

VIH PROGRAM

Pre-Conference Assignment: Negotiation

You have the opportunity to practice negotiation!

In their book, *Women Don't Ask: Negotiation and the Gender Divide*, Linda Babcock and Sara Laschever write:

“[w]omen don't ask. They don't ask for raises and promotions and better job opportunities. They don't ask for recognition for the good work they do. They don't ask for more help at home. In other words, women are much less likely than men to use negotiation to get what they want. Why does this matter? Although negotiation has always been an important workplace skill, it has long been thought to be the province of men: a competitive realm in which men excelled and women felt less capable. But ideas about what make a successful negotiation have changed in recent years. Rather than a battle between adversaries, negotiation has been increasingly seen as, ideally, a collaborative process aimed at finding the best solutions for everyone involved. This not only makes the process of negotiating less combative, it has been shown to produce superior agreements: Everyone walks away with more of what he or she wants.”

So how do you learn the skills of negotiation? How do you take these skills to the next level?
How do you perfect your negotiation skills?

Go to a flea market or a neighborhood yard sale. Go to at least 10 booths, stalls or yards. At each one, select a (low-cost) item that you would like to purchase. Make an offer! For example:

- Offer to pay 25% of the asking price.
- Offer to buy two and get one free.
- Offer to buy one item provided that you receive a 50% discount on a second item.

After each interaction, jot down in a notebook your thoughts on what went well and what you would do differently so as to improve the outcome of the negotiation.

Try different strategies at each of the 8-10 booths, stalls or yards. At the end of the negotiations, reflect on the experience as a whole and write your concluding thoughts down. Bring the paper to the retreat so you can share with your cohort.

Please bring these notes with you to the retreat so you can share your insights with the group.

