

NEGOTIATION



Breaking The Impasse!

Your 12-point Action Plan ... When all else Fails.

Version 3.2

By Chris Lang

How to Retrieve your Negotiations, Whenever they Start to Falter.

Even if you adopt all 26 Strategies in the [Negotiating Master Class](#) ... not every negotiation will unfold exactly as you had planned.



No matter how skilful you are, or how hard you try ... there will come a time when you'll reach an apparent deadlock, during one or more of your negotiations. And both parties will reach what seems to be "the end of the road" – where there looks to be no further room to reach any compromise.

What you need are several ideas to stimulate further discussion, which will hopefully lead you both to a rewarding outcome.

So, let's take a look at just what those possibilities might be.

Best wishes ...

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Chris". The signature is stylized and includes a horizontal line underneath the name.

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BREAKING THE IMPASSE

Your 12-point Action Plan ... when all else Fails.

1. Simply Take a Breather

This may sound trite. But often, it is all that's needed for you or the other party to gather your thoughts and "save face", while subtly changing from an earlier stance in a negotiation.

If you know a negotiation will extend over a long period, it's often useful to agree to hourly breaks at the outset. That way, you will be better able to stay on top of your objectives.

2. Separate Out Fact from Fiction

You need to distinguish the hard facts from some of the fictitious statements being made — by verifying information, rather than merely accepting it at face value.

Dealing in facts is the key to reaching your desired outcome. So, evaluate them and determine their relevance. Then, just present sound arguments to counter any inaccuracies you're being given.

3. Identify any Grey Areas

There may be some areas you can't easily label as "fact or fiction". Sometimes, you simply lack sufficient information to make the call; and you may need to reconvene at a later date — so you can fill in the gaps.

Otherwise, you'll find yourself unable to take a clear position, simply because of these fuzzy areas.

4. Keep your Anger in Check

As much as you may feel justified, or goaded, to do so ... threats are unacceptable and disrespectful. So, when anger prevents a negotiation from progressing, you need to put this emotion aside.

You'll find by simply introducing a third party, you can completely alter the dynamics of the negotiation; and, thereby, prevent the earlier anger from resurfacing. But, understand, that anger is generally a reflection of the importance of the issues involved. Sometimes, you might need to tackle a fresh issue in order to defuse the present anger.

5. Try to Reach Agreement "In Principle"

Sometimes emotions and words tend to get in the way. Either (or both) of you might be so intent upon getting across a specific point (or resolving a minor issue) ... that you momentarily allow yourselves to lose sight of the bigger picture.

However, if you can just come to an agreement in principle, then you are both moving towards your objectives and improving your chances of a mutually satisfying outcome.

You see, all you need to do is change your approach, without actually altering your intent.

6. Re-group and Evaluate

Whether you're negotiating alone or as part of a team, sometimes you reach a point where you need to pause the negotiations ... to allow everyone to evaluate what has their own achieved so far.

It's important for you to note down the positives. Make a realistic assessment of where you are, and what ground you've covered. That way, you can accurately gauge your progress. And then, see whether your initial objectives ought be re-prioritised.

You'll find this exercise can engender renewed enthusiasm. It will help to refocus attention and efforts towards your real objectives.

But there's an even-more interesting side benefit.

Issues that have been defying resolution, may now seem not that important after all. And more often than not, the very same process will be also occurring on the other side.

As such, both of you will invariably resume talks with renewed focus on your main purpose — and no longer be distracted by earlier side issues.

7. Seek New Information, to Add Insight

During the planning stage of your negotiation, there might have been something you overlooked or you simply chose not to consider. This can occur even during the initial discussions with the other side.

Look for new information that will help to bring new insight to your objectives. And by thinking creatively, you will find you can often circumvent the impasse to you reaching agreement.

8. Bring in an Independent Outside Party

Sometimes it makes sense to get help. By bringing in someone from outside, that person can objectively hear both of you present your respective positions. That person can then give their take on the situation; and provide each of you with some approach ideas on how an agreement might be reached.

Always seek outside help whenever discussions are seriously deadlocked, and both of you genuinely want a satisfying outcome.

9. Know When You should Back Down

Of course, you go into every negotiation expecting to achieve your “first-best outcome” on every issue. But never enter a negotiation with only one acceptable outcome in mind.

You see, being a good negotiator means you also have a “second-best outcome,” as a fall-back position. Because, negotiation is democracy, not autocracy — and knowing when you need to compromise is the key.

If you’ve given it your best shot on a particular issue and come away with at least your fall-back position, then you ought feel satisfied with the outcome.

10. Suggest a Different Venue

It probably sounds far too simple, but changing the location of the negotiation can help keep the ball rolling.

Maybe the noise level (or even just the general ambience) of the location could be contributing to your lack of progress.

To help get the negotiation back on track, offer to hold the talks at the other party's location — as a sign of good faith.

But, generally, moving to another neutral location will be sufficient.

11. Distinguish Between ... “Objectives” and “Position”

Even seasoned negotiators can allow themselves to become locked into a position, and actually lose sight of their overall objectives.

If you find the other side doing this, look beyond the position to the underlying issues and concerns. And, by doing so, you'll probably find a way to end the conflict.

It can be somewhat challenging to unearth the other side's objectives — but you'll often find it revealing when you do.

You see, by simply asking why they hold a particular position, you'll discover their actual reasons — some of which may be quite irrational. And those stated reasons may now sound quite foolish — even to them.

12. Start the Creative Juices Flowing!

When all else fails ... agree to embark upon a brainstorming session — where the ideas generated are not binding, UNLESS both of you later decide to embrace them.

You need to come up with options that may seem unlikely, may be impossible, at first. Even welcome ideas that may initially sound quite ridiculous.

If nothing else, you'll both let yourselves become creative. But, hopefully, you'll find some common ground — upon which you can forge an agreeable outcome.

You have now having read your fingertips, a dozen ways to help you in “**Breaking the Impasse**”.

But you ought not consider the list exhaustive. As you gain confidence in your negotiating, you’ll find yourself implementing these as reflex strategies.

And more importantly, you’ll soon start developing your own strategies to bypass any deadlocks, which may arise.

Please let me know how helpful you’ve found the ideas in this eBook. Plus, the earlier ones from the [Negotiating Master Class](#). And also, I’d love to hear about how you’ve used the various strategies, in any of your own negotiations.

All the very best ...

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris", with a horizontal line underneath.

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