

NEGOTIATION: HARNESS SUBCONSCIOUS POWER TO GAIN ADVANTAGE

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Negotiation

Consider the foremost attributes of a successful negotiator and you are unlikely to recognize the importance of subconscious power.

In fact, intangible power represents the most important dimension to any negotiation because it shapes how we come across to our opponent.

Our subconscious can be our greatest ally in a negotiation, yet it can also be our worst foe if we don't learn to tap into it in the right way.

TAPPING INTO THE SUBCONSCIOUS DIMENSION OF NEGOTIATION

Have you ever met someone who makes you feel instantly at ease, whom you are happy to trust from the outset?

Whilst this 'instant like' comes naturally to some, it is actually a series of things that happen at a subconscious level to make us decide if we like and trust the other person. If we are aware of these behaviours, we can control them and even train ourselves to improve them.

In a negotiation, no matter whether we are buyer, seller or otherwise, the side that knows how to use the power of the subconscious to their advantage will increase their chances of making a deal that better achieves their outcomes.

HOW OUR BRAINS WORK TO PROTECT US

Behind the scenes, our subconscious brains are constantly looking after our interests and protecting us. How we act, behave, perform, what we say and how we say it are all influenced directly by how we interpret a situation and represent it in our minds.

Awareness of how our brain's filter determines how we see the world, means we can begin to manage it, and this is the first step to tapping into our subconscious to develop our negotiation power.

BUILDING RAPPORT AND MAKING THEM TRUST YOU

One of the most powerful things we can do in a negotiation is rapport building, where we demonstrate intense interest in the other party in order to become 'just like them', simply by matching or pacing ourselves with the other person – mirroring body language, tone of voice and language patterns.

Building rapport enables us to connect directly with our opponent's subconscious. It puts them at ease, creates a connection and makes them like us, therefore building trust through our interactions.

BEING THE 'ONE UP'

A 'one up' dynamic exists in many business scenarios, social situations and relationships where there is no given hierarchy. There is always a 'one up' and 'one down', a pecking order that typically establishes itself without any discussion or agreement between parties and usually without conscious thought. If we can be the 'one up', we can claim another source of intangible power.

So what is happening here? Once again, we find our subconscious at work. Whenever we meet or engage with someone, we will, without realizing it, compare ourselves and make a rapid determination of our position relative to theirs.

In a negotiation we should be alert to the social comparisons dynamic. If we wind up believing we are 'one down', we will fail to negotiate as well as we could.

EVERY BODY'S TALKING

Possibly the single most important element of a negotiation, body language gives away a negotiator's position more than anything else.

Reading body language is about watching for cues and noticing when things change. We all have our own

patterns of eye movement when recalling information, and we will move and act in a particular way.

Body language changes when things deviate from the norm and, once again, we find our subconscious at work trying to protect us.

If we are trying to bluff a position, our subconscious mind might want to stop this happening. Our eyes might dart to a new place and we might move slightly differently. Smart negotiators will calibrate their opponent ahead of the real negotiation in order to watch normal eye movement responses.

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU SAY...

Our subconscious minds have plenty of input in what we say and how we say it.

If we listen carefully when people are relaying key bits of information, we can often hear more in how they say it than in what they are saying. Pay attention to tone, pitch, speed and inflection and it is possible to tune into what seems less convincing.

Our subconscious brains are very good at inadvertently giving away the true feelings we might be trying to hide by adding or embellishing words as an attempt to overcompensate.

Taking note of what others say and how they say it, as well as building awareness of what we ourselves do, gives us power in negotiation.

THE POWER OF BEING POSITIVE

The final way we can build intangible power is by displaying positive emotion. If we exude enthusiasm and project a warm, excited and happy persona towards our opponent, it will be difficult for them to not like us.

When you smile at someone, it is hard for them to not smile back. And when they do, a little subconscious connection forms.

PROJECT YOURSELF - PUT THOSE INTANGIBLES TO WORK

Don't underestimate the power of possibilities in our subconscious mind. It is often how negotiators get what they want.

By learning to be aware of ourselves and others, we are able to change our behaviour and maximise our negotiation power.

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