

# An examination of the movie 12 angry men

[Entertainment](#), [Movie](#)



## **12 Angry Men Analysis**

The movie 12 Angry Men gradually shifts from an argument about positions to whether or not an 18-year-old boy should be given the death penalty. Not to mention, the film also includes an integrative negotiation through good negotiation techniques utilized by juror number 8. Juror number 8 facilitates this transition by separating the people from the problem, focusing on interests, and negotiating with objective criteria. Juror number 8's negotiation techniques were integral in producing a well-informed and reasonable decision by the jury.

The beginning of the negotiation was characterized by positional negotiation against the vote of juror number 8. The opposing 11 jurors took a position and tried to convince juror number 8 to change his vote to guilty. The opposing 11 jurors took a position, and when juror 8 refuted their position with questions of why they thought the accused was guilty they dismissed his questions as ridiculous and stuck to their original position. This sequence of the negotiation was inefficient and characterized by disorganization, shouting, and a lack of reason. If the negotiation had continued to be positional, relationships with juror 8 could have been damaged beyond repair, which would have prolonged the negotiation. If juror 8 had conceded to the positional argument of the opposing 11 jurors then it would have produced an unwise agreement not based on careful analysis of the facts of the case given in court. The beginning of this negotiation shows us how ineffective and inefficient positional negotiating can be.

To make this negotiation more effective juror 8 had to separate the people from the problem by taking into account different perceptions, control of emotions, and good communication. Juror 8 not only asked the other jurors to consider his perception of the case, but he also considered the boy guilty. Juror 8 carefully listened without interrupting the other jurors in order to deduce their emotions and how their emotions contributed to their viewpoint. This was completed by asking every juror to state why they believe the suspect to be guilty. By focusing on the legitimate emotions of the jurors, juror 8 was then able to emphasize the seriousness of the problem and make the negotiation pro-active. Juror number 8 also allowed his opponents to let off steam. He let them go on rants, shouting rampages, and even endured personal attacks all without reacting to their emotional outbursts. These rants and personal attacks came specifically from jurors 3, 7, and 10. Communication was also a problem right from the start because the jurors did not know each other and felt hostile and suspicious toward each other. Effective communication between the jurors was also difficult because some of the jurors who voted guilty were not communicating constructively. Instead they were simply trying to convince other jurors to vote guilty. Juror 8 overcame these communication problems by listening actively to the opinions of all jurors and taking into account each other jurors' opinion, not attacking the views of the other jurors, and being clear and concise when engaging in communication with the other jurors. By separating the people from the problem, juror number 8 was eventually able to persuade his opponents to agree with him and rule not guilty.

Each of the initial opposing jurors had underlying interests that contributed to the problem that juror 8 had to identify and solve. At the beginning of the negotiation all of the jurors except for juror 8 were interested in deciding the verdict in a timely manner so they could attend to other business.

Specifically, juror 3 was interested in punishing a troubled youth that reminded him of his own son, who he had not spoken to in two years. Juror 7 was interested in not missing a baseball game that he had tickets to, and juror 10 was interested in punishing the suspect because of prejudices he held against people who originated from bad parts of town. Jurors 1 and 12 simply wanted to be done with the whole process. Jurors 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 11 were most interested in making an informed decision based on the facts of the case. In order to pinpoint these interests, juror 8 asked the question “Why?” to each juror’s guilty vote. Once juror 8 had identified the interests of each juror, he was able to begin talking about each interest. Juror 8 asked his fellow jurors multiple times how they would act if they had been beaten by their fathers on a regular basis as the suspect had. This helped his opponents to understand why the suspect had such a troubled past, and once everyone stopped looking to the suspect’s past criminal record they were able to focus on the case at hand. Juror 8 used the interests of his opponents to achieve his goal of a unanimous vote for not guilty by being hard on the interests and attacking the problem that the interests created instead of using personal attacks.

Negotiating with objective criteria proved to be arguably the most effective of juror 8’s methods to persuade his fellow jurors to vote not guilty. Juror 8 was under pressure from the beginning when he was the only juror not to

vote the suspect guilty, and never once did juror 8 yield to pressure. Juror 8 did not give concessions to his opponents, and his opponents were unable to resist to his advances through the use of objective criteria. Juror 8 used the facts that were presented in the trial by the elderly man who heard the altercation and the woman who witnessed the murder through the passing el train to stem debate. He used reason to demonstrate that the testimony given was not sufficient to produce an accurate verdict because the el train would have made it nearly impossible for the elderly man to hear the altercation, and it would have taken the elderly man too long to get up from his bed and make it to the door where he could have seen the killer fleeing the crime. Reason was also used to determine that the woman who viewed the killing from her window probably did not have good enough eyesight to identify the killer since she had the same glasses marks as juror 4 did. Juror 8 prepared to present the objective criteria that the murder weapon was not so rare by going to the suspect's neighborhood and finding a switchblade just like it. This objective criteria emblazoned the idea in the other jurors' minds that perhaps this could have been a one in a million coincidence that the murder weapon and the blade the suspect bought were two completely different switchblades. Juror 8 presented this objective criteria in a well thought out and organized way, and through careful analysis of the facts juror 8 persuaded his opponents that the evidence and eyewitness accounts were not beyond a reasonable doubt and therefore not warranting of a conviction.

As a result of juror 8 separating the people from the problem, focusing on interests, and negotiating with objective criteria, juror 8 was able to

successfully persuade all of his fellow jurors to vote for the acquittal of the suspect. Juror 8 successfully turned a negotiation that began as positional and inefficient and used methods discussed in the book Getting To Yes to change the negotiation to one that was integrative. Once juror 8 had identified interests and controlled emotions he was able to use objective criteria to sway his objectors to agree with his viewpoints.