



Course Director:  
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# Negotiation Skills Training



- Managers at senior, middle and junior levels
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- Conflict dispute resolution mediators
- Sales Negotiators
- Buyers
- Hostage & Crowd Control Negotiators
- Facilitators

INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATION ACADEMY

*Negotiation: The Genesis of Management*

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## PERSONALITY TRAITS that could make you or break you!

Personality traits of yourself, or of those around you, could be the cause of many problems or could help you **towards success!**

How does personality affect your **negotiation** ability, and how can you use knowledge of personality to improve, plan, or avoid **conflicts** and bad choices?

Major attention has recently been focused on **five 'big' personality traits** that seem to relate directly to success and failure, more so than many other characteristics.

These Five Big Personality\* traits are now quite commonly used in psychology for describing and analyzing individual differences. These traits are:

1. **Extraversion**, 2. **Agreeableness**,
3. **Neuroticism**, 4. **Conscientiousness**
- and 5. **Openness**.

Recent research\* has provided evidence that suggests that some of these personality traits may be directly related to your success with people and at work.

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They could be powerful in predicting **work success, mortality, and divorce** rates. They have also been linked to **academic success of students** and to successful **romantic relationships!**

So, while reading the following explanation and examples, you could rate yourself on a scale from high to low on each and use it as a topic for discussion or feedback.

## 1. Extraversion:

Are you high or low on this trait?

**Extraversion–introversion** is commonly found in many ‘tests’ of personality. These terms have been widely used in Psychology. Extraversion indicates outgoing, talkative, energetic behaviour and introversion as the tendency to be more reserved and solitary.

Do you have some of both, or do you have either the one or the other? It seems that everyone has **both an extraverted side and an introverted side**, with one being more dominant than the other (which is your dominant one?).

In negotiation one would expect extraverted individuals to be more talkative and relying on their communication skills to **persuade** and connect with others.

The introverted types would be expected to be quieter, **listening** and trying to absorb and analyze the shared information.

In any case, people **fluctuate in their behavior** all the time, and even extreme introverts and extraverts do not always act according to their type.

## 2. Agreeableness:

**Agreeableness** is characterized by kindness and the tendency to be sympathetic, cooperative, warm and considerate. People who score high on this dimension tend to believe that most people are **honest, decent, and trustworthy**.

People scoring low on agreeableness are generally less concerned with others' well being and have less empathy. Therefore, they are less likely to go out of their way to help others. Low agreeableness is often characterized by **skepticism** about other people's motives, resulting in **suspicion and unfriendliness**.

In negotiation, they are also more likely to **compete than to cooperate**.

This crucial ‘negotiation’ trait could be the cause of many ‘competitive’ situations at work or at home. On the other hand, if someone scores high on this variable it could result in

*We are in the process of developing  
an  
**Online negotiation skills  
program**  
for individuals*

**An online course with a  
difference:**

**An hour per week intervention over  
ten weeks with live explanations,  
examples, role-plays and a live  
Q & A session**

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**avoidance of conflict** or an attempt to smooth over differences, compared to those who score low.

Related to agreeableness, are traits such as: **trust**, straightforwardness, altruism, **compliance**, modesty and warmth.

### 3. Neuroticism:

Neuroticism a trait characterized by **anxiety, moodiness, worry, envy, and jealousy**. Individuals who score high are more likely to experience feelings such as anxiety, anger, envy, guilt, and depression. They respond more **poorly to stress**, are more likely to interpret ordinary situations as threatening, and minor frustrations as hopelessly difficult. They are often self-conscious and shy, and they may have **trouble controlling urges**.

One can imagine how **risky** those with a strong tendency towards 'neuroticism' can be if they do not get what they want or if negotiation becomes **stressful**.

### 4. Conscientiousness:

Conscientiousness is the tendency to be **thorough, careful**, or vigilant. Those that score high on this tendency, desire to do a tasks well. Conscientious people are **efficient and organized** as opposed to easy-going and disorderly. They exhibit a tendency to show self-discipline, act dutifully, and aim for achievement; they display **planned** rather than 'off-the-cuff' behavior; and they are generally organized and **dependable**.

They are most often neat and **systematic**, careful and thorough.

As negotiators they are good in deliberation (the tendency to **think carefully before acting**).

Conscientious individuals are generally hard working and reliable. When taken to an extreme, they may also be "workaholics", **perfectionists**, and persistent in their behavior (this may cause them to be somewhat **rigid in negotiation**).

People who score low on conscientiousness tend to be more '**easygoing**', less goal-oriented, and less driven by success; they also are more likely to engage in 'other activities outside work'.

### 5. Openness:

Openness is characterized by an emphasis on **transparency** and free unrestricted access to knowledge and information as well as collaborative or **cooperative** management and decision-making rather than central authority.

Negotiators with a strong tendency to openness will tend to request total transparency in **sharing data**, which could lead to better understanding and trust. It could, though, cause these individuals to expose themselves to being manipulated by those who are less scrupulous.

## 6. Implications:

The implications of having more or less of these qualities (or combination of it) could be crucial for your relationships, your work success and ability to communicate effectively. In some cases you could be [trained or coached](#) into handling some traits that are counter productive in being successful.

Knowledge of these traits could help us all and negotiators to:

- Design good negotiation **teams**
- Analyze opposing team and develop communication **strategies**
- Utilize unique skills to **fit** someone into the best **job**
- Understand the reason behind our failed relationships and take **remedial action**
- Be **coached and trained** in lacking communication skills
- Understand some reasons behind **conflict and success**

*Manie Spoelstra*

\*P.J. Howard, & J. M. Howard, 2000, The Owner's Manual for Personality at Work: How the Big Five Personality Traits Affect Your Performance.

[Previous Newsletters](#)