

CONFLICT & DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Knowing Your Alternatives & BATNA

As you read the material for our next class, keep the questions below in mind. To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages. Keep in mind that there are two basic kinds of information that you need to look for in the reading:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?
2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, *it is information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible conclusion about an issue, rather than another.

Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently about these issues at our next class meeting.

Reading

- Roger Fisher & William Ury, with Bruce Patton, "What If They Are More Powerful?"

Questions

1. The alternatives to a negotiation refer to the walk-away possibilities that each party has if no agreement is reached. Why is it extremely important to know your alternatives before negotiating?
2. According to Fisher *et al*, what is a BATNA? How is your BATNA related to your alternatives in a negotiation? How is a BATNA different from a bottom line (i.e., a reservation price) and a trip wire? Why is a BATNA superior to a bottom line in a negotiation?
3. In what ways is a BATNA a negotiator's best source of protection?
4. In what ways is a BATNA a source of a negotiator's power to secure a better (or at least an acceptable) agreement for themselves?
5. Putting all this together, why does knowing both your BATNA and that of the other party encourage wise agreement?