
NEGOTIATION GAMBITS

Seeking Information and exploring options

To help you get started when you want to engage with the 'other side' and get more information / movement in the negotiations, here are some suggested things to say:

As a negotiator, when you want to offer a way forward:

- What if I were to
- In an effort to show good faith, we are willing to?
- Perhaps we could provide?
- Maybe this could work for both of us.
- Although we feel we deserve X, we can live with Y.
- If I were to agree to that, what would you be willing to do in return?
- To get this going, I'll be flexible on this.

As a negotiator, wanting to ask the employer to offer a way forward:

- Can you do better than that?
- What do you think is a fair proposal?
- Could you tell me what you need?
- Why don't you start us off in the right direction?
- What do you think we should do?
- Could you tell us what you're willing to do here?
- We would agree to X, if you would do...
- What can you do to progress this?
- We're going to need something more than that.
- What is your side willing to do?
- Can you do anything to meet us halfway?

As a negotiator, when you want to delay decision:

- I'm sorry, but I'll have to give that more thought.
- Let me get back to you on that matter.
- Why don't we address that later?
- That's a question I'm not yet prepared to answer.
- I'm going to have to digest this material a little longer. Do you mind if we break until after lunch?
- Let's go over this proposal one more time later. I really want to give it the attention it deserves.
- Let me get back to you on that.

As a negotiator, you want to be an active listener:

- I'm picking up that...
- As I get it, you felt...
- If I'm hearing you correctly...
- So, as you see it...
- I'm not sure I'm getting you, but...
- So you feel that...
- It sounds as if you are concerned about...
- How do you feel about this situation?
- How did you come to that conclusion?
- If you were doing things over again, what would you do differently?
- What do you mean by that?
- Why is that important to you?
- Tell me more about that.
- What happened next?
- What I am hearing is.....? Is that right?
- Before you go on, do you mean.....?
- Will you give some examples of what you mean?
- I'm not sure I followed that. Could you explain it to me again?
- Do you mean that...?
- That is interesting, but why.....?

As a negotiator, you are wanting to probe for underlying interests:

- What do you think is important?
- Why do you think that happened?
- Why is that important to you?
- What exactly are you after?
- You say that bothers you. Why does that bother you?
- In other words, your point is..... Am I right?
- What are your other concerns?
- Are there any other issues than what you have already told me?
- What were you trying to accomplish when you did.....?
- That's interesting; tell me more.
- What is it about the idea that you are opposed to?
- How will what you are asking for meet your needs?
- _____ seems to be very important to you. Could you explain why?
- Our discussion always seems to come back toDo you think we could specifically talk about that?
- I sense that there might be something else.
- Can you tell me why you think that is more important than.....?
- What would be most satisfactory to you, and why?

Source: Professor John Barkai