
The Salary Negotiation Script for Women

New job offers · Annual reviews · Promotions Project raises · Handling pushback

HOW TO USE THIS 10-MINUTE GUIDE

This script is designed to be used before a salary conversation.

Read through the scenario that applies to you, adapt the language to your own voice and situation, and rehearse it out loud at least once.

The goal is to walk into the room having already thought through what you want to say.

Each script includes the opening move, a follow-up if needed, and language for the most common pushbacks. *Italic text is the suggested script.*

Tips are practical notes on what to watch for.

After reading this guide you'll know exactly what to say when:

- negotiating a new offer
- asking for a raise
- requesting a promotion
- discussing compensation after a successful project
- hearing "we don't have the budget"

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New Job Offer – Negotiating a New Job Offer

STEP 1 — BUY YOURSELF TIME

"Thank you so much! I'm genuinely excited about this opportunity. I'd like to take a day to review the full offer. May I come back to you by [specific date]?"

→ Always name a specific date. Vague timelines create anxiety on both sides.

STEP 2 — MAKE YOUR COUNTER

"I've reviewed the offer carefully and I'm very enthusiastic about joining the team. I've also looked at the market data for this role, I'm seeing a range of [X] to [Y] for comparable positions in [sector/location]. Given my background in [specific experience], I was hoping we could get to [specific number]. Is there flexibility there?"

→ Name one specific number, not a range. Ranges anchor the other side at the lower end.

IF THEY SAY THE OFFER IS FIRM

"I understand. Is there flexibility on any other elements, start date, annual leave, a performance review at six months, or a professional development budget?"

→ If you accept alternatives, follow up with an email summarising what was agreed.

Annual Review – Asking for a Raise at Your Annual Review

Prepare a one-page impact summary before the meeting. Bring it with you. Your manager may not have full visibility of everything you have delivered.

OPENING THE CONVERSATION

"I'd like to use part of our time today to talk about my compensation for the coming year. I've put together a brief summary of what I've delivered, can I walk you through it?"

ASKING FOR THE RAISE

"Based on what I've contributed over the past year, [name two or three specific achievements], and looking at market rates for this role, I'm hoping we can discuss an increase to [specific figure or %]. Is that something we can explore?"

→ Specific achievements beat general statements every time. 'I led the client migration that retained £2M in revenue' is stronger than 'I worked really hard this year.'

IF THEY SAY THEY NEED TO THINK ABOUT IT

"Of course. I appreciate that. Can we set a time in the next two weeks to follow up? I want to make sure this stays on the agenda."

→ Always leave with a named next step. 'I'll think about it' without a date tends to disappear.

Remember – Your goal is to have a constructive conversation about aligning your compensation with the value you create.

Promotion – Making the Case for a Promotion

The strongest promotion cases are built over time. If you are already doing the work of the next level, name it clearly.

OPENING THE CONVERSATION

"I'd like to talk about my progression. Over the past [time period], I've been taking on responsibilities that go beyond my current role — [name specifics]. I'd love to explore what a path to [target title] looks like and what would need to be true to get there."

→ Framing it as 'what would need to be true' makes it a collaborative conversation, not a demand.

IF THEY SAY YOU'RE NOT READY YET

"I'd really value your perspective on what 'ready' looks like for this role. Could we define two or three specific milestones together, and agree on a timeline to revisit this conversation?"

→ Get the criteria in writing. Vague promises of 'soon' are hard to hold people to.

IF THEY SAY THE ROLE DOESN'T EXIST YET

"I understand. Would it be worth creating a proposal together for what that role could look like? I'm happy to put some thinking together if it's useful."

Raise – Asking for a Raise After a Major Win

A significant project or result is one of the strongest moments to initiate a pay conversation, even outside the normal review cycle. Strike while the impact is visible.

OPENING THE CONVERSATION

"I wanted to find a moment to talk about something while it's fresh. The [project name] has just [delivered X result – revenue, savings, client retention, etc.]. I'm proud of that outcome, and I'd like to have a conversation about how my compensation reflects that kind of contribution. Is now a good time, or can we schedule something this week?"

IF THEY SAY THE TIMING ISN'T RIGHT

"I completely understand. Can we put something in the diary for [specific date]? I'd rather have this conversation properly than leave it open-ended."

→ Specific dates matter. 'Let's talk soon' rarely happens.

Remember – The best time to discuss compensation is while your contribution is still fresh in everyone's mind. Don't wait until your annual review if you've just delivered exceptional results.

Handling the Most Common Pushbacks

"We don't have budget right now."

"I hear that, and I appreciate you being transparent. Can we talk about what would need to change for this to be revisited and can we set a specific date to come back to it?"

→ If salary isn't possible, ask about other levers: additional leave, an earlier review, a development budget, or a performance bonus. Put anything agreed in writing.

"You're already at the top of your band."

"Thank you for telling me that, it's helpful context. Can we talk about what a move to the next band would require, and whether there's a path to get there?"

→ 'Top of band' often means the band needs revisiting, not that the conversation is closed.

"This isn't a good time."

"Of course, I want to have this conversation properly. Can we schedule a dedicated time for it? I'd suggest [specific date or timeframe]."

→ Never walk away without a named next step.

"Others in similar roles earn the same."

"I appreciate that. I'd love to understand how performance and impact factor into compensation decisions here, and share the case I've built for why my contribution merits a different conversation."

"I'll see what I can do."

"Thank you! I really appreciate that. Just so I know what to expect, when do you think you'll have a sense of what's possible? I want to make sure we follow up properly."

→ This is the most dangerous response, it sounds positive but often leads nowhere. Always pin down a timeframe.

Remember – A "no" is sometimes only the beginning of a longer conversation.

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Continue Building Your Career Toolkit

If you found this guide useful, these books have shaped the way I think about negotiation, confidence and career growth.

ON NEGOTIATION

1. Women Don't Ask by Linda Babcock & Sara Laschever – [[Paperback](#)][[Kindle](#)]

The book that started the conversation. Babcock's research is cited throughout this guide.

2. Ask For It by Linda Babcock & Sara Laschever – [[Paperback](#)][[Kindle](#)]

This book gives you the tools, including exercises for identifying what you want.

3. Getting More by Stuart Diamond – [[Paperback](#)][[Kindle](#)]

A broader negotiation book, but one of the most practical I've encountered. Diamond's core argument, that understanding what the other side actually values matters more than leverage, is directly relevant to salary conversations.

ON CAREER & SELF-ADVOCACY

Nice Girls Don't Get the Corner Office by Lois P. Frankel – [[Paperback](#)][[Kindle](#)]

A classic for a reason. Frankel identifies the subtle behaviours that hold women back professionally, many of which show up in salary conversations. Practical, direct, and still entirely relevant.

Worthy by Jamie Kern Lima – [[Paperback](#)][[Kindle](#)]

A powerful read on self-worth and why so many high-achieving women still struggle to believe they deserve what they're asking for. Pairs beautifully with the practical scripts in this guide, because the inner work matters as much as the words.

Thank You for Reading



The purpose of this guide is to help you become prepared.

Preparation creates confidence.

And confidence changes conversations.

About the Author

I'm a Senior Manager with more than 15 years of global corporate experience leading international teams and large transformation programmes.

Through The Life I Love Career Series, I translate research and real-world leadership experience into practical tools that help ambitious women navigate their careers with confidence.

If you found this useful, I'd love to hear how your conversation went. You can reach me at hello@violetamincu.com, or find me at violetamincu.com

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