

# Chapter 9

## Understanding the Importance of Perception in Negotiation

# Perception

The process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting stimuli.

# Everyone Does Not See the Same

- Personality affects perception.
- Culture affects perception.
- Attitude affects perception.
- Context affects perception.

- We perceive everything and everyone everyday.
- Person perception is the most complex.
- Perception affects all that we do.

- We create cognitive structures to organize what we perceive.
- The structure may be thought of as a file cabinet.
- Extroverts use fixed cabinets.
- Introverts use abstract cabinets.

# Sensors and Intuitors Perceive Differently

- Sensors seek validity in things that can be verified by physical senses.
- Intuitors seek the unusual and creative and see validity in things consistent conceptually.
- Sensors organize stimuli according to experience.
- Intuitors organize according to conceptual relationships.

# We Attribute Psychological Processes to Others

- We view people as causal agents.
- We infer intentions and attitudes of others.
- We expect experience to repeat.
- We make judgments about the purpose of others' behavior.
- We assess blame and culpability.
- We assess validity.

- We tend to assume that others are like us.
- We tend to think others perceive as we do.
- We tend to think others think like we do.



# Attribution Theory

- We evaluate validity of messages to acquire valid attitudes.
- We attribute cause for communication.
- Cause may be attributed to external or internal sources.

In assessing or attributing cause, we assess three things:

Consistency

Consensus

Distinctiveness

- Consistency—whether the behavior or communication is consistent with prior experience with THAT individual in similar situations.
- Consensus—whether the behavior agrees with that of OTHERS in similar circumstances.
- Distinctiveness—whether the behavior is different from prior experience generally with THAT individual.

# Decision Tree

- Consistent? No. Attribute to external causes.
- Consistent? Yes. Check Consensus.
- Consensus? Yes. Attribute to external causes.
- Consensus? No. Check Distinctiveness.
- Distinctive? Yes. Attribute to particular external causes and internal causes.
- Distinctive? No. Attribute to internal causes.

# External/Internal Causes

- We afford greater validity to behavior attributed to external causes.
- We do not hold others responsible when we attribute their behavior to external causes.
- We DO hold others responsible when we attribute their behavior to internal causes.
- Our biases and prejudices are activated in our attribution process.

# Fundamental Error

- The fundamental attributional error made by all is to tend toward attributing behavior to internal causes.
- The error accounts in part for our tendency not to believe others.
- We do not make that error in assessing our own behavior. We have a self-serving bias.

# Attribution in Negotiation

This unconscious process impacts negotiation in at least three ways:

- It influences whether or not we see a conflict.
- It influences our choice of conflict strategy.
- It influences our assessment of potential outcomes.