

Book Synopsis on

“Women Don’t Ask”

‘The High Cost of Avoiding Negotiation – and Positive Strategies for Change’

by Linda Babcock & Sara Laschever

(Synopsis by Gary Tomlinson)
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“Women 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 increasingly been seen as, ideally, a collaborative process aimed at finding the best solution for everyone involved. This not only makes the process of negotiation less combative, it has shown to produce superior agreements. Everyone walks away with more of what he or she wants.”

Why do women need to negotiate more now than ever before? Why is it good news that women can begin to discover their strength as negotiators? Could it be that women don’t get more of the things they want in life in part because they don’t think to ask for them? Are there external pressures that discourage women from asking as much as men do? Are women really less likely than men to ask for what they want? The answer to these questions can be found in Linda Babcock’s and Sara Laschever’s book; *Women Don’t Ask – The High Cost of Avoiding Negotiation – and Positive Strategies for Change*.

Linda Babcock, a Professor of Economics at the H. John Heinz III School of Public Policy and Management at Carnegie Mellon University, and Sara Laschever, a widely published writer and editor, discovered that by neglecting to negotiate the starting salary for her first job, a woman may sacrifice over half a million dollars in earnings by the end of her career. The damage continues as even highly accomplished professional women often fail to negotiate for salaries, perks, and key assignments that they deserve at work – not to mention asking for help at home.

The goal of *Women Don’t Ask* is to explore the causes of why women simply aren’t “asking” at the same rate as men. This book examines why many women often don’t realize that change is possible – why they don’t know that they can ask. It looks at the social forces that school women, from the time they are very young, to focus on the needs of others rather than on their own needs. It shows how our shared assumptions, as a

society, about what constitutes appropriate female behavior can act as a kind of psychological straightjacket when a woman wants to assert her own wishes and desires.

Linda and Sara believe that by changing the social forces that constrain women from promoting their own interests and limit them from getting more when they try, they hope to make it easier for women to do things differently. They're convinced that for behavior to change, women must understand, at a very deep level, the forces that shape their beliefs, attitudes and impulses. Simply telling women what they should do differently without helping them understand the root causes of their behavior won't help them achieve meaningful change. Their book is not simply a study of an inexplicable female failing that can be easily corrected. It is not about ways in which women need to "fix" themselves. It is an examination of how our culture strongly discourages women from asking for what they want.

Women Don't Ask offers real-life examples of the differences between the negotiating habits of men and women, and guides women in retooling their attitudes and approaches. In their book, you'll discover how to:

- Take the first step – choosing to negotiate at all
- Develop a comfortable, effective negotiation style
- Overcome fear; personal entitlement issues and gender stereotypes

By shining a spotlight on the barriers that prevent women from asking for what they want – and suggesting ways for those barriers to be removed – Linda and Sara hope their book will help individual women improve their circumstances and increase their happiness. But even more, they hope it will provoke social change on a larger scale by inspiring everyone – in the workforce and at home – to think differently about how women can and should behave.