

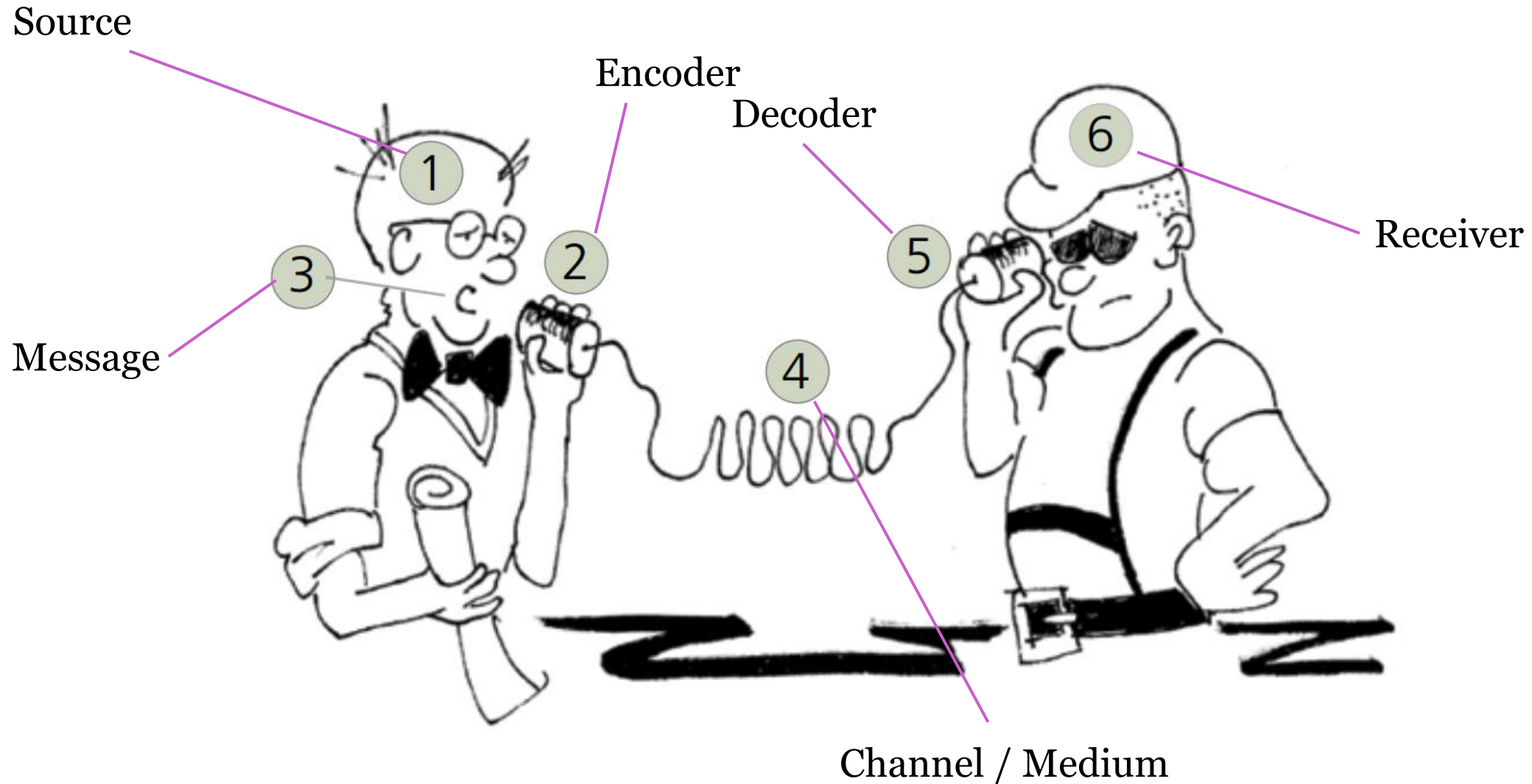


Communication Skills

A managerial perspective

Nariman Dorafshan, 2024

6 Elements of Communication

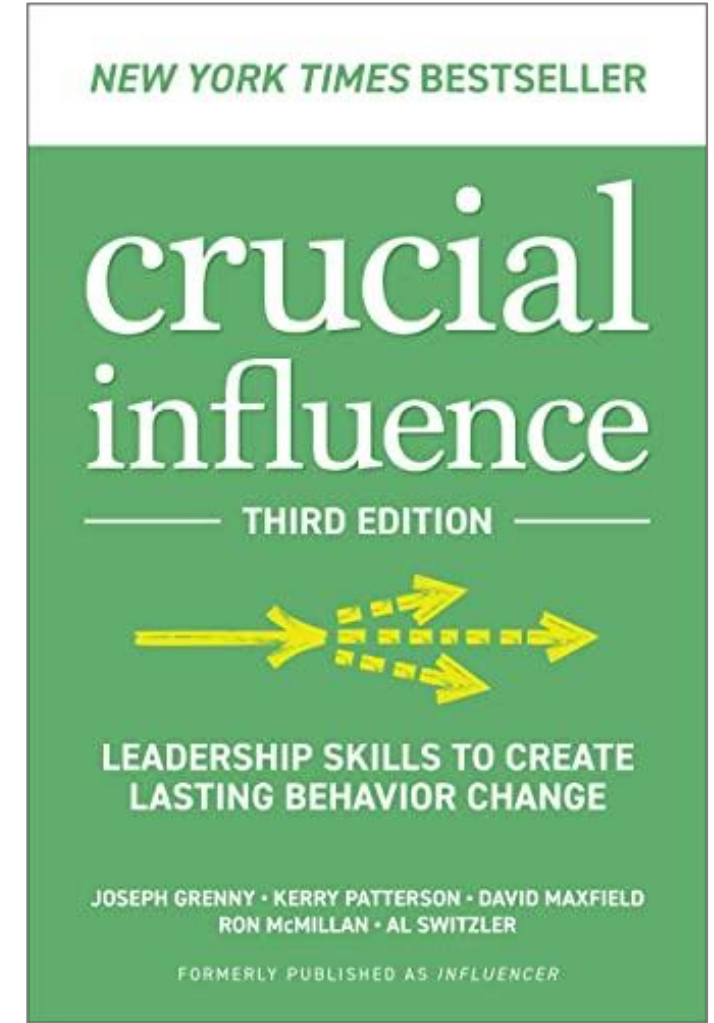
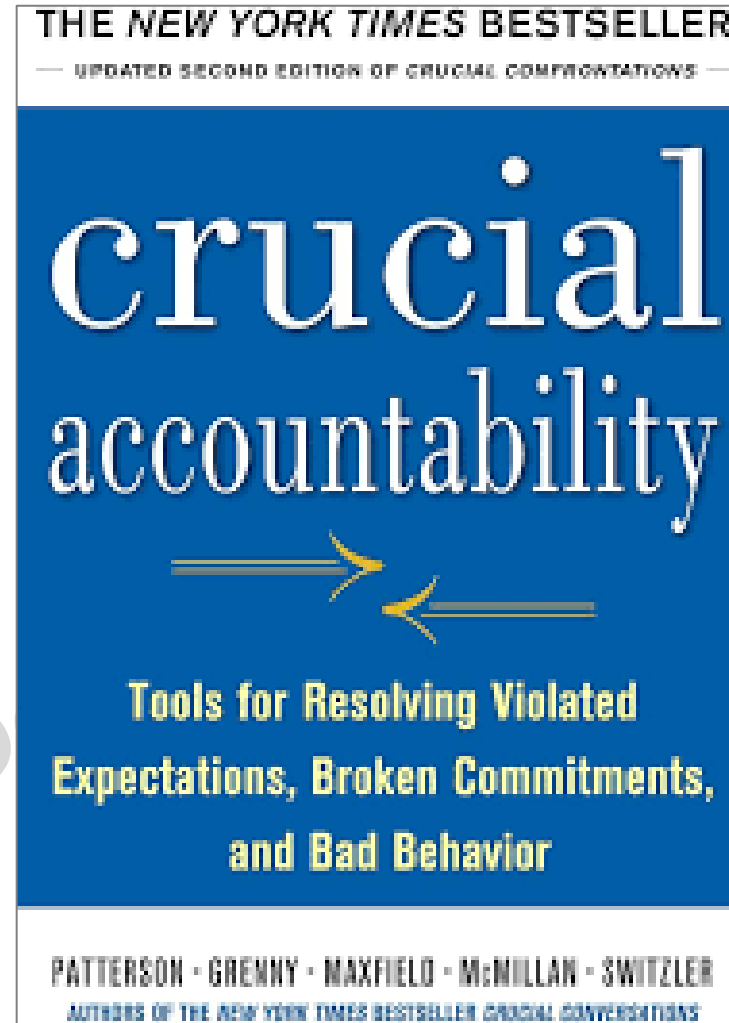
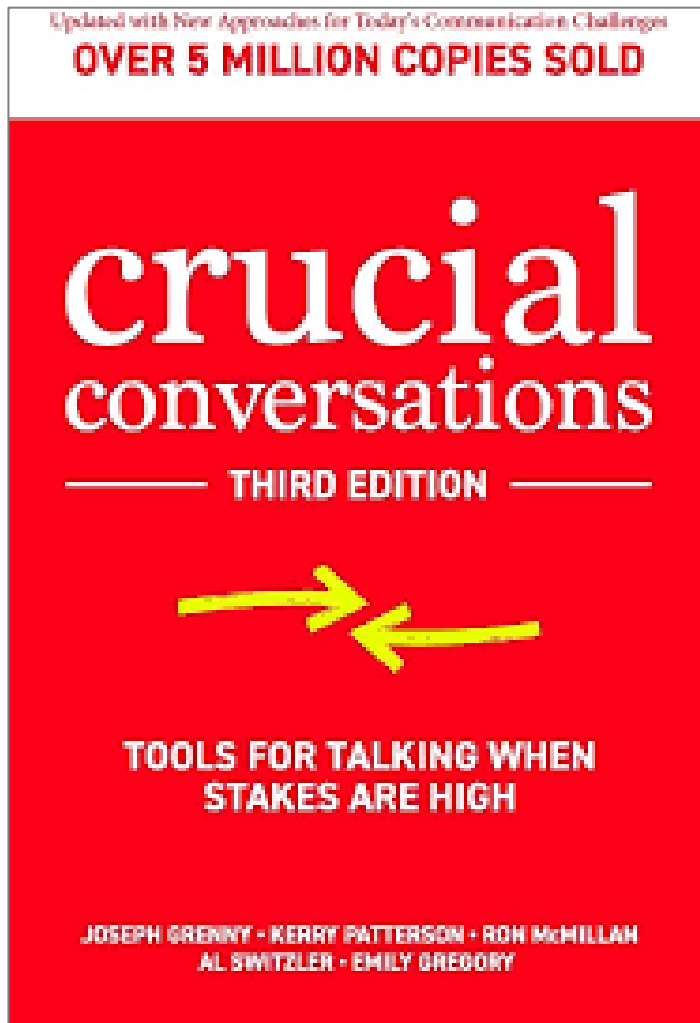


Part 1.3

Crucial Conversations

An Introduction

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Difficult Conversations - Examples

- Discussing...
 - A Wage Rise
 - A Resignation, Leaving the Company, Moving to another Project or Team
 - Firing Somebody
 - A Breaking-up, as business partners, or romantic partners
 - Criticizing a dear friend, a manager,...
 - Apologizing
 - Explaining some difficult decision

How do you start such a conversation?

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Do you simulate the conversation in your mind?

Does it help?

Crucial Conversation

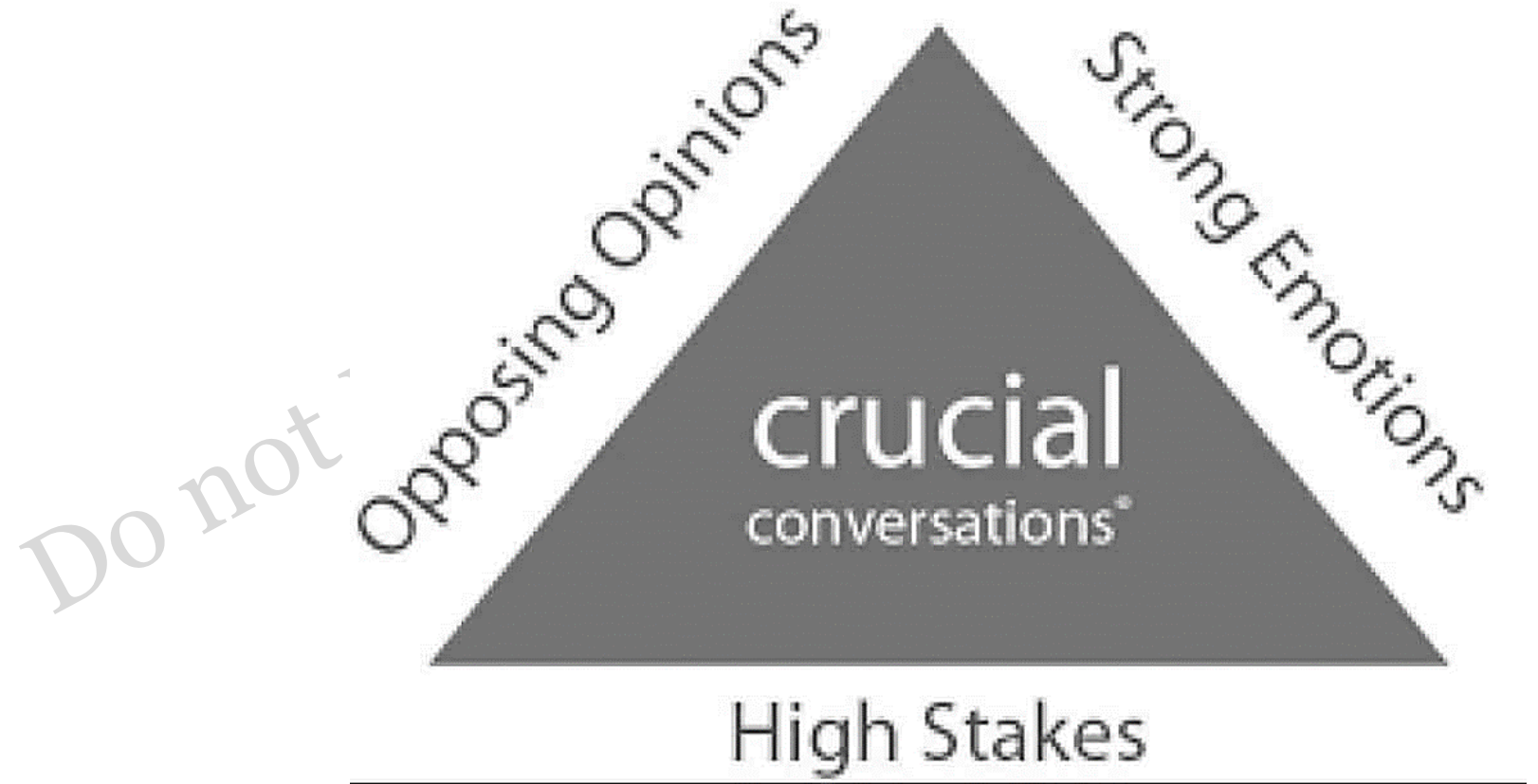
A discussion between two or more people in which they hold

(1) opposing opinions about a

(2) high-stakes issue and where

(3) emotions run strong.

Crucial Conversations



High Stakes Conversations

- High Stakes | نهادهای بالا
- Stakes: What have I put at stake here? | آنچه در وسط نهادهایم
- Compare:
 - You want to buy a second-hand laptop from your coworker
 - You have started a company with your business partner and worked for a decade, and now we want to terminate the partnership

Every action and reaction will be interpreted differently

Stakes

- What we have put into / invested...
 - Time
 - Energy
 - Money
 - Emotions
 - Hopes for the future

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Opposing Opinions

- There are always disagreements,
- I think having ... as a wage is fair.
- The manager might say I can't pay more than 70% of this price.
- Scenario 1:
 - Person 1) I want x.
 - Person 2) I can pay just y. => a simple disagreement, a price negotiation

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Opposing Opinions

- Scenario 2:
 - Person 1) I want x.
 - Person 2) You don't worth more than Y! Why do you think you worth X?
- Here it is an opposition in beliefs and values
- Now, it's not about 10 or 20% more or less,
it's about our value, capability, and competencies!

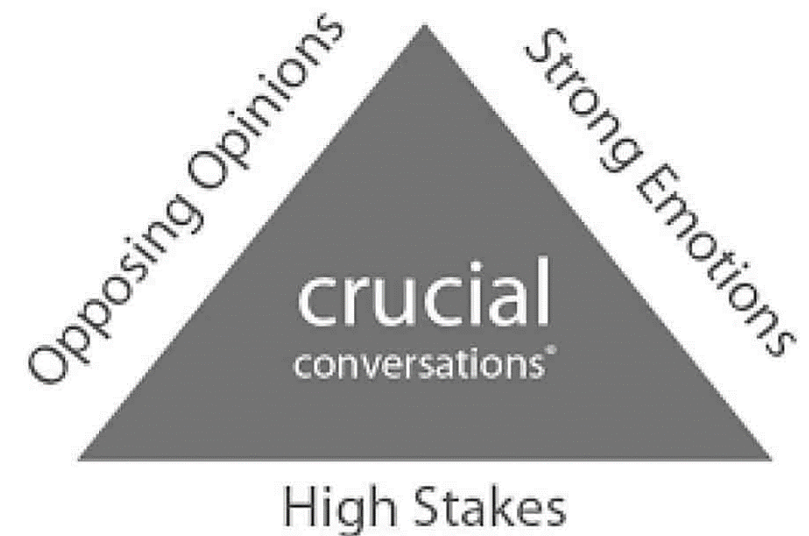
Strong Emotions

- Anger or Fear can make a conversation crucial too.
- Example:
 - You hear that the higher-ups are thinking about a scale-down
 - 2 days later, you are asking someone why they haven't delivered the project yet. The deadline was yesterday
 - What is different here than a normal conversation?

Question:

What they all have in common?

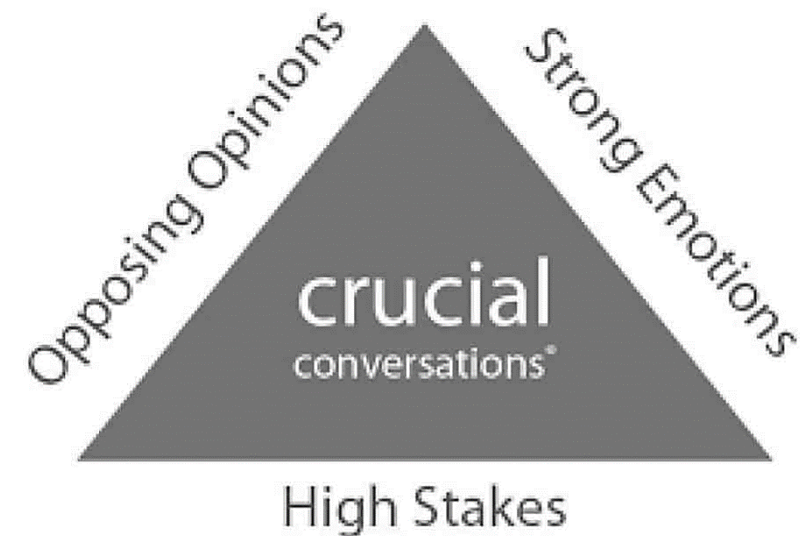
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Question:

What they all have in common?

Context!



What makes each of these conversations crucial

- The outcome could have a huge impact on either relationships or results that affect you greatly.
- Some element of your daily routine could be forever altered for better or worse. Clearly a promotion could make a big difference.
- Your company's success affects you and everyone you work with.
- Your relationship with your spouse influences every aspect of your life.
- Even something as trivial as a debate over cooking smells can damage your quality of life.

Lag Time is a Factor

- the determining factor between success and failure is the amount of time that passes between when the problem emerges and when those involved find a way to honestly and respectfully resolve it.
- It's the toxic emotions and dysfunctional behavior that occurs in the absence of a forthright conversation that causes the greatest damage.
- Biased behavior in your workplace is a problem, but its impact is multiplied when people fail to confront, discuss, and resolve the behavior.

Part 1.4

Self-Concept Theory

A very Brief Introduction

Who are you?

What makes you “you”?

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Maybe you answer with...

- You might answer with “*I’m a mother,*” or, “*I’m a therapist,*” or maybe, “*I’m a believer,*” “*I’m a good friend,*” “*I’m a brother.*”
- Maybe you answer with, “*I am excellent at my job,*” “*I’m an accomplished musician,*” or “*I’m a successful athlete.*”
- Other responses might fall into the category of traits: “*I’m a kind-hearted person,*” “*I’m intelligent and hard-working,*” or “*I’m laid-back and easy-going.*”

These responses come from your internal sense of who you are.

This sense is developed early in life, but it goes through constant evaluation and adjustment throughout the lifespan.

Self-concept: definition

- Self-concept is an overarching idea we have about who we are—physically, emotionally, socially, spiritually, and in terms of any other aspects **that make up who we are**
- We form and regulate our self-concept as we grow, based on the knowledge we have about ourselves.
- For example, you may have a very different idea of who you are in terms of your physical body, and who you are in terms of your spirit or soul.

O'Neill, P. (2005). *The Ethics of Problem Definition*. Canadian Psychology

“The individual’s **belief** about himself or herself,
including the person’s attributes and who and what
the self is.”

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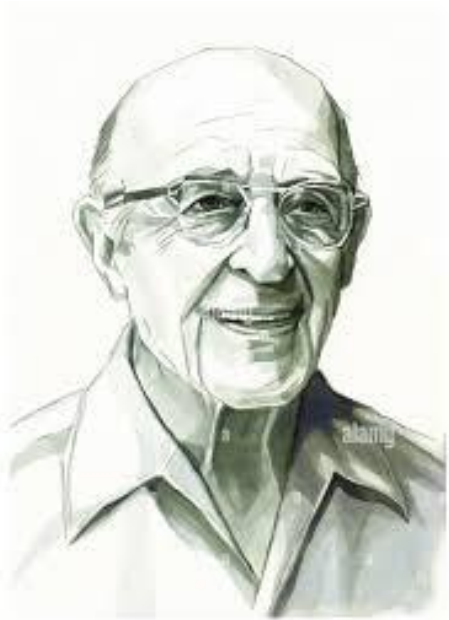
Self-Concept vs. Self-Esteem

- Self-concept is not self-esteem, although self-esteem may be a part of self-concept.
- Self-concept is the **perception that we have of ourselves**, our answer when we ask ourselves the question “Who am I?”
- It is knowing about one’s own tendencies, thoughts, preferences and habits, hobbies, skills, and areas of weakness.
- Self-concept is an overarching construct that self-esteem is one of the components of it

Self-Concept vs. Self-Image

- Self-image is related to self-concept but is less broad. Self-image is how an individual sees themselves, and it does not have to align with reality.
- A person's self-image is based on how they see themselves, while self-concept is a more comprehensive evaluation of the self, largely based on how a person sees themselves, values themselves, thinks about themselves, and feels about themselves.
- Self-image is a component of self-concept, along with self-esteem or self-worth and one's "ideal self"

the Self-Concept Theory of Personality



Carl Rogers
(1902-1987)

The **image** we have of **who we are** contributes to our personality, and our actions—combined with our personality —create **a feedback loop** into our image of ourselves.

Rogers believed that our personality is driven by our **desire for self-actualization**.

This is the condition that emerges when we reach our full potential and our self-concept, self-worth, and ideal self all.

the Self-Concept Theory of Personality



Carl Rogers
(1902-1987)

How we develop our personalities and self-concepts varies, thus creating the unique individuals we are.

According to Rogers, we always strive for self-actualization, some with more success than others.

How do people go about striving for self-actualization and congruence?

This relates to the idea of **how anyone “maintains” their idea of themselves.**

Self-concept

- self-concept is the perspective we have on who we are.
- Each of us has a unique self-concept, different from the self-concept of others and from their concept of us.

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Common characteristics

- there are some characteristics that all of our self-concepts have in common.
 1. Displays uniquely with each person.
 2. Vary from very positive to very negative.
 3. Carries emotional, intellectual, and functional dimensions.
 4. Changes with the context.
 5. Changes over time.
 6. Influence the individual's life

Dimensions of Self-Concept

- some overarching dimensions that researchers understand with the self-concept puzzle. These dimensions include:
 - Self-esteem
 - Self-worth
 - Self-image (physical)
 - Ideal self
 - Identities or roles (social)
 - Personal traits and qualities

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Some examples of positive self-concepts

- A person sees herself as an intelligent person;
- A man perceives himself as an important member of his community;
- A woman sees herself as an excellent spouse and friend;
- A person thinks of himself as a nurturing and caring person;
- A person views herself as a hard-working and competent employee.

Do not Distribute

Some examples of negative self-concepts

- A person sees herself as stupid and slow;
- A man perceives himself as expendable and a burden on his community;
- A woman sees herself as a terrible spouse and friend;
- A person thinks of himself as a cold and unapproachable person;
- A person views herself as a lazy and incompetent employee.
- .

Self-Concept Attachment

- Self-concept attachment refers to the attachment we form to a product as it influences identity.
 - For example, someone who loves their university jacket may also consider it as a status symbol that also represents their “outdoorsy” side.
 - Thus, this jacket has a strong self-concept attachment, in addition to its purpose of providing warmth.

How Does Self-Concept Affect Interpersonal Communication?

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Self-Concept and Interpersonal Communication

- Think about a cycle in which we develop, maintain, and revise our self-concept
- We have an idea of who we are, and we act in accordance with that self-concept.
- Consequently, others form an idea about who we are, and they react in accordance with their idea of who we are, thus impacting our idea of who we are.
- This feedback loop continues to shape us, and interpersonal communication plays a big role here.

- Our self-concept drives our motivations, methods, and experiences with communicating with others.
- For example, if you see yourself as someone who is always right (or who must always be right), you may struggle in communicating with others when disagreements arise.

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If that need is accompanied by an acceptance of aggression, you may use hostility, assertiveness, and argumentativeness to attack the self-concepts of the people you are debating instead of discussing their positions

Self-Concept Worksheet: All About Me (1/2)

- It is only one page with 15 prompts to complete. These prompts are:
 - I feel good about...
 - I feel successful when...
 - My favorite person is...
 - My favorite activity is...
 - I wish I could...
 - I want to...

Utah Education Network

Self-Concept Worksheet: All About Me (2/2)

- If I could have three wishes, they would be: a. b. c.
- I feel depressed when...
- A character trait I need to improve is...
- I am good at...
- I wish I did not...
- My family is...
- I would like to be...
- The most important thing to me is...
- The thing I like best about myself...

Do not Distribute

Empathy

Do not Distribute

Cognitive Empathy

- [the perception of] **the internal frame of reference of another with accuracy and with the emotional components and meanings**, which pertains thereto **as if one were the person**, but without ever losing the “as if” condition

- همدلی به معنای درک دنیای شخصی طرف مقابل است، انگار که دنیای خودتان باشد.

- و البته قید انگار مهم است و نباید از قلم بیفتد!



Carl Rogers
(1902-1987)

Empathizing with Others

- We are often caught in a bubble of peers that for them, some values are clear. This makes it hard to understand **people outside of this bubble** – like management. In order to be an effective change agent, we need to make an effort **to understand what drives others**.
- We often assume a lot about **what motivates and drives others**, without verifying it with them.
- The **Empathy Map** helps us to work from observations, rather than jumping straight to interpretations.

Empathy Map Canvas

Designed for:

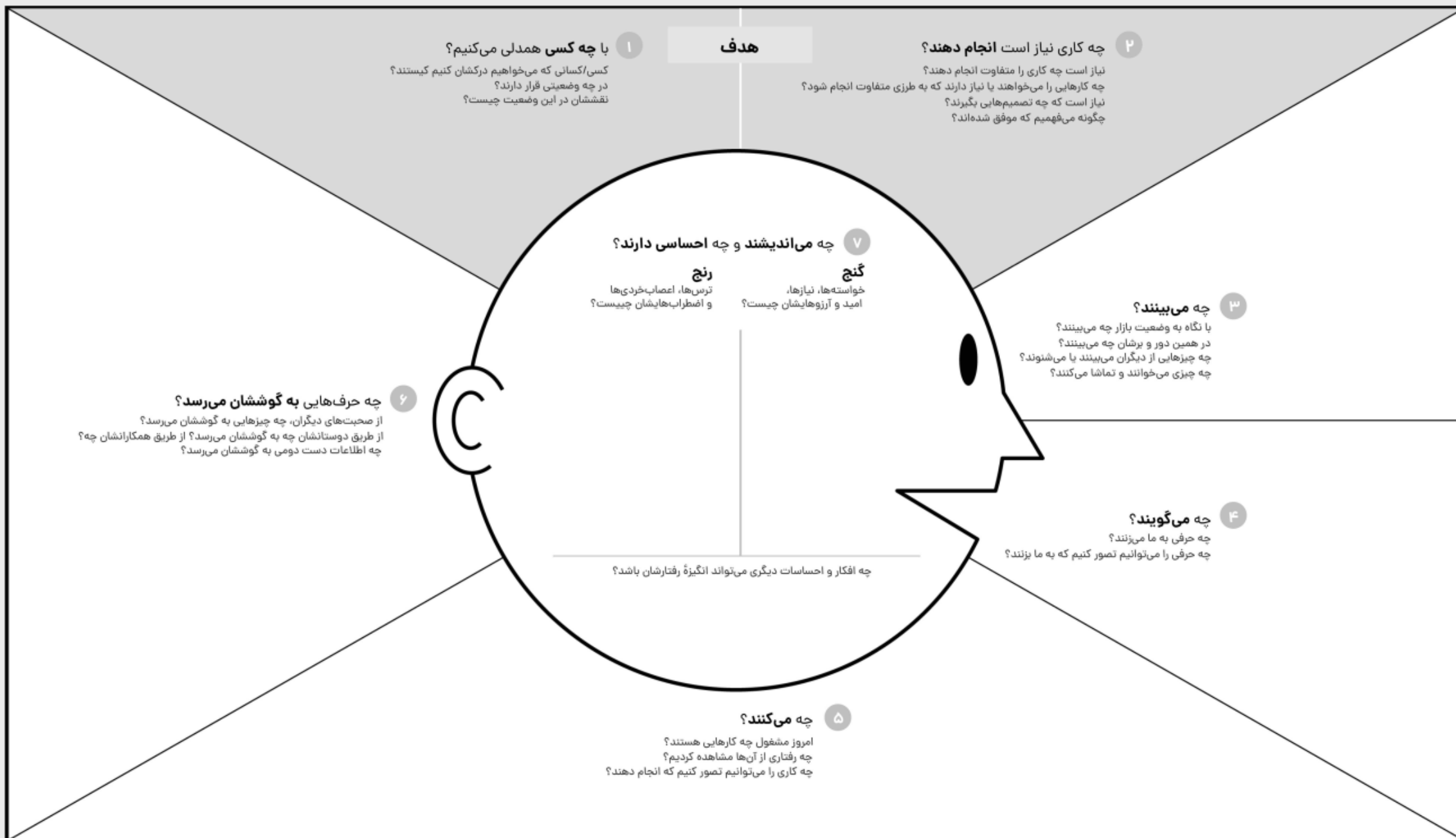
Designed by:

Date:

Version:

The Empathy Map Canvas is a tool for understanding a user's perspective. It is structured as a large rectangle divided into seven numbered sections, each representing a different aspect of the user's experience. The sections are arranged around a central profile of a face, which is divided into two main areas: the head (containing sections 1-3) and the body (containing sections 4-7). The sections are as follows:

- 1 WHO are we empathizing with?**
Who is the person we want to understand?
What is the situation they are in?
What is their role in the situation?
- 2 What do they need to DO?**
What do they need to do differently?
What job(s) do they want or need to get done?
What decision(s) do they need to make?
How will we know they were successful?
- 3 What do they SEE?**
What do they see in the marketplace?
What do they see in their immediate environment?
What do they see others saying and doing?
What are they watching and reading?
- 4 What do they SAY?**
What have we heard them say?
What can we imagine them saying?
- 5 What do they DO?**
What do they do today?
What behavior have we observed?
What can we imagine them doing?
- 6 What do they HEAR?**
What are they hearing others say?
What are they hearing from friends?
What are they hearing from colleagues?
What are they hearing second-hand?
- 7 What do they THINK and FEEL?**
PAINS
What are their fears, frustrations, and anxieties?
GAINS
What are their wants, needs, hopes and dreams?
What other thoughts and feelings might motivate their behavior?

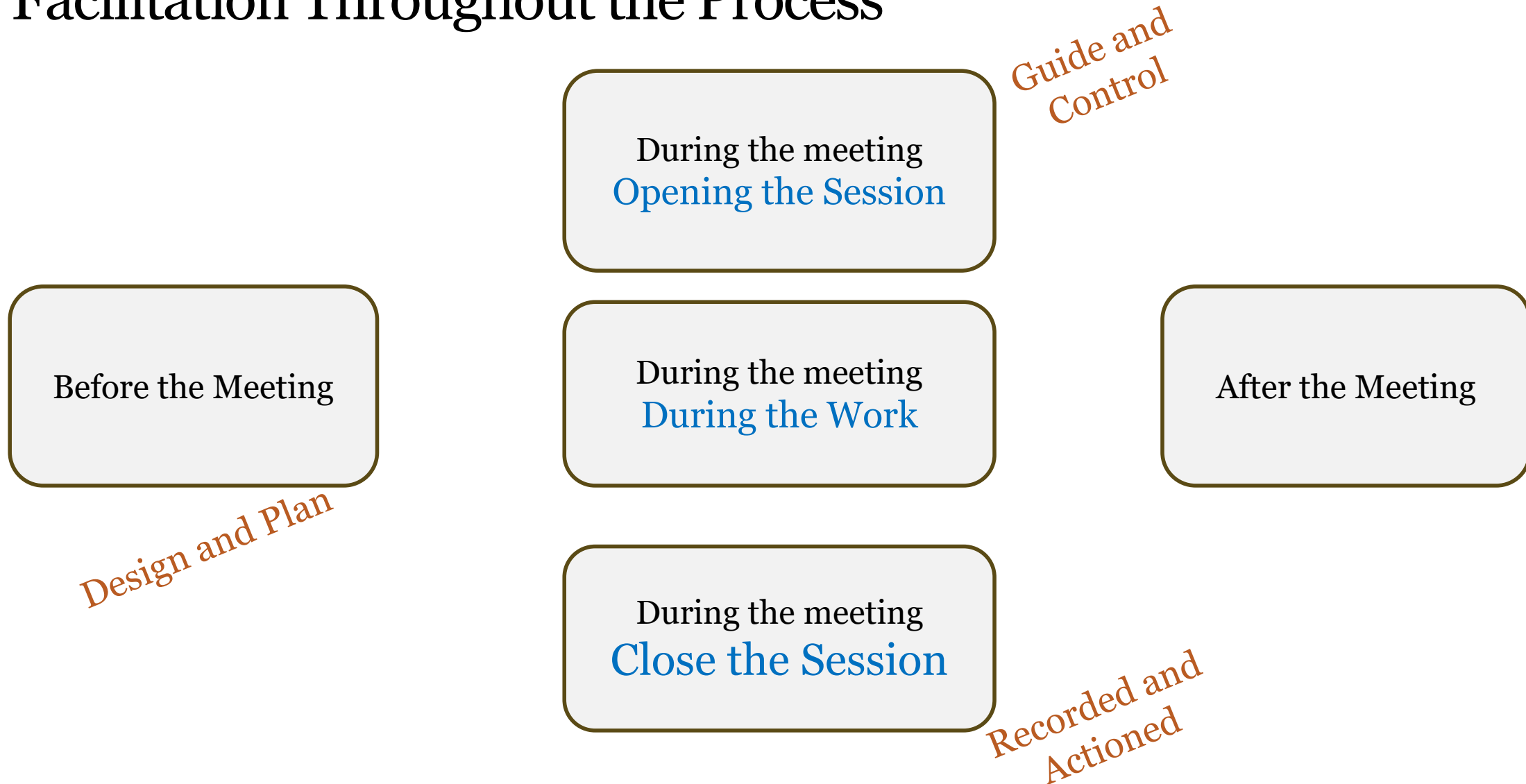


Part 2.1

Facilitation

~ Continued

Facilitation Throughout the Process



A common corporate scene (1/4)

- You've been invited to a meeting to discuss something important.
- You're sitting in the conference room along with 10 other bright colleagues.
- You're optimistic about what you might accomplish together.
- Your optimism quickly fades.
- At the front of the room the meeting organizer drones on with poorly-made slides about something that most people in the room already know.

A common corporate scene (2/4)

- Next slide. 20 minutes into the meeting, most are tuned out.
- The presenter continues with their slides disregarding that half the room is checked out. Next slide.
- It's now minute 55 of the 60 minute meeting, you finally have time to ask the two questions you came here initially to discuss.

A common corporate scene (3/4)

- Before you do, however, someone else raises their hand and asks a different question. This takes up the remaining time in the meeting.
- The question was only half-answered but it's the end of the allotted time so that's the end.

A common corporate scene (4/4)

- You walk out hating meetings just a little bit more than before.
- Here's where typical meetings fail:

Almost none of the attendees' expertise was used in any way.

60 minutes wasted with almost no exchange of ideas.

It's no wonder meetings get such a bad reputation

Part 2.3

Silent Meeting



History (1/2)

- Silent Meetings first started at Amazon.
- As Amazon was scaling in 2004 Jeff Bezos' leadership team (the S-Team) found that they didn't have enough time to make high-quality decisions.
- At Edward Tufte's suggestion, they then started experimenting with alternate approaches and settled on "Narratives" — 6-page long-form text documents — that would be the main communication vehicle.

History (2/2)

- Powerpoint was forbidden.
- Since nobody had time to read pre-reads, the document would be read silently during the meeting instead.
- And so Silent Meetings were born.

Do not Distribute

Typical Problems of “Loud Meetings” (1/10)

1. No agenda:

Loud meetings often have vague agendas.

It's not uncommon for a broad meeting to be called with no clear purpose

This lack of preparation often ensures meetings will meander with no clear outcome.

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Typical Problems of “Loud Meetings” (2/10)

2. **No shared reading material for the whole group:**

Meetings often just have a loud presentation that is accessible only to the presenter.

The audience can't go at their own pace, nor can they get back to re-read anything they missed.

If a meeting attendee tunes out, there's no way to catch up.

Typical Problems of “Loud Meetings” (3/10)

3. **Unequal time-sharing:**

Often a few people in the meeting speak more than the majority of the audience.

As a consequence, most attendees don't have an opportunity to comment and provide their thoughts.

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Typical Problems of “Loud Meetings” (4/10)

4. **Bad presentations — too slow, too fast, and meandering:**

When someone is presenting content to a group it's most often a bad use of time since most people are bad presenters.

Even in the best of cases where there is shared reading material, when a presenter decides to read the material out loud, the presentation is going to go too slow for some audience members (those that have context for example) and too fast for others (those new to the topic).

Typical Problems of “Loud Meetings” (5/10)

5. **Most meeting attendees don't comment:**

Since raising one's hand and interrupting the speaker can seem like a forceful action, it's common for meeting attendees to spend an hour in a meeting and say nothing, particularly if a meeting is large.

This is particularly true for introverted attendees or attendees further down a corporate hierarchy.

As a consequence, loud meetings don't take advantage of the audience's expertise.

Typical Problems of “Loud Meetings” (6/10)

6. Reading is faster than listening:

Most attendees likely read faster than they can listen.

This means a meeting where information is distributed orally is less efficient.

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Typical Problems of “Loud Meetings” (7/10)

7. **Favors native speakers:**

Attendees that are native speakers of the presentation language often interject more quickly and can follow along with presenters better than non-native speakers.

This can put many attendees at a disadvantage and limit their participation.

Do not Distribute

Typical Problems of “Loud Meetings” (8/10)

8. **Bad for remote attendees:**

Loud meetings benefit in-person attendees much more since they can often see the presenter and can chime in non-verbally.

Remote attendees need to be much louder to interject and often have a poorer meeting experience.

Do not Distribute

Typical Problems of “Loud Meetings” (9/10)

9. **Rambling questions:**

In loud meetings only one person can speak out loud at a time.

This means that a rambling, meandering question can kidnap the group’s time until the speaker realizes that they are doing so (which is uncommon), or someone interrupts (which is also uncommon).

Silent meetings allow simultaneous questioning which short-circuits this behavior.

Typical Problems of “Loud Meetings” (10/10)

10. Comments from the meeting often get lost and aren’t captured in any doc:

In the best-case scenario for a loud meeting, an assigned note-taker can transcribe the meeting and take notes of the discussions.

Most often though, this doesn’t happen making it very difficult for people that can’t attend the meeting to follow along.

“Silent Meetings” are meetings where most of the time is spent thinking and discussing the topics at hand.

Do not Distribute

Table Read

- Functionally, they are based around a “Table Read” that everyone at the meeting reads silently, comments in and then discusses.
- An assigned facilitator leads the comment synthesis and discussion to ensure the meeting is valuable.

Do not Distribute

100% Silent?

- Is it 100% silent? Not really.
- Sometimes it can be 95% silent. Sometimes less.
- A good rule of thumb is that a meeting is “silent” when more than 50% of the time is spent silently and the time that is not silent is spent on topics that can’t be resolved through comments in a doc (e.g. coordination problems, difficult conversations).

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Their Value

- The main reason that Silent Meetings are valuable is they focus the attendees around a piece of shared context (the Table Read).
- This document centers the discussion and cuts off most of the channels that lead typical loud meetings astray.

Do not Distribute

new ways of working (1/2)

- Silent Meetings also enable entirely new ways of working.
- For example, in a typical meeting setting you don't really have many-to-many interactions: there is the presenter and then the audience.
- The relationship is mostly static: one speaks, others listen.

Do not Distribute

new ways of working (2/2)

- In Silent Meetings there is the creator of the original Table Read and the audience that then become creators themselves through their comments.
- This dynamic enables in-meeting creation instead of just information dissemination.
- Meetings can become a forum through which work happens instead of corporate, coordination overhead.

Benefits

- 01 — They create an equal playing field
- 02 — They give everyone enough time to understand everything
- 03 — They lead to well-thought-out feedback
- 04 — They cut down on repetition and confusion
- 05 — They give everyone a chance to share and comment on ideas
- 06 — People can read faster than they listen
- 07 — Remote attendees can more easily participate
- 08 — Non-native speakers can more easily participate

Silent Meeting Basics

Silent Meeting Basics

- Step 1. Prepare an agenda and choose a Facilitator
- Step 2. Create the “Table Read”
- Step 3. Read and comment in the Table Read
- Step 4. Facilitator helps synthesize comments and leads discussion

Do not Distribute

SILENT MEETING BASICS

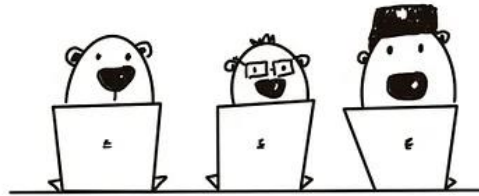
- ① PREPARE AGENDA
+ CHOOSE FACILITATOR



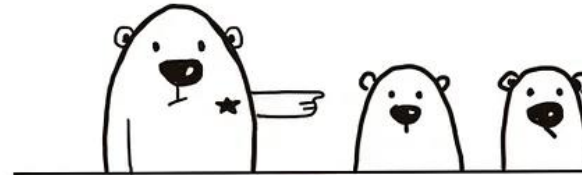
- ② CREATE A "TABLE READ"



- ③ READ + COMMENT



- ④ FACILITATOR SYNTHESIZES
+ LEADS DISCUSSION



Step 1. Prepare an agenda and choose a Facilitator (1/2)

- A few minutes of preparation goes a long way towards making a meeting more successful.
- This is a universal truth beyond Silent Meetings.
- A rule of thumb is that the meeting organizer should spend at least as much time organizing the meeting as the meeting itself will last.
- This rule might be a bit aspirational for the realities of modern corporate workplaces but the general point stands — if you're calling a meeting to take up everyone's time, treat that time with respect and make it count.

Step 1. Prepare an agenda and choose a Facilitator (2/2)

- Before your meeting create a basic agenda that includes:
 - Meeting goals (What do you want the meeting to achieve?)
 - Meeting non-goals (What is not in scope for the meeting?)
 - Meeting process (For a 30-minute meeting it could be, “Read doc silently for 20 minutes and then discuss for 10 minutes”)
 - Assigned facilitator (Who is facilitating the discussion?)
 - Assigned note-taker (This is optional but it’s often nice to have if it’s a very large meeting)

Step 2. Create the “Table Read” (1/2)

- You might have heard about “pre-reads”, the unicorn doc that everyone aspires to send before a meeting.
- It’s common to hear, “This meeting should have a pre-read we all can read before we meet.”
- In this mythical land, someone sends out a comprehensive document for meeting attendees a day or two in advance, everyone reads it thoroughly and shows up prepared for discussion like a university seminar.
- What ends up happening in reality is that nobody has time.

Step 2. Create the “Table Read” (2/2)

- This is why Silent Meetings don't rely on pre-reading anything. Since the main document is read at the table during the meeting we call them “Table Reads”
- The change from pre-read to Table Read creates common knowledge through a shared artifact for discussion.
- Everyone at the Silent Meeting has all of the context required.
- All facts needed are in the doc so everyone is on level footing.
- This helps foster a productive conversation.

Step 3. Read and comment in the Table Read (1/4)

- Once you have the Table Read, and you've convened the meeting, everyone reads and comments in the doc. This is the bulk of the Silent Meeting.
- To kick off the meeting, the Facilitator or meeting organizer should have everyone follow the process outlined in the Agenda.

Do not Distribute

Step 3. Read and comment in the Table Read (2/4)

- For the Silent Reading portion the main steps are:
 1. Read the Table Read for the amount of time allocated
 2. Readers should leave comments in the doc where they have questions or comments
 3. Once readers are done with their first pass of the document, they should go back to the beginning and read the comments that others left. The readers should respond to others where needed.

Step 3. Read and comment in the Table Read (3/4)

- While this process might seem odd at first, it eventually becomes habitual and makes it very difficult to go back to normal, loud meetings.
- This portion of Silent Meetings often results in a quiet din of clacking keyboards.
- For meetings with remote participants, it's nice to mute mics during this time.

Do not Distribute

Step 3. Read and comment in the Table Read (4/4)

- While reading and commenting, it's important to note that comments should be left unresolved in the doc:
 - Do not delete or resolve others' comments during this time.
 - Attendees often benefit from seeing the comments left by others and resolving too early shortcuts this process.
 - After the meeting the Facilitator or Table Read owner can read and resolve comments as needed.

Step 4. Facilitator helps synthesize comments and leads discussion (1/4)

- While attendees are reading the Table Read, the Facilitator is at work combing through the Table Read comments and making sure the right people are tagged throughout.
- For example, supposed that there is a question about a statistic mentioned in the document.
- The Facilitator will find the comment and tag whoever is best equipped to answer the question (e.g., in Google Docs terminology “+PersonToAnswerQuestion”).

Step 4. Facilitator helps synthesize comments and leads discussion (2/4)

- Scanning the comments also gives the Facilitator a sense for what the main questions are from the attendees and what are the most important topics for discussion.
- Once the reading and commenting period is over the Facilitator can then focus everyone on these topics.

Do not Distribute

Step 4. Facilitator helps synthesize comments and leads discussion (3/4)

- For example, if the Facilitator sees two key themes, they can start the discussion period by saying “I see two main themes in the comments.
- I also see a number of comments with questions that we can discuss outside of the meeting including Theme X that will require a completely separate meeting. For today’s discussion, the main themes that we should discuss are Theme 1 and Theme 2.
- For Theme 1, let’s look at Attendee 1’s comment...”

Step 4. Facilitator helps synthesize comments and leads discussion (4/4)

- While occasionally discussion questions are listed in the Table Read, this Facilitator-led method allows the meeting to focus on areas with the highest need for the attendees' input.
- This is where a Facilitator can shine and turn an OK Silent Meeting into an excellent one.
- One final note: Facilitators also own the clock.
- If you're approaching the end of the meeting, the Facilitator should try to “land the plane” and identify clear next steps as needed leaving enough time to do so

When Not to Use Silent Meeting?

Do not Distribute