

## SELF-PRESENTATION STRATEGIES

### Definitions of Self

- 'The self is the individual as known to the individual'. (Murphy, 1947)
- Burns (1980) defines it as 'the set of attitudes a person holds towards himself'.
- According to Leary (2004), the self is a cognitive structure that permits self-reflection and organizes information about oneself.

### Self-presentation

Self-presentation is how we perceive ourselves whether that be in front of others or alone. Self-presentation is behaviour that attempts to convey some information about oneself or some image of oneself to other people. Self-presentation is the set of method and strategies, we use selectively to apply in the situation to shape and enhance or to change our self-image to others. It can be conscious or unconscious.

### Self-presentation strategies

Strategic self-presentation- the process of constructing and presenting the self in order to shape other people's impressions and achieve ulterior goals.

Example –Image, we put on social media sites. We choose it carefully.

Self-presentations can become automatic with practice. Not being able to project an appropriately presented self-causes embarrassment. These presented self rarely judged as harshly as we think. Thus Social acceptance is a very strong motive. We want to appear friendly, likeable, and honest. We are less concerned about appearing competent and intelligent.

### There are seven different strategies with different goals.

#### 1) Ingratiation –

Edward E. Jones, Ingratiation is a psychological technique in which an individual attempt to influence another person by becoming more likeable to their target. We try to shapes other's impression through flattery. It increases the recipient's self-esteem. This is the most common self-presentation strategy.

#### There are 3 types –

- Acquisitive ingratiation: Goal of obtaining something from others.
- Protective Ingratiation: To prevent possible negative consequences
- Significance ingratiation: To cultivate respect/approval from others, rather than an explicit reward.

Example –Towards Boss, a salesperson will appreciate our choice to get the tip.

#### 2) Modesty –

Under representing own positive traits, contributions, or accomplishments to be humbler. Moderating the estimation of one's own abilities, sometimes seen as self-deprecation. Very effective in increasing likeability. Preserves high levels of perceived competence and honesty. Women do it more frequently with greater effect.

Limitation – it is only effective when others are aware of an individual's accomplishments.

### **3) Self-promotion –**

Self-promotion conveyance of positive information through one's behaviour or by telling others about one's positive asset and accomplishment. Desire to be respected for intelligence and competence. Commonly during work-related interactions. Used more frequently by men.

### **4) Exemplification –**

A strategy for self-presentation that involves inducing other people to regard one as a highly moral, virtuous person whose actions are consistent with positive, shared values. This strategy is used to elicit the perception of integrity and moral worthiness while arousing guilt and admiration in others. A person can accomplish exemplification by presenting him- or herself as honest, disciplined, self-sacrificing, generous, or principled. The individual appears absorbed by devotion to some cause and suffers from the welfare of others. Can foster strong loyalty and group cohesion. Others might feel inadequate in the face of their own shortcomings.

Example- Sending co-worker home while doing work alone.

### **5) Intimidation-**

An individual produces fear and gains power by convincing others they are powerful and/ or dangerous. It can be overt or covert.

Example – direct threat or implied threat.

### **6) Supplication–**

Advertise the weakness or dependence, hoping to solicit help for sympathy out of a sense of social obligation.

Example homeless asking money to strangers.

Limitation- the people tend to blame the victim believing suffering is self-inflicted or judge an individual as poorly functioning.

### **7) Self-Handicapping–**

An individual creates an obstacle to his or her own performance to provide an excuse for failure.

To enhance the success. Most likely used when being evaluated on skills or attributes central to self-concept.

#### **2 types –**

- **Self-reported handicapping**

Complaining about illness or stress-induced ailment to engage in a task, work, exam etc.

It will provide an excuse for failure without hampering the performance. It can increase performance by lowering expectations and reducing anxiety. Both men and women use.

- **2. Behavioural self-handicapping-**

Not adequately preparing for a task or by using drugs or alcohol to inhibit performance for work.

Men use it more usually than women; possibly because men are more competitive and driven by public standards in performance situations. The danger with this strategy is people can perceive you as lazy or unmotivated.

## **What is personal presentation in the workplace?**

Personal presentation is how you portray yourself to other people. Your personal presentation includes everything from the **way you look**, to the **way you speak** and **move**. Personal presentation is part of the communication skills, and communication is one of the five important life and work skills you need to build as a professional. Personal presentation

means **the way you present yourself** in everyday situations, including the most stressful ones like job interviews.

Your personal presentation is made of several elements including (but not limited to) the following:

### **Physical appearance**

Your physical appearance is a major part of your personal presentation. It includes everything we can see about you from wearing clean clothes, having clean and brushed hair and being well-groomed to the colour and style of your clothes and accessories.

### **Body language**

Your body language plays an essential part in your personal presentation. From the way you smile to the way you shake hands and your ability to make eye contact, your non-verbal communication significantly impacts your personal presentation.

### **Attitudes and behaviours**

We can consider that your attitudes and behaviours towards situations and people are part of your personal presentation (and your personal branding). The way you speak to and get along with others definitely impacts your personal presentation and what people think about you. Are you being friendly, kind and polite every time you can?

### **Why is personal presentation important?**

With the above definition of personal presentation, it seems essential to learn how to give the right impression through **how we look, what we say, and what we do**.

We know that within the first few seconds, we are judged based on our appearance and body language. No matter how relevant and interesting our message is, if our personal presentation is not appropriate, people will hardly listen to our message. Working on our personal presentation is the **first step to develop effective presentation skills**.

Our personal presentation is helping us to fit in by following certain **codes of conduct** and **corporate styling** principles. When getting ready to facilitate a workshop, I always adapt my personal presentation to the company I visit with a focus on the company's industry. No matter how comfortable and fashionable my workout outfit looks, it is not relevant or appropriate to my activity.

A few years back, I was helping a client getting back to the workplace as a chef. She was having a multiple of interviews, she had amazing cooking skills but still couldn't find a job. She decided to use my personal branding and image consulting services to boost her success. The first (and last) coaching session was enough to understand what was going wrong and to adjust the situation. My talented coaches came to our session dressed for interviews and I could immediately spot that her issue was based on her personal presentation. She looked beautiful but she was overdressed for the occasion. She was wearing high heels, a lot of make-up, a complicated hairstyle and fake nails. I looked at her from a recruiter's point of view and understood why nobody would hire her! The only thing a recruiter can think is that she will be late in the morning to get ready, she will then spend hours in the bathroom to stay stunning, she will never be able to stand on those heels all day, and she might lose a nail or two in the cooking pots and plates. My client dressed like that with the best intentions, to give a positive first impression; it was just not appropriate and relevant to the situation. Together, we selected a few appropriate outfits making her look like a chef at work instead of a fashion icon. Immediately after our session, she dared to reapply to her favourite opportunity and successfully got the job. I guess the lesson here is to dress for the occasion.

### **How to make the most from your personal presentation?**

As mentioned above, the best thing to do is to dress for the occasion. Dressing for the occasion doesn't mean that you need to change your entire style and feel like wearing a Halloween costume every time you get out. Dressing for the occasion is about adapting your own style to the situation. It might mean being more classy, trying to look more serious or professional, or if you are evolving in a creative environment it might mean showing off your creativity.

When feeling lost about the dress code, simply observe people around you; how do people dress on such occasions, what do they wear when working in this company? It will give you some guidance to pick and choose your outfit and accessories.

Because your personal presentation isn't only about your appearance, you will pay attention to your body language and non-verbal signals as well as your behaviours.

## Non-verbal Communication

We've already employed a little bit of nonverbal communication with the active listening skills we've previously discussed: nodding, facial expressions, leaning toward the speaker to show interest—all of those are forms of nonverbal communication. Body language can reinforce your spoken message or it can contradict it entirely.

There's a myth that says that when you speak, only 35 percent of your communication is verbal and 65 percent of it is nonverbal. That's not entirely true because so much depends on the context and situation. It is, however, absolutely true that nonverbal communication can make or break your message.

Here are some types of nonverbal communication and the effects they can have on the success of your communication:

- **Facial expressions:** Your teenage cousin we referred to at the beginning of this section might have told you he was happy, but his apathetic facial expression may have communicated different information. Facial expressions—happy, sad, angry—help you convey your message. Be aware of your facial expression when you talk and particularly when you listen, which is when it's easy to forget.
- **Gestures:** When you speak, a gesture can make your message stronger. Pointing out something you want your listener to look at more closely is an example of nonverbal communication that makes your message understood. Motioning warmly toward a coworker who deserves special recognition, making a fist to show frustration or anger, such gestures help further engage your audience when you speak.
- **Proximity:** How close you are to your audience when you speak sends a nonverbal message. If your size is imposing and you leave a very small distance between you and your listener, it's likely your nonverbal communication will be a bit threatening. On the other hand, giving someone too much space is an awkward nonverbal communication that might confuse your listener.
- **Touch:** Shaking an audience member's hand, putting your hand on his shoulder: these are nonverbal cues that can affect the success of your message. Touch communicates affection, but it also communicates power. You can think about what kind of messages a job applicant may send through a weak handshake versus a firm one after having a job interview.
- **Eye contact:** Making and maintaining eye contact with an audience when you're verbally communicating or listening communicates to the other party that you're interested and engaged in the conversation. Good eye contact often conveys the trait of honesty to the other party.
- **Appearance:** Your clothing, hair, and jewelry are also a part of nonverbal communication. If you put a dachshund pin on your lapel each morning (because you have a pet dachshund), that says something about you as a person. Similarly, the quality and condition of your clothing, how it fits, if it's appropriate for the season—all of these things speak nonverbally about you as a communicator.

Nonverbal communication reveals a lot about you as a communicator and how you relate to other people. It pays to be aware of the elements of your nonverbal communication so you can maximize the impact of your message.

## **INFLUENCE OF BARRIERS IN THE COMMUNICATION SKILLS PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION**

The discussion on barriers is perhaps the most critical component of effective communication, considering the frequency of breakdowns in communication that mar productivity and destroy reputation irrevocably. A barrier, simply understood, can be anything or anybody that prevents or hinders or unfavourably changes the intended outcome of a communicative exchange. Barriers can be intrapersonal, interpersonal and organizational.

As we are already functioning within the setup of a central university. Moreover, you are at the cusp of being employed or some of you are employed already. Therefore, knowledge of organizational barriers and how to work around them becomes indispensable. The discussion will be fruitful if we focus on organizational barriers as an individual's professional success is linked to his or her communicative efficiency within the organization where he or she is enrolled or employed or is going to be employed very soon. Every organization has its own hierarchy, communication protocols as well as channels via which information flows between the layers. Mere academic substantiation of the types of organizational barriers is futile, if we do not back them with lucid, real-world illustrations. The major organizational barriers are:

### **Distortion of information due to several transfer stations**

Due to the multiple levels in an organization and the protocols of either upward or downward communication, when the message passes through several individuals, there is change of the original message at every level.

Information selectivity as well as poor listening amplify this distortion and the intended recipient ultimately gets a mutated version of the message.

In the Indian context, this problem comes with a ghastly twist of exaggeration to sensationalize a piece of information, which becomes the latest gossip in grapevine. For instance, a conversation with the HR manager about availing a leave and the stated reason can be maliciously distorted to the extent of appearing for interviews for changing job on the pretext of personal emergency. This is not only toxic but also counterproductive.

### **Repression or overflow of information due to fear of superiors**

In the Indian context, to please the superiors and not incur their wrath, in many cases we repress issues or grievances. The reverse is also possible, where there is breach of confidentiality and unfiltered sharing of everything with the superiors to display subservience and win their favour.

### **Loss of productivity due to negative tendencies generated through groupism and ingroup-outgroup discrimination**

Even within the same organisation, groups based on interest, ethnicity, age and other factors, may at some point of time experience a clash of beliefs, leading to ingroup-outgroup discrimination, which after a while can become really ugly and affect the decorum of conversations in the organisation.

### **Loss of communicative efficiency due to the selection of unsuitable media**

Selection of medium is dependent on four variables, namely, time required for transmission of message, cost of transmission, nature of the message and the target audience.

In the Indian context, with the digital revolution, internet and smartphone applications have become the preferred media. However, if a recorded speech message is confidential, encrypted services with self-destruct option and a lifespan for the recorded message delivered, need to be appropriately utilised.

Most organizations use their own intranet, with no access to the internet, for confidentiality of organizational exchanges.

### **Loss of productivity and communicative efficiency due to information overload and congestion of channels**

When there is a conversational salad of an excessive amount of irrelevant information with relevant details, understanding and processing it decimates efficiency and such a situation of information overload passively frustrates and burns out the listeners. The focus should be on the quality and not the quantity of spoken words.

## **Importance of Cross-Culture**

One of the intriguing challenges of the dynamic spaces that we communicate in these days, is the fusion of an incredible number of cultures. Similar to a multicultural classroom, a multilingual and multicultural social setting requires delicate treatment. One of the focal points of critical discussion here is, how prepared are we to accept differences while maintaining a productive and tolerant atmosphere where individualities do not require dilution. Communication, in such contexts, moves beyond the literal and the linguistic, and to make sense of the process, one needs to be aware of the multiple cultural variables at play. In fact, lack of awareness of cultural variations is one of the biggest interpersonal causes leading to communication failure. Cultural and social sensibilities govern perception, expectation and tolerance with respect to any form of communication.

Renowned cultural theorist Dr. Geert Hofstede's model on cross-cultural communication is a widely followed, robust theoretical premise for studying how cultural differences impact communication involving participants of unique ethnicities and cultures. There are six dimensions discussed in Hofstede's model, namely, Power Distance Index (PDI), Individualism versus Collectivism,

Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI), Masculinity versus Femininity, Long Term Orientation versus Short Term Orientation and Indulgence versus Restraint.

**Power Distance Index (PDI)** deals with the societal distribution of power and how different communities function in a particular arrangement. A high degree of Power Distance signifies the acceptance of a hierarchical order by the communities whereby each community has its own position and the situation does not require any intervention. A low degree of Power Distance indicates ongoing struggle to balance the distribution of power and requires intervention to address the inequalities of power.

In terms of communication, these translate into very different behavioural paradigms as well as linguistic expressions. An individual coming from a background of high Power Distance Index, will not be excessively polite nor excessively subservient, reflected through choice of expressions in the spoken language, as they have been functioning within equitable power structures. On the contrary, someone from a low Power Distance Index background, can be at either of the extremities, i.e., excessively polite and compliant, or excessively defensive and resistant, reflected through their choice of expressions in the spoken language.

**Individualism versus Collectivism** addresses the cultural difference whereby certain groups prefer a narrower domain of responsibility (being responsible only for themselves and their immediate families) with a high degree of independent existence in a liberal social matrix and certain other groups prefer a wider domain of responsibility (extended to relatives and members of one's own community) with a high degree of collaborative growth in a structured social matrix based on communal loyalty.

In a diversified conversational space, participants with a collectivist background, prove to be better listeners, better collaborators and their linguistic choices reiterate inclusiveness ('We'-oriented sentence constructions), whereas participants with an individualist background, although more creative, do not function as efficiently in groups and their linguistic choices underline exclusiveness ('I'-oriented sentence constructions).

**Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)** helps in understanding to what extent members of a particular social group feel distressed when faced with uncertainty and indefiniteness, around

the central concern of an unseen future. The differences in mind set arise regarding whether efforts should be undertaken to control the future or just let the future unfold naturally in due course of time.

Individuals belonging to backgrounds with strong UAI, are structured, inflexible, action-oriented and their choice of expressions in the spoken language reflect precision and economy. In a dynamic conversational space, these translate into highly focused, punctual, problem-solving individuals with a greater proportion of affirmative sentences while communicating. On the contrary, individuals from a weak UAI background, are relaxed and flexible. In a dynamic conversational space, these translate into creative and unpredictable individuals who do not function effectively under stress and their choice of expressions in the spoken language reflect elaboration, depth and liberality.

**Masculinity Versus Femininity** highlights the more-frequent societal preference for ‘masculine’ behavioural and aspirational matrices like accomplishment, chivalry and recognition, assertiveness as well as material fulfilment through success. The less-frequent societal preference for ‘feminine’ behavioural and aspirational matrices like assistance and partnership, decency and politeness, caring for the vulnerable, bring to the fore, a distinct tough versus tender cultural gap in the context of a fiercely competitive conversational space. Masculinity is predominant in the cultures of India and China, contrary to the UK and Canada.

## Cycle of the Communication Process

There are seven important elements of the communication process. Here are the details:

- Sender  
The process of communication starts with the sender. This is the entity that will use the means of communication to share her thoughts. The sender starts the communication cycle by deciding to convey her thoughts and chooses the format to use.  
The sender manages her thoughts, seeks clarity and decides what exactly she wants to put forth. The sender needs to gather the required information and relevant ideas in order to communicate. For example, a writer begins with an idea and transforms it into a book.
- Message  
A message is formed after the sender decides what she wants to put forth and how she wants to convey it. It's also known as encoding. The nature of the message can change depending on the medium you use and the audience for which it is meant. Always remember that for communication to be successful, it is important that the listener or reader understands the message.
- Encoding  
Encoding is the step in the process of communication where the sender decides how she wants to convey her thoughts. Selecting the right words, associated symbols in verbal communication or gestures, tones and sounds in nonverbal communication are ways of encoding a thought.  
To make encoding easier, it is imperative to know who the receiver is. For example, Ruskin Bond writes clean and short sentences that invoke visuals to instil wonder among his readers, children.
- Channel or Medium



In order to better explain the process of communication, one has to pay close attention to one crucial wheel of this cycle, which is the medium. This screen that you're reading this article on, the newspaper that slides in every morning through your door, the television you watch your favourite movies on are all mediums. It's imperative to consider the medium used for information transmission while encoding the message or it fails to reach the audience effectively.

- Receiver

The process of communication is incomplete without a receiver to 'lend an ear'. Whenever a sender writes, or says or sings or expresses anything, it's meant to be read, or experienced. The receiver is a crucial part of this process.

The receiver gathers the information presented or broadcasted by the sender and begins to understand it. We take turns between being a sender and being a receiver. You are a receiver when you watch a movie, and a sender when you tell your friends how the movie was.

- Decoding

No matter how well the message is crafted (or encoded), it will fail to make an impact if the receiver does not possess the tools to decode the message. For instance, a nine-year-old may not understand the point of Harari's book.

While growing up, we also build the ability to decode various messages. Even if the word 'beautiful' has one meaning in all the dictionaries, globally, it would undoubtedly mean something different to different people. We decode any message by our own mechanisms, thoughts, memories and create our own meaning.

- Feedback

The process of communication is a long one. Communication does not stop after a thought or idea is expressed or a sentence or a word is uttered. It creates ripples through time, like a stone slung in a peaceful lake. Feedback is one of the last stages of communication.

After a message is encoded, sent over a medium received, and decoded, there is a need for the communication to keep moving. Through feedback, the receiver becomes the sender, broadcasting the views about the information received.

Another important aspect that is present in this cycle is noise. This refers to the obstructions people face while following the entire communication process. This can mean actual physical noise, preoccupying thoughts of the sender or the receiver, and barriers such as language, comfort, and cognitive precision.

## **The 7 Cs of Communication are:**

### **Clear**

(Clarity) Be clear about the goal of your message and the purpose of the message. Present one idea at a time making it easier for the recipient to understand. Don't leave them guessing what the message is about and having to fill in the gaps themselves.

Set a goal or outcome for what you want to communicate and work towards that.

### **Concise**

(Conciseness) Keep to the point and keep it short and simple. Don't use unnecessary words (use two words where one will do or 6 sentences when 3 will do). Don't repeat the same point in different ways.

This will also make any communication more engaging and easier to understand.

### **Concrete**

(Concreteness) Be clear, not fuzzy. Ensure there is enough detail to get the message across but not too much so that the recipient will be lost and that the message is factual.

Adding too much 'noise' around your main points can mean these are missed. Make sure your main points and any conclusions are clear to the recipient.

### **Correct**

(Correctness) Check the information you are providing is accurate and, in written communication, ensure it is free from grammatical and spelling errors. Check the technical parts of your content are understandable by the person receiving the information.

Preparation will help here to make sure you can be sure about what you are communicating or a chance to read what you have written.

### **Coherent**

Make sure your message flows well and is laid out logically. The points you make should all be linked to the main topic and should help you to deliver the objective you originally set out to achieve. Make sure the tone of the message is the same throughout.

Consider using a structure for your communication to help here.

### **Complete**

(Completeness) Ensure the recipient has everything they need to understand your message and take action if needed. If action is needed, ensure your message includes a 'call to action'. Also, ensure that any specific details are clear and included. Don't leave the recipient with lots of questions to ask.

Think about how you will check for understanding. For example, you could ask questions to check their understanding.

### **Courteous**

(Courtesy) Your message should be polite, friendly, professional, open and honest. Think about your message from the recipient's point of view and you are empathetic towards their needs. This will help you to deliver the message in a way that's easy to understand and buy into.

Also, communicating to or writing for the reader can make your communication more engaging.



## INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Communication skills are those skills which are needed to speak and write properly. A person who is able to speak appropriately whilst maintaining eye contact with the audience, uses varied vocabulary and articulate speech to suit the need of the audience is generally said to be an effective speaker. Similarly, an effective writer should be able to use written words in various styles and techniques to communicate his/her message and ideas to the readers. One should have the ability to listen carefully and write and speak clearly in any situation. Therefore, good reading, writing, speaking and listening skills are essential for effective communication.

Importance of communication your ability to communicate clearly and share thoughts, feelings and ideas will help you in all your relationships. For example, you can inform about something or you can also influence others through communication. Communication skills are needed to: inform: You may be required to give facts or information to someone. For example, communicating the timetable of an exam to a friend. • Influence: You may be required to influence or change someone in an indirect but usually important way. For example, negotiating with a shopkeeper to reduce the price or helping a friend to overcome stress due to exam or any other reason.

Human beings, by nature are not sedentary entities, but require social clustering for expression of emotions, exchange of information and to satisfy the need to communicate and bond. From the notion of society, came along the notion of speech community, which Lyons (1970) perceived as a community where all the people use a particular language or dialect. With different stages in the evolution of the human society, there have been consequent revisions in the concept of a speech community. With the advent of the idea of an Information Society (1930 and onwards), virtual speech communities followed a few years later.

Throughout the history of mankind, societies have accorded importance to skilled users of language or skilled communicators, as language perpetuates all domains of human participation, accomplishing the role of a binder. Some people are very skilled at getting what they want through the use of language, and others are not. Skilled language use tends to be respected in many cultures. So, mastering the process of communication attributes special status to people, irrespective of modality.

Improving our communication skills is fundamentally about equipping ourselves as future professionals and as responsible individuals, with the necessary skills and resources to be able to use language powerfully to share as well as receive ideas effectively in personal or professional contexts. Moving beyond language, the process of communication, the roles of the participants, the barriers and the nature of the message need to be carefully explored while learning about the nuances of effective communication. As future professionals and dutiful citizens, we will always be functioning in objective and outcome-oriented spaces. English, being the lingua franca and the universally shared common mode of understanding each other, will be the language that we will need to maneuver in unique ways to accomplish different things, like, starting a relationship negotiating a deal seeking clarification expressing concern persuading an individual convincing a colleague congratulating a

partner proposing an initiative planning a venture enquiring about an issue addressing a grievance motivating a friend requesting for a favour solving a conflict applying for an opportunity and many others. How efficiently we speak as well as how convincingly we put across our perspectives, will determine how successful we are in the process of communication. While speaking is about how and what we utter, we often forget that there needs to be significant emphasis on the non-verbal aspects of communication as well, for instance, gaze, eye contact, hand gestures, facial expressions, body posture, etc.

The contemporary thrust on improving our communication skills is also intertwined with our employability, whereby the onus is on how humanely translatable is the technical or non-technical training, imparted to resolve, manage and deal with real-world issues in the field. Last but not the least, is our temperament to tackle cross-cultural differences while communicating in a heterogeneous space and to understand, without being judgmental, how people belonging to diverse backgrounds, communicate with an acceptable level of clarity.

### **Verbal Communication**

Communication is often understood mainly as verbal communication. But it is also possible knowledge, as we shall see in the next section. Verbal communication is communication through words. This can occur in either of two modes, oral or written. Oral communication is more natural and spontaneous, and we use this mode most of the time. A great percentage of our communication is oral communication. But in formal situations, written communication is required, and not everyone can communicate effectively in writing. This may be because of psychological barriers, or lack of technique. We will discuss these barriers to effective communication a little later.

It is important to understand which mode to select for communicating effectively. Let's first discuss where the oral and written modes are effectively used, and where a combination of the two is required.

### **The Oral Mode is Used Where**

- \*Personal authentication is needed. e.g., between an officer and her personal secretary; a journalist and her source ("I heard it from a reliable source")

- \*Social or gregarious needs must be met. e.g., speaking with a visiting delegation

- \*Warmth and personal qualities are called for. e.g., group or team interaction

Exactitude and precision are not vitally important. e.g., brainstorming for ideas

- \*Situations demand maximum understanding. e.g., sorting out problems or differences between individuals, or between two groups such as administration and students.

- \*An atmosphere of openness is desired. e.g., talks between management and workers

Added impact is needed to get receiver focus. e.g., a chairperson of an organization addressing the staff; a presidential or royal address to a nation

- \*Decisions or information have to be communicated quickly. e.g., officers issuing orders during natural disasters such as floods or an earthquake

\*Confidential matters are to be discussed. e.g., exchange of positive or negative information about an organization or an individual. In the process of appointments, or promotion or selection of individuals, a period of open discussion may precede the final decision that is recorded in writing.

### **The Written Mode is Used Where**

Information has to be stored and retrieved. e.g., official records

\*Reliability and validity of an idea are important. e.g., decisions taken by a group, to be acted upon

\*The verification and authentication of an idea are important. e.g., a memo from a superior about new accounting practices.

\*Objective references are important. e.g., a research article or informative article Written communication supplements oral communication. e.g., the h u t e s of a meeting

\*Crucial decisions and actions are to be considered. e.g., plans and proposals

\*Communication is subject to review and reconsideration. e.g., goals, performance appraisals

\*Personal presence is not required. e.g., circulating a list of holidays for organizations to choose from; routine good wishes at the New Year.

- The communicator needs to extend himself in &me and space. e.g., a letter from a company head to all its branches in a country around the world.

### **Where Both Mode are used**

When people are expected to 'carry home' ideas. *e.g. after a brain-storming session, individuals or teams are asked to develop plans*

\*When follow-up activities are necessary. *e.g. after a consultative meeting*

\*When optimal understanding is needed. *e.g. a joint communique about international trade agreements*

\*When both clarity and impact are needed. *e.g. a new product is launched in the market*

\*When the presentation is exploratory. *e.g. a team member presents **ideas** for a new product*

\* When audience participation is desired. *e.g. the presentation of building development plans for a city*

\*When abstract or remote ideas are to be communicated. *e.g. a presentation at a science congress or academic conference*

## PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

### INTRODUCTION

Ethics is primarily concerned with what one ought to do, along with defining and analysing the concepts of right and wrong. When the setup of ethical norms and practices to consider an act right or wrong is made up on objective grounds, then it is usually considered that what is right, good, or bad for one person; would be right, good, or bad for everyone, irrespective of the conditions or context of any individual, culture, and society. The ideal ethical norms and principles that killing, telling lie, and cheating is wrong, that treating people as a mere means is not right, are applicable on everyone, they can be universalized, or they seek the happiness of maximum human beings. They are not usually confined to any given particular context or perspective. These objective grounds for determining what is good, right, and wrong might not work in some crucial situations where it becomes difficult to decide the rightness or wrongness of an action. Saying this, however, should not be seen as accepting the position of moral relativists, that our moral judgements, notions of truth-falsity, right-wrong are always dependent on context or perspective of a culture. What is right and acceptable in one cultural practice may not be acceptable in another culture. The possibility of accepting universal values would then become negligible. The problem arises when sometimes we find ourselves in such a situation where it becomes so difficult to take a decision in line with the fundamental ethical principles. Ethical dilemmas of real life situations involve much more layers of complexities which make it too hard to resolve these dilemmas based on any single conventional principle. Applied ethics deals with these real life situations where we try to find out the moral possibility/permissibility of specific acts. It seems to be an important requirement to consider the conditions and circumstances in which an action has been performed or about to be performed before taking any decision about the rightness or wrongness of that action. It demands to think and reflect upon the whole situation. The issues and debates of applied ethics demand a critical analysis, and an evaluation of our conventional moral principles. Morality should not be considered as a preachment and lessons to live an ideal life. Being an integral element of philosophy, there always remains a scope to reason, to think, to critically analyse and examine the customary and traditional set of principles, to question the eternal nature of these principles. This is how we move towards the path of reflective morality in order to test the effectiveness of the established moral rules in a particular situation, whenever it is required. Reflective morality does not reject the conventional moral principles, it only helps in reaching to a better decision by presenting such an approach that either adds some novel element or subtracts the unnecessary element to resolve a particular issue. Suppose, for example, a person who works as an accountant in a big private firm, his father gets seriously ill and has to be hospitalized. He requires bulk amount of money for his father's operation. His boss is very strict and he believes that if he would ask for money, his boss would never give him. That is why he took the money from company's account without informing his boss in order to save the life of his father. He saves his father's life, and gradually with time he kept all the money back into the accounts of the company. Now the question is how we would determine the rightness or wrongness of the act performed. The person was in an ethical dilemma, we all are know that stealing money cannot be said a morally right action, but at that time saving

someone's life was the most important and primary act, the means he selected was obviously not a professionally right one, but he did it under unavoidable circumstances where he did not have any other available option for saving life of his father. Keeping the whole situation in mind we may ask what action his boss would take now, should he punish his employee for not informing him, or for not taking permission before taking the money? The answer could not simply be given in affirmative or negative terms as it requires reflecting upon the criticality of the whole situation. In situations like these the need arises to think in a different direction and it also requires careful, critical examination of the customary moral principles. Based on the varieties of concepts and nature of the problem, ethics is being sub-divided in some main approaches like normative ethics, metaethics, and applied ethics. Professional ethics comes under applied ethics wherein we attempt to resolve the realistic issues such as conflict of interests in a profession, doctor-patient relationship, surrogacy, abortion, environmental issues, suicide, euthanasia, capital punishment etc. with the help of ethical principles. Professional ethics falls into the domain of applied ethics because it is concerned with rules, regulations, and norms to be followed in any profession, and these rules ultimately falls back on the concept of what is good, right, and appropriate.

## **PROFESSIONALISM AND PROFESSIONAL ETHICS**

The term professionalism stands for the way one performs his/her actions in a profession. This way may include a bundle of things in itself, the practices, the standards, the values, skills, education, and training. Professionalism requires mastery over the theoretical knowledge, but only theoretical competence is not enough, a professional should be able to implement the theory into practice. Professional ethics, as the name suggests, defines and codifies certain ethical norms necessary for all professions. We find codes of conduct and the codes of ethics in professions. The codes of conduct may vary according to different professions, e.g. engineers will be having different codes of conducts from those of medical associations, but we will find same guiding moral principles in every profession. These moral principles govern the behaviour of a professional in ethical decision-making, specifically in a situation of ethical dilemmas. An organisation/institution/company is committed to certain values and it includes ethical responsibilities of a profession. Transparency, impartialness, openness, and loyalty are few desirable characteristic traits of a professional.\* Let us take one example which highlights the unprofessional behaviour of a company. Some cases of raid and arrest of call centers employees were registered in a country. The charge was that the employees used to extort money from foreign nationals. A large amount of money has been taken away from citizens of other countries by these call centers. These call centers appointed young people for this work, trained them to speak foreign language. These employees used to call people of other countries, threaten them and force them to pay millions of dollars. Despite continuous complaints, no action was taken against these fraudulent call centers. Firstly, these types of acts lead us to think how young generation can easily be provoked by the call centers to involve in these unlawful activities only to gain large amount of money by keeping all the values of honesty, dignity and respect aside. Secondly the unprofessional attitude of the call center put down the reputation and image of all other call centers of that country as well, and thirdly the inaction and unprofessionalism showed at the level of the country also affects the relation of two countries. These unethical acts always involve a risk - risk of losing the job, risk of being caught and arrested, and risk of losing self-respect. Despite being aware of the risk factors involved in these unethical acts, what is the guiding factor that encourages people to perform these kinds of acts, why money-factor, the accumulation of money for personal gains stands over and above all moral values and the respect for one's own and other's life? Undoubtedly these offers may seem tempting at first sight, but neither the intention of doing these acts nor can the outcome be said to be good or

right for anyone involved in the act. These kinds of cases are a matter of concern for everyone, these incidents usually come and go without much attention of people as if we come across these cases daily and we are habitual and used to hearing these incidents as bits of information only. The problem is much deeper than it seems to be, one should not take these issues very lightly and ignore them. If these incidents often happen, it does not mean that more frequency of their occurrences reduces the gravity of the issue, how can it make the issue ignorable? On the other hand, the gravity of the issue must be increased when all the moral values, laws, rules, and codes of conduct fail to stop or at least reduce the frequency of these illegal acts, and lead us all to think on reasons of failure to control such actions.

### **WHY ETHICS MATTERS IN PROFESSION?**

A Profession always stands in relation to the other, a professional always seeks for good professional relations, a bonding with the other is required for the survival, and progress of a profession, for example bonding between patient and doctor, between a lawyer and his/her client. What is the nature of this bonding, what binds a professional with the other? To maintain this professional relation, we devise certain rules. There are certain codes of conduct and codes of ethics in every workplace. In a workplace, the nature of codes of conduct depends on the type of institution/organization, and they may vary from profession to profession. The codes of conduct are not morally binding in nature, codes of conduct in a profession state kind of actions that are either permitted or prohibited for a professional, these actions are directional in nature; codes of ethics, on the other hand, are statements of value, or guiding principles needed to guide the behaviour of the professionals. The canvas of the codes of ethics is much broader than the codes of conduct. Codes of ethics are the guiding principles that guide professionals to work with honesty, without discrimination, and they are aimed towards public good. These codes of ethics help an organization resolve the situations of ethical dilemma and in decision making; in issues like conflict of interests, safety, and harassment in a workplace. The moral values in all professions are of the same nature, but the decision that is taken in a particular situation in different professions would depend on considering the context, complexities and nitty-gritty of that situation. In medical profession, the ultimate objective of a doctor is to save the life of the patient. But doctors do transcend and think beyond this highest goal in the cases of Euthanasia, where we see a conflict of moral values, of saving life of patient, or to release all the pain and sufferings of the patient. The conflict of values gives rise to ethical dilemmas. The understanding of the need and importance of these ethical principles gradually broadens with the broadening of our canvas of understanding, development of our cognitive faculty of thinking and reflecting. This developing stage is the one where one can question the need, use and benefits of a particular norm for an individual, for a society or for a profession. The question that becomes difficult to answer is that despite having all the mandatory rules and necessary ethical codes, why we meet up with unethical conduct in professional set up of any company/organization/institution. Every profession demands that work must be done with honesty and integrity, that is the reason certain norms become necessary to be maintained and followed for good governance, for smooth functioning of the profession at the level of the organization as a whole and also at the level of their employees as individual human beings. Every organization should adhere to some norms, codes of conduct, and set of guidelines to regulate the organization in a proper manner and evaluate the conduct of their employees. The formation of rules and codes of conduct consist of multiple layers, various aspectual elements. These multiple layers may include:

- The organization should work for the welfare of the society, thus any act that is not acceptable in the society would be prohibited by the organization.



- The formation of rules should also take into account zero or lesser amount of harm to the environment by any kind of activity.
- The formation of rules should not go against the good of their employees.
- The respect and dignity of each individual who is using the service of any organization should be the top most priority of all professions.

The unethical behaviour in any profession results when the above said conditions will not be met, that is, when it would cause harm to the environment, to the society, to the users, to the employees; and by bypassing all these above mentioned goals, if the organization would contemplate only in making personal profits. Thus certain sets of codes and principles are required in order to distinguish between right and wrong, to establish the values and goals of an organization. We will discuss some issues in the next section that can be termed as unprofessional practices that are impediments for the development of an individual, of a profession, of the society, and of the nation as well.

## **The Importance Of Professional Ethics In The Workplace**

Brand new professional panorama, the significance of professional ethics within the place of job is undeniable. Professional ethics form the ethical compass that guides people and businesses in their interactions, decision-making, and behavior in the professional sphere. This compass is not merely a theoretical framework however a cornerstone upon which the integrity, credibility, and sustainability of offices are built. In this newsletter, we delve into the pivotal role of professional ethics inside the current place of work, exploring the profound impact it has on trust, accountability, place of job lifestyle, prison compliance, and the long-time period achievement of people and businesses alike.

### **1. Trust and Credibility**

Trust and credibility are the bedrock of any successful place of business. Professional ethics play a pivotal function in fostering and keeping trust. When employees, colleagues, clients, and stakeholders understand that an employer operates ethically, agreement is constructed, and credibility is hooked up. This acceptance as true is important for powerful operating relationships, hit collaborations, and the long-time period popularity of the corporation.

Professional ethics contribute to trust in several ways:

- Consistency
- Reliability
- Integrity
- Honesty
- Open Communication

In essence, trust and credibility are intangible but invaluable assets in the workplace, and professional ethics are the tools that help organizations earn and maintain them.

## **2. Honesty and Transparency**

Honesty and transparency are closely intertwined with professional ethics. Honesty is the cornerstone of ethical conduct and transparency is the manner via which it is practiced. In the workplace, honesty entails telling the truth, being honest about one's capabilities and limitations and fending off deceit or manipulation.

Transparency, on the other hand is ready openness and readability in communicate and choice making. It guarantees that relevant information is shared and procedures are performed in a way that is comprehensible and available to all stakeholders.

## **3. Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is a vital thing of expert ethics, particularly in fields wherein touchy statistics is dealt with, which include healthcare, finance, regulation and technology. Confidentiality involves respecting and defensive personal records, ensuring that it isn't always disclosed or accessed with the aid of unauthorized people.

The importance of confidentiality in the workplace is evident for several reasons:

- Trustworthiness
- Legal and Ethical Obligations
- Client and Employee Privacy
- Competitive Advantage
- Ethical Reputation

Confidentiality, consequently, is not necessarily a criminal and ethical requirement but also an essential thing of professionalism and belief constructing within the place of job.

## **4. Accountability and Responsibility**

Accountability and duty are key outcomes of ethical behavior in the place of business. When people and corporations adhere to professional ethics, they take delivery of obligation for their moves and are held answerable for their selections and conduct.

## **5. Positive Workplace Culture**

A fantastic place of work subculture refers to the general atmosphere, values and behaviours within an agency. It plays a vital role in shaping the work environment, worker morale and productivity. Ethical considerations are central to fostering a positive workplace culture:

- **Open Communication** – Encouraging open and sincere communicate guarantees that people feel safe expressing their concerns or reporting unethical behaviour.

- **Inclusivity and Diversity** – Embracing variety and inclusion is a moral imperative. Companies that prioritise those values create an environment where every worker feels reputable and valued, leading to advanced teamwork and creativity.

## 6. Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness means being reliable and honest, vital in personal and professional contexts. It involves consistency in actions and words, building trust over time. In business, trustworthiness is crucial for strong relationships with clients and partners. It's the foundation of trust, fostering enduring collaborations and a positive reputation.

## 7. Legal and Ethical Obligations

Businesses have legal and ethical obligations they need to meet:

- Ethical organizations follow all relevant laws and policies. This includes adhering to hard work laws, environmental policies and enterprise precise requirements.
- Ethical businesses often go past legal requirements to have interaction in socially accountable practices. This may contain environmental sustainability efforts, network involvement or fair change practices.
- Establishing a clear code of ethics publications personnel on expected conduct and facilitates the prevention of ethical violations.

## 8. Client and Employee Privacy

Respect for customer and employee privacy is paramount:

- **Data Protection** – Ethical companies take data privacy seriously. They implement strict data protection measures, obtain informed consent for data collection and ensure compliance with GDPR and other privacy laws.
- **Confidentiality** – Keeping sensitive employee personnel information such as trade secrets or personal information, builds trust and avoids legal ramifications.

## 9. Competitive Advantage

Competitive advantage in the context of outsourcing refers to the edge a company gains by effectively leveraging external IT professionals. This strategic move allows businesses to tap into specialised skills, reduce operational costs and enhance their offerings.

By harnessing the expertise of outsourced IT professionals, companies can stay ahead in their industry, respond to market changes more efficiently and deliver superior products/services to their customers. This competitive advantage helps organizations thrive in the ever evolving business landscape.

## **10. Ethical Reputation**

Ethical reputation in outsourcing is vital, showing a company's commitment to integrity and responsibility. It builds trust and attracts ethical-minded clients. Upholding this reputation means fair, transparent, and socially responsible dealings. It enhances a company's long-term success and credibility.

### **The 7 Principles of Ethical Decision Making**

Making ethical decisions can often seem like an uphill battle, one riddled with complexities and nuances that can confuse even the best of us.

Yet, as challenging as it may be, it's crucial to have a set of principles to guide you. As we traverse this road together, we'll delve into the seven principles of ethical decision-making that can help ensure our choices are consistent, moral, and reflective of our values.

#### **Integrity**

The first principle is integrity. As the cornerstone of ethical decision-making, integrity necessitates being honest and possessing steadfast moral values that direct our decision-making process.

When we speak of integrity, we are talking about consistency of actions, values, methods, principles, and outcomes. In an ethical context, you should be capable of trusting yourself, a vital aspect of which includes making decisions that reflect your values and principles, not just your immediate desires or pressures.

Moreover, demonstrating integrity can establish your credibility, allowing others to trust you, enhancing not just personal relationships but also professional ones.

#### **Respect**

The second principle is respect. It's about acknowledging the inherent value of all individuals and treating them with dignity.

Doing so involves honouring others' rights, opinions, and beliefs, even when they differ significantly from our own.

In a world brimming with diversity, respect enables us to appreciate differing viewpoints and fosters a culture of acceptance. Beyond interpersonal interactions, respect extends to the environment and all its inhabitants. Recognising our interconnectedness with nature and treating all living beings with kindness and respect is a critical component of ethical decision-making.

#### **Responsibility**

The third principle is responsibility. Responsibility means being aware that our decisions have consequences and being prepared to accept them, be they positive or negative.

This principle is intrinsically tied to accountability, suggesting that we should answer for our actions, particularly to those who are affected by our decisions.

From a broader perspective, responsibility also means being a good steward of the resources we use and the tasks we're given, further highlighting the role of ethics in our daily lives.

### **Fairness**

The fourth principle is fairness. Ethical decisions must be unbiased, treating everyone with equal consideration regardless of their status, position, or personal attributes.

Fairness involves making decisions based on objective criteria, avoiding favouritism, and giving others equal opportunities. It supports justice and equity, fostering an environment where everyone can thrive.

### **Compassion**

The fifth principle is compassion. It involves empathy and understanding towards others, even if we disagree with them or their actions.

Compassion drives us to consider others' feelings and circumstances when making decisions, encouraging us to choose kindness over harm and understanding over judgment.

Further, it urges us to acknowledge the human element in every decision we make, bridging the gap between impersonal principles and humanistic ethics.

### **Courage**

The sixth principle is courage. It requires us to stand up for our beliefs, even when it's difficult, risky, or unpopular.

Courage may involve making tough decisions that may not be instantly gratifying or could lead to criticism. But, true ethical leadership comes from having the courage to do what's right, not just what's easy or what's expected.

### **Wisdom**

The seventh and final principle is wisdom. It involves making informed decisions based on the facts while allowing room for intuitive guidance.

Unlike popular belief, wisdom isn't about knowing all the answers but understanding the complexities of ethical decision-making, asking the right questions, learning from past experiences, and foreseeing the possible outcomes of our decisions. It's about balancing head and heart in decision-making, applying both rational thought and emotional intelligence.



## **The Art of Attitude**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Attitude has been a core issue of study in social psychology since its inception. Attitude is generally used to explain our feelings, thoughts and behaviours for other people, issues, events, situations, etc. In our everyday life also, attitude has been one of the most used word. Often we say that: "I do/don't like Rohan." "I have positive or negative feelings and ideas about dogs as a pet." "Anand, as a colleague, has an attitude problem." "I favour capital punishment for the sexual offences." "I favour atomic non-proliferation at the global level." All these statements refer to some or other aspects of attitude. In this unit we will understand the meaning and definition of attitude. We will further explain the components, types and functions of attitude. We will also describe the process and theories of attitude formation and change. We will also discuss the issue pertaining to relationship between attitude and behaviour. Lastly, we will also understand the concept, process and relevance of persuasion.

### **MEANING AND DEFINITION OF ATTITUDE**

Although attitude is a common term which is very frequently used in our daily conversations, social psychologists define attitudes in a specific way. One of the pioneers of the field, Gordon Allport (1935) defined attitude as "mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related." There have been a number of attempts to define attitude in different expressions by different social psychologists, however the definition given by Allport has been still regarded as a comprehensive definition of attitude. The definition describes three different aspects of attitudes. Firstly, Allport refers attitudes as mental and neural states of readiness. This assumption implicitly asserts that attitudes are entirely personal affair and cannot be observed or measured directly by other people. Only the person who holds an attitude has access to it. Social psychological tools that claim to measure attitudes are in fact indirect measures of attitudes. Secondly, the definition states that attitudes are acquired and organized through experience. This indicates that the genesis of the attitudes we form about various people, issues, events and situations lies in the experiences that we have in our families, neighbourhood, peer groups, work place and larger society. However, this assumption overemphasises the importance of social learning in attitude formation and underestimates the role of genetic factors in this process. Finally, the definition states that attitude exerts a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related. Thus, attitudes are not merely feelings or beliefs that we have regarding people, issues, events and situations but they also guide and predict our future responses to those people, issues, events and situations.

## STRUCTURE OF ATTITUDES

An attitude is comprised of three interrelated components:

**Cognitive component of the attitude** refers to the beliefs and thought processes associated with the attitude object. The cognitive component of the attitude further guides the way in which we process information regarding the attitude object. At the initial stage of attitude formation we usually weigh the pros and cons of the attributes of the attitude object and based on these 'factual' evaluations we form either a favourable or unfavourable attitude for the object. Furthermore, once an attitude is formed it steers the way we encode, register and utilise the information received from the environment.

**Affective component** indicates that every attitude is associated with positive or negative feelings towards the attitude object. This affective feeling further leads to pleasant or unpleasant emotional responses to the attitude object. Thus liking or disliking for the attitude object originates.

**Behavioural component** indicates that a specific attitude toward an object leads us to a specific behavioural tendency or readiness and thus we are inclined to respond to the attitude object in particular manner consistent with the attitude. Although these three components are distinct processes, they function in an integrated and interrelated fashion to express the attitude. Since they all belong to the same attitude, they function in a consistent manner. If a person has a negative attitude toward polythene bags he or she will search for information supporting his view that polythene bags are dangerous to the environment. He/she will dislike the consumer goods that are packaged in the polythene bags. Furthermore, he/ she himself/herself will not use polythene bags. In this way the attitude structure remains consistent. Each of these components influences the other two and therefore, changes in one component attitude leads to the changes in other components. This process makes the attitude itself dynamic.

## TYPES OF ATTITUDES

Generally we express our attitudes as per our wish. We are aware of our attitudes and their influences on our behaviour. Such attitudes are known as **explicit attitude**. Since the explicit attitudes function on the conscious level, we are aware of their cognitive processing and their impact on our behaviour. Explicit attitudes are activated by control process of evaluation and execution. For example, we may be aware of our view and feelings towards a particular brand of toothpaste and accordingly this leads us to a specific behaviour toward that (buying or not buying toothpaste of that brand).

However, there are many other attitudes that function at the unconscious level. These attitudes are called as **implicit attitude**. Contrary to the explicit attitudes, implicit attitudes are under control of automatically activated evaluation and are executed in behaviour without the awareness of the person holding that attitude. Thus, implicit attitudes automatically affect behaviours, without conscious thought and below the level of awareness. It is assumed that in the process of developing new attitudes people usually erase and overwrite the old attitudes with the new ones. However, a model of dual attitudes proposed by Wilson, Lindsey, and Schooler (2000) states that when a new attitude is developed; it does not erase the old one. Instead, the two attitudes coexist. The new attitude becomes the explicit attitude; whereas, the old attitudes are still in memory and function as the implicit attitude. Petty, Tormala, Brinol, and Jarvis (2006) demonstrated that in many situations,

when the old attitude finds a right situation or are 'primed' by the situation, the 'subconscious' level implicit attitudes are expressed in the behaviour.

## **FUNCTIONS OF ATTITUDES**

Attitudes are formed through learning and are retained even for a lifetime. They, in many cases, become part of the core of our self. They serve a number of functions for the individual (Katz, 1960).

**Adaptive and Instrumental Function:** Favourable attitudes are developed toward rewarding objects and unfavourable attitudes toward objects that thwart or punish us. In this process people learn socially acceptable views, opinions and attitudes. Thus, after being developed, attitudes provide us a simple and efficient means of evaluating objects. A student learns to express positive attitude toward the school discipline when he/she is rewarded for doing so and is punished for not behaving accordingly.

**Knowledge Function:** Attitudes function as simplified categories for various social stimuli (people, events, situations, etc.) which further help us to understand and explain the complex social world. Our attitudes about the object category provide us with a meaning to the social world and a foundation for making inferences about its members. Our stereotypical beliefs and strong prejudices toward a particular racial group are example of such functions of attitudes. Such schematic functions of attitudes further allow us to predict the behaviours of people of these categories with less cognitive efforts.

**Self-expressive Function:** Attitudes are means to define, maintain and enhance the self-worth. Many attitudes express the basic values of the attitude holder and reinforce his or her self-image. Some attitudes represent a person's identification with a particular group. This function of attitudes operates at two levels. Firstly, our core values are reflected in the attitudes we hold and we express our attitudes in our behaviours in the social world. Furthermore, we tend to develop an attitude consistent with our self-concept. **Ego-defensive Function:** The ego-defensive function of attitudes refers that we hold attitudes that protect our self-esteem from harm or justify our acts that make us feel guilty. This function involves psychoanalytic principles where people use defense mechanisms, such as, denial, repression, projection, rationalization etc., to protect themselves from psychological harm. For example, a player may protect his ego being hurt by his defeat in an interschool badminton match by developing negative attitude toward match referee.

## **ATTITUDE CHANGE**

In any democratic country, like India, elections are conducted to decide that which political party will form the government for the next years. However, it often happens that the incumbent political party loses the confidence of voters and the other party wins the majority of voters' opinions. Thus, attitudes once formed can be changed also. For example, a person who has positive attitude toward atomic weapons may begin opposing it, or vice versa. Attitude change is a process by which valence of attitude is transformed or changed into the opposite direction.



**Balance Theory** Fritz Heider (1946) proposed balance theory which views the situations in a triad containing three components; P: the person, O: the other person, and X: the attitude object. Heider hypothesises two types of relationships among elements: sentiment and unit. Sentiment relationships are characterised by bonds based on attitudes or evaluations, for example Rohan likes coffee; Sandhya supports moves for cashless economy; Nitesh cheers Mumbai Indians in the IPL. Unit relationships indicate possession, for example Ritesh works with Omkar; Gagan has prepared a proposal for cashless economy; Mukesh owns the Mumbai Indians in the IPL). Relationships among the elements are indicated by positive (+) or negative (-) signs. Heider proposed that individuals view such relationships either as balanced (consistent) or unbalanced (inconsistent). For example, the principle that “my enemy’s enemy is my friend” is balanced, because there is something consistent about liking the person who has attacked your enemy. Balance in a triad is concluded by multiplying the signs together. If the outcome is positive, the cognitive structure is balanced (consistent) and if the outcome is negative, it is unbalanced. Balance theory proposes that since balanced states are favoured over unbalanced states, people are motivated to change an unbalanced state to a balanced state. Heider argued that by this way people restore consistency in the relationships. Heider (1958) demonstrated this in a study where participants were exposed to the triads showing that “Jim doesn’t like Bob, but he likes the poem that Bob wrote”. Responding to the situation, about 80% of participants felt the requirement of some change in the relationships. Majority of participants suggested Jim to change the sentiment relationship with Bob. About one third participants suggested Jim to change attitude toward the poem. About 5% suggested a change in the unit relationship between Bob and the poem stating that the poem was actually not written by Bob. Though Heider’s balance theory may appear reasonable to explain the relationships, it does not explain more complex situations. Balance theory takes the relationship among the elements of the triad into account but it does not talk about magnitude of these relationships. Simple disliking and enmity both have negative sign but their magnitudes are not comparable. Balance theory explains the situations involving only three elements, but the real social situations are far more complex having more than three elements. Even though balance theory has been criticised on these points, it has been applied to several areas, such as developing friendship, conformity and reactions to criticism.

### **Importance of having a positive attitude in life**

A positive attitude is not just about sporting that smile on your face every time, it is more than that. It is about maintaining that optimistic mind-set and attitude even when things are in utter chaos. It is often said that what good or bad diet does to your body, positive and negative thoughts do the same to your mind! Feed your mind with positive thoughts and you will see amazing changes around you. When you start thinking optimistically, your mind becomes clear of any negative thoughts and you will see the world in a new light. You will stop blaming yourself or others. You will be in total control of your emotions and try to seek a valuable lesson in every setback you experience.

Here are a few more reasons why should develop a positive attitude in life:

**Happiness:** A positive attitude is known to be linked with the feeling of happiness. Happiness is a state of mind; it comes from within and not dependent on external factors. When you think positively, you will be in harmony and feel happy. To put it simply, with a positive attitude, you can be happy right now ... irrespective of any situations you are in.

**Self-confidence:** When you develop a positive attitude, you will start feeling better about yourself. You will treat yourself with more respect and love, and this in turn will boost your confidence levels and inner strength. You will take on new challenges and come out of your self-limiting beliefs.

**Stronger immune system:** People with a positive attitude are lively, energetic and healthy. Positive thinking renders a positive effect on health as well; it lowers stress and improves your overall wellbeing. Even when you fall sick, your body recuperates faster.

**More focused:** With positive thinking, you achieve emotional balance, which actually helps the brain to execute functions properly. You learn to stay focused and as a result, you can come up with the right decisions in challenging situations.

**Training your mind to develop positive attitude:** Repeating positive affirmations is a great way to train your mind to think positively. Reading inspirational and motivational quotes on a daily basis will help you overcome negative thoughts and instil a sense of optimism in you. When any unpleasant event occurs, approach it with a positive mind-set and try to learn an optimistic lesson out of it. Remember, your thoughts determine your feelings and actions. So whenever any negative thought comes to your mind, immediately replace it with a positive one. Even if you are in a dire state of affairs, a positive mind-set will help you sail through the difficult phase easily. Resolve to be cheerful, no matter how the situation is. If things are not working in your favour, instead of fretting, work towards your goals with a positive attitude and you will see amazing results soon!