

Learning How to Negotiate

Objective

To demonstrate positive negotiating skills using the VASE technique.

You Should Know

If you ask for something and the other person disagrees, you might have to negotiate to get what you want. Negotiation refers to people finding an acceptable solution to a shared problem.

Do you have a hard time getting what you want? If this is true, you might believe, “If I don’t get exactly what I want, I don’t want anything at all!” This way of thinking, often referred to as “black and white thinking,” will often lead to disappointment, anger, and resentment.

If you are able to effectively negotiate, you might not get everything you want, but you will likely get some of what you want. Just as important, you can also leave the door open for future negotiations and discussions. Anger, resentment, and hurt feelings have no place in a positive negotiation.

So, what are the skills you need to negotiate effectively? You can use the VASE technique as a guide for productive negotiating:

Validate that you see where the other person is coming from – and then explain where you are coming from.

Ask for a compromise. Is there a way for both of you to get what you want?

Suggest alternatives. What are you willing to give up? Giving in is not losing; remember, getting part of what you want is better than getting nothing!

Express yourself. Use a kind tone rather than approaching the other person in an angry or aggressive manner.

Here is an example:

Validate: “I understand you need the shifts to be covered because you are short-staffed.”

Ask for compromise: “I agree to cover the shifts if you agree to let me have specific days off next month.”

Suggest alternatives: “If you are unable to provide me those days off, I am willing to provide other acceptable dates.”

Express yourself: Pay attention to wording and tone of voice. State the case clearly and without emotion.

What to Do

Describe a situation from the past where you had to negotiate with someone. Describe what you wanted, and any challenges you had. What was the outcome? Be specific.

Describe a situation where you think you might need to negotiate with another person.

Describe your strategies for negotiation using the VASE technique.

V _____

A _____

S _____

E _____

Now, think of someone to role-play with you. Who can you ask? _____

Now, practice negotiating the situation described above with your role-play partner. Describe what happened.

Did you find the VASE technique helpful? Why or why not?

How did it go? What can you do differently? What are some potential problems or obstacles when you negotiate “for real?”

Reflections on This Exercise

What else can you do to sharpen your negotiation skills? Explain.

How helpful was this exercise? _____
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn in this exercise that was helpful?
