

Ep #94: Never Split the Difference with Chris Voss



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Hosts

Dr. David Phelps and Evan Harris

[Dentist Freedom Blueprint](http://www.DentistFreedomBlueprint.com) with Dr. David Phelps and Evan Harris

Ep #94: Never Split the Difference with Chris Voss

Chris: Why do we want to use empathy? We want to use empathy because we want to receive empathy from the other side. We want it to be a two-way bridge to create the great foundation for flexibility. When someone looks at you and says, "That's right," what they're actually telling you is, "I feel empathy from you," and, bang, this bond is created. They're telling you, "You just hit the target. You just hit the perfect target with me right now." It's a way of actually saying, "Thank you for listening to me."

You are listening to the Dentist Freedom Blueprint podcast with David Phelps and Evan Harris, navigating you through the uncharted waters of a turbulent economy with straightforward advice to transform your practice into a self-sufficient cash machine, compound your net worth assets, and multiply your asset cash flow streams.

David: Good day, everyone. This is Dr. David Phelps of the Freedom Founders Mastermind Community and your host today on the *Dentist Freedom Blueprint* podcast. Really an honor and privilege to have our guest on today. This is Mr. Chris Voss. He's the CEO, author, and negotiation expert. His company is the Black Swan Group. He's author of the current national bestseller *Never Split the Difference: Negotiating As If Your Life Depended On It*. A 24 year veteran of the FBI, Chris retired as their lead international kidnapping negotiator. His company specializes in solving business communication problems with hostage negotiation solutions. In addition to the FBI, Chris' expertise draws from Harvard's program on negotiation, Scotland Yard, and the Kellogg School of Business. His negotiation methodology centers around black swans, what he calls small pieces of information that have a huge effect on an

[Dentist Freedom Blueprint](#) with Dr. David Phelps and Evan Harris

Ep #94: Never Split the Difference with Chris Voss

outcome. Not only does Chris believe the negotiation process needs to be tailored to draw out these complexities, but also he and his team negotiate in a way that has a huge impact influencing an outcome. Chris and his team have helped companies secure and close better deals, save money, and solve internal communication problems.

Chris, first of all I want to tell you I went onto Amazon just the other day, looked at your book, which has just been out this year. I grabbed a copy early in the summer when it was brought to my attention, and it has currently, I think, about 238 reviews. Eighty-five percent of those are all 5 star, and you've got a few others that are 4 star. Basically, you've got a 4.8 out of 5 star rating on Amazon, which totally makes sense because the book is a great read. Not only do you give great techniques and tips, but the stories in there make it really relevant to the audience that you're reaching. Tell me a little bit about how you decided to come about writing this book. What was the impetus for that?

Chris: I always thought, since I first started learning about how to apply these ideas to business and personal life ... I mean, way back when, the first night, I actually started this by volunteering on a suicide hot line, which makes it sound even crazier, I think. How's it possible that kind of stuff could apply? When I started teaching in business schools a number of years later I always thought there was a book that was there. I just wanted to make sure that not only we had an easy-to-understand system from end-to-end but, for lack of a better term, proof of concept. I proved it by teaching it to enough other people and enough other situations so I could show, "Yeah, it works with negotiating with your child. It works with negotiating with a vendor. It works with negotiating with a colleague." That's

Ep #94: Never Split the Difference with Chris Voss

where the whole book is designed. Once we had enough stories of people taking my ideas and making them work then we put it in a book. Found the right guy to help me write it and I think it's a readable, fun, enjoyable book that can make a difference in somebody's life.

David: No doubt, no doubt. It's a great book, a great read. We both know, and most people realize, that really life is about negotiating in any respect. You did it at a very, very high level. Hopefully, most of us aren't going to be involved in life and death situations, although it could come up, not a bad thing to be able to deal with. In every-day life it's all about negotiating. You give a lot of real-time examples like buying a car, or negotiating for your salary, buying a home, renegotiating a rent or lease, dealing with your partner. That could be a partner in business; that could be your partner domestically at home, your relationship. How many times do we need to involve good negotiating skills there.

Chris: Yeah.

David: Go ahead.

Chris: What I was going to say, too. I think the definition here is it's not win/lose. If you think of negotiation as win/lose then there's something nefarious about dealing with your romantic partner, because if I win that makes them have to lose. It's not win/lose. I don't use the term win/win. I pointedly avoid that for a couple of reasons. We need better outcomes for both sides so, yeah, it's not wrong to negotiate with someone who's very important

Ep #94: Never Split the Difference with Chris Voss

with you in your life, because you're trying to make both of you better off.

David: One of the quotes from your book ... I'm going to read it. This is from page 112, but you say, "The moment you've convinced someone that you truly understand her dreams," could be his or her dreams, "and feelings the whole world that she inhabits, the mental and behavioral change becomes possible, and a foundation for a breakthrough has been laid." That's so contrary to the way most of us deal with negotiation. We come hard with our position. We think, "Well, I'm right. This person is wrong and we dig right into it and go hard." Talk about that, but talk about how that relates to what you had to deal with with kidnappers and people that were threatening lives and asking for huge sums of money. You talked about having to slow it down, slow it down and ask the right questions. Talk about that a little bit.

Chris: First thing, and the reason is you actually speed it up by slowing it down. That's really counterintuitive and that's what I like about what we pulled together because so much of this is counterintuitive, which means, "Yeah, if I didn't show you how it worked you'd never do it." The real reason that you slow things down, and what makes slowing it down more effective, is because there's probably a seven to one rate of return over slowing it down as opposed to trying to fix it after the fact. This is almost a cliché in every aspect of our life. We say, "It takes longer to do something over than it takes to do it right," or "A stitch in time saves nine." These are conventional wisdoms that we've known through the ages that somehow we fail to apply to negotiation.

Ep #94: Never Split the Difference with Chris Voss

It takes less time to negotiate right than it takes to negotiate it over again, to do the re-negotiation. That's why you slow it down. You slow it down just a little bit, not that much. Sometimes if you slow down by 3 seconds a deal jumps out that wasn't there before. Even that, slowing it down horrifies some people because most people feel like to be in control they have to be talking and you're scared to go silent, but that's actually where a lot of the power comes from. That's how you make great things happen in a negotiation. You go silent ... If negotiation is the art of letting the other side have your way you got to shut up long enough so that they can talk themselves into your way.

David: You also talk about the art of listening as it comes into listening for levers. That is, as you said, if you listen more you find out information, key information, from the other side that you initially wouldn't even consider to be relevant, but once they start to open up and really show what their true need is, true goal, you can sometimes break apart the negotiating and go to the key thing they want and still get what you want. Is that the right line of thinking?

Chris: Yeah, exactly. You listen to what's important for the other side, because we never know for sure. There's always stuff going on the other side that we have no idea about. These are the black swans. The only way you find out about a black swan is you got to let the other side talk then you find out where that black swan is. A lot of times what you're really looking for is what can you give them easily that really matters to them? The only way you can find that out is you got to get them talking.

Ep #94: Never Split the Difference with Chris Voss

We used to say as a hostage negotiator, "What's it gonna take to get the guy out?" He's going to tell us, which means we got to shut up and we got to keep him talking, and then you look for those levers. By now we know what kind of levers we're looking for, "What do they care about? What are they afraid of? How does that affect their thinking?" They're going to tell us that with a change in tone of voice. They're going to tell us that with a change in adjectives. It's going to be buried underneath. Then, you lay that foundation, like you said, by getting them to talk so that they're willing to make an adjustment maybe to what you want.

David: Chris, do you find yourself when you are in negotiations that you really have to focus hard on listening for those black swans or, like many people, maybe more novice negotiators, we tend to always be thinking about what our next statement's going to be. Is that common? Is that something that one has to really practice and not worry so much about what you're gonna say next to overcome their objection? Is that common?

Chris: That's exactly what the real problem is in negotiation and why you want the other side to talk because, like you said, what people's habits are is that they're waiting for the opportunity to make their case, which means you're not listening. If the other side is not listening to you until they've made their case then every time you open your mouth you're utterly wasting your time. It's literally like talking to a schizophrenic, and that's another reason why you want to let the other side go first so that you don't have this battling of schizophrenics where people are talking over each other. The only time they're mouth is shut is when they're thinking about what they want to say.

Ep #94: Never Split the Difference with Chris Voss

The next level of listening that happens after that, when people start to evolve out of that and they've learned that this schizophrenic conversation isn't any good, is they listen to go, "Ah ha, that's where you're wrong."

David: Right.

Chris: That's actually evolved. I mean, you're starting to get the idea that there's an advantage to listening because now you're aware that they're are moments of opportunity in what the other guy says. Your on a right track, but if you stop there you're hurting yourself because every time you go, "Ah ha, you're wrong," you're damaging the relationship and what that means, what happens when you damage the relationship is, no deal that is worth doing if you can't implement it. With a damaged relationship then they're going to hurt you on implementation every time they can, every time they get the opportunity to be passively aggressive in the implementation.

They let things happen that are bad by doing nothing. That's when they'll get you back. When you get out of the "Ah-ha," moments your listening is starting to evolve, but now you're listening for the pluses, like maybe the "Oh, yeahs," or "All right," or "This is good." Now you're developing into listening for collaboration and then you make your real money in the implementation, or you have the real joy in a personal relationship in the implementation, or in a business you're much more efficient in the implementation. That's where the real money is made, in implementation.

Ep #94: Never Split the Difference with Chris Voss

David: You differentiate in the book between two very short phrases, Chris, and I think it's along the lines of the collaboration you were just talking about, finding areas of agreement. You state very definitively that you're looking for an agreement that comes in the form of a phrase, "That's right," and you're not looking for a phrase that says, "You're right." Could you briefly describe why we're looking for "That's right," and not "You're right." What's the difference there?

Chris: We have a running joke inside of my company that, "You're right," is equivalent of F-U.

David: Got you.

Chris: "You're right," is what we say to people when we're trying to preserve the relationship but we want them to shut up, just stop talking. I like you. I care about you. Either we work together and I have to live with you or we're in intimate relationship and I want you to be happy, and there's nothing that makes us happier than when someone looks us in the eye and says, "You're right." We find that enormously satisfying. "I'm so happy I'm right." It's so satisfying that we shut up and we leave the person that said, "You're right," to us alone. The greatest practitioners ... There's a profile. Let's profile a little bit here, shall we?

David: Sure.

Ep #94: Never Split the Difference with Chris Voss

Chris: What do you think the profile is of the type of person who has elevated the use of "You're right," to preserve relationships and do nothing?

David: It's somebody who doesn't want to deal with conflict, right? They want to just move on and let that one go and just keep their fingers crossed that it won't erupt again.

Chris: It's husbands.

David: There you go. Oh, you were talking to me? Apparently, yeah. I totally get it.

Chris: Men across the planet have learned that if we say, "You're right," to our significant other that makes her really happy and she stops giving us a hard time.

David: In doing that we didn't get anywhere, did we? We didn't solve anything.

Chris: That's the problem, and that's why our significant other becomes frustrated, because it's just looped. This deja vu loop, or where the problem happens over and over again. We bought ourselves 24 hours, if that, and then she has a right to be upset with us because we haven't solved anything. We haven't changed anything. That's the problem with it, because it's where people say ... You know, you can look at somebody in your workplace and two people are talking and you can see one

Ep #94: Never Split the Difference with Chris Voss

person passionately making their case and you'll see another person leaning back a little bit and saying, "You're right, you're right, you're right," and you can just see the figurative hand being held up in between them and "You're right's" what we say when we're not willing to embrace what the other person is saying. Either we don't see the problem with it right now or we don't want to comply.

Why does "That's right," make a difference, and why is that different? "That's right," ... Imagine you're watching something on TV and you hear something that you think is utterly the truth. You'll jump up and you'll point at the screen, you'll say, "That's right." When we fully believe in something and we fully embrace it as a complete truth we say, "That's right," and there's this epiphany moment that happens. You made a great point earlier about laying the foundation for agreement. Well, this is how you lay the foundation for agreement.

If ever there's a moment that your counterpart's going to be flexible enough with you to see your perspective it's when they feel totally heard. When they feel totally heard they say, "That's right," and now you've got this phenomenal foundation. It's really important to go silent at that point in time because we've seen deal, after deal, after deal get made when the other person said, "That's right," and then said, "You know, I can see a different path now, and they'll then suggest something that works really well for you. "That's right" is a solid gold standard. If you're not getting "That's right" out of somebody you're wasting your time.

David: Chris, I think that's so important and so relevant, and this is

[Dentist Freedom Blueprint](#) with Dr. David Phelps and Evan Harris

Ep #94: Never Split the Difference with Chris Voss

something I had to learn through just some basic counseling, relationship counseling, but let's talk about how do you get to "That's right?" How do we try to move the other person to a consensus? How do we get there?

Chris: Oh, now you want to tell people how to get to "That's right."

David: I thought that might be helpful.

Chris: Some actual implementation advice here.

David: There you go.

Chris: Here's the tricky part and it's not that it's actually complicated, it's that we're scared to do it. When the book first come out I did an appearance on Squawk Box on CMBC with Andrew Ross Sorkin, and I said, "Never be afraid to say something just because the other side thinks it's true," and he went, "What!?" It's being able to say how they feel about it. An example, student in my class in a business school at Georgetown, she's a pharmaceutical sales person. She's got a hot new drug her company's come out with. She's got a doctor on her route who is not buying this drug. He's in her territory. She sold the other stuff to him and he is utterly resistant to buying the latest, most profitable drug from the pharmaceutical company. If it's their latest product, obviously, nobody else is cloning it. There's no knock offs. They've got the market cornered. It's enormously profitable. He's not buying. She sits down with him to get a "That's right," and she's got to see if from his perspective.

Ep #94: Never Split the Difference with Chris Voss

Of course, what's in the back of his mind, "Is this your hottest new drug? You just want to sell this to me because it's profitable, and I care about my patients more than just to buy the latest thing. That's what she says to him. She says, "You know, you're not just gonna buy some pharmaceutical product because it's the hottest drug on the market, it's the most profitable issue. There's no competition on it. There's no clones. There's no knock offs for the product" she said, "because your patients are more than just patients to you. They're people to you. You feel responsible for their lives. They're not just patients, they're people. You've got the responsibility for their health and their family's happiness in your hands. Almost like she's talking him into his position, but she's just articulating she knows where he's coming from. Even if it sounds like it's not in her interest, it's how he feels. Again, she didn't say she agreed with any of it. She characterized it as if it's just complete and utter appreciation, not agreement. There's two different things there.

She said he turned and looked at her as if it was the first time he'd ever seen her and he said, "That's right," and it was an epiphany moment for him. It's also, why do we want to use empathy? We want to use empathy because we want to receive empathy from the other side. We want it to be a two-way bridge to create the great foundation for flexibility. When someone looks at you and says "That's right," what they're actually telling you is, "I feel empathy from you," and, bang, this bond is created. They're telling you you just hit the target. You just hit the perfect target with me right now. It's a way of actually saying, "Thank you for listening to me." At that moment things change. She ended up making the sale of the product to the doctor who prior to the "That's right," wouldn't give her the time

Ep #94: Never Split the Difference with Chris Voss

of day.

David: That's a great story that really brings that point home. Thanks for going to that, Chris, because I feel like maybe we just saved some marriages out there as a result of that. I think that was well stated.

Chris: Let me throw one more out there.

David: Certainly.

Chris: Talking about marriages. One of the people that I've talked to about the book recently, very senior level female executive, Silicon Valley. She said, "Thank god my fiancé read your book because now I actually like talking to him."

David: That's great.

Chris: "He's no longer only trying to solve my problem, now we have great conversations." She's actually given the book to the boyfriends and husbands of all of her friends.

David: That's outstanding. That's outstanding, because you're absolutely right. I said "You're right," but "That's right," Chris. I felt the same thing so many times, is just getting the other person to feel like they're heard, they're understood without you agreeing with them, as you said. That's the scary part, because

Ep #94: Never Split the Difference with Chris Voss

we feel like we're caving in if someone says to do that. They're heard and you build that rapport. As you elucidated well in the book that's the key as you're moving through the process of the negotiation.

Chris: It sounds like this soft warm and fuzzy New Age kind of huggy bear kind of stuff. The reality is there's always something more important than being agreed with in an interaction, and the first thing ... If I can solve a deal just by you feeling you've been heard and you then will be willing to go along with me once you felt you've been heard, that keeps me from trying to make a trade when I don't have to. I'll spend my dollars when I need to but I don't want to spend my dollars when I could have solved it with a "That's right." I'll use my dollars only when I need them. My money's more important to me than to be wasting it when I could have been giving emotional compensation which, again, sounds like nonsensical warm and fuzzy huggy bear stuff.

I do this because it works. I happen to like it because I do think that I'm a decent guy and that my motivations are for the greater good, if you will. A lot of people do this just because it works. They're complete mercenaries. The greatest practitioners of these skills, in reality, are sociopaths, because they say with emotional compensation I can get a lot without paying for anything. It's very effective stuff.

David: Chris, there's an age-old kind of sales technique that says, "When you're trying to get someone to agreement on a negotiation, maybe you're trying to sell a product or a service, that the more times you can get someone to nod their head or say, "Yes" in agreement the closer you are to getting the final

Ep #94: Never Split the Difference with Chris Voss

result. You take the converse. In fact, there's another book that also takes that position, but many books say ... As a matter of fact, there's negotiating books titled, Getting to Yes. What is it about getting to "Yes" that doesn't work in the real world and why is it better to actually get a "No?"

Chris: That's a great point. I think the problem has become that has become so overused. All of us human beings, since it's really old advice, we're battered children. If I tried to get you to say "Yes" to anything, if I tried to get you to say "Yes" that today's Thursday, you're going to ask yourself, "Where's this going? What am I letting myself in for?" "Yes" is commitment. This "Yes" trap is laid on us. I bet everybody that listens to this it happens to them four times today, that somebody tries to get them, walk them down a path that's baited with "Yes" these little morsels of "Yes." Is today Thursday? Are we on the planet Earth? Would you like to make more money? This has happened to us so many times. There may have been a point in time that that was good advice, but it has been so massively overused that everybody's guard is up. If I say to you, "Have you got a few minutes to talk?," your first thought is, "What is this leading me up to?"

David: Right.

Chris: This gets us back to the schizophrenic, because as soon as you trigger these thoughts of, "Where is this going? What am I letting myself in for?," those are all actually distractions, so now you've done something that has sent the other guy's mind away from listening to you and he's trying to figure out where you're going, which means he's not listening. All these distractions

Ep #94: Never Split the Difference with Chris Voss

have come into play and it's just killing conversations. I've had sales people come up to me and they've had this so drilled into their DNA that they got to get "Yes," they got to get "Yes." They're like, "Oh, my god, I don't know that I can change. This is all I've been taught." I'll look at them and I'll say, "Have you got a few minutes to talk?" They'll go like, "Yeah, right, exactly, you just did it to me." I was with my girlfriend the other day and her sense of style is 10 times more than mine. Thank god she's going out with me. I get wardrobe advice from her. I'm wearing a shirt that I'm kind of thinking, "Ah, I'll wear it today, see if she likes it." Immediately when she sees that I have it on she says, "I really like that shirt. That's a great shirt." I remember thinking to myself, "Eh, I don't know I guess," because it was something that I was thinking about taking out of my wardrobe.

Later that night I say to her, "So, you said you like this shirt, right?" She literally says to me, "What am I committing to if I say yes?" She'd actually told me "Yes" earlier in the day, but there's a difference between a spontaneous "Yes," a voluntary "Yes," and a "Yes" as a response to a closed-ended question where I'm trying to get you to say "Yes." Every single time, even though she said it to me earlier in the day and we trust each other, this is an area that I'm asking her for advice for, it triggers this anxiety, which is a distraction which gets in the way of the agreement.

That's the problem with trying to get people to say, "Yes." I like to say, "Yes is the last thing you want to hear." You get where you want to go with "That's right." Sometimes you even get with where you want to go with, "No." I can take my "Yes" questions because "No" is protection. If I make you feel protected by asking you, "Have you given up on this project?" ... Instead of

Ep #94: Never Split the Difference with Chris Voss

saying, "Have you got a few minutes to talk?" I'll say, "Is now a bad time to talk?" I spoke to somebody the other day. He come up with a new version. He likes to ask people, "Are you in the middle of something?"

David: Yeah, good.

Chris: Because even if they are for them to say "No" they have to mentally close out on what they were thinking about.

David: Right, good.

Chris: Now you've got their focus and it's a great tool. "Yes" is a problem and getting away from it really helps people.

David: That's excellent advice. Chris, tell us a little bit about what you mean by an accusation audit. I thought that was really well described and it made a lot of sense to me, but people that are listening today aren't going to understand what that means. What's an accusation audit?

Chris: It's this crazy counterintuitive tool. You take any interaction, and we've all got an instinct for this, so this is just making a 2mm adjustment. You know when somebody's going to be unhappy with you, and so if you sense it, because they're going to be harboring something, fair or unfair, and you're going to want to say, "Well, look, I don't want you to think I'm a bad guy here," and that's a denial of a negative which actually increases the

Ep #94: Never Split the Difference with Chris Voss

negative.

Anytime you deny you increase it, but then hostage negotiators, we learned 50 years ago, and now there's actually brain science that backs it up, if you observe a negative it diminishes it. Instead of saying, "I don't want you to think I'm being a bad guy," if you say, "I'm sure it seems like I've been a bad guy," that's an identification and where they monitor brain activity where negative thoughts reside in the brain, and they've shown that just observing, not denying, just observing, diminishes the negative thoughts.

If know that this will work and we have a gut instinct for what the problems are in advance let's sit down, let's do an audit of what the accusations could be. What are the names they could call us? "I'm sure it seems like a bit insensitive. I'm sure it seems like I haven't cared about you. I'm sure it seems like I've been a jerk. You know, what I'm getting ready to say is gonna sound really harsh." If you can predict what those accusations might be then can we fire off these labels, these identifiers, sort of like preemptive strikes, and keep them from increasing on us? We see this, we do this all the time.

If I know that the other side's harboring a negative I'll do an audit of what that predictability might be and I'll call it out. I won't deny it, I'll call it out. It works so quickly and it seems like a waste of time, and it seems like we're adding to the problem, and it just makes this stuff dissolve. It makes negativity dissolve. It's almost unfair how effectively it works. If I may, Warren Buffett does this all the time. Every one of the newsletters that he sounds out on his company's performance

Ep #94: Never Split the Difference with Chris Voss

he starts out by calling out the negatives, and when was the last time you saw somebody hold a press conference saying, "I'm tired of doing business with Warren Buffett?"

David: Never.

Chris: Right, because he knows the power of calling out the negatives first and then worrying about the positives after the fact. He's brilliant at it.

David: I have a lot of dentists and chiropractors, professional practice people, that listen to our podcast. If I took it to their world, or my former world, and think about a dental patient coming in for treatment, I would start to think in terms of that patient's going to think it's going to cost a lot of money, it may take a lot of time, and it could be uncomfortable, or painful. Would that be typically some of the audit that I would do in advance of dealing with that particular person?

Chris: Yeah. Those are great. As you say, your gut instinct tells you that these are eminently predictable, and you can add a couple things like that. When somebody comes to the dentist they feel scared and alone.

David: Yes.

Chris: The other thing that we found out about this is people say all the time, "Well, what if they don't feel it and I call it out does it

[Dentist Freedom Blueprint](#) with Dr. David Phelps and Evan Harris

Ep #94: Never Split the Difference with Chris Voss

plant it?" The crazy thing is it doesn't. What happens is ... Because we get back before this dynamic that I told you before that "No" is protection, so if you call out a negative and it's not there ... Again, there's a difference, never deny a negative. If you say, "Well, I don't want you to feel scared or alone," they're like, "Oh, my god, I'm alone." If you say, "I'm sure this must make you feel alone and scared," they'll go, "No. No, no, that's not it."

The act of saying "No" actually centers people and strengthens them because they know that they just protected themselves. Intentionally triggering a "No" in these instances actually works in our favor. It's just like taking a test where there's no wrong answer. As long as you don't deny it ... The denial is the 2mm shift that makes it either good or bad in the approach. You dealt with enough people in your profession you know how they feel in advance. You don't want them to feel that so what you do is just label it to make it go away.

David: Excellent. We're picking up just a few of the key nuggets that meant a lot to me. There's one more I want to touch on today before our time's up, Chris, and that is ... This one I really love. You emphasize asking over and over this particular question, "How am I supposed to do that?" In other words, kind of playing dumb with the other side and getting them to help you overcome, "How am I supposed to do that?" You gave some examples when you were doing negotiations for hostage release and you would say something like, "How do we know the hostage is safe?" When they ask for a certain amount of money, "How are we supposed to get that kind of money?" "How do we deliver the ransom to you?" You say, "Just keep asking that question?" That's something I never really thought

Ep #94: Never Split the Difference with Chris Voss

about and I guess the first thing I would think about is if I say, "How am I supposed to do that?" ...

Let's say if I'm dealing with a car dealer and they give me a price and I say, "Well, it's a great car and I love it and it's got great features, I just don't have that kind of money. How am I supposed to get that?" Is that where you start and what if they just come back and say, "Well, that's not my problem, that's your problem." Has that ever happened or am I approaching that the wrong way?

Chris: Actually, the answer that you were most horrified that they'd come up with, "Well, you got to do it. It's your problem, it's not my problem," that's actually where you want to go, because the key of a negotiation is finding out how much room there is on the table, how far you can go with each term. That's the signal that you've pushed that term as far as you possibly can. Really, if they respond like that you go, "Oh, fantastic." I now know that I've got everything I could possibly get on the table here. That's the only time, when they're pushed to their limit, that's as bad as it gets. It's also important to say it in a differential tone of voice that says you're really looking for help because you don't want to trigger their guard to come up by saying, "How am I supposed to do that?" in an accusatory tone.

What I coach people is keep asking, "How am I supposed to do that?" until they finally say, "If you want it you're gonna do it," because now you've accomplished one of the goals in a negotiation, you know that you can't push that term any farther. In the meantime, because you're asking for help, they'll let you know whether-or-not there's any latitude, whether-or-not there

Ep #94: Never Split the Difference with Chris Voss

are any solutions. That's how you get them to talk themselves into your solution. That's how you get them talking, and even if they don't give something to you on that term they feel they failed to help you there, which means they're going to try to help you someplace else.

David: It's going back to getting them on your side, right, getting them to help you to get to where you want to go?

Chris: Exactly.

David: Asking questions. I think it's brilliant. Well, Chris, I know that since you left the FBI you have now your black swan group, you do consulting that provides training, you advise Fortune 500 companies regarding negotiations. What about for everyday people that want to take your concepts and want to take them to a higher level in their personal life, in their business life, what are some next steps, because learning to apply anything takes practice. What do you offer that might help people that want to take a next step?

Chris: It takes practice and a little bit of maintenance, and so we put out a two-a-month negotiation advisory letter with four short 700 word pieces on how to apply, what are the four steps to make sure that there is no latitude from the other side; how to negotiate the non-negotiable offer. It comes out twice a month. It's called The Edge. You can go to our website blackswanltd.com, b-l-a-c-k-s-w-a-n-l-t-d.com and you can sign up for the twice-a-month newsletter. It will come to your inbox. You can also look at past articles. We've got some other

Ep #94: Never Split the Difference with Chris Voss

versions of training email negotiation lessons that will come out that can help you get better and dig into the tools, and then we're actually developing more-and-more ways to get better for individuals as opposed to just companies, and we've got a training coming up in New York City towards the end of October and we'll have more one-day training sessions that people can pay a reasonable fee and come and learn from us in person. We got a lot of stuff for both individuals who are really working on making their skills better and then keeping their skills at a high level.

David: Chris, I really want to come to your training. I know it's got to be extremely valuable, but how am I supposed to do that?

Chris: You know, you sign up for the newsletter, and you buy a bunch of books, and then you help our social medial, and there's always a term other than money that I'm interested in hearing about, so I'm very negotiable about a lot of stuff.

David: Awesome. Well, I'll tell you what, we've got a big listening audience and I wouldn't have had you on here today if I didn't really believe the value in what you're providing through your experience, not only through the book, but with the newsletter, workshops and, again, the book is Never Split the Difference: Negotiating As If Your Life Depended On It. Mr. Christopher Voss, the author. I would recommend anybody go pick up a book. I would go to your website, blackswanltd.com and check out events, the newsletter, the other aspects that Chris has there. Negotiating to me, Chris, is probably the highest paid form of activity that anyone can do no matter what your profession is.

Ep #94: Never Split the Difference with Chris Voss

Chris: Yeah, yeah, the return on it is extremely high, yes. Good point there.

David: Just if you save your marriage. I mean, come on. That's massive to people today that look back and go, "Well, financially I'm in trouble." "Well, how many marriages have you been through?" "Well, two, three." "Well, maybe there's something there you could have done." Anyway, don't want to belabor it, it's just good stuff. Chris, thanks for your time today. Loved having you and you and I will have a chance to meet somewhere. I'm going to make it to one of your trainings.

Chris: I look forward to it. Thanks, David.

David: Thank you, Chris.

You've been listening to another episode of the *Dentist Freedom Blueprint* podcast with David Phelps and Evan Harris. The place to be to create your freedom lifestyle with more time off, security and peace of mind. Please subscribe, download the podcast, and share it with others who want to create real freedom in their lives and practices.