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Finding Confidence
In Conflict
with Kwame Christian, Esq., M.A.



Our Goals for This Session

- Manage conflict while maintaining relationships and building trust in the process.

- Persuade effectively while managing emotions—helping others reach better decisions without unnecessary damage or drama.

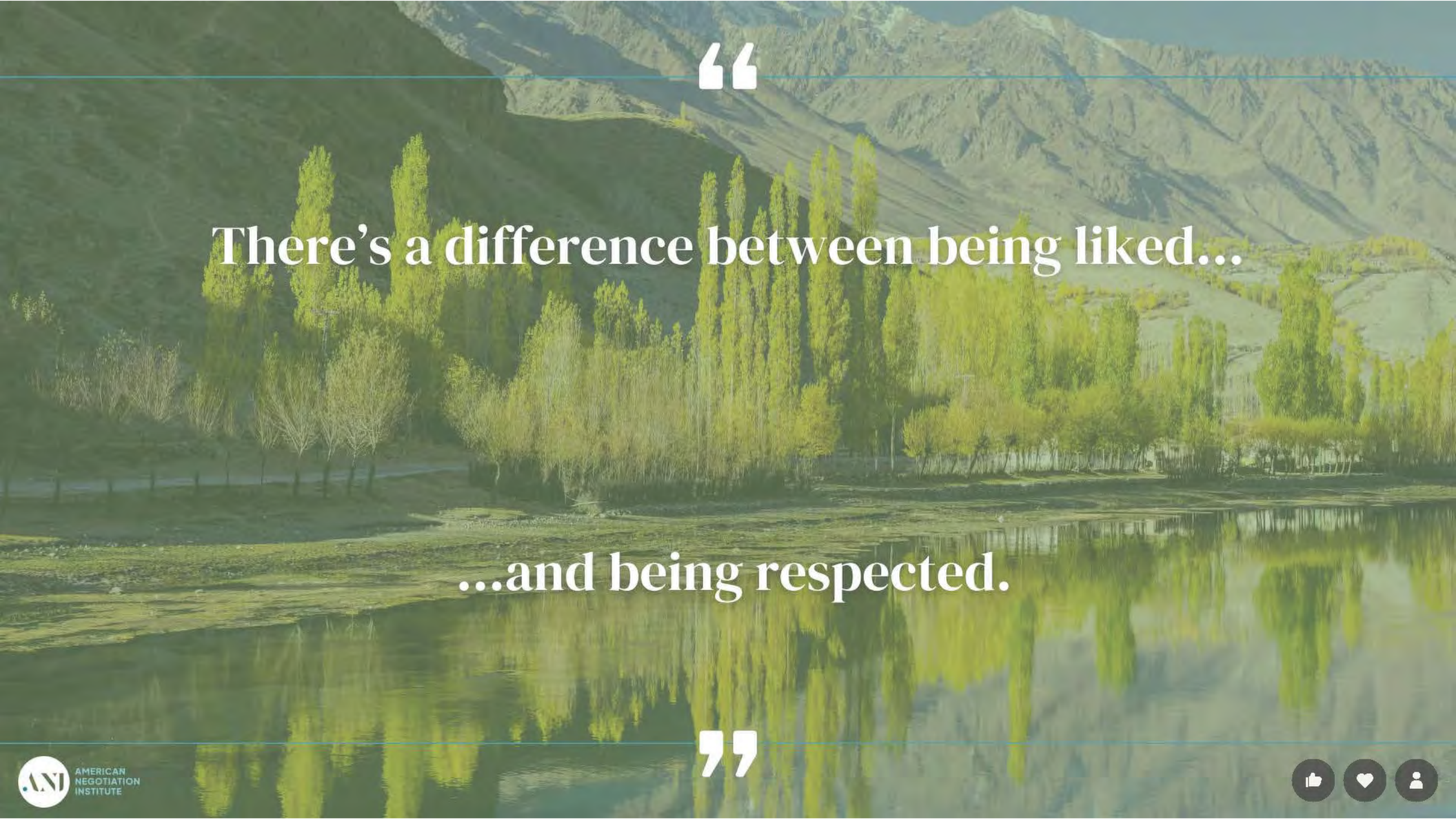
- Implement practical, actionable tools you can use immediately in your next difficult conversation.

“

I’m not who you think I am.

”




“
There’s a difference between being liked...
...and being respected.
”
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“In the communication field, we've been handing recipes to people who are afraid to get in the kitchen.”
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Confidence is a _____.



Confidence is a Skill

You can leave here knowing exactly what to say and still not say it.

- The recipe isn't the problem — knowing the words and using them under pressure are two different skills.
- Novel situations reset the confidence clock — new client, unfamiliar stakes, an audience two levels above your usual one.
- You are all here for a reason — we don't get the benefit of your brilliance if you don’t have the courage to speak.

The Positive Cycle of Confidence

Ready is not a **feeling**. Ready is an **action**.



- Courage is the entry fee — saying the hard thing once is what makes saying it the second time easier.
- **Action comes first — confidence comes after the behavior, not before it.**
- The cycle compounds — action produces results, results produce confidence, *confidence produces more action.*
- Confidence is a skill you build — you are not bad at this, you are not practiced at this yet.

Rejection Therapy

For the next week, ask for things you don't think you're going to get. If you get it, you get one point. If you don't, you get two points.

- Ask for the unlikely — make requests you fully expect to be turned down.
- One point for a yes — you got what you asked for.
- Two points for a no — you practiced the skill that scares you most.
- Recalibrate rejection — every no teaches your brain that the world didn't end.
- Fear becomes a signal — use it as a cue to approach, not avoid.





The World Responds Differently to Different People

The same ask can land differently depending on who is asking.

- Podcast story — people are perceived differently.
- Defining bias — a subconscious preference toward or prejudice against someone or something.
- Confidence plus strategy — treat bias as a strategic consideration and get the outcome without the social penalty.

Not "Fixing Women"

"Fixing women" blames women for the inequities they are fighting. If the system were equitable, nobody would have to negotiate for fair pay.

- This is reality, not fault — you did not build the structure, and you still have to operate inside it today.
- So negotiate for yourself — you don't get what you deserve, you get what you negotiate.
- And negotiate for change — the structure is a thing you can put on the table, not just a thing you endure.
- Recruit allies — most of the people with power are not defending the system, they have never been shown what to do instead.
- **Changing the structure is a negotiation too — and it is the one with the longest payoff.**

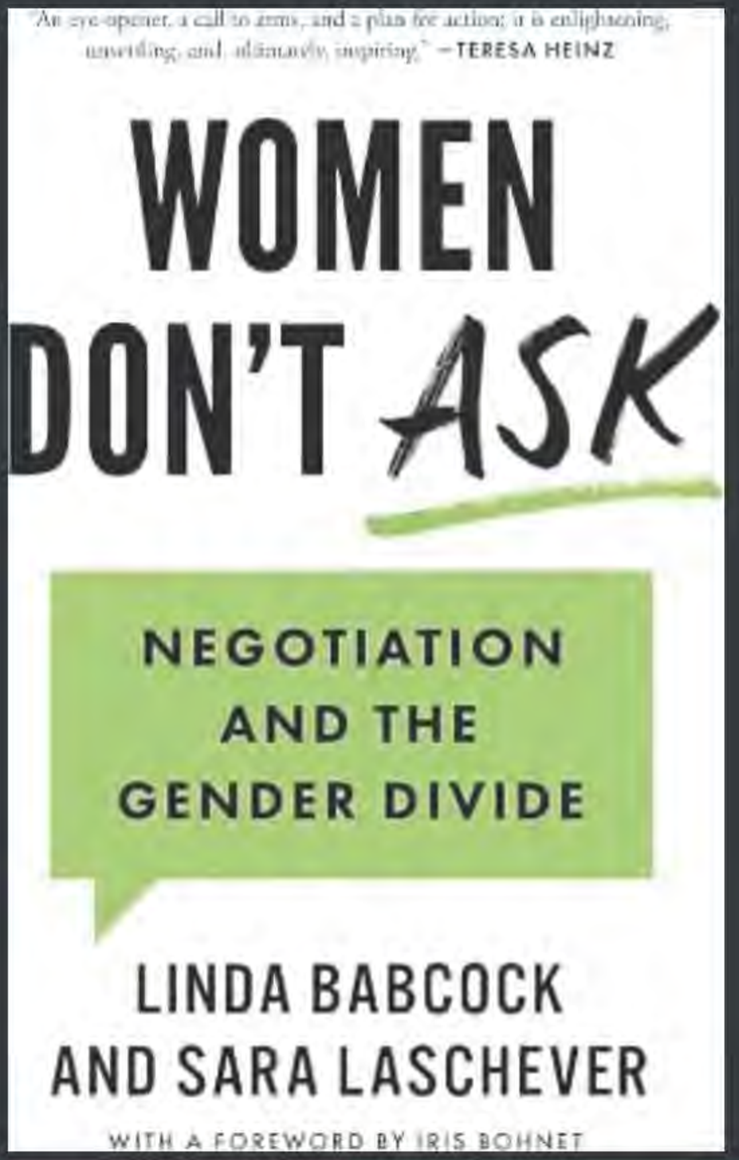


*Kate Eberle Walker, author of **The Good Boss***

What the Research Shows

Linda Babcock and Sara Laschever, co-authors of *Women Don't Ask.*

- Women ask less often — in one study, 57% of men negotiated their first job offer versus 7% of women.
- Asking costs women more — women face a greater social penalty than men for negotiating for higher pay.
- Style can be an advantage — women often excel in cooperative, problem-solving negotiations.
- Framing changes the result — requests that show concern for relationships improved both how women were seen and what they got.





Training Closes the Gap

The gender gap in negotiation outcomes is ***partially*** a skills and confidence gap, and both can be trained.

- The gap starts with goals — before training, women set lower targets and walked away with less.
- Tactics alone weren't enough — goal-setting training helped everyone but left the gap in place.
- Collaboration creates value — cooperative approaches produce better solutions than trying to "win."

Assertive, Not Aggressive

You need to be assertive, but how you are assertive matters.

- Assertiveness — saying what you need to say and asking for what you deserve, while recognizing the other person has the same right.
- Aggressiveness — claiming that right for yourself while denying it to the other person.
- The key framing for women in negotiation — frame it collaboratively. "*I'm not asking for this for my own benefit. I'm asking because it will benefit everyone.*"
- After reading these studies, I realized something shocking...





“Apparently, I negotiate like a woman. And so do the world’s greatest negotiators.”

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What Is Negotiation?

Awareness Unlocks Opportunity: Spot It, Prep It, Win It.

- Anytime you're in a conversation and somebody wants something—that's a negotiation.

- Most people lack awareness—they don't even realize they're negotiating.

- Clarify outcomes and prep intentionally, or miss strategic opportunities everywhere.

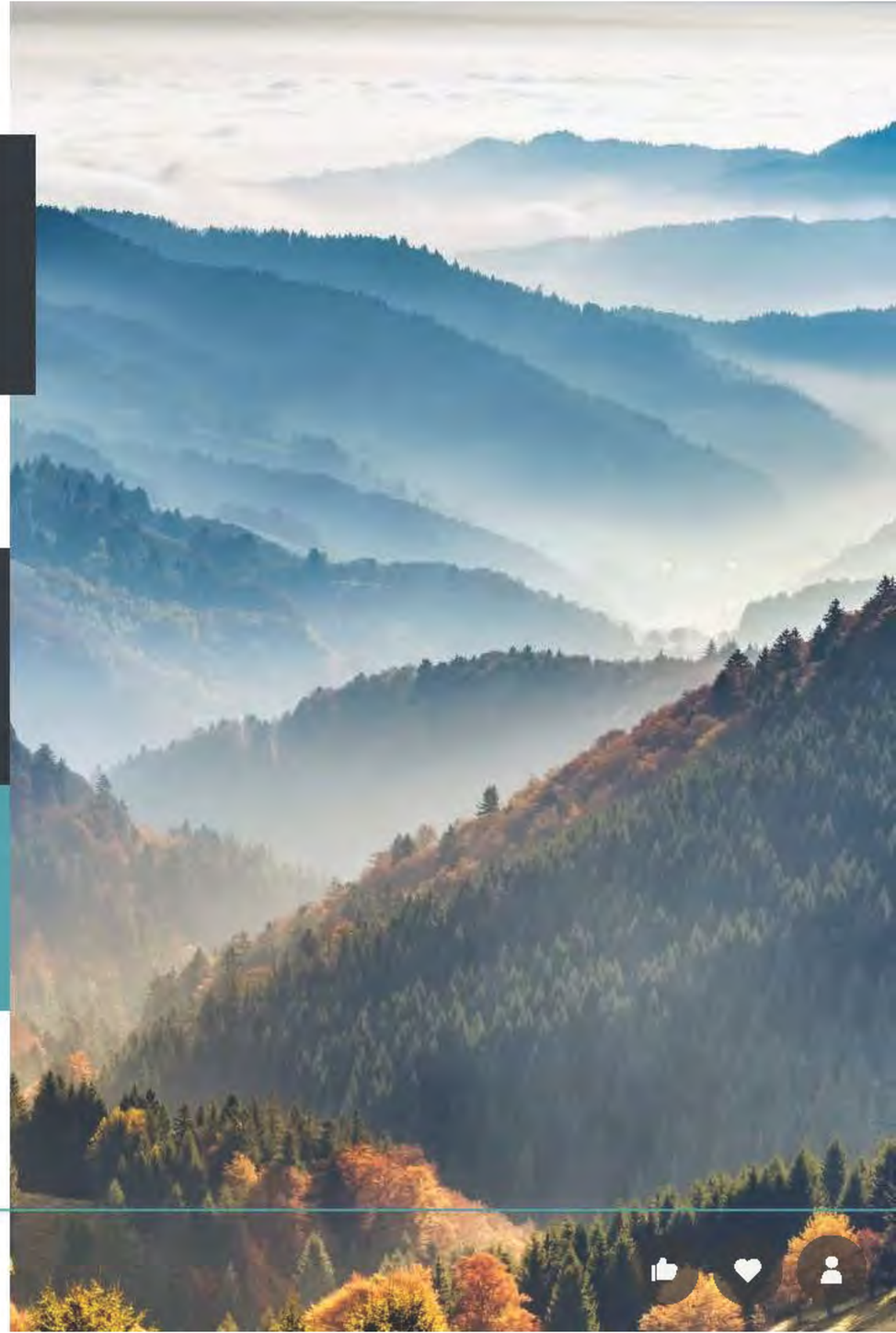
- Every interaction, no matter how small, is an opportunity to advance your goals.



What are some examples of negotiations you've had in your personal and professional life?

New Mindset:

OPPORTUNITY



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"The best things in life are on the other side of difficult conversations."

– American Negotiation Institute



Was the #1 Negotiation Podcast in the World for Nearly 10 Years

Over 16 Million Downloads.

Listeners in Over 180 Countries.

What we discovered after 1,800+ conversations with the world's best negotiators:

Timeless truths, proven strategies, and practical insights to transform your difficult conversations.



Discovery #1:

The Best Negotiators Adapt and Flow

Make Strategic Adjustments to Keep the Conversation Productive.

Discovery #2:

Practice The 3 Core Skills of Elite Negotiators:

1. Listening
2. Curiosity
3. Managing Emotions—Yours and Theirs (manage ≠ control)

Every Conversation Is Practice.

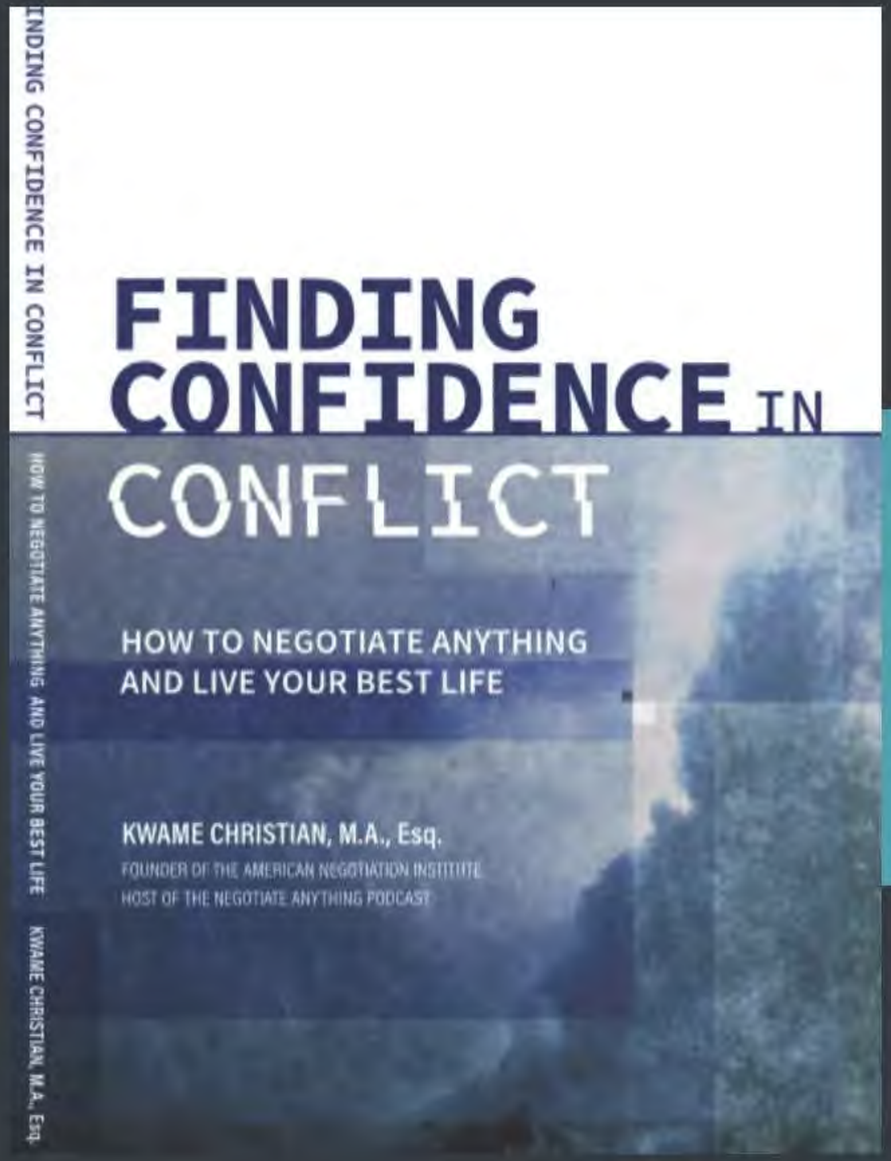
Our Signature Framework: Compassionate Curiosity™

A practical framework to guide what to say and when to say it.

Step 1
Acknowledge and Validate Emotions.

Step 2
Get Curious With Compassion.

Step 3
Use Joint Problem Solving.



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Compassionate Curiosity™ Framework

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Case Study

Your department leader always trusts you with the hardest tasks because you get the job done. You know you're ready for a promotion, but you've been skipped over a few times. Then a friend mentions a rumor: an opportunity is going to come up that you'd be perfect for. It would be a new role, title, and pay grade.

You ask for a meeting with the department leader and share what you heard. Your leader hesitates. "*It's real, but keep it quiet. Nothing is official, and we haven't decided anything.*"

Here's your chance. In one meeting, you must learn what they want and make your case. You cannot get skipped over again. How do you navigate this conversation with Compassionate Curiosity?









Step 1: Acknowledge and Validate Emotions

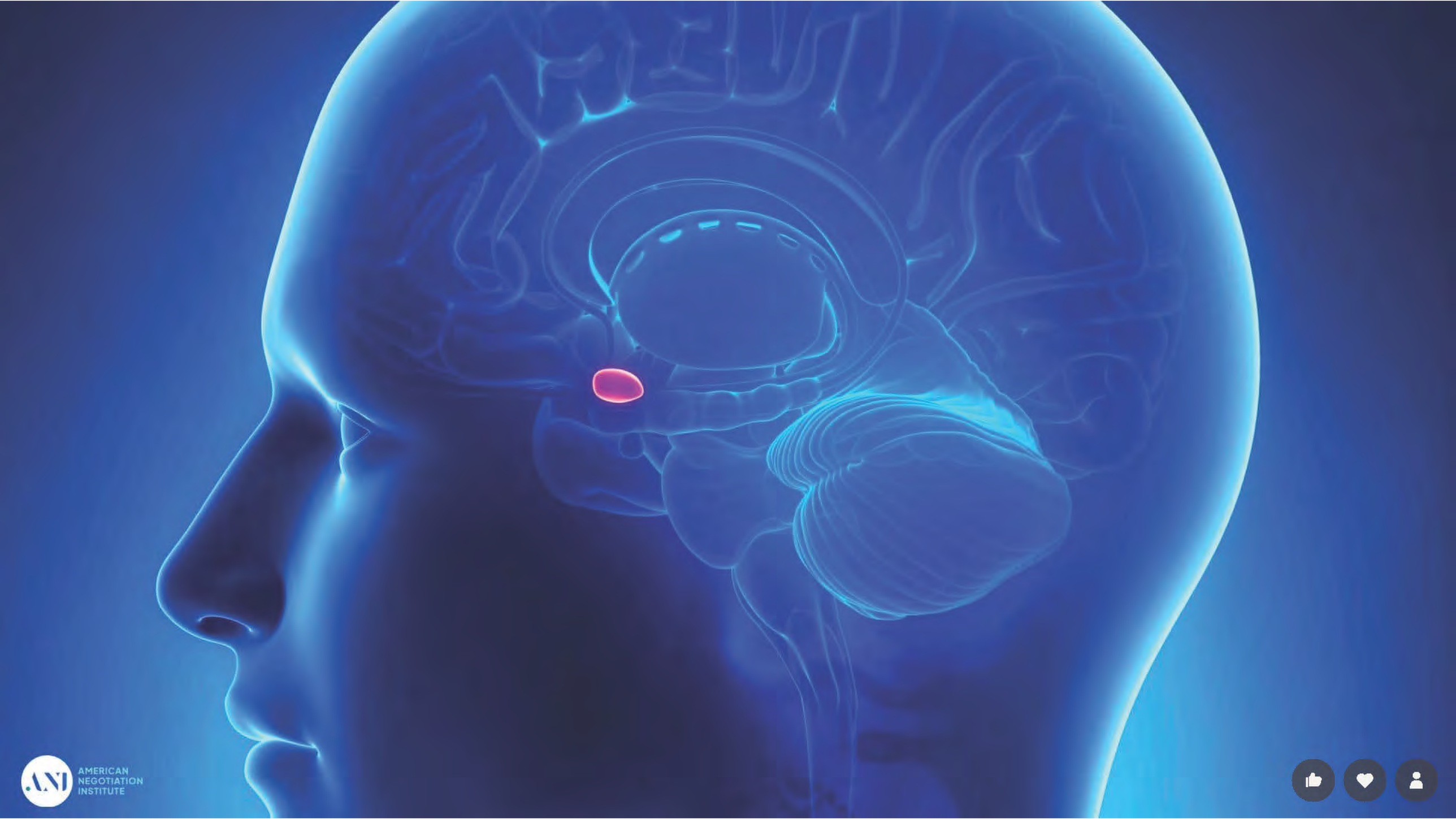
Who said this quote: **"There's no point in sending a message if they're not psychologically ready to receive it."**


Me.

Address Emotions Before Substance



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Key Words

Name it to tame it.

- *"Based on what you're telling me, **it sounds like…**"*
- *"Correct me if I'm wrong, **it seems like…**"*
- *"Given how much you care about this, **I can tell that…**"*



Go-To Key Words Applied

- *"**It sounds like** this is a big decision and you want to make sure you're going about it the right way."*
- *"**It seems like** you're under a lot of pressure to keep this quiet until every piece is in place."*
- *"**I can tell that** this is important to you and you want to make the right choice."*

Less Clinical, More Human — Examples

Don’t try to sound like me. Sound like a more strategic version of yourself.

- *"That's a tough spot — you're trying to keep a lot of moving pieces quiet at once."*
- *"I can hear how frustrating it is to have this come up before you were ready to talk about it."*
- *"You've been carrying a lot of this planning on your own, and I imagine that's been heavy."*
- *"It makes sense that you want to protect this process — that's part of why people trust you."*
- ***"I came to you directly because I respect how you run this team, and I'd rather hear it from you than from the hallway."***



"I'm not into all this touchy-feely emotional stuff.

What if it doesn't feel authentic — or what if the other person is strictly business and doesn't want to talk about emotions either?"





Warm Empathy vs. Cold Empathy

Different tone. Same strategic function.

- **Warm empathy** — acknowledge emotions directly ("*That sounds frustrating.*")
- **Cold empathy** — acknowledge conclusions, perspectives, and beliefs.
- **Make them feel seen** — your simple goal is to show you can get where they're coming from.
- **If they resist emotion, validate reasoning — reflect how they're *thinking*, not how they're *feeling*.**



Cold Empathy in Action

Validate their reasoning without heavy emotional language.

- **Acknowledge Perspectives** — *"It sounds like, from where you sit, an early leak could create confusion and pressure before the role is even approved."*
- **Acknowledge Conclusions** — *"It seems like you've concluded the fairest move is to say nothing to anyone until the role is official, and I can understand why."*
- **Acknowledge Beliefs** — *"I can tell that you believe a clean, fair process matters more than speed, and that the right person should earn this on merit."*



Step 2: Get Curious With Compassion

Have you ever been accused of yelling when you didn't think you were yelling?

0 Yes

0 I'm lying

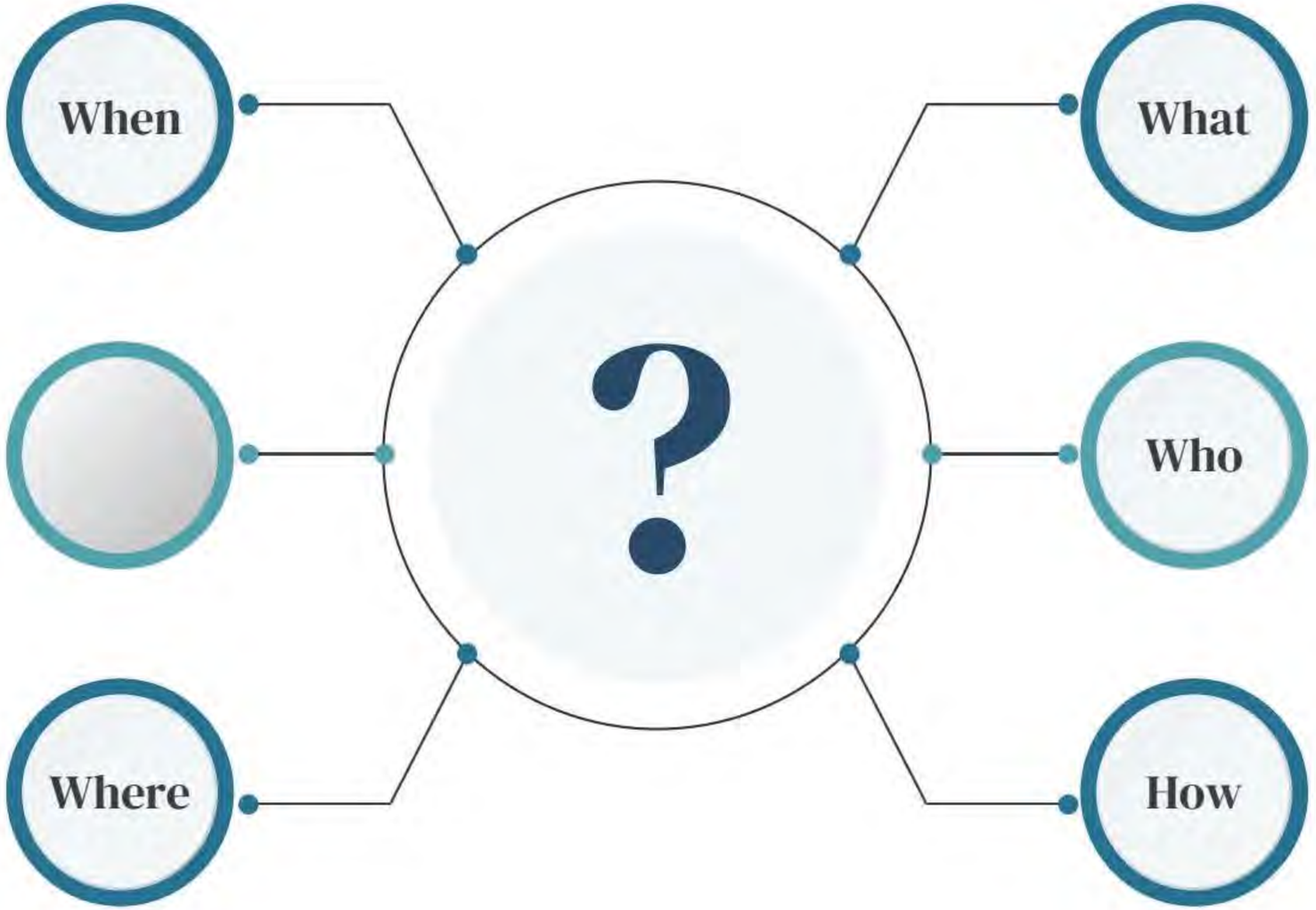


Mirror Neurons

The Tone Trap: Why Great Questions Still Might Get Bad Answers

Protecting Psychological Safety through Emotional Contagion.

- **Mirror Neurons -** Brains are hardwired to reflect the emotions they see.
- **Emotions Are Contagious -** "Vibes" matter. Because emotions are contagious, the energy you bring to these questions dictates the energy of the answers you receive.
- **Psychological Safety -** This is the engine of Step 2. A poor tone diminishes safety, which immediately destroys the vulnerability needed for a real breakthrough.
- **The Bridge to Great Answers -** Even the best questions won't get great answers without vulnerability. If the tone is off, you won't learn the truth about their situation.


When
What
?
Who
Where
How

The Right Question at the Right Time

Interest-based questions uncover the why behind the demand — and that's where deals get made.

Who — *"Who else will have a say in who fills this role?"*

What — *"What would the right person need to accomplish in the first year?"*

Where — *"Where do you see the biggest gap on the team right now?"*

When — *"When would you ideally want someone in the seat?"*

How — *"How will you know you made the right choice?"*

Collaborative Framing — *"What kind of impact would you want this person to have on the team?"*

Bonus — *"Hypothetically, what would it take for you to feel comfortable seeing me in this position?"*

The Question Funnel

"I don't want to make any assumptions. Can you help me understand what your goal is for this position?"



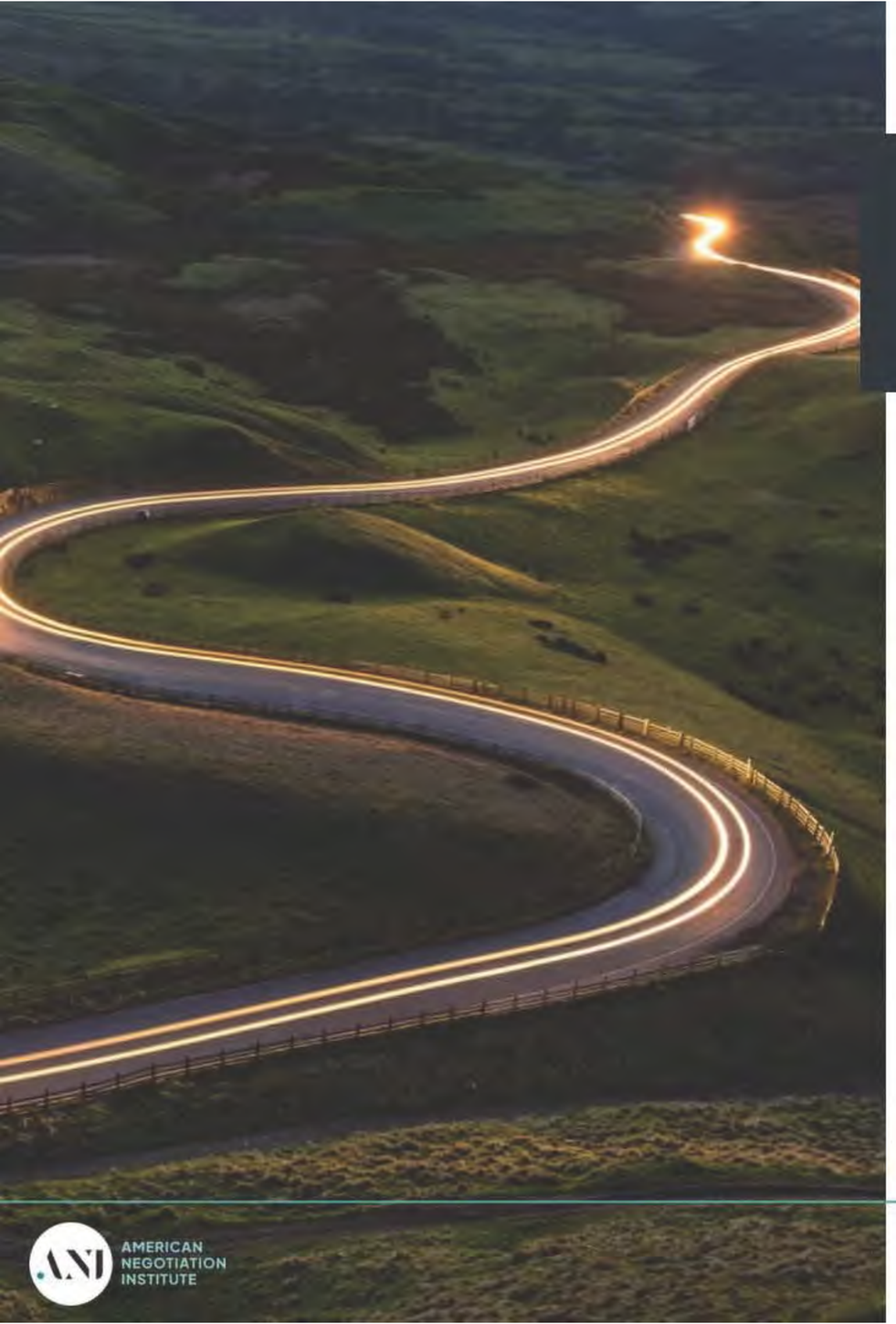
- Open-Ended Exploration — Broad & General.
- Probing & Clarifying — Encouraging Reflection.
- Testing Assumptions — Encouraging Perspective-Taking.
- Persuasion, Closing & Commitment — Driving Toward Action.



Guiding Curiosity

Pay attention to...

- Pace
- Volume
- Tone
- Repetition
- Body Language



The Empathy Loop

How to Get Them to Share.

1. **Listen.**

2. **Summarize**: *"Correct me if I'm wrong, but it sounds like…"*

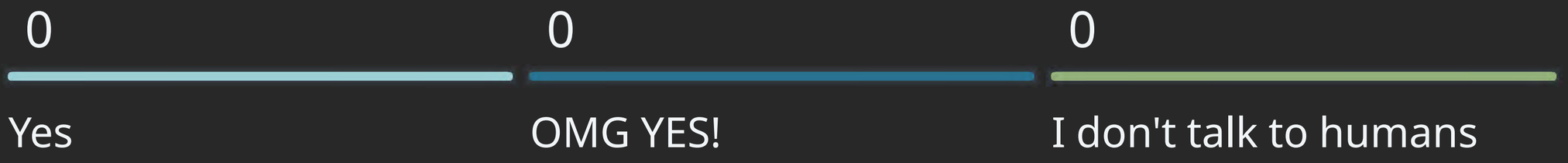
3. **Confirm understanding**: *"Is that a fair synopsis?"*

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Joint Problem Solving

Does this sound familiar? You have facts, logic, and data on your side but they still don't agree.



Being Right

VS

Being Persuasive


Egocentric Persuasion
VS
Empathetic Persuasion

Future-Focused Problem Solving



The Copy Machine Study

The Goal: Get permission to cut in line.

- Request only: "*Excuse me, may I use the copier?*" → **60% compliance.**
- Request + real reason: "*May I use the copier because I'm in a rush?*" → **94% compliance.**
- Request + weak reason: "*May I use the copier because I have to make copies?*" → **93% compliance.**

The word "because" carries persuasive power—
the source behind it determines how strong it becomes.



How To Make Your Case

Make sure you pass the “Because” Test.

- Your "because" must reference a source THEY respect — even if you don't.
- Don't argue who's right — connect to what truly matters to them.
- They are the best source to reference — "*Earlier you mentioned that you want someone in this position who knows the company well, is ready to lead on day one, and has a track record of delivering projects successfully — I believe I’m the best choice for the team because I’m a proven candidate the team already knows and respects, I keep the transition in-house, and you’ve trusted me for years with the hardest projects, which I’ve always delivered on time and under budget.”*

The Keys to Persuasion

Negotiation is the art of letting them have your way.

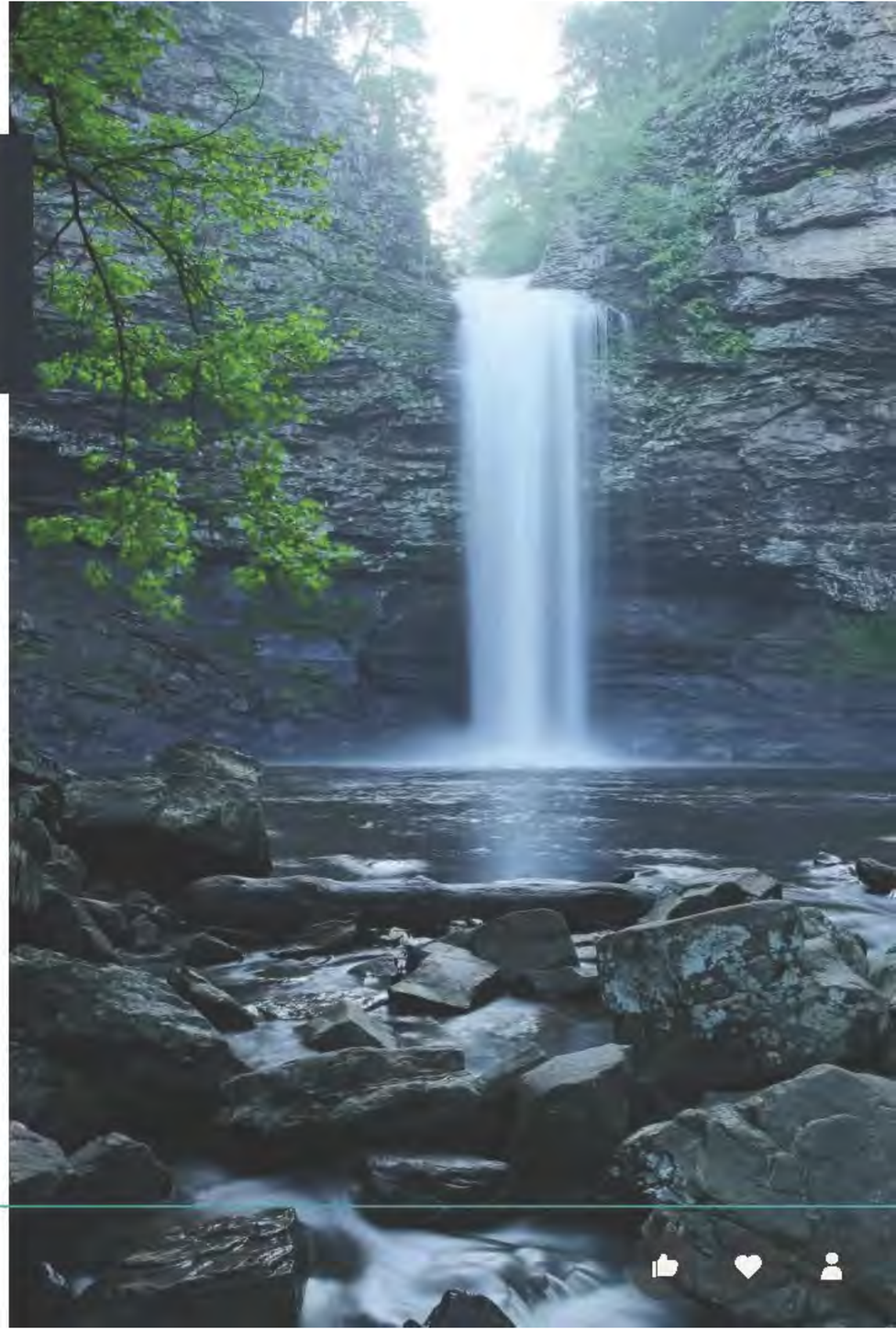
- Let them give you the keys — their answers tell you exactly how to persuade them.
- Stop trying to convince — pushing your case first invites them to push back.
- Ask and gather — every question reveals what they value and what they fear.
- Serve it back — restate their words in a way that points to you.
- Let them convince themselves — people trust conclusions they reach on their own.

Mindset Shift

It's not me vs. you — it's ***you and me vs. the problem.***

- We're on the same team here.
- The goal isn't to compete, it's to collaborate.
- You're working **with** them, not against them.

That mindset shift changes *everything*: it lowers defensiveness, builds trust, and makes collaboration possible.



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Collaboration Builds Commitment





Did We Achieve Our Goals?

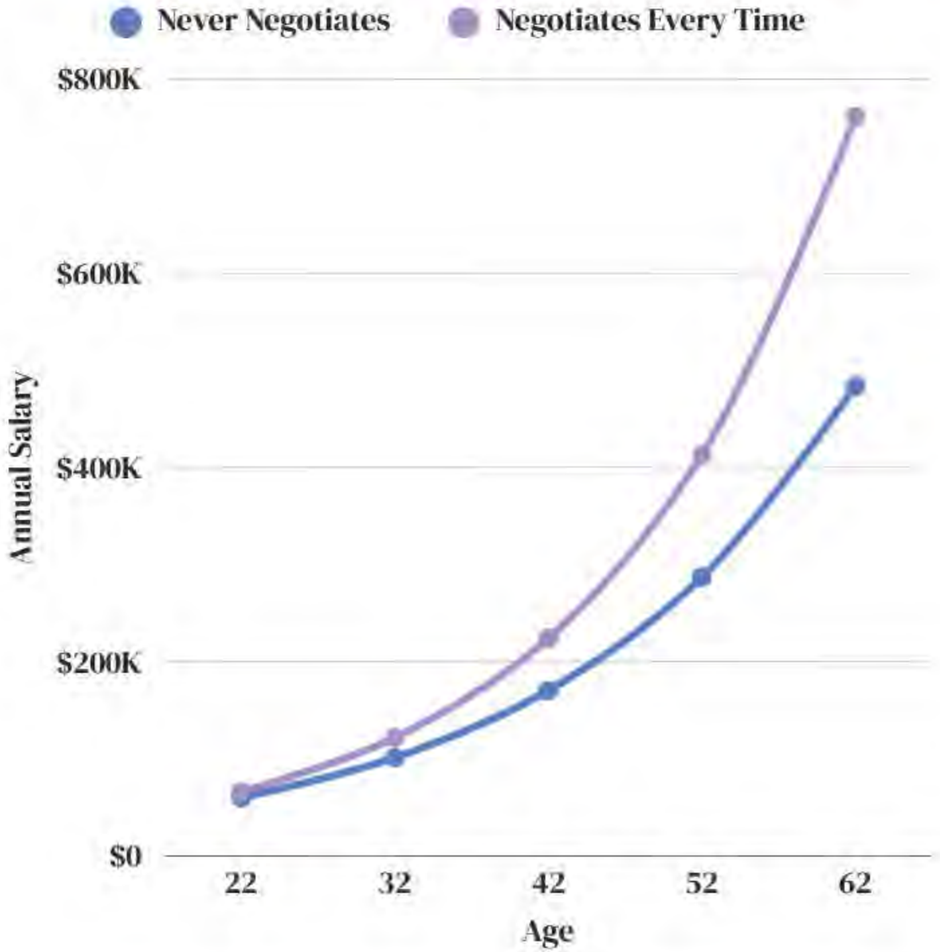
✅ You can **manage expectations and build trust** while keeping negotiations productive.

✅ You know how to **persuade while dealing with emotions using Compassionate Curiosity.**

✅ You have practical, actionable **tools you can apply immediately to real negotiations.**

The Cost of Not Asking

Same job. Same raises. Same promotions. One difference.



- Two 22-year-olds, $60,000 each — one negotiates at hire and at every promotion, the other never does.
- Identical treatment after that — both get 3.5% annual raises and 9.3% promotion bumps every five years.
- By 62 the gap is $277,000 a year — $483,868 versus $761,251, for the same work.
- Lifetime difference: $3,081,513 — in wages alone.
- Most of it arrives after 50 — by the time you can feel it, there is no time left to fix it.

Starting salary per NACE 2025. Raise and promotion rates per Mercer and WorldatWork 2025. Retirement age 63 per Center for Retirement Research, Boston College.

The Number Underneath

Lost wages are only half the loss. The other half is what that money would have become.

- He pays tax on the extra first — then invests what's left at the market's historical 10% average.
- At 63 he retires with $8,478,802 — built entirely from money that was sitting on the table.
- She retires with nothing extra — not because she invested badly, but because there was nothing to invest.
- Even one negotiation is worth $3,612,382 — ask once at 22, never again, and that is the difference.
- In today's dollars — about $1.1 million in wages and a $3 million portfolio.

S&P 500 long-run nominal total return ≈10% (≈7% after inflation). Assumes 30% tax paid before any investment.





Permission Is Contagious

You don't get what you deserve. You get what you negotiate.

- You can do this — you already have everything it takes.
- Don't just do it for yourself — do it for the women around you.
- They are watching — when they see you ask, it gives them permission to ask.
- That is how it changes — self-advocacy stops being brave and starts being normal.
- **Ask for yourself. Make it normal for the women around you.**

Amanatullah & Morris, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 2010.

Every big swing starts before anyone is listening



At 27, Kwame launched Negotiate Anything, and the American Negotiation Institute grew out of it. 16M+ downloads later, he's walking alongside the people taking their own swings.

Mindvalley Speaker of the Year 2025 · Global Gurus Top 10 Negotiation Expert 2026 · Top 0.5% of podcasts

Do you have the courage to take a *Big Swing*?

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115k+ followers

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