

Books



Split the Pie: A Radical New Way to Negotiate

by Barry Nalebuff

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Reviewed by

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Whether you are negotiating terms of engagement within a relationship, business deals, or terms and conditions of employment in your workplace, the process can quickly become taxing and adversarial. But, it doesn't need to be. According to author Barry Nalebuff, his approach – as explained in his recent book *Split the Pie: A Radical New Way to Negotiate* – capitalizes on a framework that is fair, equitable, and principled.

The book provides negotiation strategies that promote working collaboratively to find solutions that benefit both parties. Throughout the book, case studies showcase how the approach can be applied successfully to everyday discussions. Not only can this approach allow both parties to 'split the pie', but also to 'expand the pie', and get more from the negotiation by fully understanding and identifying what is at stake, and what can be achieved together. Some of the best ways to 'get more' than 'negotiated for' is by openly answering and asking curious questions, using creativity as a first resort, finding out what is valuable to both sides, and offering alternatives and new options. Nalebuff also emphasizes the importance of anticipating the reaction of the other party, and equipping yourself with ways to counter.

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One of the biggest lessons in the book is to be prepared. This means having your research and data collection completed ahead of time. It also means understanding what both sides want, and planning for what can go wrong. The top ten basics of negotiation preparation that I identified with include:

- Discuss the ground rules and present the negotiation framework up front.
- Help the other party see the value in working together.
- Be prepared to make principled arguments that will persuade the other side to work with you.
- Provide exemplars that support your perspective/stance.
- Stay away from ultimatums and never give one, even if one is received.
- Have strategies to diffuse challenging situations, such as using humour, or suggesting a break.
- Be aware of cultural differences, and listen to what is important to others.
- Identify questions to be asked, and information to be revealed or shared.
- Make smart trades, and try and give each other more of what one another values.
- Know your BATNA (Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement): never accept less than your BATNA, and understand the other party's BATNA.

When thinking about BATNA, some negotiation strategists may counsel that you never reveal your best alternative to a negotiated agreement. However, Nalebuff suggests the opposite. By not revealing your BATNA, you may place yourself in a position

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where the other party makes assumptions about your BATNA, leading the other party to come in with a lower-than-expected alternative. When you reveal your BATNA, you demonstrate honesty and transparency, and avoid wasting everyone's time. The strategy builds trust with the other party, and does not lead to questions about integrity within the negotiation process. According to Nalebuff's research, having low BATNA does not mean you cannot get your share of the pie; in fact, it can work in your favour.

If this preview has piqued your interest, and you would like to learn more about this field-tested approach to negotiations, visit the book's companion website SplitThePieBook.com for links and videos.

SplitThePieBook.com



Chapter contract chairs are invited to email mssinfo@bcpvpa.bc.ca to request a negotiations workshop and/or professional guidance to prepare for upcoming contract reviews and local negotiations.