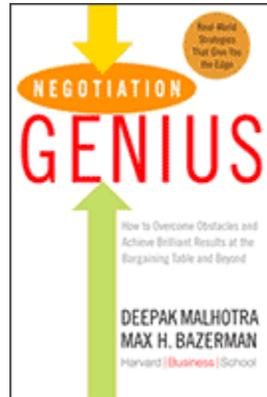


The Harvard Business School and its Negotiation Project provided fertile ground for a number of important books (among them *Getting to YES* and *Getting Past NO*) and other publications. *Negotiation Genius: How to Overcome Obstacles and Achieve Brilliant Results at the Bargaining Table and Beyond*, written by Harvard professors Malhotra / Bazerman and first published in 2007, is a worthy successor that builds on the existing body of knowledge while providing important new insights.



When it comes to the field of negotiation, conventional wisdom usually has it wrong. Many people think that good negotiators should be aggressive, are good at bluffing, would never make (or take) the first offer, and so on. This book dispels many such myths and, more importantly, explains which strategies work best in which negotiation situation.

Numerous stories and examples add real-life relevance. The initial case study should get everyone's attention, as it demonstrates one of the most common mistakes negotiators make: missing the true value of the deal because of assumptions they made. The authors explore the difference between 'claiming value' and 'creating value,' discussing crucial success strategies such as negotiating multiple issues

simultaneously, making package offers, and leveraging differences in priorities, expectations, and risk or time differences. In all, this first part of the book presents a useful summary of successful collaborative negotiation approaches.

What sets *Negotiation Genius* apart is that in Parts II, 'The Psychology of Negotiation,' and III, 'Negotiating in the Real World,' the authors acknowledge a seemingly simple reality: rationality often fails in actual negotiations. Proposing strategies for negotiating rationally in an irrational world, they show ways to overcome own biases and blind spots, as well as how to influence others by accommodating, rather than ignoring or challenging, their emotions. Without losing sight of collaboration opportunities, Malhotra and Bazerman suggest effective strategies: how to defend oneself against others' influence attempts, confront lies and deception, negotiate from a position of weakness, and so on. The title of my favorite chapter has it all: "When negotiations get ugly: Dealing with irrationality, distrust, anger, threats, and ego."

Wisely, the authors also include a discussion of when not to negotiate at all. Even the best negotiators may be better off to walk away in some settings – this book explains why and when.

*Negotiation Genius* works well as an introductory text on negotiation, or as a refresher (and a source of fresh thinking) for experienced negotiators.

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