

ER refers to the employer, EE refers to the employee in the context of workplace negotiation.

Virtual cognitions (Knowledge): Now, I am quite familiar with the four main stages of negotiation. In the last negotiation with Lily about her task at hand and the vacation she wanted to take, I went through the four main stages of negotiation: private preparation, joint exploration, bidding, and closing one by one.

Meanwhile, during the last negotiation, I also created a BATNA, the Best.... Alternative to a... Negotiated ...Agreement. This was best alternative option if the negotiation failed. I needed to define my BATNA before I started the negotiation. That was my safety net. With Lily's initial vacation plans I compared each option to see whether it was better than my BATNA. In Lily's case the BATNA was to hire someone from another team to do Lily's work when she would be on holiday. Which would cost me 3.000 euro.

Virtual cognitions (self-motivating statement): XXX, with the help of BATNA, you successfully made a win-win negotiation. Considering this, [You are a good negotiator.]

For the upcoming negotiation, a BATNA is still an indispensable factor. So ok, for Kath's case, what's the BATNA? Let me think about what would happen if there was no negotiation on this issue, and what I could do if the upcoming negotiation fails and no agreement can be reached.

If I agree that Kath can leave her job in a few weeks and do nothing for the project she is working on, that would mean the project might not be finished on time. The loss could cost more than 50 thousand euros. That sounds terrible. There must be a better BATNA! Hmm... let me see... I could separate Kath's work and give it to the other members of her team. No, the other members would need to make serious extra hours. They will not accept that easily. They all would want bonuses, and a higher salary rate for the extra hours. This will cost me much more than I normally would like to pay Kath. It doesn't seem worth it. Um, wait a minute. It's also possible to recruit a new person to replace Kath's position but it will take a few months to teach and train him before he could take over the job successfully. In the meantime, while this new person is being trained, I have to recruit another person from another team to finish Kath's task to make the deadline, but this may cost me another 10,000 euros. Well, it doesn't sound perfect, but it seems to be the best alternative option until now

for this case. So that's it. That will be the BATNA for the upcoming negotiation: I will recruit someone from another team to make Kath's deadline. This will cost me 10,000 minus Kath's salary I would not have had to pay. So that would cost around 5,000. Next, I will need to recruit a new external person to take over Kath's position in the long-term. Going to this process will cost me also 1000 euro. So together my BATNA is around 6,000.

Virtual cognitions (Knowledge): Now, I should focus on the first stage, private preparation. In this stage, keep two things in mind: first, gather and reflect information. In this case it means I should review Kath's personal information I got from the company system. Kath has already worked in the company for 5 years. What's more, she has always had excellent grades in the annual assessments of the company. Second, I should realize that my own desire is to make sure the project is finished on time while minimizing costs for the company.

Tap-tap (a knock at the door)

ER: Give me a moment. I will be right with you....

Virtual cognitions (Knowledge): Kath is coming. This should be stage II: joint exploration. Remember to gather more information and explore the underlying reason why Kath wants to leave her job now.

Virtual cognitions (Strategy): Oh, I almost forgot one thing. The teacher also taught me one essential strategy that can be applied during the negotiation. What's that?...hmmm.... Yeah, I see. "Separate the people from the problems". I should be soft on the people, but hard on the problems. First things first, I could create a positive climate for the negotiation and make the other side feel free and relaxed in the negotiation. For instance, I could offer Kath a drink politely and have a chat with him before the formal negotiation begins.

EE: I am finally meeting you! I can't bear the job anymore. It's a total nightmare for me to work here. I have to leave here immediately!

ER: Kath, I am sorry to hear that. I was not aware you felt like that.

EE: It doesn't help me that you say sorry to me. Why did they treat me like that? What did I do wrong? Everyone here is cold and indifferent.

ER: Kath, something seems to be troubling you a lot.

EE: I used to like my job, like this company. But why are these things happening to me!

ER: Hmm...I understand you are upset now. Tell me what's been going on.

EE: Working here has put me under great pressure all the time. I work so hard every day, but no one values my work. It really pisses me off.

Virtual cognitions (knowledge): Kath is clearly upset. I need to improve the negotiation climate. Let's start by being a very good listener and acknowledge her emotions.

ER: Ok, I see your concern. Can you give me more detail?

EE: Every day, I get to work at 8:00. I sit behind my desk and stay there, working my ass off until I go home at 20:00. I work all day and only get half an hour for a short lunch break. I even don't have time to make a cup of tea for myself.

ER: I see you work very hard and it is a shame if you don't have even time for a cup of tea. This must be frustrating for you.

EE: Yes, I think it is important to have a moment for rest when you are always working hard. Tea helps me to relax or calm down a bit.

ER: Yes, speaking of tea, I remember you like tea very much. How about trying some Chinese tea I poured for you? I brought them back from China.

EE: From China?

ER: Yes, last week I went on a business trip to China. I bought several types of tea, such as green tea, oolong tea and chrysanthemum tea. The tea I prepared today is green tea, Bi Luo Chun. My local Chinese friend said it's one of the best teas in China.

EE: Hmm... it tastes very good.

ER: Great. If you like it. You can take some after our meeting. Or we can try the other types of tea later.

EE: It seems I should have a meeting with you every day, then I can at least have some time for a cup of tea.

ER: Haha, you are always welcome....

Virtual cognitions (Self-motivating): Until now, Kath seems get into a better mood. It seems that the strategy of separating the people from the problems is working.

XXX, You are creating a more positive climate. [You did a great job].

Virtual cognitions (Knowledge). I should continue with being a good listener.

ER: Kath, I see your current situations are troubling you a lot, could you please tell me more about that?

EE: In the past three months, I have worked for more than 10 hours every day. I feel over-worked and totally exhausted. Like last week, I didn't even have time to talk with my husband. In the mornings I have to leave home so early that he is still asleep, and at night, when I arrive home after work, the only thing I want to do is go to bed. I feel I just live my life as a robot.

ER: Hmmmm.....that must be a very tiring experience.

EE: Every day I feel I am kept constantly on the run. I wake up at 6:30 in the morning and arrive at the company at 8 o'clock. I have to work until 20:00 and then I go back home. After a quick dinner, I still have to work for another 1 or 2 hours at home. I always have work on hand.

ER: Yeah, I see.....so.....

ER: At first, I thought a vacation may help me relieve pressure and reduce anxiety, having a short vacation could refresh me and make me feel much better. However, it turned out to be that I thought of these things too lightly. It's not only about vacation.

ER: Okay, so what do you think now?

EE: I believe I feel bad due to the attitude of my team leader towards me. She always gives me lots of work to do and forces me to finish it in quite a short time. So, I have to work overtime to finish that and I am under great pressure to achieve her requirements.

ER: Well.....

EE: It sounds unreal, right? But all I said is true. At first, I thought it was just a special case, but a few months later, I realized that she always treats me like that. What's more, my colleagues in our team always work normal office hours. So, it means they can work 9 to 5, get off work on time - that hardly seems fair!

Virtual cognitions(knowledge): I have already known Kath for a long time, she has a good reputation in the company, but according to the teacher's advice, I need to separate the people from the problem. Be soft on him, hard on the issues we faced. Of course, when she feels down, I should acknowledge this, take this seriously, and show empathy. However, when it

comes to the rules and mandatory requirements, I still should consider the problem in a matter-of-fact way, not making concessions because of the relationship between us or to cultivate the relationship. Although according to what Kath said, she seems to be treated unfairly by her team leader, I should not make up my mind about her team leader so easily. I still have to explore the facts more.

ER: Ok, I see. Have you discussed this with your team leader?

EE: To tell the truth, I have already worked in our company for 5 years, I want a promotion very much. That's the reason why I always say yes when she gives me more work to do and never complain about her.

ER: Um, I see. Have you ever thought she may also admire your work and it's possible for you to get a promotion in the near future?

EE: No, I don't think so. She is always very harsh to me and never speaks highly of me even when I outdo myself. However, when I make a small mistake, she criticizes me severely for a long time. Sometimes, sometimes.....

Virtual cognitions (Strategy): Soft on the people also means developing a comfortable setting where people can talk openly and productively. I should make her feel more relaxed and let her know she can talk about everything she wants with me.

ER: Yeah, Kath. It's totally fine. You can say whatever you want to say. It's just a conversation between you and me. So, tell me what happened?

EE: Um...a few times her attacks even got personal. I felt very bad.

ER: Hmm.....

EE: You may think she just has a high expectation of me, so she is stricter to me, do you? At first, I also thought in that way, so I even worked harder and hoped to make every task perfect. However, after a few months, I found I just used it as an excuse to console myself. Because no matter how hard I work, there was always more to do, and the team leader attacked my work for no reason.

ER: This sound very demotivating for you. Did you mention this to your team leader?

EE: Not yet.

ER: Uh, uh...

EE: It's not that I don't want to do it, I tried several times, but every time either she said I thought too much, or she just changed the conversation to another topic.

ER: Ok, I get it. But, Why now? Is there any other reason for you to quit the job now?

EE: I just don't want to work in that office any longer. I am quite worried about my future career.

Virtual cognitions: It seems Kath is crushed by her work, I ought to acknowledge her perception of situation. However, when it comes to the issues that she wanted to leave the job immediately, I still have to let him know it's not possible as there is clear company policy about resignation. Soft on people, Hard on problem. I should keep that in mind and follow it.

ER: I think I understand your concern and situation. Let's see what is possible. According to your contract, when you hand in your resign, there is still a 2 months notification period before you can actually leave the company. This of course is needed, to make sure that your work is handed over in a proper way. In other words, simply resigning might not solve your problem right away.

EE: Oh, no. I have not thought about that. When I wrote the email to you, I was a total mess.

ER: Kath, it's ok, I can understand that. Let's explore if that alternative ways to solve this problem. Have you already got any offer from another company, and are you therefore under pressure to make a decision on short notice?

EE: No, I haven't. I don't have time to find a job. I am still stuck in the work at hand and my husband recently broke his leg in an accident.

ER: Oh? That sounds terrible. How is he now? What happened?

EE: He fell down from her bike when he was hit by a motorcycle at a street corner. The accident was quite serious, he was kind of lucky that he just broke his leg.

ER: When did it happen?

EE: Last month, the doctor said he had to stay in bed at least for 2 months. He must be taken care of every day. In addition, normally, my husband also does some housework, but nowadays I have to do that myself.

ER: Are there any people helping you take care of your family?

EE: Yes, my parents are helping me to take care of our children, but they are old so they cannot do everything. I also have to help with that. Taking care of both my family and the job at the same time is very exhausting. My feeling tells me I should leave the team and make some changes in my life.

Virtual cognitions (Self-motivating): I gathered a large amount of information about Kath's working and life condition and explored a lot about her desires and the underlying reason why Kath wants to leave her job now.

XXX, [You did a great job in the joint exploration stage].

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Virtual cognitions (Knowledge): Now, the reasons why she wanted to leave her job seem clear. The negotiation will come to the next stage: bidding. The most essential thing in this stage is to develop multiple options for Kath to choose from.

ER: This must be very exhausting - your job and dealing with the situation at home.

ER: How about I have a talk with your team leader first and then arrange a meeting later among three of us?

EE: No, I don't think it's would be helpful anymore.

ER: Eee.....

EE: I have my own reasons. Two days ago, I accidentally heard a conversation between my team leader and another colleague in the kitchen. My team leader said I was naïve, that I only know work. What's more, she said I was such a weak person that it was easy to manipulate me into doing what she wanted. I was so sad but also angry as I worked so hard and gave up lots of things just for a better job. However, in her eyes, I am just an easily controlled person.

ER: That sounds horrible. It's a serious issue. I will talk with your team leader later about this. But for now, let's focus on your concerns. How would you feel if I arrange for you to be transferred to another team after you finishing your work in hand?

EE: Moving to another team? Maybe it's not a good idea. I have already struggled with my current job for 5 years. Transferring to a new team may also mean starting from scratch. Maybe I will experience all of these troubles again.

ER: Well...

EE: I joined our company 5 years ago and had worked in our team for more than 3 years. I finished lots of projects and also helped the company take on several large projects. I believe I deserve a promotion. Nowadays I feel I can't see any future for my career in the current position. Some changes need to happen about my current position here, otherwise maybe it's time for me to leave even though I don't know where I could go.

ER: Ok, I see. You always have excellent grades for the company's annual assessment. I think you are a great employee that our company needs. How about you join the company's next promotion interview round? Through that interview, you may get a better position that is more suitable for you.

EE: Promotion interview? when is it?

ER: We just completed our interview round two months ago, so you may have to wait for the next one. I remember correctly, the next promotion interview round start next month. If you want, I can give you the opportunity to attend that.

EE: One month still seems a long time for me.

Virtual cognitions (Knowledge-BATNA): We also have a job opportunity in London. If I offer Kath the position in London, I have to give Kath a special subsidy and bonus for working abroad. It will cost me 3 thousand euros. Still, the cost of recruiting someone work in London or to replace Kath current job cancel each other out. Therefore this 3000 euros alternative is much better than my 6,000 euro BATNA. Let's see if Kath wants to go to London.

ER: Ok, I see. We also have a job opportunity in London, in the UK. You would work directly under me on a new project there after you finish the work in hand. So, a new project and a new environment. I think it will bring lots of changes to your job.

EE: It sounds great. I am quite interested in that, but I have to say it's also not possible for me to work abroad now. As I mentioned just now, my husband is still recovering now. I can't and really don't want to leave him at this time.

ER: Yeah, I see. That makes sense. How about you continue your job and take care of your husband for the next few months but we keep the position for you, just waiting for your husband to recover, then you could take your husband and child with you to work in London?

EE: No, I'm afraid I still can't. It's a good chance but my husband has a great job here. After recovering, he has to go back to his work. Additionally, if we would live in London, we would have to put our children in day-care. We prefer to stay here and have our parents take care of their grandchild while we work. So, I think it is not possible for me to accept this offer. I am wondering why I couldn't have a new position in our local company.

ER: Well, as I said, the next promotion interview for local company start next month.

EE: We have already known each other for a few years, I believe you are aware of my talents and abilities. What's more, you also like me, right? As one of the persons who know me best in this company, why not just give me a promotion immediately?

Virtual cognitions: "Separate the people from the problems", I should use this insightful strategy to replace any negative mantra running through my head. Soft on the people, but hard on the issues. I could show great respect and caring to Kath and try my best to maintain a good relationship with him, but when it comes to a matter of principle, I should avoid trading the relationship for the substance.

ER: Kath, of course, we have been friends for a long time, and we are also colleagues. I do want what's best for you and also for the company. There are specific regulations about promotion in the company and there has never been an exception since the company was founded, so this's really impossible for me to do that. It will be against the fair and transparency principle of our company.

Virtual cognitions (Knowledge): Kath is not only a skilled technician but also an experienced staff member who has strong leadership skills. Offering him a chance to get promoted may mean providing higher salary in the future. However, in any case we need to hire one person for that position and compared with the loss if we lose Kath, it is still worth the pay rise and will save us time. Kath seems to be hesitant about joining the promotion interview. It doesn't satisfy him so much, but I think it still seems acceptable. So, let me at least try again.

ER: I suggest we come back to the promotion interview. I know that at least an extra month might be too long for you, however you have already worked so hard for 5 years. And I believe you are also emotionally connected to this company and your job. As a friend, I also have to say it is not so easy to find a new and appropriate job for you in a short time, even if you have rich working experience. As for the promotion interview, besides giving you the opportunity to attend, I can also write a recommendation letter for you.

EE: Um... as I know, for this interview, I'll have to compete with candidates from both inside and outside the company. Will I have some priority?

ER: Internal candidates are always given priority over external candidates when there is an equal competition. What's more, I know someone who has plentiful experience with promotion interviews as both interviewee and interviewer. If you want, I can help you to arrange a meeting with him, you can ask questions or practice with him.

EE: It's good, thanks. But...hmmm...one month, continue in my current team....

ER: Kath, let's do like this, In the coming month, if you finish your project earlier than the deadline, I can give you extra few days off before the promotion interview, you can leave the office to have a trip or use it to do preparation work for the interview at home. How about that?

EE: That sounds fair.

ER: Great. As an excellent employee we hope you can stay in our company.

Virtual cognitions (Self-motivating): Yeah, we are almost there. I developed lots of options for Kath to choose from and successfully applied the BATNA in a smart way, so I finally figured out a proposal that satisfies the interests of both parties.

XXX [You are a quite good negotiator].

Virtual cognitions (Knowledge): We have already come to the last stage: closing. Remember to ask Kath to clearly repeat the agreement we have already made.

ER: Well. I think we've made good progress. Could you please run over the main points again, to check if everything is clear?

EE: We both agree that I should continue my work for the next month at least. You will arrange for me to join the next promotion interview and give me a recommendation letter.

ER: Yeah, but please make sure your work is completed before the deadline, otherwise the recommendation letter will not be possible.

EE: Ok, finishing the work, getting the letter and joining the interview.

ER: Is that clear?

EE: Yes, it's totally clear.

ER: I am happy that came up with this strategy. I am glad that we had this talk. You are such a good employee, so I really want you to stay in our company.

EE: Thanks for your work.

ER: It's my pleasure. Have a nice day. Bye.

EE: Bye.

Virtual cognitions (Self-motivating). Yes, great! The negotiation was a success. A better outcome than my BATNA.

XXX, [You are quite good at negotiation].

This time, I went through the four major stages of negotiation in proper order again, private preparation, joint exploration, bidding, and closing one after another.

Besides, I also successfully developed a BATNA before entering the negotiation and used the BATNA to compare with the proposals that were raised during the negotiation to find the best solution that can satisfy the interests of both parties.

What' more, in this negotiation, I also applied one vital strategy the teacher taught me in this negotiation. Separate people from problems. Soft on the people, hard on the problems.

According to the strategy, I showed great respect and caring to Kath, and tried to make a good atmosphere for our meeting. However, when it comes to the problems we have to deal with. I always had my own principles and never made concessions because of the existing relationship. Finally, we made an agreement with which both sides were satisfied.

Virtual cognitions (Self-motivating). Again, all in all I could say: XXX, [You are a good negotiator].