

Win-Win: How to Get What You Want

Negotiation is the process of discussing one or more issues with other people to reach an agreement. You may think that only world leaders negotiate, but people all over the world and of all ages negotiate everyday, sometimes without even realizing it! Read the short story, Friday Night and think about a time you may have been in a similar situation.

Friday Night

Samantha McCartney is a very busy young lady. Rarely, does she have time for her school work, chores, or her little sister Krista. Samantha's parents are getting tired of her being so busy with all her activities and not spending enough time with the family, doing chores or her homework. Samantha's parents threatened to ground her for an entire month if she didn't change her ways!

Samantha vowed to her parents, "On Friday, I will not hang-out with my friends. I will complete my homework, chores, and spend time with Krista."



That Friday, during school, Samantha received a special invitation to Lisa's slumber party. The card read:

You are chosen to participate in a night filled with games, treats, movies, and gossip.

"Awesome!" Samantha exclaimed. The coolest girls in her grade would be there and Samantha HAD to attend. Overwhelmed with excitement, Samantha immediately thanked Lisa for the invitation and told her she would see her tonight!

But there was one, rather big, problem that she had to fix. Earlier that week, Samantha told her parents she would stay home on Friday night to spend time with her sister and complete her chores and homework. Yet, if she did not go to Lisa's party, her social life would be over!

What's Samantha to do?

Have you ever tried to change the amount of homework you needed to finish before you can play outside? Have you ever tried to change your bed time? If you have, you have negotiated. Anytime you want to reach an agreement, make a decision with a friend or parent, or change a situation, negotiation can help. Think of all the things that you would like to be different and you can begin to imagine all the possibilities for negotiation. The world is a negotiable place!

When you negotiate it is important to think about three things.

- First, you need to ask yourself what your alternative is if you don't negotiate.
- Second, you need to think about what you really want out of the negotiation.
- Third, you need to think about how the other person sees the situation and why they may not want to do what you want.

Let's look at each of these using the short story Friday Night as an example. Samantha would like to go to the slumber party but what if her parents said no? Let's **first** consider what the alternative to negotiating would be – what Samantha might do if she didn't negotiate. If Samantha decides to not ask her parents to go to the party, she will have to stay home. That is Samantha's alternative. Anytime you begin a negotiation, it is important to think about what your alternative is if you don't do anything. Sometimes the fact that your alternative is accepting a bad situation is often a good reason to decide to negotiate.

Second, Samantha needs to think about what exactly she wants. Suppose that she wants to go to Lisa's party on Friday night and go with her friends to see a movie on Saturday night. To Samantha, this would be perfect and that is what she might try to get her parents to agree to! But she also needs to prioritize what she wants in case her parents won't agree to everything she wants. Therefore, she needs to think about whether it is more important for her to go out on Friday night or Saturday night.

The **third** step is to try to see the negotiation from her parent's point of view. Her parents might tell her they don't want her to go to the party. If Samantha can understand their reasons, this may help her figure out how to get her parent's permission to do what she wants. So Samantha needs to ask the question: why do my parents want me to stay home? Maybe her parents don't know Lisa (the party's host) or Lisa's parents and so they feel uncomfortable having Samantha spend the night at Lisa's house. In this case, Samantha can solve the problem by having her parents come over to Lisa's house before the party so her parents can meet Lisa's parents. That would be an easy solution.



Sometimes things aren't so simple. What if Samantha's parents don't want her to go to the party because they are worried that all her socializing is affecting her ability to focus on her school work? In this case, Samantha needs to think about what they would want her to do in order for them not to worry about this and agree to let her go to the party. This is a "trade." For example, suppose Samantha came directly home during the school week to complete her school work and chores but she reserved Friday and Saturday nights to spend time with her friends. This is a good "trade" because Samantha will get to go to the party and her parents will know that she is spending enough time on her school work.



Being creative in thinking about what you have to "trade" will help you to get what you want. The key is that you get something you want and so does the other side. That way both of you end up happy.

Once you think about all of these things, it is time to negotiate! One final piece of advice: You should practice your negotiation ahead of time with a friend. The negotiation will go much more smoothly if you do!

So What Happened?

Just in case you are wondering what happened to Samantha, her parents were worried that she wasn't spending enough time doing her school work and spending time with her family. She carefully negotiated her case with her parents. Samantha committed to spending time with her family on Saturday instead of Friday. She completed her chores and homework

before she went to the party. Samantha's social life was saved and she had fun spending a lovely evening with the family on Saturday.

Both Samantha and her parents are winners!

The End

Good luck with all your negotiations, and, remember, don't forget to negotiate for what you want!

Let's Discuss

- a.) What is negotiation?
- b.) Who negotiates?
- c.) Why do people negotiate?
- d.) What kinds of things can you negotiate about?

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