
REASONING SKILLS FOR HANDLING CONFLICT

by David W. Felder, Ph.D.

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Wellington Press
9601-30 Miccosukee Road
Tallahassee, FL 32309-9662
E-Mail: Wellpress@aol.com

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Introduction

The materials in this book are used in situations where there is disagreement. One situation is when you disagree with someone else, another is when you witness other people having a disagreement and you want to decide what views to accept. Whichever situation you find yourself in, the problem is the same. There is disagreement and you want to end up with a situation of agreement. You want to go from a situation of conflict to one of consensus.

The first step in attaining the goal of agreement is to understand the nature of the disagreement. Each type of disagreement is handled a different way. Knowing the type of disagreement allows you to know what tools to use in coming to agreement. The first chapter of this book presents methods for determining the type of disagreement.

Other chapters of this book cover methods for handling each type of disagreement. Chapter two shows how to handle verbal disagreements with definitions. Chapter three presents methods of handling factual disagreements with arguments and chapter four how to avoid fallacies when presenting arguments. Chapter five focuses on methods of conflict resolution for handling conflicts of interest, and chapter six examines methods for handling conflicting moral claims. Chapters seven through ten present the methods of symbolic logic for handling factual disputes.

The skills covered in this book include the ability to communicate your viewpoints and the ability to understand other people's viewpoints. In cases where it is possible to reach agreement, you will learn how to go from conflict to consensus. In cases where agreement is not possible, you will be able to understand the nature of the disagreement. These are important skills for personal life, employment, and the survival of life on our planet. Skills in handling conflict are especially important today because when people lack these skills they turn too readily to violence. While presenting these skills which are important to life, the text also covers most of the reasoning skills that are tested on standardized achievement tests.

This text will increase your reasoning power. The ability to reason is a real power. You can use this power to convince people to do what you want them to do, or to free yourself from the control of others. Those who have this power are better off than those who do not. There are several specific benefits of having reasoning power. You will enjoy greater self-confidence knowing that you can hold your own in reasoning ability. Second you will be able to see through tricks that con artists pull on the unsuspecting. A third benefit is that you will be able to trick others. Reasoning power is a real power and like other powers it can be used for good or evil. You are being entrusted with this power and it is up to you to choose how to use it. May the power be with you.

Chapter 1:

DETERMINING THE TYPE OF DISAGREEMENT

Purpose

It is important to understand the types of disagreements people have because the type of disagreement determines what is needed in order to come to agreement. If a dispute is factual, then one might attempt to settle it by the process of argumentation; but if a dispute is one of attitude, nothing can be done unless one analyzes the factual background of the negative or positive attitude. If a dispute is one that is merely verbal, it can sometimes be solved by defining words. Conflicts of interest and moral disputes are each handled in different ways. Because different types of disputes are settled by different methods, a good first step is to identify the type of dispute.

Instructional Objective

Upon completion of this unit, the student will be able to classify disagreements as ones of attitude, fact, verbal disagreements, conflicts of interest or moral disputes.

Sample Test Item

Directions

Indicate what is true of each example using the following choices:

- A) The disagreement is one of attitude.
- B) The disagreement is one of facts.
- C) The disagreement is verbal.
- D) The disagreement is a conflict of interest.
- E) The disagreement is a moral dispute.

Example

Mr. X: "She is very devoted to the cause."
Mr. Y: "She is a fanatic for the cause."

Answer

A

Behavioral Objective

After completing this chapter, the student should be able to:

1. Define and recognize examples of the following.
Attitude Differences
 - slanted favorably
 - slanted unfavorably
 - neutral

Functions of Language

informative
expressive
directive
ethical
performative
ceremonial

Types of Disagreement

attitude
factual
verbal
conflict of interest
moral dispute

2. State how people having each type of disagreement might come to agreement.

Organizer - Spotting Attitudes

Before one can spot whether there is disagreement in attitude, one must first know how to spot attitudes.

CONCEPTS: Slanted Favorable, Slanted Unfavorable, Neutral

- Slanted favorable = If a sentence is slanted favorably, then the reader can tell that the author likes the sentence's subject.
- Slanted unfavorable = If a sentence is slanted unfavorably, then the reader can tell that the author dislikes the subject of the sentence.
- Neutral = If a sentence is neutral then the reader cannot tell whether the author likes or dislikes the subject of the sentence.

Organizer - Denotation and Connotation

A person can often spot attitudes by being sensitive to the connotative meaning of words. So first we will discuss the two types of meanings words have: denotation and connotation.

CONCEPTS: Denotation and Connotation

Examine the set of sentences below and observe how the statements in the set differ.

Denotation & Connotation
I am a peace officer.
You are a policeman.
He is a flatfoot.

The terms "*peace officer*," "*policeman*," and "*flatfoot*" all denote or refer to the same people; that is, people who work for a police department. Thus, these terms have the same denotative meaning because they refer to the same subjects.

The terms "*peace officer*," "*policeman*," and "*flatfoot*" differ in their emotive meaning. Each term shows a different feeling toward the person referred to. The term "peace officer" has a positive connotation and the term "flatfoot" has a negative connotation. The term "policeman" is neutral and has no strong connotation, either positive or negative.

The irregular conjugation "I am, you are, he is, etc." allows us to notice immediately whether words are positive or negative. When describing oneself, positive words are usually used. In describing a person to his face, neutral words or better are used. When a person is not present, negative words are more easily used. In determining whether a word is positive, neutral, or negative, you might ask whether a person would use the word to describe himself, someone else to her face, or would use the word only when the person is not present.

Sample Test Item

Directions

Indicate what is true of this example using the following choices:

- A) Approval
- B) Disapproval
- C) Neither

Example

"The tramp sneaked behind the barn."

Answer

B

Procedure

1. Examine the words used. A writer has options regarding what words are used. Some words have positive connotations and other words have negative connotations. Some words are complimentary and other words are derogatory. (In this case, the words "tramp" and "sneaked" have derogatory connotations).
2. Examine what is mentioned and what is not mentioned. A writer has options on what he or she picks to mention.
3. Examine what is suggested in addition to what is said. A person might make suggestions which go beyond the facts. For example, "in a strictly legal sense he did nothing wrong" implies that he did do something wrong. This involves reading between the lines.

Basically, a person shows his or her attitudes in the choices he or she makes. A writer has options on what words to use and what to mention. Consider all the options the writer had and ask whether he chose favorable, unfavorable, or neutral options. One might imagine a list of words with the same denotations which might be used by an author with positive words at the top of the list and the most negative words at the bottom. With this model in mind, ask yourself whether the author chose a word which would fall at the top, bottom or middle of the list.

Spotting Slanted Coverage

To spot slanted coverage examine:

1. ... the words and their connotations
2. ... what is said and what is not said
3. ... what is suggested vs. what is said

CONCEPTS: Favorable or Unfavorable Slant, Neutral Coverage

If it is possible to tell that an author approves of the subject he is writing about without his stating directly that he approves, then the writing is slanted favorably toward that subject.

If it is possible to tell that an author disapproves of the subject he is writing about without his stating directly that he disapproves, then the writing is slanted unfavorably.

If it is not possible to tell whether a writer approves or disapproves of the subject about which he is writing, then the coverage is neutral.

Slanted vs. Neutral Coverage

Slanted Favorably

Slanted Unfavorably

Neutral

Name _____

Exercise 1 - 1

Directions: Indicate what is true of each example using these choices:

- A) Slanted favorably toward the subject of the sentence.
- B) Slanted unfavorably toward the subject of the sentence.
- C) Neutral toward the subject of the sentence.

1. He was rash to jump into the water after the child _____
2. He was brave to jump into the water to save the child. _____
3. He jumped into the water and swam toward the child. _____
4. He attends many meetings for the movement. _____
5. He is a fanatic for the cause. _____
6. He is very devoted to improving conditions. _____
7. She is very lively at parties. _____
8. She moves around a lot at parties. _____
9. She goes wild at parties. _____
10. He has a lot of nerve crashing parties. _____
11. He has a lot of courage going to unfamiliar parties. _____
12. He goes to parties he is not invited to. _____
13. She is even heavier than he is. _____
14. The suspect squandered the funds. _____
15. Wife to friend: "My husband was sober last night." _____
16. The driver, pushing the legal speed limit, despite the rain, hit him. _____
17. The mechanic had oil on his hands. _____
18. The union is trying to force through a pension plan. _____
19. Although criticized from many quarters, she stood her ground. _____
20. The American flag was conspicuously absent

from the speakers' platform.

Name _____

Exercise 1 - 2

Directions: Examine newspaper or magazine articles for examples of slanted news coverage. Ask yourself whether you can tell the attitude of the author of an article. Bring in an example in which you can tell the attitude of an author and explain what in the article shows the author's attitude.

1. Words used _____

2. What is and is not mentioned _____

3. What is suggested vs. what is said _____

4. Your overall assessment _____

Organizer - Three Main Functions of Language

Before we get to types of disagreement, it is desirable to learn to spot functions of language. Factual disagreements are usually expressed in informative language, attitudinal disagreements in expressive language, and so on.

CONCEPT: Informative Language

Definition	Informative language includes utterances which are true or false.
Example	"The planet Jupiter is larger than the Earth."
Procedure	To test for Informative, ask yourself, "Is the utterance true or false?"

CONCEPT: Expressive Language

Definition	Expressive language includes utterances in which a person expresses his or her <u>approval</u> or <u>disapproval</u> of something.
Example	"I hate the smell of insect spray."
Procedure	To test for Expressive, ask yourself . . . Can you tell whether the speaker approves or disapproves of something?

CONCEPT: Directive Language

Definition	Directive language includes utterances which tell a person to do something or not to do something.
Example	"Close the door."
Procedure	To test for Directive, ask yourself . . . Does the utterance tell someone to do something or not to do something?

Note: To remember these functions of language, you might associate a few words with each one.

The Main Function of Language
Informative (true/false)
Expressive (approval/disapproval)
Directive (do it/don't do it)

Note: Remember the following to avoid confusing informative and expressive. One difference between informative and expressive is that when one makes an informative utterance, he or she is telling others some fact about the world, whereas when one makes an expressive utterance one is telling others about oneself, e.g., what is liked or not liked. One test to perform is to ask yourself whether you have learned about the speaker or about a reality outside the speaker.

Note: It is acceptable to have several functions of language used in the same discourse, providing that a person realizes he or she is switching form one to the other. When one makes a factual claim, one needs to support the information with other solid information rather than emotion.

Name _____

Exercise 1 - 3

Directions: Examine the paper below and list next to each numbered sentence the function or functions of language which are present. Then evaluate the paper. The author of the paper was told to list a belief she disagreed with and then to try to convince others that they should also reject that belief.

Green People Should Be Treated As Equals

(1) I made this statement many years ago. (2) The reason for this foolish idea was the fact that I was too young to really know what they were doing to themselves and to the society in which they lived. (3) I used to laugh at the clothes they wore and how they walked and talked. (4) This was really funny to me because everyone else laughed which made it even funnier.

(5) People think that this country has a drug problem. (6) They need to look again. (7) This country has a problem all right, a Green epidemic.

(8) The number of Green People is growing more and more each day. (9) If the world doesn't wake up in time there won't be a decent man or woman alive by the year 2,000. (10) Soon things will get so out of hand until people will be choosing their own color.

(11) It is not too late. (12) People should stop laughing and start some serious thinking about this matter. (13) If they were treated like dogged infested disease maybe the number of Green People would be reduced.

(14) Now our society is slowly changing form. (15) Instead of the normal colors, we see Green People everywhere. (16) When will this nightmare end? (17) It's got to be stopped and we are the only ones that can do it. (18) Now that I am a little older, I have come to realize how repulsive they really are. (19) Their activities aren't funny any more. (20) They turn my stomach.

Note: It is possible to go from one function to another. A person might, for example, get a person to close a door by uttering a directive, "Close the door," or he might get a person to do the same act by giving an informative utterance, "It's cold in here." Consider the following interchange"

Bob: Close the door
Joe: I don't want to.
Bob: It's getting cold in here. I have a cold and it's getting worse.
Joe: No! It's not cold.
Bob: The thermometer says 30 and the water in the pitcher is frozen. You have an icicle hanging from the tip of your nose.
Joe: O.K., I'll close the door.

Exercise 1 - 4

Directions:

1. Think of information which might affect people's attitudes toward people of another ethnic group. Imagine a Mr. Guff who hates Bunts. How might Mr. Guff's attitude toward people of the Bunt ethnic group be changed?
2. Imagine that you are the leader of a nation and that you want your country to invade another nation. Write a speech that is designed to make people in your country hate people in the other country enough so they will want to kill them.

Organizer - Some Other Functions of Language

There are other functions of language besides the informative, expressive, and directive functions. There are as many functions of language as there are things people do with language. Only a few of the additional functions of language are defined below.

CONCEPT: Performative Language

Utterances which perform actions, such as apologizing and promising, come under the performative function of language. A person is performing an action with words.

Example "I promise."

Procedure To test for Performative, ask yourself . . . Is the person making the utterance performing an action? If she is, then you can ask whether she did it, i.e., did she apologize? Did he promise? If so, answer in the affirmative.

CONCEPT: Ethical Language

Utterances which claim that a thing, person, action or situation ought or ought not to exist. Any claim that something is morally good or morally evil involves ethical language.

Example "It is wrong to steal."

Procedure To test for Ethical language, ask yourself . . . Is the person making the utterance claiming that something ought or ought not to exist? If so, then the utterance involves ethical language.

CONCEPT: Ceremonial Language

Utterances which are part of ritual behavior. Greetings and salutations are part of the ceremonial function of language.

Example "Hello."

Procedure To test for Ceremonial, ask yourself . . . Is the expression something you say simply because it is the custom? If so, then the expression is ceremonial.

Note: To remember these last three functions of language, you might just remember an example of each.

Other Functions of Language
Performative Language - "I promise" Ethical Language - "Lying is wrong" Ceremonial Language - "Hello"

Note: Remember the following to avoid confusing directive and performative. One difference between directive and performative is that when one uses directive language, he is getting someone else to do

something; when one uses performative language, she is performing an action.

Name _____

Exercise 1 - 5

Directions: Indicate what is true of each example using these choices:

- A) Informative Language
- B) Expressive Language
- C) Directive Language
- D) Performative Language
- E) Ethical Language
- F) Ceremonial Language

1. I like orange juice. _____
2. Do not waste your food. _____
3. The postman is late. _____
4. My political opponent is a do-gooder. _____
5. Take a pill after each meal and before going to bed. _____
6. Your ideas are for the birds. _____
7. Your flight leaves in twenty minutes. _____
8. The crazy fool! If I get my hands on him I'll wring his neck. _____
9. Take your umbrella with you today. _____
10. Thou shalt not steal. _____
11. I promise to pay you back next week. _____
12. George was here at three this afternoon. _____
13. The President has made many promises of that sort before. _____
14. Darling, you're the most wonderful girl in the world! _____
15. Fill out this questionnaire. _____
16. Feed the dogs before you go out..... _____
17. Oh, I'd love to go to dinner at Votino's. _____
18. Go clean out the barn. _____
19. A child should always obey his or her parents. _____

20. Passing this bill is the right thing to do. _____

Organizer - Detecting Types of Disagreement

Now that we know how to spot attitudes, we can go on to learning how to tell whether a disagreement is one of attitude, facts, a verbal dispute, an ethical disagreement, or a material conflict.

CONCEPT: Attitude Disagreement

Definition	An Attitude Disagreement is present when one person has an attitude toward a subject which is different from the attitude a second person holds.
Example	Sil: Suzy is lively at parties. Sal: Suzy goes wild at parties.
Procedure	To test for Attitude Disagreement . . . <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Spot the attitude in the first statement. It is a positive attitude.2. Spot the attitude in the second statement. It is a negative attitude.3. See if the attitude in the first statement is different from the attitude in the second statement. In this case, one is positive and the other is negative, so there is a disagreement in attitude.4. Ask, "Does one utterance show one attitude toward the subject which is different from the attitude shown in the other utterance?"5. Very often with an attitude difference, people are saying the same thing, but they are saying it differently.

CONCEPTS: Factual Disagreement

Definition	A factual disagreement is present when two or more people make assertions which cannot be true at the same time.
Example	Sil: Mr. Green is a college graduate. Sal: Mr. Green never went to college.
Procedure	To test for Factual Disagreement, ask yourself . . . <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. "Can both statements be true at the same time?" If the disagreement is factual, then the two statements cannot both be true.

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2. Replace any words having strong connotations with neutral words. If one person says "He is a peace officer," and the other says, "He is a flatfoot," both statements become the statement, "He is a policeman," when the neutral term "policeman" is substituted for "peace officer" and "flatfoot."

CONCEPT: Verbal Disagreement

Definition	A Verbal Disagreement is present when two or more parties believe that they have a disagreement, yet the disagreement depends entirely on the words used.
Example	Sil: Ancient Athens was a democracy because people in Athens elected their leaders. Sal: Ancient Athens was not a democracy because seven out of eight individuals were slaves in Athens.
Procedure	To test for Verbal Disagreement . . . <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. See if you can identify a word which could be changed or re-defined in a way that would end the dispute.2. See if there are different meaning being used for a word by the following process:<ol style="list-style-type: none">(a) Think of a definition of terms that would work for the first statement or speaker.(b) Think of a definition of terms that would work for the second statement or speaker.(c) See if there are two different definitions of terms being used by the speakers.

CONCEPT: Ethical Disputes

Definition	An Ethical Dispute is present when two or more parties disagree over ethical statements. Typically one person states that a particular thing is good, while another states that the same thing is bad; one believes that something ought to exist, another that it ought not to exist.
Example	Sil: Wealth ought to be divided equally. Sal: Wealth ought not to be divided equally.

Procedure	To test for Ethical Disputes . . . 1. See if people are using ethical language and making ethical claims. 2. See if the people are assuming ethical statements which they are not stating directly. If so, state the assumed ethical claims. 3. Note the ethical statements which each person is committed to, and see whether both could be accepted by one person. A person cannot accept that one thing is both good and evil at the same time. If both views cannot be accepted, then there is an Ethical Dispute.
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CONCEPT: Conflict of Interest

Definition	A Conflict of Interest is present when two or more parties want something which cannot be either divided or shared, so that the attainment thereof by one party precludes attainment by the other. Conflicts of Interest are usually conflicts over either the possession or use of desired objects.
Example	Employer: I want to pay you workers only ten dollars an hour. Employee: We want at least fifteen dollars an hour.
Procedure	To test for Conflict of Interest . . . 1. See if there is a statement which indicates what each person wants to either possess or use. 2. See whether the attainment of what one person wants would preclude the attainment of what another person wants. If it would, then there is a conflict of interest.

Name _____

Exercise 1 - 6

Directions: Indicate what is true of each example using these choices:

- A) Attitude Disagreement
- B) Factual Disagreement
- C) Verbal Disagreement
- D) Ethical Disagreement
- E) Conflict of Interest

1. "John is 5' 10" tall."
"John is 6' 1" tall." _____
2. "Mary almost met her sales quota."
"Mary failed to meet her sales quota." _____
3. "Passing this bill is the right thing to do."
"Passing this bill is the wrong thing to do." _____
4. "Dick finally got rid of that old Sears lawn mower and bought himself
a new one. He's using a Honda lawn mower now."
"No, Dick did not buy himself a new lawn mower. He borrowed that
lawn mower from his neighbor." _____
5. "We want twelve dollars an hour for our labor."
"As manager I can give you no more than ten dollars an hour." _____
6. "Mr. Jones is thrifty."
"Mr. Jones is cheap." _____
7. "Harry finally got rid of that old Ford of his and bought a car. He's
driving a Chevy now."
"No, Harry did not buy a new car. That Chevy is a good three years
old." _____
8. "The sun revolves around the earth."
"The earth revolves around the sun." _____
9. "I like this class."
"I don't like this class." _____
10. "That's my pen, because I saw it first."
"No, it's mine. I picked it up." _____
11. "The earth has been in existence for only a hundred million years."
"The earth has been in existence for a hundred million years." _____



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12. "Karen lives a long way from campus. I walked out to see her the other day, and it took me nearly two hours to get there."
 "Karen does not live a long way from campus. It took me only ten minutes to drive to her apartment."
13. "The sending of United States troops for UN Peacekeeping is wrong."
 "It is right that the United States send troops for UN Peacekeeping.
14. "Senator Gray is a genuine liberal. She votes for every progressive measure that comes before the legislature."
 "Senator Gray is not liberal. She hardly gives money to any causes."
15. "Joe missed the ball."
 "Joe almost hit the ball."
16. "With an income of ten thousand a year, the Smiths are poor."
 "With an income of ten thousand a year, the Smiths are not poor."
17. Mary knows how to enjoy herself when she goes out on the town.
 Mary goes crazy when she goes out on the town.
18. "A tree falling in the wilderness with nobody around to hear will produce no sound. There can be no auditory sensation unless someone actually senses it."
 "No, whether anyone is there to hear it or not, the crash of a falling tree will set up vibrations in the air and will therefore produce a sound."
19. "That is my wallet you have in your hand."
 "It's my wallet now."
20. "Mercury is smaller than Venus in circumference."
 "Mercury is larger than Venus in circumference."