

ADVANCE YOUR NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE 'BIG SCHMOOZE'

LATZ
NEGOTIATION

By Marty Latz

You walk into a car dealership to buy a new vehicle. A salesman approaches, introduces himself as “John,” and asks how he can help.

You say, “I’m looking for a new SUV. My old one is rusting out. It grew up in Minnesota, just like me.”

“Really,” John says. “Where in Minnesota?”

“Minneapolis,” you respond. “In fact,” you tell him, you “just moved here.”

“What a coincidence,” John says. “I moved here five years ago from Minnesota, too.”

You may not know it, but John just increased the likelihood you will buy a new SUV from him.

How?

Psychologist Robert Cialdini calls it the “Liking Rule.” As he puts it in his book, “We most prefer to say ‘yes’ to the requests of someone we know and like.”

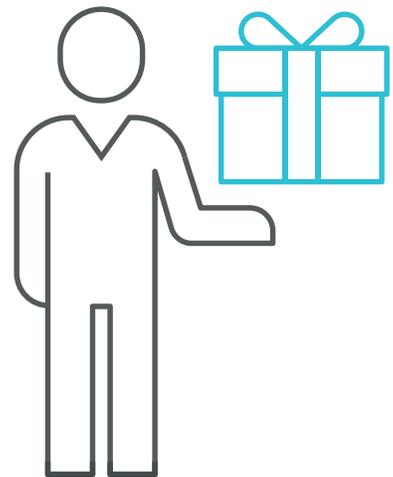
And studies have consistently shown that people like other people more when they exhibit similar characteristics. In other words, we tend to like others – and thus be more likely to say “yes” to them – when they look like us in clothing and appearance, believe what we believe and display similar attitudes.

Knowing this (or having been taught it), the car salesman was using a “mirror and match” technique. He’d mirror prospective customers in look, appearance, attitude and gestures. Then he’d match their statements by agreeing with them – thus finding some similarity with them – on any of a number of subjects.

Interestingly, this is usually effective even when the recipient knows it is occurring. Individuals still find it more difficult to say “no” to those with whom some true rapport has been established.

Individuals are also more likely to say “yes” if they negotiate over lunch, especially if it’s at a country club to which both belong.

Why? One, both individuals appear to share similar interests since they belong to the same country club.



And two, studies going back to the 1930s show that we have more positive feelings toward people and things we experience while eating. (Of course, this assumes the food is halfway decent.)

Politicians learned this years ago. They never ask for money at fund-raisers until after food has been served.

So what should you do from a negotiation standpoint to increase your likelihood of success?

- **Start with the “big shmooze,” and preferably do it over a meal.**

Spend time at the beginning of your negotiations establishing some personal or professional rapport with your counter-party. Find common interests, common friends or common background or experiences. Did you attend the same university, or share the same passion for college basketball?

- **Research possible similarities between you and your counter-party before the negotiation starts.**

When Steve Ross, founder of Warner Communications (later Time Warner), was starting out, he helped a small rental car business negotiate a deal with Caesar Kimmel. Kimmel owned a bunch of New York City parking lots. Ross wanted Kimmel to let the rental company use his lots.

What did Ross do? Before meeting Kimmel, he found out, among other things, Kimmel owned and raced horses. So did Ross' in-laws.

In their first meeting, Ross glanced around Kimmel's office and saw a picture of one of Kimmel's horses in the winner's circle of a big race.

Ross went over to the picture, looked at it, and said “Morty Rosenthal (Ross' relative) owned the No. 2 horse in that race.” Ross and Kimmel then hit it off. This made a difference.

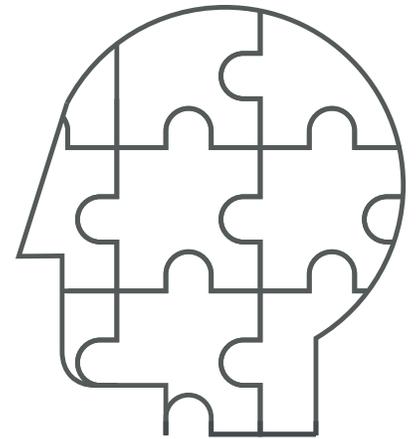
- **Don't do this in a dishonest way.**

Ross did his homework. But he didn't make anything up. Nor did he use the information he knew under false pretenses. If he had, Kimmel likely would have smoked him out – if not initially, then eventually. Rapport building is one thing. Artificially faking a relationship is another.

Dishonest negotiators burn bridges. Effective negotiators build bridges.

Next time you go to buy a car and the salesman says he grew up where you did, ask where he went to high school. His response may be telling.

Previously Published in The Business Journal



Marty Latz

*Internationally Recognized
Negotiation Expert, Author,
& Founder of LATZ Negotiation*

ABC News Anchor George Stephanopoulos has called Marty Latz “one of the most accomplished and persuasive negotiators I know.” As the founder of LATZ Negotiation, Marty has trained over 100,000 business professionals and attorneys from around the world, how to more effectively and successfully negotiate.

Latz is the author of *Gain the Edge! How to Negotiate to Get What You Want*, and has appeared as a negotiation expert on CBS, CNN, and Fox News. Latz also negotiated for The White House nationally and internationally on The White House Advance Teams. He also has written a monthly negotiation column for various newspapers since 1999.

Latz received his law and negotiation training from Harvard Law School, where he graduated *cum laude*.

LATZ Negotiation Programs Include:

- Public Negotiation Seminars
- Onsite & Customized Programs
- Coaching and Consulting
- Training Tools & Resources