

# Non-verbal Communications Work for Negotiations

*Using non-verbal communications like emotions strategically help in negotiation process.*

Managing emotions is very important in negotiations. It can either make us strong or spoil the relationships in the process of negotiation. Negotiators generally have the fear of losing the power to act tactfully. Researchers and experts have come up with solutions to manage emotions by overcoming or disposing them at all sometimes.

However, some researchers believed that emotions can be transformed into valuable benefits. They categorized emotions in to positive or negative emotions. They opined that the solution lies in the ability to identify the category of emotion and increase or decrease or completely change the emotion accordingly. A five-step approach to control emotions during negotiations are:

- **Identify your emotion:** First step is to evaluate the feelings and experience in a situation. Then find out whether the feeling would benefit or obstruct you to achieve the goal of negotiation. Feeling can be frustration, anger, empathy, or happiness etc. If it benefits, then you have to proceed further or pass on the emotion in case of trouble.

Ex:-An executive giving presentation to launch a new product has observed that some people were not impressed by the presentation. This can cause him to frustrate first.

- **Find the source of your emotion:** After identifying the emotion, one has to change the focus of the concentration on the positive effects of the situation. Psychologists advise us on ways to relax, one of them being closing our eyes and breathing in to overcome stress. This would help to activate positive feelings to deal with the situation effectively.

Ex: - The Executive can focus on people who were interested and smiling and leave those who were creating frustration in him.

- **Reinterpret the emotion:** Often the first feeling is created out of fear. But, leisurely analyzing the situation may help you to overcome the feel or change the emotion in to another category.

Ex: - Executive can attempt to identify the reason for the inattention of people and accordingly replace frustration with relief.

- **Replace the emotion:-**When all the above efforts prove ineffective and when your feelings outburst, you can change your physiological expressions, body posture or breathing intensity.

Ex: - The executive may attempt to turn towards the projector or change the speaking volume.

- **Take action to reflect your changed emotion:-**Feelings that are internally created would not be visible to others unless expressed. Actions need to reflect those emotions.

Ex: - The executive can apologize verbally or smile and ask the person who was creating frustration about the reason. This is necessary to continue the process further.

Managing emotions and using them genuinely and strategically can create value for everyone.

**Non-verbal communication** is the process of communicating without the use of words. It is also known as 'silent language.' Non-verbal communication can be in the form of gestures, facial expressions, cues, vocal characteristics, etc.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. Explain different forms of non-verbal communications

**(Hints:** communication without using words- gestures-facial expressions- cues-vocal characteristics)

2. Examine the five-step approach to control emotions during negotiations

**(Hints:** identification of emotions- source of emotions- interpretation of emotions- replacing emotions- actions for changed emotions)

*Source: Shirli Kopelman, Make Your Emotions Work for You in Negotiations, Harvard Business Review, May 16, 2014*