

HOW TO GET WHAT YOU WANT

As babies, we cry, we get fed. Later, we learn to ask for things. Eventually, we learn that how we ask for things can determine whether we get them. Want to know the secret? Five experts reveal the best ways to buy a house, parent your teenager, get a pay rise, fix a crisis, survive a divorce and ... be happy.

WORDS SARAH HENDER PICTURE ISTOCK, GETTY IMAGES

How to be a winner at work...

GARY EDWARDS, corporate trainer in communication, business keynote speaker and influence expert. garyedwards.com.au



As a former lawyer, Gary Edwards knows the importance of negotiating skills. "In life you don't get what you deserve, you get what you settle for."

Edwards has a framework for people to adopt when they enter into any negotiations. He refers to it as the four Ps: position, problem, proposal, people.

1 POSITION

State your position and hold your ground. If you show that you are happy to give away your position easily then it is unlikely you will be given what you are seeking from the other party. Make sure you know what your range is and don't go in with your best offer.

Edwards recalls a moment back in his legal days when he and his client were about to enter into talks with the other party. His client indicated that he was prepared to offer \$10,000 to settle the case. Armed with that knowledge, Edwards offered \$7000 as a starting point. His client then whispered to him "I think we could do a fair bit better than that, Gary!" Sadly for the negotiations, the whisper was audible to the other party. The negotiations ended there.

"What I learnt from that is you should always tell your client what your strategy is!" says Gary.

Of course, stating and holding your position is just the start. If that's all you do, you will just end up with one big argument.

2 PROBLEM

Approach negotiations as a problem that needs solving, namely "how can I get what I want by helping you get what you want?" The process should be collaborative.

If you are seeking a salary rise, don't just say that you deserve one because you've been working there for over a year. Do your research and find out what others in your position are earning. When you do come to do the asking, show your boss that you understand it is not easy to give out extra money and get nothing in return. Tell them why you need the extra money and if the company can't afford to pay you more,

suggest alternatives you could live with such as attendance at a professional development conference.

Most people don't have the option of threatening to leave if they don't get a salary rise, so have a plan of action with steps you can take along the way.

3 PROPOSAL

Putting a proposal involves bargaining. That is, offering something as a trade-off for something in return. At this point, the process moves on from collaborative problem-solving and aims to reach a compromise. Many people are worried

during this process that they are compromising too much and are always giving in. If you know your position and hang on to it while actively problem-solving, you will be able to come up with a proposal that suits both parties.

4 PEOPLE

Finally, what is your relationship like with the other person? How you approach a negotiation is dependent upon the extent to which the relationship with the other person matters to you. If it is a long-term relationship, whether personal or work-related, a more collaborative approach is

needed than if it is a once-off negotiation where you are unlikely to deal with that person ever again. Whoever it is, establish a good relationship with the person early on. The better the relationship, the better you can negotiate. If you trust that person, things have a better chance of going smoothly.

The smart way to buy a house...

OREN KLEMICH, real estate agent and managing director of Klemich Real Estate klemich.com.au



1 BE PREPARED

One of the most frustrating things for an agent is when a potential buyer loves a property but doesn't feel confident enough to buy. "The perfect home may come along in week two of

looking and if you don't know it's the perfect home, you miss out." Have your finances in order, know what type of property you want to buy and where, and know the market.

2 MAKE A DECISION

Back your judgment. Remember that it doesn't have to be a lifelong thing. If you're at an auction, bid with confidence. Many people don't want to open the bidding but it is often the person that opens the bidding who controls the auction. Give the impression you are never going to stop.

3 TAKE THE LONG-TERM VIEW

Be prepared to pay a little more than you planned. Potential purchasers often stop at a round figure when buying property. Pay that extra \$1000 or two to do the deal.

"So many people have a strict limit. You know that the person they're bidding against is absolutely on their last legs and one more bid is going to buy it but they won't budge. Their strict limit will let them down."

4 ENGAGE WITH THE AGENT

Most agents are good people who are only trying to help you. If you treat an agent well and you miss out on a property, chances are that they will call you about others and will help you. Ask them about what it's worth and where they think the interest will be.

5 DON'T BE PETTY

If you don't like the carpets, carpets are cheap. If you don't like the colour of the





walls, you can paint them. Don't sweat the small stuff, even in a building inspection. Ticking every box is near-impossible. And if there is a home that good, you might find others also want it, and hike it up to a price you can't afford.

6 HEED YOUR EMOTIONS

Don't dismiss your emotions. "When you've found a property you absolutely adore and it ticks every single box in eight months of looking and you don't want to speak to another real estate agent as long as you live, just buy it."

How to get your fair share...

JANE FOX, family lawyer
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Fox is an accredited family law specialist and is Chair of the Family Law Committee of the Law Society of SA. She is Principal Associate with BBS family lawyers and mediators in Adelaide. Fox has been a practising family lawyer for 15 years. Family law disputes have an added layer of emotion that can interfere with your ability to know what you want. Fox provides her tips on how to stay focused.

1 BE UPFRONT

Don't hide essential information from the other party. Some people think that they are being clever and strategic by withholding but settlements can fall as a result.

Fox recalls one matter that had been settled in principle but on receiving the document to finalise it, she spotted an asset not previously disclosed.

"It would have only had a minor impact on the settlement figure but the impact on my client was major. The trust that had been built up through the negotiation was totally dashed and my client withdrew from the deal."

In family law matters, you have an obligation to make disclosure and if you don't, that fact can form the basis of a property settlement being set aside, even if the other party discovers this fact years later.

2 KNOW WHAT YOU WANT

As opposed to what you would like or what other people think that you want.

"A lot of people have a wish list which basically says 'I want everything and they get nothing,'" says Fox.

Having a closed mind from the outset is unhelpful. When negotiating shared care arrangements for the children, be sure you can practically manage what you are seeking. For instance, if you are seeking 50/50 shared time, you need to know that it is going to suit your children and that you can maintain the arrangement.

People can become focused on the small things rather than the big picture.

Fox recalls once asking a client to write a list of all the things she wanted. At the bottom of the list was a note which said "half the pegs off the clothes line".

It was a strong indication that the client had lost her focus on what she actually wanted.

3 GET EARLY ADVICE

Get early advice before you enter into negotiations, even if you get the advice in the background and handle the negotiations yourself.

"I think there's a big misconception that once lawyers are involved, that's the

end of it and it all careers off the track like an out-of-control train but it doesn't have to be that way."

Before you negotiate, it's important to know that the amount you are seeking is within the range that you are entitled to and that both your lawyer and accountant agree that it is possible to achieve.

4 PUT YOURSELF IN THEIR SHOES

After giving some thought to what you want, you should think about what things are important to the other party and what they are likely to want. It will assist with your strategy in negotiating with them.

"If it is really important to them that they keep the house at Middleton because it has

been in their family for generations, then you know it is going to be a big ticket item for them. By offering it from the outset, you can show your good faith. Alternatively, it is just handy to keep in mind when negotiating that this is something that is already on your compromise list."

5 GIVE YOURSELF SOME WRIGGLE ROOM

Never put an offer you can only live with as your first approach.

"If you show how far the rubber band stretches in terms of what you'll live with, then it is difficult to come back from that as the other party has seen how far you're prepared to go," says Fox.

There should be wriggle room in terms of





dollar figures and what the make-up of it is. You can put a final offer but be sure it is your final one – otherwise you lose all your strength in the negotiation.

Human nature being what it is, a settlement often comes down to a trade-off of the little things, namely, “you get that, if I get this”. These trade-offs sometimes don’t go to plan.

Fox recalls one case where the wife asked her estranged husband to return all the family jigsaw puzzles. They were returned – with every puzzle missing its middle piece. Some people want to have the last word, no matter how it’s said.

6 CONSIDER THE PERSONAL IMPACT

Family law disputes have an impact on the rest of your life and your future relationships, so the way they are handled is particularly important.

“People have this unrealistic view of how it is going to go in court. They think that they are going to feel vindicated.” Fox explains.

“I tell my clients that a lot can be said in court and you can’t unring that bell. It fractures relationships. If a settlement can be reached that is reasonable, it is preferable to the impact of litigation,” she says.

A separation is stressful so the impact on mental health is also a consideration. It can take up to two years for a matter to be heard in court and people can feel that their parenting is under a microscope because everything they do is potentially subject to examination.

Sometimes resolving things early and moving on is better. If there are no children, you potentially don’t have to have anything more to do with that person ever again.

How to handle a crisis...

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Iverach is a psychologist and has been helping people in crisis for eight years. She works with the Employee Support Team at the NT Police Fire and Emergency Service in Darwin. In that role, she provides support to police when dealing with people suffering a crisis where they might be threatening themselves or others with physical harm.

When someone is in crisis, their fight or flight response is activated, stopping their ability to problem-solve rationally. The aim in negotiating with someone in this situation is to remove the fight or flight response.

1 SAFETY

If the person doesn’t feel safe, they are unlikely to be able to switch on their cognitive function, so the priority is to get them into a position of safety. If they are standing near an edge, move them away from it. If they are hot, open a window or turn a fan on. Don’t actively challenge the person by using words that make them feel threatened.

2 MOTIVATION

When people are in emotional distress, you want to get them to a different outcome quickly.

“It can feel counter-productive to ask someone why they want to kill themselves but it is very helpful to do that.”

When a person feels that someone is

listening to them, their fight or flight response will drop. Once they start talking, they may also mention something in their life which may motivate them to stop doing what they are doing. For instance, if they refer to a child in their life, you can encourage the talk around that which can bring out positive emotions and make them think about the consequences of their actions.

3 CONNECTION

Sharing a common language will help to build a connection. Non-threatening, inclusive language such as “we” rather than “you” and “I”, will make them feel you are on their side. Showing empathy helps build a sense of connection. As people adopt each other’s body language, adopting a relaxed stance (known by experts as “mirroring”) will help calm a highly agitated person.

4 A SENSE OF CONTROL

Make the person feel that reaching the different outcome you are seeking for them is achievable.

“Often when you are working with someone who is in crisis, it is a question of either ‘I’ll be okay or I’ll kill myself’, or ‘I live or they live’. It’s always two big extremes.” explains Iverach.

Break the tasks down into smaller steps to show the person they have choices. Don’t push your own ideas, wait for problems to be raised and acknowledge them and let them build the big options.

Be guided by the person’s own view. The goal is to achieve an “outcome focus”. That is, a different outcome to the one the person originally planned. If the person thinks the outcome is going against their self-view, they will never do it. For instance, if they say “I’m not a quitter. I always follow things through and I’ll follow this through.” Then you could say something like “Let’s follow this through to make sure you don’t quit”.

Remember that time is your friend. You need time to build that connection and for the flight or fight response to die down.

How to negotiate with kids...

MARK LE MESSURIER, counsellor, mentor, educator and parent coach
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LeMessurier was an award-winning school teacher. He provides counselling and coaching to young people, their parents and their teachers to help them understand and improve behaviours and their relationships. How parents communicate with their teens is vital if they want to influence them at a time when they are exposed to so many external influences.

1 KEEP THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN EARLY

Hold regular family meetings from when your child is in their pre-teen years to provide an easy place for children to feel they can open up without being judged. This sets up an environment of transparency and trust.

2 SET LIMITS

A teenager is exposed to many outside influences such as computer screens, social media, peers, nightlife, and drinking that can create problems for them if they are not restricted. Some parents find setting limits difficult.

Set rules from an early age, such as the time the child can access social media or play computer games. Of course, there will



be those moments when your child gets sprung sneaking into bed with their phone. Don’t lose your cool. Keep talking about why you have limits and enforce them.

3 PRESENT THE FACTS, DON'T LECTURE

If your teen has been drinking, present them with the facts about alcohol. Teenagers respond better to facts than a lecture. Sitting down together and looking at a reputable website about drinking underage is much more useful. If you are both upset or angry, do this when you are both calm.

4 NEGOTIATE AHEAD OF TIME

If your teenager is to attend a specific

“Be friendly, you never know who you might meet and what opportunities they bring.”



you on. The cars are revving and the wheels are spinning”. In the heat of the moment, it is a difficult decision for your child to make. If you have discussed such scenarios, you are more likely to influence their decision.

How to Be Happy...
PETER CHARLESTON, psychologist
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To me, happiness is about attitude and productive actions that derive from a mix of psychological skills. When these skills come together, they generate abundant positive energy. There are

several skills below to master, but happiness doesn't come easily.

1 Value your internal world over the external – most people avoid their own thoughts and feelings and reflecting on their behaviour, which are actually keys to finding your own happiness.

2 Embrace lifelong learning – it helps you maintain happiness and keeps your ego in check. There are too many know-it-alls in the world! Everyone has the potential to improve – you just need to live the right questions.

3 Always be honest with yourself. Confronting your own reality takes courage but has many rewards. For example, be honest about your self sabotage – whether it's procrastination, or taking on too much, or becoming easily distracted, and so on – name it for what is it and confront the fears that drive the sabotage.

4 Remember that being real requires vulnerability, and being vulnerable is not weak, it takes courage and the ability to keep your ego tamed.

5 Focus on your strengths to get results, rather than try to be perfect. Your best is enough.

6 Have a clear purpose and values to guide you – this makes decisions easier, and gives you a great reason to do your best every day.

7 Monitor your progress, no matter how small. If you are one step closer to your goal and one bit better than you were yesterday, you are doing well.

8 If you accept that some people do not act the way you want them to, then you won't keep getting hurt and disappointed.

9 Seek advice from subject experts, not just people who have influence over you.

10 Practice healthy daily rituals, for mind, body, emotions, giving to loved ones, and what you contribute to community.

11 Be friendly, you never know who you might meet and what opportunities they bring.

12 Maximise the good memories, minimise the bad memories to make sure the story of your life helps rather than harms.

13 Tune in to what helps you, tune out to what harms you. And be aware of this

personal filter so you don't waste time on insignificant things.

14 Value relationships over money – love is very powerful. And don't just marry potential.

15 Understand that giving is fundamental to happiness.

16 Make sure your stubborn inner child doesn't have too much power over you. Being a more responsible adult leads to success and happiness.

17 Allow others to hold you to account. Their feedback is important for you to listen to and gain from.

18 Look at long-term gain rather than instant gratification. There are no quick fixes.

19 Learn how to satisfy your own emotional needs. Too many people are needy and worry about what others think of them, and you have no control over this.

20 Stop comparing, it's a waste of time and energy, and no-one is like you, anyway. Focus on developing your uniqueness – it doesn't occur just because you exist.



Peter Charleston, based in Melbourne, blends personal and professional development services. His first book 'Closer' is available in bookstores now.