

Exploring links between negotiating styles and assertiveness-building.

At first sight, the counselling world of assertiveness-building and that of negotiation management consultancy may not seem to have relevant links. In fact, the **Harvard Business School** model of **principled negotiation** (Getting to Yes) has much that can be applied to **assertiveness training**. By linking the two worlds, a much more effective and holistic approach can be brought to human resource and people development within any organisation

Soft Negotiation	Principled Negotiation	Hard Negotiation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoids conflict • Makes concessions • Too soft in negotiation • Resentment feelings • Exploited feelings • Wants a quick solution to avoid difficult situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mutual gain • No posturing or tricks • Hard on the merits of the situation but soft on people • Thinking of long-term relationship • Emphasises interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Battle of wills • Extreme positions taken • Manipulative • Aggressive approach • Not thinking of long-term relations • Wants a quick victory
Passive Behaviour	Assertive Behaviour	Aggressive Behaviour
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy wasted • Poor body language • Apologises a great deal • Place too much emphasis on feelings of others • Stressed • Avoids conflict • Short-term goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High energy levels • Respecting yourself • High self-awareness • Able to make choices • Confident communication and body language • Internal integrity • Healthy stress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy wasted • Bullying • Erratic behaviour • Short-term goals • Poor communication skills • May not have an eye for detail • Manipulative • Stressed

What is negotiation? It is a means of getting what you want from others. It is a conversation designed to reach an agreement, where you and the other side have some **interests** that are shared and others that are opposed. The traditional model of negotiation assumes parties have **positions** which they move between ie **positional bargaining**

The traditional model of negotiation. (TM)

Person A

Person B

A's position(P) > concession(C) > compromise(CO) <concession (C) < B's position(P)

Formula TM = P*C*CO

BUT

Is it wise (W)? Is it efficient(E)? Is it amicable(A)? Is it good in the long-term(L)?

Counter formula: TM is not always W*E*A*L

a) Some scenarios using the traditional negotiating model.

Negotiating with both parties being hard-hard. Aggressive styles of behaviour	Parties can be obsessed with splitting the difference. Each party wants to be a winner. Problems of “face” and “ego”. Small concessions given at each stage. Time-consuming and wasteful of energy. Tendency for tricks and manipulation. Both parties may lose out.
Negotiating with both parties being soft-soft. Passive styles of behaviour	Both parties avoid confrontation and concessions given easily. Long-term relations compromised. Emphasis upon being friends. Example. A loving wife sells her camera to buy a new reel for her husband’s fishing rod. He sells his rod to buy a new tripod for her camera. Both parties lose.
Negotiating with one party hard and the other soft. Aggressive-passive styles of behaviour	Easier for a one-sided agreement with long-term relationships compromised. Feeling of resentment on one side and encouragement to repeat the strategy from the other. Tendency for manipulation. One party certainly loses out in the short-term, and the other might in the long-term.

b) A different approach from the Harvard Business School emphasising interests rather than positional bargaining.

Two readers, Tom and Jerry were using a library. Tom wanted a window open and Jerry did not. There was the potential for an argument and their positions seemed contradictory and insoluble, with one losing out whatever decision was taken. In other words, they had seemingly fixed **positions**.

The librarian spoke to each. Tom wanted fresh air whilst Jerry sought a place with no draughty air. These were their respective **interests**. As the librarian worked out the interests of the two readers, this helped define the **problem**. Once a problem is defined then a **solution** is next the logical step. The librarian suggested that a window in the adjoining room be opened. Both readers were happy and their relationship remained intact.

Negotiation = interests*problem*solution

Example: Two teenagers were arguing over an orange. An outside would suggest that it should be divided. This is the compromise resulting from positional bargaining. Let us look at their interests. It could be that A wanted the orange for its flesh and B wanted the skin for a cooking class. If you take the time to sit down and explore their interests, it may be that there is no conflict and imaginative thinking leads to a solution.

Dealing with difficulties when an agreement is not likely.

Sometimes an agreement may not seem possible and you need to have some safeguards to protect yourself.

Strategy. Before you go into a negotiation, identify your plan of action if an agreement is not possible. In Harvard-speak this is termed the **BATNA** ie the best alternative to a non-agreement.

Example: In a negotiation to sell your house and if you not think you will get a reasonable price, your alternative after breaking off negotiations is to let it. In a wage negotiation, it would be the equivalent of entering the room with the prospect of a job offer from another firm. The better your BATNA - the greater your leverage in a negotiation.

Links between developing assertiveness and the model of principled negotiation from Harvard.

Assertiveness Training.	Principled Negotiation (Harvard).
Not confusing issues and personalities.	Separating out the people and the problem.
Being willing to explore a compromise.	Avoiding the use of bottom lines and positions which become fixed.
Knowing what you want.	Knowing your alternatives if an agreement is not likely.
Preparing well before encounters with others.	Participants are problem-solvers.
Setting time limits for a resolution to concerns.	Recognising manipulative tactics.
Expressing your feelings but not in a manipulative manner.	Willing to develop options.
Knowing your facts and key words to use.	Using objective criteria when looking at agreements.
Focusing and repeating your viewpoint.	Not losing sight of your interests.
Maintaining your energy levels.	Not expending energy on misuse of time and tactics. Seeking wise and efficient agreements.
Securing long-term and sustainable relationships.	Maintaining long-term personal and business contacts.