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# Sally Soprano Memo

I enjoyed the Sally Soprano case we did in class on 9/22. To me it felt like our fist “real” negotiation. I say that because it was the first one which felt like it had many dimensions that we could negotiate. Previous scenarios were either very restrictive (Oil Pricing, Used Car) or had a simple solution (split the Afghan prunes). With the Sally Soprano case, we had a wide open area of interests to negotiate over. For example, my instructions as Lyric were all about money. However, the agent’s instructions were, from what I could gather, more about the passion for Sally to sing again. In addition, the possible outcomes were not pre-specified, so we could be very creative in what we could offer.

I think coming up with unique solutions is one of my strengths. Unique solutions throw each party off of their prescribed positions, allowing them to rethink what their goals are. However, in this negotiation I think we descended into arguing over money (distributive) too fast. In addition, I was unable to break out of it. For example, when I offered the tribute to Sally in the lobby, I was unable to get a concession in response for it. Prof. Sharone did say that we should not explicitly trade concessions because it seems like it undermines trust. Upon reviewing my notes, I did realize that he said that labeling what we gave up as a concession is a good strategy. I think I should try that next time. I could have said “this tribute will cost us $2,000 to put together.” On the other hand, I don’t think that is the right thing to ask for, because Sally does not care about money. However, the agent I was with spent a lot of time haggling over the amount of the money, so it could have been a good strategy for this agent.

So I will conclude with a reminder to stay aware of the agent problem. Prof. Sharone used the real estate example in class, which was also in the Freaknomics movie.[[1]](#footnote-1) I remember reading that it is often best to deal with the principal directly. Often if negations are not going well, get rid of the intermediaries and start the negations again directly with your principal. Only the principal knows what all of interests are. An agent in likely only getting paid on some of those interests (money) or is trying to close the deal quickly because he or she makes money in volume.

1. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=17jO_w6f8Ck> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)