

# "Trick or Re-Treat?"



## Reconciling Interests: Effective and Lasting

### October Introduction

The intensity of summer's heat has faded and our arm's are extended for autumn's entrance. As we look ahead to Halloween and the upcoming holidays some of us may feel a sense of stress and anxiety. The hustle and bustle of life, family and daily responsibilities may cloud the pure joy that these special occasions may bring. Thus, we wanted to take the opportunity to share some basic tips for managing the difficulties that may appear as you carve pumpkins, set your Thanksgiving table, and shop for presents.

Please enjoy and don't eat too much candy corn!



When you're angry and have simply just had enough, do you stick around and fight or do you flee and collect your thoughts? Do you stew and then bury your emotions or do you stay and ensure that your rival agrees with your position? In the end, what we all need to really focus on is the substance of what we're fighting about so we know how to successfully manage it.

If arguing were easy it would be called talking. Unfortunately it's not and on a daily basis we are forced to argue with our spouses, children, neighbors, coworkers, friends, family, etc. Whether we are trying to be stubborn or not, it is extremely hard to "let go" of an opinion/belief that we have. Ury, Brett and Goldberg, authors of, "Getting Disputes Resolved," focus on the most successful



ways to get a conflict resolved and explain how we can integrate their findings into our own lives. Their research concludes that there are three ways to resolve disputes: **reconciling the interests of the disputants, determining who is right, and determining who is more powerful.** Although there are these clearly defined options, Ury, Brett and Goldberg explain that by reconciling our cares and wants, we are able to garner a better outcome without sacrificing too much of ourselves.

The authors state that our in-

terests encompass a great deal of who we are as people. They can be defined as, "needs, desires, concerns, fears—the things one cares about or wants." Because they include so much of who we are and what we do, it is not necessarily an easy task to work with them. But if you re-frame your interests-based conflict to resemble a problem needing to be solved, you will be able to face it with a better set of tools: creative angles, alternative options, and possibly an objective viewpoint.

Instead of feeling frustrated the next time you are entangled in an argument, allow for emotions to enter the discussion. They need to be vented before you're able to move on. Express yourself and recognize the emotions of the other party. (continued on pg. 2)

## Top 10 Halloween Candies...In Case You Were Wondering

According to Matthew Cahill of the Daily Press, here are the top 10 most desired candies from last year:

1. Snickers
2. Nerds
3. Tootsie Rolls
4. Life Savers
5. M & Ms
6. Reese's
7. Twizzler's
8. Butterfinger
9. Skittles
10. Candy Corn

<http://www.dailypress.com/news/dp-toptenlist.027,0,3991771.story>

## Reconciling Interests: Effective and Lasting (continued)

By acknowledging their feelings, you are validating their position by recognizing that they have opinions/ideas/thoughts that they are entitled to have, "hostility may diminish significantly if the aggrieved party vents her anger, resentment, and frustration in front of the blamed party and the blamed party acknowledges the validity of such emotions or, going a step further, offers an apology." Allowing for views to be shared is integral in finding a solution. You are opening up the space for compromise, mutual respect and resolution; almost without even knowing it.



One of the main reasons for starting with the underlying issues is that they tend to uncover what is the true problem. Often times there is more to the issue than what we see. Thus, by dissecting what it is that we feel, we may be able to resolve what's on the surface faster and more effectively. Generally speaking, people most of us tend to hide our inner-most beliefs so when we are able to communicate them, half of the battle has just been fought. Smaller, less important struggles tend to fall by the wayside and the crucial matters take priority. This is extremely helpful when time is a constraint and can be seen in workplace conflicts.

are more satisfied, their relationship benefits, and the dispute is less likely to recur."

Though interests-based negotiating is a terrific style to employ, there are circumstances when **rights** and **power determination** is necessary.

For instance, if a party is unwilling to come to the table to mediate, it may be necessary to establish who has greater authority and power so that interest-based negotiation can occur. This typically happens with communities, organizations, municipalities and other large bodies of people.

Lastly, it may be important to discuss and comprehend the rights of each party before negotiating in case the range of bargaining is not agreed upon. By clarifying the rights of each person, the negotiation has hopes of seeing an end with all parties feeling mutually empowered; which is the ultimate goal of a successful mediation/alternative dispute resolution process.

At one point or another, we may all be guilty of getting mad first and asking questions later. Yet, if we are to maintain the important relationships in our lives, it's imperative to understand the dynamic of conflict resolution. So, the next time you find yourself doing battle with a colleague, stop and evaluate your interests. Suggest they do the same and work from the new information you are presented with.

Ury, W., Brett, J., & Goldberg, S. (1988). *Getting Disputes Resolved*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, CA.

