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Tactic of the Week #54

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Tactic #54 - Conditional 'No'

Summary: Offering less than a counterpart is asking for, hoping to make her go away.

This tactic is designed for all the really nice people in the world who find it just too difficult to look their counterparts in the eyes and say, "No, I am not going to do that!"

Example

You have a neighbor who makes it a weekly habit to come over to your house to borrow food. This week your neighbor shows up and asks to borrow a dozen eggs. Since you think it seems mean to refuse your neighbor's requests, you usually comply with them. But today you employ the tactic of Conditional 'No' instead. You say, "I don't have a dozen eggs. I have only four eggs that I can give you now. Would you like four eggs?" Eventually, if you get good enough with the tactic of Conditional 'No', you may even see yourself progressing to the following exaggeration of this tactic: When your neighbor asks to borrow a dozen eggs, you respond, "I do not have a dozen eggs. But, as long as you are here on my doorstep, I wanted to ask if I could borrow a gallon of milk from you."

Counter

The easiest counter for the neighbor would be to accept the four eggs graciously and be grateful you are so generous! A second possible counter would be [These Boots Are Made for Walking](#). The neighbor could respond by saying, "Four eggs will not be enough for me to make breakfast for my entire family, so I'll have to go to the store." A really nice neighbor would also counter by [Asking the Closed-Ended Question](#), "When I am at the store, can I buy you a dozen eggs?"

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.

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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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