



BT Personal Skills Journey

Key skills training for young adults



www.bt.com/personalskillsjourney



Foreword

The BT Learning and Skills Programme is passionate in its promotion of the key role communication skills play in our lives.

We recognise that in this increasingly competitive world, we need to equip our young people with an understanding of the basics in life as early as we can, as businesses both large and small cannot afford to recruit staff who are unprepared for their start in the world of work.

The lessons contained in this publication can be supplemented with many of the free resources available from our Learning and Skills website at www.bt.com/freeresources

Welcome to your Personal Skills Journey Workbook!

You will use this workbook as a journal throughout the year to evaluate and record your personal skills journey.

These skills are SOFT skills – this means that there is no one test that will demonstrate if you have them or not. Assessing your personal skills is different to assessing your verbal or numerical skills or your ability in science – there are no right and wrong answers so soft skills are harder to measure. Some people will be very good in one area and need to improve in other areas.

The aim of this workbook is to help you decide what skills are your strengths (what you are good at) or your weaknesses – the skills that you will need to practice in order to become better at them.

When you have completed this workbook, you will have written evidence of the journey that you have made through the year. You will be able to see how your skills have improved and will know what skills you need to continue to work on.

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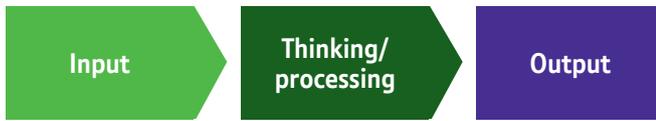


Effective communication

What it is:

It's about exchanging information between individuals or groups – effective communication is about sending and getting back clear information with different audiences. It involves listening, understanding and responding appropriately to others and being able to participate effectively in group discussions.

In simple terms it involves



Why is this important?

Because we are all doing it all the time – it is how we make sense of our world and create our view of the world. It is our relationship with ourselves and with others.

A clear understanding in how to communicate well means less stress, frustration and time wasting. Yet again, we are all unique and the message that is sent and received will vary with different people.

Think about the differences in how you communicate with:

- adults; teachers, lecturers and employers.
- peers – friend and foe

What are the benefits of applying effective communication techniques?

- Better success at job and university interviews
- Getting your points understood with colleagues and friends
- Understanding others – a two way street
- Negotiating with parents and others

Effective communication is the most important social skill you can develop. It allows you to negotiate, persuade and influence opinions.

Communicators don't wave a big stick – people listen, respond to their ideas and do what is asked of them. And employers, universities and colleges love this.

It is no accident that crimes of violence are often carried out by inarticulate people who have to throw themselves around to get noticed. It is also no secret that victims are often the same people – **they lack the negotiating skills to change their situation.**

So you think you are being understood...



So how are we communicating?

- Talking
- Listening
- Body language
- Written language

Verbal communication:

This may include your use of voice, volume, language, speed, pauses, humour as well as bringing your own style to the delivery and how you relate to the audience.

Listening

Listening is not the same as hearing – listening is consciously processing and remembering whereas hearing can be background noise. Active (good) listening means letting your team/audience know you are listening and may involve taking notes.

Body language

Body language is far more important than most people realise. If we say one thing and our body says another, you will appear insincere. Your expressions and movements show your understanding or confusion.

Written language

Basic grammar is important and if you can't spell then use a spell checker. Use paragraphs and key words to emphasise your meaning. Be tidy! Decide if a letter, email or text is most relevant to clear understanding.

Research by Birtwhistle in 1970 showed that in communicating to a group of people, 55% of impact is determined by your body language (posture, gestures and eye contact), 38% by your tone of voice and only 7% by the actual words spoken.

Think of a simple sentence –

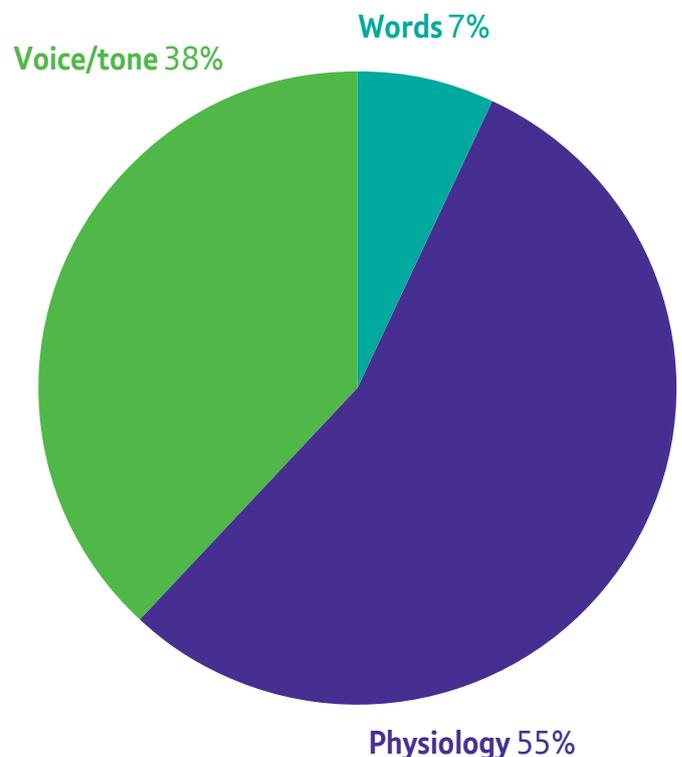
“I love my Mother’s apple pie”. Repeat it six times, with the emphasis on different words. Notice how by changing the tone of voice, loudness and timbre you can change the meaning. Then add gestures, look up or down, be still or active, breathe fast or slow.

Identifying “common language”

It is well known that peer groups form their own **common language**. This includes teenagers, social clubs, in fact any organisation.

Groups tend to shift their language to suit the majority eg a predominantly male group may isolate the women in their group simply by language. The same occurs for a teenager attending a work interview where use of teenage slang language may alienate the interviewer.

Parents and teenagers often have the same problem and must identify a common language before they can communicate.



“When it comes to body language, there are some who have better vocabularies than other.”

Doug Larson

So how do you think you can fix this problem?

- Be aware of this common language barrier and ensure you are clear in your meaning – this may mean checking that the other party understands your meaning.
- Avoid slang.

If communication is important eg with parents or potential employers, you can:

- Read newspapers with an adult language.
- Listen to other radio channels eg BBC Radio 2 or 4.
- Actively listen to adults speaking.

If you use too much slang, you may isolate other cultural groups and miss out on the strengths of getting a diverse mix in your team.

See the sections on Teams and Valuing Difference.

“The right word may be effective, but no word was ever as effective as a rightly timed pause.”

Mark Twain

Listening is a very important part of communication

“You have two ears and only one mouth – so you should listen twice as often as you speak.”

Here is an easy memory aid to help you improve your listening skills

Link

Link in – focus on the topic – before the lesson begins

Indicate

Indicators – listen for the main points in the introduction

Signal

Signal words – listen for the emphasised words

Take

Take part – be actively involved in the session – it helps you retain information

Enquire

Enquire – asking questions keeps your attention focused

Notes

Notes – take notes – you remember more if you write it down

How to make it easy to listen

Listening and good communication take practice. Spend some time watching people you respect as good communicators. What body language do they use, what patterns of speech? Try out some of these skills with friends and relatives.

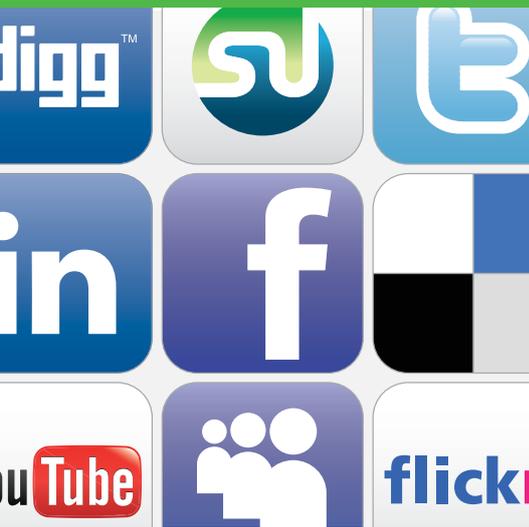
Remember that you are communicating all the time. This is true even when we are not speaking. Our non-verbal communication, how we look, behave and react to situations speaks volumes!!

See section on Brand and Image.

Notes

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02



Collaboration

What it is:

Collaboration is all about the process of working together with others in groups or one to one. It will be defined by the needs of the people involved for example we often need to collaborate to get things done such as solve problems, work on projects, tasks and make decisions or share information which is useful.

Where do we see it?

At one level it can work on a very large scale such as on the World Wide Web where people operate in large forums or chat rooms involving many thousands of people to lobby on key issues, share information about themselves or others, share files and music or buy and sell things. Examples might include Bebo, My Space, Facebook and Ebay.

At a smaller level it could be collaboration between students at school or college or your teachers and lecturers. Of course it works on a one to one level as well.

What's involved?

It involves a range of processes such as:

- Effective communication
- Knowing what you want
- The ability to compromise
- Generating ideas
- Controlling our emotions
- Influencing people
- Forming good relationships

At the heart of the matter, however, is mutual benefit. All parties in a collaborative process have to know, or even just to think, that there is some benefit to them in entering into the transaction.

Why is it important?

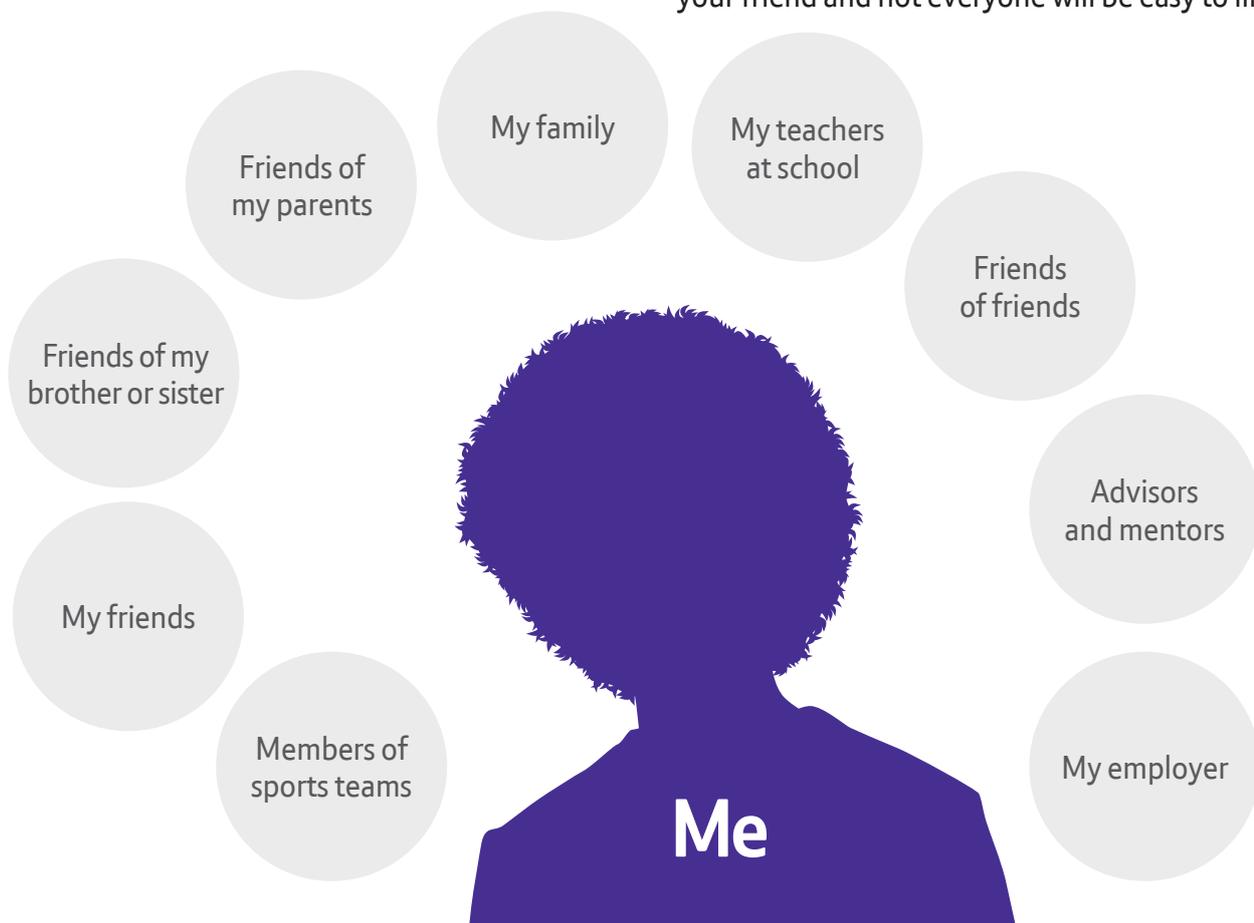
Employers are saying that two key skills they look for in their graduate and school leaver recruits are the capacity to communicate effectively at all levels together with an ability to operate in mixed and diverse teams. At the heart of these two skills is collaboration.

Our networks

It is argued that there are just 6 degrees of separation between each of us and almost every other person on the planet. In other words we know people who know other people who can connect us to wide and distant networks that create really powerful opportunities for us in both our personal and professional lives.

The challenge is to know who to connect to and then how to work hard to create and maintain these relationships.

We are typically drawn to people that are similar to us, share the same attitudes to things, do the same things and perhaps even look quite similar. You only have to look at your closest friends to see that this is true. Collaborating with these people is easy because you might want and like the same things. The challenge is how to collaborate effectively with people who are very different to you and who you may not like very much. This is the reality of the workplace that you will enter, not everyone will be your friend and not everyone will be easy to like!



Our tolerance of others

In the section on Appreciating Difference we explore the idea that we try to be non-judgmental and appreciate difference and uniqueness in others, however different they are from us. This will help us to collaborate.

In his book 'The Tipping Point' Malcolm Gladwell argued that the world is full of Connectors and Mavens.

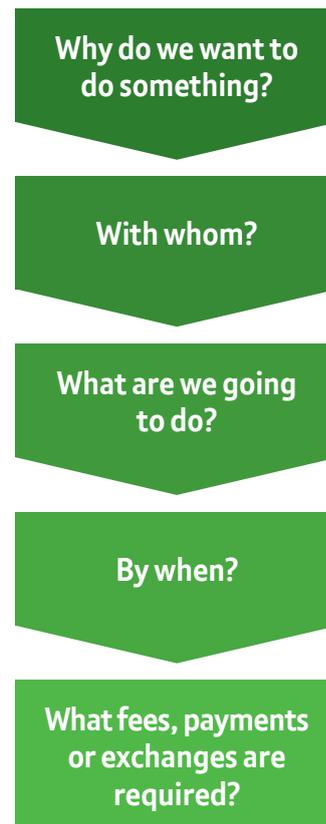
Connectors are people who are really good at bringing people together. They know a lot of people across many networks; they almost seem to know everyone. You will know people like this who have helped to put you in touch with many or most of the friends and acquaintances in your social circle. You may even be one yourself.

Maven comes from a Yiddish word meaning one who accumulates knowledge. Not only do they like to know things but they like to tell people what they know which makes them very interesting within your networks and within the process of collaboration.

So in order to build and maintain our networks it's important that we know people who know people, and people who know things. So long as there is mutual benefit in you being part of their networks for reasons of friendship, sharing skills and information a world of opportunity opens up for you.

How does collaboration work?

Collaboration of course only works if we can reach consensus on decisions and courses of action. This requires us to be firm in our convictions, know what we want but be prepared to compromise and have a 'fall back' position when necessary. In simple terms it could be described as:



Describing Collaboration

- Partnership
- Project working
- Sharing
- Team work
- Creativity
- Relationships
- Joint decisions
- Influencing others
- Listening
- Negotiating
- Trust
- Networks
- Good communication
- Compromise
- Problem solving
- Mutual benefit
- Transactions
- Willingness to co-operate
- Tolerance
- Appreciating difference
- Win/win outcomes
- Feel good factor
- Communities
- Mix of people, skills and qualities
- Innovation



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Knowing yourself

You may say of course you know who you are, but if you stopped and asked the question “who am I?” how might you respond?

From our early years, we start to know ourselves: what and who we like and don't like, what interests us, what we are good at. Certainly by the time we leave home to start work, take a gap year or study, there is a strong self of knowing what we are, but also of wanting to know more...

All individuals develop at a different rate: you may already have a good sense of self by your mid-teens, while others struggle to know their true selves well into their 20s and some never take the time to find out!

Why is it worth knowing yourself? Because knowing yourself creates self-belief and awareness. You can say ‘this is what I am and this is the space I take up.’ It also lets you focus your energy on the areas you still want to develop or allows you to look for others

who can help you fill those gaps. Knowing what ‘pushes your buttons’ or what ‘brings out the best in you’ is also very powerful; it makes you a better team player and is especially valuable in being a good leader in either your personal or professional life. And knowing yourself helps you decide when to go it alone or when to ask for support to reach your goals and dreams.

These next few pages will help you get to know yourself better – it will encourage you to hold up a mirror and then be prepared to see the reflection. This means both the image you see but also asking for a wider perspective by getting feedback from others. And once you know yourself, it will become a much easier step to understanding others.

“I think, therefore I am.”



Knowing yourself

So where do you get your opinion about yourself? The voice inside you telling you how well you did or how much better you might do next time? Or perhaps from your parents and teachers, brothers and sisters or best friends?

In fact, none of these, not even the voice inside you will give you the whole story. On a good day, the inner voice may give you positive messages and make you feel ten metres tall. On a bad day, it may criticise and tell you that you are not good enough.

That is why to know yourself well you will have to do both: take time to listen to the inner voice and learn from your experiences, but also be willing to get feedback from those around you that you trust.

Knowing yourself means you get to live life **you** want to live. The alternative? Doing what other people suggest because you don't know what you want and thus feeling like you're living someone else's life!

Knowing yourself increases your happiness.

In many cases, you are doing a lot better than you think!

Remember, you are unique – there is no handbook to tell you what you are and how it all works – that is part of the fun and adventure of life! You will have to explore your skills, your wants and needs, your hopes and fears before the pieces of the puzzle start coming together.

“We cannot teach people anything. We can only help them discover it in themselves.”

Galileo

You are unique – think of yourself as one of many different colours on a paint pad – the colour you are, the way you blend with other colours to make mixed colours, the proportion of your colour to other colours, these will all produce unique paintings... and the colour that **you** see may be different to another person's perspective: neither person is right or wrong – you are just seeing it differently...

A note on feedback – listening to the opinion of others is very powerful, but listening doesn't mean you have to change or believe that others' opinions are right. What you should ask yourself instead is if the behaviour you are showing is helping you or whether a different approach might be better.

Example: Your best friend shares with you that you are always late to social events. You may reflect that you are happy with this characteristic or decide that it is an easy thing to change (you just need to wear a watch!). Remember, your friend is neither right nor wrong; they are just giving you feedback.



What do you see? What do others see?

Tune in to your 'self': Write a list individually of the answers to the questions below, then share this list with someone you know well – a parent, a best friend or your teacher. Ask them to write what they think your answers might be. See how well they know you.

What are my interests	
What are my hobbies	
What are my hopes	
What are my fears	
My dreams	
My strengths	
My weaknesses	

Note: if you struggle to answer the questions with yourself or to share the answers with a trusted friend, ask yourself why:

- Do you think of yourself as very shy or private?
- Do you struggle to know what you want?
- What would be the benefits of sharing your self either with others or yourself?
- Are there any drawbacks?

Write down your thoughts in the notes section and create an action plan to help you get what you want.

Here are some practical tips for getting to know yourself better.

1. **Take 'know yourself' questionnaires in magazines and on the internet.** Remember, they can only offer an opinion and are only as good as the information you put in, but when you get the same answers more than once (common themes), it is probably fairly accurate. More than one questionnaire result says you are 'likely to be the quiet one in the group'. You might be pleased with this characteristic or think it is holding you back and resolve to try and speak up more often in groups.
2. **Feedback** has already been mentioned briefly! You can listen and ask for feedback from different groups: teachers, friends, parents. Importantly, you will get different opinions, depending on the other person and their life experiences. Remember, you don't have to change because of their opinion, but look for common threads – and decide if change might be useful to you. Also, try not to take it personally – all feedback is a gift!
3. **Knock on many doors.** What does this mean? Experiment! Try sport, creative hobbies, intellectual activities, practical tasks – if you knock on enough doors, one will open and you will become more aware of your strengths, skills and opportunities.
4. **Set goals and then review** – did you succeed? What led to the success? Did you fail? A lot of business leaders think we learn more from failure than success as long as we do learn!!

Knowing yourself is the ability to understand who you are, what you want, why you do things the way you do. It is knowing your strengths, weaknesses, likes and dislikes. It is becoming your own best friend.

4P SMART Goal Setting Checklist – Successful people set goals and write them down. The clearer you are about what you want; the more likely you are to see opportunities that will help you to achieve success. The 4P SMART Goal Setting Checklist is a template to help you to write goals in a way that gives you direction, clarity and inspiration.

“Without goals, and plans to reach them, you are like a ship that has set sail with no destination.”

Fitzhugh Dodson

4P SMART	Clarifying questions	Yes?
Personal	Is your goal personal? Do you use 'I' in the expression of your goal to make it your goal?	
Present	Is your goal written in the present tense? Is your goal written as though you are achieving it?	
Positive	Is your goal phrased positively? Is it helping you to move towards your intended outcome?	
Possible	Is your goal possible? Do you feel it is achievable and within your control?	
Specific	Is your goal specific? Is what you want to achieve expressed clearly and concisely?	
Measurable	Is your goal measurable? Will you know when you have achieved your goal?	
Ambitious	Is your goal ambitious? Does it motivate and inspire you?	
Relevant	Is your goal relevant to you as an individual? Is it in line with your vision and values?	
Time-bound	Is your goal time-bound? Does your goal have a deadline by which you would like to achieve it?	



5. **At the end of a day, take time to write down your thoughts** – were you able to express your true self today? Did you say you liked or disliked something; did you leave a party (or stay) because you wanted to or because the group wanted to stay? What might you do differently to stand up for your own opinion? If you wanted praise, did you ask for it? If you disliked something, did you say so? If there was something you wanted to do, what stopped you asking for it?

6. **What have you experienced so far in your life?** Write a list! Both positive and negative and then think about what it taught you. Ask how you feel about yourself. Proud? Angry? Happy? Contented? Frustrated? Confidence in yourself is very powerful in helping you get what you want, whereas low self-esteem can hold you back. A lot of anger, bad behaviour, bullying behaviour, depression and lack of getting what you want, comes from low self-esteem.

On the other hand, you can also be too confident and not study or train hard enough because you think you don't need to – reflecting honestly on your experiences will help you next time.

Knowing yourself means you get to live the life you want to live. The alternative? Doing what other people suggest because you don't know what you want and thus feeling like your living someone else's life! Knowing yourself increases your happiness.

Wheel of Life Exercise – Identify the important areas of your life

List eight areas of your life that are important to you e.g. family, fitness, health, school, further education, grades, achievements, extra curricular, career, love/romance, home, creativity, rest, hobbies, relaxation, spirituality, friends, social life, money

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

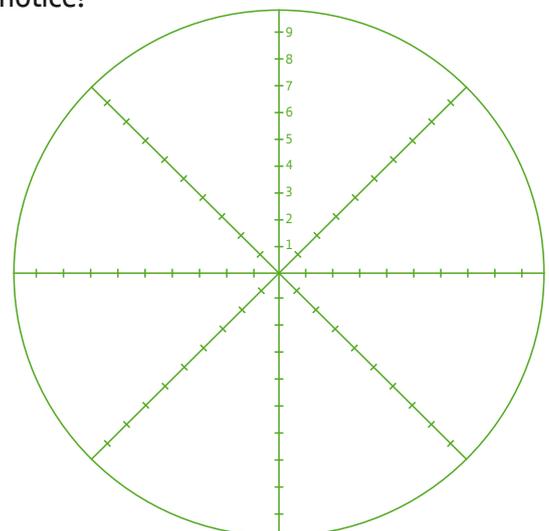
6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

Score each area of your life – Look at each area of your life and give it a score from 1-10 based on how you feel you are doing in that area; with 1 being the worst possible and 10 the best possible.

Draw your Wheel of Life – Draw the wheel below by adding the areas of your life to each of the spokes. Take your scores and plot them at the appropriate points. You can then join the dots to see how balanced your life is. Ask yourself; what do you notice?



Being honest with yourself

A. Positivity: tick those that apply.

- I never struggle to make decisions because I know there are good outcomes whatever choice I pick (being paralysed about decision making is often linked to a fear of failure or 'getting it wrong').
- Don't worry, be happy!
- I anticipate happiness, joy and success in everything I do.
- I use positive words when talking, including when talking to myself.
- I smile a lot.

5/5 Well done. You know that positive thinking helps you get what you want.

3-4 Not bad. You are fairly positive.

0-2 Mmmm. Are you aware of the effects of negative thinking!

Consider: Harry attends a job interview and thinks (negatively) that he won't get it and that others are more worthy of success. So he doesn't think enough about the clothes he will wear, or polish his shoes and he turns up late. He forgets to smile when he walks in and he puts himself down during the interview. Compare this person to James who is not equally suited for the job but has made the effort to be on time, smile and look smart? If you were the interviewer, which would you prefer? This is the power of positive thinking:

**“Knowing others is intelligence.
Knowing yourself is true wisdom.”**

**Lao-Tzu
Philosopher**

A lot of happiness is found through pursuing your dreams.

Sharing these dreams also helps to make them happen!

B. Your health.

While your health is partially down to family genetics and luck, you also play a big part in keeping yourself healthy.

- Do you smoke?
- Do you drink beyond a sensible, safe amount for your age, gender and build?
- Are you using any substances/ drugs?
- Do you exercise regularly?
- Do you eat a good diet and are a sensible weight?

There is plenty of information available and, as a young adult, the decisions are yours. It is important though to reflect on whether you are happy with the choices you are making, whether you might need support to make any changes or you feel you can handle it yourself.

Consider: James is a county footballer and has a chance to try out for the national junior squad, but his heavy smoking is slowing him down and he isn't selected this time.

C. What drives you?

We are all different and will be driven by different wants and needs, which may change over time. Some common desires:

- Relationships and starting a family.
- Influencing others and success in business.
- Wealth (money).
- Meaning and purpose in life – to make a difference.

Can you identify what drives you?

Do remember that not everyone will be driven by the same thing which can create conflict if priorities are different or confusion for yourself if you are not clear with yourself.

Consider: Lucy wants to make a lot of money but also wants to make a difference in the world. These may be in conflict and she chooses to compromise. She takes an unpaid gap year, volunteering in an African orphanage and then pursues a well-paid job on her return.

With friends think about the words above and what you think it means...

If you are unsure how to get started, consider the following situations:

- Sasha's parents are going through a divorce at home and he is feeling very angry about it. He doesn't normally get into trouble at school but has just been given a detention for fighting.
- Anna has just been successful in her Grade 7 Music Examination and feels on top of the world. She attends a job interview and is the first one accepted.
- Toby is being bullied at school and it is affecting his confidence. He tries out for the school rugby team but holds back and is not successful.
- Aamina feels quite shy and thinks nobody in her new class will find her interesting. So she doesn't join in the group conversations and the rest of her group think she prefers to be left alone.
- Jelani is the oldest of six children in his family. He acts as a leader in the sixth form drama group although some people think he is a bit bossy.

“You have to start knowing yourself so well that you begin to know other people. A piece of us is in every person we can ever meet.”

John D. MacDonald, Author

Review and scorecard

Getting to know yourself is important.

- To create self-belief and awareness.
- To say ‘this is what I am and this is the space I take up.’
- To let you focus your energy on the areas you still want to develop and/or allow you to look for others who can help you fill those gaps!
- Remember: Knowing what ‘pushes your buttons’ or what ‘brings out the best in you’ is also very powerful ; it makes you a better team player and is especially valuable in being a good leader in either your personal or professional life.
- It helps you decide when to go it alone or when to ask for support to reach your goals and dreams.

Consider writing a list of all your achievements so far... be proud of what you have done. Keep certificates, put up photos on your wall, tell others about your successes.



Notes

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04



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Appreciating difference

'Difference' is a topic which is increasingly under the spotlight, given changing world wide demographics and developing legislation. In this section we explore the fact that everyone is unique; we consider why we make judgements about other people, and how by use of the 'iceberg' analogy we can begin to think about what is beneath the surface of the skin and often not appreciated.

Demographic changes could be considered a threat, however we consider the benefits and consider how individuals can use them to their best advantage, by exploring words such as diversity, equal opportunities and stereotyping. A developmental toolkit which provides the individual with insights and encourages debate on a fascinating and highly topical issue involving everyone.

Diversity to some, inclusion to others, what does it mean to you?

'Diversity' will represent and mean different things to different people. Are any of the thoughts right or wrong? No. We would not expect the same response from everyone. Isn't it great that life is so interesting? Or some may be saying – why is life so complicated? Wouldn't it be so much easier if everyone was the same. If we all looked the same, felt the same, spoke the same language, appreciated the same things. That way we would find one way of learning, growing, developing, working, managing and behaving that worked and then stick to it.

Can you think of anything worse!
Wouldn't life be a bore?

No discussion, no debate, no sharing,
no challenge.

The fascinating thing about people is that everyone is 'unique'.

Even identical twins have something which makes them unique – different from the other. Whether it is personalities, likes, dislikes, behaviours. Have you ever taken time to people watch? Whether on the train, at an airport, in a restaurant or on the street.

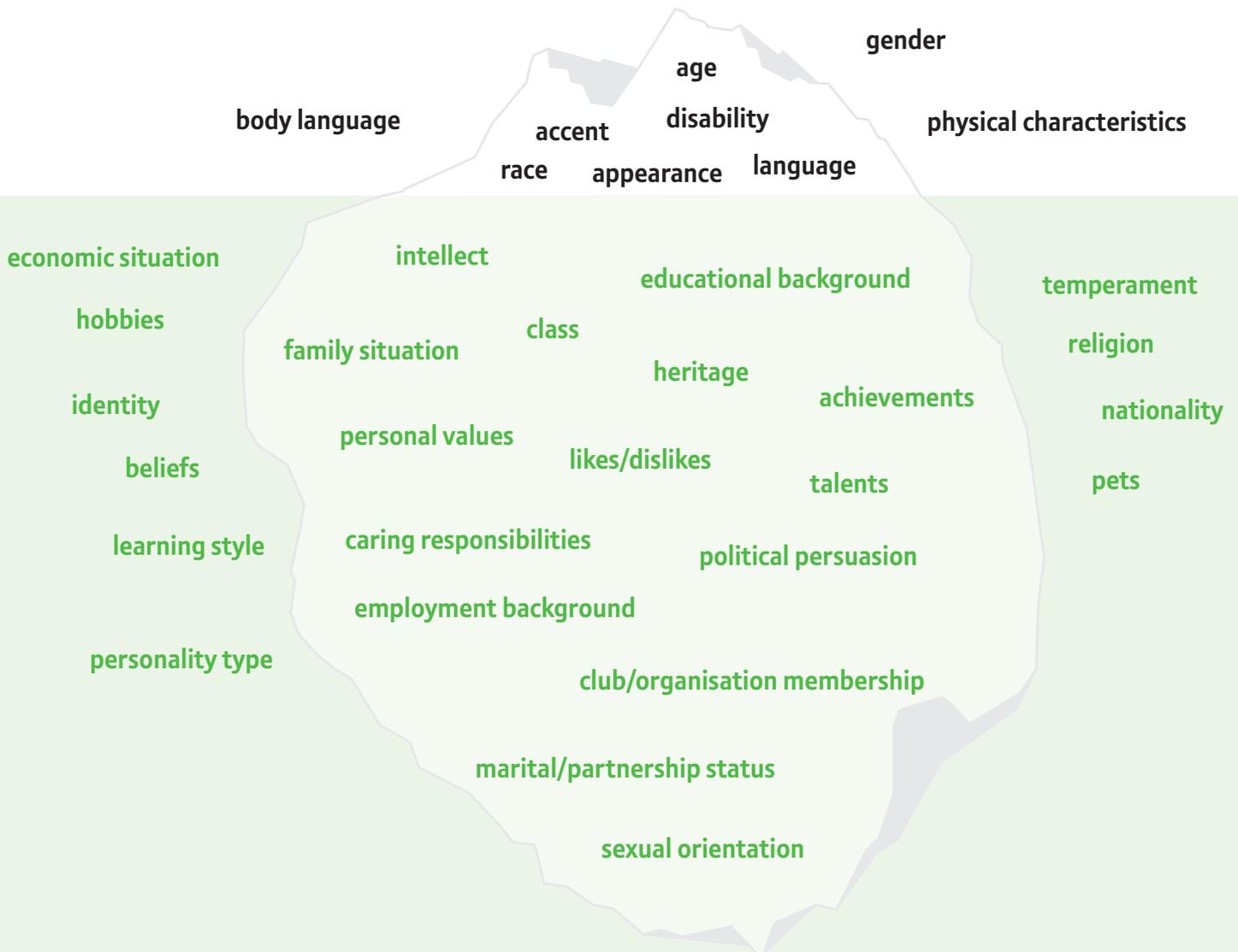
Have you looked at how individuals react with others, whether in a pair, or a group? Whether it conjures an 'aah!' when it is young love or an 'ooh' when it's an argument.

In the world of work, the challenge for companies is finding the people who have the right match to their business needs. Everyone has something different to offer. Skills, knowledge, information, help, support, interest, power, ability, intelligence...

Everyone is different with something unique to offer – diversity is about valuing and respecting the difference in you and others around you.

Why do we make judgements of others?

Look at the ‘iceberg’ diagram below. When we first ‘see’ another person, we only see the tip of the iceberg – the part above the line. Typical human behaviour is to make judgements on an individual based solely on this superficial information.



Where do our initial judgements come from?

- The media
- Our family and friends
- Our experience to date

If we put these influences together, we get our own personal “map” of how we see the world and the people in it...

Spending time with people different to us and forming friendships outside our own immediate peer group is rewarding. The media, our peer group and families can all influence our beliefs and set our minds to a particular perspective.

Yet experience shows that, if we talk to people and learn more about the issues **below the line**, we will find a lot more in common than our ‘personal map’ might initially suggest.

“Remember to keep your thoughts positive, for your thoughts become your words.

Remember to keep your words positive, for your words become your actions.

Remember to keep your actions positive, for your actions become your habits.

And remember to keep your habits positive, because your habits become your destiny.”

Why is it important?

Everyone is entitled to be allowed to grow and develop as an individual. Unfortunately and increasingly the effects of stereotyping, prejudice, bullying, racism and discrimination are in direct contrast to this human entitlement. It is also against the law of this country.

Have a look at the words below. Imagine a minority individual approaching a bigger group – this might be a boy approaching a group of girls or a new pupil joining a new class. What might these words mean to that individual?

Inclusive vs. Exclusive
Welcoming vs. Threatening
Closed thinking vs. Open thinking
Common language vs. Slang or buzz words

Stop and make a mental note of any situations which have occurred in the last week, when you can honestly say that you have excluded someone from a situation.

You may not consciously realise you are doing it.

Perhaps you have witnessed others being excluded.

You may have been left out yourself... how does it feel?

The shape of the world is changing quite dramatically, and the indications are that this rate of change will not necessarily slow down.



Hello!



Hello!

Demographic changes

Factors such as:

- Extended life expectancy
- A reduction in the birth rate in some areas of the world
- Increased global movement of people

This will directly or indirectly impact:

- The mix of people as future employees
- The type and number of companies as future employers
- Different types of jobs and careers
- Different aspirations from work and careers
- Increased demand for more flexibility to balance life responsibilities of home and work

Some UK statistics that reflect the increasingly diverse nature of our society:

- By 2010 it is predicted that only 20% of the UK workforce will be white, male, able bodied and under 45
- By 2010 only 40% of jobs are expected to be full time
- The number of people aged 85 and over grew by 64,000 (6 %) in the year to 2005 to reach a record 1.2 million. This large increase reflects improving survival and the post World War One baby boomers now reaching this age group www.statistics.gov.uk/cci
- The population of the UK is projected to grow until 2031. This is due to natural increase (more births than deaths) and because it is assumed there will be more immigrants than emigrants (a net inward flow of migrants)
- Demographic support ratios will fall. In 2004, there were 3.33 people of working age for every person of state pensionable age. This ratio is projected to fall to 2.62 by 2031

The stats above are from a range of sources including DT, Cranfield University, Government agencies, see also www.statistics.gov.uk/cci

The attraction of a more diverse world; community; workforce can include:

- An increase in the skills and experience available
- An increase in personal knowledge for all
- Fair treatment for everyone
- Flexible and welcoming environments
- Talent is nurtured and developed
- Individuals are valued
- More productivity
- Less pressure and stress

Everyone is different with something unique to offer – diversity is about valuing and respecting the difference in you and in others

A company does not exist without people

People are a company's most valuable asset and for the future it will be crucial to recruit, develop and retain the best talent across gender, race, age, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, lifestyle, personality type etc.

What is unique about you?

What different qualities do you have to offer?

Forming opinions of others based only on the tip of the iceberg is like trying to solve a problem without understanding all the facts first – **you might have some success, but it won't be a 'best effort'.**

So what can you do to help you recognise when you are making pre-conceived judgements?

Awareness is the key. When you first see or meet someone, think:

- Am I forming an opinion based on my historical 'map'? (which is based on previous experience, media input and family and peer group influence)
- Do I know enough about this person from what my eyes 'see'?
- What other information might be helpful to allow me to make a more sound judgement?
- Is it better to delay forming a full opinion until I have enough information?

Stereotyping

It is very easy to fall into the trap of categorising people. Would you have a picture in your mind of a:

Take a moment to reflect

Thinking about how we behave and how useful that behaviour has been to you is an important skill.

What does Diversity mean to you?

What does Equal Opportunities mean to you?

After doing the 'iceberg' exercise, what will you think about doing differently?



It is easy to accept that not all will look like this – however see how easy it is to have preconceived ideas in our minds. This can limit our thinking at times, so be aware of the pitfalls.

Notes

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05



BT Personal Skills Journey

Personal brand

What is it?

Your brand is the way others see you. Although this message will be perceived differently by individuals, most will collectively see you in the same light initially.



Have you ever asked others what they see in you? Ask for good, positive words and remember that if you ask a number of people the words may not be they same from all of them.

It is also good to ask for things which are less positive – not necessarily an area you want to change, however which will give an indication to the signals that you are sending out.

It's not as easy as it may seem...

Many people do not have any idea what they want to do, or what they want to be, and that is absolutely **OK**.

Ask someone older than you –
“at what point in your life did you know what you wanted to be, and at what point were you really comfortable with knowing who you are?”

Very often pressure from family members, teachers or friends leads you down paths where you really don't want to go, or you end up in a place (job or career) that you really don't want to be.

The key is to know what you enjoy in life and what you are good at. If you base this on your current and growing experiences, then you have something to build on and also work towards.

For some it may be like looking through a fog or a haze, and then suddenly the mist clears and you know exactly what it is you are looking at. Don't panic though, as this can take years for some people, and far less for others. By asking questions and talking to others it may help your thinking and speed up the process.

We cannot always do everything that we would like to do, although within reason we can do most of what we want to do.

Why is this important?

Because, whether you have thought about it or not, you are sending a message out at all times.

Think about this situation

What are you trying to achieve?	For example, university place, job, joining a sports team
Who am I going to need to influence?	The interviewer, the company, the manager, the rest of the team, others you come into contact with, your parents
What brand is needed?	Committed, fit, knowledgeable, correctly presented
How do I 'package' this brand and market myself?	Use phrases the audience will want to hear, evidence I bring with me, my body language, how I look
What research will I need to do to create this package?	Talking to others already doing what you want, asking mentors and peers for advice, and learning about who will do the interview, internet, media
Finally create a picture in your head of what this brand will be like and 'step into the role'	What will it look like/feel like to be this brand Remember it still needs to be you!

Make an impact with your brand.
See Impact and Image section.

“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn’t do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbour. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.”

Mark Twain

Marketing your brand

We have control over how we market ourselves and it is important to establish a brand for yourself in life

Consider some of these thoughts:

- How do you want others to see you.
- There is no right way or wrong way to ‘brand’ yourself.
- Others will see you differently to how you see yourself.
- Do not try to be someone else or something which is not you.
- Don’t try and copy others and be them.
- Do not allow others to persuade you to be different.
- Develop a confidence in your self which allows the real you to be seen by others.
- Remember that copying a style or behaviour will not be projected by each person in the same way.
- See qualities in others and respect those, and even try and build them into how you may want to be seen.
- Think about everything you have achieved.
- Be proud of who you are and think about what is important to you.
- Whether you like it or not, others will have an impression of you – make sure you leave them with the impression that you want them to have.
- Get creative and use your strengths e.g. if you are a visual learner – try drawing a logo of what your personal brand is.
- Remember that you are unique! Make sure those who you want to influence see that uniqueness.
- Be proud to be you and what values you have.
- The world will not know who you are unless you tell it – it is up to you to sell yourself to the world.
- Who are You and what is your **BRAND?**

“More people fail because of the lack of purpose than do because of the lack of talent.”

Bill Sunday



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Personal impact and image

So you think you should be offered a university place, a job, or some training. How do you increase your chance of success in an interview now or at anytime in the future?

Set the scene right from the start.

Did you know that it takes less than 30 seconds to make a first impression and you do not always get the opportunity to have a second chance. If you have an interview, make sure that you are making the right impressions from start to finish. However, it is not that easy and making an impression can start a long way ahead of meeting a person face-to-face.

Impact

The impact you make on someone will be based upon three criteria and how it is received by the recipient:

Words – content of what is said

Music – tone/language/speed/accent

Dance – non-verbal messages/facial expressions/hands/body language

The effect of taking one of these away means that individuals have to work harder with what is left.

Consider a conversation without the **Words**. For example a conversation with a person in another language.

Consider a conversation without the **Music**. For example a conversation in one tone of voice without expression.

Consider a conversation without the **Dance**. For example on the telephone.

Do you feel that you miss any of the message being conveyed if you are without either the words, music or dance.

Give some thought to people who can use sign language.

Think about the exaggeration of mime artists.

Experiment 1

Try and tell someone that you are really pleased to see them, in a number of different ways perhaps emphasising different words or changing the tone. Ask them if they feel any different each time the question is asked.

Ask...

Why?

What made the difference?

Was it good or bad?

Effective or less effective?

Someone who is deaf will still be able to have a good idea of what a conversation is about purely by the facial expression, and the body language being used.

Experiment 2

Try watching two people having a conversation from a distance, perhaps on the bus, or on the train, or while out and about with friends.

What can you tell about the conversation that is taking place?

How are you able to draw any assumptions or conclusions that you make?

For the maximum impact, it is best to make full use of the words, music and dance. When one or two are missing, the remainder are left to do all the work, so they need to be even more effective.

The importance of making the correct impact is that it can happen at any time, and as early as the initial call you make to a future college, employer, or perhaps the letter or application form which you send off?

Communication – remember you are communicating with people all of the time. Give careful thought about how you want to communicate and what you want to communicate with the people you meet.

Body language

So much can be read from body language, and far too often people do not realise that messages are being conveyed.

Look at other people and see what you can read about them just by looking at:

- eyes
- mouth
- arms
- shoulders
- legs
- standing/sitting position

Look at people on their own, and compare them to people in a group – What differences can you see?

It is important to convey positive signs such as:

- strong eye contact
- pleasing facial expression, including a smile
- good body posture – upright and shoulders back
- strong hand movement and gestures when talking
- walking with confidence
- good head movement

Visual impact and clothing

Given that you want to make that great first impression, and given that you are so determined to win this place; get this job; it is very important that how you look does not let you down.

Think about your visual message in this situation

What are you trying to achieve? For example, university place, job, joining a sports team

Who am I going to need to influence? The interviewer, the company, the manager, the rest of the team, others you come into contact with, your parents

How do I 'market' myself? How will I need to look; how do I want to look?

What research will I need to do to create this package? Talking to others and asking mentors and peers for advice, and learning about who will do the interview

Finally create a picture in your head of this visual image What will it look like/feel like. Remember it still needs to be you – just a well-prepared you!

Tone of voice

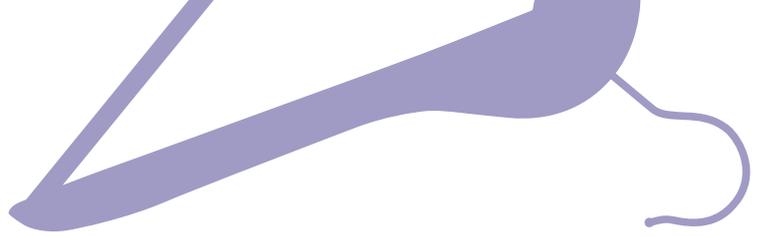
Tone of voice means how we say what we say.

The words we use send signals about us – they show our audience what we represent as a brand and helps them to understand what we stand for. The way we talk as a brand is as important as the way we look. Think about which words you emphasise in a sentence, and then by changing the word you emphasise, recognise the difference in the impact created.

Try the exercise with a mate or someone at home.

“When it comes to body language, there are some who have better vocabularies than others.”

Doug Larson, former Pastor



A few things to think about

Hair

Clean, tidy, not over the face, reasonable cut, not a distraction.

Face

Girls – make up, small amount – highlight eyes with mascara, and lips with gloss or light lipstick, as these are both areas used in communication.

Guys – clean shaven.

Teeth

Clean teeth and fresh breath; no gum; regular visits to the dentist are highly recommended.

Shirts

Guys – top button fastened, white is always smart and a good option. If wearing a coloured shirt then think carefully about the matching tie. Buy shirts that fit. Do not borrow. Make sure you know your neck size. If not, get it measured. It looks bad if the collar is too tight and you will not be able to relax. You certainly do not want to look as if you could share a shirt with another person – and it could be thought that you had lost weight; are stressed; are ill perhaps. All potentially conveying wrong messages. Ensure your cuffs are rolled down and done up, with either buttons or cufflinks.

Girls – ensure blouse or shirt not exposing too much flesh or cleavage. There is a time and place for that, and that time is not at an interview. Make sure it fits, and that it is not too tight or too big. Make sure it is tucked in.

Tie

Tie up to the top and avoid ‘fashion knots’. Make sure the ‘long’ end touches the top of the trousers. Windsor knots are best. If you cannot tie a Windsor knot, ask someone to show you how.

Jewellery – guys and girls

Not too much. Avoid anything that will be a distraction eg dangly earrings, statement necklaces, jangly bangles. Be careful with body piecing. Earrings are acceptable, other piercings may be best removed or hidden or concealed for interviews. Guys may want to consider if they want to wear any earrings depending on what they are being interviewed for. Be sure to wear a watch, which is telling the correct time.

Jackets

Guys – bottom button left undone. For choices of single breast or double, ask for help from shops to see what suits you best. Very often family or friends will not want to offend you by giving their opinion if you are going to buy new. Assistants are trained to help all shapes and sizes and to advise which is best. Make sure it fits, and the same rule applies as with the shirt – don’t borrow!

Girls – same rules apply as the guys. There is no particular stipulation or etiquette with regard to buttoning up.

Trousers

Make sure they are long enough.

Guys – trousers should sit on the top of the heel of the shoe. If they have hooks for a belt, wear one.

Belts

Wear one that fits and is the right colour with the trousers or suit.

Skirts

Should not be too short. When you sit down, it should be on the knee at least. If you buy a new one try sitting down in the shop to test it. Equally it should not be too long. Give some thought to the shape of skirt and your body shape – what looks good on you, as opposed to styles which may be less flattering. Do not wear skirts which are too tight – seek a shop assistant’s help if at all unsure.



Shoes

Make sure they are clean, polished and in good condition. Ensure the heels, toes and laces are all in good condition. Do not wear new shoes – make sure they are worn in. To keep shoes in good condition allow shoes to breathe when they are taken off – use shoe sprays. Make sure the shoes go with the outfit.

Guys – black shoes, lace up or good slip on. Do not wear trainers.

Socks

They act as the link between the trouser and the shoe, so make sure they are the right colour. No white socks and make sure there are no holes.

Tights

Tights and not stockings or hold-ups are recommended, as they provide a better overall finish and look. If wearing coloured tights, then ensure they work with the outfit, a natural is recommended whenever possible for interview situations. Make sure there are no ladders or holes. It is always worth taking a spare pair in your bag for the occasion – just in case.

Hands

Clean nails which are cut and shaped always make an impression.

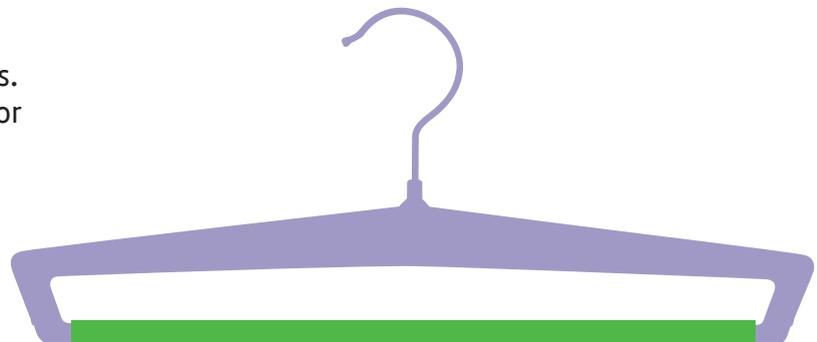
Girls – No nail varnish, except perhaps a clear or very natural colour. This does not mean you need to go to have your nails done! Anyone who bites their nails must take steps to break the habit. It can often be associated with stress, tension and worry, so wrong assumptions may be made about the type of person you are or what else is going on in your life. Products can be bought from the chemist.

Body smells – perfume/deodorant

Steer away from strong perfumes or aftershaves etc. Smell clean and fresh, not leaving the room full of an aroma which can be offensive – each person has different taste, and if interviewer does not like it, you may leave the wrong lasting impression. Ensure you wear deodorant. There is no excuse in today's world to have bad body odour. Ensure you do wash your clothes regularly and let them breathe once you have taken them off. Jackets and suits very often get put straight back into the wardrobe, and would benefit from being aired before being put away.

Cultural dress

Ask if you are unsure or it is unclear what the protocol is regarding culturally related garments. In the increasingly diverse world, situations change and someone will always be willing to give guidance if it is not obvious.



And finally...

It is better to dress up, than dress down and feel under-dressed, as generally people think more of you. If ever in doubt, it is quite normal and acceptable to ask what dress code is expected. If you know people there, then ask for an opinion or even have a look for yourself.

Research

You want to make an impact – then it is better to research as much as possible:

- Talk to others – at college on open days
- What are the ‘goods’ and the ‘bads’ from inside information – others have been where you are now and will know what it feels like – if you don’t ask you will never know
- If you ask others, appreciate that it is their view, so treat information gained sensibly
- Check websites and look at news articles
- Read books – university prospectuses etc

You will perform best if you are comfortable, well prepared and happy to be there.

Planning

Once you have decided on a direction, whether this is a job or a location or a college, then 110% effort needs to go into the process.

It is important to show the passion you have for the place you are after. The competition is tough and getting tougher.

If others show more determination and desire, they win you lose.

Plan, plan and plan again.

Do you have a diary? – an effective way of keeping a track of where you need to be and when.

Do you wear a watch? – you will not be able to be anywhere on time if you are relying on others to tell you what time it is.

This is your life and your career and you need to work through the plan.

The person who knows you the best is You.

An interview is the chance to explain who you are, what you have achieved and what you want to do – **make the most of the chance.**

Have you considered a contingency in case the plan went wrong?

In your plan consider:

- Phone number, address and contact name?
- Is your outfit completely ready?
- Have you checked the location of the appointment?
- Have you checked transport routes and alternatives, and is a map available?
- Plan to arrive at least 20 – 30 mins ahead of scheduled time of meeting – sit outside building, or in reception if necessary
- Make a list of the key points that you want to make about yourself during the interview – what have you achieved in your life/what makes you different from other people/why should you be the chosen ‘one’ ahead of others?
- Make sure you have been to the toilet
- Take the opportunity to check hair/lipstick/tie/shoes etc
- Take your personal statement/CV/application etc with you and other documentation
- Have three questions ready to ask – this shows that you are serious about the situation you are discussing

It is important to believe in yourself at this stage, because if you don’t others will not see the ‘real’ you.

Good preparation, all leads to you being cool, calm and collected and ready to attend **The Interview**, for the next stage of your life.



Fail to plan, plan to fail...

Consider how you might handle rejections.

You may find it funny when someone else is rejected, however when it happens to you – be it for an important placement, a job, or the chance to work on something really big – it hurts. While you can't protect yourself completely from the pain of being told you're not wanted, there are techniques that can help to prevent you becoming a serial rejectee.

- 1 Reflect on what went well and what could have been better
- 2 Ask for feedback
- 3 Learn from mistakes and make changes next time
- 4 Don't take it personally
- 5 Prepare properly
- 6 Talk it through with others
- 7 Don't sulk if you miss this time
- 8 Stick at it

Where the majority of candidates have similar grades, a strong brand to the right audience, communicated confidently with a positive attitude – this is what gets you noticed.

See sections on **Communication and Positive Attitude**.

The interview

Go with the aim of enjoying the opportunity to confidently explain to this person or these people about **YOU plc**.

You have a certain amount of time to get the message and information across, and you need to maximise that time.

You need to be cool, calm and collected, so the research, planning, image, etc are all important in how you are about to be received by your preferred prospective employer or college.

You are selling yourself... so planning is similar to a sales strategy.

Standing position

When you are standing talking to someone or perhaps waiting, make sure that you are standing up straight, with feet firmly on the ground. Consider your feet as your foundations or roots – if they are firm and well planted, you will present an air of confidence and be 'strong' in mind and body. If you are seen as weak at the roots, then you be easily pushed over. Often when people are nervous or embarrassed they stand on one leg (sometimes not knowingly), or you may have one leg wrapped behind the other.

Watch others and notice the difference, and try it yourself. Be strong and confident.

Sitting position

In the same way as standing, similar things can be said about how you should sit. Try and sit upright and don't slouch. Make sure your feet are on the floor, and your hands are in front of you, perhaps on your lap. Avoid the casual hands behind the head, and the laid back approach as this can come across as a lazy or disinterested attitude.

Handshakes

A handshake is probably the most recognised greeting worldwide. While handshakes appear to be a friendly gesture, it can be misleading and it is important to appreciate and recognise the meaning of different handshakes in a variety of situations, and to make sure you use them to your advantage.

Pressure in a handshake

It is important to get the pressure right. Be careful not to squeeze too hard, especially in a male vs female situation. A firm handshake shows confidence. A weak (limp) handshake can indicate that you are not interested, perhaps insincerity or a lack of confidence.

Think

Target audience

- Who are they?
- What type of people are they?
- How do they think?
- What are their expectations?
- How many will there be?
- How long do I have?

Positioning

- How will I sit or where will I stand if you are doing a presentation?

Who are you?

- Define who you are. Sell your personal brand.

Point of difference

- Why you and not any other candidate?

Proposition

- What benefits does this difference provide?

Breathing

- Don't forget to breath. Pause and take a breath before answering a question.

Make the most of your assets...

- **Inwards** – what do you know of yourself; your style and personality.
- **Upwards** – what ambitions are you working on at the moment.
- **Backwards** – what have you already learnt – or what have you done?
- **Forwards** – why do you want this job, opportunity, or place?

Here is an exercise you can do with your friends and family before an interview – remember constructive feedback is a powerful learning tool.

The initial greeting in an interview is very important. Practice it a few times with different people before the big day.

Think who the interviewer may be

Practice with different age groups

Ask the person you were practising with to rate you for the skills below:

- 1= Too little
- 2= Just right
- 3= Too much

Skill required

Eye contact

Hand shake

Greeting

Confidence

Posture

Top tips for interviews

- Prepare and research about the university, company and its marketplace
- Be punctual and allow plenty of time for the journey. It is useful to have a contact number in the event that you may be delayed
- Be yourself – take 10 deep breaths before going into the interview
- Be courteous to all whom you meet, you never know who they are!
- Smile and walk with purpose into the interview room
- Have a firm handshake, appropriate to the situation – practice beforehand
- Prepare questions you want to ask
- Ask questions that are relevant to the job/course
- Dress appropriately, if in doubt dress formally. This is not the time for a fashion statement!
- Body odour – if nerves cause you to perspire, use an effective deodorant
- Perfume/aftershave – discreet
- Ensure that you are well groomed, for example clean clothes, hair and nails
- Jewellery should be kept to a minimum
- Shoes should be clean, well polished and comfortable
- Be well prepared and allow time for set up if you are expected to make a presentation. Check the equipment that is required prior to the interview
- Take a back-up for the presentation, just in case
- Turn off your mobile phone

Notes

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07



BT Personal Skills Journey

Team working

Your capacity to work in mixed and diverse teams in the workplace will stand you in really good stead in your careers. It is a prized asset in most organisations the world over! It is best defined as:

“To contribute to small group and whole group activity – when individuals work towards a common goal.”



So what does it mean for you?

The acronym below highlights the ingredients of an effective team. Spend a few minutes thinking about a team you are currently in and tick off how many of these ingredients **YOUR** team has.

Trust

- Trust and support for individuals
- Trust in our goals and where we are going
- Trust creates self-confidence

Expectations

- Establish ground-rules within the team
- Know your role and that of others

Aims

- Have common and shared aims
- Communicate and agree these aims with everyone

Mixture

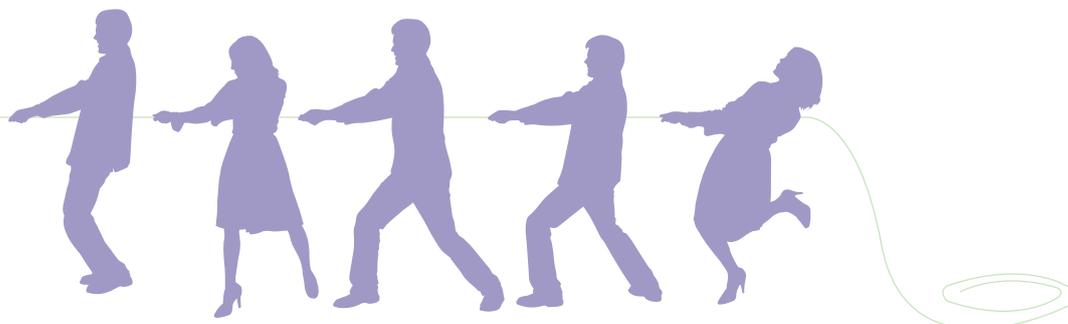
- Have a range of skills in the team
- Have a range of styles of doing things
- Have the right number of people in the team

Success

- Teams should always celebrate success
- Success breeds further success always!

How do strong teams get the best out of a diverse mix of people? By valuing and respecting their differences.

Read more about this in the Appreciating Difference section.



Forming a successful team

It is only human to feel uncertain when forming or joining a team. Here are some typical thoughts...

- Why are we here?
- Will I like them?
- Will they like me?
- Will I fit in?
- What am I meant to do?

Now think of a person who might have recently joined a team you are in. How might you now help them to settle in to your team as quickly as possible?

These feelings are almost inevitable. So what can you do to get through this stage as quickly as possible?

One of the quickest ways is by establishing ground rules. This means agreeing with others in the team how things are going to be done and how you will behave towards one another.

Here are some examples of ground rules:

- How you would like to be treated and how you will treat others?
- Respect for each other's differences (gender, ethnicity, physical and intellectual abilities)
- How the team will communicate the team purpose
- How you will show commitment to the team
- Roles and responsibilities
- How you will listen to each others' ideas
- How will you celebrate success and effort?
- How will you deal with conflict in the team?

Think of a team you have recently joined or are about to join... list below the ground rules you will need to help you settle in as quickly as possible.

We don't normally choose the people in our team. A team is not a friendship group, it has a job to do. You may not like some members of your team – the question is can you still work with them?

Good relationships

Strong teams are built around people who...

- Are open and honest
- Listen to and learn from others
- Are prepared to change their minds when they are wrong
- Challenge the issue, not the person
- Have optimism and enthusiasm
- Have compassion and passion

Who will not tolerate and who will challenge...

- Selfishness
- Dishonesty
- Playing games
- Secrecy
- Negativity

Clear rules help us communicate better.
Read more about this in Effective Communication.

Your role in a team

You will be able to contribute to a team in two main ways; through your skills and your personality.

Your skills might dictate your functional role within a team ie as an administrator, an engineer, an analyst, a PA or project manager.

Your personality will influence how you behave and interact with others. This behaviour will dictate what kind of team role you might prefer in different situations.

What is a team role?

It is important to be aware of how your personality interacts with other personalities in a team. A good team needs a mixture of attributes and skills to be successful. In the table below is a list of typical roles.

Read through the roles. Which roles do you think you fill in a team?

(If you find this hard, ask a trusted friend to help you identify your preferred roles – you are probably able to operate across most roles but it is common to have one or more preferred roles.)

Role	Responsibilities
Full of ideas – solves difficult problems	Strengths: An important role: teams need people like you to come up with ideas on how to solve problems. Potential Weakness: Can you also listen to others?
Keeping the peace – helping the decisions get made	Strengths: This is an important role – harmony in teams is highly prized. Potential Weakness: Make sure you also help do the work and get your hands dirty as well as keeping the peace.
The doer – first to try anything out! leads from the front!	Strengths: Very important – someone has to be brave enough to go first and lead by example. Potential Weakness: But can you also try a different plan if yours is not working? Can you let others get involved without offending their feelings?
Likes to do the detail – stays till the end to see it done	Strengths: Good job – you need someone like you to balance those who are good at getting things started, but don't stay to get it finished. Potential Weakness: Make sure you can also share the workload and don't let things worry you too much.
Just one of the team – doesn't like to lead or be noticed	Strengths: Team players are vital, especially people willing to do any part of the job necessary. Potential Weakness: Are you also able to get your ideas heard by the team? Remember, you may be the one who has worked out the best way to do it!
Technical specialist – likes to know how things work	Strengths: Every team needs at least one person with the specialist knowledge to complete the task. Potential Weakness: Can you also see the bigger picture?

So what does this mean for you?

Once you know your preferred roles, you can play to your strengths and be aware of the potential 'weaknesses' that go with these strengths. Knowing what skills you bring to a team and how your character will affect others is a big part of successful teamwork.

Leaders spend a lot of time getting to know their team – it helps them to know what role they will play in team success!

Read more in the Leadership section.

Types of intelligences – tick the boxes!

The skills you contribute to a team will be influenced largely by the things you are good at and like to learn. These might be driven by the intelligences you possess. There are nine commonly accepted intelligences. All of us will have talent in one or more areas outlined below. The more things you try out, the more you will identify your talents. So tick the boxes. What are your talents?

“Those who are not looking for happiness are the most likely to find it, because those who are searching forget that the surest way to be happy is to seek happiness for others.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Are you?	A lot	A bit	Not at all
Linguistic – (good at languages)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intuitive – you instinctively analyse a situation or person before it fully develops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creative – like to use your imagination to do things	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Musical – can feel and move to the beat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Logical – (good at maths)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicative – good with people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-aware – knows what you want and how to get it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visual/spatial – sees things easily in 3-dimensions/pictures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical/practical – like to get your hands dirty, good at sport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Put your team role and your intelligences together to help you design your personal image.
See how to do this in the Personal Brand section.

Your style of learning new skills

So now you know what role you might play in a team and how effective teams work. What about how you learn best? Every person learns slightly differently but we all learn through our senses:

- Vision
- Hearing
- Touch
- Smell
- Taste

Individuals will often be dominant in one of these areas and will learn better if they understand and favour their own style.

Which of these styles sounds most like you – you might want to ask a close friend or member of your family if you are not sure.

Auditory learners (“sounds good to me”)

- Talkers
- Prefers to be told rather than shown
- Listens but may always be impatient to talk
- Will talk to themselves
- Listening to radio/music is important
- Often untidy
- Prefers listening in lessons

Revision/Learning tips

- Reading out loud
- Discuss and teach
- Tape information
- Tell others your revision plans

Visual learners (“I can see what you mean”)

- Prefers face to face meetings, seeing videos, diagrams and reading
- Likes maps not oral directions
- Doodler
- Gives visual presentations

Revision/Learning tips

- Patterned notes with pictures, illustrations
- Visualise ideas in head
- Use visual diaries, videos, posters and colour

Practical learners (“Hang on”)

- Prefers hands on, tactile
- Relaxes through activity e.g. sport
- Prefers to do and talk
- Fidgets, doesn't like sitting still
- Uses gestures and expressions

Revision/Learning tips

- Make models
- Underline/highlight while learning
- Use active visual notes
- Move while learning

What does this mean for you?

Once you know your preferred learning style, look at the table below for some tips on how to improve some basic skills...

How do I?	Practical	Visual	Auditory (hear)
Learn	Through practical activity	With pictures, diagrams, video	By listening to lectures, tapes, discussions
Spell	By writing it out	By seeing the spelling in your mind.	By sounding it out phonetically
Write	Short, action type paragraphs	Very descriptive paragraphs	In direct, speech, rhyme and rhythm
Memorise	Repetitive doing	Bold underlining. Imagining in pictures, pattern, writing it out	Repeating out loud, listening and oral tests
Relax	By actively “letting off steam”	By watching not doing e.g. film, sports	By listening e.g. music and radio
Communicate	By gestures, body language	By watching facial reactions, using metaphors	By detecting mood and information through tone of voice and listening
Read	Practical, action based material	Material with plenty of description	Speeches, plays, conversation, chatty material
Recall information	Focus on action and feelings	Through images, scenes, faces	Hearing sounds, words, stories
Draw	Action scenes	Descriptive scenes	Busy, noisy scenes
Hear	Active material	Descriptive material	Rhythmic rhymed music and poetry

If you work out someone’s learning style and use language that matches this style – you will find your ability to talk to people much easier.

Read more about this in the Communication section.

Team working summary

If you put your skills, the roles you play, your learning style and your intelligences together... **you are unique!**

Congratulations

Knowing how you will work in a team is the first big step. If you want to influence others and get your voice heard, move on a step and work out other peoples' styles and roles as well. They are unique too. Take time to celebrate that thought – a lot of success and happiness comes from focusing on others' strengths and skills and working out how you can work together with others to help you achieve all you want.

Effective teamwork includes:

- Having a shared direction that's clearly understood by all
- Clear and defined team roles for everyone in the team which matches their skills and abilities
- Systems that are understood and serve to support individual, team and organisational goals
- Supportive relationships based upon clear, open and honest communication



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Leadership

What it is:

“Inspiring and motivating a group, team or individual in order to get a particular task done. Appreciating, respecting and balancing the team, task and individuals working with you, without losing sight of the big picture. Understanding the responsibilities and subtleties of co-ordination and control.”

It is very much about being you and bringing your own character and personality to the role. You will, however, have to project the very best of you in order to be effective. It could be said that it's the ability to get people to do what they don't normally want to do and then **LIKE IT!**

What it is not:

It's not shouting and bullying or needing to have all the ideas. Some people say they don't want to be leaders because they confuse leadership with dominance. Dominance involves forcing control on less assertive or less physically able individuals whereas leadership is about a positive ability to get the best out of yourself and others.

Excessively dominant people make bad leaders – bullies are usually very insecure and can only function if they keep control by emotional or physical force.

Leading people, leading ourselves

What is also important is thinking about what style of leadership suits you.

It's not always hard or complicated.

And it can be learnt. After that it requires some practice. Effective leadership is in quite short supply.

We are not all going to lead a country or captain a major sporting team but leadership is essential at every level in society especially, as a starting point, in family groups. Even great leaders agree that leadership starts with the simple things:

- **Self belief** – It starts from within (you being able to lead yourself) and radiates out.
- **Relationships** – It involves mostly common sense and is far more about knowing and motivating people than just the nuts and bolts of a job.
- **Authenticity** – It is driven by your personality. If you try to be someone else people will see through it. Be true to yourself and respect difference in others.
- **Personal brand** – A combination of what you project and how others see you. You need to be aware of both so you can adapt your style when necessary.
- **Delivery** – Are you someone who can get things done and be seen to deliver what you say you will and by when?

You're probably already doing it now in lots of ways, some of which will be known to you and others not known.

Also look around you. There will be great examples of leadership happening right before your eyes from your peers, teachers, employers, parents and guardians.

Why is it important to me?

Statistically, everyone will be a leader at some stage in their lives. This may be:

- **Family orientated** – setting an example as a parent to a spouse or child.
- **Work related** – leading a team or organisation.
- **Sport/hobby related** – leading a team or social club.

“The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority.”

Ken Blanchard – management author

Leaders will have different styles

Official style

Relies on rules and directions. Is usually fair and impartial. Uses an impersonal style.

Balances the team well but can lack the ability to inspire the individual. Often this is a style more suited to managing rather than leading.

Expert style

Has “come up from the ranks” – knows the skills of the job and can demonstrate them. Gives directions based on experience and “what I say”. They are usually good at getting results under pressure. Very hands on – sometimes too much. Tends to ignore the detail and bend the rules. Think retired footballers taking over as manager.

Team-builder

Uses the team members to provide both motivation and discipline. Believes in the power of “we” not “I”. A very collegiate style which can work and be highly effective especially in flat, team based structures without strong hierarchies.

Dictatorial

Expects their team to simply follow orders. May rely on fear of punishment or other serious consequences to keep the team together. Command and control such as this can be highly effective as a short term style in dangerous operational roles such as the military or fire service. Often, however, it is the style of insecure leaders and does not achieve good results!

These styles can be mixed and matched to suit the occasion. For example a fire fighter might need quite a dictatorial approach when lives are in danger in a house fire, but back at the station this command and control approach would not work.

Of course many more styles exist. Think of a leader you admire.

What style do they use and why?

Personal drive and charisma are important skills for a leader – think about this when you are designing your brand and selling yourself at interviews.

Charisma has a similar definition to leadership – it is the ability to inspire, motivate and get things done... but it can differ in the lack of focus on individuals. Charismatic leaders tend to have incredible personal drive and are prepared to sacrifice their own needs and encourage others to do the same in order to get things done.

“You manage things, you lead people.”

Admiral Grace Murray Hooper,
US naval officer

Remember not all leaders are good. Hitler was a highly effective leader. He was evil, ruthless and entirely misguided but we cannot say he was a bad leader.

Effective leadership is usually related to **personal charisma**, which can be used to achieve good or evil.

Top tips on being a good leader – leading yourself and others!

- **Know what you and your team want – be purposeful.** Without a well-defined purpose, others, including family members, will try to define your purpose for you. It is your choice – you can play the role of the victim, take a chance and play the odds by being a part of someone else’s purpose or you can develop your own purpose and plan.
- **Use your gifts – and use them with discipline.** We all have God-given gifts, talents and abilities for our use. The big question is: “Are you using your gifts? This takes a disciplined approach. Do you know what your gift(s) are? Are you using your gifts every day? Your gifts are meant to be shared with others. Without discipline, the gifts that you have will not reach their maximum potential.
- **Reflect on your efforts – be prepared to be wrong as well as right.** To reflect means to step back and learn what life is revealing to you. This could come in the form of information that you already know or, more importantly, it is information and feedback that comes from other sources. Rather than be quick to defend your position, consider using the gift of feedback to your advantage.
- **Make the present perfect – be positive.** Leaders recognise that the past is gone and they have no control over the future. Living in the now – or present – is both healthy and more productive. Leaders make the present perfect.
- **Listen, listen, listen – see all viewpoints – be inclusive.** Good leadership never involves dominating or bullying less assertive people. Listening is the one activity you need to do more in life than any other activity, except to breathe. Listen for what people say, what they don’t say, and what they would like to say but don’t know how to put into words. Good leaders listen to everyone.

- **Be 100% honest – when speaking with others.** Holding back how we “really” feel when communicating with others does damage to ourselves, as well as to the relationships we have with others. It takes courage and practice to “level” with others in a non-aggressive and non-judgmental manner. Invest now if you want trust when it counts.
- **Stop tolerating – don’t put up with things that aren’t working for you.** What are you tolerating? Toleration is something or someone that keeps you from having the quality of life that you deserve. Make a list of all the things that you are putting up with currently and make decision to do one of 3 things:
 - 1 eliminate it;
 - 2 look at it differently; or
 - 3 respond to it.

Once you have identified your list, begin to work on it!
- **Take calculated risks and see failure as part of life.** Leaders are risk takers but they focus on succeeding. They see occasional failure as inevitable but temporary. The job you don’t get, the university place you miss out on. Good leaders learn from these experiences and bounce back. Sometimes, in an attempt not to fail, you miss the true spirit of learning which is built on taking a risk and going for those difficult things.
- **Learn to see yourself as others see you.** Leaders get feedback whenever they can so they know how others see them. You may need to ask for it though!
- **Be yourself!** Because the best style of leadership is to bring YOU to the table. Go with your gut instinct. Trust your feelings. Leadership starts from within and radiates out.

“Integrity without knowledge is weak and useless, and knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful.”

Samuel Johnson 1709 – 84

So what does leadership mean to you?

Now you have read through this section, think of a leadership role you would like to have or have now. This could be in the workplace, in sports or with your friends.

What do you think are the most important skills for you as a good leader?

Remember:

Leadership is about people and people are about feelings... to be a good leader you need to understand feelings and how to motivate people, including yourself.

All leaders are effective communicators – look at the section on how to get your message across and create rapport with others.

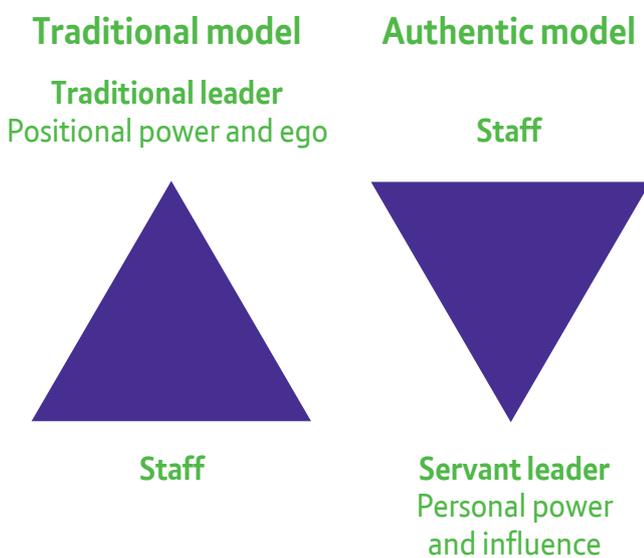
“Most of the outstanding leaders I have worked with are neither tall nor especially handsome; they are often mediocre public speakers; they do not stand out in a crowd; and they do not mesmerise an attending audience with their brilliance or eloquence. Rather, what distinguishes them is their clarity and the persuasiveness of their ideas, the depth of their commitment, and their openness to continually learning more.”

Peter Senge,
management author

Leadership as service

There is great power from serving others. The concept of servant leadership is thousands of years old. At the heart of it is the idea that leadership can operate in one of two ways.

The leader at the top of a hierarchical pyramid through 'position power' or we have the option to 'flip the pyramid' and have the leader at the bottom of the pyramid acting as servant leader through their own 'personal power'.



Leadership: problem solving and planning

What is it?

Facing problems and deciding how to tackle them is a fundamental skill. Here are some guidelines to help you get started.

What is the problem?

In many cases, the biggest block to solving a problem is not identifying what the actual problem is!

Imagine a current problem you are facing.
Can you identify the actual problem?

Why is this important?

Because if you have a structured approach to solving problems, it prevents panic and missing important information. It also gives others in your team confidence that you know how to overcome obstacles.

Here is an example of how to approach problems.

- Define the problem itself – really understand it.
- Explore your resources e.g. people (parents, teachers, peers) and equipment.
- Do some creative/lateral thinking “brainstorm” the problem – what options do I have?
- Select one of these options.
- Make a plan and delegate who does what.
- Practice/ rehearse this plan.
- Do it! (Explain how.)
- How is it going? Do I need to modify my plan?
- Keep doing it – complete it!
- On completion – Review it (could I have done it differently/better?).
- Celebrate success (if you gave your best effort, even if you were not completely successful, you should celebrate your efforts).

Try applying this to the problem you thought of at the top of the page... if you find you get stuck at any of these stages, you may need to talk it through with someone else!

Not trying to solve a problem because you are scared of failing is still failure... but without the benefit of gaining valuable learning experience from a solid attempt. Give it your best effort!

Try applying this to the problem you thought of in the previous section.

Leadership – motivating yourself and others

What is it?

We might call it a “positive mental attitude.” Finding and maintaining the drive to get something done takes effort and discipline – attitude is very important to achievement.

Research has shown:

- Positive feelings help brain cells connect more easily.
- Positive feelings create huge power – to succeed, you must believe you can.

Positive thinkers:

- See a problem as a challenge, not a threat.
- See opportunities, not problems.
- Consider that all things are possible.
- Avoid moaners when choosing friends.
- See failure as temporary and a useful learning tool.
- Speak and act positively.
- Use positive gestures, smile and be cheerful.
- Look forwards not back.

Negative thinkers:

- Find faults in others.
- Look for problems and barriers.
- Expect the worst.
- Blame and criticise others, not themselves.
- See failure as permanent.
- Are often anxious or angry.
- Compare themselves unfavourably to others.
- Dislike positive statements and people.
- Have a “closed” mind.

What does this mean for you?

As a behaviour experiment, to see if you are a positive or negative thinker, consider the following examples and which one you are more likely to use.

I sometimes worry that I won't succeed or/
I do my best and accept the consequences.

I work because others expect it or/
I work for my own success and future.

I get discouraged if my marks are low or/
I bounce back quickly and find out what went wrong.

Criticism makes me feel a failure or/
criticisms help me to see how to improve.

Believe it! Enthusiasm, a positive attitude and personality are as important as exam results when going for an interview.

Enthusiasm is infectious – in a team, as a leader, at an interview or in the workplace. This is one disease you want to catch! Make it part of your Personal Brand.

“The job of the leader is to speak to the possibility.”

Benjamin Zander



Action Centred Leadership – the three rings

The Action Centred Leadership model identifies three generic areas of leadership responsibility:

- 1 Achieving the task
- 2 Building and maintaining the team
- 3 Developing the individual

These are represented as three inter-locking rings, as follows:



Professor John Adair

This diagram implies that these three areas of leadership responsibility interact.

For example: if the group fails to achieve the task, the team spirit will be low and individuals in the team may become dissatisfied or demotivated.

In another case, if an individual feels incapable of contributing to the task due to a lack of experience or knowledge, the team cohesion may suffer and the task will become more difficult to accomplish.

Alternatively, if the group is not given the opportunity to bond as a team, the individuals will get the opportunity to develop themselves within the team and again, the task will become more difficult to accomplish.

Please use your own relevant examples to demonstrate in interactions between the three areas of Leadership Responsibility.

Leadership Summary

- Being able to lead yourself is the first step. Learn how to do this well.
- Be yourself. If you try to be someone else you will get found out.
- Operate with enthusiasm – it's infectious.
- Know where you want to go – have clear goals.
- Create a clear plan – those you lead will want to know where they are going.
- Praise and encourage as often as you can. This helps get the best out of people.
- Make decisions – you will sometimes get it wrong but don't let this stop you.
- Take responsibility when things go wrong. Give the credit when they go right.
- Operate with humility and integrity at all times.

Remember that effective leaders are in quite short supply.

If you can do it well and you find the right outlet for your talents then you will be in great demand! Good luck in this pursuit.

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BT Personal Skills Journey

Time management

Why should we manage our time?

Certainly some people never master this skill. So why do big businesses prize this skill?

Do you do any of the following?

Arrive late for appointments, arrive late for friends and family submit projects/homework late, miss transport and connections?

Being late regularly makes a statement. It forms part of the image others will have of you.

So what do you think being late might say about an individual?

- If you are late, you can miss vital instructions and appear flustered.
- It can give you insufficient time to prepare for a vital interview or presentation.
- Worse still it provides a poor statement of how you organise and lead yourself.

Here are some tips for good time management:

- **Prioritise** – work out what has to be done first and give it that priority.
- **Set deadlines** (typically 90% of a job is done in the last 10% of the time!).
- **Tell a trusted mentor about your deadline** – it helps you to get on with it!
- **Stop putting it off till later** – think about doing it and do it – time spent thinking about work has associations with guilt. Time spent after work has been finished is high quality time and is the most enjoyable.
- **Get peer support** – arrange group sessions for work you know you find difficult.
- **Take ownership of time** – we are better if we set our own regime rather than following someone else's.
- **Stop blaming others** – decide for yourself what has to be done and stick to it!
- **Allow time in your schedule for fun things** – the brain works best with some down time between longer projects!
- If you are unavoidably late, apologise, even if it wasn't your fault and think what can you do to limit the damage to your image?



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BT Personal Skills Journey

Being unstoppable

Throughout our lives we are constantly being presented with challenges, challenges about how we live, challenges about ways to get what we want. Sometimes it can seem as if things are put in our way. If we let these things beat us or get us down we end up simply accepting a life that is limited by our past experience.

Being unstoppable means we are able to decide what we want and go get it with confidence knowing we have what it takes to deal with setbacks and disappointments. We also have a “growth” mindset that is focussed on learning from our mistakes.

When we develop this mindset, nothing seems too difficult and we will approach every thing we do with energy and enthusiasm, knowing we have a good chance of success.

**When the world says, “Give up,”
Hope whispers, “Try it one more time.”
Author unknown**



It takes the average person 10,000 hours to become amazing at something!

Would you like to be amazing at something?

Like what? (group shares/each note down onto paper) e.g. singer, band, Olympic swimmer, dancer, scientist, doctor, author...

How much practice are you willing to put in?!

Q – Think about something you would like to do and consider how much practice you would like to put in...

PhD for success



Dream and dream big and build a vision of how life can and will be, provided you do the thing you think you cannot do. Then get yourself a PhD for success.

Live life with **passion**. When we live here we feel alive and able to do the things that seem so far away when we are feeling low.

Live life with **humour**. Humour and laughter are good for the soul and help give us a sense of perspective.

Live life with **determination**. No matter what you choose to do, make sure you give it everything you have because a victory hard won makes it worth the effort. The harder you strive, the less willing you will be to give up on your dream.

When we look at people we consider to be successful can feel envious and create “reasons” why they got what they have – “lucky”, “know the right people”, “clever”, “talented”, and then create all the excuses as to why we can’t.

The truth is that most of these people started just like us, but they all had a dream, a big dream that created a burning desire within them and that desire compelled them to seek it out.

Sylvester Stallone is a massive example of this:

SYLVESTER STALLONE: By 1973, Stallone had auditioned for almost every casting agent in town, but found little success. Now he has established worldwide recognition as an actor, writer, producer and director since he played the title role in his own screenplay of “Rocky” which won the Academy Award in 1976 for Best Picture. Have you ever considered his story?

Try looking at www.sylvesterstallone.com

What did you learn about determination?



Self talk “what’s my label?”

Unstoppable people are no different from those who are not – they just think differently. They are more determined.

So how do you think? Do you think positive, encouraging thoughts or negative, destructive thoughts? It is all habit. We get into the habit of either complimenting ourselves or criticising ourselves.

Imagine going about your daily routine with yourself beside you! That is, imagine being an invisible friend of you, walking beside you, sitting beside you as you go about a typical day.

You are that friend, watching you, and commenting on your performance. So, when you see yourself going to school or college, or talking, or writing a letter or whatever you do on a typical day imagine being that friend and commenting all the time. ‘Well done, that was great’ you may say. Or ‘You idiot, that was really bad’. You might say ‘well done, you really dealt assertively with the bully’. Or you might say ‘Wimp – you never stand up for yourself’.

In other words, this activity involves you being a brutally honest friend who is giving you feedback all day.

Because did you know you are doing this all the time? You are talking to yourself all day, silently complimenting or criticising yourself. You are constantly giving yourself labels.

- Assertive
- Tough
- Creative
- Weak
- Funny
- Dull
- Intelligent
- Stupid
- And on and on.

So what is your label?

An interesting question is, if you talked to your best friend the way you talk to yourself how long would that person remain your best friend?

Determined people are always telling themselves they are good, they are strong, they can keep going, they will succeed.

Those lacking determination are always telling themselves they can’t, they are not tough enough or clever enough.

Imagine being that invisible friend and you will write down all the labels you give yourself – positive on the left, negative on the right. Imagine a typical day and all the things you say to yourself.

Look at the labels on the negative side. These are just that: labels. Labels that have nothing to do with your real potential, labels that you have picked up over the years, perhaps labels others have given you.

Rewrite them now on the other side – as positives. This may seem artificial at first but you will find you start challenging your negative labels. You will start challenging the way you speak to yourself.

Every time you criticise yourself you weaken yourself and reduce your determination.

Q – Be your invisible friend and become aware of all the things you typically say to yourself. Just write down anything that comes into your head.

Metaphor for being unstoppable

What we say becomes our reality – whether we are saying it inside our heads or outloud. So if you say “homework sucks” it does! If you say “homework’s a breeze” it is!

Definition of a metaphor: the comparison of two similar things but doesn’t use the word “like” in the sentence, phrase or clause e.g. your eyes are diamonds.

- 1 Imagine being unstoppable
- 2 Note down any words or images that came to mind
- 3 Now put them in a sentence

e.g. I’m a burst of energy that brighter with each challenge



Sir Ernest Shackleton was an explorer. In 1909 his mission to be first to the South Pole was beaten back when Shackleton realised that while they could get to the pole they didn’t have enough food to survive the return journey. As he said to his wife, ‘Better a live donkey, than a dead lion’.

Does this sound like unstoppable to you? Perhaps not. But while the expedition failed to achieve its key goal, the important thing was that Shackleton was not deterred. He vowed to return again to the South Atlantic. He said that not to try again would be the ‘greater failure’. His new expedition set off in 1914 and his ship was called ‘The Endurance’. His story is a powerful proof that you should never give up – however bad it gets.

What do we need to be unstoppable?

Being unstoppable is not just about keeping going. It is vital to have:

- **The vision to have a clear idea of what we want to achieve**
- **The courage and confidence that it will work**
- **A workable plan for achieving it, based on real knowledge**
- **Willingness to learn from mistakes as we go along**

Where is vision?

Vision is about spotting opportunities and then turning them into real aims.

The aims aren't just a sense of general direction but a really clear goal.

If it's a vision, we should be able to see it.

When Clive Woodward took over as England's first full time professional rugby coach in 1997, what was his vision?

Put simply it was for England to be the best team in the world and to win the World Cup.

Given our weak record up until then, this was one big vision and yet, with a lot of hard work and commitment, it was achieved in 2003.

What gives us confidence?

Some people are more confident than others, but we all need a certain amount of confidence to succeed. So where do we get confidence from?

We get it from:

- **Past successes of our own**
- **Seeing that it can be done**
- **Being convinced and encouraged by others**
- **Having a workable plan that we can believe in**

So if you're not sure you can do it, just think about the hurdles you have leapt in the past, look around to see if others have made it work and allow those who believe in you to remind you of your abilities. But nothing beats a good plan!



What makes for a workable plan?

To achieve anything worthwhile takes proper planning and research. We need to work out how the goal can be achieved and the milestones along the way. This involves learning from others and recognizing how others can help.

So a good plan will have SMART objectives, which means:

Specific	Clear and simple targets
Measurable	So we know whether we've done it
Agreed	With those who help or care
Realistic	Is this really achievable?
Timed	So when are you going to do it?

The plan is also based on understanding the resources needed. Sometimes those resources are the skills you bring to the party. Fail to develop the right skills and your not going to have much fun at the party.

How do we handle setbacks?

'That which doesn't kill you makes you stronger'

There is no harsher teacher than our own experiences. Firstly **we learn what NOT to do**. Learning through experience is rather like trial and error. Secondly, we learn – or rather develop – some character. Setbacks may be unwelcome but if we overcome them we develop the 'thick skin', the resilience needed to cope with pressure. **We learn how to deal with public failures and humiliations.**

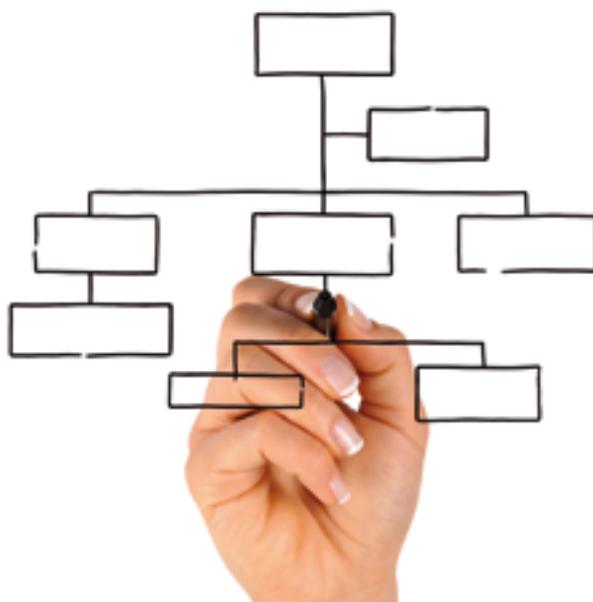
Victory – whatever the result?

Even if we don't fully achieve our goal, being unstoppable brings its own innate rewards. First of all, we will have done far more than we might have done otherwise.

"If you reach for the stars, you might just get the moon."

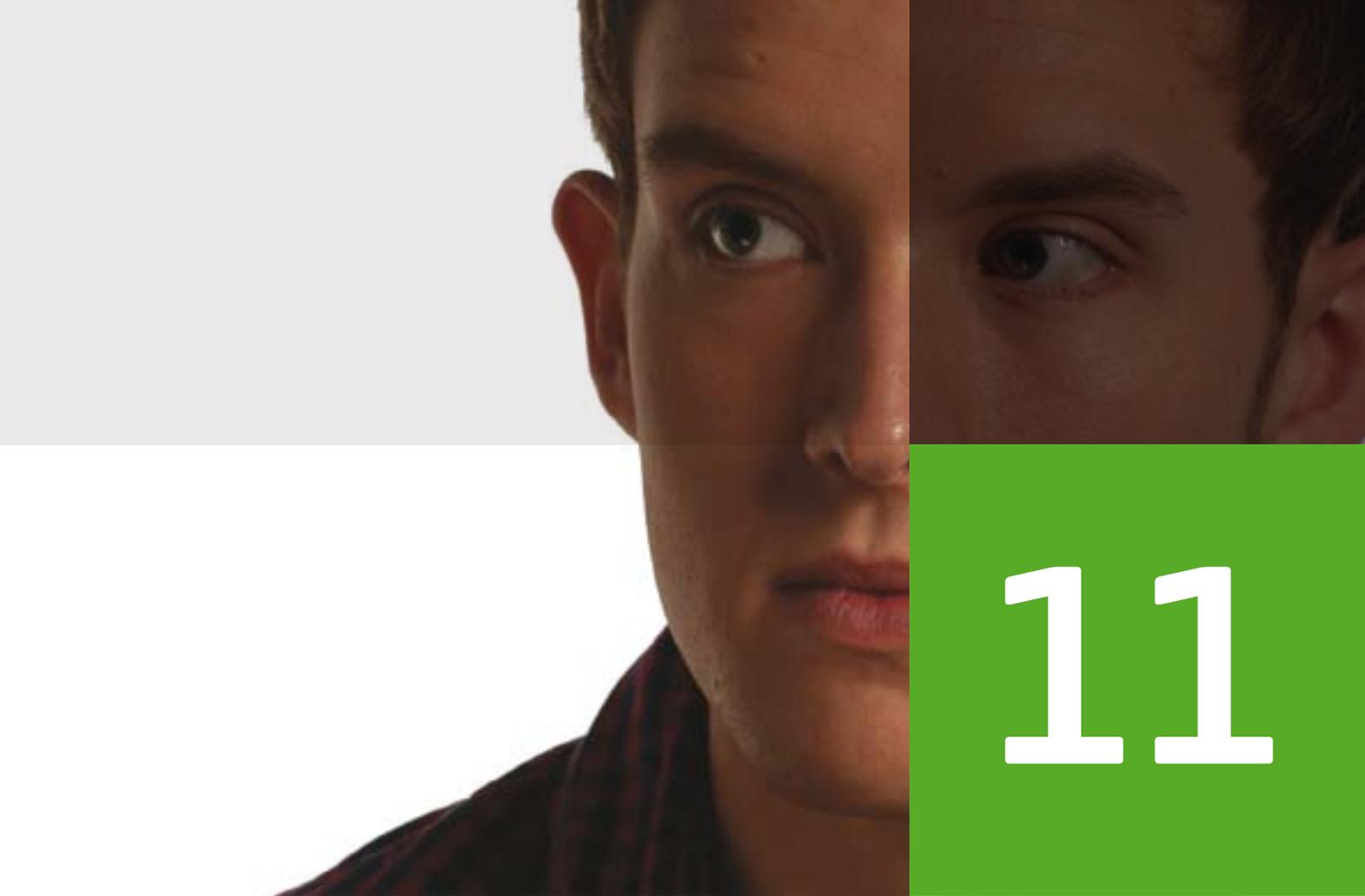
Secondly, we feel a sense of pride in achievement. It's better to try and fail, than not to try at all. We will have undergone some major personal growth and change.

Shackleton is a great model of sheer unstoppable. Despite the horrors of this expedition he returned to the South Atlantic in 1921 with much of his original team. Every single one of them was unstoppable. Shackleton died of a heart attack when the ship reached South Georgia. On his wife Emily's instructions, he was buried there.



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BT Personal Skills Journey

Ethics and integrity

Ethics and integrity are old-fashioned words in today's world. Too many leaders in society don't set the highest of standards – just think of the scandals involving our MPs, our bankers and sports stars. At the same time, while religions provide a basis for ethics in our lives, how do we make sense of competing religions seeming to contradict each other?

Ethics and integrity do matter and this section explores why. If we don't behave with some concern for others and we can't be trusted or trust other people then life is much harder. A set of principles is provided to help you deal with the challenge of making sense of a range of competing ethical standards.

A lack of understanding can lead to conflict between groups creating 'them and us' mentalities. Examples of 'them and us' misunderstandings include conversations between parents and teenagers, different religious groups,

gender, age or ethnic groups, managers versus employers and so it can go on...

But it does not have to be this way!

One of the benefits of an ethics and integrity policy is accepting that not only do we have the right to live the way we want but so has everyone else. This means you might have to moderate your own behaviour some times to be part of a healthy society.

Here we will help you understand your own ethics (the moral compass that guides your every action) and how your own ethics will relate to the country you chose to live in. It will also help you apply these ethics with integrity, which in reality is the only way forward to live together in a tolerant society.



What are ethics?

Well, a good way of thinking about them is as rules. Every game needs rules and perhaps life does too.

Think about sports – anything from football to Formula 1.



Without a clear set of rules to play by, sport just doesn't work. Everyone signs up to the rules and the game makes sense. The poor old referee is never popular but his or her job is to make sure everyone sticks to the rules so the winner really is the winner. Everyone is outraged if someone wins by cheating.

What about school? Do we need rules to make this particular game work?

Now you may not agree with every school rule. But have a think about which rules are needed to help you live and learn together. We need ethics around bullying, respect for others, recognising diversity, cheating and so much more.

So we've looked at sports and school, what about life?

“Football isn't a matter of life and death. It's more important than that.”

Bill Shankley

Dictionary definition:

Ethics: a system of moral principles, of the culture you live in, the rules of conduct recognised in respect to a particular group, culture. Example: medical ethics; religious ethics.

Where do ethics come from?

Life is a bit bigger than sports.

Typically your individual values are instilled in you as you are growing up. Common influences are parents, siblings, friends, teachers, the media and also the country you live in and/or your country of ethnic origin. These ethics exist to give us 'ground rules' for social interactions, to form a 'code of conduct' or the Laws of the Land. Common values allow us to socialise in a diverse community.

And the rules we talk about in life are often called... morals. Ethics are a moral code that we sort of choose to live by. Unfortunately rules often stand in the way of the goal we are aiming for. But they sort of protect us from each other – and ourselves. What sort of things are we talking about?

Well it can be things like...

If Mum can be bothered to clothe and feed us, what should we do in return? Clean our room... get in by a time that stops her worrying.

If we want a good mark for a piece of schoolwork, it might be easier to download someone else's answer from the Internet, but we won't have learned anything. And if we are found out or actually need that knowledge in an exam...

If a friend does us a favour, we should pay them back with a favour of our own.

So where do we get the ethical rules from? Well this is where it gets complicated. The sources of ethics are a pretty big question.

Can you think where conflict can arise?

Work out your own, individual ethics.

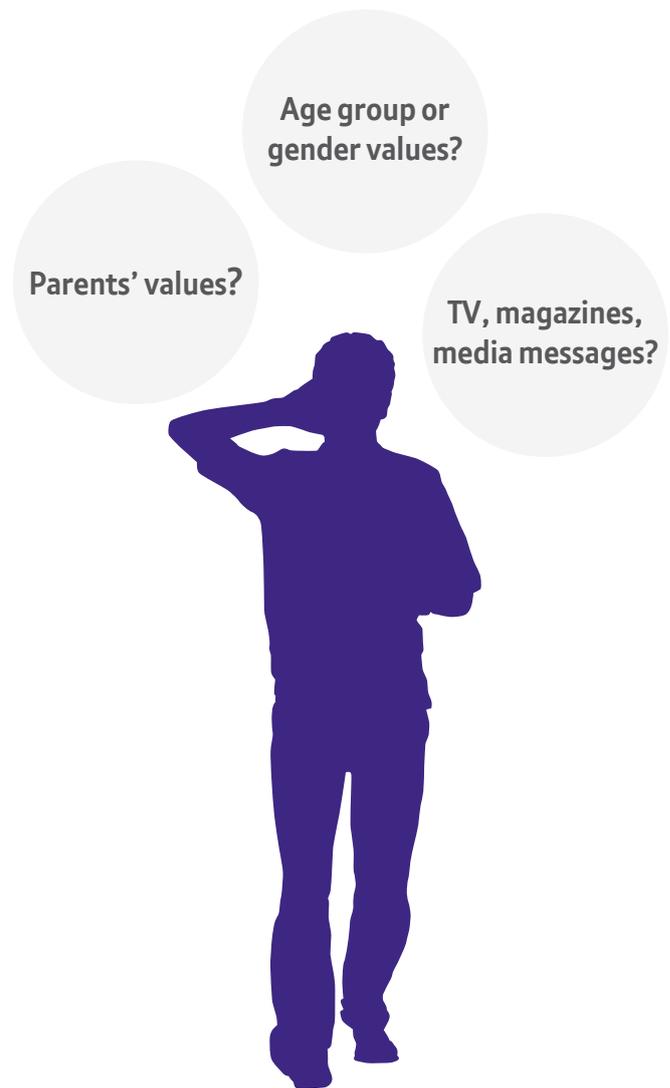
Using the diagram to the right, look at some common influences and work out from where you have picked up your own values. Then list the main values you think guide you.

This list of values is **you**. It is your guiding compass – if you breach these ‘rules’ or someone else attempts to make you... you will feel uncomfortable.

So why do many teenagers find themselves pulling against their parents’ values?

So the sources of our ethics include everything from family values to the laws of our country to religion to politics. The big sources also include the role models we can’t help but be influenced by. These include the characters – fictional and real – that we see on TV and in the media generally. We can’t help feeling that if these rules work for them they might work for us too.

Turning to the big and timeless sources of ethics, we see that every religion and every country has its own set of moral codes and ethics. Now you don’t have to watch the news for long to see examples of people at war with each other because they believe in different things. But when you look at these codes you find they are more similar than they might appear.



Think of some examples which you may have seen or been made aware of this week

We live in a diverse society with lots of different religions and codes. But what do most ethical codes have in common?

- **Loving each other**
- **Being honest**
- **Being peaceful**
- **Not killing**
- **Taking care of others**

So the good news is that the world's religious and moral codes are fundamentally similar. The detail may cause a few problems but the really important things are the same.

While we all believe in the rules, how do we make sure everyone follows them?

They say virtue is its own reward. So we feel good if we do the right thing and guilty if we don't. But sometimes that's not enough. We get greedy, we get selfish and sometimes we are just plain desperate. So the laws of the country try to contain those ethics in such a way that we face punishment if we break them. If we break the rules of football we get sent off, if we break society's laws we get sent to prison.

So what happens when we go out into the world of work? The same things apply. Many companies these days actually publish their values so their staff, suppliers and customers know what they consider important.

- Maya thinks taking a life is unacceptable under any circumstances. All life is sacred.
- Mishka thinks everyone must be treated equally.
- Lucy thinks bullying is acceptable.
- Simeon thinks being late all the time is no big deal.
- Jason thinks dressing differently to all his friends shows his individuality
- Chardonnay thinks shouting and laughing loudly at the cinema during a film is ok.
- Hossein thinks it is better to reward good behaviour than punish bad behaviour.
- Tracey thinks it is ok to steal an apple from a shop but not an ipod.
- Nikky is in social care and thinks we should tolerate her bad behaviour because she has never been given a chance in life.
- Natasha thinks it is ok to pass on malicious gossip.
- Stuart thinks we should show courage in our own misfortunes and kindness to another's misfortune.
- Malia thinks it is ok to lie to your parents but not to your friends or to yourself .
- Stacey thinks you should treat others as you would like to be treated yourself.

Live and let live – where can this go wrong?

In a perfect world, we would all be free to live exactly as we choose. So why don't we?

One main problem is that because we all have different values, there is potential for our behaviour to irritate or even damage other people, either deliberately or accidentally. As an individual or a group, you then decide whether you can tolerate this behaviour.

Consider the following two extremes:

A Tolerate anything and everything. This means you will just 'blow with the wind' and accept any action from others, even if very different to your own moral code. This might be from your parents, friends, your community or indeed anyone who chooses to challenge your values. **Type A people** might say 'Whatever you do is fine by me.'

But avoiding all conflict is the cause of much discontent as you lose your own sense of identity or allow damaging behaviour to occur. Example: Many people think that the UK has lost its sense of 'Britishness' because the current policy of political correctness deters residents from voicing their own values.

B Tolerate nothing. This is where much extremist thinking comes from. Intolerant people are not prepared to accept that others have the right to think differently. **Type B people** might say 'It is my way or no way.'

Obviously, we need to be balanced in our reactions. Balanced means picking some values which we will not allow to be compromised but also accepting that in some cases, we can tolerate or forgive differing behaviour.

Consider this quotation:

“For evil to win it is necessary only that good does nothing.”

What do you think it means?

Which would you tolerate and why?

From the examples below, Think about and talk to others about what you and they would or could tolerate and why...

	Agree with this value	Disagree but would do nothing about it	Disagree and would do something about it
Bullying is ok?			
Ok to pass on gossip?			
My music on your iPod			

Avoiding 'Them versus Us'

If you start thinking you have nothing in common with your parents, that 'they' can't understand you or you are at work and you think your managers have no concept of what you do, or you might think that boys are unable to understand girls (and vice versa), you are demonstrating 'them and us' thinking!

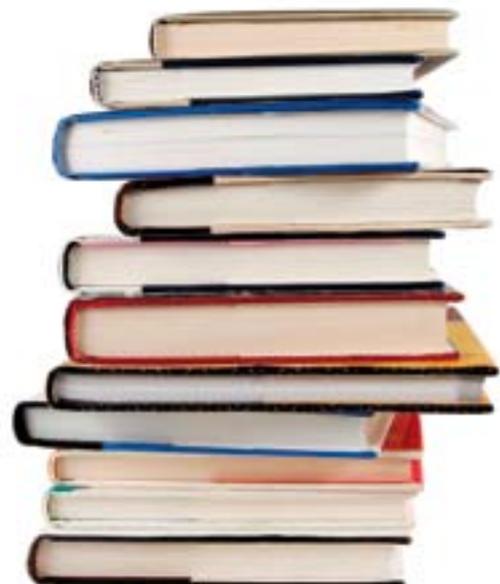
This unhelpful thinking occurs where a group of people with similar values get together and talk about a different group. Engaging in 'them and us' conversation means we have stopped trying to tolerate and appreciate diversity and are no longer willing to value different skills, ideas and values.

Consider: Matthew and his friends think the teachers are giving out too much homework. They say 'They (the teachers) don't understand us'.

How do we avoid this happening? Be aware that it is easy to drift into this behaviour. Try instead to empathise (think of yourself in the other person's shoes). Ask, why does the other person respond in that way? Is it something Matthew and his friends should tolerate or challenge.

"Pick battles big enough to matter but small enough to win."

Jonathan Kozol
From 'on being a teacher'



Integrity

If ethics are the moral codes and rules of the game of life, what is integrity?

If something has integrity it is a whole, it is complete and solid. A structure with integrity remains solid and strong even when put under pressure. Buildings with integrity can withstand hurricanes and earthquakes. So what is integrity in people?

A person with integrity remains true to themselves and their own ethical code. So this does mean that integrity does vary depending on your ethical code. If you have seen *The Godfather* you will see that Don Corleone has integrity. His moral code puts the family first and loyalty is everything. But the moral code also says that murder is an acceptable way of doing business! This code has its limits and by the end of the three films the contradiction between family and business values has destroyed the family. The hero has literally murdered members of his family – the very thing his ethical code pays most attention to.

Integrity is ‘applied ethics.’ It is the only way forward for diverse groups to live in harmony. It means you being prepared to say what you believe is right or wrong and deciding what you will do about it.

Showing integrity is rarely the easiest option nor will it always be the safest path. It may not guarantee you popularity or gain you an obvious reward. But to grow as an individual, to have self-respect and the respect of others, it is absolutely necessary. If you allow yourself to follow the crowd against your own beliefs, you will feel unhappy deep inside.

The more integrity you have the more able you are to stay true even when tempted or threatened.

Integrity is the quality of a person’s character; wholeness, soundness, honesty. It is a statement of your personality or identity. An acknowledgement that you will stand up for what you believe in.

Think about this situation: Sarah’s grandmother lived in a generation in the UK before multiculturalism and still struggles to accept the diversity she sees around her. Sarah’s gran keeps saying she doesn’t like all the different ethnic groups she now sees around their local town.

If Sarah is going to act with integrity, which response do you think she should use? (Assuming Sarah’s value is to appreciate the diversity in her town.)

- “Gran, I understand it used to be different for you, but I don’t feel the same way”
- “Gran, you are wrong! I won’t talk to you again!”
- “Gran, I agree with you” (when she doesn’t!)

OR this one... Mishka desires to study but her friends want her to go to a party this weekend. She doesn’t want to seem boring but has an important test on Monday.

- **Mishka gives in and says she will go but then says she is sick, even though she isn’t.**
- **Mishka gives in and goes to the party.**
- **Mishka explains why the study is important to her and says she will look forward to the next party, just not this weekend.**

Integrity takes practice. You may not get the balance right first time or even every time afterwards. More importantly it should tell you that nor will anyone else!

Integrity requires lots of skills: wisdom, courage, honesty, humour and above all time for self-reflection. What a tall order! You can see why all of us may sometimes get it wrong.

Getting someone to support you if you plan to stand up for your values can be very powerful.

Perhaps the best way to think of dealing with differing values is to treat everyone as experimenters. You, your parents, your teachers and all your friends or people you meet. The vast majority will be doing their best to uphold their values and act with integrity.

What are the temptations and what are the threats?

Temptations are everywhere. The more successful we are, the more temptations come our way.

For an example politicians have an expense account that enables them to claim for all sorts of things that may not be related to their job. And if no-one questions those expenses it soon becomes 'normal' to exploit the benefits. Sadly, the politicians involved don't even recognise that they have lost their integrity until the newspapers reveal what is going on and the tax payer is outraged.

Or, from a different walk of life? Sportsmen may find their sex appeal enhanced by success – and take advantage of the fact. But again when the truth comes out they find they have to pay a huge price for their lack of integrity.

Sometimes the temptations are excused as 'victimless' crimes. If we fiddle an insurance claim, and lie on a form to have lost or damaged more than the truthful amount, no-one gets hurt. But the reality is that every other insurance policyholder is paying for our false claim and ends up paying more for their insurance as a result.

- 1 MPs who fiddled their expenses lost their seats and even faced prosecution.
- 2 Tiger Woods reputedly lost £1m a week in sponsorship deals as a result of his affairs.
- 3 Employees risk losing their jobs and prosecution. And even those who don't get caught probably feel the guilt, even if everything looks fine on the surface.

Threats are there too...

A company manager may recognise that blowing the whistle on illegal practices will cost them their job. If you disapprove of your friend's behaviour, you run the risk of being shunned by those friends whose company you value so much.

Lack of integrity seems to have a lot of benefits. More money, more fun, and so on.

So what's the drawback?

Give some thought to and list the things which could be a bad result:

If there are no drawbacks then integrity doesn't have a lot of point does it?

So what have we learned about ethics and integrity?

- We have to make a choice of your own moral code.
- It doesn't have to be the one we have imposed upon us by our upbringing, but whatever it is it is likely to share main similar values. Values of care for others, for family, for the world in which we live.
- **But** this won't mean anything if we aren't true to the complete ethical code – not just the parts that let us do what we want to do, but those that don't!

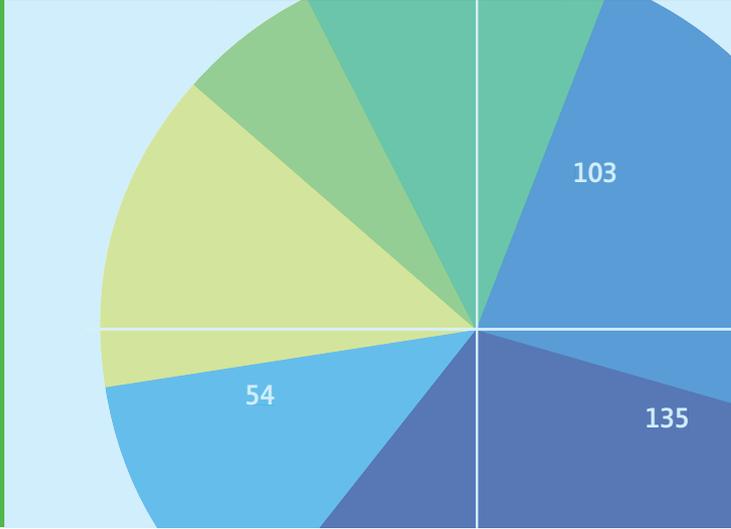


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BT Personal Skills Journey

Keeping your learning effective

Once you have read through this book, this is the time to reflect on what you have learnt and catch those thoughts! One of the pleasant challenges of leaving full-time education is that you choose what you learn. (Some people will be lifelong learners while others will peak early and stop active learning.) It's now up to you if you want to keep growing and 'catch that ball'

How do I do this?

Take the time to consider what the major learning points were **for You**. Try to make them specific points rather than vague and general ideas and consider your own learning style when you decide on **Your Action Plan**.



Some tips on 'Action Planning'

- Ask a buddy to help you. Be prepared to be challenged constructively on your goals.
- Keep it specific, achievable and relevant. 'Being a better person' is too vague if you want to increase your circle of friends . Try "I will talk to two new people every week".
- **If you don't complete the How, When and Who, then a desire to change is just wishful thinking. Learning from your experiences requires action...**
- Don't be too harsh when judging yourself! Most people are already doing a lot of things very well!

Mentoring

Now you have had time to reflect and create your action plan, how will you get assistance to ensure you follow through with your good intentions?

Most people need a mentor. This can be a buddy, a tutor or a trusted adult who will gently encourage you to complete your goals.

This mentor should also be able to gently prompt you or offer advice if you are finding it difficult!

We suggest you aim to review your action plan one month after you have completed it. If you are not making progress, you can ask yourself why.

Remember, everybody has good intentions – to make a positive change takes effort and action! Think of the problem solving section – you just have to do it.





My Action Plan

What have I learnt?

1

2

3

4

5

What will I do?

1

2

3

4

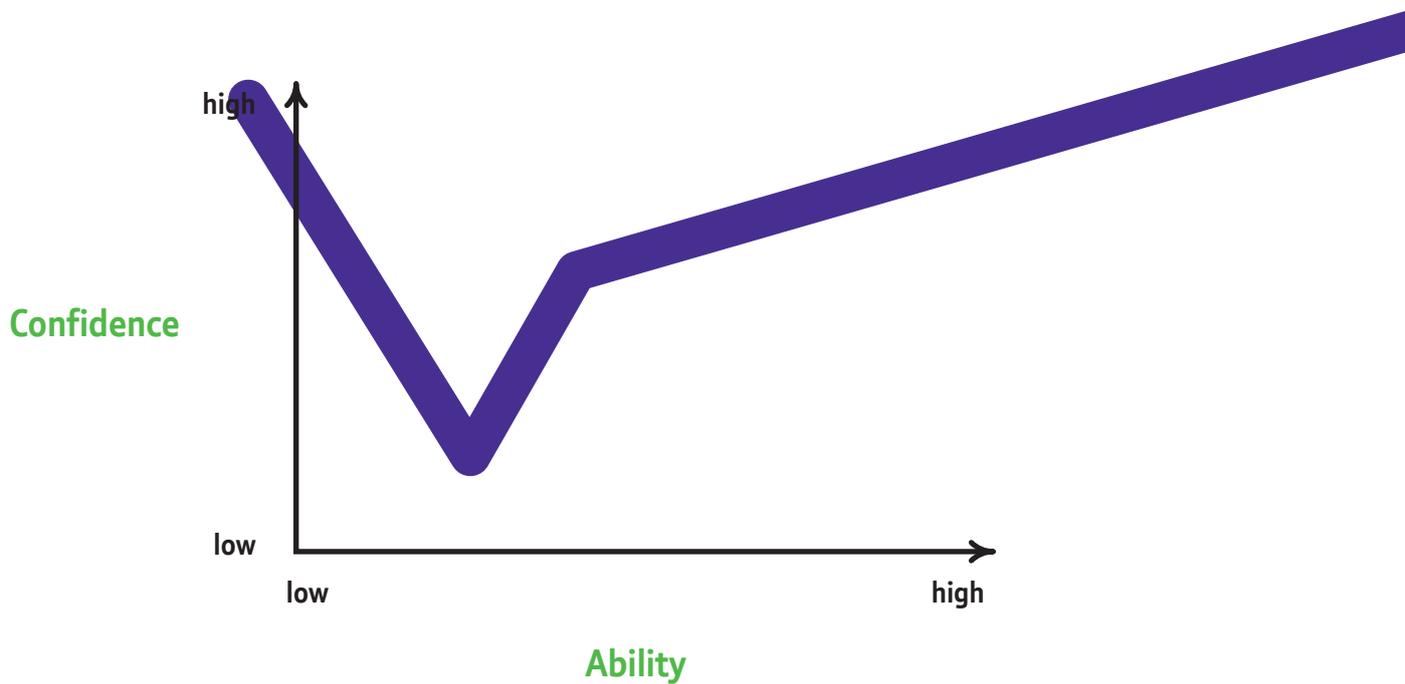
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When will I do it by?

Whose help will I need?

What benefits do I see?

The way people learn new skills



Think of how you learn – four phases:

- 1 At the start, your confidence is high but your ability is low.
- 2 Be aware that, as you realise how little you know about a new skill, your confidence will dip and you need to apply focus and commitment to your training.
- 3 Once you get the basic functions of a task into your brain, skills improve quickly as does your confidence – but you find you still need to concentrate to do the skill.
- 4 Finally, after much repetition and commitment, the skill feels natural and you can focus on higher level achievement. You are no longer aware of the basic skills and ‘they come naturally’.

In summary, to move yourself from low ability to high ability as effectively as possible, you need four Ms:

- **Mind-power** – know what you want and have the willpower to see it through
- **Management** – structure your training into manageable learning chunks and make sure you have the resources and environment to do it
- **Memory** – understand how you best learn (see your learning style) and use a variety of tools to help the learning stick
- **Make sure** – you need to re-enforce and reflect the learning to make it stick

And the rest is up to you! Good luck in getting what you want. Life is a journey; travel well and have fun!

Action without vision just passes the time.
Vision without action is just dreaming.
**But vision and action together...
and you can change the world!**

Notes

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The '**Personal Skills Journey**' consists of workshops, handouts and courses related to personal education. It is designed to provide you with knowledge and skills which, if applied, will increase your marketability in the transition from '**learning to earning**'.

It is aimed at students and explores skills commonly used in the world of work. We will look at how to effectively contribute and influence outcomes and how you can make the best of your own unique skill set.

The handbook is designed so that you can fill in the spaces with your own thoughts and learning points as well as read the material. This will help you to understand your own learning style and remember the key skills that are particularly relevant to you as an individual.

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This resource was produced in conjunction with
www.learningtoearning.co.uk

