

A compromise of compromise and conviction is a difficult road to navigate. A narrow middle ground exists between an unbending position and excessive concession that must be found for any successful agreement between two parties. Relinquish too much to find a middle ground, and the deal will have achieved nothing, demonstrated by the Articles of Confederation. Bargain for too much, and an agreement will be impossible to achieve, shown by President Woodrow Wilson's League of Nations. This delicate balance can be likened to holding a handstand. If you do not kick up enough, you will obtain the momentum necessary. However, if you provide too strong a kick and compromise too much, you will end up worse than where you started: on the ground instead of on your feet.

Your main goal should always be kept in mind and cannot be compromised in an agreement. This mistake can be seen from the United States' earliest attempt at autocracy, the Articles of Confederation. This document was created to unify the states of America under a strong government that would lead the young country. Though it was ratified by all 13 original states, the Articles of Confederation created a weak central government that was incapable of enforcing any of its decisions or bringing together feuding states. So despite its acceptance, the Articles betrayed their original goal and ended up failing altogether. This is why they were quickly replaced with the Constitution, which drew from the mistake of its predecessor and stayed true to its goal of creating a strong central government.

At the same time, full conviction is not an optimal strategy, demonstrated when President Woodrow Wilson attempted to actualize his League of Nations. Despite the scanty support from Congress, even amongst his fellow Democrats, he refused to change any aspects of his bill. As a result, it was shot down by an overwhelming majority and the entirety of his dream failed. Rather than concede a few points, such as the controversial Article X requiring member nations to go to war for each other, Wilson sought support from the US public. A stroke that took away his ability to give speeches ended all hope of ratification of the treaty as it stood. Still Wilson refused to negotiate, even though a majority of the Republicans would have been willing to ratify the bill if Article X were removed. If Wilson had been willing to compromise on less important points, WWII could have been prevented by the US membership of the League.

An example of a good balance between holding on to your ideals and compromising with others can be seen with Theodore Roosevelt's negotiations between Japan and Russia after their war. Since the war was originally fought for the control of Korea and Manchuria, Japan maintained its goal by receiving undisputed control over those areas and by procuring Russia's economic investments there. At the same time, it gave up the monetary reparations it initially demanded from Russia, as well as half of Sakhalin it wanted, since the northern part had been traditionally under Russian rule anyways. In this way, Japan

gave up some of its demands but held onto its main goal to achieve a very beneficial Treaty of Portsmouth in 1905.

Through the actions of the Founding Fathers of the United States, the stubbornness of President Woodrow Wilson, and the smart negotiations made by Theodore Roosevelt in the Russo-Japanese war, a balance between compromise and conviction is clearly shown. One must always stay true to her core beliefs, but be willing to give up some of the superficial details in order to achieve her goal. This is the key to good negotiation and important for everyone to know so they can prevent deadlocked arguments and ineffectual agreements in the future.