

Practical Negotiation Skills: Making Things Happen



Objectives:

At the end of the session be able to:

- Identify and discuss individual sources of negotiating strength and conflict-handling style.
- Recognize and apply the Seven Elements of Effective Negotiation— Relationship, Communication, Interests, Options, Alternatives (BATNA), Legitimacy, and Commitment.
- Explain and evaluate different negotiation approaches and understand when each is most effective in academic and clinical contexts.
- Apply negotiation strategies and conflict-management techniques to real-world OB-GYN scenarios involving faculty, residents, and institutional stakeholders.
- Develop a personal action plan for improving negotiation effectiveness and collaborative problem-solving.

What Is Negotiation

Negotiation is back-and-forth communication designed to reach agreement **while preserving the relationship**.

- Occurs when parties have **some shared and some opposing interests**
- Is not about winning—it is about **making decisions under conditions of difference**
- Happens constantly in academic medicine (resources, roles, expectations, priorities)
- *Key idea:* Negotiation is inevitable; **how** we negotiate determines outcomes.

Where We Negotiate

- Negotiation occurs:
 - **At work:** roles, salary, protected time, space, curriculum, leadership
 - **With learners:** expectations, feedback, remediation
 - **With patients & teams:** compliance, trust, shared decisions
 - **At home & life:** time, priorities, trade-offs
- *Negotiation skill is a leadership competency, not a transactional tactic.*

Conflict Styles Shape Negotiation

- People approach conflict differently—and that matters in negotiation.
 - Competing
 - Accommodating
 - Avoiding
 - Collaborating
 - Compromising

No style is “right” or “wrong.” Effectiveness depends on context, stakes, power, and timing.

Negotiation Approaches

Soft:

- Relationship-focused-Participants are friends.
- The goal is agreement.

Hard:

- Position-focused-Participants are adversaries.
- The goal is victory.

Principled / Interest-Based:

- Focus on interests, not positions
- Use objective criteria
- Create options before deciding

***Goal:* agreements that are effective and sustainable**

What Successful Negotiators Do

Effective negotiators consistently:

- Prepare deliberately
- Listen more than they speak
- Have high (but not unrealistic?) expectations
- Identify interests (theirs and others')
- Use persuasion—not pressure
- Protect integrity and relationships

Preparation is the single strongest predictor of success.

The Seven Elements of Effective Negotiation

All effective negotiations attend to:

- Relationship
- Communication
- Interests
- Options
- Alternatives (BATNA)
- Legitimacy (fair standards)
- Commitment (who does what, when)

Weakness in one element weakens the entire agreement.



Negotiation Preparation: Self, Other, System

Before negotiating, clarify:

○ Yourself

- Interests (tangible & non-tangible)
- BATNA
- Target & resistance point

○ Other Party

- Their interests and constraints
- Their BATNA
- What they value differently

○ System

- Who else is affected?
- Institutional norms, policies, power dynamics

Planning the Conversation

Plan **how** the negotiation will unfold:

- Anticipate difficult moments
- Role-play your opening
- Prepare key questions
- Decide when to pause or buy time
- Consider emotional and relational consequences

Good planning creates flexibility, not rigidity.

During the Negotiation: How You Listen

Effective negotiators:

- Listen actively and reflectively
- Paraphrase and summarize
- Listen for what is **not said**
- Ask “why” and “why not”
- Stay open to new information

Listening is an information-gathering strategy.

Negotiation: Planning

REF: Shell, Bargaining for Advantage

Negotiation Behavior	Skilled	Average
Questions, as% of all negotiating behavior	21.3	9.6
Active listening: Testing for understanding	9.7	4.1
Active Listening: Summarizing	7.5	4.2
Total information exchange	38.5	17.9

During the Negotiation: How You Decide

Focus on:

- Interests, not positions
- Problems, not people
- Objective criteria for fairness
- Redirecting personal attacks to the issue
- Being prepared to walk away if needed

BATNA defines real power.



The Six-Step Negotiation Process

1. State the problem
2. Identify real interests on both sides
3. Restate the problem clearly
4. Generate options(no commitment yet)
5. Evaluate options using fair criteria
6. Reach agreement and commitment

Example: Applying the Six-Step Negotiation Process

Scenario

A faculty member requests **20% protected time for teaching**, but the department chair is concerned about **clinical coverage and revenue**.

1. State the Problem

“We need to determine whether and how protected teaching time can be supported without compromising clinical operations.”

Example: Applying the Six-Step Negotiation Process

2. Identify Real Interests (Both Sides)

Faculty member

- Time to teach effectively
- Recognition for educational work
- Career advancement

Department chair

- Clinical coverage
- Financial sustainability
- Fairness across faculty

Example: Applying the Six-Step Negotiation Process

3. Restate the Problem Clearly

- “How can we support high-quality teaching while maintaining clinical productivity and equity within the department?”

4. Generate Options (No Commitment Yet)

- Partial protected time during peak teaching blocks
- Teaching coverage shared across faculty
- Adjusted clinical schedule rather than full reduction
- Temporary pilot period with evaluation

Example: Applying the Six-Step Negotiation Process

5. Evaluate Options Using Fair Criteria

- Teaching workload expectations
- Clinical productivity benchmarks
- Departmental policies
- Educational outcomes

6. Reach Agreement and Commitment

- Agree to **10% protected time for one academic year**, with:
- Defined teaching deliverables
- Productivity metrics
- Formal review at year's end

“Notice how the solution changed once we focused on interests instead of positions.”



Negotiating in Teams

Compared with solo negotiators, teams:

- Create more value
- Share more information
- Generate more integrative solutions

Team strategies:

- Prepare together
- Assign roles
- Schedule breaks
- Clarify accountability



Common Errors to Avoid

- Assuming shared values or communication styles
- Avoiding conflict
- Talking to prove you're right
- Expecting reciprocity
- Not listening carefully

Most negotiation failures are process failures.

Negotiating Roles, Resources & Compensation

Common negotiable elements include:

- Salary & protected time
- Role clarity & expectations
- Promotion criteria & track
- Space, staffing, and support
- Professional development

The first offer is rarely fixed.



What a Good Outcome Looks Like

A strong agreement:

- Meets key interests
- Is fair and explainable
- Is better than the BATNA
- Supports future working relationships
- Includes clear commitments

Final Takeaways

- Negotiation is about **relationships and results**
- Conflict styles influence strategy
- Preparation creates power
- Interests expand the pie
- Agreements succeed through clarity and follow-through

Negotiations rarely fail loudly—they fail quietly, through assumptions that go unexamined

Personal commitment:

One negotiation behavior I will practice this month is...