

# Session 5

## Communication in Negotiation

# Communication in Negotiation

Communication processes, both verbal and nonverbal, are critical to achieving negotiation goals and to resolving conflicts.

- Negotiation is a process of interaction
- Negotiation is a context for communication subtleties that influence processes and outcomes

# Basic Models of Communication

Communication is an activity that occurs between two people: a *sender* and a *receiver*

- A *sender* has a meaning in mind and encodes this meaning into a message that is transmitted to a receiver
- A *receiver* provides information about how the message was received and by becoming a sender and responding to, building on, or rebutting the original message (processes referred to as “feedback”)

# Distortion in Communication

## 1. Senders and receivers

- The more diverse their goals or the more antagonistic they are in their relationship, the greater the likelihood that distortions and errors in communication will occur

## 2. Transmitters and receptors

- The choice of transmitter can affect outcomes
  - Some messages may be better spoken, others written
  - Poor eyesight, faulty hearing, etc. diminish the ability of a receiver to receive a message accurately

# Distortion in Communication

## 3. Messages

- The symbolic forms by which information is communicated
- The more we use symbolic communication, the more likely the symbols may not accurately communicate the meaning we intend

## 4. Encoding

- The process by which messages are put into symbolic form
- Senders are likely to encode messages in a form which receivers may not prefer

# Distortion in Communication

## 5. Channels

- The conduits by which messages are carried from one party to another
- Messages are subject to distortion from channel noise or various forms of interference

## 6. Decoding

- The process of translating messages from their symbolic form into a form that makes sense
- When people speak different languages, decoding involves higher degrees of error

# Distortion in Communication

## 7. Meanings

- The facts, ideas, feelings, reactions, or thoughts that exist within individuals and act as filters for interpreting the decoded messages
- Those filters can introduce distortions

## 8. Feedback

- The process by which the receiver reacts to the sender's message
- Absence of feedback can contribute to significant distortions
- Feedback can distort communication by influencing the offers negotiators make

# What Is Communicated during Negotiation?

- Offers, counteroffers, and motives
- Information about alternatives
- Information about outcomes
- Social accounts
  - Explanations of mitigating circumstances
  - Explanations of exonerating circumstances
  - Reframing explanations
- Communication about process



# How People Communicate in Negotiation

- Use of language
  - Logical level (proposals, offers)
  - Pragmatic level (semantics, syntax, style)
- Use of nonverbal communication
  - Making eye contact
  - Adjusting body position
  - Nonverbally encouraging or discouraging what the other says

# How People Communicate in Negotiation

- Selection of a communication channel
  - Communication is experienced differently when it occurs through different channels
  - People negotiate through a variety of communication media – by phone, in writing and increasingly through electronic channels or *virtual negotiations*
  - Social presence distinguishes one communication channel from another.
    - the ability of a channel to carry and convey subtle social cues from sender to receiver

# How to Improve Communication in Negotiation

- Use of questions: two basic categories
  - Manageable
    - Cause attention or prepare the other person's thinking for further questions:
      - “May I ask you a question?”
    - getting information
      - “How much will this cost?”
    - generating thoughts
      - “Do you have any suggestions for improving this?”

# How to Improve Communication in Negotiation

- Use of questions: two basic categories
  - Unmanageable questions
    - Cause difficulty
      - “Where did you get that dumb idea?”
    - give information
      - “Didn’t you know we couldn’t afford this?”
  - bring the discussion to a false conclusion
    - “Don’t you think we have talked about this enough?”

# How to Improve Communication in Negotiation

- Listening: three major forms
  1. Passive listening: Receiving the message while providing no feedback to the sender
  2. Acknowledgment: Receivers nod their heads, maintain eye contact, or interject responses
  3. Active listening: Receivers restate or paraphrase the sender's message in their own language

# How to Improve Communication in Negotiation

- Role reversal
  - Negotiators understand the other party's positions by actively arguing these positions until the other party is convinced that he or she is understood
  - Impact and success of the role-reversal technique
    1. Effective in producing cognitive changes and attitude changes
    2. When the positions are compatible, likely to produce acceptable results; when the positions are incompatible, may inhibit positive change
    3. Not necessarily effective overall as a means of inducing agreement between parties

# Special Communication Considerations at the Close of Negotiations

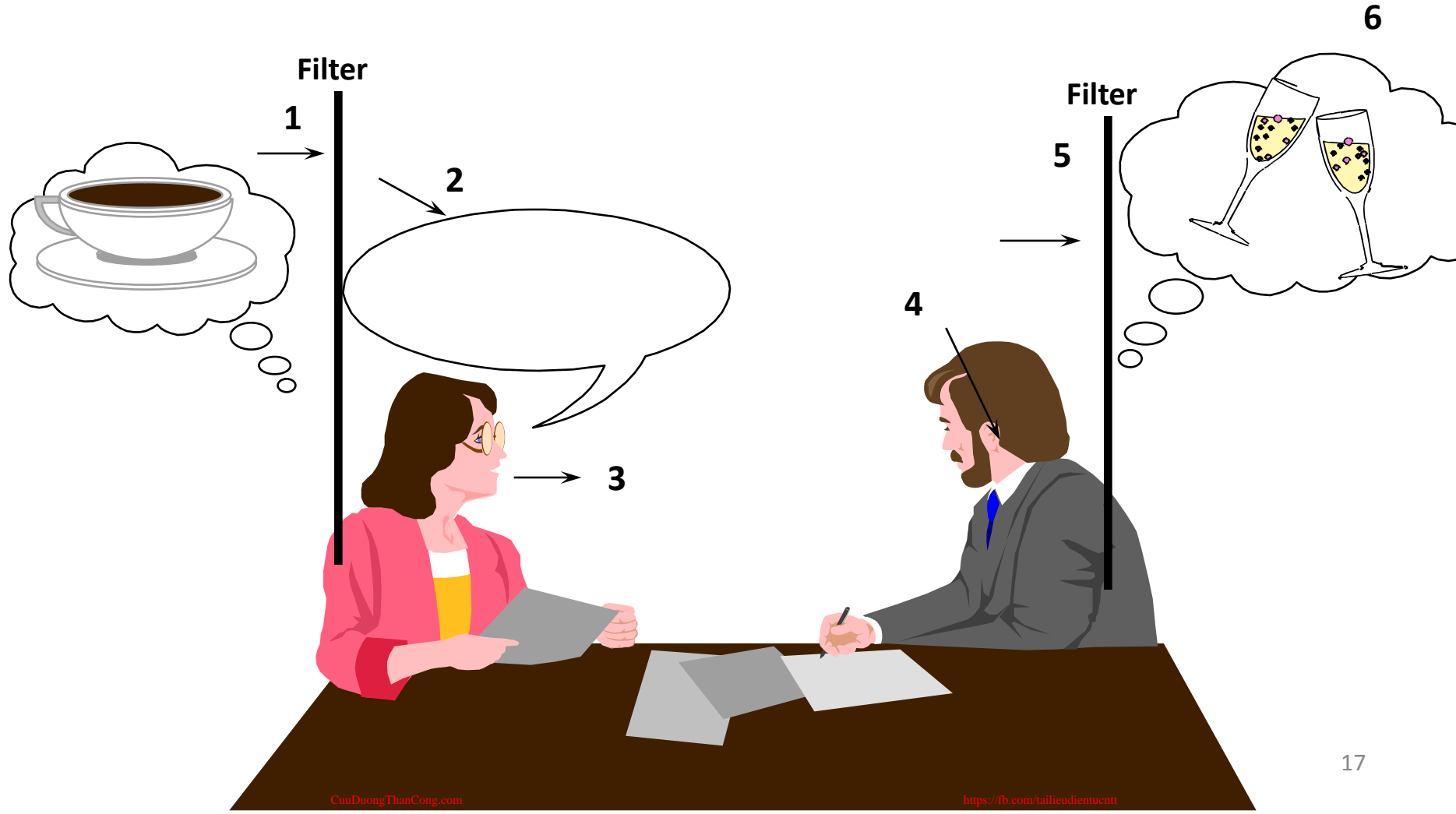
- Avoiding fatal mistakes
  - Keeping track of what you expect to happen
  - Systematically guarding yourself against self-serving expectations
  - Reviewing the lessons from feedback for similar decisions in the future
- Achieving closure
  - Avoid surrendering important information needlessly
  - Refrain from making “dumb remarks”

# Element of Communication





# Communication Process



# Communication Barriers

## 1 - Physical Barriers

Sounds, poor eye sight, tiredness, stress, weather..

## 2 – Emotions

Hate, fear, love, anger, lack of feeling

## 3 – Assumptions and Perceptions

Lack of clarity, lack of feedback

## 4 – Individual differences

Sex, age, confidence level, past experiences, education level, race, culture, beliefs, attitudes

# Communication Barriers

## 5 – Languages

Dialects, tone, meanings, written

## 6 – Cultural styles

Direct/ Indirect, rules of politeness,  
formality/informality

## 7 - Non-Verbal Cues

non-verbal cues are inconsistent with oral message  
=> confusion

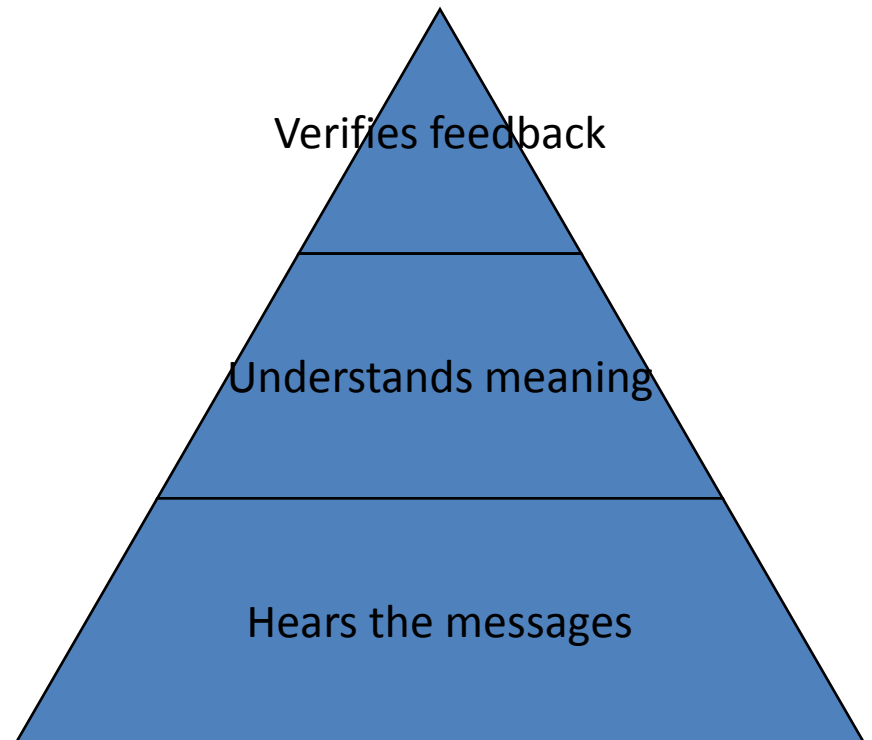
# Active Listening

Listening with a purpose

- Only hearing sound?
- Creating meaning?

# Active listening happens when:

- The listener hears the messages
- Understands their meaning
- Verifies the meaning by offering feedback



# Active Listening

- **Ask open ended questions**
- **Reflects feelings**
  - Attempts to understand how the other person feels in response to his/her circumstances
  - Shows empathy
  - Defuses emotion
  - Creates a feeling of acceptance

# Active Listening

- **Listen like a student.** Assume there are things about the situation that you don't understand. And even in areas you are confident you do understand, listen for data that undermines rather than supports your beliefs, under the assumption that you could be wrong or only partially right.
- **Find your own style of listening.** If you are sincere about understanding what someone is saying and feeling, your concern will come across and you won't sound mechanical.
- **Listen for the real meaning of criticism.** It's easy to listen and reply to compliments.
- **Focusing on other opinions can also give the listener the chance to reflect on the process and strategy.** Stepping aside and taking a dispassionate view of the goings-on can make one a far more effective negotiator.

# Confirms key points by summarizing

- Restate the result of the conversation in a clear concise manner
- Summarize key points made or agreements reached
- Close the conversation with a summary
- Provides opportunity to correct any misunderstanding
- Shows courtesy
- Saves time
- Acknowledges speaker



# Rapport

- **Mutual gains negotiation** requires rapport.
  - You're trying to convince your counterpart that your offer is fair; you designed it to meet his interests as well as yours.
  - How much success will you have if your counterpart has zero faith in your ability to understand his interests?
  - Successful negotiation starts with building shared understanding of the situation.
- **Words of understanding**
  - We usually set out to build understanding with words.
  - When we find that we're not understood, we say, "Let me clarify...." And then we try saying the same thing a different way.

# Rapport

- Step into each person's world.
- See it from their perspective.
- Think their style, talk their style, become their style.