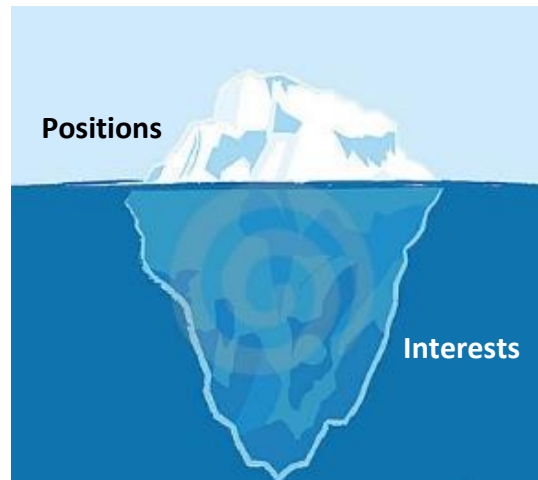


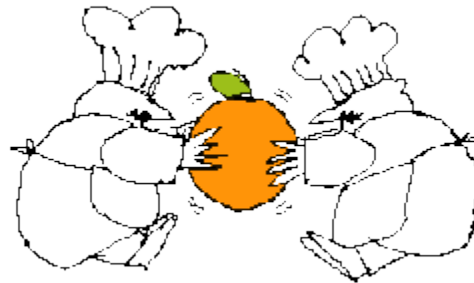
Coaching Tip: Positions vs Interests



One of the main tenets of any mediation or negotiation philosophy is the idea of **positions** and **interests**. Hopefully most of your coaching is not a negotiation, but it is possible that there are some mediation aspects. These concepts can also be useful in understanding why someone might be resistant to change or collaboration.

The main idea is to focus on a person's *interests* rather than their *positions*. The reasoning behind this is illustrated with a classic, and rather silly, example about an orange.

If there are two people arguing over who should get the one orange that is left, both of their positions are "I want this orange!"



It would be easy to come in and split the orange in half as a compromise. However, neither person is happy now. Why? Well their positions may have both been that they wanted the orange, but if we had dug a little further into the interests we would have found out that one person wanted to eat the orange and the other wanted to bake a pie. The best solution with that knowledge is to give one person the rind and the other the inside or fruit of the orange. This way it is a win-win instead of a lose-lose negotiation!

This is obviously a trivial example, but it gets to the main idea, which is that we should always ask "why?"

How does this relate to your coaching? It's a good reminder that as coaches we have to listen and then ask those follow-up questions when on our calls. If an idea is suggested and it is met with resistance, it's important to ask why so we can understand their "interest" and not necessary be turned off their "position."

Sources: ["Getting to Yes" by William Ury](#)