



How Great Negotiators Use the Power of Presence

by Alan Ovson

What differentiates a successful negotiator from someone else? Really successful negotiators use the Power of Presence. They know and use effective strategies and they know how to regulate and deal with emotions that often sabotage successful negotiations. This gives them the presence of mind and emotion needed to react comfortably while making their presentation or entering a difficult conversation.

Research on Emotions, Finances, and Relationships

A growing body of research reveals how displays of emotion influence financial and relational outcomes in negotiations. Whether the emotions are subconscious, authentic, or fake, they have an impact on both the process and the outcome of a negotiation.

Research by Paul Ekman, emeritus professor of psychology at the University of California, San Francisco, suggests that people from almost every culture recognize six basic facial displays of emotion: anger, disgust, fear, sadness, surprise, and happiness. These displays of emotion have a very real effect on the negotiation process and outcome.

Negotiators who understand this use a strategic display of positive emotions that help the development of long-term relationships and favorable outcomes. They also understand how to respond to emotions displayed by others.

How Emotions Affect Negotiations

Sad negotiators will perceive arguments with a sad tone as more persuasive than arguments with an angry tone because sad tones are more congruent with their own feelings.

Positive negotiators will perceive and remember positive information more broadly and are able to envision and create alternatives. Positive emotions exist when people feel safe and satisfied.

People feeling negative emotions like anger or disgust are likely to focus narrowly and resist alternatives. They relate only to information associated with their feelings.

Because of these effects of emotions on the outcome of your negotiations, understanding how to respond to negative emotions is crucial for your success.



6 Steps to Respond to Negative Emotions

1. Find out what the opponent wants.
2. Allow them to vent their emotions. Then, take a break and cool down.
3. Acknowledge the validity of the emotions and/or apologize.
4. Shift the discussion into a non-emotional interest-based discussion.
5. Discuss what an unproductive negotiation will entail for both sides.
6. Express disappointment.

Conclusion

When negotiators have the Power of Presence, they understand their and the other side's emotions. This understanding allows them to build rapport and strengthen relationships, both of which are essential in any negotiation. Their presence lets them expand both the range and depth of their thoughts and ideas, giving them the mental agility to create alternatives which will lead to successful outcomes for their negotiations.

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