

Tony: The biggest obstacle to getting what we really want in our lives, in our careers, in our business is ourselves.

Hi everyone. I'm Tony Vlahos, Chief Marketing Officer of ExecuNet. And I'm speaking today with William Ury. He's the co-author of *Getting to Yes*, the world's bestselling negotiation book. And he's the author of a new book *Getting to Yes with Yourself*.

The new book doesn't come out to January, but we'll get a good dose of Bill to carry over until then. And by all means, feel free to pre-order.

So Bill, hi.

Ury: Hi Tony. How are you?

Tony: I'm well, thanks. So tell me, why did you write *Getting to Yes with Yourself*?

Ury: Well it's interesting Tony. I've been in this field for 35 years of negotiation, helping people get to yes.

And *Getting to Yes* introduced a new way of thinking about negotiation, shifting from a win-lose adversarial negotiation to can we work together? Can we get to what sometimes is called a win-win, a solution that works for both sides.

And then over the years I realized people have a lot of difficulty with that. So I wrote a book about how you deal with difficult people and difficult situations, *Getting Past No*.

But then it kind of dawned on me over the years that actually maybe the most difficult person we have to deal with in negotiation is the person we look at in the mirror every day, which is ourselves. Because it's in our own human tendency to react, to act without thinking.

Because often I'm in these negotiations, and I see us acting in ways that go exactly contrary to what our interests are. We get angry. There's a saying that when angry you'll make the best speech you'll ever regret. Out of fear we give in when we ought not to be giving in.

So I've been thinking about that for a long time, and I realized it's time, not just for a new way of negotiation; it's a new way of thinking about getting to yes itself, which incorporates both the inner negotiation with ourselves - getting to yes with ourselves - and the outer - getting to yes with the other.

In fact, what I found is if you really want to change the game with the other side, you have to begin by changing the game with yourself.

Tony: We say things about ourselves, to ourselves like *I'm my own worst enemy*, and *I need to get out of my own way*. Is that what inspired this book? And it's a really hard thing to do, isn't it?

Ury: That's it. It's funny because I often ask business leaders, *what's more difficult for you? The external negotiations you engage in with clients and suppliers and so on? Or the internal negotiations with your colleagues, bosses, employees, boards, and so on?*

I've asked this question 100s of times, and I'd say at least 2/3, maybe ¾ of the hands go up and say, it's the internal negotiations that are more difficult than the external. With people with whom you are on the same team.

Well what's more internal than the negotiations inside of yourself? And of course that is the most difficult, the most challenging. Cause we've got blind spots. We don't see it. And we get in our own way. And if we can get out of our own way, if we can do a little bit of that inner homework, then the result both in satisfaction and in agreements to me are enormous.

Tony: Extraordinary. So the book, and we're not going to go over every one of these wonderful, proven steps. But there are essential six proven steps that you cover. And they're intended to dramatically improve outcomes, in all aspects of our work and life.

And the first is putting ourselves in our own shoes. What is the main idea there?

Ury: Well, I mean it sounds funny, because aren't we already in our own shoes. But in negotiation countless times when people ask me what's the single most important skill for a negotiator, if I had to pick just one I'd say it's the ability to put yourself in the other person's shoes, whether it's the customer, your business partner, whoever it is.

Put yourself in their shoes. Understand the way they see things, because after all negotiation is an exercise in influence. You're trying to change the other side's mind. How can we possibly change their mind if we don't know where their mind is?

And then I realized it's very hard for people to do that. I mean, it's easy to say. Put yourself in the other person's shoes. Walk in their moccasins. But it's really hard to do it.

And what makes it hard to do it is that our minds are so full of thoughts, emotions, worries about our things, we don't have any mental space to be able to take in the other side to really understand where they're coming from.

So then I realized, maybe the psychological antecedent to putting yourself in their shoes is you first have got to put yourself in your own shoes. In other words, before listening to the other, maybe you've got to listen to yourself and clear that mind a

little bit so that you can have the clarity both to know what it is that you really want. It's not just about what the other side really wants.

I'll give you an example. I was invited last year to help a very wealthy entrepreneur who set up the largest retailer in Latin America. He was in a gigantic fight with someone to whom he had sold control of his company. It was a French entrepreneur. We can go on for 2.5 years fighting over control of this company. And he was 76. He was going to be Chairman of the Board for another 8 years. They were using every law firm to fight each other. It was hugely public. *The Financial Times* called it the biggest cross-continental boardroom showdown in recent history.

Tony: Oh my goodness.

Ury: So the stakes were huge. And so this guy asked me to help him. So I went over to his home. And I sat with him. His name was Abilio. And I said, *Abilio, you've got everything. What do you want here?*

He said, *I want my stock at a certain price. And I want elimination of the non-compete clause. And I want the company headquarters.* He rattled off a whole list of things. And I was listening, and I said, *but Abilio, you've got everything you want. You can never spend all the money you've got. You've got a new family. What is it that you really want?*

So we probed for a while. And then he said, *you know what I want? I want freedom. I want my freedom.*

So I said, *Abilio, what does freedom mean to you?* He said, *it's freedom to spend time with my family for one thing. Young kids, and so on. And it's freedom to pursue my business dreams.*

That was aha! Because once he put himself in his own shoes, understood what he really wanted, then the conflict, as difficult as it was with the other side, became much easier. And this conflict that had been going on for 2.5 years, and within 4 days we were able to bring both men to an agreement that both - it wasn't just one of these grudging, *okay, I'll get it over with.*

They were both highly satisfied with the agreement. Really satisfied. And it gave him the freedom that he most wanted to go on with his life. And he was a happy man. He said, *that was the beginning of the rest of my life.* I mean, it was really the best thing that could have happened to him.

So to me, it just underscores this point that the real negotiation starts right here.

Tony: Yeah. And the book is rich with these examples and these stories. And another, I think highly relevant example that you provide in the section of the book around standing in your own shoes is this one of we all know what our position is. And we want, for example, a raise.

But tell me the difference between knowing your position and knowing what your interest is.

Ury: So much of negotiation is all around positions, which are the concrete terms. Dollars and cents. Terms and conditions. In the case of a raise, it's the number. That's the position.

Underlying the position, however, is what really motivates you to take that position? We call this your underlying interests. Your concerns, your needs, your aspirations. I want recognition. I have got a family health crisis. I want to put my kids through college. Whatever it is. Those are the underlying interests. Someone else got a raise. I don't feel it was fair.

If you can put the spotlight - positions it's okay. I'm asking for this. Well there's no money in the budget. End of conversation. But you want recognition? We have some budgetary problems, but we can give you a new title. We can maybe get you a tuition loan program. You can get creative.

So instead of treating it as a fixed pie, you can expand the pie so you can solve both side's problem. You can solve the budget problem and you can solve the employee's problem. And to me, that's the key to negotiation.

And the thing again there that I found is so often even though people get that conceptually, they find it hard to do, because our mindset goes to scarcity. There's not enough. You go into a negotiation. There's not going to be enough for me and for you. And so in order to - we've got to change that internal mindset of scarcity and find out that in fact, there's going to be enough for everybody.

And that's the shift that needs to take place. It all begins, every one of the outer shifts that needs to apply to the negotiation has an inner analog. And we've forgotten that inner analog. So the book to me is about - I realize that we've been negotiating with one arm tied behind our back. We've just been focusing on outer techniques.

But we've got to draw on our inner resources so we've got both arms and we can really be most effective in our negotiations.

Tony: Extraordinary. And this relates to another step that you cover in the book and it's reframing your picture. Can you tell me a little bit about that one?

Ury: Sure. How do you change the game? You change the frame.

In other words, you change the frame from you and I are on opposite sides of the table, glaring across the table, engaged in a face to face confrontation. Or you and I are side by side, jointly attacking the problem.

I've been teaching people that kind of reframing. And I realized that it's hard for people, partly because they themselves haven't reframed their own inner picture. If you see the world - and a lot of us tend to have part of us that sees the world as a hostile place where there isn't enough for everyone. And someone's going to get me.

And if you've got that, then that's going to make it very hard for me to make partnership with you. So you've got to go back and rethink that question.

I remember it was Einstein actually who once said interestingly enough that the most important question that any human being can ask themselves is is the universe friendly? In other words, because he figured out if we say the universe is not friendly at all, we're going to arm ourselves to the teeth with atomic weapons, and there isn't going to be any life on earth.

But if we think that yeah, there's adversity in the world, there's challenge in the world, don't deny it. But ultimately life's on my side. Then you're going to approach people in a very different way. If you trust people, they're more likely to trust you. If you respect people, they're more likely to respect you. If you try to get to yes with them, they're going to try to get to yes with you. And you're going to end up generally doing much better than people think. I don't trust you and then you're not going to trust me. An eye for an eye and we all go blind.

Tony: That's really great. So let's talk about one more of these, I think beautiful, steps. And I love this one, which is respect them even if.

And tell me why it's such a difficult concession for people to make. And it doesn't really cost anything. And it's just a wonderful thing to do for someone. What's our hang up with respect?

Ury: It's amazing to me. It's like so often in negotiation, I find that where things break down isn't around the substance, because there's a substantive thing. It's around issues of, it's the feelings. It's the face. And it's basic human respect.

And we're such in a rush to get things done nowadays that we don't pause to actually respect the other person, which is maybe listen to them, acknowledge what they've done. Just those simple actions make a huge difference in negotiation.

I've seen so many negotiations where it failed simply because of a lack of basic human respect. And so to me it's the cheapest concession we can make. It costs us nothing. And it means everything to them, because the person's dignity means everything to them.

I even think for example, I've sometimes trained hostage negotiators. These guys have to deal with hostage situations every day in a city like NYC. What's their number one rule? I remember this big burly NY cop saying, *my number one rule is be nice.*

In other words, give some respect to that person, even if they're an armed criminal, and you're more likely to get them to surrender peacefully to the police and there's not going to be anything. It costs you nothing. And imagine in business, if we could just - if the NY police can show respect to an armed criminal, we can show respect to our neighbor, to our business partner, and so on.

And it's so, it costs us nothing, and the rewards are priceless.

Tony: We make these distinctions in business, don't we? And we say, it's not personal; it's business, as if it's two different things.

And you're saying, it's not. In fact, to be personal with someone and respectful of them makes you better at business.

Ury: Yeah, because negotiation, what I find as the two classic mistakes we make is I'm going to be hard on the problem. It's all business. And if I'm hard on the people, so be it.

Where some people say, I've got to be soft on the people, the customer and everything. And then I'm soft on the problem. I just give concession.

No, the secret of negotiation is to be soft on the people and hard on the problem. If you want to be hard on the problem, and really solve the problem, you've got to be soft - in other words, respectful, listening and dealing with people. If the people and the emotions and their feelings are not going to get in the way of dealing with a problem.

It's like coming home to your spouse after a long day of work, and so has your spouse, and you say, *honey the house is a mess*. Well, they may not hear that as a focus on the problem. They may hear that as a personal attack. *You didn't do what you said you'd do. You didn't take the kids to school. You didn't take the garbage out.*

And you get into a huge fight. So often in life the people get in the way of dealing with the problem. Well maybe we need to deal with the people first. And the first person we need to deal with is this person right here.

Tony: Wonderful. Gosh, I think the strength of *Getting to Yes with Yourself* for me is simple and powerful wisdom through personal story. And tell me about one experience, and there are so many in the book that I love, but tell me about your experience with the Syrian rebel leaders, and the lesson it contains for business leaders. I think there's a really good one there.

Ury: My passion is helping people get to yes. And ultimately my passion is peace, a more peaceful world. So I've gotten involved a little bit in the conflict of the terrible war going on in Syria. And in the course of that, my colleagues and I went in and interviewed a number of rebel leaders in Syria just to find out what is it they want?

And we arrived there on the Turkish Syrian border and we did 20-30 interviews. But the last interview we did was with a guy who was like the archetypical our Western stereotype of a terrorist. He's a Muslim fundamentalist. He had the beard and everything like that.

So you can watch your prejudices work. And then I was interviewing him and I said, *how did you get into this?* He said, *I was studying at the university.*

-What were you studying?

-Poetry.

-You're a poet?

-Oh yeah. I come from a long line of poets. And then he declaimed some poetry. And then I said, if you survive this, what are you going to do?

-My love's in Egypt. I fell in love with her. And we'd like to get together. And he just suddenly became human.

I said, *what are you most worried about? Let's say you win.*

-I'm worried about the extremists, because I believe in sharia law, but I don't believe anyone should impose anything on anyone by force.

I said, *so what's the last thing - I'm going away to America. Any message you want me to bring back to people in the West?* He said, *yeah. I know the Syrian war shows up on TV. But just remember, it seems like numbers to you. But just remember, every man, woman, and child who's dying has a soul.*

It was just a complete transformation. So I was able to put myself in his shoes. And that's the thing in negotiation. Is the ability to break through the prejudices, the preconceptions, the lenses, to actually connect with a human being, and see where you can find common ground. And that to me is a great challenge in business, at home -

Tony: It really is.

Ury: - with our teenagers. Or it's a great challenge in the world. Can we listen to the other human being? It costs us nothing. It doesn't even mean making concessions. It just means understanding as the first precondition to getting to yes with that person.

Tony: Another thing I love about Getting to Yes with Yourself is that these lessons that you share can be used by everyone in every day situations. So let's talk about how someone in business can use it to become more productive. We've covered a few examples. But if you were to summarize what a business person would most get from the book? What's your hope there?

Ury: My hope is first of all, this is going to help anyone just long term. But let's imagine you have a tough negotiation tomorrow morning. You might take a look at this book, run through it, and say, how can I get prepared for this meeting? How am I going to get myself out of the way so that I am actually negotiating at my best, my highest performance?

To me, the key to negotiation, to be able to give the highest performance, is to be able to negotiate from a place that I call the balcony. It's almost like you're negotiating on a stage, and part of your mind goes to a mental and emotional balcony overlooking that stage where you can keep your eye on the prize. Unrelenting focus on what's important to you.

So if you can go through these steps, can help you go to the balcony, when you understand what is it I really want? Behind the position of what I think I want, the numbers, what is it that I - what's the equivalent of freedom? What's the deep underlying value that I'm standing for here?

If you can go through it and say who can give that to me and realize that actually you have that inner resolve. You can actually help yourself to it. You're not dependent on the other.

Because the key in the other is to care, but not too much, otherwise you're too dependent on the client. But if you can bring that self-sufficiency. And that's what the book is, is about realizing that we actually have much more power inside of ourselves that we think. And if we can convey that, we're going to set up, go into that negotiation tomorrow morning with a lot more confidence. And that confidence is going to translate into a better result.

Tony: Perfect. And what about folks who want to make a career change? It's not directly addressed in the book, but the principles are universal. And the learnings can be applied I believe to situations where an executive needs or wants to make a change in their career path.

Any initial thoughts on how one might use this book to negotiate that kind of change?

Ury: For sure, because if you're going to make a career change, it's because there's an inner conflict inside you. Are you going to stay there, move on, go this direction or whatever? This book is about how you resolve inner conflicts. It's about, maybe the - I mean the first step really addresses the whole question of, we all have inside ourselves this inner critic.

You're going to be a failure. That's not going to work.

That voice gets in the way. And so the book is about how to deal with your inner critic. How to disarm your inner critic. And understand yourself better, understand what you really want, what's the prize for you, why are you making the career

change? It's about giving you that sense of confidence and power that yeah, I can do it.

So it's about doing that inner homework that's going to allow you then to get the job that you want in life.

Tony: Terrific. Now, there are many more methods. And we're not, as I said, going to cover them all. They're in the book and they're laid out beautifully and backed up with amazing memorable engaging stories. But I do want to read just a little bit from a part of the book just to give everyone who's watching us today an understanding of why you wrote this book. And I think this really sums it up for me.

In the morning, when I look at myself in the mirror, I like to remind myself that I am seeing the person who is probably going to give me the most trouble that day, the opponent who will be the biggest obstacle to me to getting what I truly want. I find it valuable to review in my mind even for a few minutes the six steps of the inner yes method in order to prepare myself for any challenges that may arise that day.

I like to ask myself questions for each step. This process helps me get out of my own way. And I hope it can help you too.

And that's why you wrote this book.

Ury: That's exactly why I wrote this book.

Tony: Wonderful. It's an amazing book. I've enjoyed it. I'm sure everyone who picks it up will enjoy it and use it as a guide book for every day life and business change and career development and all those great things we want for ourselves, we truly want for ourselves.

Bill, thank you so much for your time today. And I look forward to talking again soon.

Ury: It's a real pleasure Tony. And I wish you much success in getting to yes with yourself and with others.

Tony: Excellent. Thank you.

Ury: Bye.

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