

Collaboration between the Conscious and the Unconscious: A Jungian Analysis of the Negotiation Process



Prof. Dr. Kasia Jagodzinska

Institute of Management, University of Neuchâtel, Rue A.-L. Breguet 2, CH – 2000, Neuchâtel, Switzerland

ABSTRACT: The common approach to the negotiation process focuses on the external manifestation of the interaction between two parties who are trying to reach a satisfactory agreement. This view does not take into account the internal drivers of behavior of the involved parties. The externalized dynamic between the negotiators is only the secondary result of the interplay between the conscious and unconscious elements in the psyche of both parties. The condition of a long-lasting agreement is therefore a collaboration between the conscious and unconscious representation on the individual level.

This article examines the transcendent function as a union between the conscious and the unconscious, specifically the ego and the self. It focuses on the tendencies of these two factors that can either hinder or make the transition of energy possible in view of reaching a successful manifested agreement. The study provides a straightforward reference that can be used by analysts and business professionals to help them understand what are the psychological aspects that affect the negotiation process, both on the individual and on the collective level.

KEYWORDS: Negotiation, Analytical Psychology, Jungian Analysis, Ego.

THE ROOTS OF NEGOTIATION IN PSYCHOTHERAPY

The first indication that negotiation primarily starts on the internal level has its roots in the ancestry of dynamic psychotherapy, specifically in exorcism. As a well-structured type of psychotherapy, exorcism bears remarkable resemblance to the negotiation process. Its distinctive characteristics are as follows: The exorcist speaks in the name of a higher good. He must have absolute confidence in his own powers. He addresses the intruder (the “other party”) in a solemn way. The exorcist’s preparation for the process can be long and tedious, often it includes personal sacrifices, such as fasting or social isolation. The exorcism should take place in a structured environment, often of a sacred nature. It should not allow too many onlookers. The process may involve lengthy discussions with the intruder. The ultimate aim of the practice is to persuade the spirit to leave the infested victim. The expelling often involves a trade. The possessor finally agrees to leave, but not before obtaining something in exchange, an adequate compensation.¹ For example, in Japanese superstition and folklore as described by a German physician, Von Baelz², the possession often took the form of a fox. In the course of the exorcism the animal would place demands that involved regular deliveries of its favorite meals. Only when the requests were fulfilled and the appetite satisfied, was the possession cured. Recounts of analogous practices can be observed in other countries and cultures. This might allow one to suspect that the negotiation process can be viewed as a collective archetype.

THE SYSTEM OF EXTERNAL (COLLECTIVE) NEGOTIATION

Although the comparison may seem unconventional or even surprising, it is easy to spot the common elements between certain dynamic psychotherapy approaches and the negotiation process. The negotiator represents the higher good expressed in the form of a quest for a mutual agreement that ideally should improve on the individual circumstances. Self-empowerment is a critical condition of a successful negotiation. Lack of conviction and hesitation chip away at inner bargaining power and reduce the chances of reaching a victorious external outcome. Success starts in the psyche. The negotiator is the mouthpiece of the person whom they represent, even if it is themselves. As pointed out by Winston Churchill, “He who fails to plan is planning to fail”. Undeniably, preparation is one of the most important phases of the process. It involves setting the stage and designing the negotiation space to serve a predetermined purpose. Most importantly, it is the phase when the emotional impact is at its lowest, because there is yet no interaction between the parties. Freed from the grips of affect, reason can take the steer.

¹ Ellenberger, H. F., 1970. *The Discovery of the Unconscious. The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry*, Basic Books Inc., Publishers: New York, pp. 14-15.

² Idem. For a more detailed description of the case of Kitsune-Tsuki (possession by the fox), refer to p. 15.

Collaboration between the Conscious and the Unconscious: A Jungian Analysis of the Negotiation Process

In order to better control the flow of the dynamic, the number of people that are involved in the discussions should be kept to a minimum. This reduces the risk of miscommunication, information asymmetry and various (mis)interpretations of the available data. The aim is also to create a system of interdependency between the chosen parties in view of encouraging a sense of personal involvement in the process, referred to as the endowment effect. As pointed out by C. G. Jung, the individual is the least effective (and therefore the most dangerous) in a crowd, because they are freed from all individual responsibility. Accordingly, the field-tested FBI model to negotiations of the highest caliber clearly defines three roles: the negotiator, the commander and the decision-maker. It is worth noting that the negotiator should be the only active speaking participant.

The process of reaching an agreement can take considerable amounts of time. Among negotiation experts, the shared recommendation is to have unwavering patience. Although there should be an established time plan, the process should not be rushed. A great offer made at the wrong time is nothing other than a waste of psychic energy. Demands are what constitute the chips for trade. The rule of the game is to never give without asking for something in return. Just like in a successful exorcism, agreement is made possible once the requests are considered as having been satisfied. The end result of the process is the creation of a new energy.

On the external level, negotiation is typically defined as a formalized process during which two parties with different needs try to reach a mutually accepted agreement about the distribution of resources. It occurs when the following structural elements are in place:

1. The determinants of negotiation - two parties;
2. The object of negotiation - the differentiator;
3. The system of interdependency between the parties.

The main objective of a negotiation is to bring two opposites together in order to arrive at a strategic and executable wholeness. This mutual effort between the parties is referred to as collaboration, or the win-win (principled) approach. The name indicates that there needs to be a double win for an arrangement to be made possible. This suggests that both parties should be in a predominantly collaborative mindset. This collective perspective fails to take into account the pre-existing condition – the personal psychological framing of each of the partners separately. The condition *sine que non* of an external win-win is a collaboration between the conscious and unconscious on the individual level. The more appropriate approach would therefore be a quadruple win.

The system of external negotiation is a mirror reflection of the internal level. It is made up of the following factors:

1. The two parties – the conscious (ego) and unconscious (the self);
2. The differentiator - the position of the ego and counter-position in the unconscious;
3. The system of collaboration – the transcendent function.

THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL NEGOTIATION – A JUNGIAN PERSPECTIVE

In analytical psychology, the individual's journey to psychological wholeness is referred to as the process of individuation. It was termed by C.G. Jung as *Nekyia*, the introversion of the conscious mind into the deeper layers of the unconscious psyche. The factors that influence this process merit a more detailed examination.

The union between the conscious and unconscious contents of the psyche is known as the transcendent function. Studies in analytical psychology show that the conscious (the ego perspective) and the unconscious (the self) seldom agree as to their preferences. The paradox of the individuation process lies in the fact that the separation of the ego from the self is a necessary condition for coming into maturity, but then these two alienated elements of the persona need to come together again to function in harmony as independent entities. The two opposites, the ego and the self, are like two negotiators striving to balance their respective interests. Only when there is internal harmony, can external accord be attempted. Therefore, the condition for sustainable agreements, first internal and then external, is the existence of a solid ego-self axis. The complete process of continuous development of consciousness encompasses the following steps:

1. ego-self unity (ego identified with the self);
2. ego-self separation (ego alienated from the self);
3. ego-self axis (ego reunited with the self)³.

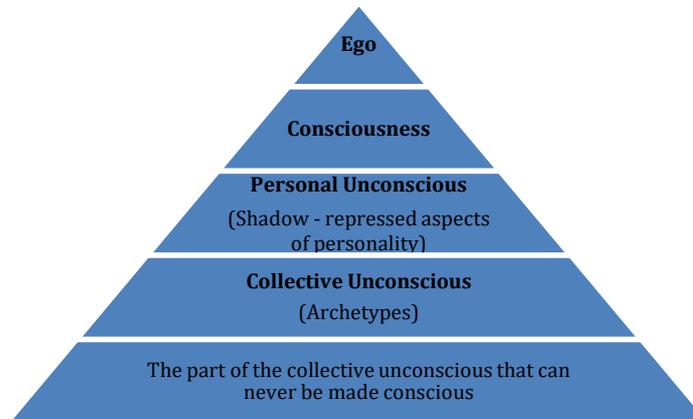
From a psychological perspective, negotiation can be defined as a cycle of transformation and development of the psyche necessary for implementing and adapting to a new situation (the third element). In negotiations, there are two aspects that drive the dynamic: the position and the interests. They can be explained by the analogy to the conscious and unconscious elements of the psyche. The opening offer and the demands that are expressed in a negotiation constitute the “what” part of the discussion. This explicit representation is referred to as the position, the “What do you want?” question. The position has a deeper layer. It is a conscious reflection of the unconscious, underlying motives. While it is fairly easy to identify what the other party wants, the invisible drivers behind their position are more challenging to understand. The question “Why do you want it?” is helpful in trying

³ Edinger, E., 1992. Ego and Archetype. Individuation and the Religious Function of the Psyche. Shambhala Publications Inc., Colorado, p. 186.

Collaboration between the Conscious and the Unconscious: A Jungian Analysis of the Negotiation Process

to uncover the interests behind a specific request.

In order to maximize the resources and arrive at an agreement, the parties need to explore both the “what” and the “why” questions. On the psychological level, both the conscious and the unconscious need to be taken into consideration. Positions and interests can best be mentally illustrated on the example of an iceberg. Positions are above the waterline. They are the conscious elements expressed by the ego. Interests lay below the water. They are governed by a multitude of unconscious stimuli, both personal and collective. The psyche is a self-regulating system of layers, as illustrated in Figure 1⁴:



The ego is a complex of ideas which constitutes the center of consciousness. It is one complex among many⁵. It is distinguished by a sense of identity and continuity, by being anchored in time and space, and by its ability to act and make decisions. The findings of the association experiment shed more light as to its characteristics⁶. When asked what comes to mind when you hear “ego”, the common responses are: consciousness, reality-orientation, complex, willpower, autonomy, identity card, control center, guiding star, identification, protection cocoon, stubborn, arrogant, egocentric, barrier, inflation.

The collected responses show that the connotations can be either positive or negative. Nonetheless, in the course of real-life negotiations (as opposed to training sessions that take place in an artificially structured environment), I typically observe the latter association. Many negotiators attribute the lack of agreement to the ego of one party taking over, or to the so called “ego plays”. This colloquial interpretation immediately points to inflation, which is one of the possibilities. Another explanation would be a shaky internal ego-self axis, on the part of one party or both, that may jeopardize the chances of finding a mutually beneficial agreement. Ego means to be conscious, but there are also emotions connected with the ego and there is the physical (behavioral) context. In order to attribute meaning to a materialized end result, it is necessary to comprehend all the components governing the system of the psyche along with the biological aspects. This will be addressed in more detail in a later part of the article.

Complexes are the *via regia* to the unconscious and to their relative autonomy. The self is the total personality, the center. It represents a totality made up of instincts, physiological and semi-physiological phenomena. As the source of the individual’s psychic life, it is a dynamic, evolving being. As shown in Figure 1, the self is collective. It is noteworthy that power or drive, erroneously attributed to the ego during the association experiment, belong to the sphere of the self. The self has dark aspects, such as the shadow, the repressed contents of the psyche that lie below the threshold of consciousness. However, it is the ego that enables us to distinguish between good and evil. This indicates that the ego is able to learn, assess what is fruitful behavior, but the healing power is beyond it. The ego has the freedom to choose and make decisions. It is the only aspect of personality that is responsible.

The self is referred to as “the God within us”. The encounter of the self is equivalent to the discovery of God. The dialogue between ego (conscious) and the archetypal God (unconscious) makes possible a more meaningful way of life. In negotiations, one of the pitfalls is lack of purpose and failure to set a clear negotiation objective. The ability to establish a direction and clearly communicate it are vital pre-requisites for coming to an agreement. In reference to the psychological level C.G. Jung points out that, “One-sidedness is an unavoidable and necessary characteristic of the directed process, for direction implies one-sidedness. It is an advantage and drawback at the same time. Even when no outwardly visible drawback seems to be present, there is always and equally pronounced counter-position in the unconscious (...). The counter-position is not dangerous so long as it does not possess

⁴ Jacobi, J., 1971. Complex Archetype Symbol in the Psychology of C.G. Jung. Princeton University Press: Princeton.

⁵ Jung, C. G., 1971. Psychological Types. Collected Works. Vol. 6. Princeton University Press: Princeton, § 706.

⁶ I conducted the semi-association experiments on a group of sixty-seven executive MBA students and business professionals from different industries and countries (Poland, Switzerland, Germany, Norway, Sweden, France, the Middle East, and the United Kingdom). Response time was not measured, only the associations were recorded, therefore I refer to the experiment as a “semi-experiment”.

Collaboration between the Conscious and the Unconscious: A Jungian Analysis of the Negotiation Process

any high energy-value.”⁷ High-energy tension evoked by tough negotiations releases the unconscious content. It can manifest itself by slips of the tongue, which usually occur in the least appropriate moment. These outbursts of the unconscious material provide precious cues to the counterpart about the underlying interests, fears and motivations. To avoid the detrimental effect of this phenomenon, the ego and the self should operate as allies on the same side of the bargaining table. As Jung noted, “It is only when the conscious mind confronts the products of the unconscious that a provisional reaction will ensue”.⁸

The self and the ego are not interchangeable. Jung points out that “Their existence points to a definite psychological fact, namely, the independence and sovereignty of certain psychic contents which express themselves by their power to thwart our will, to obsess our consciousness and to influence our moods and actions”⁹. This is very similar to the dynamic between the negotiation partners. They are autonomous entities who must find a way to rule together in the kingdom of the psyche, not each as a separate monarch.

THE TRANSCENDENT FUNCTION AS A MEANS TO SELF-EMPOWERMENT

Jung observes that, “undervaluation is one of the greatest obstacles in formulating the unconscious material. (...) Erroneous judgments are due to the individual’s unconsciousness and lack of self-reliance: either he is able to judge only by collective standards, or else, owing to ego-inflation, he loses his capacity for judgment altogether.”¹⁰ This revelation sheds light as to why some negotiators attribute failure in negotiations to the ego factor. They focus only on the tip of the iceberg – the consciousness. Placing more importance on the ego may, like a self-fulfilling prophecy, lead to ego inflation. At the same time, the unconscious material lies undiscovered below the waterline. Avoidance does not render it non-existent. What is not addressed, will eventually surface. Based on my negotiation experience I came to observe that the more the ego is inflated, the more arrogant the behavior becomes at the negotiation table. Arrogance is often a disguise for insecurity and lack of belief in one’s own negotiation power.

Self-empowerment revolves around the stimulation of psychic energy, linked to the libido function. According to C. G. Jung, the method of “active imagination” is the most potent auxiliary for the production of the contents that lie below the threshold of consciousness. Once stimulated, they emerge in the conscious mind and can activate goal-directed behaviors¹¹.

A practical negotiation boosting tool is the Visualization-Confidence-Realization (VCR) method.¹² Some resources refer to it as the chessboard technique. The point is for the individual to imagine that a given life situation is a board and the chess pawns can be moved according to one’s preferred outcome. Visualization is the creation of anticipatory emotions. It involves setting a goal, imagining what success will feel like and directing the efforts towards the desired outcome according to a negotiation plan. Confidence relates to being internally convinced that we deserve what we are asking for and clearly communicating our demands. Realization is putting the plan into action with purpose and conviction. The power of this exercise lies in the imaginative process.

The role of a negotiator is to bridge the interests of both parties, and thus satisfy the individual motives of each. Consequently, the key goal is an attitudinal modification of the other person. In order to fulfil that objective, the negotiator needs to understand that the psyche is a self-regulating system of psychological and biological components. It encompasses the thinking, feeling and intuition functions. An attitude is a cocktail of cognitive (thoughts), affective (feelings) and behavioral (actions) elements. In order to change the attitude of the negotiation partner, one needs to address all the three elements. The secret of success lies in the sequence of how this is done.

Some negotiators focus all their energy on attempting to change the behavior of the other party. In other words, they resort to the art of influence. Meanwhile, the change in behavioral pattern is only the last instance. In order to change how a person will act, it is necessary to first modify how they feel and think. In order to gain possession of the high energy, the starting point should be the emotional state, not rational devaluation.¹³

There is a clear relation between biology and the mind. The brain is built in such a way that when an external trigger enters, it first reaches the amygdala, which is a cluster of neurons located in the brain’s medial temporal lobe that forms part of the limbic system. The amygdala plays a key role in processing emotions. In a very simplified illustration, once the trigger passes the amygdala

⁷ Jung, C. G., 1960. *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*. Collected Works. Vol. 8. Pantheon Books, New York, § 138.

⁸ Jung, C. G., 1960. *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*. Collected Works. Vol. 8. Pantheon Books: New York, § 172.

⁹ Jung, C. G., 1953. *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*. Collected Works. Vol. 7. Pantheon Books: New York, § 399f.

¹⁰ Jung, C. G., 1960. *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*. Collected Works. Vol. 8. Pantheon Books: New York, § 176.

¹¹ Jung, C. G., 1960. *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*. Collected Works. Vol. 8. Pantheon Books: New York, p. 68.

¹² Jagodzinska, K., 2021. *Negotiate Your Way to Success. Personal Guidelines to Boost Your Career*. Business Expert Press: New York.

¹³ Jung, C. G., 1960. *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*. Collected Works. Vol. 8. Pantheon Books: New York, § 167.

Collaboration between the Conscious and the Unconscious: A Jungian Analysis of the Negotiation Process

it reaches the neocortex, which is a region responsible for, among others, cognition, perception and logical reasoning. Contrary to what we would like to think, biology suggests that humans are primarily emotional beings.

Basic instincts are deeply embedded in the brain structure. C. G. Jung suggested that we are not born as a *tabula rasa*. We inherit certain predispositions and archetypal patterns of behavior. The primal instincts, such as the fight or flight reaction, are impossible to alter. Studies in psychology confirm the assumption that there are two systems – System 1 is responsible for the quick associations and mental shortcuts; it operates on the basis of feelings. System 2 is the more complex representative of logic and reasoning.¹⁴ The conclusion is clear: we first feel, then we think. In more elaborate terms we rationalize the reasons to justify the emotional decisions we have already made¹⁵. The transcendent function makes the transition from one attitude to another possible.

The analyst mediates the transcendent function by helping to bring the conscious and the unconscious together to arrive at a new attitude. The external negotiation process follows a reversed order to the transcendent function:

1. ego-self unity → the agreement between the negotiation parties;
2. ego-self separation → different interests of the parties;
3. ego-self axis → the collaboration in view of ensuring an efficient negotiation. In the negotiation process what we are searching for is to make conscious those contents, which can adversely impact our actions, so that the unpleasant consequences can be avoided. In other words, a regulating mechanism is needed. The capacity for an inner dialogue between the conscious and the unconscious is a touchstone for external objectivity. Admitting the valid position of the other person, as well as acceptance of the existence of the “other element” within oneself are the first steps on the journey to individual wholeness and collective agreement – a quadruple win.

ETHICAL COMPLIANCE SECTION

Compliance with Ethical Standards: All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Conflict of Interest: The author declares she has no conflict of interest.

Informed Consent: Informed verbal consent was obtained from all individual adult participants included in the study

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1) Dinnar, S. and Susskind, L. (2019). *Entrepreneurial Negotiation: Understanding and Managing the Relationships that Determine Your Entrepreneurial Success*. Springer.
- 2) Duhigg, C. (2014). *The Power of Habit. Why We Do What We Do in Life and in Business*. Random House Trade Paperbacks.
- 3) Edinger, E. (1972). *Ego and Archetype*. Putnam.
- 4) Edinger, E. (1984). *The Creation of Consciousness*. Inner City.
- 5) Edinger, E. (1992). *Ego and Archetype. Individuation and the Religious Function of the Psyche*. Shambhala Publications Inc.
- 6) Ellenberger, H. F. (1970). *The Discovery of the Unconscious. The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry*. Basic Books Inc. Publishers.
- 7) Fisher, R., and Shapiro, D. (2005). *Beyond Reason. Using Emotions as You Negotiate*. Penguin Books.
- 8) Freud, S. (1922). *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*. The International Psycho-Analytical Press.
- 9) Holiday, R. (2016). *Ego is the Enemy. The Fight to Master Our Greatest Opponent*. Profile Books Ltd.
- 10) Jacobi, J. (1971). *Complex Archetype Symbol in the Psychology of C.G. Jung*. Princeton University Press.
- 11) Jagodzinska, K. (2016). *Egotiation is the New Negotiation: The Concept of Negotiation Revisited*, Eurasian Journal of Business and Management, 4(2), 72-80 DOI: 10.15604/ejss.2016.04.02.007.
- 12) Jagodzinska, K. (2021). *Negotiation Booster. The Ultimate Self-Empowerment Guide to High-Impact Negotiations*. Business Expert Press.
- 13) Jagodzinska, K. (2021). *Negotiate Your Way to Success. Personal Guidelines to Boost Your Career*. Business Expert Press.
- 14) Jung, C. G. (1953). *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*. Collected Works. Vol. 7. New York: Pantheon Books.

¹⁴ Duhigg, C., 2014. *The Power of Habit. Why We Do What We Do in Life and in Business*. Random House Trade Paperbacks: New York.

¹⁵ Jagodzinska, K., 2021. *Negotiation Booster. The Ultimate Self-Empowerment Guide to High Impact Negotiations*. Business Expert Press: New York. pp. 53.

Collaboration between the Conscious and the Unconscious: A Jungian Analysis of the Negotiation Process

- 15) Jung, C. G. (1956). *Symbols of Transformation*, Vol. 5. Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- 16) Jung, C. G. (1959). *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. Collected Works. Vol. 9,I. New York: Pantheon Books.
- 17) Jung, C. G. (1960). *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*. Collected Works. Vol. 8. New York: Pantheon Books.
- 18) Jung, C. G. (1968). *Man and His Symbols*. Dell Publishing.
- 19) Jung, C. G. (1971). *Psychological Types*. Collected Works. Vol. 6. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- 20) Jung, C. G. (1990). *The Undiscovered Self*. Princeton University Press.
- 21) Jung, C. G. (1959). *Aion. Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self*. Princeton University Press.
- 22) Kast, V. (2002). *The Dynamics of Symbols. Fundamentals of Jungian Psychotherapy*. Fromm.
- 23) Meier, C.A. (1989). *Consciousness*. Sigo.
- 24) Reynolds, N. (2016). *We Have a Deal. How to Negotiate with Intelligence, Flexibility & Power*. Icon Books.
- 25) Samuels, A. (1985). *Jung and the Post-Jungians*. Routededge.
- 26) Shapiro, D. (2016). *Negotiating the Nonnegotiable. How to Resolve your Most Emotionally Charged Conflicts*. Penguin.
- 27) Sharrot, T. (2017). *The Influential Mind. What the Brain Reveals about our Power to Change Others*. Abacus.
- 28) Ury, W. (2015). *Getting to Yes with Yourself and Other Worthy Opponents*. HarperCollins.