



## Negotiation 3.0

### The power (and perils) of self-assessment Michael Wheeler / 2 January 2015

Recognizing both your strengths and relative weaknesses is important to your long-term negotiation success. It enables you to build on the skills that you've mastered and to address other areas where there's room for improvement.

When it comes to negotiation, however, accurate self-assessment is difficult:

- First, negotiation requires a complex mix of analytic and interpersonal skills. Sometimes effectiveness at one thing comes at the cost of being good at something else.
- Second, negotiation provides poor feedback. When you reach agreement, it is hard to know if you left value on the table or stressed a relationship. And if you are stalemated, it can be hard to tell if a deal simply wasn't possible, or if you overplayed your hand.
- Finally, how you rate yourself reflects your general temperament. Are you generally self-confident—perhaps too much so—or are you hypercritical. Others may view your performance more objectively.

As a result, your self-assessment simply is simply a starting point, a template for on-going learning. You can calibrate your profile by drawing on two sources of information. One is disciplined analysis of your own experience. The **Negotiation 360** app is designed for exactly that. It prompts you on a case-by-case basis to evaluate how well you've done interpersonally, asserting your interests and empathizing with other parties' needs and feeling. Then it asks about problem-solving—how well you did at expanding the pie and getting a fair share of it. And it nudges you to name what you did well and what you would differently in the future. Quickly you'll compile a personalized, practical list of what you can do to enhance your effectiveness going forward.

Second, couple those reflections with feedback from people who've seen you negotiate—a colleague at work or a family member who came with you when you bought a car or leased an apartment. Be clear that you're not looking for praise. You want to know what you can do better. Again the **Negotiation 360** app provides template that will help others give you focused, actionable advice. Better still, return the favor and make it habit. Regularly compare notes and coach each other.

Don't forget that you can also learn from the people sitting across the bargaining table. After all, you see them up-close. Note what they do well and what they might have done better. Afterwards, consider the

underlying factors that may explain their behavior and attitude. Some of their actions may express their temperament (are they trusting or suspicious). Other times, specific circumstances may drive someone's approach (for example, if they have to make a sale to meet a monthly quota). Remember that how well you perform isn't just a matter of skill. Luck—good and bad—plays a role in success, too. Sometimes you may be in a strong position. Other times, through no fault of your own, maybe not.

If you are interested in seeing results of similar self-assessment surveys, check out the article "Rocks and Hard Places," also posted on this site. Dana Nelson and I wrote it several years go for the *Negotiation Journal*. We analyzed data from an eight-question instrument (which included the four questions in **Negotiation 360** app), and found patterns and styles described in the app.

You also can review other posted notes on this site that deal with related issues, including:

- Fundamental tensions in negotiation
- Negotiation: required reading list
- Negotiation best practices

Other parts of this site have short videos on topics including emotions in negotiation, persuasion, getting in sync. Finally, for commentary on negotiation issues and cases, see my blog on LinkedIn's Influencer platform: [https://www.linkedin.com/profile/view?id=266437464&trk=spm\\_pic](https://www.linkedin.com/profile/view?id=266437464&trk=spm_pic)