



CHOOSE COURAGE

**In Your
Relationships**
Profit from Problems

Ruth M. Schimel, Ph.D.

Choose Courage in Your Relationships:

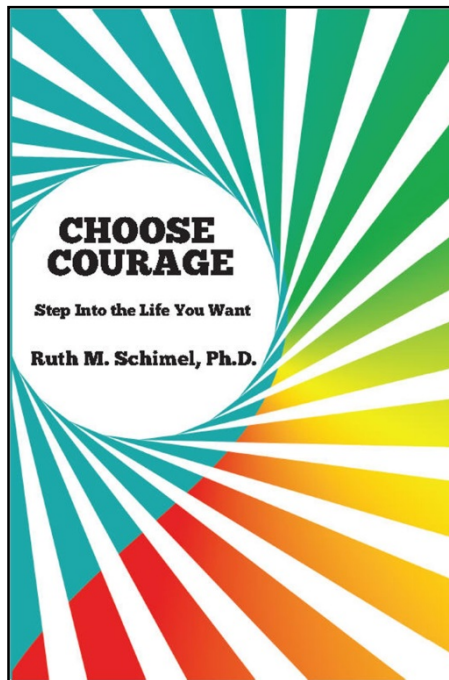
Profit From Problems

by Ruth M. Schimel, Ph.D.

**Career & Life Management
Consultant**

**DON'T MISS THIS GROUNDBREAKING BOOK THAT
PROVIDES THE FOUNDATION FOR THE HANDBOOKS**

Choose Courage: Step Into the Life You Want



**by Ruth M. Schimel, Ph.D.
Career & Life Management Consultant**

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[Choose Courage: Step Into the Life You Want](#)

ACCLAIM FOR CHOOSE COURAGE

We are in the era as never before where individuals can express who they are, what they believe in, what they seek, and where to move forward across most of the globe.

Technology has enabled and empowered the ability to have a platform to express your opinion (from Tweets to blog posts, to other means). Thus the timely publication of the Dr. Ruth Schimel's new book entitled "Choose Courage: Step Into the Life You Want" is ideal to guide individuals to not only pursue their dreams but also to realize them.

Choose Courage offers a unique set of guidelines that is sensitive to the individual reader and allows everyone to tailor the recommendations to their own set of circumstances. Most "How-to Books" dictate a lofty set of rules and principles to the reader for the pathway to success. Dr. Schimel offers a positive, manageable, and realistic process.

Choose Courage is an outstanding life map that guides a range of individuals from business leaders to elementary teachers to exhibit their courage and to use their respective talents without boundaries, without fear.

Dr. Hubert Glover, Drexel University, Author of Giraffes of Technology: The Making of the 21st Century Leader

USE AND BENEFITS OF CHOOSE COURAGE

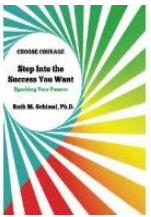

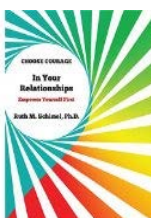
***Choose Courage: Step Into the Life You Want* transforms what could be a heroic cliché into concrete ways you can realize your true capacities. Based on doctoral-level research with everyday people, the book provides a 21st century definition of courage. The array of tools and guidance will help you build on your strengths and skills as well as transcend emotional barriers. Photos, art, humor, and poetry will also inspire your continuing action.**

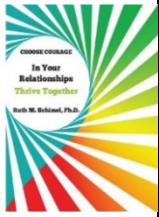
The design of *Choose Courage* echoes the dynamism of life. Like the blended, spontaneous nature of jazz, this interactive book uses a range of disciplines to support fresh ideas and menus of processes; weave them into what you want and need. Since the approach reflects the incremental nature of actual progress, take the small steps in whatever order makes sense to you. Or use the sequence offered. You'll be prompting your own potential and useful contributions from and to others.

THE CHOOSE COURAGE HANDBOOKS

Promote your progress based on what engages and inspires you in Ruth's major book: [Choose Courage: Step Into the Life You Want](#). For further encouragement, explore the four related handbooks below in addition to *Profit from Problems*. New formats to promote your happiness and joy are planned. Custom-designed for your enjoyment, adaptation, and action, all handbooks are about 50-100 pages and interactive. They also offer powerful processes for group training and development. Click on the handbook titles to purchase your copies!

Currently available handbooks:

	<p>Step Into the Success You Want: Sparking Your Powers (Choose Courage Handbook #1) July 31, 2014 By Ruth Schimel, Ph.D.</p> <p>Create success as you define it and reduce barriers to progress.</p>
	<p>Step Into the Success You Want: Building Bridges to Achievement (Choose Courage Handbook #2) November 11, 2014 By Ruth Schimel, Ph.D.</p> <p>Pursue your true interests, manage time, attract merited attention, discover your and others' heroes within, and access your wisdom.</p>
	<p>Choose Courage In Your Relationships: Empower Yourself First (Choose Courage Handbook #3) March 29, 2015 By Ruth Schimel, Ph.D.</p> <p>Make relationships flourish using your full range of interpersonal skills, viable expectations, care for others and unique charm.</p>



[Choose Courage in Your Relationships: Thrive Together](#)
[\(Choose Courage Handbook #4\)](#)

November 19, 2015
By Ruth Schimel, Ph.D.

Benefit from others' originality and strengths in partnerships, friendships, love, and intergenerational situations. Use these processes to improve your choices.

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Use your good judgment, intuition, intellect, and common sense as you apply and adapt suggestions and guidance from this handbook.

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DEDICATION

This handbook is offered with appreciation to my clients and readers,
as well as to my collaborator and production editor, Kathleen Sindell, Ph.D.
(www.kathleensindell.com)

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CHOOSE COURAGE IN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS: PROFIT FROM PROBLEMS

“Power resides in the moment of transition from a past to a new state.”

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson, American essayist, lecturer, and poet ~

“Becoming courageous is a process that involves the willingness to realize your true capacities by going through discomfort, fear, anxiety, or suffering and taking wholehearted, responsible action.”

~ Ruth M. Schimel, Ph.D., Career & Life Management Consultant ~

INTRODUCTION

Problems and people tend to keep company. But since no person, situation — or even problem — rarely stays static, there’s always hope for improvement and opportunities for effective action. Given these realities, this handbook is designed to help you profit from possibilities inherent in problems, issues, and blocks. Why let them limit your personal and professional relationships as well as quality of life, now and in the future?

Instead, create good outcomes for yourself using your experience, knowledge, and skills. As you bring them together with focused tools, leads, and insights from this handbook, you’ll be even more effective in actual situations. Let the good will implicit in your values and interests infuse your communication and use of resources. All these processes can energize and inspire you to promote pleasure and progress over time.

Practical steps and guidance are available for you throughout this handbook. Let’s start with your own interpersonal skills, especially since you may not appreciate them all nor see ways to strengthen and add to them. Why focus on yourself initially?

First, that’s where you have more choices and influence. Starting within yourself also provides viable alternatives to blaming others over whom you likely have limited control. Your own powers will become more apparent as you specify your

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current capabilities using the self-assessment below. The five minutes you take to complete the first part will remind you of your strengths. Periodic reviews will support confidence for action and continuing progress. You may also see new ways to improve your skills, abilities, and knowledge.

Second, the assessment helps you identify new skills to learn and apply in order to strengthen the quality and quantity of your relationships. And, third, your thoughtful choices about when, how, where, why, and with whom to use your strengths will create additional advantages and opportunities.

Actually, the value of interpersonal skills starts earlier in life than you may think. For example, *The Washington Post* recently reported on data collected in Nashville, Seattle, rural Pennsylvania, and Durham, North Carolina schools since 1991. The outcome based on two decades of tracking 753 kindergarteners indicated their behaviors could predict later success related to getting a college degree and jobs. (See article: *If You Want Your Children to Succeed, Teach Them to Share in Kindergarten* by Emma Brown: <http://wapo.st/1CJR5t6>.)

Related to the “works and plays well with others” line I remember from my kindergarten report cards, here are the criteria used for assessment of children in the research:

- Resolves peer problems on his/her own.
- Is very good at understanding other people’s feelings.
- Shares materials with others.
- Cooperates with peers without prompting.
- Is helpful to others.
- Listens to others’ point of view.
- Can give suggestions and opinions without being bossy.
- Acts friendly toward others.

No doubt you’ll note the parallels between these behaviors and the adult skills listed in the following self-assessment designed for your own situation and use.

USE YOUR FULL INTERPERSONAL CAPACITIES

When you take five-minutes right now to review your current levels of skills, knowledge, and abilities, you’ll get an immediate sense of optimism about your interpersonal strengths. The information will help you see what you can do to

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contribute to your own effectiveness with other people in specific ways. You'll also be better able to assist them with their development.

When you feel adventuresome, share the assessment format below or even results with anyone you wish. For example, converse with trusted supervisors, colleagues, subordinates, friends, and family. Others may complete it for themselves and for discussion of mutual perceptions. In addition, use the process to identify interaction patterns, group learning opportunities, and issues to address.

On a scale of 1 to 5 (highest), highlight or circle the number that reflects your current level of expertise; if the description is not relevant, just ignore it. Alternatively, if it's a subject or process you want to check out, do a little online research. When not sure of where you stand numerically, always be generous with yourself.

In the spaces provided at the end of each of the three sections, add other capacities based on your ideas and those of people who know you in a variety of contexts. For insights and leads, pay special attention to the qualities you admire in others and to situations you tend to avoid or in which you feel uncomfortable.

Knowledge

1 2 3 4 5 1. Group dynamics (interaction among participants)

1 2 3 4 5 2. Proxemics (how physical location in a group influences behavior)

1 2 3 4 5 3. Cultural and ethnic differences relevant to your situation

1 2 3 4 5 4. Types and uses of interpersonal skills assessments

1 2 3 4 5 5. Communication theory and processes

1 2 3 4 5 6. Own interpersonal issues

1 2 3 4 5 7. Nonverbal communication

1 2 3 4 5 8. Human relations theory and processes

1 2 3 4 5 9. _____

1 2 3 4 5 10. _____

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Skills

- 1 2 3 4 5 11. Giving feedback
- 1 2 3 4 5 12. Interviewing and other ways to gather information from others
- 1 2 3 4 5 13. Listening for what's not literal in what people say
- 1 2 3 4 5 14. Analyzing an interpersonal situation or issue
- 1 2 3 4 5 15. Synthesizing information about an interpersonal problem
- 1 2 3 4 5 16. Naming specific emotions and feelings in yourself
- 1 2 3 4 5 17. Identifying specific emotions and feelings in others
- 1 2 3 4 5 18. Leading an interpersonal skill development process
- 1 2 3 4 5 19. Being alert to nonverbal cues you give others
- 1 2 3 4 5 20. Reading nonverbal cues in others
- 1 2 3 4 5 21. Identifying reasons for and types of conflict
- 1 2 3 4 5 22. Diagnosing reasons for ineffective communication
- 1 2 3 4 5 23. Using metaphors and other ways to enrich what you say
- 1 2 3 4 5 24. _____
- 1 2 3 4 5 25. _____

Abilities

- 1 2 3 4 5 26. Appreciating and understanding human diversity
- 1 2 3 4 5 27. Intuition
- 1 2 3 4 5 28. Sense of humor about your foibles, perceptions, and ambitions
- 1 2 3 4 5 29. Good judgment about when to seek assistance and feedback
- 1 2 3 4 5 30. Willingness to consider unsolicited feedback
- 1 2 3 4 5 31. Capacity to hear the actual message behind what is being said

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1 2 3 4 5 32. Ability to inspire trust

1 2 3 4 5 33. Self-confidence based on reality

1 2 3 4 5 34. Facilitation of meetings

1 2 3 4 5 35. Effective participation in and contributions to groups

1 2 3 4 5 36. Empathy: ability to imagine, or understand others' feelings

1 2 3 4 5 37. Capacity to serve audiences and read reactions while speaking

1 2 3 4 5 38. _____

1 2 3 4 5 39. _____

Next Steps

1. Review your strengths (any capacity you labeled 4 or 5). Perhaps group them to determine patterns related to self-presentation, information gathering, and understanding how your behavior can influence others. Certainly mention and celebrate the strengths you note below.

2. For every 1, 2, or 3 you have circled above, consider whether or not you want or need to develop that capacity further. Look for patterns among the ones you have chosen to identify key areas for strengthening. Mention them here.

3. Now, choose one or two areas (particular skills, abilities, or knowledge) to develop or strengthen, specifying a few, manageable objectives for each.

4. For anything you want to improve that is identified in (3) above, circle methods to use from the list and others you add below.

- peer collaboration
- workshops, courses, and online classes (MOOCs)
- verbal, written, and audio-visual feedback
- mentors
- books, articles, guides, and online resources
- observation of others in real and reel life
- self-study program or process
- teach and train others
- _____
- _____

5. Create a simple plan for follow through with your first choice, possibly including:

- your learning strategy for your first choice
- some specific criteria for evaluating progress
- who will help or collaborate with you
- what you would enjoy doing to acknowledge and reward your progress

6. As you wish, repeat steps 2 - 5 for other capacities you want to strengthen or develop.

Since continuing improvement of interpersonal capacities is often best nurtured in interaction with others, find a partner or form a small group of about four to five people who would like to work together. Assessing and developing your interpersonal capacities in a vacuum can be sterile and less productive, however uncomfortable you may feel when you first give and get feedback.

To promote productive exchange, you'll be better motivated and enriched when collaborators have something different, unique, or complementary to offer. In fact, that's a good way to start the conversation. Focus on capacities each of you brings to the process even before you set some simple guidelines for learning, practice, and

mutual feedback. Then you can discuss and decide on what you want to do to honor everyone's needs, interests, and time.

REALITIES IN CHOICES AND RELATIONSHIPS

You've already started well to address problems, issues, and blocks by appreciating your capacities and potential via the assessment, perhaps in more detail than usual. Yet, since this handbook is about relationships which involve a variety of people, your insights and actions can only go so far. That's why tools, ideas, and inspiration are offered to encourage continuing use and development of your strengths and conscious choices of how to influence others. Ultimately, your willingness to understand and address the interaction and natural complexity in your relationships can benefit everyone.

Nevertheless, the very nature of your changing environment and dynamic tendencies of other people may inhibit your best efforts. You'll continue to encounter behavioral filters of privilege related to racial, economic, and social advantages. That's even expressed in neural activity related to social pecking orders as discussed by Robert Sapolsky about how higher status people tend to attract greater attention. See the research on this in his 2015 *Wall Street Journal* article, *Brain Reflexes That Monitor the Pecking Order* <http://on.wsj.com/1TBOzse>.

On the other hand, lack of opportunity for some people also affects relationships as you've no doubt experienced or noticed. In many instances, culture is a crucial foundation that complicates as well as provides depth and interest. (See discussion of cultural matters and possibilities they offer at the end of this Introduction.)

Furthermore, each individual's behavior is influenced by genes and epigenetics, or how environment and experience affect the chemistry of DNA. In other words, the interaction between nature and nurture does not tell the whole story, as current research has found. For example, genes themselves can be affected by stressful events such as abuse, violence, or illness. And variations in particular genes predispose children to different reactions as discussed in Alison Gopnik's *Wall Street Journal* article: *Aggression in Children Makes Sense — Sometimes*, <http://on.wsj.com/1Oqut28>.

In fact, imposed situations can shift actions of some people. Over forty years ago, the research of Stanley Milgram showed how unquestioning obedience to authority led to hurtful behavior. About the same time, Philip Zimbardo did somewhat

related research on the psychology of imprisonment and how the power of total control could distort behavior of guards. Based on that inquiry, Zimbardo believes most everyone can be evil.

That both professors used male college students in their experiments may have affected results, in my opinion. The students were young, perhaps hormonally flush and more easily influenced by authority. To make up your own mind, though, see *The Stanford Prison Experiment* film and an earlier related documentary, *Quiet Rage*.

As you know from your own life, everyday professional and personal situations that do not involve laboratory or experimental situations naturally include relationships that are challenging and variable, no matter the level of caring. Marriages and other partnerships of months and years have frustrations and dark times. Among many, issues may involve money, sex, children, health, doubts, and confusion — not to mention, ironically, conflict avoidance. These realities are not helped by expectations of continuing honeymoons and consistent experiences and behaviors. Yet even continuously pleasant times may lose appeal; such predictability may bring a sense of security that eventually becomes boring due to lack of variety and surprises.

Work situations are also in flux as the cast of characters, internal resources, and the economy affect power relationships and content. Comfort in continuity or predictability some people prefer is therefore difficult to sustain. As mastery and a sense of control is reached, repetition may also lead to boredom and atrophy. Except perhaps for initial learning, routines can lead to “tennis elbow” of the mind or an itch for change. Since the learning curve is thought by some to be five to seven years, you can expect that preparing for change will serve your interests and keep relationships — not to mention your own life — vibrant, stimulating, and healthy.

In *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*, political economist Albert O. Hirschman provided ways to prepare for and deal with flux in personal and professional relationships. Although his study related to responses to the decline of firms, organizations, and states, Hirschman’s ideas are also relevant to personal and professional relationships. Using his title as a guide for choices and action, gird yourself to leave when necessary, speak up to protect your interests and move to a healthier place, or accept realities and stay put with grace.

Considering all these possibilities, resolving conflicts with others is another skill to strengthen or add to your repertoire. Following is a range of choices to improve your capacities for managing personal as well as professional situations. Take what’s useful, make it your own, and leave the rest.

NEGOTIATE TO SOLVE PROBLEMS

As promised in the second handbook on relationships, *Thrive Together*, this Introduction includes more specific guidance on negotiation (see definition under types of conflict resolution later on). It is one of the more effective processes and tools for finding common ground in conflicts as well as to transcend blocks, issues, and problems. While not a magical solution, the negotiation process will help you move forward in your relationships, at home and work, and in community. Consider and experiment with whatever ideas and steps below expand your repertoire and suit you, taking action that relates to your needs, situation, and goals.

To appreciate your own attitudes, ambivalence, and assumptions, you may find it useful to jot down now some keywords about what conflict means to you by answering the following questions. Those responses will help you understand how you tend to deal with conflict in various ways, for better, for worse, or somewhere in between.

- What main words and phrases do you associate with conflict?

- Name a few significant experiences that influenced your attitude toward conflict.

- What one or two patterns have you noticed in how you address conflict and/or avoid useful action related to conflict?

Based on your answers to any of these questions, how would you describe below your readiness to address a conflict, or possibly misunderstanding that sabotages or limits a current, important relationship? For example, are you curious, averse, interested, or committed? What steps are you willing to take? (Subsequent information on conflict resolution and negotiation may help you clarify your responses. But noting them below as well, could provide your more current, authentic views, unaffected by that following information.)

DEFINITIONS RELATED TO CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The following information and ideas are based on summarizing and integrating approaches by experts and practitioners. Use critical thinking and common sense to apply them to your situations. You may also want to explore them with a range of people you respect who are familiar with you and realities you face. (FYI: Much of this was part of conflict resolution course material I put together for teaching at universities as well as experience volunteering as a community mediator for several years and during diplomatic work.)

CONFLICT: WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT

Conflict is an event or process that reflects perceived or actual differences among individuals, groups, or organizations. It can relate to past, current, or future situations as well as to a variety of stakeholders who have issues, goals, and interests that vary or do not connect well.

Use the following descriptions of various characteristics of conflict and lingering conflict for diagnosis of your situations. Check what applies, restating any to reflect what you face. Insights from reviewing those choices may help you identify opportunities for amelioration and action.

Characteristics of conflict can include:

- Goals are uncertain or changing.
- Communication is more confusing than usual.
- Values are explicitly or implicitly at odds.

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- Emotions are involved and affect perception and understanding — information can therefore be distorted or misinterpreted.
- Threats are made or implied.
- Money or some material prize is often an option for action, cure, or symbol of settlement.
- Time is typically an element and may be a motivator.
- Desire to settle is usually present, but other factors such as retribution and resentment may distort or distract from progress.
- Most everything is negotiable (when addressed with open minds and creativity).
- Resolution can be an outcome, including forgiveness, exchange of goods and/or services, changes in expectations, and commitment to an improved situation.

Characteristics of lingering conflict, with implied opportunities for amelioration, are:

- Goals of parties are not clearly established.
- Costs of maintaining conflict are not entirely apparent or assessed by parties.
- Benefits of settlement are not well-articulated and weighed.
- Each side is hooked into need to punish the other one.
- One or both sides think another person or process will resolve the conflict to their advantage.
- There is no or limited willingness to question or discuss positions and possibilities.
- Trust is weak or not well-established.
- Influencers and others with power are stubborn, ego-bound, or stuck in self-righteousness.
- Collusive sub-groups or individuals are saboteurs.

TYPES OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION ARE:

Violent: terrorism, guerilla warfare, conventional war, riots, murder, imposition of one set of interests on another, hostage-taking

Peaceful: bypass people, units or organizations; make alliances to bring pressure; lie; withhold information; leave (transfer, promotion, resign); negotiate, mediate, litigate; develop policies and programs with input, commitment, and agreement from all stakeholders; vote

Negotiation is a peaceful means of conflict resolution which occurs when two or more parties work out actual, perceived, or potential differences. Applying to cooperative, neutral, and adversarial relationships, it includes:

- opportunities to exchange promises
- ways to check compliance
- constructive outcomes that benefit all parties
- ways for parties to retain power they value

AMBIVALENCE ABOUT CONFLICT: The dictionary has a range of definitions which may explain many people's ambivalence toward conflict. They are:

- open fighting, warfare
- disagreement or disharmony, a clash
- (from psychology) the opposition or simultaneous functioning of mutually exclusive desires, impulses, or tendencies
- collision

No wonder so many people prefer to avoid dealing with conflict. Discomfort, ambiguity, and possible loss seem associated with the word, if not also present in actual experiences. The void of unknown outcomes hovers. Often, the worst outcome is imagined, certainly making the process of becoming courageous relevant!

Yet, consider conflicts in your life or those you have observed that have been worked out in fair ways. When has the risk, or at least an honest try, been worth the effort? In retrospect, how might you or others have proceeded more effectively? Mention a few ways below:

Figuring out the value and risk of addressing conflict in your personal and professional life is challenging. To make an honest effort, list below the main potential benefits and likely outcomes from addressing one significant interpersonal conflict you have in mind. Then mention a few likely probabilities that could result if you don't deal with it.

BENEFITS AND RISKS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Following are many of the benefits from using your skills in conflict resolution to work out differences. You are likely to:

- Save time by getting to the point through focusing and addressing issues.
- Use tangible resources more effectively.
- Improve understanding of different viewpoints as a basis for better planning and action.
- Encourage commitment of all parties to an agreed-upon goal.
- Feel more at ease or at least relieved of main tensions.
- Encounter new ideas and opportunities.
- Strengthen trust to support current and future cooperation and collaboration.
- Enjoy and deepen professional and personal relationships.
- Meet goals and objectives.

What other benefits would you add?

Risks may include:

- Time is lost in efforts to resolve conflict.
- Vulnerabilities become more apparent and intrusive.
- Disappointment and loss of commitment occur when efforts do not pan out.
- Problem or issue possibly escalates due to misunderstanding, ineptitude, or sabotage.
- Stalemate occurs and sour feelings linger.

What other risks would you add?

The following summary information reflects what many professionals say about the process of conflict resolution through negotiation. Use and adapt it to enrich your repertoire as you practice the art.

CONVENTIONAL APPROACH TO NEGOTIATION

The conventional approach to negotiation is often labeled positional bargaining. In this process, each side:

- takes a position
- argues for its position
- makes concessions to reach compromise

Advantages of positional bargaining are:

- Each side tells the other what it wants.
- An anchor is provided in a difficult situation because parties use a predictable process.
- The process may lead to acceptable agreement.

Disadvantages of positional bargaining are:

- possible inflexibility of positions
- attention to positions rather than to underlying concerns of parties and collaborative, creative possibilities
- splitting of differences between parties rather than development of carefully-designed solutions that benefit both sides
- possible inefficiency — the more extreme the positions, the smaller the concessions

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- tendency to succumb to contest of wills, egos

WIN-WIN APPROACH TO NEGOTIATION

This approach pays attention to both the substance and process of negotiation by focusing on the merits or opportunities in the conflict. It recognizes that no side benefits when one party is hurt by the agreement and the relationship continues; the disadvantaged party then has little motivation to honor the terms and may even seek retribution. Furthermore, it assumes that parties working collaboratively, in good faith, can develop creative and useful ideas that will result in a better arrangement than merely making concessions. This is often called a win-win outcome. (From *Getting to Yes* by Fisher and Ury and *Getting Together* by Fisher and Brown.)

Following are basic tenets of this approach adapted from *Getting to Yes*:

People: Identify and clarify personality conflicts and emotions or feelings that affect communication and trust, treating them separately.

Interests: Address the human needs of the negotiators by identifying each side's requirements, desires, concerns, and fears.

Options: Invent together alternatives for mutual gain.

Criteria: Develop agreed-upon, useful criteria for judging merits of agreement such as market value, precedent, scientific judgment, professional standards, efficiency, costs, tradition, reciprocity, equal treatment, time, effectiveness, fairness, etc. Then determine together:

- Is agreement efficient and viable?
- Does agreement improve or avoid damage to the relationship?
- When agreement is possible, is it wise?
- How does the agreement benefit most everyone's long-term interests, support basic goals, and encourage possible cooperation or collaboration of the parties?

STYLES OF NEGOTIATION

The descriptions of five negotiating styles below are adapted from the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument which can be accessed and purchased through

search engines such as Google. Use your own experience and insight to modify and/or add to them. As negotiations proceed, identify individuals' styles or a similar version; maybe develop your own definitions. Based on these insights, choose appropriate strategies to improve communication and meet objectives of the parties.

In some instances, styles may be so contradictory that negotiation will be thwarted (e.g. competing and avoiding). If you come to this conclusion, you may want to consider alternatives to negotiating on your own such as leaving the situation, reconsidering your degree of commitment, or third-party intervention.

Competing "I'm going to win this one." (and you'll lose)

Avoiding "I don't want to talk about it." (delay at all costs)

Compromising "I'm going to give in order to get." (we'll find some middle ground)

Accommodating "Whatever you want..." (I yield)

Collaborating "Let's work together to find a mutually beneficial outcome."

PROCESSES FOR NEGOTIATION

In many actual situations, you'll rarely have the luxury, need, or even interest in following the step-by-step processes provided below. When available, information is likely to be developed more informally, perhaps in different sequence. Time may be limited. Intuition and sometimes impatience may influence behavior rather than just the rationality and logic of these guidelines. Saboteurs might want to derail the process, requiring more assertive, strategic leadership and management.

Nevertheless, the following can be a useful checklist. Adapt it for structuring your thinking, strategy, and action as well as to ensure you use available resources and options. At the same time, be prepared to also proceed organically by taking advantage of what flows naturally and usefully.

- Be clear to yourself about your own objectives, perceptions, emotions, interests, and concerns.
- Learn as much about the situation as possible beforehand through analysis and conversation with a range of people.

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- Discuss your view of options with others for their ideas and perspectives. When appropriate, keep them informed of progress.
- Obtain information related to the other side. That can include biographical data, finances, and public statements. Clarify your understanding of one another's goals, strategies, and values, preferably in conversation. The more open the communication, the greater likelihood of building trust.
- Identify common interests or at least overlapping concerns.
- Imagine what the other side truly wants and needs as well as their style of negotiating and sensitive buttons. Consider how your own tendencies will mesh and what you can do to create better communication, find common ground, and agree on outcomes.
- Develop an authentic negotiating approach for yourself, including a range of options. Visualize yourself in the negotiation, imagining how you would handle important contingencies.
- Keep evaluating your own assumptions based on what you sense, feel, and hear.
- Ask yourself what you don't yet know that would be useful to learn. If you can't obtain the information beforehand, how can you elicit it during the negotiation and informal conversations?
- Identify and organize information the other side needs to know to help them understand your perspective.
- Prepare several hypothetical situations to educate the other side to your point of view.
- Design, arrange, and provide the most fair, effective physical arrangements for the negotiation process and participants.
- Think of several appropriate ways to ease tensions such as telling a story on yourself or a joke that does not annoy or antagonize.
- Define and work toward your best alternative to a negotiated settlement (BATNA from *Getting to Yes*).

Strengthening Your Readiness for Negotiation. After reading and considering the foregoing, are you ready to use and adapt some of the ideas in a situation you are facing? Whether or not you are, now is the time to appreciate the skills and experience you already have with conflict resolution, based on what you have just read and know. That can remind you of how well-prepared you are to move forward effectively.

Use the suggested list below to review your strengths and readiness. Add other skills, abilities, and experience that relate to your situation in the spaces at the end. Circle the level that describes your current expertise: (1) is lowest and (5) is highest. Always be generous with your numerical choices.

When you've circled 1, 2, or 3, decide if you want to improve that capacity. If so, consider training, observing, reading, participating in workshops and courses, mentoring, on-the-job experience, and other methods you know about or can identify with some research.

1 2 3 4 5 Listening skills

1 2 3 4 5 Sense of humor about your situation and others' behavior

1 2 3 4 5 Analytical skills

1 2 3 4 5 Charm

1 2 3 4 5 Integrity

1 2 3 4 5 Synthesizing skills

1 2 3 4 5 Interpersonal skills

1 2 3 4 5 Awareness of others' nonverbal communication

1 2 3 4 5 Awareness of your own nonverbal communication

1 2 3 4 5 Willingness to let go of control that could limit good outcomes

1 2 3 4 5 Empathy: capacity to identify with others' feelings and needs

1 2 3 4 5 Evaluation of complex situations

1 2 3 4 5 Articulateness: ease and effectiveness of communication

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1 2 3 4 5 Willingness to learn, stay open to new information and ideas

1 2 3 4 5 Experience with and interest in building trust

1 2 3 4 5 Clarity about goals

1 2 3 4 5 Intuition/gut feeling

1 2 3 4 5 Ability to deal with and make use of ambiguity

1 2 3 4 5 Patience

1 2 3 4 5 Creativity

1 2 3 4 5 Self-awareness and willingness to self-adjust

1 2 3 4 5 _____

1 2 3 4 5 _____

1 2 3 4 5 _____

Some Guidelines for Practicing Negotiating Skills:

- Launch new skills as strongly as possible, starting with low-risk situations in which practicing will be more comfortable.
- Never let an exception occur until skills are strongly rooted.
- Seize the first, appropriate opportunity to use your skills.

To get started using your negotiating skills, briefly answer in a few words any of the following that will assist your progress:

- When and for what will you use your negotiation skills?

- What main impediments do you anticipate and what will you do about them?

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- What can you do to encourage others to learn more about the negotiation process so you all can work better together?

- How will you assess and reward your own and others' progress?

- Who will you enlist to assist you and other negotiators?

Now, what is your first step to resolve a conflict that is important to you? Briefly describe it below and block necessary time on your calendar for follow through on this and your other choices for action.

OPPORTUNITIES IN CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Among significant influences on your relationships and conflict resolution opportunities you may not have explored fully are cultural differences. Attention to their variety and value can benefit most everyone involved. Even when there seem to be common experiences, geographic, familial, and individual variations are worth attention. Consider such aspects for strengthening and improving connections as well as for making progress with issues and conflicts.

This general definition of culture itself exposes its power and influence on relationships. Culture is "the totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions and all other products of human work and

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thoughts characteristic of a community or population." As such, culture relates to a significant range of human activity.

Since culture is so all inclusive, it affects identity profoundly. Maybe that's why many people cling to their own, consciously and unconsciously. Some feel theirs is superior and that, by definition, others' cultures are inferior. Such attitudes may be protections from underlying fears and anxieties or just reflect limited connections with different people and situations. Unexpected benefits then can emerge through exposure, exploration, and experience.

For example, William Deresiewicz mentions in a book review of *The Great Wave* on the opening of Japan in the 19th century that "...there is no self-knowledge — and thus, in a sense, no true knowledge at all — without displacement." In other words, awareness and growth can bloom from the discomfort that often goes with exploring differences and experiencing being a stranger.

CULTURAL EXPOSURE THROUGH A FILM

A variety of western European students demonstrated this process of growth through exposure to cultural differences in the French film *L'Auberge Espagnole* set in Barcelona, Spain. Their predictable conflicts about keeping things tidy in their shared apartment were less important than the real and important drama centered in relationships. Through exposure to one another and dealing with conflict, the students transcended stereotypes related to gender, language, and nationality.

The supposedly rigid German, constrained Brit, proper Frenchman and unfeminine lesbian revealed the appealing and complex individuals they actually were. What also emerged through the protagonist's efforts to find himself was the underlying human need for clarifying identity and direction for the future — a universal struggle of youth in a variety of cultures that often continues lifelong. (See the forthcoming section for additional ideas for learning about culture through the arts: Enjoy Cultural Variety.)

CULTURAL ISSUES IN LARGER CONTEXTS

The apartment life in the *L'Auberge Espagnole* film is a microcosm of the characters' countries which are sometimes considered melting pots, possibly a romantic illusion of integration. Exploration of the history of nations actually reveals

their patchworks of territories combining a variety of cultural groups that periodically struggle for control, influence, resources, and land. The obvious and underlying conflicts within and between countries are heightened by differences of race, religion, and class, occasionally overlaid with tribal issues. In fact, the Latin derivation of the word nation is tribe.

Despite the rich heterogeneity of the United States there is a wide range of issues reflecting cultural differences and values that show up as segregated enclaves. They affect almost everyone, directly or indirectly in relationships, neighborhoods, work, schools, friendships, travel as well as in prison populations.

Cultural conflicts continue as recent statistics reported in *The Wall Street Journal* show; there have been over 1000 anti-Jewish and half as many anti-Muslim hate crimes. Unfortunately, the latter figures, along with other acts of discrimination are increasing as the Middle East conflict continues to erupt beyond its borders. Reported infiltrations of extremists and criminals increasingly stoke fear and anxiety in the U.S.

September 11 shocked Americans into acknowledging their vulnerability to threats from abroad often related to political, religious, and ethnic differences. Even today, in a 2015 *New York Times* survey by its research and analytics department among 3,244 subscribers who chose to participate, 49% were afraid there will be another attack in their lifetime on the order of September 11. 29% said they did not expect one and 22% said they were not sure. This study occurred before the burgeoning of ISIS, aka ISIL or more appropriately DAIISH, and al Qaeda terrorism into Europe and Africa in 2015.

Sometimes related to cultural differences, the specter of domestic violence and terrorism, hovers as well. Whether they have proven mental illness or not, many perpetrators attack defenseless victims in everyday situations such as military recruiting facilities and movie theaters. The Oklahoma City bombing and Waco, Texas Branch Davidian siege are less recent examples of the centuries-long history of conflicts among ethnic, religious, cultural, and class groups in the United States. Many reflect overarching and aggravating issues such as poverty, urban decay, natural resource depletion and degradation, and weapons proliferation. Within such issues often reside simmering conflicts, reflecting differing cultural values, fears, and histories, not to mention power and ideological struggles.

Despite such disturbing and often destructive realities, many people still need and benefit from connecting with one another, whether they admit it or not. Without

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a modicum of peace and prosperity, almost everyone loses, whether they are "haves" or "have-nots." Then how to "just get along," how to foster understanding, acceptance, and even collaboration for mutual benefit?

There is potential for better understanding and acceptance in the following shifts and pressures which may stimulate mutual understanding and cooperation, perhaps even empathy.

- trends toward merging of members of different races, religions, and genders into family units
- relative increases in numbers and influence of people with different skin colors and ethnic backgrounds
- increased recognition by individuals, groups, and influencers of need to modify policies and devote resources to domestic issues such as mental illness, incarceration rates, and addictions leading to increased deaths from alcoholism, opioids, and heroin
- general matters such as aging, class structures, health, affordable housing, and education that relate to sustaining quality of life, economic viability, and public safety; they all have cultural aspects which complicate and potentially enrich situations and could forge a sense of community in some instances. An example is the aging in place Village movement throughout the U.S.
- international issues such as trade, refugees, nuclear proliferation, climate change, pollution, epidemics, cyberwarfare and many other matters that borders don't thwart affect individuals' lives

In today's world, no human being is an island, but neither is any country, ethnic group, religion, class, race, or gender. Although some with greater resources and perhaps fear can put gates around themselves, ultimately many will still be vulnerable to economic downturns, crime, terrorism, and epidemics. Change, for better and worse, cannot be stopped. But it may be influenced for the better by you as an individual and by collaborating with others through your range of relationships. In addition, your resources can include money and time as well as experience, education, leadership, and common sense. Continuing learning and caring about others can ease the transitions for everyone..

One way that will benefit most people at almost no cost is to learn about and appreciate cultural differences: what you want to embrace and modify in your own and what is valuable, possibly threatening, and enriching in others. This is a process available to anyone curious about what other people offer and aware of dangers in not understanding different and possibly conflicting motivations and values.

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For example, how do you relate to these American cultural values shared by many in the U.S. and beyond?

- primacy of the individual
- action over contemplation
- competition as a major motivator in economic activity

For another view of American cultural values, you may be interested in this 2015 take on the mythology of American exceptionalism in *Bloomberg Business News*. See the five related charts from Jeremy Grantham: <http://bloom.bg/1OTTQw7>

There is nothing intrinsically right or wrong with these or many other cultural values. However, staying at one end of the spectrum at the expense of learning about and possibly integrating the advantages of alternatives may lead to a limiting rigidity. Instead, imagine what would happen if there were a range of ways to:

- identify, develop, and define the worth of individuals and groups
- gather, evaluate, and share information for mutual benefit and action
- be successful

Learning how other cultures and countries address such matters provides new ideas and possibilities. In Ireland, for example, a student prize recognizes generosity of spirit.

To increase flexibility within the United States, people could explore the realities of nonlinear processes or how things unfold. That understanding can contribute to making sense of complexity and paradox as well. In turn, such an approach provides ways to avoid boxing life's messiness into mere logic and analysis. In other words, dealing with seeming illogic can be an important basis for appreciating many important situations and behaviors.

Seeing what emerges from using analysis and synthesis together can be more powerful than simply seeking cause and effect relationships which don't reflect complex realities. There are often just too many variables and influences to assume one cause or action leads to one effect. As in relationships, both distractions and advantages occur in dynamic interactions. Emotions naturally add to the complexity as well as clarify direction for what may seem obscure.

To play with specific examples, consider other criteria for success beyond money, higher education, position, or power. One example could be satisfying

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relationships in which all parties benefit and grow. How would that definition of success influence your choices and behavior? No doubt you can think of other questions and approaches to spark your imagination and expand or deepen what you do and how you live.

As you appreciate the riches and possibilities in differences, see what opportunities emerge to improve your situation. What beneficial ways are there to support and learn from one another? What would happen when you explore other cultures with openness and curiosity?

This process may also expand thinking and pleasures as well as decrease disdain and fear of differences. Just as studying how individuals struggle through difficulties to become stronger, other cultures can provide good drawing boards for understanding, conversing, and finding alternatives to transcend problems. New opportunities and variety are possible, offsetting the boredom and stasis that often come with what's known and seemingly predictable.

ENJOY CULTURAL VARIETY

Appreciating cultural differences does not mean giving up or limiting your own beliefs, nature, or way of living. But it can stimulate, educate, and entertain with new ideas and choices. The process also helps you confirm what you like and prefer about your own situation.

For adventure and pleasure, try any of the following ways to enrich, enlarge, and deepen your life by exploring others' beliefs and behaviors. To encourage your momentum, choose or adapt one for follow up within the next week or so.

Learn about another culture that intrigues you, within or outside this nation; imagine your own from its perspective.

Study how an interesting culture evolved, comparing and contrasting its history, and possibly its arts, with your own. Look for the commonalities and differences.

Listen to and watch people from different cultures. Engage them in conversation, asking questions and offering information about yourself, your ways of living, and customs, as appropriate.

Identify how your own culture has affected your main values and actions, for better and worse.

Read biographies, autobiographies, and articles about people from different backgrounds you find interesting or even challenging.

Choose any examples from literature, dance, music, visual arts, theater, and film that seem new and engaging to you. How does your experience with it relate to what you know about already and your expectations?

Explore different foods and eating preferences within and outside the United States. Prepare a meal with someone from another culture, sharing some favorite dishes.

Mention below your preferred choice or adaptation from the foregoing suggestions and specific steps (how, when, where, and with whom) for follow through.

BENEFIT FROM DISCOMFORT IN DIFFERENCES

Choosing what's comfortable and predictable can limit worthwhile challenges and opportunities. For example, a well-educated, sophisticated woman might prefer a doctor with a similar background in contrast to one from a different country or race with better credentials and patient ratings. If you have such tendencies, being aware of them can prepare you for making more conscious, effective choices.

In a possibly less benevolent situation, imagine walking down a street and noticing a rowdy group of teenagers from another race or ethnic group walking toward you. Do you make way for them, cross the street, keep barreling ahead with eyes averted, or look them in their eyes? That decision is best made when you know something about their values and tendencies to help you predict what could happen and how to stay safe in a specific context.

You may be interested in knowing about 2015 research on anxiety in the United States. It notes that we are distinctive in our emphasis on feelings, though some inarticulateness or avoidance of dealing with them I've noticed makes me wonder about this generalization. For the full discussion, see *The New York Times* article, *The Anxious Americans*, by Stanford University anthropology professor T. M. Luhrmann at <http://tinyurl.com/pbl8juf>.

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On a more general level, address any unspecified anxiety you feel about terrorist threats by taking reasonable precautions based on understanding the values and behaviors of such people. Though fear of a specific source may not disappear, learning what's behind their actions may help dissipate the anxiety expressed in a sense of impotency and doom that comes from hearing about vague and continuing dangers. Your knowledge and insight can also help you make effective decisions related to travel, work, family activities, and other aspects of your life, as well as local and national policies. For a discussion of religious violence, see Rabbi Jonathan Sacks' 2015 book: *Not in God's Name: Confronting Religious Violence*.

THINK AGAINST YOURSELF TO THINK FOR YOURSELF

Although I'm not a fan of French existentialist philosopher Jean Paul Sartre, I can still learn from the way he embraced differences. Sartre explained why he wanted to study one of his own countrymen, the writer Gustave Flaubert, with whom he had little in common: "Because he is the opposite of what I am. I need to rub against something that puts me into question. In *The Words* I wrote, 'I have often thought against myself.' That sentence has never been understood... But, in fact, that's exactly how one should think: One should always be questioning one's own assumptions." Thinking against yourself will not only enrich your life, but also protect it; understanding another perspective can help you prepare for and engage with the unknown, whether it's appealing or threatening.

To think for as well as against yourself for your own benefit and to profit from problems, this handbook also provides you with the six guides below. As always, adjust the ideas and suggestions to your nature and situation. The guides are designed to be flexible, to honor differences in readers and users. Experiment with relevant applications that inspire you and relate usefully to your situation in order to improve your relationships, take good care of yourself, and move forward.

Guide One: Benefit from the Brain in Your Gut

Guide Two: Ways to Untangle Problems

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Guide Three: Manage Relationship Saboteurs

Guide Four: Transcend Limiting Situations

Guide Five: Block the Bullies: At Work and Beyond

Guide Six: Use Your Power — Fully

Perhaps this quote from a father of modern aviation, Wilbur Wright, will contribute to your progress: *No bird soars in a calm.*