



# Bargaining with the Devil: When to Negotiate, When to Fight

By Robert Mnookin

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**Bargaining with the Devil: When to Negotiate, When to Fight** By Robert Mnookin

*An internationally renowned leader in the art and science of negotiation addresses life's most challenging conflicts—what to do when you are facing an adversary you don't trust, someone who may harm you, or who you even feel is evil. In such situations, should you try to negotiate a deal or resist?*

In an age of terror, our national leaders face critical decisions every day. Should we negotiate with the Taliban? Iran? North Korea? In private disputes you too may face such adversaries: a business partner who has cheated you, a sibling grabbing part of your inheritance, a greedy divorcing spouse. Across a wide range of difficult conflicts, Mnookin explains how to make wise decisions. He identifies the traps to avoid—emotional, strategic, and political—and the elements that are critical for success.

Mnookin's real life case studies cover a remarkable range. Some involve political leaders: Churchill's refusal to negotiate with Hitler; Nelson Mandela's choice to initiate negotiations with the government of South Africa. Half the cases involve business or family disputes where Mnookin played an active role. In all of them, emotions ran high and demonization ran rampant.

In this lively, informative, practical work, Mnookin provides the listener with the tools they need to bargain with the devils in everyday life as well as evaluate the decisions of our national leaders.

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

Drawing from a remarkable range of real-life stories, Mnookin offers his thoughtful guidance in disputes of all sorts where the temptation is to demonize:

The CEO of a small high-tech company learns that his joint-venture partner, a big foreign corporation, has been secretly cheating him under a license agreement; IBM discovers that Fujitsu, its largest competitor, has copied its software; the San Francisco Symphony is torn apart by poisoned labor-management relations; divorcing spouses, each feeling wounded and betrayed, disagree about custody and support; three siblings are in conflict about what to do with a jointly inherited vacation property.

Mnookin also examines decisions made in conflicts with evil regimes, where lives and liberty were at stake. He analyzes Winston Churchill's fateful choice in May 1940--Britain's darkest hour--to reject negotiations with Adolf Hitler and to carry on the fight. He compares Nelson Mandela's decision to initiate negotiations with the South Africa apartheid government that had imprisoned him for life with the imprisoned Soviet dissident Natan Sharansky's decision not to negotiate with the KGB for his freedom. And Mnookin evaluates with sensitivity the Hungarian Jew Rudolf Kasztner's still controversial decision to negotiate with Adolf Eichmann in the hope of saving lives.

This lively, informative, indispensable book identifies the tools one needs to make wise decisions about life's most challenging conflicts.

Read an excerpt for *Bargaining with the Devil*.

#### From Publishers Weekly

Mnookin, head of Harvard's Program on Negotiation, combines business, history, philosophy and psychology to present a complete set of tools for confronting "Devils," defined as any individual perceived as a harmful adversary. Examining eight conflicts, including Winston Churchill's decision to reject negotiations with Adolf Hitler, Nelson Mandela's decision to initiate discussions with South Africa's apartheid government, IBM's discovery that its largest competitor copied its software, poisoned labor-management issues in the San Francisco Symphony, and examples from his professional experience, Mnookin (*Beyond Winning*) provides a straightforward account of the deliberative options when facing a "Faustian tension between pragmatism and principle." Along with cogent analysis, Mnookin suggests four general guidelines for determining the best course of action: systematically compare the cost-benefit ratios of negotiating or fighting, collect advice from others, tip the scales in favor of negotiation before fully committing, and don't allow moral intuition to override pragmatic assessment. While Mnookin admits his suggestions are "hardly the last word," they will help decision-makers focus their thoughts in challenging situations. END

#### About the Author

Robert H. Mnookin is the Samuel Williston Professor of Law at Harvard Law, the Chair of the Steering Committee of the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School, and the Director of the Harvard Negotiation Research Project. A renowned teacher and lecturer, Professor Mnookin has taught numerous workshops for corporations, governmental agencies and law firms throughout the world and trained many

executives and professions in negotiation and mediation skills. Professor Mnookin has written or edited nine books and numerous scholarly articles. His books include *Beyond Winning: Negotiating to Create Value in Deals and Disputes* (with Scott Peppet and Andrew Tulumello) and *Negotiating on Behalf of Others*.

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