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Tactic #25 - Focus on the  
Future

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## Tactic #25 - Focus on the Future

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Summary: Forcing a counterpart to let go of past issues and look at what's ahead.

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Sometimes counterparts get into conflict and start blaming each other for negative things that have happened in the past. (This is as common in marriage as it is in long-term business relationships!) Getting stuck in the past can make it very difficult to create a win-win outcome, since all the negotiators are busy blaming their counterparts or defending themselves. Under these circumstances, it may be in your best interest to Focus on the Future.

### Example

A manager is counseling an employee about poor performance on the job. Each time the manager brings up an example of the employee's poor performance, the employee blames the specific problem on the manager or another department. Since difficult employees will defend their wrongful actions to their death, it is helpful to Focus on the Future. It would be appropriate for the manager to ask the difficult employee, "What will it take to have you produce a quality product next week?" Even the most difficult employees will help define the future.

### Counter

If you are put in this situation and, for some reason, do not want to be held completely accountable for the results of the negotiation, the appropriate counter is the tactic of [The Safeguard](#). In the example above, the employee might reply, "I will do what I can to produce a quality product next week, but if I do not get all the information and cooperation I need from other departments, I may not be able to accomplish that goal."

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This tactic is one of 101 strategies and tactics featured in [The Only Negotiating Guide You'll Ever Need](#), by Peter Stark and Jane Flaherty.



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