

{ What a Girl Wants }

How to parley like a pro and increase
your negotiating know-how.

By Lisa Marino

How To: Pick Your Own Price

Do: Make sure you do your homework. Before negotiating the price of a hefty car or home purchase, find out the fair market value by looking up the car at kbb.com (Kelley Blue Book, a guide for car pricing) or investigating the selling price of comparable homes in the neighborhood (called “comps”). This helps you determine a realistic starting point for buying within your budget and provides needed ammo for negotiations.

Don't: Make an outlandishly low offer—you'll likely insult the seller or seem disingenuous. This is where the research pays off!

How To: Sway Your Spouse

Do: Remember that solving most domestic disputes comes down to compromise, not winning or losing. Want him to pitch in more around the house? Ask nicely and explain why you need his help, then give him time to express his feel-

ings without interrupting. If you come to an impasse, suggest a trade-out situation where he does the cooking and you clean up afterward.

Don't: Get involved in name-calling, criticizing or dredging up the past. This just puts the focus back on “winning” when it's supposed to be about compromise.

How To: Bargain With Your Boss

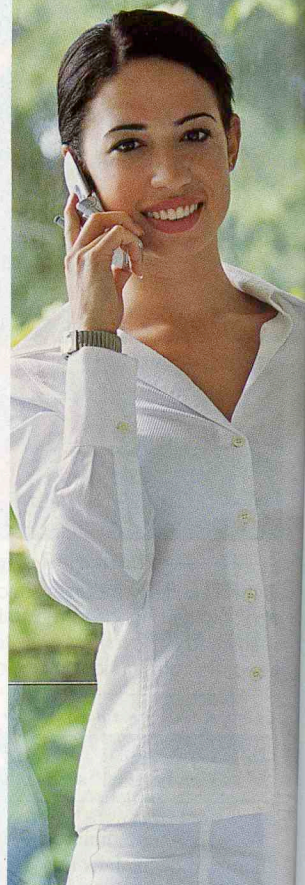
Do: Ask for a raise. Negotiation specialist and author Dr. Linda Babcock found that men are four times more likely than women to negotiate their salaries.

Don't: Forget to bring a proposal. Before you lay your cards on the negotiation table, you have to know what hand you're playing. Research average salaries for your job title, taking geography and duties into consideration. Prepare a “pitch” highlighting your skills and accomplishments, showing how much you've saved/earned the company or decreased your boss' workload.

3

Rules to Barter By

1. Ask and Ye Shall Receive: Take the initiative. You won't ever get what you want if you don't ask for it.
2. Know (and be) thyself!: Good negotiators aren't always aggressive, so be yourself or risk losing credibility.
3. Practice the 24-hour rule: It's okay to say, “Let me think about it and get back to you in 24 hours.”



{ Ready, Jet Set, Go! }

4 of the season's hottest getaways for unwinding, shopping and exploring.

By Natalie Kurz

Exploration Destination: Costa Rica

With new charter flights direct from STL to Costa Rica, it's easier (and more affordable) to explore! With its rain forests, black sand beaches and waterfalls, it's a paradise of adventure—whether you want to windsurf at the base of Arenal Volcano (an active, lava-spewing fire pit), deep-sea dive with giant manta rays darting daintily through colorful coastal reefs or kayak down white waters of one of the dozen raging rivers.

Enlightening Expedition: Mediterranean Cruise

The hottest all-inclusive vacations this year are sightseeing cruises through the sultry Mediterranean. Marvel at the Gothic architecture and wander the Picasso Museum in Barcelona, then behold the beauty of the Sistine Chapel in Rome before you stroll the ancient ruins of Pompeii in Naples. With so many remarkable ports of call from Marseilles to Monte Carlo, there's enough history and culture to mesmerize any intellect.

Shopping Stop: Streets of London

From custom-made suits on Savile Row to the world's largest antique market on Portobello Road, the streets of London are a shopaholic's fantasy. There's Oxford Street, a one and one-half-mile stretch of hip chains like Urban Outfitters and French Connection. Or you can drool over designer duds at Louis Vuitton and Chanel on Bond Street. And if you can't find it at Harrod's, Europe's largest department store, then it doesn't exist!

Peaceful Paradise: Los Cabos

With a year-round temp of a balmy 78 degrees, Los Cabos is a world-class resort destination. Comprised of two towns, San Jose del Cabo and Cabo San Lucas, Los Cabos epitomizes the white-sand serenity that de-stressing vacationers covet. Luxuriate in an opulent private villa, sun yourself by the warm, cobalt blue waters of the Sea of Cortez or practice line drives at a world-class golf course such as Cabo del Sol.

Traveler's Checks

While booking a trip online seems affordable and convenient, it often costs less in the end to utilize a travel agent who can help customize a vacation package that's right for you, and at no extra cost. If you want to spend the week lounging on the beach drinking Daiquiris and indulging in exotic cuisine, an agent can recommend a beachfront hotel with an extensive bar and restaurant selection. Plus, many agents can set you up with free upgrades.

How To Travel

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{ Beachfront Bonus }

For the ultimate ocean-side experience, book a stay at the 642-room Riu Palace in Cabo San Lucas, an all-inclusive getaway stretching along the Sea of Cortez. ▶

