

Excerpt from the Book Negotiate like a Phoenician by Dr. Habib Chamoun-Nicolas in collaboration by Dr. Randy D. Hazlett

While analyzing multiple successful modern negotiations, I discovered a new concept in practice, which I have coined Tradeables<sup>TM</sup>. I also believe using Tradeables<sup>TM</sup> was an active practice of the ancient culture of the Phoenicians. I've outlined in my new book, *Negotiate Like a Phoenician: Discover Tradeables*, how the business model and negotiation practices of that ancient culture are applicable today. I add to that body of material today historical examples of dispute resolution and conflict avoidance through the use of Tradeables.

We define Tradeables<sup>TM</sup> as either:

- 1) A set of ideas or actions that help leverage a DEAL without being a part of the deal, or
- 2) Products and services that satisfy customer needs outside our own product line that are not in competition with our offerings.

Tradeables<sup>TM</sup> are, in fact, things that create greater negotiation capacity for our own present or future DEALS. Tradeables<sup>TM</sup> literally means “able” to “trade” or bringing trading capacity. Tradeables<sup>TM</sup> are favors unexpected by the other side outside of a DEAL which set the tone for future business dealings. The side creating Tradeables<sup>TM</sup> doesn't expect any direct reciprocity from the party receiving the Tradeables<sup>TM</sup>. Tradeables<sup>TM</sup> are by definition outside of the scope of the initial negotiation. Tradeables<sup>TM</sup> with conditions become Trade-ins or Trade-offs during the negotiation process. Gifts or favors with the intent to manipulate or buy an inside position are not Tradeables<sup>TM</sup>. The common saying “I'll scratch your back if you scratch mine” does not apply. Such *quid pro quo* actions do not qualify as Tradeables<sup>TM</sup>. The use of Tradeables<sup>TM</sup> should never be construed from either side as a bribe. The Phoenician business model is one of openness, fairness, and integrity which elevates the customer as a long-term business partner ahead of the present DEAL. Any offer outside this framework simply is not in alignment with the spirit of Tradeables<sup>TM</sup>. Use of Tradeables<sup>TM</sup> must be within the overall framework of building a business partnership with mutual gain and mutual trust.

Tradeables<sup>TM</sup> can include tribute, or unsolicited gifting. Often in history, we find the Phoenicians weighing the consequences of resistance and deciding in favor of preservation of life and business. As an example, the Assyrians were notoriously ruthless and periodically invaded the Phoenician coast. The Phoenicians repeatedly used a policy of appeasement. In roughly 875 BCE, the annals of Tiglatpileser I (ARAB: I. 479) record,

*At that time I marched along the side of Mount Lebanon, and to the Great Sea of the land of Amurru I went up. In the Great Sea I washed my weapons, and I made offerings unto the gods. The tribute of the kings of the seacoast, of the people of*

*Tyre, Sidon, Byblos, Makhalata, Maisa, Kaisa, Amurru, and Aradus, which lies in the midst of the sea, -- silver, gold, lead, copper, vessels of bronze, garments made of brightly coloured wool, linen garments, a great monkey, and a small monkey, maple-wood, boxwood, and ivory, and a nahiru [dolphin], a creature of the sea, I received as tribute from them, and they embraced my feet.*

If Phoenicians gave gifts, they could regain their loss. These tributes pre-empted actions that would be more costly in the long term. Especially when dealing with the Assyrians, the Phoenicians made liberal use of Tradeables™ in the form of unsolicited tribute. The Phoenicians did not find themselves in much conflict resolution, for in those days, conflict = war. Tradeables were able to diffuse tensions and settle doubts concerning political ambitions.

However, the Phoenicians were people of principle and met resistance with resistance when necessary. They had an navy that was without equal. The Phoenicians used Tradeables from a position of strength throughout most of their extensive period of economic dominance. I would speculate that the economic pressure they could wield was considerable.

Changing gears a bit, let's take a look at one example where the Phoenicians resolved a conflict with the following narrative from the scriptures.

## ***Ending a Quarrel***

There is a very brief encounter recorded in the Christians scriptures involving the people of Tyre and Sidon following the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. While short, it is no less insightful into the mindset of the Phoenician remnant.

Acts 12

*19b Then Herod went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there a while.*

*20 He had been quarreling with the people of Tyre and Sidon; they now joined together and sought an audience with him. Having secured the support of Blastus, a trusted personal servant of the king, they asked for peace, because they depended on the king's country for their food supply.*

An unknown problem arose between the Roman-installed Jewish ruler and the people of Tyre and Sidon. First, it is interesting that a king would have a persisting quarrel with his subjects. Herod Antipas was not one to tolerate disobedience. John the Baptist lost his head because of his finger of accusation pointing towards the throne (Matthew 14:3-12). Herod had married his half-brother's wife, which was commonplace in that time after the death of a sibling. However, Philip was alive and well. This, however, was not the same Herod that probed the Magi concerning the birth of Jesus. This was Herod the Great's

youngest surviving son. In order to protect his monarchy, Herod the Great had two older sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, executed in 7 BCE (Hoehner, 1980). Three other sons were passed over as heirs for mistrust. It was, however, the people of Tyre and Sidon who approached the ruling son to end a quarrel.

Foremost, we see that the people joined together. There is power in unity. It was to everyone's benefit to keep the peace. Second, they not only joined together, but they sought an audience with the king. They knew the level at which this problem could be solved. However, they did not go in unprepared and on their own. The Phoenicians knew the decision-maker (the king) and a key decision-influencer. They enlisted the support of a trusted personal servant to the king. Their request was for peace. Why? These people knew that this quarrel was not worth the price, for they depended upon the king for their food supply. The people of Tyre and Sidon banded together with a plan and a purpose. They evaluated the consequence of a failure to reconcile and decided the risk was too great. We see in this short description a business savvy reminiscent of prior generations.

## **A Phoenician Gift to You**

Today, we live in a complex world where we are bombarded in the newspapers and on TV with conflicts in the home, at the office, in courts of law, and on battlefields around the globe. I am speechless watching senators and congressman fight over polarizing issues like boxers, pummeling each other with their fists. Similarly in other spectator sports, emotion at soccer matches takes precedence over reason, generating insane actions on and off the field of play.

In Phoenicians times, the world was also a dangerous place. The Phoenician business philosophy steered them through a period of rapid expansion and wealth amidst regional wars, coupes, and revolutions. Following the merciless pillage of Tyre by the Macedonian king, Alexander the Great, the Phoenicians no longer had a geographical center of power in history. However, their business practice of colonization and trade expansion dispersed the Phoenician heritage and culture throughout the populated world. The Phoenician identity and philosophy prevails even today.

What is the solution for the negotiations of the future if we don't even agree on the basics of human interaction? Is the solution as simple as marching back 4000 years to learn from a proven, ancient business philosophy? A lost art of those Phoenician business principles involved the use of Tradeables™ – finding unmet needs of your trading partner and satisfying them outside the scope of a business deal. The rapport and trust gained from such practice is invaluable.

Some simply cannot see the value of giving something away. They see their negotiation party as a necessary adversary. He is needed for our current business, but we don't care about his business, whether he survives or not. They do not care to foster mutual long-term gain if short-term profit is in aim.

In business, we must preserve identity while respecting others. There appears to be an element of spirituality involved when we desire to enlarge our circle of caring into our business actions. Spiritually sensitivity has been identified as the number one newest trend for business in the coming decade (Aburdene, 2005). Tradeables™ embraces this spirit of fostering trust and business comradery.

I challenge you to study the beliefs and methods of the ancient Phoenicians. Make a change in your business philosophy, and negotiate like a Phoenician.

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