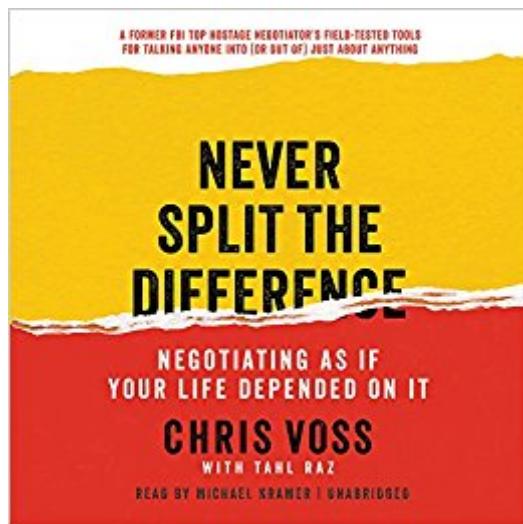


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# Never Split The Difference: Negotiating As If Your Life Depended On It



## Synopsis

[Read by Michael Kramer] A former international hostage negotiator for the FBI offers a new, field-tested approach to high-stakes negotiations -- whether in the boardroom or at home. After a stint policing the rough streets of Kansas City, Missouri, Chris Voss joined the FBI, where his career as a hostage negotiator brought him face-to-face with a range of criminals, including bank robbers and terrorists. Reaching the pinnacle of his profession, he became the FBI's lead international kidnapping negotiator. *Never Split the Difference* takes you inside the world of high-stakes negotiations and into Voss's head, revealing the skills that helped him and his colleagues succeed where it mattered most: saving lives. In this practical guide, he shares the nine effective principles -- counterintuitive tactics and strategies -- you too can use to become more persuasive in both your professional and personal life. Life is a series of negotiations you should be prepared for: buying a car, negotiating a salary, buying a home, renegotiating rent, deliberating with your partner. Taking emotional intelligence and intuition to the next level, *Never Split the Difference* gives you the competitive edge in any discussion.

## Book Information

Audio CD: 1 pages

Publisher: HarperCollins Publishers and Blackstone Audio; Unabridged edition (May 17, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1504735056

ISBN-13: 978-1504735056

Product Dimensions: 5.8 x 0.7 x 5.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 874 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #158,032 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #33 in Books > Books on CD > Business > Management #69 in Books > Books on CD > Business > General #82 in Books > Books on CD > Nonfiction

## Customer Reviews

Former FBI Hostage Negotiator Chris Voss has few equals when it comes to high stakes negotiations. Whether for your business or your personal life, his techniques work. (Joe Navarro, FBI Special Agent (Ret.) and author of the international bestseller, *What Every Body is Saying.*) Emphasizes the importance of emotional intelligence without sacrificing deal-making power. From a former hostage negotiator - someone who couldn't take no for an answer - which

makes it fascinating reading. But it's also eminently practical. In these pages, you will find the techniques for getting the deal you want. (Daniel H. Pink, author of *To Sell Is Human* and *Drive*)  
--This text refers to an alternate Audio CD edition.

A field-tested, game-changing approach to high-stakes negotiations—whether in the boardroom or at home. *Never Split the Difference* is a riveting, indispensable handbook of negotiation principles culled and perfected from Chris Voss's remarkable career as a hostage negotiator and later as an award-winning teacher in the world's most prestigious business schools. From policing the rough streets of Kansas City, Missouri, to becoming the FBI's lead international kidnapping negotiator to teaching negotiation at leading universities, Voss has tested these techniques across the full spectrum of human endeavor and proved their effectiveness. Those who have benefited from these techniques include business clients generating millions in additional profits, MBA students getting better jobs, and even parents dealing with their kids. *Never Split the Difference* provides a gripping, behind-the-scenes recounting of dramatic scenarios from the gang-infested streets of Haiti to a Brooklyn bank robbery gone horribly wrong, revealing the negotiation strategies that helped Voss and his colleagues succeed where it mattered most: saving lives. As a world-class negotiator, Voss shows you how to use these skills in the workplace and in every other realm of your life. Life is a series of negotiations: whether buying a car, getting a better raise, buying a home, renegotiating rent, or deliberating with your partner, *Never Split the Difference* gives you the competitive edge in any discussion. Advance praise for *Never Split The Difference*: "This book blew my mind." It's a riveting read, full of instantly actionable advice—not just for high-stakes negotiations, but also for handling everyday conflicts at work and at home. Adam Grant, Wharton Professor and New York Times bestselling author of *Originals* and *Give and Take*: "Emphasizes the importance of emotional intelligence without sacrificing deal-making power. From the pen of a former hostage negotiator—someone who couldn't take no for an answer—which makes it fascinating reading. But it's also eminently practical. In these pages, you will find the techniques for getting the deal you want." Daniel H. Pink, bestselling author of *To Sell Is Human* and *Drive*: "Former FBI hostage negotiator Chris Voss has few equals when it comes to high-stakes negotiations. Whether for your business or your personal life, his techniques work." Joe Navarro, FBI Special Agent (Ret.) and author of the international bestseller *What Every Body Is Saying*: "Your business—basically your entire life—comes down to your performance in crucial conversations, and these tools will give you

the edge you need. . . .It's required reading for my employees because I use the lessons in this book every single day, and I want them to, too. •Jason McCarthy, CEO of GORUCK

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And so begins this surprising book. The author begins the book by relating his experience at a prestigious seminar at Harvard University. Several of the college's top negotiators put him on the spot to see how he would negotiate in a hypothetical hostage negotiation. The author held his own against the expert negotiators, surprising the professors. How did he do so well? Mr. Voss explains that the methods used by the FBI were developed over time, "products of experiential learning; they were developed by agents in the field, negotiating through crisis and sharing stories of what succeeded and what failed." In other words, these tactics HAD to work. If hostage negotiators failed, people literally DIED. The author discovered that the same techniques used in life and death situations could be generalized--they "made great sense intellectually, and they worked everywhere...In the twenty years I spent at the Bureau we'd designed a system that had successfully resolved almost every kidnapping we applied it to." NEVER SPLIT THE DIFFERENCE is not just about tricky negotiation tactics, or ways to "outwit" your adversary in battle. Whether you are negotiating with kidnappers, or just negotiating a raise, the principles are the same. For example, people always want to be understood and accepted. "Remember you're dealing with a person who wants to be appreciated and understood." This is true no matter the type of negotiation. This also means careful listening, or what the author calls, the martial art of "Tactical Empathy." It's nearly impossible to listen to the other side; so, you have to deliberately change your focus: "Make your sole and all-encompassing focus the other person and what they have to say. In that mode of true active listening." Each chapter in NEVER SPLIT THE DIFFERENCE begins with a real-life example from the author's involvement with hostage negotiations. Warning: Many of these cases are brutal, and oftentimes people are hurt, or even killed. After the real case is presented, the author then explains what negotiating techniques worked, and which didn't. At the end of each chapter, there is a nice wrap-up of the key lessons learned. One of the key techniques recommended is to "Be a mirror." You simply try to reflect back what is said: "The intention behind most mirrors should be 'Please, help me understand.' Every time you mirror someone, they will reward what they've said. "The book's title reflects the author's position that compromise, or "Splitting the Difference" is actually a lazy way to conclude a negotiation. It often gives bad results: "We don't compromise because it's right; we compromise because it is easy and because it saves face." However,

a simple compromise is often "ineffective and often disastrous. At best, it satisfies neither side. And if you employ it with a counterpart who has a win-lose approach, you're setting yourself up to be swindled." Instead of taking the easy way, Chris recommends working relentlessly to see "what is really motivating the other side." The negotiation is not so much a battle, as a process of "Discovery." Figure out as much as you can about what the other sides really needs. Even when the other side says, "No," that's okay. Use that to clarify what the parties really want. Figure out the other side's "religion," or what truly matters to them. Finally, the Appendix contains detailed steps for preparing for an important negotiation. For instance, list your goals, as well as the negotiating "tools" you will be using. Chris explains that in the heat of discussion, you will otherwise forget your tactics. All in all, I found NEVER SPLIT THE DIFFERENCE to be an impressive book, filled with practical knowledge, tips, and just plain WISDOM about how to deal with people. I like the fact that the tips and tactics are PROVEN techniques--not just some theoretical ideas. If you've negotiated with kidnappers, I'm pretty sure that qualifies you as an experienced negotiator. Advance copy for review courtesy of Edelweiss Book Distributors.

My bona fides: I have professionally negotiated for over thirty years. Do it daily. I've taken approximately 20 hours of graduate study in negotiation and conflict resolution. I occasionally lecture on the subject. My rating: This is one of the two best books anyone can read on negotiation. The other is Cialdini's famous, "Influence: The Art and Science of Persuasion." While there are many good books on the subject, I can't think of any others that are as complete and useful as these. Advice: Remember that negotiation is a practice. You will be best aided by these books by taking a chapter at a time and practice the ideas and techniques. Practice them on your family, on your colleagues and on your friends. (Forget pets. Dogs are too obliging and cats too indifferent.)

**WHY THIS BOOK MATTERS:** We negotiate or persuade dozens of times a day. Then there's the big stuff that changes the course of life: getting a raise; landing a job offer; buying a car or house. Most of us had no formal training in negotiation, or were taught incorrectly. This book is your secret weapon for mad success. **MAIN CONCEPT:** Tactical empathy: "This is listening as a martial art, balancing the subtle behaviors of emotional intelligence and the assertive skills of influence, to gain access to the mind of another person." **IS IT FUN TO READ:** Finished it in a day. The book is full of riveting life-and-death hostage negotiations, and Voss spins a damn good yarn. **OKAY, BUT IS IT**

USEFUL?: I highlighted 109 passages and took 20pp of single-spaced notes. There is so much crazy useful stuff in this book that it would be a bargain at 100x the price. For example, Voss advocates getting to “No” before getting to “Yes.” To those schooled in academic negotiation, this may seem heretical. But it makes all kinds of sense: letting your adversary say a solid “no” gives them a feeling of safety, security and control -- a great starting point to a negotiation. The technique of asking calibrated open-ended questions is pure gold (e.g. “How do I do that?” or “What is important to you about that?”) Funny thing is that I’ve been teaching that technique for years, but only now understand \*why\* it works so well (thanks, Chris!). Then there’s the step-by-step protocol for negotiating your salary and the 6-step Ackerman bargaining model. There’s mirroring: you repeat people’s words verbatim, so they feel understood. There’s labeling, where you identify the emotion behind what people are saying, thereby deepening empathy. Great quote: “Good negotiators, going in, know they have to be ready for possible surprises; great negotiators aim to use their skills to reveal the surprises they are certain exist.” What I really like about this book was that its techniques were honed by real-life negotiations with actual bad guys. During his 24 years as FBI Lead Hostage Negotiator, time and time again Voss got people released from the grips of determined terrorists and kidnappers. If the techniques work in those critical situations, surely they’re good enough to help you negotiate a raise. In the end, this is a book about not just being good at negotiation, but being great at life. “Never Split the Difference” is serious wisdom, every bit of it earned, conveyed with great humor, storytelling and insight. Read it to be a more effective human.-- Ali Binazir, M.D., M.Phil., Happiness Engineer; Speaking Coach, KNP Communications; author, *The Tao of Dating: The Smart Woman’s Guide to Being Absolutely Irresistible*

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