

EVERYONE CAN WIN audio script edition

Skill 12: Broadening Perspectives

Mins:secs	Topic
07:17	What we can and cannot change
13:29	Find the path with heart
19:43	Consider the context
22:48	Watch the ripples
25:25	Sense the ah-ah!
28:45	Respect and value differences
32:38	Include a long-term perspective
35:09	Hold the vision
37:55	Connect to the power of synergy
40:46	Experiment, find the missing element
45:56	Summary

Sometimes it all matters so much - we're so embroiled in the conflict, so attached to its outcome, we so need other people to behave in a particular way. A whole toolkit of skills doesn't seem to be enough. The conflict has absolutely hooked us or perhaps defeated us, but we just can't let go. There's one tool left in the box. Perhaps we need a new view.

This is Skill 12: Broadening Perspectives, based on the book Everyone Can Win, about handling conflict constructively.

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Imagine for a moment that you're a traveller about to climb a mountain. At the foot of the mountain, when you turn around all you can see is what's directly in front of you: a few trees, a mountain stream, a rocky track. As you climb, you can turn around and see that the few trees are in fact part of a larger forested area. A little higher you can see the farmland beyond the forest. Higher still, your view becomes more expansive – a township in the distance, a broad river that the little stream you first noticed is feeding



into. Finally, you reach the top and you have a full 360-degree view. Broadening Perspectives is like climbing a mountain to see more of the whole scene.

As we claw our way upward, skirting the boulders in our path, finding a way through we begin to:

- See the conflict from a different perspective
- Understand another person's viewpoint
- Become aware that the whole picture is much bigger than any single person's perspective.

We're not denying the problem. We couldn't if we tried. It's still there, but in a wider frame. We are not so immersed. Can we see ourselves objectively, even for a moment and begin to notice our embroiled state from a little distance? We're finding ourselves as a witness.

Try this exercise. Think of a problem you are dealing with right now:

- What would you say is your issue?

Try a different perspective:

- What would the person most involved with you in this conflict say is your issue?

Go to a different perspective again:

- How would a thoughtful and compassionate outsider looking at you both describe the issue?

You're witnessing, as well as participating.

The real trick is to switch frequently between these two.

Try these three questions on yourself the next time a c wakes you up in the middle of the night and you're ruminating. Finding the place where you can witness yourself and the whole issue in a bigger context is very calming. If we can overview the whole problem in its wider context, it's like zooming out on a computer screen. The details are no longer in focus. Soon we might see that frustration is not our only option. We stop judging the rights or wrongs, and we just observe our prejudices and hopes ... from a little distance. We haven't disconnected. We're still very present to the whole thing. This is self-



awareness, one of the pillars of emotional intelligence. Your broader perspective throws up new insights and can change what you do. You might witness that you're defending your opinions very rigidly and that might help you be a little more flexible.

Perhaps you change your perspective from "me" to "us". Which larger teams or tribes do you belong to? What does your tribe need? It's not just me, the mum or dad, it's us, the family. It's not just me, the mid-level manager, it's us, our whole organisation and our contractors and our customers. It's not just about me, it's about all living beings on our planet. We are on that team too, and we are responsible for that tribe and to that tribe.

We broaden our allegiance and our caretaking becomes more inclusive. Our concern becomes the whole as well as our private selves. That's the bigger picture.

We might take on responsibility for the way we all are polluting our environment. We may need now to rethink the views of our parents, teachers and our peers and stand up for something different. We may be called on to let go of stereotypes of other groups and cultures that falsely simplify our picture of diversity.

We are in times of refugee crises, horrendous outcomes from climate change, pandemics sweeping the world. We can be overwhelmed with their enormity.

Often, it seems we can *do* nothing. But I believe that there is a very important role we can still play. We can personally engage with life's challenges and at the least, serve as a **witness**, paying attention with enormous compassion to all that is going on. As a witness we are very present, we focus our attention on the issues, hold them and those that suffer close to our hearts. We can BE with others, however far away. Our witnessing offers a cocoon, a nurturing force field, in which the overwhelming experience can BE SO for the person, while they deal with and grow through whatever is on their plate.

I believe that witnessing is always a powerful force for good, even when we cannot see directly its results. It's what counsellors do, it's what mediators do, it's what caring friends do for each other. It's how we can live life in the thick of things, conscious, aware and connected, rather than indifferent and distracted. We hold the space, and it makes a difference.

#



Of course, we have to decide carefully about ... as the alcoholics prayer goes,

What we can and cannot change, and find the wisdom to know the difference.

There will be moments when we're called to action. Our personal conflicts are right in our face. They will require we address them with all the conflict resolution skills we can muster, with the help of this series.

Can we make a positive difference in the situation in front of us today? Perhaps there's an opportunity for a simple act of friendship or a hand up for someone in trouble. Sometimes we can directly engage with larger issues that are universally troubling us. The truth and reconciliation processes, begun in South Africa over apartheid, have now sprung up all over the world and they point out a path, not only for broad social issues but for what is personally going on in our own lives.

- **Can we acknowledge the past?** Can we really own up to the abuses and injustices that have occurred?
- **Can we hold serious perpetrators to account?** Can we demand that justice prevails and that the worst offenders are appropriately disciplined?
- **Can we support everyone's opportunity to improve their lives?** And particularly those that are disadvantaged? Are there changes needed in the way our own workplaces or our own families operate – different structures or systems – so that in-built discrimination and exclusion cease and they're much less likely to recur?
- **Can we make amends?** What can we do or encourage to make up for previous wrongs?

When there's something we can do, let's act. When conflict seems intractable, let's reflect. We might need to reconsider what we can and can't change in our personal conflict. Are we are defending or condoning mind-sets or habits that have passed their use-by date? Are we, for instance, waiting for the other person or the situation to change before we take a step towards them?



Or perhaps this problem will never work out and it's time to move on now. Perhaps we need to accept that our efforts cannot shift this issue and we have to get on with the rest of life.

Or perhaps we see that the situation is not hopeless, but we're pushing too hard. We want someone to make a shift and they just won't do it.

Perhaps our timing is wrong and as we push harder, the more conflict we create.

After our best efforts, we may need to let go of the how and the when. Take a step back. There's a natural flow in the currents of life and we may need to respect this hidden force. It has its own timing and its own ways. Sure, we can hold our intention for the best possible outcome, whatever that is. But we need to stop expecting it to shape up exactly as we'd hoped. It might be time to recognise that the next stages are out of our hands. When we stop pushing, our energy shifts. We might see some other options. Others might begin to respond differently, move closer, or become more accommodating. Results may take longer and they might come in a very different form. And sometimes, the outcome is even better than our original plan. We might have to let the natural flow take its own course in its own time, not ours.

LISA

In preparation for starting a family, Peter and Lisa decided they'd move out of the city to the country. They would move as soon as the details of Peter's new internet business were finalised. This new business would give him work that was not dependent on location and that seemed perfect. But there were problems involved in the set-up and every day Peter seemed more remote and more despondent. Lisa could not get a date out him for their move.



She couldn't action anything meaningful, waiting for him to handle all his business issues first. But her head was spinning with plans.

She was on the edge of a new life, but obstacles were blocking her at every turn. Daily she was becoming more stressed and more short-tempered, and particularly with Peter. She was frustrated that there was nothing she could do to make Peter's business work for him, but she was totally dependent on that happening.

Lisa saw that it was time for a broader perspective. What was the view of all this from the mountain top? And she could see she was stuck, putting her whole life on hold, waiting on Peter and the business plan. What things could she and couldn't she change? She asked herself: what could she do NOW that would give her back a sense of control, a sense of her life moving forward under her own steam?

She knew she wanted to have a big clean-out of junk before their move. She could start on that immediately. She'd dreamt of doing silk screen printing once they moved. She could enrol in a local college. There was a course that would start in a few weeks. She thought of a new project she could get involved in at work that would make it more engaging for the time being.

As she looked at the whole picture, she saw that she wasn't actually trapped by these difficulties. Recognising that she couldn't help Peter, she stopped pestering him and pushing for answers. Within a day or so, he seemed less withdrawn and more optimistic. And she had things she could get on with. Yes there were obstacles, but she was back in the flow. She'd



got her struggle out of the way and was able to let things take a more natural course.

#

What else will a broader perspective help us locate? We may be able to: **Find the path with heart**

and especially if we've lost it.

In needing to stand up for what we want, sometimes we have not injected enough 'heart' into the situation. When we're stretched to our limit, empathy can completely escape us. That's another time to get a bigger picture, climb to the mountaintop. There, our turbulent feelings can come back into perspective and we have the opportunity to re-consider. Have we closed off to protect ourselves? Or so that we can gird ourselves up fight for what we believe in? That's very natural when we're angry, or we've come to dislike someone intensely, or they have hurt us or they hate us. But from such a cramped withdrawn position we are very unlikely to find the way forward. Hate begets hate and more actions fuelled by hate.

In each one of us there's a natural tenderness that we could apply to all beings. We might feel when we hold a kitten. It jumps to the fore with the very young and vulnerable. Can we and apply it to this person in particular? Can we notice or surmise their pain and possibly their fears too, no matter how well hidden they are? Can we sense the damage that past hurts or mental imbalance or limited life opportunities may well have caused them? Can we summon compassion, and let it flow towards them – not just because it's noble, but because it's also smart. Compassion strengthens our own well-being and our openness to all the challenges that life offers. It serves us. It may also ease the conflict.

Choosing the path with heart is a wise choice. Can we focus on putting heart into even our most difficult interactions? Can we hold to it or quickly get back to it, no matter



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what happens? I always want to be true to that part of myself, alongside my anger, even fury or overwhelm. It's a tough call. It's a skill that needs practice if it's to be a real option for me when I'm in the thick of conflict. I practise on strangers when I hear they've done something that absolutely appals me. I locate some caring about them in their essence in the midst of my horror.

But still, I do numb down my compassion – and I do it often! I tend to go numb on the big issues that are assailing me daily whenever I turn on the news. I'm not alone in this. It's incredibly tempting to bury our head in the sand, close off and turn away.

We turn off to the facts of religious persecution and genocide, that people are starving, that we have refugees in extremis on our borders and we won't let them in. The least we can do is to awaken our compassion, and bear witness to these atrocities.

It means waking up to our own hunger for peace, for justice in the world. Racism, bigotry, fanaticism of any sort tears at the heart of a just society. Our compassion should actually burn inside us as our fire for positive change. We need our hearts open. On these issues our silence perpetuates violence. Where is our voice?

The path with heart can crack down like a ton of bricks if that's what's needed. If they are doing the wrong thing, they are hurting themselves, as well as other people, whether they realise it right now or not. The path with wise heart and deep caring does have a voice and it may be necessary to speak out forcefully. Turning back to the personal, choosing the path with heart will certainly mean you won't let your teenage son get away with stealing or drug-taking, or your boss get away with sexual harassment. Compassion does not imply we have to agree with or accept what they do. When we see something we believe is wrong, it is a call to action, whenever that's possible.

No matter what they've done, no matter what punishment they deserve and indeed, you might impose, you still can wish them, in their essence, well. If you must be tough, be tough with heart, not without it.

Having said that, sometimes it's true that the path of heart will require you to leave uncorrected something you think is completely unwise, but the person apparently



needs the experience and you may be powerless or have decided it's unwise to block those learning experiences. Wish them well and really mean it.

Remember to include compassion for yourself as well. If we are in physical danger, we have a duty and responsibility to care for ourselves and keep ourselves out of harm's way. We keep ourselves out of harm's way to protect ourselves and to protect dangerous people from themselves and their own potential for wrongdoing.

If you're at a crossroads and don't know which way to turn, sense which option has more heart. It will be the better one. Of course, you might first need to work through some raging emotions before you clearly sense in which direction your heart is leading you.

One last word on this, from the Dalai Lama:

"Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible."

#

Let's consider the Context

Sometimes we've only been seeing part of the problem, and we're not seeing it in its full context. Broadening our perspective might require that we really consider the context. We might need to take into account all the implications. Our issue won't resolve itself because many other factors are involved. Someone wants a pay rise; they know they deserve it; but their pay rise must occur in the context of the whole pay structure in the organisation. That doesn't mean we shouldn't go on pushing for what we believe we deserve, but in fact we might be fighting a bigger battle than we first thought.

Say, you have been treated badly by a former employer. You believe you have the right to sue them through the courts. Consider the wider context before you take that path. Will justice be served, or will you just end up paying out all your savings to the lawyers and may well get nowhere? Climb to the mountaintop, and survey the whole



court route. Do you know anyone who has won a case like this? What compensation would you realistically expect to achieve through the courts? Would that make a difference? Would you get your old job reinstated? After the whole situation, would you want it back anyway?

As we consider the context, all the implications we may need to look carefully into legal factors, political, climate or economic conditions, the prevailing culture and customs and into current social issues.

Presently we live in a society with huge buried social unrest, waiting for any trigger event to convulsively resurface as we have seen with Marriage Equality and Black Lives Matter movements. Whether or not we choose to march on the streets, or use the media to express our outrage, these movements deliver a message to each one of us. Finally the personal is always the context. As Gandhi said:

“We must be the change we want to see in the world.”

So, look within. If something’s wrong ‘out there’, there’s something to fix inside us too. For instance, it is vital that we as individuals and as members of our community come to terms with our own unwillingness to resolve past and current injustices, to see the advantage they have given us. What’s the connection between their past and our children’s future?

We can use the situation ‘out there’ in the world to bring us messages about ourselves and our lives. Outside and inside us, that’s the full context.

#

As we broaden our perspective:

- we consider our task as witness – present and fully attending to what is going on.
- We look carefully into what we can and cannot change.
- And no matter what the provocation, we choose the path with heart.
- We look into the context, the factors impacting on any steps we might take.



And we also need to be mindful and:

Watch the Ripples.

Throw a stone into the water and the ripples spread out through the whole pond. One thing is always affecting another. If you are dealing with a child's behavioural problems at home, you probably should also be considering the connection between that and circumstances at school. Step back. Look around. Where are the ripples? Something wrong in one work area may be affecting other parts of the organisation. Inequalities or unfair treatment in one part of society is causing major problems in other areas. The unequal distribution of money and power in our world is having devastating results, excluding the underprivileged from the benefits of society – health systems, education, work, material comfort and political and social status. How long can that hold steady?

As we watch the ripples, we are asking: 'Does this problem extend further, and would solutions have more wide-ranging effects?'

If we are considering making a significant intervention in a conflict, can we notice if that is likely to create change in other areas? If it's change we want to see, we'll be encouraged to pursue our conflict resolving process with more vigour because it will have such a widespread effect. Here's a good case in point: fair pay for workers in the garment industry in third world countries is. As we address this issue, it has profound ripples affecting the whole industry through many nations.

If we keep tracing the ripples outwards enough, we may see that everything and everyone is interconnected. We need each other to survive and flourish. We're bound together in a web of mutuality. The actions of one individual are interconnected with every other.

#

Sense the ah-ah!

When our perspectives broaden sometimes it comes as a sudden shift in our thinking. It's a transformation. Something clicks and suddenly we see things differently.



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- Instead of seeing the other person as the enemy we see them as our teacher, who is bringing us important lessons that we really need to learn.
- The other person tells you something about their past and suddenly their behaviour makes perfect sense.
- Perhaps you notice your own inappropriate rescuing behaviours, how you jump in to help at every opportunity and sometimes it's not appropriate. Now you can clearly see what is needed from you and what is not.
- Perhaps you've had a transformational shift in thinking while applying some of the other the skills you've been listening to here ...Have you come to see a particular conflict or issue quite differently? ...Perhaps it was a reframe, a map you did, or a question you asked yourself.

I had a big ah-ah recently. It came as a flash of insight. For years I've been talking about including the opposing point of view in decision-making. But I was always irritated when I faced opposition. My insight came when I realised that what I'd been experiencing as an attack, was actually a gift, I could use it to think more clearly and more deeply and find a higher order solution and that's what I really wanted.

Just for a moment think about a problem you are facing right now...Got one?

<i>Ask yourself:</i>	What do I need?
<i>Ask more carefully:</i>	What do I really need?
<i>And inquire deeply and slowly for a third time:</i>	What do I really, really need?

Digging deep to find what we really, really need may help us find the **transformational** shift that will take us forward, perhaps out of the impasse.

The trouble with us human beings is that we're so messy. We get things wrong time and time again. We might not make our transformational shift as a sudden leap. We might be making it day by day as we handle our conflicts a little better. We are trying to



change old habits and sometimes those habits are inter-generational. We can use conflict to pinpoint our patterns. We are using our conflicts to become more conscious. So we have to be kind to ourselves when we make mistakes. We're on a learning journey.

#

Our broad perspective can help us Respect and value differences

We are all unique and special, with distinctive yet equally valid viewpoints. You may have heard the story of the blind men and the elephant: each man took hold of a different part of the elephant. The one holding the trunk concluded the animal was a snake: the one holding the leg thought it was a tree; the one holding the tail was convinced it was a rope; and the one touching the elephant's side claimed it was definitely a wall. Each assumed that his experience was the true representation of this thing called 'elephant' and could not understand why the other men were describing something which sounded very different.

Each person's viewpoint is a part of the whole. Only if we include all information do we get a reasonably accurate picture of what we are dealing with. Someone who has a totally different set of priorities to you is telling you about another piece of the full story. Include objections, rather than oppose them. Apply the discipline of switching '*but*' to '*and*' as you argue things out. Have you ignored a different viewpoint that ought to be included in solutions you design? Integrating it generates higher order thinking. Can you too come to realise that opposition is actually a gift?

People from other races, different religions, different sexual preferences, different value sets, different personalities all make up the whole. Each has a valuable contribution to make, and each viewpoint is worthy of our respect and our consideration. Each person is bringing us part of the glorious full picture.



Yes, I can master inclusion and treat others with courtesy. But is there still another bridge to cross? What am I unconscious about?

Am I complicit in the oppression of groups whose culture and values are different to my own? By my actions and by my lack of them, am I condoning the continuation of their oppression? Am I indifferent? What am I being called on to reassess? It takes courage to cross this bridge when we don't know what's on the other side!

Krishnamurti, the philosopher, had a good point when he said:

Change in society will come about naturally, inevitably, when you, as a human being, bring about change in yourself.

Have I painted a picture of another person or group is wrong, evil, dangerous and undeserving? Is that really true or have I just taken on the ill-considered biases of my own in-group? Is it time for me to do some independent thinking, do a bit of research? Perhaps we've all been blinded by fear, ignorance or misinformation. Is it high time I shone a light into my own dark places?

I believe we are being called on ultimately to let go of our personal sense of tribal boundaries, of sexual boundaries, to rethink our own personal identity, to become one with the enormous diversity in the human race.

#

As we broaden our view, we may need to

Include a long-term perspective

Are we supporting or resisting inevitable forces for change and growth? They are always at work below the surface. If we don't take time out to sense them, we may feel disheartened. How much conflict will you stir up resisting change? Can your broader view take in a long-term perspective?



You'll see that change is happening everywhere all the time. It disturbs the status quo and forces us to change structures. Just look at how COVID-19 has turned our world upside down in ways we never could have predicted. Many people are now working from home while still employed by large companies. New ways of living are being demanded of us, new ways of seeing the world. Will we resist or will we adapt? No, it may not immediately feel good or for the better. These disturbances can be extremely uncomfortable – excruciating, if you've lost your job and don't know what to turn to next.

Uncertainty itself can be something we heavily resist. Of course, we'll plan for the best and protect ourselves from the worst wherever we can. But can we get a bit more comfortable with that feeling of uncertainty? Can we sit in the 'not knowing', sit right on the pointy tip of it, experience the discomfort and stay with that feeling? It is truth – at least for now.

If we can sit with uncertainty, we might turn our focus to what can we learn, how can we welcome the new and shape it to work better for everyone – even when we haven't chosen it. Find the benefits, rather than dwelling on the losses? It can be our opportunity for something better. We can redefine ourselves as we respond to change. So can we become optimists about change, without ignoring the hard facts? According to research at Boston University' School of Medicine: the most optimistic people live an average of 11 to 15 percent longer than their more pessimistic peers. And they're definitely living happier lives.

As we take onboard the long-term perspective, optimism will help us locate better ways to move forward. What's our vision for the problems in front of us? What kind of world do we want to move forward to? Where are we heading in the evolution of ideas? With a global awareness we see that there are things worth fighting for, changes we need that just won't come quickly. We need an inner fortitude for our long, hard campaigns, so that we can continue them for as long as is needed.



Hold the vision

Examples are always helpful. Take for instance, Nelson Mandela. Born in 1915 into a brutally divided society, he dedicated his life to the liberation of his black South African people.

In the 1960s, he was sentenced to life imprisonment, mostly in the isolated Robben Island prison for his activism in the pursuit of this cause.

At his trial he said:

"I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."

In prison, very quietly and very much alone, he learned to claim the full power of his leadership.

As a political prisoner, he became the focus of a changing global attitude which opposed apartheid and sought to isolate the white regime. That regime came to fear imminent racial civil war as pressure of the sanctions grew. Finally, in 1990 after 27 years in prison, the South African President F. W. de Klerk released Mandela and began talks to end apartheid. Four years later, Nelson Mandela was elected the first African president of South Africa and attempted the process of healing the divided society, with his Truth and Reconciliation initiatives.

Mandela was always in it for the long haul. He always held in front of him a vision of a liberated future for his people, indeed all people, and



worked all his life towards that end. Here are two principles that guided him:

“A winner is a dreamer who never gives up.”

“It is in your hands to make a difference.”

#

Harness synergy, the extra element that makes the difference

It might just be the miracle factor we need for change. It can arise through a new combination of unique factors. Suddenly there’s a co-operative interaction between all the parts.

Are you able to spark synergy by introducing something completely different into the equation? I watched a divided family recently make an enormous shift in their home atmosphere by introducing a puppy into their lives. It was an ‘out of left field’ intervention into the family dynamics. And it worked! Small changes can make a big difference.

Synergy may be the ability to perform something together that we could never achieve alone. Or as a result of the combined push for change from like-minded people co-operating.

Don’t underestimate the deeply held desires of thousands of people. Ultimately, they can shape major world events. Our actions can have a wider meaning and multiply their effects when we work in co-operation with others. Consider the constantly growing effectiveness of the MeToo movement in exposing sexual harassment and calling perpetrators to account.

Synergy sparks as many different perspectives come together, producing far more significant results than those perspectives could ever accomplish separately. Finally, we are beginning to see multi-pronged initiatives to tackle climate change. That



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push now coming from groups of farmers, of manufacturers, of investors and sometimes even within government and energy producers, though mostly these two are still painfully slow. Can't they feel the synergy for this change gathering force?

Finally, remember it is always up to us, the individual, to harness our voice to a growing momentum. Are we now able to express a different opinion in conversation with our friends? When we sense synergy, we gain more courage to insist that our voice too is heard. Most of us have a preference for not rocking the boat, but when synergy is afoot, we can afford to be braver and our actions can really make a difference.

Victor Hugo wrote this in the early 1800's. It's a timeless truth.

Nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come!

Synergy can arise because we've come up with a better or new combination of factors. Experimenting or grabbing a new opportunity may well offer the key to success.

Experiment. Find the missing element

We are undergoing an exciting and rapid transformation to become a world powered by cleaner, cheaper and more reliable energy.

Much of it has been spear-headed by the creative genius of Elon Musk. He's an innovator and an entrepreneur. He finds and then relies on the smartest people in each industry, funds their research generously and closely supervises as they experiment on prototype after prototype. He made his fortune originally when his shares in PayPal netted him around \$180 million. He staked the lot on creating technological breakthroughs that would sustain the human race. In 2008 he nearly went bust. His



rockets wouldn't fly, his cars wouldn't run. But undaunted, he pushed on, constantly experimenting and dreaming up new projects.

In the summer of 2016-17 South Australia experienced disastrous power blackouts on extreme temperature days. Some politicians were blaming renewable energy. Musk knew better. The real problem was adequate storage to cover peak demand, and he believed he knew how to fix that. There was a nearby windfarm and if he could capture its excess energy, he could store it. It would require the world's largest lithium ion battery to service a backup system to the state's grid. He got into conversation with visionary billionaire, Mike Cannon-Brookes on the topic. And they challenged each other to a bet: Musk would have the system built within 100 days from signing the contract, or he would supply it for free. The contract was worth \$50 million. Musk was prepared for the experiment and he won the bet. His company, Tesla completed the project in around 60 days. The battery system now provides backup energy for the whole state, and sets an example for what can be done with the public supply of clean energy on a national scale.

It was pretty typical of how Musk stacks up his successes, with electric cars, space rockets, solar and wind manufacturing, storage batteries and refining hundreds of tiny, but vital peripheral components needed to make them all work - synergy! We don't really hear much about his failures! But they are there, in abundance.

Here is a man who, while geared for success, is prepared to fail. If it's innovative and will lead the planet forward, Elon Musk will have a go.



Each mistake, each failed experiment, is a learning experience on his way to what really works.

The same thing goes for relationships and the problems in them that you are facing. Experiment, learn from the failures. Seek out new opportunities. Persist with the vision. How do you want it be? What would that look like? And decide how best to make it happen. What ideas or new perspectives, what factors, what people will you gather for synergy to spark? How are the currents of change moving today?

Millions of us already want such things as medicines and vaccines available to everyone regardless of their finances, non-violent resolution of conflict, an end to the factors that fuel injustice and ignite terrorism. Our responsibility to future generations demands we come to grips with the sustainable use of the planet's resources and do it now.

At the least, being an awake, caring witness. Unite your heartfelt wishes with others who want these things too. Perhaps, it's not just about caring. Perhaps there's a call to action for you. How could you influence your organisation? Perhaps you'd like to see it run with more emphasis on social justice and ecologically sustainable approaches to its important decisions. Use your conflict resolution skills to push for the issues you care about. Your voice swells the power of synergy - like-minded people acting together, driving the changes we need. Too grand? Rubbish! Start right where you are.

#



Let's extract from all of this the lessons for each one of us:

SUMMARY

What does broadening perspectives entail?

- Become a witness, present and alert to other people's experience and taking an objective view of our own. How would a compassionate outsider describe this problem?
- Look clearly at what you can and cannot change. Adapt to the flow of unfolding events.
- Find the path with heart. Both personally and as part of society, look wide and look deep. Transform apathy or aversion or contempt into active compassion.
- Consider the wider context. What else bears on your decision-making here? What are the implications?
- Watch the ripples, notice the interconnections. Does the problem extend further, and would the solutions have wide-ranging effects?
- Is there a new perspective, an 'ah ha', that improves on old thinking and previous approaches? Ask yourself 'What do I really, really need?' You're on a learning journey. Perhaps there's an old habit that no longer serves you and maybe you can let go it, at least just for today?
- Respect and value differences. Other viewpoints form part of the whole picture. Remember, 'AND' not 'BUT'.
- Include a long-term perspective with the inevitability of change. Rather than resisting it, can you shape it for the better? Hold to your vision and sit with uncertainty if that's what's true for now?
- Harness synergy. Find the extra element that makes the difference. What new factors, ideas, perspective or people might interact to shift the whole problem. Experiment. Learn from the failures. Join the change that is possible once people act together. Add your voice.

Broadening our perspective is like climbing higher up a mountain to see further horizons.

Only from these higher perspectives can we find meaning in distressing events and find

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the relationships between seemingly unconnected potentials. From these higher perspectives we can learn to behave as a caring, co-operative and global community.

This has been the last episode in this series. Now we've explored all 12 skills for managing and resolving conflict effectively. If you've missed any of them, do catch up some time soon so you have a rounded picture of all the tools available in your toolkit of skills. You may well want to revisit particular episodes to brush up on the content when an issue is right up there for you.

If you haven't done so already, perhaps subscribe to this series wherever you listen to podcasts, so that your conflict resolution toolkit is easily at hand. Do let your friends know about the series too. Good conflict resolution skills do make an enormous difference to people's lives. We'll need all these skills to play our part in building a better future.

If you'd like more details on all of this, have a look at our website, at Conflict Resolution Network. Our headquarters are at crnhq.org. You can download transcripts and explore our extra study notes on broadening perspectives and browse our bibliography. There's a free [manual for trainers](#) there too. And for ongoing reference, you might want to purchase the book, *Everyone Can Win*. It's been the inspiration for this series.

Also, on our Conflict Resolution network website, you'll find some details about initiatives that we've captured in our broader perspective.

One of them is employment for all who need it. What new factors could bring that to reality? COVID is actually deepening the problem that has always been with us. We're seeing new government funded employment programs as we recover from the economic effects of the pandemic. Some of them are renewable energy projects. Yeah! Momentum for the idea of 'employment for all who need it' is building a little. Is there the germ of an idea here also for impoverished countries and those recovering from war?



At Conflict Resolution Network we also vision peacetime, noncombat roles for the military. I'm not talking about quelling protests; I'm talking about how our own Defence forces can and do support their communities in emergencies and disasters. We saw it in Australia in 2019 and 2020, when large parts of the country were ravaged by bushfires. Many communities would not have survived without The Defence Force 'Operation Bushfire Assist.' They stepped up again, only a few months later, taking on duties in aged care homes overrun with COVID. Yeah again! Let's voice our support for emergency assist training for the military and faster, more effective channels for response!

At the Network we've long lobbied for multiple individual Peace Treaties, between two countries at a time – to gradually grow a network of positive one-to-one relationships between nations. Every new peace treaty signed is another step in the right direction.

Here's a Network vision that still often stumbles. We keep on working to try and change the political climate. We deserve to have our politicians better understand and integrate diverse points of view, rather than two-way point-scoring. We so need them to address the issues and refrain from personal attack. Divisiveness does not solve our communities' problems. What will encourage politicians to display the values we personally prefer when they address each other and the media? When we see it at its worst, it should encourage us to do our own best. If we work within our personal spheres to build a climate where everyone's needs are routinely considered, we might ultimately choose statesmen, rather than pugilists, to govern our affairs. Feedback?

We'd appreciate your feedback on all these issues and also on this podcast series. What's been important for you? What's missing? What would you like to see happen with it? Use the 'Contact Us' link on our website.

Thank you for your listening ear. It's been an honour to have you onboard.



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