



▶ RATHER THAN AVOID NEGOTIATIONS, USE YOUR STRENGTHS

LATZ
NEGOTIATION

By Marty Latz

"I dislike negotiating and the inherent conflict in it. It really bothers me and causes a significant amount of frustration and stress. Yet I realize that much of life involves some level of conflict and negotiation – even within the family. What should I do?" Here is my advice to this question from a seminar attendee of mine.

1. Utilize your strengths

Knowing your strengths and weaknesses – and appreciating the conflict avoider part of yourself – will invariably help you live a happier life. And if this requires that you avoid an upfront role in certain conflict-ridden negotiations, so be it.

But that doesn't mean you simply avoid all possible negotiations, some of which may not involve significant conflict. The key is to evaluate your situation, drill down to the parties' interests beyond their stated positions, and involve yourself where the parties' mutual interests dominate their conflicting interests.

Examples might include negotiations involving mutually beneficial long-term business relationships or partnerships and family issues that must be addressed or they will fester and get worse.

2. Bring in a front-line negotiator

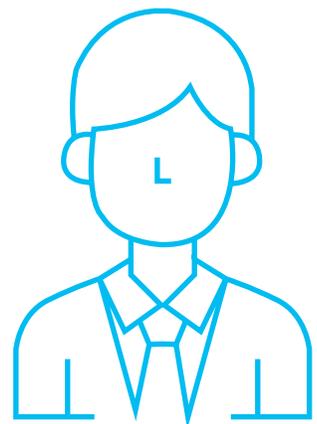
Some love to negotiate as much as you dislike it – and some have developed an expertise in both the process and the substantive issues on the table in various situations. Take advantage of their strengths.

Let's say you just inherited your family business but have little interest in it. Consider involving an investment banker, a business broker/consultant and/or a lawyer to take the lead role in the sale.

You can and should be involved in these negotiations, but in a behind-the-scenes role that minimizes your face-to-face conflict.

A friend is a successful business owner who really dislikes personal and professional conflict. He is super relationship-oriented and goes to great lengths to avoid conflict as it takes a psychological toll on him.

How did he grow a successful business? He focused on building client relationships – his strength – and hired a Chief Operating Officer whose role included managing internal and external conflicts.



3. Consider technology to help

What type of conflict causes you the real pain? For many, it's the in-person, face-to-face overt variety. If this is you, consider whether and to what extent you can effectively negotiate through technology like e-mail, texts, exchanging red-lined documents, and other similar communications.

However, keep in mind the downside risks to solely communicating in these relatively impersonal ways. While it will shield you from in person uncomfortable adversarial contexts, it's also easier for many to say no by e-mail than in person.

4. Over prepare

Finally, if you evaluate the situation and it really does require you to negotiate it yourself, then:

- Over prepare and develop a strategic plan in advance of the actual engagement with your counterpart, including identifying when it makes sense for you go with your best alternative (or Plan B), thus ensuring that you don't succumb just to avoid the conflict;
- Practice the negotiation beforehand, including trying out possibly uncomfortable phrases like "I understand what you're saying, but it just doesn't seem fair to me because ...". Practice will increase your comfort level in that environment.
- Request a break if the conflict gets too intense. You can then cool down and reflect on the strategies in your plan.

Latz's Lesson: Some love negotiation and others don't – stick with your strengths and take steps to shield your weaknesses.



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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.

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