



LESSONS FROM AN EXPERT
THE ART OF NEGOTIATION

NEGOTIATING WITH THE INNER CHILD

JOHN THOMSON
the negotiator

THE NEGOTIATOR

LESSONS NOTES FROM AN EXPERT

NEGOTIATING WITH THE INNER CHILD

CODE RED THE NEGOTIATORS, Lessons From An Expert, is a unique series of invaluable lesson notes and resource for students, teachers and those considering using professional mediation services. The guides are extracts from John Thomson's books and training manuals and offers practical insights and strategies applicable to real-life situations.

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NEGOTIATING WITH THE INNER CHILD

a guide to understand why we think the way we do

a gift from the 'The Negotiator'

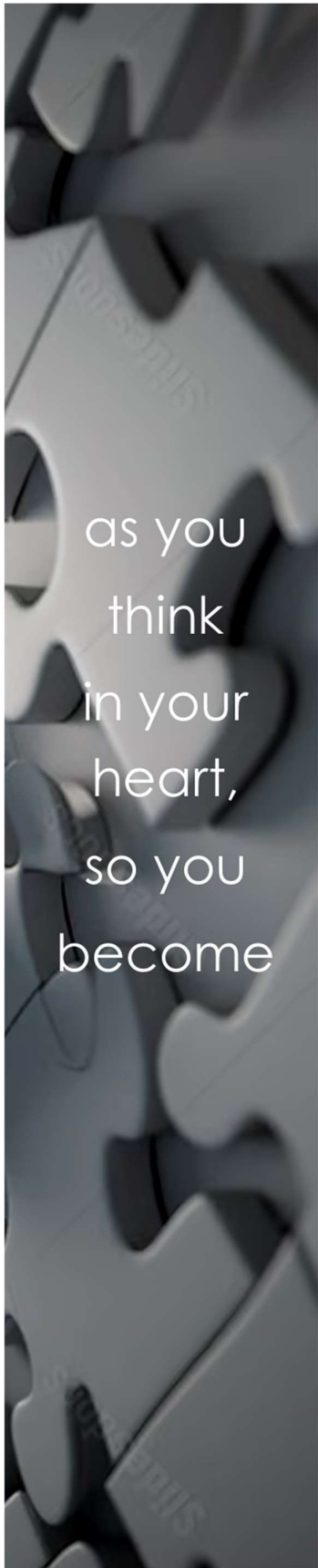


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introduction



Watermarked From Birth

Cultural and social conditioning begins before birth, during the foetus's development, and is significantly influenced by the mother's psychological state, health, and environment.

Referred to as the 'child within' or 'inner child,' five primary behavioural characteristics are identified by their psychosynthesis,¹ cognitive ability and intellectual receptivity, defining individuals of all ages as they transition from childhood to old age. Each developmental age is not left behind but being adopted as we age influences future responses to selection, adaption, ambition and pursuit of personal goals.

In the Book of Wisdom, Solomon² states, "Give me a child until he is seven, and I will show you the man."

¹ Def: psychosynthesis: therapeutic integration of logical thought and a richer, multidimensional system of analogical, comparative thought.

² The Book Of Wisdom, also known as The Book Of Proverbs, recorded judgements by King Solomon (10th Century BC).

Solomon observed that early childhood cognitive development (*intellectual perceptiveness*) indelibly shapes the progression of thought and response behaviours from child to end of life through the interplay of emotional and social experiences and educational influences. Modern neuroscientific findings show that the foundations laid in the first seven years of life are critical for lifelong health and mental well-being and influence ambition and the ability to achieve goals and desires.

Those who experience supportive and enriched early childhood environments tend to be curious and **open to learning**³, which fosters positive development and social cohesion. These people are generally collaborative rather than combative and given to rational reasoning and self-examination. This valued attribute creates opportunities that enable them to reach their full potential and is outwardly exhibited through the encouragement of others through positive affirmation, a reflection of their own self-assurance and security.

At my Army officer selection revue, a psychologist asked me to describe my mother, a question that perplexed me because I could not relate that to an Army conflict environment. Only years later when studying sociology I learned that similar questions expose 'the child within.'

Examining the 'child within' underscores childhood experiences' enduring influence on adult life, influencing emotional stability (E.Q), personal growth, relational well-being and mental and physical resilience.

Know Who and What You Are Dealing With

All conflict resolution specialists and negotiators have an obligation to understand the character of the parties they are working with before proceeding to face-to-face or online mediation.

At the earliest possible time, client personality, temperament, and openness assessments must be made to determine the character and ability of the participants to take instruction, understand the broader context of the situation and their ability to exercise flexibility of thought to come to a resolution. I identify positive and deficit personality traits and behavioural characteristics in a pre-emptive assessment to assess individuals' risk and likely outcomes. The insights I gained helped me

³ Refer to Lesson Note: Openness To Learning, Creative Problem Solving. CRMC309

develop strategies to avoid possible stumbling blocks, impasses, and objections arising from sudden or unpredictable behavioural changes between conflicting parties. This also ensures a fair and equitable assessment of the individual's needs and expectations.

I also recommend a wide range of reading material to help individuals prepare for mediation or negotiation sessions before group or face-to-face sessions.

Resonance or Vibrations

New age teachers and hermeneutic theory incorrectly use the word 'vibration' to describe the energy within a person and its impact on their environment. The correct interpretation is found in psychological science, referred to as 'emotional resonance,' which is the element that motivates 'grit' and resilience, determination, and empathic, compassionate character.

resonance is as flowers are to bees, the brighter the colour
and sweeter the scent, the more attractive they become

Emotional resonance is unique to every individual. It gives us that feeling of 'connection' and a strong sense of empathy, understanding, and the ability to share personal experiences, which deepen interpersonal connections and significantly improve our communication ability. It is most evident in charismatic leaders and gifted celebrities, but in everyday interactions, it helps individuals navigate social relationships, understand others' perspectives, and respond appropriately to their emotional needs.

While the science of psychologically induced behaviours is beyond the scope and responsibility of a mediation or conflict resolution specialist, understanding the essential elements of emotional resonance is particularly important. This enables practitioners to identify and validate their clients' emotional experiences, fostering a supportive and healing environment. From this, we understand the "child within" and can specify one or more of the five dominant characteristics carried throughout life.

In highly charged mediation environments, mainly where an individual exhibits instability, high anxiety, depression, hostile or aggressive language, or other characteristics that could derail the negotiation

process, the resolution specialist should ensure those individuals have support, professional help, and care to manage negative behavioural traits.

A strong network of family, friends, and mentors can provide emotional support and resources that bolster resilience, while social support can buffer the effects of stress and adversity.

Understanding the characteristics of the 'child within' helps identify ways to cultivate and strengthen the mediation process, form strategies to overcome negative behaviours and enhance the capacity to achieve long-term positive outcomes.

imagine if today was the first day of the rest of your life,
that you could make a decision with all your previous
experiences to guide you



section one



FIVE LITTLE MONKEYS



Five Little Monkeys

Portrayed in nursery rhymes, Five Little Monkeys, refers to the unpredictable and often mischievous behavioural characteristics of one or more of the five underlying psychological preconditioning's (*monkeys*) that exist within all of us.

With a natural disposition to seek stability and predictability throughout life, the monkeys are portrayed as “I saw nothing, hear nothing, know nothing, say nothing and want nothing; each monkey is depicted with their hands covering parts of their body related to those responses.

John Watson's⁴ work to understand human behaviour attributed parental behaviours and environment as the most significant influences on personal and generational social conduct and societal behaviour. It is from this work his theories of the ‘child within’ were developed and have since become mainstay theory in developmental behaviour.

The ‘child within’ is most notable among those who resist or negatively auto-respond with emotionally triggered responses to challenges of belief or ideology. Because the mechanisms that cause the responses are deeply entrenched psychological preconditions, they are generally consistent and resistant to demands for change, exhibited by overtalking, changing or diverting discussions from the required narrative, or exhibiting physical agitation, all signs of an unwillingness or inability to consider alternative perspectives.

Negotiation practitioners must understand the subliminal drivers of such behaviours, which are often described as ‘pig-headed’, belligerent, uncooperative, combative, and quarrelsome but with understanding can be managed and used to assist in the resolution process.

Not Just The Client, But The Mediator

Understanding the underlying character, culture and values of those involved in the mediation process is not only limited to those in dispute but also includes a need to understand the personalities and characteristics of mediators and their support staff.

⁴ John B Watson 1878-1958 Behavioural scientist with eminent work in 1913.

Self-examination can be painful but helps identify bias, prejudice, inappropriate attachments, and challenging preconceived pathways and outcomes within the resolution process.

Referred to as 'mirroring,' client characteristics can often reflect the mediator's own personality and traits, resulting in potential 'blind spots,' assumptions, and misunderstandings. This underscores the need for mediators to be cautious and attentive, ensuring that the standards they apply to assess their clients are consistent with the measures used to evaluate their own capabilities.

before pointing fingers,
make sure your hands are clean

This lesson examines five fundamental inner paradigms that commonly manifest as behaviours in individuals under stress and high anxiety, providing definitions of psychoanalytic behavioural characteristics.

The Wounded Child

This child carries pain and trauma from past experiences stemming from perceptions of neglect, abuse, or other adverse negative childhood experiences. The wounded child experiences fear, sadness, anger, and feelings of unworthiness in adulthood.

Exhibited Behaviour:

This child uses negative, demeaning language consistent with underlying insecurities and inferiorities, exhibits defeat and surrender, often breaking down in tears and is frequently repetitious.

This pattern of behaviour suggests a pervasive sense of hopelessness and helplessness, typical in individuals who experience chronic stress and anxiety or who have encountered repeated failures or rejection throughout their lives.

Negotiator Awareness

The negotiator must avoid expressing sympathy (*as opposed to empathy*) as this reinforces (*even feeds*) the inner child. Instead, they must maintain positive affirmation, be patient when listening, highlight strengths, and validate their positive efforts. They must avoid comparisons with others, never question their qualifications or challenge their understanding, and be patient when explaining options and alternatives, encouraging them to engage and take ownership of the solutions explored.

If feeling rejected, this child can demonstrate irrational behaviours, including intense 'rants,' long periods of sullen silence, refusal to co-operate, arriving late and being unprepared at appointments or engaging in delay tactics, all part of the 'defeated' child psyche, 'if I don't get what I want, you will not get what you want.'

These responses are often prompted by the perceived changes in the status of the power balance or failed expectations being perceived as threats, which can trigger a fight-or-flight response.

In this context, the child's aggressive or belligerent outbursts and behaviour can be a maladaptive coping strategy aimed at self-protection. Many 'wounded' tend to utilise physical intimacy as an inner demand for affirmation and can be a trap for the development of inappropriate mediator bias.

Particularly evident in mismatched power balance relationship failures, the juxtaposition of withdrawal and emotional surrender is often associated with spiteful critical language, narcissistic behaviours and aggressive outbursts, all painting a complex picture of an insecure, unstable and troubled childhood.

It underscores the mediator's need to assess and identify potential environmental, social, and psychological factors that may contribute to these behaviours. This assessment should aim to devise targeted interventions that address the internal and external sources of the 'child's' distress and develop appropriate therapies and support.

The Playful Child

The playful child appears secure and purpose motivated. They tend to express themselves with ideological romantic goals and are outgoing, creative, and spontaneous, displaying a natural curiosity often on the fringes of social conformity. They have a high cognitive ability to grasp concepts, think innovatively, and tend to focus on the value of relationships more than the value of acquiring assets.

Exhibited Behaviour

The 'playful child' is the child you never really get to know. This child struggles to express their 'inner' feelings of loss, betrayal and pain. Hence, their sense of playfulness acts as a coping mechanism, allowing them to distance themselves from feelings they do not trust or are uncomfortable with, often feelings of intimacy (physical and mental) and in environments that require high trust.

Laughter, giggling, and maintaining the persona of the "little boy" or "little girl" are defensive strategies that help people mask their vulnerabilities and avoid confronting their past negative experiences and feelings.

Often perceived as highly motivated, playful children have the potential to excel in various fields. They can become excellent sportspeople and athletes and are commonly employed in social and community sectors. However, they may struggle with focus and attention to detail, start projects that never finish, and explore relationships with naivety.

Negotiator Awareness

The playful child often uses various expressions of intimacy, referred to as the 'touchy feeling type.' They develop connectivity with others as they attempt to explore other people's feelings as part of their own 'normality testing.'⁵ his behaviour is seen as flirtatious but superficial but is

⁵ Normality Testing def: Gaussian Distribution, Self-Testing Normality is a psychological response used by individuals experiencing inferiority and insecurity to assess and modify their

reactionary, without purpose or meaning, and once past, they most often move on to the next relationship.

The playful child struggles to manage complex or excessive information processes, as this demands heightened attentiveness, akin to acts of maturity, which the playful child is trying to avoid. The negotiator must present information in disciplined timeline order, explain probabilities, and offer clear future pathways as they become apparent. Reiterating and repeating the facts and processes is critical to developing meaningful change.

Because the 'playful child' views life as a game, it becomes a game they also want to win. The negotiator must separate the resolution process from their life game or risk an 'aggrieved child' who will manipulate players, attempt to umpire the game on their terms and change the rules of engagement, all in a bid to gain an advantage in their game.

As a professional, I make the game they want to play a game that does not involve definitive resolution choices. For example, in a relationship breakdown where property distribution is the focus of mediation, I could make the game about the children's relationship with their 'other grandparents' and where they will stay on holidays or around matters already concluded while quietly and incrementally negotiating settlement of the issues that they struggle with.

The Rebellious Child

The rebellious child experiences feelings of constraint (e.g., *being told to 'go to your room while others play'*) or stifled ambition during childhood. It can manifest in adulthood as defiance, reluctance to conform, difficulty with authority figures, disobedience to rules and law, and conformity to social norms.

behaviours to conform to societal characteristics of 'normality,' and is most obvious in the social phenomena's 'Leeming Effect' and 'Social Herding.'

Exhibited Behaviour

If things are going their way, it is all good, but if they feel like they are being disadvantaged, all hell can break loose. Often aggressive, inflexible, and even resorting to bullying and manipulation, the rebellious child has little regard for process, the feelings and distress they cause, and the impact of their decisions on others.

Negotiator Awareness

Never tell a rebellious child what to do. Instead, ask for their input and what they think. This approach not only develops a sense of ownership of the process but also avoids 'weighted outcomes'⁶ in their favour. Prone to heightened anxiety and states of perceived threat, the negotiator should avoid using terms that give a rebellious child an opportunity to say how they feel; once started, trigger-based responses can quickly escalate to robust and emotionally biased dialogue. I utilise an 'if and then'⁷ negotiation style with the rebellious child. In this conditional approach, proposals and concessions are framed with contingencies, each offer or concession based on the other party agreeing to a specific term. This strategy equips you with the necessary tools to negotiate effectively.

The Fearful Child

This fearful child has fears, anxieties, and insecurities stemming from unsafe or insecure childhood fears and experiences. Often emanating from unstable home environments, witnessing domestic violence, experiencing physical punishment and living with threats of deprivation (*condition supply*⁸), intimidation (*bullying*), and selfish behaviours, the

⁶ Weighted Outcome: Taking into account the weight of information or influence in favour of a prejudice towards a desired outcome.

⁷ If And Then, Conditional Bargaining. TNS310 Lesson Note In This Series

⁸ Conditional supply def: Reward, obedience and task return supply, including affection, security, stability, protection from harm and nourishment. A failure to provide forms identifiable syndromes include Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD) and Disinhibited Social Engagement Disorder (DSED), anxiety and depressive disorders.

fearful child is denied creative exploration of ideas and behaviours, emotional awareness and relational sensitivities.

Exhibited Behaviour

The fearful child often finds it difficult to face new challenges, which can be a source of frustration for them and those around them. They may engage in delay and avoidance behaviours, seek guidance, and defer responsibilities to others. This behaviour indicates their need for support and understanding.

The fearful child lives in a constant state of anxiety that creates symptoms of 'fidgeting, restlessness (*often involuntarily stretch or yawning in sessions*), leg twitching, nail-biting and expressing states of hyper-vigilance typified by impulsive reiteration questions (e.g., 'what did you say,' or 'say that again').

Negotiator Awareness

Often hardworking, loyal, and relationally dependent, the fearful child is at the most risk of a disadvantageous outcome in mediation and negotiated settlements. The simple reason is that they don't stand up for themselves.

A professional negotiator should engage in pre-mediation preparedness meetings with the fearful child. Before any mediation or resolution meeting, the mediator or negotiator should write down the questions the fearful child may want to ask. The mediator may have to skillfully coach that child into meaningful and constructive dialogue with other parties as they often experience a 'mental block,' limiting their ability to participate in fair and balanced negotiations.

Too often, as I have walked out of a meeting, the fearful child has said, "Why didn't I ask that question?" or "I wish I had thought of that before."

It is not that they didn't think of the question; the child within was so fearful to express it that they had a 'mind-block.' Silence or the absence of valid contribution does not infer guilt, blame or justify concessional advantage.

It is our collective responsibility, mainly the negotiator's, to ensure there is an opportunity for fair communication balance, particularly with the fearful child.

Additional Information

For practitioners wanting to explore the complex psychological impact of disproportionate fear on the developing child and its influence over the adult, I recommend reading about the following:

Attention and Learning Disorders: (ADHD): Inadequate cognitive stimulation and unstable environments can exacerbate symptoms of inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity.

Specific Learning Disorders (SLD): A lack of educational resources and support may lead to difficulties in reading, writing, and mathematics, resulting in specific learning disabilities and the inability to comprehend more complex obligations, i.e., the inability to read printed documents.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): Children exposed to traumatic events, such as abuse, neglect, or violence, can develop PTSD, characterized by symptoms such as intrusive memories, avoidance behaviours, and emotional numbing.

Conduct Disorders: (ODD) Oppositional Defiant Disorder: This disorder involves a pattern of defiant, disobedient, and hostile behaviour toward authority figures, often linked to inconsistent discipline and emotional regulation.

Developmental Trauma Disorder (DTD) accounts for complex reactions to chronic interpersonal trauma, including emotional dysregulation, impaired relationships, and self-perception issues.

Google search the above disorders for more information.

The Nurtured Child

Like the other four 'inner children,' the nurtured child has beneficial and detrimental characteristics to their wellbeing. The nurtured child develops with high levels of emotional support, physical care, cognitive stimulation and social interaction, forming secure, trusted attachments with their parents, wider family or caregivers. They feel safe and confident within stable, controlled environments, are less prone to anxiety and depression and appear emotionally stable.

Exhibited Behaviour

Often referred to as the 'entitled child,' the nurtured child develops in an environment that shields them from adversity and prevents the development of coping mechanisms. They are not exposed to stress and criticism and, because of their highly protective upbringing, do not have

opportunities to build resilience and problem-solving skills. They tend to become excessively reliant on the advice of others, building relationships with people empathetic to their desires, which reinforces their distorted subliminal view of how their world should appear to them.

Their interdependence on others makes it difficult for the 'nurtured child' to confront and self-rely on their own decisions. Their reluctance to accept changes or consider alternative options as a pathway to resolution underscores their resistance to growth and adaptability.

They demand high levels of attention and special treatment, are often opinionated, lack the ability to consider others, find it difficult to admit fault, guilt, or vulnerability, and demand high stability and routine.

Like playful children, they are sometimes called 'social butterflies.' They are often insensitive in their conversations and lack social and cultural awareness, viewing the world from their entitled position.

Negotiator Awareness

The mediator/negotiator must know that over-nurturing inadvertently leads to high expectations, perfectionist tendencies, and excessive and often unrelated demands. The nurtured child usually sets unrealistically high standards for themselves, leading to low self-efficacy, reduced problem-solving skills, oversensitivity, perfectionism, and impaired social skills underpinned by a fear of failure. The nurtured child demands high expectations of others, often becoming the source of deep resentment as others are unable to meet the nurtured child's expectations and as frustration and tensions increase, it leads to critical judgement and devaluing of others and makes them feel worthless.

As a mediator or negotiator, you must always carefully inform the 'nurtured child' that resolution outcomes may not be on the terms and conditions they expect, and that adverse findings and loss of perceived value and social status are part of the mediation process and often beyond their control.

It is critical to ensure a nurtured child has emotional support if adverse findings attributing blame to them are likely to be found.

Summary

As mediation practitioners or negotiators, understanding fundamental human behaviours is essential for fostering a harmonious and integrated validation of all aspects of the resolution process. This comprehension allows both the individuals engaged in conflict resolution and the mediators to effectively address unresolved issues, cultivate strengths, and ultimately live more balanced and fulfilling lives post-resolution.

Recognising behavioural differences aids in navigating conflicts more effectively and promotes open and honest communication among parties. Various psychological, cognitive, and social factors may lead some individuals to assume that their actions are invariably justified. While such conviction can enhance confidence and assertiveness in leadership roles, it is equally important for individuals to embody humility and openness, acknowledging the potential for error and actively learning from their experiences.

Striking a balance between confidence, self-awareness and critical thinking can significantly enhance personal growth and improve decision-making processes. This integrated approach contributes to more successful mediation outcomes and supports the development of healthier interpersonal dynamics between the involved parties.

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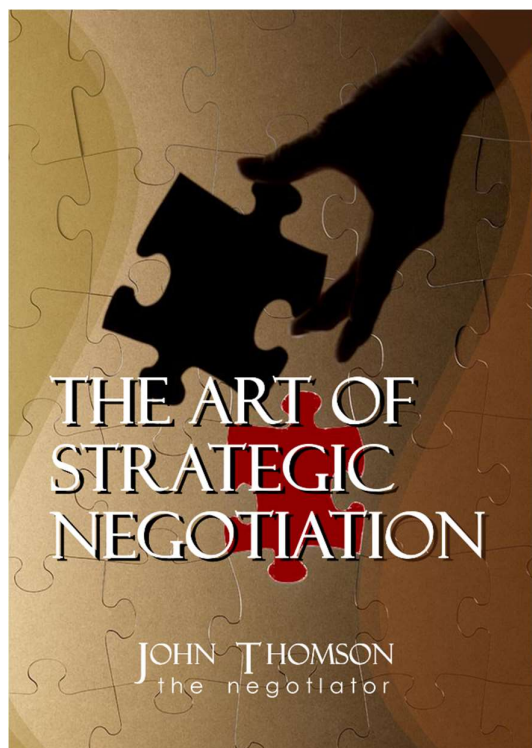
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A Greater Lesson

This lesson is an overview of a section from the book, **The Art Of Strategic Negotiation**, by John Thomson.

The Art Of Strategic Negotiation is a comprehensive guide and compelling reading for those required to negotiate settlement terms, whether they are salespeople, contract negotiators, dispute resolution specialists or family relationship mediators.

It is strongly recommended as substantive reading material for behavioural science students and those seeking to negotiate within vocational and occupational endeavours.



In E Book Format

We recommend you purchase this book on Amazon or as an 'E'Book from our web site.

www.johnthomson.com.au.

'E'book price: AU \$29.95

Recommended Reading In This Series

THE NEGOTIATOR CØDE RED Master Class Lesson Notes are available in downloadable and printable format from our online platforms. With over forty titles they constitute the framework of our **Master Class** Training and education programs.

The following subjects are closely linked with the contents of this lesson and are recommended reading.

- TNS404 Mindfulness, Keys to Situational Awareness
- TNS405 Origins Of Conflict, Why People Create Trouble
- TNS422 Openness, Keys To Quick Recovery
- TNS203 Why Trouble Comes
- TNS437 When They Say They Did Nothing Wrong
- TNS510 Emotional Regulation, Controlling Run-Away Feelings
- TNS503 Denial, Losing Control Of Your Destiny

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- Go to our website and open the education portal. You will find a list of print, audio visual or audio podcast options. Click on the title subject bar of choice to open.
www.nzmrs.co.nz
www.johnthomson.com.au
- Open a Youtube portal in your browser and search **THE NEGOTIATOR**, subscribe and then search by the relevant codes and titles.

there
is
nothing
more
human
than
talking
about
our
feelings

About John Thomson

With a reputation for getting 'tough deals done,' John Thomson is 'the negotiator.'

Known for his novel and hybrid problem-solving methodologies, John is a veteran 'deal maker,' negotiator, and resolution specialist.

He is a Senior Mediation, Negotiation, and Arbitration Partner, Consultant Advisor, and critical event manager specialising in the property, environmental, and aviation sectors.

An author, educator, keynote speaker, plenary speaker, and professional educator who encourages practitioners to explore alternative resolution solutions for their clients.

A frequent flyer between Australia and New Zealand, John is an associate member with governing institutes and a Senior Consultant working with a team of professionals in both countries.

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intentionally left blank

A young child with light brown hair is sitting on the ground, leaning against a large, worn, olive-green backpack. The child is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The overall tone is somber and contemplative.

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