

**TURNING
CONFLICT INTO
OPPORTUNITY**



A Guide for Your Difficult Negotiations

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CONFLICT COACHING

WHY PREPARATION IS WORTH IT

Negotiations become difficult when someone does something or fails to do something that blocks our access to what's important to us. This can trigger emotional reactions and lead to failed negotiations.

If you are facing a difficult negotiation this guide will help you be more effective and enhance your success and satisfaction with the outcomes.

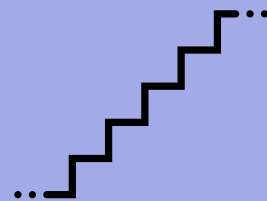
These six steps will prepare you for an **interest-based dialogue** rather than a **positional debate**. They will allow you to explore what's really most important for you and make your best guess as to what the other side needs as well.

If you complete all these steps and still haven't gotten the result you seek, consider me your **911** emergency call.

If you would like to talk to me about managing your conflict, or my mediation services, **give me a call at: 403-801-0234 or send me an email: david@davidgouldmediation.com for a free consultation.**



6 STEPS TO PREPARE FOR NEGOTIATIONS



STEP 1) UNPACK YOUR STORY

It is easy to become attached to your story of what happened in the past and then get caught up in what you made it mean.

Your focus has likely been on showing them all the reasons you are right and they are wrong, this is an argument not a negotiation. A different approach is far more useful.

Take a blank page with a line down the middle. On the left side capture the facts of the situation as you know them. This is just what actually happened.

At the same time on the right side of the page capture the meanings from your story. These are your judgements, interpretations and assumptions that drive your emotions and are the foundation of potential conflicts.

You can use this analysis to plan how you will establish your facts in the negotiation. Acknowledge your emotions that are triggered on the meaning side but don't let them control you in your negotiation.

Step back from those emotions and look at your own story as objectively as possible.

Facts	Meanings

STEP 2) UNPACK THEIR STORY

It is important to try and understand who you will be negotiating with. Put yourself in the other side's shoes. Make your best guess as to how the other side sees the facts and capture it on the left side of another blank page.

On the right side of the page make your best guess as to the other side's meanings, their judgements, interpretations and assumptions. Consider what emotions might be alive for them in their story.

This is a challenging task but critical to effective negotiations. When approaching any difficult negotiation there will always be some major points of resistance. It's hard to shake the mentalities of "I'm right and I know it" and "they're wrong and challenging to work with".

Work hard at this to make it as complete and accurate as possible.

STEP 3) COMPARE EACH SIDE'S FACTS & MEANINGS

Compare the facts on both pages and identify what are likely to be areas of agreement and disagreement. For those areas of disagreement, explore how you will deal with establishing proof on your part and consider what facts will be difficult or impossible to prove.

Brainstorm ways in which you might **collaborate on establishing proof**. For example, you might agree to a neutral appraisal or expert report when dealing with a disputed fact. You might also consider if objective criteria such as building codes could help.

Then compare your lists of judgements, interpretations and assumptions. They are often the cause of conflict and can derail negotiations.



STEP 4) GENERATE OPTIONS FOR RESOLUTION

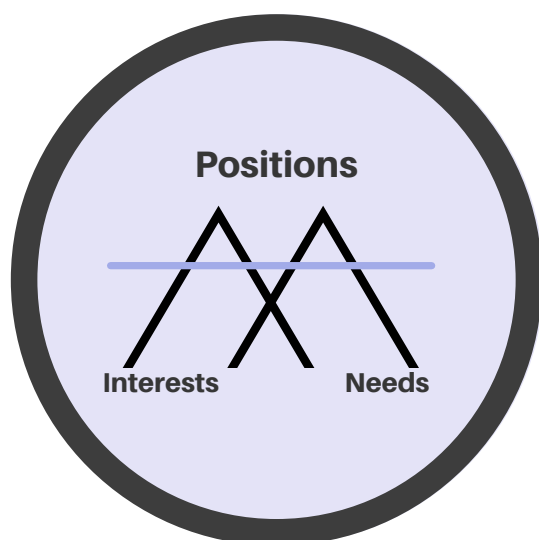
The goal of this step is to open up possibilities for a resolution that works for both sides.

A position is a statement of what a person wants not why they want it. The “Why” is the underlying needs and interests that drive the position.

Interest & needs can be met in different ways. If you become locked into a certain position you might lose sight of alternative solutions.

Brainstorm options and test how well they meet both parties interests and needs.

If you are fortunate to have someone to assist you with your preparation, they can bring an objective perspective to this step



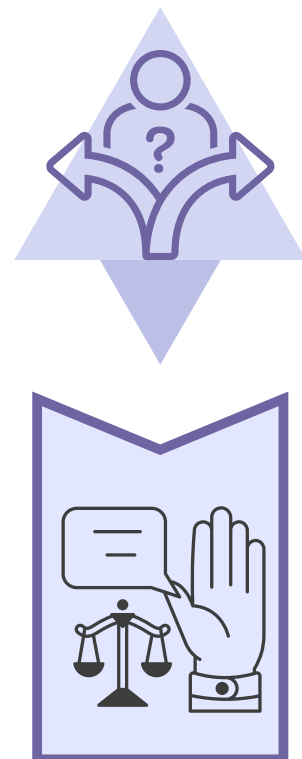
STEP 5) CONSIDER THE ALTERNATIVES

As you generate options for a resolution that works for both sides, you should also consider what you will do if you can't get a deal.

BATNA - This is your **B**est **A**lternative **T**o a **N**egotiated **A**greement. The work you have done in the previous step will allow for a realistic assessment of what you really can do if you don't get an agreement and have to walk away from the negotiation.

Anything that beats your BATNA is **not a compromise**.

This must of course include litigation risks. This is one of the most important considerations in a high-stakes negotiation.



STEP 6) GET THE OTHER SIDE TO THE TABLE

You can now reach out to the other side with an invitation to negotiate.

Share with them some of the steps you have taken to prepare for an interest based negotiation.

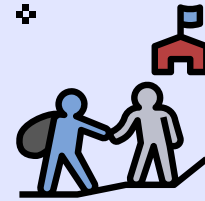
Share some of your thoughts about what's important to them and confirm your commitment to explore options for a resolution that works for both sides.

Your preparation will arm you with critical reasoning that will demonstrate a position of strength rather than weakness and submission.



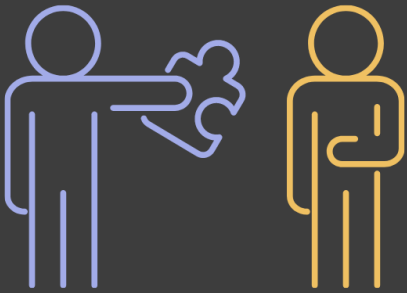
Getting Help

Who can we look to for assistance with our negotiation?



Sometimes your negotiations appear insurmountable. The other side might seem totally unreasonable and simply wrong. I often get asked by lawyers or their clients, “Why should we negotiate when we already know exactly what they are going to say”. **This is a trap.** When your story affirms the other side’s wrong-doing, negotiations seem pointless and litigation inevitable.

Where To Look



- Friends
- Family
- Professional Advisors



- Conflict Management Coaches
- Mediators

These individuals can be a great help, but remember you want an objective assessment and not simply their agreement with your position.

Conflict Management Coaches

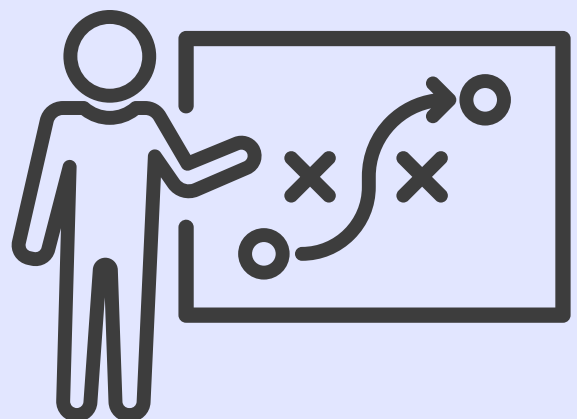


Conflict, communication challenges, disaffected employees, dysfunctional teams, and declining productivity all impact an organization's bottom-line: **profits**.

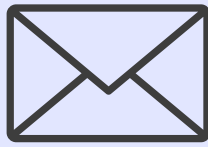
Conflict coaches can be retained to work with you to prepare for your difficult negotiations, much like how a fitness coach helps an athlete prepare for a competition.

They can help to map out an effective strategy that will empower you and your organization succeed in any conflict or difficult negotiation.

Conflict coaches can also be retained by organizations to provide training programs that create conflict competent teams.



Contact



If your negotiations go beyond your control, I can help you get them back on track and settled. Simply contact me to learn how:

david@davidgouldmediation.com

or by phone at:

403-801-0234

FOR A FREE 30 MINUTE CONSULTATION

If you would like to read more from me, visit my website:

davidgouldmediation.com

or find me on [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).

