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Tactic of the Week #32

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Tactic #32 - Launching a Tangent

Summary: Bringing up information unrelated to the negotiation issues.

Some counterparts specialize in inserting a tangent, or side issue, into a negotiation that has absolutely nothing to do with the negotiation being discussed.

Example

A manager is discussing with an employee the importance of coming to work on time. In the middle of the discussion, the employee protests, "Other employees come into work late, and you do not say anything to them." This is an example of Launching a Tangent to deflect attention from the real issue: this employee's continual tardiness.

Counter

The most effective counter in this situation is to employ the tactic of [Deflecting an Answer with a Great Question](#) and then get back to the agenda. For example, it would be appropriate for the manager to ask, "What makes you believe I do not give other employees who come into work late the courtesy of dealing with them one-on-one, just as I am doing with you?" Or, "If I allow you to come into work late, but I do not allow other employees to do so, is it possible some people may think I am playing favorites with you?" Then the manager could [Focus on the Future](#), saying, "What do you think you could do differently that will enable you to get to work on time each day?"

Do you have any negotiation questions? If so, then send them to us by hitting the "reply" button in your email window. We'll do our best to address them in upcoming issues.

If you'd like to forward this issue to a friend or colleague, please click "forward email" below.

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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