

**THE NEW  
TALENT  
PLAYBOOK**  
*Podcast*

**Workbook**

**Lead Like a  
Negotiator –  
Because You  
Already Are One**

Featuring Jonathan B. Smith

**Episode 9 - Season 4**

By Rob Levin, Creator of [Thenewtalentplaybookpodcast.com](https://thenewtalentplaybookpodcast.com)

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You just listened to Jonathan B. Smith, expert EOS Implementer and negotiation strategist with The Black Swan Group, explain why every conversation is a negotiation—and how you can win more by fighting less.

Jonathan reveals that the key to effective leadership, team health, and getting what you want isn't logic; it's tactical empathy. By understanding how to make your counterpart feel heard and removing yourself as a threat, you can transform difficult conversations into productive outcomes. This playbook will help you start applying these powerful skills today.

## 1. Are You a Threat? (The Leader's Self-Audit)

Jonathan's most counterintuitive point is that as a leader, you are inherently a threat. You control raises, promotions, time off, and projects. Recognizing this is the first step to having more productive conversations. Your goal is to consciously remove yourself as a threat.

### Threat-Level Check:

Which of these leadership scenarios do you recognize in your own behavior? Joe's primary ROI isn't just financial. It's measured in his team's well-being and client satisfaction. His goal: "that we don't have anybody crying" and keeping everyone sane. This **human-centric approach is the foundation** of his firm's success.

- ☐ When frustrated, my tone becomes sharp and dismissive.
- ☐ I often use logic to "win" an argument with a team member.
- ☐ I jump in to solve a problem before my team member has finished explaining it.
- ☐ I feel the need to have the last word in a disagreement.
- ☐ When a mistake happens, my first instinct is to find out who is at fault.

## 2. Diagnose Your Listening Level

Jonathan explains there are five levels of listening, but most of us get stuck in the least effective ones. The goal is to move up the ladder to understand the other person's point of view, even if you don't agree with it.

### Listening Level Self-Assessment:

In your most recent team meeting, which level were you operating at?

- Level 1: Listening for the Gist: (You're distracted, on your phone, only half-paying attention).
- Level 2: Listening to Hijack: (You're waiting for them to take a breath so you can jump in and take the conversation where you want it to go).
- Level 3: Listening for Logic: (You're focused on the facts and data, trying to figure out why they're saying this).
- Level 4: Listening for Logic & Emotion: (You're hearing the facts and noticing their emotional state—frustration, excitement, concern).
- Level 5: Listening for their Point of View: (You're trying to understand their "worldview" and what's driving their perspective).

What level do you default to most often?

☐ Level 1    ☐ Level 2    ☐ Level 3    ☐ Level 4    ☐ Level 5

What is one step you can take in your next meeting to listen at a higher level?

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### 3. Identify the Negotiator Types on Your Team

According to Jonathan, people fall into three main negotiator types. Knowing who you're talking to allows you to adjust your communication style for a better outcome.

#### Your Team's Negotiator Profile:

Think about your leadership team. Who fits which description?

- The Assertive: They need to be heard and respected. They want to talk and value directness. If you interrupt them, you lose.
- The Analyst: They need time and quiet to think. They value data and dislike being rushed. If you pressure them for an immediate answer, you lose.
- The Accommodator: They want to be liked and value relationships. They focus on building rapport. If you seem cold or transactional, you lose.

| Team member | Probable Negotiator Type (Assertive, Analyst, Accommodator) |
|-------------|---|
|             |   |
|             |   |
|             |   |

What's *your* default type? How can you adapt your style when speaking to someone with a different type?

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## 4. Create Team Health by "Entering the Danger"

Jonathan uses his Black Swan skills within the EOS framework to foster team health. The goal isn't to avoid difficult conversations but to have them constructively, without "breaking the team." The key is making the other side feel heard so you can move forward together.

### Difficult Conversation Prep:

Think of a difficult conversation you need to have with a team member.

1. What is the core issue you need to resolve?

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2. What is their likely perspective or "point of view" on this issue? (Try to state it in a way they would agree with).

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3. How can you start the conversation by acknowledging their viewpoint to show you understand it? (e.g., "It seems like you feel frustrated with the timeline because..." or "It sounds like you're concerned about...")

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*"If you deliver the message correctly and they genuinely care about the person on the other side, and the other side feels heard, 93% of the time you're gonna actually be able to create a better outcome."*

**- Jonathan B. Smith**

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