

Guidance note on 1:1 principled negotiation

For those who asked about negotiations with one or two parties (rather than multi-stakeholder) it depends whether you will be an impartial third party or part of the negotiation:

If you are the third Party role: if you are in the role of third party look for literature on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) or mediation. Please know that taking on this role requires skills and training. An excellent reference (though it may now be out of print) is: *Resolving Disputes Without Going To Court*, Andrew Floyer Ackland, 1995

If you are one of the negotiating parties yourself: look for books on 'principled negotiation', 'win/win', or 'cooperative negotiations'. Avoid books on negotiation that talk about knowing your ideal, middle and fall-back positions. They are based on positional/adversarial negotiation principles – quite a different ethos.

Key aspects of principled one to one negotiation

1. **Attitude:** Go with good intent and convey you want to work hard to find a mutually beneficial outcome. Focus more on communicating your intent to actively seek win/win, than you do on your negotiating position. Go with an attitude that there is a shared challenge or problem, which you need to tackle together.
2. **Empathy:** Adopt a stance of focused listening. In other words seek to understand their perspective, ask lots of open questions. You don't have to agree with their view but aim to try and see it from their perspective and communicate what you understand.
3. **Information:** Share information openly and encourage them to do the same. Ask them what information could you provide that would be a help. Ask other open questions to work out what information you need. Be ready to disclose your real needs and wants - don't get trapped by your own negotiating position.
4. **Creative solutions:** Encourage a time of creative thinking /lateral thinking/ brainstorming - to generate a range of solutions. Short list the best for further consideration.
5. **Check viability:** Before ideas gather momentum they need to be checked for acceptability and viability. If you are able to do this yourself and make the decision do so but if necessary be sure to check with those you represent and any relevant experts. Make sure the other party does the same.
6. **Together select the actions:** Once the short list has been checked for viability you may need to do more work to consider again which appear to result in best mutual benefit.
7. **Plan action:** Once you have short listed the best plan the steps for implementation. Ensure these steps are specific, realistic, timed and written down. This will help with checking progress and reduce the risk of misunderstanding. Make sure everyone is clear on who is doing what and when. You may want to split the action planning into short, medium and long term. Plan for progress review as well.
8. **Ongoing communication:** Agree how you will continue to communicate/cooperate to address any unforeseen circumstances and ensure implementation.
9. **Take Time:** Try to take the time pressure off the situation so that there is time for the process to work - ie to build trust and goodwill with those you are negotiating with.
10. **Informality** Trust and goodwill are created best in informality so keep things relaxed and if possible eat together in a neutral location - or bring to meetings some good quality biscuits/muffins/cake - it all communicates goodwill.
11. **Emotions:** Aim to keep in adult/adult mode which is unemotional, respectful, assertive interaction. If you start getting emotional you are either slipping into 'child' or 'parent' modes - so take a break and come back in calm assertive (not aggressive or passive) mode
12. **Be trustworthy:** Never fudge, bluff or manipulate. Never offer something that is not in your gift to deliver, keep your word - if you say you will do something - do it! If for some unexpected reason you can't deliver communicate as soon as possible as to why and what you will do about it. Behave with respect, consideration and integrity.