



Stanford eCorner

Striving for Symbiotic Negotiations

Steve Young, *Former NFL Quarterback*

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/1768/Striving-for-Symbiotic-Negotiations>

Young talks about fostering great relationships with his teammates and learning how to overcome the competition by using his negotiation skills. He describes how most of the negotiations he has been involved with have been symbiotic. It is important for people to feel that they are not being taken advantage of because you will lose out in the long haul, he says.



Transcript

You would foster a great relationship with your teammates. If you take advantage of the insecurities of your teammates, you're going to fail in the long run. When I talk about driving people into the ground, you talk about defense and the other guys. It was amazing to me. Once I learned the game and got settled in and relaxed and had studied the game, it became kind of an art. I became a true professional. I could start to study the eleven guys that were across from me. In the moment, I could look them in the eye. By studying in the film and getting to know them better, they give themselves away. One of my favorites for the Dallas Cowboys was Darren Woodson.

He played many years for the Cowboys at safety. He was a very good player and a very good guy, a smart guy. Being smart, he would use those smarts to trick people. He was very tricky, but his tricks were always the same because we're all creatures of habit. I always worked on things I did the same way every time because you had to break the mold. If you did everything the same, everyone got a jump on you with that same analysis of yourself. I hate poker, but it's the same thing. What's my "tell"? What's my little thing that I'm giving away? Study that, understand that and now use it against your opponent. Darren Woodson, every time he was going to blitz - he was going to come and blitz me - wouldn't look at me. It was almost like I could tell if he looked at me, so he'd be looking away.

I'd be like "Oh my gosh. Here he comes." I always wanted to yell "Darren! Look at me!" to just play with him because he'd be like "I don't know where you are. I don't know where you are." In negotiations, I never want you to think that I would be preaching taking advantage of other people's weaknesses to gain an advantage and pound them into submission. That doesn't work over the long haul. In football, there's a little different element because there's a score and everything else. But truthfully, in most of the negotiations I've been involved in, I know this is old school. It's like you're saying symbiotic. There's that win-win thing. If you don't find a way for everybody to gain momentum together and find a place to land - I'm in negotiations all the time in business now - if you don't allow people a place to land, you're in for the dog fight of your life. People will not give in if they don't have a soft place to land, if you don't give them a place to go that feels okay.