

# Building Blocks of Agreement and Disagreement

by Sophia Tutorial



## WHAT'S COVERED

In a previous lesson, you learned that whenever we make decisions, we consider (either consciously or subconsciously) what we will gain or lose with each option. This lesson will discuss:

1. Maximizing/Minimizing Gains and Losses
2. Creating Momentum through Agreements

## 1. Maximizing/Minimizing Gains and Losses

Conflict resolution offers the parties many opportunities for decisions, and each decision is itself an opportunity to either agree on something or to disagree.

During this process, each party is aware of **gains**, or obtaining something of value, and **losses**, or losing something valued. Each party wants to maximize its gains and minimize its losses.

🔗 **EXAMPLE** You and your roommate have been in conflict over use of the kitchen. The kitchen is often dirty, and things are missing from the refrigerator. You and roommate can't seem to agree on who should do the following tasks:

- Clean
- Cook
- Shop for groceries

There's a variety of issues that need to be discussed; some of them are tangible (such as the chores that need to be done), and some of them are intangible (such as the lack of communication).

Once these issues are out in the open, you and your roommate see if you can come to even one small agreement. This could be something like, "Let's keep a list on the refrigerator of what food and household items we're out of. Because we haven't been communicating well, let's have a meeting on Saturday morning to talk about x, y, and z."

Every time there's an agreement, it's a positive step forward and evidence of a possible gain; each time there's a disagreement on something, it's evidence that there could be a loss.



## TERMS TO KNOW

### Gain

Obtaining something of value.

### Loss

Losing something valued.

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## 2. Creating Momentum through Agreements

Even if they're small, each agreement can help the parties gain **momentum** in terms of maximizing gains. Momentum is a tendency for something going in one direction to keep going in that direction unless it is affected by outside forces.

We all know what momentum means if we've ridden a bicycle, gone running, or went swimming. We get our momentum going, and we just want to keep it up.

In terms of conflict resolution, you make one agreement, and that agreement opens the door for the next agreement, and so on. This is called agreement stacking because our momentum builds as we make these agreements, and it then becomes easier to make each subsequent agreement.

Naturally, the opposite is also possible. If the parties begin to disagree, each disagreement can create momentum in the other direction.

Within the conflict resolution process, it's possible to reach answers even on small issues in order to make decisions and agreements that will create momentum for maximizing gain.



## TERM TO KNOW

### Momentum

A tendency for something going in one direction to keep going in that direction unless affected by outside forces.



## BIG IDEA

The goal of the conflict resolution process is to instill confidence in the parties that if they meet together, put their issues on the table, and collaborate, they have a chance to maximize their gains and minimize their losses.



## SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about how agreements and disagreements affect the conflict resolution process. You now understand that each agreement reached during a conflict **creates a forward momentum** that makes it easier to make the next agreement. This is why it's important for the parties to try to reach decisions on even the smallest issues; doing so will create momentum for **maximizing gains and minimizing losses**. Good luck!



## TERMS TO KNOW

**Gain**

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**Loss**

Losing something valued.

**Momentum**

A tendency for something going in one direction to keep going in that direction unless affected by outside forces.