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Difficult Conversations Made Easier

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Difficult Conversations Made Easier

Jonathan R. Cohen†

DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS: HOW TO DISCUSS WHAT MATTERS MOST. By Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton & Sheila Heen. New York: Viking, 1999. Pp. 250.

The first question a reviewer faces is whether to recommend the book. In this regard, my job in reviewing *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most* by Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton and Sheila Heen is trivial: I strongly recommend it. Their topic—how to make difficult conversations productive—is both important and largely unexplored, and their insights are original and highly penetrating. How should one ask one's boss for a raise? How should one tell a spouse that one wants a divorce? How should one talk with an elderly parent about entering an assisted-care facility? For those who either engage in or study difficult conversations, this text is a must-read.¹

The more difficult task is to define the work's strengths and weaknesses. Below, I begin by briefly summarizing the work. I then assess its strengths and its weaknesses.

I. AN OVERVIEW

Difficult Conversations is divided into two main sections, "Shift to a Learning Stance" and "Create a Learning Conversation." The first is largely analytical, and the second is largely prescriptive.²

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1. As *Difficult Conversations* was written for a general readership, this review addresses the merits of *Difficult Conversations* for that readership. I do not attempt to assess the scholarly contribution of *Difficult Conversations* to the negotiation and communication literature.

2. Methodologically, *Difficult Conversations* follows the descriptive/prescriptive mix now common to negotiation research. See HOWARD RAIFFA, *THE ART AND SCIENCE OF NEGOTIATION* 20-25 (1982). See also James Sebenius, *Negotiation Analysis: A Characterization and Review*, 38 *MANAGEMENT SCIENCE* 1, 18-38 (1992) (characterizing the development of the negotiation literature).

In "Shift to a Learning Stance," the authors posit that within most difficult conversations there are in fact not one, but three essential conversations: a "what happened?" conversation, a "feelings" conversation, and an "identity" conversation. Stone, Patton and Heen suggest that in the "what happened?" conversation discussants should explore contribution, a concept they see as distinct from fault. The authors suggest that, rather than focusing on who is to blame, each participant should ask how she or he contributed to the predicament. In particular, they recommend disentangling the subjects of impact and intent. For example, a father who is too busy at work to attend his child's basketball game doesn't intend to hurt his child, but when the father fails to attend the game, the child may feel rejected (p. 51). In the "what happened?" conversation about this situation, it may be vital to recognize that the impact of the father's non-attendance was to make the child feel rejected *and* also to recognize that this impact was not the father's intent.

Stone, Patton and Heen also identify the importance of having a "feelings" conversation. Though feelings are often at the heart of difficult conversations, they are often ignored. People frequently try to frame feelings out of the problem. The catch is that unaddressed feelings commonly resurface, leaking or bursting into conversations, inhibiting listening, or corroding relationships or self-esteem. For example, if Bill is angry at his wife Sharon, it may be impossible for them to talk constructively until Bill recognizes his anger.

A third critical factor in many difficult conversations is "identity." A worker who defines herself as unworthy of being treated well will be unable to ask for a raise. A mother who defines herself as a poor communicator may find the prospect of talking with her adolescent daughter about sex quite daunting. A less common but quite famous example of how identity issues can hinder a difficult conversation is illustrated by Moses's reluctance, even in the face of Divine instruction, to tell Pharaoh to release the children of Israel from slavery. States Moses, "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" and "O my Lord, I am not eloquent. . . but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue."³

Against the analytical backdrop of the three conversations, the authors offer prescriptive advice. Their central message is to create a "learning conversation" in which you and your counterpart work "for mutual understanding. Not mutual agreement, necessarily, but a

3. *Ex.* 3:11; 4:10

better understanding of each of your stories, so that you can make informed decisions (alone or together) about what to do next" (p. 145). To achieve this end, the authors recommend initiating the conversation from the "third story"—how a neutral outsider would understand the situation (pp. 149-55). Often people begin difficult conversations from within their own story ("I hate your hyper-criticizing all of my writing") or within the other party's story ("I know that your job is to be an editor, and you probably think that if I can't handle criticism, I shouldn't be a writer"). Instead, the authors recommend beginning from the vantage point of a neutral observer ("It seems there is a recurring problem between us. I don't like getting back an article I've spent weeks on covered with your extensive 'corrections', and I expect that you don't like it when I get angry at you for doing your job. I'd like to try to talk about this with you, hear what you're thinking, and see if we can come up with a solution that works well for both of us.") Such a neutral framing can be pivotal to producing a conversation focused on joint problem solving rather than blame. In addition, the authors highlight various other skills that make difficult conversations easier, including such skills as active listening and clear self-expression.

II. STRENGTHS

The central insights of *Difficult Conversations* so resonate with common sense that it is easy to overlook just how remarkable of a book it is. One great accomplishment of *Difficult Conversations* lies in identifying difficult conversations as a distinct phenomenon. Like an abstract portrait that appears chaotic until the structure of the face within it is pointed out—after which the image becomes "obvious"—so too with the phenomenon of difficult conversations. The problem of how to make difficult conversations productive is a fundamental one. As identifying a problem can be half of solving it, this accomplishment alone makes *Difficult Conversations* a significant work.

Difficult Conversations also provides great insight into solving that problem. The authors' suggestion to prepare for a difficult conversation by walking through the "three conversations" is eminently sensible, and the illustrative chart they offer toward that end is quite helpful (pp. 218-19). Most fundamentally, their prescriptive goal of having a "learning conversation" is right on target. While it is unclear in a how-to book without footnotes such as this which, if any, of

the particular ideas are original to the authors, their synthesis is outstanding.⁴ What they have created is a useful primer for those engaged in difficult conversations. That is a major contribution.

Furthermore, to their credit, Stone, Patton and Heen do not commit the Panglossian error of assuming that the other party will automatically “play along” cooperatively. Rather, they address the reality that the other party may be resistant to having a learning conversation, and they offer tips for responding to such resistance. For example, if the other party resists a neutral, third-position framing of the conversation, the authors illustrate how to reframe even highly combative statements constructively. For example: “THEY SAY: I’m right, and there are no two ways about it! YOU REFRAME: I want to make sure I understand your perspective. You obviously feel very strongly about it. I’d also like to share my perspective on the situation” (p. 204). While I would not go quite so far as the authors’ assertion that “you can reframe anything the other person says to move toward a learning conversation” (p. 204), I commend their attention to the resistance that the other party may pose to engaging in a learning conversation.

WEAKNESSES

In many respects, *Difficult Conversations* is a path-breaking work, and so the criticisms I offer below should be understood merely as minor objections.

My first criticism is a small point. *Difficult Conversations* is directed to advising a person who is planning to initiate a difficult conversation. However, often people find themselves in difficult conversations they do not choose to initiate: either the other party initiates the conversation, or a seemingly “easy” conversation suddenly transforms into a difficult one. Many of the skills recommended to those who enter difficult conversations proactively will carry over to those who reactively find themselves in such conversations. For example, advice like focusing on contribution rather than blame, paying attention to feelings, adopting a learning stance, etc. However, I suspect that entering a difficult conversation reactively frequently raises distinct issues. When should one try to engage in the conversation, and when should one try to delay? How should one respond to sudden emotions and unexpected information? While the authors do address reactive difficult conversations, they do so quite

4. The same may be said of Patton’s earlier works. See ROGER FISHER ET AL., *GETTING TO YES: NEGOTIATING AGREEMENT WITHOUT GIVING IN* (2d ed. 1991).

briefly, and primarily by repeating their suggestion to try to create a learning conversation (pp. 154-55). This criticism of their book is also an indication of its strength: I so valued the authors' advice on proactive difficult conversations that I wish they had more to say on reactive ones.

My second criticism is more substantive: Does *Difficult Conversations* suppose either more skill in emotional detachment or in conversation management than many people possess? The authors argue that emotions—indeed, intense emotions—are endemic to many difficult conversations. Yet some of their advice supposes a very high capacity to detach from such emotions and act constructively. To illustrate, consider the passage from the book's brief discussion of what to do when one reactively finds oneself in the midst of a difficult conversation:

If Jill comes to Jason and says, "We need to talk about how you ruin all our meals by being so obsessive about the dishes," Jason might find himself wanting to respond from inside his story: "What? *You're* the one with the problem. You're the biggest slob I know!" But if he does, he'll send the conversation headlong toward that brick wall.

Instead, Jason can treat Jill's opening as her part of the Third Story. He might say, "It sounds like you're pretty unhappy with how I handle the dishes. I have trouble with how you deal with the dishes too, so I think we each have different preferences and assumptions around that. It seems like that would be a good thing for us to talk about." (pp. 154-55)

Is it realistic to think that many people can suppress their emotions sufficiently to offer the second response? My concern is that many may lack a ready capacity to offer emotionally detached, purely constructive responses.⁵ To their credit, the authors do discuss the influences of strong emotions on difficult conversations and ways of

5. See also the hypothetical conversation between Brad and his mother over Brad's failure to seek employment aggressively:

But what if [instead of avoiding the topic of the job search when prodded by his mother and withdrawing (pp. 94-95)] Brad took the time to paint a more complete picture? Instead of saying, "Mom, you're driving me crazy!" Brad might say, "When you ask me how the job search is going, I feel a couple of things. One thing I feel is angry. I suppose that's because I've asked you not to bring it up, and you do anyway. But at the same time, part of me is appreciative, and reassured that things will be okay. It means a lot that you're looking out for me and that you care" (p. 103).

addressing them (pp. 99-107). Further, many of their examples reflect sensitivity to the challenges that such emotions pose.⁶ However, I am skeptical whether many people can override such strong emotions, even if they are recognized and addressed, to offer constructive responses as easily as parts of their book imply.

Much of *Difficult Conversations* also supposes a higher degree of skill in conversation management than I believe many people are capable of, at least without adequate training. To illustrate, consider the dialogue at the end of *Difficult Conversations* between Jack and Michael, interjected with conversations between Jack and his Coach:

JACK: Listen, Michael, say what you will, but the problem on the financial brochure was that after all the work I did, you treated me badly, and you know it!

MICHAEL: The problem on that project was that I had the poor judgment to use you in the first place. I'll never make that mistake again?

...

JACK: Okay, cut. This isn't going right.

COACH: What went wrong?

JACK: I don't know. He didn't react very well.

COACH: Notice that you began the conversation from inside your story.

JACK: I should have started from the Third Story. That's right. I'll start over.

...

JACK: Michael, I've been thinking a lot about what happened between us on the financial brochure. I found the experience frustrating, and I suspect you did as well. What's most worrisome to me is that it feels like it has affected our relationship. I wonder whether we could talk about that? I'd like to understand better what was happening for you, and how you felt about working together, and I'd also like to share what I found upsetting.

MICHAEL: Well, Jack, the problem is that you're just not careful enough, and then you can't admit it when you make a mistake. It really made me angry when you started making excuses.

6. See, for example, Stone, Patton and Heen's account of a father talking to his hospitalized daughter about his contributions to her eating disorder. "It won't be easy [to have such a conversation]. In fact it may be the toughest thing [the father] ever does" (p. 121).

...

JACK: Okay, he's attacking me. I thought if I started from the Third Story he was supposed to be nicer.

COACH: Well, Michael's reaction wasn't nearly as confrontational as it was in your first try. You're actually off to a good start. You did a great job of beginning from the Third Story. Remember, persistence. Michael's not immediately going to understand that you're trying to have a learning conversation. You have to be prepared for him to be somewhat defensive.

JACK: And say what, if he attacks me?

COACH: He's already into his story. The best thing you can do for the conversation is to listen from a stance of real curiosity, to ask questions, and to pay special attention to the feelings behind the words (pp. 221-22).

The above passage was undoubtedly designed for pedagogy, to help the reader understand how the authors' ideas can be applied. Obviously, Stone, Patton and Heen do not believe that an actual conversation can simply be restarted when it goes astray or that an online Coach can be readily consulted. However, it is unclear to what extent the authors imagine that their readers are capable of having, or learning to have, an internal online dialogue about the shape of a conversation while in the midst of the conversation akin to that between Jack and his Coach.

Many of the skills advocated in *Difficult Conversations* suppose a high level of ability on the part of a discussant to converse and simultaneously to manage the shape or process of the conversation. Loosely put, the authors' advice requires that one ear is trained on the other party, but one ear is also listening from the "third position." My concern is that, at least without some practice and training, many people lack such Janus-like skills. To observe a conversation from a detached vantage point and to analyze how to intervene constructively is not easy when one is a mediator; it is even harder to do when one is a participant.

Can most people learn such skills? I suspect that the answer is yes. However, learning such skills is a process which often requires much training and effort. If *Difficult Conversations* were a how-to video on a sport like golf, I would say the following: a video can give you an ideal at which to aim, and for people who lack such a model, seeing the video's model is essential. However, developing one's own swing is not merely a matter of watching a video. It usually takes time, patience, practice, and coaching—and even then, many people

never develop a fluid swing. So too with *Difficult Conversations*. *Acquiring* the skills portrayed in *Difficult Conversations* is a very different thing from merely reading the book and achieving a cognitive understanding of those skills.

IV. CONCLUSION

In *Difficult Conversations*, Stone, Patton and Heen have ventured into a largely unexplored territory: how to make difficult conversations productive. Analytically, they identify three essential sub-conversations within most difficult conversations: the “what happened?” conversation, the feelings conversation, and the identity conversation. Prescriptively, they offer the benchmark of a “learning conversation” as a goal. Throughout, they also provide much practical advice on how to work toward that goal. *Difficult Conversations* is a path-breaking foray into very important terrain. Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton and Sheila Heen have written not only an outstanding book, but also, I suspect, the first chapter of a much wider dialogue.

Negotiation through the Lens of a Social Psychologist

Neil Shah

THE MIND AND HEART OF THE NEGOTIATOR. By Leigh Thompson.¹
New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1998. Pp. 359.

The Mind and Heart of the Negotiator is a new negotiation text targeted towards undergraduate and graduate psychology students. It differs from most negotiation texts currently, or soon to be, on the market in that it analyzes negotiation through the lens of a social psychologist. In 1982, Howard Raiffa published a pioneering text called *The Art and Science of Negotiation*.² That text focuses on exactly what the title suggests; it blends mathematical decision analysis tools with certain qualitative aspects of negotiation.³ In 1986, David A. Lax and James K. Sebenius furthered Howard Raiffa's approach and published *The Manager as Negotiator: Bargaining For Cooperation and Competitive Gain*.⁴ The Lax and Sebenius text, which is geared toward business students and executives, is one of the leading textbooks on negotiation.⁵ In the legal field, law students, lawyers and clients will soon be able to turn to *Beyond Winning: How Lawyers Help Clients Create Value in Negotiation*, the upcoming book by Robert Mnookin, Scott Peppet and Andrew Tulumello that focuses on the special features and challenges of legal negotiations.⁶ Until now, there has not been a textbook that adequately addresses negotiation from a social psychological perspective. *The Mind and Heart of the Negotiator* fills this void brilliantly.

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2. See HOWARD RAIFFA, *THE ART AND SCIENCE OF NEGOTIATION* (1982) (analyzing negotiation primarily using mathematical decision analysis tools with some discussion of the qualitative aspects affecting interpersonal relationships).

3. See *id.* at 7-9.

4. See DAVID LAX & JAMES SEBENIUS, *THE MANAGER AS NEGOTIATOR: BARGAINING FOR COOPERATION AND COMPETITIVE GAIN* xiv (1986) (acknowledging Howard Raiffa for his contribution to the text).

5. See *id.* at x.

6. See ROBERT H. MNOOKIN ET AL., *BEYOND WINNING: HOW LAWYERS HELP CLIENTS CREATE VALUE IN NEGOTIATION* (Mar. 1999) (unpublished manuscript, on file

The textbook's overall purpose is to provide students with a "big picture" view of negotiation "with readily accessible insights, strategies and practices" (p. xxi). Many current negotiation textbooks fail to satisfy this purpose because the material is "unconnected, redundant, and lacking integration" (p. xxi). Thompson addresses this problem by laying out three structural goals for her text. The first is internal depth. The text should ease the reader into the material, allow him or her to explore certain areas in detail, and then it should properly conclude with a brief summary. The second is progressive complexity. At the beginning stages, it should equip the student with the proper analytic tools to assist learning in future chapters. As the novice gains expertise, the textbook should strive to guide the student into more complex areas of negotiation. The final goal is for the textbook to have an interdisciplinary focus. It should draw on research in economics, psychology, sociology, communication, and organizational behavior.

Part I of this review provides a brief synopsis of each chapter. Part II analyzes whether these chapters satisfy Thompson's purposes as set out above. Part III concludes by recommending this book as an aid to those studying negotiation.

I. SYNOPSIS

The author segments the textbook into fourteen similarly structured chapters. At the beginning of each chapter, she gives the student a fictitious fact situation highlighting certain negotiation issues, which are analyzed within the chapter. Throughout the chapter, she uses various theories, tables, and diagrams to explain each of these issues. At the end of each chapter, she provides the student with a useful set of bulleted "take-away" points. As opposed to summarizing each chapter in chronological order, this synopsis divides the textbook into five areas: (A) Fundamental Aspects; (B) Decision Making Aspects; (C) Cognitive Aspects; (D) Social Aspects; and (E) Specific Aspects.

A. *Fundamental Aspects*

The first four chapters introduce the fundamental concepts of negotiation and equip the student with the necessary skills to dive deeply into future chapters. Chapter 1 provides a useful "big picture"

with the *Harvard Negotiation Law Review* (discussing the special challenges of legal negotiations and the role of law and lawyers in negotiations).

view of negotiation by laying out the framework for the entire textbook (p. 12). The "big picture" view includes: preparation; distributive and integrative bargaining skills; team negotiations, coalitions, groups, agents and third parties; relationships and communication; and the use of feedback, experience and expertise.

Although the first chapter introduces the student to the main elements of negotiation, such as parties, issues, alternatives, interests, and positions (pp. 8-10), Thompson expounds upon these elements in the second chapter, which focuses on preparing for a negotiation. Chapter 2 discusses reservation points, bargaining zones, and the role of information and power in negotiation. The author recommends using a template worksheet to help prepare for future negotiations (pp. 25-29) and emphasizes that the most valuable information a negotiator can obtain in the preparation stage is knowing the other side's alternative to a negotiated agreement (p. 29).

In the third chapter, the author examines the parties' conduct at the bargaining table. Specifically, she recommends examining different tactics negotiators can use to influence an outcome, such as: reciprocity, consistency, social proof, flattery, authority and scarcity (pp. 34-38). Furthermore, she responds to a series of questions commonly asked by students of negotiation such as, "Who should make the first offer?" and "How much should you concede the first time around?" (pp. 30-33).

Chapter 4 analyzes integrative agreements by suggesting ways in which a negotiator can be strategically creative. It introduces the tension between creating and distributing value. The author emphasizes that negotiators should not forget about claiming value (p. 61) and should capitalize on differing interests, time preferences, capabilities, and risks (pp. 55-57). Taken together, the first four chapters introduce the fundamental concepts of negotiation and provide students with answers to some commonly asked questions.

B. *Decision Making Aspects*

The next two chapters explore the decision making aspects of negotiation. Specifically, they examine rational behavior by concentrating on normative models of negotiation. In Chapter 5, the author defends the importance of studying principles of rational behavior. She then defines and explains axioms of rational thought, such as expected utility theory and Nash's bargaining theory. Finally, she critically analyzes the limitations and value of rational theory to the field of negotiation. Chapter 6 discusses expected utility theory in

greater detail, expected value theory, and prospect theory. The author emphasizes that these normative models are important because they help explain how decision heuristics differ from optimal theoretical behavior.

C. *Cognitive Aspects*

To help fully explain why negotiators violate axioms of normative models, three chapters of the textbook focus on the mind of the negotiator. Chapter 7 discusses heuristic and systematic information processing mechanisms and knowledge structures. Processing mechanisms are the ways in which a negotiator's mind uses information stored in his or her memory (pp. 107-10). Knowledge structures are the theories, beliefs or expectations that the negotiator may hold about a person, a group of people, an event, or almost anything else (pp. 110-18).

Chapter 8 examines how negotiators reason about themselves and others. It first defines and explains the concept of rationality. Next, the chapter introduces certain core social psychological factors that describe human behavior. The author categorizes these factors into four themes: (i) evaluation—our appraisal of others; (ii) self-enhancement—our appraisal of ourselves; (iii) prediction—our evaluation of others and events in a way so as to maximize prior understanding; and (iv) social desirability—our desire to be liked by others and avoid disapproval. This chapter concludes by explaining that the practice of negotiation involves the use of three skills: decision-making skills, social perception skills, and negotiation rationality skills.

Chapter 13 explores the effect of learning and experience in negotiation. This chapter explains the concept of learning, discusses the use of "expert" negotiators, analyzes how negotiators can learn from experience, and suggests ways to improve negotiation performance.

D. *Social Aspects*

Thompson devotes three chapters to the social aspects of negotiation. Chapter 10 examines the social context of negotiation and how it impacts processes and outcomes of negotiations. Specifically, the author analyzes social norms, relationships between parties, rapport building, and the role of emotion in negotiation.

Chapter 11 discusses how principles of social justice (equity, equality, or need) and fairness (including self-interest) impact the processes and outcomes of negotiations. As "fairness" is a subjective,

socially defined concept (p. 209), the author recommends that a negotiator be aware of social justice principles and ask what definition of fairness the parties are using to resolve a dispute (p. 212).

Chapter 12 analyzes social dilemmas and other noncooperative bargaining games, such as the classic "prisoner's dilemma." Thompson critically examines game theory principles and discusses factors that might induce cooperative behavior, such as simply promising to cooperate and publicizing the need for cooperative behavior (pp. 221-24).

E. *Specific Aspects*

Chapter 10 and 14 each examine specific aspects of negotiation. In Chapter 10, Thompson introduces multiparty negotiations by explaining the nature and productivity aspects of group dynamics. She provides a two-step framework for analyzing multiparty negotiations. First, she suggests identifying the parties, the roles they play, and the structure of their relationships to one another (p. 148). The second step is to "undertake a normative, descriptive, and/or prescriptive analysis" at each of the seven levels of negotiation analysis (p. 148). Thompson explains that the levels of negotiation analysis are: individual, dyad, polyad, intermediary, collateral relationship, intragroup, and intergroup (p. 148). She recommends analyzing the dynamic that operates at each level (pp. 146-66). In the last chapter of the textbook, Chapter 14, Thompson introduces the student to, and offers prescriptive advice for, environmental negotiations, negotiations via technology, and negotiations across cultures.

II. SATISFACTION OF PURPOSES

The author clearly achieves her overall goal of providing students with a "big picture" view of negotiation. The textbook is easy to understand, well written, and well researched. It explains key concepts and theories by using simple definitions, colorful examples, accessible tables, and meaningful diagrams. Furthermore, each chapter is well structured and concise. Although the textbook achieves its overall purpose of providing a "big picture" view of negotiation, there is still the question of whether Thompson satisfied her goal of providing a text that has internal depth, progressive complexity, and an interdisciplinary focus.

A. *Internal Depth*

On a whole, the textbook has sufficient depth. However, in certain areas Thompson sacrifices depth for overall breadth. For example, the template preparation worksheet includes the following steps (pp. 26-29):

- Step 1: Determine Your BATNA
- Step 2: Improve Your BATNA
- Step 3: Determine the Other Party's BATNA
- Step 4: Determine the Issue Mix
- Step 5: Ways to Present your Offer/Counteroffer
(Communication)
- Step 6: Think About Possible Tricks and How to Deal with
Them

It would have been useful to include additional steps on this preparation worksheet. One step examining the interests of each party and another step examining the relationship between the parties would provide the student with a more comprehensive preparation worksheet.⁷ In the first chapter of the textbook, the author states that "the ability of negotiators to build and maintain a relationship . . . is critical for negotiation success" (p. 12). Given its importance, it would be wise to include an examination of it in the template preparation worksheet. This would also integrate concepts found in later chapters, such as Chapter 10, which focuses on relationships and rapport building.

Also, in discussing ways to be strategically creative there could have been more detail on the role of time in negotiation. The author suggests that a negotiator can exploit differences in time preferences to claim more value in an integrative agreement (p. 56).⁸ Numerous studies suggest that time significantly impacts negotiation.⁹ However, there is no examination of how time impacts negotiations and how time can be used as a strategic tool when negotiating. It would have been useful to examine these studies and perhaps a variety of

7. See ROGER FISHER ET AL., *GETTING TO YES: NEGOTIATING AGREEMENT WITHOUT GIVING IN* (2d ed. 1991) (establishing a four-step approach to negotiation: (1) distinguish between relationship issues and substantive issues, (2) focus on interests in lieu of positions (3) invent options for joint gain, and (4) use objective criteria to select among options).

8. See LAX & SEBENIUS, *supra* note 4, at 88-116 (suggesting five dimensions of differences that negotiations may exploit to capitalize on integrative agreement: differences in valuation of the negotiation issues, differences in expectations of uncertain events, differences in risk attitudes, differences in time preferences, and differences in capabilities).

9. See, e.g., ROY J. LEWICKI & JOSEPH A. LITTERER, *NEGOTIATION* 151-52 (1985) (explaining the strategic role of time in preparing for and conducting a negotiation,

other issues, such as: when is it appropriate to establish a time deadline? What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of using a time deadline? Why do people soften their demands, or make more concessions, as the deadline approaches? Why do people impose time deadlines in the first place?

B. *Progressive Complexity*

For the most part, the textbook is progressively complex. The first four chapters provide readers with the basic analytical tools and logical framework necessary to comprehend future chapters. However, undergraduate students may find the fifth and sixth chapters too technically challenging. These chapters delve into normative models of negotiations based on axioms of rationality. In the preface, the author correctly advises that an undergraduate student can skip these technical chapters and not compromise learning. Although some students may find the chapters difficult, they provide a logical introduction to the chapters on social cognition and justice. At the end of Chapters 5 and 6, the author notes that people always violate axioms of normative models (p. 100). In asking why that is so, she points to the need to better understand the mind of the negotiator (p. 101) and proceeds to the next chapter on social cognition.

Although it is logical to discuss decision making aspects in the early chapters, it makes very little sense to examine multiparty negotiations near the middle of the book. As "[t]he dynamics of group negotiations are far more complex than those of two-party negotiations,"¹⁰ it would have been wiser to place the chapter on multiparty negotiations near the end. This placement would satisfy two purposes. First, it would help prevent undergraduate students from being overwhelmed by the complexity of group negotiations. Second, it would provide continuity in that the student does not have to jump from the dyad framework to a multiparty framework and back to the dyad framework in the course of reading the book.

Similarly, the tenth chapter, which discusses relationships and rapport building, is awkwardly placed. It would make more sense to discuss these concepts earlier in the book, perhaps when discussing

and summarizing studies, which confirm that time deadlines accomplish the following: (1) lead negotiators to soften demands; (2) increase the pressure to reach agreement; and (3) help protect a party who has softened demands not to appear weak); RAIFFA, *supra* note 2, at 80-85 (examining the role of time in negotiations through laboratory experiments involving strike and escalation games).

10. MAX H. BAZERMAN & MARGARET A. NEALE, *NEGOTIATING RATIONALLY* 128 (1992).

preparation in Chapter 2 or when examining what to do at the bargaining table in Chapter 3. Given Thompson's statement that relationships are critical to the success of a negotiation (p.12), it seems odd that relationship issues are not discussed earlier in the text.

C. *Interdisciplinary Focus*

The textbook meets its goal of being interdisciplinary in focus. The fifth and sixth chapters deal with economic and technical issues relating to decision making theory. Chapter 11 delves into the realm of philosophy by discussing social justice, fairness and social utility. The remainder of the textbook intricately weaves together the disciplines of communications, psychology, and sociology from an individual and organizational perspective.

One drawback is that the textbook only briefly examines the role of the law or of lawyers in negotiations. Despite the fact that there is a discussion of partisan and non-partisan perceptions, through the comparison of the mind sets of a lawyer and a scientist (pp. 115-16), the law presents more challenges than just partisan perceptions. For example, the adversarial legal culture and certain ambivalent assumptions lawyers make about clients present unique challenges to lawyers and those involved in legal negotiations.¹¹ A chapter or section summarizing the role of lawyers in negotiation or the special challenges that the law presents to negotiation would have been useful.

III. CONCLUSION

The author does a wonderful job of making difficult social psychological concepts accessible to students with little or no background in psychology. She uses easy to understand language, colorful examples and meaningful diagrams. As it covers a large number of topics relevant to the study of negotiation, the text is broad in scope. Thus, she clearly satisfies her overall goal of providing students with a "big picture" view of negotiation. For the most part, she also satisfies her three goals. The textbook has internal depth, is progressively complex, and combines research from a number of different disciplines.

In terms of improvement, the author could have examined certain areas in further detail, placed certain chapters in a different order, and included some discussion on the role of law and lawyers in negotiation. Despite these minor drawbacks, this text is a significant contribution to the study of negotiation and fills an academic void regarding the field of social psychology.

11. See MNOOKIN ET AL., *supra* note 6.