

She Negotiates

AND CHANGES EVERYTHING...

FORBESWOMAN

Negotiating Strategic Partnerships by Putting Your Skin in the Game

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Gloria Feldt, author of the acclaimed [No Excuses, 9 Ways Women Can Change How We Think About Power](#), had no idea what she was getting into when she said yes to being our guest expert in the [She Negotiates Leadership Retreat](#) which took place last Thursday, June 30. Her closing comment speaks volumes about the benefits of putting our “skin in the game” even when the results may not be predictable.

“What surprised me about the entire day,” says Feldt, “was that everyone stayed so engaged through the entire, incredibly intense workshop.”

We all “met” on [Twitter](#), aided by a chorus of women who sang our praises to each other. But as we worked toward putting the parts and pieces of our first-ever retreat together we ran into a few potholes with our newbie adventure that could have derailed the whole event if not for Feldt’s flexibility and ingenuity.

And Feldt was not the only one. What follows may look like simple scratch my back networking fluff, but there’s much more to be gained from this gratitude list. These are the kind of women and organizations you want to know; the kind who will risk their reputations because the cause we are all aligned behind—parity, power, leadership and change—is far greater than the perceived risk.

Girls with Skin in the Game

[Selena Rezvani](#), a Philly-based author, speaker, and consultant on a mission to increase the number of women in leadership, writes for the [Work in Progress](#) blog on Forbes. She sprinkled Twitter dust on our behalf, as did Kiri Blakeley, author of [Can’t Think Straight: A Memoir of Mixed-Up Love](#), and long time [Forbes columnist](#).

Janet Hanson, founder of [85 Broads](#) and [Forbes blogger](#) made sure we became members to make use of her vast and powerful worldwide network of women, while Cali Yost, CEO and founder of the [Flex Strategy Group](#), [Forbes blogger](#) and [She Negotiates](#) graduate, bumped things up a notch by letting her network know the value she received from our training.

[Camilla Webster](#), a multimedia expert, host and writer and leading business anchor reporter for Forbes and [Forbes Woman](#) is in the middle of completing her first book, *Seven Pearls of Financial Wisdom: The Women’s Guide To Enjoying Wealth and Power*. Yet she took the time to promote our retreat to her network.

We also forged partnerships with our natural networks, including the Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles ([WLALA](#)), the National Association of Women MBAs ([NAWMBA](#)), the National Association of Women Business Owners ([NAWBO](#)), Women’s Economic Ventures ([WEV](#)), [The Scheinfeld](#)

Center for Entrepreneurism and Innovation, Women's Festivals, and Pincus Professional Education.

All of the individual women we asked for help and all the businesses and organizations with whom we partnered, as well as the women who attended the retreat, have an expressed stake in advancing the role of women in leadership. In fact, when asked what they would do with \$1 million (the amount we stand to lose over the course of our careers by not negotiating our first salaries), they all echoed the same leadership goals and causes: education, housing, poverty. In other words, when women are empowered to lead, they make choices that change the social, economic and political landscape.

So forging strategic connections requires that women set aside the tired notion that we can't and shouldn't ask for help and that to prove our worth we must work harder and longer while also endeavoring to do it all.

Feldt calls on all women to turn up the heat on our natural networking capacities by opening the door for other women, and making sure they walk through it. Feldt calls this "Sister Courage."

"Be a sister. Reach out and ask for help when you need it. Give help when someone else needs it. Have the courage to raise issues. Put the two together with action and you have a movement."