



Sixty Second Insight #5: Negotiation 101

by Dave Arch

Getting To "Yes"



An effective leader needs to learn to negotiate and always grow in his or her skills. Certainly, a classic in the world of negotiation training is the book entitled *Getting to Yes* by William Ury and Bruce Patton.

Above is my attempt to depict it in a graphic form as William Ury and Bruce Patton talk about the fact that initially both parties come with a position. Position 1 might be, "The United States government should not have any more involvement in our healthcare system." Position 2 might be "The United States government needs to get more involved in our healthcare system." Within the book, *Getting to Yes* both authors speak to the fact that each person must "get behind" the other person's position if a successful negotiation is to transpire.

Position 1 has to understand, "What are the motivations/drivers behind Position 2 (i.e. the government needs to get involved in the healthcare system). Why? Those holding that position might reply, "Well, clearly, the health care costs will continue to rise until only the wealthy are going to be able to afford health care."

Indeed, making health care more affordable might be one of the “why’s” behind both positions. Even though they have a common motivation, one position believes that the government needs to get more involved in order to control the rising cost of health care while another says the government doesn’t need to get more involved since the government has not shown strong ability in being able to efficiently and cost-effectively manage the programs it already has under its control.

Once the “why’s” (the motivations) have been defined behind each position, sometimes you can find *common desires or goals* behind both positions. They just have different ideas for how to get there (i.e. their positions).

For instance, both might want more affordable health care. You can bring that down as you’ll see in the poster and set up a Position 3. By writing the word *Affordable Health Care* on a whiteboard, you might be able to bring to the table opposing parties – willing to brainstorm how to have affordable health care. That brainstorming might result in a Position 3.

If Position 3 is a compromise that is neither Position 1 or 2, then it’s a negotiated compromise that needs to be based on an *objective standard*.

In the book, *Getting To Yes* they suggest a list of basic standards. Objective standards might be market value, precedent, scientific judgment, professional standards, efficiency, tradition, moral standards, equal treatment, reciprocity, or cost. These are bases on which a court might decide an action. They are criteria that are outside the control of these two differing parties but would stand up to scrutiny as an objective way of evaluating the final decision.

Getting to Yes has proven itself a wonderful framework for helping think through impasses when two parties or more arrive at a place when it looks like there is no way to get past the solid positions each party has taken. A leader will want those skills in his/her toolkit.
