

# Breaking Barriers and Taking Control in Your Career with Claire Wasserman of Ladies Get Paid

## **SPEAKERS**

Claire Wasserman, Lara Schmoisman

### **Lara Schmoisman**

This is Coffee N. 5. I'm your host, Laura Schmoisman, our guest today decided to do something about the wage gap. She is Claire Wasserman, founder and author of Ladies Get Paid a platform and a book created to help women advanced professionally. And financially. Claire teaches other women to be their own advocate in their workplace and get the payment and the benefits that they deserve. Claire, I'm so happy that you're here with me again, we did have an Instagram Live, but there's something special about podcasts is my first love. And the first love always stays there somehow. So thank you so much for being here.

### **Claire Wasserman**

Thank you for having me. I'm glad to know that you're not sick of my voice yet.

### **Lara Schmoisman**

Oh, no, I love you. And I can't get enough of you. It's really important that you talk in your book, and you're always approaching as part of your mission, I believe. And it's about negotiation is negotiation and negotiation and negotiation. And it's something so hard to do sometimes.

### **Claire Wasserman**

Yeah, yeah. Well, so I began focusing on salary negotiation, when I realized that it was sort of the only way as an individual that I could possibly combat the wage gap, right, the wage gap. It is systemic, it's overwhelming, it's depressing, right? Well, until we can change the system, right? How do I make sure that I'm at least closing my own wage gap? And that is asking for more money. And there's a couple of things to work through. I mean, of course, there's the mindset part, right, not being afraid to ask. I think a lot of women have this fear that simply by asserting themselves that they might come across as aggressive or or, you know, jeopardize the relationship in some way. They are worried that they can't live up to the amount they're asking for. I've heard that from some women, they're afraid that if they negotiate a big amount oh oh, now they feel like an imposter. Right? Can they deliver? So there's a lot there. But that's not it. That's not it. Because we don't talk about money in this society, we do not get a financial education, we do not learn how to negotiate. So then there's the logistical questions. What am I even charging? How do I find that out? Is Glassdoor the only place I can look. And then the part that I think that is, is actually the most important part and one that's my favorite is you have to make the case.

It's not just about, quote, deserving it. Okay. And it's not just about, quote, being confident, you will get top dollar if you can communicate why you are a top performer. So which of your accomplishments do you talk about? How do you make the case that look, I did this work, and it impacted the bottom line, I made you money, I saved you money, resources, discounts I got from vendors, time, save time. So telling that story is so important. And the last thing is, we have to be ready to respond when they say no. I think women do ask as much as men. I think the problem is, we may get a no and we say, Okay, thank you.

### **Lara Schmoisman**

But I feel like there are a lot of people that they are not even going through the process of asking for the fear of lost.

### **Claire Wasserman**

Yeah, I mean, at the end of the day, you know, it is a luxury to negotiate. I mean, if you are honestly afraid to lose the opportunity, then don't ask, but you're discounting yourself. It's, it's they want you to work there. If you've gotten this far in the interview process, if you have worked there long enough to even be having the discussion of getting a raise, if they lose you, that is bad for them. Okay, it's expensive for them if you walk away, so you're both on the same team. It's interesting there, there's been research that says that women don't ask as much as men. But there's more recent research that's come out that says, actually we do ask, we're just told no more than men. And so what I want women to really prepare for is if you get that no or that not yet, what's your follow up? What's your second ask? Because I think too often we prepare for the first ask. And especially now during COVID, right, budgets can be tight, things a little bit different. So we can talk a little bit more about well, what do you say when they say now,

### **Lara Schmoisman**

But negotiation is not only about money. That's something I want to put out there because many people think us is all about making the salary or making Mad Money and say, Well, maybe you cannot give me more money. But we can you can give me more vacation. You can give me more time off. There is other ways of negotiating.

### **Claire Wasserman**

Absolutely. And it's kind of like the way that you look at your job and money in your life. It's a holistic picture, right? I mean, you could go work for a company that pays you a big salary, but you hate working there. So it's not always about the money. It's things like you just mentioned right? Vacations days, it's ultimately it's called full compensation, right? you're negotiating an entire package when you're hired, and things that bring you value the company can give you and they don't cost very much money. So paying for you to go to a conference or once we get back in our cars and taking the subways, right, can they compensate you for your commuting mission? I mean, really, there's so much out there that you can ask for and you should be asking for it.

### **Lara Schmoisman**

I used to work in an agency that everyone, which happens in a lot of agencies, people say very, very light, and a lot of people will be happy to stay late, because they will provide dinner, and they will get a

menu and they will get to choose some have a fancy dinner. For me my encouragement was to be efficient, be fast, and my perk was getting there on time to go home with my family. So our perks were conflicting.

### **Claire Wasserman**

Hmm. And that's where the negotiation comes in. Every time that we make an ask, you have to imagine what's in it for them, right? How are they going to receive this? How do you position it as a benefit? And so proactively addressing all the reasons they might say no, or have an issue and address that, address that and you know, you can't have it all. So think about kind of the one, two and three of what's most important to you in terms of your work your work life balance and have that be part of the discussion of your full compensation.

### **Lara Schmoisman**

Yeah. And I think the moment that you decide that you're ready to go and have your ask, you also need to be ready to get have your gifts.

### **Claire Wasserman**

Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. And this is where it's important to check in with yourself about how is this whole thing going, right, the kind of work that I'm doing the environment that I'm in, what are my goals? I think, too, oftentimes, we're just, you know, our heads down, we're working hard, we're assuming that our work will speak for itself. Oh, no, you need to speak for your work, you need to be making decisions about where you're going. If we just keep waiting to be recognized and rewarded... We're gonna be waiting a long time.

### **Lara Schmoisman**

Yeah, well, but from the other side, I can tell you as a company, also, there are some limitations, some rules and logistics that we put as a company, because it's the only one way to work, otherwise, it will be chaos. And in, in many places, like in my company, myself, where we creates a domino effect, that if one things fail, it will push the other one and the next one and the next one. So you need to be aware of what are your ask, according to where you're standing. Because if someone was asking my team, I want to work completely opposite hours of your team, the rest of the team, sorry, that that cannot do because we work as a team.

### **Claire Wasserman**

Right. And that's where I think it's great to be asking questions. I mean, certainly before you get hired, I mean, inquiring about the company culture and having them give you specifics. But it's you know, if you're not sure about how you're being compensated, ask at I mean, this is a great thing to do. When you work at the company, and you feel like you're not going to be getting that raise or you know, you know, the conversation is going to be a little awkward, whatever, you can start out by saying I want to understand how this company, you know, is making money, how I fit into it, how I can be the best leader that I can be? I'm you know, I want to make sure we're doing really well here again, I know times are tough, so you're making it part of a larger conversation around the work that you do. So it's not just about kind of the money, the money, the money.

**Lara Schmoisman**

And that's great when you're negotiating a company. And you know, what happens as you always take more and more, because you're ready for more and you want to grow in the company, but many times you're not compensated for what all the stuff you took, you took and you demonstrated that you can take on and you can take responsibility, and you're respectful, and you're responsible. And what's next. I mean, nobody said no, when you were taking more stuff.

**Claire Wasserman**

Yeah, I think, you know, it's tough because I always encourage women, you know, go above and beyond. But wait a minute, hold on, do we need to be compensated for the above and beyond? Do we need to make sure that it's not at the expense of our sleep and our sanity? I think have an idea of what you will eventually asked for Okay, and what you need to do to get there. So if you have an idea that you want to you know, build certain skills, or have more face time with the client, or maybe get to the next level, right, you start talking to the people who are above you and you ask them what their challenges are so you can get a sense of you know, what you might do if you were in that role, you might need to prove yourself for a little bit at least you know, when you have your first win of any kind, it could honestly just be good feedback from a client. Go talk to your boss, not about you give me the raise now. No, no Now it's the beginning of a lot of a larger conversation of this is where I'd like to go in terms of compensation, and or level. What's your advice for me? If you were in my shoes? What would you do?

**Lara Schmoisman**

Oh, I love that I always that making the other one people, hey, you're a smart person, you got what you got for a reason, what would you do? I mean, that's a great way to put it

**Claire Wasserman**

exactly at but that being said, it's just important not to put too much on them, right? Don't come to them and say, I have no idea what my direction is. And like, what should I do? Right? Because like they're busy, so have an idea, right? Have something specific and and maybe even give suggestions, right? Like, I think it could be a good way to go and do this, or take this class. Or maybe I could shadow this person for a week, right? So have some suggestions of how you can get to where you want to be, and you know, even salary, have a suggestion of what you found in the market and then get their feedback.

**Lara Schmoisman**

Lately, the wall, also stern in a way that a lot of people and assigned to be independent contractors, a lot of people work as a freelancers. And that doesn't mean that you need to stop negotiating. I mean, I always I even as having a company have to negotiate with my clients, and say, but what I learned if you choose to do something for free, or for a lower rate is to make sure the other person understand that you're communicating. And I think that that's one of the biggest problems are for communication issues.

**Claire Wasserman**

Oh, my goodness, like any relationship.

**Lara Schmoisman**

Exactly. So if you're not communicating that we did something for free, because you like that person, or if you want to give them a taste of what you can do for them, or whatever, what for whatever reason, you're doing it, you need to communicate it, but this one is free, the next one won't be. So there are no surprises, because you're setting up expectations,

**Claire Wasserman**

especially important, even though you work for them, you know, or let's say, you know, you have a manager, you have to actually manage them, you know, and something I always do is when somebody asked me what my rate is my speaking rate partnering rate, I tell them a very high amount. And then I say, but I really believe in what you're doing. And I want to work with you. What's your budget, I'm sure we can figure this out together, right. So I'm, I'm acknowledging, and I'm asserting This is my value, I'm starting really high. But I'm not saying it's this or I'm walking, I mean, eventually I get to a point where I do have a bottom line. But in the beginning, I want to, you know, I want to really show them that this is something that we figure out together. And that it's a conversation,

**Lara Schmoisman**

you're creating a relationship, you're creating a partnership, but in any kind of relationship. Communication is essential. Oh, absolutely. If you don't communicate your needs, it's even in a boyfriend girlfriend relationship in a couple in a friendship. He has to be a two way street.

**Claire Wasserman**

Totally, totally agree.

**Lara Schmoisman**

I mean, you don't want to be that needy friend that is always calling. And you don't want to be I mean, you know those friendships. I mean, we're talking about the girls communities here. So we know the needy friend, or we know the friend that only can be there for you when you're having a bad time.

**Claire Wasserman**

Yeah, and it's it's tough for those of us who are people pleasers, I find, if you're somebody who always wants to make another person happy. That's it's good in the sense that if you have a client, you're you're gonna serve them. But it's bad in the sense that you may let them overstep and scope will will change. So it is a balance of being diplomatic. And you know, and again, like you do want to accommodate another person, I just cannot be at the expense of yourself.

**Lara Schmoisman**

Exactly. There's something else that I want to touch base Assad, because you're like me, you're a connector, you love to make introductions and to connect people and to help people because you are a helper you are. And I feel the same way. I always want to help everyone. And I did so many times even on my own expense, that it's something that I'm working on. And I'm learning every day, and I'm getting better. But anyway, there's so many people out there that they say, Oh, no, I don't mix. I don't want to connect people. Because if something goes wrong, I'm in the middle. And I feel the opposite. They feel like okay, if it doesn't work, that's a word. There's two adults say are intelligent people, otherwise, I will never connect them. And it's up to them to make it work.

**Claire Wasserman**

Right, right. Listen, if all of us just stuck to ourselves and didn't help each other, then none of us would get very far. There's a great book called give and take by Adam Grant, who really illustrates how connecting other people is how we all grow our networks and it actually helps you to connect other people because you become Very valuable to a lot of people, you become the person that people have in common. And you'll get more opportunities because of it. So when you help others, you're also helping yourself. And that's how I honestly, that's how I built my whole career. I mean, I never got a job. When I applied online, I'm not even sure I ever got an interview, maybe once the jobs that I've had in my life have come through relationships, the way that I built ladies get paid was because I act asked a number of women in my life, who do you recommend to come to these events? And then when I would get connected, I would say, who do you recommend should come to these events? Now we have 75,000 women. So I'm the living proof that connecting again not only helps others, it also helps you and pay it forward.

**Lara Schmoisman**

Oh, my God, to me exactly is paying for and it's called good for your soul. I mean that, but you have to do it first with intention, like I always say, but then you have to do it with no agenda.

**Claire Wasserman**

Right? Right. Right. Absolutely. And you have to ask permission to I think, you know, when you said earlier, people being afraid that if they connect their folks that they're gonna, like, you know, drop the ball or something, you need to make sure that you've spoken to the separate people, and you say, Hey, is it okay if I make this introduction? And if they say yes, then that means they're already bought in, and you don't have to worry about it. It's, it's when you like, throw somebody onto an email chain, and you don't really you're not clear about it. I hate that's one of my pet peeves. Because I don't know what to do. I don't know who this person is. I don't know why I should be talking to them. Like I have no context, connecting is key. But how you connect is also key.

**Lara Schmoisman**

Yeah, and also how you're, I mean, I love making connections. And but then, for example, is if someone make a connection to me, I put yourself you in BCC, so I don't fill your fill up your email box, and like, I take myself out of the equation. I mean, I'm the kind of person who go to the market. And probably I come back with a client because I met them in the line. But

**Claire Wasserman**

Me too

**Lara Schmoisman**

Because I love to hear people's stories, and I love to chat with them. And something which is really important, is to remember people's names, to me is essential, and should listen to the story. And then even if you made them 100 years later, is like, Oh, yeah, you were there. You did that. And yeah, remember that? And because people feel like your value that that they are not a number that they they

are that person. And in this life, we became numbers in so many ways, like how many followers you have, but you don't know them, you don't engage them with them

**Claire Wasserman**

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. I mean, it's interesting. They know me, because I think most of my followers have come from classes that I teach or conferences that I speak at. So but I don't, you know, I don't necessarily know them. So I love it when people DM me, or they, you know, repost things that I've posted. And there's a couple of women I've become very close with, because they consistently show up, you know, they were coming to my events, they email me and they say, How can I help you? And I, I'm grateful to them, you know, they started by following me, but now I'm definitely following them. So it's kind of a no, it's easy. Just be consistent, show up, pay it forward. And you'd ever know where you can go and who you're going to meet and what will happen.

**Lara Schmoisman**

The truth is, it's not about the numbers. It's about the consistency like many people ask me, hey, you're in marketing, why I have so many... so little followers. Why do I need more?

**Claire Wasserman**

Mm hmm. Yeah. Yeah. I mean, I only have 10.2k, which, for somebody like me, it's not very much, honestly, I just don't want to be on my phone. That's the that's the truth is I do like making content that part's fun. But if I can just avoid being on my phone, and just like live my life, I it's really more for me like a lifestyle thing. We look at screens all day. I don't want to have to I don't have to do it again.

**Lara Schmoisman**

To me, I have a social presence, my team work on it. And I'm happy that they do it. And I feel that there is a message to be said. But at the same time, that's not how I build relationships with people. If someone wants to build a relationship with me, there is an email they can reach out if we align we'll make it happen. And there's so many other ways to connect. I speak in so many places I'm out there podcasts. There's so many other ways to connect. I always say that social media until a year ago, my social medias were all private.

**Claire Wasserman**

Oh, wow. Okay.

**Lara Schmoisman**

And this last year, say okay, I'll put it and we grow. And that's fine and I'm happy about it, but it's not Not something that I obsess. I don't care. Right, right.

**Claire Wasserman**

Well, balance is important.

**Lara Schmoisman**

It's all important. Yeah. So let's go back to final classification on negotiation for a minute. Your advice in making someone comfortable into going to negotiation? What are the check in points?

**Claire Wasserman**

Mm hmm. Well, first, know that this is an opportunity to look really good, okay, you're going in there to talk about work that you've done, what you're proud of how you've helped the company, you're going to be well researched. So you're going to look really professional. So try to instead see this as something to look forward to, instead of dread. Something else that I really encourage everybody practice mean, I have scripts in my book, ladies get paid. Get those scripts, get somebody to practice with you. And as you practice, really observe your body. Okay? When do you start getting nervous, right? When does your heart start beating faster? Or your, you know, your palms are getting sweaty? And don't fight it, just accept it say, this is where I'm at this may happen. And you know what, it probably won't happen, or if it does, you're going to have seen it before. I think the issue is when we practice, we think of that expression, practice makes perfect. Well, hold on. Now, that's a lot of pressure, you know, perfect makes pressure. So instead of again, fighting, oh, my God, this is what I'm not good at, or this is just where I'm at and have faith that you've practiced it. And whatever happens will happen. It'll be a good story afterwards.

**Lara Schmoisman**

Yeah. And just be prepared for the journey. And we prepare that sometimes the rules of the game change, and that you need to adapt.

**Claire Wasserman**

Yeah, yeah. And this is a person who has to negotiate their own salary, as well. And they're going to have to go back to their boss. I mean, usually, sometimes they're, they're the gatekeeper. But other times they have to go make your case to somebody else. They are on your side. Just always remind yourself, they are on your side.

**Lara Schmoisman**

Yeah, that's, that's great advice. Thank you so much, Claire. I always enjoy you so much. Enjoy your clarity or advise your warmth on everything you do. They are...

**Claire Wasserman**

I have to say, I love the way you say negotiation. It's so good. It's like, way better the way you say it than I say it.

**Lara Schmoisman**

I don't know. It's just about the accent. I guess that the sexy accent Yes,

**Claire Wasserman**

the accent is excellent in negotiation fantastically pronounced. I love it.

**Lara Schmoisman**

Thank you so much. And thank you for being here.

**Claire Wasserman**



Thank you for having me.

**Lara Schmoisman**

Thank you for joining us. If you like the show, remember to leave a review. I will really appreciate it. If you want to know more about marketing and and myself, follow me on Instagram. My handle is Lara Schmoisman. Was so good to have you here today. See you next time. Catch you on the flip side. Ciao.