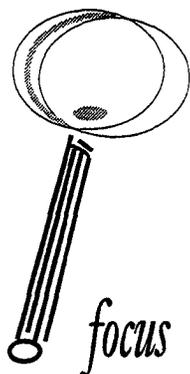


# 1

## Essentials of Negotiating



### Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- List the three criteria for negotiating processes.
- State the central topic or objective of every negotiation.
- List the five basic needs of people that underlie all negotiations.
- State four reasons for distinguishing between needs and solutions in a negotiation.
- List the four ways to dissolve blocks in negotiations.

### TWO VIEWS OF NEGOTIATING

There are two different views of or approaches to negotiating. One view holds that negotiating is what we do to defend our solutions or positions, prove we are right, and win. When we take this view, then strategies and techniques for making our opening demands, positioning ourselves, and trading concessions are very important to us.

The other view of negotiating holds that negotiating is what we do to meet both mutual and differing needs, and create mutual understanding and acceptance so that both sides walk away satisfied. When we take this view, knowing how to recognize our own and others' needs and directing a conversation to create mutual understanding and acceptance are very important to us.

This book explains how to accomplish the second view of negotiating by leading people who are attached to the first view (wanting to be right and to win) into the second view (wanting to meet the needs of both parties).

## WHAT NEGOTIATING IS

Negotiating is what people do to get what they need from other people. In one sense, all of life is a negotiation. We negotiate with our spouses, our kids, our boss, our employees, our neighbors, people on the freeway, in line at the market, and so forth. We negotiate every day to get what we need from others. Every negotiation has a different set of rules, often unspoken, sometimes unconscious or unknown, and sometimes prescribed. Some negotiations are easy and quick, and some are complex and take multiple meetings over time. Regardless of how easy or difficult, all negotiations share several points in common, as is explained below.

### Negotiating Is a Process

Negotiating involves a series of behaviors. We need to be conscious not only of the topic we are talking about, but also of how we are talking about it. We need to be aware of whether our approach is likely to get us the agreement, cooperation, or resolution we want or get us stuck instead. The term process refers both to the steps involved in a negotiation and what is happening at every step of the negotiation.

### Negotiating Takes Place Between People

It might sound obvious, but negotiating is something that involves people. We do not negotiate with machines. We negotiate only with other people. Thus, to be effective, we need to be insightful about people in general and about the particular people with whom we are negotiating. We also need to be flexible because what people do in a negotiation is often not what we expect.

### Negotiating Is About Needs

The central topic of every negotiation is needs, not solutions. Solutions only exist to meet needs. Needs are what we negotiate—our personal needs, the needs of the organization we represent, others' personal needs, and the needs they represent. If we fail to recognize our own needs accurately or to hear what others need, we are unlikely to be successful in our negotiations.

### Every Negotiation Is Different

Depending on the situation, every negotiation has its own rules or protocols. Sometimes the rules are historical and familiar. This is often the case when we interact with our parents or spouse or a long-time friend. Sometimes the rules are unconscious, as is often the case when we find ourselves repeating conflicts or problems with someone and don't know how to break the cycle. Sometimes we need to create the rules as we go along, as is likely to happen in a new relationship or a new business context. And sometimes we find ourselves in situations in which there are prescribed, formal, or traditional procedures, as in union/management negotiations, buying a car or home, or filing an insurance claim.

## Sometimes It's Easy and Sometimes It Ain't

Sometimes negotiations are a piece of cake, and sometimes they are tough work. Sometimes we can run down the basketball court and make a slam dunk, and sometimes we have to bring the ball down several times just to get a shot in. Such is life. We need to be realistic and understand that our negotiations are not always going to be easy. Sometimes we have to be creative and persistent to address and dissolve a series of blocks.

## THE PROCESS, OR WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

Every negotiation has a beginning, an end, and a series of steps in between. A negotiation may take less than a minute to resolve or it may take months or even years. We need to be conscious of the process so we can direct it and change it if it becomes ineffective.

Being aware of the process gives us options. However, consciousness of the process implies an important preliminary step: reflection about how we want to approach the issue before we begin the negotiation.

## Who's Across the Table?

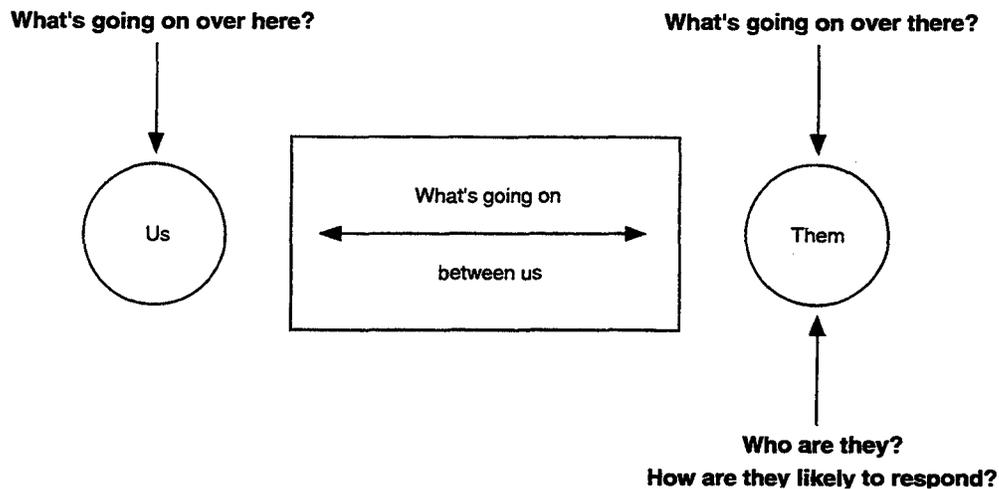
If we know something about the other people in the negotiation, it gives us important information to engage them effectively. If I know that the other person is easily embarrassed, I may want to talk to that person when no one else is around. If I know the other person is short-tempered, I may want to raise a touchy issue in a public place, like a restaurant, where the person is less likely to become volatile. If the other person tends to be argumentative or defensive, I may want to give assurance up front that I do not want to find fault but to resolve the issue collaboratively. If the other person is introverted and needs time to think alone, I will want to avoid overwhelming him or her with too much information and pushing for resolution in the first meeting. If I know the other person needs lots of information to feel comfortable in making a decision, I will want to do my homework and have all the information available, especially if I need a quick decision.

## What's Going on over There?

We need to be aware of what is going on with the other person during our discussions so we can redirect the process if it starts to go sour (see Exhibit 1-1). If the other person stops talking, that is usually a good sign that something is wrong. The same is true if the other person becomes agitated, angry, frustrated, impatient, accommodating, or dismissive.

## What's Going on Over Here?

In addition to being aware of the other person's behavioral and emotional responses, we also need to be aware of our own reactions in the process. We need to be conscious of feeling angry, resentful, distrustful, or embattled. We

**Exhibit 1-1****Who's Across the Table**

need to notice when we stop listening and start planning our defense while the other person is talking. We need to pay attention if we begin interrupting or dominating the conversation, or suppressing what we are thinking and not speaking out. We should be conscious of needing to be right by wanting the opposition to see things our way, admitting they are wrong, and giving in. In short, we need to be aware of when we are getting mired in the process.

### What's Going on Between Us?

We need to be aware of the process going on between us. We should avoid trying to be right rather than trying to understand each other. We need to pay attention to closing doors instead of opening them and wanting to win more than wanting to collaborate on a solution. We need to avoid arguing over who has the right solution rather than trying to understand each other's needs. We should be aware of when we are being demeaning rather than valuing each other.

### Three Negotiating Criteria

Essentially, our negotiating processes need to meet three criteria: They need to be safe; they need to be fair; and they need to be effective.

#### Safety

If our negotiating processes are not safe, people will not come to the table to talk. People may feel unsafe because they are afraid of being blamed, criticized, taken advantage of, or embarrassed. They may be afraid of having someone angry with them. Creating safe processes is often the "negotiation" before the negotiation" that occurs prior to international negotiations among nations. This may also occur within families or organizations when a neutral or safe

third party talks to each side in a dispute separately to identify the conditions under which both sides would be willing to discuss matters face-to-face.

#### Fairness

Negotiating processes need to be fair. The other party needs to expect to be heard and to have a fair voice in decisions that are made. If the other party feels ganged up on, left out, or discounted, there may be no way to arrive at a mutually satisfactory agreement or commitment.

#### Effectiveness

Negotiating processes need to be effective in order to reach agreement or resolution. Effective processes require that both parties have the same information, and that the information be accurate and complete. Effective processes require that we understand how both sides are thinking and interpreting the information and how the current situation is affecting both sides. We need to understand our own needs and objectives, as well as the needs and objectives of the other side. Both parties need to send whole, complete messages to each other and to listen and explore rather than sell and judge. They need to try to understand what the problems are and what they mean in terms of satisfying each party's needs. They need to focus on generating numerous options together rather than one side locking onto a single solution and defending it to the death.

## NEGOTIATING REQUIRES

### WILLINGNESS AND ABILITY

Creating processes that are safe, fair, and effective requires both willingness and ability. We have to check our own internal motivation in a negotiation. We have to want to achieve a mutually satisfying resolution. The other people involved in the negotiation usually know what our intentions are and respond in mirror fashion. If we want them to admit they are wrong, they will probably want us to do the same. If we are not listening to them, they are unlikely to listen to us. On the other hand, if we are sincere in our desire to reach agreements that will allow both of us to walk away satisfied, the other people involved are more likely to commit to the same outcomes.

Sometimes we are willing but do not have the ability to negotiate effectively. We may think we are listening, but we are not really hearing the other person's needs. We may think we are being descriptive about data, but we are being judgmental instead. We may think we are being clear, but we are not saying what we are really thinking, how the situation is affecting us, or what we need. Sometimes we think we are stating what we need, when we are actually telling the other parties what we want them to do, criticizing them, or trying to "shape them up." Sometimes we do not realize what our tone of voice sounds like or how we are making it unsafe for others to commit to what we want them to do. This is why it is so important to stay aware of the process throughout the negotiation.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING FLEXIBLE

Because we are negotiating with people, not machines, we need to be flexible. Sometimes what we start off talking about is not the real issue, the most important issue, or the whole issue we need to discuss. We need to pay attention to what is going on in the conversation to identify the real issues. We may start off talking about a schedule and find that the other party is getting irritated or resistant. If that is the case, we may need to stop and find out what the irritation or resistance means. If we do not understand the meaning, we may miss the real issue that needs to be resolved.

### Be Willing to Talk About Your Relationship

The important thing we need to talk about may be our relationship, not the schedule. If we do not feel safe and respectful toward one another and do not address our relationship, it may be difficult for us to solve our scheduling problem satisfactorily.

Most people tend to ignore relationship conflicts and hope they will just disappear, but that rarely happens. What we do not talk about, we do not resolve. Thus we need to be flexible during negotiations and shift our focus from the negotiation topic when there is obviously something wrong with the relationship. If after talking about our relationship, the negotiation topic is still important to us, we can go back to it and resolve it more easily.

### Be Willing to Change Your Process

We also need to be willing to change our process if both parties are going around in circles, opposing one another, or simply stuck. We discussed earlier the importance of our processes being safe, fair, and effective. If not, we may need to take a break, summarize where we are in the discussion, or get more information. If what we are doing is not working, doing more of it does not make sense. We need to redirect the conversation. If we are not sure what is wrong or what to do differently, just say so. This can help both parties focus on making the process more effective.

### Avoid Fixed Beliefs

An important part of being flexible is avoiding fixed beliefs. We need to be open to exploring, to hearing all the facts, and to understanding the other parties' point of view, no matter how much we may disagree with it. We also need to be open to the very real possibility that there is more than one right answer.

### Be Patient

Finally, part of being flexible is being patient. Issues are not always instantly resolved. We may want instant resolutions with drums rolling and trumpets blaring, but issues usually get resolved gradually, as understanding and acceptance develop among the parties involved. This may often require sitting down to negotiate more than once.

## THE OBJECTIVE: MEETING NEEDS

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the primary objective of all negotiations is to meet both parties' needs. Parties decide to negotiate because each of them needs something. If this were not the case, they would not be talking at all. This seems obvious and yet so often we act in ways that prevent this from happening. Our job is to create an atmosphere of clarity and ease of understanding each other's needs.

### Understand Others' Needs

Often we seem to do the opposite of making it easy to understand each other. We fail to ask other people what they know, think, feel, or need. We complain that we do not understand them or why they do what they do. Instead of exploring to discover and to understand their needs, we judge them. Instead of creating safety, listening, and valuing them, we tell them what is wrong with them and why our misunderstandings are their fault. We intimidate them and then wonder why they become defensive and unreasonable.

### Make It Easy for Others to Understand Your Needs

We need to understand the people we negotiate with and make it easy for them to understand us. We cannot expect them to read our minds. Our needs have to make sense to them if we want them to commit to helping us meet them. We should share what we know, what we are thinking, and how we interpret our situation. We try to create empathy by telling them how events affect us and those we may be representing. We need to tell them clearly what we need versus what we are currently getting, explain what we are willing to do, and what we want from them.

### Accept that Needs Are Valid

Our attitude toward our own and others' needs plays an important role in how effective we are in our negotiations. We may evaluate or censor our own and others' needs. We may believe that some needs are valid and some are not. The reality is that to be human is to have needs. We all have basic needs that motivate us from birth until death. Our needs, like our emotions, are an innate part of us. They are not good or bad, but simply a reflection of human nature in general and of our particular historical experience.

### The Five Basic Needs

Five basic interrelated needs motivate the behavior of all humans from birth until death. While these needs are present all the time, certain needs become primary or more pressing at different stages of our development and in particular situations.

#### Survival/Safety

We all need to survive physically. As infants and young children, we are literally dependent upon others for our survival. Sometimes we face life-or-death

situations. Other times, less serious circumstances may seem like life-or-death situations to us. For example, we may feel we cannot live without someone or believe that if we do not get a particular job or accomplish some task, something catastrophic will happen. An illness, even if it is not serious, may cause us to feel vulnerable and threatened. Someone's anger, even if it is not directed toward us, may cause us to feel unsafe.

#### Worth/Value

We need to believe that we have a right to be alive, to be who we are, and to live in ways that feel congruent with our self-image. We need to feel valuable and worthwhile. If we do not value ourselves, we will assume that what others want us to be and do is more important than what we think we need to be and do. If we do not value ourselves and believe that we do not have a right to something, we are not likely to ask for it or stand up and negotiate for ourselves.

#### Competence

We need to believe that we are enough. We need to believe that we are strong enough to protect ourselves, smart enough to figure out what we need to know, and talented enough to achieve the things we want to accomplish. When we are five, we want to be ten; when we are sixteen, we want to do the things that twenty-one-year-olds do. We arm wrestle, we challenge, we try new things. We spend much of our lives trying to prove our competence to ourselves and others.

#### Belonging

We need to be loved and connected with others. We need to share our journey with others, to not be alone, and to know that others will be there for us when we really need them. We need to have a home in the world and to be wanted by others. The degree to which we feel loved, accepted, and respected by others often has a significant impact on our feelings of safety, worth, and competence.

#### Meaning

We need to be able to understand and make sense out of our life experience. We need coherence, congruence, and order. We need predictability. We are purposeful people and, as such, need a sense of direction, specific goals, and a sense that we can achieve them.

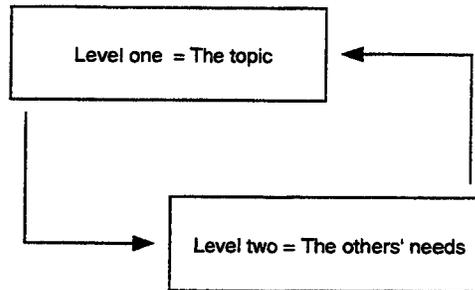
#### Listen on Two Levels

The five basic needs are a part of every conversation or negotiation that we have. To hear what needs are important to others during our negotiation, we must listen on two levels (see Exhibit 1-2). On one level, we need to listen to the topic or content being discussed. On another level, we need to observe how the other people talk about that topic—the words they use, the tone of voice, their nonverbal communication, and what all this tells us about what they need. If they cannot be direct or clear about what they need or if we are uncertain about what they need, then we need to ask.



## Exhibit 1-2

### Listen on Two Levels



### Why Others Don't Tell Us

If people are not willing to tell us their needs, it usually means one of several things:

- They are not clear about what they need.
- They do not believe they have a right to what they need.
- They do not feel safe telling us what they need for fear of being taken advantage of, judged, or dismissed.
- They are angry with us and want to punish us.

When people do not reveal what they need, we can usually tell their reasons from their behavior and tone of voice. If they appear confused, they probably do not know themselves what they need. If they seem hesitant or make self-deprecating comments, they may not believe they have a right to what they need. If they are silent or talk around the issue, they probably do not feel safe. If they sound irritated, they may be angry with us.

### Needs vs. Solutions

A final point about negotiating is that it is extremely important to distinguish between needs and solutions. Needs have to do with human experience: feeling safe, valued, competent, connected, and being able to make sense of what is going on. Needs are a desire for certain outcomes or results that differ from the current outcomes or results. For example, I may want to resolve a conflict with someone (a need to belong) or I may need to finish a task (a need to feel competent).

Solutions, on the other hand, are the actions that people take to meet needs or accomplish desired outcomes. If the solution is carried out, we expect to get the outcome we desire (our need). Solutions are what we do, and want others to do, to produce conditions that do not currently exist. For example, I may need to feel valued (my need) so I want you to tell me that I did a good job (my solution). I may feel hungry, need to feel satisfied, and decide to eat something. Eating is the solution to my need to not be hungry. I may need to feel that I have gotten a fair deal on my new car, so I am willing to do my

homework and shop around. Shopping around is my solution. Or I may want to get a certain amount of money for my trade-in. How much I want for my used car is my solution to this need.

#### *Four Reasons to Focus on Needs, Not Solutions*

There are several reasons that it is important, during a negotiation, to focus on needs rather than solutions.

1. Focusing on needs rather than solutions helps us clarify what we need. Only then can we clearly explain our needs to others. If we do not know our own needs, we cannot expect to get them across to others.
2. If we tell others only what we want them to do and they do not understand what we need, they may not understand our request. Generally, people do only what makes sense to them. They avoid doing things they consider senseless if the requested action requires change or sacrifice on their part.
3. Often our solution does not seem reasonable to them. They may become defensive or resist because they do not understand the need behind it. ("No, I don't want to go to the store for you.") However, if they do understand the need, they may be willing to help us come up with an alternative solution that will work just as well or better. ("If you do not need it until after lunch, I can pick it up then," or "Would you like to use my car or have John go for you")
4. Expressing our needs to the other party can help to create empathy. People may resent hearing what we want them to do if they do not know why the action is so important to us. In telling others what we need, we choose to be vulnerable with them and set the stage for them to be more self-disclosing and vulnerable with us. In this environment, it is more likely that we both end up getting what we need.

Focusing on solutions can pit us against others. Focusing on needs is more likely to lead to mutual understanding and agreement. An example of this occurred when two owners of a business disagreed over whether to move the manufacturing portion of their business to their corporate offices, located in another state. The owners had several discussions about the potential cost savings over several years if they located all of their company in one building, and the potential costs and risks involved in moving their manufacturing plant. No amount of financial analysis brought them any closer to an agreement. In fact, resolution came only when both parties discussed their personal needs related to the business decision. The majority owner stated clearly his need to be in control of his fate, which in this case meant controlling the manufacturing part of the business. He also shared some personal information that explained why it was so important for him to not feel out of control.

The second partner was gradually able to clarify his needs to contribute something significant to the business, to have an important role to play, and to run his own portion of the business without feeling as though someone were looking over his shoulder. Currently he ran the manufacturing facility. He was afraid that if it were moved into corporate headquarters, his role, influence, and autonomy would be diminished.

Once the two partners understood each other's needs, they accepted them as valid and committed to helping each other get what they needed. The ultimate solutions were to move manufacturing to corporate headquarters and develop a noncompeting spin-off company that the second partner would manage. This creative solution to both partners' needs came about because the partners were willing to be appropriately vulnerable with each other and to share and understand each other's needs.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING THE RULES

Every negotiating situation has its own rules. Car dealerships, for example, have a prescribed way to negotiate sales. Typically, a dealership will send out the first salesperson to find out what you are looking for and how serious you are about buying. The salesperson will show you what is in stock, and take you for a test drive. At some point, he is likely to ask you to make a written offer, claiming that while he has no authority to set price, your offer will be submitted to the sales manager. If the salesperson is successful, he will get you to commit before the dealership makes any commitment. If he thinks you might walk away, he will summon another salesperson to work with you ... and the process goes on.

Similarly, union/management negotiations in this country tend to follow prescribed processes, often involving lengthy meetings right down to a prescribed deadline. If either side settles before the deadline, that side's constituency usually criticizes their representative for giving in too easily.

### Knowing the Rules Gives Us Options

The process for buying a car or a house or negotiating a union contract may be very different from the process for buying a household appliance or negotiating with your teenager or an employee. Whatever the situation, it is important to know the rules. This gives us choices about how to influence the process so the rules are not used against us. Knowing the rules tells us what our options are so we do not naively give away what we do not have to give away, or so we do not make unrealistic demands that might kill the negotiation. Thus, we can ultimately craft decisions that satisfy both sides.

When buying a car, for example, knowing the rules can significantly influence the outcomes we get. In addition to knowing how car dealerships structure their sales process, it is also useful to know that:

1. You can buy a car through a broker in many parts of the country. Brokers buy wholesale from dealers and will usually quote you a price that is a few hundred dollars over the dealers' inventory price.
2. If you have a quote from a broker, many car dealerships will sell you the same car for \$100.00 less; otherwise they will lose the sale to the broker.

Following are some other examples that illustrate the importance of knowing the rules.

1. If you know a company has traditionally been unwilling to negotiate on price, you might be able to address this up front and find a way to make it worth their while to waive their usual policy. For example, it might be worth it to the company to give you a break on price if you can give the company volume business or persuade the company that doing business with you will be a good marketing strategy.
2. If you know that publishers typically pay "X" percent royalty on a standard contract and will agree to your retaining copyright on your material, this gives you parameters within which to negotiate.
3. If people in your office never raise their voices or express their anger directly, it will probably not be very effective for you to get your way by yelling and screaming.

The important point is to know the rules so you know what your options are and can make realistic decisions about how to approach and structure your negotiations.

## NEGOTIATING IS A PROCESS OF DISSOLVING BLOCKS

One way to define negotiating is to say it is a process of dissolving blocks. If there are no blocks, then there is nothing to negotiate. Thus we want to be able to recognize the blocks as soon as they arise so we can dissolve them.

We can understand how blocks occur in our negotiations if we observe what happens when water comes together from different sources. At the confluence or meeting point, there is turbulence until the water flows in a common direction. That common direction will always be the direction of least resistance.

The same phenomenon occurs when we come together with others in negotiations. Our experiences and consequently our beliefs and emotions and needs are the source of our energy or water flow. The force of our energy becomes manifested in our behaviors. We approach each other as separate streams of water, and we have the choice of either creating turbulence by pushing against each other or using the force and direction of each others' energy for our mutual benefit.

We tend to create turbulence when we judge others instead of trying to understand them. We create blocks when we fail to draw others toward us and use their energy. On the other hand, we can create a positive flow if we can step aside whenever others push against us with their beliefs, judgments, or opinions, or with their emotions, needs, and solutions. We need to view their needs and solutions as invitations, not demands. They are invitations to understand more about the other side, the situation, and ourselves.

### Blocks Exist for a Reason

We are more likely to create a common flow of energy if we remember that the blocks that arise in our negotiations are there for a reason: People need something and are afraid they cannot get it. Our job in a negotiation is to

understand what their needs are so we can find solutions that will allow everyone to walk away satisfied.

For example, if the block in our negotiation is that the other people in the negotiation view the situation differently, then their perspective of the situation reflects their experience and needs. If we fail to understand why their perspective differs from ours, and therefore fail to understand and accept their needs, we are unlikely to reach agreement.

### Use Others' Energy for Your Mutual Advantage

Instead of pushing back against the energy of the other party and creating turbulence, we need to grasp the energy and go with it. Instead of pushing back, we need to try to go in the same direction. If we do this, it does not mean that we give up or lose our direction. It simply allows us to explore the other party's direction first. Thus, the other party will be more willing to explore the direction of our energy. We will be more likely to either reach agreement and go in a common direction, or to go in separate directions peacefully. In either case, we will reach resolution.

How do we grasp and integrate others' flow of energy? We do this by exploring their anger, building upon their opinions, trying to understand them without giving in, and validating their experience.

### Explore Others' Anger

We grasp and integrate others' flow of energy by exploring the vulnerable emotions and needs behind the anger rather than pushing back and reacting with our own anger, as seen in Exhibit 1-3. Be aware that anger is always secondary and a cover to emotion. Preceding and underneath the anger is a vulnerable experience such as fear, disappointment, embarrassment, frustration, or loss.

If we do not push against or resist the anger, we will learn a lot. We might try asking, "Tell me more." "What happened?" "Help me understand why that is important to you." Letting others have their anger (as long as we are not in physical danger) and exploring with them what it means, leads to understanding and insight. It also tends to dissolve or dissipate the anger because anger needs something to push against. If you remove yourself as the target, the anger cannot continue. If you are willing to step aside and explore the other person's anger, he or she is likely to feel safer and more understood.

An example of pushing back:

Don: I'm angry that you refuse to do what I asked you to do.

Ken: Do it yourself. I've already got too much to do.

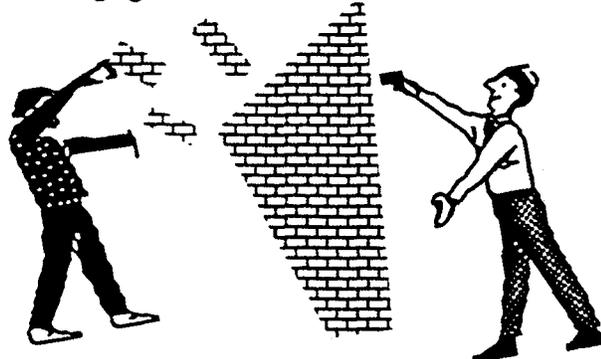
An example of integrating others' flow of energy:

Don: I'm angry that you refuse to do what I asked you to do.

Ken: Help me understand more clearly why you are so frustrated with this and what you need. I am feeling really pressured with everything that I have to

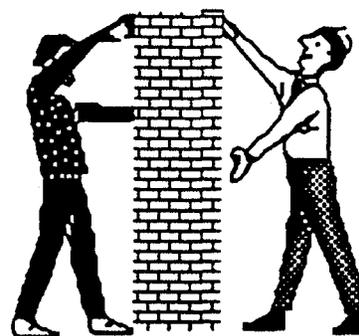
## **E** xhibit 1-3 Use Others' Energy for Mutual Advantage

Pushing against



versus

Using the energy together



do, but I'd like to see if there is some way that I can help you get what you need.

### Build Upon Others' Opinions

Similarly, we also grasp and integrate others' energy whenever we explore and build upon their opinions rather than disagree with them. The easiest thing in the world is to make people stupid and wrong. Instead, we need to assume that they view things their way for some good reason, given their past experiences. We need to be able to put the opinions of others in their own historical context to understand why they make sense to them.

A fundamental fact about human beings is that they are meaningful creatures. They are consciously reflective. They need to understand the relationship among events or experiences in their lives. If they cannot, they get frustrated, anxious, or nervous. Hence, be assured that whatever views other people have, they have for good historical reasons. If their views do not make sense to you, then you do not know them.

An example of pushing back:

Susan: I do not agree with the state sales tax that is being proposed.

Jill: Well, I think that's a short-sighted view. We need to do something about funding our school systems.

An example of integrating others' flow of energy:

Susan: I do not agree with the state sales tax that is being proposed.

Jill: Tell me more about your views on that. I am concerned about adequate funding for our schools. From what I have read, I have assumed that a sales tax would be one answer to that need, though I have some reservations about some elements of the current tax proposal. Are you opposed to any sales tax or to this particular proposal?

### Understanding vs. Giving In

We are often afraid to understand others because we are afraid that means we have to give up our own perspective and agree with them. That is not true. Understanding and valuing others who are separate and different from us is not synonymous with agreeing with their views. Understanding is just understanding. When people with differing views understand and appreciate each other, they integrate their energy and usually reach agreement.

An example of giving in:

Tom: I think that the environmentalists have gone too far.

Roger: I suppose you're right.

An example of understanding:

Tom: I think that the environmentalists have gone too far.

Roger: I can understand your views on the environmentalists since their activities have seriously impacted your mining operations. It is a very difficult issue to balance short-term business needs with long-term environmental needs. I suspect it is going to take sincere efforts on everyone's part to find appropriate and creative solutions.

### Validate Others' Experience

An important way to grasp and integrate others' energy is to validate their experience. We can do this by avoiding arguments about what happened when or who did what first or last. We can also integrate energy by exploring and validating others' emotional experience instead of telling them that they should not feel whatever they are feeling. In addition, we need to pace our interaction so we do not get ahead or behind others—give them answers when needed and allow them time to think when they need it. We also need to explore what they need rather than argue over who has the right answer. Basically, we validate another's experience whenever we explore rather than judge.

An example of judging and not validating:

That's a stupid thing to say. You obviously have not had too much experience in this area.

An example of exploring and validating:

Your statement surprises me because what you are saying is different from my experience. Tell me more about how you came to your view.

### The Sources of Our Blocks

Where do the blocks in our negotiations come from? We often falsely assume that the important blocks come from sources beyond our control. This is not usually the case. The primary source of blocks is usually ourselves. The

secondary source is the other party involved, and the third and least important source is the situation being negotiated.

### Sometimes It's Us

In what ways are we a source of blocks? As we saw in the preceding section, we are a source of blocks when we push against others with our judgments, anger, or self-righteousness. We are a source of blocks whenever we have solidified beliefs or think we know it all. We are a source of blocks whenever we are locked into solutions. And finally, we are a source of blocks whenever we insist on being right rather than trying to understand.

### Sometimes It's Them

When others lock onto their judgments and solutions, they, too, lose their ability to explore and understand. They push against us. When we do this with each other, we create conflicts in our relationships and our processes become unsafe and ineffective.

When our relationships are not in alignment, it usually follows that we start acting in ways that are not effective. When this happens, we usually need to step back, shift our focus away from the topic we are discussing, and directly address or intentionally change our process to get our relationship back on track. For example, if we are arguing with each other or trying to convince each other that we are right, we may need to calm down, take a breath, and listen to each other. As noted in the preceding section, we are able to do this by grasping the other party's energy and moving in the same direction so we can integrate rather than push against it. While others may differ from us, they do not have to be a serious block in most instances.

Notice in the following conversation how Jill shifts from letting Susan be a block to integrating their energy. She does it by letting go of trying to be right, and trying to understand instead.

Susan: I do not agree with the state sales tax that is being proposed.

Jill: Well, I think that is a short-sighted view. We need to do something about funding our school systems.

Susan: Well, the solution to funding our schools is not a sales tax.

Now notice Jill shifting the process.

Jill: We could spend all day trying to convince each other who is right about the sales tax and not get anywhere. Instead of trying to convince each other, tell me your thinking about ways that we could fund our schools.

### Sometimes It's the Situation

The third source of our blocks is the situation. Sometimes there really are limited resources. There is one car and we both want to use it. But even limited resources do not have to be a block if we have the commitment to help each other get what we need (which requires that we have a safe, respectful,

and resolved relationship). If we are committed to helping each other get our needs met, we will not argue over the limited resource (the car). Instead, we will explore our individual needs to see how we can work out sharing the car.

This brings us back to the importance of aligning our flow of energy with others by exploring with them ways in which we can meet our mutual and differing needs. This is the objective of all negotiations.

## SUMMARY

Negotiating is a process that people undertake to try to meet their mutual and differing needs. Negotiations are handled effectively when we try to understand instead of trying to be right. We need to be aware of what is going on in our process and to be willing to redirect our process when it becomes unsafe, unfair, or ineffective. This way, we can dissolve the blocks that arise from us, from others, and from the situation. We will explore all of these concepts in more detail in the coming chapters.



## Review Questions

1. The primary objective in every negotiation is: 1. (c)
  - (a) to win.
  - (b) to get others to agree with us.
  - (c) to meet the needs of all parties.
  - (d) to find the right solution.
  
2. Our negotiating process needs to be: 2. (b)
  - (a) clever to outsmart the other party.
  - (b) safe, fair, and effective.
  - (c) quick and efficient.
  - (d) secret so the other party cannot use it against us.
  
3. It is more important in our negotiations to: 3. (b)
  - (a) know better techniques than the other party.
  - (b) be committed to achieve resolution.
  - (c) know more about the topic than the other party.
  - (d) be able to think faster than the other party.
  
4. If the other party becomes irritated or resistant, we should: 4. (c)
  - (a) ignore it and keep trying to convince the other party that we are right.
  - (b) stay on the topic and not get sidetracked.
  - (c) find out why the other party is feeling irritated or resistant and what the other party needs.
  - (d) tell the other party not to feel that way.

5. If we do not know what to do next in our negotiation, we should: 5. (c)
- (a) quit and forget it.
  - (b) become silent and wait to see what the other party does next.
  - (c) say that we are not sure what to do next.
  - (d) just keep talking and act like we know what we are doing.
6. In our negotiations, we should: 6. (d)
- (a) have our minds made up and hold firm to our beliefs.
  - (b) not let the others talk us into seeing things their way.
  - (c) convince the others that we are right.
  - (d) be open to exploring all the facts and understanding how the situation looks to the other party.
7. People do what they do because: 7. (a)
- (a) it makes sense to them, given their past experience and what they know about the current situation.
  - (b) they are not very smart oftentimes.
  - (c) they want to take advantage of us if they can.
  - (d) they act out of habit.
8. Needs are: 8. (b)
- (a) only valid if we do not need too much. There is a difference between what we really need and what we want.
  - (b) an innate part of everyone and therefore are valid.
  - (c) sometimes valid. Some needs are valid and some are not.
  - (d) valid only if others agree with you.
9. The smart thing to do in a negotiation is to: 9. (a)
- (a) tell the Other party what we know, why the issue is important to us, and what we need so it is easy for them to understand us.
  - (b) not tell the others too much or they might use it against us.
  - (c) make the others tell us what they know before we tell them what we knew,
  - (d) not appear too vulnerable.
10. If others do not tell us what they need, it is usually because: 10. (c)
- (a) they are trying to be sneaky and take advantage of us.
  - (b) they are too stupid to know what they need.
  - (c) they do not believe they have a right to what they need, they do not feel safe, or they want to punish us.
  - (d) they know they do not really need it.

