



Negotiation

Beth Fisher-Yoshida

Columbia University and Fisher Yoshida International, New York, NY, USA

What is it?

Negotiation is when two or more parties with seemingly conflicted interests come together in a decision making process. There are two elements: the actual substance the parties are negotiating about; and the social aspect, which is the relationship. The negotiation might be collaborative, competitive or mixed motives. There are different parts to a negotiation, including preparation, process and outcomes. A collaborative process will lead to a collaborative outcome; a competitive process to a competitive outcome. The preparation influences the process and outcome, while the process also influences the outcome. Parties are satisfied at the conclusion of a negotiation if their expectations were met. When the substance of the negotiation is critical then parties are satisfied if they get what they want. If the relationship is important then a positive ending to the negotiation results in parties being satisfied. If the relationship and the substance are important, the negotiation has mixed motives because parties may not push to meet substantive goals if there is a risk of damaging the relationship.

Who uses the concept?

Negotiation is a part of everyday life. We may have simple negotiations about where to eat lunch or more complex negotiations about nuclear weapons. They take place in our personal lives, in business and in diplomacy. We all negotiate, but we may not realize this is what we are doing at the time. We pay attention to different aspects of the negotiation process, such as how much we prepare. We are affected by the dynamics of negotiations, such as power distribution or the emotions that surface before, during and after a negotiation.

Fit with intercultural dialogue?

The negotiation process involves communication. Through communication parties make their needs known and work together to find ways to satisfy them. Trust influences how much information they disclose. To build trust, parties need to feel safe and understand each other. This becomes more complex and challenging when there are noticeable differences in values, beliefs, styles of communication, levels of emotional expressiveness and power distribution. Intercultural dialogue seeks to address these types of differences and in a sense these dialogues are types of negotiations. The parties are negotiating shared meaning making.

What work remains?

One area needing more attention is the preparation phase of the negotiation process. If we frame intercultural dialogue as a negotiation, then the parties need to spend more time becoming familiar with one another and each other's cultural orientation to life. Parties benefit from knowing the level of commitment to each negotiation because that determines how hard each party is willing to work to achieve mutual understanding and resolve outstanding issues.

Resources

- Fisher-Yoshida, B., & Yoshida, R. (2015). International negotiation. In J. M. Bennett (Ed.). *Sage encyclopedia of intercultural communication*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lewicki, R., Sanders, D., & Barry, B. (2014). *Negotiation*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.