

MAX PARADOX

PROBLEM? RELAX. YOU'VE GOT THIS!

Self-Help with a Sense of Humor ;)

I Can't Ask for a Raise



**How to Talk About Money
Without Apologizing for Liking It**



*We have a problem. Relax. We can solve it—
and have a laugh along the way.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRO	1
Chapter 1 - The Raise Is Not a Favor	10
Chapter 2 - Stop Negotiating Against Yourself	24
Chapter 3 - Hard Work Is Not a Salary Argument	39
Chapter 4 - Find Out What Your Job Is Actually Worth.....	55
Chapter 5 - Stop Waiting for the Perfect Moment.....	70
Chapter 6 - Delete the Apology Script	83
Chapter 7 - Your Bills Are Not the Business Case.....	98
Chapter 8 - Do Not Threaten to Quit Unless You Are Ready to Quit	111
Chapter 9 - Ask for a Number, Not a Vibe.....	125
Chapter 10 - Build the Conversation Before You Enter the Room.....	138
Chapter 11 - Handle "No Budget" Without Leaving With Nothing	153
Chapter 12 - Turn "Not Yet" Into a Contract With Reality ...	166
Chapter 13 - Make Every Objection More Specific	182
Chapter 14 - Negotiate the Offer You Actually Receive	197
Chapter 15 - What If You Freeze in the Meeting?.....	211
Chapter 16 - What If Your Manager Is Bad at This Too? ...	226
Chapter 17 - What If You Get the Raise and Still Feel Underpaid?	242
Chapter 18 - Build a Career Where You Do Not Need Permission to Know Your Value	255

Chapter 19 - Make Raises Boring	272
Chapter 20 - You Are Allowed to Want More Money	286

INTRO

You have decided to ask for a raise.

Not today, obviously.

Today you are preparing to prepare.

You open a document and type something professional at the top, perhaps "Salary Discussion," which immediately sounds as if the United Nations has become involved. Then you delete it because it feels aggressive. You replace it with "Quick Catch-Up," which is so harmless it could refer to coffee, weather, or whether the office printer is still making that noise.

You start rehearsing what you might say to your boss.

"I was wondering if maybe there might possibly be an opportunity at some point to discuss whether my compensation could perhaps be reviewed."

Excellent.

You have transformed "I want a raise" into a hostage negotiation conducted entirely through apologies.

Then your brain becomes extremely helpful. It reminds you that the company has expenses. Your manager is busy. The economy is weird. Susan from accounting once mentioned budgets. You received a laptop three years ago. There was free cake at the holiday party. Perhaps asking for more money after all this generosity would be morally inappropriate.

So you close the document.

You will ask next month.

Next month, naturally, arrives with the disturbing reliability of all months.

This book is about that moment: when you know you should talk about money, you have reasonable grounds to talk about money, and yet the simple act of saying, "I'd like to discuss my compensation," feels approximately as comfortable as announcing at Thanksgiving that you have prepared a spreadsheet ranking everyone's parenting skills.

For many people, asking for a raise is not primarily a money problem. It is a conversation problem wrapped in anxiety, uncertainty, social conditioning, fear of rejection, and the strange belief that wanting to be paid more makes you greedy.

It does not.

You are allowed to like money.

Money pays rent. Money buys groceries. Money fixes the mysterious sound coming from the car. Money lets you replace a mattress before it becomes an archaeological site. Money gives you choices, time, security, and occasionally the ability to order dinner because you simply cannot emotionally negotiate with a cutting board tonight.

Wanting more money does not automatically mean you worship money. Wanting more vacation time does not mean you worship beaches. Wanting a better office chair does not mean you have joined a furniture cult.

It means you have preferences.

The trouble begins when your brain treats salary discussions as moral evaluations rather than business conversations. Instead of asking, "What value am I providing, what is my role worth, and what outcome am I requesting?" you start asking much more dramatic questions.

"Will they think I'm ungrateful?"

"Will my boss be disappointed?"

"What if they say no?"

"What if they say yes but secretly hate me forever?"

That last scenario is particularly efficient because your boss has not actually reacted yet, but you have already created an entire eight-season workplace drama in which everyone resents you.

Your brain deserves an Emmy.

Here is what makes salary conversations uniquely uncomfortable: your employer and you can both genuinely like each other, respect each other, and still have different financial interests. The company would generally prefer to obtain excellent work at a reasonable cost. You would generally prefer to provide excellent work at a higher cost.

This is not betrayal.

This is commerce.

Your salary is not a handwritten thank-you note from the organization. It is part of an exchange. You provide skills, time, judgment, reliability, experience, effort, and results. In return, the company provides compensation and other benefits. You can appreciate your job and still want that exchange updated.

But many people do something peculiar when discussing salary. They become their employer's volunteer defense attorney.

Before the manager has said anything, they argue against themselves.

"I know budgets are probably tight..."

"I know I already got an increase two years ago..."

"I know everyone is working hard..."

"I know this may not be the right time..."

Congratulations. You have successfully negotiated yourself down before negotiations have even begun.

No opposing counsel required.

Another common mistake is waiting for confidence. You tell yourself you will ask when you feel completely prepared, calm, certain, persuasive, and immune to rejection.

That person does not exist.

Some people look calm during salary negotiations because they have practiced. Others look calm because their face has frozen. Either way, confidence usually arrives after you develop a process—not before.

That is what we are going to build here.

You will learn how to decide whether you have a credible case for a raise, gather evidence without creating a forty-seven-slide presentation called Reasons I Am Magnificent, choose the right moment, decide what to ask for, and make the request clearly.

You will also learn what to say when your manager pushes back.

Because they might.

They may say the budget is closed. They may say your timing is bad. They may tell you that you are doing great but there is currently "no room," which is an interesting phrase because companies can usually discover room for things they consider sufficiently important.

You need to know what comes next.

Should you ask when compensation decisions are made? Should you request specific targets? Should you negotiate something else? Should you ask for a review date? Should you begin considering another employer?

Those are practical questions. We will give them practical answers.

What we will not do is tell you to stand in front of the mirror every morning and shout, "I AM WORTHY OF ABUNDANCE," until your neighbors become concerned.

Self-belief is useful.

A documented business case is usually more useful.

We will also separate several things that people often throw into one emotional bucket: your personal worth, your market value, your salary, your manager's opinion, the company's budget, and whether your request succeeds immediately.

They are not the same thing.

A company can value you and still underpay you.

A manager can genuinely want to keep you and still be unable to approve your request today.

You can deserve a raise and still present the case badly.

You can present an excellent case and still hear no.

And a no can mean many things. "Not now" is different from "not at this company." "We need more evidence" is different from "we will keep moving the goalposts until you retire." Your job is to learn the difference.

Most importantly, you are going to stop treating a salary conversation as a confession.

You are not entering your manager's office to admit that you enjoy money.

They already know.

Your manager also enjoys money. So does the CEO. So does the company, which has probably constructed several departments dedicated specifically to obtaining more of it.

You are not introducing a controversial concept.

The goal of this book is not to turn you into an aggressive negotiator who enters every meeting like a movie villain and demands twenty percent more plus ownership of the building. The goal is simpler: to help you talk about compensation calmly, clearly, professionally, and without apologizing for having financial interests of your own.

You will still feel uncomfortable sometimes.

That is fine.

The objective is not to eliminate discomfort before you act. The objective is to stop letting discomfort make financial decisions on your behalf.

Because silence is also a negotiation strategy.

It is simply one where the other side never has to respond.

By the time we are done, you will know how to prepare your case, start the conversation, state your number, handle objections, respond to a no, recognize vague promises, negotiate alternatives, and decide when the real raise may require a different job.

You do not need to become fearless.

You need a method.

And ideally one that does not begin with "Sorry to bother you."

Wklejony tekst

Chapter 1 - The Raise Is Not a Favor

You are about to ask for a raise, so naturally your brain has decided to review every kindness your employer has shown you since your first day.

They hired you.

They gave you a laptop.

Someone once approved your vacation request without making a face.

There are coffee pods in the kitchen.

How can you possibly ask these people for more money?

This is the first mental trap to remove: treating compensation as generosity.

Your salary is not a charitable donation from the company to support your expensive habit of requiring food and shelter. It is part of a commercial arrangement. You agreed to provide something the organization needs—your time, skills, experience, decisions, problem-solving ability, availability, relationships, output, or some combination of these things—and the organization agreed to pay for it.

Nobody needs to feel guilty about this.

Imagine calling a plumber, receiving the invoice, and saying, "Wow. You're asking for money? After I let you into my house?"

That would be strange.

Yet employees often use approximately this logic on themselves.

The company gave you an opportunity, therefore you should be grateful. Gratitude then quietly transforms into