

# NEGOTIATING MINDFULLY

A constructivist grounded theory approach proposing a conceptual framework linking mindfulness to negotiation effectiveness

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The concept of *mindfulness* continues to enjoy a prodigious surge in popularity.

Mindfulness attributes and benefits have been well researched and tested. In every sense of the term *mindful*, whether derived from Eastern tradition or cognitive psychology, being mindful in our lives is a skill that, if cultivated, will create positive outcomes in our daily experiences (Siegel, 2010).

On the other hand, research on *negotiation* also continues to thrive, as few objectives in life can be achieved without interacting with another party. Drawing on social exchange theory (Kopelman, Avi-Yonah & Varghese, 2012; Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976; Homans, 1958), Falcao (2010) proposed the *value negotiation* approach, offering a comprehensive strategy aimed at maximizing and enhancing financial gains while building and strengthening rapport and relationships.

Building on humanistic psychology (Rogers, 1959, 1961), this paper attempts to demonstrate that mindfulness can enhance the effectiveness of negotiation. To support this theory, I have conducted a qualitative research. Adhering to a constructivist grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2006), I selected thirty narratives from my negotiation experiences and collected these using a free association technique. The results suggest that when a negotiation was more effective, mindfulness was a causal condition. The key finding of the analysis is a new conceptual framework with four stages, covering a mindful approach to negotiation; this is proposed as a main flow through which a negotiator can progress. I suggest that this framework could offer a practical way to help individuals improve their negotiation outcomes, setting the scene for further development and testing.

## ABSTRACT

The concept of mindfulness and the theory of negotiation have long been studied. This research looks at negotiation theory from a humanistic perspective, proposing that mindfulness can positively improve negotiation effectiveness. A constructivist grounded theory methodology is adopted to analyze data collected using a free association technique. This analysis concludes by proposing a new conceptual framework for mindfulness, to be used in a negotiation context.

**Key words:** mindfulness, negotiation, grounded theory, constructivist grounded theory, free association.

## INTRODUCTION

Few objectives in life can be achieved without people interacting with each other. As an everyday vehicle for interpersonal interactions, negotiation has naturally attracted the attention of many scholars who have greatly advanced our understanding of the complex social and psychological processes involved in negotiation (Gelfand, Major, Raver, Nishii & O'Brien, 2006). Many researchers from different disciplines interacting with each other have begun to offer new negotiation concepts and strategies (Chia-Jung & Bazerman, 2009). In my opinion, the *value negotiation* approach proposed by Falcao (2010) provides the most comprehensive framework to date for an effective process that adopts a win-win approach, focusing on value, enhanced communication and rapport, to maximize and improve future gains and relationships.

As we practice negotiation in everything we do or say, it is pivotal that we negotiate effectively. The theoretical foundations of Falcao's model are grounded in social exchange

theory (Kopelman et al., 2012; Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976; Homans, 1958) and overemphasize the strategic directives and tactics to be followed. I believe that, as every negotiation involves interaction, the behavioral patterns, cognitive abilities and inner theaters of the individuals involved are bound to affect the process. I suggest that we need to engage *mindfully*, through a more holistic engagement, for a negotiation to be effective.

Finding its roots in the Buddhist psychology, the concept of mindfulness has enjoyed a remarkable surge in popularity during the last decade (Davis & Hayes, 2011). Two basic approaches underpin the concept in modern psychology. The first continues to be derived from eastern traditions that define mindfulness as the awareness that emerges from being in the present moment, paying attention on purpose and without judgment (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). The second originates from cognitive psychology, which characterizes mindfulness as being open-minded and flexible, welcoming new information and considering more than one view, all the time remaining sensitive to context and with the present moment (Langer, 2011). At the heart of each of these descriptions, there are mental processes and attributes that encourage the individual to be fully aware of self and context—flexible, receptive, open and creative. All these are attributes that can theoretically take us one considerable step forward toward achieving effectiveness in our value negotiation.

In this thesis, the literature on negotiation is briefly reviewed. The focus then turns to the concept of mindfulness and to various attempts by other researchers to link mindfulness to negotiation. I also consider various studies that explore the importance of some attributes of the negotiation process and outcomes that are established benefits of mindfulness.

This thesis aims to explore the link between mindfulness and negotiation effectiveness. Adhering to a constructivist grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2006), the data were analyzed using a free association technique to collect it. Analysis included

initial, focused and theoretical coding. Findings in support of a causal relationship between mindfulness and negotiation effectiveness are presented with an overview of the main themes that emerged from the focused coding stage. Finally, my key finding is that the data and analysis guided the development of and proposal for a conceptual framework with four interrelated stages that encapsulates a mindful approach to negotiation, enhancing its effectiveness. This research fills a gap by proposing a comprehensive conceptual framework that links mindfulness to *value negotiation*; I suggest that this framework could offer individuals a practical way to improve their negotiation outcomes.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### NEGOTIATION

Negotiation is inherent in any human interaction. It is an everyday vehicle for interpersonal interactions (Fulmer & Barry, 2004). We negotiate every day for different purposes, as few objectives in life can be achieved without interacting with another party. So, “like it or not, you are a negotiator. Negotiation is a fact of life” (Fisher & Ury, 2012: xxv). Falcao (2010) offers a comprehensive assessment of the important aspects of negotiation, pointing out that: (1) negotiation is everywhere, in almost every single communication between two or more people; (2) negotiation is not a skill but a process that requires different (learnable) skills in action; and (3) every negotiation entails a relationship.

Research on negotiation continues to thrive. Empirical research has been predominantly grounded in economic theory, behavioral decision-making and cognitive psychology traditions (Kopelman et al., 2012; Bazerman, Curhan, Moore & Valley, 2000; Kahneman & Tversky, 1973; Thompson, Wang & Guinea, 2010). In late 1980, researchers with a broader theoretical lens and a grounding in social psychology conceptualized

negotiation as “a social exchange and a focus on financial and/or relational instrumental outcomes” (Kopelman et al., 2012:592). Social exchange theory (Kopelman et al., 2012; Blau 1964; Emerson, 1976; Homans, 1958) “characterizes social relationships as interactions in which self-interested actors transact with other self-interested actors to accomplish individual goals they cannot achieve independently. Interdependence and self-interest are central assumptions” (Kopelman et al., 2012: 592). According to this theory, the focus is not solely on financial value but “also on idiosyncratic personal preferences and relational value in an exchange process that includes subjective cost-benefit analyses and the comparison of alternatives” (Kopelman et al., 2012: 592). I believe that the “*value negotiation*” approach proposed by Falcao (2010), which builds on the “principled negotiation” approach introduced by Fisher and Ury (2012), offers a fairly robust framework and win-win approach; it uses a social exchange theory lens to focus on outcomes that include financial gain, building rapport that can maximize and enhance future gains and relationships.

Falcao (2010) outlined the seven elements of negotiation as relationship, communication, interests, options, legitimacy, commitments and alternatives. He identified three kinds of negotiations (relationship, substance and communication) in almost every encounter, and offered a road map with strategic tactics to guide the negotiator throughout the process. By identifying and understanding such concepts as interdependence, collaboration, reducing resistance, clear communication, understanding and creating value and making choices, Falcao provides tools to make the negotiation process more effective.

I suggest that Falcao’s (2010) model overemphasizes strategic directives and tactics and underemphasizes the personal attributes and skills needed to enhance effectiveness. To fill this gap, I propose to explore a framework that complements value negotiation by building on humanistic psychology, with its emphasis on a person’s phenomenological experiences, feelings and values (Kopelman et al., 2012), and the

person-centered theory (Rogers 1959, 1961) which asserts that behavior cannot be “adequately accounted for by a knowledge of the individual’s previous conditionings, but only if we grant the presence of a spontaneous force within the organism which has the capacity of integration and redirection” (Rogers, 1946: 422) . These approaches require a holistic engagement that includes one’s own self and others (Kopelman et al., 2012; Rogers 1959, 1961). Parties make use of their full range of feelings, staying present and focused, without any inner barriers to interrupt the engagement. Building on these assumptions, I propose to explore the concept of mindfulness.

## **MINDFULNESS**

During the past decade, the concept of mindfulness has enjoyed a prodigious surge in popularity, evolving from an obscure, 2,600 year-old Buddhist concept into a mainstream psychotherapy construct (Davis & Hayes, 2011). *Mindful* is a term that conjures up many meanings. In plain language, its synonyms include: alert, careful, thoughtful and watchful. The term has also been used to describe being open-minded and avoiding the premature closure of possibilities (Langer, 1989; Siegel, 2010). It is also used to describe being aware on purpose without any judgment of what is happening in the present moment (Kabat-Zinn, 2008; Siegel, 2010). Here, to be consistent with the literature reviewed in this thesis, the term *mindfulness* refers to a psychological state and not to a set of practices or a trait.

Two basic approaches underpin the concept of mindfulness in modern psychology (Hede, 2010). The main one derives from the eastern tradition (Sujato, 2012; Hahn, 2012; Baer, 2003, Kabat-Zinn, 1990, 1994, 2008; Martin, 2002). Perhaps “the most known and influential work on the introduction of mindfulness in clinical practice has been done by Jon Kabat-Zinn” (Childs, 2007: 367). The other approach comes from cognitive psychology

(Langer, 1989; Langer & Imber, 1980; Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000). My research draws on the literature of both approaches without differentiating between them.

Kabat-Zinn defined the concept of mindfulness as a “moment to moment, non-judgmental awareness, cultivated by paying attention in a specific way, that is, in the present moment, and as non-reactively, as non-judgmentally, and as openheartedly as possible ” (cited in Hede, 2010: 95). Mindfulness develops an insightful, penetrative awareness, “a seeing underneath the surface or through the other form of things to their truest nature. Behind surface appearances, we can perceive unsuspected dimensions of relationship and connectivity, a sense of interconnectedness of things, including oneself” (Kabat-Zinn, 2002: 69). In his book *Full Catastrophe Living*, Kabat-Zinn (1990) touches on the capacity of mindfulness to develop the ability to see what is beneath the surface: “When we begin paying attention to what your mind is doing, you will probably find that there is a great deal of mental and emotional activity going on beneath the surface” (Kabat-Zinn, 1990: 25). He continues, “As you embark upon your own practice of mindfulness meditation, you will come to know something for yourself about your own not knowing. It is not that mindfulness is the answer to all life’s problems. Rather it is that all life’s problems can be seen more clearly through the lens of a clear mind” (Kabat-Zinn, 1990: 25–6). Mindfulness cultivates the capacity to know what we are thinking, feeling and sensing as it happens (Kabat-Zinn, 1994) so we can enter our experience at any time and transform it. This is what Flavell (1976) calls the “metacognitive” dimension of mindfulness, referring to our knowledge of our own cognitive processes or anything related to them (cited in Chaskalson, 2011). Mindfulness enhances our ability to place attention where we want it to be and keep it there for longer (Jha, Krompinger & Baime, 2007; Jha, Stanley, Wong & Gleaned, 2010; Chaskalson, 2011).

Langer (2011: 279) defined mindfulness as “a flexible state of mind that is characterized by openness to novelty, becoming sensitive to context and perspective without being trapped in rigid mindsets, all while we are situated in the present moment”. Langer (2011) outlines alertness to distinction and awareness of multiple perspectives, making it clear that mindfulness refers to active and fluid information processing (Langer, 1989). Burgoon, Berger & Waldron (2000) conclude that substantial benefits in a variety of communication contexts can accrue as a result of greater mindfulness prior to and during communication. A mindful approach involves looking at things from many perspectives, recognizing that an advantage from one perspective could be a disadvantage from another. “The evaluation positive or negative is a state of mind,” Langer said, “it means that the number of consequences one could enumerate for any action are dependent on the individual’s interest in noting them and the evaluation of each of these consequences is dependent on the view taken of them” (Langer, 2011: 283). Through mindfulness, we learn to live with uncertainty rather than accepting whatever in front of us because it is certain and regretting it afterwards. We look for more information and alternative solutions (Langer, 1989). A study by Ostafin and Kassman (2012) concludes that a direct relationship exists between mindfulness and insightful problem-solving (creativity).

According to Kopelman et al. (2012: 597), “a reliable and validated measure of mindfulness includes five factors: observing, describing, acting with awareness, non-judging of inner experience and non-reactivity to inner experience; whilst Bodner (2000) (cited in Baker, 2007) identified four interrelated traits that characterize a mindful person: engagement, novelty seeking, flexibility, and novelty producing.

Niemiec, Rashid, and Spinella (2012) explored the conceptual integration of mindfulness and character strengths. Their work builds on Niemiec’s (2012) studies of mindful living. Using the VIA Classification of 24 characters and 6 virtues (Seligman, 2011) as their basis, they outlined the contributions of many scholars working to establish a

connection between mindfulness traits and practices and various strengths and virtues. The few I find particularly relevant to my own research include: (a) self-regulation of attention, whether to internal or external experience, characterized by curiosity, openness and acceptance of the experience in the present moment (Bishop et al., 2004; Niemiec et al., 2012); (b) the close link between mindfulness and the ability to “adaptively self-regulate feelings and actions” (Niemiec et al., 2012 ; Baliki, Gera, Apkarian & Chialvo, 2008; Eisenberg & Spinrad, 2004) — “In flexing the self regulation muscle, a mindful disposition offers new insights by enhancing cognitive flexibility” (Niemiec et al., 2012: 243); (c) “Mindfulness seems to be a core feature of many cognitive-oriented strengths (the virtue of wisdom and knowledge) and self-control oriented strengths (the virtue of temperance) (Niemiec et al., 2012: 244); and Langer (1989, 2011), who took a “cognitive view when she defined mindfulness as the continuous creation of new categories, openness to new information and novelty, and implicit awareness of more than one perspective. Similarly, in character strengths language, curiosity and judgment might be seen as acts of creativity and learning” (Niemiec et al., 2012: 244).

The concept of emotional intelligence defined by Goleman (1996) as predicting success more accurately than academic intelligence comprises five basic emotional and social competencies: self awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. Riskin (2006) argues that mindfulness practices can develop the first four of these competencies, thus helping to produce the fifth. Hill and Updegraff, (2012) conclude that mindfulness may improve emotion regulation by influencing people’s awareness of their emotional experience.

In his book *The Mindful Workplace*, Chaskalson (2011) argues that mindfulness increases levels of resilience and emotional intelligence, raising self-awareness and awareness of others, improving interpersonal sensitivity, focus and communication skills,

while reducing impulsivity and enhancing one's capacity to hold and manipulate information, thus increasing the capacity to innovate and be creative.

Van de Hurk et al. (2011) investigated the relationship between the practice of mindfulness and personality traits, concluding that the practice of mindfulness is positively related to openness and extraversion. More specifically, Thompson and Waltz (2007) found a positive relationship between mindfulness skills and "agreeableness." A few studies claim that it is possible to change personality (Helson, Kwan, John & Jones, 2002; Piedmont 2001) and suggest that experiences and the environment play a big role in personality development (Roberts, Wood & Smith, 2005; Van de Hurk et al., 2011). According to Kabat Zinn (1990), mindfulness induces a significant shift in the way life events are experienced, thus altering personality.

Lastly, a 2013 article published by the American Psychological Association (Davis & Hayes, 2011) asserts that the benefits of mindfulness are empirically supported by research. Those benefits include: boosts to working memory (Jha et al. 2010); increased focus (Moore and Malinowski, 2009); less emotional reactivity (Ortner, Kilner & Zelazo, 2007); more cognitive flexibility (Siegel, 2007; Davidson, Jackson & Kalin, 2000); more relationship satisfaction (Barnes, Brown, Krusemark, Campbell & Rogge, 2007); enhancement of self-insight, morality and the promotion of empathy (Shapiro, Schwartz & Bonner, 1998; Aiken, 2006); compassion (Shapiro, Astin, Bishop & Cordova, 2005) and increased patience (Rothaupt & Morgan, 2007) among many others.

## **MINDFULNESS AND NEGOTIATION**

My literature review indicated that there have been very few attempts to link the concept of mindfulness to negotiation. One example is the suggestion of Kopelman et al. (2012) that mindful and strategic emotion management can be achieved through a reflective process of "self narration." Kopelman et al. (2012) propose that a mindful negotiator can re-narrate

the current moment by changing his/her cognitive appraisal and reframing the situation. This can lead to the development of positive regard for the self and others, better negotiation outcomes and the enhancement of individual well-being. As this concept is strongly aligned with positive organizational psychology, it limits itself to the emotional management and regulation attributes of mindfulness. Another example is the attempt by Brach (2008) to identify similarities between the theory of mindfulness meditation (and its Buddhist foundations) and interest-based negotiation. He proposed “that a kind of magic can occur when negotiators apply mindfulness practices to negotiate” and outlined “the logical foundation of this magic by examining four thematic parallels: goals, presence, acceptance and connectedness” (Brach, 2008: 26). Brach focused on explaining how some meditation practices are applicable and relevant in a negotiation context. While this article provides a practical and good overview of some of the benefits of mindfulness, its scope is narrowed by a focus on practices rather than the concept itself. In addition to Brach, several other theorists including legal scholars have adopted the same approach in their research (Pounds, 2004; Riskin, 2004, 2006, Rock, 2005; Freshman, Hayes & Feldman, 2002).

Many researchers have explored the importance of one or more established benefits of mindfulness to negotiation without conceptualizing it as such; many of these have a clinical perspective. The rest of my literature review, summarized below, covers many of those studies.

## **Emotions**

There is rich body of research covering the interpersonal nature of emotions, that our thoughts and behaviors are influenced by our emotions and that our emotions influence the emotions, thoughts and behavior of the people with whom we interact (Filipowicz, Barsade & Melwani, 2011). Fisher and Shapiro (2005) introduced a framework to deal with

emotions that arise during negotiation. They proposed to use this framework as a lens to understand the emotional experience of each party and to stimulate positive emotions. They argued that awareness of what might be motivating someone else's or one's own behavior can diffuse a situation, leading to a more effective negotiation.

A negotiator's ability to observe and identify any emotional display and its effect on the negotiator offers important insights that can be used to frame a response. Kopelman, Gewurz and Sacharin (2007) suggested the concept of "authentic presence" in which a negotiator able to balance the attention paid to the self and other parties can respond to emotions in an effective manner.

### **Management of emotions**

In arguing for the importance of the emotional intelligence (EI) in negotiation, Fulmer and Barry (2004) focused on the EI framework developed by Salovey and Mayer (1990). This framework focuses on the following set of abilities: "(a) the ability to both accurately perceive and express emotion, (b) the ability to access emotion in facilitating thought, (c) the ability to understand and analyze emotion and (d) the ability to regulate emotion in the self and others" (Fulmer and Barry, 2004: 251). They then considered four areas of the negotiation process and argued they are related to EI: "information acquisition, decision making, choice of tactics and ability to influence emotions of the negotiation opponent" (Fulmer and Barry, 2004: 252). They proposed that, in those four areas, the level of emotional intelligence would positively affect negotiation performance.

### **Improvisation**

Balachandra, Bordone, Menkel-Meadow, Ringstrom, and Sarath (2005: 416) described negotiation as "a fascinating subject in part because the process is often unpredictable." There are always external events outside the control of the parties, including new facts to

learn and issues to deal with, that can accidentally trigger emotional outbursts. Focusing on preparation is not always a comprehensive solution. Negotiation is dynamic and interactive in nature and requires those involved to make sense of it as it evolves (Balachandran et al., 2005; McGinn & Keros, 2002). Balachandra et al. argued that, because it is impossible to predict every possible move in a negotiation, negotiators must be able to size-up a situation, become self-aware, hear what the other party is saying, reflect on this and apply correct actions.

### **Behavioral patterns**

The effect of another psychological variable, mood, on the negotiation process, has also been studied. Findings support the hypothesis that a positive mood increases a negotiator's tendency to be cooperative, enhancing his ability to seek integrative gains (Bazerman & Chugh, 2006; Forgas, 1998; Carnevale & Isen, 1986).

Freshman et al. (2002) cite Riskin's suggestion that through mindfulness (meditation), negotiators become better grounded in what he described as "mood effects (the improvement of mood), mood-success effect (the association of more successful negotiation with better moods), awareness effects (due to seeing things in more effective ways) and freedom effects (the ability to make choices due to seeing things in more effective ways)."

### **Awareness and focus**

Attempting to understand how negotiators actually make decisions, Bazerman and Chugh (2006: 10) introduced the concept of Bounded Awareness, defining it as "the phenomenon by which individuals do not see and use accessible and perceivable information during the decision-making process, while seeing and using other equally accessible and perceivable information." Through this limitation, useful information is missed and a "focusing failure

results from a misalignment between the information needed for a good decision and the information included in the decision making process”(Bazerman and Chugh, 2006: 10). They argue that such a focusing failure will be costly to negotiators.

### **Subjective value in negotiation (intuition and perceptions)**

To map the domain of subjective value in negotiation, Curhan, Elfenbein, and Xu (2006) intriguingly researched the psychological imprint on negotiators of their involvement in a negotiation process. They argued that a negotiator’s feeling about the process was an aspect of subjective value, adding that, “negotiators generally rely on subjective intuition to evaluate how well they did. If subjective value mirrors intuitions about performance, then it may be a more proximal predictor of future behavior than objective performance itself.” (Curhan et al., 2006: 495). I found this interesting, as it highlights the importance of intuition and perception of the situation, the other party involved, the final terms reached and oneself in enhancing negotiation effectiveness.

### **Identity and beliefs**

According to Freshman (2006) how others identify us and how we perceive ourselves can affect negotiation. When we negotiate, a network of interrelated identities, beliefs and emotions are played out. Our identity may entail certain beliefs that remain unconscious. Awareness of the emotions triggered by others’ perceptions, our self-perception and any violation of unconscious (or conscious) beliefs can enable us to shift to a more fluid and functional identity. “If we do not understand the relationship between identity, emotion and beliefs, we get stuck in fixed senses of ourselves, of others, and of negotiations themselves. If we do understand this relationship, then we have multiple possibilities to improve negotiations” (Freshman, 2006: 107). Interestingly, Freshman touched on the

concept of mindfulness as an emerging intervention promoting awareness of “the shifting emotions, beliefs and identities in ourselves and others” (Freshman, 2006: 110).

### **Personality traits**

Dimotakis, Conlon and Ilies (2012) developed and tested a model to show that the negotiator’s personality interacts with the negotiation situation to influence the process and outcome. Although they focused on one personality dimension (agreeableness), they opened the door for other personality dimensions to be investigated. From my perspective, the significance of their model in confirming the importance of personality-situation fit in a negotiation context supersedes its limitation in focusing on one personality dimension. To their credit, and given the inherently interpersonal experience of any negotiation, the choice of *agreeableness* was an attempt to reduce this limitation.

### **Psychological distance in negotiation**

Giacomantonio, De Dreu and Mannetti (2010) build on the construal temporal theory (Liberman & Trope, 1998). According to that theory, the psychological distance from an event influences the way information is construed, judged and evaluated. They concluded that negotiators with a high construal level (psychologically distant) should focus on the interest aspects of a negotiation rather than on issues (position), thereby facilitating an interest-based negotiation.

## **CONCLUSION**

Despite the widespread applications of mindfulness, there have been very few research attempts to apply the construct to negotiation. Those attempts remain limited in scope as they consider one or more attributes of mindfulness or mindfulness practices in a

negotiation context. My research aims to fill this gap by exploring a comprehensive extension of mindfulness into negotiation

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **A qualitative research project**

The research stance is reflective and interpretive; its aim is to describe and understand actual experiences. The research question and methods for data collection require a high degree of subjectivity in interpreting and understanding respondents' experiences. A qualitative research approach was thus deemed most appropriate (Creswell, 2013; Fischer, 2006).

My qualitative research uses a belief system grounded in "social constructivism" (Creswell, 2013). My philosophical assumption about reality is one of interpretivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Creswell, 2013); I believe in developing subjective meanings of experiences. From an ontological and epistemological perspective, those meanings are formed through interaction with others and through historical and cultural norms that operate in one's life. My goal is to rely as much as possible on the respondent view (Creswell, 2013).

#### **A grounded theory method**

The overall methodology used is a form of grounded theory: "Grounded theory, originally developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967 is particularly suitable when a researcher wants to provide a new perspective on a well-established area of study. Its purpose is not to test the theory but to explore data, discover patterns, identify, develop and relate concepts"

(Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2013). In examining the data, my interest and focus was not on the subjective experiences per se but on “how such subjective experiences can be abstracted into theoretical statements about causal relationship” (Suddaby, 2006: 635); I propose a causal relationship between mindfulness and negotiation effectiveness. In summary, my aim is to inductively suggest a theory by means of a qualitative analysis of the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

### **A constructivist grounded theory approach**

Given my stated philosophical assumptions and the nature of my research aim and question, a traditional Glaser and Strauss grounded theory approach (exemplifying the post-positivist interpretive framework in its systematic procedures form (Creswell, 2013)) would not be the most appropriate. Methodologically, my research is aligned with the Constructivist Grounded Theory approach advocated by Charmaz (2006), which “lies squarely within the interpretive approach to qualitative research with flexible guidelines” (Creswell, 2013: 1970). Charmaz (2006: 10–11) explains: “In the classic grounded theory works, Glaser and Strauss talk about discovering theory as emerging from data separate from the scientific observer. Unlike their position, I assume that neither data nor theories are discovered. Rather, we are part of the world we study and the data we collect. We construct our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives and research practices”.

## **DATA COLLECTION (METHOD)**

### **Ineffective questions and interviews**

In collecting data, the first challenge I faced was how to find relevant and true information. I explored various methodologies and considered the most common qualitative research method, namely, to construct a series of questions, hold face-to-face interviews and

generate information to be analyzed. In researching any topic, two overarching questions have to be addressed: “What is the object of the enquiry and how can it be enquired into?” (Hollway & Jefferson, 2005). When linking mindfulness to the effectiveness of a negotiation (my research question), these translate into “What are mindfulness and effective negotiation and how can the causal relationship between the two be explored and measured?” Given the personal and complex nature of the enquiry subject and the first pool of potential participants I considered, I started to be concerned about the efficiency of collecting data via interviews. My initial and main concern was that participants’ motivations might influence their answers. I have to believe that what I am told is true, comprehensive and relevant. Although this is a good technique, it is highly dependent on the choice of questions and participants, the way interviews are conducted, the depth, relevance, sensitivities and willingness of participants to *genuinely* participate and the truthfulness of their answers. Given the nature of my chosen topic, I felt that I could not trust the veracity and significance of data produced from a set of questions in an interview set-up. It was a risk I was not prepared to take.

### **Narrative approach**

Outside this framework stands the narrative approach (story-telling); after all narrative is “the primary form by which human experience is made meaningful. It organizes human experiences into temporally meaningful episodes” (Polkinghorne (1988) cited in Hollway and Jefferson, 2005: 32). “Thinking, perception, imagination and moral decision-making are based on narrative structure” (Josselson (1992) cited in Hollway & Jefferson, 2005: 33). The success and suitability of a narrative method for studying experiences have been well-researched: Bauer (1996) (cited in Hollway and Jefferson, 2005: 32) explains “narrations are rich in indexical statements (reference is made to concrete events in place

and time)”; “eliciting stories has the virtue of indexicality, of anchoring people’s accounts to events that have actually happened” (Hollway & Jefferson, 2005: 35).

### **Free association**

Turning my attention to how to collect stories without suppressing any respondent input (including my own at this stage), I decided to leave the agenda of each conversation about the selected themes open, limiting my responsibility as a researcher to being a good listener. My intention was to elicit narratives, encouraging interviewees to remember specific events and express thoughts exactly as they occurred. Sigmund Freud developed a technique he called “free association” as early as 1895 (Kris, 1996; Freud, 1899). In a therapeutic context, “the patient was encouraged to relax on the couch and then simply feel free to voice whatever thoughts drifted into his or her mind without censorship” (Snowden, 2010: 41). The aim of free association is to let somebody move from one idea to the next. “We all free associate; it is a natural way of thinking” (Lucas, 2004: 1). Freud (1899) cited in Lucas (2004: 1–2) believed “if a person freely talked they will go on to many things, leaps, chain of ideas. If allowed to speak long enough you discover a line of thought in a chain of ideas, a logic sequence”; “if you relax and listen, you will discover a tissue, a chain of thought, it is meditative, without ambition. You must trust that your unconscious mind will perceive a pattern.” While the method of “free association” is one of the golden rules of psychoanalytic therapy, it is certainly not exclusive to psychoanalysis and can be used outside the therapeutic context. Hollway and Jefferson (2005) advocated its use as a qualitative research method that works best when the research question involves understanding people’s experiences through their own meaning frame, because it is “able to offer an enriched, more complex, nuanced and arguably more humane and ethical view of the human subject... people’s struggles with the constraints and possibilities of their social circumstances; their unique biographies; their creative

capacities; their ethical impulses and the conditions which compromise these impulses.” Convinced that “free association” would be the right technique to use to gather stories around themes, my attention turned to the source of those narratives.

### **Personal free association**

I explored the possibility of selecting a group of participants involved in the field of negotiation and running this research using the free association narrative method (Hollway & Jefferson, 2005), but kept coming back to two overarching principles: (1) The research question has a theoretical and academic dimension driven by professional and personal dimensions. On the professional level, I wanted to understand my own success during twenty years of negotiation experience. On the personal level, I hoped that my research would advance my quest for self-understanding and develop new attitudes and skills to enable me to negotiate more effectively; (2) To use free association effectively on others, the respondents I chose would need to be acquainted with the process and aware of their own inner worlds (Mills, 1956). I would need the ability to interpret their unconscious drift by using my own unconscious (Lucas, 2004). However, there are many challenges even when using the, arguably much simpler, traditional narrative research method. These have been aptly captured by Creswell (2013: 1760): “narrative research is a challenging approach to use. The researcher needs to collect extensive information about the participant, and needs to have clear understanding of the context of the individual’s life. It takes a keen eye to identify in the source material that gathers the particular stories to capture the individual’s experiences.” As the veracity, significance and relevance of the data are all paramount, I worried that I would not have the ability or skill to deal with multiple sources of data using the free association technique, or to make sense of the data when accounts might be littered with contradictions, inconsistencies, assumptions and

possibly ambiguous representations of experiences (Hollway and Jefferson, 2005), as well as inner-world complexities.

Sigmund Freud's use of self-analysis provided me with the answer and much-needed support. Throughout *The Interpretation of Dreams* (arguably Freud's most important work) Freud (1899) analyses his own dreams including the famous dream of "Irma's injection." His own self-analysis led him to examine his childhood memories and dreams, shedding light on his unconscious world. As he encouraged other people to free associate, he also began to record and analyze his own dreams. This proved very important in the evolution of psychoanalysis (Snowden, 2010). Focusing on using myself (self-analysis) as the source seemed as the most viable choice—after all, I have in excess of twenty years of experience to tap into, knowing that "the most adventurous quest in science is ultimately the quest for self-understanding: to know thyself, to understand on a multiplicity of levels, from physics and biology to heart, mind and spirit, what it means to be fully human, and to perceive throughout multiple intelligences and the various sensing systems we have for interfacing with the outside world and our own interiority, the deep interconnectedness and unity of self and environment and self and relationship with others" (Kabat-Zinn, 2002).

I acknowledge that the use of this method comes with its own challenges; the main one was that I would play two roles: researcher and respondent. As I would be using myself to collect and subsequently analyze experiences, I realized the need to accommodate myself as a part of the research and also outside it. I gave very careful consideration and thought to the fact that I would be playing those two roles. I went to great efforts to separate them, looking objectively at the data and keeping a safe distance between the collection of stories and the analysis. Snowden (2010) explains that Freud "was always as objective as possible when working with his own dreams, trying to view himself as he would a client."

My own experiences have significance and value to me. By accessing this data, I have been able to achieve an in-depth understanding of the topic in question, allowing these experiences to be of value to others as well as myself.

## **DATA GATHERING AND ANALYSIS**

### ***Data gathering***

As soon as my supervisor learned that I was hoping to use my own experiences as research data, she introduced me to the practice of free association. I started to become acquainted with the concept, in particular as it is described by Mills (1956) and Kris (1996). I also explored free association in a meditative context as outlined by Naranjo (2006). In my first writing session using this process, I came up with a list of incidents (cases) as they came to mind. That list was kept live and updated as incidents came to my mind and as I free-associated about a particular case. My writing sessions varied from fifteen minutes to just over an hour. I never wrote two stories at the same time. In some cases, a story was written over multiple days. I planned regular free association sessions every morning, sitting down and writing about an incident; I adhered strictly to this schedule, although not every session was a productive one. The choice of which incident to write about on a particular day was arbitrary. All writing sessions took place in the early hours of the morning in a very quiet place (generally my home office) where I could sit undisturbed. In a few instances, I felt the need to start the session with a short breathing meditation (closing my eyes, sitting quietly and focusing on my breath, bringing awareness to my body sensations). I often felt the need to get up early in the morning and write undisturbed. I adopted the principle of free-writing without censorship. The process became one of communicating an observed thought from a position of neutrality using two key processes: “one is that of letting go (or going with the stream”); another, “attention”(Naranjo, 2006: 115). At many points, as I free-associated, I felt as if I were interviewing myself about an

incident, asking myself to talk about the event, describing it as much as possible—what was it like, my thoughts and feeling about it, what happened next. I asked myself to talk about anyone else involved and what did I do to manage the negotiation. Religiously following this process, I wrote thirty narratives between December 2012 and February 2013, sending an initial set of five to my thesis supervisor by the end of December for general comments and confirmation of the methodology used. A second set was sent in mid-January. Once my supervisor had confirmed the validity of this research method, I completed fifteen additional narratives. This number accords with the quantity of research narratives recommended by Creswell (2013), although in grounded theory, the ultimate criterion for the final sample size is theoretical saturation (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Creswell, 2013). For this reason, the final five narratives were written after the initial twenty-five were analysed and only for the purpose of confirming that theoretical saturation had been reached (Chamaz, 2006). My final sample size was thirty narratives; the incidents, although chosen using free association, span a broad range of circumstances and provide a good variety of contexts and dimensions. A summarized list of narratives is presented in Appendix D.

The stories were not edited but saved in their original formats. All analyses were conducted using these raw narratives. For the purpose of this thesis, I have edited the stories and excerpts included very slightly, to safeguard confidential information and protect the identities of other parties. These changes do not alter the substance of the data.

## **Data analysis**

While the traditional method of grounded theory is systematic in collecting and analyzing data, relying on the use of open, axial and selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), Charmaz (2006) advocates using more flexible guidelines that serve as general principles,

focusing on the theory developed that depends on the researcher's view. She places more "emphasis on the views, values, beliefs, feelings, assumptions and ideologies of individuals than on the methods of research" (Creswell, 2013: 2001). She believes that it is the researcher's role to make decisions about categories throughout the process, bringing questions to the data (Creswell, 2013).

Charmaz (2006) proposes using analytic stages as guidelines, beginning with the initial coding as a first analytic turn and then moving to a focused coding that allows the researcher to decide if formal axial and/or theoretical coding is appropriate and useful. She invites the researcher to "stop and ask analytic questions of the data" (Chamaz, 2006: 42–3). During the first phase, data are fragmented and analyzed. Codes (defined as "categorizing segments of data with a short name that simultaneously summarizes and accounts for each piece of data" Charmaz, 2006: 45), are allocated either in line-by-line segments or as incidents. The second stage involves engaging in a "focused coding" where a selection of the most useful initial codes are tested against data. Therefore, a study of and interaction with data that moves through comparative levels of analysis is required. "We compare data with data as we develop codes, next we compare data with codes; after that, we compare codes and raise significant codes to tentative categories; then compare data and codes with these categories; subsequently, we treat our major category(ies) as a concept(s)" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011: 361). Imaginative interpretations alongside rigorous examination of our data and analysis (Charmaz, 2006; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) will occur. In short, "the logic of grounded theory involves fragmenting empirical data through coding and working with resultant codes to construct abstract categories that fit these data and offer a conceptual analysis of them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011: 361).

Following a preliminary review of the first twenty-five stories and including the last five narratives, using Falcao's (2010) criteria for an effective negotiation, two groups were formed: Group A contains 18 narratives that relate to negotiations judged to be effective, and Group B contains the 12 remaining narratives.

Initial coding was conducted (on a line-by-line basis when possible but mostly on an incident-by-incident basis, as deemed relevant) on each story. This involved a close reading of the data, returning to the texts and asking questions, looking for clarifications and then naming a segment of data with gerunds (described by Denzin and Lincoln (2011: 368) as "a heuristic device used to bring the researcher to the data". The intention was to help "define implicit meanings and actions" that would provide "directions to explore," encouraging "making comparisons between data" and suggesting "emergent links between processes in the data" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011: 368). [Appendix C provides an example of these codes].

Following my literature review, I concluded that the attributes and benefits of being mindful in a negotiation context could be grouped into four dimensions (or perspectives):

- (1) Clinical dimension reflecting understanding self and others, being intuitive and insightful, developing the ability to see what is beneath the surface;
- (2) Behavioral dimension representing the ability to focus, listen, improvise, reflect, collaborate and be resilient, among other attributes;
- (3) Decision-making dimension displaying the ability to enhance cognitive abilities and to make good judgments based on evaluations, and
- (4) Cognitive and emotional dimension embodying the enhancement of emotional intelligence, the increase in self-awareness whilst being detached from outcomes and remaining objective.

When initial coding had been completed on the first twenty-five narratives, I proceeded to separate those codes and classify them under each dimension. A color-

coding system was used as I went through the narratives one by one. All codes could be grouped under those dimensions; there was no need to create additional categories. Where I believed that a code could fit under more than one dimension, I returned to the data to confirm the case and then classified it under both dimensions if necessary.

Focused coding then commenced. These codes were more conceptual in nature, using the most significant or frequent earlier codes to categorize the data in an analytically rigorous way (Charmaz, 2006). Drawing on the constant comparative method, I then proceeded to compare all cases, comparing codes with codes and data with codes. A higher level of codes reflecting common categories and themes was derived. At that stage, the remaining five narratives went through the same process. No more additional themes were found. These codes are listed and described and excerpts of texts are provided in subsequent sections by way of example.

To address the first part of my research aim (establishing a causal relationship between mindfulness and negotiation effectiveness), I began by comparing themes that resulted from the focused coding across the two groups (Group A and Group B). However, the focused coding helped to develop common themes across the various narratives; so as I carried out this exercise, interacting constantly with the data, new threads for analysis became obvious. I started to look for patterns across all cases in Group A, examining the previous codes and trying to develop a link among them (Creswell, 2013). This resulted in the development of theoretical (conceptual) codes and the proposal of a conceptual framework that includes four main stages. As Charmaz (2006: 62) explains “Theoretical codes are integrative; they lend form to the focused codes you have collected. These codes may help you tell an analytic story that has coherence. Hence, these codes not only conceptualize how your substantive codes are related, but also move your analytic story in a theoretical direction.” This conceptual framework was then tested against the focused

codes in Group B to confirm the validity of the framework and the causal relationship between mindfulness and negotiation effectiveness.

This process allowed me to make a comparison between the two distinct groups, establish the basis of a causal condition and propose a conceptual framework; a formal axial coding was therefore not necessary.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This section starts by providing an overview of the findings in relation to the main themes (categories) that emerged from the focused coding stage in both groups of data (A and B). When the themes were compared across groups, a strong presence of mindfulness themes was found in Group A versus mindlessness (*opposite of mindfulness*) themes in Group B. Those results are reported in this section. An initial causal relationship between mindfulness and negotiation effectiveness was then established. The section then presents and proposes a conceptual framework for mindfulness, to be used in a negotiation context. This framework suggests four stages (pillars), linking attributes associated with mindfulness to negotiation effectiveness.

### **FOCUSED CODING THEMES**

#### **Willingness to exert effort to understand other perspectives**

Common to all narratives, this theme encompasses many interconnected attributes, including: exploring and evaluating, empathy, seeking to understand alternatives, being flexible, understanding the situation by observing, questioning and enquiring, acknowledging other perspectives, raising conversations and assessing.

***Narrative #10 (A)*** “He was asking the right questions. I was very transparent.. I listened to the client, went back and responded after due

*consideration... Our method of calculation across the company changed as a result of this meeting.”*

**Narrative # 12 (A)** *“I knew where X is coming from.. I knew where Y is coming from.. I moved on to explaining what I have been doing. I recollected examples of advice I’d received from both of them before; that was very handy and showed them that I applied their advice in my action plan.”*

These attributes often facilitated solutions or helped to build a relationship with the counterpart.

**Narrative # 10 (A)** *“Great two days... Great learning experience.. Relationship with X is stronger.. Did not see the client representative after that as he lives in another part of the world, but referred him to one of my colleagues in that part of the world and they continue dealing with him on the back of my encounter.”*

**Narrative #11 (A)** *“I needed to focus on finding a solution.. I invited her to find a solution with me... We worked as a team.”*

Conversely, failing to evaluate other perspectives was a common theme in most Group B examples. It was interesting to learn that understanding perspectives had to be mutual; in other words, both participants had to seek to understand and be understood. If I eliminate the cases where one-sided understanding occurred, a failure of this theme is common to all narratives in Group B.

**Narrative # 1(B)** *"I can see where he is coming from ...I took the time to explain to him what is the reason for my decision. I did not lie, but told him what needed to be told... He was not interested"*.

### **Genuine interest in connecting and building the relationship**

This theme includes attributes such as engaging, collaborating and aiming to assist. The theme was common across the board, but what intrigued me were a few situations (four cases) where attempts were made to connect and build relationships but the effort was implied to be not genuine. This contributed unfavorably to the encounter.

**Narrative # 14 (A)** *" I spent the first day talking to him.. The more I get to know the guy, the more I felt sorry for him..I continued to listen very carefully to him and the more I listen the more he felt at ease to talk. I think he saw my genuine reaction in my eyes."*

**Narrative # 8 (B)** *"I started engaging repeatedly in conversations about what she is doing... I was sending signals.. My conversations were inviting. Was I really interested..? Was I really ready..? To be honest I was not very sure."*

### **Trusting intuition**

This theme appeared strongly in Group A manifesting as either being insightful, listening deeply or using learning from other experiences (in at least 14 out of 18 cases). The opposite theme did not appear as strongly in Group B (in at least 6 out of 12 cases), however if I widen the criteria to include implicit references, the picture changes.

**Narrative # 3 (A)** *“A personality I can cooperate with. From talking to X, I felt it is the right deal.”*

**Narrative # 9 (B)** *“My intuition is telling me it is not the right thing to do. I did not want to believe that. I was excited, so left things loose with the guy.”*

**Narrative # 4 (B)** *“I should have interjected and left the room earlier... I should have trusted my guts. I should have listened to my body.”*

**Narrative # 9 (B)** *“...had I gone with my intuition, I should have put exactly what I wanted or thought it would reasonable to him and to me. I did not.”*

### **Focusing, observing and being attentive to details**

“Being attentive to details” appeared in at least sixteen out of eighteen narratives in Group A. Observing and being attentive included the ability to pick up signals whilst being curious. In Group B, being inattentive appeared in at least eight narratives out of twelve.

**Narrative # 4 (A)** *“... I looked at her eyes and I can see pain, frustration, annoyance.”*

**Narrative # 18 (A)** *“My first XX meeting, I felt obliged to talk. I saw X looking at me, waiting for me to talk... Everyone was looking at me... I saw XX in front of me. This guy does not like anyone. It seems that no one likes him as well.”*

**Narrative # 2 (B)** *“...Apparently X was trying to send me some signals to pick up on an idea—I did not hear that.”*

### **Listening**

The attribute of listening or not listening appeared equally in both groups (at least in nine out of eighteen narratives in Group A and six out of twelve narratives in Group B). However, I

could argue that a lot of other associated attributes (such as connecting and engaging) which appeared strongly entailed “listening” as an implicit behavior.

**Narrative #16 (A)** *“The more I listen to him, the more he is opening up. He needed someone to listen to him.”*

**Narrative # 3 (B)** *“The conversation continued for 10 minutes—he kept asking me to calm down... he can get lost.”*

**Narrative # 4 (B)** *“I was not present. I was not listening to what he was saying.”*

### **Controlling emotions**

Under this banner fall both impulse control (being calm and patient) and the ability to control cognitive distortions. In this case, emotions were controlled in all cases under Group A and uncontrolled in nine cases out of twelve in Group B.

**Narrative # 2 (A)** *“Reading the first email, then the second, got upset about one in particular, I remember it upsetting me. I remember telling myself I am upset. Leave it alone... I needed to read about the job.”*

**Narrative # 4 (A)** *“I was annoyed and hurt—how dare she talk to me like that? Who the hell she thinks she is? So I left her and decided to go out of the building for some fresh air... I need to calm down and think straight and focus. Stick to the facts. Ok stop... Stop being caught in my pre-judgment and perception...”*

**Narrative # 3 (B)** *“I became agitated... My emotions got the better of me. I picked up the phone and gave him a call... I was not talking. I was shouting.”*

## **Developing a sense of awareness**

This theme included the sense of being present, awareness of context and my own emotions, strengths and weaknesses. This attribute was present in all Group A narratives. In Group B, the findings were more interesting. In a superficial sense, awareness (rather than lack of awareness) was present in almost all narratives in this group. However, the inability to control emotions seemed to be caused by the fact that, at a deeper level, those emotions were not understood. Including this factor dramatically changes the ratio: at least ten out of twelve cases in Group B showed a lack of emotional awareness (examples are included in the “Understanding self” section below.)

**Narrative # 6 (A)** *“...I felt OK talking. I was calm, extra calm. I was nervous. I know I was nervous. I was hesitant, a bit, but I knew I was. Concerned—scared...”*

**Narrative # 7 (A)** *“I liked X. What a patient man. At no point did he lose his patience at all. Calmly and steadily explaining and re-explaining... Where am I? Observing, listening, bored, annoyed, overwhelmed. I know what these guys are up to. I want to lose my patience. I want to storm out of this room. What will I look like if I do so... I am bored...”*

## **Remaining objective**

Sticking to facts, remaining emotionally detached from any outcome, remaining calm and patient; this theme was present in at least nine out of eighteen narratives in Group A. Being attached to outcome and becoming emotional about it was a theme present in at least six out of twelve narratives in Group B. Including the attribute of becoming judgmental in the interaction, changes the Group B results to eight out of twelve narratives.

**Narrative # 5 (A)** “ Ignoring her allowed me to focus on those terms... I knew that this will require a great deal of patience... I believe I was doing very well on that front so far.”

**Narrative # 7(B)** “I felt honored to be chosen... I was excited and ready to go. It is my chance. It is my time. I need to make an impression. I want to make an impression. I was so excited. I think I over assumed the outcome. I put too much weight on it.”

### **Understanding self**

This theme differs from “Developing a sense of awareness” in that it requires an understanding and awareness of the self at a deeper level. It also includes understanding of one’s own character, personality fit and reaction to others at a deeper level. This theme was present in all Group A narratives, while the lack of this understanding contributed to the ineffectiveness of at least nine out of twelve encounters in Group B. In most of these narratives, emotions rose high, triggered by a reaction to an event/object/person. Those emotions became uncontrollable. The reasons for the triggers were not understood.

**Narrative # 17 (A)** “I felt a bit jealous of X and Y... but look at them, I really don’t want to behave in this fashion. That is not me.”

**Narrative # 4 (A)** “X reminded me a lot of Y. We used to be friends.. He has these silent moments about him that I hated. A void space that made me feel uncomfortable. She reminds me of him.. I did not feel that her annoyance was about me; it was about some sort of disbelief as if someone has betrayed her or annoyed that she will be used again - not sure exactly what was going on with her, but she was certainly annoyed, scared and disgusted, not with me, this I am now certain of as between

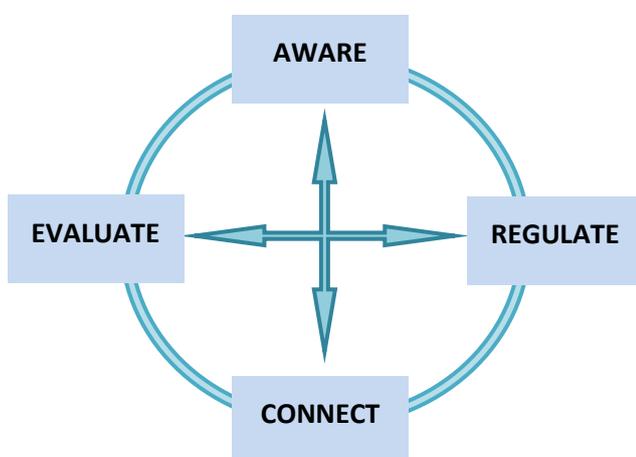
*emotions she was trying very hard to be nice to me - I can feel it - I can feel it more when I stopped judging her.”*

**Narrative # 6 (B)** “... I totally lost it... this is totally unfair... The bastard was ripping us off. He rubbed me the wrong way...”

**Narrative # 7(B)** “...I felt threatened. Something triggered that big reaction, I don’t know what...”

## PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The proposed framework represents a main flow that the negotiator progresses through (See Appendix A). It includes four phases: Phase 1 Aware; Phase 2 Regulate; Phase 3 Connect; Phase 4 Evaluate.



All studied negotiation encounters (in both groups) included those phases. The natural order of those phases (following the numerical order) tended to be the case in most instances, however, an important feature of this process was that certain conditions or circumstances sometimes emerged where I

did not find myself starting at Phase 1. This did not seem to hinder the process as long as all phases were covered. However, Phase 1 followed by Phase 2 remained the anchor for all phases. Another feature of this framework is the active interaction between the phases. All four phases are interrelated; phases repeat as necessary and not in a particular order.

When this framework was tested against the data and the focused codes of Group B narratives, I realized that:

- (1) All negotiation encounters passed through every phase in one order or another.

(2) The negotiation did not have to fail all phases to be ineffective overall. The result of testing the framework on the Group B - (non-effective) data is reported in Appendix E.

The rest of the section presents an overview of the four phases (pillars) that form the proposed conceptual framework for a mindful negotiation:

### **Phase 1 Aware**

The AWARE phase is characterized by the deployment of attention *from an observer's perspective*. Using an ability to focus, listen, observe and reflect, a mindful negotiator is able to step back and clearly describe the environment, emotions and stimuli without being attached or judgmental, just aware of the way things are. Narratives 3(A), 13(A) and 14(A) provided some good examples of this ability, clearly describing and being aware of situations:

**Narrative 3 (A)** *"She was very attentive to me. I was very present with her. I felt nervous in some times. I saw that she was getting distracted or started to get annoyed—rolling her eyes or cutting me short. But I noticed that she was noticing that and noticing that I was noticing her."*

**Narrative # 13(A)** *"I felt upset—and many things drove me to this feeling; but the fact is that I knew that I was upset. I decided not to think about it now. Just accept the things for what they are."*

**Narrative # 14(A)** *"I think he saw my genuine reaction in my eyes... I was aware of my feelings at the time and gave myself the permission to carry on and continue on the same path."*

It is most important for effective negotiation to bring salient emotions and thoughts (existing in inner theater) that might have triggered a reaction to the level of awareness

and acknowledge them. In Narrative #14(A), the person I was dealing with reminded me of a certain figure in my earlier life so I had to stop myself from passing a quick judgment as a result of this transference:

**Narrative # 14(A)** *“X reminded me of dad, not sure why, but certainly felt at ease when talking to him, but at the same time annoyed by him as I could not believe that a man of his seniority was still stuck in the middle of nowhere, content with what he was offered—doing as little as possible to get by.. I had to catch myself straight away as I felt I was passing a quick judgment on someone I didn’t really know.”*

A similar theme reappeared in Narrative 7(A)

**Narrative # 7(A)** *“...dealing with X reminded me of the good old days. I hear the voice of my dad reminding me to focus. I feel the touch of his hand taking me to the market and making strong statements on what it takes to be successful or not. I feel calm and at ease.”*

Narrative #16 provided another excellent example of listening deeply and becoming aware of what was going on under the surface—an attribute which tremendously helped in this encounter:

**Narrative # 16 (A)** *“I could be angry with him. My ego is wounded. I could not. I feel for him. I feel sorry for him. I listened and listened. I feel for him, I told him that. Feel sad. Feel his sadness. I wanted to leave, I did not want to leave him. I wish I can help more... I took a walk—closed*

*my eyes, this is not X—this is me stuck somewhere and needing help. I had a lot of hope, I would travel the world, I will run and fly high, no one listened or supported; people did not understand me, but now they did. They did not understand me but they were right, I did not see it this way. I am pleased with where I am, I really am. X will realise that one day. I will help him. I feel for him. I was there, I know what it feels—hope one day he will be in my place today.”*

This ability—to have this added level of awareness (seeing what is under the surface), to be aware of my thoughts and emotions, tap into my intuition, take notice of the effect of my own emotions/behaviors on others, pay attention to what is under the surface along with the effects of stimuli to my inner theater, all while observing what is actually happening in the moment— would have been invaluable in many of the Group B cases. For example in narrative # 4(B), the emotions were triggered well before the start of the meeting (so certainly something deeper that I was unaware of at the time pushed those reactions to the surface).

**Narrative # 4(B)** *“X called a meeting. It is going to be ugly I thought. I feel sick in my stomach as I was heading for this meeting. I tried to avoid the meeting. He still wants to sit and sort it out...” [Then during the meeting] “I started to get fired up. The conversation was not about work anymore. It is getting uglier. I was getting more upset... I was becoming impatient and feeling tired of him and the whole situation. I know better, I always did better. I have the capability to behave better, but I did not. My mind was rushing to something else. I was thinking about X and his... background.”*

Being aware does not only include emotions, thoughts, environment and situation, it encompasses being cognizant of our own character, abilities, strengths and weaknesses.

**Narrative #18(A)** *“...I can do it. If I have one strength that I can rely on, it is the ability to adapt to new environment. Speak up no worries.”*

**Narrative # 9(A)** *“X is an expert. Fantastic. I like working with him... He was happy to talk to me. I ask, he answers. I enjoy working with him. I learn a lot.”*

While in Narrative # 8(B), in hindsight, a potentially successful joint venture arrangement could have been reached had I realized and focused on the fact that potential partner strengths could have complemented my weaknesses in many areas.

At the end of this phase, and with this observer’s perspective, the negotiator can decide how or whether to act on any thoughts or emotions. This paves the way for the next phase.

## **Phase 2 Regulate**

After experiencing the previous phase, one can naturally recognize the need to REGULATE raw emotions and thoughts. This regulation might take many forms. In Narrative #1(A)—the simple use of an object as an anchor helped me to focus on the present moment.

**Narrative #1(A)** *“I took a conscious decision to touch a stone I put in my pocket every time my mind drifted outside this room... I had to touch the*

*stone few times that day, but quite pleased with myself as towards the end I was touching it well before my mind found itself somewhere else.”*

In other instances, a cognitive appraisal was needed to tackle distortions. Narrative #7 (A) provides a good example:

**Narrative # 7(A)** *“I want to storm out of this room. What will I look like if I do so? I feel like doing it. I am bored... is this going to last for a long time? Here I am, my emotions are getting hold of me. Go back, hey, wonderful opportunity. I know what these guys are up to. They are trying to wear us up. They want to learn.. So one contract and possibly two that is the extent of the relationship. Still I think we need to make a good impression. Listen to X. The guys know his stuff. The translator is interesting. I could turn this to a wonderful experience, one to talk about to everyone indeed. I will.”*

Unregulated emotions led to an unsuccessful negotiation outcome in the majority of Group B cases.

**Narrative #7 (B)** *“I felt betrayed. I felt frustrated. I did not want to stay anymore. I am not interested at all... Seriously, I am not interested to stay in this set up meeting anymore. I went out. I spoke to my wife. I was angry. She asked me to calm down. She asked me to stay focused and to benefit from the meeting. Play the game she said, you never know. I did not want to hear that. They are awful. I went back and started to be*

*very sarcastic. I am not respecting them anymore, they don't deserve my respect full stop."*

Many emotional intelligence attributes could also be viewed as a means of regulating or controlling reactions. Being assertive was very crucial in Narrative #6 (A), while the lack of assertiveness in Narrative #12 (B) has not contributed favorably to the outcome of the encounter.

**Narrative #6 (A)** *"It was the time for me to reciprocate and I did that. I visited every point he made. I offered my argument from my standpoint. I reiterated and gave examples. I wanted to keep the relationship. It was not personal. It was where I am at."*

**Narrative # 12 (B)** *"I should have known better. I did not like the investment to start with. I am not going to part with the money that easily. There is no need to be emotional about it. The solution was to be assertive earlier on, knowing what X's point was, but I don't think he understood where I am coming from. He kept pressing and I hated it."*

Among other attributes found in my research that can be listed under this phase are: distancing the self, exercising reflection, using anchors, developing impulse control and applying some reality testing.

### **Phase 3 Connect**

Arguably CONNECT includes the ability to connect inwardly and outwardly. I propose that the ability to connect inwardly be represented in Phase I. I therefore address the outward connection in this phase.

In this phase, a negotiator will try to engage with the other party. The common themes in this phase are: becoming interested and taking the time to understand the other party, initiating conversations, establishing communication, seeking to develop relationships, looking for opportunities to collaborate, exercising empathy, listening, suspending judgment and remaining calm and patient.

**Narrative # 17(A)** “ We broke up for lunch. I made the conscious decision to mingle with one of those investment bankers. In one hand, I was impressed with what they had to say so I wanted to learn more. But most importantly I felt that to gain ground I needed to take the discussion with those guys to a different level... I can certainly use my ability to engage with them in a way that will make our future conversation more personal and friendly.”

**Narrative #5(B)** “I just could not trust this person from the moment I laid my eyes on him. The feeling was mutual. X always avoided looking at me in the eye. I think I was radiating some negative vibes or the look of mistrust was all over my face...” [Section omitted] “The meeting took the whole day during which we went out for lunch. X and his team were not interested in engaging with me outside the meeting, save some lip service conversation.”

The interesting finding from my research is twofold: (a) the intention to connect had to be genuine to be effective and (b) Group B narratives failed the test in 100% of cases in this phase. In other words, whenever there was an ineffective negotiation, one theme or more was invariably missing.

After the CONNECT phase, a negotiator may feel the need to go back to REGULATE and then to AWARE before attempting to CONNECT again, or chose another order or proceed to the next phase, EVALUATE.

#### **Phase 4 Evaluate**

In this phase, the negotiator attempts to evaluate the opportunity, situation and context. A high degree of flexibility is needed as he/she remains open to new perspectives.

The common themes are understanding different perspectives, questioning, enquiring, assessing, exploring alternatives and looking for and developing solutions.

**Narrative # 1(A)** *"We spent the whole day going through our proposal and the various sections every one has to cover and the various input that each has to give to the others for their respective sections. I was really impressed... mostly amazed by the experience of those guys."*

**Narrative # 5(A)** *"I actually became interested in what she has to say, trying to understand her point of view. Out of ten points I can point out one or two issues that she was right on, so we adjusted our offering."*

**Narrative # 15 (A)** *"I booked my first flight to [location] with an aim to understand what the real issues are... I had a plan of my own. I scheduled a meeting with each one of them. I was keen to know the individuals and listened carefully to what they have to say. I scheduled meetings with other staff members as well to discuss the project."*

**Narrative # 17 (A)** *"Those guys are very impressive with the way they structured this deal. And the more I listen, the more I now realise that those guys... are waiting on questions; in other words, if our questions are clever enough we could know a lot of details about the real deal... so*

*after engagement... I put a tick on all of the challenges (being addressed) except for the financing arrangement. This is an area that everyone believed should be left to the client to deal with... but why not I kept telling myself... Just hang on a minute, I told my boss. Look at this.”*

**Narrative # 5 (B)** *“Going through the file was not pleasant at all. No doubt in anyone’s mind that I had a case. I came more prepared than the other team. I came across as more knowledgeable. I was forceful... I picked up on a few words that X said and responded with an example to prove he is wrong—I did that with plenty of sarcasm. He talked about being fair, I showed him a few examples that he has not been.”*

**Narrative # 6 (B)** *“Soon discovered that the guy whenever it suits him he is happy to follow the contract and whenever it is not, he is not. His answer: I know what you are trying to do, but you are not listening to me, this is what I am offering, take it or leave it—you can sue us if you don’t like it.”*

**Narrative # 10 (B)** *“X asked me few questions—I remember I did not answer them fully. He started to ignore me.”*

**Narrative # 11 (B)** *“My questions were not engaging. I asked some questions but was more interested in being seen asking questions. I was busy writing notes and in other times drawing.”*

## **LIMITATIONS**

The limitation of this research stems from two challenges. First, by using myself to collect and subsequently analyze experiences, I needed to accommodate myself in belonging to the research and being outside it, basically playing the roles of both researcher and

respondent. Moreover, It is also possible that if I had relied on multiple respondents with a variety of experiences, the findings might be different.

To ensure that the research was not weakened by this challenge, measures were put in place to keep a safe distance between the collection of the narratives and the analysis. Narratives were only reviewed for analysis purposes. Analyses were conducted using the raw format of the narratives. Each data collection and subsequent analysis was documented. Second, the chosen data sample covers a broad range of circumstances with a wide variety of contexts and dimensions (refer to Appendix D).

These measures were used to ensure that the data collected was credible and dependable, the subsequent analysis was feasible and that the conclusions inferred from the data were grounded in those narratives.

## **FURTHER AREAS OF RESEARCH**

This research takes an important step in proposing a conceptual framework linking mindfulness to negotiation effectiveness. It sets the scene for further development and testing. Therefore I suggest that the validity of this framework be empirically established as a first step toward future research.

An interesting direction for future research would be to study the effect of the negotiator's degree of mindfulness on negotiation effectiveness when the other party has or has not been mindful.

Further directions and questions can be suggested:

1. How does the negotiator's state of mind before the negotiation experience influence his perception of the experience itself? What is the impact of his previous relationship or interaction with his negotiating partner?
2. How and to what extent do external factors affect the mindful approach to negotiation?

3. What is the most effective way to teach mindfulness for negotiation? How can we train negotiators to be mindful?
4. To what extent do some attributes implicit in a mindful approach (such as ethics and honesty) undermine a negotiator's ability to bargain successfully?
5. Can this conceptual framework be used when the negotiation involves a negotiator who represents other parties (not as an employee) and where success must be defined as achieving others' goals?
6. How can we design interventions to promote mindfulness in negotiation?

## CONCLUSION

Negotiation is inherent in any human interaction. For as long as we live, we are bound to interact with others exchanging mutual needs. We all negotiate. That is a fact of life (Fisher & Ury, 2012). In this thesis, I have suggested that being able to negotiate in a state of awareness enables us to be flexible, open to novelty, creative with alternatives and free from the tyranny of thoughts and emotions. Mindfulness is a skill that, if cultivated and applied to negotiation, could lead to its effectiveness.

To establish the causal relationship between mindfulness and negotiation effectiveness, two groups of narratives were analyzed. The first group (A) covers negotiations that were classified as effective, while the second group (B) includes negotiations that were not effective. The themes emerging in the first group when compared with the second group were all known attributes associated with mindfulness. They included: being willing to make an effort to understand other perspectives, trusting intuition, having a genuine interest in connecting and building relationships, having the ability to focus, listen, observe and be attentive to details, developing a sense of awareness, remaining objecting and understanding oneself.

Subsequently a conceptual framework was proposed representing a main flow through which the negotiator progresses. This framework includes four interrelated phases: Phase 1 Aware; Phase 2 Regulate; Phase 3 Connect; Phase 4 Evaluate. The framework was then tested against the data of Group B (ineffective negotiation narratives). It was evident that: (1) all negotiation encounters in this group passed through every phase of the framework in one order or another and (2) a negotiation encounter did not have to fail all phases to be ineffective.

While this research was not without limitations, it achieved its theoretical aims and objectives, that is to explore the link between mindfulness and negotiation effectiveness and to propose a comprehensive conceptual framework suggesting a mindful approach to negotiation. On a personal level, my hope for this research was to advance self understanding and to fine-tune and develop new skills that would enable me to negotiate more effectively. That aim was also realised. I now realize that one of the main keys to my successes over the last twenty years was an ability to be completely present in the moment, focusing on the task-in-hand, listening and fully engaged with the person I was dealing with, seeking to genuinely understand the situation and alternatives, and utterly refusing to be distracted by my distortions and emotions.

“On the plane of wisdom, mindfulness extends the continuity of awareness from ordinary consciousness to Samadhi (*the exalted levels of higher consciousness*) and beyond, staying with the mind in all of its permutations and transformations and thus supplying the fuel for understanding impermanence and causality. And finally on the plane of liberation, perfected mindfulness is an inalienable quality of the realized sage, who lives ever mindful” (Sujato, 2012: 304). In this state of awareness resides the magic of mindful negotiation.

I confirm my move to a better mental neighborhood.

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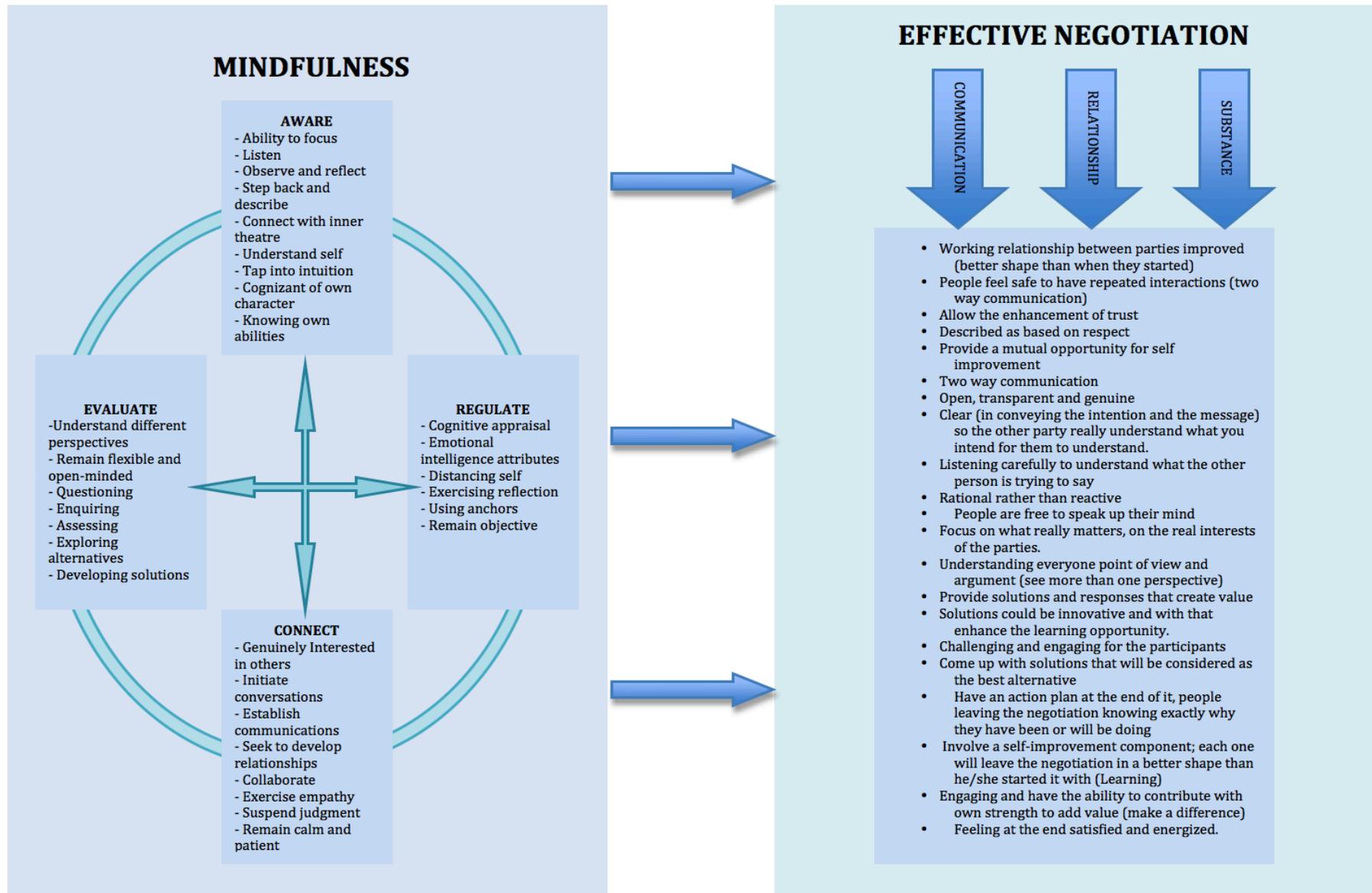
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# APPENDIX A: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



## APPENDIX B: EXAMPLES OF NARRATIVES

### EXAMPLE 1: EFFECTIVE

Work has not been easy in the last 6 months. The flux of proposals going out the door is unheard of. A lot of pressure on my team; and what I did not want happen. I was asked to travel to *[location]* to participate in the negotiation of a massive contract with *[Client name]*.

The opportunity is great. It is in an industry I want to gain experience in. Massive contract—a game changer for company—and most importantly I will be the only traveling from my *[location]*, the rest of the team will be coming over from other parts of the world. It is very obvious that the company is trying to front with their heavy weights, putting a lot of effort to win this job.

I was really looking forward to get my Cho Dan Bo, also was eager to watch my son going through his grading to Blue Belt as well. Both of us trained very hard. Going to *[Location]* will mean that I will miss both of those chances.

At the same time, I did not agree with the strategy the company is trying to follow—I felt there is a lack of focus, wasting time and energy, lack of vision and transparency.

So I pushed back as much as I could, until such time that the head of our business unit called me at home one evening and managed to twist my arm. I was off to *[Location]*—totally pissed off about the whole thing—felt disengaged, flat and not interested with the whole thing.

Arriving to *[Location]*, the company put us in a magnificent hotel and what an ostentatious set up. I met the guys for the first time, ironically all *[nationality]*. This is going to be very interesting. .

We all arrived two days before our meeting so we can spend some time preparing and gathering our thoughts. The first day was awful for me. I continued to be disengaged, very emotional about the fact that I had to come over to start with. At some point, I realized I was emotional about the whole thing—and started telling myself to stop, “I am where I am now—let me benefit from this visit as much as possible”, but I just could not control myself. I felt I had to distance myself. I need to find a calm space to reflect and find myself again. So I decided to take a walk.

Surrounding the hotel a big piece of land with manicured gardens. Many swimming pools scattered around. No one is swimming. The hotel is right at the beach—over looking *[Location]*. Walking around, I started feeling the sea breeze. I focused on that and nothing else. I found a palm tree right by the beach and sat under it. I closed my eyes and kept focusing on the sea breeze. I once learned a technique that helped me before to relax—I decided to use it: I imagined a strong light on top of me, I started to breathe in the light and breathe out a dark air and as I continue to breathe in this fashion, my body was replacing any negative energy (dark air) with positive ones (light). I started to feel very relaxed. So my mind drifted back home. I was sitting watching my son grading, his face looking at me with a big smile clearly indicating how happy he is with this achievement. Then my mind turned to the emotional state I was in. I saw challenges heading my way, the trip to *[Location]* carrying an ugly face, my boss asking me to travel etc... The beauty is I was looking at each and every challenge with me sitting outside of it rather than caught in the middle of it all. I observe those challenges one after another and let them go.

My mediation session lasted well over an hour. I came back energized, certainly feeling relaxed and ready to face another day.

The next day started well. I took a conscious decision to touch a stone I put in my pocket every time my mind drifts outside this room. We spent the whole day going through our proposal and the various sections every one has to cover and the various input that each has to give to the others for their respective sections. I was really impressed by the quality of work put by everyone—mostly amazed by the experience of those guys. I was also impressed by how helpful and cooperative those guys are, the amount of info I managed to get out of them (some not related to our proposal at all, but to satisfy my curiosity). I had to touch the stone few times that day, but quite pleased with my self as towards the end I was touching it well before my mind find itself somewhere else. “How lucky I am to be here, alongside those heavy weights, what a great opportunity to learn” —I was telling myself.

We spend the rest of the evening in the same meeting room. No one wanted to leave before making sure that all bases have been covered. We have been in the same place for the last 13-14 hours. The time passed very quickly and it does not seem that we were tired at all.

The meeting with the client started early morning. Everyone was well prepared and looking forward to it.

What happens next?

Our meeting with the client went fantastically well. Our stay in [Location] was extended by another week. This did not seem to bother most of us, including myself. It seems that I accepted the fact that I am where I am, so might as well take advantage of the situation. I left [Location] on a very positive note. Learned a lot. Met a group of highly intelligent individuals. I felt I added a lot of value.

Subsequently, the client advised us that the decision is to award the job to our competitor. The disappointing news did not seem to deter me from thinking that I had great two weeks in [Location] where I can comfortably state that each one tried his utmost best, and the experience itself was great.

## **EXAMPLE 2: EFFECTIVE**

Frustration—big distance—how can he do it—feel sorry for him—ugly place—tough environment—difficult connection

Visit to [location] was on the card for sometime part of my round trip visit to sites as soon as I rejoined the department again.

Trip to [location] —catching a car and drive for more than 6–7 hours north. [name] abrupt. Everyone says that. Stuck alone on site (from our company) with the rest being [nationality]. The guy is [nationality]. Short in his conversation. Have been with the company for ages. Not happy.

On the phone he sounded like [name]—not happy/grumpy/cursing his luck big time.

I have to face him. He is one of my staff members. I am really dreading that trip. What am I suppose to say. Driving for half a day, spending the night and say what. Calm him down.

Go there and play it by ear this what I decided to do. Long way. Non finishing trip. Arrived to site and it was awful. The camp was very basic. Tin ceiling. Rain, very noisy. Going to the toilet, urinal very high. [Name] very small. White hair. Messy office. Hands on.

He curses every single word. Not happy. He is trying to patronise me. He needed to vent out. I feel it. I would if I was in his shoes. I hate the place already. He whinges and complains about anything and everything. Curse, whinge, talked about my predecessor, complained about him, he is expecting no more from me, he does not trust the company, he does not trust me, I am the new kid on the block, I am young, he is definitely rude, he is definitely frustrated, he has a wounded personality.

He took me to the toilet to show me how ugly the place is, he showed me the camp, he told me about the fact that no one waits for him. Ignoring him on site. No one talks to him. He does not eat his food. And on and on..... no one listens to him from his own company.

I could be angry from him. My ego is wounded. I could not. I felt for him. I feel sorry for him. I listened and listened. I felt for him. I told him that. Feel sad . Feel his sadness. I wanted to leave, I did not want to leave him. I wish I can help more. I have to leave tomorrow.

With him, I have no choice but give him full attention. Being present by force. The problem stares at you in the face. Actually, you don't want but to be present. You cannot avoid the problem. I became like a radar, picking up every signal sent by [name], every feeling, emotions, gestures.

They put me in the unit of the project director. Served me lunch there. Well cooked food. The next day met the project director. Abrupt person. [nationality] style; the one used to the bush. Poor [name]. He complains about [name] but also commend his work.

Saw [name] again. What to tell him. I cannot sell him that. I have to sell it to him. I have to give him hope. I want him to trust me. The more I listen to him, the more he is opening up. He needed someone to listen to him. He feels that the message is going somewhere and he is not discounted. I continued doing that. For a second, I noticed that perhaps he is not expecting more than that in the space of two days.

I took a walk—closed my eyes—this is not [name]—this is me stuck somewhere and need help. I had a lot of hope, I would travel the world, I will run and fly high, no one listened or support; people did not understand me, but now they did. They did not understand me but they were right, I did not see it this way. I am pleased where I am, I really am. [Name] will realise that one day. I will help him. I feel for him. I was there, I know what it feels—hope one day he will be in my place today.

Tuned on to the environment—stuck on site—no communication -had no choice but to focus on [name]—don't have time to be tired—I did not feel tired—I felt present—I felt emotionally present—I wanted to be with him, present and listening and I did

[Name] continues to open up. [Name], his nephew needs a job. His brother ([name]'s dad) is relying on [name]. He shared his health problem with me. He has good money, this is what he said. Doing what he is doing for few years—then he wants to retire in piece.

Leaving the site—[name] is one of my team members; open channel—mission accomplished—did not need to promise anything other than listen to him and tell him I will do what I can really do. He needed to trust someone, he felt he had me. Many phone calls from [name] on the way—are you ok ?—driving Ok?

What a wonderful experience. Very pleased with myself. Pleased to realise early in the piece how I felt about the whole episode. Close enough, but distant enough. I could see the problem and me observing it from a distant, but close enough to it. That is magic. I felt it.

What happens next?

[name] stayed on site for the next two years, he semi-retired for couple of years, kept in touch with me and then re-hired in [location] on a project. During that time, he refused to work with anyone but me.

### EXAMPLE 3: INEFFECTIVE

Back in the main office—and few months later, the outcome of my trip to [Location] had many effects:

- Disappointment of the partners as they now realised they will be making much less than what they expected (as per previous reports)
- Every partner now potentially making less money, becoming more clever! or rather vigilant in the way the charges are going through the books (in other words—no effort wasted into sending to [Location] any bill that, even remotely, could be charged to the job)
- Every partner now vigilant in looking into what the other partner is charging to the job (much less money to distribute at the end, partners becoming more attentive to details)
- The discovery earned me my first credibility stripe (in other words, well and truly my first early win) ; so some were impressed and others became more jealous ([Name]!)

It is not one thing that made me realise those effects. Series of activities and behaviours that if put together led me to this conclusion. I brought it up with my boss—he thought I was over reacting following my trip to [Location]. However, I kept very attentive to details and the more I focused on that side of things, the more I was able to prove my assumptions. I kept collecting data for over three months period. In all of that, the Head of Account in [Location] ([Name]) proved to be extremely helpful. My trip to [Location] and the time spent with him (albeit he was not very pleased with the discovery I made in my Peer Review) paid off—our relationship is becoming better and better. At some point, I did not even try to look for issues, he was pointing them out to me.

Three months worth of data—confirming that [Name] was trying to pull the wool over our eyes. “couple of air tickets charged to the job on the back of a trip made by their representative—one day to our job, and few days to their other job—100% charged to our

job”—“Plant shown as hired to the job with a start date and end date that do not match the entry/exit date of the machine into the country”—“Different Exchange rates formula applied to their invoices depending on whether it make sense financially to their favour or not” etc. a complete file with back up material, a summary sheet (the works). Ready to go to war with it. I was so annoyed in one hand, but on the other hand pleased with the fact that this is going to be another stripe for me in [Name]. Funny, every time I look at this file, I had mixed feeling of anger and happiness (with a smirky smile on my face !).

I spoke to my boss about it. He was not super excited per se. Appreciated what I have done. Sees the whole value in question as not very material (when compared to the discovery of the mistake in [Location]). He agrees that we need to claim the money back but was more concerned (I think) with the way he wants to convey the message to [Name] ([Name]) without affecting the relationship. So he came to the conclusion that the best way will be to book a time to see them face to face in [Location]. And then he warned me to calm down and that I should also focus on our side of the deal as well—his words: I need you to be very attentive on this one, we cannot afford to goof, so you cannot be super excited and you have to remain calm at all times—so as you prepared a file on them, they will be doing the same about us, if you are going to face them, you better go and do your homework internally as well, find out if we made similar mistakes !!!!!

His warning came as a shock to me. I came down the lift feeling quite deflated. He was right, for one. How come I did not think about such an obvious thing? really annoyed with myself at this point.

I started to collect our data—and that proved to be difficult in some instances. Dealing with the likes of [Name] and [Name] (fully of jealousy and security issues) proved to be like pulling teeth. I never expected anything different, so I consciously avoided being caught emotionally with them. I have done nothing wrong to any of those two and cannot explain their behaviour in any other way. They are what they are, so I am not going to focus on the way they talk to me and get myself upset here. I need the info from them and this is what I will focus on.

Our file completed—we have some mistakes—that made me more annoyed. (1) because I did not think about this before, and I can only see the smile of my boss when I will tell him (you see, I told you kind of smile). (2) we actually made those mistakes. But the saving grace for me was that our mistakes were mostly genuine ones (save one or two), and overall they have much less impact ie if we offset one against the other, [Name] will owe us money (well and truly); and that made me happy.

We booked a time to travel to [Location]—three of us. My boss , his boss and myself. It is the first time that I will be seeing [Name] in action. I think [Name] brought him to strategically bring the conversation to a different level. I thought that this was a clever move.

A small [Location] town—no airport, so quite a drive to arrive to. I am not complaining, I had the chance to see few other towns/cities on the way ([Location] was one of them). We had few stops on the way and the conversations between [Name] and [Name] were about the various personalities we are about to meet, the outcome and challenges of the existing jobs, the lessons learned for future jobs, where/what are the future jobs etc... My mind was racing at that point, I caught a fancy leather shop with my eyes “I wonder if I can buy something for [Name] from here”—“ I wonder what the hotel will look like and the authentic [nationality] food”—“what [Name] looks like”—and then back to the famous file, I imagined

the [Name] representative coming up with 101 excuses and me defending each one of them—I had answers for everything—I am going to nail them.

The meeting started the next day. [Name] had a similar representation ([Name], his boss and my equivalent) I met [Name]. He looks like Danny DeVito. Really like him. I just could not trust this person from the moment I laid my eyes on him. The feeling was mutual I think—[Name] always avoided looking at me in the eyes (in hindsight, I think I was radiating some negative vibes or the look of mistrust was all over my face for [Name] and others to see it). We took off; [Name] led the charge, talked about the relationship, the status of the job, the challenges, the future jobs etc.. the aim of the meeting, all sounded waffle to me as I wanted to get down to business.

Going through the file was not pleasant at all. No doubt in anyone's mind that I had a case. I came more prepared than the other team. I came across as more knowledgeable. I was forceful at times but never lost my temper at any time. I picked up on few words that [Name] said and responded with example to prove he is wrong—I did that with plenty of sarcasm. He talked about being fair, I showed him few example that [Name] has not been etc... every now and then, I imagine both [Name] and [Name] telling me you cannot do it, as if I was in this meeting to prove them wrong. I was stopped many times by [Name] and [Name]. [Name] was feeling the heat under the collar. I was feeling pleased but uncomfortable as well. The discomfort is stronger. I knew that I am winning, but did not feel 100% OK (as if I am in a boxing fight, I knocked down the competitor but kept punching him).

The meeting took the whole day during which we went out for lunch. [Name] and his team were not interested in engaging with me outside the meeting, save some lip service conversation. The end result: we recollect the money, both [Name] and [Name] patted me on the shoulder. They were impressed with my preparation and also with my role as the Bad Cop (!!!) But the irony is I was not very pleased with myself at all. I won the match, but did not feel OK. I was exhausted—I remember sleeping in the car on the way to the airport. My relationship with [Name] and his team is almost non-existent. I felt that the only value I added to this equation was fiercely recollecting the money.

What happens next?

The project was the end of the road for the [Name]/[Name] association (I am not blaming myself here for this outcome as many things happen between the [Location] encounter and the end of the project). The project's result was exactly as I forecasted it to be. I met [Name] again few years down the track in [Location]. His first remark when he saw me: Did you calm down or your still uptight since [Location] ?

#### **EXAMPLE 4: INEFFECTIVE**

[Name] is a technical person, extremely clever. Very different to me indeed. He rubs me the wrong way. I guess the chemistry between us was never there. He knows it all. He thinks he does. He is abrupt and annoys the hell out of me. Not sure what it is, but the guy really annoys me. He is sarcastic and thinks that he knows it all. Always dismissive, always has to have the final answer. Better stay away from him.

As a global organization, our inter-offices dealings have to be regulated. [Name] sees that as a bureaucratic exercise and certainly does not see the value in anything but picking up

the phone and talk to the other office to sort any deal. We don't see eye to eye on this one. I don't recall we see eye to eye on many things before in any case. This is another one to add to the list.

I remember heading for the beach, feeling very angry. I wonder what others will think about me, the secretaries, the MD, my colleagues. I simply made a fool of myself. I feel very disappointed but ironically relieved. Not good enough. I am really upset. I lost my temper and could not control myself. I was not hearing what [Name] was saying. I hate the guy. He knows I do. I think he knows, I think he hates me. But still I made a fool of myself I think. I felt very relieved !! but at the same time angry at myself.

"You are not listening to what I am saying, this thing will never work, listen to me, it will never work, this shit system is failing" [Name] kept repeating this statement or something to that effect. I was not paying attention as a matter of fact, thinking about it now I can hear his voice, but then I don't think that I heard it at all

I drafted a procedure to follow. I pushed back in very professional way. Many members of my department did too. Things are not working. [Name] called a meeting to sort this one. He does not want the process—He was never interested to listen to other people view. Nothing will be different on this one I guess. It is going to be ugly I thought. I feel sick in my stomach as I was heading for this meeting. I tried to avoid the meeting. He still wants to sit and sort it out. He wants to bully us this is what he wants. At least this is what I think he will do.

"We will not wait on you to tell us what to do"—this what I heard him saying. He was on and on about the system, the people. Someone has to stop the bastard. I started to get fired up. The conversation was not about the system anymore. It is getting uglier. I was getting more upset. I don't recall discussing the merit of the system or even listen to what [Name] has to say about it. I became impatient and feeling tired of him and the whole situation. I know better. I always did better. I have the capability to behave better, but I did not. My mind was rushing to something else. I was thinking about [Name] and [nationality] background. I thought about the last episode with him and how he behaved. I was not in the room that is for sure.

I should have interjected and left the room earlier on (in a nice and professional way). I should have trusted my guts. I should have listened to my body. I was not present. I was not listening to what he was saying.

I left this meeting but after putting out a show, shouting and accusing [Name] of being unprofessional. I did not see [Name] in front of me. I saw an ugly beast and I was on the attack. I was agitated. I left the office and headed off to the beach.

What happens next

[Name] and I continue not operating at the same level. The episode above was a result of me not being mindful, and rather than truly focus on the problem in hand, I was so occupied by revenge.

## APPENDIX C: EXAMPLES OF INITIAL CODING

Narrative Data	Initial Coding
<p><b>Excerpt # 1</b></p> <p>We all arrived two days before our meeting so we can spend some time preparing and gathering our thoughts. The first day was awful for me. I continued to be disengaged, very emotional about the fact that I had to come over to start with. At some point, I realized I was emotional about the whole thing—and started telling myself to stop, “I am where I am now—let me benefit from this visit as much as possible”, but I just could not control my myself. I felt I had to distance myself. I need to find a calm space to reflect and find myself again. So I decided to take a walk.</p>	<p>Preparing for the meeting (teamwork gathering thoughts)            Continuing to be disengaged , very emotional, still in the space of not wanting to travel.            Telling self to stop and accept the facts.            Inviting self to benefit from the visit.            Finding it difficult to control self.            Feeling the need to distance self            Feeling the need to find a calm space to reflect            Deciding to take a walk.</p>
<p><b>Excerpt # 2</b></p> <p>At some point I felt like bringing the three together and bang their heads against each other. But leaving emotions on the side, it is very clear that each one of them has a point, but no one is seeing but his own point. Sorting this out together in one room will be the way.</p> <p>I put them together and very soon discovered that I made a mistake. [Name] and [Name] went quite. [Name] was ranting. [Name] will through a comment, [Name] will follow and that will set [Name] off. My attempt to facilitate the meeting went in vain. I remember the good looking [Name] coming in and offering us drinks. At some point, I was hearing noise only and not a discussion. Emotions reign. [Name] got tired. [Name] checked out. I checked out as well. I don't remember if [Name] was still in the room or not</p>	<p>Feeling emotional about it.            Realizing the need to leave emotions on the side.            Concluding that everyone can bring value.            Needing to act by bringing them together.            Putting them together in one room.            Realizing that this was a mistake.            Realizing that people are not ready to face each other.            People talking over each other.            Feeling distracted and emotions reigning.            People checking out.            Not being present in the room.</p>

**Excerpt # 3**

Most importantly, I need to let [Name] realise that the move will involve others as well. It is not about her only. I needed to focus on finding a solution. She is a child and cannot be caught in my emotions and be reactive.

Pulled her on the side. I asked her to tell me why she wants to move. I explained to her why I want as well to move. I also explained to her what the move will entail and then moving her to my office will mean xyz. So I explained to her that so many activities need to happen that will take time ie calling the internet guy, buying furniture etc.

So I invited her to find a solution with me. I asked her to take leadership and write the steps needed to be taken for every room to be move. Then put a time line on each activity and how they interact with each other. Then we can talk about times and how can we do it together etc.

She was very pleased. She is really good at driving a plan. She was not patient but needed to understand that things need a plan. She is really good at being persistent. She went on, put a plan, worked with me and her mum on it and the move started—we worked as a team. The girl will make a wonderful lawyer.

Wanting to use this opportunity as a learning opportunity for a teenager.

Needing to focus on a solution .

Seeing that she is a child and cannot be caught up in my emotions.

Exploring with her why she wants to move.

Explaining to her why I want the move as well.

Explaining to her what this entails. Inviting her to find a solution with me.

Asking her to take leadership writing the steps that need to be taken.

Inviting her to explore, analyze. and coordinate the time required for the activities.

Seeing that she is good at driving plans.

Seeing that she is good at being persistent.

Carrying on with her plan and working with her mum and me on the move.

Working as a team.

Seeing lots of positives in her.

**Excerpt # 4**

Stressful experience will be an understatement. [Name] was genuine since day one. I was caught between wanting to jump or not. All I was thinking about was “What is wrong with the deal and what could go wrong” ? “ Why [Name] wants me in?””How can she shaft me” ? “How I can maximize the deal to my advantage”? “how I can remain in control”

The JV structure was not the easier to have. It is not a straight forward deal, but thinking about it now, in every conversation [Name] was talking about what is good for me and her; I was more inclined to listen and see the negative side of the deal. I had many opportunities to call it off, I did not. I continued and dragged [Name] with me.

Feeling stressed.  
Being uncertain.  
Looking always at the negative sides of the deal.  
Doubting her motives.  
Feeling threatened.  
Looking for way to protect myself.

Deal being complicated.  
Her being happy to engage on win-win basis.  
Me being inclined to look for what can go wrong.  
Having many opportunities to call it off.  
Continuing to bluff my way through.

**Excerpt # 4**

I went back and started to be very sarcastic. Last think I cared about was the merit of the choice made by the owner. Was it about me , were they right? I did not care. I felt betrayed. I am not respecting them anymore, they don't deserve my respect full stop.

When I started talking to others about it, some asked me to go and talk to one of the owners, explore the reasons why they did this. I am not interested I said.

Very soon, I started to pick up emails, I lost interest in the context of the workshop itself. I was there because I had to. I felt threatened. Something triggered that big reaction I don't know what. Things did not go as I wanted them—but the way they did it I hate it. It is not about me being one of the chosen one or not, it was about the way they did it. I had coward people.

Starting to become sarcastic.  
Losing trust in them.  
Doubting self.  
Feeling betrayed.  
Refusing to see others.  
perspective.  
Them losing respect.

Losing interest in exploring further.  
Not being present – disengaged.  
Feeling threatened.  
Feeling something is getting hold of me.  
Things not going as I wanted them.  
Hating the way they behaved.  
Hating cowardly people.

## APPENDIX D: NARRATIVES LIST

<b>Narrative Code</b>	<b>Negotiation Classification</b>	<b>Nature</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Approximate Period</b>	<b>Location</b>
1A	Effective	Contractual negotiation	Early stages of a contract Face to face with other team members and then with client	2012	Asia
2A	Effective	Contractual negotiation	Early stages of a contract Face to face with client	2012	Australia
3A	Effective	Buying a property – Personal	Face to face with the seller	2012	Australia
4A	Effective	Human Resources issue	Forming a team and sorting out a reporting structure—face to face with new member and previous manager	2006	Australia
5A	Effective	Contractual negotiation	Final stages of securing a deal Face to face with client	2010	Australia
6A	Effective	Human Resources issue	Face to face with a manager—dealing with a personal matter	2012	Australia
7A	Effective	Contractual negotiation	Selling our services. Face to face with client	2009	Asia
8A	Effective	Contractual negotiation	Final stages of securing a deal. Face to face with client	2009	America
9A	Effective	Contractual negotiation	Meeting with client to sort out an issue during the life of a project—part of a team	2004	Africa
10A	Effective	Contractual negotiation	Early stages. Selling our services. Face to face with client	2011	Australia
11A	Effective	Personal negotiation	Negotiation with family member.	2012	Australia
12A	Effective	Across divisions reporting and negotiation	Face to face with two peers trying to establish relationship and diffuse tension	1999	Europe
13A	Effective	Personal negotiation	Negotiation with two family members	2013	Middle East
14A	Effective	Contractual Negotiation	Conducting a face to face Peer Review on a long-timer	2000	Africa
15A	Effective	Human Resources negotiation	Face to face with three seniors. Trying to diffuse tension and sorting out an organization structure	2007	America

16A	Effective	Human Resources issue	Negotiating with one of the team members who became very frustrated	2000	Africa
17A	Effective	Contractual negotiation	Face to face as part of a team. Starting to sell our services and come up with an innovative product	2001	Africa
18A	Effective	Set up a process	Negotiating to set up a new system/process	2006	Australia
1B	Not effective	Human Resources	Face to face with a manager, dealing with a personal issue	2005	Europe
2B	Not effective	Contractual Negotiation	Face to face with client – tackling some issues during the life of a project	2011	Australia
3B	Not effective	Personal negotiation	Negotiation with a landlord	2002	Europe
4B	Not effective	Peer negotiation	An encounter with a peer. Negotiating a process	1999	Australia
5B	Not effective	Contractual negotiation	Negotiating with a JV partner over an account	1999	Europe
6B	Not effective	Contractual negotiation	Face to face, part of a team, final stage of closing a project	2009	Australia
7B	Not effective	Human Resources issue	Negotiating to be nominated as part of the succession team	2002	Europe
8B	Not effective	Personal negotiation	Setting up a contractual relationship with a friend	2012	Australia
9B	Not effective	Human Resources issue	Negotiating an offer received to join another organization	2011	Australia
10B	Not effective	Human Resources issue	Part of a team, reporting on issues	2012	Australia
11B	Not effective	Human Resources issue	Negotiating a new position	2011	Australia
12B	Not effective	Personal negotiation	Face to face with a real estate agent	2006	Australia
TOTAL 30	A = 18; B = 12				

## APPENDIX E: TESTING THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK ON GROUP B DATA

(Y = the case did not show any theme to suggest otherwise, so the negotiation passed the test; N = the case showed at least one theme to suggest that it did not pass the test.)

Narrative #	AWARE	REGULATE	CONNECT	EVALUATE
1B	Y	N	N	Y
2B	N	Y	N	N
3B	Y	N	N	N
4B	N	N	N	N
5B	Y	N	N	N
6B	N	N	N	N
7B	N	N	N	N
8B	N	N	N	N
9B	N	N	N	N
10B	N	N	N	N
11B	Y	N	N	N
12B	Y	N	N	N