

Karen Dee on negotiating to get what you want

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NOLA LALEYE

Karen Dee, managing partner, Accendo Leadership Advisory Group

Karen Dee has a storied background in financial services as a top executive at Wells Fargo, SunTrust and **Fifth Third Bank**, where she was president of Florida and the mid-South region based in Orlando until she retired in 2014.

Since then, she teamed up with **Cari Coats**, executive director of the Center for Advanced Entrepreneurship at Rollins College, to launch a new advisory services firm called Accendo Leadership Advisory Group. Dee loves helping women grow as leaders, and especially as negotiators. It's a practice that most women find akin to root canals.

"We need to change the frame from an adversarial, icky, dreaded exercise to a positive collaborative, problem-solving approach. And when you think about it, most women are really good at collaboration and problem solving," she said. "When we change the frame, we already start to feel better about it. We must feel better about it, because everything in life is negotiated."

Here are five tips for women to improve their negotiating skills:

- **Know and be yourself.** If you are a good listener, use that strength.

- **Do your homework.** Negotiating is problem solving. Details matter. Most importantly, you have to know the “walkaway point” at which the deal no longer makes sense for us.
- **Ask and ask big.** The only rules are there are no rules, and practice your pitch a lot. Consider the “anchor point,” to determine a starting number for discussion, a point from which you can adjust value up or down. That can change based on existing salaries or other offers. Aim high and start there. Decide what will delight you.
- **Bundle or package to get what you want.** What do I have to get to get what I want? Be creative.
- **Be comfortable with — and use — silence.** Remember this: She who speaks next loses. Respect the silence. Women talk too much. “We use way more words to say the same thing than men. When you win, be quiet.”