Good luck! The single most important thing you can do is to sound knowledgeable and convey enthusiasm. Remember that the people who interview you will typically be invested in the organization you are seeking to join. If you convey that you agree that where they have chosen to work is great, they will think you have impeccable judgment!
over your career. You know the men in your company are getting their $600,000 and will wave at you as they drive past in their new Teslas.

Here are some other reasons to negotiate your starting salary:

1. It sets your pay scale in your new organization, which influences all your future opportunities for promotion, raises, and bonuses.
2. It can influence your pay in future jobs.
3. Most employers expect new hires to negotiate their salary. We have heard managers actually rethink their decision to hire someone after that person accepted the first number offered. (This can also differ by field.)

You may not have heard why women don’t negotiate. Well, one study found that, if they do, women are more likely to be disliked and less likely to be hired. A man who negotiates hard is showing he’s competitive and ambitious—“a man to be reckoned with.” But a woman who is competitive and ambitious is not living up to prescriptive stereotypes that the good woman is modest, self-effacing, and nice. (Note to Future Self: When you’re in a position to hire awesome women, encourage them to negotiate their salaries. Even if you can’t meet them at their target number, let them know that you respect their zeal and don’t hold it against them.)

Luckily, one study shows a formula for how to negotiate starting salary without backlash, and we’ll walk you through it. But first, you need to prepare.

**Delay “The Talk”**

If you can avoid it, try not to enter salary negotiations until the offer stage. Why? You want to put yourself in the best bargaining position. If you wait until the offer stage, you can shift the power imbalance more in your favor. At the point that an employer is offering you a job, it is invested in you. It has determined that you are the best candidate for the job, and it has invested time into interviewing you, checking your references, and thinking seriously about what you have to offer. It doesn’t want to go back to the drawing board with a candidate it didn’t like as much. Which means you have some power in the situation, and you should use it to your advantage.

How do you delay the talk? First, cover your tracks. If there is a question about salary on an application, don’t put in a number. If there’s room, write in something like “reasonable market price” or “prefer to discuss at offer stage.” If it’s a form application that requires a number, write a dash (“—”).

Sometimes employers want to talk about salary during your interview. Prepare for this beforehand by prepping vague responses:

✓ “I’ll consider any reasonable offer.”
✓ “I’m still learning about the role and your organization, and I would have a much better sense of the appropriate salary later in the hiring process, once I
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- “I’m still learning about the role and your organization, and I would have a much better sense of the appropriate salary later in the hiring process, once I have a better understanding about what the job entails.”
- “I’m not so much concerned with pay package than with learning about your organization. If it’s okay, I’d like to use my limited time to hear more about the role and discuss salary later in the process.”

Spend a couple of minutes practicing similar responses that feel comfortable to you and write down one that you like:

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**Do Your Homework**

In most situations, negotiating your starting salary is appropriate—even expected—when you accept a new job. But in certain situations, salaries are fixed, and trying to negotiate for a higher salary won’t work. Unions, minimum wage, and grant funding are a couple of factors that sometimes make salaries nonnegotiable.

If you’re not sure if your salary is negotiable, try to identify someone in the know whom you could ask. Was there someone in the interview process you felt like you really clicked with, who’s not in charge of your salary, whom you could ask?

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If there’s not, do you know anyone who’s in the field, who maybe had a similar position at a similar company before?

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Next, find out how much your job is worth. There are two main ways to find out approximately how much you should be making in your job.

First, do some online research. There are many websites that can help. Here are a couple we’ve found (as we all know, websites come and go, but at the time of this writing, these sites were up and running):
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salary.com</td>
<td><a href="http://www.salary.com">www.salary.com</a></td>
<td>Enter your job title and your city of employment and get a free quote of the median salary for other jobs like yours in the area. Paid option releases more detailed reports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payscale.com</td>
<td><a href="http://www.payscale.com">www.payscale.com</a></td>
<td>Create an anonymous profile with your salary, details about your employer, and the region you work in and see where you rank in terms of salary and benefits with comparable people in your field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glassdoor.com</td>
<td><a href="http://www.glassdoor.com">www.glassdoor.com</a></td>
<td>Compare your pay and benefits to others in your field. Also access information about the culture and work environment of different companies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Outlook</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bls.gov">www.bls.gov</a></td>
<td>Go to &quot;Subjects&quot; and then &quot;Wages by Area and Occupation.&quot; Includes information on required education and certifications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SimplyHired</td>
<td><a href="http://www.simplyhired.com">www.simplyhired.com</a></td>
<td>See average salaries for your job in your area and compare your salary to others in similar jobs nationally.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Second, reach out to your network. Do you know anyone working in the field whom you could have a frank conversation with about salary?

Do you know anyone in the field who is maybe more senior but who started out at the level you're entering? (The economy has changed, but you can still get a general idea.)
Second, reach out to your network. Do you know anyone working in the field whom you could have a frank conversation with about salary?

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It’s important to have these numbers figured out ahead of time and to tell yourself that you are going to stick to them. When you’re in the heat of negotiations, you may feel pressured to say yes, even if the number seems low to you. You don’t want to walk out of the meeting with a job you want on a salary you can’t eat on. If the employer is not budging on a number that is below your rock-bottom number, it may be more prudent for you and your family to walk away. Walking away from a job interview, unless you are desperate, should always be an option.

Don’t Give a Range!
Just don’t do it! Offering a range may be tempting, especially for women, as a way to seem more reasonable and out of fear that you may be asking for too much. Resist this temptation. It is a trap. Why? First of all, it lets you off the hook for asking for what you really want. If you know your target salary but think it’s a little high and are scared to ask for it, offering a range with your target in the middle (or even worse, at the top) lets you wiggle out of the discomfort of negotiating. Don’t do this! Work through the exercises in this section, do your homework, have your facts ready, ask for what you want, and be ready to back it up. Second of all, why on earth would an employer ever give you more than the bottom of your range? If your target is $60,000, and you tell your employer that your range is $55,000–$65,000, they are most likely going to offer you $55,000, and you won’t be in a space to negotiate because you already told them that you are okay with $55,000. You don’t leave yourself any room to negotiate.

Figure Out Your Numbers
What is the absolute rock-bottom number that you can accept? What is your target salary? These numbers should be based on the homework you did above and some basic calculations about what you need to live on.

What Is Your Rock-Bottom Number?
To figure this out, factor in your monthly expenses (rent, bills, food, etc.) and, if applicable, consult with your partner on what your family can live on.

What is your target salary?

Don’t Give a Range!
That's why we advise women to figure out their target salary and their bottom line beforehand: to have a mental range. Ask for your target salary, don't tell them about your bottom line, and keep that range in your head.

**Practice**
There may be tough questions asked during negotiations. The best way to prepare for these is to practice them.

What are the top-three questions about salary that you're afraid of?

1. 

2. 

3. 

Now prepare some responses to these questions. Here's an example:

Q: “The number you’re asking for is more than we paid the person in the position before you. Why should we give more money to someone we don’t know will work out?”

A: “I think the experience and training I will bring to the position will expand the scope of what can be accomplished in this role. I am ready to commit to bringing the company to new levels, and I’d like my salary to reflect this expanded vision.”

Write down your responses below. Focus on highlighting the unique things you bring to the table and how those qualities will benefit the organization you’re joining.

1. 

2. 
Negotiating Starting Salary

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It's important to remember that if you're not sure, you can always ask for more time. If the employer's representatives are pressuring you to accept a number you're not totally comfortable with, say you need a day or two to think it over or say you are waiting to hear back from another position and you will get back to them in a few days. They may say no, but it also may encourage them to offer you your target salary in the name of closing the deal. Don't say you need time to talk it over with your partner or husband. That may well be true, but it can signal that you're not the one calling the shots in your career.

Practice a few responses that buy you time to think:

1. 

2. 

3. 

Prep Your Brag List
You want to be ready to show, not just tell, the employer why you should be paid your target salary. Prep a list of accomplishments, relevant experience, and unique qualifications that make you well suited for the role. (See chapter 12 in the workbook for how to keep and develop this list.)

Write them down here:
Now, pick your top three and write down why they will benefit the organization that you hope to join. Try to make it as specific as possible. Here’s an example:

Brag point: “I raised annual giving by 15 percent in one year at my last company.”
Benefit: “In addition to the strategic direction I will bring, my effectiveness at fund-raising will help secure the program’s future and expand into X market.”

Write down your three top brag points that will benefit the organization you are interviewing with:

1. 

2. 

3. 

Expand the Pie
Don’t limit your research to just salary numbers. In addition to your bottom line and target numbers, consider other forms of benefits and compensation.

Additional Items to Consider
✓ Allowances: cleaning, travel, gas
✓ Bonuses
✓ Commissions
✓ Commuter options
✓ Company car
✓ Education or tuition reimbursement for you and for family members
✓ Expense accounts
✓ Flexible schedule
✓ Health/dental/vision coverage
✓ Leave eligibility
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✓ Health/dental/vision coverage
✓ Leave eligibility

✓ Life insurance / other insurance
✓ Off-cycle performance review
✓ Paid sick time
✓ Parental leave
✓ Pay-grade adjustments (move to bottom of higher pay grade, so there is more room to grow)
✓ Professional development opportunities
✓ Relocation assistance
✓ Retirement plan options
✓ Sign-on bonus
✓ Stock options
✓ Telecommuting options
✓ Vacation time / holiday pay

Consider these additional benefits with two strategies in mind: First, if your employer won’t budge on salary, you can supplement your base pay with additional benefits. Second, if one or more of these additional benefits are important to your work-life balance (such as having a flexible schedule or being able to take vacation), identify those items as priorities. Which ones are important to your life? Rank the items above: which is at the top? Which is at the bottom? Practice discussing them along with your target salary:

Don’t Hate, Negotiate!

The time has finally come. You’ve interviewed for your job, successfully delayed talks of salary, did your homework, and got offered the job! Congratulations! Now come the negotiations. We have a few guidelines to offer to help you get the salary you want without getting backlash for negotiating as a woman.

1. Come prepared. If you’ve done your homework, you should be set. The night before, make sure to practice again your responses to the questions you’re a little scared of.
2. Don’t open. Wait for the employer to offer a starting number. This will give you a better bargaining position and ensure that you don’t undercut yourself.
Sometimes the employer will frame the salary number as nonnegotiable. This is where, as a woman, you have to tread carefully in order to avoid backlash. As we discussed, men are expected to negotiate, while women are expected to be deferential. Luckily, research has shown that if you frame your negotiation carefully, you can avoid backlash. Use the following formulas to open up negotiations:

"It wasn't clear to me whether this represents the top or the bottom of the pay range."
"I don't know how typical it is for people at my level to negotiate salary, but I'm hopeful you'll see my skill at negotiating as something important I'll bring to the team."
"My mentor stressed how important it is to negotiate if there's a pay range. He also stressed I should say I'd like to be eligible for a year-end bonus."

By using these careful framing techniques, you can enter negotiations while still staying in the lane of what's "expected" as a woman.

Now your turn. What will you say if the employer says the salary is nonnegotiable?

If the employer is willing to negotiate but pushes you to open negotiations, try your best impression of an artful dodger:

**EMPLOYER:** I need to know your target salary to make you an offer. Can you give me a range?

**YOU:** You're in a much better position to suggest an appropriate range based on your knowledge of what's budgeted for the position and the range for similarly qualified employees in similar roles. Why don't we start the conversation there?

3. Counter with a carefully researched response. Bring in the homework you did, your past earnings, and your qualifications to your counter. Instead of just "How about $75,000?" try "I've done lots of research, and it seems that the average salary for this type of position in this market is between $70,000 and $85,000. So in that context, I think $75,000 is reasonable, especially considering my eight years of experience in this field."

Another tactic: "I was expecting that your offer was going to be around $75,000. This number is lower than I was planning for. I will have to give it some thought."
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Don't try to leverage another offer in your counter. Research has shown that this doesn't work for women.

4. If unsure, think on it. Don't accept an offer if you don't want to. If the employer is not budging and the number is too low, ask for more time. See above when you wrote down a couple of lines that will buy you time. At the point when the employer is offering you the job, it is invested in bringing you on board. When you ask for more time, it gives whomever you're negotiating with time to discuss the job and your qualifications with those higher up; hopefully they will come back with a number that's closer to your target.

5. Clinch the deal—then deal some more. Don't forget about nonsalary benefits. Once you've agreed to a number, make sure you also nail down the priority benefits that you identified earlier.

When you've settled on salary and benefits, make sure to write your agreement down and e-mail it to the employer, so you have a record. You can frame it as "I'm excited to be part of such a great company. Thanks for speaking with me today and addressing my concerns. These are my records from our agreement."

How did it go? What's one thing you could do better next time? Was there something you wished you would have prepared for that you hadn't?

Now go have a glass of wine and toast to your new job! (Note to Future Self: Consider instituting Wine Wednesdays when you're in charge.)