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# *Editor's Note*

## Negotiation Journal

Is everything negotiable? In their column, "When 'Sacred' Issues Are at Stake," Max Bazerman, Ann Tenbrunsel, and Kimberly Wade-Benzoni use the internal quotations to signal that sacredness comes in different forms. Some people may see certain issues as not even discussable for moral or ideological reasons, while others may invoke moral principles as a bargaining tactic to extract greater concessions. The most interesting cases may involve issues that are "pseudo-sacred," that is, nonnegotiable under certain conditions but perhaps not under others.

As the authors note, claims of sacredness challenge conventional negotiation prescriptions, notably, the advice to search for win-win trades. Offering someone money in order to get her to compromise her principles, however, may be inflammatory. When moral judgments differ, emotions flare and rational analysis suffers. Whether a person or group can ultimately afford to stand on principle depends, of course, on the alternative to a negotiated agreement.

Amy Finnegan and Susan Hackley examine another dimension of this problem in their article, "Negotiation and Nonviolent Action: Interacting in the World of Conflict." Specifically, they explore the parallels and contrasts between the fields of negotiation and nonviolent action. The principle of nonviolence itself can be hard to honor in harrowing situations, but it can be a means to confront powerful parties with the need to change their policies and behavior. Like negotiation, its successful practice requires patient coalition building, astute framing, and perhaps above all, the vision to see how seemingly conflicting principles can be reconciled.

While Finnegan and Hackley focus on resolving conflict between nations, in "A Logic for the Magic of Mindful Negotiation," Darshan Brach explores ways in which an individual can achieve better mental and emotional balance. Specifically, she describes how particular forms of meditation enable a negotiator to keep his or her true objectives in mind, even in moments of stress. By deepening awareness of other parties' needs and feelings, it may also foster more constructive relationships.

A very different view of negotiation is offered in "A Conceptual Framework for Modeling Automated Negotiations in Multiagent Systems." Here the authors Mohammad Reza Ayatollahzadeh Shirazi and Ahmad Abdollahzadeh Barfouroush present a framework for understanding exchanges that are facilitated electronically. In some instances, the process may be entirely automated, where the "parties" are software agents or programs. In

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other cases, humans may be at the keyboard but are communicating electronically. Shirazi and Barfouroush specify the negotiation frameworks that should guide the design of both kinds of systems.

In “New Technology Meets an Old Teaching Challenge,” Gerald Williams, Larry Farmer, and Melissa Manwaring also examine the potential that technology holds to transform negotiation, specifically, how technology can foster a deliberate practice approach to teaching negotiation skills. Students learn negotiation skills most effectively, the authors argue, when given the opportunity to perform well-defined tasks at appropriate levels of difficulty, with immediate feedback and opportunities to practice until the tasks become routine. Using webcams and special annotation software in their law school classrooms, Williams and Farmer have put a new spin on that old standard of the negotiation classroom, the negotiation simulation.

The negotiator’s state of mind — and heart — is front and center in this issue’s review essays. Like Brach, Ran Kuttner also explores the potential impact of meditative practice on negotiators and mediators in his review of Gregory Kramer’s *Insight Dialogue*. Kramer has applied the principles of Buddhist meditation to group settings, a practice that Kuttner finds particularly relevant for negotiators.

Finally, Clark Freshman also tackles emotional and spiritual issues in his review of William Ury’s new book, *The Power of a Positive No*. One of the coauthors of the seminal *Getting to Yes*, Ury argues that saying “yes” would not get most of us very far unless we also learn how, when, and why to say “no.” And doing so, Freshman believes, just might make us all a bit happier.

*Michael Wheeler*