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## Women in Negotiation Toolkit: Skill 1: Choose to Negotiate

A research by the Institute for Family Studies (IFS), show that 32% of newlywed women are more educated than their husbands, and yet, it is the men who earn more. Women start out at the same pay scale as men at the beginning of their careers according to Payscale's report on The Gender Pay Gap. However, as women move up the ladder, they seem to fall behind men in terms of salary even though they work as hard and are equally skilled.

Wonder why? Women don't negotiate! Linda Babcock did a study for her book Women Don't Ask where she found that there was a 7.6% difference between the salaries that women MBAs were getting and those that men were getting. She found that about 7% of women attempted to negotiate, while 57% of men did. Know Your Worth Women are more likely to accept the initial offer without trying to negotiate because they don't know their worth. As a woman, you need to understand the value you bring to the table. Michelle Obama, Former First Lady, in her last job (before her husband became president) said to her boss, "This is what I have: two small kids.

My husband is running for the U.S. Senate. I will not work part-time. I need flexibility. I need a good salary. I need to be able to afford babysitting. And if you can do all that, and you're willing to be flexible with me because I will get the job done, I can work hard on a flexible schedule." I was very clear. And he said yes to everything. That's how I advise young women: Negotiate hard and know your worth. - Michelle Obama, Former First Lady, in Parade, June 2014  
Everything is Negotiable Yes, you read it right. Everything is negotiable, from a pay raise to getting your desired seat on an airplane. You just have to ask; it is that simple. Women often hesitate to ask and accept whatever is offered to them. Gavin Kennedy, in his most popular book, "Everything is Negotiable" says, "If you accept their first offer, you will never see their best offer."

As per him, salary, terms, and conditions of employment are fixed only by the final contract. Until the final contract is agreed, everything is negotiable. Your Current Salary is the Benchmark for Future Salary Your pay raise is always based on your current salary. When you interview for a new job, you are asked to provide your salary proof. By not asking for the raise or negotiating your pay, you set a low benchmark for your future salaries. Linda Babcock points out that women who consistently negotiate their salary increases earn at least \$1 million more during their careers than women who don't. Be the Change Women are underpaid because they have been accepting salary offered to them, without negotiating for ages. By choosing to negotiate you not only get the pay you deserve but also set a benchmark for other women. Decide to not settle for less - choose to negotiate.

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