

GENERATE LOTS OF OPTIONS TO GET TO AGREEMENT

The next Pay Raise Process topic that helps you accelerate your salary is Generate Lots of Options. I referenced this in the goal-setting lesson, and you'll soon see how it fits in.

Some women I've worked with on pay raise issues have told me that they never before recognized their options for getting something of value other than money. In the minds of many, their request for a raise is a yes-or-no proposition.

Listen to some of the many similar responses from my Pay Raise Survey where women were asked to state their biggest fear about asking for a raise.

- “Being denied.”
- “Being turned down.”
- “Not getting the raise.”

All of these are some version of this final one, which was expressed several times in one way or another. The biggest fear? “That they will say no.”

These responses expose a perspective that sees a pay raise request as merely a yes-or-no exchange: “I'll ask, and I'll either get the raise or I won't. My request will either be accepted or denied.”

With the prospect of outright rejection looming large as one of only two perceived outcomes, it's no wonder so many women are afraid to ask.

But the pay raise negotiation is better viewed as a pay raise *conversation*. It's a conversation which explores mutual interests and needs. In this lesson, you'll see that **generating lots of options helps you expand the possibility of reaching an agreement that satisfies the needs of both parties.**

Simply put, having more options facilitates agreement. Being ready with alternatives to meeting your request allows you to continue the pay raise conversation, to explore and discover the place where needs and agreement intersect. That's your goal in the negotiation.

And that's why, before your meeting, you need to generate a lot of options—ones that could work for both sides.

Later, you'll be getting the scripted replies that will help you use these various options to respond to your manager's objections. For now, let's look at an example.

Let's say your manager tells you that this year's budget doesn't allow for the 10% salary adjustment you requested to reach competitive pay. There are many ways to respond to this assertion, but for our example, we'll say that one of *your* needs is to have more time at home for your family.

So instead of letting the conversation stop with "Sorry, no budget for a raise this year," you propose that in lieu of the salary increase, you take every other Friday off without a pay cut. That's 10% fewer hours, but *without* a reduction in salary.

This option has no direct costs, meeting your manager's interests given the budget constraints. Yet it also meets your needs for more personal time, without a loss of income.

If the salary increase isn't going to come through in the near-term anyway, at least you can still get something of value to you, to your needs, to your *life*. Given the circumstances and constraints, it's not a bad deal, right?

Here's another example: Let's say you love international travel, and you've learned that a major conference related to your work is to be held in Berlin this year. Or Bangkok. But wherever, it has appeal to you. So when your manager says "no budget" for your raise, you segue into your pitch for expense-paid attendance to the conference.

You might be asking, well, how could there be money for an overseas conference when there's no money for a salary increase?

One of my salary negotiation clients, a thirty-something woman with a newly-minted PhD in public health, was unfamiliar with line item budgets. She was smart and accomplished, no question about that, yet her education and work experience didn't expose her to business accounting practices.

So she was completely unaware—until I told her—that even though the payroll budget might have reached its limits for the year, there were other options, other places such as the training budget or the travel budget, where she could tap into some money to reach her target goal. She was intrigued and pleased to learn this.

As you may be aware, in government and business, budgets are usually set by line item;

there are different pots of money for different purposes: payroll, facility improvements, training and development, office supplies, and so on.

That's why your request for conference attendance or a car allowance or graduate school tuition reimbursement could be a viable alternative even when there's no budget for a pay increase this year.

Does this really work? Oh, yes. Please indulge me for a minute while I give you some history. When I started my advisory business in 1993, I named it Work Options to help career women expand their vision for what's possible with flexible work arrangements, and to equip them to ask for what they wanted.

I initially offered my services with a burden for working moms who'd just had a baby, and who struggled with work-family balance, as it was labeled back then.

The problem I saw was that women felt their choice was limited to one of two paths: either continue to work a full-time schedule, which allowed for the income but no time for their baby, or to quit their job and career, which meant the gift of family time, but without a steady work income.

Because flexible work arrangements weren't offered at their job, most women assumed they couldn't have one. They didn't view flexible work as an option, *so they didn't even think to ask for one*. I've seen that over and over again.

My goal was to show them that they *did* have options—ones that they could even create themselves. And that they could propose those options to their employer instead of quitting their job.

I put WorkOptions.com online early, way back in 1997. Since then, I've been privileged to help literally thousands of women (and many men) across North America and beyond, to ask for and get the work terms they wanted in the areas of flexible work, longer maternity leaves, and higher salaries.

From more than two decades of my direct client experience, I can tell you, asking works. Start there. And options work to foster agreement after you ask for what you want.

Likewise, in your situation, you can identify or devise desirable options, alternatives, work-arounds, or compromises that meet your needs and interests.

So when you meet a “no” you have somewhere to go. You can continue the conversation by exploring the options which are advantageous, agreeable, or at least acceptable, to both sides.

Among some of my clients, a change in job title or classification has been a viable work-around to getting a raise, even after a “no budget” response. Flexible work arrangements or tuition reimbursement or more paid time off are other negotiable options.

These are options that *you* can generate and propose. Presenting options is your answer to reaching agreement.

And it’s not just me and my client experience that says this is so. The master negotiators and authors of *Getting to Yes* state, “Skill at inventing options is one of the most useful assets a negotiator can have.”¹

Negotiation experts Lee Miller and Jessica Miller put it this way: “An **essential** element of [collaborative negotiating] is to come up with an **exhaustive** list of possible solutions. You can then identify all those that satisfy the interests of all the parties and choose from among them. Generating such a list should be part of your preparation.”² (Emphasis mine.) “Simply having an exhaustive list will help you to be creative once negotiations begin and you start hearing from the other side.”³

ACTION STEP: Your assignment is to do just that: prepare an exhaustive list of possible solutions. The worksheet that accompanies this lesson will get you started.

In Days 4 and 5, you’ll see how to use options to continue the conversation after you hear an objection to your raise request. You’ll especially like the PDF with several pages of scripted replies to keep the conversation going.

NOTES

1. Roger Fisher, William Ury and Bruce Patton, *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In, Third Edition* (Penguin Group, 2011), 58
2. Lee E. Miller and Jessica Miller, *A Woman’s Guide to Successful Negotiating: How to Convince, Collaborate and Create Your Way to Agreement, Second Edition* (McGraw-Hill, 2010), 115
3. Ibid., 12