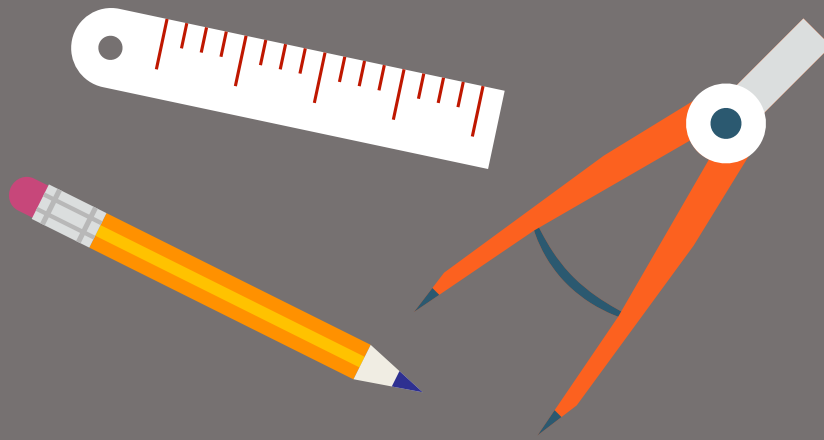


# 10 Things to Avoid Saying When Asking for a Raise – and Why



PRACTICAL TOOLS

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Sometimes we're so worried about what we should say when asking for a raise that we forget the things we shouldn't.

Many things can run through our heads when we're trying to negotiate for a raise. A lot of them, however, should stay internalized – even if the temptation to say them tries to take over.

Here's a countdown of 10 things not to say when asking for a raise – and why:

## 10. I do most/all of the work around here.

Is that so? You might feel that no one gets anything done other than you, but you're probably mistaken. Co-workers may not work at all the same pace, so it sounds judgmental to compare your work ethic to theirs unfavorably. Your focus for asking for a raise should be for your efforts and contributions alone, not how they stack up against the rest of your team. Doing that can make you look petty.

## 9. I don't feel appreciated.

This is as whiny as it sounds. If you're judging appreciation solely by the amount of your paycheck, your bosses will take notice and deduce that you get no satisfaction out of your job other than heading to the bank. It doesn't make a good impression to equate pay with the only real reward you get from working.

## 8. I do three people's jobs, so I think I'm entitled to more pay.

You want to go into your raise negotiation with a list of how you contribute to your department and the company, sure.

But stick to the facts and avoid underscoring that the department is understaffed and you're unwillingly picking up the slack. If you feel you go above and beyond your job requirements to get things done, say so, but keep things positive. Harping on how many hours extra you put in or how you rescued an overworked employee makes you sound superior.

## 7. So-and-so makes more than I do and it's not fair.

There's a reason many companies keep employees' salaries confidential: They don't want wars breaking out over who is compensated more. In worst cases, it might be to hide some form of inequality or discrimination, but more likely it's because even people working at the same level have different education and skill levels. There could be a variety of above-board reasons your cubicle neighbor might make more than you do, but they're irrelevant to your raise request. Again, keep the focus on what you bring to the table, not everyone else.

## 6. The company spends a lot of money on \_\_\_\_\_, so why can't I get a raise?

No matter how big a cog you are in the wheel, remember that you don't run the company. Thus, you're not in charge of making the budget decisions. So it's unwise to call them into judgment when asking for raise. This again is about making your request focus on you and your abilities and efforts, not about how the company should (or shouldn't) spend its profits.

## 5. I don't understand what the company's yearly budget has to do with me.

This is a follow-up to #6 and again shows that you're not thinking of the needs of the company before yourself. Going into a raise negotiation without understanding how your company operates and what drives its success makes you appear small-minded. Even if you're tempted to eye-roll when your boss cites budget concerns during your raise meeting, the only smart move is to say that you understand the company's needs come before any one employee.

## 4. I thought I was doing my job well enough.

"Well enough" won't get you anywhere when it comes to salary negotiating. Some people think that if they're at a minimum fulfilling the duties they were hired to do, they should automatically be considered raise material. But things often don't work that way. If this is your approach, you can likely expect nothing more than a paltry cost-of-living raise (if you're lucky). Your aim should be detailing how you do your job to the best of your ability and are eager to learn more.

## 3. I think I'm underpaid for my experience and education.

This one isn't an absolute no-no, but never throw it out there without some concrete evidence to back up your claim. If you think you have some clear-cut stats to make your case, include them as part of the reason you're deservedly asking for a raise. But here again, remember – the decision to give you a raise comes down to you and you only. So if you go with this approach, be ready to back it up with specifics on just what your education and experience bring to the job and the company.

## 2. I desperately need the extra money for \_\_\_\_\_ .

Many people throw this into their raise negotiation because they think it makes them sound more sympathetic (as in, "I wouldn't be asking if I didn't really need it!"). But it's important to remember that, even if your boss understands your position and might genuinely be sympathetic, that's no real grounds for receiving a raise. It just plays to emotions, when what you should play up are your skills and achievements.

### And the #1 utterance to avoid:

## 1. I can probably get a better salary at another company.

The first thing your boss will think? Well then, why don't you! This is no time to play hardball if you don't have a specific offer to counter with. Even if you've done your research and are fairly certain someone doing your job at another company makes more than you do, avoid lobbing this pitch – or you may be the one striking out.