



# Active woman

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Practical guide



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## CHAPTER I

### Interpersonal communication - competencies necessary for work

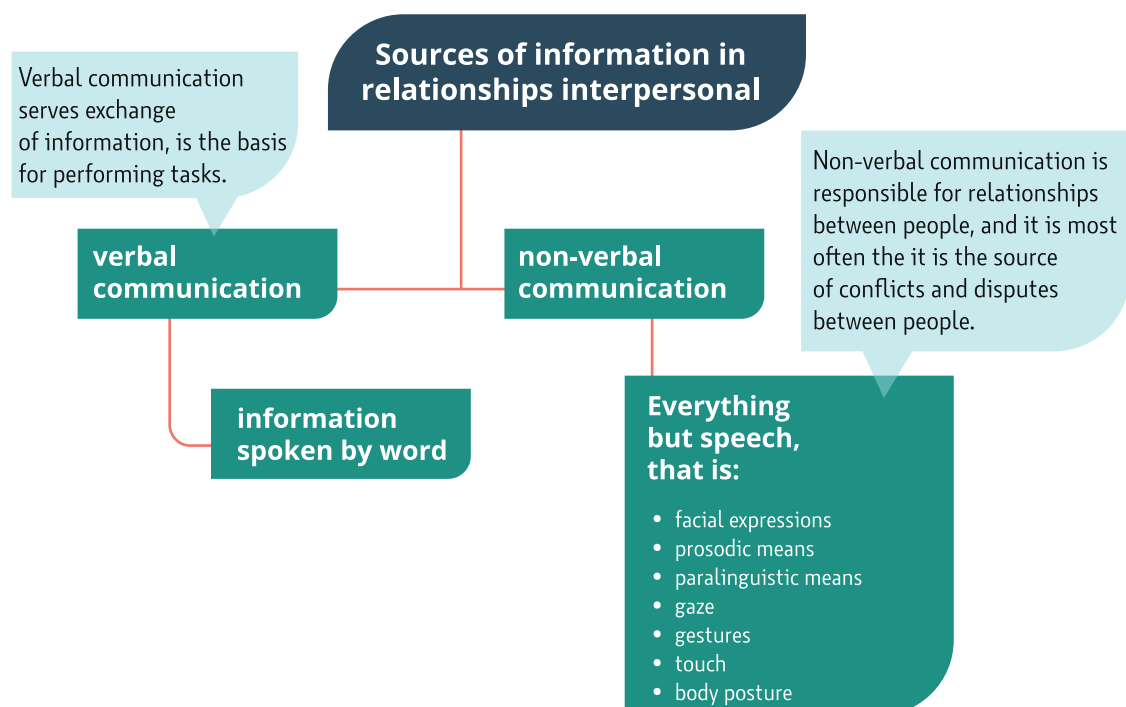
Interpersonal communication seems to be one of the basic skills of every human being, at the same time it is the most common cause of conflicts and disorders in interpersonal relations. It is an art that we learn throughout our lives.

In the broadest sense, every human behavior constitutes a message in relations with another person - even the absence of a message carries some information. To better understand our own communication, it is useful to look at those elements by which others receive information from us. Communication can be divided into verbal and non-verbal.

Sources of information in interpersonal relations

Verbal communication	Non-verbal communication
Information that is an objective fact	Everything but speech, that is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• facial expressions</li> <li>• prosodic means</li> <li>• paralinguistic means</li> <li>• gaze</li> <li>• gestures</li> <li>• touch</li> <li>• body posture</li> <li>• behavior in space</li> <li>• makeup, clothing, interior design</li> </ul>

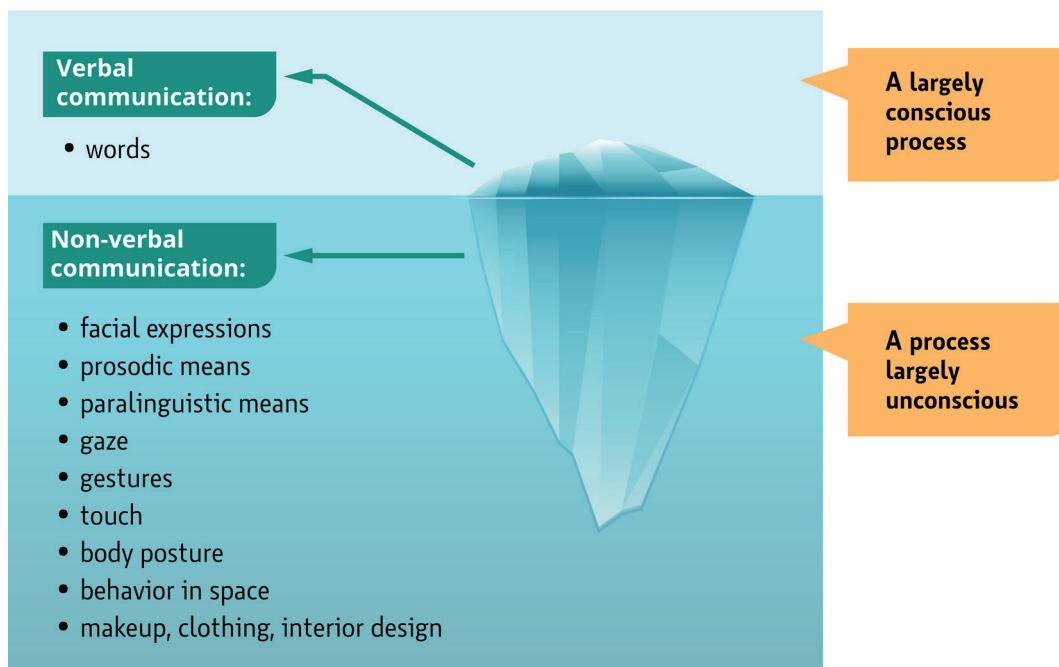
Verbal communication is used to exchange information and is the basis for performing tasks, while non-verbal communication is responsible for interpersonal relations and is most often the source of conflicts and disputes between people.



Sources of information in interpersonal relations

It is worth looking at the contribution of the different types of communication to the reception of information from another person in interpersonal relationships. It would seem that verbal communication is the main source of information, and this is indeed the case when we are focused on completing tasks - at work, for example. However, in the aspect of a relationship between two people, the source of information is primarily non-verbal communication. It is on the basis of it that information is obtained about whether people respect each other, like each other or are distanced, whether their relationship is friendly or official.

The share of verbal communication in building interpersonal relationships is small, at about 7%, the remaining 93% of information about the relations of people to each other and to the world is gained through the reception of sent nonverbal messages. One can use the analogy of an iceberg, only a small part of which protrudes above sea level - what is articulated and heard constitutes only the tip of the iceberg, the rest remains invisible.



#### Verbal and nonverbal communication

The hallmark of nonverbal communication is its integrity at the level of many groups of messages, e.g. when a person distances himself, he often expresses it by tilting his body back, not smiling, avoiding eye contact, limited gesticulation, etc. Consistency is paramount in the perception of nonverbal messages - judgments are rarely made on the basis of a single factor.

## Example

Imagine two people standing with their arms crossed.

### Person 1

He stands with his arms crossed  
At the same time:

- his body is tilted back
- avoids eye contact
- does not move
- does not smile
- his facial expression is statuesque
- uses paralinguistic means (sighs, murmurs, exclamations expressing thought, e.g. hmm, ehm, yyy)
- in terms of prosodic means: tone of voice quiet, balanced



### Person 2

He stands with his arms crossed  
At the same time:

- moves vividly in space
- maintains eye contact with the interlocutor
- smiles
- facial expressions indicate relaxation
- speaks freely
- voice is sonorous



Consistency between the spoken word and body language is also important, as it is more difficult to consciously misrepresent nonverbal communication than verbal. Therefore, when there is a discrepancy between what is said and body communication, we subconsciously believe the message comes from the body rather than the words.

### 1.1. Communication in teams working remotely - threats.

What does this basic knowledge of communication tell us in the context of remote work? Keeping in mind the data cited earlier, it can be seen that remote work severely limits the exchange of non-verbal communication - largely responsible for creating relationships in a team.

While working remotely:

- we have far less information about other people's attitude towards us - we do not build closer relationships;
- we can't check the consistency of nonverbal messages - for example, when we hear irritation in the voice of the person we are talking to, and we don't know the whole context, we can't tell whether the state of irritation appeared in connection with our words or is caused by some event (barking dog, child's mischief, etc.);
- we cannot check the consistency between the spoken word and the communication coming from the body.

Therefore, when working remotely, there may be barriers due to specific communication, such as:

- lower level of cooperation - other employees are not important to me, so I will not support them;
- distance - I do not have information about my informal position in the group, the quality of the relationship I have with others, I do not trust other team members;
- prejudice - one trait, behavior, such as tone of voice, can create prejudice and it is difficult to revise one's judgments;
- long-suppressed conflicts - the lack of direct relations limits the ongoing resolution of small disagreements, which can reach a significant size after time.

## 1.2. Practical tips for developing communication competencies

What can you do to make communication in a team working remotely effective?

1. First of all, be aware that relationships built with remote tools bring us fewer messages than a live meeting.
2. Take care of the precision of verbal statements.
3. Use paraphrasing and active listening.
4. Talk about the relationship - ask about intentions.

It is important to have supportive relationship-building communication knowledge and skills, taking into account the various factors affecting the process. Let's look at the four areas mentioned above.

### **Awareness**

Awareness that relationships built through remote tools bring us fewer messages than a live meeting will avoid many mistakes arising from stereotypes, internal beliefs, experiences.

Each of us, when joining a new team, develops an opinion of others - this is important knowledge, allowing us to make decisions that subjectively are best for us.

It can be said that this is the simplest system of orientation in reality. It is often based on a very simplistic model of evaluation in relation to ourselves - people perceived as similar to ourselves are more easily accepted and positive relationships are built with them more quickly.

In the case of people similar to ourselves, we often believe that successes depend on their personality traits, and failures depend on external situations. Conversely, in the case of people who are not like ourselves, success is attributed to external situations and failures to personality traits.

## Example

Charles has achieved incredible success in his work on project X and has suffered total failure on project Y.

I perceive Karol as similar to myself and therefore explain to myself that he was able to achieve such a great result on project X because he is smart, hard-working, creative, committed. On the other hand, with project Y, most likely the team did not support him, maybe he was sick or had a spate of other personal or work responsibilities.

Conversely: I perceive Charles as unlike me and therefore explain to myself that he managed to achieve such a great result on project X because he was lucky, probably Y-kowski helped him or he credited the work of others. On the other hand, I explain Karol's failure on project Y to myself by referring to his character traits: he is lazy, not very bright, prefers talking to working.

## How can you expand awareness?

### Exercise

Answer the question:

What type of person, their behavior is close to you, and what type is distant?

.....

.....

.....

### Hint

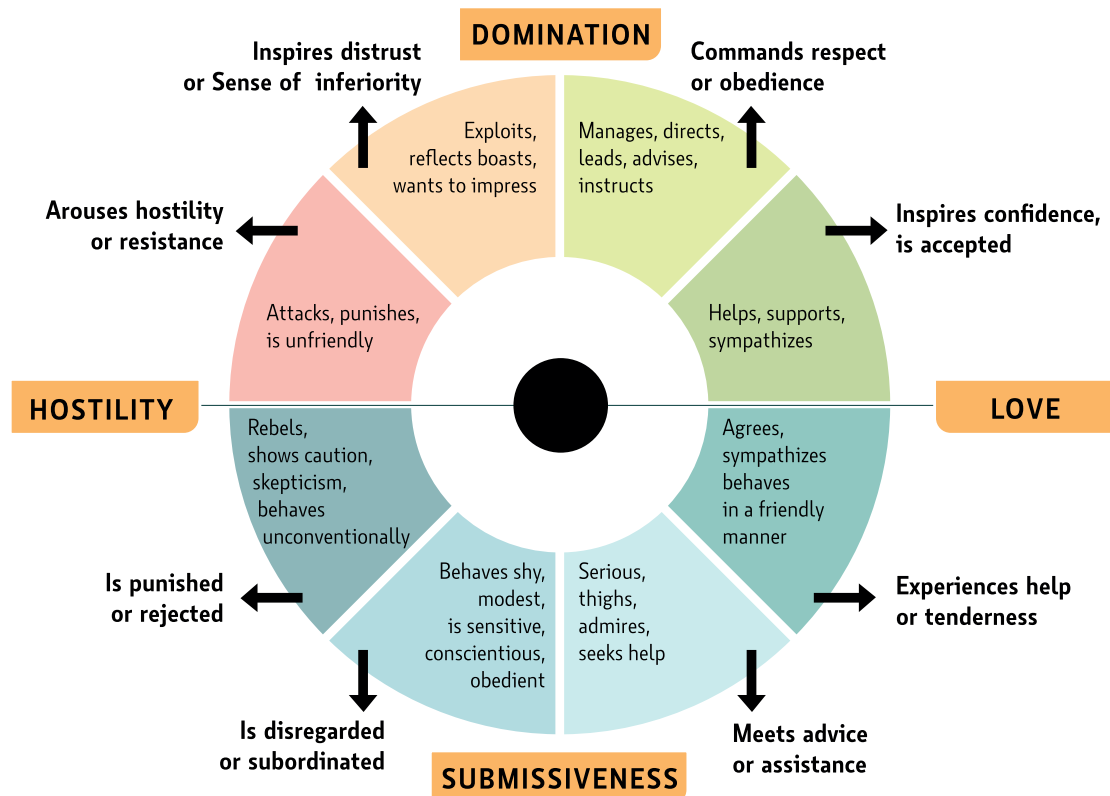
I like / dislike:

- energetic / phlegmatic people
- incorrigible optimists / pessimists
- task-oriented / reflective
- cheerful / serious
- classically dressed / dressed unconventionally
- unconventional / standard
- reliable / spontaneous
- gentle / direct

Awareness of what type of person, behavior is close to me, and what type is distant, can help to realistically evaluate the work of others, their involvement, and not succumb to the mechanism described above of linking the characteristics of people and situations to failure or success.

Awareness can be expanded by familiarizing oneself with the eight-part systematization of interpersonal behavior according to Theodor Newcomb. The author described, based on his research, eight human behaviors that elicit specific, fixed reactions in other people. He described these behaviors on two axes: submissiveness - domination and hostility - love, indicating that a specific behavior always somehow automatically triggers a specific reaction. Familiarize yourself with the diagram below.





An eight-part systematization of interpersonal behaviors (inside the circle) with their corresponding and induced behaviors (outside the circle). Elaborated. based on T. Newcomb et al, 1970, *Social Psychology. A study of human interaction*, Warsaw: PWN.

Being aware of what personal experiences can distort our perception of another person, and knowing that there are eight behaviors that elicit specific reactions, it is useful to use what is called metacommunication. It involves thinking about the communication/inference process itself.

It is a good idea to precede your evaluation of the other person by asking yourself a few questions from the level of **metacommunication**. Questions such as "What?", "Who?", "When?", "How?", "Where?" will be helpful, for example:

- What did she say? Is what she said verifiable?
- From whom do I get the information?
- Who is responsible for it?
- Where can I verify the knowledge?
- How was it done?
- When was the work done?
- What are the criteria for evaluating the work?

Metacommunication allows you to make a cool assessment based on facts rather than your own subjective beliefs.

### Opinions and facts

In consciously building relationships with others, it is also important to distinguish facts from one's own beliefs and judgments. An opinion is not a fact. Facts are statements that can be objectively verified, while whenever there is an element of evaluation, a subjective perception, we are dealing with an opinion. In relationships,

especially when making assessments, it is important to determine whether we are reaching for facts or opinions.

### Exercise

#### Check yourself and mark what is opinion and what is fact:

Karol did the project well.	fact - opinion
Karol did the project according to the schedule.	fact - opinion
Karol did the project as planned.	fact - opinion
Karol works quickly.	fact - opinion
Karol does his work faster than his colleagues in his department.	fact - opinion
Karol is rough in communication, even obsequious.	fact - opinion
Karol only talks about tasks at work.	fact - opinion
Karol knows Excel.	fact - opinion
Karol is an excellent computer scientist.	fact - opinion
After Karol everything flows, he does not stress.	fact - opinion



If you want to check the correctness of your answers and find out why a particular answer is correct or not - **see Attachment 1.**

### Worth knowing



The opinion should be expressed in a form indicating that it is our own opinion, such as:

- In my opinion...
- I believe that...
- In my opinion...

### Precision of verbal statements

Precision in communication largely translates into the quality of relationships built - the more precisely one can express one's needs, the less chance there is for mistakes and conflicts. At the same time, precision in verbalizing one's thoughts is a difficult and multifaceted process.

Here we will focus on pointing out a few elements you should take care of to avoid conflicts. When writing an email, giving verbal instructions, discussing tasks, it is important to focus on analyzing the message being sent and checking that it is worded in such a way that the other person is able to understand what we wanted to convey.

## Example

### Messages vague

#### Version 1

##### Person #1

May I ask you to help me embrace these documents? It is very important and must be sent quickly.

##### Person #2

Ok, I will find a moment to help you.

#### Version 2

##### Person #1

Can I ask you to help me embrace these documents? It's very important and needs to be sent quickly.

##### Person #2

Ok, I'll find a moment, but I still need some information, what specifically do you want from me? What can I help you with?

### Precise message

#### Version 1

##### Person #1

May I ask you to help me collect data on X so that I can send the statement by 2:00 pm? After getting the data, I will need about 30 more minutes to complete the statement. Can you have the data on X ready for me by 1:30 pm?

##### Person #2

Ok, I will find a moment and by 1:30 pm you will have the data in electronic form in the mail.

### Precise message

#### Version 1

##### Person #1

May I ask you to help me collect data on X so that I can send the statement by 2:00 pm? After getting the data, I will need about 30 more minutes to complete the statement. Can you have the data on X ready for me by 1:30 pm?

##### Person #2

Ok, I will find a moment and by 1:30 pm you will have the data in paper form on your desk.

##### Person #1

And you will also have the data in electronic form? If they are in paper form, I will need them by 13:00 at the most, so that I have time to enter them.

##### Person #2

No, I don't have them in electronic form, but I will manage to get them to your desk by 1:00 pm.

Imprecise messages can not only cause delays in getting work done, but also create conflicts within the team. Analyzing the above examples, one can imagine several possible negative consequences, for example, person #2 will think that the task is urgent, but he has until the end of the week, not the day. In another scenario, he may start doing everything on his own from the beginning, wasting time, which will also be a misunderstanding. Such reception of the message may cause conflict and result in mutual resentment.

### Worth knowing



**An indicator of the precision of messages  
is whether the other person  
will respond exactly as we want.**

### Paraphrasing and active listening

Another important competence necessary for good communication and cooperation is the use of paraphrase. Paraphrasing is to summarize the other person's statement in one's own words, so that the interlocutor can confirm, contradict or clarify his statement. Paraphrase is used in cases where there are many threads, digressions, insinuations, emotions. When using paraphrase, it is important to focus only on the facts, not to draw conclusions and, above all, not to put an equal sign between your conclusions and facts.

## Example

### Message

There are so many things this month that I don't grasp, I haven't finished one yet and I already have two more things on my desk. No one understands that what I'm doing requires tremendous focus and I can't take 5 phone calls every now and then, because after each break I start all over again. Still the boss called and resented that I didn't help Kasia. Gee, princess one! Instead of working, she flies to him and complains. I'm totally fed up, I'm going to throw this job to the devil. My friend also recently changed her job and now she finally knows that there is a life besides work and she has time for everything.

### Paraphrase incorrect

#### Version 1

I understand that you have a lot of work, and Kasia runs to the boss and complains about you, you do not like her.

#### Version 2

I understand that you are so fed up with the job that you are thinking of changing it.

#### Version 3

I understand that the boss has treated you unfairly and you are fed up with the abuse of you, so you change jobs.

### Paraphrase correct

I understand that the volume of duties and the inability to focus due to phone calls makes it difficult for you to complete your tasks on time, and your boss additionally wants you to help Kasi. You have had enough.

A properly worded paraphrase begins with the words:

- I understand that...
- That is ...
- You want to say ...
- You say that....

Paraphrase is a tool for active listening. A feature of active listening is to focus on the other person's statement, not on what you yourself want to say. The enemy of active listening, on the other hand, is quick interpretation, focusing on those contents that aim to confirm one's thesis.

## Talking about the relationship - communicating intentions

When working remotely, communicating intentions and talking declaratively about the relationship with the other person is very important, as limitations in the area of non-verbal communication severely handicap this very aspect.

What messages you can use:

1. I really like working with you, like me you focus on tasks.
2. I find it difficult to work with you, we use different terminology, many professional phrases I do not understand. Can I ask you to translate on the fly when I don't know what it means?

3. What I appreciate about working with you is that we always find time for a little laughter, but we stick to the tasks.
4. I like it when you summarize our conversations, it helps me see the most important things.
5. That's how I think we are at two opposite poles - I need silence and focus, and you, I feel, need people around you.

Such and similar communications can bridge the gap in the limitations of relationship knowledge during interactions in remote teams.

It's worth applying similar principles when communicating intentions. When you see a co-worker's reaction that surprises you, that is inconsistent with the sender's intention, it is important to discuss this in real time, for example: My intention was to point out that we are running out of time for the project. I have a feeling that you took it very personally. Sorry, this message I wanted to say out loud to all of us, including myself.

### **Decalogue of communication to support cooperation in teams**

1. Know yourself and be willing to admit when you have made a mistake.
2. Be an astute observer, pay attention to the little things.
3. Be aware of the vagaries of your interlocutor's attention.
4. Speak clearly and to the point, check that you are understood, do not make premature judgments.
5. Pay attention to the meaning, not the form of your partner's speech.
6. Count the feelings of the other party, show respect for your partner.
7. Do not ignore any question and ask questions yourself.
8. Don't be afraid of a difference of opinion - it can be beneficial.
9. Try to accept the other party's point of view and avoid giving advice.
10. Express disagreement, criticism in a constructive way.

### **Worth knowing**



- **Communication is an irreversible process.**
- **Every behavior is a communication.**
- **Communication is multifaceted.**
- **Words are objective, but giving meaning to words is subjective.**

## Worth knowing



1. We don't realize that the same word can mean something completely different to different people.
2. We think that others perceive the problem in the same terms as we do.
3. We speak in vague terms, give too little information, thinking that others can easily put themselves in our shoes.
4. We interpret what others have said, or add something to their statements that wasn't there.
5. Instead of listening, we think about what we ourselves want to say in a moment.
6. When we speak, we don't try to make others understand us, but try to make our points first and foremost.
7. We don't control our non-verbal messages and don't realize their impact on the situation.
8. We assume that our fears are facts and infer our interaction partner's intentions without having any basis for doing so.
9. We hide our true reactions to what the other person has said.
10. We don't control how we are understood, and we don't pay attention to feedback.

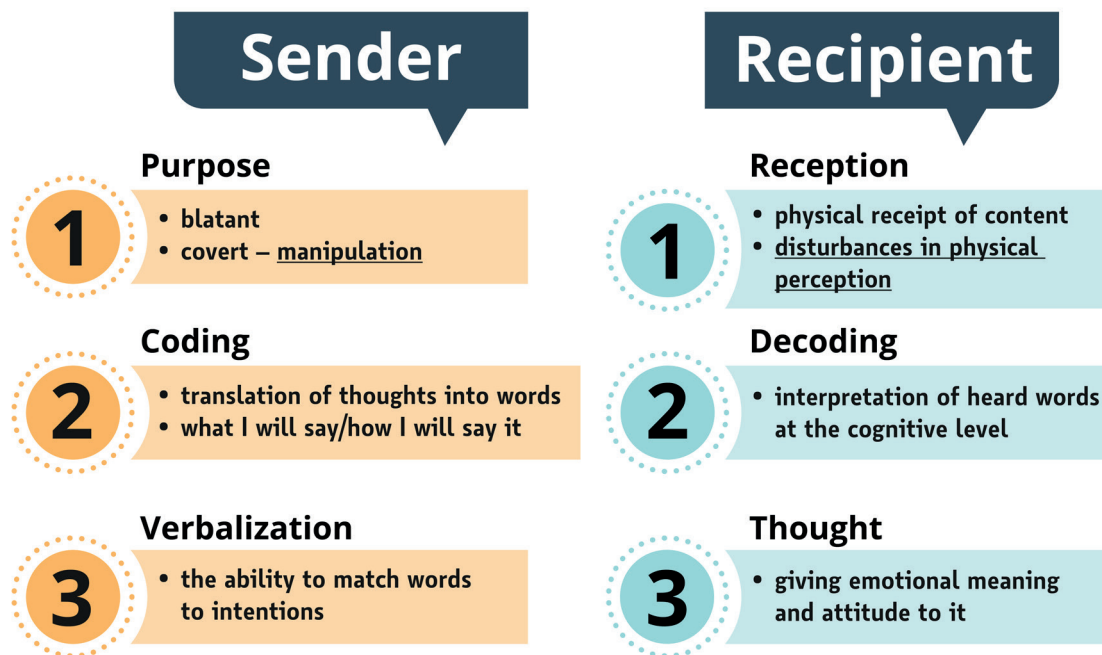
## CHAPTER II

### Resolving conflicts at work

In the work of a team, conflicts can be an engine of change or a source of failure. Avoiding conflicts is not the best solution, at the same time, excessive focus on resolving conflicts - especially relational conflicts - may not contribute much to the team's work either. Well-resolved conflicts are much needed, they build mutual trust and become a driving force for the team. If a very difficult conflict between two people is resolved, both of them will be richer in self-knowledge and experience - they will know how to resolve difficult situations and have more mutual trust. In the next conflict situation, it will be easier for them to find a solution.

#### Communication process and levels of disorder

Knowledge of communication and how to resolve conflicts is crucial in teamwork. Communication can be disrupted at three levels - each of which will generate conflicts of different intensity. The communication process always involves two people - the sender and the receiver, who exchange roles during the conversation.



Communication process and sources of conflict at different levels

The most difficult conflict situation to resolve is one in which the sender conceals the true intentions of his message in order to manipulate others. Such conflicts often end in the breakup of cooperation. Most conflicts in teams arise at the other two levels - misstatement of one's thoughts or misinterpretation of the interlocutor's words, sometimes caused by simply not hearing part of what is being said or an inaccurate message. Knowledge of the different levels of communication disorders is important during the resolution of difficult situations themselves.

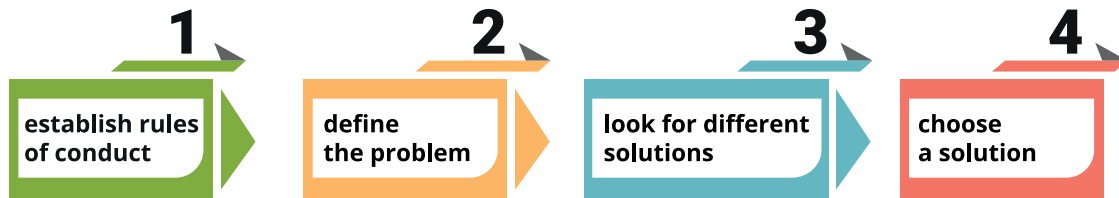
Conflicts are mostly about:

- goals - different issues are important to the parties;
- paths to the goals - the parties want to achieve the goals in a different way;



- needs - on the way to achieve the goals, the needs of the parties are not taken into account.

In resolving a conflict situation, it is worth using the 4-step method, which helps to structure the conversation. It is worth bearing in mind that during a conflict, emotions often come to the fore, obscuring the core of the problem. It can be helpful to dismiss them. Using the 4-step method gives you a chance to resolve the conflict in a positive way.



Stages of resolving conflict situations

## 2.1. Principles of conflict resolution

### Rules of conduct


Before resolving a difficult situation, it is important to establish rules of conduct.








Examples of rules:

1. We set a time frame.
2. We show respect to each other during the conversation.
3. We turn off phones.
4. We focus on analyzing the elements that apply only to the situation at hand; we avoid digressions.
5. We look for the benefits of the conversation.
6. We do not equate the person with the problem, we separate the problem from the person.
7. We focus on interests.
8. Instead of giving flashy answers, we ask our partner questions.
9. We name and highlight joint achievements, and thank the partner for his or her contribution.

### Defining the problem

A conflict situation should be well defined. In understanding the source of the problem, it is useful to include all the steps described below.

Stages	Description
<p>I</p> 	<p>Formulate the problem in the form of a question</p>

Stages	Description
II 	How else can the problem be formulated?
III 	Clarifying precisely what is meant by the key words for the problem
IV 	Determining what is and what is not a problem
V 	Drawing the problem - in the form of a sketch, diagram, chart
VI 	Asking a series of questions: what? where? when? who?
VII 	If the problem is complex, divide it into segments for discussion
VIII 	Identify what divides us, what unites us

### Looking for solutions

Once the initial arrangements have been made, it is worth focusing on looking for several solutions. The greater the number, the greater the chance of finding a solution that satisfies all concerned. It is worth identifying the potential benefits and losses of adopting a solution.

## Solutions and their consequences

Solutions	Description	Consequences
I	We do nothing	Nothing will change
II	We look for solutions until both sides come to an agreement	Benefits both sides, though the result of compromise
III	Someone else sets the rules for the two feuding parties	Either side can be dissatisfied

### Selection of a solution

From among the proposals, a solution should be selected that will most satisfy both parties. In order to make the right choice, each party should have clear expectations, at the same time made realistic and adapted to the capabilities of the team.

### 2.2. Individual conflict resolution style

Three basic styles of resolving difficult situations can be distinguished. In the context of remote work, it is worth noting that it does not require frequent confrontation with others, which can reinforce avoidance strategies. It is important to recognize your own style and be aware of how others may react.



Model of behavior in conflict situations

Any of the above styles may be necessary - although it is useful to have the ability to use any of these models, the assertive style should definitely prevail in relationships.

### Tools to support conflict resolution

#### Filter questions

In resolving a conflict situation, you can use metacommunication by applying the following filter questions:

1. Are there such qualitative requirements that presumably there is only one best solution?
2. Do I have enough information to make a qualitatively very good decision on my own?
3. Is the problem structured?

4. Is acceptance of the decision by group members important for effective implementation?
5. If I decide on my own, will the decision be accepted by group members?
6. Do the team members agree with the goals that should be achieved by solving the problem?
7. Is it possible that there will be a conflict among group members about which solution to the problem is preferred?

### Helpful messages

- I see that we have a different opinion.
- I have a different opinion on this topic.
- Thank you for sharing your opinion about me - I think differently about myself, I would now like to return to the topic of the meeting.
- We are moving away from the topic.
- I feel that we are missing the purpose of the meeting.

### Assertive attitude

I am OK - and my partner is OK.

### Individual conflict resolution style - test



If you want to know your conflict resolution style, you can solve the test - see **Attachment 2**.

## CHAPTER III

### Remote work - organization

*Give me six hours to cut down a tree, and I'll spend four of them sharpening my axe.*

Abraham Lincoln

Preparing for work both physically and organizationally is often half the battle, so it's worth spending enough time to organize your space and plan your activities. Time spent on good work planning often reduces the amount of time needed to get the job done. Don't work hard, work smart - this motto is worth following when working remotely.

During the pandemic, remote work has become a new challenge for many people. Some have come to love this mode of work, enjoying the independence, saving time on commuting, while others complain about the complete disruption of the rhythm of the day. One thing is certain - remote work requires a lot of soft skills, which are less needed when working in-house. The main difference is that remote work requires a lot of independence in planning the time and place of work, as well as self-discipline.

#### 3.1. Workplace organization

The workplace should be characterized by:

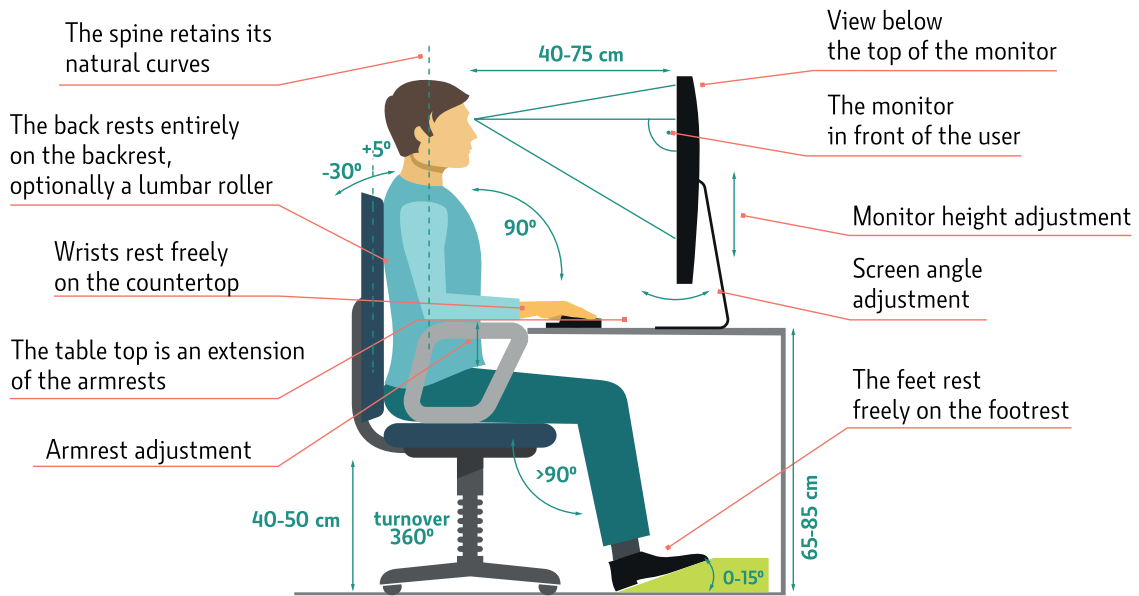
1. distinctiveness and customization;
2. Preparation of tools for work;
3. orderliness.

#### **Separation**

It is important to separate the workspace at home - if you can not separate a separate room, it is worthwhile to ensure such a place that will not be used by other household members during work, or their stay there will be very limited. A bed or couch in the bedroom is not the best idea, it does not provide adequate focus and does not mobilize effort. If the workspace is located in common areas, it is worth ensuring that the tools for work are moved or put away when the work is done - this will allow a symbolic separation of work time from home life.

#### **Adaptation**

Your workspace should be ergonomic, that is, one that allows you to work comfortably and at the same time ensures correct posture. Be sure to have a natural posture when working for hours at the computer. The ideal workplace should include a comfortable chair and a spacious desk that provides proper support for the wrists. It is worthwhile to have a footrest that allows proper support, as well as proper lighting to reduce eye strain. Materials needed for work should be nearby.



Recommended conditions for sedentary work

It's also a good idea to adjust your clothing for work - pajamas, for example, are not the best choice:

- is associated with relaxation, rest, rather than mobilization and effort;
- disturbs the separation of work and private life, resulting in mental exhaustion instead of rest.

### Worth knowing



**Working from home requires the ability to create clear boundaries between work and family, personal life. The right attire helps establish these boundaries.**

### Preparation of work tools

All work tools should be in working order. In an office, taking care of tools such as a computer, printer, printer ink, phone, etc. is left to the person hired for this purpose. In a remote working environment, tools should also be provided by the employer, but their condition should be taken care of by the employee himself, who should report his needs in advance.

It is also worth taking care of a place where important matters, notes, "reminders" will be written down - often at work there are boards where such information is pinned, written down, and at the same time they are all the time visible and reminders of deadlines, urgent phone calls, small things to do. At home, too, it is worth organizing something like this - these can be ordinary pieces of paper, which are hung up, using special plasticine.

## Order

Just as important is to remove from the workspace any devices and objects that can be disturbing, such as the TV on, social media, computer games and other distractions.

## Conditions

Ensure that the conditions of your work are as peaceful as possible, it can help to talk to family members, to jointly establish rules for the operation of the household while working. It is worth agreeing with the children, for example, not to enter the room when the door is closed. Similarly, you can make arrangements with your partner not to talk to him when he is focused on work.

## Breaks

In a company, during the working day, the employee moves around: he goes to another room to agree on something with another co-worker, moves documents, etc. At home, there is less opportunity to move around, so it is important to take short breaks to change positions. Sometimes you need to take a moment to think about the solution to a problem, and it's worth doing it on the move then. During breaks, taking care to ventilate the room will ensure better working comfort.



If you want, you can use a checklist to help you organize your workspace well - **see Attachment 3.**

## 3.2. Organization of work

*No rush, no pauses.*

*Slowly means smoothly. Smoothly means fast.*

Work efficiency is highly dependent on good organization - both of the company as a whole and of each employee. People who are competent in managing their mood, their time, who can focus, work effectively in any position. In remote work, these competencies are even essential. Working in a company is based on greater control, each co-worker is an informal "disciplinarian", that is, in passing, evaluates the quality of a colleague's work, observes commitment, and even if he or she does not do so, there is a self-disciplinary dimension to working in close proximity to others.

The elements that make up the ability to organize one's own work well are extremely important in remote work. They can be most broadly divided into specific hard skills - such as working with a calendar, creating procedures, organizing documentation - and soft skills, which can include communication, concentration, self-discipline and self-regulation. How then to organize remote work in the comfort of home, when so many things can encourage a change of activity, and lack of control can cause postponement of many activities, which will consequently disrupt home life and contribute to stress and burnout? First, hard competencies will be discussed, i.e. how to organize work.



Work organization

## Planning

### A. Time frame

It is important to determine the exact hours of work and time for breaks. In addition, allow enough time to prepare for work - taking care of clothing, restroom, etc.

### B. Priorities

Scheduling is nothing more than placing tasks to be done in time. It seems like a simple task, but often plans are too optimistic, do not include room for unforeseen events, too many time "eaters" appear.

One very good tool to help you plan your calendar is the Eisenhower matrix. The axes of **important - unimportant** and **urgent - non-urgent** help to prioritize work and prepare a plan for the day, week.

- Urgent and important things placed in the first box require attention and quick implementation, their non-implementation can result in serious consequences, so they are a priority.
- The next area to be addressed is the important - non-urgent field. There you will find very developmental tasks, important from the point of view of the company and its development. Often, however, this is the area where there is not enough time.
- The non-important-urgent area, if it is not completed, can move into the urgent-important category, as it can otherwise cripple the company's work later on. Examples include the purchase of garbage bags, printer ink. These are minor things from the point of view of the company, but necessary for its operation. It is worth noting that the area of urgent - unimportant most often devours a lot of time, and the actual work is not completed.
- The last area in the Eisenhower matrix is unimportant - non-urgent. The tasks that fall into this area can be the most difficult part of remote work. It may also be that these tasks are actually a sham of work. Examples include organizing paperwork for a long time, wasting a lot of time searching for information, focusing too much on discussing instead of acting, planning too much.



## The Eisenhower Matrix

	URGENT	NON-URGENT
IMPORTANT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• emergencies</li> <li>• urgent matters</li> <li>• tasks with a completion date</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• daily activities</li> <li>• planning</li> <li>• looking for new solutions</li> </ul>
UNIMPORTANT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some phone calls</li> <li>• some correspondence, reports</li> <li>• some meetings</li> <li>• upcoming urgent matters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• time eaters</li> <li>• pleasures</li> <li>• everyday life, busy</li> <li>• some phone calls, some correspondence</li> </ul>



If you want to prepare a priority list based on the Eisenhower matrix, you can use a ready-made sheet - **see Attachment 4.**

### C. Calendar

Once the priorities are well defined, it's a good idea to start working with a calendar. When scheduling work, it's always a good idea to give yourself a few more minutes to complete particular tasks, especially when they are not measurable, that is, they do not depend on us alone. Such things include, for example, a phone call, the timing of which also depends on the other party.

Depending on the type of work, it is a good idea to plan individual periods - a month, a week, a day. Of course, if someone does repetitive work at home, then planning in that case will be for a specific number of products or tasks completed. On the other hand, in work that is not repetitive, a monthly, weekly and daily snapshot can make it much easier to complete all tasks.

There are a number of electronic tools that help with planning, to mention Google Calendar or calendars included in email applications. They allow several people to work on the same document at the same time - either through sharing or co-sharing - which has its great advantages, giving instant access to information and making collaboration easier.

The paper version of the calendar also has its supporters. You can use your own templates, which, in addition to the information typical of a calendar, will include the determination of priorities and space for comments.

## Calendar - month

DAY	Urgent/Timely tasks	Important tasks	Comments
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			
19			
20			
21			
22			
23			
24			
25			
26			
27			
28			
29			
30			
31			

Such a monthly plan includes the most important tasks - in the urgent/timely column those that should be completed within a certain time, the others important for the development of the company in the last column.

On a weekly basis, a very similar document can be used, but tasks with a higher level of detail should be included in such a calendar. The weekly plan does not include a number of basic, routine, daily tasks.

## Calendar - weekly

Day of the week	Urgent/Timely tasks	Important tasks	Comments
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			

The final element is planning for the day. One good habit is to prepare a plan at the end of the day for the next day, including tasks that need to be completed or refined. By planning the previous day's tasks, we can save a lot of time on the following day.

Daily planning should include fixed, routine elements, as well as breaks that will allow all tasks to be completed according to work hygiene. It is a good idea to include any standard activities such as checking and sending mail.

## Daily plan

Hours	Fixed elements	Tasks
8:00–9:00	mail review 8:00–8:15	
9:00–10:00		
10:00–11:00		
11:00–12:00		
12:00–13:00	break 12:00–12:15	
	mail review 12:15–12:30	
13:00–14:00		
14:00–15:00		
15:00–16:00		
	plan for tomorrow 15:45–16:00	

Planning can be used to set some rules together with colleagues to facilitate work and prevent conflicts. For example, it is worth setting a time for checking e-mail. Some people seem to think that if an e-mail was sent at 10:00 am, it will be read at the same hour. Setting times for receiving mail can prevent such hasty conclusions and teach co-workers - let's say, with a wink - patience. For very urgent matters, you can use other means of communication, such as the telephone.

### Scheduling techniques

Scheduling work will not always be helpful. For those who need a push for action, planning can be frustrating. Frustration can also arise when a large portion of the planned activities are not completed. Below are two techniques to help smoothly implement planned activities.

- **The “eat that frog” technique** - involves picking out from among all the tasks those activities that one dislikes. These should be done at the beginning.

This is important for two reasons. First, if the most difficult, resistance-inducing tasks are completed first, satisfaction will increase and further work will be easier. Secondly, you can continue working without worrying about tasks that require a lot of effort or arouse reluctance. The “eat that frog” technique contributes to increased activity and better well-being.

- **The POMODORO technique** is very helpful when there is a flurry of tasks that require focus and smooth execution. In high concentration, our brain works for about 25 minutes - after that it needs a short break or a change of activity. This exact principle is used by the POMODORO technique, which involves strong concentration for 25 minutes and a 5-minute break. During the break, one can organize documents, records, check the mail, get up from the desk and make a phone call. Although 25 minutes doesn't seem like much, this time nevertheless allows you to complete a task or part of it.

### Breaks - the body

In planning, it is important to remember to take breaks - sedentary work is not good for keeping fit. It's worth keeping in mind that even a few simple exercises, movement habits during the day, will benefit better form, translating directly into better mental condition and productivity.

Schedule breaks - working remotely allows you to better tailor your breaks to your needs. Listen to yourself and see what model of work and breaks will be optimal for you. Do you need several smaller breaks, or is one longer one enough for you? Plan your day to vary activities.

You can develop the habit of making all phone calls standing up, which will allow your muscles to rest. When taking a break, it's a good idea to air out the room, breathe, and stretch your body. People with good habits of breathing exercises, stretching during the day, definitely have better mental and physical condition, translating into high work efficiency.

A home space during a break can provide us with that comfort we don't have at the company. We can eat our meals in our favorite place, we can take a walk in the garden or go out on the balcony, play with the dog. A moment's break from mental work gives a breath of fresh air. It is important to consciously enjoy this rest.

### Worth knowing



**Old proverbs have wisdom in them, so remember:  
in a healthy body a healthy spirit.**

### 3.3. Soft competencies in remote work

In addition to specific techniques for organizing remote work, it is worth briefly discussing some important soft skills.

**Focusing your attention and emotions.** There is a simple rule - where your attention, there your emotions. What does it mean in practice?

### Exercise

Imagine that you are now focusing on a situation when a close person at work let you down. It was a difficult situation and you felt uncomfortable.

What emotions/mood are accompanying you now?

- sadness, discouragement, resignation, regret, disappointment
- anger, rage, desire to retaliate, irritation, nervousness
- general agitation
- anxiety, withdrawal, desire to escape
- joy, contentment
- maybe others, what kind? .....

This simple exercise was designed to show that it is the thoughts, the content we focus on and their interpretation that trigger certain emotions, less often specific situations. Excessive ruminations, focusing on analyzing failures, affects the lowering of mood, which directly affects concentration and performance.

### Example

Imagine two people who were late for work. The boss pointed them out, saying that he would not tolerate such behavior and lateness.

#### Person 1

Apologizes to the boss for the boss's tardiness.



He says to himself - today's slip-up is already scored, now I'm going to get to work hard so as not to slip up and make up for lost time.

#### Person 2

He apologizes to the boss for being late.



He says to himself - but I'm unlucky, I'm always unlucky and fall in, others succeed, they often only simulate work, and I work, and now the boss will probably be angry with me, he may fire me, not give me a bonus.

In the corridor during work she meets a colleague and has to discuss with her her today's lateness and her conversation with the boss.

While at work, she is upset and makes a mistake that takes her a long time to correct. As a result, she fails to complete the tasks she was supposed to do today.

**Proactive person** - strongly focused on achieving tasks, goals.

**Reactive person** - strongly focused on emotions, experiencing, relationships.

It is worth developing proactivity in yourself. In this regard, it is worth analyzing your internal monologue - its quality translates into the effectiveness of your work, level of satisfaction and personal satisfaction.



If you want to check whether you are dominated by proactive or reactive language, **see Attachment 5.**

### Worth knowing



**People who act effectively don't look for problems, they look for opportunities.**

### Multitasking - myth or hit?

Multitasking is nothing more than multitasking, or the ability to perform several activities simultaneously. In the 1980s and 1990s it was considered an indicator of efficiency. If a person could perform multiple activities at the same time, he or she was considered efficient, effective, hard-working. However, research clearly shows that a person can hold in short-term memory at the same time about 6 pieces of information that he analyzes in parallel - this requires great effort from him. It is nowadays believed that multitasking results in distraction, lowers efficiency, causes great waste of time. Therefore, instead of fighting the limitations of the mind, it is better to learn good time management, task planning and practice strong will and self-control. Getting into the habit of concentrating on one task and completing it to the end definitely saves time.

### Worth knowing

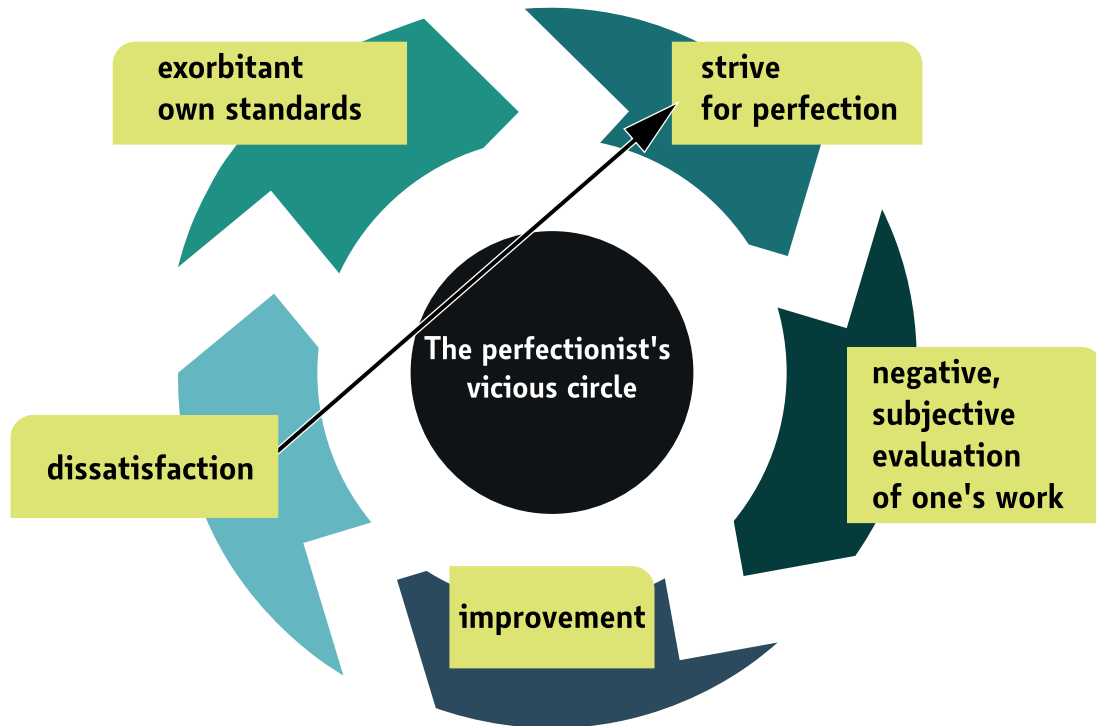


- **Multitasking creates the appearance of being busy.**
- **Focusing on one task and finishing it translates into efficiency at work and more time for personal life.**
- **No rushing, no pausing. Slow means smooth. Smoothly means fast.**

### Procrastination vs. perfectionism

Procrastination, or putting off tasks, does not apply to lazy people, but to perfectionists. A lazy person doesn't procrastinate - he simply doesn't work out of laziness. Not finishing tasks and deferring them to later often applies to people who are ambitious, have a need for perfection, impose very high standards on themselves, which causes them to constantly correct and improve something, and as a result they run out of time.

Procrastination causes severe mental debilitation - in a perfectionist's mind, unfinished tasks cause stress, which secondarily limits their abilities. Perfection can kill. A perfectionist can fall into a vicious cycle that ends in professional burnout. Working remotely can strongly contribute to triggering this mechanism due to not receiving feedback from others on a regular basis.



The perfectionist's vicious circle

### Self-discipline

It is worth - as a conclusion - to analyze what you already have, what is your resource, what is in the area of deficits, in order to then start working on the development of competencies and skills to eliminate these deficits. Again, a reminder: no rush, no pause. Slowly means smoothly. Smoothly means fast. In the context of implementing change, it's important to emphasize that it's worth focusing on taking small steps and consistently achieving successive goals.

Simple goal setting, developing habits is nothing more than an exercise in self-discipline. Below is the final exercise - do some self-reflection and complete the table.



## Exercise

Do some self-reflection and complete the table.

My resources for organizing remote work:

My deficits in remote work organization:

My goals to implement in the area of deficit leveling:

## Worth knowing



**Krakow was not built at once.  
The principle of small steps still applies.**

## Appendices

### Attachment 1

Correct answers are marked in bold.

#### Exercise

Check yourself and mark what is opinion and what is fact:	
Karol did the project well.	fact - <b>opinion</b>
Karol did the project according to the schedule.	<b>fact</b> - opinion
Karol did the project as planned.	<b>fact</b> - opinion
Karol works quickly.	fact - <b>opinion</b>
Karol does his work faster than his colleagues in his department.	<b>fact</b> - opinion
Karol is rough in communication, even obsequious.	fact - <b>opinion</b>
Karol only talks about tasks at work.	<b>fact</b> - opinion
Karol knows Excel.	<b>fact</b> - opinion
Karol is an excellent computer scientist.	fact - <b>opinion</b>
After Karol everything flows, he does not stress.	fact - <b>opinion</b>

#### Opinions-comments

Charles did the project well.	What does that mean well? On time? According to the guidelines or my subjective assessment because I like it?
Karol works quickly.	What does fast mean according to what criteria? Faster than me?
Karol is coarse in communication, even obsequious.	What does it mean rough, obsequious? How about masculine?
Karol is a great computer scientist.	What does it mean great? It is so in my perception.
After Karol everything flows down, he does not stress.	How do I know this? Are there objective indicators of stress in all people? Or do I not notice signs of stress?

## Facts-comments

Charles performed the project according to schedule.	If there are assumptions and a schedule, it can be objectively checked.
Karol performed the project according to the assumptions.	If there are assumptions and a schedule, this can be objectively verified.
Karol does his work faster than his colleagues in his department.	The criterion here is the speed of the team, whose members perform the same activities.
Karol at work only talks about tasks.	If Karol at work talks only about tasks, and does not interject there thoughts, evaluations, opinions, this is a fact.
Karol knows Excel.	It is possible to master Excel 100%.

## Attachment 2

### Self-diagnosis of conflict resolution style

Read the statements below. Write YES - if this is how you most often act in social situations, and NO - if this behavior is foreign to you or you don't know what it is about. If the behavior described below is rather rare for you - also write NO.

1. I try to avoid conflicts because I don't like to get upset.
2. In conflict situations I usually give way.
3. I strive for such conflict resolutions that everyone is satisfied with.
4. I usually fight hard for my own.
5. I often submit to other people.
6. I withdraw from difficult situations.
7. I also know how to cooperate with people who have different opinions.
8. I strive for a settlement, even when I am overwhelmed by rage.
9. I usually try to prove to people that I am right.
10. I often give in so as not to provoke conflict.
11. When others are arguing, I usually sit quietly.
12. I really like to win in conflicts.
13. In conflict situations, I actively seek compromise.
14. I give way when I see others doing so as well.
15. As a smarter person, I give way to those less mature.
16. I cooperate with people because I believe that this is the best way to resolve conflict.
17. I eliminate conflicts by seeking solutions that satisfy both sides.

18. I run away from difficult situations because they cost me too much.
19. I like fierce clashes.
20. I rarely speak my own opinion.
21. I show humility sometimes.
22. Together with my partner (partner) I try to find the best way out of a conflicting situation.
23. I fight because I think others will destroy me.
24. I usually deal with people's aggression by finding a middle ground.
25. I know how to give in.

We take into account only YES answers, for which we award one point each. We count the points according to the following scheme:

- COOPERATION            3, 7, 16, 17, 22
- COMPROMISE            2, 8, 13, 14, 24
- FIGHT                    4, 9, 12, 19, 23
- AVOIDANCE             1, 6, 11, 18, 20
- SUBMISSION             5, 10, 15, 21, 25

4-5 points in a given category indicates that we tend to resolve conflicts in a given style. It is good when we have most of the styles in our behavioral repertoire. The best score is an arrangement of the effective triad of conflict resolution COMPROMISE - COOPERATE - FIGHT.

### Attachment 3

#### Checklist

Component	Instruction	Done?
Workstation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• remove distractions (mute phone, apps, TV, radio)</li> <li>• make sure you are comfortable (chair/chair, window, lighting, background)</li> <li>• clean up your desk</li> <li>• prepare a pitcher of water/juice or thermos of coffee/tea</li> </ul>	
Preparation for work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• notebook</li> <li>• pens</li> <li>• materials (naming and describing them properly will make them easier to find)</li> <li>• documents</li> <li>• clothing</li> <li>• food, toilet</li> </ul>	

Component	Instruction	Done?
Checking the equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internet - does it work?</li> <li>• headphones</li> <li>• computer - battery, charger at hand</li> <li>• phone - battery</li> </ul>	
Rules for working at home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inform the household members when you are working</li> <li>• ask for quiet</li> <li>• establish signals - e.g., a locked door, a sign on the door</li> </ul>	

#### Attachment 4

	URGENT	UNURGENT
IMPORTANT		
UNIMPORTANT		

#### Attachment 5

Reactive language	Proactive language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can't do anything...</li> <li>• He is driving me crazy....</li> <li>• I won't agree to it....</li> <li>• I have to do it...</li> <li>• I can't...</li> <li>• I have to...</li> <li>• I would do it if...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let's look at what can be done....</li> <li>• I control my feelings...</li> <li>• I can do an effective...</li> <li>• I can choose the right response...</li> <li>• I choose...</li> <li>• I prefer...</li> <li>• I will...</li> </ul>

