

Introduction

You spend more time negotiating than you do driving to work each day. Most of us take our driving seriously: We've studied, practiced, and taken a driving test. We have a license, insurance, a car, and a fancy navigation system; we know the rules of the road, and we hope that people who disobey those rules will get pulled over and ticketed. These investments mean that we don't sit up at night worrying about how we are going to drive ourselves to work. We have the equipment, we know what we are doing, and we get there. We feel ready, prepared.

Negotiating every day should be the same way. Yet, if you are like most other people, you spend countless hours fretting about upcoming negotiations. "What should I say?" "Should I open first or not?" "What do I do if they don't accept my offer?" and so on.

This book is about how to make sure you are prepared and ready to negotiate on the roughest of terrain, with the most daunting road conditions.

The need to negotiate can happen at any time—sometimes once a day, and sometimes more than once a day. Any time you cannot reach your goals without the cooperation of someone else, you are propelled headlong into negotiation. You may not be engaged in a hostage negotiation, or striking a deal for millions of dollars' worth of a product or service for a company, but the importance of arriving at a point where you and the other party both feel you win is vital to your peace, sanity, and productivity. For example, if your goal is to eat dinner in peace, and your young child is demanding that you fix a toy or play a game, you must negotiate.

If your goal is to sell your house and upgrade to a nicer house with a heftier mortgage, you must negotiate with your penny-pinching spouse, who may not be up for the move. You sometimes are thrown into negotiations when you least expect it—such as when somebody has the nerve to claim what you thought was yours. Imagine that a coworker announces he or she wants to "reconsider" the project responsibilities that you thought you both

already agreed to. Or say that your neighbor claims it is your job to repair a fence that fell down after a freak thunderstorm.

The simple question I ask in this book is “Are you ready to negotiate at the drop of a hat?” If your answer is anything but “Yes, certainly,” then please read on. One false move in negotiations of major importance, such as salary negotiations, house buying, and car buying, can have a dramatic negative consequence on your economic welfare for years to come. Given that your quality of life is affected by your ability to bring home the bacon as well as eat it in quiet dignity, knowing how to negotiate in the corporate world and in the kitchen is essential for peace of mind and retirement.

This book does three things: First, it provides a game plan that works in any negotiation situation. I dispel the faulty belief that negotiations in boardrooms or real estate deals are fundamentally different from salary negotiations, school and community negotiation, and, yes, negotiations with spouses and kids. Chances are, if you are great at making real estate deals, then you also will be great at negotiating with a caterer for your local charity’s fundraiser.

Second, this book focuses on the two key tasks of any negotiation: creating win–win deals by leveraging information carefully collected from the other party and effectively laying claim to part of the win–win goldmine.

Finally, this book talks about how to handle less-than-perfect situations, such as when you make a threat (that you did not really mean), how to establish trust with someone you don’t trust, how to walk away at the right time, and how to negotiate with people you don’t really like and, at the other end of the spectrum, people you love very much.

Negotiation may sound daunting, but if you are informed, practiced, and prepared, even you can do it. And that’s the truth.

