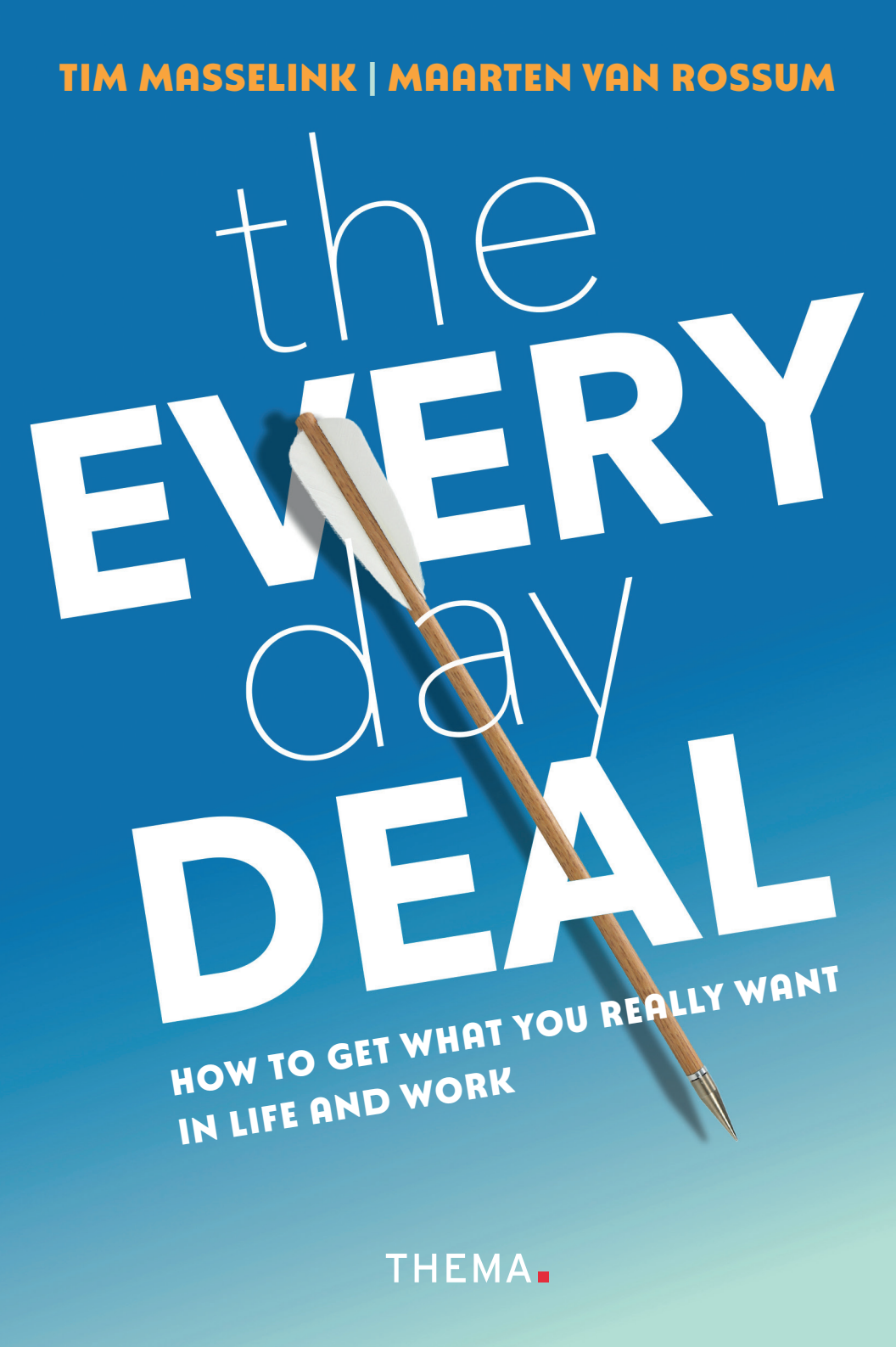
TIM MASSELINK | MAARTEN VAN ROSSUM

the EVERY day DEAL



HOW TO GET WHAT YOU REALLY WANT IN LIFE AND WORK

THEMA.

Foreword

Negotiation is my profession and daily reality as a lawyer, business mediator, and board member. But effective negotiation is never just a single style, a single trick, or a single talent. It is a collection of skills that you continually refine and develop: from legal acumen to diplomatic sensitivity, from relational expertise to strategic insight. Like a toolbox that you continually expand, because every situation has its own dynamics. What works in a boardroom does not always work in a confrontational situation where people are personally involved, and what seems obvious to do in politics can actually backfire in the business world. That realization alone brings peace of mind. You do not need to master everything all at once, as long as you know which tools are available and, most importantly, when to use them.

This book by Tim Masselink and Maarten van Rossum contributes to this targeted approach for professionals. They take negotiation out of the realm of cunning tricks and tough deals, and put it where it belongs: right in the middle of everyday life. Their message is that negotiation is about achieving goals together with others.

Working with others, instead of against them, closely aligns with how I view this profession. Moreover, they make this field accessible without oversimplifying it. They bring an energy and liveliness to negotiation that you rarely see. It becomes tangible, practical and engaging – because they show how skills truly come to life once you understand why they work. Tim and Maarten focus not only on the how, but also on the when: when to choose conversation, when to opt for creativity, when to be firm, and when to leave space for reflection. At the same time, they are not naive and recognize the power games, the pressure of deadlines, and the temptation to give in just to get it over with. That makes this book not only instructive, but above all highly practical.

My hope is that in these pages, every reader recognizes what I have discovered throughout my career: that successful negotiation is not about winning, but about truly making progress; not about being right, but about creating meaningful impact; and not about 'me' or 'you,' but about finding a form of 'we' that does justice to everyone who depends on the outcome. This book is not just a collection of tips, but an invitation: to expand your toolkit, deepen your expertise, and work together to build a new generation of negotiators who make a real difference – both at the table itself and in everything that it impacts.

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Introduction

The word 'negotiation' holds a negative connotation for many people. It brings to mind backroom deals, clashing interests, and parties unwilling to give each other anything. It conjures up images of winners and losers, coming home and getting an earful because you did not manage to get the most out of it, or on the drive home realizing what you actually should have said.

People feel that in a negotiation, you are being played because the other party pushes their agenda and is better at bluffing. Besides, negotiation often also means pulling all-nighters and the next morning, looking pale and haggard, having to admit that once again, things did not work out. The negotiations are – as you often hear – completely deadlocked.

But negotiating also can be very rewarding. It can even be exceptionally enjoyable. It is a matter of giving each other some leeway, taking the time to understand the other party's interests, and work-

ing together creatively to find a solution everyone can live with. It is magic when that works!

Afterward, the relationship will often have improved. You have something to celebrate!

We make a distinction between *bargaining* and *negotiating*. Bargaining is what many people think of when they hear the word 'negotiation'. But that is really just haggling – often it is only about price or terms and conditions. It implies a conflict; we associate it with winning or losing. Because of the fear of losing, or simply the fear of conflict, we often dread a negotiation in advance.

This is why we have a far too limited view of what a negotiation really is. We often think of haggling over a price, large business deals or well-known negotiators who regularly make the news. However, daily life is a series of negotiations. The conversation with your manager about taking a few months off to travel the world, deciding who within your team gets to work on exciting projects and your children's bedtimes.

The lessons and suggestions we offer in this book are designed to guide you through all those situations that you may not even recognize as negotiation. With a wide range of examples, from simple work situations to complex processes, we demonstrate how negotiation is always about achieving goals with people who are open to this.

This book helps everyone become more effective at getting what they want – without it having to be at someone else's expense! Not by using cheap tricks – we do not believe in that – but by clearly presenting what you want and truly understanding the other party's perspective. Negotiation truly begins when both parties intend to reach a deal and are willing to take each other's needs and demands seriously.

Reaching agreement together

Of course, despite our passion for negotiation, we understand that it is not always enjoyable. You may encounter a counterparty who turns it into a power game. Even when the involved parties intend to reach an agreement together, it can still be difficult to reconcile their respective interests.

At times like these, it is important to take a step back and consider the role that negotiation plays in the bigger picture. Negotiation falls somewhere between collaboration and confrontation.

Collaboration is the most rewarding thing. You have an overarching goal, and together you look for the best way to achieve that goal. Confrontation is at the other end of the spectrum. Negotiation is therefore a must to prevent us from ending up in a brawl.

This applies not only to individuals and (market) parties in a specific country, it also applies at a global level. We need to work things out together. As long as you are talking to each other, you are not at each other's throats. Negotiating skills are therefore an absolute necessity for working together, living together, and for peace.

In other words, we aim to structure the conversation in a way that steers it toward collaboration and minimizes the potential for conflict.

The process begins with a goal

In this book, we cover the entire negotiation process from start to finish. That brings us to the first lesson: to see it as a process with different phases – from goal to deal. People often jump to conclusions too quickly; for example, assuming that it will not work out anyway, while there are often more possibilities than you might think.

It takes some effort to figure that out, however. It requires openness from all parties, trust, and a willingness to engage in calm and con-

structive dialogue together. It also requires preparation. You need to be clear about your goals and your strategy, otherwise the other party will take advantage of you.

This book covers all of these topics, more or less in chronological order. We will start with the preparation phase. In this phase you need to have your own goals and interests clearly defined. What do you want to achieve, and is there perhaps another way to accomplish the same thing?

You also try to as much as possible anticipate the conversations you are going to have. Who is my counterparty, what are their interests, and how strong is our relationship? Is there a likeability factor – do we trust each other? And very important: do we have a shared starting point? That is a key to success, because it means you are less likely to stand in opposition to each other and more likely to stand *alongside each* other looking at the problem together.

In short, what kind of conversation do you expect? We distinguish between different types and examine the balance of power inherent in each.

At the table

After the preparation phase, you sit down together at the table. You exchange information, initially perhaps a bit cautiously, and then hopefully soon with a greater degree of openness.

If everything goes well, trust will grow. But what if the conversations are difficult and the other party relies on their position of power? How do you get a stalled conversation back on track?

Afterward, once a deal has been reached, a phase begins that is often underestimated: presenting the deal to your stakeholders. There might even be interest from the media. This brings its own unique

dynamics into play, where you sometimes have to revert to earlier phases.

Of course, not everything we cover here is relevant for smaller negotiations where less is at stake. It is nice to practice negotiating on a small scale – even if it is just negotiating with your child about bedtime or making a purchase in an online marketplace. From there, you can take the step toward more complex negotiations. Many of the principles are the same, whether you are negotiating your salary or custody arrangements, selling your business, making a deal about nature conservation, or forming a government and dealing with international politics.

We will walk through the negotiation process using questions you need to ask yourself. This gives you a clear understanding of your position and what you can do best in your particular situation.

Above all, remember this:

- Negotiation is not just about price; it is also about achieving goals with others, both at work and in your personal life.
- It falls somewhere between cooperation and conflict, and helps prevent disputes from escalating.
- Anyone who prepares thoroughly regarding their goal, counterparty, balance of power, and stakeholders greatly increases their influence.
- The principles in this book work just as well for major political deals as they do for negotiating with your colleagues or discussing bedtime with your children.

What is our goal?

It is, to say the least, remarkable how often people struggle to answer the question of what they actually want *in specific terms*.

We have asked this question at every conceivable hierarchical level, from department store managers to the top executives in multinationals. Almost every time, the answer was something along the following lines: a sustainable outcome, lasting results, not too expensive... and countless other things that anyone might perhaps want.

But when we asked them to be specific, you could almost hear a pin drop. Silence. Good question.

This is usually not because people have no idea of what they want, but because the people they represent are not yet on the same page. The sales department may want something different form the technical department. If there is a lot of diversity among your stakeholders, it becomes harder to give a clear and specific answer

to what you want. You then quickly fall back on abstract terms – a fair price, a good outcome – terms whose exact meaning are open to interpretation.

This does not only occur in large, complex negotiations. You might encounter this dynamic even when you are just selling your grandma's cabinet in an online marketplace. Suppose your spouse sees that cabinet as an emotionally valuable keepsake from grandma, while you mainly see it as an ugly, bulky thing you want to get rid of as soon as possible – there now is a difference of opinion among the involved stakeholders. It is possible that you will end up selling the cabinet for an amount your significant other thinks is far too low.

Preparing yourself can be a way to gain more clarity about the goal of your negotiation. For example, you can prepare yourself by taking a look at the prices for similar cabinets that are for sale.

This book is entitled *The Everyday Deal- How to Get What You Really Want in Life and Work* because everything starts with your goals. If you are not clear about your goal while the other party is clear about this, there is a good chance the negotiation will end in disappointment. You are then no longer in control, and before you know it, you have given something away that you will regret later. Those who are not clear about their own goals will quickly find that the other party is writing the script. Always try to stay in control of the process; do not become an actor in someone else's process.

Carefully considering what you want, discussing it with the people around you, and researching what is possible – all of these are part of clarifying your goals. The better you know what you want (and therefore also what you do not want), the better you position yourself for a negotiation.

Dare to discuss your goals out loud. Talk to a colleague or partner. Your environment often holds up a mirror to you, which helps you discover your blind spots.

Do not wait until you are at the table. Take your time for this. Challenge yourself to identify possible additional needs and actively seek out any missing information. Talk to others, explore practices both within and outside your organization, and make use of the knowledge available in your network.

All too often, your ideas start to shift when confronted with a cunning counterparty. You are in a stronger position if you have thought about this seriously and realistically in advance.