

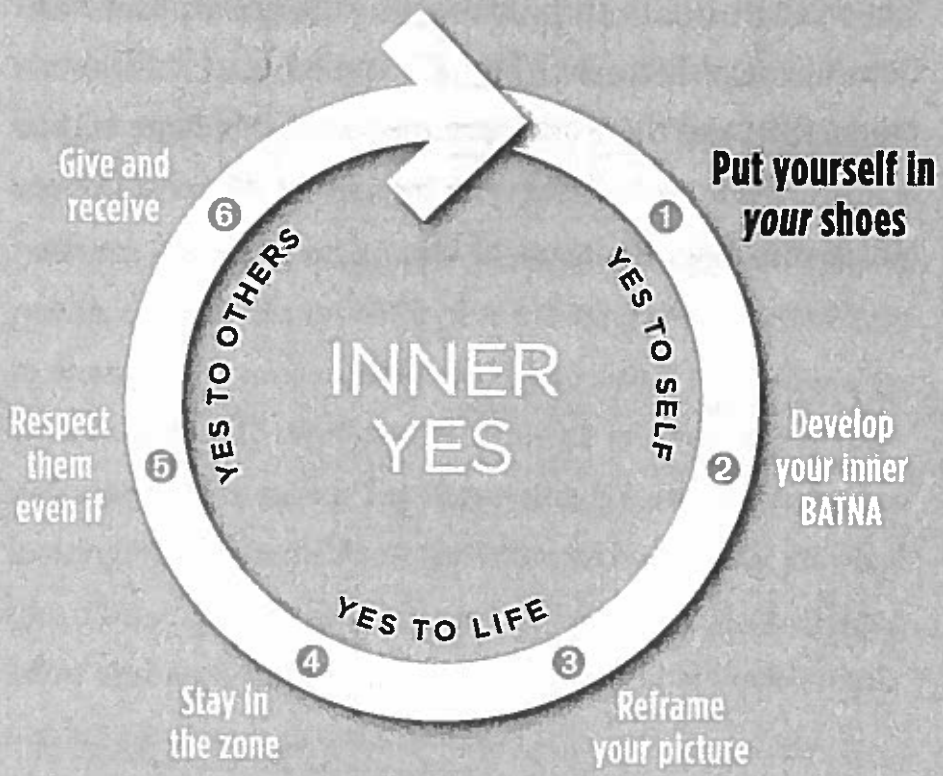
GETTING
TO
YES
WITH
YOURSELF

and Other Worthy Opponents

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HarperOne
An Imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers



PUT YOURSELF IN *YOUR* SHOES

FROM SELF-JUDGMENT TO SELF-UNDERSTANDING

Know thyself? If I knew myself, I'd run away.

—JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE

While I was writing this book, I was approached for help by the wife and daughter of Abilio Diniz, a highly successful and prominent businessman from Brazil. Abilio was involved in a complex and protracted dispute with his French business partner, fighting over control of Brazil's leading supermarket retailer, a company that Abilio and his father had built up from a single bakery. While Abilio had sold controlling shares to the French, he remained

as chair and major shareholder. A partnership that had started well years earlier had turned bitter. Two major international arbitration cases were in process as was a big lawsuit. The battle was the subject of constant speculation in the media. Who was winning? The *Financial Times* called the dispute “one of the biggest cross-continental boardroom showdowns in history.”

Trapped in a conflict from which he could see no way out—a fight that consumed his time and resources—Abilio felt angry and frustrated. The general expectation was that the fierce battle, which had lasted for two and a half years, would go on for another eight years, by which point he would be well into his eighties.

After studying the case carefully, I had a chance to talk extensively with Abilio and his family at his home in São Paulo. As complicated and difficult as the conflict with the French partner seemed, I sensed that the first and fundamental obstacle lay within Abilio himself. A man of dignity, he felt very disrespected and ill-treated by his business partner. He did not know what he really wanted most, to fight or to settle. In and out of the boardroom, he often found himself reacting out of anger in ways that went contrary to his interests. Like most of us, he was his own worthiest opponent.

The first step in resolving the dispute, it seemed to me,

was for Abilio to figure out his true priorities. So I asked him, "What do you *really* want?" His first response was to give me a list: he wanted to sell his stock at a certain price; he wanted the elimination of a three-year noncompete clause that prevented him from acquiring other supermarket companies; and he wanted a number of other items including real estate. I pressed him again. "I understand you want these concrete items. But what will these things give you, a man who seems to have everything? What do you *most* want right now in your life?" He paused for a moment, looked away, then turned back to me and said with a sigh: "Freedom. I want my freedom." "And what does freedom give you?" I asked. "Time with my family, which is the most important thing in my life," he replied. "And freedom to pursue my business dreams."

Freedom then was his deepest need. Freedom is important to all of us but it had special resonance for Abilio because of a harrowing experience in his past. Years earlier, while leaving his home, he had been kidnapped by a band of urban guerrillas. Confined in a tiny cubicle with two pin-size holes for air and assaulted by intensely loud music, Abilio thought he would be killed at any moment. Fortunately, he was rescued in a surprise police raid after a week in captivity.

Once Abilio and I had clarity on his deepest need, free-

dom became the “north star” for our work together, orienting all our actions. When my colleague David Lax and I were able to sit down to negotiate with the other side, we were able to resolve within just four days this bitter and protracted dispute that had gone on for years. The solution was surprisingly satisfying for everyone, as I will recount later in this book.

We all wish to get what we want in life. But the problem is that, like Abilio, what we *really* want is often not clear to us. We may want to satisfy others in our lives too: our spouse or partner, colleagues, clients, even our negotiating opponents. But the problem is that what *they* really want is also often not clear to us.

When people ask me what is the most important skill for a negotiator, I usually respond that, if I had to pick just one, it would be the ability to put yourself in the other person's shoes. Negotiation, after all, is an exercise in influence, in trying to change someone else's mind. The first step in changing someone's mind is to know where that mind is. It can be very difficult, however, to put ourselves in the other person's shoes, particularly in a conflict or negotiation. We tend to be so focused on our own problems and on what *we* want that we have little or no mental space to devote to the other side's problem and what *they* want. If we are asking our boss for a raise, for instance, we may be so

preoccupied with solving our problem that we don't focus on the boss's problem, the tight budget. Yet unless we can help the boss solve that problem, the boss is unlikely to be able to offer us a raise.

There is one key prior move, often overlooked, that can help us clarify both what we want and, indirectly, what the other person wants. That move is to put yourself in *your own* shoes first. Listening to yourself can reveal what you really want. At the same time, it can clear your mind so that you have mental and emotional space to be able to listen to the other person and understand what he or she really wants. In the example of the raise, hearing yourself out first can help you listen to your boss and understand the problem of the tight budget.

Putting yourself in *your* shoes may sound odd at first because, after all, are you not already in your own shoes? But to do it properly is not nearly as easy as it might appear. Our natural tendency is to judge ourselves critically and to ignore or reject parts of ourselves. If we look too closely, we may feel, as Goethe says, like running away. How many of us can honestly say that we have plumbed the depths of our minds and hearts? How many of us regularly listen to ourselves with empathy and understanding—in the supportive way that a trusted friend can?

Three actions can help. First, see yourself from the

“balcony.” Second, go deeper and listen with empathy to your underlying feelings for what they are really telling you. Third, go even deeper and uncover your underlying needs.

SEE YOURSELF FROM THE BALCONY

Benjamin Franklin, known as a highly practical and scientific man, reflected in *Poor Richard's Almanack* more than two and a half centuries ago, “There are three things extremely hard: steel, a diamond, and to know one's self.” His advice was: “Observe all men; thyself most.”

If you observe yourself and others in moments of stress during negotiation and conflict, you will notice how easily people become triggered by the other person's words, tone of voice, and actions. In virtually every dispute I have ever mediated—whether it is a marital spat, an argument in the office, or a civil war—the pattern is reaction followed by reaction followed by yet another reaction. “Why did you attack him?” “Because he attacked me.” And on it goes.

When we react, we typically fall into what I call the “3A trap”: we attack, we accommodate (in other words, give in), or we avoid altogether, which often only makes the problem grow. Or we use a combination of all three approaches. We may start off avoiding or accommodating, but soon enough,

we can't stand it anymore and we go on the attack. When that backfires, we lapse into avoiding or accommodating.

None of these three common reactions serves our true interests. Once the fight-or-flight reaction gets triggered, the blood flows from our brain to our limbs, and our ability to think clearly diminishes. We forget our purpose and often act exactly contrary to our interests. When we react, we give away our power—our power to influence the other person constructively and to change the situation for the better. When we react, we are, in effect, saying *no* to our interests, *no* to ourselves.

But we have a choice. We don't need to react. We can learn to observe ourselves instead. In my teaching and writing, I emphasize the concept of going to the balcony. The balcony is a metaphor for a mental and emotional place of perspective, calm, and self-control. If life is a stage and we are all actors on that stage, then the balcony is a place from which we can see the entire play unfolding with greater clarity. To observe our selves, it is valuable to go to the balcony at all times, and especially before, during, and after any problematic conversation or negotiation.

I recall one tense political mediation session when the president of a country was shouting angrily at me for almost thirty minutes, accusing me of not seeing the tricks of the political opposition. What helped me keep calm was to

silently take note of my sensations, emotions, and thoughts: *Isn't it interesting? My jaw feels clenched. I notice some fear showing up. My cheeks feel flushed. Am I feeling embarrassed?* Being able to recognize what I was feeling helped me to neutralize the emotional effect that the president's shouting had on me. I could watch the scene from the balcony as if it were a play. Having recovered myself, I was then able to recover the conversation with the president.

This is the point: whenever you feel yourself triggered by a passing thought, emotion, or sensation, you have a simple choice: *to identify or get identified*. You can observe the thought and "identify" it. Or you can let yourself get caught up in the thought, in other words, "get identified" with it. Naming helps you identify so that you don't get identified. As you observe your passing thoughts, emotions, and sensations, naming them—*Oh, that is my old friend Fear; there goes the Inner Critic*—neutralizes their effect on you and helps you to maintain your state of balance and calm. My friend Donna even likes to give humorous names to her reactive emotions such as "Freddy Fear," "Judge Judy," and "Anger Annie." (Humor, incidentally, can be a great ally in helping you regain perspective from the balcony.) As soon as you name the character in the play, you distance yourself from him or her.

Observing ourselves so that we don't react may seem easy,

but it is often tough to do, particularly in the heat of a difficult conversation or negotiation. As one business executive recently said to me, "I think of myself as a calm, cool person. And I am that way at work. But then sometimes, I find myself snapping at my wife. Why can't I stay calm like I am at work?" Like this husband, when our emotions get triggered, we all too often "fall off the balcony." If we want to be able to consistently rely on self-observation to keep us from reacting, it helps greatly to exercise it like a muscle on a daily basis.

Recently, I came across a mother's account of witnessing her own growing frustration in dealing with her four-year-old. Charlotte, the mother, wants to have a close and trusting relationship with her son, but his refusal to go to bed night after night triggers powerful reactions in her. Her account illustrates how difficult it is to resist the temptation to react and how practicing self-observation can help us make better choices. Charlotte writes:

Being both fascinated by and fearful of my newfound emotionality, I began to watch more closely what anger really felt like. The first thing I noticed was its seduction, its sexiness. There were times I could almost see myself at the emotional crossroads where one path led to calm, open-hearted resolution, the other to explosive anger. And it was hard, very

hard at times, not to plunge down the latter. At the moment, giving expression to my anger felt like the thing I most wanted to do; its allure was profoundly powerful and overwhelmingly convincing.

Charlotte investigates with curiosity the strong temptation to explode at her child and gets a glimpse of the “crossroads,” the point at which she can either give in to the anger or approach the situation in a calm way. If she gives in to her anger, her son will distance himself out of self-protection. If she remains calm, she can advance her core interest in a close and trusting relationship with him. What helps her maintain her state of balance is her ability to recognize the reactive pattern night after night, and to see that she actually has a choice *not* to react. As Charlotte realizes, self-observation is the foundation of self-mastery.

Try this yourself if you like. Investigate the feelings and reactive patterns that are triggered in you by a problematic relationship at home or at work. Notice the anger, fear, and other disturbing emotions that arise in you as you interact with the other person. Like Charlotte, learn to go to the balcony and observe these emotions and how they make you feel. See if you can spot your own crossroads, the moment in which you can choose between an impulsive reaction and a considered response that advances your true interests.

To develop a habit of self-observation, it helps to cultivate your inner scientist. You are the investigator, and the subject of your investigation is yourself. Psychologists even have a name for this: they call it "me-search." Approaching your thoughts and feelings with a spirit of inquiry—as Charlotte does when she examines the feelings triggered by her son's behavior—will help you keep your balance and calm. Mastering the skill of observation requires, moreover, that, like a good scientist, you observe the phenomenon with detachment and an open mind. It requires that you suspend self-judgment to the extent possible.

It is all too easy to judge our thoughts and emotions, to see them as wrong or right, bad or good. But in a psychological sense, there is nothing really wrong that we can feel or think. Actions can be wrong, but not thoughts or feelings. As inner scientists, we simply treat even the darker thoughts and emotions as interesting research material. I find a simple but powerful question to keep asking myself is: "Isn't that curious?" The question creates distance and opens the way to inquiry rather than judgment. As I have cultivated my own practice of self-observation over the years, I have come increasingly to appreciate the dictum of the Indian philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti: "To observe without evaluating is the highest form of intelligence."

One way to train yourself to observe without judgment

is to reserve a period of time once a day—it could be as little as five or ten minutes—to sit quietly in a comfortable position, close your eyes, and simply watch your passing thoughts and feelings, almost as if the sky were observing the passing clouds. If you get caught up in a thought or feeling, or even if a harsh self-judgment shows up, treat it as perfectly fine. Simply notice that you were caught up and go back to observing. The more you engage in this exercise of mindfulness, the easier it becomes. Bit by bit, you familiarize yourself with the workings of your mind.

Imagine a glass of water that you have just filled from the faucet. It is full of fizz and you cannot see through it. If you wait a moment and let the water settle, however, the bubbles slowly dissipate and the water turns crystal clear. That is what we are trying to do here with our minds: to let the fizz settle so we can see clearly what is happening inside ourselves. Before a challenging phone call or meeting, I find benefit in taking even a single minute of silence to myself. One minute alone with my eyes closed helps me to observe my thoughts, feelings, and sensations and to quiet my mind so I can focus better in the conversation. It is an easy technique available to us at any time.

Learning to observe yourself is simple, but not easy, particularly in conflicts. With practice, you get better and better. Ideally, the balcony is not just a place to visit from time

to time, but rather a home base. In your interactions with others, you can learn to be on the stage enacting the drama while at the same time watching it from the balcony. That takes practice, of course, but the more you can live your life with clarity and calm, the more effectively you will be able to deal with others and to pursue your interests with ease and success. The inner yes method is designed to help you go to the balcony when you like, stay on the balcony for as long as you like, and negotiate from a balcony perspective.

LISTEN WITH EMPATHY

Psychologists have estimated that we have anywhere between twelve thousand and sixty thousand thoughts a day. The majority of those—as high as 80 percent—are thought to be negative: obsessing about mistakes, battling guilt, or thinking about inadequacies. For some, the harsh critical voice of our inner judge is stronger, for others weaker, but perhaps no one escapes it. “You said the wrong thing!” “How could you have been so blind?” “You did a terrible job!” Each negative thought is a *no* to yourself. There is a saying that goes, “If you talked to your friends the way you talk to yourself, you wouldn’t have any.”

Self-judgment may be the greatest barrier to self-

understanding. If we want to understand other human beings, there is no better way than to listen to them with empathy like a close friend would. If you wish to understand yourself, the same rule applies: listen with empathy. Instead of talking negatively to yourself, try to listen to yourself with respect and positive attention. Instead of judging yourself, accept yourself just as you are.

Empathy is often confused with sympathy, but it is different. Sympathy means “to feel *with*.” It means to feel sorry for a person’s predicament, but without necessarily understanding it. Empathy, in contrast, means “to feel *into*.” It means to *understand* what it is like to be in that situation.

Listening to yourself with empathy goes one level deeper than observing. To observe is to see from the outside, whereas to listen is to feel from the inside. Observing offers you a detached view, whereas listening gives you an intimate understanding. Observation gives us the understanding of a scientist studying what a beetle looks like under a microscope, whereas listening gives you the understanding of what it feels like to be a beetle. You can benefit from both modalities together. Anthropologists have found that the best way to understand a foreign culture is to participate in it actively *and* at the same time to maintain an outside observer’s perspective. I find this method, called participant observation, is equally useful when it comes to understanding ourselves.

As I listen to myself, I notice that the majority of my

problematic emotions are the same every day. For example, one anxiety that pops up regularly concerns the daily to-do list that only seems to expand: *Will I be able to get through it?* To understand and reduce the intensity of these recurring feelings, I have come up with a daily exercise: In the morning, I imagine sitting at a kitchen table. As each familiar thought or emotion such as anxiety or fear, shame or pride shows up, I offer it an imaginary seat. I have learned to welcome all customers, no one excluded. I seek to treat them as the old friends or acquaintances that they are. As the kitchen table fills up, I listen to the free-flowing conversation of feelings and thoughts.

What about the inner judge? I make a place for him at the kitchen table too. If I try to suppress or exclude him, he simply goes underground and continues to judge from a hiding place. The best approach, I find, is to simply accept him as one of the regular characters in my life. I have even come to appreciate him as being like an old uncle who thinks he is trying to protect me but is often just getting in the way. Accepting him, I find, is the best way to tame him.

If nothing else, I find this kitchen table exercise helps me remain aware of these regulars so that they are less likely to catch me by surprise and sweep me away. I have learned, especially, to listen for any dark feelings or thoughts that I may normally disown or stigmatize. Anger is one of them. I have found that, if I don't recognize when I'm feeling angry

and then listen for what is behind that feeling, it can leak out in a destructive way when I least expect it, for example, in a sensitive conversation with my wife.

Jamil Mahuad, former president of Ecuador and a Harvard colleague, once shared how he gradually learned to deal with his painful feelings by putting these feelings in the spotlight. "Sadness . . . was not well received by males in my family. When some of my ancestors were really sad, they averted that emotion by expressing anger," he explained. "I had the same difficulty. Still it is not easy for me to connect with pain, with grief. But by recognizing and bringing this shadow to light, you start incorporating that 'new' part into what you are." By bringing his painful emotions "to light," Jamil was able to control his anger and operate with a balcony perspective as he conducted a difficult peace negotiation with the president of Peru, thereby putting an end to the longest-running war in the hemisphere.

Keep in mind that listening is not just an intellectual exercise but an emotional and physical one as well. For example, when you are afraid, try to feel the fear in your body. What does it feel like? Icy? Does it feel like a pit in your stomach? Does your throat feel parched? Recognize its familiar feeling and just stay with it for a moment without pushing it away. Try to relax and feel your way into the fear. Breathe into it if you can. That way, you can slowly begin to release it.

If this kind of deeper listening to yourself seems awkward or too challenging, consider asking a friend—or even a professional counselor or therapist—to listen to you until you are able to make a habit of listening to yourself. Or consider keeping a daily journal. I find that writing down my feelings and thoughts, even if only for a few minutes, keeps me on the balcony and helps me uncover patterns that I would not see in the rush of life. Try it out and you will begin to see and listen to yourself more clearly and understand yourself better.

One of the great benefits of listening to yourself before you enter into a problematic conversation or negotiation is that it clears your mind so that you can then listen far more easily to others. I have long taught listening as one of the central skills of negotiation and have noticed how difficult it is for people to listen to others, particularly in conflict situations. Could it be that the main obstacle is all the unheard emotions and thoughts that are clamoring for attention and cluttering up our minds? Could it be that the secret to listening to others is to listen to ourselves first?

UNCOVER YOUR NEEDS

If you listen to your feelings, particularly recurrent ones of dissatisfaction, you will find that they point you in the

direction of unmet concerns and interests. Properly interpreted, they can help you uncover your deepest needs.

In the old story of King Arthur, a young knight from the court sets out with enthusiasm to find the Holy Grail. Within the first months of searching, he sees in the woods an apparition of a great castle. Entering, he finds an old injured king seated with his knights and on the banquet table a silver chalice, the very Grail itself. The young knight is tongue-tied, however, and while he wrestles with what to say to the king, the castle suddenly disappears and he is left alone in the forest, disconsolate.

The knight continues to search for many decades without success until one day there springs up in front of him the very same castle in the woods. The knight enters and sees the king and on the table the Grail. This time, much older and wiser, the knight instinctively finds the right words. He asks the old king a simple but powerful question: "What ails thee?" As the knight listens to the king's woes and uncovers his deepest needs, a human connection of friendship grows between the two and, out of that friendship, the king gives the knight the Grail, sought after by so many.

That is the power of asking the right question. We can each take a lesson from the knight and ask ourselves about what is not going well for us. In what areas of your life are you not happy or fully satisfied? Is it work or money, family

or relationship, or health or general well-being? Feelings of dissatisfaction are the language that your needs use to communicate with you. When your needs are frustrated or unfulfilled, it is only natural to feel anxiety, fear, anger, or sadness. What, then, are these underlying needs? What do you most want? What are your deepest motivations? The better you understand your needs, the more likely you will be able to satisfy them.

I was once involved as a third party in a bitter civil war that had been going on in the jungles of Sumatra for twenty-five years. In a meeting with the leaders of the rebel movement, I asked them what they *really* wanted. "I know your *position* in this conflict. You want independence," I clarified. "But tell me more about what your *interests* are. *Why* do you want independence?" I still remember the uncomfortable silence that ensued as they struggled to answer this fundamental question.

Were they fighting chiefly for political reasons such as self-rule? Or economic reasons such as control over their natural resources? Or security reasons such as being able to defend themselves against a physical threat? Or cultural reasons such as the right to education in their own language? If they were fighting for more than one reason, what was their order of priority? The truth, as it emerged, was that, while they were crystal clear about their position—

independence—they were not as clear about the deeper motivations behind their fight for independence. Thousands had died in the struggle, but their leaders had not systematically articulated the underlying “why.”

In my negotiation experience, I find that people usually know their position: “I want a 15 percent raise in salary.” Often, however, they haven’t thought deeply about their interests—their underlying needs, desires, concerns, fears, and aspirations: Do they want a raise because they are interested in recognition, or in fairness, or in career development, or in the satisfaction of some material need, or in a combination of these?

In negotiation, the magic question to uncover your true interests and needs is: “Why?” “*Why* do I want this?” One valuable practice is to keep asking yourself why—as many times as necessary—until you get down to your bedrock need. The deeper you go in uncovering your underlying needs and interests, the more likely you are to invent creative options that can satisfy your interests. In the case of the raise, for example, if your interest is in recognition, then even if budgetary constraints prevent your boss from giving you as high a raise as you had hoped, you might still be able to meet your interest by obtaining a new title or a prestigious assignment. Uncovering interests opens up new possibilities that you might not have thought of before.

In the case of the civil war, my colleagues and I delved deeply behind the rebels' position of independence and into their underlying interests. Using a flipchart, I started writing down their answers to the why question: self-rule, control over their economic resources, preservation of their culture and language, and so on. The next question I asked was: "What strategy will best serve these interests?" Would it be to continue to wage war? The rebel commanders readily acknowledged that, because the government army was strong, the war could not be won even in ten years. Or would the best strategy be to form a political party and run for office?

It took some years for the rebel movement to debate and eventually choose the second political route. When they did, they negotiated a peace agreement with the government that gave them self-rule, control over their resources, and cultural rights. When the provincial elections were held, rebel commanders became the governor and vice-governor. While they did not obtain independence, they nonetheless advanced their strategic interests. That is the power of uncovering and focusing on your true interests.

The deeper we go in probing for our own underlying needs, the more universal those needs tend to become:

"Why do you want the raise?"

"To have more money."

“Why do you want more money?”

“So I can get married.”

“Why do you want to get married?”

“Because it will bring me love.”

“Why do you want to be loved?”

“To be happy, of course.”

The bedrock desire then, is a universal one: to be loved and happy. This may seem utterly obvious, but uncovering this universal desire can actually open up a new line of internal inquiry. If you don't get the raise at the level you want, can you still be happy? Does your happiness depend on the raise—or even on the marriage—or does it come from you, from inside? It is not an idle question. To the extent that you can find a way to experience love and happiness from the inside, you will be more likely to find love and happiness if you get married *or* if you don't, if you get the raise *or* if you don't.

Among our basic psychological needs, two universal ones stand out in particular. One is protection, or safety, which promises the absence of pain. Another is connection, or love, which promises the presence of pleasure. How can we protect and connect? Since life is, by nature, insecure and since love often feels insufficient, it is not always easy for us to meet these needs fully. But we can begin the process.

FROM SELF-JUDGMENT TO SELF-UNDERSTANDING

As straightforward and natural as it sounds, it is often not that easy to put yourself in your own shoes—to see yourself from the balcony, to listen to yourself with empathy, and to uncover your underlying needs. The journey from self-judgment to self-understanding takes hard and continual work.

To return to the earlier example I gave of my client Abilio Diniz, even once he had uncovered his deepest need—freedom—he encountered many internal difficulties in his way. Shortly after our conversation, Abilio gave a major and lengthy magazine interview in which he emphasized that he was moving beyond the battle with his former business partner in order to live his life. In the introduction to the article, however, the interviewer noted that, in the course of the conversation, Abilio mentioned his adversary by his full name thirty-eight times, hardly an indication of moving ahead. The following week, Abilio was in a board meeting of his organization and, despite his expressed intention to keep his cool, felt provoked and repeatedly called his opponents cowards. However much he tried, he found it hard to stay on the balcony.

When I next spoke with Abilio, who was becoming a friend in the process of our work together, he told me:

“The truth is that I am still furious. What can I do? I don’t know what I really want. Sometimes it is to finish the dispute and sometimes it is to carry on the fight. I may have no choice anyway but to continue to fight. Maybe I should just enjoy it.”

The process of getting to yes with yourself can often be difficult just as it was for Abilio. In the problematic situations we face at work, at home, or in the larger world, it is common to be torn and undecided and it is easy to continue to react. That is why the patient and courageous practice of putting yourself in your shoes is so vital. Abilio persisted. He had long intimate talks about his dilemma with his wife and family. He went every week to see a therapist to uncover his darkest feelings. He talked with me. He wrestled with his temper; and with dedication and discipline, he learned to spend more time on the balcony. By understanding and accepting himself just as he was, he became his own ally rather than his own worst opponent.

However challenging it was for Abilio to engage in this psychological work of figuring out what he really wanted and then reaching an inner agreement with himself, in the end the rewards were immensely greater: he received his life back. Even before we approached his opponent at the negotiation table, Abilio took concrete actions to pursue his freedom. He became chair of the board of another major

company, he found a new office outside of the company headquarters, he went on a prolonged holiday with his family, and he began to explore a new business deal. In other words, he said *yes* to his needs. This *yes* to himself opened up the possibility of approaching his adversary for a genuine negotiation, one in which neither side would lose. And that made all the difference, as we'll see later in the book.

As this story suggests, putting yourself in your shoes helps you become your friend rather than your opponent when it comes to negotiating with others. It helps you not only to understand yourself, but to accept yourself just as you are. If self-judgment is a *no* to self, self-acceptance is a *yes* to self, perhaps the greatest gift we can give ourselves. Some might worry that accepting themselves as they are will diminish the motivation to make positive changes, but I have found that the exact opposite is usually true. Acceptance can create the sense of safety within which we can more easily face a problem and work on it. As Carl Rogers, one of the founders of humanistic psychology, once noted: "The curious paradox is that when I accept myself as I am, then I change."

Now that you have put yourself in your shoes and uncovered your needs, the natural question to ask is: Where can you find the power to meet those needs? That is the next challenge in getting to *yes* with yourself.