

# Knowing Your Alternatives & BATNA

## Instructions

When doing the reading for this class, there are the two basic kinds of information you need to understand:

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?

*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 position on an issue, rather than another.*

## Reading

Fisher, R., Ury, W., & Patton, B. (2011). What if they are more powerful? In *Getting to yes: Negotiating agreement without giving in* (3rd ed., pp. 99–108). Penguin Books.

## Questions

1. The *alternatives* to a negotiation refer to the walk-away possibilities that each party has if no agreement is reached between them.  
Why is it extremely important to know your alternatives before negotiating?
2. According to Roger Fisher, William Ury, and Bruce Patton, 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? In what ways 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 and power to secure a better (or at least an acceptable) agreement for themselves?
4. Putting all this together, why does knowing both your BATNA and that of the other party tend to encourage wise agreement?

To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages.

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.