

That Person Across the Table

**A Series on Negotiation Strategy for Farmers
Part 4**

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Introduction

Perception really is the other side's reality.

Perception

Understanding the circumstances, history, personal experiences all leads to understanding the thinking of the person across the table from you. The problem on the table is his (or your) thinking.

The conflict really is in your head. Fears are real. Hope can cause wars and facts are useless when solving a problem.

Other Peoples' Shoes

First off, you see what you want to see. You pick out facts and details that reinforce your reality. You throw away the same facts if they threaten the same world view.

Simply put, spending time in his shoes allows you to see the emotional force behind the thinking.

Deduction

You can't deduce their intentions from looking at what you fear. Remember your fears are based on your past experience.

Your Problems

It is tempting to blame them, the other side, the big bad company, and so on, for your problems. It is even easier to make them responsible. Assessing blame will firmly entangle the other side in your problems.

Opportunities to Act

Are there ways to change their perception? Yes there are but it requires you to change the way you send the offer. By making an offer outside their pre-conceived notion can break the deadlock.

Value Based Proposals

For most western populations, 'saving face' has no meaning or is derogatory. For other cultures, it is the most important issue at the table. Phrasing disagreements in terms of process, principles, or precedence allows the discussion to continue while respecting the other person.

Reality

Recognizing other realities prior to negotiations will lessen problems at the table. Foundations based on shared realities build better agreements. All that said, concentrating on the problem, with all its merits, will go farther than trying to deal with that ... across the table.

Resources for this Publication

Getting to Yes, by Roger Fisher, William Ury and Bruce Patton, Second Edition, 1991

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