THE COMPLETE LEADER

COACHING GUIDE

NEGOTIATION

A conversation that constructively facilitates an agreement between two or more people.

LEADERS LEAD OTHERS

One of the 25 leadership competencies

SECTION 01

WHY NEGOTIATION MATTERS

Negotiation is one of the 25 core competencies that define a complete leader. As you grow this capability, you'll notice real shifts in how you lead yourself and influence others.

This guide is built for a 90-day journey. You'll explore the foundations, assess where you stand today, practice new behaviors, sidestep common traps, and track your progress, at your own pace or alongside a coach.

WHAT STRONG NEGOTIATION LOOKS LIKE

- You reach agreements in selling, purchasing, staffing, borrowing, and beyond
- You break large issues into smaller, solvable ones
- You hold your position under resistance instead of compromising yourself

> **REFLECT**
>
> *Why does Negotiation matter to you personally? How might developing it change your effectiveness as a leader?*

SECTION 02

FOUNDATIONS OF NEGOTIATION

THE DEFINITION

A conversation that constructively facilitates an agreement between two or more people.

Like any skill worth mastering, Negotiation rests on a few core building blocks. Understanding them gives you a vocabulary for your own growth.

THE CORE ELEMENTS

1 **Both parties must gain**

Agreement isn't feasible until each side gets something they want. Determining what each party will actually accept is the work.

2 **Preparation and information**

The person with the most information usually does better. Learn as much as possible about the other party's situation before you sit down.

3 **Patience and composure**

Logic isn't the only thing that prevails in bargaining: interpersonal relations matter greatly. Nothing kills creativity faster than anger, pride, embarrassment, envy, or greed.

REFLECT

Which element feels most familiar? Which one feels like a stretch right now?

SECTION 03

YOUR STARTING POINT

Before you move forward, take an honest look at where you are today. Read each statement and mark how often it's true of your leadership.

I am able to separate people from issues when engaging in important negotiations.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I regularly seek win-win outcomes when negotiating with others.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I approach negotiations believing there may be additional alternatives better than my current solutions.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I listen thoroughly to understand the interests and issues of the parties with whom I negotiate.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I learn as much as I can about the other party's situation and constraints before a negotiation begins.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I know my limits and my alternatives before I enter the conversation, so I hold my position under resistance.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

> **REFLECT**
>
> *Looking at your answers, where is your greatest opportunity for growth? What patterns do you notice?*

SECTION 04

NEGOTIATION IN PRACTICE

Competencies grow through deliberate practice. Work through the activities below in order, or choose the ones most relevant to your context.

ACTIVITY 01 45 min

Practicing Negotiation

Prepare a real negotiation by answering eight questions before you enter the room.

TRY IT

1. Define your audience, why they would agree, and why they could disagree.
2. Decide the best method for them, then name your main idea and three supporting points.
3. Write why you believe in it and how they benefit, then rehearse on someone who knows your organization.

ACTIVITY 02 30 min

Set Your Limits and Alternatives

Preparation is what lets you hold your position under resistance instead of compromising yourself.

TRY IT

1. Before your next negotiation, write your ideal outcome, your acceptable outcome, and the point where you walk away.
2. Name what you will do if no agreement is reached, so pressure in the room cannot push you past that point.

3. Separate the terms you can trade from the ones that are fixed, and keep the list in front of you.

ACTIVITY 03 30 min

Break the Issue Into Pieces

Large issues stall. Smaller ones get solved one at a time.

TRY IT

1. Write the negotiation as one large issue, then split it into every separate variable: price, timing, scope, people, terms.
2. Mark the pieces you believe both parties already agree on.
3. Plan to open with those, then sequence the rest from easiest to hardest.

ACTIVITY 04 40 min

Learn the Other Side

Information is the negotiator's main advantage.

TRY IT

1. Before your next negotiation, research the other party's situation, pressures, and constraints.
2. Write down what you believe they want, and what they'd actually accept.
3. Identify what you can offer that costs you little and matters to them.

ACTIVITY 05 20 min

Set the Environment

A non-threatening setting is what makes open discussion of terms possible.

TRY IT

1. Plan where and how your next negotiation will happen to reduce threat.
2. Open by establishing what you both want to achieve, before discussing positions.
3. Celebrate small successes along the way and reward cooperation.

ACTIVITY 06 25 min

Close It Properly

An agreement neither party can restate isn't an agreement.

TRY IT

1. Write out the terms of the agreement in plain language.
2. Confirm that each party understands them the same way.
3. Bind the agreement with a verbal or written contract, and set a follow-up.

SECTION 05

COMMON NEGOTIATION TRAPS

As you practice, watch for these common pitfalls. Naming them now makes them easier to catch in the moment.

01 **Taking the first ask literally**

People often ask for more than they expect to get. Treating an opening position as a final one closes options that were always available.

02 **Letting emotion drive**

Anger, pride, and embarrassment shut down the creativity a good agreement needs. Control the emotion, then negotiate.

03 **Compromising yourself under resistance**

Less experienced negotiators give ground because they lack confidence, not because the deal required it. Prepare so you can hold.

04 **Skipping the other party's need to be heard**

Insensitivity to being heard derails agreements that the terms alone would have supported.

REFLECT

Which trap feels most familiar? How will you stay aware of it as you practice?

SECTION 06

YOUR 90-DAY PRACTICE

Lasting change comes from a few focused habits, practiced consistently and tracked honestly. Build your plan below, on your own or with your coach.

CHOOSE YOUR THREE HABITS

Based on everything above, which three habits will make the biggest difference in growing your Negotiation over the next 90 days?

1

2

3

BUILD IN WEEKLY ACCOUNTABILITY

Write questions you can answer each week to measure progress and surface obstacles. The best ones are answered with “yes,” “no,” or a number.

Q1

Q2

Q3

Accountability partner: who will you share these with?

Completion date: when will you evaluate & celebrate?

Measurements of success

How will you celebrate?

SECTION 07

GO DEEPER

Keep building your Negotiation with these resources. Explore them, then capture what stands out to you.

BOOK	**The Complete Leader, Ch. 3.8: Negotiation**	The full framework and examples behind negotiation.
PODCAST	**The Complete Leader Podcast**	Episodes 45, 73 & 125 explore negotiation in practice.
ONLINE	**Negotiation competency library**	Videos, articles, and podcasts at TheCompleteLeader.org.

> **CAPTURE YOUR INSIGHTS**
>
> *As you work through these resources, which ideas most apply to your own growth in Negotiation?*

KEEP GOING

YOU'VE GOT THIS

Developing Negotiation is an investment in yourself and everyone you lead. Return to this guide often: revisit the activities, reread the traps, and celebrate small wins along the way.

Every complete leader started exactly where you are now.