

# 7 Skills You Need to Negotiate Better

By Naseem Mariam

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ABSTRACT: When confronted by a crisis, man usually takes recourse to one of 2 options: fight or flight. However we human beings have a third option -- negotiation -- which we need to cultivate into a skill. Learn the 7 skills you need to get the best from your negotiations.

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When confronted by a crisis, man usually takes recourse to one of 2 options: fight or flight. This is the traditional, natural, in-built mechanism within all animals. However we human beings have a third option which we need to cultivate into a skill.

That is the option of negotiations - of discussions, debate, and dialogue to arrive at a win-win solution to the crisis on hand. Just what is Negotiation? What are the skills that you need to have to get a fair deal in a negotiating table.

The definition of negotiation says: "a discussion intended to produce an agreement"

Skills that help you do better at the negotiating table:

1. Self Awareness - knowing what makes you tick; and empathy

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Understand your own strengths and weakness. Know what your core values are -- what is it that you are willing to compromise on or adjust with? Also you should have total control over your emotions: understand how you behave and what triggers can upset your composure.

Study the other party -- understand them and the background they come from: what are their strengths and weaknesses. How have they reacted in the past to such situations? Which of the negotiating styles do they display predominantly: Avoider, Compromiser, Accommodator, Competitor or Problem Solver?

2. Identify: Creative and innovative solutions

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Develop an open mind, always have an inquisitive and enquiring approach to every problem; think of the problem less and concentrate more on the solutions. The problem exists in a world of 'lack' and scarcity whereas the solution encourages thoughts of abundance and plenty. Thus focus on the solutions to maintain a positive outlook and approach the negotiating table with confidence.

3. Analyze: Evaluate the pros and cons of possible solutions

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Question 'what if' this objection is raised; what will happen if this situation occurs.

Take a lot of time and care to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the various options and solutions. Think about and rank them on priority that you feel the other party would rank the solutions; then rank it as per what you feel is important.

Making a list of alternatives, evaluating the pros and cons of each and then ordering them from most desirable to least desired outcomes from both perspectives will give you a better picture of the inherent value of each solution.

4. Communicate: listening, speaking, presenting, questioning, match the medium

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Good communication starts with good listening skills. What is dear to the other person? What factors weigh heavy with them? Now that you have taken the trouble to identify solutions and evaluate the pros and cons, you need to speak out and present these facts as you see them. Allow the other party to present their points.

Then pause in your negotiations -- give each other time to think: take a small break in the middle. The art of questioning helps you focus better on the other person's views and draw forth clarity into the situation on hand. It is easy to persuade the other person when you use the communication medium that they relate to: do they prefer reading documents, or graphics and diagrams, or is it bulleted points? Is it emotional feelings or logical facts that drive the person?

5. Detach people from the problems; be fair in all dealings (integrity, honesty, trust)

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Be courteous, polite and show respect for the other party. Keep a good handle on your negative emotions and give your positive attitudes and behaviors free rein. Think and talk only in terms of the problem and issue. Detach people from the problem. Do not make personal remarks, hurting comments nor be a sycophant and grovel at the other's feet. We are looking for a win-win solution -- not just a solution.

Be fair in all dealings. Act with integrity to yourself, honesty with others and gain the trust and faith of the other party. Matching the non-verbal actions of the other person helps build an atmosphere of trust and friendliness faster.

6. Believe in sacrifice and service

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The purpose of negotiating should be to help you offer greater service to others. Service and sacrifice are the reasons why you are willing to negotiate and arrive at a solution that is acceptable to both parties. You are willing to sacrifice some un-essentials and not-so-mandatory attributes in order to gain something better and longer lasting and you sincerely believe that the other party is also willing to give some in order to achieve much.

7. Be willing to walk away

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When you are being cornered into a lose situation, be willing to walk away and drop all negotiations. Have the courage to walk away rather than compromise on what you hold

dear. This once more emphasizes the fact that you should know what your core values are i.e. Step One should be completed first before you start negotiating.

The ebook "Project Serenity - How to gain happiness and peace" gives you a more detailed practical information to improve in these skills. There are case studies of a project manager and how she realizes the importance of integrity, honesty and trust in business dealings.

Finally, it is practice that makes perfect. Try out these skills and practices of negotiation in smaller groups, with peers, with siblings, with less critical issues and daily problems and irritants. With practice you will be able to stop looking at the people on the other side as enemies and start thinking of them as collaborators and helping hands.

Together we should be able to negotiate ourselves to a solution that was better than what either of us had imagined. The win-win situation may take time and practise to arrive at but it invigorates and nurtures both parties to a great extent.

#### Related Reading

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ebook "Project Serenity - How to gain happiness and peace"  
<http://www.pm4all.com/serenity.html>

#### About the Author

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Naseem Mariam is the editor of "Management that Soars" eNewsletter & author of "Project Serenity - How to gain happiness and peace". Her writings draw life from her 18 years experience as software Project Manager. Let her guide you towards Faster All Round Success and a Stress Free, Joyous Life. Her free ebook and Newsletter tell You How. Subscribe with <mailto:projectdioxide@sendfree.com> Visit her at [www.123projectmanagement.com](http://www.123projectmanagement.com)

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