

5 WAYS TO BE A CHAMELEON NEGOTIATOR

There is no one way to be a great negotiator. There is no perfect approach. Skilled negotiators take a chameleon like approach in everything they do. They adapt, change and adjust to secure the best deal possible. You negotiate with people, and everyone, including you is different. As such, the best negotiators change to situation. Here are 5 ways to help make that happen.

1. PUT YOUR PERSONAL VALUES ON THE SHELF

Fairness, winning and ego don't belong in a negotiation. Do you find yourself wrestling with these as the negotiation drags on? If so, you are stuck inside your own mind. Skilled negotiators must remove their own personal values from a negotiation.

Fairness: There is none. It's not their job to be fair with you. Forget fair. Don't let your view of fairness cloud your judgement.

Winning: Do you want to win - to beat the other side? Nobody likes losing. Most skilled negotiators are competitive. Suppress this urge. For the other party to leave a negotiation satisfied, you must give them the sense they got the best deal – that they won. You be the loser.

Ego: Think you or your company is great and all powerful. Careful. These people love to talk. "Help me understand why you are so great?" This gives information and information is power. Drop the ego. Be humble. Make them feel important.

Justification: Do you rationalize their position? Do find yourself saying, "that's reasonable." There is a difference between asking "why" and justifying their position. Challenge everything, including your assumptions. Negotiations are rarely rationale.

Skilled negotiators suppress their own values and strive to step outside them - to open up their mind.

2. ADAPT YOUR STYLE, APPROACH AND STRATEGY TO THE SITUATION

The same approach will not work every time. How are they behaving? How should you respond? Is it a planned approach, or an emotional one? Everything you do in a negotiation should have a purpose.

3. GIVE THEM THE SENSE THEY ARE IN CHARGE, EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE

Skilled negotiators strive to be in control of the process. Do things because they are the right for you, your business and the negotiation. If not, don't do it.

"Diplomacy (*sic negotiation*) is the art of letting someone have your way." – Daniele Vare

4. CHALLENGE EVERYTHING

Don't assume the past is an indicator of the future. Don't assume market rules apply. Don't assume they are unhappy. Be intelligently stupid. Ask "why" – even when you think you know the answer.

5. LISTEN AND THINK

It is very difficult to think and talk. It is also quite difficult to learn anything when you are talking. Negotiation is about listening. Think then act.

The chameleon doesn't move quick, they are measured and adapting. Do you adapt to them, or them to you? Be a negotiation chameleon and see better deals.