

# 27. The Win-Win Waltz

**OBJECTIVE:** Learn the three steps of the “Win-Win Waltz” as a tool for effective joint decision-making and action planning.

**TIME:** 40 minutes

**MATERIALS:**

Write three “situation cards” on large sheets of paper: (write one title on each card)

Express Initial Positions

Explore Underlying Concerns

Create Win-Win Solutions

Situation Cards

Win-Win Waltz Worksheet: distribute one copy to each participant

**NOTE TO TRAINER:**

Place the three Cue Cards so that they are visible to all the group members (e.g., facing the group, propped on chairs in front of the group). Spread the cards/chairs out so there is room for two people to stand next to each.

**TALKING POINTS:**

One hallmark of a true partnership is the effectiveness of two people’s shared decision-making. “Effective” means they are able to make decisions that are responsive to the full range of concerns of both partners.

These steps of the win-win waltz can be used to make decisions about upcoming events (shared decision-making) and to change things that are not working ( fix-it talk). The only difference is that fix-it talk begins with two initial steps.

Give the following initial explanation, pointing to each Cue Card as you explain it:

A waltz has 3 steps, as does collaborative problem solving:

1. Express initial positions;
2. Explore underlying concerns; and
3. Create win-win solutions.

**ACTIVITY:**

Walk through the following example to be sure that everyone understands the difference between, on the one hand, concerns (fears, values, motivations) and, on the other hand, positions and solutions (plans of action).

**STEP 1:** Express initial positions:

Peter and Mary want to buy a car. Peter says, “Let’s buy a Ford.”

Mary says, “No. I want a Toyota.”

**STEP 2:** Explore underlying concerns:

Ask the group what Pete’s concerns might have been that led him to suggest a Ford.

Peter might say: “The prices are reasonable. The dealership is close by so it will be easy to take care of maintenance and repairs.”

Emphasize that both sides need to explore their underlying concerns and ask then for what Mary’s might be.

Mary might say: “I don’t want to keep taking the car back to the shop; Toyota has a good repair record. I want as much room as we can get for passengers—for our kids and for their friends.”

**STEP 3:** Create a plan of action responsive to both. Go with the information generated by the group.

Peter and Mary might say: “Let’s get a Consumer’s Report guide to cars so we have full information on repair rates, roominess, and prices. Let’s also check in the Yellow Pages for which dealers have repair facilities near us.”

**HINT:** Encourage thinking in terms of solution sets that are multi-piece answers.

Invite one couple in front of the group to try the “waltz” sequence. Use the situation of a couple deciding what to do for dinner. Hold up the relevant Cue Card for each step.

Emphasize the difference between concerns and positions (action plans/specific solutions). Make one list for all of their concerns. Then list three possible solutions: her idea with modifications, his with modifications, and at least one new solution (possible final solution).

Practice distinguishing concerns and solutions by asking the group:

Let's practice looking at the difference between concerns and solutions some more. If you and your spouse were discussing who is responsible for what household jobs, what might be concerns, and what might be solutions?

E.g., concerns might be how long each job takes, how much he or she enjoys doing the job, or how much preparation the job takes. A solution, by contrast, might be: He cooks; she cleans.

Have a different couple come to the front and traverse the three steps on their own to the dilemma: "What should we do for vacation this summer?"

Using the Win-Win Waltz Worksheet, they write out the three steps.

Pass out additional Situation Cards, and invite additional couples to try the "Win-Win Waltz" in front of the group.

**GROUP DISCUSSION:**

Most couples have systems for making decisions together such as taking turns on who gets their way, allowing whoever feels most strongly about the issue gets their way, or reaching a compromise (they both give up some). How do these three options compare to the Win-Win Waltz?

**CONCLUSIONS:**

With the Win-Win Waltz, virtually any decision becomes easy and mutual. Both big and little decisions—where to live and what to eat for lunch—can become simple and shared. The more skilled a couple becomes, the faster the decision-making—and the more satisfied you both feel with the resulting plan of action.