



# Using Emotion

*"If you are emotional, you are no good to anyone in a negotiation."*  
- Stuart Diamond

What's the difference between 'using emotion' and 'getting emotional'?

The former is a conscious, intelligent application of a legitimate influencing strategy designed to produce a desired outcome. The latter, when it is a negative emotion, is pathetic, weak, irrational, foolish, crazy, disturbing, egotistical, sad... The key thing to remember is that when a person allows him or herself to get emotional they lose a very important thing... they lose *control*.



People who are emotional stop listening; they become unpredictable, lose focus and make poor decisions. Consequently they often hurt themselves and don't meet their goals. By losing self-control they forfeit control over the situation and the other party. They may say things they later regret, dig their heels into a position they cannot easily get out of, or reject good deals out of spite. The focus often moves from working out a good solution to one of trying to hurt the other party.

So, assuming we want to stay in control, how do we use emotion to our benefit?

**Appeal to friendship or reciprocity** *"Aziz, I need your help on this mate... can you make an exception on this occasion? I will make it up to you in the long-run."*

**Disclose to build a more 'human bond'** *"Dave, I need to confide in you... I'm trusting you on this one... okay?"*

**Play the 'guilt' card** *"Nicole, I've always known you to be a reasonable person; surely you're not going to impose a cancellation fee; or have I misjudged you?"*

**Apologise** *"Yes, you're right; I'm sorry you feel that way, but please understand that was not my intention; you have my word it will not happen again."*

**Express an emotion without demonstrating it** *"Eric, we've been working on this issue for weeks now, I don't know about you but I'm feeling frustrated by our lack of progress; do you feel the same? What can we do to find a solution?"*

**Show how another's emotionality is not helping** *"Kim, I appreciate you feel strongly about this; however, raising your voice and making irrational threats like that is not helpful... and it's certainly not helping you."*

**Act out an emotion** You can of course pretend to get emotional in order to unsettle the other party, destabilise the situation or to try to extract a concession. However, whilst this may work occasionally, if you regularly shout at people, bang the table or walk out of negotiations, then this blunt tactic loses its power. You will also lose credibility and destroy relationships. Emotion is powerful; use it wisely.