Helpful Negotiating Phrases

Responses to the question, “What are your salary expectations?” when the question is asked before an offer is made:

- I’m sure when the time comes; we will be able to work out a fair compensation package. For now, if you don’t mind, I prefer to focus on whether we really have a match here.

- To be honest with you, I feel uncomfortable discussing money right now because I don’t want to box myself in or screen myself out prematurely. First, I’d like to know more about the position and its’ responsibilities.

- I imagine that the company has already established a salary range for the position. What is this range?

- Can you tell me what range you’ve budgeted for the position? Can you tell me how you arrived at that number? (Listen to needs, priorities!)

- It would be easier for me to discuss my salary needs if I understood more about the job and how my qualifications might fit in. Could we discuss the position more in detail?

- I can tell you how much I was earning but until I know more about the responsibilities of this particular job, I can’t really tell you how much I’m looking for here. (Separate past earnings from future income; useful when looking for higher earnings)

- Last year my position was worth…..(go broader than salary, e.g., bonuses, increases).

- Based on my understanding of the market value for the position, I would expect my compensation to be in the of __________.

- Why do you feel my offer won’t work for you? (Your offer denied. Listen and respond to their concerns.)

- Focusing on numbers is not always helpful; could we look at the responsibilities a little more closely? (indicate flexibility, desire to learn more; later revisit compensation when your negotiating position is stronger).