

## **Ready To Leave, My Dear? Perhaps the only thing you need to prepare for a negotiation**

**By, William Ho, Executive Coach & Trainer @ Progress-U Limited**



So, you are telling everyone that you don't want to be a salesperson. Why? Perhaps it is because you hate negotiation. You don't like the confrontational aspect, especially with strangers. You worry that you may not be getting a good deal. You feel stress and fear: stress of pressuring to make a deal and fear of not getting a deal at all.

Oh yes, you wouldn't need to do any negotiation if you were working in human resources, or in the finance department or, if you were just staying at home, being a good spouse or a nice parent.

Or truly you would never need to? Negotiate, I mean?

Remember when you were a kid, and you asked for your favorite toy or dress as a reward for getting a high mark in your school test or examination. Or getting to watch your favorite cartoons on TV or play your beloved video games just a little bit longer before you went to bed by being a good and well-behaved child.

The truth of the matter is, we do negotiate, basically everything, everywhere, and at any time.

You buy a car, you negotiate. You ask for a pay raise, you negotiate. Even in going out for a movie or dinner, you discuss with your partner(s) when and where to go, and at the end, you want to get what you want.

Deal?

So, maybe now you want to be a master of negotiation, and you may ask what is the ONE thing that you need to remember, if you are allowed to remember ONLY ONE thing?

Seriously, you need focus and determination to learn more if you want to become an expert on anything, such as negotiation. However, let me tell you five words that you should remember every time enter any form of negotiation:

BATNA, which stands for "BEST ALTERNATIVE TO NEGOTIATED AGREEMENT", a coming from Roger Fisher and William Ury in their 1981 bestseller, Getting to Yes: Negotiating Without Giving In.

In the simplest term, if the proposed agreement is better than your BATNA, then you should accept it. If the agreement is not better than your BATNA, then you should reopen negotiation. If you cannot improve the agreement, then you should consider withdrawing from the negotiation and pursuing your alternative. So the question you need to ask yourself is: are you ready to leave from the negotiation?

In negotiation, the one thing that really strengthens your position is the ability to walk away from the deal.

I mean, being always ready to walk away from a deal, you become so invincible that even a devil will sell his/her soul to you.

Negotiating from a position of desperation is a bad, bad situation. You are almost certainly going to lose. The other parties will push until they find your threshold of pain. Imagine cases like bartering about salary when you are unemployed, buying a car when you really have to buy one, or want to get married and there is only one available woman (or man) within a 20-kilometer zone.

Of course, we need to acknowledge that things that are beyond our control do happen. Some of these situations are unfortunate and unavoidable. Yet in any negotiation, your best preparation is to figure out a way to get by if the deal does fall through – BATNA: best alternative to negotiated agreement.

For example, before you even step into a show room for your next car, think about your BATNA and go through the following steps:

1. Start shopping for a car before you really need to.
2. Before starting the negotiation for any specific vehicle, clearly understand your fallback plan. What will you do if you don't get this car? Buy something else? Take the bus and train? Ride your bike?
3. Don't let yourself become too emotionally attached to the car until it's yours.
4. Figure out in advance what you want to pay. If you can't get the deal you want, walk out. You can always come back later if you want.

“Ready to leave, my dear?”

Whether you're buying or selling, whether it is a car or a table cloth or a company, the principle always works in the same way. The last thing you want is to spend all your time daydreaming about how wonderful things will be after the deal is done. Instead, the way to win is to carefully figure out how tolerable things will be when the deal fails to happen.

Although the best outcome of a negotiation is still a win-win deal for both parties, in almost every case, the party who controls the direction that the negotiation takes is the one who is best prepared for the possibility of the deal not happening at all.

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William is a senior veteran in the business world, also helped to attract and confirm investors to set up overseas companies; and was involved in a few merger and acquisitions throughout his career. He earned his stripes through his practical experience in the actual market.

He is keen to help and coach companies to explore their own potential, understand their core competence, and ride through the adversity of the economy. He is especially interested in situation where companies have to deal with constant changes, new market developments, multicultural environments, fierce competitions, and leadership development, particularly in sales. His expertise lies in building and managing sales and marketing teams, key account management, tactical negotiation and closing deals, forming alliances and partnerships through training and coaching within the organization to develop a sales- and subsequently results-oriented culture.

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