THE POSTDOC EXPERIENCE:
NEGOTIATION WITH AN IMBALANCE OF POWER

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SOUND FAMILIAR?

• Offered a postdoc that is funded through a federal fellowship program. The lab has a lot of grants.

• Negotiating start date -- PI indicated that if I were to pick an earlier date, it might not be enough time for the fellowship paperwork to go through. If needed the lab would cover my salary for the first few months.

• Relevant because I know that the PI/lab has some money that they can allocate to payroll.

• Wanted to negotiate as a matter of principle. I negotiated my offer for graduate school with success.

• Found out that the federal fellowship is actually a pretty competitive rate (50K).

• State taxes will be higher -- don't know if health insurance costs will increase. Those factors could knock take-home pay down a few $K. Gathering data on insurance to see if it is factor to cite if I end up asking for more $$.

• WAIT FOR IT So....is it unwise to negotiate this offer given that it is competitive and more than I expected? The PI has so far been extremely kind and reasonable. But I don't know if attempting to negotiate violates some sort of protocol and might start things off on the wrong foot.
WHY POSTDOCS DON’T NEGOTIATE?

- Fear of conflict
- Fear of the employer’s power
- Fear of negotiating poorly
WHY SHOULD YOU NEGOTIATE?

• Most employers are open to negotiate offers
• Some employers might offer less because they expect to negotiate with the candidate
• 100% of employers want their applicant to accept and be satisfied/happy with the terms of the offer
• But... only about 25% of applicants actually negotiate
• Both sides can win if you negotiate well
• Remember if you receive an offer, they want you!
THE MOST IMPORTANT RULE IN NEGOTIATION...

If you ask, and you hear no, you feel stupid in the moment, if you don’t ask you feel stupid for the rest of your life.
WHERE ARE WE HEADED?

• Some critical negotiation skills to effectively manage your negotiations:
  • The difference between positions and interests
  • Getting creative

• Dealing with power:
  • Timing
  • BATNA
  • Framing, Anchoring , and agenda setting
  • Persuasion…what will work?
KEY TO ALL YOUR NEGOTIATIONS…POSITIONS AND INTERESTS

• Shift your focus from positions (what you want) to understanding interests (why you want something)
• Interests Ice Berg
• Know your interests as well as the others
GETTING TO YOUR INTERESTS

You must be clear about:

- What you want exactly (being very specific)
- Why you want what you want (your logic and rationale)
- What all your interests are – not just $
- Which interests are most important (ranking)
- The others ability to meet your interests
- Can you assert effectively for your interests? If not, why not?
POSTDOC NEGOTIATION

What are all the things of value you can ask for?
GETTING TO THEIR INTEREST

• Practice empathy like Carl Rodgers
• Tactical empathy

Some questions designed to uncover their interests:

• Ask why and what:
  • “Why is this really important to you?”
  • “What underlying concerns do you have?”
  • “What is the real problem here for you?”

• Confirm:
  • “As I understand your interests, they are …”
  • “Have I misunderstood any of your interests?”
GETTING CREATIVE…

• There once was a king who had three sons.
• When he died he left them 17 camels.
• To the first he left 1/2 of the camels,
• To the second he left 1/3
• And to the third he left 1/9.
• Unfortunately, 17 does not divide out evenly.
• So they went to a wise old woman and asked her advice.
• What could she have told them?
NEGOTIATION IS A PROBLEM SOLVING EXERCISE

An employee walks into her bosses office and asks for a raise.

The boss replies “Sorry we are already over budget for the year.”

Let’s imagine the reason the employee is asking for a raise is not money. What else could it be?

With a partner, in 2 minute come up with other reasons
WHEN YOU DON’T HAVE POWER IN NEGOTIATION IT OFTEN FEELS LIKE…
A FEW IDEAS FOR DEALING WITH POWER WHEN YOU DON’T HAVE IT…

1. Consider a key dimension -- timing
2. BATNA (Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement)
3. Framing, Anchoring, and agenda setting
4. Persuasion
TIMING HELPS OR HURTS WHEN YOU DON’T HAVE POWER…BE STRATEGIC

Necessity never made a good bargain.

~ Benjamin Franklin
BATNA (BEST ALTERNATIVE TO A NEGOTIATED AGREEMENT)

Best course of action if you cannot reach agreement
BATNA EXAMPLE IN YOUR CONTEXT

- Salary negotiations before a postdoc and during renewal?
- What does your BATNA look like? How might it change?
- What about the PI’s BATNA?
FRAMING, ANCHORING, AND AGENDA SETTING
PERSUASION
ARE YOU SPEAKING THEIR LANGUAGE?
QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU!