

Co-operantics

People skills for co-operatives

TECHNIQUES OF PRINCIPLED NEGOTIATION

In their rightly famous book "Getting to Yes" Fisher and Ury examine different negotiating tactics and ask the question: "soft or hard bargaining – which will bring us the best results?" Their answer, well illustrated in the book, is that we should change the game and negotiate on the basis of principle, rather than play power games.

The book outlines four steps:

1. SEPARATE THE PEOPLE FROM THE PROBLEM

- negotiators are people first
- negotiator's interests - substance - relationship
- separate substance from relationship

2. FOCUS ON INTERESTS, NOT POSITIONS

- reconcile interests, not positions
- identify interests
- talk about interests

3. INVENT OPTIONS FOR MUTUAL GAIN

- diagnosis
- prescription
- broaden your options - brainstorm
- look for mutual gain
- make their decision easy

4. INSIST ON OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

- what would be the objective criteria in this case?
- negotiate with objective criteria

A large chunk of the book deals with how to use the techniques when the other party is more powerful, if they won't use Principled Negotiation or if they use "dirty tricks", such as good guy/bad guy routines or leaks to the media.

Fisher and Ury insist that in all situations, an understanding of the techniques of principled negotiation will be useful – even if all it does is prevent you from agreeing to something that is not in your best interests.

(Based on "Getting to Yes - Negotiating an agreement without giving in"
Roger Fisher & William Ury, Arrow Business Books, 1997)