

Negotiation Versus Persuasion

Let's talk about where negotiation fits into the world of persuasion and the difference between the two. Persuasion occurs when your ideas are so convincing that the other party ends up adopting your point of view. With persuasion, there is no compromising as there is in negotiation. Rather, the other party willfully and enthusiastically abandons their position to embrace yours. This abandonment is not brought about by manipulation because the other party clearly sees the gains and advantages of doing business with you. Negotiation, on the other hand, is a process of give and take. It's being able to overcome objections on both sides of an issue and ultimately reaching some common ground. While persuasion is the ultimate ideal, anytime any one of us is presenting our ideas, the other party is often equally committed to their own convictions, thus making negotiation the next best path. Often when we hear the word "negotiation," we think of a complex deal going on in the business world. In reality, however, all of us are involved in multiple negotiation processes every day. For example, when you want steak but your spouse wants lasagna, you may banter back and forth about why one is better than the other. In the end, however, you end up going to a place that offers a bit of both. In that instance, you may not have thought of yourself as *negotiating*, but that's really what it was. Negotiation is so common in day-to-day life that you must master the skills of great negotiators to become a Master Persuader.

Negative Associations with Negotiation

While persuasion is what most of us are striving for, cooperative negotiation can yield win-win situations and should not be overlooked. In the previous example in which the spouses were trying to agree on dinner, both parties win because they end up going to a place that offers both of their dining preferences. Neither party has to compromise; both parties get what they want. When discussing negotiation in training seminars, I ask the audience what their perceptions of negotiation are. I commonly hear things like "two parties ready to fight," "frustration," "manipulation," "long hours," "deceit" and the list goes on and on. Despite what my audience members might suggest, there are only four true outcomes to negotiation: win-win, no deal, lose-lose or win-lose. The problem is that too often we get stuck in the mindset that negotiation is a game like football. That is,

we think there has to be a clear-cut winner and loser. That mentality, however, does not reflect real negotiation. The truth is, everyone can win in a negotiation setting. If we want to use a sports analogy, a better one would be tandem parachuting. Tandem parachuting is where two people jump together, sharing the same parachute. In this sport, like in negotiation, you are in it together, you work together, and when you land safely, everybody wins. If you don't, everyone loses!

Stephen Covey, author of the best-selling book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, is a big advocate of either going for the win-win situation or not going for it at all. If you think about it, if it turned out any other way in your own negotiations, would your prospects ever want to do business with you again? Would they recommend you to their friends? Aside from that, it would simply be wrong and any possible short-term gains would not be worth the damage to your reputation and future business.

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