

NEGOTIATING WITH AN AGGRESSIVE COMPETITIVE NEGOTIATOR (ACN)

- Control your style to *be formal and respectful*. Maintain an attitude of very polite doubt. Never meet hostility with hostility except in physical self-protection. Remember that perceived humiliation is the parent of destructive behavior. A generally quiet mode will make any interruptions you do decide to make all the more telling.
- *Inject integrative elements*. Acknowledge some of the Other's interests. Name areas of joint gain. Sit side by side and address together some representation of The Problem, rather than "confronting each other" across the table.
- *Control the pace*. Repeat the Other's statements to gain time to think. Restructure deadlines. Keep reasonable control of airtime when it is your turn.
- *Ask detailed and specific questions*. Start with the Other's earliest points or basic assumptions and do not get pulled too early into talking about the Other's final points. If you are unconvinced about something keep asking "Why?" or "Why Not?"
- *Name the problems you have with the Other's point of view or acts, but gently*. Say, "I might be wrong, but...". Demur—or say you may demur: "What you say could be correct, but some people might raise the following problem..."
- *Use interruptions* to deal with tirades and unprofessional behavior. If the Other makes ascending demands that assume a drum-beat quality, go back to the first demand and temporarily ignore later ones. If there is name-calling or rudeness, spill a water glass, or drop your briefcase on the table or bang the table loudly—once. If things are intolerable, refuse to negotiate until a later time. You can save face while doing this by adjourning "until we both have the facts (or authorization) we need."
- *If the Other baldly commits to an unacceptable "position,"* consider naming the use of commitment as a source of power. Alternatively, simply ignore the Other's statement as if this "commitment" had never been made. If you have to finally undo a commitment to an unacceptable position, make an appeal to new facts or circumstances or a higher authority. Work very hard to save face for both the Other and for yourself.
- *Be absolutely straight and truthful* about the facts. And—even under great pressure—be fair and trustworthy and scrupulously respectful yourself.
- Make yourself *believe in the possibility of a good solution* up until the moment that you finally break off all contact. Many people have been misled to think it is not possible, in dealing with an ACN to find a good solution. It is easy thereby to make the mistake of falling into avoidance or fights, or inefficient solutions.
- *Be prepared for the possibility* that an ACN will suddenly become reasonable, pleasant and respectful.