

“Women are not going to be equal outside the home until men are equal in it.”

—Gloria Steinem

The women’s movement has benefited men as well as women since its inception. Each time a door has been opened for women, the men in their lives have joined in their greater satisfaction as complete human beings. More education for women has meant better partners, colleagues, and associates for men. Better working conditions, more attention to equality, and greater focus on outside activities create a more balanced work environment for men and women.

Men have missed out on the joys of parenting, community involvement, volunteer work, and downtime long enough. It’s time for a change in our attitudes toward the sexes. We must each define who we are and who we want to be without allowing the media, our employers, our parents, or the world to do it for us. Society works best when individuals are given their God-given right to the pursuit of happiness and to be all that they can be.

With women ready to assume true partnership at work and at home, quality of life becomes an issue that applies equally to men and women. By sharing leadership, both benefit. The dream of a better life for our children is as important to men as it is to women. Men have daughters, granddaughters, nieces, aunts, wives, mothers, and female associates, and they wish for every advantage for those they care about. A CBS News poll had found that the majority (65%) of women today consider themselves feminists and, perhaps more startling, 58 percent of men are comfortable with the title. These men and women responded affirmatively upon hearing this description of a

feminist: “Someone who believes in the social, political, and economic equality of the sexes.” From my experience, this is not at all surprising. We have reached a time in our history when men and women want what’s best for each other. We do not want gender to stand in the way of what we desire as human beings.

My experience has shown me time and time again that men who have daughters really care about the future of women. When I launched Women’s Business one of our first advertisers was a father whose daughter had just opened her own law practice. He bought her a year’s worth of advertising. He cared about her success and wanted her to be visible in her industry and among her potential clientele. To this day, ten years later, she is still a regular advertiser. I can’t count the number of subscriptions men have bought for their wives and daughters, or how often a husband has nominated his wife for an honor that the newspaper awards. These are true examples of the importance of women’s success to the men in their lives. In other instances, I am often asked by fathers to consult with their daughters on getting a new business off the ground or to help their daughters get networked into the community. These men get it. They know that it isn’t easy to be successful and that being a woman is one more obstacle to face.

They care enough to reach out and ask for help for their daughters, wives, sisters, and female friends. They understand that there are different tracks to success and that the traditional career path is not yet available to most women. So they look for the alternative. They look to those women who have access to the networks they want for the women in their lives to belong to.

On her first interview with Diane Sawyer after becoming the first woman speaker of the house, Nancy Pelosi shared the outpouring of support she had received from men with daughters. They understood that this moment in history meant that their daughters could believe in their dreams and ambitions and relate. It is difficult for men to understand this as they have always had role models. When I grew up in the 1960s, father and-son businesses were everywhere. It was assumed that, if a man had a business of his own and a son, the son had a career path to follow. You rarely heard a story of a dad bringing his daughter into the business. Although, Christie Hefner, daughter of Hugh Hefner, has not only been successful at Playboy Enterprises but she was also selected by Forbes Magazine as one of the “100 Most Powerful Women in the World.” Of course, there are many other famous and not-so-famous women who have taken over from a father or a husband in the past, often after a death, and today more likely due to careful planning, and they have been successful at taking the company to the next level. But the majority of family business stories is still one of men bringing their sons into the business and then turning it over to them. They become the role models for others to follow.

With women owning nearly half of all businesses, however, the scenario is about to have a dramatic change. Research study found that while 91.4 percent of women and men business owners planned to pass their businesses on to their children, women thought of their daughters in their succession plans nearly twice as often as men (37% vs. 19.2%). Men overwhelmingly considered their sons (75.6%), and women thought of their sons slightly more often than their daughters (46.6% of women). Interestingly enough, in

companies with revenues of \$4 million or more, women are as likely as men to pass the business to a daughter (23.9% overall).

The complexity of the mother-and-daughter relationship can be an obstacle but with the current trend of successful women-owned businesses growing, these are obstacles that will be met and conquered. I've personally seen mother-and-daughter companies to help them talk through the issues that are not typical of other employer/employee firms. My experience revealed the biggest challenge was the "letting go" by the mother.

Having worked with other companies with sons and fathers and sons and mothers, this struggle is fairly typical of family-run businesses. Mothers and daughters just tend to have a bit more of an emotional bond that is inclined to get in the way of advancing the agenda. An outside mediator is beneficial for every family-run business. As more and more daughters take the helm at firms, whether from their mothers or their fathers, they will be able to learn from each other the tricks to making it work. The key to achieving a successful transition is about giving children the opportunity at an early age to get a feel for what the work is about.

The opportunity for young children to understand the nature of work is as important today as it was in the 1990's, or in the 1960s. One learns at an early age what real work looks like and helps instil confidence.

Also, I am often asked why it is that women are not forthright at asking for help. Whatever profession they choose, they tend to hold back and think they have to do it all on their own. Men instinctively ask for help and delegate

responsibilities from the start. The debate on whether this difference is the result of men having played more team sports than women should be coming full circle since girls have played more team sports since the passage of Title IX in June 1972. It reads, “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” Girls today have the advantage of learning early on about teamwork. The dramatic success of women on college campuses today may partially be a result of their greater involvement in teams early in life. We are what we learn and what we are inspired by. The important point is that both men and women have daughters and want to believe that they will have equal opportunity to pursue their dreams. Our pride in our children is what keeps us working for a better tomorrow.

The next generation is already different in many ways from this generation. They are women and men for whom “change is constant, communication is instant. They are more comfortable with globalization and working in different ways, anywhere and anytime,” says Catalyst’s president, Ilene Lang. The question is: What advice can we give them? Lang relates a story about giving her son some career advice upon his college graduation and realizing something for herself. Remembering the 1967 movie, *The Graduate*, and the significance of the one-word answer to Dustin Hoffman’s what-to-go-into dilemma—“plastics”—Lang wanted a similarly catchy answer for her son. This is what she told him, and what she discovered for herself as well: “When I was in business school, people said ‘computers,’ and they said computers because that was an industry that was desperate for talent in the 1960s and 1970s and they would hire women—and that was really important. But, I don’t have a

pithy little one-word answer for you. I will tell you to go find a company with a great reputation, where there is integrity in the leadership, where they will train you and invest in your future.”

And here is Lang’s epiphany: “Lo and behold, my son chose a company with a woman CEO. When I thought about that, I figured out the one word: The one word is ‘women.’ If you want to find companies that are going to be around forty years from now, the word of advice to the future is ‘women’—that’s where the competitive advantage comes from, not because women are better, but because companies that develop and advance women are working toward sustainability, because they can include differences, and they can see a world in the future that is different from the past and seek meritocracy comparable with representation, and that’s the true measure of a company that is reinventing itself.”

Yes, there are advantages for both men and women as they have the opportunity to work for and report to women. It breaks the stereotyping of bosses of the past and provides a new meaning to who sits in the corner office. It can’t be said often enough that these gender role reversals, as they may be seen by this generation, will prepare the next generation for gender parity in all situations—paving the way for what needs to be a respect for men in the home. Mr. Mom, Madame President, Ms., Mrs., and Mr. should all be titles of respect. Let’s reach beyond the glass ceiling at the office and the linoleum floor at home by envisioning men and women in both places. For the first time in our history we may have the occasion to watch a new role model evolve—that of First Gentlemen. Every first has the opportunity of designing the role for others to follow. I look forward to watching the next generation of men

respond to this important role traditionally held by a woman, and making history around the world utilizing the power that this new positioning represents. An ambassador to other countries, the First Gentlemen will speak volumes about equality of the sexes in America.

Often most young women do not see the challenges that face them as career women. They see themselves able to compete directly with men as they are confident about their education and abilities. They are unfamiliar with the struggles of their sisters from past generations and believe that their performance will speak for itself and get them to where they want to go. They have heard of glass ceilings and old boys' networks but they see only opportunity ahead. Today's young women also know that they have options—the ability to choose what profession to pursue and how high to reach. They feel equally prepared as their male counterparts for the future.

Having a long-range plan of when to get your education, get married, start a family, buy a house, start a business, plan for your children's education, and save for retirement is something both young men and women are thinking about. There is no playbook on just how to do it right, however. When I am asked these questions by young women, and it happens every time I visit a college campus, I generally give my flip answer: "Don't get married if you don't have a boyfriend. Don't have a baby if you aren't pregnant. And if you want to start a business, you better get a day job because that's what will pay the bills." This usually snaps them back to realizing that all of this planning just isn't going to work. Life happens and we must do our best to be prepared to make the most of it.

My point is that, for male or female, the rules have changed and each must go after life with all the vitality he or she can muster. It is interesting to note that right now on college campuses across the country, women are excelling more than ever. From valedictorian to leaders in campus groups, women have found their calling. As their numbers on college campuses have increased, women's power has increased, once again proving there is power in numbers. There is currently an outcry to get males back on track with their education and their outlook for the future. If only this trend taking place on the college campus will catapult itself into the world of work and politics that we have been discussing, then we will see true gender parity with this generation.

I adore watching young fathers with their children and know that today's children will have a better opportunity to see themselves for the future when no boundaries have been placed on what they can or cannot be. And yes, I know as well as you that not all families are made up of a man and a woman. How wonderful it is for a gay couple to have the opportunity to choose between who will have the joy of staying home, or the shared responsibility of juggling child care as they both head out to work.

It is clear that nothing in our society is as simple as it was decades ago, but this is not a reason not to see the bright light ahead. By standing up for equality of the sexes in everything we do, we have the opportunity to do what is best for our children while doing the best for ourselves, whether that means one parent stays home or parents rely on workplaces and government to participate in providing healthy, child-safe environments. Studies show that women-owned firms are more accommodating to parents when it comes to

child care or elder care. Women understand better than anybody the demands that are placed on women for the care of loved ones.

With more women running companies, more women in the boardroom providing guidance for human resource departments, more women in politics to focus on social concerns here and abroad, more women leading hospitals or sharing responsibilities in medical groups, more women standing at the front of the college classroom, and more women allocating a non-profit's funding equally to women-and-girls' to that of men-and-boys' issues, America can strengthen its image in the world and reclaim its leadership status. Men win when their choices are respected and they become positive role models as father, caretaker, homemaker, and cheerleader for their children and others. There are many things we can "do over" in our lives, but reliving our children's childhood is not one of them.

Family Leave/Parental Leave

The question is: why? Why, in the richest country in the world, has so little attention been given to what is best for families? Why, when it is clear that the family structure is in trouble, does the United States and the companies and the organizations in it increase working hours rather than look for greater productivity and effectiveness as other countries have done? So much rhetoric is espoused by politicians about the importance of family values, yet little if anything is done to protect employees from being exploited during the most critical moments in their family's lives. As was mentioned earlier, the United States is embarrassingly far behind other countries around the world, and women and men have been penalized long enough for your leaders not making family life the first priority. In countries such as China and Russia, state-run

nurseries have been established, and women have paid maternity leave and a guaranteed job when they return.

In Sweden, men and women have a parental leave law in which men are encouraged to participate in order to become more involved in the family—and they are—70 percent of men take advantage of Sweden’s parental leave.

Closer to the United States, the Canadian Labor Code entitles female employees a standard seventeen weeks of mostly paid, job-protected maternity leave. The law also grants both male and female employees up to thirty-seven weeks of job-protected parental leave, so there is additional leave, though unpaid, for women, and generous time for men with some pay. Maternity and parental leaves are compensated by unemployment insurance, which consists of fifteen weeks of benefits at 60 percent of the employee’s regular wage. All leave benefits are taxable income. This is the federal standard regarding maternity and parental leave laws, but each province can vary. There are conditions of employment, such as six consecutive months of continuous employment with the same employer, before a female can receive the seventeen weeks of absence. The law also demands that when the employee returns to work, he or she is reinstated back to his or her former position with the same wages and benefits.

If the position is no longer available, a comparable position must be offered. “Parental leave may be taken any time during the fifty-two-week period starting the day the child is born or, if adopted, the day the child comes into the employee’s care,” according to the Canadian Labor Code. These are just more examples of countries that put families first. Limited women’s

involvement in the decision making at the legislative level has kept America back in this policymaking arena. Recommendations for paid leave were part of both the 1963 President's Commission on the Status of Women report and the 1967 NOW Bill of Rights. As more women reach the highest levels of government, more attention will be placed on what's best for families—men, women, and children. It's time to focus national attention on what is best for families in America. Clearly, the present course we are on is not working. Work/family balance is a win for men and women. That's why the time for a woman to lead is now.

The United States continues to have the strongest protections in terms of guarantees for equality. But legislation against discrimination, as we know, does not mean discrimination doesn't exist. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 was passed when women were making an average fifty-nine cents for every dollar a man was earning. Today, that number averages in at seventy-seven cents for every dollar a man makes. Equality is too often in the eye of the beholder, and we now know that this pay gap begins within the first year after graduation from college.

Regardless of hours worked, occupation, parenthood, and other factors typically affecting pay, 25 percent of this early gap was unexplained—and determined likely to be “due to sex discrimination.” As we have discussed, the wage gap affects men as well as women. Jobs should not be gender specific, and compensation should relate to the talents and skills needed, not the sex of the participant. Period. The newest census figures show that women earn less than men in every state. The narrowest gap was in Washington, DC, where women earn ninety-one cents for every dollar that a man earns. Women in the

finance and insurance industries earn just fifty-five cents for each dollar a man earns. The hope is that as these two industries focus their attention on the women consumer, women in these professions will become more valuable.

The legal profession as well is riddled with inequities. Within all areas of the legal profession, men's median income is \$102,272, with women earning slightly less than half that. This disparity puts the legal profession at the head of the class for wage gaps. In a country where every available worker is needed—and more so when the Baby Boomers retire—a wage gap is not just illegal, it is counterproductive. Women supporting families and women without families deserve equitable pay for equitable work. We know well that women generally outlive men and that, although they hold the majority of wealth in the country, they also are the majority of the poor. As your government struggles with how to fund the future of social security and Medicare, the first order of business must be to guarantee an end to the wage gap.

What do I see with more women at the helm in political positions? Legislation that benefits families, including the enactment of universal healthcare and education rather than incarceration becoming the norm, along with a more humanitarian approach to your country's social problems to transform your inner cities. Globally, women's power would be seen as strength, not because of harsh words or harsh sanctions, but because of a strong middle class and a commitment to peace. The greatest difference between men and women may just be the most important reason why we need more women in government: the ability and desire to build relationships rather than control those around us—diplomacy over tyranny.

Anyone who has ever worked for a woman knows well her style is about bringing about consensus and working toward a common goal.

Women nonetheless are very capable of aggression and will fight mightily for what they believe in and when they feel they or those around them have been wronged. But they also understand the importance of peace. Men and women benefit when peace is the major objective. Former ambassador Swanee Hunt says, “Women are adept at bridging ethnic, religious, political, and cultural divides. Through my work as chair of The Initiative for Inclusive Security, I’ve interviewed women around the world. Particularly in conflict regions, women have proven adept at cutting across international borders and internal divides. Ironically, women’s status as second-class citizens has been a source of empowerment, since it has forced women to find innovative ways to address problems.”

America’s current relationship with many world leaders is tenuous at best. Our long time standing as the strongest nation on earth and a land of the free where anyone can realize a dream is losing ground. Hunt says, “Global anti-Americanism is on the rise. America and its leaders need to understand why the world loves and hates you. Bringing more women into decision making could fundamentally change the way America does business. Rather than dealing with North Korea or Iran by severing diplomatic relations, I expect a woman would engage all players at the negotiating table. She can empathize with the experience of being ignored, and thus she’ll reach out to others.” I respond with: The alternative—the severing of diplomatic relations—is unacceptable and foolhardy.

When women lead in America, the world will take notice and be prepared to work with you on issues common to you all. Americans have been role models for the world. It's time we make yourselves better role models. You live and work in a global economy and therefore, as our planet becomes smaller, every woman and man must consider what is best for all nations and people on the earth. Your humanitarianism and actions toward peace are at a critical juncture in history. You must have inclusive leadership and social responsibility as your mission at home and abroad.

“One can never consent to creep, when one feels an impulse to soar.”

—Helen Keller

Ten Recommendations

It's time for women and men to take action. But how? What can we do to change the power structure that exists today? I have ten recommendations.

- **First**, every woman must become less judgmental about the other women in her life. We have more in common with each other than with the other gender, and it is our responsibility to educate ourselves to this fact. Every woman knows what I mean when I say this. Every time we criticize another woman for any reason, we lose. We particularly lose if we share our criticism with someone else. Women—be honest. You know that this is true. When you find fault with other women, you present the case that women are faulty—and that includes you. Too often, women criticize other women in the workplace and men view this

as the greatest form of disloyalty—a stab in the back. Men know and understand the importance of backing each other up in the workplace in the spirit of being supportive. Women have yet to learn this.

A 2006 Psychology Today article makes the case that a woman's worst workplace enemy is another woman. The perception that this is true is just as, if not more, dangerous for women because "it reinforces some inchoate portrait of the woman executive as insecure bitch, easily threatened, overly emotional, less able to focus on achievement because she is preoccupied with squelching young talent." Whether or not this is true, we know that there are fewer women at the top in every profession and every industry, and therefore it seems as though we must compete among each other to get there. The article suggests that perhaps women are disappointed as they have expectations of sisterly cooperation.

The truth is that studies show women at the top are less likely to mentor young women than the men at the same firm. This may be because, once at the top, women feel as though they must spend as much time as possible relating to those in the same position in order to keep what they've fought to earn. I've heard this over the years from senior executive women who felt "playing the game" was more important to their career than bringing in others to watch their backs or join their ranks.

Men very rarely, if ever, criticize another man to others. They keep their thoughts to themselves and let the chips fall where they may. You may think I am being insincere with this opinion, but I promise you, degrading other women will never put you in a good light or help other women succeed. It is

true that when she wins, you win. We need more women winning than women losing.

One woman's fall—if it can in truth be called that—must not bring us all down.

Second, career women and women who choose to stay home must find common ground. When books such as *Get to Work* chastise women who choose to stay home to raise a family, they only further the gap that exists between these two groups. Author Linda Hirshman declares that women who choose to stay home have made a meaningless choice. She believes value can only be found in a flourishing life—defined as one that includes a love of work. I believe that a flourishing life can be found at home or at work by both men and women. The fact that our society continues to accept only women in the role at home is what is meaningless. The homemaker role is as important as any other occupation this country has to offer. I've been there. Shame on those who want to find fault with those who find value in creating a home for spouse and children and providing the foundation for a healthy life. There is plenty of tedious work done in so-called work environments that causes the average woman or man to go nuts. Making a bed, cleaning a house, and crafting a meal are not nearly as tedious as some of the tasks one might perform in corporate America—and love of that work, most likely, will not be the motivator. In other words, it is time we value the work that is done at home—the shaping of the next generation—and accept that there are many ways of

(Getting a Place at the Table)

doing it. Women and men are capable of nurturing the next generation, and when we as a society demean the chore of raising children, we demean the role itself.

Is there a performance review for this job? Ask yourself this— what, if any, performance reviews have you been accustomed to that really took into account the long-term importance of the job? Most performance reviews only take a look at the goals and objectives of the months previous to the review process. The review criteria are generally based on short term rather than long-term goals. No one can disagree with the fact that parenting is a long-term job, and no performance review early in the process can determine the long-term effect of being present in a child's life. The youngest generation, is everyone's responsibility, and until we really become accountable to this fact, we as a country are hurting ourselves as a world leader. Think about the fact that in the past twenty years, your technology has substantially changed the way we work.

Computers, cell phones, PDAs, teleconferencing, and more have allowed work to be done 24/7 anywhere on the planet. Yet, your idea of parenting hasn't changed much. The work/life balance that is so desired just doesn't add into the equation. Women who want to have it all find that they can't do it all at the same time. So what is the answer to this dilemma?

The answer is in my **third** call to action: Men and women: Don't allow the media, or anybody else for that matter, to define who you are. Hunter, gatherer, assertive, aggressive, CEO, assistant, and on and on. You and only you should decide who you are and what you bring to the table. Leaders are people who know themselves well and go about expressing themselves to

anybody and everybody they come across. Leaders are not afraid to stand out in a crowd, to be different, to take risks, or to make mistakes. It's the nonconforming that allows leaders to advance their ideas and be seen separately from others. Women are the perfect nonconforming leaders with their intuitive leadership style. Remember grammar school, when the teacher picked on the boys time and time again because they were louder and out of their seats repeatedly?

(Yes, I once was a teacher). Life isn't grammar school. We no longer have to kowtow to the boys just because they spend so much time out of their seats and in our faces. The true leaders may just be those who are able to restrain themselves and are ready to get the job done. The hip and hollerin' that goes on in movies such as *The BoilerRoom* or *Two for the Money* may be fun to watch, but it clearly shows the juvenile side of business at its worst.

Are all men really risk takers? It's time you looked behind the curtain to see that the one you think is the all-knowing, all-powerful ruler is just like the little man in *The Wizard of Oz*—a simple man using his tricks to appear great and powerful. Or, in other words, not that different from you and me.

The smoke and mirrors used by too many leaders keep the potential next group of leaders (women and some men) at bay—or have them leaving in droves to make their mark elsewhere. The time is now for men and women to stand up and scream, "I'm as mad as hell and I'm not going to take it anymore!" (Thank you, actor Peter Finch, in the movie, *Network*). You are the richest country in the world and have the greatest resources at your disposal, yet you haven't been able to figure out how to utilize the talents of 100 percent of your population.

Fourth, it is time to demand equality. That means, as a start, quotas for female representation in the boardrooms across America. It is not enough to report annually on the progress that corporations are making in recruiting, interviewing, and selecting women to join them in the boardroom. It is not enough to measure annually the number of women earning their rightful place in the top senior executive positions at America's corporations. It doesn't make sense for you to expect that the next generation of women will watch as this generation of talented women is rejected for these positions and will still want to pursue the dream that ends in disappointment.

So, if you don't change this now, when? As has been pointed out, women are losing ground in the race to the top, and this loss has, and will continue to have, a dramatic effect on how young women perceive their opportunity for corporate success. When Norway boasts 28.8 percent of women on board seats, Sweden 22.8 percent, Finland 20 percent, and Denmark 17.9 percent, versus our 14.6 percent, you in America and myself must demand change.

Improving the statistics is not just about performance. It is also about changing the comfort zone's definition. Quotas are the way to show intelligent people year after year that diversity is beneficial, not only for the company's bottom line but also for the shareholders. That will be the tipping point. Without quotas, there will be no urgency and no change. Like water, comfort seeks its own level.

And then we must demand that there be equal gender representation with appointees to state and federal government offices. These are the people who

make the laws that govern us all, and women are the majority. Just as your ancestors demanded no taxation without representation, women must demand representation now. We must not allow the press to characterize women as ignorant regarding foreign policy as they did with Geraldine Ferraro. What she told CBS News about her 1984 vice presidency run has every chance of being repeated today, but in a different year, and with a different face: “I had been in Congress not a tremendously long period of time, but I certainly had more knowledge about foreign affairs and other things than Ronald Reagan did when he became president of the United States. So, I was secure. I didn’t have a problem with how I would deal with the Soviet Union. But the press did. Ted Koppel. did. I mean, I was taking a test every time I went in for an interview.”

We have qualified women to fill the positions locally and nationally.

We have the vote and the money and now we must use it to put women in power. Yes, I’m asking you, no, begging you, to vote for women. It is the only way women will truly have equal representation in government. You have seen how the dialogue changes when women have a voice in government. A focus on education, healthcare, national security, and equal wage is in the best interest of every American. If not now, when?

We must demand that the White House Women’s Office of Initiatives And Outreach be reopened to continue the work it began in the early 1990s. The office, launched by then-President Clinton and directed by Betsy Myers, was established, as Myers said “to provide women a seat at the policymaking table.” The office coordinated federal agencies’ programs that addressed the interests of women with the women they were designed to assist. Most important, the office provided women a voice and a chair at the table of

government. Until true gender equality is reached in American government, women have the right and the need to be heard through a separate office when necessary. Women are the consumers and the voters and the most educated, so they should not have to wait another forty-seven years, or seventy-three years, or two hundred years, or however many more years it will take for the current structures to catch up with what is needed now.

My fifth point: We, men and women, must take it personally that there is a wage gap. If you find that you are not being paid fairly, bring it to the attention of your boss. Often, this is all it takes to have the matter rectified. If you are not taken seriously, you must do the work in your organization to find out if the problem is gender based.

If you are in a leadership position, you can ferret out the wage inconsistencies: One female leader once said “I don’t know if people look for it like I do. I go to the women’s names on the list and I look to see whether or not they are being paid equitably. I have found unconscious inequities in compensation and when I do, I go back and fix them. You look at two people—a man and a woman side by side—and say, they’ve been here the same amount of time, done basically the same work, so why isn’t she making as much as he is? That’s not right, it has to be fixed.”

“First, I underestimated how hard it is for women to talk about this [their wage]. They need their job and they are afraid of losing it. They have a great fear. They need the paycheck. Second, the dialogue must get started. Women won’t act until they talk about it.” So I ask you, if not now, when? There is no excuse for a wage gap in your country based on gender. As we have discussed earlier, the wage gap hurts both men and women and must be rectified. Unless

we address the discrepancies in pay scale across all industries for gender and race, we, as a society, are not doing the best we can for all our people.

The next generation are already benchmarking salary and learning to negotiate: “Those already on the job need to get informed about ways to get promoted. Those in mid-career need to gather their allies, talk about what their pay is and how to rectify it. And, finally, professional women, high-earning professional women, have to believe that they have been affected.” Take a look. Take a stand. It’s never too late. Men and women must stand up when they believe wage discrimination is at work. Getting a place at the table means more than just getting a seat. It means security in knowing that every chair has equal clout.

Sixth, we must understand the importance of women’s organizations, supporting them every chance we get, not only with our involvement but also with our checkbooks. Almost every industry has a trade organization devoted to the issues of women in the trade. If you are not a member of your respective women’s trade organization, ask yourself why. Too often, I hear from women that they just want to be treated equally by their peers, not as a woman and particularly not as a representative of a women’s organization in the industry. Unfortunately, these women do a major disservice to the women who put all their energies into securing a place in history for them in their respective industries—not to mention a great disservice to themselves.

Think about the difference women make in your life every day. Think about the difference a women’s organization makes in empowering women to keep at it and fight for every opportunity they can to achieve success.

Here's an example of how you can make a difference. TV station owner Diane Sutter, president and CEO of Shooting Star Broadcasting, started a ten-month executive MBA-style broadcast leadership program for the National Association of Broadcasters because so few women and minorities are owners, 5 percent and 3 percent respectively, in contrast to their 50-percent sales staff representation. "It's designed so the people who teach the course are the bankers, the brokers, the venture capitalists. The participants get the relationships that they frequently haven't had access to and, secondarily, they learn. So it's relationships and information that have not been available to them," she says.

I know that once you "get there" it is difficult to reach back and bring others along. Evelyn Murphy said "I was so busy watching what was coming at me, I never realized how important it was that I watch my back. I wish I had brought more women up behind me to assist me going forward." Women may get to the top but without the pipeline of women behind them, they are isolated and need to rely solely on their own resources. It's time that the pipeline is filled with women, and that women at the top can depend on those around them to support them. It's time they be part of The Club. It's time for women, instead of fearing that they will be seen as a peculiarity by the shareholders, the market, the customer, the media, and their peers, take their place among the leadership in whatever field they choose to pursue.

Too often, I hear from women that once they get into the male-dominated arena, they fear that bringing other women in will label them as biased. Can you imagine—one woman in a sea of men suggesting that another woman be

brought in is seen as bias? If you believe in the power and intellect of women and the importance of diversity, you, woman or man, will want to bring more women to the table. This is the world I want to live in and this is the precedent that America must embrace in order to continue as the world's most powerful country.

Women's trade organizations give credence and visibility to the important roles women play in an industry, particularly in the industries viewed as male territory. The Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS) was founded in 1977 to provide professional and personal advancement and develop industry and government recognition for the increasing involvement of women in the transportation industry. Today, the international organization has more than thirty-nine chapters and forty-five hundred members successfully connecting with women and men and helping to shape a diverse workforce.

How many Americans know that Jane Garvey, appointed by then-President Bill Clinton in 1997 to head the United States Federal Aviation Administration for a five-year term, ran the \$13 billion organization with fifty thousand employees during one of the most critical chapters in American history, the horrific tragedy of September 11?

Since that day, America has relied on the people involved in the transportation industry to provide the highest level of security and safety. Garvey restored America's faith in air travel after the terrorist attack and she did it by building consensus and collaboration. Senator John McCain said, "She's reached out to a lot of segments of the industry and she's done a good job listening to them." Garvey is not only a role model, she has also provided visible recognition that

women do succeed in the transportation industry and therefore she has made it easier for others to follow.

President George W. Bush appointed Mary E. Peters the fifteenth secretary of transportation in September 2006. Peters, like Garvey, rose through the ranks of the private and public sectors of the transportation industry for more than twenty years. These are just two of the thousands of women in an industry that is all too often thought of as male-only—all the more reason a trade organization like WTS is so necessary. You see, the pictures in your head about who does what are based on years of media influence, family background, and basic environment.

Women have been at the forefront of many arenas—even industries in safety and security. Just because we don't see them reflected often in the media or come into contact with them in our everyday lives doesn't mean they don't exist. This is just one of the many women's trade and/or professional organizations that have been launched to support the advancement of women. It is an example of a women's organization whose mission has helped advance women. Its members span across the country, Great Britain, and Canada and are in charge of roads, bridges, airports, subways, railroads, and all other forms of transportation. Its meetings are attended by women and men, and the networking fosters a comfort factor important to the trade.

Seventh is the visibility factor. I have been asked many times "If there are so many high-powered, influential women in the region, why don't we see them?"

"What will you do when you run out of successful women to report on?"

There is no chance of that. Women are achieving success in every industry every day in this country regardless of the lack of media coverage and despite the obstacles in their way. Your job is to go out and support them. You must hire them, promote them, buy from them, and vote for them. You must, men and women, realize that your countries are better when we make the most of the talent they have available.

This is especially important for women running for elective office. Statistically, in contrast to the way things used to be, when women run for office—they do win! The Center for American Women and Politics and the National Women’s Political Caucus both report that the percentage of women in federal, state, and municipal legislatures has been rising steadily for the past decade. I’ve given the example of more women holding U.S.

Senate seats than ever before in U.S. history. So to “get even,” that is, to compete on a level playing field and get the visibility they need, women candidates must be supported with your energy, time, money, and, of course, a check mark next to their name in the voting booth!

And **eight**, here’s a charge for my opposite sex: Men must become more aware of the subtle discrimination that hovers in most office environments. They must then demand that it stop. Men must also mentor more women and help them move upward on the management ladder and the path to leadership.

Men and women working together as equals at all levels is the goal. Let us stop treating women as brainless. There will be obstacles in the workplace for women and men to work through successfully together.

These obstacles cannot stand in the way of having equality as the benchmark for success. Whether it's working together or living together, men and women can and must find conduct that succeeds.

Nine, the push for gender equality must start as early in life as possible. The education of the next generation, both boys and girls, is critical to the success of women's leadership. Gender stereotyping is as harmful for girls as it is for boys.

Walk through any baby department and you'll see onsies stamped with "Princess" in pink and "Stud" in blue. Am I suggesting swapping out these newborn-sized outfits?

No. I'm saying, don't buy them at all. Acceptance and encouragement of the innate skills and talents of both sexes is the answer to raising healthy children.

This doesn't discount the value of single-sex activities such as the Girl Scouts or the Boy Scouts, which provide early opportunities to develop leadership skills. Leadership, however, should be a value that's also taught and realized in mixed company, since it is only in the mixed company of women and men that true leadership will advance. Women must get into the mainstream of what has been male-dominated up to now and act with clarity, strength, and vision. In this way, both women and men can work together to ensure that the next

generation of women will have an equal and powerful place at the leadership table.

And **Ten**, whether or not we see a woman president soon, the task is clear. We must spring into action. We must recognize talent at all levels and not discount someone because of gender. Men have the right to take care of their children and women have the right to bring home the bacon. Stereotypes from the past will not move us forward. All of the elements are in place for change. You must surpass the political progress of so many of your European and global neighbours and share leadership at every level, not by putting children at risk but by elevating them to our collectively achieved first priority.

It's time there be a true balance of power. Yes, women must have their 52 percent of power. America must be ready for the challenge of new leadership—shared leadership. America must say that it is ready for women to lead.

“If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation.”

—Abigail Adams

“If society will not admit of woman's free development, then society must be

remodeled.” —Elizabeth Blackwell

“Men are not the enemy, but the fellow victims. The real enemy is women’s denigration of themselves.” —Betty Freidan

“You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing which you think you cannot do.” —Eleanor Roosevelt

“There cannot be true democracy unless women’s voices are heard. There cannot be true democracy unless women are given the opportunity to take responsibility for their own lives. There cannot be true democracy unless all citizens are able to participate fully in the lives of their country.”

—Hillary Rodham Clinton

It’s time to speak directly to the women. It is time to go beyond the conditioned self that women are second. You have been brought up to be fair and just and to make sure that you never show a sense of bias—until it comes to you and other women. How do I know this?

Because you’ve told me over and over again. When you have an opportunity to make a decision to bring another woman on board, you tell me, “I can’t just pick a woman because she is a woman. I have to view the candidate’s skills and abilities and choose the best one for the job.”

Really? If I asked you to select the best fitting dress you could find, you wouldn’t go to the store and try on every single size. You’d go directly to the

rack with your size and start from there. In other words, you would automatically narrow your search and in the end you would have successfully chosen the best fitting dress. That's what I'm asking you to do with women.

If women aren't selecting women to get ahead, then who will? You know as well as I do that you support women every chance you get when it comes to community service projects, breast cancer awareness organizations, and much more. Why is it so difficult to support the women who aspire to leading roles in universities, hospitals, foundations, government, law firms, C-suites, and boardrooms? These are the areas where women can and are ready to make a difference. Yes, I know the men you know tell you that there is equal opportunity at the top. The best candidate will be chosen to move forward. So where are the women at the top? Is it your assumption that there really are so few qualified women to lead? You know better.

Deloitte & Touche's Sharon Allen says just the opposite regarding the numbers of candidates for corporate boards, and really, you can substitute just about any leadership position for the business version in her discussion. She says, "Many times you hear, 'Well, there aren't enough qualified women available' and I think that they are just not looking far enough and not throwing the broader net to find them.

It is natural for people to work with people they know, like, and trust. Men are more comfortable with men. Their wives are more comfortable when they work with men. It is up to women to bring more women onto the golf course, into the clubhouse, anywhere where men congregate to.

Finally ensure they feel comfortable. If you are a woman who enjoys being the token woman in the room, pay attention right now because this is for you. You may think you are being heard. You may think you've broken down barriers but you haven't because you can't change the dialogue or the perspective alone.

I've heard too many times from men that when a token woman is asked to suggest someone to join the group, she often chooses another man. Is it competition she fears? Is it jealousy? Is it only seeing what's in it for her and not seeing what can be in it for someone else? I don't have the answer. I only know that the attitude must change. Until we have an equal number of men and women in leadership positions, things will not change. Women will continue to earn the majority of college degrees and stay right where they are—somewhere in the middle—unless you are ready to effect change.

The Number One cry across America in the past decade from career women is that they want to be taken seriously. It tops every survey list of what women want. Go into any bookstore and look at the magazine section. Seek out the Women's Interest section. Is this all you are interested in? How is it possible this section hasn't changed but added more of the same in the past thirty years while you and I have been expanding our horizons? Magazines on fitness, weight control, glamour, celebrities, food, make-up, clothes, gossip, television, and homemaking: Have women no interest in business, politics, education, medicine, law, and more? Take a moment to talk with the bookstore staff about a new book on leadership for women. They will tell you to look in the Women's Studies.

Once a minister was preaching on the importance of women supporting other women. He compared the journey of women with that of other immigrant groups in America. But, he stated, “The difference is women do not work to elevate each other. Instead, they put their gender aside and choose to elevate the men in their lives.”

For a moment, I was indignant. Who did this guy think he was, telling me that I wasn't doing my best to help other women? I continued to listen as he described beautifully the Irish immigration to America during and after the Potato Famine. The anti-Irish, anti-Catholic sentiment at the time pushed the new settlers to form tight communities in major cities and eventually to learn that change could only be made through the ballot box. They focused their attention and work toward government and law enforcement.

By the 1850s, they were a major force in police departments in all the larger cities and held ranks all the way up to police chief. Their successful organization placed them at the head of labor unions and politics, and they voted 80 to 95 percent together as Democrats. The election of your thirty-fifth president, and first Catholic president, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, can be attributed to the hard work and determination of this immigrant population. This is an example, the minister explained, of what a group can do to elevate itself to power in this country. The light went on in my head. Of course, women must put women first if we expect to attain true equality. Again, if not women, then who?

Women have been struggling for equality in America since the day they arrived. What has changed is that women can have it now if they would just

take it. So what's stopping women? Where are the powerful networks for women? Women must create networks that not only support them but also put them in places of power.

When we look at politics, a similar story appears. Many, no, too many people vote the party line out of the assumption that the candidates of one's party are more closely in line with one's values and interests. Of course, in recent years, party lines have blurred and voting for the party doesn't guarantee you anything.

The question you need to ask is: "Would you have voted for a woman for president in 2008?"

The answer can be summarised as follows: "I will vote for a woman president in 2008 only if I think she is the best candidate to deal with the issues that are important to me. I won't vote for a woman president just because she is a female."

"I will if she is a candidate who can articulate a vision, a plan, and take a stand on issues that I believe are important. In other words, I won't vote for her just because she's a woman, but because she is speaking the language of leadership I can support and buy into."

"That depends. I would like to say I will vote for a woman regardless, but in good conscience I cannot just vote for a woman simply because women have been left out of the political leadership. I will need to evaluate the candidates to determine who I believe will cause the least harm to the world."

“I’d vote for the right woman, but not just any woman. I’d love to see a strong female candidate run and win. I’ve always believed that our only true chance for peace in the world is if we could get the leading women from the war zones and troubled areas around the table and have them create the terms for moving forward. If the mothers, daughters, wives, and sisters put their efforts together, I am confident they would find a creative solution to keep their sons, brothers, husbands, and friends alive and living in peace. We know where the men have gotten us—it is time to give the women a chance.”

These are just a few of the responses received. Can you hear the dilemma in the comments above? Women want women to lead, but only the right ones. Do we hold men to this same litmus test? Don’t we compromise on our values when we’re in the voting booth and are faced with two men candidates, neither of whom fully shares our views?

Will the right woman meet my test and your test? Has any woman been able to meet the test of all women? This is exactly what is holding us back! Do you honestly believe that any woman who makes it onto the ballot for president of the United States hasn’t proven herself along the way?

It’s time for women to lead in America, and only women can truly make it happen. I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again: Women must hire women, promote women, and vote for women. Do it for your daughter, your granddaughter, and the next generation of women. Do it for your son, your grandson, and the next generation of men. Do it for yourself. Your country deserves the best leadership in the world, and women have struggled far too long and far too hard not to be considered worthy of the task. The decision for women to lead in America is in your hands. The time is now.

