

# Alien culture



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Leadership Challenge Challenge I have a fear of negotiations. I'm usually hesitant in persuading people. I understand that for every leader it is absolutely essential to overcome this fear and start conversing with people from a higher ground. A leader is a source of power and personal traits reflect in the leadership role (Sadler 19). As a leader there will be several occasions where I will be having difficult conversations and it is imperative that I have an upper hand. Otherwise it can reflect very poorly in my overall performance. It can be in the form of a bad deal, less salary, getting less value or money for the products or services that we are providing. So to overcome this fear and to push myself out of my comfort zone I chose to sell.

Negotiating is often not considered an imperative part of leadership but it is, for instance, if a student needs to ask the university to add a course in their curriculum, the leadership needs to negotiate (. I purchased back-support cushions that one puts on their office chairs. The logic behind these cushions is they support the back when the person needs to sit for longer hours for work. I purchased 10 of these and tried to approach people outside an office in the hopes of selling them. I put the bag that had 10 cushions aside and picked out one. I literally went up to people in suits and tried to sell these. The idea was not to sell at a profit, the idea was just to sell!

Insight

This challenge taught me that the most daunting aspect of selling is the approach. The feeling one gets right before approaching someone, whether it is asking for a raise or asking to buy a product. There is another lesson that I learned that no matter what you are selling a person needs to stay calm, relaxed, confident and has to look the potential customer in the eye.

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However, one should not appear challenging or intimidating the customer.

### Commitment

This challenge proved more difficult than I had imagined. I thought that people would buy these cushions when I offer them a discount, but that wasn't the case. Simply, people were not interested in them. But I stood committed. There was a moment during the day when I asked myself 'am I wasting time?' 'Is selling, persuading and negotiating not my thing?' But then my commitment compelled me to finish the task and I ended up making a certain profit which I wasn't even aiming for. After asking people for two hours without a positive response I got angry but more importantly, I became determined. I overcame the anxiety of having a difficult conversation. I realized that there isn't much to it. The only obstacle is the fear the person creates in his own head. I am proud that I approached over two dozen people to sell 10 cushions. This number only reflects the ones that I had conversations with. There were quite many who rejected me straightaway. This also taught me that having prior knowledge about your customers is extremely important. In fact information is power during negotiations (Watkins 25).

As I am writing this I am ready for my next challenge. I want it to be more difficult. In my opinion it is an indication that I am the leader in the making. I am ready to take on challenges. A team can look up to me. I can even lead a corporate. It is just a matter of practice. With my practice and by applying my academic skills I will be able to steer the ship when it is in hot waters. This ship can be a corporate facing devaluation in their stock, my team losing credibility in an organization or a company that is losing sales. I will be there to help them and I will be leading from the front.

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Reference

Sadler, Philip. Leadership. London: Kogan Page, 2003. Print.

Watkins, Michael. Shaping the Game: The New Leaders Guide to Effective Negotiating. Boston: Harvard Business, 2006. Print.