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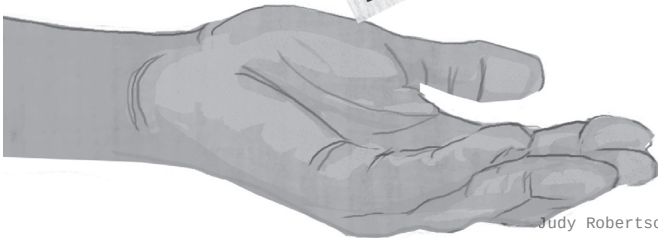
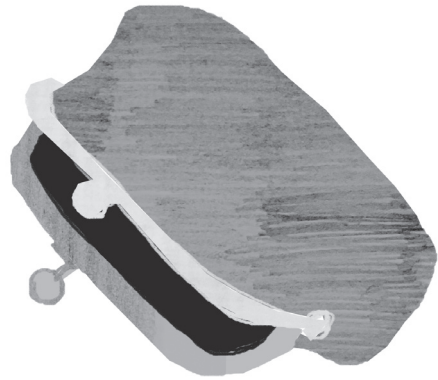
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Salary negotiation

Judy Robertson & Alison Williams



We should make sure that, when they leave university, all of our women graduates know and understand salary negotiation skills. And because we firmly believe that institutions shouldn't exploit people, let's make sure that anyone in charge of a hiring process understands how gender relates to salary negotiation.

According to the University and College Union (UCU), there is a 16.4% gender pay gap in the UK despite equal pay legislation being in force for forty years (UCU, 2016). The gap is slightly less in higher education at 12.3%, and it tends to increase at higher grades. At Edinburgh, the gender pay gap across all staff grades is 4%: the average woman member of staff earns £1,814 a year less than the average male member of staff (UCU, 2016). Over a career of forty years, this is worth over £70,000. What would you spend the back pay on?

Of course, it's not just an issue in academia – there are eye-watering salary differentials in many industries. For example, in technology jobs, women earn around £17K a year less than men (Mediaworks). And in case you're not already completely in despair, try this: there is a motherhood pay penalty (Budig, 2015). Yes, that is as depressing as it sounds – women who are mothers earn less than women who are not mothers. Sadly, there is also a fatherhood pay premium.

A report by AAUW (American Association of University Women) found that it takes mothers an extra five months to earn what fathers earn in a year (AAUW, 2016).

There are many complex societal reasons for this inequity which we will not go into here. But you're not powerless to change your own circumstances, and the first step is to ask for more. It is vitally important for a woman to negotiate her salary in her first job because if she doesn't, she will start her career earning less than her male counterparts, and the gap will be compounded over the years. Half of the readers may be thinking: "Well of course you negotiate a salary – duh!" Other readers might be thinking: "Oh, but I couldn't possibly do that. I should just be grateful to get a job".

When Judy started working, she was in the latter group. It simply didn't occur to her to do anything except to accept the employer's first offer. In general, women tend to negotiate salary less frequently, and ask for

less money when they do (Bohnet, 2016). This is because there are societal expectations about how women are "meant" to behave. Studies show that managers are less likely to want to work with female employees who had asked for a pay increase, but this was not the case for such a request from a male employee (Bohnet, 2016). It is the price for being seen to violate gender norms. This recipe is about how to negotiate a salary, and also how to create an environment where women don't pay a social price for doing so.

Ingredients

- A spark of indignation or burning sense of injustice (adjust to taste).
- Facts about salaries in your sector.
- Steely resolve to ignore any childhood socialisation about how "ladies don't mention money".

Method

1. **Find out what the average salary is in your sector.** This external legitimacy can give you confidence in asking for your starting salary. You can use the average to anchor your request in a reasonable range. In academia, you could use the UCU Rate for the Job website (<https://www.ucu.org.uk/rateforthejob>) for information on expected salaries at various stages.

2. **If you're recruiting staff, advertise the expected salary range in the job particulars.** Add the phrase "salary negotiable" to the advert. Transparency is required because gender bias thrives with ambiguity. If women are given information about the range of wages for the position, they are as good at negotiation as men (Bohnet, 2016).

3. **Ask for a salary increase when you switch jobs.** When Judy last moved job, she spent a sleepless night trying to work out what salary increase she should ask for after receiving the initial offer. To save you the effort, 15% seems to be about right (Miller & Miller, 2011). In fact, this is what the University did offer her, so she could have enjoyed her sleep instead.

4. **These three qualities for successful negotiation cropped up in Judy's desperate nocturnal reading: be confident, be prepared and be willing to walk away** (Miller & Miller, 2011, p. 16). You need confidence to reach an agreement, and to convince the other party that your request is based on an accurate understanding of the facts, it is fair and it will benefit you both. Part of being confident is not being apologetic about your position, or weakening your argument by saying: "I may be wrong but...". You can prepare by thinking through your priorities, and

goals – perhaps what really matters to you is flexible working or a good holiday allowance – but know your bottom line and be prepared to reject an offer which does not meet it. "You do need to understand the value of what you bring to the table and refuse to accept less" (Miller & Miller, 2011, p. 16).

5. **Be persistent – don't give up at the first attempt.** When Alison was invited to take over running an undergraduate seminar programme at a university which shall remain nameless, the assumption was that she would work on the basis of pre-existing expenses and a small honorarium. Running the entire programme, however, involved a lot of work: planning, facilitating, formative and summative marking, and student guidance. The university didn't seem minded to be generous – or even fair – and was trading on her love of the work, and her desire to keep the programme running.

Complaining to a woman friend that "they want to pay me peanuts" there was a pause, and then the reply: "I've always thought of you as more of a pistachio person, myself". Alison went back to the university with a fair, not extravagant, pistachio proposal. The thought "I'm a pistachio person"

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– see point 4 above) carried her through two attempts to knock her back: and the pistachio proposal was accepted.

6. **Review your salary against the sector average and compare your work to promotion criteria regularly to avoid stagnation.** You can frame it in terms of someone else's suggestion if you prefer: "My team leader suggested I talk to you about a pay rise" (Bohnet, 2016). You could request someone to negotiate on your behalf if the whole thing gives you the horrors.

7. **If you're a senior manager, make sure there are routine procedures through which all staff can apply for a pay increase with transparent guidance about what is required.** At the University of Edinburgh, there is an annual timetable for regrading, promotion and one-off contribution payments (Reward Processes Timetable, 2016). Consider all applications systematically, and if you're really serious about closing the gender pay gap, consider all staff for grade increases whether they have applied for them or not. Evidence across the University of Edinburgh Athena SWAN applications and the senior managers' focus groups shows that women are less likely to apply for promotion or compensation than men: they may need encouragement to apply.

If you really want to put your money where your mouth is, do what the University of Essex did and increase women professors' grades by three points to raise their average salaries to those of male professors (Times HE, 2016).