

COMMON OBJECTIONS

When you start a conversation with someone about pay you'll be fighting against the cultural norm of pay secrecy that can found in both your organisation and more broadly in the community. This guide is to help you respond to the most common objections you'll find to starting the discussion about pay. It's not comprehensive but will help you to handle the most common objections.

Background

In the last couple of months we've seen the CEOs of the 4 big banks as well as the RBA Governor be grilled by the Federal Parliament Economics Committee. We've been working with the ALP and have had each of these men (yes they are all men) asked about their approach to pay secrecy.

What's really important to note is that they all/with the exception of CBA1 confirmed to parliament that the either do not have pay secrecy provisions, or for those who do that they will not enforce these provisions. That means that we *can* talk about pay without fear for repercussions.

Common Objections

'I'll get an formal/informal warning'

I can understand you're worried about getting a warning. That would worry me as well. We have our CEO on record telling parliament that his organisation won't enforce those contracts. Lying or misleading parliament is a very serious problem. If one of our line managers tried this one, we'd just escalate it (with help from the FSU) - the CEO is not going to risk his reputation on this matter.

'I'm embarrassed to share my pay info because I think I get paid more/less'

Oh yeah, I totally understand that- I feel the same way actually. The way I've overcome this is by understanding that while I have a say in how much I earn through my REM review, I don't actually have the ability to control how much I earn, or how much others do. The thing I do have control over is whether I share my information and use it to make this a better place to work. If I learn that I earn less than my colleagues, I can use this information to figure out a strategy to fight for a better increase. If I find out I'm earning more, then I want to work with my colleagues to figure out what I'm doing that's more effective in getting better pay increases, so we can learn from each other to make sure there is equity in our pay system. Either way, I've decided that rather than be embarrassed, I'm doing to use this information to make our workplace better. Do you think that might work for you?

'I just don't think talking about pay is the right thing to do'

That's an interesting observation that is completely in line with the culture of our industry. Have you thought about why you don't think it's the right thing to do? If you're not comfortable sharing all your pay information, is there anything you would be prepared to share? Would you share your % increase for this year with others? Or your bonus? Do you think pay is fair here? Is there anyone who you think earns more/less that should be earning more/less? The only way we're going to change things is by taking small steps. Would you consider sharing some of your information?