

# Emotion as a Motivator/Demotivator for Conflict Resolution

*by Sophia Tutorial*



## WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, we'll discuss how we as human beings tend to seek out pleasurable emotions while avoiding painful ones. More specifically, we'll look at:

1. Pleasure/Pain Motivation
2. Role of Emotion in Conflict Resolution

## 1. Pleasure/Pain Motivation

People are motivated by a variety of factors; if we look at all the factors and distill them into two things, those two things would be pleasure and pain.

This **pleasure/pain motivation**, or tendency to seek things which give us pleasure while avoiding things which cause us pain, is the most basic way of describing human motivation.

We all seek out emotional experiences that give us positive feelings, such as:

- Happiness
- Confidence
- Satisfaction
- Gratefulness
- Contentment

At the same time, we attempt to avoid emotional experiences that give us negative feelings, such as:

- Annoyance
- Anger
- Sadness
- Fear
- Helplessness
- Desperation

➦ **EXAMPLE** In order to feel good, we do things like spend time with loved ones, or we might

accomplish things, such as hobbies like gardening or building something. Sometimes to feel better, we do things that are a little unpleasurable, like household chores.

You may hate vacuum cleaning, for instance, but you probably feel good when you finish vacuuming because the floors are clean. This is how we tend to move toward accomplishing things that we know will give us pleasurable feelings.



#### TERM TO KNOW

### **Pleasure/Pain Motivation**

The most basic way of describing human motivation -- a tendency to seek to obtain things which give pleasure and avoid things which cause pain.

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## **2. Role of Emotion in Conflict Resolution**

When two parties come into a conflict resolution session, the emotions they're feeling are probably more negative than positive; however, they've agreed to come in good faith and sit down with each other to resolve the conflict.

This process can encourage people to move towards resolution by allowing them to experience their needs being met, which will lead to more pleasurable emotions.

One of the first things to happen in a conflict resolution session is that each party gets a chance to speak and be heard. The very process of being allowed to speak and share his or her experience in the situation can move someone from feeling helpless or desperate towards feeling satisfied or hopeful.

As part of the process, the person who has spoken will also be listening to the other party. This can also create movement because the party who is now listening may be hearing this other perspective for the first time.

Hearing the other side allows each party to gain a better understanding of each other's:

- Positions
- Interests
- Needs

This can move the parties from feeling mad to a little more satisfied or content because each person has a clearer view of what's motivating the other person.

As you learned in an earlier lesson, every little agreement that the parties reach gives them an opportunity to move closer to accomplishing their goals. Whenever a need is met, whether it be small or large, there's a new movement away from negative emotions and towards positive emotions.



#### BIG IDEA

Emotion is a positive and powerful motivator, as we want to move towards things that feel pleasurable to us.

This is why the conflict resolution process in and of itself is designed to give people opportunities to move away from more painful emotions and toward more pleasurable emotions when they:

- Listen to each other
- Are heard by each other
- See their needs being met



## SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that the most basic way to describe what motivates us as humans is through the **pleasure/pain motivation**, which is our tendency to seek things which give us pleasure while avoiding things which cause us pain. You now understand the **role of emotion in conflict resolution**. Because emotion is a powerful motivator, the resolution process is designed to move both parties toward more positive emotions by allowing them to experience their needs being met. Good luck!

Source: Adapted from Sophia tutorial by Marlene Johnson.



## TERMS TO KNOW

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