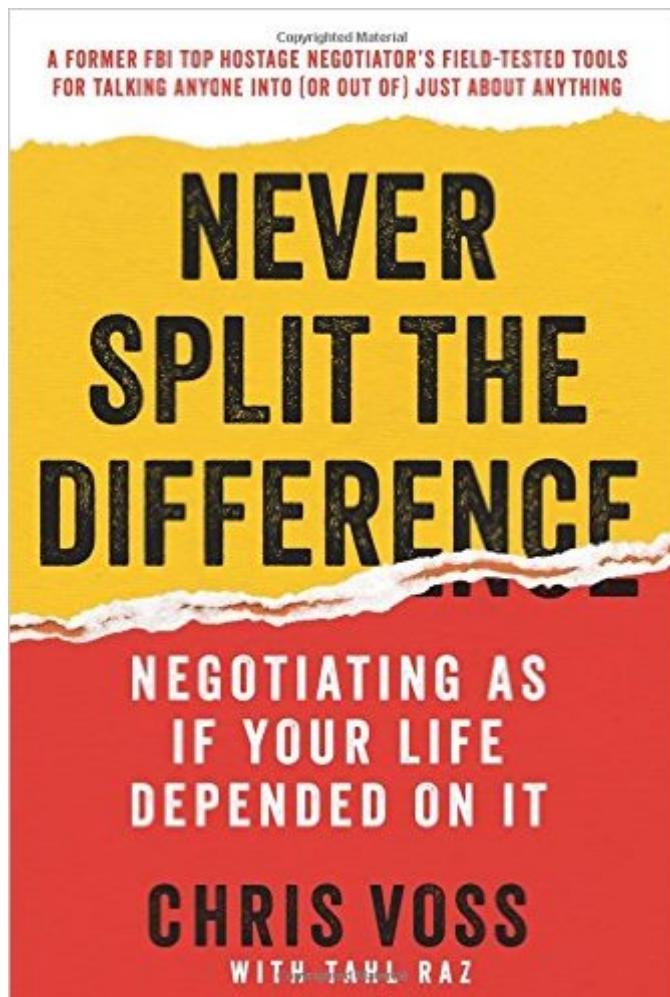


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# Never Split The Difference: Negotiating As If Your Life Depended On It



## **Synopsis**

A former international hostage negotiator for the FBI offers a new, field-tested approach to high-stakes negotiationsâ "whether in the boardroom or at home. After a stint policing the rough streets of Kansas City, Missouri, Chris Voss joined the FBI, where his career as a hostage negotiator brought him face-to-face with a range of criminals, including bank robbers and terrorists. Reaching the pinnacle of his profession, he became the FBIâ ™s lead international kidnapping negotiator. *Never Split the Difference* takes you inside the world of high-stakes negotiations and into Vossâ ™s head, revealing the skills that helped him and his colleagues succeed where it mattered most: saving lives. In this practical guide, he shares the nine effective principlesâ "counterintuitive tactics and strategiesâ "you too can use to become more persuasive in both your professional and personal life. Life is a series of negotiations you should be prepared for: buying a car, negotiating a salary, buying a home, renegotiating rent, deliberating with your partner. Taking emotional intelligence and intuition to the next level, *Never Split the Difference* gives you the competitive edge in any discussion.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

And so begins this surprising book. The author begins the book by relating his experience at a prestigious seminar at Harvard University. Several of the college's top negotiators put him on the spot to see how he would negotiate in a hypothetical hostage negotiation. The author held his own against the expert negotiators, surprising the professors. How did he do so well? Mr. Voss explains that the methods used by the FBI were developed over time, "products of experiential learning; they

were developed by agents in the field, negotiating through crisis and sharing stories of what succeeded and what failed." In other words, these tactics HAD to work. If hostage negotiators failed, people literally DIED. The author discovered that the same techniques used in life and death situations could be generalized--they "made great sense intellectually, and they worked everywhere...In the twenty years I spent at the Bureau we'd designed a system that had successfully resolved almost every kidnapping we applied it to." NEVER SPLIT THE DIFFERENCE is not just about tricky negotiation tactics, or ways to "outwit" your adversary in battle. Whether you are negotiating with kidnappers, or just negotiating a raise, the principles are the same. For example, people always want to be understood and accepted. "Remember you're dealing with a person who wants to be appreciated and understood." This is true no matter the type of negotiation. This also means careful listening, or what the author calls, the martial art of "Tactical Empathy." It's nearly impossible to listen to the other side; so, you have to deliberately change your focus: "Make your sole and all-encompassing focus the other person and what they have to say.

**WHY THIS BOOK MATTERS:** We negotiate or persuade dozens of times a day. Then there's the big stuff that changes the course of life: getting a raise; landing a job offer; buying a car or house. Most of us had no formal training in negotiation, or were taught incorrectly. This book is your secret weapon for mad success.  
**MAIN CONCEPT:** Tactical empathy: This is listening as a martial art, balancing the subtle behaviors of emotional intelligence and the assertive skills of influence, to gain access to the mind of another person.  
**IS IT FUN TO READ:** Finished it in a day. The book's full of riveting life-and-death hostage negotiations, and Voss spins a damn good yarn.  
**OKAY, BUT IS IT USEFUL?:** I highlighted 109 passages and took 20pp of single-spaced notes. There is so much crazy useful stuff in this book that it would be a bargain at 100x the price. For example, Voss advocates getting to "No" before getting to "Yes." To those schooled in academic negotiation, this may seem heretical. But it makes all kinds of sense: letting your adversary say a solid "no" gives them a feeling of safety, security and control -- a great starting point to a negotiation. The technique of asking calibrated open-ended questions is pure gold (e.g. "How do I do that?" or "What's important to you about that?") Funny thing is that I've been teaching that technique for years, but only now understand \*why\* it works so well (thanks, Chris!). Then there's the step-by-step protocol for negotiating your salary and the 6-step Ackerman bargaining model. There's mirroring: you repeat people's words verbatim, so they feel understood. There's labeling, where you identify the emotion behind what people are saying, thereby deepening empathy.

Hollywood depictions of police or corporate negotiations generally star some big, swaggering action figure, who swaggers in, shoots from the hip, and makes demands. Chris Voss, former FBI international hostage negotiator, now in private practice, wants you to know: if you that, youâ™ll probably lose. But youâ™ll also lose if you follow negotiation tactics long taught at business schools. His time-tested approach, developed in the field, is more complex and subtle. Itâ™s also more successful. All negotiation, Voss holds, is about listening, acquiring information, and remaining receptive to the other side. It isnâ™t about being stronger than your opponent or holding their feet to the fire. Many issues claimed regarding negotiations nowadays, like âœnever apologizeâ• and âœdeal from strengthâ• make bad policy, because they limit available options and leave the other side feeling ignored. People enter negotiations hoping to be heard, respected, and helped. A negotiatorâ™s goal is to listen. Thus, Vossâ™s approach includes terms like âœtactical empathy,â• âœaccusation audit,â• and âœmirroring,â• all of which stress listening to, and anticipating, your opponentâ™s needs. Voss emphasizes the value of asking questionsâ" which should always be open-ended, since yes/no questions merely affirm what you already know. They also leave the answerer feeling defensive, which makes them less receptive to negotiation overall. Traditional, âœventionalâ• approaches back the other side into corners, leaving them feeling powerless and without autonomy. Negotiation requires extending the illusion of control, even to criminals and outliers. âœDealing from strengthâ• feels good, but seldom works.

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