

Beyond Leaning In: How to Negotiate to Get What You Want

Katie Lane
Open Source Bridge 2014

Creative Business Advice for Creative People

www.WorkMadeForHire.net

@_katie_lane



Sheryl Sandberg published her book on women in the corporate workplace in March of 2013. Thanks in no small part to a terrific media campaign, it nearly immediately received praise as the panacea to the lack of power women experience in the workplace. “If you want something, ask for it! All you need to do is lean in!”

Everyone liked the hell out of the book.

Many people associated Sandberg’s encouragement to “lean in” with negotiation.



And this made me sad.

Because Lean In is a crappy negotiation book. It may be good as a book on other things, but negotiation isn't one of them.

It doesn't actually teach the language of negotiation, it just encourages people to negotiate. It's like loudly declaring that everything would be better if we all spoke French and then not teaching anyone how to speak French.

- How to **ask** for what you want
- How to **take control**
- How to **be awesome**

So today I want to teach you a little bit about the language of negotiation. What you need to understand if you're going to negotiate. And we're going to talk about three main areas: how to ask for what you want, how to take control in a negotiation, and how to feel more confident when you negotiate.

How to Ask For What You Want

First up, How to Ask For What You Want.

Most people get this wrong. They ask for a position and fail to talk about their interests.

Positions vs. Interests

So what's the difference between interests and positions?

Positions are things. They are unique and can only be satisfied in one way. Either you get exactly what you want or you don't. In most negotiations, people state a position and then whittle away at what that position is over the course of the negotiation. You start out asking for \$500 and end up getting \$300.

Interests are the "why" behind our positions. They describe what the position will allow us to do or why the position is important to us.

Here's an example of the difference between using positions and interests to negotiate something.

Positions

I want a French Bulldog.

Let's say my wife and I are considering getting another pet. If I approach the negotiation using a position I will say: "I want a French Bulldog."

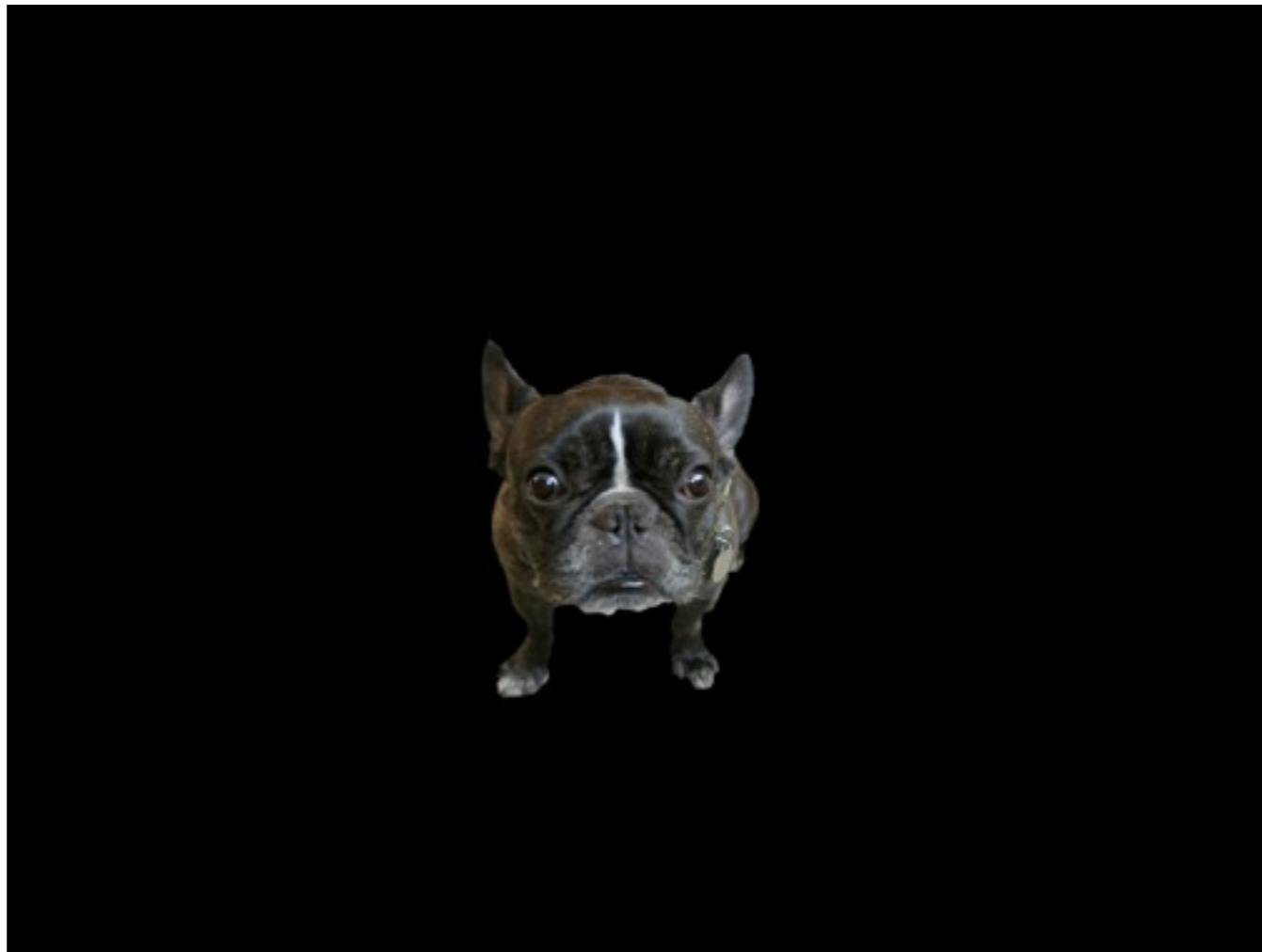
This is a perfectly true statement, but if my wife doesn't want a French Bulldog it means I've left myself with very little room to negotiate. I've turned the negotiation into a "yes" or "no" situation.

Interests



Now, if instead I start talking about my interests, I'll describe the qualities of what I'm looking for in a new pet. These are the things that are important to me about having a pet and are things that I would be unhappy if I didn't get.

"Goofy" is the last descriptor.



So when I use positions to negotiate: this is all I can get. Either a “yes” or “no” to a French Bulldog.



If I use my interests instead, I open up the number of options that can settle the negotiation. It could be a French Bulldog, or any one of a number of other animals. There might even be an animal that fulfills my interests better than a French Bulldog.

If I only negotiate by using positions, though, I can very easily miss out on discovering these options.

But what if you want money?

So that's great when we're talking about getting a new pet, but what happens when you're negotiating over money? Money is a pretty hard line position: \$300 is very different from \$3000. The two aren't interchangeable.

Money isn't inherently interesting. Unless you have something to spend it on, it doesn't do anything for you. Money has value because of what it allows you to do: those things are your interests.

So when you are negotiating over money, this is my advice:

Be a 3 year-old.

Three year olds are never satisfied just knowing that something exists or that something is happening, they want to know why. When you negotiate over money and need understand your interests (or theirs!) ask "Why?"

Why?

Why?

Why?

Why?

Why?

So let's try it out.

"I want a rate of \$95/hour."

Why?

Because that's the standard rate and I want the standard rate.

Why?

Because it's important to me to be considered a professional of a certain skill level.

Why?

Because it will allow me to work with clients I'm more interested in working with.

Why?

Because I want work that is fulfilling creatively and that pays well.

Why?

Because I want to do more than just work; I want the time and ability to do other things that are interesting to me.

So when you negotiate like this, it not only helps you discover more options (maybe they can't pay you \$95/hour on this project, but they are willing to sign a 12 month agreement that guarantees \$1000/mo) it also helps you evaluate what they're offering you. If what they're offering doesn't help support your interests, the why behind what you want, you know you're better off turning the offer down.

How to Take Control

Get a ~~Batman~~

Get a BATNA

**Best
Alternative
To a
Negotiated
Agreement**

BATNA = Back Up Plan

Important factors of BATNAs:

Something you want to do.

Something you can do without getting the other person to agree to something.

Something that supports your goals.

“Yes, but...”

This is a phrase I want you to get rid of. It's not helpful because it makes people stop listening to you. Instead, replace it with

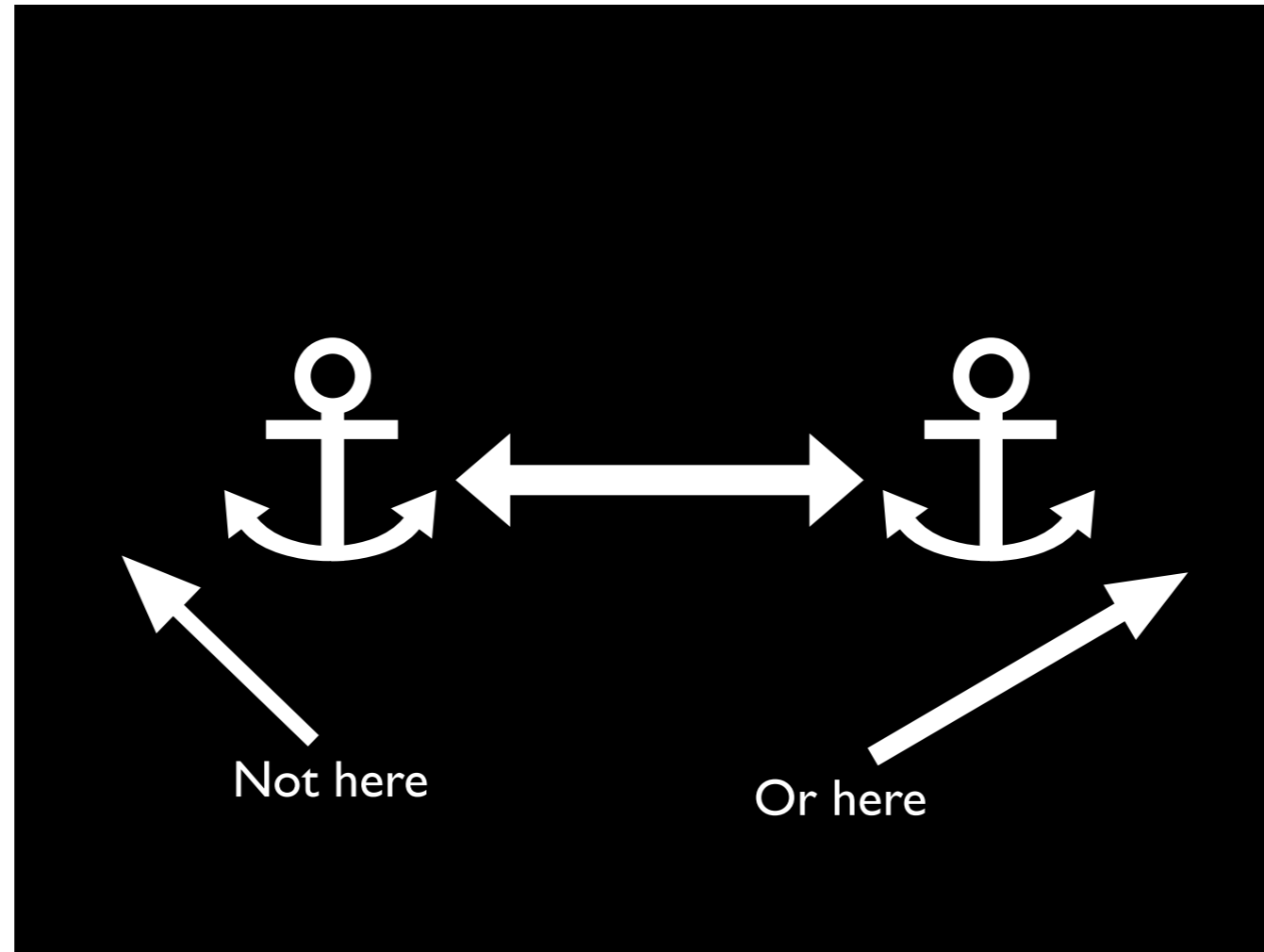
“Yes, and…”

This doesn't mean you are agreeing with them. It just means that you heard what they said and you have additional information to provide. It encourages rather than discourages continued communication.

If you've done improv you know why “Yes, and” is so important.



If you want to take control in a negotiation you need to understand the concept of anchoring. Anchoring happens when one side first establishes a number or standard in relation to the thing being negotiated. That anchor, even if it doesn't make sense, will inform how the negotiation proceeds. Let's use an example.



Let's say you are negotiating a job offer with a new company.

They offer \$75,000 per year w/ benefits. That \$75K is their anchor.

You, on the other hand, tell them that given the work they need done, \$90,000 w/ benefits is a much more realistic number. \$90K is your anchor.

In 9 out of 10 instances, the negotiation will settle somewhere between \$75K and \$90K.

It won't go below \$75K because you know they are willing to pay at least that much and it likely won't go above \$90K because they know you are willing to accept at least that much.



So how do you anchor?

First, only do it when you're informed. Do your homework! If you don't understand the value of the thing being negotiated, don't make statements. If you absolutely must talk, ask questions.

Second, if an irrational anchor is dropped, you disavow it. You can do that by re-anchoring, which is repeating your anchor a number of times in a short period of time.

How to be Awesome

Trick Your Stupid Brain

Our brains are amazing biological machines, but sometimes they can be remarkably stupid. This especially happens in times of stress.

The good thing is that when you are stressed out, there are very easy ways of tricking yourself back into thinking everything is OK.

We're going to do this together. I want everyone to stand up. Now I want you to repeat after me: "I'm awesome!" x2-3.

Now turn to the person next to you: "You're awesome."

Your brain believes these things because your brain always wants to make sense of what it hears. It wants the information to be right. Doing this, or having a buddy help you out by doing this with you, before a negotiation can be the extra boost of confidence you need.

I have literally gone to the bathroom at work, looked in the mirror and repeated "I'm awesome; I can do this," before important conversations.

Lady Gaga & Beyoncé Want to Help You Out

Playlist of good high energy songs that make you feel good. Same basic idea. Your brain will mirror the emotion it hears from your surroundings to help you fit in.

“We few, we happy few,
we band of brothers
(and sisters)....”

Some people do much better when they are negotiating on behalf of someone else. If you tend to back down when representing your own interests but feel more passionate when representing others, dedicate your negotiations to someone. Before beginning say to yourself, “This is for my [husband][wife][kids][friends][dog][cat].”



Cheat.

Ok, not really full blown cheating.

But if you're going to be on the phone, use notes. Write out why what you're asking for is important to you and what goals your negotiation is helping you support. Have your back up plan there too. Having that information in front of you can help you avoid chickening out or accepting something you really don't want.

Thank you!

Katie Lane

www.workmadeforhire.net

@_katie_lane