THE NEGOTIATION PREPARATION TOOLKIT

A practical, printable framework for preparing your next important conversation. Use it for a job offer, salary discussion, client deal or everyday decision.

01 DEFINE THE OUTCOME

What do I want to achieve? Be specific about your ideal result, your acceptable result and what you will not agree to.

Ideal outcome: _____

Acceptable outcome: _____

Walk-away point: _____

02 UNDERSTAND THEIR WORLD

What might matter most to the other side? Think about constraints, pressures, timelines, risks and what success would look like to them.

Their likely priorities: _____

Their likely concerns: _____

03 PREPARE YOUR VALUE

List the evidence you can use: achievements, alternatives, market facts, time saved, or outcomes created. Focus on why your proposal makes sense to them.

My strongest evidence: _____

04 CREATE OPTIONS

Identify at least three variables besides price or salary: timing, flexibility, responsibilities, scope, support, delivery terms or future review.

Option A: _____ Option B: _____ Option C: _____

ASK WITH CONFIDENCE

05 OPEN COLLABORATIVELY

Example: “I’d like to find an outcome that works for both of us. Could we talk through what matters most and explore the options?”

My opening line: _____

06 ASK BEFORE YOU ARGUE

Useful questions: “What matters most to you?” “What would make this workable?” “What flexibility do we have?” “What concerns would we need to address?”

My best question: _____

07 RESPOND TO PUSHBACK

Example: “I understand that constraint. If we can’t change that variable, what else might be possible?”

A likely objection: _____

My calm response: _____

08 TRADE, DON’T JUST CONCEDE

Example: “If we can agree on the timing, would you be open to adjusting the scope?” Each concession should have a purpose.

What could I exchange? _____

09 CLOSE CLEARLY

Summarise who will do what, by when, and how you will confirm the agreement in writing.

My next action: _____

CHECKLIST BEFORE YOU START

- ■ I know my ideal outcome and alternatives.
- ■ I can explain the value I bring.
- ■ I understand the other person’s likely priorities.
- ■ I have questions and options prepared.
- ■ I am willing to pause rather than rush into agreement.