

# Introducing diplomacy as an useful concept

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**Abstract—** Introduction: Diplomacy consists of the civilized and peaceful action of relating to different groups, nations or societies. It represents a typical instrument of countries' foreign policy, which focuses on keeping relations between the different sovereign states balanced. In the professional environment it is essential to remember this concept and its benefits in productivity and good general environment of the teams.

**Methods:** Search for the following keywords: “diplomacy”; “work”, “coworkers”, “teams”, “leadership”. Search for articles in Portuguese, English and Spanish in databases: The Cochrane Library, Pubmed in the last 5 years.

**Results:** Professional conflicts and other behavioral problems top the list of reasons for dismissals. In addition, currently in health, the competence and pressure to generate results within a certain economic range, the constant accumulation of tasks and work schedules and curricular or hierarchical competitions within the institutions can be factors that demand an increasingly coordinating capacity. Diplomacy, in this context of staying out of fruitless disputes and maintaining good relationships with all colleagues is one of the pillars of any professional activity. However, it is rarely developed as a specific theme. Strategies such as: communication, dealing with difficult situations and the cultivation of social bonds together with flexibility, negotiation, good education and emotional control, among others, are fundamental to harmonious procedures and relationships in daily work.

**Discussion / Conclusion:**

Diplomacy emerges as an inseparable quality of any worker and of any professional area. Its constant implementation improves the environment within the teams, the achievement of objectives, the overall satisfaction and effectiveness of the stakeholders. It should be cultivated whenever possible and remembered by the leading elements and by each member of a working group as well.

**Index Terms--** “diplomacy”; “work”, “coworkers”, “teams”, “leadership”

## I. INTRODUCTION

Professional conflicts and behavioral problems top the list of reasons for dismissals. In addition, currently in health, the competence and pressure to generate results within a certain economic range or time frame, the constant accumulation of tasks and work schedules and curricular or hierarchical competitions within the institutions can be factors that demand an increasingly coordinating capacity.

Diplomacy, in this context of staying out of fruitless disputes and maintaining good relationships with all colleagues is one of the pillars of any professional activity. However, it is rarely developed as a specific theme. Strategies such as: communication, dealing with difficult situations and the cultivation of social bonds together with flexibility, negotiation, good education and emotional control, among others, are fundamental to harmonious procedures and relationships in daily work. With this article I plan to resume major topics for some of these strategies. [1,2,3]

## II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

**Methods:** the author searched for the following keywords: “diplomacy”; “work”, “coworkers”, “leadership”; “teams”. Search for articles in Portuguese, English and Spanish in databases: The Cochrane Library, Pubmed in the last 5 years.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It doesn't matter if you are a manager who seeks to cultivate a healthy work environment or if you are simply someone who wants to acquire better conflict resolution skills: before speaking or doing anything, a diplomatic individual always evaluates situations in order to determine the best action plan. Although diplomacy is difficult in certain circumstances, anyone can remain focused if they are tactful, learn to relieve tension in difficult situations, and cultivate healthy relationships with others. Here are some common traits a diplomatic person should aim to have and how you can put them to practice:

### 1) Communication [4]

- Invest in assertiveness and avoid double interpretations
- Do not look at the phone during a conversation - instead, pay attention to understand the other person's perspective.
- Rephrase what you just heard to show that you really understood what was said
- Attention to non-verbal language (tone of voice, body posture...)
- Show empathy by discreetly reflecting the other person's gestures and posture, as if you were a mirror. For example, if

she is holding her face in her hands, do the same thing - this will demonstrate involvement in the conversation.

- Always ask yourself if your comment is true, helpful and kind.
- Adapt the communication style to each situation. The message to be conveyed can be more easily communicated in a general meeting or in an individual meeting
- Give suggestions instead of commands.
- Human beings usually have a positive reaction when hearing their name, so use your interlocutor's name occasionally during the conversation
- Instead of giving your opinion directly, turn it into a question - it forces the person to think - ask open-ended questions that require some reflection and cannot be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no'.
- Good education is the secret of diplomacy, so wait for your turn to speak and never interrupt others; encourage others and insult no one; maintain a neutral and natural tone of voice.
- Praise the work of the team in an authentic way. Praise a positive attitude from a colleague. Foster positive reinforcement and recognition of skills and work.
- Share, ask and listen to opinions. In this way, it is possible to involve the team, avoid problems and strengthen working relationships.
- Listen to others' perspectives instead of always making decisions on your own. Don't forget to thank people for their sincerity and showing appreciation for the way they think/ideas given even if you don't agree.
- know how to express your opinion but always try to be involved with the solution and not with the problem
- if what you say is one thing and what you do is another you will lose all credibility and respect from colleagues
- It is essential to create an environment of cooperation in the company and not of competition

### 2) Emotional control [1,2]

- Postpone immediate reactions and study your self-awareness: knowing what are the "triggers" that make you react, people or situations you can try to predict your own behavior
- Practice deep breathing techniques to keep calm when someone stresses you and, if so, remove yourself from the situation and spend a few moments elsewhere
- Do not add fuel to the fire when someone is talking badly about someone. You can work in a toxic environment with several "gossip" colleagues, but don't get in the game - staying away from rumors shows character and integrity
- Be aware of your filters: not every assumption you make is true when you think about a given problem or person, it can come from a misconception you don't know you have.

### 3) Negotiation

- You should seek familiarity, not friendship and discuss differences in advance.
- Assign roles and responsibilities.
- Do not start any conversation or negotiation in an angry / stressed way. Before an important conversation: consider the facts of the situation: no one should start a dialogue based

solely on their own opinions or emotions or on things they have heard from others;

- write the goals to achieve with the conversation/negotiation; predict possible objections, think of responses and write them down;
- relieve tension with a positive opinion or news before sharing unpleasant information, this will keep the other person calm and create a bond of trust between the two;
- present dates when you will see benefits of the change to make or suggestion given
- share and ask for opinions. Always try to find a middle ground that will satisfy everyone involved in the negotiation and always be willing to find a consensus. This is where flexibility is exercised. [1,2]

### 4) Diversity and connection

- Leveraging diversity means being able to create and develop opportunities through different kinds of people, recognizing and celebrating that we all bring something different to the table.
- A diplomatic person understands the importance of diverse team composition, which includes generational, cultural, professional, and experiential representation. Recognizing the role of positive reinforcement of all these elements can contribute to the team's continued success.
- During meetings keep an open mind and hear everyone's opinion and be thankful for their contribution. Being inclusive can bring new ideas and help your coworkers to feel valued and considered. [5]

### 5) Assertiveness

Emotional competence determines that an individual can take a clear position not "on the fence". An assertive person affirms their self and self-esteem, demonstrates security and knows what they want and what target they want to achieve. Assertiveness does not mean that a person is right or wrong, but it does indicate that the person announces and defends his ideas with vigor and respect for the listener [5]

### 6) Growing social links/ Networking [6]

A diplomatic person makes others feel good by his side, so try to establish a friendly atmosphere. Talk about the weekend, the partners, the children and each other's hobbies; and discuss the latest news or television programs that you've been watching. Show a genuine interest in other people's lives to make them more comfortable. Add a touch of humor whenever possible.

This dynamic is crucial to successful teamwork. If team members don't connect with each other, and with the leader, then true project engagement can't exist. Team members will just go through the tasks, being present because they're required to, not because they desire to. The literature describes authentic leaders as those who cultivate relationships with their followers to develop a sense of "we" and commitment.

On a more specific level there are 3 kinds of networking:

personal, operating and strategic. Using all three as a diplomatic leader can optimize results, multiply your knowledge and practice of dealing with different people, contributing to more internal and external connections and to a future oriented approach.

### 7) *Centeredness*

Further impacting a team success is the ability to stay focused on team objectives. Competing priorities often derail teams before synergies can create momentum. A diplomatic leader recognizes this potential pitfall and centers team members on the vision. Centeredness is described as maintaining team behaviors within boundaries. Because wandering can occur when there's a lack of meaning, the diplomatic leader assists the team in maintaining centeredness by helping establish short-term objectives on the path to long-term goal attainment.[5]

All these traits can and should be trained. In the text above you can find several tips on how to do it, beyond that you can:

- take online courses on diplomacy, on leadership (knowing your leadership style can bring many valuable insights) or any psychology course that can help to increase your self-knowledge and awareness (knowing your strengths and limitations help you to know where you're at and what should you work on)
- learn about or attend a training session to better understand the concept of communication styles. Learn your preferred communication style
- You can ask for feedback on your peers concerning your behavior
- Ask for professional help: psychology. Sometimes we need to be guided in self reflections and inherent conclusions to evolve.
- Study, observe and practice your body language: being a diplomatic communicator means you are able to appear relaxed even when you may not be. Your body language communicates a tremendous amount [4,8]

Diplomacy can be cultivated and practice definitely helps. You should practice diplomacy wherever you go. Remember mental practice is also helpful.

## IV. CONCLUSION

Diplomacy emerges as an inseparable quality of any worker and of any professional area. Its constant implementation improves the environment within the teams, the achievement of objectives and the overall satisfaction and effectiveness of the stakeholders. It should be cultivated whenever possible and remembered by the leading elements and by each member of a working group as well. A diplomatic leader at the helm of a diversified team can create synergies so that ideas can flourish and the team can produce better results benefitting the aimed population.

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