Building Relationships with the Negotiation Skills of Daniel

Life is filled with disagreements and conflict with rebellious children, divisive church members, selfish coworkers, critical relatives, or hostile civil authorities. In this workshop we will examine the practical negotiation skills a hero of the Bible and then explore ways to apply these skills to conflicts of daily family, workplace, and church life.

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1. **Introduction**
	1. Our definition: “Negotiation is a discussion aimed at reaching an agreement.”
		1. You and I negotiate every day, although we often fail to recognize that our “discussions” are really small “negotiations.”
		2. If we can learn to negotiate the small things well, we will do a much better job negotiating the “big” things.
2. **Negotiation in Daniel**
	1. We’re going to consider the negotiation described in Daniel 1:8-16.

*But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself in this way. Now God had caused the official to show favor and sympathy to Daniel, but the official told Daniel, “I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you.*

*Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, “Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see.” So, he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.*

*At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. So, the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.*

* 1. Discussion Question: Why did Daniel’s negotiation with his guard succeed, when his negotiation with the Chief Official did not?
	2. An “interest” is the underlying motive or desire that prompts a person to negotiate in the first place and stake out a particular position.
	3. “Interest”-based negotiating has strong roots in Scripture. For example, Philippians 2:3-4: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”
1. **Interest-Based Negotiating**
	1. Discussion Questions: What were the “interests,” i.e., the underlying concerns and motives of the Chief Official? Of the guard?
	2. Joint Problem Statements: Usually framed as a question, a Joint Problem Statement integrates the important (and legitimate) interests of everyone involved in the negotiation, as much as possible.
2. **Using the PAUSE Principle (see Chapter 11 of *The Peacemaker*)**
	1. The PAUSE Principle is a simple way to bring cooperative, interest-based negotiating into everyday life. PAUSE is an acronym:
		1. **P**repare for the negotiation
		2. **A**ffirm the people involved
		3. **U**nderstand the “interests”
		4. **S**earch for creative solutions
		5. **E**valuate options objectively

Case Study: A couple whom I know found themselves in a disagreement over whether to visit the wife’s parents after church one Sunday. The wife thought it was a good idea. The husband did not. They were at an apparent impasse.

* 1. Discussion Question: As a student of interest-based negotiations, what advice would you offer to help them get our of their “either-or” impasse?
	2. Additional Information on Underlying Interests:

Husband: The husband had just returned from a long trip the previous evening and was tired. He had already decided that he wanted to go home after church, have a simple lunch and spend the afternoon unwinding from his trip. He likes his in-laws very much, but they are gregarious and require a high degree of energy. Right now, he doesn’t feel at all energetic and, being an introvert, needs some time to recharge.

Wife: The wife has not seen her parents in several weeks and is feeling a bit remiss in her responsibilities as a daughter. They are getting older and her dad has recently had some significant medical problems. She feels the uncertainty of not knowing what the future might bring pressing in on her and so wants to be more diligent about staying in close touch with her mom and dad.

* 1. Discussion Question: Focusing on their underlying “interests,” see if you can integrate them in a way that produces an outcome to which both husband and wife might say “yes.” What other “interests,” beyond those mentioned above, ought to be woven into their negotiation?
1. **Post-Workshop Assignment**
	1. Please complete the following steps:
2. Over the next 5 days, keep a journal of how you respond during “discussions aimed at reaching agreements.”
3. Next, review your notes and pick out your tendencies. Some will tend to “Compete,” others to “Concede.” Most of you will be somewhere between these two extremes.
4. Now, review the PAUSE Principle and choose one element on which to work. Most of you should focus on Understanding Interests.
5. Now, spend final 5 days practicing your chosen element in at least one discussion each day, journaling your experiences.
6. Compare where you are at the end of your second 5-day experience with your first 5-day experience. Most of you will notice significant improvement in your ability to think “cooperatively.”
	1. Thank you for taking part. May all of your “discussions” result in agreements that honor God and build relationships.

***Suggested Readings:***

*The Peacemaker,* by Ken Sande. Published by Baker Books, USA.