

A Butterfly's View of 15.667 — Negotiations and Conflict Management

(see which questions you can answer?)

- 1) Is there one especially "**rational way**" to divide \$2 with a stranger? (If you think there is not, what determines the family of "rational choices"?)
- 2) Do you think that most **business decisions are made rationally**? Is there usually one optimum decision?
- 3) You are facing a specified conflict or negotiation with someone about whom you know only demographics, style and job description. **You have only an hour**. What might you do to prepare?
- 4) In real life, in a super important case, how and when should you choose which **strategies and tactics** you will use in a negotiation? On what factors ought this choice to depend?
- 5) How can one try to prevent a "**bad attitude death spiral**" in a negotiation with someone you do or do not know well? Where does a desire for **revenge** come from?
- 6) Which of the ways of **building trust** appeal to you the most?
- 7) What is the difference between **manipulating people and inspiring them** (as a leader)?
- 8) If you or someone else has gotten **painted into a corner**, through a commitment that should never have been made, what could be done?
- 9) Can you tell when someone is **lying** to you?
- 10) How might you figure out the strategy and depth of strategy the Other is using in a negotiation?
- 11) Within a close team or a couple, if you have no time in each negotiation to pursue the best win-win solutions, where both sides gain simultaneously, how can A and B behave so **that both are actually gaining, in the aggregate**, over time?
- 12) How would you define **effectiveness** in a negotiation? Are you effective? Who do you know that is effective?
- 13) Is it the choice of negotiating *strategy* that determines **effectiveness**? If so — which strategy is most effective?

- 14) If not—which tasks and skills most fundamentally determine the effectiveness of a negotiator?
- 15) What proportions of all your negotiations and conflicts are "mixed motive"? What proportion is purely collaborative? and what proportion is purely competitive? After you take the Thomas Kilmann Questionnaire, assess the strengths, in the five basic strategies, that you bring to your negotiations. Are your **skills in balance with the requirements of the negotiations** you are engaged in? (Which of the tactics on the Tactics sheets in Negotiation 101 do you want to practice?)
- 16) Imagine you are **assembling a team** to start a project or a company. What would you look for, in the people you would choose for your team, with respect to the five sets of strategic strengths in negotiation?
- 17) Given that most people think they are ethical, *and* that people are not at all the same with respect to **ethical standards**, would you want to give your future employees or partners an Ethics test? :-) See if what they *actually* do is what they say they *should* do, when ethical questions arise? Just see if they do what they agree to do, in negotiations with you? Suppose they think different standards should apply to them than to "most people"?
- 18) What is the likely effect of having an **observer** when you negotiate?
- 19) In complex negotiations what are some of the reasons for **sidebar discussions** with someone on the Other's team? Are there any reasons not to have sidebar discussions?
- 20) If you wanted to **win over a ten-person decision-making group** about a certain proposal, what are some of the ways you might do this successfully?
- 21) Please think of one or two negotiations that are truly vital to you—these could either be negotiations with yourself or negotiations with Others. **What is it that is being negotiated?** Think for example, about money, time, status and prestige, trust, space, family status, future growth possibilities, etc. Is money the most important subject? Name some ways you could find out how effective you are in this real-life negotiation that really matters to you.
- 22) The Last Task in a negotiation is: that all parties must come to see the outcome as the best possible under the circumstances. When is the last time you have seen the failure of the Last Task in a negotiation? Why did this happen?
- 23) Under what circumstances would you make the **first offer** in a competitive negotiation?
- 24) Under what circumstances would you **lay out all your relevant real interests** in a negotiation?

- 25) Name some elements of process you would want to think about, if you were going to negotiate for your side on a two-person team.
- 26) In a setting with coalitions, would you prefer to be a "pivot" person, or the person with the most tangible resources, if those are not the same?
- 27) Some of the options for dealing with complaints are: listening, referring people to other resources, just giving or receiving needed information, helping people help themselves through developing choices and coaching, shuttle diplomacy, formal mediation, fact-finding, arbitration or adjudication (and managerial decision-making), systems change, generic approaches, agency complaints, lawsuits, going to the newspapers. Which of these are more likely to be collaborative? Which are more likely to be competitive? Which will likely be "mixed motive"?
- 28) Some sources of power in negotiations include: legitimate authority, rewards, sanctions, force, information, expertise, elegant solutions, commitment, moral authority, BATNA, relationships. Which of these sources of power do you need for each of the options above, for dealing with complaints?
- 29) Who should decide which complaint option or conflict management option is chosen? The manager? The complainant?
- 30) Which is the most cost-effective complaint handling option'?
- 31) What does a person in an organization think about first when he or she wants to raise a concern or make a complaint?
- 32) Is it possible to go outside the organization with a complaint and still have a normal work life thereafter within the organization? What does your answer mean for conflict management system design?
- 33) What is the first question to ask yourself when you face a dispute or a complaint as a manager?
- 34) Which sources of power do people turn to when they feel powerless? What is the effect?
- 35) Is there such a thing as a "frivolous" complaint? What would you want to try, if someone kept blaming problems on other people?
- 36) Under what circumstances is a Difficult Person not "difficult"?
- 37) Which sources of power are likely help the most, in dealing with a very Difficult Person?

- 38) How do you manage your own emotions in conflict situations? (Do you consciously manage your emotions at all, or do you simply react?) What do you do if you start to feel yourself getting upset?
- 39) Do you try to affect the emotions of others in a conflict situation? How? For what purpose?