

For The Forces Of Good: The Superpower Of Everyday Negotiation
S. Lucia Kanter St. Amour
Synopsis, Contents, Chapter Summaries, and About the Author

Synopsis:

This is a companion book to Lucia's podcast launched in February 2022: *Forces of Good: The Superpower of Everyday Negotiation*.

The joy Marie Kondo sparked for home organizing Lucia Kanter St. Amour has kindled for everyday negotiation.

Have you ever arm-wrestled for chocolates, gamed with the tit-for-tat robot, or booked a session with a negotiation stylist? No? Ever tried to get a toddler to eat their broccoli, been in a conversation where someone repeats themselves over and over, or tried to reason with a person who insists their opinion is indisputable fact?

Ever faced a bully?

Yes? **This book is for you.**

With plucky prose and arresting content, it offers handy Everyday Super Tips . . . and Girl Scout cookies. Accompanied by a runway fashion show of original art, you might call it the little black dress (or white pantsuit) of negotiation literature. It's as visually splashy as it is enriching.

Negotiation happens everywhere everyday and it can be anyone's everyday superpower - even through small acts and language. Yet, negotiation is still viewed by the general public as a specialized skill mastered by experts, and one that you either have or you don't ("Negotiation can't be taught. Some people just have the skill and others don't," as proclaimed by a high school senior, heading to Brown University to study International Relations, at the author's 2022 Easter dinner table). Women, in particular, still consider negotiation cringey - many are uncomfortable just asking for something, prioritizing so-called politeness over opportunity and success.

Well, guess what? Negotiation isn't just for business and boardrooms. Negotiation is sexy. Negotiation is stylish. Negotiation is powerful and accessible *to you*. Every day.

For the Forces of Good is inclusive and aimed at a general audience. It handily vanquishes the myth that negotiation is some rarified skill for special settings carried out by elite executives or gifted individuals. Far from a dry, technical text, it's a just-so recipe of expertise and vulnerability. Lucia shows us all how to layer the cake with equal parts skills building, storytelling, social and historical commentary, and thought experiment.

The frosting on this yummy how-to book is how unashamedly it also flexes some intellect, imbuing the reader with that same intellectual prowess. Lucia navigates us multi-directionally, connecting the pieces - like the cunning video game super heroine unlocking each next level, making us smarter with every turn of every page, all the while sharing her humanity.

Contents

Dedication

Preface

- Chapter 1 Arm-Wrestling for Chocolate: A Negotiation Appetizer
- Chapter 2 Play Nice: Rapport and Haggling
- Chapter 3 “Little Old Ladies”: Negotiation Planning, Power, and Leverage
- Chapter 4 “Spidey Sense” In Negotiation: Planning Meets Interoception
- Chapter 5 Two Ears and One Mouth: How to Be the Most Powerful Person in the Room
- Chapter 6 The Cat Riddle: Perspective-Shifting and Imagination in Negotiation
- Chapter 7 The 1998 Hostage Crisis: Negotiating When There’s No Plan
- Chapter 8 Running from Russia: Storytelling in Negotiation
- Chapter 9 Raging Bull v. Atticus Finch: The Language We Use in Negotiation
- Chapter 10 “Are We There Yet?” The Use of Questions in Negotiation
- Chapter 11 Stick or Snake? Basic Brain Science in Negotiation
- Chapter 12 Bigshot v. Wallflower: Negotiation Style and Behavior
- Chapter 13 Sentimental Coffee Mug: Mental Maps and Traps in Negotiation
- Chapter 14 Time Out on the Field: Impasse and Mediation
- Chapter 15 “Hand Over Your Milk Money”: Negotiating With Bullies
- Chapter 16 The Marketplace of Ideas: When the First Amendment Crashes Your Negotiation
- Chapter 17 The Pause Heard ’Round the World: Negotiating Your Inner Voice
- Chapter 18 Special Negotiations: Every Day for Some

Chapter Summaries

Preface

The preface kicks off *For The Forces Of Good: For The Forces Of Good: The Superpower Of Everyday Negotiation* with my first conscious real life negotiation when I was a 10-year-old girl operating a lemonade stand at a family garage sale in the small town where I grew up in Illinois. It sets the stage for the reader in a number of ways: (1) me as a relatable author (I'm no one "special"), and what makes me a negotiation expert today; (2) the introduction of the idea that negotiation is not, contrary to common belief, an elite skill for C-suite executives, MBAs, sales professionals, or attorneys; (3) the promise of what I'll deliver in this book: a combination punch of everyday handbook meets meaty and intellectual research, history, and overall content.

Throughout the book (at least a couple per chapter), I offer **Everyday Super Tips** set apart in splashy text boxes. These are meant to break up the monotony of text and offer a "nugget" that will stick in the reader's memory.

Chapter 1

It all starts with chocolate! I walk the reader through a simple negotiation exercise that I used as the first lesson plan of every semester I taught Negotiation at the law schools - involving arm wrestling for chocolate. This chapter whets the appetite with an attention-grabbing lesson while introducing some basic concepts of negotiation that apply in everyday circumstances. The chocolate negotiations never failed to hook 10 years of law students who don't think they can be impressed, and it won't fail to hook the reader, either.

Chapter 2

Have you heard of the Tit-for-Tat robot? No? You'll know what that means after reading this chapter. In chapter 2 I introduce the importance of rapport (the HOW and the WHY with a handy DOs and DON'Ts chart - one of several throughout the book), and assign a homework exercise of haggling. I also discuss negotiating with technology and online dispute resolution (ODR), and introduce the Prisoner's Dilemma - a basic game theory framework that provides guidelines for cooperation and optimizing outcomes. Shakespeare's *Othello* also makes a cameo appearance in this chapter.

Chapter 3

This is a building blocks chapter (and includes Girl Scout cookies!). I walk the reader through 10 steps of planning for any negotiation (and even share how my law students groaned about this part before discovering how invaluable it is). I discuss the difference between power and leverage. Using the example of buying a used car, I provide handy charts and concrete steps for setting goals and thinking through interests, standards and norms, and information exchange (including some stealth tricks of the trade for guarding information you don't want the other side to discover!). The 2003 film *Pirates of the Caribbean: Curse of the Black Pearl* and the classic movie, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* feature in this chapter. Hmmmm . . . what do those films have to do with negotiation planning? You'll have to find out!

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 starts to combine the nuts and bolts bits of *For The Forces Of Good: The Superpower Of Everyday Negotiation* with the larger “thought experiment” aspects of the book. This is one of many ways the book has layers. Now that we’ve established the importance of planning (and how to do it), this chapter demonstrates how the plan then allows you to be fully present in the negotiation and *pay attention to your instincts / body* - your interoception, and remain flexible, take breaks, or adjust your plan accordingly. This chapter begins to touch upon cognitive science, and uses the example of Margaret Wise Brown’s *Goodnight Moon* as a trailblazing example of language and interoception as a tool to negotiate with society and shift existing paradigm.

Chapter 5

Want to know the secret to being the most powerful person in the room? This is the chapter that shows you how.

Possibly the most important chapter of *For The Forces Of Good: The Superpower Of Everyday Negotiation*, this chapter covers the quiet superpower of negotiation: Listening.

Think listening is a snooze-worthy soft skill and, besides, you’re already a spectacular listener? I say this with all the love in my heart: think again, petunia! I’ll explain WHAT makes listening so important and HOW to really nail it, using a 3-step tried and true system (also demonstrated in my podcast, and those two episodes are referenced for readers to hear a demo). I discuss what “noise” is and how to manage it; the importance of reflecting back both content and emotion to seek verification or clarification; and - through the story of the Jesuit priest - how waiting quietly for your turn to talk, or remaining silent while you nod your head and finally say, “I understand” is not actually listening. Finally, although asking questions is emphatically NOT part of the three-step process, I reveal the first of two “stealth questions” offered in the book.

Chapter 6

First, the riddle: In a square room there is a cat in every corner. In front of every cat there are 3 cats. How many cats are there in all?

Hint: it is not a math problem.

This chapter discusses perspective shifting in negotiation to achieve a deeper level of understanding, help save face, get unstuck from impasse, and brainstorm options. Solving the cat riddle also requires imagination, which is the second part of this chapter - and dips its big toe into some social anthropology. The lesson is that specifically and vividly imaging an outcome can actually manifest that outcome, that tapping into that “rebel” that we all have in us, and imagining even non-existent options boost confidence and effectiveness in everyday negotiation.

And of course, I reveal the answer to the cat riddle.

The book is illustrated with several of my own watercolor paintings, such as *Cat Perspective*, included in this chapter:



Chapter 7

This one is a cliffhanger: it tells the story of the time I was held hostage at gunpoint in Russia. We've discussed planning, we've discussed how to be "present" and use interoception once you have the anchor of a plan. What about when there's no plan? The beauty of this chapter is how I relate a very much NOT everyday scenario to everyday negotiation tools - namely, negotiating when backed into a corner and when you have no plan. That is, indeed, a scenario anyone can relate to.

Chapter 8

This chapter resolves how I escaped my Russian captors and then reveals the whole point of Chapter 7 and the first half of Chapter 8: the value and magic of storytelling in negotiation. Storytelling is ancient and transgresses all cultures. Everyone has stories to tell, and enjoys hearing stories. I proceed with a comprehensive summary of how and why storytelling is such a powerful tool in everyday negotiation (people are less likely to interrupt, builds rapport, easier to remember in tense moments than data, nurturing, provides relatable examples, hard to argue with). As with chapter 5, I also connect this chapter to a specific podcast episode; and I recommend a few favorite true story underdog sports movies.

Chapter 9

I consider this the "Tongue Fu" chapter. The language we use with ourselves, with one another and in negotiation is a complex topic. I start this chapter off with another anecdote and then break down the language from the anecdote to introduce how much "fighting" language is thoughtlessly bandied about in everyday communication and negotiation - and how it can derail things. I then shift to small and seemingly innocent language like "but," "always," "never," and "very." I discuss how to reframe language to change the whole mood of a negotiation or conversation; the language of mediators; the language of empathy; and the language of apology. Plato makes one of a couple appearances in this chapter.

Chapter 10

There's a reason *For The Forces Of Good: The Superpower Of Everyday Negotiation* is ordered as it is, with Listening appearing before this chapter - Questioning. This chapter examines the purpose of questions in negotiation (after demonstrating listening), and how the skillful use and timing of questions can be transformative in everyday interactions and negotiation. I reveal some "secrets" from the Mediator's Playbook of asking questions; dissuade readers from using the

“Why” question; and offer the usefulness of the “no-oriented” question. This is also the chapter where I disclose the second of the two “stealth questions.” (Hmmmm, what could it be?)

Chapter 11

Now that we’re warmed up, things start to get really yummy. This chapter lets readers adopt the role of a brainy neuroscientist as it provides a primer in neuroscience, emotions and how they impact decision-making in negotiation - along with understanding the myth of rationality. Some of these “aha!” nuggets will have the reader recalling earlier scenarios in their own life and can help navigate difficult moments in everyday negotiation. I’m not a neuroscientist (remember, I’m “no one special”)! I’m not even strong in the sciences (though held my own in mathematics). So, I’m living proof that just about anyone who has made it this far in this book can gain a basic understanding of the crossover of neuroscience, conflict, and negotiating. Readers love the stuff that makes up chapter 11. It makes them feel smart and as if they have traveled through a portal to understand a new dimension.

Chapter 12

If I asked you what your negotiating STYLE was, what would you say? And I don’t mean “throwback 90’s grunge” v. “non-binary minimalist in loafers.” A critical competency used by professionals - and one that will give anyone that added edge in everyday negotiations in any context, professional or personal - is to understand that we each have our own natural style when dealing with conflict. So, what is that? At UC Hastings and Berkeley Law, we taught the Thomas Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) to gain insight into the various conflict modes. The TKI is the world’s most used conflict-management tool for the workplace. This chapter discusses the TKI and how all Modes are useful depending on the context and players. It then goes beyond negotiating *style* to explore negotiating *behavior*: focusing on 15 behaviors and “hot buttons” for people to be aware of as possible emotional or psychological triggers - all of which I relate back to Chapter 3, step 10 of the Planning process. In fact, throughout the book, I draw connections for the reader to earlier or later material so as to reinforce and practice the tools as all part of a larger ecosystem. It’s all connected, and I don’t ask the reader to draw the connections themselves. One of the first rules of negotiation, identified in Chapter 2 is “make it easy for them!”

Chapter 13

Now we’re really getting to the juicy bits - and by now the reader has earned it! According to behavioral economics and the seminal work of social psychologists Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, the Rational Person theory doesn’t take into account all the reasons people behave the way they do. People make decisions relative to a reference point, and that reference point is the *status quo* - “where I am now.” Kahneman and Tversky categorized their work into a set of common heuristics: maps of shortcuts that the brain takes so that it can make decisions and function without causing us to collapse in fast-moving everyday life, which otherwise bombards us with far too much information to process. But many of these heuristics can also act as traps in a negotiation, if you aren’t aware of them. This chapter discusses a few of the most common mental maps and traps. Cassandra from Greek mythology makes an appearance in this chapter. Like chapter 11, audiences absolutely eat this stuff up! This series from my blog was at the top of

the scribd.com list when they offered me the acquisition deal in January 2022 (which I rejected, and, instead, launched my own podcast).

Chapter 14

A scene from *The Princess Bride* kicks off this chapter. What happens when you get stuck in your negotiation? You may not be as stuck as you think. The beauty of this chapter is that it calls upon many of the tips already imparted in the preceding 13 chapters as tools to bridge impasse. I discuss what does and doesn't qualify as true impasse and how to get help: by turning to a qualified mediator. In addition to some of the language and benefits of mediation already introduced in prior chapters, the second part of chapter 14 really dives into the substance of what it means to engage with an experienced mediator - and how enlisting our help is very different from working it out on your own. The plot twist of this chapter is its message of *optimism and hope*, even in the face of impasse.

Chapter 15

I wish I didn't have as much experience with bullies as I do. I've dealt with bullies from time to time since I was in grade school and as recently as a harrowing group bullying experience in 2021 that took me by surprise. So you'd think I'd be a pro at handling bullies. Yet this was the most challenging (and important) chapter for me to write for one reason, and I'm sorry to be the one to break the news . . .

I'm not convinced you *can* negotiate with bullies.

At least not alone.

Inclusion of this chapter was a deal-breaker. It is honest about the practical challenges of effectively standing up to bullies, while still offering realistic advice. This chapter is an example of the hybrid voice of vulnerability and expertise that is a hallmark of the entire book. Nelson Mandela makes an appearance here. *Star Wars* and *Alice in Wonderland* also feature in this chapter.

Chapter 16

Free speech. Fake news. Clickbait. . . . This chapter is a beautiful blend of history, intellectual thought, and reality-checking with real-world situations - and by Chapter 16 the reader is more than ready for it. It's short and sweet, discussing the history of the "Marketplace Of Ideas" paradigm of the First Amendment, and how to handle the current social trend of all opinions being represented as incontrovertible fact in a negotiation or conversation. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes and Dr. Neil deGrasse Tyson make an appearance here, as well as an imagining of what Friedrich Nietzsche might post on his Twitter feed. It ends with yet another plot twist of surprising advice - relating back to chapters 11 and 13.

Chapter 17

March of 2022. Did you see it? Were you watching?

Another short chapter, this one examines negotiating one's inner voice: the quandary of how and when to speak up against the status quo (or bullying or injustice), and what that calculus entails. I connect back to Chapter 11 and also discuss #MeToo, Edward Snowden, the Senate Confirmation Hearings of Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, and Dr. Eyal Press's very important book, "Beautiful Souls." I also tie in some research on two conflicting moral values and how it shapes these inner negotiations (and outward social judgment of them): Loyalty v. Justice.

Chapter 18

Now . . . after all that . . . watch this:

The final chapter is the magnum opus of *For The Forces Of Good: The Superpower Of Everyday Negotiation*. It rewards the reader with synergy: "Wow! It really does all fit together!" I use a scenario that does not apply to everyday situations (a special education negotiation) and show how it connects the dots from the Everyday lessons of the book. Of course, I've been connecting everything all along, but this final chapter ties together all of the previous chapters and lessons in an elegant harmonic symphony. It is sublime, inspirational, and ends with a next-generation childhood story, harkening to the Preface which introduced the book with a childhood story.

Symmetry!

About the Author

S. Lucia Kanter St. Amour is a Harvard Law certified mediator and has practiced law since 1998. For ten years she held regular clinical teaching positions in Mediation, and Negotiation at UC Hastings and UC Berkeley Law. One of the original designers of the EEOC's pilot mediation program in 1996 for the agency's San Francisco regional office, Lucia has a deep background in mediation. She has lectured at many prominent universities internationally; and served for several years as competition judge and mediator for the International Chamber of Commerce in Paris, France. In 2022, she launched her podcast *Forces of Good: The Superpower of Everyday Negotiation*, and was elected Vice President of the Board of Directors of United Nations Women - San Francisco Bay Area chapter. She is the founder and executive director of Spectrum Strategies, a 501c3 non-profit for families with kids with special needs. Studied in 6 languages, pianist, golfer, and cook of legitimate Italian cuisine, she lives with her family in the San Francisco Bay Area.