

Talking Points: Women Don't Ask Presentation, September 23, 2010

Slide 1 and 2:

Thanks so much for having me here today. I'm looking forward to sharing with you some of the things I've learned by reading the book, "Women Don't Ask: Negotiation and the Gender Divide." Actually the title should probably be "Women Don't Ask for THEMSELVES" because the authors are very quick to point out that women are actually excellent advocates when it comes to asking for things for others, but when it comes to negotiating or asking for things for themselves, NOT SO MUCH.

Slide 3:

I found the book title itself to be very intriguing. "Women Don't Ask." That's a pretty strong statement and it immediately brought three questions to my mind:

- 1) How do the authors know this?
- 2) Why don't women ask? (And also "What is it that they don't ask for?")
- 3) What does "not asking" cost?

So, these are the three questions I'm going to try to answer with this presentation.

Slide 4: This book was written by two women:

Linda Babcock who is currently a Full Professor of Economics at Carnegie Mellon University (only 6% of all Full Professors of Economics are female even though 25% of the PhDs in economics are earned by females) and Sara Laschever, who is an author who

has written many articles on women in the workplace for magazines such as the New Yorker.

Linda first got interested in the topic because of several things that she personally observed. When she was serving as the Director of the PhD program for Hinds College at Carnegie Mellon University, a group of female teaching assistants came to her and were very angry. They wanted to know why most of the male teaching assistants in the college were teaching their own courses while the female teaching assistants were all serving as assistants to other professors. Linda didn't know but she told them that she would find out. She went to the administrator who made the teaching assignments (who happened to be her husband and was very candid about answering her question) and asked. He told her that he would give a course to anyone who came with a good idea, a clear outline of what they wanted to teach and why it was needed and a reasonable budget. He said the men asked, the women didn't ask.

About this same time, a female graduate student came and asked her why she (Linda) had allowed two men to march in the spring graduation even though they wouldn't actually defend their dissertations until August. The female grad student said "I would have liked to march in the spring too, but I didn't know you could." Linda said she had to tell her, "Well, the men asked if they could march and I could make that happen so I did."

A different female graduate student came and complained that Linda had provided funds to a male graduate student to attend a major public policy conference but hadn't provided the same funding to her. Linda again had to say, "Well, he asked and you didn't. I see my job as helping make possible opportunities for students and I could do this so I did."

Linda started seeing a pattern and thought back to her own experience when she was an Associate Professor. Two men who were probably equally, but not better qualified than she was were promoted to full professor. So Linda said she sat in her office thinking, “Soon the Dean will come down and say “Linda, you are doing such a good job, we are going to promote you to Full Professor.” But months passed and the Dean didn’t appear. Linda had a good relationship with the Dean so she went to him and asked why she hadn’t been promoted when the two men were. It turned out that the two men had both gotten offers from other institutions and had gone to the Dean and said they were going to leave if they weren’t promoted. Once Linda brought to the Dean’s attention that she was as deserving as the two guys, the process for getting her promoted was begun.

After reflecting on what was going on, Linda, who is a researcher in the field of negotiation, started looking into what was known about gender issues related to negotiation. She found that all the studies that had been done to date looked at differences in how men and women negotiated and NOT who was negotiating nor what motivated someone to negotiate.

So, Linda called in Sara to help her collect data that would enable them to understand these issues. Sara went across the country and interviewed hundreds of people, both men and women, from the extremely successful to people with everyday jobs. Linda stayed at the university and collected data through surveys, observing people in her lab playing games to see who used negotiation strategies to better their chances, and got the administration of Hinds College to include a single extra question on the exit interview that was given to all graduating students: “Did you negotiate your job offer?”

Slide 5:

All the data they collected was consistent. They found that:

- Men initiate negotiations 4X's more often than women
- That only 7% of women graduating from Hinds College at Carnegie Mellon reported that they negotiated their first job offer while 58% of the men did. (And this was even after all students were counseled that negotiation of the job offer was expected, that people would offer them less than they could pay, and that they SHOULD negotiate the job offer.) It is also interesting to note that younger women (such as these new graduates) reported on surveys that they felt they were as assertive as men when it came to asking for things for themselves and that the negotiation issue was an issue only for "older women" – those forty or above. The data from the Hinds College survey doesn't support their belief.

When asked to give words and metaphors that they felt described the negotiation process, men chose words like "fun," "winning a ball game," "a wrestling match"

While women chose words like "scary," "intimidating," and equated negotiation with "going to the dentist"

They also asked both men and women to tell when they had last been involved in the negotiation process and to describe the negotiation itself. On average, women reported that it had been about 18 months before when they had been involved in a negotiation and the types of negotiations they reported were – buying a car or agreeing on the buying or selling price of a house-activities in which negotiations are typically expected.

Men, on the other hand, reported that their last negotiation had been within the past week and had involved more everyday

activities- asking a colleague to support a pet project of theirs in return for the negotiator's support of a project of the colleague's, getting a neighbor to help with a backyard project in return for a case of beer, or negotiating with a spouse to determine who would pick up a child from soccer practice.

It is clear that men saw negotiation as an everyday tool to be used to make their lives easier and to help them get things that they wanted, indeed, men saw it as a fun, perhaps even entertaining activity, or as a chance to prove their superiority. Women had an entirely different outlook – they saw negotiation as something to be dreaded, something to be used in their own lives only under very structured circumstances.

Along these lines it turns out that 70% of the people who buy Saturn cars are female and that females so hate to negotiate for a car, that a man in New York is running an entire business in which he handles all the price negotiations for his clients. And all of his clients are female! The process doesn't save his clients any money, but it does keep them from having to negotiate.

Slide 6:

Sara's interview data confirmed Linda's survey data. As you can see from these quotes: women report being very uncomfortable when they have to negotiate on their own behalf.

Slide 7:

So, why don't women want to ask for things for themselves, even when they know it is expected or they know they deserve them?

Turns out there are three things:

- How children are socialized
- The types of behaviors we accept from adult women

- **Women’s knowledge of what opportunities are available, what is out there to be negotiated, what others who do the same work they are doing are asking, etc. that occurs because women in many cases are excluded from professional and personal networks that men are involved in.**

Slide 8:

Note: Remember that what authors are reporting about how children are treated etc. are general patterns and they don’t apply to every child all of the time or even some of the time. However, in general, the research shows pretty consistently that boys and girls are treated differently from day 1.

Girls and boys are socialized differently from Day 1. Parents and nurses perceive boy and girl newborns very differently. Boys are perceived as “more coordinated, more alert, more active, less in need of comforting”- even when no real differences exist. Nurses have been observed to pick up babies in pink caps much more often than they do babies in blue caps even if the caps have deliberately been placed across gender lines. One physician reported that he could walk down the hall and tell by the voices coming out of a room if the newborn was a boy or a girl. Linda said that she didn’t really believe him until she started thinking about how people talked to her two boys. Boys: Come on, Tiger. Go get em. You can do it. Slap me a high five. Girls: What a sweetie. Don’t you look pretty. Can you give me a kiss? Look how good she is at loving that baby.

And the way we talk to children signals how we expect them to be. Girls: sweet, nice, and loving. Boys- a little man, a tough guy, in charge of the situation, a risk taker.

Slide 9:

By the time they get to 1st grade, children have internalized expected behaviors. In the classroom, little boys will raise their hands and wave them around excitedly even when they don't know the answer because it gets them what they want – the teacher's attention. While little girls, even when they know the answer, will sit quietly and wait to be recognized.

Slide 10:

In general, toys given to little boys and little girls also differ. Girls' toys tend to be dolls, doll houses, kitchen sets, ironing boards, things that have a focus on caring for others and providing services for others. Rarely, if ever, are these types of toys given to boys.

Slide 11:

On the other hand, boys' toys focus on setting and accomplishing goals, being a winner, self-expression, figuring something out and making it happen, successfully building something, completing a project, and having an impact on others.

Slide 12:

It is not only how we talk to children, and what we give them to play with that makes a difference. The types of chores boys and girls are typically assigned also differ. Boys may take out the trash, wash the car, mow the yard, rake the leaves. All chores that they can do outside of the house, often without direct supervision, and that they frequently get paid for either by their family or by others in the neighborhood for whom they do work. Girls, on the other hand, are more often assigned household chores like helping with the cooking

or cleaning, or watching a younger sibling. These type chores are ones that are usually done with supervision and they are much less likely to be paid for them.

Slide 13:

As a result, boys learn “Work for money.” And girls learn “Work for love.” And which do you think pays more cold hard cash?

Slide 14:

In general, women come to the workplace with much less experience at using negotiation as a tool to get things for themselves and with a much lower comfort level that the work they do is worth being paid for. They also often don't have a good idea of what the fair monetary value is for the work they do.

Slide 15:

THEN, women get to the workplace and find out that others (both men and women) do not like women that are aggressive about going after what they want for themselves. They see that these women are often “punished” by having their work undervalued, by being ignored in meetings, by being excluded from important projects or committees, because others see them as “pushy,” “not a team player,” “overbearing.”

Slide 16:

And some even less flattering terms!

Slide 17:

And, because many activities have traditionally been divided along gender lines, women often find that they are excluded from many of the support networks that men in similar jobs have available. One female physician reported that for many years she was not even aware that the men in her field had regular tennis round robins in which she was not invited to play (even though she had been the college tennis champ at her university and could have probably easily beaten any of the men in the group). Not only did this keep her from getting informal advice and guidance from her male peers, it kept her from knowing what things were coming up, who she should ask, what she should ask for, when would be the best time to do the asking, and what her colleagues were asking for. And who, should opportunities arise, do you think her male colleagues are going to think of and offer the opportunity to – someone with whom they feel comfortable because of common interests and multiple informal interactions or someone with whom they have had little or no contact?

Slide 18:

Now that we know that many women really do hate negotiating things for themselves, and we have an idea of why they don't like negotiating, let's look at what it costs when women don't ask. In their book, Linda and Sara ask the question, "Who wouldn't trade 5 minutes of discomfort at the first of her career for three quarters of a million dollars or more at the end of her career?"

Slide 19:

Go over numbers.

This is what is called "accumulated disadvantage."

Slide 20:

This situation may more closely aligned with your situations. Go over numbers.

Slide 21:

These data are from 2001 (and not from the book) but they clearly show the differences between male and female salaries within the same educational level. The gray bar represents salaries of males at 100%, women who hold professional degrees (doctors, lawyers, dentists) earn only about 60% of what men with the same degrees earn while for all other educational levels, women earn between 72 and 76% of what men do. That means that for every dollar a man earns, a woman doing the same work earns approximately \$0.75.

Slide 22:

The wage gap between men and women has decreased since 1980, but has not changed much since the 1990's. Women still earn only about 75% of what men do when in the same jobs. Put another way, you work 12 months for what a male doing a similar job works only 9 months.

Slide 23:

But it is not only money that is an issue. All of the things on this list are things that men get more often than do women, simply because men negotiate for them on a regular basis.

Slide 24:

Unfortunately, for women, many of us tend to think that we will be recognized for our good work. In an ideal world, in which all managers/bosses/supervisors were great at their job and made sure to cultivate their best talent, this might well happen. But in the real world, many supervisors are reactive rather than being proactive (perhaps because they are overworked themselves) that they deal with issues only when they are brought up to them. An example from the book is of a woman who was an electrical engineer at a large company, she had been a member and leader of a team that had developed some cutting edge software related to optics in robots and was well respected within her company for her excellent work and because what she had developed had brought the company lots of recognition and lots of money. Well, her boss was transferred and a new man from outside the company came in. He didn't know about the work she had done previously, and consequently did not assign her to top projects, did not have her go to some important meetings, and in general was just overlooking her. She says she believes that because she was pregnant with her third child at the time, that the new boss just saw her as a fat cow who couldn't possibly be of any particular value to the company. And the female electrical engineer was uncomfortable with going to him and saying, "Hey, this was my work and I want to be assigned to this new project." Because she didn't want to be confrontational or push herself forward. Consequently, within 6 months of her new boss arriving, she had found a new job at another company and left. And her company had lost a very valuable employee.

Slide 25:

Here are some statistics that show that even though women make up 50% or more of the workforce, women occupy the top jobs at much lower levels than would be expected if men and women were moving forward equally.

The same statistics apply in academia – even though 46% of the people receiving PhD degrees are female, a much lower percentage achieve the rank of a full professor or become college presidents. And remember from earlier that only 6% of Full Professors of economics are female even though 26% of the PhDs awarded in Economics are to females.

One possibility of what might cause this to occur: Remember when we looked at what happen when one person negotiates a slightly higher salary than does another? Each year the person who started at the slightly lower salary gets farther behind and after 10 years they are earning only about 69% of what their colleague is earning and after 25 years they are only earning 62% of what their colleague is earning. Suppose about the 10 year mark, the two individuals apply for the same job. Both individuals have similar resumes, similar recommendations, and do equally well in their interviews. Then the employer looks at their pay history and sees that one has consistently been paid at a lower level than the other. The employer is likely to wonder why and perhaps to assume, although wrongly, that the person who was paid more is actually better qualified. It is important to remember that:

LOW PAY COMMUNICATES SOMETHING INACCURATE ABOUT YOUR VALUE AND YOUR WORTH.

Slide 26:

Consequently, business and academia are not making full use of the potential of their female employees.

Slide 27:

And at home, it turns out that even when both the husband and the wife hold equally high paying and demanding jobs, the women still do

2/3 of all the household work. And both the men and the women who responded in surveys felt that that was the way it should be. Now what does this mean overall

- 1) Women have less free time than men**
- 2) Women are becoming more stressed than men, which can lead to all kinds of health difficulties.**

In an experiment where they looked at levels of stress hormones in working men and women at various times during the day, they found that at 5 pm, the level of stress hormones in men's blood decreased while the level of stress hormones in women's blood increased. They hypothesize that this is because women are starting their second shift, and not only do they have to do anything that is required by their job during the evening, but they are also in charge of running the household and providing the majority of the child care.

An article in 2007 in the New York Times, titled "He's Happier, She's Less So" reported that compared to the 1970s women were reporting being less happy and men more happy. Time-use data showed that men now spent less time on things that they didn't really want to do and more time on relaxing while women, while not spending that much more time on things they didn't want to do, just had so much more to do than before (including keeping a home and maybe a garden, caring for children, doing paid work, and caring for aging parents), that they couldn't get it all done and had to let many things go undone which led to greater discontent. And maybe it is because women have greater ambitions now than they did back then, when they were likely only comparing themselves to other women and not both to other women and other men. The same trend was seen between teenage girls and boys. Girls now feel they have to do everything as well or better than boys and still be "effortlessly hot."

Slide 28:

It turns that even when women do ask, they tend to ask for much less than their male counterparts are asking for, between 15 -30% less. One thing that I found very interesting is that even though women are responsible for starting more than half of the new businesses, they only get 22% of the start-up funds that are available. One of the entrepreneurs told Linda and Sara that men came to them with pie in the sky requests for huge amounts of money that they had to cut way back before it was a realistic request, but the women who came, had such tight careful budgets that it was clear that if they had even one unexpected set back, they would not have sufficient funds.

Slide 29:

Why do women often get less than men when they negotiate?

- **Women generally set lower goals.**
 - They are unsure of what they are worth.
 - They are afraid that asking for too much might threaten a relationship.
 - They fear that the people around them will react badly.
 - They are less optimistic than men about what might be available.
 - They are less comfortable than men with risk taking.
 - They are less confident in their ability to negotiate.

Slide 30:

Go over take home messages.

Slide 31:

Complete Take Home Messages and briefly mention next month's presentation.