

Thought for the day – 32

‘Don’t be predictable’

Many of us are creatures of habit. We have routines and rituals that make us feel comfortable. If, as part of a long-term relationship, you have developed a particular way of negotiating with a trading partner, this will inevitably mean that they will be able to predict the way you will act and react. This will hinder your negotiating effectiveness.

A number of negotiators mistakenly believe that negotiation is an exercise in compromise. This encourages the opponent to start with an exaggerated posture so that they can achieve their objective and make the other party feel that they too have achieved a good result.

Others of us have favourite ploys or approaches to negotiation which may be effective if used occasionally, but lose their cutting edge when over-used and abused. One public sector client, when seeking to negotiate down the proposed price for a consulting project, always starts the negotiation the same way:

‘My colleagues and I are really impressed by your proposal, but there is another bid which is 10% cheaper. We would love to be able to give you the job but need to know if you can match their offer.’

Unfortunately for him, consultancy is a very incestuous business, and this man’s reputation for this particular ploy has rendered it useless.

If you use the same ploys with negotiation partners again and again, you too will lose your effectiveness.

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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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