



Interest Activity

“Conflict is a growth industry.” (Roger Fisher & William Ury, *Getting To Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In* xvii {1981}). One of many faculty members teaching conflict resolution courses wryly observed that conflict resolution had also become a growth industry. Ugli Orange is one of several excellent conflict resolution exercises used in such classes; some of you may have used it yourselves. In the interest of time, we decided to skip the exercise and focus on the message. Were we to have carried out the exercise, one or more of you would have been asked to play the part of Dr. Jones, and others the part of Dr. Roland. (If you’re interested in more detail, please see:

- <http://jfmuller.faculty.noctrl.edu/crow/ugliorangesactivity.pdf> or
- Google “ugli orange” to sample an array of views.)

Each is a research scientist working for a pharmaceutical company, each has developed a scientific “cure” for a significant and time sensitive societal problem, and each needs a large supply of Ugli oranges, a very rare fruit, to make the precious serum or toxic gas antidote.

Dr. Roland is poised to protect people from gas leaking from two WWII era nerve gas bombs being moved by the government. He has developed a synthetic vapor that will neutralize the gas if it is injected into the bomb chamber before the gas leaks out. The vapor is made with a chemical taken from the rind of the orange.

Dr. Jones has developed a synthetic chemical useful for curing and preventing Rudosen, a disease contracted by pregnant women. If not caught in the first four weeks of pregnancy, the disease causes serious brain, eye, and ear damage to the unborn child. There has been a recent outbreak of Rudosen in our state, and several thousand women have contracted the disease. Needless to say, the synthetic chemical is derived from the juice of the Ugli orange.

To the best of everyone’s knowledge, the only surviving Ugli orange crop this year—barely enough to meet the needs of either scientist-- is in the hands of a Mr. Cardoza, who is known to be willing to sell to the highest bidder.

Each scientist has been authorized to spend up to \$250,000. Each company has sued the other over copyright infringement. There is no love lost between the firms. Nonetheless each scientist has decided to speak with the other before beginning negotiations with Mr. Cardoza.

As the exercise plays out, some groups are more successful than others. Faculty who have used the exercise multiple times point out several important lessons.

1. The very act of deciding to discuss the problem with each other is a step in the right direction. They could have tried to sabotage each other's visit to Mr. Cardoza.
2. Although it is not apparent from the quick overview, the full instructions for each scientist include a good bit of "noise"—facts that could be relevant to some aspects of the issue but may not be pertinent to the best and/or most immediate resolution. Those groups able to sort through the information and land on the most pertinent facts were the most successful.
3. A test of how carefully you read: did you see the seemingly simple resolution to the dilemma? Those groups who asked each other what they really needed found that Dr. Roland needed the rind of the orange, and Dr. Jones needed the juice. In a rational world, arrangements were made for shared workspace, serums and gases were produced as quickly as possible, and people were ultimately saved.
4. This, of course, reminds us that everything can be negotiated, and that most things are not a zero-sum game, even if they appear to be so initially.
5. Which leads to a reminder to focus on interest, rather than position.

Position: I need all the oranges

Interest: I need the rinds (or juice) of all the oranges