



# **NEGOTIATING: 10 TRUTHS FROM PROFESSOR BARNEY JORDAAN WHITE PAPER**



Professor Barney Jordaan is a South African negotiation, mediation, dispute and conflict resolution specialist. He has worked with many global organisations - and teaches negotiation skills and conflict resolution at Vlerick.



# HOW DO YOU DEFINE NEGOTIATION?

There are thousands of definitions. However, I think it's helpful to view it as **a decision making process**. Do people want to work together, and on what terms? Then it's reaching the best

decision you can in the circumstances, based on the best information available - a decision that everyone can commit to for the long-term.

# ARE HUMAN BEINGS NATURAL NEGOTIATORS?

2  
No! We may live in a very sophisticated world, but a lot of our instinctive emotions and behaviour is still in the Stone Age. Our brains are hardwired to **instinctively** regard others **with suspicion**,

and we're always on the lookout for threats and danger. This is true in negotiation situations too – which isn't helpful and can distract us from the end goal.





# SO CAN WE LEARN TO NEGOTIATE?

3 Absolutely. You can learn to **prepare** and **plan better**. You can also learn to set clear goals and develop an appropriate strategy for each negotiation. Then it's a matter of controlling the focus of the negotiation and

learning to listen to the other parties. You can also become more aware of **your own emotions** and biases – basically, honing your effective behaviours and letting go of the less effective ones.

# WHAT KIND OF PERSON MAKES A GOOD NEGOTIATOR?

4 Negotiation is a left-brain-right-brain activity. It's a continuous dance between the problem, the process and the people. You need to be **alert**, **conscious** and in the process. You need to be aware of assumptions and attitudes – both your own

and those of the other parties. So you need to be flexible and open minded. You need to be able to recognise your instinctive reactions for what they are and not be ruled by them – and you also need to be analytical and prepared.

# HOW DO YOU START LEARNING TO NEGOTIATE?

It all starts with **understanding yourself**. What are your assumptions - about the situation and the people involved? What pushes your buttons? It's also about understanding how and why you make choices and reach decisions. People think they're rational, but we very rarely are.

We are products of our upbringing and backgrounds - as well as those instinctive Stone Age emotions - and together, they lead us to make stupid decisions sometimes. And of course, if you understand yourself, it makes it much easier to understand where the other person is coming from.





# AND AFTER THAT, WHAT'S NEXT?

You learn to **prepare** – to find out about the people you'll be talking to and what they want and need. You learn to adopt the right mindset. This means that rather than thinking of the process as a competition, you see it as a collaboration and

an opportunity to make good decisions. You learn to frame it as an opportunity to co-create better outcomes for everyone concerned. It's not about gaining ground and losing ground – **it's about getting the best deal for everyone.**

# WHAT ABOUT THE PERSON SITTING OPPOSITE?

7 If they have a mature approach to negotiation, you will have a productive time. And even if they are aggressive and domineering, you can still end up with a result that is mutually beneficial.

What you need is **a value proposition that's better**

**for them** than they can find anywhere else. You play to their self-interest, for your own sake. What you don't do is play their game their way. There is research that suggests that loud, brash, domineering people can be disarmed by a less ego-driven, focused person.





# THIS DOESN'T SOUND LIKE IT LOOKS IN THE MOVIES ...

That's because it isn't.  
In the movies it's all  
bombast, ego and  
out-manoeuving.

In real life, **it's about  
reaching a situation that  
works for both parties  
for the long-term.**

And honestly, that  
wouldn't make good  
TV. It would be pretty  
boring!



# IN FACT, IT SOUNDS QUITE ZEN ...

**Good negotiators** are **thoughtful people**. They live by the adage that confidence is silent, while insecurity is loud. They learn to behave reflectively when they're confronted by dirty tactics and games. In other words, they don't just have a knee-jerk response that's

unproductive or conflict inducing.

It's also true that negotiation skills can be used in many places outside of the boardroom. They can help you to persuade people in a way that allows everyone to get what they need and to stick with an agreement.

# HOW CAN I LEARN TO BE A BETTER NEGOTIATOR?



I recently worked with a group of 220 sales people who negotiate all the time. Only 40 of them had had any professional negotiation training. I'm not saying that the people who haven't had professional training were no good at their jobs. They're probably very good at their jobs.

I just know that they could be even better if they invested time in **learning more about the art and science of negotiation**. The important thing is that anyone, at any stage of their career can benefit from becoming a better negotiator. This is true both professionally and in many other aspects of their lives.



**Signature**

**NAME**

# BARNEY'S TOP TIPS ON NEGOTIATION

- Listen in a way that encourages others to talk. Talk in a way that will encourage others to listen.
- Be prepared – those who prepare best do best.
- Try to see issues through the eyes of the other party.
- Adopt a positive mindset.
- Focus on creating and claiming value.

# WANT TO LEARN TO BECOME A BETTER NEGOTIATOR?



Discover our successful negotiation programmes

- **NEGOTIATE TO SUCCESS**: a six-week online learning journey on the essentials of negotiation
- **NEGOTIATION TO CREATE VALUE**: an advanced classroom management programme

[WWW.VLERICK.COM/NEGOTIATION](http://WWW.VLERICK.COM/NEGOTIATION)



Contact

**MAAIKE VAN AMEIJDE**

maaike.vanameijde@vlerick.com

T: + 32 9 210 97 37