

NEGOTIATING FOR SUCCESS

by Donna Stevenson



Last year, my husband and I had the need to purchase a new vehicle. Given the size of this type of purchase, it was no surprise it would be a challenging situation for me. I wanted to shop around and focus on getting as much as we could on a trade-in. He wanted a higher-end vehicle from a specific dealer, based on the premise trade-in value would be greater as well as after-sales service. This negotiation involved him, the dealer, the salesperson, and the salesperson's manager – a complicated situation.

Negotiation takes many forms in our daily lives. We negotiate with our spouses, our children, our bosses, our colleagues, and just about everyone else. What differs is the challenge posed by the situation and the other side's view.

William Fry, in his book *Getting Past No*, states,

“We may all be negotiators, yet many of us don’t like to negotiate. We see negotiation as stressful communication. We see ourselves faced with an unpleasant choice.”

His solution is to jointly problem-solve, tackle the issue, not the person by “...[turning] face to face confrontation into side by side problem-solving.”

What is Negotiation?

Negotiation is the process where we exchange ideas to effect a change in our relationships. All negotiations involve both rational and emotional factors. The outcome is as likely to be emotional as rational.

Why Negotiate?

We negotiate to reach an agreement, settle an argument, make a point, reach a mutually beneficial solution. All negotiations are about change and involve action.

To negotiate successfully, we need to understand ourselves and our opponents, psychologically. Failure to understand these psychological needs is at the root of most unsuccessful negotiations.

The Successful Negotiation

At [Mohawk College Enterprise \(MCE\)](#), we train leaders in the steps of successful negotiation.

1. Pause for Reflection.

Reflect before you start to negotiate to evaluate the risks. Pause during the negotiation so your emotions do not get in the way.

2. Search for Needs.

Be clear on what you need to get out of the negotiation. Each party needs to feel involved and an important part of the process.

3. Determine Your Objectives.

Ask yourself - what issues are most important to you and the other side? What would be the optimum outcome?

4. Agree on Facts.

Both parties believe their assumptions to be facts. Use probing questions to validate assumptions and focus on facts.

5. Control the Climate.

Negotiate in a positive climate. Show the other party you have their interests at heart.

Finally, plan for your BATNA (Best Alternative To a Negotiated Agreement). This is the best way to satisfy your interests without the other side's agreement. What is your 'walkaway'? How can you get them to respect your interests? Do you need to use mediation or arbitration? Select the one best for you.

Remember my situation with the vehicle purchase? We found a solution which met both our needs. And I must admit he was right about the after-sales service.



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