

# Learn to Negotiate

Women don't realize it, but they consistently accept second best. We pay more, work harder, accept lower quality, allow ourselves to be inconvenienced, and retire with smaller nest eggs than men, simply because we're not taught to negotiate. This summary paper is based on the incredible book by Linda Babcock and Sara Laschever, [Ask for It: How Women Can Use the Power of Negotiation to Get What They Really Need](#). I also blogged about it [here](#) and [reviewed the book here](#).

Based on exhaustive research, the authors of *Ask for It* found that, in every circumstance of life, men automatically and naturally ask for a better deal four times more often than women. As a result, they have better lives and feel better about themselves. (p. 4. "In every study, Linda's team found clear and consistent evidence that men initiate negotiations to advance their own interests about four times as often as women do.")

Why don't women ask? The little voice inside telling you not to do it (don't rock the boat, don't get pushy, why can't you be happy with what you have?) isn't your voice. "It's the voice of a society that hasn't progressed nearly as far as we'd like to think, a society that's still trying to tell women how they should and shouldn't behave. It's a voice whose message is conveyed, often unwittingly, by our parents, teachers, colleagues, and friends - and then repeated and amplified by the media and popular culture." (p.1)

Women still earn less than men in every category ([citation here](#)). The way to overcome this is simply to get in the habit of ASKING.

If you're unhappy with something in your life, **START WITH THE PREMISE THAT IT CAN BE CHANGED**. (Think about how often we assume the opposite. Do men do this? Think of the last time you complained to your man about a situation at work. What did he do? I'll bet he offered at least one strategy for changing it.) "Instead of wondering, is that negotiable?" assume it IS. Don't wait for change. ASK for change. (p. 47)

Chapter 4 is horrifying. The authors document proof that women are discriminated against. **PROOF**, ladies. And we're talking about the unintentional, subconscious kind of discrimination. The only way to overcome systemic, unconscious, well-meaning, pervasive discrimination is to ASK. The authors call it "*Bias without Malice*"

Bias without malice starts early: "...In a study, school children were asked to perform a small task and then pay themselves what they thought they deserved. (First graders were asked to

award themselves Hershey's Kisses.) In first, fourth, seventh and tenth grades, girls consistently paid themselves 30% – 78% less than boys." (p. 150)

Chapter 10 - Cooperative or collaborative (interest based, win/win) bargaining is more effective, and it's more natural to women.

Chapter 14 – Warning to remain “nice” and non-threatening during negotiations or both men and women on other side of table will punish you!

Women wait until they can't take it anymore and then blow up. Better to "assemble documentation, showing how you've increased the value, identify the best time to approach the boss, and make your case in a calm and businesslike way." (p. 199)

"The brain imposes costs when we worry about something, and the longer we worry, the higher the cost. The sooner you ask for something you want, the better the negotiation itself will feel." (p. 201)

NEVER ask if something is negotiable. Always assume it is. (p. 210)

Conceding too much too early can make the other side intransigent (p. 212)

*BOTTOM LINE: GET IN THE HABIT OF LOOKING AROUND, THINKING, COULD THIS BE BETTER, MORE COMFORTABLE, MORE ENJOYABLE? AND THEN ASK, AND DO IT IN A NICE, COLLABORATIVE WAY. YOU'LL BE SURPRISED HOW MUCH HAPPIER YOU'LL BE. If you're not willing to learn this for yourself, learn it for your daughters and granddaughters.*