Ethical Negotiation

# What we are seeking are win-win outcomes.

Ethics establish the means of doing what is right, fair and honest.

Reputation plays a vital role in every negotiation. It's much easier to achieve win-win outcomes when you have a reputation for being fair, honest and willing to do the right thing. A counterpart who feels you are unfair, dishonest or unwilling to do the right thing will be less willing to make concessions or even to begin a negotiation with you in the first place. So guarding your reputation by always acting in an ethical manner is the key to successful negotiation. When making any decision, remember this: A reputation takes years to build, and only minutes to destroy.

Something may be perfectly legal and still not be ethical

You can't be 95 percent or 99.9 percent ethical. You are either ethical or you are not

Ethical negotiators don't think only about what they can "get" out of a negotiation but also about what they can "give" to their counterpart. In this way, they take the long-term view. They know that a counterpart who walks away from a negotiation feeling successful will be willing to come back and negotiate again in the future.

1. **Know what is not negotiable.**

**2. Be honest.** In a negotiation, whenever you are ethical and honest even though it costs you something, you gain points

**3. Keep your promises.** In your eagerness to put a deal together, you may sometimes make promises and concessions you hadn't planned to make. You demonstrate your ethics when you fulfill those promises long after the desire to do so has left you.

**4. Have multiple options.** Going into a negotiation with multiple options will help both you and your counterpart achieve your goals. If someone proposes an option you feel is unethical, you will be ready with another, ethical option for accomplishing the same goal. Sometimes you may encounter negotiators who are unilateral thinkers who have only one option. With them, it's their way or the highway. If their way is unethical in your opinion, you have only one option--to walk away from the deal.

**5. Be willing to say "no."** Some negotiators are quite comfortable looking a counterpart in the eye and saying "no" when they feel something is not right. Others worry that saying "no" seems confrontational, even when a proposal does not seem ethical--then later they regret agreeing to the proposal. Being willing to say "no" to something that is not right is a great strength.

**6. Be familiar with scene standards/norms.** Ignorance is not a good excuse for unethical behavior. When in doubt about some aspect of your negotiation, check it out.

**7. Go with your gut.** If you have a bad feeling about things, be prepared to walk away. Better safe than sorry.

**8. Practice the concept of "no surprises."** Making sure that a negotiation does not contain any negative surprises will reduce the chances of an ethical lapse.

**9. Follow the Platinum Rule.** The Golden Rule tells us to treat people the way we would like to be treated. The Platinum Rule™ tells us to treat people the way they want to be treated. Caring about your counterparts enough to treat them the way they want to be treated helps build long-term relationships based on ethics and trust.

**10. Be willing to walk away from a deal.** When it comes to effective negotiations, remember, some of the best deals you will ever make are the ones you did not make. All of us have contemplated doing something and just getting a gut feeling that we should say "no." So we have walked away from the deal. Later, when we heard negative information the information reinforced the fact that we had made a great decision. In negotiations, your head may try to rationalize deal points to make your gut feel more comfortable. Remember to go with your gut instinct, since it does not rationalize as well as your head.