

**10 reasons you must buy this book and
avoid being ground to a pulp!**

1. Virgin negotiators demonstrate four common behaviours which contribute to their losing out in negotiations.
2. Successful negotiators, on the other hand, have secret strategies which enable them to win at negotiating.
3. You can project power and authority with your body and voice tone, and stop the other side taking advantage of you.
4. It's rarely "just the price" – how can you avoid having to discount yours under pressure?
5. You should never sit down for a negotiation without a "letter in your back pocket."
6. Even inexperienced negotiators can come out on top, as a very recent discovery about the psychological state of brilliant negotiators shows.
7. Giving the other side a big pile of facts about your proposition will actually help them negotiate against you.
8. Giving the other side a false deadline (without ever giving away your real one) will put you in a position of power.
9. Chatty questions are 10 times more persuasive than factual statements.
10. Phrases like "to be honest with you" will undo all your good work and wreck your negotiating strength.

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NEGOTIATING SKILLS FOR VIRGINS

For Review Only

BOB ETHERINGTON



**NEGOTIATING
SKILLS
FOR VIRGINS**

For Review Only

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For Review Only

Warning: Before You Buy This Book ...

The material you have
in your hands is very valuable.

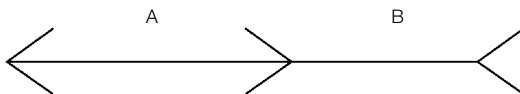
There are many people who do (or would like to do) business with you, who would rather you didn't have it. It is an unusually practical book about the real secrets of negotiating some "really" great deals for yourself.

It has been written for people like you (often, in my experience, from the Northern Hemisphere) who feel that they are probably terrible at negotiating and would like to do it better! ... well ... OK, "brilliantly well".

But first ...

I said in the first paragraph the real secrets of negotiating. But maybe you believe that you have seen it or read it all before. So first a self-test to see whether you are ready for the material in this book; please answer this question:

Which do you think is the longest line in the diagram below? Line A or line B?



For Review Only

So which is it then ... "A" or "B"? I know you've seen it, or similar diagrams, before in countless children's comics and books of optical illusion but give me your answer anyway. "They're both the same length," you say. Very good. You know that's right because you've seen it before, like I said.

But now I'd like you, if you would, to actually measure the two lines. Go on, please do it now ... if you're standing in a bookshop use the edge of a bus/train/plane ticket.

Oh dear! I know! You've just discovered line A is 30% longer than line B!

But all we "adults" do it all the time ... me too. Whatever it is, we think we've seen it (read it or heard it) all before and we "assume" we know. And you may think this book is also one that is going to be full of stuff you already know. However I'd like to open your mind to the unexpected.

This is a book born out of several years of practical and successful negotiating around the world. The approach has been used, by me, to negotiate the sale and purchase of personal artefacts (cars, houses, TVs) and, in the work-world, to seal deals on mutually favourable terms (redundancy packages, salary increases, international contracts worth several million).

So I'd like you to suspend your adult scepticism and reinforce your open-mindedness before reading this book (once you've bought it) by writing the following words on the dotted line across the next page:

"MAYBE HE'S RIGHT"

Thanks,
Bob Etherington

For Review Only

"....."

See the previous page

Definitions for Virgins

negotiate (verb) [*nee-go-shee-yate*]

1. What you have to do when the other person says “No”
2. What you have to do when desirable assets become scarce

bigdiscounts (noun. pl) [*big-dis-cownts*]

What you give when you don't know how to negotiate

paytoomuch (verb) [*pey-toow-muh-ch*]

What you do if you don't know how to negotiate

Rules for virgin negotiators

1. Nobody will negotiate with you unless they believe you can help them or hurt them.
2. If they keep coming back to the table you have something they want.
3. If you keep coming back to the table they have something you want.

Introduction

You don't start negotiating until the other side says, "No!"

I used to travel a great deal for my job. For this reason I found myself in a camera shop in a Hong Kong shopping mall a few years ago ... I was buying a digital video camera with a friend from the Philippines. The camera was on sale for about USD 2000. Top of the range at that time ... Brand name too.

I went through the time honoured HK ritual with the shopkeeper, "Is that your best price?" The shopkeeper grudgingly knocked off USD 140. I felt good ... \$140 off ... whooo! You'd never get that in London! I was about to accept when my friend jumped

in. “You must haggle!” she said. (Brazenly ... right there in front of the man ... in front of the whole shop ... in a loud voice too!) “I just did,” said I. “Not like that!” she said. “We’ll pay \$200 that’s all,” she said to the shopkeeper. “Can’t be done!” he said. (Embarrassment.) “Let’s go!” she said, and began to walk out. “Just a moment,” said the man coming out into the street. “Let’s see what we can do.”

Ten minutes later we had the camera for \$1300 including a carry bag, tripod and a wide-angle lens. We also spent another \$700 on an excellent digital still camera selling in London for \$1200.

OK, it was actually a “haggle” BUT it was also ... nearly ...very nearly ... a full bodied “successful negotiation”. Not a “Hey ... we really screwed ’em!” deal for either side. But then again, nobody walked away feeling “short-changed” either. It was a very good deal for both of us. Leaving the encounter feeling like this, on both sides, is the ideal outcome for a good negotiation. Why do I say this? Because it had many of the elements that mark the difference between basic haggling and sophisticated negotiating:

- It was as wise as it was sensible.
- I would definitely do business there again.
- He would probably be pleased to see me if I went back.
- I would be pleased to go back.

Oh ... no “negotiations” please ... we’re from the Northern Hemisphere!

For people who are not originally from Asia, the Middle East or Latin America, real negotiating is not part of our way of life; neither is bargaining or haggling. We Caucasians are, generally, very bad at negotiating. This applies to our home life and work life. It also applies to corporate deals both very small and very

large. Many of us are even encouraged to believe it is impolite to embark on a negotiation especially in a “posh” shop or similar intimidating surroundings.

“Can we ‘DO’ something on the price, Sir? If you need to question the price, Sir, you clearly can’t afford it!”

So, with all this built-up angst, agony and vividly imagined future-embarrassment, lurking deep in our genes, we hate even the thought of doing it. We hate the thought so much we are scared to embark on it under any circumstances. We laugh loudly (too loudly?) when we recognize someone very close to home in situations like this ... ourselves:

Harry The Haggler: Now, look. I want twenty for that.

Brian: I – I just gave you twenty.

Harry The Haggler: Now, are you telling me that’s not worth twenty shekels?

Brian: No.

Harry The Haggler: Look at it. Feel the quality. That’s none of your goat.

Brian: All right. I’ll give you nineteen then.

Harry The Haggler: No, no, no. Come on. Do it properly.

Brian: What?

Harry The Haggler: Haggle properly. This isn’t worth nineteen.

Brian: Well, you just said it was worth twenty.

Harry The Haggler: Ohh, dear. Ohh, dear. Come on. Haggle.

Brian: Huh. All right. I’ll give you ten.

Harry The Haggler: That’s more like it. Ten?! Are you trying to insult me?! Me, with a poor dying grandmother?! Ten?!

Brian: All right. I’ll give you eleven.

Harry The Haggler: Now you’re getting it. Eleven?! Did I hear you right?! Eleven?! This cost me twelve. You want to ruin me?! [...]

Brian: Ohh, tell me what to say. Please!

Harry The Haggler: Offer me fourteen.

Brian: I’ll give you fourteen.

Harry The Haggler: He's offering me fourteen for this!

Brian: Fifteen!

Harry The Haggler: Seventeen. My last word. I won't take a penny less, or strike me dead.

Brian: Sixteen.

Harry The Haggler: Done. Nice to do business with you.

From the 1979 Monty Python Film Life Of Brian

So we get “ground to a pulp”

We'll get to the difference between “haggling” (see above) and “negotiating” later, but you get the picture. The upshot of our reluctance to negotiate is that the very few expert negotiators in the Northern Hemisphere who do know how to negotiate, end up painfully screwing us. They don't intend to hurt us but they end up doing so anyway because we don't know how to do it back to them.

Yet people from Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and throughout the second and third worlds in general, are expert at it. We (from the North) vacation in their countries and come back with tales to tell of what happened when we were buying things in the markets, bazaars and “souks”. We love the lithe, direct and supple way they do it and secretly we envy them. At the same time we ourselves are afraid to give in to the need to be flexible, inventive and alive to the possibility of the moment. Just like “Brian” when up against “Harry the Haggler” we get frustrated and embarrassed. We are not really able to join them in the expert verbal intercourse. We just want it to be over. And when we come up against them in a serious business transaction they “grind” us again too. It is, for them, a way of life. They have no shame, regret or embarrassment about bargaining, haggling or negotiating. They are brought up to do it from childhood. They expect everybody to do it well too. If you don't engage in it with them (and with gusto) they are somewhat bemused.

So what's in this book for you?

In these pages, as I said before, you will discover the “real” secrets of negotiation ... and you will! In Chapter 1 you will be introduced to the very heart of the issue. And that is that you should only enter in to a negotiation if you really desire (or *Aspire*) to emerge with a great result. Why? Well, the situation that often makes a negotiation necessary is that you have (or the other side has) already said (or is imminently likely to say) “No” to some standard terms in a proposed transaction. So although many sales training books tell you that such an impasse, deadlock or objection is somehow a “buying signal”, taking you closer to deal, there is NO evidence to support this! In fact it is quite the opposite.

The other key reason for investing time in a negotiation is that some resource you want or the other side wants is becoming increasingly scarce and a straight “sale” is not going to provide a satisfactory result. (The current global energy market in which participants are competing for a declining fossil-fuel resource is a prime example.)

If you have tried a classic “sale and purchase transaction” and failed but still want to do business with each other you are now in a more complex situation. You are no longer in a sale; you are on the verge of a “negotiation”. And in any negotiation one side has more power than the other. And that word “**power**” needs a little clarification. Because “power” isn’t something you’re given. Power is something you take. Power is simply a “feeling”.

As a virgin negotiator if you feel, at this “imminent negotiation” stage, that you are in a weak position or you are at all half-hearted about it, then all the evidence (and there is a great deal of research to support this) points to “not such a great final outcome” for you. As with so much of success in business and negotiation (and life in general) it comes down to your Attitude and your Aspiration. So in Chapter 1 we will discuss what you

can do to raise these before you begin. Once you have flown through Chapter 1 you will be ready for the next big secret revealed in Chapter 2 ... the alternative landing site (or “letter in your back pocket”). The confidence you gain from knowing that you have previously planned somewhere to set yourself down if the original journey doesn’t go according to plan is enormous. All virgin negotiators need to learn the essential nature that prior planned options give them. In many international companies the presentation to the Board or Executive Committee of such a back-up plan, is now mandated before the senior management permit any team to sit down across the negotiating table with a counterparty. If it’s good enough for them it must be good enough for you.

In Chapter 3, I will ensure that you understand the difference between selling, haggling and negotiating. I will do that by illustrating the clear differences. You will see that “haggling”, in particular, is largely a financial trimming and bartering issue, whilst selling and negotiating are, or should be, focused on perceived value. Negotiating is the “poor cousin” of selling. You will discover that you should always endeavour to “sell” the other side before you get into a negotiation. In “selling” you and the other party agree a deal and price around a set of standard pre-set terms. The pricing may be affected by a price discounting formula, which is a part of these standard terms. The terms are either your own or the other party’s or a mixture of the two.

When it comes to “negotiating” a complication has set in. A deal on standard terms has not been possible, so you must be prepared to vary the terms in some way. The “virgin” in the negotiating arena generally attempts to get the deal “closed” by varying just one “term”: the price! And it’s usually by reducing it if you’re the seller or paying too much if you’re the buyer. I have lost track of the number of times I have heard from sellers: “It’s the price ... we’re just too expensive!” Or from buyers: “It’s no good ... we have to pay their price ... there’s nothing else

we can do!” The truth is, in fact, that quite a few things come before price, as you will see in Chapter 3. This book is about negotiating not haggling.

Chapter 4 is entitled “Deconstructing the ‘No’”. We’ve all heard smart-asses reeling out the put-down epithet: “What part of ‘No’ don’t you understand?” And yet there are generally many factors which have led to “No”, whether it’s our side saying “No” or the other side saying “No”. As a “virgin” you absolutely need to sit down and analyse why you’re really saying “No”. What do you really want from this negotiation? If you sincerely believe that it’s the money you want, what do you want to do with it? Is there some other way you could achieve the same result? Why do you want it? OK and why do you want that? Boil it down ... then boil it down again.

If you want a parallel example it is similar to analysing the folklore relationship between employers and employees. Between these two parties there is generally a view, on the “employer” side that the “number one” issue for employees is “money”. Yet when asked, employees rarely rate money as “number one”. So in the same way you must analyse all your needs prior to entering into the negotiation and then mentally place yourself in the shoes of the other side. What’s behind their “No”?

It is rarely “just the money”. Chapter 4 shows you how to do this and provides you with a planning tool to make it easier.

Then in Chapter 5 we finally get round to what is often for many humans the BIG one ... the people problem. “He makes me so mad!” “I am sick and tired of the way that woman behaves!” “Those people! That Asian guy at the end of the table never said a word!” “I thought that British man would never stop talking.” “I just can’t negotiate with the Russians ... it’s their attitude.” “And in the middle of the meeting this Arab’s uncle suddenly showed up and everything ground to a halt ... it was just stupid. I’m not doing that again.” “I don’t understand how those Americans

could even consider negotiating ... it was the first time we'd met. I don't even know them!"

Human beings often don't like each other for a number of reasons. These are sometimes to do with perceptions gained from the TV and what they read in the newspapers. Occasionally and irrationally they pile a particular ethnic group together and decide not to like them. Often it is because of the influence of local political propaganda. I was recently asked by an American immigration officer at Houston International Airport, who noticed a couple of Iranian stamps in my British passport, "Why do the Iranians all hate us?" Yet "hate" is hardly the feeling you get walking the streets of Tehran in the early 21st century; a city in which most of the well-educated young majority would do anything to learn American English and travel to the USA.

The reality is that most people in the World simply want to have a nice life. They see the world through their own spectacles and not ours. They are not against you and me ... they are simply for themselves. Just because they don't look, sound, behave and think like people from my family, company, ethnic group, or country, doesn't mean that either you or I cannot negotiate with them. I may not like them or you (and vice versa) for many reasons both rational and irrational. But if there's mutually advantageous business to be done I will set these reasons aside and using the techniques described in Chapter 5 negotiate with you until we "do" the deal.

Machiavellian, manipulative, mind gaming, psychological tricks ... this is what you'll find in Chapter 6. Well ... OK, not quite as bad as that but it would be remiss of me in an instructional book about negotiating (and specifically written for virgin negotiators) not to outline some of the simple well researched psychological tools that can be used to persuade another human brain to your way of thinking. You don't have to use them if you don't want to but you DO need to recognize if they are being used as "ploys" against you. They are very well researched but not at

all complex. In fact, they are so simple that most people's prior reaction to every single one is, "That would NEVER work against me!" And yet if, during a negotiating training class, I don't warn the delegates that I am about to use one of the tools to influence their behaviour and subsequently get them, unconsciously, to do something they would not have done otherwise (for example to give me a completely undeserved round of applause for something), most people are profoundly shocked. They often apologize after the session for being so unguarded. No need to apologize. We are all surprisingly susceptible to very simple ploys of people who would like to do business with us.

So the first six chapters in this book explain the planning tools and techniques (OK ... sometimes even "ploys") available to and used by all experienced and successful negotiators. Then we come to "field-application", because Chapter 7 is about the way you behave when confronted by your real life negotiating counterparty. "Be on your best behaviour" was an instruction that ruled my childhood. But for a negotiator much academic research over the past 40 years or so has shown that there are a few clearly identifiable behavioural habits which can either wreck or make a great negotiation. In Chapter 7 you will learn that there is no autopilot in negotiating. There is no formulaic approach which will get you to the landing field of your choice every time without further real-time input from you. It is time to introduce you to the classic bad-behaviours which average negotiators regularly trip over and fall into and the counter good-behaviours employed habitually by successful, experienced negotiators. Chapter 7 reveals four of these on each side of the fence. Four good ones as used by great negotiators and four common accidental "wreckers" mistakenly used by average negotiators.

Finally, Chapter 8 brings everything together and shows you how to prepare and plan for a real negotiation, using everything previously covered in the book. And, as you will see as you get in to the book, it ends as it begins. Negotiation is generally not

a thing that happens and then ends and then a new one starts again ... it is a continuous process. The reason we are very often prepared to negotiate in the first place is that we want to deal with these people again so we invest time and effort to give them a little and take something back for ourselves in return. Once you have all these relatively simple skills buttoned down you will be all set for your next real negotiation.

Great Negotiating Skills is not a long book and it doesn't need to be. As a topic "negotiating" can be dressed up in a lot of superfluous detail (in order to get you to pay more or buy another book?). Or you can apply just the techniques in these eight chapters and see what happens.

So there's the challenge. Just go and do what I describe in these pages. Nothing else is needed. First make sure you really aspire to come out of your next negotiation with a great result ... nothing else is more important than this. Then: 1. Be properly prepared (most negotiators are not). 2. Know clearly what you're going to do if it doesn't work out (most negotiators have no such Plan B). 3. Never make a statement when you could ask a question (most negotiators don't realize how they mess up by "telling" too much). 4. Control their perception of time (most negotiators have no idea how to do this or how valuable it is). 5. Control their perception of your power (most negotiators have no idea that power has little to do with reality and nearly everything to do with perception).

Then, after your next negotiation, when you have applied these lessons, drop me a line (my address is at the end of the book) and let me know what happened ... good or not so good ... I'm not a shrinking violet I can take it.

That's it.

I look forward to hearing about your success!

For Review Only

SECTION 1

**The elevator to success is out of order. You'll
have to use the stairs, one step at a time.**

JOE GIRARD, WORLD'S GREATEST SALESMAN
(GUINNESS BOOK OF WORLD RECORDS)

Aspiration and Attitude

“At heart we underestimate ourselves. We do not really believe in ourselves and remain for that reason weak, ineffectual, even impotent, when we could be strong, dominant, victorious.”

DR NORMAN VINCENT PEALE

So you want to be a successful negotiator. That is a very good starting point. It is a lot better than wanting to be a failure.

But how good you actually are at negotiating depends on a little bit more than a “want”. In this book I will show you many techniques of persuasion and “value creation”. But how good you actually become as a negotiator depends on one important factor more than anything else. And it is one factor that most similar books ignore: your *aspiration*.

First ... Who am I?

My name is Bob Etherington and I am a salesman.

I know that is similar to the introduction given by people in an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting but, judging by results, I am an experienced and successful communicator, business persuader and sales manager. It has taken me over 37 years in the “school of hard knocks” to get there but I’ve made it. (Hurrah!) For the record I am also a pilot, an engineer and a business owner, but selling activities still take up most of my business day.

So I’m about to save you 37 years of toil by condensing a big chunk of that knowledge into about 37,000 words in the little book you are now holding. I am not better than you, but I have learnt a lot about persuasion in business and that’s what you’ll find in this book.

Even though many business people are not very keen on either *selling* things or *negotiating* deals, it is a fact that for just about all commercial enterprises, there is nothing more important than those two activities. Why? Because without them nothing else happens.

Now, when you’re learning to *sell*, (I was initially trained by Rank Xerox in the UK c.1970) one of the required classes usually covers how to make initial contact with prospective customers. One method I was taught was how to write effective, door-opening, sales letters. “Lesson 1” on this subject included some explanation of the way most intended recipients tend to read sales letters.

You see, once your prospective customers have been enticed to open the envelope (getting them to do that is an art and science all on its own) they tend to do something unexpected. They look at the *end* of the letter first.

That is why most effective sales letters always have a “P.S.” at the end. And the strongest sales message in the letter is always contained in that “P.S.”. But as this is a *book* about negotiating and not a letter, it has a P.S. (Pre Script) at the beginning and a P.S. (Post Script) at the end and they are both the same.

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Because my most important message for you (a negotiating virgin) is contained in those P.S.s and it is key to your success as a top negotiator.

Here it is:

P.S. Never enter into a negotiation unless you aspire to emerge from it with the very best possible deal you can imagine.

As with so many areas of life, research and academic observation proves, over and over again, that successfully negotiated outcomes usually have little to do with either training, knowledge or experience. They DO always have a lot to do with your Attitude and Aspiration.

I have attended and conducted many negotiating training programmes around the world in the past few years. Delegates are often able to pass various assessment tests at the end of their programmes. They know, off-by-heart, the supposed formulae for conducting a perfect technical negotiation. They play the business-games and simulated negotiation exercises perfectly. Yet put them in the field in a real negotiation involving real assets, real products, real services and very real money and they fail to win the deals they could have won for themselves or their businesses.

I have been introduced to people who are supposed to be their company's "top negotiator" with several years experience. They have invited me to observe them in action and give feedback. *[What people usually want in these cases is the positive feedback ... in other words the good stuff only to bolster their fragile egos. Nothing at all, despite the initial brief, is really required from me, as their consultant, on the not-so-good side.]* I have then sat at the back and watched the action. What happens is that this expert often conducts it technically, in a reasonably average manner. Indeed, he (or she) often gets a deal agreed, as if a

“deal-at-any-cost” was the original objective. Yet the other side, often younger and hence by default with less experience, but with greater hunger and aspiration, gets easily the best cut of the negotiation.

On one occasion I was asked to watch, listen and observe one of these top “experienced negotiators” negotiate for my edification. (He was actually my boss at the time). He finally became so frustrated with his lack of progress and yet determined to impress (me?) that he eventually uttered the immortal words to the leader of the other team, “Is there any other financial incentive I can offer you to get you to give us the deal today?” The other side’s eyes spun like the reels in a fruit machine. I’m surprised their leader didn’t mime a cash register and say, “Cha-Ching!”

How much or how badly you desire and aspire to achieve the best negotiated outcome, compared with the same desire and aspiration on the other side of the table, is key to leaving the negotiating table with the best deal for you.

It isn’t a case of reaching a “great deal” at the expense of the other side. It is simply realizing your own value and thinking and acting in a manner that conveys this sense of purpose and confidence to the people sitting across the table from you. It is even possible to extend this idea to a team of people who are negotiating on your behalf by confidently setting an expectation of a great result.

In some of the in-house negotiation training programmes that I run for companies, we actually prove the validity of this high expectation/aspiration approach by being a little underhand with one of our training exercises.

We set up the delegates in two *almost* identical parallel negotiation exercises in separate rooms. The asset they negotiate over has no tangible value either to the buyer or the seller ... it is all in their perception.

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The buying side in both negotiation groups has an identical briefing sheet. The sellers, on the other hand, are each set different objectives. One “selling” team is set an objective to get £50,000 for the asset. The other “selling” team just £20,000. What happens, every time we set the exercise, is that the team we settle the higher expectation on initially ends up negotiating a much higher final price for their asset. The amazing thing is that the buyers don’t feel hard done by and the sellers don’t feel imposed on either. The teams are generally shocked at the large difference between the outcomes and the reason for it, when this is revealed to them at the end.

If we set ourselves high standards and goals and truly aspire and expect to reach them it is amazing what we can achieve. In his book *The Luck Factor* (an academic examination of the repeatable behaviours of lucky people) Professor Richard Wiseman of the University of Hertfordshire, UK has found that one of the four key behaviours of lucky people is that they expect to be lucky. So prior to negotiating, a key behaviour for you *virgin negotiators* to work on is your level of aspiration and expectation.

This isn’t always easy ... as the 19th century American philosopher Henry David Thoreau said: “Most men live lives of quiet desperation and go to the grave with the song still in them”, and it seems to me, despite the mountains of positive-thinking self-help books which are available, not much has changed in the 21st century. (Are we really hardwired to feel so inferior to each other?)

Just a few years ago an anonymous survey taken in the First Class section of a major airline revealed that 76% of people seated up there “in-the-nose” believed that they did not deserve to be there! They thought that sooner or later someone would discover that they were not worthy. That their value was much less than they had been leading other people to believe.

Yet most people I meet have the potential to become anything they want to become.

In a previous book (*Presentation Skills for Quivering Wrecks*) I said that in my experience most business people around the world seem to be playing a cassette-tape/CD in their heads which isn't helping them at all. The message that's playing over and over again is: "What will they do when they discover I'm only me?"

Virgin Negotiators! ... if this is you it must stop. Today. Stop listening to that tape.

Our aspirations as human beings are very much dictated by our own self esteem. And our self esteem comes mainly from the constant conversations going on in our head.

I am actually typing this part of the book, in August 2007, seated upstairs on a 747 "Jumbo" on my way back to London from leading an in-house negotiation workshop for a company in Asia. [*Thinks: "I see from the moving map display on the seat-back TV in front of me that we are currently flying just north of Istanbul ... there are some great natural carpet negotiators just below me."*]

Anyway, on the particular Asian training programme I have just delivered, there was a very able delegate – an Australian – who proved that he is, potentially, a very good technical negotiator. The problem has been, all week, that he has showed little belief in himself. He has constantly refaced every exercise with an excuse:

"No but ... I just want to warn you I'll be no good at this." (He was great.)

"No but ... I'm actually a 'techie' I haven't got the experience in the sales area." (He was fine.)

8 NEGOTIATING SKILLS FOR VIRGINS

“No but ... our product IS far too expensive.” (No it isn’t.)

“No but ... in the *real* world we have to give our customers a discount ... they demand it.” (I’m sure they do. Price is *always* an objection – but you’re not going to give them one.)

When it came to personal aspiration the Australian was shooting himself in the foot at every turn. If he continues like this he will continue to give away value to counterparties, which they would otherwise be quite willing to pay for.

By changing his in-head conversation first he will very rapidly – surprisingly rapidly – alter his perception of himself and subsequently other people’s perception of him.

As a starter I suggested swapping the “No but ...” (which he usually begins every sentence with) for “Yes and ...” thus removing all the negative parts of the following sentence. If he concentrates on this, I estimate other people will see the change in him in about two weeks.

When my business partner and I first set up our training business, on the dining table in my London apartment a few years ago, we never once told a lie about our size or the startup nature of our business. It simply never arose as a question from any potential customer and as they didn’t ask, we didn’t say anything. They told us the types of problem they wanted solved ... we told them how we could help and they, more often than not, engaged us. Sometimes before they knew our fee. We always thought and acted as if we were part of a huge organization which, until we set up on our own, is exactly the type of organization we had been working in.

Our aspiration level was high. We offered and delivered a high level of service so there were no complaints. We even appointed an external chairman for our company who would set a constant expectation of high performance and sales targets if we should

ever falter in our resolve. Our strategy worked so well that we started to gain some really large international clients. After a few assignments our main contact from one particular large client bumped into me one day at London Heathrow airport.

“Hi Bob,” he said. “I was in your street, at that tennis shop, earlier today. Your offices are near there aren’t they? I didn’t see your office block. Where is it?” (Office block? ... Office block? It was the two of us with one phone and one (borrowed) laptop at my dining room table!)

But our aspiration levels were high as were our expectations. When negotiating deals for ourselves we never once gave in to the discount pressure ... we didn’t have to. We always appeared to be busy ... we kept ourselves “scarce”. We held our nerve when we were up against competitors even when our diary was empty! We “walked away” from the negotiating table a number of times whenever our fees *were* under pressure. It was odd how often on those occasions the assignments and the money chased us ... about 80% of the time as it happens. A typical illustration of this is shown in a client’s email copied word for word below:

Dear Bob,

Thank you for a series of interesting discussions over the past two months with respect to our proposed sales and marketing programme. We have just completed our monthly board meeting during which we considered your proposal in parallel with those from your competitors. I have to tell you that your fees are very high by comparison and this was the view of the whole board. Nevertheless we accept your proposal at the rates quoted and request that you let us know as soon as possible when you can start the work.

John

So can any of us tap into some psychological tools which will increase our individual self esteem, expectation and aspiration to a level which will bring us up to “top-negotiator” standard? Yes ... and the answer is instantly to hand: modern sports-psychology ... the world of techniques to which footballer David Beckham, golfer Tiger Woods, the whole of the 2006/7 Australian Cricket team (and just about all successful sports stars) attribute their long standing and continuing success.

You see most top sports stars are only human. They are not looking for success in a bottle of the ubiquitously named “banned-substance”. They know they have to find it in themselves. They suffer from all the self doubt and lack of self belief that you do. I know you never admit it and that with your friends and family, just like those sports stars (and the First Class passengers in that Boeing 747), you talk a good *public* talk. But left to their own devices, most people's self-talk chatter is putting them down instead of up.

One of the most often faced challenges experienced by sports stars is how to improve their performance. They are frustrated that they *know* they often possess superior, physical attributes and strengths compared with their competitors (probably just like you and the things you would like to negotiate with a counterparty) and yet they're consistently being out performed by their competition (like you are probably being out-negotiated by the team on the other side of the table).

In so many of these sports cases the one thing that separates their final performance from that of the others in the race has been found to be based in their belief as to their ability to outperform the competition. Simply put they are operating with a limiting belief as to their strengths and abilities compared with those on the other side. However research shows that an individual's *core beliefs* in any given area of their life will ultimately determine the reality they draw into their life! ... Top performer, Poor performer or Average performer.

So how do you go about changing a limiting belief to a positive one – one that will result in a transformation of your expectations and aspirations? One that will bring about your transformation from an average negotiator to a top negotiator?

First, can I ask you ... do you talk to yourself? (*Do I? ... I don't know? Let me see now ...*) You see it has long been established by psychologists and neuroscientists that we all (every person in the world) carry on a continuous dialogue, or self-talk, of something between 150 and 300 words each minute. This means that we process between 45,000 and 50,000 thoughts each day. Most of this dialogue is harmless and serves our daily activities such as, "I need to stop at the supermarket". The problem comes about when your inner dialogue takes on a negative connotation like, "I'll have to give them a discount ... they are in a much stronger position than us". "We are only a start-up in this market. We don't have the experience to compete at this level." Or, "There are so many companies similar to us. We don't stand a chance of getting it." The constant negative reinforcement created by our habitual negative self-talk results directly in the creation of a limiting belief (or beliefs) that go on to become self-fulfilling prophecies.

A belief – positive or negative – is a feeling of certainty. Beliefs are, literally, hard-wired into our brain in comfortable grooves or neural motorways. Incoming data from your senses travel on these neural motorways on the way to interpretation in the brain. Therefore, if you sincerely want to change an unresourceful/limiting belief into a totally empowering belief, you must divert the negative neural motorway created in your brain.

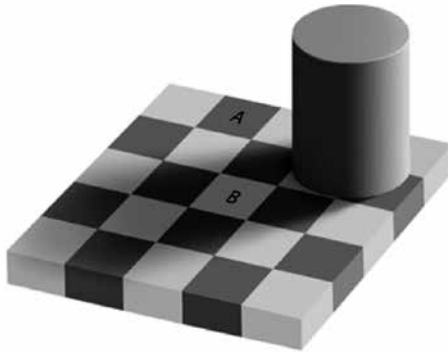
You can achieve this in exactly the same way that the roadways were laid down in the first place: by using self-talk, or what are generally called "affirmations". Affirmations are statements of fact or belief (negative or positive) that will ultimately lead to the end result you expect. Words that follow the phrase, "I am", such as "I am a great negotiator" or "I am confident in the value

of my service” are an affirmation. The simplicity of affirmations often makes more cynical people dismiss them. But ask any successful person for an opinion (and I often do) and you will hear no cynicism. Affirmations are regularly used by successful business people and professional athletes.

This is how you can compose effective affirmations for yourself. The process is a simple one. First, identify the areas of your life which are not working to your satisfaction ... in your case the area of successful negotiation. Now, write out your aspirational affirmations that represent things the way you want them to be. These will be the vehicles for creating new resourceful/positive motorways. Your affirmation should be short and to the point. It must be so simple that a small child will understand it. And because your brain cannot hold a negative thought it must always be stated in the positive. “I am a truly confident negotiator” not “I am not worried about negotiating.” Also, your affirmation must be stated in the present tense – as if it has already happened, for example, “I am a strong successful negotiator”.

Now you are going to use these affirmations to play a trick on your brain and to alter your perception of yourself and the world.

You think your perception (the way you see things) is reality and that it can't be changed? I'm afraid you're wrong and I am about to prove it. Before you go any further let me prove to you that your brain plays tricks on you all the time. With these aspirations you will just start getting your own back. Below is a chessboard. Two of the squares are marked respectively “A” and “B”. Here's the question: which is the darker square “A” or “B”?



Reality? Out there ... or ... just in your head?

Take your time ... it's easy isn't it? Of course square "A" is darker ... of course it is ... any fool can see that! But what if I were to tell you something. What if I were to tell you that they are both identical shades of grey! What if I were to tell you they are EXACTLY the same colour! Look again ... OK, now you think I'm totally crazy! But they are the same. It is just that your eye, seeing a three dimensional picture, tells your brain that things towards the background get darker and things in the foreground are lighter so that is what you perceive ... it just isn't reality. This illusion was compiled by the psychologist Edward H. Adelson at MIT in Boston and to check that we are both not "bonkers", go to his website: [http :/ / web.mit.edu /persci /people/ adelson/checkershadow_illusion.html](http://web.mit.edu/persci/people/adelson/checkershadow_illusion.html) where you can check and prove it for yourself. (And yes ... as you will see, just like the squares above, they are exactly the same shade of grey.)

So now you are going start presenting different images and self-talk to your brain in order to change its perception of reality in exactly the same way. You are going to change your perception of reality until, like the chessboard squares, it becomes your reality!

So are you ready to apply this science? (Remember this technique is effective in all areas of human performance ... not just aspirational negotiation.)

Sit upright on your bed or in a comfortable chair. Shut your eyes and take two minutes or so to relax progressively from toes to head. Imagine you are at the top of a 100-step staircase and mentally find yourself walking down, counting off the steps as you go. 100 ... 99 ... 98 ... 97 ... at each step feel yourself becoming more and more relaxed. At the bottom of the imaginary staircase speak your affirmation aloud between five to twenty times. (This depends on the time you have and the number of beliefs you are reprogramming.) When you have completed this exercise bring yourself out of your relaxed state, slowly from toes to head, and open your eyes.

Repeat this every day for just 30 days and see the difference in yourself. Remember all you have to do is "do it". The change will start in your brain long before you are conscious of the change.

Why do you have to "say" the affirmation out loud? By speaking your affirmation aloud you are involving more of your brain by including two more of your senses: hearing and feeling. You must trust this process. You must give your affirmations a chance to achieve your desired outcome. If you worry or doubt yourself or wonder if your affirmations are working, you will convey this worry to your subconscious mind. And in doing that you will generate the belief that your desire may not come to pass or the affirmation may not succeed. This process works for everyone who does it. Just do it.

It is your beliefs that produce your life experiences, not the other way around. Organize and control your beliefs using affirmations to create a life filled with successful experiences.

These experiences will reinforce the beliefs that created them. The business world is not necessarily led by the best people. It is always led by the people who *think* they're the best.

All the available research shows that when experience and training are pitted against high aspiration and high expectation those aspirational negotiators tend to come out on top more often.

It is that simple.

For Review Only

SECTION 2

Question: What is Plan B?

Answer: Not Plan A

“There is nothing worth less to a pilot than altitude above you or runway behind you. Take-offs are optional ... Landings are compulsory. So what’s your plan?”

DAVE LAWRENCE, MY FIRST FLYING INSTRUCTOR

Learning to fly a plane is great fun ... I did it ... it's not difficult ... 12–15 hours to “first solo” for averagely intelligent people. So why does it take a minimum of 50 or 60 hours ... or even more, for most people to get a full flying licence? It is the time taken mostly in training the novice what to do if something DOES go, unexpectedly, not-according-to plan. Before a pilot sets out on a flight he must first plan his route and, most important of all, where he will land if he has to come down early or unexpectedly. Every couple of years, in order to maintain your UK flying licence, you have to go up with an instructor or examiner who at any moment will pull back on the throttle levers high over the English countryside and say, “You’ve just had an engine

failure. Where are you going to land?” and expect you to select a site and glide the “engineless” lump of metal down to within a few hundred feet of your designated pre-planned spot before mercifully applying full power again. Or they will get you to wear a pair of blacked-out spectacles (“Foggles”) and fly you around for several minutes in order to disorient you before allowing you to remove the glasses. At which point they will ask you to identify your exact location and then take them to the nearest alternative airfield. Bursting into tears won’t hack it ... you must have a pre-prepared plan!

Understanding the huge power and confidence you give yourself at the negotiating table when you start out with an alternative landing site in mind (for use if something should go wrong) is very important. In negotiating I always ask virgin negotiators think of it as a letter in your back pocket (LIYBP). When I was an employee I always negotiated better salary increases for myself if I had an offer letter from another employer in my trouser pocket. I rarely had to mention it ... my confidence said it all. And the “letter-in-your-backpocket” idea is critical to your elevation from Virgin Negotiator to Top Negotiator. This is because it provides you with the confidence to act in a more courageous manner. You will always make a wiser decision about whether to accept a negotiated agreement if you have previously established what your alternative is (or alternatives are).

In simple terms, if your negotiated agreement is better than the contents of the LIYBP, then you should accept it. If the agreement reached so far, is not better than the contents of your LIYBP, then you should continue to negotiate until you reach a better agreement. If you cannot, then discontinue the negotiation. You would be surprised how often people emerge from the negotiating table with a deal a long way from their original intention. They lose sight of the objective in the excitement of the moment. Any deal rather than the right deal becomes the objective.

You think it can't happen? That of course you wouldn't lose sight of your primary objective? I have to challenge that thought.

There is an exercise we give to corporate negotiation workshops consisting of highly qualified, experienced and well educated 21st century executives which illustrates how easy it is to quickly lose sight of what a wise agreement would look like.

It goes like this: I produce from my wallet a genuine \$50 bill (US Dollars). I tell the class that it is up for auction in 50 cent increments. The winner will receive the note. Anyone in the room can bid for it in sequence (I tell them I will go round the class clockwise). Anyone can drop out at any time but cannot then rejoin the auction. We open the bidding.

After the first two bids I suddenly remember that there is one auction rule I have omitted ... the second-best bid, at the end, also has to pay up. A couple of sensible people immediately drop out but for the rest greed and fear blind them to what's happening. In particular nobody in the room now wants to lose and as the number of participants slowly reduces, "not coming second" becomes the dominant objective. So powerful is this desire that during the exercise, we regularly find the bidding for the \$50 bill not only reaches but exceeds the face value. It is not uncommon to find three or four people bidding \$53 ... \$53.50 ... \$54 ... \$54.50 ... for a \$50 bill. It is at this stage that I bring the auction to a sensible (and wise) conclusion. I point out how easy it is for any of us to become caught up in the proceedings and end up with a deal that makes no sense for our side at all.

So a previously established LIYBP keeps you focused and stops you agreeing to something stupid.

If you cannot negotiate a better agreement for your side (or for yourself), then you must consider concluding the negotiations and exercising your alternative. In the real world the costs of doing that must be considered as well but, as the saying goes, "When you're up to your backside in alligators it is difficult to remind yourself that your objective was to drain the swamp!" In essence your LIYBP will protect you both from prematurely agreeing to terms that are unfavourable for you and from saying "no" to terms it would actually be in your interest to accept.

Having a great LIYBP increases your negotiating power. Because, if you can improve the contents of your LIYBP, you will increase your *actual* negotiating power and the *perception* of your negotiating power at the same time. We humans are always communicating; it is not something we control particularly well. Over 55% of human communication is picked up by other people from our unconscious body language and another 38% from our tone of voice. So good negotiators "feel" when their opponent is desperate for an agreement. They can "feel" that there is no Plan B on the other side. When this happens they will demand much more from you and you will have to capitulate. On the other hand if you do appear to have many options, outside the negotiation, then you are likely to get many more concessions from your counterparty in an effort to keep you at the negotiating table.

So what happens when the reality is that the other side does have more power? What happens when the "Letter In Your Back Pocket" is not as good as you would like? When, like many small business owners trying to sell to a large corporation, you are an unknown entity? When the other side is, more or less, saying: "I don't know who you are or what you think you can offer us, or how you rank against our regular supplier but ... well, you're here now so let's negotiate!"

The truth is that even when an effective negotiator (or negotiating team) does not have good options outside the negotiation, they often *think* they do and this is what makes the difference (see Chapter 1!). For example, both sides may *think* that they can get the deal they want (the big company negotiators *think* they can grind a price discount out of the smaller company or go elsewhere ... the smaller company thinks they can persuade the larger one that their offering is unique). Yet, because most buying decisions are made at a deeply unconscious level, perceptions are the biggest issue when it comes to deciding whether or not to accept an agreement. If a top, “aspirational” negotiator thinks that they have a great LIYBP, even when the reality is that they are actually weak, they will, very often, pursue that option, even if it is not as good as they think it is.

Even when your LIYBP contains (as mine has in the past) things like: *If I can't get this deal I will vacation for the summer and write a book; I have ten other prospective customers in various stages of the sales process ... one of them will drop ... if this particular one fails it isn't the end of the world; there are at least five other businesses I could begin in less than a week ...* then it is very spooky how often the business has chased me. Yet when I have convinced myself that a particular assignment is mine for the taking and I have no LIYBP then I am often “surprised” by my failure to get it: “We felt the other company had a better understanding of our issues and culture.”

At the end of his life Sir Winston Churchill said he felt like an aeroplane at the end of its journey, nearly out of fuel, searching for a safe landing field. That was OK in the mid 20th century, but as a successful 21st century negotiator you shouldn't even be preparing to take-off without knowing where your safe alternative landing field will be.

One of the great and well-publicized LIYBP success stories in the past few years in London, UK was over the threatened

increase in land rental demanded by the owners of the land on which the London Eye stands. The owners of this “bigwheel” tourist attraction had been paying £65,000 per year in rental. In 2005 the owners of the land, represented by a powerful London businessman Lord Hollick, gave them notice to quit unless the London Eye’s owners increased their rental to £2,500,000 per year ... a whopping 3880% increase!

Extreme opening positions for a negotiation? Certainly! On one side a strong and successful business owner and on the other the cash-strapped, debt laden owners of a popular tourist attraction. What did the London Eye’s owners do for a LIYBP? They appealed to London’s Mayor, Ken Livingston who gave them a great one: *a threatened compulsory purchase order to be placed on the land by the Corporation of London!*

The resulting negotiation concluded in February 2006 left all sides happy. With the threat of the compulsory purchase order known to be in the attraction-owner’s back pocket, the owners of the land negotiated a deal which gave them just one-fifth of their originally demanded rental: £500,000 ... an increase? Yes but not nearly as much as they had originally hoped for. But, on the other hand, guaranteed for “the foreseeable future”... (and as all business people know there is no such thing as a “bad” profit). Also in the course of the negotiations the original owners of the “Eye” agreed to sell all their shares to the waxworks pioneers “Madame Tussauds” and so rid themselves of all their debt.

So in most of the ways that we have to measure a successful negotiation it was successful. Each party could walk away with something more than they might have had if they had become totally intransigent. But without the effective LIYBP what would have happened? And if Lord Hollick representing the landowners, had read this book first would he have established an even more powerful LIYBP of his own? We shall never know.

About the Author

Bob Etherington has been developing his reputation for sales success since the 1970s, in a career that has spanned many global markets.

Having begun his career in 1970 with Rank Xerox in London, he was quickly headhunted by Grand Metropolitan Hotels and then became a Money Broker in the City. He joined Reuters, the international news and financial information leader in the 1980s, and became a main Board Director for Transaction Services in 1990, moving to New York in 1994 to take control of their major accounts strategy for US banks. Reuters' international sales to these banks grew rapidly and, as a result, Bob was appointed to organise professional sales training for the entire company.

In 2000, Bob left Reuters and became co-founder of SpokenWord Ltd., the UK-based sales training company. He resigned as Managing Director of SpokenWord Ltd. in 2008.

Bob now lives between his homes in London and Kent and is currently working on a variety of business, theatre and charity projects. He can be contacted at robertetherington@yahoo.co.uk or via the website www.bobetheringtongroup.com.