

Bayes Rule With Nash Equilibrium For Negotiating

Just like the talker/listener system is used for conflict or high emotions, Bayes Rule is used for a specific situation- negotiating for a win-win. Negotiation in good faith and looking for the highest win-win means you are using Nash Equilibrium.

Otherwise, just use basic conversation protocol.

Bayes Rule postulates that **as people receive new information, their beliefs change, and there is a natural convergence of expectations on solutions.** There is back and forth, without bullying or coercion and the couple gets to better know one another.

By simply telling the context or the “Why” behind what you want, you increase the odds of getting your needs met. That is what it is about in a relationship. Both people are usually able to get their needs met, if people are negotiating in good faith.

Person one tells person two what is a win for them. Person two now has the ability to create a win-win.

Nash equilibrium is the default assumption. We assume that a couple wants to have a win-win, rather than a win-lose. Nash equilibrium seeks a win-win, the highest possible win-win.

In a relationship, a win-lose rapidly becomes a lose-lose. Rarely does a couple tolerate a lose-win without giving consequences, even if it is passive-aggressive. If you win and your partner lost, you walk away from the bargaining table. You go back when you have a better grasp on what it means to have a win-win. If there is a higher win-win available, talking about what you want and why will get you there.

If there truly is no win-win, can you alter something else in the process so that one person does not lose?

Bayes Rule expects the couple to go back and forth several times (about 7) so that each party is clear on what they prefer from the negotiation. If you are not sure, clarify it until your partner is satisfied that you understand. Once you know what you want and what your partner wants, that in itself is a win for the future. You now understand your partner more deeply and future negotiating will benefit from this information.

Face to face meetings make this more effective and efficient because each party is hearing the other party make assertions and answer questions, immediately getting new information.

The other party can hear the answer in real time (not text or email) and get to know the context, notice immediately that they might share that goal and announce that fact. What happened in seconds might take several days of indirect communication.

Example (without using Nash Equilibrium or Bayes Rule):

Person 1: Where would you like to go to dinner tonight?

Person 2: I don't care, you choose.

Person 1: How about that diner nearby?

Person 2: Nah

Person 1: The Italian Food place?

Person 2: Nope

Person 1: You just said you didn't care, but you clearly don't like my choices. (frustration ensues)

OR

(with **using Bayes Rule and Nash Equilibrium**)

Person 1: I want to go out to eat tonight, not takeout. I don't want to do dishes and I kinda want to be served. I've been tired and my stomach is off, so not the Mexican place or Italian food. Maybe the diner or the seafood and steak place. Would you like to go out to eat? (notice there was not a question being asked until after all the information was given. Questions can be wimpy statements when we don't own the question itself. When you are asking a question, ask if you can substitute a statement for the question. Questions are okay once you have given your statement- makes it more direct and less guesswork.)

Person 2: I get that. So out to eat, Diner or Seafood and Steak place... I know you would prefer that I go with you. I'm feeling into it. What do I want? I think I want to have seafood, so that would work for me. I wasn't feeling like going out to eat, but I see that it is important to you. I can go because it is important to you or we could get takeout and I will set everything up and do the dishes, so you don't have to do work. Which would you prefer? Both are about equal to me.

Person 1: I strongly prefer going out. I don't want you to go unless you want to. I am okay going by myself, although my preference is to go with you. Takeout isn't the same to me.

Person 2: (note that throwing your partner under the bus is not okay and throwing yourself under the bus is not okay- Nash Equilibrium. If you really don't want to go, say that.) I get that. Thank you for saying you are okay going alone, too. I don't feel pressured and I want to spend time with you, so let's go out together. I want you to be happy and satisfied and that is a win for me as well.

Notice that there is no guesswork. People are direct and while they are willing to sacrifice and please their partner, it is not welcome if it is throwing oneself under the bus. People are verbally precise, which speeds up the process and removes any drama. Well done!

What would it take for you to try Couples Counseling and see how that compares to just reading articles? The articles are good in support of counseling, but they are not a substitute. Give Michelle, my Office Manager, a call at 585.544.5342