

How to Create Win-Win Solutions

There's a classic negotiation story about two children fighting over an orange. Unable to agree on who should get the orange, Rita and Dalia ask their dad to decide. Dad finds a knife, cuts the orange in two, and gives half to each child.

Rita squeezes the juice out of her half of the orange, drinks it, and throws the rind away. Dalia carefully shaves the rind off her half of the orange and uses it to bake a cake. She throws the fruit away. Alas, Rita and Dalia are each left with only half of what they really wanted when they could have gotten all. Why didn't Dad see this? In order to understand where things went wrong, it's necessary to distinguish between positions and interests.

Your *position* is your proposed solution to a problem. In this case, each girl's position was that she should get the entire orange. Your *interests* are the needs that your position addresses. Rita's interest was juice to drink. Dalia's interest was orange flavoring for a cake.

Dad's mistake was that he didn't inquire to reveal each girl's interests. If he had, he could have created an interest-based problem statement like, "How can we solve the orange problem in a way that addresses Rita's interest of having orange juice to drink and Dalia's interest of having orange flavoring for a cake?" An interest-based problem statement like this would have made easier to identify "win-win" solutions to the orange problem that addressed both girls' interests, for instance:

- Give the fruit of the orange to Rita and the rind to Dalia
- Give the entire orange to Rita and give Dalia artificial orange flavoring from the cupboard for her cake
- Give the entire orange to Dalia and give Rita orange juice from the carton in the refrigerator

When you find yourself in conflict with someone over the best solution to a problem, use the following steps, illustrated with the Rita/Dalia example, to create your own win-win solutions. Most people will gladly accept a solution that addresses your interests if it addresses theirs as well.

1. Identify each person's position (proposed solution)	<i>Rita's position:</i> Rita gets the orange, Dalia gets nothing <i>Dalia's position:</i> Dalia gets the entire orange, Rita gets nothing
2. Identify each person's interests	<i>Rita's interest:</i> orange juice to drink <i>Dalia's interest:</i> orange flavoring for a cake
3. Create an interest-based problem statement that lists all the interests of each person	How can we resolve the orange problem in a way that addresses a) Rita's interest of having orange juice to drink and b) Dalia's interest of having orange flavoring for a cake?



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4. **Brainstorm potential solutions** that address as many of each person's interests as possible. Don't stop brainstorming until you've identified several potential solutions

Potential solutions that address both girls' interests include:

- Give the fruit to Rita and the rind to Dalia
- Give the entire orange to Rita and give Dalia artificial orange flavoring for her cake
- Give the entire orange to Dalia and give Rita orange juice from the carton in the refrigerator

Use the template on the following page to create your own win-win solutions.

Win-Win Solution Template

<p>1. Identify each person's position (<i>proposed solution</i>)</p>	<p>Your position:</p> <p>The other person's position:</p>
<p>2. Identify each person's interests</p>	<p>Your interests:</p> <p>The other person's interests:</p>
<p>3. Create an interest-based problem statement that lists all the interests of each person</p>	<p>How can we resolve the problem of [describe problem] in a way that addresses...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your interests of _____ [list all the other person's interests]• And my interests of _____ [list all of your interests]
<p>4. Brainstorm solutions that address as many of the interests in the problem statement as possible. Don't stop brainstorming until you've identified several potential solutions</p>	<p>[List your solutions here]</p>



Remember that creating win-win solutions is not a solo activity: it's a joint effort between you and the other person(s) with a stake in the problem.