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SKILL-ENHANCEMENT COURSE(SEC)-COMMERCE AND MANAGEMENT
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MODULE-1- FOUR SKILLS OF COMMUNICATION TO ENHANCE CRITICAL SKILL

1.10 Ways to Improve Your Listening Skills (with Examples) -Jennifer Herrity

- 1.Stay focused
- What it means: Remove distractions and pay full attention.
- Example: You silence your phone and close your laptop during a meeting so you don't miss key details.
- 2.Visualize what you hear
- What it means: Create a mental picture of what the speaker describes.
- Example: A coworker explains a new process; you picture each step in your mind to follow it more easily.
- 3.Don't interrupt
- What it means: Let the speaker finish before responding.
- Example: Even when you think you know the answer, you wait for your friend to finish explaining their problem before jumping in.
- 4.Wait for natural pauses to ask questions
- What it means: Ask questions only when the speaker pauses.
- Example: During a presentation, you note down your questions and ask them at the end instead of interjecting.
- 5.Ask clarifying questions
- What it means: Ask questions that make the message clearer.
- Example: You ask, "So just to be clear, the report is due Friday at noon, right?"
- 6.Empathize with the speaker
- What it means: Try to understand the speaker's feelings and point of view.
- Example: Your coworker seems stressed about workload, so you say, "That sounds overwhelming—what part is most challenging?"
- 7.Provide feedback
- What it means: Show you're listening through words, nods, or summaries.
- Example: You nod while someone explains a task and then say, "So I'll email the client by 3 p.m. and update you afterward, correct?"
- 8.Practice active listening
- What it means: Engage consciously with audio material to build skill.

- Example: You listen to a 2-minute podcast clip, pause, and write down what you remember, then replay it to compare.
- 9. Reflect on your listening
- What it means: Think about how well you listened and what you could improve.
- Example: After a team meeting, you realize you missed part of the discussion because you were checking email—next time, you decide to stay off your phone.
- 10. Make listening a habit
- What it means: Use these skills regularly so they become natural.
- Example: You intentionally practice listening without interrupting during daily conversations, even short ones.

2. Public Speaking for Success-Dale Carnegie

- Effective public speaking builds confidence, leadership, and influence.
- Good speakers have an edge in professional and personal life.
Know your subject deeply — research and organize your material.
- Practice repeatedly to reduce anxiety and build familiarity.
- Visualize success before stepping on stage.
Understand who you are speaking to — their interests, fears, and expectations.
- Tailor your message so it connects with listeners emotionally and intellectually.
- Start with a strong opening that grabs attention (question, story, startling fact).
- Structure body points logically — clear and simple.
- End with a memorable conclusion that reinforces your main message.
- Real stories and personal experiences make your message vivid.
- Specific examples help the audience understand and remember points.
- Your enthusiasm is contagious — if you care about the topic, the audience will too.
- Be genuine — sincerity builds trust.
- Eye contact creates connection.
- Facial expressions, posture, and gestures add impact.
- Movement should be purposeful, not distracting.
- Use variety in tone, pitch, volume, and pace to maintain interest.
- Pause for emphasis — silence can be powerful.
- Avoid monotone delivery.
- Nervousness is natural — channel it into energy.
- Deep breathing and focused preparation reduce tension.
- Start with smaller audiences to build comfort.
- Ask questions and invite participation.
- Listen to the audience's reactions and adapt if needed.
- Use humor where appropriate to relax and connect.
- Visuals should support, not replace, your spoken words.
- Keep slides simple and easy to read — one idea per slide.

- Rehearse out loud, not just in your head.
- Practice with friends or record yourself for feedback.
- Refine based on real responses.
- Avoid fillers like “um,” “you know,” and “like.”
- Don’t read long blocks of text — speak conversationally.
- Avoid over-complicating ideas — clarity wins.
- Enthusiasm inspires and persuades more than perfect wording.
- Believe in your message — your conviction shapes impact.
- Seek feedback after every speech.
- Analyze recordings of your talks to identify strengths and weaknesses.
- Never stop learning — mastery comes through ongoing effort.

3. IMPORTANT READING SKILLS:DEFINED WITH IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES- INDEED EDITORIAL TEAM

- **Skimming**
 - *Definition:* Skimming is the ability to quickly glance through a text to understand its general idea or main theme.
 - *Improvement Strategy:* Practice reading headings, subheadings, introductory sentences, and conclusions to grasp the overall meaning without reading every word.
- **Scanning**
 - *Definition:* Scanning involves searching a text for specific information such as dates, names, keywords, or facts.
 - *Improvement Strategy:* Identify key terms before reading and move your eyes quickly over the text to locate relevant details efficiently.
- **Reading Comprehension**
 - *Definition:* Reading comprehension is the ability to understand, interpret, and retain the meaning of a text.
 - *Improvement Strategy:* Read actively by asking questions, summarizing paragraphs, and discussing the text to strengthen understanding.
- **Critical Reading**
 - *Definition:* Critical reading focuses on analyzing and evaluating the text rather than accepting information at face value.
 - *Improvement Strategy:* Question the author’s purpose, tone, evidence, and assumptions while comparing ideas with other sources.
- **Vocabulary Skills**
 - *Definition:* Vocabulary skills involve understanding word meanings and their usage in context.
 - *Improvement Strategy:* Learn new words through context clues, maintain a vocabulary journal, and read a variety of texts regularly.
- **Inference Skills**
 - *Definition:* Inference is the ability to understand implied meanings that are not directly stated in the text.
 - *Improvement Strategy:* Pay attention to clues, examples, and tone to draw logical conclusions beyond the explicit information.
- **Reading Fluency**

- *Definition:* Reading fluency refers to reading smoothly, accurately, and with appropriate speed.
- *Improvement Strategy:* Practice reading aloud, repeated reading, and timed reading exercises to enhance fluency.
- **Summarization Skills**
- *Definition:* Summarization is the ability to identify and restate the main ideas concisely.
- *Improvement Strategy:* Highlight key points, write short summaries after reading, and avoid unnecessary details.
- **Concentration and Focus**
- *Definition:* This skill involves maintaining attention while reading without distraction.
- *Improvement Strategy:* Choose a quiet reading environment, set specific reading goals, and take short breaks to maintain focus.
- **Analytical Skills**
- *Definition:* Analytical reading helps readers break down complex ideas and understand relationships within the text.
- *Improvement Strategy:* Use mind maps, note-taking techniques, and compare-contrast methods to analyze content effectively.

4. 7 WAYS TO IMPROVE WRITING SKILLS-COUSERE

- Review grammar and spelling basics
- Having correct grammar and spelling is the foundation of clear, professional writing.
- Example:
- Instead of writing: “She go to school every day and she like study.”
- Correct it to: “She goes to school every day, and she likes to study.”
- Use punctuation properly: rather than “I went to the store I bought apples and bananas.” write “I went to the store; I bought apples and bananas.” — using a semicolon to connect closely related independent clauses.
- By using correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling, your writing becomes easier to read and more credible.
- Read what you want to write
- Reading good examples helps you internalize structure, tone, vocabulary and style that you can emulate (without copying).
- Example:
- If you want to write short stories → read short stories. Notice how authors build characters, pace dialogues, show descriptions, set tone. Then try to mimic that style when you write your own.
- If you want to write opinion pieces or reviews → read essays or reviews in newspapers or magazines. Observe how arguments are structured, how evidence or opinions are presented, how conclusions are drawn.
- By doing this, you develop a sense of “what good writing feels like,” which influences your own writing style.

- Proofread / Edit carefully
- It's important not to submit your first draft as final. Revisiting your work helps catch mistakes — grammar, spelling, flow — and tighten clarity.
- Example:
 - After writing an essay or email, wait some time (even 20 minutes) and then read it again. You might spot typos, missing commas, or awkward sentences.
 - Try reading it aloud: often that helps you notice if a sentence sounds clumsy or too long.
 - Then edit: maybe you realize a long sentence can be broken into two; a phrase is redundant; a word could be simplified.
 - This process makes writing cleaner, more polished, and easier for readers to understand.
- Get feedback from others
- Another person's perspective helps you catch things you might miss — unclear arguments, structural issues, or ambiguous phrasing.
- Example:
 - Share your essay or article with a friend or peer and ask: "Does this make sense to you? Are there parts you found confusing?"
 - If you join a writing group or class, ask for feedback on style, tone, or how persuasive your writing is.
 - For example, you might think a paragraph clearly explains your point — but a reader might say the argument feels weak or the conclusion seems sudden. This feedback helps you refine your writing further.
 - Feedback ensures your writing communicates what you intend — not what only makes sense to you.
- Think about structure / outline before writing
- Good structure helps your writing deliver ideas in a logical, easy-to-follow way.
- Example:
 - Before writing an essay: sketch a quick outline like
 - Introduction → what you'll discuss.
 - Body paragraphs → point 1, point 2, point 3 (each with supporting detail).
 - Conclusion → summary + final thought.
 - If writing a story: plan the plot — exposition / rising action / climax / resolution — so events unfold clearly, tension builds, and readers stay engaged.
 - Outlines avoid confusion, help you organise ideas logically, and make writing smoother.
- Write often — practise regularly
- Writing consistently helps you build fluency, improve clarity, and find your "voice."
- Example:
 - Keep a personal journal: write a few sentences or a paragraph daily about your day, thoughts or plans. Over time you'll notice your writing becomes clearer.

- Try “free writing”: pick a prompt (e.g. “Describe your ideal day”) and write for 10–15 minutes without worrying about grammar or structure. Later you can edit.
- Write letters/emails, short stories, blog posts — diverse writing helps you practise different styles and purposes.
- Frequent writing makes writing easier, helps you experiment, and builds confidence.
- Use “common fixes” — polish your style
- Even grammatically correct writing can be dull. Polishing style — using strong verbs, active voice, varied sentences — makes writing more engaging and dynamic.
- Example:
- Rather than writing: “He was very tired and he walked slowly to the door.”
- Try: “He trudged to the door, exhaustion weighing him down.” (strong verb + vivid imagery)
- Use active voice instead of passive: instead of “The ball was thrown by him,” write “He threw the ball.”
- Vary sentence length: mix short punchy sentences with longer descriptive ones to keep the reader’s interest.
- Remove unnecessary words: instead of “In my opinion, I think...” you can simply write “I think...”

MODULE II-CREATIVE CHALLENGE

5. YOUR TRUTH IS THE MOST POWERFUL TOOL-OPRAH WINFREY

- In her introduction, Reese Witherspoon talks about of Winfrey and her widespread influence. Winfrey, in her speech and the backstage interview, focuses on the importance of speaking one's truth as it is the most powerful tool individuals have. She applauds the courage of women who shared their stories of harassment and abuse as she discusses the story of Recy Taylor and Rosa Parks.
- Meaning of ‘Your Truth’
Oprah Winfrey defines “your truth” as an individual’s lived experiences, inner beliefs, values, emotions, and personal journey. It is not about universal facts but about acknowledging one’s authentic self without denial or pretence.
- Truth as the Foundation of Identity
According to Oprah, understanding and accepting one’s truth is essential to building a strong identity. When people deny their experiences or hide their feelings, they lose clarity about who they really are.
- Authenticity Over Perfection
- Oprah stresses that authenticity is more powerful than striving for perfection. Embracing imperfections and past struggles allows individuals to live honestly and confidently, rather than being controlled by fear of judgment.

- **Truth and Inner Strength**
Accepting one's truth develops emotional resilience. Oprah explains that facing painful experiences openly strengthens character and enables individuals to rise above adversity.
- **Breaking Free from Shame and Fear**
Oprah highlights that shame, guilt, and fear often silence people. By owning their truth, individuals can break free from emotional burdens and reclaim their sense of dignity and self-worth.
- **Truth as a Tool for Healing**
Sharing and acknowledging personal truth has a healing effect. Oprah believes that confronting one's past—especially trauma—leads to emotional recovery and self-acceptance.
- **Truth and Personal Empowerment**
Oprah emphasizes that truth empowers individuals to take control of their lives. When people are honest with themselves, they make decisions that align with their values and aspirations.
- **Building Genuine Connections**
Living truthfully enables deeper and more meaningful relationships. Oprah states that honesty creates trust, empathy, and mutual understanding between individuals.
- **Truth as a Source of Purpose**
Oprah suggests that personal truth helps individuals discover their life purpose. Understanding one's experiences allows them to use their story as a source of meaning and direction.
- **Using Truth to Inspire Others**
Oprah believes that sharing one's truth can inspire and empower others. Personal stories of resilience and growth encourage people to confront their own realities with courage.
- **Truth as a Moral Compass**
Personal truth guides ethical decision-making. Oprah argues that when individuals stay true to their values, they lead lives rooted in integrity and responsibility.
- **Living Truthfully as a Lifelong Practice**
Oprah concludes that living one's truth is an ongoing journey. Continuous self-reflection, honesty, and courage are required to remain aligned with one's authentic self throughout life.

6- CREATIVITY AND COMMERCE: THE BATTLE AND THE BALANCE

- **Introductory Remarks**
- On behalf of Dean Lorraine Justice and CIAS, welcome and thank you all for attending this exciting event.
- The College of Imaging Arts and Sciences represents diverse students and alumni across traditional and non-traditional creative careers.
- This event connects students with creative industry professionals for portfolio feedback and valuable networking.
- Face-to-face interaction is key to learning, growth, and career development.
- Over 50 companies and 100+ representatives are participating from across the U.S.

- Nearly half of the professionals here are CIAS alumni, returning to share experience and advice.
- The day begins with keynote speaker Michael Hess and a panel on career topics.
- Michael Hess will speak on “Creativity and Commerce: The Battle and the Balance.”
- Industry Day runs from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.; portfolio reviews are open until 4 p.m.
- Sponsored by the Office of Co-op and Career Services and CIAS.
- We welcome feedback to help shape future events.
- Special thanks to Gretchen Burruto and Shauna Newcomb for their support.
- The organizers are the key people who make this event possible.
- About Michael Hess
- Michael Hess speaks on “Creativity and Commerce: The Battle”.
- Creative people usually rely more on the right brain (imagination, intuition, fantasy).
- The left brain (logic, analysis, objective reasoning) often takes a back seat.
- This can create challenges because:
- Creative thinking may clash with business realities.
- Business requires structure, logic, and planning.
- Keynote Focus
- Michael discusses challenges faced by creative professionals:
- Job searching
- Daily work life
- Career growth
- Entrepreneurship
- He shares:
- Real-life examples
- Practical advice
- Ways to balance creativity with business success
- He speaks from experience as both a creative professional and a business owner.
- Professional Background
- Founder and CEO of Skooba Design
- Over 20 years of experience in:
- Consumer product design
- Product development
- Marketing
- Entrepreneurship
- Executive management
- Writes a twice-monthly column “Business with Class” for CBS News
- Serves as a formal and informal advisor to entrepreneurs and businesses
- Holds:
- Multiple patents
- Many pending patents
- Over a dozen product trademarks
- Articles and Ideas

- Some notable article titles include:
- “Is Kindness a Realistic Customer Service Strategy?”
- “The Three Most Painful Words in Web Development”
- “Great Customer Service Starts with Seven Letters” (Empathy)
- “When You Should Pick Up the Phone and Why”
- “I’m Breaking the Law and Loving It”
- Recent Article Highlight
- His recent article: “The Joys of Sling-Shotting Unhappy Customers”
- Main ideas:
- Be determined, persistent, and positive
- Address unhappy customers proactively
- Turn dissatisfied customers into loyal ones
- Conclusion
- Michael’s insights are valuable and practical.
- The audience appreciates his time and expertise.
- He is welcomed as the keynote speaker.
- The speaker appreciates the opportunity to speak and thanks the audience.
- He is surrounded by creative people from RIT, both professionally and personally.
- He works in product development and design and enjoys creating innovative products.
- He founded Skooba Design 12 years ago, which makes laptop bags and carrying cases.
- Every creative employee he has hired (designers, graphic artists, etc.) has been an RIT graduate.
- Most were hired straight out of college, with only internships as experience.
- He is proud of this and has never regretted hiring RIT graduates.
- He believes RIT is an extraordinary resource for the business community.
- He often recommends RIT to other business professionals.
- Two of his product designers, Brian and Julie, are present at the Digital Den until 4 PM.
- Students are encouraged to meet them and learn about their work.
- His wife has a Master’s degree in furniture design from the School of American Crafts.
- His sister-in-law has a Master’s degree in photography from RIT.
- Many of his friends and colleagues are also from RIT.
- He feels like an honorary RIT Tiger, despite not studying there.
- He does not have a formal creative education.
- His degree was in Soviet Studies, which he jokes was not a practical choice.
- He is a self-taught creative professional with over 21 years of experience.
- He learned product design through hands-on work and collaboration.
- Creativity is central to his life, both professionally and personally.
- He enjoys writing, contributes articles to CBS News, and values good writing.
- He has interests in creative hobbies like writing and music (even if just for fun).
- He describes himself as deeply and intensely creative.
- He warns that his tone may sometimes sound cynical, but it is not meant to discourage.

- The speaker is not criticizing creative people; they're offering a different perspective than what creatives are usually taught.
- Speaking on behalf of the business community, they emphasize that businesses want creatives to succeed and depend on their work.
- If something sounds blunt or uncomfortable, it's meant to push thinking in a new direction, not to offend.
- The talk focuses on three things:
 - Creativity (which the audience already has)
 - Commerce (which is often ignored)
 - The tension and balance between creativity and commerce
- Understanding this balance is essential for building a successful creative career.
- Everyone in the room considers themselves creative and plans to work in a creative field.
- Almost no one plans to work in sales—and that's the key misunderstanding.
- Reality: Everyone is in sales, every day.
- You sell:
 - Your ideas
 - Your opinions
 - Your skills
 - Your accomplishments
 - Yourself
- Even if you're not selling physical products, you are still engaging in commerce.
- The first and biggest sale of your life is when you leave school and try to get a job.
- At that moment, you are selling:
 - Your resume
 - Your portfolio
 - Your talent and abilities
- What you're trying to get in return:
 - A job
 - A career
 - Payment for your skills
- A job exists to earn a paycheck.
- In the working world, you are always "selling":
 - Your ideas
 - Your arguments
 - Your work and accomplishments
- You sell to:
 - Teammates
 - Colleagues in other departments
 - Your bosses
- Promotions happen when you sell your achievements effectively.
- Saying "this is what I've done" is a form of sales.
- This is commerce, whether we like it or not.
- 2. Creative Work and Making a Living
- If you create only for personal satisfaction, it can remain a hobby.

- If you want to make a living from creative work:
- You must accept that you are in sales.
- Every creative professional is also a commercial person.
- This is true even if it feels uncomfortable or against your sensibilities.
- Creative People and Commercial Challenges
- Creative people often have traits that make their work exceptional.
- Those same traits can make business and commercial life difficult.
- From experience working with creative people:
- These challenges are common, but not universal.
- The speaker groups these into three broad characteristics.
- This idea is called “Commercial Challenges of the Creative Mind.”
- First Commercial Challenge: Non-Conformity
- Creative people are often:
- Free-spirited
- Non-conformist
- Independent thinkers
- They dislike following preset paths.
- They think in non-linear ways.
- Their minds are always full of ideas.
- They don’t like being told what to do.
- Many prefer working independently or being self-employed.
- This independence fuels creativity but can clash with business structures.
- Creativity vs. Conformity: Creative people often hide their uniqueness to fit in; nonconformity emerges later in their career.
- Career Impact: Early in a career, nonconformity can hinder opportunities, especially the first job or commercial transaction.
- Job Applications: Many applicants assume casual, non-formal communication is acceptable; examples include:
- Starting emails with “Hey”
- Using text-speak or “LOL” in messages
- Sending resumes with minimal context (“see attached”)
- Professional Expectations: Casual approaches may be misunderstood by HR or business owners, especially those older or less creative.
- First Impressions Matter: Your email or introduction is the “knock on the door”; if it fails, your resume and work may never be seen.
- Key Lesson: Early-career professionals should balance creativity with professionalism to ensure opportunities aren’t lost.
- Applying for Jobs
- Many portfolios look great, but applicants often send them carelessly.
- Some people just say “Hey” and don’t check the company website or role before applying.
- Tip: Always research the company and role; follow basic professional etiquette.
- Reality: Sometimes you have to “play the game” to get your foot in the door, even if it feels restrictive.
- Creative People & Ego
- Creative people are often strong-willed and ego-driven — this is mostly positive.

- Pride in your work is important for quality creative output.
- Challenge: Strong ego can hurt your career if not managed.
- Ego Challenges in the Workplace
- Problem 1: “This is how it’s done” mindset
- In school, you had freedom to perfect your craft.
- You may enter a workplace with a fixed idea of how things should be done.
- In professional settings, business needs often come before personal creative preferences.
- Reality check:
- Ego can make you resist feedback or business requirements.
- No matter how amazing your work is, if it doesn’t serve the business, it’s a problem.
- Practical Example
- You create a beautiful design (e.g., graphic design).
- A manager or client may say: “Great work! Now, can you adjust it to meet our needs?”
- This can feel frustrating but is normal in professional life.
- Accept compromise in business
- Creative people often argue with business decisions.
- These arguments are healthy but the business side usually has reasons (legal, experience, conversion rates).
- You can fight for your ideas, but sometimes it’s best to accept compromise.
- 2. “Perfect is the enemy of the good”
- Always striving for perfection can stop progress.
- Focus on creating something good and functional, not perfect.
- Execution matters more than perfection in business (e.g., ads, brochures, websites).
- 3. Compromise doesn’t mean selling out
- In business, compromise is necessary.
- Sellers compromise with customers, teams compromise internally.
- Not everyone will get their way; choose your battles wisely.
- Stand firm only when you strongly believe in something.
- Otherwise, implement decisions and move on for the greater good.
- Think beyond “this is not my job”
- Don’t limit yourself strictly to your craft or discipline.
- Be willing to learn and help in other areas.
- Success comes from flexibility and contributing beyond your immediate role.
- What you learn in school doesn’t always match real work, especially in small companies.
- There are more small companies than big ones.
- Doing what you’re best at is important, but building extra value is just as important.
- Focus on growing your personal value as an employee, not only as a creative person.
- You may enjoy using creative tools like a tablet.
- But sometimes you’ll be asked to do less exciting tasks (symbolized by a tape gun).
- In small teams, everyone must be a utility player and help wherever needed.

- This can include tasks outside your job role, even basic ones.
- Employers value people who are flexible and willing to help.
- Refusing tasks because “that’s not my job” reduces your value.
- Being a team player shows maturity and professionalism.
- Flexibility helps you gain new skills and grow long-term.
- It prepares you for future roles or even starting your own business.
- Example: A designer in the company had sewing as a hobby.
- That skill later helped repair products instead of wasting them.
- Her extra skill made her more valuable to the company.
- Going Beyond Your Job Description
- Whenever a damaged bag comes in, she stops her work.
- She goes into a cold warehouse and fixes the bag herself.
- In just five minutes, the bag looks like new.
- This makes customers happier than replacing the bag.
- It saves the company money and builds customer trust.
- She adds a tag saying the bag was “lovingly repaired” by her.
- She did more than what she was hired for.
- Because of this, she became extremely valuable to the company.
- Lesson: Be willing to work outside your role and avoid a “this is not my job” attitude.
- 2. Importance of Business and Work Experience
- Most students don’t have much real-world business experience.
- That is normal and not your fault.
- However, gaining business knowledge is very beneficial for career growth.
- You don’t need deep expertise in accounting or finance.
- You should understand basics like:
 - Sales
 - Gross margin
 - Expenses
- Your work directly affects company profits, and profits affect you.
- 3. Understanding the Bigger Picture
- Creativity alone is not enough.
- Sometimes good ideas cannot be approved due to cost or resources.
- Companies may not afford tools or may not make money from an idea.
- Understanding how a business makes money helps you accept decisions.
- It helps you understand what employers expect from you.
- Learning Sales Skills
- Sales is part of everyday life.
- Careers often change; most people don’t stay in one field.
- Knowing how to sell is useful in any profession.
- Sales skills help if you:
 - Pitch to clients
 - Sell products or services
- Important skills include:
 - Negotiation
 - Closing deals
 - Understanding customer mindset

- In negotiations, the first person to speak often loses.
- Speaking too early can make you undervalue or overpay.
- A strong strategy is to listen more than you talk.
- Let the other party react first, then adjust your pitch.
- In sales (e.g., creative agencies), avoid overselling before gauging interest.
- Waiting helps you understand if the buyer is leaning toward purchasing.
- Example from art sales: artists often undervalue work due to nerves or inexperience.
- Confidence and patience can lead to better outcomes in negotiation and pricing.
- Key Ideas (Contemporary Language Skills for Commerce & Management)
- The story describes a buyer using silence as a negotiation strategy.
- The buyer stayed quiet intentionally to create pressure.
- The seller (Jennifer) became uncomfortable and reduced the price herself.
- This happened because the seller spoke first, which is a common negotiation mistake.
- The buyer was already willing to pay more but benefited from patience.
- This shows how understanding human behavior is crucial in selling and negotiation.
- Lessons for Creative People in Commerce
- Creative professionals must understand business and commercial thinking.
- Selling is not just about talent, but about how value is communicated.
- Knowing human psychology helps you get fair value for your work.
- This applies both inside organizations and in the marketplace.
- Important Life & Business Lesson
- You cannot always be right in business situations.
- Sometimes, you must adjust and compromise strategically.
- Success comes from balancing creativity with practicality.
- Right Brain vs Left Brain Concept
- Right-brained people (Creative / “Lighties”):
- Imaginative
- Emotional
- Artistic
- Think in abstract ideas and visuals
- Left-brained people (Analytical thinkers):
- Logical
- Data-oriented
- Linear thinkers
- Focus on facts, numbers, and structure
- Challenge in Commerce
- Most creative people work in environments dominated by left-brained thinking.
- To succeed, creatives must learn to:
- Communicate clearly
- Understand data and structure
- Translate creative ideas into business value
- Conclusion

- Effective commerce requires a balance of creativity and logic.
- Understanding people, psychology, and communication is essential.
- Strong language and negotiation skills lead to better outcomes in business.
- The idea that people strictly use only the “right brain” or “left brain” is scientifically debated, but many people believe that individuals are naturally wired in one dominant direction.
- Some people are predominantly creative, while others are predominantly analytical. People can cross over, but usually one side is stronger.
- Creativity cannot be taught.
- You can learn technical or analytical skills (like spreadsheets, calculations, business analysis).
- But you cannot learn how to be creative in the same way—you are born with it.
- Because of this, being creative is powerful.
- Many great ideas, inventions, and artworks throughout history started with creative thinking.
- However, creativity alone is not enough.
- Creative ideas can only go so far on their own.
- To turn ideas into real products, businesses, and careers, analytical (left-brained) people are needed.
- They help organize, structure, commercialize, and scale ideas.
- Therefore, creative and analytical people depend on each other.
- Neither can be truly successful without the other.
- Career paths often fall into two broad areas:
 - Intrinsically creative businesses (e.g., advertising agencies, design studios, web development companies)
 - In these environments, creativity is the product.
 - In creative companies:
 - You work mostly with other creative people.
 - There is less pressure to be highly commercial.
 - Interviewers and colleagues are more likely to understand and value creativity.
 - Larger or more corporate environments require more interaction with analytical people, which can be challenging but necessary to turn creativity into success.
- Many people dream of working in very cool, creative companies where everyone is artistic and free-thinking.
- In reality, most people work in conventional businesses, not because of lack of talent, but because there are more regular companies than creative ones.
- Most of us will be creative professionals inside larger organizations, not the only “creative person” there.
- In such organizations, you work alongside engineers, salespeople, manufacturing staff, etc.
- Therefore, creatives must learn to:
 - Work as part of a bigger process
 - Collaborate with non-creative people
 - Compromise, choose battles wisely, and understand their role in the business
 - Use both creative (right brain) and logical/business (left brain) thinking

- Being able to engage with business thinking increases your value and opens more career opportunities over time.
- Example – Ben’s Story:
- Ben was the first graphic designer hired by the speaker.
- He was extremely talented, confident but not egotistical.
- Ben wanted to understand the business side:
- How the company worked
- His role in sales and operations
- Company finances and processes
- He was willing to do basic tasks like packing boxes, showing commitment.
- Outside work, Ben pursued his personal passion (horror movies):
- Designed horror-themed T-shirts
- Built his own website
- Worked late nights after office hours
- Key Lesson:
- Be creative, but also understand business.
- Stay humble, collaborative, and hardworking.
- Balance creativity with commercial awareness to grow successfully in your career.
- He started building a following by selling T-shirts.
- Famous rock stars wore his shirts on stage; one even sent a photo of Quentin Tarantino wearing one.
- That level of recognition showed he was doing something truly cool and successful.
- He shipped T-shirts to customers regularly.
- Over time, the number of orders kept increasing.
- It became clear he was growing a real business and could eventually do it full-time.
- The speaker believes you cannot stop someone from pursuing their dream.
- Employees do not stay in one job forever; people move on.
- After about five years, it was clear he was ready to leave.
- The speaker helped him set up his business legally.
- He also helped him make professional connections.
- This support was given openly, not just as a boss but as a mentor.
- One day, he said he was earning enough to survive and wanted to try on his own.
- The speaker encouraged him to take the chance.
- Even after leaving, he returned to help when needed.
- He remained grateful and a strong team player.
- He built a company called Fright Rags.
- He now runs it successfully with an office, warehouse, and employees.
- The story shows that creativity and business can work together.
- Learning commerce helped him turn creativity into a career.
- Combining creativity and business leads to long-term success and freedom to do what you love.
- As you move forward in your career, the more commercial value you bring, the more freedom you’ll have to pursue the creative work you truly want to do.

- Building a strong career allows you to support both your professional growth and your creative ambitions.
- Thank you for listening to me today.
- I appreciate your time and attention.
- I wish you all outstanding and successful careers

7.MY LIFE: A NAME TRIMMED WITH COLORED RIBBONS- LYN HEJINIAN

- **Nature of the Text**
My Life is an experimental autobiographical work that challenges traditional narrative forms. Rather than presenting a linear life story, Hejinian uses fragmented prose to reflect the complexity of memory and identity.
- **Autobiography Reimagined**
Hejinian rejects conventional autobiography, which typically follows chronology and coherence. Instead, she presents life as a series of moments, thoughts, and impressions that resist fixed meaning.
- **Meaning of the Title**
The title suggests that identity (“a name”) is decorated and altered by experiences (“colored ribbons”). It implies that the self is not stable but shaped by memories, language, and perception.
- **Fragmentation as Structure**
The text is composed of short, discontinuous sections. These fragments mirror how memory works—nonlinear, selective, and often incomplete—emphasizing that life cannot be fully captured in orderly narratives.
- **Language as Central Theme**
Hejinian foregrounds language as both a tool and a limitation. She shows that language shapes experience but cannot fully represent reality or personal truth.
- **Subjectivity of Memory**
Memories in *My Life* are presented as subjective and fluid. The text suggests that recollection is influenced by emotion, context, and time, making memory unreliable yet meaningful.
- **Multiplicity of the Self**
The work portrays identity as multiple and evolving rather than unified. The “self” appears in different voices, moods, and perspectives, challenging the idea of a single, stable identity.
- **Everyday Experiences**
Hejinian includes ordinary moments—family life, childhood impressions, daily observations—to show that meaning is found in commonplace experiences, not just major life events.
- **Absence of Narrative Closure**
The text deliberately avoids conclusions or resolutions. This openness reflects the idea that life is ongoing and cannot be neatly summarized or completed.
- **Reader Participation**
Hejinian expects readers to actively engage with the text. Meaning is not given directly but created through interpretation, making reading a collaborative process.

- **Time and Nonlinearity**
Past, present, and future coexist in the text. This fluid treatment of time reinforces the idea that personal history is constantly reinterpreted rather than fixed.
- **Feminist Implications**
The work can be read as a feminist challenge to male-dominated autobiographical traditions. By breaking form and authority, Hejinian creates space for alternative female self-representation.
- **Resistance to Authority and Certainty**
The text resists authoritative voice and absolute truth. Hejinian suggests that certainty limits understanding, while openness allows complexity and discovery.
- **Life as Process, Not Product**
Hejinian presents life as an ongoing process rather than a finished story. Identity is continuously formed through interaction with language, memory, and experience.
- **Conclusion: Redefining Life Writing**
My Life: A Name Trimmed with Colored Ribbons ultimately redefines autobiography. It presents life as fragmented, linguistic, and open-ended, emphasizing multiplicity, uncertainty, and reader involvement.

8. GENDER EQUALITY IS NOT JUST A WOMEN'S ISSUE- LAURA AMAYA, CLARE SCHRODER, SANDRA MEDRANO AND ALEXANDRA GEERTZ

- Gender equality is not solely about improving women's lives; it is a societal issue that affects men, families, communities, economies, and institutions.
- Inequality is rooted in social norms and power structures that shape expectations for both women and men.
- Many gender equality efforts have historically focused only on women and girls.
- While these efforts are essential, they are insufficient if men and boys—who often hold social, economic, and political power—are excluded.
- Without engaging men, progress can be slow, fragile, or resisted.
- Traditional norms of masculinity pressure men to be dominant, emotionally restricted, aggressive, and primary breadwinners.
- These norms contribute to:
 - Poor mental and physical health among men
 - Higher rates of violence and risk-taking
 - Limited emotional expression and caregiving roles
- Thus, gender inequality harms men as well as women.
- Men often benefit from patriarchal systems, even if unintentionally.
- These systems reinforce:
 - Unequal division of unpaid care work
 - Gender-based violence
 - Discrimination in leadership, education, and employment
- Recognizing men's role is essential for dismantling inequality.
- Men should be engaged as partners and allies, not blamed or sidelined.
- Positive engagement includes:
 - Encouraging men to question harmful norms
 - Promoting respectful relationships
 - Supporting women's rights and leadership

- Allyship strengthens gender equality movements rather than weakening women's voices.
- Gender equality allows men to:
 - Participate more fully in caregiving and family life
 - Experience healthier relationships
 - Improve emotional well-being
 - Share economic and domestic responsibilities
- These benefits lead to stronger families and communities.
- Gender norms are learned from childhood through family, schools, media, and institutions.
- Engaging boys and young men early is critical to preventing future inequality and violence.
- Education systems play a key role in promoting equitable attitudes.
- Gender equality requires changes at multiple levels:
 - Laws and policies
 - Workplace practices
 - Health and education systems
- Policies must encourage men's involvement in caregiving (e.g., parental leave) and challenge discriminatory practices.
- Gender inequality intersects with race, class, sexuality, migration status, and other identities.
- Men are not a homogeneous group; strategies must account for diverse experiences and vulnerabilities.
- Inclusive approaches lead to more effective and just outcomes.
- Achieving gender equality is a shared responsibility among individuals, communities, governments, and institutions.
- Sustainable change requires cooperation between women's rights movements and initiatives engaging men and boys
- Gender equality is about transforming power relations and social norms, not replacing one dominant group with another.
- When men are meaningfully involved, gender equality efforts become more effective, inclusive, and sustainable.
- True equality benefits everyone and strengthens society as a whole.

MODULE-III-COMPETENCE: LEARNING THE ART OF WIN-WIN

9.HOW I BUILT THIS WITH GUY RAY-THE TRUE STORY OF INSTAGRAM-GUY RAZ,KEVIN SYSTROM AND MIKE KRIEGER

- Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger met while studying at Stanford University.
- Both had an interest in technology, design, and entrepreneurship, but came from different technical strengths.
- Their complementary skills later became crucial to Instagram's development.
- Kevin worked at Google, gaining exposure to product development and startup culture.
- Despite a comfortable job, he felt unfulfilled and wanted to build something of his own.
- He learned coding in his free time to pursue entrepreneurship.

- The original startup idea was Burbn, a location-based app allowing users to check in, plan meetups, and share photos.
- Burbn was overly complex and tried to do too many things at once.
- Users mainly engaged with the photo-sharing feature, not the other function
- Kevin and Mike realized the need to focus on what users loved most.
- They stripped Burbn down to its core feature: sharing photos easily.
- This decision led to the birth of Instagram
- Instagram emphasized simplicity, speed, and visual appeal.
- Features like filters were added to make photos look professional and attractive.
- The app was designed to be intuitive, requiring minimal effort from users.
- Instagram launched in October 2010.
 - The app gained thousands of users within hours and millions within months.
 - Word-of-mouth and social sharing fueled its explosive growth.
 - Rapid growth caused frequent server crashes and technical issues.
 - Mike Krieger played a key role in stabilizing the platform and scaling the technology.
 - The founders worked under intense pressure to keep the app running.
 - Early investors believed in the founders' vision despite limited features.
 - Funding allowed the team to focus on improving infrastructure rather than rushing monetization.
 - The company stayed small to maintain focus and speed.
 - Instagram entered the market when smartphones and mobile photography were becoming mainstream.
 - Its mobile-first approach set it apart from competitors.
 - Timing played a major role in Instagram's success.
 - In 2012, Facebook acquired Instagram for approximately \$1 billion.
 - Kevin and Mike chose Facebook to protect Instagram's growth and independence.
 - The acquisition validated their vision and work.
 - Focus on solving one problem extremely well.
 - Listen carefully to user behavior rather than assumptions.
 - Simplicity can be more powerful than complexity.
 - Strong partnerships and complementary skills are essential.
 - Instagram's success was not accidental but the result of clear focus, smart decisions, resilience, and timing.
 - The story highlights how learning from failure (Burbn) led to extraordinary success.
 - The journey reflects the importance of adaptability in entrepreneurship.

10.6 NEGOTIATION SKILLS ALL PROFESSIONALS CAN BENEFIT FROM- KELSEY MILLER

- Negotiation is something nearly every professional does — whether it's negotiating a job offer, a raise, a project deadline, a contract, or even daily tasks. According to Kelsey Miller, there are six core skills that make someone a strong negotiator.

- These skills help you communicate clearly, make sound decisions, build trust, and reach agreements that work for everyone involved — often turning difficult situations into productive, mutually beneficial outcomes.
- The 6 Essential Negotiation Skills
- Communication
 - You must clearly articulate what you want and where your boundaries lie. Successful negotiation depends on clear expression and mutual understanding.
 - Communication isn't just about talking — it also includes active listening: summarizing what the other person said, clarifying doubts, paying attention to tone and body language.
 - Good communication fosters respect, reduces misunderstandings, and helps both sides feel heard — a foundation for any agreement.
- Emotional Intelligence (EI)
 - EI means being aware of your own emotions and those of others. In negotiations, reading emotional cues — like hesitation, concern, enthusiasm — can help you adjust your approach.
 - Managing emotions helps you stay calm under pressure and respond thoughtfully, rather than reacting impulsively.
 - EI builds trust: when negotiators sense empathy and genuine understanding, they become more open to collaboration and compromise.
- Planning & Preparation
 - Before negotiations begin, you should research relevant facts, know your own objectives, and anticipate what the other party might want.
 - It helps to know your fallback option if negotiations fail — often called your BATNA (Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement).
 - Understanding the possible "zone of agreement" (what each side is willing to accept) gives you clarity on whether a negotiation is likely to succeed or if walking away is wiser.
- Value Creation (Win–Win Mindset)
 - Instead of viewing negotiation as a zero-sum game ("my gain = your loss"), value creation focuses on expanding the pie so everyone benefits.
 - This involves identifying mutual interests, proposing creative solutions, and being open to alternatives beyond the obvious — leading to collaboration rather than conflict.

- By making offers that benefit both sides, you build trust and often lay the groundwork for future positive relationships.
- Strategy and Tactics
- Good negotiators think ahead: they define their role, understand their value, anticipate the other party's position, and adapt tactics as the discussion evolves.
- They choose the right approach — whether to push, concede, ask open questions, or propose alternatives — based on the situation, relationship, and goals.
- Strategy includes knowing when to be firm, when to compromise, how to steer conversation, and when to pause or take a break to avoid emotional reactions.
- Reflection (Learning from Each Negotiation)
- After a negotiation — whether successful or not — take time to evaluate what went well and what didn't: communication, timing, persuasion, emotional balance, trade-offs.
- Identify patterns: Where did you lose ground? Where did you gain more than expected? What could you adjust next time?
- This self-review transforms each negotiation into an opportunity for growth, gradually making you a more skilled negotiator over time.
- You start with planning (what you want, minimum acceptable terms, your alternatives).
- In the meeting, you use communication to state your case, active listening to understand the employer's concerns, and emotional intelligence to stay calm and empathetic.
- You aim to create value, perhaps by offering more flexibility, additional services, or longer-term commitment — not just a higher pay.
- You adapt your strategy, maybe by prioritizing benefits over salary or offering phased payments.
- After the negotiation, you reflect on what worked — maybe highlight the value you brought rather than just demanding pay — making you better prepared for next time.
- This blend of skills helps you negotiate not just for short-term gains, but for long-term relationships, respect, and sustainable outcomes.

12. ECONOMIC HISTORY OF KERALA FROM 1800 TO 1947 AD PART

1: MALABAR-BA PRAKASH

- The Malabar district formed the northern region of present-day Kerala State.
- It was part of the Madras Presidency during British rule.

- The region has been economically backward in many respects.
- Malabar came under colonial rule after the English East India Company conquered it from the Mysoreans in 1792.
- British rule continued until India gained independence in 1947.
- Despite its backwardness, Malabar had been a major exporter of various agricultural products to Europe for over two thousand years.
- Despite exposure to external influences, Malabar remained an underdeveloped region with a backward agricultural sector.
- T. W. Shea's study is the only major work examining the causes of agricultural backwardness in Malabar.
- Shea identified six barriers to economic growth:
 - Immobility within the caste structure
 - Traditional occupational distribution of the elite
 - Absence of systematic government in the pre-British period
 - Pattern of land tenures
 - Structure of family property laws
 - Pattern of population growth during the 19th and 20th centuries
- Shea argued that business elites showed little interest in modernising agriculture, which prevented changes in productive techniques.
- According to Shea, social and economic barriers inhibiting development were never seriously challenged in Malabar.
- A major limitation of Shea's study is that it ignored the impact of colonial policies on Malabar's economy.
- The present study offers an alternative explanation for agricultural backwardness during the colonial period.
- It emphasizes two main factors:
 - Extractive and unfavourable colonial policies affecting agriculture, industry, infrastructure, trade, and commerce
 - The caste system and related social practices prevailing in Malabar.
- British Malabar covered about 6,262 sq. miles, divided into 18 taluks and 2,222 villages by the early 19th century.
- The region had favourable climate, heavy rainfall (50–300 inches), fertile soil, rivers, forests, and backwaters, ideal for agriculture.
- Large eastern areas were mountainous and forested, including Silent Valley and Attapady Valley.
- Agriculture was the main occupation, supporting almost the entire population in the early 19th century.
- Non-agricultural population was very small, less than 5% in 1837.
- The agrarian system had a hierarchical land-rights structure, with agrestic slaves at the bottom.
- Malabar largely functioned as a non-monetised economy, except in trading centres.

- Major crops included paddy, coconut, pepper, cardamom, ginger, betel nut, and fruits like jackfruit and mango.
- Export crops such as pepper, coconut products, cardamom, betel nut, and timber were economically important.
- Pepper
 - Major export earner, forming about 45% of Malabar's exports in 1804.
 - Known as the "black gold" of Malabar.
 - Europeans (Portuguese, Dutch, English) aimed to monopolise the pepper trade.
 - Initially cultivated only in Chirakkal and Kottayam taluks.
 - Lost its position as the largest export by the 1830s.
- Coconut and Coconut Products
 - Second most important export after pepper.
 - Included copra, coconut oil, coir, and coir products.
 - Became the largest export earner by the 1840s, mainly in coastal areas.
 - Limited inland cultivation due to lack of irrigation and low yields.
- Rice
 - Staple food and main agricultural produce.
 - Cultivated in low-lying wetlands, dependent on monsoon.
 - Used traditional farming methods and tools.
 - Rice and paddy were exported during the first half of the 19th century.
- Coffee introduced to Malabar in the 1820s
 - 1829: East India Company encouraged coffee cultivation to boost exports
 - Madras Government exempted coffee plantations from land tax
 - By the 1840s, large-scale coffee cultivation in Wayanad by European planters
 - Coffee became the largest export by the 1870s
- Native cattle: bulls, bullocks, cows, buffaloes
 - Native oxen were small and poor breed (Buchanan, 1800)
 - Cattle housed in small huts, fed grass and straw
- Horses, sheep, goats, poultry not native; introduced from outside
- Large numbers of cattle imported via Palghat
- Little change in agriculture in late 19th century
- Major change was expansion of plantation crops, especially coffee
- Decline of Pepper and Changes in Malabar's Economy (Point-wise):
 - Pepper once accounted for 33% of Malabar's total export earnings, but its importance declined over time.
 - Spread of pepper cultivation from Malabar to other regions (e.g., Sumatra) by the Dutch in the 18th century reduced Malabar's monopoly.
 - By the 1940s, about 90% of world pepper came from Dutch-controlled regions.
 - The "wilt of pepper" disease damaged crops by attacking roots and drying up vines.
 - Fall in pepper prices, high taxes, and unfavourable land tenure systems worsened the decline.

- By the 1940s, Malabar's share in world pepper trade fell to about 1%.
- Coffee replaced pepper as the main export crop in the late 19th century.
- The coffee boom ended in the early 20th century due to coffee disease.
- Malabar shifted from being a rice exporter to a rice importer after 1860.
- By the 1870s, food grains formed the major share of imports.
- Food grain shortage was due to stagnant agriculture, limited paddy expansion, and population growth.
- Lack of industrial growth forced about 80% of the population to depend on agriculture.
- Most people depended on agriculture for their livelihood. The 1881 census shows only 20% worked outside agriculture in areas like government service, trade, or industry.
- Poor agricultural development, lack of other sectors, and population growth led to chronic unemployment, widespread poverty, and near-famine conditions for many.

MODULE IV-COLLABORATION CHALLENGE

13-TEAMWORK CAN MAKE A DREAMWORK-INHOUSE INCORPORATION

Meaning of Teamwork

- Teamwork refers to collective effort by individuals to achieve a common goal.
- Emphasizes coordination, cooperation, and mutual support.
- In-house incorporation requires joint efforts of multiple departments.
- Legal, finance, HR, and management must work together.
- Teamwork ensures smooth and efficient incorporation process.
- A common objective aligns team members.
- Clear goals reduce confusion and duplication of work.
- Shared vision motivates employees.
- Tasks are divided based on skills and expertise.
- Improves efficiency and saves time.
- Prevents overload on a single individual.
- Open and transparent communication is essential.
- Helps in:
 - Avoiding errors
 - Resolving issues quickly
 - Improving decision-making
- Mutual trust strengthens teamwork.
- Cooperation reduces internal conflicts.
- Builds a positive work culture.
- Strong leadership guides the team.
- Leaders:

- Coordinate activities
- Motivate members
- Resolve conflicts
- Teamwork brings diverse ideas and perspectives.
- Encourages creativity and innovative solutions.
- Problems are solved faster through collaboration.
- Each member is accountable for assigned tasks.
- Collective responsibility ensures quality output.
- Promotes discipline and professionalism.
- Teamwork reduces delays in incorporation procedures.
- Minimizes errors and legal risks.
- Saves organizational cost.
- Working in teams improves morale.
- Creates a sense of belonging.
- Enhances job satisfaction and productivity.
- Teamwork is essential for successful in-house incorporation.
- Collective effort leads to organizational success.
- Hence, *“Teamwork can truly make a dream work.”*

14. 7 PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS THAT CAN HELP YOU BE A MORE SUCCESSFUL MANAGER-COURSERA STAFF

- Analytical Thinking
- Ability to collect, examine, and interpret data to understand problems clearly and identify root causes.
- Critical Thinking
- Evaluating situations objectively and questioning assumptions before taking action.
- Creativity
- Generating new ideas and alternative solutions when conventional methods fail.
- Decision-Making
- Selecting the most effective solution in a timely manner while considering risks and outcomes.
- Communication Skills
- Clearly explaining problems, sharing solutions, and ensuring team understanding.
- Emotional Intelligence
- Managing one’s own emotions and understanding others’ feelings to handle problems calmly.
- Collaboration and Teamwork
- Involving team members in problem-solving to gain diverse perspectives and better results.

15.IMPROVING GROUP DYNAMICS-MINDTOOLS CONTENT TEAM

1. Meaning of Group Dynamics

- Group dynamics refers to the behavior, interactions, and relationships among members of a group.
- 2. Importance of Positive Group Dynamics
 - Improves teamwork and cooperation.
 - Enhances productivity and goal achievement.
 - Creates a positive and supportive work environment.
- 3. Clear Goals and Roles
 - Clearly defined goals give direction to the group.
 - Well-defined roles reduce confusion and conflict.
- 4. Effective Communication
 - Open and honest communication builds understanding.
 - Encourages sharing of ideas and feedback.
- 5. Trust and Mutual Respect
 - Trust strengthens cooperation among group members.
 - Respect for diverse opinions improves group harmony.
- 6. Strong Leadership
 - Effective leaders guide, motivate, and coordinate the group.
 - Leaders help resolve conflicts and maintain focus.
- 7. Encouraging Participation
 - Equal participation ensures all voices are heard.
 - Increases commitment and engagement of members.
- 8. Managing Conflict Positively
 - Conflicts should be addressed early and constructively.
 - Healthy conflict can lead to better decisions.
- 9. Team Collaboration
 - Collaboration improves problem-solving and innovation.
 - Collective effort leads to better outcomes.
- 10. Continuous Feedback and Improvement
 - Regular feedback helps improve performance.
 - Allows the group to learn and grow together.
- 11. Conclusion
 - Improving group dynamics leads to effective teamwork and organizational success.
 - Positive interaction among members is key to high performance.

16.TEAMWORK IS HARDWORK.HERE'S HOW TO BULD THE SKILLS TO DO IT WELL-ANN KOWAL SMITH

- A woman recently completed 500 days alone in an underground cave, monitored remotely by scientists, to write a book on the mind and body's resilience to extreme solitude and deprivation.
- Society's fascination with isolation reflects a growing trend toward individualism and detachment.
- Humans are inherently social beings with biological needs for connection and cooperation.

- Our evolutionary success over other species is largely due to our ability to work together.
- Despite this, education and work systems largely emphasize individual achievement.
- Organizations claim to value collaboration but typically hire, promote, and reward individuals.
- Incentivizing individual performance often produces competition rather than genuine collaboration.
- Pandemic lockdowns and remote work increased isolation, even as collaborative work rose by over 50% in the past two decades.
- As global problems grow more complex, effective collaboration is increasingly essential.
- Collaborating effectively is difficult, but some teams consistently outperform others.
- Research shows that collective intelligence is the key factor that predicts how well a team solves problems together.
- Collective intelligence is similar to IQ, but it is not about individual intelligence.
- Instead, it depends on how team members interact, communicate, and engage with each other.
- High-performing teams are often seen as having “magic,” but their success is not due to luck.
- Strong collaboration is built through five specific, learnable skills.
- These skills require intentional practice and do not happen automatically.
- Skill 1: Listening with humility
- People often overestimate how well they listen.
- Research shows we forget much of what we hear shortly after hearing it.
- The brain processes information faster than people speak, which leads to distraction.
- Good listening requires active mental effort, not just hearing words.
- Humble listening means listening to learn, not just waiting to respond.
- Active listening boosts productivity, innovation, and collaboration.
- Skill 2: Asking good and curious questions
- People who ask thoughtful questions are perceived as better listeners and more caring.
- Curious questions help others feel understood and validated.
- Leaders often ask instrumental questions that only confirm their own views.
- Effective collaboration improves when questions are open, curious, and exploratory.
- Focusing on open-ended questions ("what if," "what could be") rather than transactional ones opens the door to new and unexpected insights. Though ambiguous questions can cause anxiety, they often touch on what truly matters. Good questions spark ideas and foster inclusion by valuing others' contributions.
- Challenging Assumptions
- Alexander Pope warned, “a little learning is a dangerous thing,” and research confirms it. Both inexperience and expertise can blind us: the more we know, the more we risk ignoring other perspectives. By questioning our assumptions and suspending beliefs, we reduce confirmation bias and expand our thinking.

- Disagreeing Respectfully
- Healthy disagreement prevents overconfidence and groupthink. Respectful debate allows ideas to be tested and improved without fear of retribution.
- Generative disagreement improves organizational outcomes.
- It requires psychological safety: the belief that you can raise difficult issues and your colleagues will support you.
- Hierarchy is a major obstacle to people speaking up at all levels.
- Study example: 90% of nurses would not contradict a doctor even if a patient's life was at risk.
- Implication: Organizations with such fears cannot reach their full potential.
- Conclusion: High-performing teams and collective intelligence need psychological safety to allow competing viewpoints.
- Widening the circle of empathy
- Empathy is often seen as a remedy for bias, but empathy itself is biased.
- Humans naturally divide the world into "Us" and "Them", even with good intentions.
- Neuroscience insight (Robert Sapolsky):
- When someone in the Us group does something wrong → we scrutinize their actions but not their character.
- When someone in the Them group does something wrong → we see it as a character flaw, not just a mistake.
- In diverse, high-turnover workplaces, this natural wariness can:
- Reduce team effectiveness.
- Limit organizational performance.
- Positive takeaway: Widening empathy is possible with practice.
- Listen to colleagues actively.
- Be curious about new ideas.
- Build deep, trusting relationships.
- Scholar Jamil Zaki: With effort, we can "free our empathy from its evolutionary bonds."
- The world requires us to solve wicked problems that cannot be handled by individuals alone.
- Flammini's well-publicized cave isolation experiment demonstrates that individuals can accomplish a lot on their own.
- However, in today's world, individual effort is not enough to tackle complex challenges.
- Many problems at work are not rocket science, but they are not easy either.
- Tackling these challenges requires working together and developing collective skills.
- Developing five key skills is a good place to start for effective collaboration.
- These skills take time and commitment to learn and practice together.
- We would never ask a professional sports team to play without practice, yet we often ask business teams to do the same.

- If we don't learn to activate our collective abilities, we cannot work effectively or win.



