


Women Don't Rule Redux

By Eva Kaplan-Leiserson

Thank you, dear readers. Your responses to my column “Why Women Don't Rule”

 *Intelligence* (April T+D) have been intelligent, well thought out, and, most important, calm. Here are two major themes that emerged from your letters.

Gender roles. Many of the responses I received (a 60/40 ratio of women to men) ex-

amined whether there are true gender differences or just traditional roles that we fall into. Ross Thornton, curriculum manager for Williams Scotsman, weighs in for traditional roles learned in childhood. He says that a woman can definitely be an authority figure, but she's more often expected to be nurturing and supportive,

while a man is viewed as “the person in charge” who commands respect. It sounds outdated, he concedes, but the cultural assumptions persist.

The idea of learned gender roles is supported by the observations of Ellie Hall, senior faculty member at the Center for Creative Leadership www.ccl.org. She says that in the mixed-gender

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groups she works with, the women often defer to the men during conversation and decision making. However, in the single-sex groups of the Women's Leadership Development program, interaction is evenly shared among participants. Those are only anecdotal observations, Hall admits, but they suggest that women don't lack competence—perhaps just confidence.

(Mrs.) Barri Blauvelt, CEO of management development firm Innovara, adds support to that hypothesis. She cites the dismal number of women health-care executives (only 150 women *in the world* in top-level health-care manufacturing positions) and references a study conducted by the Magellan Group. Women limit themselves by not being aggressive enough to ask for promotions or better compensation, the study found.

“When trade-offs have to be made or fights fought,” Blauvelt says, “we back away.”

Different values. Geraldine Storch, HR consultant, says that in the competitiveness studies, it's possible that the women didn't do their best because they “weren't invested in an artificial outcome that meant little to them.”

Indeed, research conducted by Jack Wolf of Lifelong Learning Partners seems to demonstrate that men and women define success differently. Wolf's doctoral dissertation studied male and

Smart Link

Making sure that women get the training they need to succeed is a priority of the Workforce Investment Act, currently pending reauthorization in Congress. Wider Opportunities for Women <http://www.wowonline.org> convened a panel of experts to discuss their experiences under the WIA www.sixstrategies.org/files/briefingsummary.PDF.

female business owners and found that the men defined success primarily in financial terms, while the women included social contacts, employee morale, turnover, relationships with suppliers, work-life balance, and other factors in their definitions.

Wolf says that if studies asked women to compete

in skills such as networking or work-life balance, the playing field would be more level. “It isn't because of a lack of talent, skill, or even desire that women don't compete in certain areas,” he says. “My work shows that...certain endeavors aren't as important to women” as to men.

What *is* often important to women is motherhood. Frequent feedback contributor Bob Snyder, retired from the U.S. Air Force, notes that women who take time off to raise children are disadvantaged in terms of business relationships, and that might impede their getting ahead despite accomplishments. Mailbox, page 13.

Recent college grad Alyssa Perkins feels that we're asking the wrong questions. Why are women trying so hard to be like men? she asks. “Perhaps [lacking] the same competitive drive as men is our greatest strength. In the chase to become like men, our unique roles have been left undiscovered.”

Training Course of the Month

Here's a training program that proves women can do anything they set their minds to. No, that *girls* can do anything they set their minds to. In Aniak, Alaska, 350 miles west of Anchorage, teenage girls make up the Dragon Slayers, an all-girl firefighting and emergency medical team. Members range in age from 13 to 18 years old.

Pete Brown, a retired Vietnam medic, formed the team after his son had a medical emergency and no EMS team existed in the village to help. As Brown was putting the team together, demand grew and the eight adults couldn't handle all of the emergency calls.

Why no boys? Brown says they resist the strict rules, such as being on call 24/7, being available for ongoing training twice a week, and eschewing any tobacco, alcohol, or drugs.

Brown emphasizes that the girls' level of training and competency is just as high as that of adults. He builds grief management into the training and supervises each call himself.

All of the girls who have left the Dragon Slayers have continued in related careers. A younger group in training, the Lizard Killers, replaces members as they move on.

 Source/Connect for Kids

Top Ten Signs That an Internet University Is a Degree Mill

- 1 . The online university isn't accredited.
- 2 . The university is accredited, but not by an agency recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation
☞ www.chca.org
- 3 . The only admission criterion is possession of a Visa or MasterCard. Academic record, GPA, and test scores aren't required.
- 4 . Students are promised a degree based solely on career experience.
- 5 . Students are promised a diploma within 30 days of paying all fees, regardless of their academic status when beginning the program.
- 6 . Students are promised a degree for a lump sum—usually US\$2000 to \$2500 for an undergraduate degree or \$3000 to \$5000 for a graduate one.
- 7 . The Better Business Bureau in the state the university claims as headquarters has multiple complaints registered against the school.
- 8 . The online admission counselor asserts that Internet-only universities can't be accredited by a CHEA-recognized agency.
- 9 . The university's Website either doesn't list faculty or lists faculty who attended non-CHEA accredited schools.
- 10 . The school is located on a tiny island nation and claims it doesn't need recognition from an outside accreditor.

☞ Source: GetEducated.com. Visit the Website for free listings of accredited distance learning programs.

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