

PROFESSIONAL PAPER

Why Do Women Fail in Negotiation More Than Men Do



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ABSTRACT

The negotiation process occurs in many situations of our daily lives, in business, in society, whenever we have human interaction. Knowing to negotiate effectively is a soft skill, which we can learn and improve permanently. Contrary to popular belief, you don't have to be born with this skill. We are two genders: females and males, men and women, involved in so many interactions and relationships. As we are different from many point of views, we tend to act and react differently, and thus to negotiate in different ways. This differences is not just due to the fact that we are women or men, but how the society made us act in certain ways. Across the years, women showed some lack of negotiation skills comparing with men, due to the fact that they were raised up differently, and have some inner image about themselves which is formed based on the experiences they have in society. This article points out some of the reasons why do women fail in negotiation more than men do, based on the direct observation of the women negotiation styles, researches in the field, books and articles regarding the process of negotiation.

KEY WORDS: *negotiation, skill, women, fail, society*

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Introduction

We negotiate every day. Whenever we want something from someone, or someone wants something from us and we cannot get it simply by asking, most of the time we negotiate, whether we realize it or not.

When comes to negotiating, according to researchers, women seem to have the same basic skills as men, they just don't use them effectively. When asked to describe an experience of negotiating, women used words like "scary" and "like going to the dentist, and men said "fun," "exciting" and "like winning a ball game."

As a result, women in business often watch their male colleagues pull ahead, receive better assignments, get promoted more quickly, and earn more money. Observing these inequities, women become disenchanted with their employers. When a better offer comes along, rather than using that offer as a negotiating tool, women may take it and quit. This happens even in organizations that make concerted efforts to treat women fairly.

Literature Review

The literature addressing the subject about women and men is so vast, covering many areas of our lives, from sexuality to business and thus, to the negotiation field. The authors, both men and women, tend to write objectively but also speak from their experiences of males or females, which helps us make a big picture of the similarities and differences in both genders. Thus, we can read books written by men, or by women or by men and women together.

Authors like Sonya Friedman, write about subjects like "how learning to be a women with a life of your own can rich the life you share with a man" in "Men are just desserts" (1983). This subject will always be of great interest for girls and women of all types, especially for those lonely ones.

On the other hand, there is a current in literature regarding the way you could win, no matter what. In their book "How to manipulate men"(2005), the authors Natalia Baratova and Maria Ripinskaia write about ways in which women could lead and be on top over men.

But most of all, the authors concentrate themselves on the differences between the two genders. Thus John Gray in "Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus" (1992), "Mars and Venus in the Bedroom" (1995), or Allan Pease and Barbara Pease in "Why Men Don't Listen and Women

Can't Read Maps" (1998), stress the main differences between women and men in everyday life situations.

A very important subject is the psychology of the adolescent girls, which Mary Bray Pipher talks about in "Reviving Ophelia" (2005), a starting point to understand how girls are raised up and trained to think, and how they deal with the boys in early years.

In the field of negotiation, we find books like "The Good Girls guide to Negotiating", (2001), by Leslie Whitaker and Elisabeth Austin, or "Women Don't Ask: Negotiation and the Gender Divide" (2003), by Linda Babcock & Sara Laschever, which are perfect guides for women into the negotiation process.

All the books are very interesting and of a great help in learning the differences between both genders. In my personal opinion, an important starting point is the psychology. Thus so the psychology books like "Brain Rules" – John Medina (2008), helps us understand how we make decisions. Because, apart from being different, men and women have many similarities and both are human beings which function under the same psychological rules. The differences occurs mainly in the way we are raised up and the way the society makes us act.

Methodology

This article is based on the direct observation of women around me, analysing their styles of negotiation in different areas like: business, workplace, society, family, etc. The women that I observed were between 25 and 65 years old, students, college graduated or without any collage, business women, working women and even pensioners. Some of the women having children and facing the need to return to work after the maternity leave.

Some points are also made form studying the literature in the field.

Thus, I came up with a number of ten reasons for which I bealive women fail in negotiation more than men do.

Empirical Findings

Being a woman myself and a negotiator, too, I asked myself why generally women fail in negotiation more than men do. After studying the

subject and observing the women around me, here are some reasons I want to stress:

1. They tend to keep "the peace", in most of the cases. Being nest and family oriented, women are more inclined to preserve the good relationships, many times even giving up their own interests. This makes them have a tendency of "pleasing people", and not speaking their word.

"Many girls are empathy sick", psychology Mary Pipher says in her bestseller about adolescent girls "Reviving Ophelia". "That is, they know more about others feelings than their own". Girls are particularly uncomfortable about stating their needs to boys and adults, Pipher says. "They worry about not being nice, or appearing selfish".

2. They are raised to be "good girls". They want to be nice, to be polite, not to be called "bitches" and these make them have the same tendency of "pleasing people".

Ok, so what is wrong about pleasing people? Well, it is nothing wrong when you try to make somebody feel better, lets say a guest or a friend, but when you put yourself always on the second place, when you renounce your own interest and needs just to keep the other person satisfied, this might become a habit and in the big world it is not a good habit at all.

A lot of women are polite and they confuse asking for what they want with conflict. They confuse assertiveness with aggressiveness and hostility. They think asking for things means you are taking advantage of others.

Women often have difficulties in saying no, particularly when they are dealing with someone they care about.

The trouble is, women can worry to much about keeping everybody else happy.

3. They tend to "sacrifice themselves". This tendency comes also from trying to be "good girls", trying to be perfect: perfect mothers, perfect wives, perfect friends, perfect neighbours, etc. They want to be liked, and sometimes they irrationally want to be liked by everybody, forgetting the fact that this is impossible.

Women see this "sacrifice" around them, to the women in their lives. By the time an average girl reaches adulthood, she has spent years surrounded by vision of women as self-sacrificing saints.

As Leslie Whitaker and Elizabeth Austin say in their book "The Good Girls guide to Negotiating", "We have all seen mothers solve an angry dessert dispute by handing over their own treats, just to keep peace in the

family. Maybe that's not so bad as a picnic-table strategy. But when it comes to negotiating with the outside world, Mum needs to remember to keep at least one Popsicle for herself."

4. They don't ask and they don't even like to ask. In many cases, they take what they are offered. This thing also has a background in the early childhood, when they were raised to be "good girls". They might remember their moms telling them when visiting somebody "take a cake and don't ask for more, just be polite."

In the book "Women Don't Ask: Negotiation and the Gender Divide", the authors Linda Babcock and Sara Laschever sustain that women lagged behind their male colleagues in salaries, bonuses, promotions, and perks simply because they hadn't "asked for it."

Well, I think they were right.

This means women tend to leave opportunities untouched, and raises, challenging projects, and promotions are given to the men who ask for them.

5. They try to be different and adopt a negotiation style that doesn't reflect who they are.

Women often think that a good negotiation is tough, screams and uses a lot of ugly tricks. So, if they think to be successful negotiators they try to be like this. Usually this doesn't work. Because a lot of women haven't learned that there are other successful negotiation styles, they avoid negotiating or think they don't have an aptitude for it.

The truth is, how you negotiate needs to reflect who you are. You must be authentic or you will lose all your credibility.

6 They don't see a situation as an opportunity to negotiate.

Many women don't recognize that opportunity to negotiate exist in many situations. They look at the situations in terms of decisions that have to be made, rather than opportunities to negotiate.

7. They don't like to negotiate.

Most of the time, women avoid negotiating simply because they don't like it. The truth is not everybody like to negotiate, negotiation process is not something to get pleasure from, but when it comes to your needs and interests it is good to learn how to do it and just do it, without thinking if you like it or not.

Instead of thinking if you like it, you should think that this is something normal, as long as you don't look after cheating the other party but to find win-win solutions instead.

8. They think they are not as good as men.

Many women think that negotiation is for men, not for them. They associate negotiation with business and think that this domain is mostly for men. The truth is, we negotiate every day, and this process is far from being used in business only.

This is the reason why in many cases women think they are not as good as men are in negotiation. And this thought simply makes them weaken their power in the negotiation process. And the power is a perception: if you think you have it, then you have it. If you think you don't have it, you don't have it. Perceiving themselves in the inferiority, they tend to lose simply by that, by thinking that they don't have a chance anyway,

9. Sometimes they rely more on their feminine charm than on their knowledge.

On average, men succeed better in business than women simply because they are thinking more on business than women. They make more money because they think more about money than women do. It is a fact, regarding the reasons: because women have to think about children, housekeeping, and so on. Whatever the mind is focused on, that thing tends to materialize, the person being more determined to take actions toward his goal.

So is the case with preparing a negotiation. Whereas men use more time in preparing the facts and arguments before entering a negotiation, women tend to use their time on their outfit and outside look. It is nothing wrong with that, the look counts, we all know about the influence of a good appearance. But sometimes, this "good looking appearance" takes time to be prepared: going to the hairdresser, looking after clothes in shops, etc...it takes time. So, sometimes women lose time to invest in their look and appearance rather than preparing to negotiate.

They might get something because they look dazzling, but they don't have arguments for what they ask for and on the long run they might not be regarded as trustworthy or competent.

10. They don't know their value and tend to underestimate themselves.

In many cases women don't know how to appreciate themselves and they tend to underestimate themselves. Not knowing their true value make them negotiate bad for themselves, and make many bad concessions.

This underestimation is more accentuated after the maternity leave, when women have to come to work after a long absence in the field. Being at home with the child make many women feel that they lost contact with the working world and they are not that good at it when they come back.

"I'm just lucky to have a job", says the mum returning to work when her kids hit kindergarten. This reflects for example the salary negotiation, where women don't have the courage to ask for more because they simply believe they don't deserve more.

Women don't know their market value: women reported salary expectations between 3 and 32 percent lower than those of men for the same job. Men expect to earn 13 percent more during their first year of full-time work and 32 percent more at their career peak.

They also undervalue themselves and assume the first offer is all they are worth. Self-ratings of schoolgirls after performing a task were 30% to 78% below boys. Women report salary expectations up to 32% lower than men for the same job.

Conclusion

Women have some natural skills who can be used in their advantage or against it: their tendency to keep relationships, to keep the peace. This is a good negotiating skill, one has to know how to use it properly.

Comparing with women, men are more inclined to look for their advantage, their goal and succeed. Of course, they too do mistakes in negotiation, many of them due to their competitive styles, and yes, both genders can learn how to improve their negotiation skills.

They both need to learn to be assertive. They need to know what they want and get prepared when facing an important negotiation they know about. They have to know themselves, know their own style in negotiation, and use it in their own advantage, and avoid trying to be someone else.

They have to know their BATNA (Best Alternative to Negotiated Agreement), and know their opponent, try to put themselves into the opponent shoes and see the world through his eyes.

They have to separate the people from the problem, concentrate on interests not on the position and of course, know their goal (interest), and avoid fighting over position, in other words to "keep their eyes on the prize."

And most important, they all have to know that negotiation is not a bad thing, is a normal process in business, as well as in the social world, and try to find win-win solutions, whenever they can.

Because, like it or not, this is life: a big negotiation field. As the author Chester Karrass said "In business as in life - you don't get what you deserve, you get what you negotiate."

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Zašto su žene slabije u pregovorima od muškaraca?

APSTRAKT

Proces pregovaranja se javlja u mnogim situacijama našeg svakodnevnog života, u poslovanju, društvu, kada god imamo ljudsku interakciju. Efikasno pregovaranje je meka veština, koja se može učiti i kontinuirano poboljšavati. Ovaj stav je suprotan od popularnog verovanja da se sa ovom vještinom moramo roditi. Mi smo kao dva roda: muški i ženski, muškarci i žene uključeni u veliki broj interakcija i odnosa. Kao što se po pitanju mnogih aspekata razlikujemo, skloni smo da se ponašamo i reagujemo različito, pa samim tim i pregovaramo na različite načine. Ove razlike ne leže samo na činjenici da smo žene ili muškarci, već i tome kako društvo utiče da naše ponašanje ide u određenim pravcima. Kroz vreme, žene su pokazale neke nedostatke u pogledu pregovaračkih veština, u poređenju sa muškarcima, zbog činjenice da su odgajane drugačije i imaju neku unutrašnju sliku o sebi, formiranu pod uticajem društva. Ovaj rad ukazuje na neke od razloga zašto žene u pregovorima pokazuju lošije rezultate od muškaraca, na osnovu direktnog posmatranja stilova ženskog pregovaranja, istraživanja na terenu, knjiga i članaka u vezi sa procesom pregovaranja.

KLJUČNE REČI: pregovaranje, veštine, žene, društvo

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