**Dealing with Frustration**

**Program Type:** Classroom Discussion  
**Audience Type:** Grades 3–8

**Description:** Brainstorm techniques for dealing with frustration and showing persistence during engineering activities. This discussion works best after students have experienced at least one challenging engineering activity.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- Students will learn productive ways to deal with frustration and overcome mental blocks.

**TIME REQUIRED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advance Prep</th>
<th>Set Up</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Clean Up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 minutes</td>
<td>0 minutes</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>0 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SITE REQUIREMENTS**

- None

**PROGRAM FORMAT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Instructor-led discussion</td>
<td>10 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with Frustration</td>
<td>Large group discussion</td>
<td>15 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrap-up</td>
<td>Large group discussion</td>
<td>5 min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dealing with Frustration  
Classroom Discussion
Preparation

SUPPLIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supplies</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large piece of paper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Chart pack or poster board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markers</td>
<td>2–3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ADVANCE PREPARATION

The facilitator should think about what they do when they are “stuck.” Think of a few strategies you use in your own life to deal with frustrating situations.

SET UP

None required.
Let students speculate before offering answers to any questions. The answers given are provided primarily for the instructor’s benefit.

Suggested script is shaded. Important points or questions are in bold. Possible answers are shown in italics.

Launch discussion by reminding students of something that many found difficult to do in a previous session.

**Do you think the first design an engineer makes is usually the best?**

*It can take many tries before an engineer comes up with a design that will work.*

Highlight that in previous sessions students persisted despite frustrations and were able to accomplish something in the end.

Ask students to share about a time that they were frustrated.

**Today we are going to pool our knowledge and brainstorm some strategies for what to do when we get frustrated during an engineering activity.**

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**Group Sharing**

15 minutes

Draw a diagram on the chart or poster board:

![Diagram](image)
What are some positive things you could do if you get frustrated when creating a design? Stop, take a break, and calm down. Then look at neighbors’ designs to get ideas, or ask them for help. Have a positive attitude!

Take student input to build a web of suggestions for things to do when frustrated. Some examples are:

- Take a deep breath
- Look at what other people are doing
- Try again
- Ask for help
- Stretch
- Take a step back and look at the whole thing
- Pinpoint what the problem is
- Try a whole new idea!

Is it OK to use ideas from your neighbors? Yes! Engineers often take existing ideas and improve on them, or find a new use for an old design. You are encouraged to look at what your neighbors are doing and use their ideas—they might just lead to an even better idea!

WRAP-UP

Which of these strategies do you already use in your life? Which of these do you not use but think could be easy to practice during our next engineering activity?

Keep the sign posted for future engineering activities; or, bring it back into the classroom for every session. Return to the list and keep adding things as you go through the various lessons.