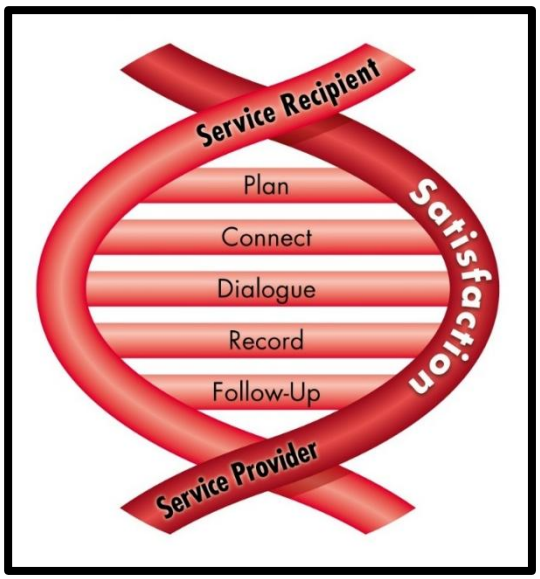
*The Nixon Method©
Step 5 – Dialogue





This article describes the importance and application of ***The Nixon Method*** in particular, **Step Five - Dialogue**. I cover three areas in detail: Dialogue Stages, Emotion Management and Keeping Control.

Step 5 – Dialogue is the hardest step for most of my clients because here is where you find yourself face to face with the person or people that oppose you.

OMG now what
Inexperienced leaders plan and launch into dialogue without realising that most of the time it doesn't work out as planned. One of the most important skills is to be ready for whatever happens. Expecting surprises prepares you for when the unexpected arises. Being well prepared enables you to look confident regardless of how you feel inside (think improv).

Dialogue Stages
The first thing to know is that dialogue and negotiation generally pass through five stages. Experienced leaders know what to do (or not do) at each stage. In our workshops we teach what to do and rehearse so leaders become more confident leading difficult dialogues through each stage.

This article is part of a series of five, each describing a different step in the method. People wanting to learn in detail how to lead each step can engage Peter to speak or train in-company, subscribe to his online learning platform, or read his books.

The Preparation stage is basically everything you do BEFORE you meet the stakeholders. In this connection it involves completing *The Nixon Method Steps 1-4.*

The Introduction stage is culturally specific and can look quite different in West Virginia or Tokyo. What is consistent across cultures is using this stage to properly introduce all the people in the room and then set the stage for the dialogue to follow (agenda, timing, objectives etc.).

The Objection stage begins the moment you hear *"yes, but"* or people begin to set out their counters to what you introduced earlier. The objection stage is normal and can be more or less heated depending on the scenario. In one negotiation recently my client's counter-party, someone he had not heard from for three years, opened the dialogue by blasting his position and criticising his thinking. The counter-party obviously had harboured negative emotions about my client for a long time, and this was when it finally came out. The objection stage can be long or short, hot or cold but is seldom over until all the pent-up emotions are aired.

Our training helps prepare people to both *"keep their head when others lose theirs and blame it on them"*, and to *"control your emotions to enhance your situation rather than hinder it".* The current President of the USA is a very public example of someone who never learned to do either or these and suffers as a result.

The creation stage begins once people realise they need to work together to overcome their differences and negotiate an optimal outcome. If they don't need each other the relationship tends to end at the objection stage but as long as engagement continues, even if unwilling, people begin to ask questions and present their packaged positions (prepared in stage 2). Concession making and taking (also prepared in stage 2) ensues until the stakeholders reach agreement.

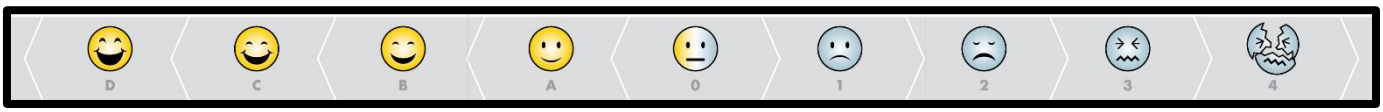
The documentation stage comes after agreement is reached. The leaders will summarise and reconfirm the agreement as they understand it. This stage can derail when the parties involved do not define agreement the same way. Be prepared for this stage to be difficult but there are ways to make it go well and we cover these in our client consulting and training.



Success Today = +Professional Skills +AI Skills +People Skills*

DNA – Selling Ideas

If you want to change the world you need to learn how to sell your ideas to others. When this comes up in our client scenarios we share our DNA relationship selling process and principles (from *The Business Developers Playbook*, Routledge). DNA process and principles are breakthrough learning for most professionals who think the right idea will change the world. This might be true, but you still have to share your ideas before the world knows what you are talking about and then why they should care about your idea or change behaviour as a result. The solution is in the dialogue.



Emotion Management

Our client interventions go into the depth required to deal with emotions experienced or predicted from any stakeholders. It is impossible to succeed without recognising the emotional elements of influencing and negotiating with people. In the end we are trying to satisfy needs and wants and since emotions influence needs and wants, knowing more about emotions enables leaders to proceed with care.

Destructive Emotions

I have spent decades accumulating practical ways to assist my clients. My deep dive into emotions began after reading Daniel Goleman's book *Destructive Emotions*. This led me to meeting many of the leading researchers on emotion and related fields from the last forty years. My learning comes in useful all the time. One example was negotiating an important project for a client when we were told at the first meeting that the lead negotiator on the other side was retiring and he wanted this project, his last in charge, to go as smoothly as possible. This opened the door for my client to get all they wanted and the project was a success. The counter-party retired happy. We did not forecast this emotion in our planning (he retired early), but when it arose we used our Ma-Ma technique, fully explored the emotion, and proceeded accordingly.

Samsara & Conflict Reaction Options

☯ You hit me and my only reaction is compassion for you
1. You hit me but I don't hit you back wishing sometimes I had
2. You hit me and I hit you back less hard to show my integrity
3. You hit me and I hit you back equally hard to draw the line
4. You hit me and I start a fight that never seems to end
5. You hit me and I hit you back so hard you never hit me again

Process Control

The next part of step 5 is preparing our clients (or reminding them live when we are consulting from afar) on how to keep process control and use time and space as needed, (e.g. time outs), in response to surprise requests, emotions, demands or even missteps made by you or your team. And let's not forget that while negotiating, the world itself is constantly changing all around us.

I was working with one of the large US Investment banks when an all-staff meeting was announced. Our negotiation was delayed for the participants to take the call. After the call the meeting resumed, and all the staff wanted to talk about was how the call changed what we were

negotiating. Their bank had just merged with one of their competitors, and all their jobs were at risk (or so they thought).

Faith & Culture



The best change leads to sustainable positive outcomes, and sustainability is supported by faith in your solutions and an organisational culture that supports their achievement. In my decades of work I have identified the elements of the most successful cultures by identifying the hurdles that slows down the rest of the companies trying to compete. The acronym I use to remember these hurdles are *Inspiration Stops Bad Faith*. When appropriate we include these in our preparation.

Summary

Remembering that "*whatever can go wrong will*" and being prepared for such eventualities will keep you on course towards achieving your optimal outcome first defined in step 1. It is also important to remember that you will learn a lot during your internal preparation (steps 1-4) and in dialogue with stakeholders (step 5). What you learn will likely adjust or change your original goal. This is normal. You might get more than you ever expected or you might get less. Most likely you will achieve something slightly different than what you originally planned.

Changes arise due to issues you were unaware of, concessions exchanged, and due to the people you are negotiating with. *Change the people and you change the outcome.* Success today needs three things: professional/technical skills, ai skills and people skills. In terms of people skills, all you need are included in *The Nixon Method,* so remember *never, never, never give up.*

If you would like to learn more let me know. In the meantime add your comments and questions below.

Sincerely,

Peter

Professor Peter Nixon FCPA
Founder and Curator - Domaine Dialogue
Master trainer, speaker, author, consultant;
#potentialdialogue | #starnegotiator|#peterandrewnixon
Website | Online Learning Site | Books | Video | Podcast |



THE SOLUTION IS IN THE DIALOGUE ©

*The Nixon Method© is a five-step process designed to help leaders and their teams clarify what they want and then refine and rehearse the tactics and techniques needed to influence and negotiate with key stakeholders to achieve positive change @work, @home and @large in society.

The Nixon Method© was created by Peter Nixon, FCPA based on decades of training and consulting leaders from MNC's, Professional Firms, Government, Start-Ups, Banks and non-profit organisations in over 60 countries worldwide. The method also builds on his decade auditing for PwC legacy firm C&L in Quebec, Ontario, Switzerland, France, Hong Kong and China.

Peter Nixon is based in Hong Kong (Nov-May) and Montreal (June-October). He helps clients lead technological and organisational change personally (on-site) or by inspiring others to do so through keynotes, masterclasses and teaching. People can contact Peter Nixon through his website www.PotentialDialogue.com

