Negotiating Emotions

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Folk wisdom suggests that a negotiator (1) should avoid getting emotional and (2) is a passive recipient of the whims of emotion. In this article, I argue that both of these notions are false and that a better pair of assumptions is that (1) emotions can positively affect our ability to reach negotiation goals and (2) we can actively negotiate which emotions are experienced and how intensely. I extend the emotional appraisal work of Lazarus (1991) and Parkinson (1995) by suggesting that we appraise situations emotionally for their personal relevance by evaluating relational identity concerns—namely, autonomy and affiliation. Negotiating emotions entails negotiating these relational identity concerns and the tensions that a conflicting set of concerns can create.

Folk wisdom offers straightforward advice on dealing with emotions in negotiation: don't get emotional. Negotiators are urged to "show no fear," "don't be sad," "swallow your pride," "don't worry," and deny any hint of emotion.

A problem with this advice is that it rarely helps, and it often makes things worse. Negotiators are always feeling *some* emotion. Even if parties manage to suppress emotional expression, their negative emotional experience remains; their attempt to suppress emotions consumes extra cognitive energy; and physiological arousal increases, both personally and in their negotiating partner (Gross, 2002).

Nevertheless, there are good reasons for folk wisdom advocating not getting emotional. First, getting emotional is often viewed as an

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impediment, an obstacle to the ostensible superiority of rational thinking. Emotions are associated with weakness, loss of control, and disregard for rational interests; to be emotional is seen to be impulsive and shortsighted. Second, talking about emotions can make people feel vulnerable, whereas hiding behind a mask of friendliness and collegiality can save people from some of the discomfort of emotion-focused dialogue. Third, many negotiators lack the vocabulary to describe clearly their emotional experience, instead they focus on substantive issues such as division of property or distribution of payments. For many people, substantive issues are often much easier to discuss than such abstract, personal concepts as humiliation, wounded pride, and anxiety.

Nevertheless, negotiation takes place within a relationship, a context in which emotions inevitably arise. Thus, building upon the emotional appraisal work of Lazarus (1991) and Parkinson (1995), I propose three main ideas in this article:

- *Emotions affect our ability to reach negotiation goals.* Many people assume that emotions have no place in a negotiation. Yet people are in a state of "perpetual emotion," according to Shapiro (2001), and emotions can affect efforts toward reaching negotiation goals.[1]
- *Emotions are a means to communicate relational identity concerns.* Parties cannot negotiate well unless they know *what* they are negotiating. To reach goals, the parties must be clear about the concerns that underlie emotions. I suggest two relational identity concerns in this article.
- *Parties can further their negotiation goals through explicit negotiation of emotions and relational identity concerns.* In many negotiations, the parties implicitly negotiate emotions—and not always well. Who feels what, and who *should* feel what? They often react mindlessly to one another's emotional expression and fail to actively shape the emotional contours of the relationship. However, awareness of emotions and underlying concerns can enable the parties to explicitly negotiate emotion and concerns in a way that furthers their negotiation goals.

Why Care About Emotions? Reaching Negotiation Goals

Emotions have an impact on our ability to reach negotiation goals. Whether aware of it or not, negotiators typically desire two goals in their interaction: affective satisfaction and instrumental satisfaction (Verba, 1961; Shapiro,

1999, 2000). The ability to deal well with emotions enhances the likelihood of attaining those goals.

Affective Satisfaction

Affective satisfaction is one's general level of satisfaction with the emotions experienced during the negotiation. Am I happy, sad, or perhaps annoyed with my emotional experience? Affective satisfaction literally means that I am satisfied with my affect; thus it focuses on my feelings about my feelings—my "meta-emotions," for short (Gottman, Katz, and Hooven, 1997).

Let's consider a couple of simple examples to illustrate the notion of affective satisfaction. I enter a negotiation dubious that the other party will treat me with adequate respect. If the other party treats me well, appreciates me, and respects me, I may feel increased enthusiasm during the negotiation. Consequently, I feel relieved that I am enthusiastic. The positive valence of my meta-emotion of relief implies affective satisfaction. Conversely, I may experience minimal affective satisfaction if I feel resentful and annoyed at the other negotiator, or if I feel frustrated by my feelings of resentment and annoyance. The meta-emotion of frustration indicates to me that I do not feel a great deal of affective satisfaction.

Instrumental Satisfaction

The second goal deals with instrumental satisfaction, the extent to which substantive work requirements are satisfied. If negotiators from two disputing companies walk away from a ten-day meeting with a lot of good feelings but no new ideas about how to deal effectively with their differences, the meeting might be considered an affective success but an instrumental failure. Instrumental satisfaction deals with the extent to which parties are able to work efficiently and effectively to agree on substantive commitments to which they aspire.

Emotional Valence and Movement Toward Negotiation Goals

A growing body of research suggests that positive emotions increase the likelihood of reaching instrumental and affective goals. Negotiators with a positive mood report higher enjoyment of their interaction (Carnevale and Isen, 1986). Compared to those in a neutral mood, negotiators induced into a positive mood achieve more optimally integrative outcomes and use less aggressive tactics (Carnevale and Isen, 1986). These results suggest that

positive emotions foster problem solving, creative exploration of ideas, and empathy with the perspective of other parties (Isen, 2000). Recent neuropsychological theory proposes that the improved ability to problem-solve, think creatively, and empathize may result from an increased level of dopamine in certain regions of the brain (Ashby, Isen, and Turken, 1999). Thus positive emotions may trigger release of dopamine, which in turn promotes improved cognitive ability in negotiation.

In contrast, negative emotions are linked to inaccurate judgment and lessened concern for the other parties' preferences (Allred, Mallozzi, Matsui, and Raia, 1997; Bazerman, Curhan, and Moore, 2000; Loewenstein, Thompson, and Bazerman, 1990). Negative emotions even can lead us to neglect our own instrumental goals, as when we reject an ultimatum that is superior to our alternatives (Bazerman, Curhan, and Moore, 2000; Pillutla and Murnighan, 1997). Anger, for example, can sway us away from our original goals and toward hurting the person whose actions anger us (Daly, 1991). We obsess over the circumstances that trigger our anger and focus less attention on how to reach our original goals (Daly, 1991).

It is not always the case that positive emotions tend to move negotiators closer to their goals and negative ones further away. Some negotiators may try to elicit a negative emotion in others for strategic gain (Barry, 1999), as when a party from a third-world country shames a representative of the United States into increased financial support for the country's ailing economy. Negotiators also can manipulate their own emotions for strategic, exploitative gain. For example, a used car salesperson may feign anger and shock toward a customer's rejection of the asking price of a car, in an attempt to coerce the customer into purchasing the car at asking price.

However, manipulating emotions for strategic, exploitative gain can have a damaging effect on the long-term relationship (Axelrod, 1984). Those who use exploitative tactics run the risk of being caught in their bluff, which can contribute to loss of credibility and perhaps a tarnished reputation, especially if the tactics are caught repeatedly. Another risk in strategic use of emotion is that the manipulation may not have the desired effect. Instead of scaring the customer into taking the car at asking price, the salesperson's anger may annoy the customer enough that he or she decides to shop elsewhere.

Exploiting emotion is also risky business given current organizational trends. Negotiations usually involve people who have an ongoing relationship with one another and who are in close and consistent contact.

Politicians, lawyers, diplomats, and organizational workers often interact with a small and stable network of colleagues. Many organizational structures have become less hierarchical and increasingly team-based, meaning that workers increasingly negotiate decisions with colleagues instead of simply having the decision made for them by those of higher rank. Given the large proportion of iterative negotiations, this article focuses on negotiating in a long-term interpersonal relationship.

How Emotions Bring Negotiation Goals Closer

In this section, I argue that emotions often occur within a relationship, real or imagined, and that emotions are a means to communicate relational identity concerns.

Emotions Arise in Relationships

In a negotiation, emotions occur within the context of a relationship. A relationship is a mental representation of how a person perceives an association with another party (Cashdan, 1988; Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983). Even intrapsychic negotiations—such as whether to sleep twenty minutes longer or awaken now—can be conceived of as relational. For example, Schelling (1984) suggests metaphorically that multiple selves exist within an individual and battle for control over behavior. Bazerman, Tenbrunsel, and Wade-Benzoni (1998) argue that disputants feel conflict between what they *want* to do and what they believe they *should* do. A relational conflict exists between the *want self* and the *should self.*

Because relationships are psychological—that is, they exist in the mind—emotions may arise in response to relationships with real or "imagined" people (Bion, 1959; Fairbairn, 1963; Parkinson, 1995; Scharff and Scharff, 1998). Consider a young lawyer who feels angry because the other party refuses to negotiate in good faith; her anger erupts in response to actions of a real "audience" (the unethical other party). Contrast that with the young lawyer feeling proud that she does not follow suit and act in bad faith. Perhaps unconsciously she tries to play the role of a good daughter impressing her mother by doing the right thing (see Scharff and Scharff, 1998). In this instance, her emotional experience is in part derived from her relationship with a party that is not physically present at the negotiation (Bion, 1959; Cashdan, 1988; Fairbairn, 1963; Scharff and Scharff, 1998).

Emotions Communicate Relational Identity Concerns

Not every word or action fuels emotion. As people interact, they conduct "primary appraisal," evaluating the situation for issues of personal relevance regarding identity concerns (Lazarus, 1991; Parkinson, 1995). If the situation is deemed personally relevant, secondary appraisal occurs to refine which specific emotion is experienced. Secondary appraisals (1) evaluate what a person might do to prevent further harm or acquire further benefit in the situation and (2) assess who is to blame or receive credit in the situation. If the young lawyer gets angry because the other party negotiates in bad faith—but then realizes that she can persuade the other party to act more ethically—her anger is mitigated.

Lazarus argues that in any interaction, multiple appraisals occur and that these individual appraisals merge to reveal "core relational themes," generalized relational meanings about the interaction (Lazarus, 1991). Core relational themes are the "central (hence core) relational harm or benefit in adaptational encounters that underlies each specific kind of emotion" (p. 121). When we appraise a situation according to one of these themes, a distinctive emotion manifests. For example, anger manifests if a party experiences a "demeaning offensive against me and mine," guilt arises from self-blame, and fear results from an appraisal of imminent danger (Lazarus, 1991). In essence, core relational themes are descriptive and past-focused.

In line with the work of Parkinson (1995), I argue that an emotion is not simply a reactive consequence of a particular type of appraisal and relational theme. Emotion serves a forward-looking communicative function and conveys an imperative about a desire, concern, or goal in an interpersonal relationship. For example, the communicative agenda of anger might be, "Take me seriously, and give me the respect I deserve"; the imperative of fear might be, "Help! Protect me!" (Parkinson, 1995, p. 286). Thus Parkinson suggests that emotions communicate identity concerns, though he does not elaborate on a specific one.

I propose that because interpersonal negotiation occurs within the context of a relationship, negotiators experience relational identity concerns, specifically for autonomy and for affiliation. These two concerns, seen by many as basic dimensions of human existence, have been the subject of a significant amount of research and theory building across a variety of fields (Angyal, 1941; Bakan, 1966; Bem, 1974; Benjafield and Carson, 1986; Deci and Ryan, 1985; Wiggins, 1991). In the field of negotiation,

Kolb and Williams (2000) discuss the importance of advocacy and connection, and Mnookin, Peppet, and Tulumello (1997) elucidate the "tension" between assertiveness and empathy. In psychology, Freud emphasizes the importance of work and love, Fromm (1941) differentiates the notion of a separate identity from oneness with the world, Sullivan (1953) contrasts a need for power with a need for tenderness, Freedman and colleagues (Freedman, Leary, Ossorio, and Coffey, 1951) distinguish between dominance/submission and affiliation/hostility, and Gilligan (1982) contrasts justice and care.

Autonomy is the extent to which parties govern their own actions without the imposition of others. In other words, autonomy is self-rule, and behavior is accordingly self-determined. Autonomous behavior results when a party acts on the basis of internalized, personally accepted principles and not from pressure or coercion from others (Averill and Nunley, 1992).

A concern for autonomy arises in virtually every relationship as parties attempt to establish and coordinate their level of influence and control in the relationship. Who sets the agenda? Who guides conversation? Who interrupts whom? To what extent does each party have decision-making authority? A negotiator given strict orders from the boss about what to say and how to act in a meeting clearly has limited autonomy.

Too little autonomy can be frustrating, because the negotiator has reduced discretion to determine the course of the interaction. If a negotiator arrives with a full agenda and refuses to change any portion of it, the other negotiating party may feel angry thanks to impinged autonomy and a dampened opportunity to help decide which issues to discuss.

On the other hand, too much autonomy can be overwhelming. In Europe, an elected official who led a multiparty coalition wanted to be involved in every coalitional decision. Because more than ten parties made up the coalition, the leader's micromanagement overwhelmed his ability to guide the coalition toward broad goals, and within months it collapsed.

Writers and theorists have been challenged by lack of language to describe the nature of relational interconnectedness and intermingling among people (Gilligan, 1982; Josselson, 1995; Miller, 1976). Given the individualistic focus of Western science and philosophy (Schmitt, 1995), there is a paucity of words in our lexicon to describe how people are emotionally linked together or kept apart. As a term and concept, *affiliation* helps to address the lack of a relational lexicon. Affiliation is the extent of emotional closeness or distance that one party feels toward another.

Affiliation can be positive or negative. Negotiators who build a side-by-side, cooperative relationship with one another tend to cultivate a sense of positive affiliation (see Fisher and Brown, 1988). At the Camp David negotiations facilitated by President Jimmy Carter, stalemate nearly ruined the peace process between Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. Begin pledged that he would never allow dismantling of Israeli settlements, stuck firmly to that position, and with stalemate at hand decided to withdraw from the talks. However, before leaving Camp David, Begin asked Carter to sign copies of a photograph for his grandchildren; the photograph depicted Begin, Sadat, and Carter together. Carter autographed eight photographs personally—one for each of Begin's grandchildren—and Carter reports that Begin was so touched by this act that he agreed to carry on with negotiations. This affiliative turning point allowed a subsequent compromise on the settlement issue, in which authority to decide the issue was transferred to the Knesset, which authorized dismantling of settlements (Carter, 1991).

Conversely, in the current Middle-East crisis, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority feel a strong negative affiliation with one another, as evidenced by their reciprocal character attacks. It is not correct to assume that they do *not* have a relationship with one another, in large part because they are each affected and influenced by the actions and statements of the other. Rather, they have a strong negative affiliation with one another.

Social Structure of Relational Identity Concerns

Because we interact with numerous people for various purposes, an expectation regarding relational identity concern is often packaged in the form of a role that we play and a status that we hold.

A *role* is a socially defined expectation about how we should be treated and should treat others regarding the concerns of autonomy and affiliation. Negotiators who cast themselves in the role of an adversary, for example, disaffiliate themselves from one another and challenge each other's sense of autonomy. Conversely, negotiators who see themselves working side-by-side as a joint problem solver share a common, positive affiliation as colleagues and appreciate one another's autonomy through the shared task of problem solving.

One's standing relative to that of others constitutes one's *status.* Parties hold status along multiple dimensions of expertise or experience (Johnson, 1997); a key function of high status is that it can increase autonomy and

affiliation. In terms of the affiliative-enhancing effect of high status, empirical evidence suggests that people like to trade and transact with partners of high status; in terms of autonomy enhancement, higher status individuals get a greater share of resources (Thye, 2000).

How Relational Identity Concerns Affect Emotions

The appraisal process leads a negotiator to experience positive or negative emotions. If a negotiator is treated as desired or expected regarding relational identity concerns, then positive emotions are likely to arise (see Lazarus's similar notion of "goal congruence," 1991). Positive emotions tend to lead us closer to instrumental and affective negotiation goals (Ashby, Isen, and Turken, 1999; Carnevale and Isen, 1986; Isen, 2000). If negotiators are treated undesirably regarding relational identity concerns, negative emotion is likely to arise, which can handicap any effort to reach a negotiation goal (Allred, Mallozzi, Matsui, and Raia, 1997; Daly, 1991; Loewenstein, Thompson, and Bazerman, 1990; Pillutla and Murnighan, 1997).

Relational tensions arise when there is a gap between the relationship as currently perceived and as reasonably desired. Specifically, tension manifests if a negotiator is dissatisfied with the perceived level of autonomy or affiliation within the relationship.

Tension within a relationship is not necessarily bad, because it can motivate a negotiator to try to make constructive change. Tension may motivate the negotiator to argue over issues such as who should make which decisions. Through such conversation, negotiators can learn about one another's preferred ways of interacting in terms of affiliation and autonomy; they can then decide whether or not to revise treatment accordingly.

Tension can arise within a single role or between roles. To help elucidate how tension can arise in the process, I draw from my observations of a conflict that emerged between two students during a class exercise in a negotiation course that I teach. The students, whom I will call Ron and Sue, took part in a six-party case simulation about possible development of a shipping port. Ron and Sue were not only classmates but also romantic partners. In the class exercise, Ron role-played a representative for a consortium interested in developing a shipping port, while Sue played a representative of neighboring shipping ports in the area. Part of her role entailed secretly trying to sabotage building of Ron's proposed port, as it would likely harm the neighboring ports' business.

Within-Role Tension

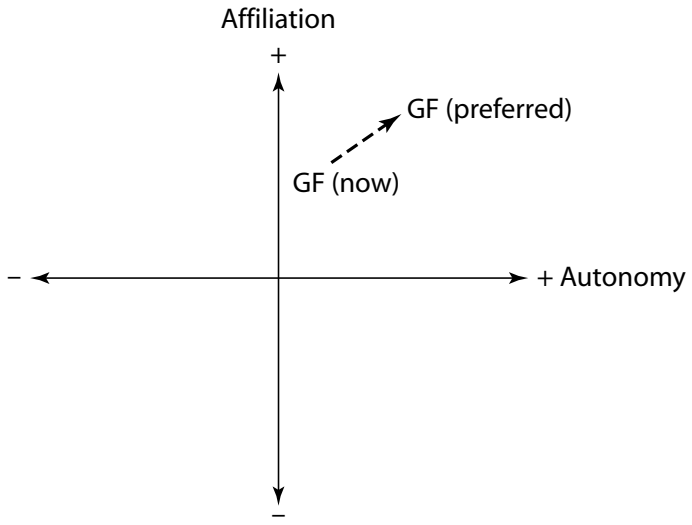
Negotiators do not always have the degree of autonomy or affiliation they would like in a role. I call this dissonance "within-role tension." In the role of girlfriend (GF in Figure 1), Sue perceived herself to have a positive level of autonomy and affiliation, though she preferred more of both. In other words, she wanted increased emotional closeness with her boyfriend, and she wanted more freedom to make decisions within their romantic relationship. Thus she admitted feeling some unsatisfied relational identity concerns in her role as girlfriend, and subtle frustration resulted.

Between-Role Tension

Expectations about autonomy and affiliation in one role can conflict with those in another role, producing "between-role tension." In other words, the direction of desired movement regarding one role is contrary to the direction of desired movement of another role. The stronger the tension, the stronger the emotion likely to be experienced. The negotiator is literally pulled in multiple directions.

During the negotiation, Sue and Ron experienced a conflict. He offered a proposal to her that sacrificed a significant amount of his possible revenue, to accommodate Sue's demands as representative of the neighboring ports. She initially refused his very generous offer. He was surprised and later confided that he wondered, *Why is Sue not cooperating? Why is she*

Figure 1. Tension Within the Role of Girlfriend (GF)

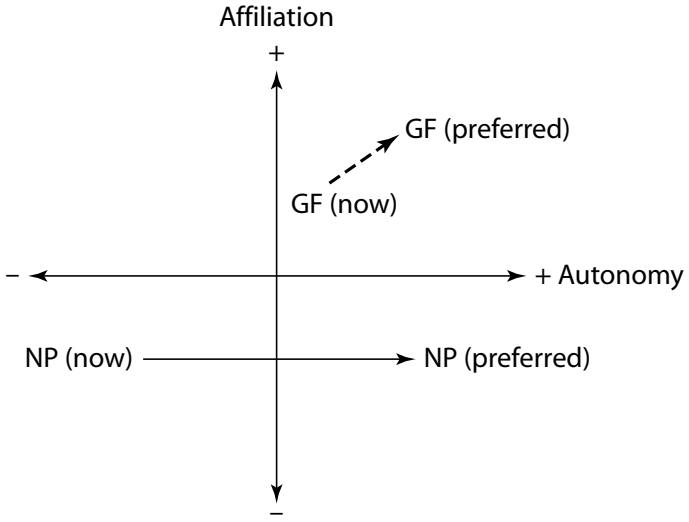


being so hyperautonomous? Doesn't she feel a sense of affiliation with me? Sensing Ron's growing confusion and resentment, she finally decided to agree to a decision that was not as financially beneficial as her best alternative to a negotiated agreement (Fisher, Ury, and Patton, 1991). What can explain her financial sacrifice?

As seen in Figure 2, Sue was pulled in multiple directions. As girlfriend (GF), she wanted to increase affiliation with Ron, while as the representative for the neighboring ports (NP) she wanted to remain disaffiliated from him and garner increased autonomy. Ultimately, the strength of her affiliation with Ron as boyfriend overpowered her affiliation to the other ports. Consequently, she chose to accommodate Ron's request.

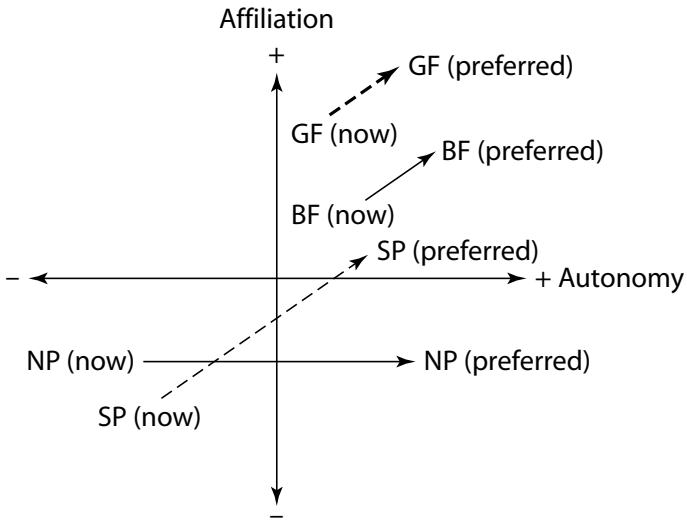
The relational dynamics of a two-party negotiation are quite complex, considering that each party in the negotiation plays multiple roles that entail dynamic movement in terms of affiliation and autonomy. Figure 3 illustrates some of the relational push and pull experienced by Sue and Ron. The diagram shows the movement of autonomy and affiliation for both people within their roles as romantic partners and port representatives. (Ron's roles are abbreviated *BF* for boyfriend and *SP* for representative of the shipping port.) It is beyond the scope of this article to explore the intricacies of relational dynamics in a negotiation, but note that the ideas here merely scratch the surface of the complexity of such relational dynamics.

Figure 2. Tension Between Two Roles Played by One Party



Note: NP = representative of neighboring ports; GF = girlfriend.

Figure 3. Tension Resulting from the Interaction Between Two Parties, Each Playing Two Roles in a Negotiation



Note: GF = girlfriend role; BF = boyfriend; NP = representative of neighboring ports; SP = representative of shipping port.

Emotions Are Negotiable

Emotional appraisal of relational identity concerns sometimes occurs automatically and individually in a person's own mind. Simply put, a negotiator appraises a situation (in terms of the extent to which the concerns are being met) and reacts emotionally.

However, emotions can be co-constructed through dialogue and behavior. In other words, they can be negotiated (Parkinson, 1995). Parties can jointly discuss and modify primary and secondary appraisal. Hence they can explicitly negotiate which emotions to experience and thus participate in emotional meaning making.

During a visit to Serbia in 2002, I dined with Serbian elected officials and we discussed the Yugoslav wars that had taken place in the previous decade. At the dinner table, conversation turned hot as discussion shifted to whether or not Serbian citizens should consider the Serb actions in Kosovo and elsewhere as criminal or as legitimate self-defense. Though the content in the discussion centered on the question of political guilt, I would argue that the officials were also negotiating the extent of emotional guilt they and their fellow citizens should feel in light of the country's history. In other words, they were negotiating both primary and secondary

appraisal. In terms of primary appraisal, discussion questions touched upon several themes:

- Who impinged upon whose autonomy in the war?
- Who is the victim of the other's assertions of autonomy?
- Who is affiliated with whom? Who is the legitimate enemy to which military and political action is merely a response of self-defense?

In terms of secondary appraisal, the officials discussed specific issues regarding accountability, blame, and predictions about what the future holds for their country. Surprisingly, by the end of this conversation one official changed his view on the situation. In doing so, he changed the type of emotion attached to the situation as well.

Conclusion

Negotiators cannot help but get emotional. However, this does not mean that negotiators need to passively react to every emotion they or others experience. Emotions are negotiable via internal and explicit dialogue regarding relational identity concerns.

In this article I argue that emotions arise through a process of appraisal, which deals in part with relational identity concerns—especially autonomy, affiliation, role, and status. The appraisal process is often negotiated automatically in a nondeliberative way; but through awareness, the appraisal process can be explicitly negotiated in ourselves and with others, empowering us to negotiate which emotions are experienced. Through this explicit negotiation, we can work to enlist positive emotions in ourselves and others, therefore better enabling satisfaction of instrumental and affective goals.

Note

1. Emotions have been defined in a multitude of ways. For example, Van Brakel (1994) lists twenty-two recent definitions of emotion. For the purposes of this article, I conceive of emotion not as biologically unique entities but rather as "emotional syndromes" (Averill, 1980), sets of events that occur together systematically. Physicians use the term *syndrome* to refer to a collection of symptoms often found together, such as the coughing, fever, and sore throat that typify influenza (Cornelius, 1996). Averill suggests that, like disease, emotion has a

variety of components that tend to occur together, including subjective feelings, facial and bodily postures, patterns of physiological arousal, and behaviors that we engage in when feeling emotional. For details on the relationship between these factors and negotiation, see Jones and Bodtker (2001).

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