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Negotiation Advice: Everyone Can Win

by Fred Gebhart

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Many planners think of negotiating as winning and losing. Anything you win is something I lose. The more successful strategy is to think of negotiating as an exercise in winning, period. It's called mutual gains bargaining and everyone wins.

The familiar strategy of starting with extreme demands and browbeating opponents into submission sets everyone up to lose, explained Carol Frohlinger, president of Negotiating Women and author of best-selling negotiating books *Her Place at the Table* and *Nice Girls Just Don't Get It*. One party may have the power to bully the other into agreement, but that kind of forced settlement creates ill will and sets up future battles.

"I'm trained as a lawyer, always looking out for my client's best interest," Frohlinger said. "Traditionally, you start high, I start low, and we meet somewhere in the middle. If you win, I lose. Mutual gains bargaining is getting behind what people say they want to really understanding their needs and interests."

Taking the time to understand what the other person wants is the key to successful bargaining, Frohlinger said.

"It gives you huge opportunities to enhance relationships and long-term benefits whether you are talking business relationships or personal relationships," she said.

Getting to mutual winning takes patience and attention. It is easy to think of negotiating as a formal process. The reality is that we all negotiate all the time—at work, at home, with family and with friends.

"People tend to focus exclusively on the issues," Frohlinger said. "They forget that emotions are as important as issues. People negotiate with, and continue to work and play and live with, people who they like and trust. Consider the issues, but consider just as strongly the pressures that other person is facing, what they are worried about. Getting to mutual success means managing your own emotions as much as it does influencing the other party's emotions."



Carol Frohlinger

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