

Beyond Reason: Using Emotions as You Negotiate

Authors: Roger Fisher and Daniel Shapiro

People negotiate every day for different purpose, and each day they experience emotions, both positive and negative. When negotiating formally or informally, people often don't know how to handle these ever-present emotions -- their own or those of the other person.

In the first two chapters of their book, *Beyond Reason: Using Emotions as You Negotiate*, Roger Fisher and Daniel Shapiro introduce a framework to deal with the emotions that arise during any negotiating process. This framework consists of five core concerns that negotiators can use to help prepare, conduct, and review the emotional dimensions of a negotiation: appreciation, affiliation, autonomy, status, and role. While not completely distinct from each other, each concern has its own special contribution in stimulating emotions. Core concerns are human wants that are important to almost everyone in virtually every negotiation. They are often unspoken but are no less real than are tangible interests (p. 15). By focusing on these concerns rather than reacting to a multiplex of changing emotions that occur during a negotiation, negotiators can stimulate positive emotions and overcome negative ones, while still maintaining sight of the best interests for their parties.

The difference between having a core concern ignored or met can make or break a negotiation. According to the authors, each of the core concerns must be addressed in a manner that is neither too excessive nor too minimal. The following are standards that can be used to measure if core concerns are being treated appropriately (p. 16):

- Fair? Fair treatment is consistent with custom, law, organizational practice and community expectations. We feel treated as well as others who are in similar or comparable circumstances.
- Honest? Honest treatment means that what we are being told is true. We may not be entitled to know everything, but we do not want to be deceived. When the other person honestly addresses our concerns, their intent is not to deceive or trick us. They communicate what they authentically experience or know.
- Consistent with current circumstances? It is perhaps unreasonable to expect all of our concerns to be met in every circumstance. Norms change as we deal with everyday matters or a crisis. Appropriate treatment is often consistent with these changing norms.

The power of core concerns is that they can be used for two purposes: (1) as a lens to understand the emotional experience of each party, and (2) as a lever to stimulate positive emotions in yourself and others. Awareness of core concerns can help you see what might be motivating someone else's behavior so that you can modify your actions to address that person's concern. Further, awareness of your own core concerns can help to diffuse a situation in which you feel your emotions are escalating. For instance, if the other party says or does something that you perceive as an attack, instead of reacting, you can reflect a moment, ask yourself which of your core concerns feels threatened, and respond in a manner that restores balance to the interaction.

Fisher and Shapiro present tables (p. 19) that explain both the risk of ignoring core concerns and the power of meeting core concerns (the tables have been slightly modified for space purposes):

The Risk of Ignoring Core Concerns

| Core Concern: | My Core Concerns are Unmet Whenever: | The Resulting Emotions Can Make Me Feel: | When This Happens, I Am Prone: |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Appreciation | I am unappreciated | Angry Impatient | To react negatively, contrary to my interests |
| Affiliation | I am treated as an adversary | Indignant Disgusted Resentful | To go it alone |
| Autonomy | My autonomy is impinged | Guilty and Ashamed Remorseful | To think rigidly |
| Status | My status is put down | Embarrassed Sad | To act deceptively and be seen as untrustworthy |
| Role | My role is trivialized and restricted | Envious and Jealous Anxious | |

The Power of Meeting Core Concerns

| Core Concern: | My Core Concerns are Met When: | The Resulting Emotions Can Make Me Feel: | When this Happens, I Am Prone: |
|---------------|---|--|--------------------------------|
| Appreciation | I am appreciated | Enthusiastic Caring | To cooperate |
| Affiliation | I am treated as a colleague | Compassionate Content | To work together |
| Autonomy | My freedom to decide is acknowledged | Comforted Pleased Hopeful | To be creative |
| Status | My high status is recognized where deserved | Proud Accomplished Courageous | To be trustworthy |
| Role | My role is fulfilling; it includes activities that convince me that I can make a difference | Calm Relieved Relaxed Happy | |

In subsequent chapters, Fisher and Shapiro address each core concern in detail: how to express appreciation, build affiliation, respect autonomy, acknowledge status, and choose a fulfilling role when involved in a negotiation. They also go into further depth on how to deal with strong negative emotions during the negotiation process, how to successfully prepare for negotiations using the core concerns as a model, and ways to use the model in the real world.

While emotions are often uncomfortable, especially when trying to keep a cool head during a negotiation, by addressing emotions at a core level and in a systematic way, we can harness the power of our emotions to create positive results for ourselves and others. The core concerns framework presented by Fisher and Shapiro can be used for situations ranging from multi-party business negotiations to daily interactions with family, friends and co-workers.

Fisher, R., & Shapiro, D. (2005). *Beyond Reason: Using Emotions as You Negotiate*. New York: The Penguin Group.

Prepared by Jen Bowe, FDR Graduate Assistant