



HOW TO BE A SUCCESS AT EVERYTHING

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FOUR TIPS TO MAKE YOU A BETTER NEGOTIATOR

YOU'LL NEVER GET WHAT YOU WANT IF YOU DON'T ASK. HERE'S HOW TO GO ABOUT IT THE RIGHT WAY.

BY TAMARA JACOBS

At the center of every business deal or salary negotiation you'll ever be a part of, there's a rock-solid truth: If you don't *ask*, you most likely won't *get*. Everyone at the table is looking out for themselves. Yet there are plenty of expert dealmakers and highly qualified jobseekers who are still too squeamish to advocate for themselves and their companies as forcefully as they should.

It's a mistake to believe that if you're truly deserving, good things will be offered to you without you ever having to request them. They won't. Only Cinderella had a fairy godmother. Which means you'll need to win Prince Charming (or that lucrative account or compensation package) all on your own. Here are four strategies to help you do it.

1. CALL UPON YOUR "M.O.M."

Your actual mom might have some useful advice, too, but the "M.O.M." approach tends to work pretty well in helping you sort out your boundaries. Ask yourself what the Maximum you're seeking is, the OK you'll accept without pushing for more, and the Minimum you're willing to take if you can't get it. If you can answer those questions, you'll know exactly the point at which walking away is the better option.

2. CONSIDER THE WHOLE PACKAGE

If you're a jobseeker discussing your total compensation number with an employer who's made you an offer, remember to add things such as educational reimbursements, vacation time, sick days, car allowance, 401(k) matching-funds contribution, and travel allowances into your negotiations. Don't fixate on just getting more money. In the final analysis, there are less quantifiable parts of the deal that will make your life better and save you a fortune in out-of-pocket expenses, which over time will correlate to more money in your pocket.

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“BY MAKING AN OFFER FIRST, YOU ESTABLISH THE BASELINE THAT WILL DETERMINE THE ENTIRE ARC OF THE CONVERSATION.”

3. GO FIRST

Old-time negotiators say that it’s smart to let the other side of the table make the first offer for you to respond to—in other words, to be completely reactive. But by making an offer first, you establish the baseline that will determine the entire arc of the conversation that follows.

Those who are more likely to walk away happy.

4. KNOW YOUR “NO”S

“No” doesn’t mean “never”—maybe just “not now.” You can’t let an offer that a company or prospective business partner has rejected get you down or stop you in your tracks. In many cases, no means something less definitive, like “not yet.” Whenever you hit a “no,” look at it as a delayed “yes” and act accordingly. Be persistent, but don’t be a pain. If you think there’s still room to satisfy your M.O.M, keep after hiring managers or potential clients who’ve said no, and remember to stay professional.

Also remember that a bad “yes” is worse than a solid “no.” **“A BAD ‘YES’ IS WORSE THAN A SOLID ‘NO.’”** It’s sometimes possible to use a “no” response as a way to deepen or strengthen the relationship. If you’re willing to accept the idea that getting turned down isn’t the worst news ever, than you can communicate to colleagues and potential business partners that you still believe there’s an opportunity to work together. An open demeanor in the aftermath of a “no” can help develop a level of trust that could lead to many more “yes” responses down the line.

Finally, make sure to learn from “no.” Understanding why your offer was rebuffed is important to succeeding in the future. Sometimes a “no” is a sign of a performance issue you need to address. Other times it might signal a disconnect with a client, like a pricing or marketing concern that’s been left unanswered. Whatever the reason, don’t take it personally, and see it as an opportunity for improvement.

It all comes down to having the confidence to determine what you’re worth (or what your proposal is worth) and asking for it. Rarely do we get to “yes” the first time. It’s not how you start, it’s how you finish.

This article is adapted from *Your Ultimate Success Plan: Stop Holding Yourself Back And Get Recognized, Rewarded, And Promoted* (Career Press, June 2015) by Tamara Jacobs, president of [Tamara Jacobs Communications, Inc.](#) It is reprinted with permission.