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Tactic of the Week #65

April 21st, 2011



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Tactic #65 - Taking a Time Out

Summary: Taking a break from a negotiation can sometimes be the best thing for both counterparts. You may want to just use the restroom, let tension disperse or locate additional information before making a decision. A break might last 10 minutes, overnight or a whole weekend. Novice negotiators have to learn to feel comfortable saying, "Let's take a break."

Example

All parents have a difficult discussion or two with their children at some point. The topic of the discussion may be school grades, curfew, telling the truth or enforcing discipline. Sometimes a discussion does not go well. The parents end up angry, raising their voices and saying things they regret later. The child ends up frustrated and in tears. At a time like this, a great question for parents to ask themselves is, "If we get angry enough to say things we might later regret and our child ends up in tears, will we have accomplished our goal?" If the answer is "no," it may be time to take a break.

Counter

If your child thinks he is "winning" the discussion and you are taking a break for the sole purpose of avoiding the issue being discussed, he may want to insist on resolving the issue immediately. As another option, he could make sure you establish a specific time to reconvene.

Do you have any negotiation questions? If so, then send them to us by hitting the "reply" button in your email window. We'll do our best to address them in upcoming issues.

If you'd like to forward this issue to a friend or colleague, please click "forward email" below.

This tactic is one of 101 strategies and tactics featured in [The Only Negotiating Guide You'll Ever Need](#), by Peter Stark and Jane Flaherty.



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