

At business schools or in professional seminars, you cannot study negotiation without at least hearing about *Getting to YES*. This 1981 book by Harvard professors Roger Fisher and William Ury sold more than two millions copies and laid a strong foundation for the concept of win-win negotiating. Alas, it seemed less useful for international negotiators, as some of its key tactics assume counterparts that are balanced and receptive to rational arguments. While this assumption may not always work in the U.S., either, it tends to fail miserably in, say, Russia or Colombia, where negotiations can become highly emotional and irrational.

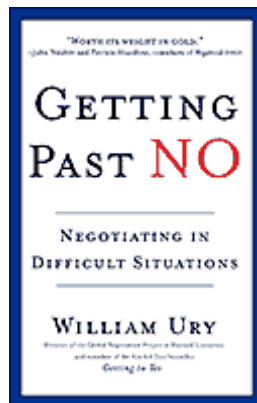
This is what makes Bill Ury's subsequent book *Getting Past NO*, originally published in 1991 and recently reissued, a tremendous value: like no other, it focuses on the situations that make domestic negotiations (sometimes) and international ones (often) difficult: when counterparts insist on their views, dig in their heels, get highly emotional, or otherwise leave the rationalistic win-win framework we generally prefer.

Ury discusses the nuances of navigating such situations through a joint problem solving approach that is "interest based" rather than based on rights or power. He makes five im-

portant suggestions, designed to convert confrontational situations into cooperative creative problem solving:

- Don't react. When under pressure or being attacked, step back and reflect.
- Don't argue. Instead, try to understand your counterpart's positions and agree with them to the extent possible.
- Don't reject. Don't push back on others' positions, but try to reframe them to understand the underlying interests.
- Don't push your own ideas or proposals. Try to work with your counterparts to come up with solutions that best match both sides' interests.
- Don't escalate. When the above fails, don't escalate the situation. Instead, think about alternative scenarios and introduce them in compelling ways.

*Getting Past NO* remains focused on win-win outcomes. What makes it highly practical is that the book suggests powerful ways to move forward in situations where many negotiators no longer know how to get past a problem. This "Breakthrough Strategy," as Ury calls it, is as applicable for mediators as it is for negotiators. Throughout the book, the author does not stop at explaining principles but excels with numerous practical suggestions with immediate applicability. *Getting Past NO* thus provides a powerful toolset for all of us facing potentially difficult negotiations.



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A seasoned former executive of Fortune 500 company Texas Instruments, he regularly interacted with employees, customers, outsourcing partners, and third parties in more than 25 countries around the world, including many parts of Asia. Mr. Katz is the author of "Negotiating International Business – The Negotiator's Reference Guide to 50 Countries Around the World".

