

Designing Options*

What are the range of options? Use the tools below to generate ideas.

Clarifying tools

- **Chunking** - breaking the problem into smaller parts.
- **Researching** - more information; extent of resources: constraints.
- **Goal-setting** - what is the outcome we want?

Generating tools

- **The obvious solution** - to which all parties say "yes".
- **Brainstorming** - no censoring, no justifying, no debating
- **Consensus** - build a solution together
- **Lateral thinking** - have we been practical, creative?

Negotiating tools

- **Maintain current arrangements** - with trade-offs or sweeteners.
- **Currencies** - what is it easy for me to give and valuable for you to receive?
- **Trial and error** - try one option, then another
- **Establishing alternatives** - what will happen if we can't agree?
- **Consequence confrontation** - what I will do if we don't agree.

Selection

Consider:

- Is it built on a win/win approach?
- Does it meet many needs of all parties?
- Is it feasible?
- Is it fair?
- Does it solve the problem?
- Can we settle on one option or do we need to trial several?



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Negotiation Skills*

Five basic principles

- Be hard on the problem and soft on the person
- Focus on needs, not positions
- Emphasize common ground
- Be inventive about options
- Make clear agreements

Where possible prepare in advance. Consider what your needs are and what the other person's are. Consider outcomes that would address more of what you both want. Commit yourself to a win/win approach, even if tactics used by the other person seem unfair. Be clear that your task will be to steer the negotiation in a positive direction. To do so you may need to do some of the following:

Reframe

Ask a question to **reframe**. (e.g., "If we succeed in resolving this problem, what differences would you notice"? Request checking of **understanding**. ("Please tell me what you heard me/them say.") Request something she/he said to be **re-stated more positively**, or as an "I" statement. **Re-interpret** an attack on the person as an attack on the issue.

Respond not React

- Manage your emotions.
- Let some accusations, attacks, threats or ultimatums pass.
- Make it possible for the other party to back down without feeling humiliated (e.g. by identifying changed circumstances which could justify a changed position on the issue.)

Re-focus on the issue

Maintain the relationship and try to resolve the issue. (e.g. "What's fair for both of us?" Summarize how far you've got. Review common ground and agreement so far. Focus on being partners solving the problem, not opponents. Divide the issue into parts. Address a less difficult aspect when stuck. Invite trading ("If you will, then I will") Explore best and worst alternatives to negotiating an acceptable agreement between you.

Identify Unfair Tactics

Name the behavior as a tactic. Address the motive for using the tactic. Change the physical circumstances. Have a break. Change locations, seating arrangements etc. Go into smaller groups. Meet privately. Call for meeting to end now and resume later, perhaps "to give an opportunity for reflection."

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Broadening Perspectives*

Respect and value differences

Just as we are unique and special, so are other people. We all have distinctive viewpoints that may be equally valid from where we stand. Each person's viewpoint makes a contribution to the whole and requires consideration and respect in order to form a complete solution. This wider view can open our eyes to many more possibilities. It may require us to change the mind chatter that says: "For me to be right, others must be wrong."

Recognize a long term timeframe.

Consider how the problem or the relationships will look over a substantial period of time. The longer timeframe can help us be more realistic about the size of the problem we presently face.

Assume a global perspective.

If we believe that the actions of one individual are interconnected with every other individual, then we can have a sense how our actions can have meaning in conjunction with the actions of others. We can look at the overall system, which may be the family, the organization or the society. Consider what needs this larger unit has in order to function effectively.

Deal with resistance to the broader perspective

Taking up a broader view can be scary. It may make us less certain of the rightness of our own case. We may fear that we will lose all conviction to fight for what we need. We may have to give up the security we got from the simple way we previously saw the problem. We may need courage to enter the confusion of complexity. Many fears of taking the broader perspective prove ungrounded once we analyze them carefully.

Open to the idea of changing and risk-taking

By taking a broader perspective you may be confronted with the enormity of the difficulties. Identify what you can do to affect a particular problem, even if it is only a small step in the right direction. One step forward changes the dynamics and new possibilities can open up.

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Responding to Resistance from Others*

When faced with a statement that has potential to create conflict, ask open questions to reframe resistance. Explore the difficulties and then re-direct discussion to focus on positive possibilities.

EXPLORE - Clarify Details		
It's too expensive.	➔	Compared to what?
Too many/much/little/few.	➔	Compared to what?
I want the best.	➔	What would be best for you?
EXPLORE - Find Options		
You can't do that around here.	➔	What would happen if we did?
He (she) would never...	➔	How can we find ways for it to happen?
They always...	➔	Are there any times they don't?
We've tried that already.	➔	What was the outcome?
This is the only way to do it	➔	Yes, that's an option. What else could we consider?
REDIRECT - Move to the Positive		
It will never work.	➔	What would it take to make it work?
I won't...	➔	What would make you willing?
It's a failure.	➔	How could it work?
It's disastrous.	➔	What would make it better?
He's (she's) useless.	➔	What is he (she) doing that is acceptable?
It's impossible.	➔	What would it take to make it possible?
I can't.	➔	You can't see a way to do it at the moment?
I don't want to.	➔	What would you like?
- Go Back to Legitimate Needs and Concerns		
He's (she's) a hopeless case!	➔	It's hard to see how to work with him (her)?
You fool (and other insults)!	➔	What do we need to do to sort this out?

How dare you do such a thing!	➔	What do you dislike about it?
It should be done my way.	➔	What makes that seem the best option?
His/her place is a pig's sty!	➔	He/she puts a different emphasis on tidiness to you?
He/she doesn't do their fair share.	➔	Where do you think his/her priorities may lie?

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