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GETTING TO YES: A BOOK SUMMARY

Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In by Roger Fisher & William Ury (1991).



Does your blood pressure begin to rise when you enter into a negotiation? Do you cower when someone gives you an ultimatum during a negotiation? If you answered “Yes” to either of these questions, then this book has some insights and lessons that may increase your success in approaching and interacting in a negotiation.

In *Getting to Yes*, the authors introduce and explain the method of principled negotiation. Principled negotiation is different from positional negotiation. In positional negotiation, each individual takes a position, argues that position in an attempt to get the other side to see the error of his/her ways, and makes concessions in the hopes of reaching a compromise solution. There are some benefits to positional negotiation. First, the other side learns what you want and second, it can produce an acceptable agreement. However, the authors also uncover the dangers of positional negotiation. Some of these dangers include reaching impasse in negotiation, damage to relationships, unwise agreements, and less attention being paid to underlying concerns of the individuals. Principled negotiation tries to address and remedy these dangers.

In principled negotiation, individuals are encouraged to focus on the following points: people, interests, options and criteria. People: there is a human aspect to negotiation. We are emotional beings with varying perspectives. In order to negotiate effectively, principled negotiation asks us to deal with the people issues prior to addressing the substantive matter of the negotiation. As the authors state, “participants should come to see themselves as working side by side, attacking the problem, not each other.”

Interests: In positional negotiation, individuals stay focused on their demands and positions. In principled negotiation, the goal is to dig beneath the surface position to discover concerns and interests. For example, an employee may demand a raise in a job. This is their position. However, the principled negotiator will work to discover why the individual holds this position ie why getting a raise is important to them. It may be because they desire recognition of their efforts. Or, it may be because their spouse just lost their job and they are having trouble making ends meet. By focusing on interests, the principled negotiator can work toward taking care of the human needs that lead people to adopt their positions.

Options: In principled negotiation, the authors assert that individuals should invent options for mutual gain before trying to rush to reach agreement. The principled negotiator believes that there are many good solutions in a negotiation and that just finding one of those solutions is not good enough.

Criteria: The final proposition of principled negotiation involves incorporating fair and independent standards into the negotiation process. Examples of fair standards include market value, expert opinion or even flipping a coin. Utilizing such objective criteria can assist individuals in moving forward in their negotiations.

Getting to Yes provides tools and techniques for developing your skills as an effective principled negotiator. Whether you are a parent trying to negotiate with your children, a salesperson trying to land your next sale, or a lawyer trying to negotiate a settlement, this book has something to offer you.

To learn more about how we can help you develop your skills as a principled negotiator, visit us at www.adrgi.com.

IN NEGOTIATION, PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE – A MESSAGE FROM MICHELLE JOY WECKSLER

At the time she was only 2, but my niece had the makings of becoming a hard bargainer. We were in a grocery store and she decided she wanted a box of Lucky Charms. Her mother had already told me that sugar cereals were “out of the question.” So, being the sometimes-obedient aunt, I informed my niece that the Lucky Charms were not going home with us. In response, my niece dropped the box on the floor and stared at me. Hmm, not so different from how I’ve seen grown adults react when their demands are not met.



I looked at my niece and very calmly asked her to please pick up the Lucky Charms and place them back on the shelf. I explained that someone might trip over the box if it was left in the aisle. Something profound must have happened in the air between us because all of a sudden it appeared that my niece could no longer hear me. As a matter of fact, it seemed that my niece could no longer see me! She was looking down at the ground and moving her foot around in a circular motion on the floor. Now granted, in some negotiation situations, we may feel that we have the power to alter the actions of our negotiating partner. For example, I probably had the power – being the bigger and stronger adult that I was – to force my niece to place the box back on the shelf. However, there were risks involved in using my power with my niece – the least of which was a fellow shopper calling the authorities on me! Some of the risks were similar to the risks inherent in exercising our power in business negotiations. I was concerned about negatively impacting our future negotiations. I was also concerned about bad publicity – I mean how would it look if I grabbed a child and escorted her to the parking lot kicking and screaming? I knew heads would turn. But I also knew that giving in to her demand wasn’t the appropriate action. So, drawing on my learning regarding effective negotiators, I decided not to take instantaneous action. Instead, I decided to wait.

We stayed there for a long time...other shoppers had to maneuver around us to navigate down the aisle. But, eventually, my niece slowly inched her way toward the box, bent down, and replaced it on the shelf. I have to say the experience was quite an ordeal for me. Those 15 minutes on aisle 6 felt like an eternity to me. I can only imagine what they must have felt like to a 2 year old. But waiting those 15 minutes taught me a lot about negotiation. I learned that sometimes it is helpful to explain yourself and then just wait -

give the other person time to think and time to act. I learned that by staying committed to a negotiation, I might impact the commitment the other negotiator has to the process. After all, my niece could have walked away and left me standing there beside the Lucky Charms! I learned to consider the implications of exercising my power. I also learned to weigh the risks and benefits associated with my choice of action during a negotiation. I learned that no matter what your negotiating partner looks like, don't rush to make assumptions – even the smallest negotiator may hold an incredible amount of power. And most of all, I learned to be patient. Don't push the other negotiator, don't fill the space between you with weak reasoning and threats, and don't walk away if you don't get exactly what you want when you want it. Slow down, take a deep breath, and be willing to wait. Patience truly is a virtue.

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NEGOTIATION LESSONS FROM OUR CHILDREN

In the October 2003 issue of *Selling*, Robert Menard points out some of the lessons we can learn about negotiation from our children. To quote Menard, "Children are naturally good negotiators. They know intuitively that "no" means "maybe"; they do not give up easily; and they know enough to ask for much more than they want."

Here are some of the lessons Menard believes we can learn from our kids:

Learn to open up discussions. Whether we say "no" or "because I said so," children usually follow up with us by asking "why?" By moving us beyond our positions, they open up the door to further discussion and the possibility of softening our resistance.

Be persistent and creative. Children will come up with many good reasons why we should give in to their requests. They don't give up. They merely accept the challenge your rejection provides!

Listen and ask "what if." If a child asks for candy and you say "no," the child will hear you and come back with "what if I eat the candy after dinner?" Be willing to explore how you can turn a "no" into a "yes."

Use optimistic terms. Children know to avoid pessimistic language or language that is tentative when framing their requests. Children know that if they frame their request using tentative language, it is easier for the parent to say no.

Use high initial demands to your advantage. Menard points out that children train their parents by presenting high demands. One example that the author gives is of a child who asks for a nose ring. The parent was more than happy to compromise on pierced ears to avoid the trauma he would experience with having his child running around with a nose ring. Of course, the child really only wanted pierced ears all along!

Watch children and learn from them. See which lessons you can take from the playground into the boardroom!

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Very often negotiations breakdown because one or both sides forget (or never realized) that its all about dealing with people. Yes, I know that the "people" are usually representing entities of some sort, but during the process, the negotiators will always incorporate their "personal" factors into the deal.



Personal factors can include such things as fear of losing or pride in performance. These personal factors and many others just like them have a strong impact on the outcome of the negotiations and cannot be ignored. If you forget to consider the "emotional" disposition of the party on the opposite side of the table, you will handicap your efforts and reduce the odds of success.

Understanding and addressing the emotional issues in addition to the substantive issues is critical in successful negotiations.

William A. Gallaty is the Managing Partner of The Rand Group, LLP, Management and Financial Consultants.

[Want to learn about how we can help you with negotiations?](#)

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“The test of a first rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function.”

- F. Scott Fitzgerald



A CHALLENGE TO YOU! IT'S NEGOTIABLE!

The title says it all. In his book *You Can Negotiate Anything!*, which sold 2.5 million copies, Herb Cohen posits just that – that you CAN negotiate anything. So challenge yourself. Find something that you believe cannot be negotiated – a ticketed item in a store, going to see a “chick flick” or “guy’s movie” with your spouse, or getting a raise from your boss. Then, go for it! What might you be able to do to make this otherwise non-negotiable situation negotiable? What can you say? What do you have to put on the table to try and meet the interests of the other person?



Go ahead. Negotiate the non-negotiable. We challenge you!

Share your success stories with us! If you are successful in your negotiations, please e-mail us and share your story. We would welcome the opportunity to highlight your successes in our upcoming newsletters! E-mail us at info@adrgi.com.