



# Getting physical about negotiation, facilitation, and mediation: Bodywork for enhanced performance, protection, and perception

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# Getting physical about negotiation, facilitation, and mediation: Bodywork for enhanced performance, protection, and perception

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This paper presents ten embodied practices to enhance performance, protection, and perception in negotiation, facilitation, and mediation. They stem from thirty years of experience. Colleagues to whom I teach them in the European institutions find them useful. They concern conscious breathing, connecting with others and yourself, protecting your space, channeling aggression, projecting confidence and power, reading facial and body cues, and preparing yourself like an athlete would. The presentation of each practice includes a story, guidance to use it, and comments.

**Keywords:** Negotiation, facilitation, mediation, body, breathe, mindfulness, performance, protection, perception.

Cet article présente dix pratiques corporelles pour améliorer sa performance, sa protection et sa perception en négociation, facilitation et médiation. Elles se fondent sur trente ans d'expérience. Les collègues à qui je les enseigne au sein des institutions européennes les trouvent utiles. Elles consistent à respirer consciemment, se connecter avec les autres et avec soi-même, canaliser les agressions, projeter de la confiance en soi et de la puissance, lire les indices faciaux et corporels, et se préparer comme un athlète le ferait. La présentation de chaque pratique comprend une histoire illustrative, des indications concernant leur utilisation et des commentaires.

**Mots-clés :** Négociation, facilitation, médiation, corps, respiration, pleine conscience, performance, protection, perception.

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## INTRODUCTION<sup>2</sup>

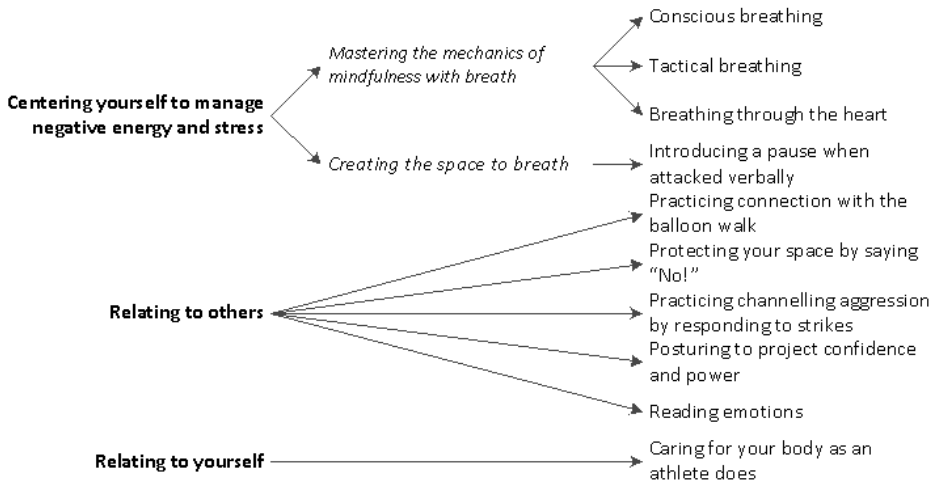
Negotiation, facilitation, mediation are not out-of-body experiences. Indeed, the physiological basis of cognition, perception, and emotion (Damásio, 2005) affords them an embodied nature.

The ten practices presented in this paper help enhance performance, protection, and perception by grounding negotiation, facilitation, and mediation in the body.

I have tested and refined the practices over the last thirty years and teach them to fellow European Union (EU) officials. Colleagues confirm their applicability and worth. Still, all practices have not been systematically tested and I issue an invitation to the likes of Dan Druckman and Cecilia Albin (2011) to assess them scientifically.

The paper is structured according to the three categories into which they fall, namely, centering yourself, relating to others, and relating to yourself (Figure 1). Stories, guidance, and commentaries accompany the presentation of each practice.

**Figure 1.** *The ten practices*



2. The information and views set out in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Neither the European Union institutions and bodies nor any person acting on their behalf may be held responsible for the use that may be made of the information contained therein.

## 1. CENTERING YOURSELF TO MANAGE NEGATIVE ENERGY AND STRESS

*“You are the negotiator. You should do it.” Thinking nothing of it, I agreed to get back the AUD 500 deposit for the four-wheel drive our two families had rented for our holiday in Fraser Island, an idyllic island north of Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. The owner, an imposing individual, stood behind the counter. The phalanges of his clenched fists bore “L”, “O”, “V”, “E”, “H”, “A”, “T”, and “E” pinpricked in faded indigo, revealing con work and an inclination to violence. “No. I got nobody to check the car. Come back tomorrow.” he replied after I asked for the deposit. He reeked of alcohol. “Tomorrow” was not an option because we were flying out of Brisbane at dawn. When I said that the car was OK and that we had an early flight, he got in a rage, started insulting me, and became menacing. I was trapped his office. Had a rental deposit turned me into a prizefighter?*

*Decades of training in aikido, a Japanese martial art focused on avoiding conflict, peacemaking, and protecting oneself while protecting the aggressor, had given me the means to diffuse aggression and engage in combat. But, grappling with this big man swimming in an unholy cocktail of alcohol and testosterone was not an inviting prospect. He wouldn’t feel a thing. Moving him required total concentration.*

*So, I centered myself. To slow down my racing heart, I counted my breath. I checked my posture. And, I grounded my stance. This not only prepared me for a possible confrontation. It also sent the non-verbal message that I would not be a victim. Finally, it allowed my neocortex to continue processing available options: “How could I de-escalate?”, “How could I connect?”, “Which of his existential needs could I meet?”, etc. and to stay receptive to new information from my environment.*

*Without warning, the door burst open. “Papa, we’re thirsty. Real thirsty.”, my daughter said. “Could we have water?” I almost rebuked her, telling her to leave us alone. But, the breathing paid off. It introduced a pause between her stimulus and my response that allowed me to think rather than react and likely dismiss her. I asked the owner: “Could the kids have a drink at the water fountain?” A long silence followed, the kids waiting in expectation at the doorstep. The owner’s deep voice broke the silence: “Sure. Do they want cups?” The kids lined up and, before the last one had gotten a chance to drink, the owner said: “It’s okay, mate. Here’s your 500.”*

I think that the breathing habits that I acquired in the 80s practicing mindfulness and centeredness following the teachings of, respectively, Vietnamese Zen Buddhist Thich Nhat Hanh (2009: 3–8) and aikido Sensei Hiroshi Ikeda (Meyer and Reeder 2000: 19-33) played a key role. Why? Because breath

- readied me for a physical confrontation;
- calmed me down, which likely led the aggressor to calm down by mirroring, thus initiating a process of de-escalation;

- helped me receive and process external input (Wheeler 2013: 92), introduced a pause between stimulus and response, opened up new options, allowed for a diversion, and made possible to connect via emotion when connecting with thinking and doing had failed;
- gave room for the Chinese Taoist principle of *wu wei* or nonassertiveness (e.g., Lee and Little, 2016, pp. 79-81) to operate and produce unexpected breakthroughs.

## 1.1. Mastering the mechanics of mindfulness with breath

Beyond this Aussie anecdote, the negotiation and persuasion literatures underscore the relevance of mindfulness to negotiators, mediators, and facilitators, whether it is to “deal better with stress, develop self-understanding [...] and understanding of others, and feel compassion and empathy.” (Riskin, 2006: 241), to increase your capacity to improvise (Wheeler, 2013: 90–191), to better face unforeseen, high stress situations like kidnappings (e.g., Voss and Raz, 2016: 1), to handle suicide situations (e.g., Combalbert 2006), to combine commitment and unattachment (Kuttner and Wheeler, 2007) or to shorten the attention blink or mental dead spot that we experience when we shift focus (Cialdini, 2016: 28).

This section aims to make heightened awareness and clairsentience (Palmer, 1994) accessible to anyone, within minutes, using breath. First, it explains conscious breathing. Then, it describes a technique for situations of intense stress. Third and last, it presents a practice to cope with verbal aggressions.

### 1.1.1. Practice 1: Conscious breathing

Conscious breathing restores unity of mind and body, establishes calmness, and heightens awareness about one’s self and the world. Practice deepens it, but you will need only a few minutes to learn and apply it—if you don’t practice it already.

Place your attention on your breath. Notice your abdomen rise when you breathe in and fall when you breathe out. You may initially place a hand on your belly to make this obvious. You may wish to relax your neck, shoulders, and the area between your shoulder blades when exhaling.

Physiologically, you achieve conscious breathing by using your diaphragm to breathe. Diaphragmatic breathing stimulates the vagus nerve. And, the vagus nerve relaxes you<sup>3</sup>.

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3. Through the depression created in the abdomen, diaphragmatic breathing makes it possible to increase the diameter of the inferior vena. The increase in the diameter of the inferior vena decreases the flow into the left atrium of the heart and stimulates the vagus nerve. In turn, the vagus nerve slows down the heart rate. Each of us can therefore decrease their heart rate at will. The limbic system (the emotional brain) interprets a decrease in the heart rate as the message—a lie, actually—“all is well” and responds by reducing the reactivity of the corticoid axis, which triggers the “flight-fight-freeze” stress response and reduces or prevents the activation of the prefrontal

Thich Nhat Hanh popularized conscious breathing in the West starting in the 1980s (1987: 5; 1988; 1991) and was soon joined by others like Kabat-Zinn (1994) and Rosenberg (1998).

He proposes non-denominational practices, without or with verbalization, usable alone, in combination or as a basis for improvisation (Table 1).

**Tableau 1.** *Breathing practices (short version in brackets)*

Breathing in	Breathing out
No verbalization.	No verbalization.
“1, 2, 3” (more or less depending on your capacity)	“1, 2, 3, 4, 5” (more counts exhaling than inhaling <sup>4</sup> )
“Breathing in, I know that I am breathing in,” (“In.”)	“Breathing out, I know that I am breathing out.” (“Out.”)
“Breathing in, I notice that my breath has become deeper,” (“Deep.”)	“Breathing out, I notice that my breath has become slower.” (“Slow.”)
“Breathing in, I smile,” (“Smile.”)	“Breathing out, I release.” (“Release.”)
“Breathing in, I calm my body,” (“Calm.”)	“Breathing out, I feel at ease.” (“Ease.”)
“Dwelling in the present moment,” (“Present moment.”)	“I know this is a wonderful moment.” (“Wonderful moment.”)

To ensure that your breathing supports rather than distracts you, take the time to test different approaches with or without verbalizations. In support of this, you may wish to use the short videos referenced in the endnotes to try other practices out:

- the millennial sciences of *prāṇāyāma* and *tsa lung*—respectively, the Indian (e.g., Iyengar 1981) and Tibetan (e.g., Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche 2011) yoga of breath;
- Chinese T'ai Chi (e.g., Cheng Man-Ch'ing 1993) and Chi Gong (e.g., Cohen 1999);
- Jewish devotional breathing practices such as breathing the Divine Name “*Yud* (י)–Empty, *Hay* (ה)–In, *Vav* (ו)–Full, *Hay* (ה)–Out” (Roth 2009: Ch. 2, pp. 26–27) or *Chedvah* breathing<sup>5</sup>, along with their Kabbalistic and Hassidic symbolism (Verman 1977: pp. 111–129);

neocortex. It allows the partial neutralization of the limbic system while stimulating the activation of higher brain functions.

4. Taking more time to breathe out than to breathe in proves especially useful when hyperventilating. It reduces the oxygen (O<sub>2</sub>) concentration and increases the carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) concentration.
5. The Jewish *Chedvah* breathing technique as taught by Lubavitcher Rabbi Harav Yitzchak Ginsburgh employs an 8, 4, 6, 5 rhythm and count based on the number associated with each

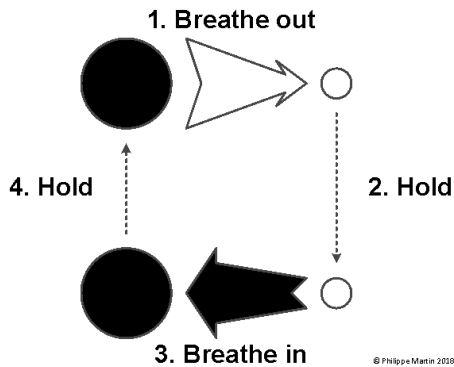
- the SYSTEMA breathing technique that stems from the Russian Orthodox holy warrior tradition, which the KGB perfected during the Cold War (Vasiliev 2006);
- the *Hosh dar dam* Islamic Sufi awareness in the breath<sup>6</sup>;
- the historically groundbreaking technique for stress release based on the medical mantra “One” of Harvard Medical School Benson and Klipper (1975)<sup>7</sup>.

Under intense stress, at 145–175 heartbeats per minute (Siddle 1995: 8), awareness of breath is not enough to retain the ability to perform complex motor tasks, see clearly, hear distinctly, focus, think, and move.

To slow down their heart, police intervention units and military special forces use “tactical breathing”<sup>8</sup> (U.S. Army Lt. Col. Dave Grossman and Christensen 2008: 328–339).

### 1.1.2. Practice 2: tactical breathing (see figure 2)

**Figure 2.** *Tactical breathing*



Step 1: Breathe out through your lips, from your diaphragm, as if compressing a bagpipe to the count of four, aiming for four seconds and noting that “One thousand” last roughly one second.

Step 2: Hold your breath to the count of four<sup>9</sup>.

letter in the Hebrew alphabet of the word Chedvah (הדוּחָה). Chedvah breathing cultivates all 4 parts of the breathing cycle, i.e., inhalation, hold, exhalation, and rest. (<http://www.inner.org/meditate/jewish-breathing-meditation.php>; accessed on 30 July 2018).

6. <http://www.sufimeditationcenter.com/teachingsufimeditationcenter.html>; accessed 30 July 2018.

7. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nBCsFuoFRp8>; accessed on 30 July 2018.

8. Synonyms: “combat breathing”, “box breathing”, and “4 squares breathing”.

9. The apnea serves the same function as taking more time to breathe out than to breathe in because it reduces the oxygen concentration and increases the carbon dioxide concentration.

Step 3: Breathe in through your nose into your stomach as if filling a balloon with air to the count of four.

Step 4: Hold your breath to the count of four.

Repeat steps 1–4 four times, or until you feel your body and mind relax.

“When [we] take control of [our] breath,” says U.S. Navy Seal Mark Divine, who tested controlled breathing in the field, “we can perform better, we can think more clearly, [and] we can make better decision when under duress.”<sup>10</sup>

In the field, Divine recommends allowing your body to skip the apneas while Grossman and Christensen advocate sticking to the four steps. In my experience, it pays off to keep the apneas to pace your breathing and avoid hyperventilating.

Negotiators get verbally assaulted. E.g., Israeli negotiator Moty Cristal mentioned *non sequitur* verbal attacks during hostage negotiations as common (personal communication, 2016). Negotiators, mediators, and facilitators must not only protect their agreement (Susskind 2014: 139–151), but also themselves. Indeed, the other party may attack you, succumbing to anger or feigning it to manipulate you, flipping Fisher and Ury’s advice to “separate the people from the problem” (1981: 11 and 17–40).

How to restore inner peace after *ad hominem* attacks and abuses? By breathing “through your heart”. It heals disconnection (Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche 2011: 50) and restores cardiac coherence<sup>11</sup> (Martin 2011; Servant-Schreiber 2004: pp. 51–68; Servant-Schreiber 2007).

### 1.1.3. Practice 3: Breathing through the heart

Step 1: Pause/stop.

Step 2: Become aware of your breath by following it.

Step 3: Breathe as though your breath is entering through your heart and exiting via the solar plexus while actually exhaling and inhaling through your nostrils.

Step 4 (optional): When circumstances allow, place your hands in front of your heart, without touching or touching very lightly. This helps focus on the heart area and creates a feeling of warmth, both thermal and psychological since you are hugging yourself.

Step 5: Replace the disturbing emotion by a positive feeling like appreciation.

10. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZzhk9jEkl&t=56s>; accessed on 30 July 2018; “when [we] take control of [our] breath, [...] we can perform better, we can think more clearly, [and] we can make better decision when under duress.” (0.54); note that Divine simplifies “tactical breath” as Step 1 and 3 of Grossman and Christensen’s “tactical breathing”. In addition, Divine suggests counting to four on Step 1 and five or six on Step 2.

11. <https://www.heartmath.org/>; accessed on 30 July 2018.

Step 6: Sense changes as they happen. In particular, notice how focusing your breathing on your heart area rapidly generates a pleasant sensation in that area and how it frees you from negative emotions, calms you down, and makes you peaceful.

Repeat steps 3–6 as long as the verbal attack lasts or until you feel okay.

Step 7: Assess your options with the clarity that you just regained. Can you love your current situation? Must you change it? Must you leave it? If you cannot love your present situation and must either change or leave it, how will you proceed?

How do you create the space to start using practices 1–3 while someone is attacking you ?

## 1.2. Creating the space to breath

An attack not only delivers a blow, but also tends to make you react and hook you into what Transactional Analysts call a game (Berne 1972: 43–45). If you take the bait and respond to the attack with a counter-attack, you put yourself at the mercy of the attacker, just like the trout that bites the lure puts itself at the mercy of the angler. Repeated attacks in short sequence make centering with breath harder.

The next practice inspired by communication skills expert Dan O'Connor (2009) offers a way to stall a verbal attack, wedge in the space for grounding, and avoid manipulation.

### 1.2.1. Practice 4: Introducing a pause when attacked verbally

Step 1: Answer the verbal attack with: “That’s interesting...” or your variation thereof.

Step 2: Pause, but briefly enough for the attacker not attack again.

Step 3: Complete your reaction with one of the options below or an equivalent

- “Tell me more...”
- “What brings you to say that?”
- “What prompts you to do that?”
- “What makes you ask that?”
- “How does this matter to you?”

Regarding “Tell me more...”, Transactional Analysis suggests asking men in a fact-finding way and women, in an empathic manner (Martin 2004: 235).

“What?” and “How?” questions and impart to those who use them a unique yet fair advantage as I observed over the years. “How?” or “What?” seem associated with a greater likelihood that your interlocutor will engage their rational neocortex

and disengaging from their emotional limbic brain and their instinctual reptilian brain. “How?” and “What?”, which Voss and Raz refer to as “calibrated questions” (2016: 20, 141, 149–156, 243), also “preclude ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ answers and forces your counterpart to contribute their energy and engage in solving your problem” (p. 20).

How about “Why?”? I agree with Voss and Raz (2016: 153) to avoid using “Why?” on its own because many hear it as an accusation and react emotionally. But, experience shows that “Why?” works well when sandwiched between a call for empathy and a specification, e.g., “Please help me understand” + “why” + “you prefer A to B.”

Practice 4 helps negotiators acquire verbal reflexes. It follows the same conditioning logic as that of karate kata (Kanazawa 2013) or patterns for jazz (Coker *et al.* 1970). In the martial arts and music, students rehearse forms to etch them in their bodies and brains. This allows martial artists to engage in any confrontation and jazz musicians to improvise harmonically smooth solos over any chord progressions.

How do I teach the practice? First, I ensure that participants realize that they are role-playing. Second, I instruct an “aggressor” to attack a “victim” verbally while throwing at them a soft foam soccer ball underhand. Third, I tell the victim to fend off the attack with “That’s interesting... Can you say more?” or a similar comeback, while receiving the ball. After the attack/throw and the parry/catch, the victim becomes an aggressor and the role-play goes on. We close after everyone has played both roles.

To avoid “dramatic excess” (Alexander and Lebaron 2009: 192), evacuate emotions and restore identities, I ask participants to “de-role” themselves. I tell them to overdramatically brush their improvisation persona off, as done in the Brazilian neo-traditional urban healing ceremonies that inspired the now customary Freudian psychoanalytic psychodrama “de-roling” ritual (e.g., Ancelin-Schützenberger 2013: 21). This symbolic distancing rite reminds participants that they were play-acting and helps preserve relationships between colleagues.

Before moving to the topic of connection, breath also buys you staying power. “As a general rule, *patience pays*.” (Cohen 1980: 98). In addition, breathing helps you not lose your calm... or makes you aware that you are, in fact, “losing it” (Lempereur and Colson 2010: 164–166).

## 2. RELATING TO OTHERS

### 2.1. Connecting with others and connecting with your own emotions

To get participants in my workshops to experience connection with others and with their own emotions and how it relates to following and leading, I use an inflatable balloon of the kind used at kids’ birthday parties. The “balloon walk” surprises most participants. It provokes chuckles, comments, and even Instagrams.

### 2.1.1. Practice 5: Practicing connection with the balloon walk

Step 1: Place an inflated party balloon between you and a partner at shoulder level.

Step 2: Experience standing still while holding the balloon.

Step 3: Experience walking with your eyes open while holding the balloon.

Step 4: Experience taking turns leading with your eyes open while holding the balloon.

Step 5 (optional): If you wish to experiment with your eyes closed, take the steps necessary to ensure safety.

The “balloon walk” embodies a metaphor like the aikido strikes that Practice 7 will describe. The balloon acts as a connector that links two partners.

How will negotiators connect at the table? Through thinking, behavior or feelings? Will they connect as psychological equals or unequals? This is hard to predict. Connectors vary tremendously in kind and strength. They include looks, clothes, glasses, timepieces, jewelry, sex, gender, a name, a place, nationality, political party membership, club membership, a team, a cause, a value (professionalism, greed, generosity, etc.), wealth, an experience, a failure, a success, an object, friends, colleagues, an employer, children, parents, food, wine, liquor, a special diet, an illness, a sport, a hobby, a skill, a school, a university, a degree, an award, etc. Cialdini (2013) enshrines similarity as a key to persuasion. He points out that similarity gets people to like you... and you, to like them.

While it only involves carrying a party balloon, the “balloon walk” can trigger strong emotional reactions.

*During the group debriefing of a “balloon walk” exercise, we witnessed a participant lose control of himself, yell at his partner, and call him names because “on several occasions, the balloon almost fell to the ground because of the erratic way [he] moved”. What had happened?*

The reaction of this frustrated participant illustrates that you can lead not only with fullness, by increasing pressure and inviting movement away from you to avoid bursting the balloon, but also with emptiness, by reducing pressure and inviting movement towards you to avoid dropping the balloon. The frustrated participant essentially resented being tossed around by a teasing partner who caught on straightaway how to lead with emptiness.

Employing a vacuum to define a course once you have established a connection illustrates a key concept in Chinese strategy, the concept of *shih*, 勢. Two major *bin’fa* or Chinese military treatises—the Sun Tzu and the Sun Bin—discuss it at length (Sun Tzu and Denma Translation Group 2009: Chapter 5; Wu *et al.* 1996: Chapter 9). But, what does *shih* refer to?

The US Pentagon notes that “there is no Western equivalent to the concept of ‘*shì*’.” (US Secretary of Defense 2002: 6). As a result, “strategic configuration of power”, “alignment of forces”, “propensity of things”, “potential born of disposition”, “position”, “circumstances”, “situation”, “course of events”, “power”, “strategic advantage”, “potential”, and “momentum”, apply equally well to the vague, rich, and dynamic concept of *shih*<sup>12</sup>. This notion is so crucial that it deserves a central place in negotiation and conflict resolution (Martin 2004).

*Shih* operates universally. In the arts, *shih* manifests as that invisible force field that unconsciously and gently guides your gaze to locate the solitary monk lost in the wilderness of a huge traditional Chinese painting (Cheng 1994). *Shih* is also what *Tai chi* practitioners play with to upset their partner’s balance or throw them during so-called push hand exercises (Sifu Jesse Tsao 2015, personal communication).

China integrates *shih* in its diplomacy. Starting in 1978, “China has gradually built a ‘ring of friends’ around its borders. It has normalized relations with Russia (1991), the Central Asia former Soviet republics (1992), South Korea (1992), Laos (1989), Indonesia (1990), Brunei (1991), Vietnam (1991), and Singapore (1990). China has also settled border disputes with Laos (complete), Vietnam (all except for the South China Sea islands), Russia (97% borders delimited), the three Central Asian former Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, and Tajikistan (all complete), and stabilized border disputes with India and Bhutan.” (Lai 2004: 22). Building a “ring of friends” around China’s borders set the framework conditions to serve one of Deng Xiaoping’s central objectives, i.e., for trade to flourish.

*Tai chi* practitioners, warring states’ generals, Chinese diplomats, negotiators, mediators, and facilitators alike manipulate *shih* to their advantage by juggling with the full and the void. *Shih* includes and goes beyond the Western notions of framing and reverse engineering (e.g., Lakoff 1989; Lax and Sebenius 2006; Luntz 2007; Malhotra 2016). What I call “*shih*-based negotiation” strives to set up the semantic, cultural, environmental, sociological, economic, and political circumstances that make reaching your negotiation objectives inevitable before sitting down at the table. Indeed, the negotiation should begin with parties committed *a priori* to agreeable formulae (Zartman and Berman 1982: 9) and a viable solution space. *Shih* shifts the emphasis from value capture, creation, and distribution to monitoring, guiding, and ensuring the satisfaction of all interests... to your advantage, whether you are a business person, a peacemaker or both.

So, will you push the negotiation forward with the fullness of a well-thought out first offer (Thompson (2013) or draw it in with the emptiness of a listening ear (Dell and Boswell 2011)? Will you try to control the tension between creating and distributing value (Mnookin *et al.* 2000: 9 and 11–43) or will you dance with fullness and emptiness as you develop solutions jointly (Lempereur and Colson 2010)? Where will you invest your resources during preparation? Into the geoengineering

12. For inspiring commentaries on *shih*, see Sun Tzu and Griffith (1971), Ames (1993), Jullien (2004), and Gimian and Boyce (2009).

of a virtual negotiation watershed that feeds into a reservoir of desirable outcomes or into the optimization of your performance during the negotiation?

## 2.2. Protecting your integrity

*Between 1995 and 1996, Belgian serial killer and child molester Marc Dutroux kidnapped, tortured, and sexually abused six girls, four of whom—Julie and Mélissa, and An and Eefje—he murdered. This instilled fear in parents and children in Belgium and the rest of Europe. At the time, I headed an aikido dojo where I taught adult and kids classes. Because some children escaped Dutroux’s assault by reacting forcefully, I decided to teach kids to say “No!” In a role-play involving only kids, I instructed “bad guys” to move into the personal space of “good guys” and grab their shoulder. I also told good guys to shout “No!” as loud as possible before the bad guys did. In a flash, kids got into their roles. On round one, good guys could only manage a weak “No!” and bad guys overwhelmed them. By round three, following my admonition to shout on the top of their lungs, good guys kept bad guys at bay and became virtually untouchable. When they replayed the game a few weeks later, good guys fended off bad guys without having to relearn how to say “No!”*

*Encouraged by my success with kids, I included this practice in my “Getting physical” workshops for adults. Indeed, shouting “No!”—or imagining that you do so—protects your space, your intimacy, your integrity, even your reservation value. Regarding the latter, among self-labelled non-negotiators, many understand “compromise” to mean agreeing to a deal below their bottom line. The practice of resolute albeit silent “No!” not only wards off an aggressor as effectively as a shout, but also helps develop the resolve to respect yourself and stay above your bottom line.*

*A few weeks after one of my workshops, a participant, “Karin”, came to my office to thank me for the “No!” technique. Not for her, but for her son. At school, kids bullied her son day after day. School had become a nightmare for him. Karin spent the evening after the workshop teaching her son to say “No!” By bedtime, her son told her: “I hope that they try to bully me tomorrow morning!” with a wide smile on his face. The next morning, the bullies did not bother her son. They did not bully him the next day either. In fact, they left Karin’s son in peace thereafter.*

### 2.2.1. Practice 6: Protecting your space by saying “no!”

“No!” is a known negotiation concept (Jim Camp 2002; Bill Ury 2007). But, when negotiators establish unity between their body and their statement, they infuse the message with such power that they may not need to utter the message verbally.

## 2.3. Channeling aggression

*“A gun, a loaded gun! Can you imagine?” My aikido buddy, “Bob,” was telling me what he considers his best aikido story.*

*At the time, Bob was working as an airport dock worker. Bob is strong, tough, yet peace-loving. He did not share the risk-seeking propensities of his macho coworkers.*

*One day, after a long day of hard work, as Bob was getting ready to head home, Crazy “Joe” thrust a loaded gun into his face. “How does YOUR aikido help with THIS, Bob?” yelled Crazy Joe. Bob, with the volubility of lifelong martial artists, had been ranting and raving about the wonders of his art. Now, Crazy Joe was challenging him for real. Bob’s life was at stake. Following an ever-so-brief moment of surprise, Bob regained his calm by centering himself breathing consciously while sliding to Crazy Joe’s side, pivoting out of the line of fire, and mapping his hand onto the one with which Crazy Joe held the gun. He then complimented Crazy Joe on this nice piece of weaponry and asked him to take a closer look at it. Delighted, Crazy Joe acquiesced. While examining it, Bob discreetly emptied the magazine of the pistol into his pocket. He played with the gun for a while longer and, with a smile of genuine appreciation, handed it back to a beaming Crazy Joe.*

When confronted, aikidoka Center themselves, Connect with the other person, Channel the energy, and Conclude. The “4Cs” model, with “foresees” and “force/ease” as mnemonic acrostics, summarizes this approach (Martin, 2004). For a demonstration, watch Hiroshi Ikeda Sensei (2015) blend with a diagonal *yokomen uchi* attack by entering and spinning with an *irimi nage* defense.

Practice 7 encourages negotiators, facilitators, and mediators to experiment not only with centering, connecting, channeling, and concluding, but also with receiving, moving away, blocking, and being hit. Practice 7 gets them

- to experience relief when stepping out of harm’s way, the magic of flow when blending, and the pain associated with receiving a blow or blocking it;
- to notice which emotion (fear, anger, surprise, joy, scorn, shame, etc.) arises depending on the situation and examine how they feel afterwards;
- to reflect on how and why they choose one approach over another.

### 2.3.1. Practice 7: Practicing channeling aggression by responding to strikes

1. Partners pair up with one attacking the other with a strike by cutting the air with their hand blade either with an overhead strike to the head and diagonal strike to the side of the head, stopping a few centimeters away from the head of the partner;
2. The defender tries out different response, e.g., doing nothing and almost getting hit, stepping out of the way and letting the strike go past, blocking late, in midcourse, and early, and blending by turning like a spin or sliding in.

Partners trade roles every four strikes.

For more on aikido communication, I recommend Christian Vanhenten’s excellent *In Search of Martial Kindness* (2016).

## 2.4. Projecting confidence and power

*At two in the morning, hours away from an early transcontinental flight back to Europe, after a delightful evening in a São Paulo jazz club, I realized that I had left a critical medication behind in the science city of São José Dos Campos, 80 km away from São Paulo. I had to find the medication locally. At the Liberty Suites, a hotel where guests slept behind bars for their own protection, the armed night guard gave me directions to a 24/7 pharmacy half a dozen blocks away. After a few minutes, I realized that gang members and dealers accounted for most of the sparse nighttime population. Retreating would have made me prey and I needed the medication. So, I walked on while modifying my posture, to which I had not paid much attention until then. I progressively adjusted it to ensure that it projected confidence and power without presenting a threat.*

To project confidence lead with your abdomen, maintain your head upright as if an invisible thread pulled the crown of your head, keep the back of your neck long, and tuck your chin in slightly, as Japanese samurai did<sup>13</sup>.

*I crossed paths with a gang of idle bikers, walked by the frenzy of an illegal marketplace and through the associate shuttle of cars, motorcycles, and mopeds, and, lastly, made my way past another band of urban warriors just before reaching the pharmacy. I purchased my medication and returned following the same route. Gang members and dealers monitored my every move. Occasionally, loud laughter would erupt and startle me. I pretended not to notice and kept walking at a determined yet leisurely pace. While my fellow night owls might have been well-meaning and kind-hearted people, I did experience relief as I locked myself in my grim little cell at the Liberty Suites.*

### 2.4.1. Practice 8: Posturing to project confidence and power

Several activities will help you project confidence and power with your posture. Alone, in front of a mirror, or with friends you may experience how different postures feel. If with friends, ask for their feedback. You may turn this into a game by randomly drawing postures and associated emotions without showing them to your partners and having your audience guess and, possibly, offer advice.

I recommend to participants in my workshops to read primatologists like Frans de Waal (2005) to learn about posturing, dominance, and reference from our non-human relatives. The postures of non-human primates, esp. chimpanzees, clearly illustrate the meaning of human postures. It's a shortcut and much more fun.

Finally, watch videos like the National Geographic Documentary on the Secrets of Body Language<sup>14</sup>. I find the segments featuring respectively U.S. President

13. See the Water Chapter of 16<sup>th</sup> century samurai Miyamoto Musashi's *The Book of Five Scrolls*. ([https://archive.org/stream/MiyamotoMusashi-BookOfFiveRingsgoRinNoSho/Book\\_of\\_Five\\_Rings\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/MiyamotoMusashi-BookOfFiveRingsgoRinNoSho/Book_of_Five_Rings_djvu.txt); accessed on 29 July 2018) and Akira Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai*.

14. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YUDWNcvoosQ&t=12s> (U.S. President George W. Bush and Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin) and <https://www.youtube.com/>

George W. Bush and Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin, and U.S. President Bill Clinton, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat, both at Camp David, most informative.

## 2.5. Reading emotions

*At a recent meeting, a colleague and I hit a stalemate trying to convince each other. Pulling out a last resort rhetorical joker from his sleeve, the colleague blurted: "The request comes from our boss." It almost worked, but my colleague stared at me straight in the eyes just a little bit too long. Then, as if throwing in a confirmation of his lie, he unwittingly wiped the words that he had just uttered from his lips with his hand. I decided against confronting him and having him lose face. I used his unconscious admission of weakness to my advantage later on in the conversation instead.*

The face displays emotions as you experience them. Their number is not infinite. Paul Ekman and his colleagues identified eight basic emotions, i.e., sadness, scorn, surprise, anger, disgust, fear, joy, and shame (Ekman and Friesen 1975 and 1978; Ekman *et al.* 2002; Ekman 2007, 2009, and 2015), to which Adam Perkins of King's College added anxiety in 2012, and perplexity might be added. In addition, Du and Martinez (2015) identified seventeen complex universal expressions suggesting a greater number of facial expressions of emotions of biological origin than originally thought. This said, the eight plus one basic emotions offer a strong basis for face readers. The Appendix explains how to tell them apart.

Your face will disclose your sentiments. But, you can hide them using concealment, falsification, dodging, misdirecting, and telling the truth falsely (Ekman 2009).

Reading emotions accurately offers valuable information to negotiators, mediators, and facilitators. But, they should use it discerningly. An emotion that flashes on someone's face does not necessarily relate to the exchange or could relate to it in more than one way. Also, as psychologist Dr. Michel Gottschalk stresses (personal communication, 2017), reading and decoding facial expressions while thinking and talking is not possible. Furthermore, alternating at high speed between bargaining and decoding facial expressions is unsustainable. Consequently, reading facial expressions to support a bargaining process requires operating as a team, distributing tasks, and agreeing on a code to communicate between members secretly.

When on your own, stay aware of your guts and other somatic markers associated with intuition (Dane and Pratt 2007: 38). A twitch in your belly carries meaning, even if you do not know what it is. If you feel something in your guts, you caught a false note in an otherwise melodious discourse. Is it related to your

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watch?v=EWeqIkJZYNQ&t=19s (U.S. President Bill Clinton, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat); accessed 31 July 2018.

conversation or not? In any case, acknowledge the dissonance. Calibrating the other party with questions to which you know the answer early on, so-called “norming”, will help you discriminate when you need to. Still, stay humble because your guts can get it wrong!

When an alarm signal goes off, consider

- asking for a break;
- rewinding mentally;
- going over what you just discussed; and, when you reconvene,
- asking the other party to restate what they just said.

Does the restatement trigger the same pang? If it does, note and account for it. Both the old and new topics deserve your attention.

### 2.5.1. Practice 9: Reading facial expressions

1. Develop your emotion reading skills with micro-expressions training tools developed, in particular, by Dr. Paul Ekman (Ekman FACE Suite, Ekman METT 3.0, Ekman SETT 3.0, Ekman METT Profile, Ekman METT PLUS<sup>15</sup>) and Humintell Director Dr. David Matsumoto (Reading Emotions, Comprehensive Training Package, Evaluating Truthfulness, Advanced Training Package<sup>16</sup>). Simpler apps for tablets and smartphones give a good idea of how these tools work at low cost.
2. Watch a series like “Lie to Me”<sup>17</sup>.
3. Watch DVDs or videos with the sound off and, then, on. How do non-verbal and verbal messages match? What causes discrepancies?
4. Make practicing micro-expressions identification a habit.

## 3. RELATING TO YOURSELF

*On a Greyhound from Ottawa to Montreal, a Mounty shared with me his incredible interventions, making the best police action movies boring in comparison. “What’s your secret?” I asked as we parted. “Sleep, food, and exercise.” he replied.*

*This reminded me of Pascal Lamy during his tenure as EU Commissioner for Trade, before he led the World Trade Organization as Director General. Lamy managed his negotiations like the marathon runner he was. He not only worked on the substance, procedure, and diplomacy, but also slept enough by asking his*

15. <http://www.paulekman.com/micro-expressions-training-tools/>; accessed 30 July 2018.

16. <http://www.humintell.com/>; accessed 30 July 2018.

17. <http://www.paulekman.com/lie-to-me/>; <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1235099/>; accessed 30 July 2018.

colleagues to replace him at the table and wake him up when appropriate, ate healthily, and ran daily<sup>18</sup>.

Regarding evacuating negative energy and stress mediator Ben Hoffman (2014) says: “I certainly walk vigorously, perhaps right in the day at lunch time if we’re taking a break [...]. Take a break and walk that off and try to regain composure. In the evening, I spend some time meditating, doing some deep breathing exercises.”

### 3.5.1. Practice 10: Caring for your body as an athlete does

#### 1. Sleep and jet-lag

- a. Set your clock to arrival time when boarding an aircraft and adopt the arrival day/night pattern on the plane;
- b. Exercise during the flight and in sunlight upon arrival;
- c. You may decide to follow an anti-jet lag diet like the one developed by the US Argonne National Laboratory<sup>19</sup>. If so, start soon enough before the meeting for it to work—at least 24 hours prior to departure;
- d. If you plan to reset your body clocks using a nutritional supplement, bring some with you because what the food and drug regulation of one country classifies as a food supplement, that of another country may regulate as a prescription drug.

#### 2. Food

- a. Become knowledgeable about nutrition by reading books written by scientists and physicians like Verburgh’s (2014) thought-provoking *Food Hourglass* nutrition, by looking up dedicated web sites sponsored by government agencies, medical associations, and patient’s associations, and by seeking the advice of an MD or an accredited nutritionist;
- b. Above all, learn to distinguish between protein, carbohydrates, and fat, and between slow and fast sugars on the basis of their glycemic indices, and plan your meals accordingly.
- c. If you require a special diet because of intolerances, allergies, or otherwise, make the necessary arrangements. This may include making yourself autonomous by bringing food along, checking food stores in the vicinity of the venue, and informing the hosts of the meeting of your dietary requirements;
- d. Eat lightly to stay sharp because digestion requires energy. In particular, keep an eye on pasta, bananas, red meat, cherries, salmon, and lettuce and avoid dishes combining fats and carbohydrates because they cause

18. See also Audebert-Lasrochas (2005: 645–648 and 651 (breathing), 648–649 (sleep), and 649–650 (diet)), Karpov, *et al.* (2006: 13–16), and Labrosse and Lanski (2005: 58 (diet), 59–60 (breathing), and 60–62 (physical exercise)).

19. <http://www.netlib.org/misc/jet-lag-diet>; accessed 30 July 2018.

fatigue—regarding the last item, my friend “Jenny” refers to macaroni and cheese as “social control” because her father would serve her and her sister the dish to numb them into passivity when they visited him as kids;

e. Stay hydrated and well-supplied in essential minerals and electrolytes. So, avoid water-hungry alcohol molecules, manage coffee intake, and bring water to the meeting.

### 3. Exercise

a. Identify exercise venues in advance and bring an exercise routine that you can perform in your room as a backup;

b. Exercise for at least 20 minute per day making sure to break into a sweat;

c. Stretch to eliminate toxins—30 seconds per stretch suffices;

d. Keep up a breathing practice.

Finally, test your sleep, nutritional, and exercise strategies in advance.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Negotiation, facilitation, and mediation are not out-of-body experiences. The practices in the article enhance performance, protection, and perception in negotiation, facilitation or mediation by making them integral pursuits that involve our organism as a whole.

Conscious breathing has a special status because it calms down the body and, thus, the mind. It helps sustains the other practices. Conscious breathing requires little time, no external resources, and no external coaching to achieve proficiency. Conversely, some of the other practices like decoding facial expressions require training.

If you already know the practices, will you go back to them? If you do not, will you try them out? In both cases, will you take up the challenge of practicing them and risk empowering yourself?

## Medical disclaimer

The information in this paper is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Seek the professional advice of a medical doctor or qualified nutritionist, if you decide to optimize your diet.

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20. <http://www.novancia.fr/biennale-negotiation-2016>; accessed on 30 July 2018.

## APPENDIX: BASIC EMOTIONS AND HOW NOT TO CONFUSE THEM

Emotion	Facial clues	Often confused with	Distinguishing clues
Sadness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letting upper eyelids droop</li> <li>Losing focus in the eyes</li> <li>Slightly pulling down lip corners</li> <li>Lowering eyebrows to inner corners</li> </ol>		
Scorn	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tightening lip corners and raising on only one side of the face (2. Tilting head slightly backward)</li> </ol>	Joy	Asymmetrical, whereas joy is symmetrical
Surprise	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raising eyebrows</li> <li>Widening eyes, exposing more white</li> <li>Opening mouth, dropping jaw slightly</li> </ol>	Fear	Eyebrows not pulled together Eye uniformly widened The briefest of all emotions (Ekman, 2003, p. 148)
Anger	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lowering eyebrows down and together/Frowning</li> <li>Staring intensely, eyes bulging</li> <li>Narrowing lips</li> </ol>		
Disgust	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wrinkling nose</li> <li>Raising cheeks</li> <li>Raising upper lip</li> </ol>		
Fear	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raising and pulling together of eyebrows</li> <li>Raising upper eyelids</li> <li>Tensing lower eyelids</li> <li>Slightly stretching lips horizontally back to ears</li> </ol>	Surprise	Raised upper eyelids
Joy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forming crow's feet wrinkles</li> <li>Pushing up cheeks</li> <li>Moving the muscle that orbits the eye</li> </ol>		The eyes and, in particular, Crow's feet wrinkles distinguish real from fake smiles
Shame	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staring downward</li> <li>Touching lip</li> <li>Biting lip</li> </ol>		
Anxiety	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eye darting</li> <li>Head swiveling</li> </ol>		

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