

# Claire Smith

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## Speaking Biography

Former British diplomat and extreme negotiator, Claire Smith, has played hardball with governments, political institutions and corporate bodies across the globe.

Expert in managing the complexities of global business practices and the Art of Negotiation, Claire now runs her own consultancy business CH Smith Consulting to help re-build government capabilities after conflict and to companies navigate turbulent times.



Claire's engaging keynotes and workshops draw on her vast experience within the Diplomatic Service and her subsequent career as a leading consultant.

Claire is also a visiting professor and lecturer at several UK universities and is an adviser to the monastic community of Ampleforth Abbey (the UK's largest monastic community). Claire speaks near-native German, fluent French and Mandarin.

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With over 25 years' experience as a diplomat, Claire was one of the first Mandarin speaking women to be posted to Beijing, as China began to open up following the Cultural Revolution. A well-known and respected diplomat in Asia, Claire was part of the UK government delegation to negotiate the future of Hong Kong and ran the UK government's programme to bring Chinese professionals (starved of contact with the outside world) to the UK.

Leaving China, Claire returned to London before being seconded to the German Foreign Ministry where (as a fluent German speaker) she negotiated trade deals and cultural and educational relations with Taiwan. She was also the first non-German to work in the ministry's crisis centre.

This was followed by a highly eventful period as Political Counsellor in Islamabad, Pakistan. Claire was responsible for dealing with high profile topics of international concern between the

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UK and Pakistan, including negotiating with the Taleban in response to the Ariana airline hijacking at Stansted. Evacuated after 9/11 with a suitcase, mobile phone and a small son, Claire returned to London to work in the Cabinet Office, before running a large department in the Foreign & Commonwealth Office while at the same time being a member of the UK's Joint Intelligence Committee.

Claire's engaging keynotes and workshops draw on her vast experience within the Diplomatic service and her subsequent career as a leading consultant. Her keynote topics include:

1. The Art of Negotiation and Problem Solving - Claire could include any or all of the following:
  - a. How do we define success when negotiating?
  - b. applying skills from extreme contexts to daily business life and how to negotiate with people who do not share your mind-set.
  - c. What are the integral persuasion techniques involved in achieving your aims and objectives – how does that differ between cultures?
  - d. How do we adapt techniques when it comes to facing different types of negotiation and problem solving issues? In particular, what role does authenticity, communication, relationships and body language play?
2. Effective communication; how to achieve your goals using appropriate skills based on preferences, experiences, cultural and national differences.
3. Handling Change: behaviour, culture and resilience in the face of adversity. Claire could include any or all of the following:
  - a. Living and working in a global business; how to adapt to new business cultures and environments and acknowledge the disruption involved.
  - b. Dealing with disaster and downturns; what are the main factors to consider when forced to confront ambiguity and complexity and how to react to difficult operating environments.
  - c. People and places in transformation: re-inventing countries and re-inventing yourself. Do specific behaviours and attitudes transcend culture when dealing with change?
  - d. How to mitigate risk when it comes to dealing with uncontrollable external factors.
  - e. Does handling successful change stem from forward thinking and planning or is a resilient attitude the most essential characteristic?