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Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreements Without Giving In

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Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreements Without Giving In

By: Roger Fisher & William Ury

Review by Spencer Evans

If you are looking for a heartwarming tale or an inspiring memoir, you have picked up the wrong book. *Getting to Yes* is full of tips, tricks, and techniques that will help you “get to yes” in all your negotiations. When people think of negotiating, they think of haggling with store owners in Thailand or Mexico to get a great price on fake Oakley sunglasses. *Getting to Yes* takes superficial haggling to a new level, focused on creating value for both parties in the negotiation.

*Getting to Yes* provides a framework for winning a negotiation with the following steps: (1) separate the people from the problem, (2) focus on mutual interests rather than positions, (3) identify options for mutual gain, and (4) insist on using objective criteria.

1. Separate the people from the problem. Negotiating with emotion is one of the best ways to ruin the negotiation. People become emotionally attached to the product or service of which they are negotiating and end up being offended at the first bad offer. The best way to separate the people from the problem is to build a relationship with the party on the other side of the table. Think of the other side as a partner in the negotiation rather than an opponent.

2. Focus on mutual interests rather than positions. Fisher and Ury explain, “Your position is something you have decided upon. Your interests are what caused you to so decide.” Instead of asking, “What do you want?” we need to be asking, “Why do you want it?” A negotiation is more successful when the parties understand their real motives and then match them with each other.

3. Identify options for mutual gain. A collaborative negotiation is a win-win scenario. Too many people think of negotiations as win-lose, although it does have its time and place. Mutual gains help preserve the relationship and create value in the long run over the short run.

4. Insist on using objective criteria. Before each side start negotiating terms and conditions, they should first agree on a set of criteria that will pave the way for the rest of the negotiation. When the different sides have opposing interests, objective criteria are crucial in moving forward with the negotiation.

Above anything else, negotiation skill takes time and effort. Every negotiation is different, but these skills and strategies can and should be adopted and applied to every negotiation. Negotiating is a lost art that many people shy away from, but if you apply these techniques, you will be “Getting to Yes” in no time.