

Communication Skills with Special Focus on Lord Krishna's Negotiation Skills in the Epic Mahabharata-A Brief Study

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Abstract

In the modern-day world, communication skills are becoming ever more important. However, not much effort appears to have gone into tracing the history of this branch of learning. Keeping this in view this paper attempts to trace the Communication Skills in the epic Mahabharata of India. Conflicts are an ever-present reality and increasingly being handled through negotiations. Negotiation skills involve a complex interplay of communication, strategy, and interpersonal dynamics aimed at reaching mutually beneficial agreements between two parties which is nothing but bargaining to reach one point of commitment. Lord Krishna, who was the master negotiator possessed these skills which is tricky to finish his intended task which was nothing but war. But he gave the impression that the opponents had the upper hand and won the situation. This is his greatest negotiation skill who is a role model of mastering negotiations in all ages. So, we can firmly say that Lord Krishna is the role model of negotiator in all aspects and respects. The aim of this paper is to trace the negotiation skills with reference to Mahabharata, the great Indian epic.

Introduction

Negotiation is a fundamental aspect of human interaction, playing a crucial role in various aspects of our personal and professional lives. Whether you are resolving conflicts, making business deals, or navigating everyday situations, effective negotiation skills are essential for achieving successful outcomes. Negotiation is essentially a communication process where parties with different interests come together to find a mutually agreeable solution. It requires a combination of strategic thinking, effective communication, and the ability to understand and influence others. Developing strong negotiation skills can lead to better relationships, improved

decision-making, and increased success in reaching favorable agreements. Negotiation Skills includes the following if you need effective communication skills to make your intentions clear and establish boundaries. ...

- 1.Active listening. ...
- 2.Emotional intelligence. ...
- 3.Patience. ...
- 4.Adaptability. ...
- 5.Problem-solving. ...
- 6.Establish Boundaries....

Introduction to Negotiation Skills:

Key Components of Negotiation Skills:

Communication Skills: Clear and articulate communication is crucial during negotiations. Being able to express your thoughts, listen actively, and understand the perspectives of others enhances the likelihood of finding common ground.

Preparation and Planning: Successful negotiations often hinge on thorough preparation. This includes researching the other party's interests, understanding your own priorities, and anticipating potential challenges. A well-prepared negotiator is better equipped to navigate the negotiation process.

Emotional Intelligence: Recognizing and managing emotions, both your own and those of the other party, is vital in negotiation. Emotional intelligence helps in building rapport, understanding unspoken cues, and finding solutions that consider the emotional aspects of the negotiation.

Flexibility and Adaptability: Negotiations rarely go exactly as planned. Being flexible and adaptable allows you to adjust your approach based on the evolving dynamics of the negotiation. It's important to have a clear understanding of your goals while remaining open to creative solutions.

Problem-Solving Skills: Negotiations often involve addressing challenges and solving problems. The ability to think critically, generate creative solutions, and collaborate with others is essential in finding mutually beneficial agreements.

Assertiveness and Diplomacy: Striking the right balance between assertiveness and diplomacy is crucial. Assertiveness allows you to express your needs and interests, while diplomacy helps maintain a positive relationship with the other party.

Negotiation Strategies: Familiarity with different negotiation strategies, such as distributive (competitive) and integrative (collaborative) approaches, can enhance your ability to navigate various situations effectively.

Patience and Persistence: Negotiations can be time-consuming, and reaching a consensus may require patience. Persistence is necessary to stay focused on your goals and work through challenges until an agreement is reached.

One of the greatest negotiations happened between Lord Krishna and Arjuna, which was more in the form of motivational talk which led to happen Mahabharata War between Kauravas and Pandavas. Arjuna was convinced by Krishna to take battle with his relatives, gurus, and revered mentors in the form of a song which is called Bhagavad-Gita that becomes masterpiece of world literature. One more interesting negotiation happened between Arjuna and Duryodhana trying to woo Krishna to join his side without any hesitation.

Lord Krishna with Kauravas, Hanuman with Ravan in the Ramayana had negotiated efficiently in the mythologies based on the consequences. But they failed in their assigned tasks. Are they failures? Apparently yes. Krishna knew that Duryodhana would not agree, and he wanted the war to bring back Dharma. Pandavas was willing to compromise to any extent, but Kauravas were left with no option except war. Thus, Krishna the master negotiator achieved what he wanted while giving the impression that the other side won, which is the art of perfect negotiation. The most famous negotiation involves the master negotiator lord Krishna as Pandavas's negotiator. But, in any successful negotiation, there is a hidden agenda and while making the opponent feel that he won, the agenda was served successfully.

Aims:

- 1.To analyze The Mahabharata to track the negotiation skills with reference to Lord Krishna
- 2.To explore if the epic can be read as a learner of communication Skills.

Discussion

The Mahabharata, an ancient Indian epic, offers valuable insights that can be applied to improve communication skills. Here are some lessons from the Mahabharata that can be relevant to communication:

Effective Listening (Bhishma's Vows): Bhishma Pitamah, a key character in the Mahabharata, took a vow of lifelong celibacy and never ascending the throne to ensure his father's happiness.

This demonstrates the importance of listening to the needs and desires of others before asserting oneself. Effective communication starts with attentive listening.

Right Speech (Dharma in Conversation): The Mahabharata emphasizes the concept of Dharma, which refers to righteous duty. When engaging in conversations, it's essential to speak the truth with tact and empathy. Communicating in a way that aligns with moral and ethical principles enhances one's credibility and fosters trust.

Clarity in Expression (Bhagavad Gita): The Bhagavad Gita, a part of the Mahabharata, is a dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna. The Gita emphasizes the importance of clear communication. When conveying ideas or instructions, clarity is crucial. Avoid ambiguity and ensure that your message is easily understood by the intended audience.

Effective Persuasion (Krishna's Counsel): Lord Krishna played a pivotal role in advising and guiding Arjuna during the Kurukshetra war. His persuasive communication skills are evident throughout the epic. Learning to articulate your thoughts persuasively, using logic and emotional appeal, can be an asset in various personal and professional situations.

Handling Conflict (Diplomacy in Kurukshetra): The Mahabharata is essentially a story of conflict and how it is resolved. Diplomacy and effective communication are essential in managing conflicts. Instead of resorting to aggression, explore diplomatic and constructive ways to address differences and find common ground.

Building Trust (Yudhishtira's Honesty): Yudhishtira, the eldest Pandava, is known for his honesty. Trust is the foundation of effective communication. Being truthful and consistent in your words and actions helps build trust with others, leading to more open and transparent communication.

Emotional Intelligence (Draupadi's Strength): Draupadi faced numerous challenges, yet she displayed emotional resilience. Understanding and managing emotions, both yours and others', is crucial for effective communication. Emotional intelligence enhances interpersonal relationships and helps navigate complex situations.

Adaptability (Arjuna's Learning): Arjuna, the skilled archer, faced moments of doubt and moral dilemma. His ability to adapt and learn from Krishna's guidance is a valuable lesson. In communication, being open to learning, adapting to new information, and adjusting your approach when necessary are key attributes.

Storytelling (Episodic Narratives): The Mahabharata itself is a masterpiece of storytelling. The ability to tell engaging stories can captivate an audience and convey complex messages

effectively. Whether in a professional presentation or casual conversation, storytelling can make your message more memorable. By drawing inspiration from the Mahabharata, individuals can enhance their communication skills, fostering better relationships and achieving success in various aspects of life.

The Mahabharata, one of the ancient Indian epics, is not only a story of war but also a rich source of wisdom on various aspects of life, including negotiation skills. Here are some instances from the Mahabharata that highlight negotiation skills:

Krishna's Peace Mission:

In the Kurukshetra War, Lord Krishna played a crucial role as a mediator. Before the war, he went to the Kauravas court on a peace mission, attempting to prevent the conflict. Krishna used persuasive communication and logical reasoning to propose various solutions that could avoid bloodshed. Despite his efforts, the Kauravas refused to agree to a peaceful settlement.

Draupadi's Diplomacy:

Draupadi, the wife of the Pandavas, exhibited negotiation skills during the game of dice. When the Pandavas lost in the game and faced the risk of exile, Draupadi negotiated with Duryodhana to ensure the protection of at least one brother. Her attempt was unsuccessful, but her strategic thinking is evident in her efforts to salvage the situation through negotiation.

Bhishma's Conditions:

Before the Kurukshetra War, Bhishma, the granduncle of both Pandavas and Kauravas, was appointed as the commander-in-chief of the Kauravas army. However, he laid down certain conditions that needed to be met for him to fight, including not fighting against women. This demonstrated Bhishma's sense of honor and negotiation in setting terms before committing to a course of action.

Arjuna's Dilemma:

Before the war, Arjuna faced a moral dilemma about fighting against his own relatives, teachers, and friends. In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna counseled and negotiated with Arjuna to help him understand his duty as a warrior. The entire conversation serves as a negotiation of values, ethics, and the path Arjuna should follow.

Yudhishtira's Proposals:

Yudhishtira, the eldest of the Pandavas, demonstrated negotiation skills in various instances. After the war, when the Kauravas were defeated, Yudhishtira proposed a peaceful coexistence

and offered a share of the kingdom to the surviving Kauravas. This demonstrated his willingness to negotiate and avoid further conflict.

These instances from the Mahabharata highlight the importance of negotiation skills in resolving conflicts, preserving dharma (righteousness), and finding peaceful solutions to complex situations. The characters in the epic employed various negotiation tactics, such as persuasion, logical reasoning, setting conditions, and proposing compromises, to navigate through the challenges they faced.

Findings

Lord Krishna played a central role in the Mahabharata, and his negotiations were crucial in various instances throughout the epic. Here are key findings and lessons from Krishna's negotiations:

1. Diplomacy and Persuasion:

Krishna displayed exceptional diplomatic skills when he went on a peace mission to the Kaurava court before the Kurukshetra War. Despite being on a mission to avert the war, he used persuasive communication to try and bring about a peaceful resolution. This emphasizes the importance of diplomacy and effective persuasion in negotiations.

2. Conflict Resolution:

Krishna's primary objective was to avoid the devastating war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. His negotiation efforts were aimed at finding a compromise and preventing bloodshed. Although his attempts were unsuccessful due to the Kauravas' refusal to agree to a fair settlement, Krishna's commitment to conflict resolution is evident.

3. Ethical Negotiations:

Krishna consistently emphasized the importance of righteousness (dharma) in his negotiations. He advised Arjuna on the battlefield in the Bhagavad Gita, stressing the ethical aspects of war and duty. This highlights the significance of conducting negotiations within a framework of ethical and moral principles.

4. Strategic Thinking:

Krishna demonstrated strategic thinking in various situations. For example, in the game of dice, Draupadi sought Krishna's help when she was being disrobed. Krishna, through strategic thinking and negotiation, ensured that Draupadi's honor was preserved. This underscores the importance of strategic planning and foresight in negotiations.

5. Problem-Solving and Innovation:

In the face of complex challenges, Krishna often came up with innovative solutions. For instance, during the peace negotiations, he proposed alternatives to avoid war. Even in the battlefield, his advice to Arjuna in the form of the Bhagavad Gita presented a unique perspective on duty, righteousness, and the nature of life.

6. Understanding Human Psychology:

Krishna had an acute understanding of human psychology, which he used to guide and counsel individuals effectively. His negotiation with Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita involved addressing Arjuna's emotional and psychological dilemmas, showcasing the importance of understanding the human aspect in negotiations.

7. Maintaining Equanimity:

Throughout the epic, Krishna maintained a sense of equanimity, even in challenging situations. This calm and composed demeanor contributed to his effectiveness as a negotiator, emphasizing the importance of maintaining emotional balance in negotiations. The negotiations involving Krishna in the Mahabharata provide valuable insights into the art of negotiation, encompassing diplomacy, ethical considerations, strategic thinking, problem-solving, and an understanding of human nature. The lessons derived from Krishna's negotiations continue to be relevant for those seeking to navigate complex situations and conflicts in a wise and principled manner.

Conclusion

In summary, negotiation skills are a multifaceted set of competencies encompassing effective communication, strategic thinking, emotional intelligence, flexibility, problem-solving, cultural awareness, ethical considerations, patience, persistence, and an understanding of power dynamics. Mastery of these skills empowers negotiators to navigate complex situations, build collaborative relationships, and achieve outcomes that satisfy the interests of all parties involved. Honing negotiation skills is an ongoing process that involves a combination of knowledge, practice, and self-awareness. Whether you are negotiating in a professional or personal context, the ability to navigate these interactions with skill and finesse can lead to more successful and mutually beneficial outcomes.

References

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