

Thought for the day – 29

‘Go to the balcony’

Emotion is a part of everyday life. There will be some people you will get on well with, and this will affect the way you negotiate with them. There will be other people you will not get on well with, and this will also affect the way you negotiate with them.

When you consider rows and arguments, it quickly becomes apparent that one side starts an argument and the other party is usually drawn into it. This applies to family arguments as well as business negotiations. There is a skill in only arguing when it suits your purpose. Having an argument in a negotiation is acceptable provided that *you* choose to have the argument rather than being drawn into it.

We need to broaden this out and think of emotion as more than rows and arguments. Enthusiasm, optimism, bonhomie and the willingness to work together are just some of the many forms of emotion.

If one person sets the emotional tone for negotiation, and the other is drawn into it, there is much to be said for being the person who sets the tone, rather than being the one who is drawn in. This means deciding in advance of a negotiation whether you wish the tone to be positive, motivational and enthusiastic or critical, negative and derogatory. You should ensure that having decided on the appropriate tone for negotiation you choose your words carefully so that you achieve the desired effect.

It is also important to consider how you should respond to the words and actions of the other party in the negotiation. It is all too easy to be drawn into an argument in a negotiation, when this was never part of your plan. The Americans have a saying, ‘go to the balcony’, and in a negotiation it may be necessary to go to the balcony when the other party introduces the wrong type of emotion. Going to the balcony merely involves not reacting. When the other party says something provocative, you should mentally count to ten, and then continue by side-stepping what was said.

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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.

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