

Women and Negotiation: How to Be Your Own Ultimate Self-Advocate

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Goals

- Recognize barriers that currently prevent women from fully participating in negotiations
- Understand the increased and unique challenges of self-advocacy in a virtual or hybrid context
- Commit to increasing women's participation in negotiation

Chatbox Question

What does your world look like when
you feel confident telling your story
and advocating for yourself?

Negotiation: A New Way

Negotiation: The Old Definition



Salary



Deals



Cases

Negotiation: A New Way



- Negotiation is **steering**. A negotiation is any conversation in which you are steering a relationship.
- Every conversation you have with someone is an opportunity to steer their relationship for mutual gain
- We also need to steer the conversation we have with ourselves
- Negotiation is not just about numbers, but also about the messages and signals we send

One Method of Successfully Steering a Negotiation:

Asking Great Questions

Q: What does asking questions have to do with negotiation success?

A: A lot. Research finds a definite link between self-awareness and effective leadership, including negotiation skill. We cultivate self-awareness by asking ourselves the right questions.

And 93% of us are not asking the right questions of other people to get more out of negotiation.

Women and Self-Advocacy

Differences in How Women Self Advocate

- Differences are attributable to communication styles and gender bias
 - Women frequently say “we” when describing something they have personally done while men often use “I” for something they have not personally done.
 - Women often presume they cannot speak up without knowing every detail.
 - Women speak in ways that “save the face” of others
 - Women are more likely to be hesitant to promote their work



Claiming Expertise

- **The Problem:** Women are more likely to undercut their expertise. Belittling yourself can make you come across as cautious and doubtful, undercutting your strengths.
- **Real-Life Example:** A presenter asked a group of men and women whether anyone had expertise in breast-feeding. A man raised his hand. He had watched his wife for three months. The women in the crowd, mothers among them, didn't come forward as experts.
- **Real Study:** The Gender Gap in Self-Promotion

Claiming Credit: Mastering Self-Assessments at Work

When women know that self-assessments will be read by a group of people, they can be more hesitant to describe themselves in an overly positive manner, because they don't want the committee to see them as "cocky."

Strategy: **Self-assessments are not the time to be modest!** Men will absolutely describe themselves in incredibly favorable terms.

- It is equally important to self-advocate both publicly and privately.
- Make sure you are proactively communicating your goals and also meet proactively with people who will be your advocates.

The Challenges of Speaking Up

- Women walk a tightrope between being “too aggressive” and barely being heard
- Research shows that women worry that “talking too much” will cause them to be disliked
- In one study, male executives who spoke more often than their peers were rewarded with 10% higher competence ratings. When female executives spoke more than their peers, both men and women punished them with 14% lower ratings



Recommendations for Increasing Women's Participation

Former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has recommended increasing the amount of peacebuilding funds allotted for projects that directly advance gender equity.

Other steps could include:

- Fixing easy, practical issues
- Setting quotas
- Increasing critical engagement with men to counter stereotypes (such as traditionally masculine roles in war and peace).

Skills:

- Choosing Your Language
- Land the Plane
- The “I/We” Formula



Choosing Your Language

Replace “I think” with “I know” or “as I understand”

→ I think there are many ways I can contribute → My track record shows what I'll be able to do.

Replace “I'm sorry” with “Thank you”

→ I'm sorry, I can't make that time. → Thanks for consulting me. I can do X.

Replace “But” with “And”

→ I know you have a limited budget but/and I also know that investing in me will improve your bottom line.

Replace “Compromise” with “Contribution”

→ I need a compromise here. → Here's what I can contribute to our deal. What can you contribute?

Land the Plane

Getting to the point!

- Clear
- Thorough
- Concise



Six questions to answer to make yourself understood:

1. **Who** needs to be looped in/ included?
2. **What** needs to happen?
3. **When** should the task be completed?
4. **Where** are you (or the group) in the process?
5. **Why** is the task important?
6. **How** will progress be shared?

Use the “I/We” Formula

The Formula: “Here’s what I’m asking, and here’s how we all benefit.”

- **This frame helps you:**
 - Highlight common interests
 - Focus the person on gains rather than losses
 - Center the conversation on the positive possibilities
- **This language portrays:**
 - Your status as a leader
 - Your outward-facing focus

Use the “I/We” Formula

Examples:

- “If I receive this promotion, we as an organization will benefit from my proven track record and ability to lead my colleagues.”
- “The investment for my services is X. When we work together, you get my track record of generating results, as well as more personalized attention than you do with agencies that “make it up in volume.”

Chatbox Question

What challenges have you faced in
this new virtual/hybrid world?

The Challenges of Going Virtual

Transparency creates trust.

- Social distancing can lead to misunderstanding and disconnection.
- Access to informal networks, feedback, and coaching
- “Presenteeism” and gender-skewed hybrid settings

Human communication is optimized when people talk in-person

Topics can be emotionally or conceptually difficult to grasp without body language

Facial expression and body language convey a lot of information about emotions that will be missed over the phone or in email/text exchanges

When you cannot physically see other people, you are more likely to attribute negative intentions

Technical Challenges of Going Virtual

- Hard to tell who is speaking without a visual, and people are more likely to interrupt each other
- Harder to deal with and understand the role of silence
- May experience problems with the technology (phone cutting off, people not being able to access the chatroom)
- Participants are more susceptible to distractions (such as checking email or social media)



How to Claim a Seat at the Virtual Table

- Control the conditions
 - Establish time, day, participants, platform, number, if certain speakers will call in from the same location, quiet room, reserve bandwidth for optimal sound/video quality.
- Set reasonable expectations for call length
 - Changing circumstances may mean changes in childcare or other factors that make long calls challenging. Consider a series of short calls rather than one long one.
- Speaking procedure and order
 - One speaker at a time; non-speakers should mute their microphones to reduce background noise. Establish procedures for raising hands, giving non-verbal feedback, or voting.

How to Claim a Seat at the Virtual Table

- **Self-identify before speaking**
 - Especially important for audio conferencing, or when speaking with new people
- **Encourage requests for repetition**
 - Let people know at the outset they should speak up if something is difficult to hear and that requests for clarification are welcome
- **Use video where possible and maintain eye contact**
 - Helps maintain communication and gives maximum information
- **Make accommodations to allow participation from all**
 - Closed captions, participating by text, interpreters, support people, etc.

8 Strategies for Women in Negotiation

(1) Amplification

- **Case Study: Obama White House**
 - When President Barack first took office, $\frac{2}{3}$ of his senior staffers were **men**
 - Female staffers adopted a meeting strategy they called “amplification”
 - When a woman made a key point, other women would repeat it, giving credit to its author
 - This forced the men to **recognize the contribution** and denied them the chance to claim the contribution as their own



(1) Amplification

- **Case Study: Obama White House**
 - *“We just started doing it, and made a purpose of doing it. It was an everyday thing.”*
 - As a result:
 - President Obama noticed and began calling more often on women and junior aides to voice their opinions
 - Women gained parity with men in the President’s inner circle during his second term
 - There was even a gender split among his top aides
- **Shine Theory** – “I don’t shine if you don’t shine”
 - There is tremendous power in women supporting other women
 - Amplification is a team effort.

(1) Amplification

Three types of amplification:

1. The original amplification: **Amplification by Reiteration**.
 - a. Obama administration example.
2. **Amplification by Multiplication**
 - a. #MeToo movement example.
 - b. **One woman** could be paid off or silenced, but **multiple women acting in concert** had power.
3. **Structural Amplification**:
 - a. Wade and her employees together **structured a process** designed to believe women's stories.

(2) Speaking with Power

- Women are socialized to sound less confident
- Words/Phrases to AVOID:
 - “just”
 - “my passion...” or “I’m passionate about...”
 - “I think...” (vs. “I know”)
 - “Can you do me a favor” when speaking to an assistant
 - phrasing as a question rather than as a statement to sound less aggressive
 - “this is just one idea, but...” or “I could be wrong, but...”

(2) Speaking with Power

FROM: "I'm so sorry I'm late"

TO: "Thank you so much for waiting for me."

FROM: "I'll try"

TO: "I'll see what I can do."

FROM: "Does that make sense?"

TO: "Let me know if you have any questions."

FROM: "I am so sorry to bug you with this"

TO: "Thank you in advance for your time/help with this."

FROM: "I'm so sorry for making that mistake!"

TO: "Thank you for catching that. I will get it taken care of ASAP."

FROM: "I don't know"

TO: "Let me look into that and get back to you."

(3) Eliminate Conversational Tics

- Women will use an apology to get the other person to apologize
- **Example: A senior colleague missed a meeting.**
 - You: “Saw you weren’t at the meeting. Sorry if I forgot to tell you about it”
 - You know that you told him about the meeting, and you are expecting him to apologize for not coming.
 - This can backfire, because the man can say “Yeah, make sure you tell me next time”



(3) Eliminate Conversational Tics

- Women also tend to use apologies in uncomfortable situations, often as humor to belittle oneself.
- **The Problem:** “Apologetic behavior takes away one of the keys of brokering new relationships. If you are unable to portray confidence in your interactions, the client is not sure this is a person or organization I can trust.”

(3) Eliminate Conversational Tics

Ways to sound more confident:

- Slow Down Your Speech
- Create a Strong, Go-To, Confident Opening Sentence
 - Example: “To follow up on Anna’s comment or X presentation point” “That’s a great point...” “I really like that idea...” “A concern I have is...” “Something we need to look at is...”
- Create an outline of your thoughts to avoid being interrupted
 - “There are 3 issues I see with this plan...” “I see 2 great benefits to partnering with this company...” “I’ve heard 3 types of feedback from our clients...”
- End Your Sentence on a Low Tone

(4) Framing - What is it?

Painting a picture with your words to put forth the best, most powerful, most constructive form of your situation or argument.

(4) Framing - A Visual Example



(4) Framing - A Visual Example



Framing - A Visual Example

- **First Image:**
 - Drawing attention to the portion of the picture you want others to see
- **Second Image:**
 - Deemphasizing the portion of the picture that is less helpful

Framing Principles for Women

- Be positive but authentic; credibility is important
- Highlight:
 - Common interests
 - Opportunities for gain rather than loss
- Omit any escalating words

Framing Example: Before

- **Before:**
 - “We can’t get you an executed contract within 48 hours. There’s no way to get the necessary approvals in that time. Sorry – it just doesn’t work when you contact us this late.”

Framing Example: After

- **After:**
 - “I know a quick turnaround is critical for you, and because you’re an important relationship for us, I’ve pushed hard on timing. I can get this signed within 72 hours. That’s the absolute minimum we need to make sure everything is solid – this way we can avoid surprises later on, and start executing on the concepts we discussed.”

Framing Example: Before

- **Example:**
 - A senior colleague missed a meeting. You know that you told him about the meeting, and you are expecting him to apologize for not coming.
- **Before:**
 - “Saw you weren’t at the meeting. Sorry if I forgot to tell you about it”

Framing Example: After

- **After:**
 - “I noticed you weren’t at the meeting this morning. We all benefit when you’re there, so I tried to schedule the meeting at a time you could make. I wanted to go over a few things with you that will be useful for our case - Can I stop by your office later to go over what we talked about? Let’s make a plan for the next one so that you’re able to attend.”

(5) Claiming Credit: Public and Private

- A study asked women and men to predict their results on an exam:
 - When told that their predictions would be announced in front of the group, women predicted much lower grades than their male counterparts.
 - When told that their predictions would be private, i.e. each person would see only their own predictions, women reported much higher grades, in the same range as their male counterparts.

Applying this to Self-Assessments

- When women know that self-assessments will be read by a group of people, they can be more reticent to describe themselves in an overly positive manner, because they don't want the committee to see them as "cocky."
- **Strategy:** Self-assessments are not the time to be modest! Men will absolutely describe themselves in incredibly favorable terms.
 - It is equally important to self-advocate both publicly and privately.
 - Make sure you are proactively "steering your kayak" and also meet proactively with people who will be your advocates.

Claiming Credit in Group Projects

Heather Sarsons, a PhD candidate in economics at Harvard, gathered data on economists to see how teaming up with others (in this case to coauthor a paper) affects the likelihood of getting promoted (i.e., getting tenure), and whether it differs by gender. She found that co-authored papers correlate with fewer promotions for female academics.

- Sure-fire method of preventing this from happening: preemptively, publicly, claim credit for everything you do.

Claiming Credit in Group Projects

“If you don’t take credit for what you do, it is likely that someone else will.”

- How to prevent it within your team?
 - Immediately set the record straight
 - **Example:** “To clear up any misunderstanding, what Kevin is trying to explain is that we collaborated on this effort. He led the initial data gathering, while I devised the methodology and performed the analysis.”
 - Follow up in private
 - Repeat:
 - “Don’t avoid uncomfortable conversations. They take between five and fifteen minutes,”
 - A short, uncomfortable conversation can be far less stressful than working in a team where credit and praise are unfairly given and taken.

(6) Mastering the Pre-Meeting

Preparing for the Pre-Meeting:

- Nemawashi (根回し) in Japanese means an informal process of quietly laying the foundation for some proposed change or project
- Having a clear plan for a negotiation
- Visualising or practicing

(6) Mastering the Pre-Meeting

- Before the Meeting: What to do get ready to look confident?
 - Speak up quickly
 - Go to the meeting early. This:
 - (1) helps you feel more comfortable; and
 - (2) helps you engage in camaraderie with colleagues.
 - The **power of the informal** is an important concept for male executives. It is more about relationships the higher up you go.
 - **When women come late or right on the dot to meetings and are not a part of the casual pre-meeting talk, you're already cut out of the tone of the group.**

(7) Emotions in Negotiation

- **Avoid Anxiety**

- Studies show negotiators experiencing anxiety made weaker first offers, responded more quickly to each move the counterpart made, and were more likely to exit negotiations early

- **Anger**

- Damages the long-term relationship between the parties and can backfire as a tactic

- **Disappointment**

- Expressing disappointment can serve a more tactical purpose by encouraging the other party to look critically at her own actions and consider whether she wants to change her position to reduce the negative feelings she's caused you

- **Temper Happiness and Excitement**

- The best negotiators achieve great deals for themselves but leave their opponents believing that they, too, did fabulously, even if the truth is different.

(7) Emotions in Negotiation

- Cultivating Positive Emotions
 - People in positive moods prefer collaboration over competition.
 - People experiencing positive effects show patterns of thought that are more flexible, unusual, integrative, and open than those whose effect is negative or neutral.
 - Prior to a negotiation, women can use positive priming (thinking about something positive or engaging in a joyful activity) to increase positive emotions.
 - Result: greater creativity, openness, and willingness to collaborate, all of which are essential to successful negotiation.
- Boosting Emotional Intelligence

(8) Strategies Around Non-Promotable Tasks

- Don't start by saying "no", declining reflexively may not be the best strategy
 - Use framing to make clear to the institutions that they may be losing out by having differential task assignments
- Have your "no" stick is to provide an alternative plan
- Use your influence to break norms
 - Women must be more fair to our female colleagues
- Have a watertight refusal in place
- Arm yourself with evidence
- Offer a "no" and a communal "give"
- Check with a senior colleague

(8) Strategies Around Non-Promotable Tasks

- Provide an Alternative Plan
 - Example: "As much as I love a challenge and I really appreciate your faith in my ability to get things done, this is what is possible right now."
- Highlighting Priorities
 - Example: write down your current assignments and their deadlines and ask for clarity on which projects are priority.

(8) Strategies Around Non-Promotable Tasks

- Mirror the body language of the person across from you
- Use humor
- Rotate tasks
- Build a tribe to help you navigate
 - **The “Say No” Club:** A support group that advises and supports you in declining assignments
 - Helps you be strategic and determine priorities clearer
- **If you can't say no, at least get credit for the work**

Hypo

Your office has gone virtual since the start of the pandemic. Recently, the office has moved to a hybrid schedule where you only need to be in the office twice a week. Your office is a considerable commute from home and, at first, hybrid work has felt like a major blessing. Soon after though, you feel that your supervisor interrupts you in meetings more often when you are not in the office, favoring those who are physically present. You also feel that your contributions are not being given credit. You are up for a promotion soon and are hoping that a raise could relieve some of your financial burdens, given rapidly rising inflation and a higher cost of living. You decide to have a conversation with your supervisor.

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