

NEGOTIATION, AN EMPOWERMENT TOOL FOR WOMEN

Being a feminist is believing in equality of gender.

Being a negotiator is a means of achieving this ideal. It allows us to understand the balance of power and surpass it. To resolve a conflict without violence. To listen and be listened to. To find acceptable solutions for everyone involved.

Negotiation viewed through the prism of gender helps us understand its emancipatory properties. Not because women negotiate better or differently from men, but because negotiation is a powerful tool to regain control of your destiny and it helps women free themselves from social-professional norms and stereotypes: by fully exerting THEIR power without violence.

To grasp the liberating power of negotiation, we first need to analyse how gender – as a social construction – influences women conducting negotiations.

Women are great negotiators in both family and social settings. But, also, in armed conflict where they are excellent at finding concessions to create solutions to maintain the peace: there is a 35% higher chance that peace will last for over 15 years when women are at the negotiating table, even if they only represent 14% of negotiators (Source: *Women in Peace Processes 1992-2019/Council on Foreign Relations*).

On the other hand, women negotiate less – and not so effectively - for themselves.

They feel less entitled than their masculine colleagues to ask for a promotion and raise (Source: *LinkedIn study 2021 – France*) starting from their first employment, even though they represent the majority of higher education graduates in Europe. They are also met with more resistance from their employers (Source: *McKinsey & Company, Women in the Workplace*). Women who negotiate are also perceived as being aggressive and are less likeable than their masculine counterparts – who actually often ask for much more!

There are, therefore, negotiations that are more complicated for women, as soon as they question the roles established by the patriarchy, women care for others in an altruistic manner, whereas men produce and are paid for their work. Now that we know that even from a very young age, girls receive less pocket money than boys

(25% - according to a study by Childwis agency – 2017), we can understand the famous imposter's syndrome and the complicated relationship women often have with money and power.

Negotiation is understanding the balance of power better, to be able to use your own power in the best way possible, both contextually and institutionally.

By understanding that even though the balance of power is structurally not in favour of women in the workplace, this does not make them victims and instead can help them adopt efficient strategies to disarm the daily micro-aggressions they deal with.

Understanding that the glass ceiling is a combination of conscious and unconscious sexist dynamics, helps women regain confidence in themselves:

“My skills are not the only thing in play.”

Focusing on the things they do have control over is important:

“I can't change the image other people have of me, but I can influence and control my own excellency.”

Last of all, negotiation is not a competition, it is the attempt to resolve a conflict by finding an acceptable solution for everyone involved. Empathy and emotional control are decisive. Even though both men and women have the same emotions, their manners of expressing them often differ, not by nature but through education. Women are often socially encouraged to read emotions – specifically the non-verbal. Women understand the power of emotional foresight and often are one step ahead and have a real talent for this exercise. By training and preparing for a negotiation by including the gender aspect – because it structures our relations to others and to the world – is the key to professional and personal success. Let's take advantage of this!

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In keeping with ADN Kids, which adapted the PACIFICAT® reference to children to allow them to express themselves without aggressivity, ADN Women gives women the keys to this essential method so they can take hold of their future through a series of webinars open to all and online information campaigns on social media.