

Can negotiations occur without trust

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Can negotiations occur without trust BY Richer The nature of negotiation and its process constitutes a number of various factors that leads to an effective or ineffective process and outcome. One of the primary purposes of a negotiation is to come an agreement with another party by exchanging offers and to find solutions to a common issue, " whenever we cannot achieve our objectives single-heartedly' (Thompson, 2009).

Some believe that in order to conduct a negotiation, trust is an utmost important factor as negotiators depend on the information provided by the other party, on the outcomes to which the parties omit throughout the negotiation process, and on the other party to deliver the commitments (Licked, Poplin, 2013). This essay aims to discuss whether trust is a precondition for negotiation. As such, it will attempt to reach to a deeper understanding of trust in a negotiation, before understanding how it may influence the outcome, and whether a negotiation may take place between us and the people whom we do not trust.

Examples of trust and distrust within negotiations are given, before the essay will conclude with reasons why it is impossible to successfully negotiate with people whom we do not trust. Trust is commonly defined as a confident and positive expectation of the actions of another party (Lessons, Smith, 2012). Trusting gives us the assumption that the other party would meet the expectation by considering our welfare and honoring their commitment towards the agreement.

Trust in negotiations, like in any other independent relationships, is characterized by dependency and vulnerability to the other party. Trust in

this case, according to Lessons, implies to the positive expectation to sought common solutions to create value, integrate interests, and find mutually beneficial solutions (Lessons, Smith, 2012). This brings us to the characteristic of an integrative negotiation, which seeks to create value and achieving joint gains. In such cases, negotiators are in dependence to each or one another for the sharing or exchange of information.

According to Licked and Poplin, even though a negotiator may have a certain level of doubt in the other party, he or she still has to have at least a bit of trust, otherwise, it may be impossible to accept anything the other party says at face value or reach a viable agreement (Licked, Poplin, 2013). As a result, being constantly afraid and doubtful with what is being shared would not low us to take a step further. This is further aggravated by the fact that negotiators may not be able to verify the received information.

Here, trust is more about acceptance rather than further scrutiny and serves as stepping-stones to have an exchange of information during the negotiation process. Without trust, we are not able to move on further to create solutions and agreements based on the information received. As such, the negotiation is impossible to proceed further due to an absence of trust. In a negotiation, many parties tend to focus on positions, not interests. The relevance f how interests could halt a negotiation seems to interlink with the problem of having trust.

If we do not trust the other party, we lack an openness to share our objectives and understand their interests in the negotiation. In an example of the story shared by (Fisher, Our, 2006), two men were in conflict in a library

as one wanted the window open and the other wanted it closed. Both could not come to an agreement on how much to leave the window open. When a third party, the librarian asked why both men wanted it closed or open, one shared that he wanted to get fresh air, but the other wanted to avoid the draft (Fisher, Our, 2006).

Here, we can see how both men focused on the position, the " what", and not each other's interests, the " why". As such, we can see that without understanding each other's interest, both men came into conflict and could not negotiate on a solution. As a result, it then becomes virtually impossible to really identify or appreciate the problem that actually needs to be addressed (Fisher, Our, 2006). To build on this, trust is extremely important as it serves as a foundation for understanding each other's interest before working on the solutions or agreements.

Without trust, both parties will not seek to understand each other, and end up being fixated on their positions due to their own interests. This prevents both parties to successfully negotiate on the issue. In order to negotiate, trust is important in order to avoid retaliation due to a conflict of views and ideas. Without trust, every solution and idea will be met with suspicion and skepticism. This lack of trust not only inhibits cooperation and successful negotiation, it may also result in retaliation that causes the escalation of conflict (Coleman, et al. 2000). In addition, according to (Kramer, 1994), this may even result in paranoid cognitions in which one may feel that he or she is subject to the other party malevolence. These perceptions may then drive him or her to the point of hyper vigilance and rumination, resulting in a

faulty diagnosis of the result of working with the other party (Licked, 2006). As such, conflicts would then arise, as the negotiator would increasingly focus on his or her position, and end up reluctant to come into agreement.

The negotiation will then come to an impasse as both sides end up using their negative perceptions to retaliate each other, causing the conflict to escalate beyond control. As explained above, trust seems to be indispensable in order to negotiate. However, according to a writer Bonnie Change, claiming trust is necessary for all negotiation seem to be an overstatement as the significance of trust is culture and context specific (Change, 2009). In her example of how two people may conduct a negotiation without trust, she gave a scenario of negotiation with hostage-takers.

A negotiator and a hostage-taker do not know each other and thus, will not have any trust between them. However, both of them may still engage in a negotiation to lay down the benefits of letting the hostage go. The negotiator's main objective is to talk the hostage-taker into revealing information about him or herself, and find out what kind of concessions to make for the release of the hostage. The hostage-taker's main objective is to use the hostage to obtain what he or she needs, including the escape from the crime.

The succession of the negotiation in such cases are a result of the weight of the gains and losses, depending on which side has more power to influence the outcome. For example, if the hostage were to be a high profile person, the hostage-taker would have more power to negotiate through to his or her

wants. Therefore, through this example, negotiations may occur even though both parties do not trust each other. According to (Choc, 2013), should there be no trust between two parties, relying on formal legal mechanisms such as preparing contracts are constructive ways to proceed with a negotiation.

These formalized documents remind people of what they had agreed upon and serves as documentation, minimizing miscommunication that may occur if a deal is made based on fertilization. Creation of such agreements usually requires elaborate consequences and penalties for violating the terms of agreement (Licked, Poplin, 2013). These consequences of violation commonly includes penalties such as monetary compensations and mechanisms such as law and the police force will be brought in to become part of the system of enforcement, should any agreements be violated.

With a contract to force people to keep to a certain agreement, trust is not required in order for a negotiation to occur. We meet new people everyday, and sometimes, negotiations may occur whether or not we know the person. Of course, trust is not immediately established. Rather, like impressions, our judgments of trustworthiness can occur rapidly at the start of a stagnation. This trustworthiness may result from what the negotiator has learned about the other party's reputation. For example, if I wanted to buy something for a shop owner for the first time, I will naturally exhibit skepticism in the shop owner and the quality of the goods.

However, if I see a crowd at the shop with people snapping up the items, naturally, I would have the trust in the shop owner that the goods sold would be good. Here, we can see how the reputation of a person may easily create

trust in us, towards the other party, even if we were to be meeting for the first time. In addition, many negotiations seek trust as the objective and continue to build trust throughout the negotiation process. In the example of the negotiation with a hostage taker, the negotiator and hostage-taker may have not trust between each other at the very start.

However, along the way, trust is built when both sides seek to understand the concessions that they can make, in order to gain what they want. While these initial impressions may also change as a negotiation unfolds, they create a powerful frame for interpreting the other party behavior and also provide a heuristic for judging negotiators' strategy choices (Lessons, Smith, 2012). As such, trust is important to keep a negotiation process going, and it is definitely an important factor to determine the relationship and outcome of the negotiation with the other party.

As such, we cannot negotiate with people whom we do not trust. Earlier, contract binding was mentioned as a way where negotiation may occur even if there is no trust between two parties. Here, it is true that the two parties may have no personal trust in each other. However, according to Shapiro, even if there may be no personal trust, an institutional trust, also known as trust in a system, is what is present, leading to the creation of contract making (Shapiro et al. , 1992). With a trust in the legal enforcement system, it also creates a deterrence-based trust in order for a negotiation to proceed.

Shapiro further added that this is a basic and 'minimal condition' of trust in all negotiations (Shapiro et al. , 1992). This depends on the consistency in behavior and the threat of punishment if they do not maintain their promises

to a certain commitment, and violate the documented agreements. In addition, it also depends on the gains for adhering to the agreements, such as rewards. Thus, the mentioned forms of trust will still be present even if we may have no personal trust.

According to (Lickel, 2000), even the most complex and sophisticated formal contract cannot stipulate every detail or possible contingency about the deal. Therefore, having personal trust in the other party is still critical. Without personal trust, a negotiation would not occur. This essay aims to discuss whether it is possible to negotiate with people whom we do not trust. Trust in this case, refers to having a positive expectation of the other party and allowing ourselves to be dependent and vulnerable to the other party.

There may seem to be cases where we may not have personal trust in a person and yet will still be able to negotiate. However, as mentioned in the essay, it may seem that trust is not present, but we may have a different form of trust, an institutionalized trust and most definitely, a deterrence based trust to ensure that we do not fall victim to breaches in agreements. The essay may show that it requires trust to form only cooperative agreements. However, likewise in competitive negotiations, it can still occur as deterrence based trust will be present to ensure that agreements are not breached.

As mentioned in the essay, without trust, we will only focus on our own objectives and interests and thus, will not allow the other party to gain anything. As a result, the negotiation will only come to an impasse if agreements cannot be made. In addition, without trust, we will be suspicious

and skeptical of the information that is shared with us. This causes us to develop paranoid conditions and result in a conflict instead of being able to negotiate. To conclude, it is certainly critical to have some form of trust in a negotiation. However, it is also good to have relative trust, rather than an absolute trust.

Having a fair share of distrust will definitely help us draw caution to what concessions we make. Ultimately, we cannot negotiate with people we do not trust at all. Trust will enable both parties to reach a solution that is needed or accepted by both sides, when we are not able to achieve them on our own.