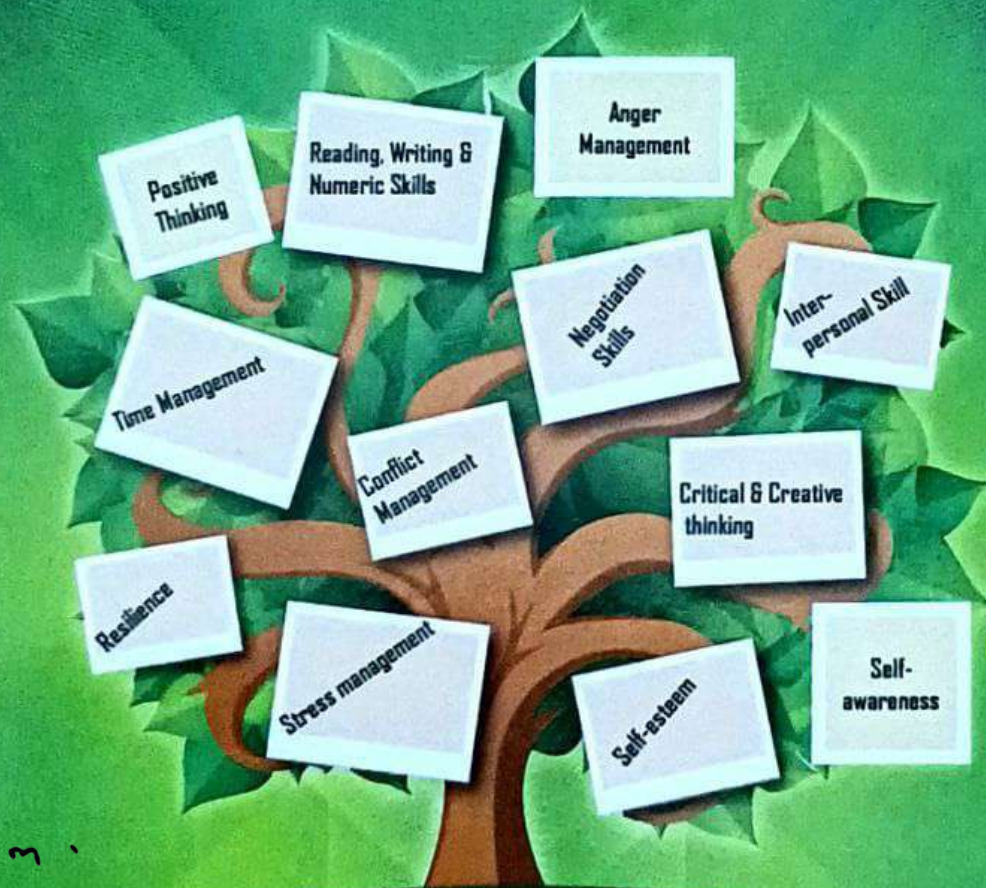


LIFE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT



Dr. M. Antony Raj

PRINCIPAL
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Life Skills

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**NEGOTIATION SKILLS: A STRATEGY TO ACHIEVE
WIN-WIN GOALS**

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Introduction

United Nations Charter asserts its reason for existence as "to maintain international peace and security" and is based on four principles: the Principle of humanity, the Principle of neutrality, the Principle of impartiality, and the Principle of independence. Maintenance of peace, the basis of harmonious living amidst inevitable and emerging conflicts from time to time from different quarters on multiple grounds of self-justified reasons, is a challenge, and its success in conflict resolution depends on the art of negotiation skills. The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines negotiation as the process of discussing something with someone to reach an agreement. Negotiations involve two or more parties who come together to reach some end goal that is agreeable to all those involved. Negotiation skills are crucial to achieving win-win outcomes and building positive relationships in business or personal situations.

Negotiation Process

Negotiation is a process and it travels its own timeline taking a course of action. The negotiation process can vary depending on the context, but here's a general outline:

1. **Preparation:** This is arguably the most crucial step. Before entering negotiations, both parties should thoroughly research their own position as well as the other party's. Understand the goals, priorities, and potential concessions. Anticipate possible objections and prepare responses.

2. **Establish Goals:** Clearly define what you want to achieve through negotiation. This includes setting one's ideal outcome as well as his/her bottom line or minimum acceptable terms.
3. **Opening:** Begin the negotiation with an opening statement or proposal. This sets the tone for the discussion and frames the initial terms of the negotiation. It's important to be assertive but also open to dialogue.
4. **Exchange:** This is the heart of the negotiation process where both parties present their positions, concerns, and offers. It involves active listening, asking questions, and seeking clarification on points of contention.
5. **Bargaining and Concessions:** Negotiations often involve give-and-take. Be prepared to make concessions while also advocating for one's own interests. Look for areas of compromise that satisfy both parties' needs.
6. **Closing:** As the negotiation progresses, work towards reaching a mutually acceptable agreement. This may involve refining terms, clarifying misunderstandings, or addressing any remaining issues.
7. **Agreement:** Once both parties have reached consensus on the terms, formalize the agreement. This may involve drafting a written contract or agreement document that outlines the terms and conditions.
8. **Follow-Up:** After reaching an agreement, it's important to follow up to ensure that both parties fulfill their obligations. This may include implementing the agreed-upon actions, monitoring progress, and addressing any issues that arise.

Throughout the negotiation process, effective communication, flexibility, and a willingness to collaborate are keys to achieving a

successful outcome. It's also important to maintain professionalism and respect towards the other party, even in cases of disagreement.

Negotiation Skills – Why Important?

A review of different web-based resources end in listing out the following credentials to understand the intricacies and complexities involved in negotiation skills, to understand its necessity to master these skills.

1. ***Conflict Resolution:*** Negotiation skills enable parties to resolve conflicts peacefully and find mutually acceptable solutions, avoiding escalation and fostering cooperation.
2. ***Effective Communication:*** Negotiators must listen actively, express themselves clearly, and understand others' perspectives, improving overall communication abilities.
3. ***Relationship Building:*** Successful negotiations build trust and respect between parties, laying the foundation for positive long-term relationships.
4. ***Goal Achievement:*** Negotiation skills help individuals advocate for their interests while finding common ground with others, facilitating the achievement of personal and professional goals.
5. ***Problem-Solving:*** Negotiators must creatively address complex issues and reach agreements, honing their problem-solving abilities.
6. ***Conflict Management:*** Negotiation skills aid in managing conflicts constructively, minimizing tensions and promoting collaboration.
7. ***Career Advancement:*** In professional settings, adept negotiators secure favorable deals, resolve disputes, and build partnerships, leading to career advancement opportunities.

8. **Financial Benefits:** Negotiation skills often result in better financial outcomes, whether negotiating a salary, contract terms, or business deals.
9. **Enhanced Decision-Making:** Negotiators assess options, weigh pros and cons, and make informed decisions, improving decision-making skills.
10. **Adaptability and Resilience:** Negotiation involves navigating uncertainty and overcoming challenges, fostering adaptability and resilience.

In nutshell, negotiation skills are essential to achieving goals, building relationships, and succeeding in personal and professional life.

Successful Negotiation Skills

Several negotiation skills are crucial for success in various contexts

1. **Listening Skill:** Paying close attention to the other party's concerns, interests, and perspectives is essential for understanding their needs and building rapport.
2. **Communication Skill:** Clear and effective communication involves expressing your own interests, asking relevant questions, and conveying information concisely.
3. **Analytical skill:** Analytical skills refer to an individual's ability to identify a problem, investigate to find out relevant facts, and find a logical solution.
4. **Discussion Skill:** It involves respecting the views of others and placing our own views with clarity amidst differences of opinions.
5. **Problem-Solving Skill:** Negotiators must be adept at identifying issues, generating creative solutions, and evaluating trade-offs to reach mutually beneficial agreements.

6. **Decision-Making Skill:** Assessing options, weighing risks and benefits, and making informed decisions are vital for steering negotiations towards favorable agreements.

Negotiations Skills for Teachers

Teaching is a complex skill. It is an art and a science. The objective of making the students learn, irrespective of their individual differences in terms of their skills, knowledge, attitude, background, and mental make-up. Academic achievement, the ultimate goal, breeds much-a-problems in the teaching-learning process that involves students, teachers, parents and officials. One of the most important skills teachers need for classroom management is negotiation.

Negotiating with Students

In every classroom, there are challenging days, and mastering the skill of negotiating with students through their emotional fluctuations is vital for teachers to maintain equilibrium, concentration, and authority. Establishing explicit policies, procedures, and expectations at the start of each term can minimize conflicts. However, when conflicts do arise, possessing adept negotiating skills becomes crucial. Initiating conversations with positive language, such as, "I understand you're feeling frustrated in my class, and I'm here to support you. Can you elaborate on what's causing the most difficulty?" Having the class syllabus readily available allows you to refer the student back to established guidelines and inquire about any confusion or challenges they may encounter. Encouraging the student to suggest an appropriate solution to the problem and assisting them in devising strategies for moving forward and achieving success is key. Granting the student a degree of control empowers them to take ownership of the issue and assures them that their concerns have been heard and addressed.

Negotiating among Students

Conflicts frequently arise among students in the classroom, requiring teachers to act as mediators to maintain control. Demonstrating effective negotiation skills in these situations helps prepare for resolving conflicts as they arise. When feasible, it's advisable to remove the two students involved in the conflict from the classroom environment to minimize disruption. Engage them in a conversation outside while providing a task to keep the remaining students occupied. Initiate the dialogue by allowing each student to express their perspective. After each has had an opportunity to speak, begin the negotiation process by summarizing their points. For instance, you might say, "From what I understand, Mark, you feel frustrated when Jim..." Repeat this process for the other student. Encourage both students to suggest potential solutions and work towards reaching a mutual agreement. Resolving the conflict may occur swiftly or require multiple discussions over time. If the situation appears to be beyond immediate resolution, don't hesitate to seek assistance from a principal or counselor.

Negotiating with Parents

Teaching necessitates effective communication skills, especially when engaging in negotiations with parents who believe their child has been treated unfairly. It's essential to remain accessible to parents throughout the school year, not just during scheduled conferences. Provide contact information such as an email address and voicemail number for parents to reach you at any time. When meeting with parents, ensure you have all the relevant information provided to the student readily available to share. Communicate to parents that all students are offered equal and multiple opportunities for information access and academic success, which can help diffuse tense situations. Maintain a positive tone when discussing a child, emphasizing your

support for their success. Assure parents that you are invested in their child's well-being and academic progress. If parents still feel their child requires special consideration, offer additional support such as after-school tutoring or further assessment for potential learning difficulties. Remain open-minded and willing to consider parental input, and be prepared to negotiate adjustments to aspects like homework assignments or classroom time allocation.

Negotiating with Other Professionals

Negotiation skills are unexpectedly crucial for teachers when interacting with fellow educators. Shared resources such as classrooms, multipurpose rooms, computers, and supplies require equitable distribution, leading to potential conflicts, particularly during busy periods. To maintain positive professional relationships, it's important to communicate in supportive ways during staff meetings and remain flexible when scheduling events like field trips, assemblies, and class parties. Take initiative in fostering compromise among colleagues and utilize negotiation skills to mediate and provide assistance whenever necessary. Recognize that teachers, like everyone else, have challenging days, and seize opportunities to offer encouragement and build rapport with others. This approach earns the respect of coworkers and creates more opportunities to negotiate and resolve issues collaboratively.

Conclusion

Life needs to be happy without troubling and harming others. A social living is bound to invite some smaller or bigger problems. The success of smooth solving lies in dialoguing and negotiations. Hence, all the professionals, including teachers and students, need to be trained in this skill, so that their mission becomes a success.

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