

Negotiating to achieve

Here we are nearly two months into the New Year and I have a question to ask you: do you know where your 2011 list of goals is?

You're probably off target, like most of the population, by everyday pressing deadlines, demands and dealing with the snowy winter weather.

OK – refocus.

I want you to find that list, read it out loud and then read it again. Now is the time to get serious about achieving at least some of the items on your list by year's end. Time, as they say, is a wastin'.

Now is the time to think strategically how you're going to get from A to B for each of the items on your list. If you're like many of us, at least some of your 2011 goals include the need to negotiate – whether for a higher salary, expanded responsibilities, a business loan or new clients. Negotiations play into every aspect of your personal and professional life. You may not realize it, but even life lessons such as buying a car, getting a mortgage and making travel plans all entail some form of negotiation. Everything in life is a negotiation. How many times have you “negotiated” your child's curfew or an allowance increase? Sometimes it's easier to bargain with a client than it is with your kid!

For women especially, the mere mention of the word “negotiating” can trigger

anxiety. That's because negotiating is often wrongly equated with competition – you either win or you lose – or confrontation – let's pull out all our ammunition and may the most powerful person be left standing.

You need to readjust your thinking about

The authors also point out that men are four times more likely than women to ask for a higher salary despite the fact that their credentials are the same.

Next month the Main Line Society of Professional Women will host a real negotiating pro – Sharon

Pinkenson, executive director of the Greater Philadelphia Film Office. Pinkenson, who has helped bring the filming of such movies as “The Sixth Sense,” “Unbreakable,” “Jersey Girl” and “National Treasure” to the

Philadelphia area, certainly knows how to close a deal. In advance of her March 1 SPW event, Pinkenson shared a few of her negotiating tips with us.

Sharon says the key to successful negotiating lies in setting clear and specific goals for yourself as well as understanding the needs and goals of the person you are negotiating with. She emphasizes that if you do your homework and figure out in advance the best way to work toward both parties' goals, chances are you will come out of every negotiation with at least part, if not most, of what you asked for.

“Your goal is not to blow the other person out the water,” she said. “Your goal is to find a way to move forward together.”

Let's all move forward toward our goals. I hope to see you at SPW! Register online for our upcoming events at www.spwmainline.com.

Taking Charge

Eileen Connolly-Robbins, founder of Society of Professional Women, Main Line Chamber of Commerce



negotiating, however, if you are going to meet those goals on your 2011 list. It's much better to view negotiating as a means to find common ground, whether with a boss, a potential client or even a spouse. You and the person you're negotiating with must each identify your needs and goals and arrive at points to agree on. The aim is to end up with a win-win negotiation. Find a solution that is acceptable to both sides, and that leaves both sides feeling that they've won.

Avoiding negotiations can be costly. Twenty percent of women say they never negotiate at all, and this can cause problems not only in their careers but in everyday life as well. In their book, “Women Don't Ask,” authors Linda Babcock and Sara Laschever present a stunning fact – by failing to negotiate a starting salary for her first job, a woman may end up losing half a million dollars over the span of her career.