

Conversations About Women in the Workplace: Breakout Group Notes

Session 2: The Leadership Ambition Gap

12/5/13 in Franklin Lobby 1, 55 participants

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Participants were divided into groups based on where they sat, and they were given topics from the *Lean In Discussion Guide* (see below). The groups were asked to answer the questions and to share a few takeaways about their topic at the end of the meeting. Takeaways included observations, tactics, and motivational statements.

Lean In Discussion Guide: <http://bit.ly/19VY12a>

Topic 1: Silencing voices and opinions

Have you ever felt as if you were ignored or silenced? Do you think that treatment was based on your gender? Why or why not?

1. Before meetings, gain allies for presentation of ideas
2. See yourself as a contributor vs. “female” contributor.

Topic 2: Fear is the root of so many barriers that women face

What is your greatest fear? What would you do if you weren't afraid?

1. Make plan to overcome your fear via communication & more
2. Networking and talking with others
3. Getting a mentor
4. Self-awareness= make plans
5. Positive reinforcement plans (something to look forward to)

Be FearLESS

1. Be your authentic self
2. Let your fear be your motivator.

Topic 3: Cultural depictions of career women

Can you think of any movies or TV shows that feature happy, successful men who have both careers and families? What about women?

1. More men shows than women shows, noticed women don't have to work or had help

2. The shows that had women as single or divorced were very strong.

Topic 4: Gender and aspirations for leadership

What gender differences exist regarding aspirations to top positions? Why do you think more men than women say they want to get to the top? Have you seen these gender differences in your own life?

1. Avoid a complete break in education or career
2. Have an ongoing plan & goal
3. Remain available & visible.

Topic 5: Early exposure to gender roles

What roles did your parent(s) play in your childhood home? If you grew up in a house with two parents, was one more responsible for breadwinning while the other was more responsible for taking care of the kids and the house? Looking back, how do you think the way your parents divided things up shaped your thoughts about gender? If you are from a single-parent family, how did your mother/father meet both financial and caretaking responsibilities? Did having a single parent both provide and care for your family shape your thoughts about gender? Do you think the roles your parent(s) played influenced what you think is appropriate or normal for men and women to do?

1. Less gendered roles in younger generations; less pressure from peers
2. Parents can influence/steer towards less gendered beliefs. Families are not powerless
3. More equality in roles given to men/boys and women/girls on TV (e.g. Dora the Explorer).

Topic 6: Gender and leadership

In what ways are women and girls dissuaded from pursuing their goals and becoming leaders? In what ways are men and boys encouraged to pursue their goals and become leaders? Have you ever been described by others as ‘being ambitious?’ Was this said as a positive or negative comment? Have you ever been referred to as “bossy?” How did it make you feel?

1. Women are doing IT and doing MORE
2. Their (parents) roles influenced us but did not define us
3. Women now have broader aspirations and choices.

NOTE: this could fall into one or more categories:

1. Bring another woman into the meeting, project, discussion
2. Keep other women informed of issues, workgroups, opportunities at OP for them to participate in
3. Nominate more men to bring the casserole
4. Show the respect you would show to a man to your women colleagues.