

Thought for the day – 34

‘Aim high’

Research by Chester Karass suggests that the most successful negotiators aim high. His research in the USA has been replicated in the UK. Two groups of buyers were chosen for a number of experiments. One group of young ambitious buyers were asked to negotiate a 15% discount off the range of prices from two suppliers. The second group of more experienced, but less ambitious, buyers, were asked to negotiate a 5% discount off the same range of prices from the same suppliers. The outcome was clear:

- The experienced buyers all achieved the 5% discount. Not one exceeded the objective.
- Not one of the ambitious buyers achieved the 15% discount. However, all achieved more than 10%.

Unfortunately, one of the many problems we face in a negotiation is the conditioning that comes with our experience. Because of our experience we may temper our aspirations. As we know a market or a product we tend towards norms and less radical aspirations. It is often the inexperienced negotiator who does not realise that something has never been done in a particular way before who achieves that additional benefit.

It is not just experience that causes the problem. If you compare the British culture with the Middle Eastern culture, there are strong differences in the way that we shop. These differences are carried over into our business lives, and the British culture is to see prices as fixed and non-negotiable. Many of us therefore do not ask for concessions which others may take for granted. The message has to be aim realistic but high in negotiation.

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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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