

*Thought for the day – 28*

**‘Be receptive’**

Frequently, we approach a negotiation having considered all the issues and developed a solution that satisfies our concerns. We then see the negotiation as about convincing our opponent of the value of our solution. The problem is that our opponent has also considered all the issues and developed a solution that suits them, and the chances of both parties finding the same solution are pretty remote.

Both therefore start the negotiation with their own solution which they wish to ‘sell’ to the other party. Each is resistant to the ideas of the other. Each solution may solve the problems of one party, but is unlikely to solve both sets of problems. As the negotiation proceeds, people tend to dig in to these positions, their solutions and their ideas.

It is relatively easy to break this spiral. The first step is to recognise that you are negotiating ‘with’ the other party, rather than against them. This involves being receptive to their ideas and their proposals, and indeed encouraging them. It is relatively easy to ask, at an appropriate point in a negotiation, how the other party recommends that you resolve the problem you are negotiating. The skill is then to develop, enhance and build on their proposal, to the point where it is an acceptable solution to both of you. Unfortunately, what most of us do is propose our own solution, rather than invite theirs. If we don’t like theirs, we then counter-propose.

Breaking the spiral starts from the basic premise that the other party will be more receptive to a solution based on *their* proposal than on yours. Even outrageous proposals from the other party can be modified, developed and enhanced.

© The author

*This thought has been taken from Eric’s book ‘Mastering Negotiations’. A master negotiator himself, he is our expert trainer on the subject – click [here](#) for details of one of his most popular courses.*

TO DISCUSS YOUR TRAINING REQUIREMENTS  
PLEASE CALL 01582 469080

<http://www.in-house-training.com>

Email: [info@in-house-training.com](mailto:info@in-house-training.com)