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Fear of Asking

Catherine, a 43-year-old lawyer from Kansas City, had worked in the public sector for most of her career. She never made much money and after almost two decades of public service she decided to switch to the private sector. Although she anticipated a large boost in her earnings, she took the precaution of consulting Linda—a friend from college—before embarking on her search. With Linda's help, she researched what comparable people in comparable jobs were making, identified the salary she should be able to get, and practiced negotiation tactics. She soon found a job she liked, but the offer she received was significantly lower than she'd hoped. Nonetheless, despite all her preparation, Catherine accepted the offer without negotiating. At the critical moment, she said, she "panicked and caved." The prospect of negotiating made her too nervous to go through with her plan.

Gabriela, 50, serves as the general manager of a leading symphony orchestra. This extraordinarily capable woman routinely negotiates with unions, foundations, record companies, and concert halls on behalf of her company. Despite her reputation as a tough and skillful bargainer, though, she cannot bring herself to ask her own board of directors for what she thinks is a fair raise. Every year at the time of her review, she gives the directors a list of salaries earned by individuals in comparable jobs—and every year she accepts whatever they offer her without asking for more. She says, "I'm annoyed that this last time I did it again. . . . I just said thank you. I'm annoyed because I think they'd respect me more if I said something back. They're probably wondering—how good can she be at negotiating for [the orchestra] if she can't even negotiate

for herself?" Even though the benefits of asking are obvious to Gabriela (not just more money but greater respect from her board), her anxiety makes it impossible for her to do so.

What's going on here? Catherine had practiced and prepared to negotiate, but at the last moment she couldn't bring herself to try. Gabriela knows that asking for a raise would probably produce a totally positive outcome—both more money *and* more respect—but still she doesn't do it. Why not? Little research to date answers this question, presumably because until now scholars have assumed that people of both sexes approach negotiation using simple economic reasoning: After calculating costs and benefits, they decide to negotiate when the benefits promise to exceed the costs. But how does this explain the large number of women who say they never negotiate at all? How can the simple economics of their lives be so different from those of men, who as we've shown negotiate much more frequently? Remember Linda's study in which 20 percent of the women respondents (the equivalent of 22 million people in the United States) said that they never negotiate at all? Surely it can't be that some women *never* encounter situations that offer net benefits from negotiating. And the economic explanation barely illuminates Gabriela's predicament: Apparently, in asking for a raise for herself, the cost that far outweighs any possible benefit is the internal cost to herself—the intolerably high level of discomfort created by the process of negotiating on her own behalf. Many men also feel nervous about asking for a raise, but for a variety of reasons more of them seem able to overcome their discomfort and ask anyway.

So what's making women so nervous? What are the sources of Catherine's panic and Gabriela's intense discomfort? Why would huge numbers of women strenuously avoid negotiation despite the very real costs of *not* negotiating? This chapter looks at the broad impact of a problem that consistently plagues women, interfering with their ability to ask for and get what they want: Anxiety.

Real Anxiety, Real Barriers

Although researchers have long speculated that women feel more anxiety around negotiating than men and that their anxiety often prevents them from negotiating, until now there hasn't been much research showing that this is true. But Linda's web survey finally established that women do indeed feel more anxiety and discomfort than men feel about

negotiating. In the survey, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements such as: "I feel anxious when I have to ask for something I want" and "It always takes me a long time to work up the courage to ask for things I want." Using their answers, Linda's team created a scale to measure each respondent's level of "negotiation apprehension." True to expectations, women scored significantly higher than men on this scale, with 2.5 times as many women as men feeling "a great deal of apprehension" about negotiating.[1] (This survey, you'll recall, included respondents of all ages and from a wide range of backgrounds.)

Another part of the survey measured respondents' "negotiation apprehension" in a different way. Respondents were asked to read several negotiation scenarios and then rate how anxious they would feel in each situation. Women expressed significantly more apprehension about negotiating in all the scenarios except one (negotiating with family members about where to go on vacation). Women felt particularly uneasy about scenarios involving work or activities in which they felt less expert than men (such as getting their cars fixed). In those scenarios, twice as many women as men felt "very anxious" or "extremely anxious" about conducting the negotiation.

Approaching this issue from yet another angle, the survey asked respondents to read a list of words and indicate those that described how they thought about negotiation. Men associated words such as *exciting* and *fun* with negotiation far more than women, who were more likely than men to choose words such as *scary*. In a related study, the organizational psychologist Michele Gelfand asked respondents to read a list of metaphors and identify those that captured their experience of negotiation. Where men chose metaphors such as *winning a ballgame* and *a wrestling match*, women were more likely to pick metaphors such as *going to the dentist* as representative of their experience of negotiation.[2]

Linda has also found in her teaching that women express more anxiety than men about negotiation. Linda frequently asks her negotiation students to write down their reasons for taking her course. While men tend to give answers like "I want to improve my negotiation skills," women often say things like "I hate negotiating and I want to learn how to do it better" or "I tend to avoid negotiating because it makes me so uncomfortable; I hope to change that." The differences between the responses of male and female students are so constant and predictable, Linda can almost always identify the sex of the students from their answers without looking at their names.

Extreme discomfort with negotiating can afflict even extremely powerful and successful women. In 2000, Linda conducted a negotiation workshop with about 20 female physician executives—women doctors in high-level managerial positions such as the chief medical officer of a hospital and the vice president of an insurance company. In the course of the workshop, Linda surveyed these physicians to discover their feelings when they negotiate. A full two-thirds reported that negotiating made them very nervous and a total of 86 percent expressed strong negative feelings about negotiating, such as saying it makes them feel insecure and defensive. Only 14 percent of these accomplished and successful women expressed any positive emotions about negotiating, such as saying that it makes them feel powerful and assertive.

The Consequences of Anxiety

Women's greater anxiety about negotiating doesn't just make the process of negotiating harder for them (although it does that too). It also prevents women from negotiating as much as men do. The survey revealed that similar levels of anxiety prove to be far more disabling for women than for men—more than three times as crippling. When a woman's anxiety jacks up 25 percent, for example, the likelihood that she'll go through with a negotiation decreases by 11 percent. But a 25 percent increase in a man's anxiety decreases the likelihood he'll ask for what he wants only by 3 percent. So women not only experience more anxiety about negotiation, their anxiety presents more of a stumbling block for them than it does for men.[3] Illustrating the different ways in which men and women respond, David, 34, a hedge fund manager, said that he knows he can make progress in a negotiation if he can "endure the moment of discomfort." Martha, the career counselor, in contrast, said that she often avoids negotiating altogether because of "the personal expense psychically and physically." The prospect of that "moment of discomfort" discourages her from negotiating at all.

This urge in women to avoid negotiating is so strong that a man in Pittsburgh has launched a successful business negotiating the purchase of cars for other people. Not surprisingly, most of his clients are women—women willing to pay significant sums of money to avoid the unpleasantness of negotiating. It's not that these women are afraid they'll negotiate badly and end up paying too much for their cars. The fees they pay for the service eat up whatever savings their "professional

negotiator" wins for them. They just don't want to have to negotiate. A study by the business professors Devavrat Purohit and Harris Sondak confirmed that saving money is not a driving goal for women in this situation, and that they are willing to pay as much as $1,353 to avoid negotiating the price of a car, compared to half as much, $666, for men.[4] This may explain why 63 percent of Saturn car buyers are women—drawn to Saturn's strategy of not negotiating prices.[5]

Anxiety and the Primacy of Relationships

What causes women's greater feelings of discomfort and anxiety around negotiating? Why are men more likely to concentrate on the issues in a dispute or the advantages they can win for themselves, while women are more likely to amplify the negative side of negotiating? In addition to the reasons we've already discussed, many women worry about their competence at negotiating: They worry that they'll lose control of the negotiation and make mistakes, that they'll concede too quickly or be thrown off guard or become intimidated.

Later in the book, we describe techniques for women to build up their self-confidence around negotiating and strengthen their control over the negotiation process—techniques that have been shown to substantially increase women's negotiating success. But before we explore those solutions, we need to understand one of the major causes of female anxiety around negotiating—women's fear that asking for something they want may harm their relationship with the person they need to ask. This fear often causes women's anxiety to surge, making it much harder for them to step over the "threshold for asking" and try to negotiate.

Extensive literature in virtually every discipline in the social and behavioral sciences concludes that relationships play a more central role in the lives of women than in the lives of men.[6] This has been shown to be true for small children and teenagers as well as for women and men in all walks of life and at every stage of adulthood. What this means is that women see the world—and themselves—through "relationship-colored" glasses. Looking at life through these glasses, they don't separate the relationships involved from the particular issues being considered in working out a business deal, solving a problem at work, bargaining with a merchant, or making decisions with a friend or family member.

Let's look at some of this research. A 1982 study by the psychologists William McGuire and Claire McGuire interviewed 560 children in grades one through eleven. Each child was given five minutes to tell the interviewer about him- or herself. The researchers found that the girls were far more likely than the boys to describe other people in their conceptualizations of themselves.[7] A 1988 study by two researchers at the National Institutes of Health, Robert McCrae and Paul Costa Jr., turned up similar results among elderly people.[8] Other research by the psychologists Jane Bybee, Marion Glick, and Edward Zigler asked people to describe their "ideal self." They found that women were more likely than men to include relationships in their descriptions.[9]

In one fascinating study, the psychologists Stephanie Clancy and Stephen Dollinger recruited 201 college students to take part in a study for extra credit. They instructed these students to collect 12 photographs that "describe who you are as you see yourself." The students themselves could take the photographs, they could ask other people to take the photographs, or they could use photographs that had already been taken. Clancy and Dollinger found that male students were more likely to submit pictures that captured them engaged in an activity (such as playing a sport), displaying prized possessions (such as a car), or alone. Female students were more likely to submit pictures of themselves with other people. The authors concluded that women tend to define themselves more in terms of their relationships while men tend to define themselves more in terms of their abilities and accomplishments—terms reflective of their individuality, independence, and separateness.[10] Another researcher, Sarah Taylor, repeated this study with a class of ninth graders, with similar results: Girls were almost twice as likely to submit pictures that showed them in connection with others (69 percent of the girls' photos were about connection compared to only 38 percent of the boys' photos) and 50 percent of the boys' pictures showed them alone whereas just 18 percent of the girls' pictures were solo shots.[11]

Although researchers disagree about the role of genetics in the different importance of relationships to men and women, the treatment of male and female children by adults at the very least encourages it.[12] Researchers have found evidence, for example, that parents discuss emotions and feelings with their daughters more than with their sons, thereby teaching girls to be more attentive to the feelings of those around them and, by implication, to take more responsibility for those feelings.[13] This is a lesson that girls may also be explicitly taught. Sandy,

the former commercial lending officer, was a talented gymnast when she was young. Most of the other girls on Sandy's team specialized in one event, but Sandy was talented enough to perform well in several events. At one point, her coach took her aside and told her that Cindy, one of her teammates, was upset because Sandy was so good at Cindy's event. The message could not have been clearer: Sandy's achievements and potential were less important than the feelings of another girl. More generally, Sandy was being told that she needed to curb her own ambitions—she needed to strive and hope for less—in order to protect the feelings of the people around her. It's hard to imagine a coach telling a male athlete to perform less well to spare the feelings of another boy.

Different Views of the Self

Whatever the causes, the different importance men and women place on relationships has led psychologists to conclude that men and women see themselves differently or have different "self-schemas" or "construals of the self."[14] Psychologists define a self-schema as your internal sense of who you are and what you're like—an interior self-portrait made up of how you experience your own personality and how you believe other people see you.[15] Your self-schema influences the ways in which you perceive the world around you—it provides a "filter" through which you process information, understand events, and organize your memories. It is also a prime motivator of your behavior.

In an impressive piece of scholarship that ties together research findings from many disciplines, the social psychologists Susan Cross and Laura Madson argue that men have more independent self-schemas and women have more interdependent ones. People with independent self-schemas—like many men—define themselves in terms of their distinction from others and pay less attention to the impact of their actions on the people around them. They focus on promoting their personal preferences and goals and seek out relationships that tend to be more instrumental than intimate, more numerous, and less personally binding.[16] People with interdependent self-schemas, in contrast, define themselves in terms of their connections to others—"relationships are viewed as integral parts of the person's very being."[17] They see their actions in terms of how they will influence people around them, and one of their primary goals is to develop strong relationships and protect them.

Not surprisingly, men's and women's different self-schemas can have a profound impact on how they feel about asking for what they want.[18] In one study, Lisa Barron observed male and female students as they participated in a job negotiation. Afterward, she interviewed them to understand their goals and strategies. Based on these interviews, she divided the participants into two categories: those who saw the negotiation as a way of advancing their interests and those who saw the negotiation as a way of furthering their acceptance by others (such as the hiring manager or others in the organization). Barron found that men made up 72 percent and women made up only 28 percent of those in the "advancement" category while men made up only 29 percent and women made up 71 percent of those in the "acceptance" category.[19] This strongly suggests that men are more likely to see the "instrumental" side of a negotiation (they see it as "just business") and women are more likely to focus on the interpersonal side, where relationship concerns are salient.

Our interviews produced numerous examples of this different point of view. Becky, the journalist, said "When I go into a negotiation . . . I think about the relationship first. . . . I think about maintaining that relationship before I think about my own [needs] really." David, the hedge fund manager, said just the opposite: "I don't worry about hurting feelings in a professional context."

Negotiation Equals Conflict

Women's strong urge to foster and protect relationships can make many of them fear that a disagreement about the outcome of a negotiation—a disagreement about the issues being discussed—actually represents a personal conflict between the negotiators involved. Negotiation scholars Deborah Kolb and Gloria Coolidge write: "Negotiation, conceived as a context in which conflict and competition are important, may not be a comfortable place for many women" because it puts them "in opposition to others."[20] That is, women often feel uncomfortable negotiating even in situations in which this type of controlled conflict is expected and appropriate, because promoting conflict is foreign to their self-schemas and their sense of identity. Men, for the most part, are less likely to believe that a disagreement about issues also means a conflict between the negotiators. They also typically worry less about the damaging effects of conflict.

Researchers believe that childhood socialization and styles of play create these different attitudes toward disagreement and conflict. By about age three, they point out, girls prefer playing with girls and boys prefer playing with boys. This preference intensifies with age—by age six, children play with other children of the same sex about eleven times as much as they do with children of the opposite sex.[21] This is important because boys and girls play differently—and learn different things from the ways in which they play.

Girls tend to play in small groups and form close relationships with one or two other girls. Their most important goals involve increasing intimacy and preserving connection.[22] As a result, girls, much more than boys, engage in activities in which everyone is equal and there are no winners and losers.[23] When there is a dispute during play, girls will frequently end a game in order to protect the relationships among the players.[24] Girls make polite suggestions to one another and prefer to agree rather than disagree. From these forms of play, girls develop a strong preference for cooperation and for avoiding conflict, and they discover that avoiding conflict can be a successful strategy for achieving their important goal of maintaining close relationships.

Boys, in contrast, play in larger groups than girls and their play is rougher.[25] Boys issue direct orders to one another far more than girls do; and boys' play involves more competition, conflict, and struggle for dominance.[26] When boys talk, their agenda is one of self-assertion.[27] If there is a dispute in a game, boys deal with it by implementing agreed-upon rules.[28] Through these types of behavior, boys learn that they can be aggressive in their interactions without really hurting each other or damaging their relationships. They also learn that competition is fun, that those on the opposite sides of a contest can still be friends, and that asserting themselves can be a successful strategy for attaining their goals (such as winning the game they're playing). In the process, they discover that they can interact with others in aggressive ways without harming their relationships.[29] Even more important, they learn *how* to do this—how to oppose others without harming their relationships. In her 1994 book *Talking from 9 to 5*, Deborah Tannen describes the following situation: "A woman told me she watched with distaste and distress as her office-mate heatedly argued with another colleague about whose division would suffer necessary cuts in funding, but she went into shock when, shortly after this altercation, the two men were as friendly as ever. 'How can you pretend that fight never happened?' she

asked the man who shared her office. He responded, 'Who's pretending it never happened?' as puzzled by her question as she was by his behavior. 'It happened,' he said, 'and it's over.' "[30]

With fewer opportunities to engage in "friendly competition" and perhaps both a natural inclination and strong social reinforcement to develop and safeguard relationships, girls and women may be slower to learn how to do this. Martha, the career counselor, said: "I do think [for men] there's that sense of 'this isn't personal, we're on the soccer field, this is a battle, but once we step off we will be fine.' That kind of depersonalization of the interaction is something that I definitely don't feel like I got as a girl growing up. I felt like it was instilled upon me that it was all personal." Because women have had more limited experience of conflict than men, they have also had fewer opportunities to learn how to deal with conflict in ways that *don't* threaten their relationships—they don't have those skills.[31]

Lynn, a 25-year-old professional nanny, moved into an apartment with two roommates who had already been living there for some time. Lynn's bedroom was extremely small and she wanted to move a bookcase and a desk into the living room, but her roommates had left no space for her. Afraid that she would be branded a "troublemaker" and that her relationship with them would start off badly, she never asked whether room could be made for her things. "I worry that if a conflict occurs when I'm in a negotiation in any realm it will cause stress in the relationship," she explained. "If the relationship is important . . . you don't want to hurt the relationship with the people you're negotiating with." Deborah Tannen, in her 1990 book *You Just Don't Understand*, observed that when faced with a choice between holding fast to personal goals and backing down from a request in order to preserve harmony in a relationship, many women will choose the latter.[32] Although men often do this as well, evidence suggests that women do it more.

The strength of women's need to avoid any hint of conflict can influence their behavior even when there's no need for them to care about their relationship with the other negotiator. Martha, the career counselor, tells a story that illustrates how a woman's reflexive impulse to worry about relationships can prevail even when all objective evidence indicates that the relationship at stake is not important:

> I remember getting into an awful dispute with somebody who was handling some money for my mother. He disappeared basically after

> he started handling it, and eventually I got it back. But I remember a friend of mine saying, "Why are you so worried that he's not going to like you? You know this guy should be in jail." And there was that kind of mentality that said in addition to getting the money back I also had to make sure that I kept everybody happy, and that's a real struggle. . . . He wasn't part of my social circle. I never ran into him. He probably *should* have been in jail.

The impulse to pay attention to relationships is so deeply imbedded in women's psyches that they rarely see any of their interactions as *not* having a relationship dimension, Deborah Kolb and Gloria Coolidge contend.[33] So when they find themselves in situations, like Martha's, in which there is no potential for future interaction and the opinion of the other negotiator can have no impact on their lives, they don't make the adjustment that says "okay, I don't need to care about this relationship"—because caring is the routine way in which they approach things.

Women also worry more about how asking for something may threaten a relationship because women typically suffer more when their relationships suffer.[34] This is because the self-esteem of people with interdependent self-schemas depends in good part on the relationships they have with others, research has shown.[35] As a result, a rocky business interaction or a negotiation from which the other negotiator leaves unhappy may present a painful challenge to a woman's self-esteem. In her book *Toward a New Psychology of Women*, professor of psychiatry Jean Baker Miller explains that "women's sense of self becomes very much organized around being able to make and then to maintain affiliations and relationships. Eventually, for many women the threat of disruption of connections is perceived not just as a loss of a relationship but as something closer to a total loss of self."[36]

The self-esteem of people with independent self-schemas suffers less when relationships are threatened. Several studies support this supposition. One shows that not being forgiven by a friend damages a woman's self-esteem more than it damages a man's, for example.[37] Another found that for women there is a positive association between self-esteem and their perceived degree of personal "connectedness" to others—but no association between these for men.[38] No one likes to be rejected, of course, but rejection seems to hit women harder on average than it hits men—and seems to represent more of a deterrent to their asking.

The End of Anxiety

Women's fears are not entirely unfounded, of course. Aggressive negotiation behavior, such as making extreme demands, refusing to concede, and bullying the other side, can stir up a lot of conflict and damage relationships. But this doesn't mean that women should avoid negotiation altogether. Nor does it mean that women should forget about their anxieties, "act like men," and ignore the impact of their behavior on their relationships. Instead, women need to acknowledge that they almost always have dual goals in a negotiation—issue-related goals and relationship goals—and that they need to find ways to achieve both. Fortunately, the past 20 years of negotiation research have shown that everyone, both men and women, can benefit by embracing both of these goals when they negotiate.

From Contest to Cooperation

The first step toward achieving both issue-related and relationship goals in a negotiation—and reducing negotiation anxiety—involves reframing the interaction. This means approaching it not as a contest or a competition, but as a chance to share ideas with the opposing negotiator and work together to solve problems that affect you both. In their book *The Shadow Negotiation: How Women Can Master the Hidden Agendas That Determine Bargaining Success*, Deborah Kolb and Judith Williams, both negotiating scholars, explain that when negotiators "take steps to insure that the negotiation conversation unfolds as a collaborative dialogue rather than an adversarial contest," the process of negotiation can become far more productive and lead to "solutions that would never have occurred to anyone independently."[39] The influential negotiation book *Getting to Yes*, by Roger Fisher and William Ury, first introduced this approach to a wider audience and provides numerous suggestions for how to make it work. One of the principal strategies recommended by Fisher and Ury involves using what they call "interest-based" rather than "position-based" bargaining. A simple example from *Getting to Yes* demonstrates the difference between the two:

> Consider the story of two men quarreling in a library. One wants the window open and the other wants it closed. They bicker back and forth about how much to leave it open: a crack, halfway, three quar-

ters of the way. No solution satisfies them both. Enter the librarian. She asks one why he wants the window open: "To get some fresh air." She asks the other why he wants it closed: "To avoid the draft." After thinking a minute, she opens wide a window in the next room, bringing in fresh air without a draft.[40]

The key to this example is that the two men were arguing about their *positions* (whether the window should be open or closed), which were incompatible, rather than about their *interests* (the needs and wishes underlying those positions). The librarian, rather than siding with one of the two positions, instead tried to find a way to satisfy the interests of both men, and ended up making both of them happy. This can be a great approach for maintaining and even improving relationships because it focuses the negotiators' efforts on ways to "attack the problem"—figure out a good solution—without "attacking each other" by fighting each others' positions.[41] Techniques for doing this include:

- asking diagnostic questions (what problems does opening or closing the window create for you?);
- sharing information about your own interests (the stuffiness in here is making me uncomfortable; I have a cold and shouldn't sit in a draft);
- unbundling the issues or adding issues (is there a way for you to get some fresh air without me sitting in a draft?);
- brainstorming about possible solutions rather than defending established positions (let's try to think of ways to satisfy both of our needs).[42]

These techniques appeal to many women because they don't put relationships in jeopardy—and can significantly decrease their anxiety about negotiating. Women also appreciate this approach because working together and fostering cooperation are already things that many women like to do and do well. Their childhood forms of play make them skillful at these kinds of behavior and—this point is worth stressing—make them comfortable with them. When women need to change their behavior dramatically or act in ways that feel inconsistent with who they are, this tends to ramp up their anxiety, not lessen it. Trying to understand the needs, interests, and concerns of the other side often allows women to get to know the other negotiators better. This doesn't

merely produce superior outcomes, it can actually improve their relationships. (We look more closely at the advantages women bring to negotiation and how their cooperative approach can produce better results for all parties in chapter 8.)

But paying attention to the interests of the other side doesn't mean overidentifying with their needs. Susannah, the political strategist, believes that the intense anxiety she experiences going into a negotiation comes in part from an exaggerated identification with the person on the other side of the table. "I just feel so guilty," she said. "I worry that I'm putting them in a difficult situation, especially if I'm asking for something that I think will be hard for them to give to me. I'm just wracked with guilt." Heather, the pastor, remarked that in many cases women have "negotiated themselves out of their position before they even open their mouths. . . . Before even the get-go, we've decided not to ask for something, because we're worried that it's going to be too much to ask." So another means of controlling anxiety when approaching a negotiation is to trust the other negotiators to take care of themselves. Most people have no trouble saying no when they can't or don't want to do something, but they're often eager to say yes if they can—and if they know what you want.

A friend of Sara's named Jane told Sara that she was hesitant to ask for a big raise because she thought it would be hard for her boss to give her so much. Sara asked Jane how she feels when one of her own employees comes to her with a request, even one she can't fully satisfy. Without pausing to consider, Jane said, "Well, it's my job to take care of my employees, do what I can to keep them, and make them happy." When Sara pointed out the inconsistency of her response, Jane recognized the contradiction. She also felt better about asking for as much as she wanted—and got the raise she wanted.

Another useful strategy for women can be recognizing that they don't need to bar emotion from their negotiations completely. Many women worry about becoming emotional in a negotiation and that this will be a mistake. The key to expressing emotion in a negotiation is to use appropriate emotions—emotions that can help achieve your ends. Expressing negative emotions (such as anger or frustration) by banging on a table, yelling at the other side, or becoming defensive are rarely effective in persuading another person to see your point of view. Bursting into tears doesn't usually work well either. But communicating positive feelings (such as cheerfulness) by smiling and speaking in a calm

voice can be enormously effective because emotions have been shown to be contagious—one side can actually "catch" the emotions of the other. So communicating a positive, let's-work-together-to-figure-this-out attitude can often reframe an interaction that starts out on a combative note and change both the mood of the other negotiator and the overall tone of the negotiation.[43] Research has also shown that people in good moods think more creatively, are more likely to engage in cooperative strategies such as exchanging information, and find more innovative ways to solve problems. They're also less likely to resort to competitive strategies and contentious tactics.[44]

Using humor can be another effective way to influence the tone of a negotiation. Elaine, the district court judge, described relying on humor both when she was a lawyer and now that she is judge because "humor has a way of leveling things, not leveling exactly, but . . . it relaxes people." And when people are relaxed, the anxiety of everyone in the room decreases.

Getting Help

There's another way to deal with anxiety about damaging a relationship by asking for too much: Get help when help is available. Eleanor, the literature professor and biographer, negotiated the contracts for her first two books by herself. The editor who bought them was extremely powerful and well-regarded, and Eleanor's fear of offending this editor made her hesitate to push for too much money. "When it came down to it," Eleanor said, "I backed down because I didn't want her to hate me." After Sara interviewed Eleanor and talked to her about our research, Eleanor hired an agent to negotiate the contract for her third book, something she'd been reluctant to do because she thought her editor wouldn't like it. Not only was the editor fine with Eleanor having hired an agent, the agent negotiated an advance for Eleanor's third book that was *more than ten times the amount she'd gotten for the second book*. This gives us a pretty good idea of how much money her relationship concerns prompted her to leave on the table in those first two contract negotiations. It also gives us a sense of how much women in general sacrifice because they worry that pressing for what they want will damage a relationship.

Disarming the Tough Guys

But what about when you run into opposing negotiators who resist taking a cooperative approach to the process—a particularly anxiety-producing scenario for many women? Roger Fisher and William Ury then recommend resorting to what they call "negotiation jujitsu," a term derived from the ancient martial art of jujitsu. In jujitsu, combatants "avoid pitting their strength against each other directly and instead try to step out of the way and use their competitors' strength to achieve their own ends."[45] "Negotiation jujitsu" provides a way to defuse a conflict when other negotiators take a competitive approach, stake out an inflexible position, or attack your position or you. In a situation like this, a direct counterattack would most likely lead to an escalation of conflict, with both sides degenerating into personal attacks, negative emotions, and positional bargaining.[46] Far more effective is to meet this type of competitive approach by doing what William Ury calls "stepping to their side."[47] Stepping to their side involves continuing to treat the other negotiators with respect despite their combative attitude. It involves listening to their arguments, acknowledging the legitimacy of their opinions, and agreeing with them wherever you can. In addition to reducing the conflict between you, it allows you to focus on their interests rather than on their positions—and invites them to do the same for you.

Here's an example of how this can work. Suppose you want to reduce your work week and work only Monday through Thursday, with Fridays off. When you ask your boss whether this will be possible, he responds by yelling, "Absolutely not!" Rather than shouting back (as many men might do) or becoming emotional and backing down (as many women might), an effective strategy would be to change the tone of the conversation by responding calmly or with humor: "Wow, you really hate that idea! I guess it would create a lot of problems for you." In this way, you acknowledge your boss's strong feelings and show that you've listened to him. But you haven't conceded; instead you've moved from being an adversary to being on his side—you're trying to see his point of view. This is effective because it is hard to argue with someone who is on your side.

The next step involves reframing the conflict from a "positions" orientation to an "interests" orientation—getting your boss to think be-

yond his reflexive position ("absolutely not!") so together you can search for a solution that works for both of you.[48] A good way to do this would be to ask a question, such as: "What problems does my absence on Fridays create?" This accomplishes two things: It gives you information and it moves the interaction away from arguing and disagreeing and toward problem solving. Once your boss has explained why he thinks giving you Fridays off is impossible ("no one else with your expertise is in on Fridays if we have an emergency"), a good response would be to acknowledge your boss's situation ("now I understand your reaction"). Then follow up with a question that addresses your interests: "But I want to spend more time with my children (or study for a test that would qualify me for a higher position, or take a course that meets on Fridays). Do you have any ideas about how I could get a little more time away from work without causing you a lot of problems?" This approach continues the process of "stepping to his side" while promoting mutual cooperation and problem solving.

Although these techniques may not always get you what you want (it just may not be possible for you to take time off without really harming your employer), they do protect your relationships while you're negotiating. In this example, both you and your boss can walk away from the negotiation with an increased understanding of each other and the knowledge that together you can try to solve problems cooperatively and creatively. This can give a huge boost to your future working relationship.

Mercy, 51, the director of space management for a large state university in the Southwest, described how this approach has worked for her:

> With a number of vice presidents here on campus . . . they initially came in demanding and expecting to get instantly whatever they requested, and they'd heard the nasty word "no.". . . After negotiating with them and finding some sort of solution for them, not nearly what they wanted, but certainly a viable solution, there have been a number of times where they. . .walked away with a sort of new respect or a different level of understanding of my job, and respect comes with that. They didn't get what they wanted, but they were happy with the outcome.

Sara had a similar experience when she worked at a consulting firm. As the senior editor and writer working on a large-scale training program that included video scripts, case studies, workbooks, and teaching manuals, Sara had to rely heavily on the firm's word processing depart-

ment for rapid turnaround on several sets of revisions. Shortly before the deadline for the materials to be delivered to the client, the word processing department made a sizable mistake that delayed delivery. After the problem was sorted out and the materials were completed, Sara asked for a meeting with the head of the word processing department and his supervisor. As soon as she entered the room, she realized that the two of them were steeled for a fight, expecting her to blame them entirely for the mishap. Rather than staking out a strong negative position such as "you screwed up and made me look bad," Sara presented her interests in a calm, conciliatory voice. She needed to understand what had gone wrong so that she could explain it to the consultant who was running the project, she said, and she wanted to figure out what both she and the word processing department could do differently next time in order to avoid making a similar mistake. As soon as the other two realized that she wasn't going to attack them, they relaxed. The three of them talked back and forth about possible process changes and without raised voices or hard feelings reached an agreement about how to do things differently in the future. Not only did this improve the production process, it improved Sara's relationship with the head of the word processing department and made her future working interactions with him more pleasant and productive.

Although taking a cooperative approach to negotiating can eliminate some of the causes for women's anxiety, even when women negotiate well they often get less than a man might get in the same situation. This is because women often don't ask for as much as they can get, and because people on the other side of the table often resist conceding as much to a woman as they might concede to a man under identical circumstances. We look at these factors impeding women—the pressures that prevent women from setting higher goals for themselves and the limits society places on how much a woman can get in a negotiation—in the next two chapters.