

# WOMEN DON'T ASK

NEGOTIATION and the GENDER DIVIDE

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### A Price Higher than Rubies

One of Linda's graduate students—a young woman who had taken her negotiation class—visited Linda in her office to share some good news. The student had just accepted a job offer from a great company and couldn't wait to begin her new career. When Linda asked how the negotiations had gone, the student seemed surprised. Her new employer had offered her so much more than she'd expected, it hadn't occurred to her to negotiate. She simply accepted what she was offered.

This story points out an obvious truth: Before we decide to negotiate for something we must first be dissatisfied with what we have. We need to believe that something else—more money, a better title, or a different division of household chores—would make us happier or more satisfied. But if we're already satisfied with what we have or with what we've been offered, asking for something else might not occur to us. Ironically, this turns out to be a big problem for women: being satisfied with less.

#### Expecting Less

In 1978, psychologists discovered that women's pay satisfaction tends to be equal to or higher than that of men in similar positions, even though women typically earn less than men doing the same work.<sup>1</sup> Four years later, a broader study looked at many different types of organizations and reached a similar conclusion, which the author of that study, the social psychologist Faye Crosby, called "the paradox of the con-

tented female worker."<sup>2</sup> Seventeen years later, in 1999, a study by two management researchers confirmed this finding again.<sup>3</sup> Even at the turn of the twenty-first century, in other words, with all of the gains made by women during the previous four decades, women still feel at least as satisfied as men with their salaries, even though they continue to earn less for the same work.

How to explain this strange phenomenon? Why would women be just as satisfied as men while earning less? Many scholars believe that women are satisfied with less because they expect less: They go into the work force expecting to be paid less than men, so they're not disappointed when those expectations are met.<sup>4</sup> To test this theory, the psychologist Beth Martin surveyed a group of undergraduate business students. After presenting them with information about salary ranges for the different types of jobs they would be qualified to take after graduating, she asked them to identify which job they expected to obtain and what they thought their starting salary would be. Working from the same information, women reported salary expectations between 3 and 32 percent lower than those reported by men for the same jobs. There was no evidence that the men were more qualified for the jobs they chose—just that women expected to earn less for doing the same work.<sup>5</sup>

In another study, two social psychologists, Brenda Major and Ellen Konar, conducted a mail survey of students in management programs at the State University of New York at Buffalo. In this survey, students were asked to indicate their salary expectations upon graduation as well as at their "career peak"—how much they expected to earn the year they earned the most. They found that the men expected to earn about 13 percent more than the women during their first year of working full-time and expected to earn 32 percent more at their career peaks. Major and Konar ruled out several potential explanations for these differences, such as gender differences in the importance of pay or in the importance of doing interesting work, gender differences in the students' perceptions of their skills or qualifications, and gender differences in their supervisors' assessments of the students' skills or qualifications.<sup>6</sup>

Another study also found similar gender differences in ideas about how much money was "fair pay" for particular jobs. Using college seniors at Michigan State University, researchers discovered that women's estimates of "fair pay" averaged 4 percent less than men's estimates for their first jobs and 23 percent less than men's for fair career-peak pay.<sup>7</sup> These three studies suggest that women as a rule expect to be paid less than men expect to be paid for the same work.

Our interviews bore out these findings. One standard question we asked was "Are you usually successful in getting what you want?" To our initial surprise, almost every woman we talked to said yes. When we probed further, however, it turned out that many of the women we talked to felt as though they were successful at getting what they wanted in part because they didn't want very much. Angela, 28, the marketing director of a community development bank, said she's usually successful at getting what she wants because "I don't think I ever want something that's that far out of my reach." Julianne, 36, a graphic designer who is now a full-time mother, said she usually gets what she wants because "I have pretty realistic expectations in my life, both professionally and personally." Cheryl, 45, the owner of a small toy store, said she's good at getting what she wants because she's not very demanding and "readily pleased." These women, like so many others, hold modest expectations for what will constitute appropriate rewards for their work and time. Since lower expectations are more likely to be filled than higher ones, the odds are better that these women—and most women—will be satisfied with the rewards that life sends their way.

But this doesn't make sense, you may say. Why would a woman who is poorly paid be satisfied with her salary under any circumstances? Surprisingly, extensive research has documented that pay satisfaction correlates with pay expectations, and not with how much may be possible or with what the market will bear. In other words, satisfaction depends not on whether your salary is comparable to what others like you are paid, but on whether it falls in line with your expectations. People are dissatisfied with their pay only when it falls short of what they expected to get, not when it falls short of what they could have gotten.<sup>8</sup> And most women don't expect to get paid very much, so when they don't get much—as so often happens—they are less likely to be disappointed.

### No Value to Women's Work

What leads women to undervalue the work they do and set their expectations so low? The Old Testament says that a good woman is worth "a price higher than rubies."<sup>9</sup> But because most women until recently devoted much of their lives to unpaid labor in the home they're unaccustomed to thinking of their work in terms of its dollar value. Many factors play into this problem, with perhaps the most obvious being

our historical predisposition against recognizing the economic value of what society deems to be women's work. The economics journalist Ann Crittenden, in her book *The Price of Motherhood*, explains: "Two-thirds of all wealth is created by human skills, creativity, and enterprise—what is known as 'human capital.' And that means parents who are conscientiously and effectively rearing children are literally, in the words of economist Shirley Burggraf, 'the major wealth producers in our economy.'"<sup>10</sup>

A society's education system also makes a huge contribution to the creation of "human capital," of course—by training children, guiding their creativity, and helping them direct their skills toward productive forms of enterprise. But children who do not grow up with attentive caregivers in safe, stable homes tend to derive far less benefit from their education system and only rarely grow up to become "major wealth producers." Schools can only do so much to compensate for deprivation or neglect at home.

Despite the demonstrated economic importance of child rearing, however, women who devote themselves either full- or part-time to raising their children are not only thought by many people to be doing nothing ("not working"), they suffer a loss of income that, Crittenden reports, "produces a bigger wage gap between mothers and childless women than the wage gap between young men and women. This forgone income, the equivalent of a huge 'mommy tax,' is typically more than \$1 million for a college-educated American woman."<sup>11</sup> Looked at this way, doing "women's work" not only means working at an occupation with no recognized monetary value, but working at one that is perceived to have negative value. Rather than being paid to do this terribly demanding and important work, in other words, women must pay—with lost earnings, missed opportunities, and, in many cases, radically diminished financial security.

Let's we think that all this has changed since the women's movement propelled so many women into the work force, and that these statistics refer to what is now a relatively small group of women, Crittenden reports that "homemaking . . . is still the largest single occupation in the United States. . . . Even among women in their thirties, by far the most common occupation is full-time housekeeping and caregiving."<sup>12</sup> Even the most advantaged and best-educated women fall into this category: "The persistence of traditional family patterns cuts across economic, class, and racial lines. . . . The United States also has one of the lowest labor force participation rates for college-educated women in

the developed world; only in Turkey, Ireland, Switzerland, and the Netherlands does a smaller proportion of female college graduates work for pay."<sup>13</sup>

The cumulative impact of these realities on women cannot be exaggerated. Accustomed to laboring without pay at work that is devalued by every objective financial measure, and to seeing most other women devote a huge proportion of their adult lives to unpaid work, women enter the traditional work force unaccustomed to evaluating their time and abilities in economic terms.

Our interviews produced many examples of this handicap. Angela, the marketing director for the community development bank, had a college degree from Princeton, five years' experience as a successful lobbyist on Capitol Hill, and a year of working on a presidential campaign. When her candidate lost, she began looking for another job and quickly identified two that she found attractive. But neither job matched exactly the work she had been doing before, making her fear that she wasn't qualified for either. As a result, when one of the firms made her an offer, she was so surprised and grateful that she just accepted it. When she called the other company to withdraw her name, she learned to her surprise that they had been planning to make her an offer as well. If she had waited before accepting the first offer, the existence of the second offer would have put her in a better negotiating position. But because she undervalued her skills and her appeal, she accepted the first offer she received—and a salary that was less than she had been making before and less than she almost certainly could have gotten.

Similarly, Joan, 41, a magazine editor, described being sought after to serve as the editor of a new magazine targeted at working women. At one point during the hiring discussions, her future boss asked what she wanted to be paid. "In hindsight," she said, "I was so naïve and clueless, and I just had never really made a lot of money in my life, and I didn't need a lot of money, so what I asked for seemed like a lot of money. And it was just not a lot of money." After she was hired and spoke to other people in similar positions, she discovered how "pathetic" her salary was. Her explanation for her naïveté was that she "hadn't been in the work force for a lot of years of her working life" and was "very young in the world of business"—an explanation that might accurately describe the lives of many, if not most, women.

Like many of their female peers, Angela and Joan were suffering from a limited understanding of their market power. That is, they didn't realize that a market existed for their particular skills and talent and experi-

ence—and that this market could help them establish what they were worth to prospective employers. Evidence from our interviews suggests that this is a common problem among women. Kim, the radio news anchor, admits with embarrassment that at one job her immediate boss (who did not control salary decisions) laughed when she discovered what Kim was paid, it was so little. The station's most prominent "on-air" talent, Kim hosted the morning "drive-time" news program at the leading station in an intensely competitive radio market. Although she was widely admired by her colleagues and audience, she later discovered that her peers and even many people who were junior to her in both rank and public prominence—most of them male—were paid far more. She probably could have drummed up an offer from a competing station in short order and might even have been able to double her salary, but at the time she had no idea what her work was worth—or that she could use the market to her advantage in this way.

Even when they recognize their market power, many women feel uncomfortable about using it as leverage in a negotiation. Stephanie, the administrative assistant, didn't ask for an increase in her salary even when she had another job offer and her boss asked what it would take to keep her. "I thought it would be taking advantage of an opportunity but an unfair advantage," she explained. Stephanie understood that she had some market power, but she didn't think it was right to use that power.

The Stanford linguist Penelope Eckert traces women's lack of awareness about their market value to traditional labor divisions between men and women. A man's personal worth, she notes, has long been based on his "accumulation of goods, status, and power in the marketplace," while a woman's worth was until recently based largely on "her ability to maintain order in, and control over, her domestic realm."<sup>14</sup> Because this historical legacy makes men more accustomed to evaluating their worth in the marketplace, they also seem more comfortable using their market power to get what they want—by researching average salaries for comparable work, bringing in competing offers, and emphasizing that they have objective value outside their organizations.

### For Love, Not Money

In her review of research on children's household chores, Jacqueline Goodnow observed that, in addition to being given chores that emphasize their dependence, girls are also assigned chores that must be

performed on a more routine basis, such as cooking and cleaning. Boys' chores, while encouraging their independence, also tend to involve less frequent tasks such as washing the car, shoveling snow, and taking out the garbage.<sup>15</sup> Goodnow surmises that girls rarely earn money by performing the housekeeping chores they shoulder at home (such as cleaning, cooking, and washing dishes) for their neighbors, because those jobs are identified as female responsibilities and are typically performed by the woman in each house. In contrast, more infrequent tasks, such as lawn-mowing and shoveling snow, tend to be identified as male responsibilities, but the man in each house, instead of performing them himself, often pays a neighborhood child—usually a boy—to fill in for him.<sup>16</sup>

Virginia Valian agrees with this analysis: "Because parents see infrequent tasks as ones that call for payment, they are not likely to pay a daughter, for example, for washing the dishes, but they will pay a son for washing the family car."<sup>17</sup> Valian believes that this "gendered" approach to chore assignments teaches children not only that there is a difference between "men's work" and "women's work," but also that the appropriate rewards are different for each. "Children have reason to think that boys labor for payment, while girls labor 'for love,'" she writes.<sup>18</sup>

As a result of this early training, many women struggle when they must assign a value to their work. Lory, a 30-year-old theater production manager, said, "I have a hard time putting a monetary figure on the work that I do." Although she manages three productions (in three cities) of a long-running hit show and works punishing hours, including most nights and weekends, she "feels weird" asking for more money because she thinks she should be working for "the love of the theater." Emma, the social science researcher, said that at the beginning of her career she didn't have many reference points to help her evaluate her work, and she actually worried that she was making *more* money than she should. "I genuinely thought that I was overpaid. And I also thought that I was working on social service issues, where there's this sense of 'How can I be making all this money when I'm working on issues related to improving services for low-income people? It's not really fair or appropriate.'" If women believe that doing important work—work that they care about and even love—means that they can't place a value on their time and contribution, or that their time and contribution therefore have a lower value, it's no wonder that they have trouble gauging what their work is worth.

Having been trained to think that they should work "for love" rather than money also makes gratitude, strangely enough, another limiting factor for women. Grateful to be paid at all, many women accept what they are offered without negotiating. Angela feels that she made only a half-hearted attempt to negotiate a higher salary for her current position in part because "I was glad to get this job. . . . I really, really wanted the job and I knew I was going to take it no matter what." Emma described a similar experience in which gratitude held her back from asking for more than she was offered:

I talked to people in Personnel, and they said, "Well, this is the high end of the salary range, and this is all we can do." And so I just accepted that. And then after my son was born, my costs were so high for child care and other things that I went to the person responsible for administration and said, "I have to have a substantial increase." And I got it. And I realized after that that I could have really negotiated for much more. I could have negotiated for fewer hours; I could have negotiated for a signing bonus; there were a lot of things I could have negotiated for, but I didn't. Because I accepted, "Oh, I want to tie in with the range. I should feel lucky I have this job."

Barbara, 59, a human resources consultant, told us about being hired by a consulting firm to create and head a whole new division. Brought in at what the company called "Level 2," she quickly realized that as a division head she should have been at "Level 1." But there were practically no women at Level 1 in the company, and, she said, "at the time I was kind of grateful," so she didn't fight it.

We're not saying, of course, that any of these women should have pushed so hard for more that they jeopardized jobs that they obviously wanted and liked. We're simply saying that an exaggerated sense of gratitude should not have prevented them from gathering information about what was fair and available—and using that information to get more of what they needed or deserved.

Sometimes, women feel grateful simply for being paid enough to live well. Louise, the power company executive, explained that she never pushes too hard for higher compensation, even though she knows she is paid significantly less than her peers. "I think it is this whole thing about feeling like I have a lot and . . . I'm pretty grateful for what I have," she said. This highlights another reason women have trouble estimating what their work is worth: Rather than thinking about their value in the marketplace, they instead focus more narrowly on what

they need. This may be because until quite recently women in western culture worked at jobs outside the home only if they "needed" to—if their spouses weren't bringing in enough to support the family, or if they had no other source of income because they were orphaned, unmarried, divorced, or widowed. Even now, when a woman is divorced, many judges determine her financial settlement from her husband based on what the judge decides she "needs"—not based on any objective evaluation of her contribution toward the accumulated assets in the marriage.<sup>19</sup> As a result, women have learned to think of their incomes in terms of what they need rather than in terms of what their work is worth. As Angela explained, another reason she didn't negotiate for a higher salary at her current job was that "It would have been difficult for me to even make the case that it was an issue of what I needed."

### Wrong Comparisons

Even when women do collect information about the market value of their work, they often make the mistake of comparing themselves to the wrong people. Research has shown that people typically compare themselves to others whom they consider to be similar, meaning that men are more likely to compare themselves to other men and women to other women.<sup>20</sup> As a result, rather than looking at everyone performing a comparable job who has comparable training, experience, and skill, male or female, women tend to compare themselves only to other women<sup>21</sup>—women who are still paid 76 cents to every man's dollar.<sup>22</sup> Women therefore compare themselves only to people who are likely to be underpaid—and men compare themselves to people who are typically paid more. In addition, since professional networks tend to be gender-segregated, as we describe later in the book, women often have fewer opportunities to compare themselves to men because they know fewer men and have less access to information about what men earn.

Eleanor, 34, a literature professor and biographer, has been reluctant to push for more pay and better "perks" (such as a larger office and adequate funding for her research) because compared with her female peers of the same age, she has "way more." "The people who have more than I do are not my peers," she said. "They're people who are more senior than I am." A committed teacher with a high professional profile and an excellent reputation, Eleanor had already written two highly



regarded books that were published by a prestigious publisher and won several important prizes. She confidently declared to Sara that she was far more valuable to her department and to her university than many more senior people who were better paid and enjoyed more perks. But when it came to concrete rewards for her contributions, she didn't compare herself to them; she compared herself to her female friends from graduate school, few of whom had been as successful as she.

Angela, the community development bank marketing director, told us how, in the early years of her career as a lobbyist, she worried that she was "getting away with something" or fooling her employers because she was making such a good salary. Eventually, she traced her concern to a misplaced comparison. "I was comparing myself to my peers age-wise. But when I began to compare myself to my peers professionally, what other lobbyists were making, and even though I was very junior, I was a lobbyist and I was out there, you know, spending the same time and energy. I thought, 'yeah, I deserve this.'"

Once she learned this lesson, she was able to go to her boss and say, "Hey, I'm a bargain to you right now." He agreed, and immediately gave her a raise to keep from losing her. The critical change, for Angela, came when she began "spending more time professionally with my peers versus my personal buddies." She didn't compare herself to lobbyists who had 25 more years of experience than she had, but she compared herself to other lobbyists of *both* sexes with experience comparable to hers. This is a lesson from which many women can learn: In order to judge their worth more accurately and develop a well-founded idea of what the market will pay them, women need to learn how to make the right comparisons by seeking out information about their professional peers of both sexes.

### Unsure of What They Deserve

Women may also expect less and feel satisfied with less because they're not sure that they deserve more. Liliane, the electrical engineer, described feeling as though she didn't deserve to be interviewed for an engineering job despite her impressive college record. This lack of self-confidence made her so thrilled when she was offered a job, she didn't care what she was paid—and didn't negotiate her starting salary. Later on in her career, despite notable success, she is still struggling with this issue of what she deserves. Although she feels well compensated in

many ways for her work, she hasn't negotiated for a higher title that she wants and that more accurately describes her role. When asked why, she explains that other people might deserve the title more, although she also admits that many less talented and productive people have already been awarded the higher title. Liliane is struggling with what social scientists call a low sense of personal entitlement—a problem that research has shown to be rampant among women.

Before deciding to negotiate for more than you've got, then, you don't just need to feel dissatisfied. You also need to feel sure that you deserve the change you want. Here, too, women struggle with a powerful disadvantage—a disadvantage that they often manage by waiting to be offered what they want rather than asking for it directly. When we interviewed Lory, the production stage manager, she told us that for the past several months she'd worked hundreds of hours of overtime and was waiting for her bosses to notice. She wanted them to recognize her dedication and reward her. Having them acknowledge her work without her needing to ask would make her feel good, she said, and asking for the recognition was not going to feel nearly as good—even if she got it.

Being given a reward (a raise, a promotion, access to an opportunity, even just praise and thanks) without asking not only spares a woman the discomfort of announcing her belief that she deserves that reward, it can also relieve her uncertainty about whether in fact she does deserve it. Julianne, the graphic designer, said that her approach when she wants something is to "work harder so it will be clear I deserve it. I tend not to ask. Because it's a little more rewarding . . . because what that means is that the people who are giving it to me think I deserve it." This testimony is particularly telling because neither Lory nor Julianne is particularly shy or lacking in self-confidence. Nonetheless, both of them felt that being rewarded for their hard work without having to ask would confirm the value of their contribution and boost their self-esteem.

These examples highlight the importance of external factors to a woman's sense of entitlement. Although all of us feel better when we receive praise and approval, extensive research has shown that the average woman's feelings of self-worth tend to fluctuate in response to feedback—whether positive or negative—more than the average man's.<sup>23</sup> One study found that women's positive feelings about their abilities and their work performance increased significantly in response to positive feedback and plummeted dramatically in response to negative feedback.

In comparison, men's feelings about the quality of their work changed very little in response to either type of feedback.<sup>24</sup> Being rewarded for their accomplishments (as opposed to asking for recognition) may not only increase a woman's pride about her work, it can also enhance her sense of entitlement. Many women wait to be rewarded for their efforts, in other words, because they don't know whether they deserve something unless someone else tells them that they do.

In one of the first studies on entitlement, the psychologists Charlene Callahan-Levy and Lawrence Messe recruited students to write a series of opinions about campus-related issues. Half of the students were instructed to decide how much money to pay themselves and half were instructed to decide how much to pay someone else for the work. The researchers found that women paid themselves much less than men paid themselves—19 percent less. Furthermore, women paid others, including other women, more than they paid themselves. The researchers found no gender differences in the students' evaluations of how well they had performed the task, meaning that women were not paying themselves less because they believed their work was inferior to the work of men or other women. They simply lost their ability to accurately evaluate what the work was worth when they were the ones performing the task.<sup>25</sup>

In a study by the social psychologists Brenda Major, Dean McFarlin, and Diana Gagnon that followed up this research, men and women were asked to evaluate the application materials of incoming freshmen and predict their college success. They were then told to pay themselves what they felt was fair for their labor. Although the researchers expected gender differences, the disparity they uncovered was dramatic: Men paid themselves 63 percent more on average than women paid themselves for the same task. Once again, the researchers asked the subjects how well they had performed the task and found no gender differences in their performance evaluations.<sup>26</sup>

In another study, Major, McFarlin, and Gagnon gave male and female research subjects four dollars to perform a "visual perception task" in which they counted the number of dots in a sequence of pictures. They instructed the subjects to keep working until they had "earned" their four dollars. They found that women worked 22 percent longer than men and counted 32 percent more pictures of dots. This result occurred even though privacy was maximized—the students were not being observed by the experimenter and were instructed to put identification numbers, not names, on their materials. But even though women

worked longer and faster, the men and women were equally satisfied with their pay and did not differ in terms of how they evaluated their performance.<sup>27</sup> The results of these three studies suggest that women can correctly evaluate and set expectations for others—their low sense of entitlement is reserved for themselves.

A few examples illustrate how women struggle with this issue of what they deserve. Susannah, the political strategist, said that pursuing something she wants makes her uncomfortable because "I don't always feel that I deserve it." She said she often doesn't ask for things "because I get nervous about asking or I don't think I deserve it so I sort of talk myself down from going toward it." Lisa, 46, the receptionist-manager of an animal hospital, said that as a child, "my training—what is really engrained in me—is that you're never quite deserving of what you might want."

When we asked men how they feel about what they deserve, we got very different answers. Brian, 32, an intensive-care nurse, gave an answer that suggested that he thought this was a strange question, with an obvious answer, "Um, sure," he said. "I deserve the things I want—yeah." This is a confident answer, while the answers we heard from many women tended to be far more tentative about what they deserved. Mike, the entrepreneur, responded to this question with what amounted to confusion, saying, "Interesting question! . . . The sense that I deserve something is not a sense that I carry with me, generally. Do I deserve this, or deserve that?" Where women are often preoccupied with ascertaining what exactly they deserve, it doesn't really cross Mike's mind to consider whether he deserves something or not—this approach isn't relevant to his thinking.

Another study looked at this question of entitlement in a different way. Lisa Barron asked MBA students to negotiate for a hypothetical job with an actual job recruiter; afterward, she interviewed the students about their experience. To explore entitlement issues, she asked whether the students thought they were entitled to a salary similar to or greater than that offered to other job candidates. Of the subjects who thought they belonged in the "entitled to more than others" category, 70 percent were men and 30 percent were women; of the subjects who fit into the "entitled to the same as others" category, 29 percent were men and 71 percent were women.<sup>28</sup>

Hoping to further illuminate this issue, Linda and her colleagues created an entitlement scale to ask men and women directly about their sense of entitlement. Using the web survey described in the introduc-



tion, they presented people with a series of statements about what they thought they might or might not deserve and asked them to rate, on a seven-point scale, the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement. Not surprisingly, men scored significantly higher on this scale than women.<sup>29</sup> What was surprising was the extent of the disparity: More than half the women respondents and almost twice as many women as men turned out to be suffering from a low sense of entitlement (52 percent of the women and only 29 percent of the men). Only 6 percent of the women displayed extremely high levels of entitlement, whereas almost twice as many men (11 percent) fell into this category. In addition—and this is important, because the younger people we interviewed insisted that this would not be the case—the gender differences in entitlement for people in their twenties and early thirties were just as large as the gender differences for older people.

All of these studies, using different approaches, go a long way toward explaining why women are less likely than men to ask for more than they already have: *Women are not sure that they deserve more.* As a result, even when women can imagine changes that might increase their productivity at work, their happiness at home, or their overall contentment with their lives, their suppressed sense of entitlement creates real barriers to their asking. Because they're not dissatisfied with what they have and not sure they deserve more, women often settle for less.

### Where's the Problem?

But if women are satisfied with the personal and professional rewards they receive, where's the problem? Who are we to decide that people shouldn't be satisfied with what they have? Does it do anyone a service to persuade satisfied people to be unsatisfied? We think it does. We're convinced that as a society we are paying a substantial price for leaving women undisturbed and unaware of how much they may be missing. We wouldn't be comfortable with a system that consistently paid people born on even-numbered days less than it paid people born on odd-numbered days—such a suggestion sounds preposterous. But women make up half of our society, just as people born on even-numbered days do. Why should we tolerate a society in which half our citizens are arbitrarily undervalued and underpaid? Fairness as a principle doesn't work if applied only in response to demand; it must be safe-

guarded and promoted even when its beneficiaries don't realize what they are missing.

Let's start with the social costs. Undervaluing themselves and being undervalued by society can be bad for women's health. The close link between a positive "self-perception" and psychological good health is well-known.<sup>30</sup> More recent research now indicates that the opposite is also true. A negative self-evaluation combined with stress can lead to depression,<sup>31</sup> and two-thirds of all depressed adults are women.<sup>32</sup> Depression is not only a problem in itself but can lead to other health problems. As reported in the January 20, 2003, issue of *Time* magazine, "Each year in the U.S., an estimated 30,000 people commit suicide, with the vast majority of cases attributable to depression." *Time* also points out that depression makes "other serious diseases dramatically worse," such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, and osteoporosis.<sup>33</sup> Unfortunate for each individual, depression often represents a real cost to society as well—to provide care for the uninsured or underinsured at a time when health-care costs are skyrocketing. (And most people are underinsured for mental health care.) Then there's the question of lost productivity due to depression, which *Time* estimates "costs the U.S. economy about \$50 billion a year."<sup>34</sup>

We're not claiming, of course, that persuading women to ask for what they want more of the time, and convincing society to accept and encourage this, will do away with depression and increase production. But, as one set of researchers put it: "Because of the potentially serious implications of negative self-perceptions for achievement behavior and psychological health, more attention should be devoted to discovering factors that produce inaccurately negative self-perceptions. A better understanding of the causes of negative self-perceptions may enable us to prevent or at least alleviate these biases, which presently may hold back some females and males from achieving their full potential."<sup>35</sup>

There are other social costs as well from women as a group being unequally rewarded for their work. With many types of benefits (such as social security, disability insurance, unemployment insurance, and pensions) linked to one's salary, paying women less means apportioning inadequate amounts of these "rainy day" guarantees to huge numbers of the populace. As a result "American women over sixty-five are more than twice as likely to be poor as men of the same age."<sup>36</sup> In addition to forcing so many women to struggle at the ends of their lives, leaving this situation uncorrected imposes substantial economic costs on society to support all of these indigent female elderly.

The phenomenon that Faye Crosby has called “the denial of personal disadvantage” also contributes to the social costs we all pay for underestimating the value of women’s work and time. Since, as Crosby has shown, “people typically imagine themselves to be exempt from the injustices that they can recognize as affecting their membership or reference groups,”<sup>37</sup> a woman may see that other women earn lower salaries than comparable men and yet believe herself to be exempt from this problem. This is unfortunate for several reasons. First, at a personal level, because this woman doesn’t recognize the reality of her situation, she may take no action to fight it. Second, at a broader societal level, people are more likely to push for changes in which they have a personal stake—changes from which they themselves will benefit. The longer women labor under the misapprehension that they personally are doing okay, the longer it will take for the system as a whole to adjust this fundamental and counterproductive inequity.<sup>38</sup>

There are real market costs as well. As we already reported, in the year 2000, women owned 40 percent of all the businesses in the United States (a total of 9.1 million female-owned businesses) but received only 2.3 percent of the available venture capital dollars.<sup>39</sup> How to explain this? Although there are undoubtedly many contributing causes, Joanna Rees Gallanter, a venture capitalist herself, has observed, “Women are often not comfortable talking about what they’re worth. They’ll go in to pitch a project and naturally put a lower value on it than men do.”<sup>40</sup> You may think—well, that’s too bad, that’s business. Businesses go under every day. But sheer scale puts this problem into perspective. If 40 percent of the businesses in this country may be undercapitalized, this puts far more than the long-term survival of a few businesses at risk. It puts at risk the employees of those 9.1 million businesses, the fiscal health of the communities those businesses serve, and at some level the health of our national economy.

What are some other costs? Just as a person who decides to buy a bottle of wine usually assumes that a higher-priced bottle will be of better quality than a more inexpensive one, employers tend to assume that applicants with better compensation records are more capable than those who have been paid less. Because women’s salary histories don’t always accurately reflect their true capabilities, employers sometimes fail to hire the most talented people for the jobs they need to fill, and their companies as well as the female applicants lose out. With this happening in every type of business at every level, we as a society are inevitably misusing our resources—our human capital. We may also be

limiting potential business growth and related gains in productivity (a major index of economic health), if more than 50 percent of our citizens are not making full use of their talents or being given the opportunity to do the best work of which they are capable.

Finally, businesses suffer when managers don’t know what their employees need to do their jobs well. Influential management texts, such as *The Human Equation: Building Profits by Putting People First*, by Jeffrey Pfeffer, stress that being a good manager means keeping your employees happy and productive.<sup>41</sup> An employee who doesn’t realize that changes in her working conditions could improve the quality of her work makes her manager’s job that much harder. An employee who doesn’t communicate to her boss that her work performance is being undermined by financial strain, a conflict with a coworker, or a mismatch between her talents and the needs of a particular project prevents her boss from managing her most effectively. This is not just theoretical. Many senior people we interviewed said that it helps them to know what their people want. Rather than frowning on employees who ask for more money, new opportunities, or different “perks” and benefits, these managers appreciate knowing what they can do to make their employees’ lives easier and their work better. The trap of low expectations combined with a depressed sense of entitlement doesn’t merely punish women by preventing them from recognizing and pursuing changes that might improve their situation. It deprives their bosses, colleagues, friends, and intimates of valuable information about them. In its worst manifestations, it wastes women’s talents and prevents them from realizing their full potential.

As the sociologist Cynthia Fuchs Epstein has written, “it is in the nature of human motivation that when people are not appropriately rewarded for their efforts and contributions, they cease to aim high.”<sup>42</sup> She also points out that “women, like men, find that when others honor their contributions, listen to their ideas, and acknowledge their [work], they perform at higher levels.”<sup>43</sup>

Managers also don’t want to lose good people because their employees don’t ask for what they want and then get lured away by better offers. In many cases, departing employees might have saved themselves the trouble of changing jobs simply by telling their managers what they needed to improve their working conditions and increase their job satisfaction. The responsibility goes the other way too. Managers need to realize that women are less likely to ask for promotions or raises that haven’t been given to them. If managers don’t take steps to correct the

resulting wage inequities, they leave their organizations open to lawsuits when such discrepancies are discovered. They also risk souring morale in their organizations and seeing talented women leave for better-paying jobs when they realize that they've been treated shabbily. Worker turnover costs businesses millions of dollars every year—and much of it could be avoided if managers made a point of finding out what their employees want and need, and workers felt free to tell them.

Here's an example from Linda's own experience. Two male colleagues became eligible for promotion at the same time she did. Although all three of them were equally qualified for promotion, the two men were promoted and Linda was not. Linda had an excellent relationship with her dean and couldn't understand how he'd failed to recognize her significant professional accomplishments and her contributions to the school. She felt angry and unappreciated, and she thought the dean should know how she felt and want to do something about it.

Linda was lucky because she knew she was unhappy, she could clearly identify what she wanted (the promotion), and she felt confident that she deserved the promotion she wanted (perhaps because she was comparing herself to both male and female colleagues). So she spoke to her boss. The colleagues who'd been promoted, it turned out, had received offers from other institutions. They'd threatened to leave unless they were promoted. The dean wanted to keep them, so he gave them what they asked for. Because Linda hadn't asked to be promoted, the dean never even thought of her—she was off his radar. Once she asked, he readily agreed to promote her too.

As Linda left the dean's office, the words "I'm glad you asked" rang in her ears. The dean made it clear that knowing what she wanted was useful information: He wanted to take good care of his people and be a good manager; Linda was a valuable employee, and asking for what she wanted helped him do that.

### Greater Expectations

Fortunately, women can learn to avoid the trap of low expectations. Research has identified situations in which gender differences in entitlement disappear—situations that help us think about ways in which women can overcome their tendency to underestimate what they deserve. In the 1984 study mentioned earlier in which people were asked to review application folders and predict the success of incoming college

freshman (the study in which men paid themselves 63 percent more on average than women did), the researchers, Major, McFarlin, and Gagnon, also ran a variant condition that produced interesting results. In this condition, they left a bogus list at the students' desks that listed what earlier participants in the study had paid themselves. This list contained eight names (four male and four female) along with the amount each subject had paid him- or herself. The average amounts male and female subjects had paid themselves were about the same. In this condition, they found, male and female subjects paid themselves about the same amount, which corresponded to the average of this list. The researchers also ran two other conditions. One used a bogus list in which the men paid themselves more on average than the women and the other used a list in which the women paid themselves more than the men. Both of these conditions produced no gender differences in what men and women paid themselves.<sup>44</sup> A similar study published eight years later (in 1992) by Brenda Major and another colleague, Wayne Bylsma, reached the same conclusion—gender differences disappear when men and women receive the same information about the "going rates" for given jobs.<sup>45</sup>

These studies tell us that in unambiguous situations that provide women with appropriate comparison information, knowledge of what the market will pay for their skills and time can help override their inaccurate sense of self-worth. But situations like these are rare. More common are situations in which information about prevailing salary rates is not readily available—situations in which women's low sense of entitlement makes them most vulnerable to unfair treatment (or simply to the natural tendency of the market to reward people no more than they require).

One of Linda's studies confirms that ambiguous negotiating situations, in which comparison information is hard to come by, can produce big gender differences in outcomes. Using data collected by the career services department of an Ivy League business school, Linda and two colleagues, Hannah Riley and Kathleen McGinn, both negotiation experts at Harvard, found that the women's starting salaries for their first jobs after graduation were 6 percent lower on average than the men's—even adjusting for the industries they entered, their pre-MBA salaries, their functional areas, and the cities in which their jobs were located.<sup>46</sup> This is a pretty big difference. But even more striking was that the guaranteed yearly bonuses negotiated by the women were 19 percent smaller than those obtained by the men (again, taking into account sig-

nificant differentiating factors). When Hannah Riley discussed these findings with the career services counselors at the school, an interesting detail emerged: Reliable guidelines about starting salary ranges exist for many industries and jobs, but few guidelines exist for standard bonus amounts.

These results suggest that bonus negotiations represent a more ambiguous situation in which women's impaired sense of entitlement makes them more likely to price themselves too low. They also suggest ways for women to reduce their vulnerability in these ambiguous situations—by tracking down the information they need for themselves. How can this be done? The first step involves tapping one's networks—both personal and professional connections—to find out as much as possible about what people in similar positions earn and about the titles or job grades, office assignments, levels of administrative support, workloads, travel requirements, bonuses, vacation time, and benefits that go along with those positions. In a hiring or promotion situation, this type of information can become a valuable resource. Someone who wants more vacation time to spend with her kids might offer to trade her bonus for an extra two weeks off, for example. Someone else who wants more administrative support might offer to do more traveling. The first step in doing this kind of research is to make sure to collect information from both women and men. The second step is to collect information from outside sources that compile salary ranges for particular jobs, such as Internet sites, trade journals, and career counseling offices at colleges, universities, and professional schools. Web sites that contain information about salary ranges for particular jobs include [www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com), [www.careerjournal.com](http://www.careerjournal.com), [www.jobstar.org](http://www.jobstar.org), and <http://content.monster.com/>. Detailed information about salaries in various types of businesses and lines of both public- and private-sector work can often be found on industry- or sector-specific sites as well. These resources can provide women with hard data to back up their requests—and give them a concrete idea of their market power.

Gillian, 52, a rehabilitation counselor, had been working on a contract basis at a large hospital for 12 years. She put in a lot of hours, but because hers was not a permanent position, she was paid by the hour and paid poorly—only \$16.37 an hour, despite 29 years' experience in her field. When the hospital finally offered her a full-time position, she wasn't sure whether she could also request a higher salary or she should just be grateful to have the security of a permanent job. Her friends told her that she should definitely ask for more money, but she was so

uncertain that one of her friends, a colleague of Linda's, suggested that she talk to Linda. Linda told her that her hourly wage was very low and that full-time hourly wages tend to be much higher than those paid to part-timers. Linda encouraged Gillian to research the salaries paid to other people doing comparable work (both men and women), and Gillian discovered that these ranged from \$20 to \$25 an hour. Encouraged by Linda and her other friends, and with this data in hand, Gillian asked for 23 dollars an hour and got it—a raise of 41 percent. This is a perfect example of how much more women can get for themselves when they question their low sense of entitlement, research appropriate goals, and get the kinds of support they need to ask for what they deserve.

# 3

## Nice Girls Don't Ask

The research we presented in the last chapter suggests that women's low sense of personal entitlement—uncertainty about what their work is worth or how much they deserve to get for what they do—often deters them from asking for more than they already have. But what causes this depressed sense of entitlement? Why does the average woman have more trouble than the average man believing that she deserves more than she's been given? And why is she less comfortable asking for changes that would improve her working conditions, enhance her job satisfaction, or help her run her household more efficiently? In this chapter, we draw on research in sociology and psychology to explore the roots of this problem. We look at the ways in which we as a society school children in gender-appropriate behavior and pressure adults to abide by conventional notions of how women and men should behave.

### Society's Messages

We as a society take it for granted that men and women usually behave differently and exhibit different types of traits—this has been well documented.<sup>1</sup> Men are thought to be assertive, dominant, decisive, ambitious, and self-oriented, whereas women are thought to be warm, expressive, nurturing, emotional, and friendly.<sup>2</sup> These are gender stereotypes, and in every branch of the social sciences, from psychology and sociology to organizational behavior and linguistics, researchers

have shown that they hold sway over people's perceptions.<sup>3</sup> Because gender is a physical characteristic and immediately apparent, we all draw a wide range of conclusions about the people we meet—as soon as we meet them—based on their gender.

Ideas about gender roles go even further. Not merely beliefs about what men and women are like, these shared ideas represent our expectations for how men and women will behave. For example, it's widely believed that women tend to be "communal," or less concerned with their own needs and more focused on the welfare of others. Men, in contrast, are thought to be "agentic," an awkward term that means focused on their own aims and interests and more likely to act independent of others' needs or desires.<sup>4</sup> In common language, women are thought to be more "other-oriented" and men are thought to be more "self-oriented."

The pressure to put the needs of others first manifests itself in a variety of ways in women's lives. Lory, the theater production manager, summed up her other-directed approach to life in this way: "If it's something that's just for me, only for me, then I go back to, 'do I really need it?' More, it's really, 'how does it affect people around me?'" Describing her job, in which she manages the production staffs of three shows in three cities, she said, "really, my needs are group needs. . . . Which actually fits pretty well into my regular life, too, because I'm not usually too concerned about me. You know, I'm much more outward. I think the purpose in life is to make things nice for everybody." Lory's attitude is especially noteworthy because she's not a 70-year-old grandmother who came of age in the 1950s. She's young and self-confident, she works in a competitive and demanding field, and she's very successful.

In a completely different professional realm, Ada, a lawyer in her early fifties with a distinguished career as a litigator behind her, now serves as inspector general of a high-profile government agency. And like Lory, Ada is extremely successful and outwardly self-confident. But, although she has no trouble asking for things on behalf of her clients, her employees, or her children, she said, "I find it really hard to ask for things for myself." Comfortable being aggressive and capable in her "communal" role, when she is working on behalf of others, she pulls up short when she needs to ask for something on her own behalf.

Of course, no one is completely "other-oriented" or "self-oriented"; we all possess both of these qualities to varying degrees. But many studies have shown that as a society we expect women to be more oriented toward the needs of others and men to be more oriented toward their

own needs and ambitions. And this is where problems arise, because the ideas we share about gender roles are also normative—they involve qualities and behaviors that we believe men and women *should* have. So a man who is not especially ambitious risks being called a “wimp” or a “loser.” And an assertive, ambitious woman runs head-on into society’s requirement that she be selfless and communal. Wanting things for oneself and doing whatever may be necessary to get those things—such as asking for them—often clashes with the social expectation that a woman will devote her attention to the needs of others and pay less attention to her own.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to holding strong ideas about how men and women should feel and behave, we as a society feel confident that everyone else shares these ideas—an assumption that usually turns out to be true. In the “pay allocation” studies by Major, McFarlin, and Gagnon described in the last chapter, for example, both men and women predicted that men would pay themselves more than women. In the “time worked” studies, both men and women predicted that women would work longer than men for the same pay. This tells us that both sexes recognize women’s lower feelings of entitlement and assume they will play out in predictable ways: leading women to expect smaller rewards for the work they do and motivating them to work harder for the rewards they get.<sup>6</sup>

Evidence that women are conditioned not to get what they want can be seen all around us in popular culture. Women’s magazines exhort women month after month to believe that they’re entitled to happiness, self-confidence, and success. (Here are a few cover lines from 2001 and 2002 issues of Oprah Winfrey’s magazine, *O*: “Self-Esteem: The ‘O’ Guide to Getting It”; “Dream Big”; “Success: Define It for Yourself.”) *O* and magazines like it publish articles like this precisely because they know that women struggle with entitlement and self-esteem issues—and that offering to help women with these issues sells magazines.

Even something as seemingly basic as sexual satisfaction seems subject to this differential analysis. Studies reporting the percentage of time women reach or fail to reach orgasm are a staple in women’s magazines, but similar studies of men rarely if ever appear. This suggests both that the importance of sexual fulfillment for men is generally understood and that we take for granted that women will not have their needs met in this most basic area of life a surprisingly large percentage of the time. It may also suggest that during intimate relations, as in other parts of their lives, women tend to fulfill their expected gender role and focus

on the needs of their partners while men, trained to be “self-oriented,” are more likely to focus on their own needs.

We don’t mean to suggest that men don’t also struggle with self-esteem and entitlement issues, of course, but whether they struggle to a much lesser degree or they worry that it’s unmanly to admit how much they struggle, men’s magazines do not hawk many articles designed to bolster men’s self-esteem. And given how much more likely men are to ask for the things they want and need, it’s clear that entitlement issues don’t constrain men in the same ways that they constrain women.

### The Origins of Norms

Where do these ideas about appropriate and “natural” behaviors come from? In the early years of our social development as a species, researchers suspect, biological factors first pushed men and women toward different roles. Women’s ability to bear and nurse children gave them clear advantages in the domestic realm while men’s superior strength gave them work advantages. So for hundreds of thousands of years, women took care of the children and the housework while men felled trees to build houses, hunted for food, protected their families (even going off to war), and devoted themselves to other tasks that involved physical strength.<sup>7</sup> Once scientific and technological advances eased the pressure of these biological factors, the influence of cultural tradition kicked in—men and women continued to play the historical roles they’d always played because this allocation of roles, being familiar, seemed correct and appropriate. As a result, even today, “domestic” roles (in the home) are still filled overwhelmingly by women and “employee” roles are still filled more by men (although women have made substantial gains in this realm).<sup>8</sup>

At work, the different jobs men and women typically perform also perpetuate traditional ideas about gender roles. As recently as 2001, 98 percent of child-care workers, 82 percent of elementary school teachers, 91 percent of nurses, 99 percent of secretaries, and 70 percent of social workers in the United States were women. In the same year in the United States, 87.5 percent of the corporate officers of the 500 largest companies, 90 percent of all engineers, 98 percent of all construction workers, and 70 percent of all financial managers were men.<sup>9</sup> In addition to perpetuating old notions about what constitutes “women’s work” and “men’s work,” this heavy identification of certain jobs with one



gender or the other also suggests that it takes stereotypically “male” or “female” qualities to succeed in those occupations. A 1999 study by the social psychologists Mary Ann Cejka and Alice Eagly proved this point by asking college students to rate the attributes necessary to succeed in various occupations. For occupations more heavily dominated (numerically) by men, students felt that male physical qualities (such as being athletic and tall) and masculine personality characteristics (such as being competitive and daring) were important for success in those occupations. For occupations more heavily dominated (numerically) by women, students felt that female physical qualities (such as being pretty and having a soft voice) and female personality characteristics (such as being nurturing and supportive) were important for success in those jobs.<sup>10</sup>

The steady inroads women have made into male-dominated occupations in recent years might give us the impression that strict job segregation by gender and the ideas this segregation perpetuates have become things of the past. The percentages of men and women in different professions noted above were drawn from 2001 data, however, and Cejka and Eagly’s study was completed in 1999. Another study from the 1990s calculated that for women and men to be equally distributed into similar types of jobs, 77 percent of the women working today would need to change jobs.<sup>11</sup> In other words, for a long time to come, the jobs that men and women typically do will continue to teach us lessons about the jobs men and women “should” do.

There’s another dimension to this problem: Western society’s historical habit of “assigning” men and women to certain types of work can actually function as a kind of self-fulfilling expectation—exerting pressure on men and women to develop the characteristics and skills needed to perform the jobs to which they’ve been assigned. As Alice Eagly demonstrated in her influential book *Sex Differences in Social Behavior: A Social Role Interpretation*, being given certain types of jobs forces women to develop the skills those jobs require.<sup>12</sup> The same is obviously also true of men, who in many cases must develop more male-identified skills and cannot make use of the more female-identified traits in their personalities.

But we’ve become so self-conscious about gender roles and gender stereotypes in recent years, you may say, how can we still be perpetuating them? How do well-loved little girls, given every material advantage and offered opportunities never dreamt of by their female ancestors, grow up to display the same lower sense of entitlement felt by their

mothers and grandmothers? That we do perpetuate it is inarguable: Our research observed gender gaps in entitlement for men and women currently 35 and younger that were equal to those for older generations.<sup>13</sup> This means that younger women are just as likely as their older peers to feel unsure about what they deserve—and to feel uncomfortable asking for more than they have.

Two major social forces seem to be responsible for the stubborn persistence of gender-linked norms and beliefs. The first involves the socialization and development of children and the second involves the maintenance of gender roles by adults.

### The Socialization of Children

A line of child development research has identified a process of “sex-typing,” through which each new generation of children is taught roles and beliefs by previously socialized members of the society.<sup>14</sup> The developmental psychologist Eleanor Maccoby describes the presumed sequence of events: “Adult socialization agents and older children treat children of the two sexes somewhat differently, using reinforcement, punishment, and example to foster whatever behaviors and attitudes a social group deems sex-appropriate. Socialization pressures are also applied to inhibit sex-inappropriate attitudes and behavior. The result of this differential socialization is that boys and girls, on the average, develop somewhat different personality traits, skills, and activity preferences.”<sup>15</sup>

We heard many stories about the powerful pressure that gender stereotypes exert on women’s sense of entitlement. Adele, 65, a retired financial consultant, said that she was “taught from a very young age that asking for anything was like begging and that ‘good girls’ didn’t beg.” As a result, Adele never once in the course of her long career asked for a raise. Instead, she taught herself to avoid thinking about the things she wanted. This protected her from disappointment, but it also impaired her ability to judge what her work was worth—her sense of personal entitlement was almost totally suppressed. Needless to say, not thinking about what she wanted also made her considerably less focused and effective at getting promotions, rewards, and opportunities that she might have deserved and enjoyed.

Lisa, the animal hospital receptionist-manager, says that when she was growing up, “girls were really taught to defer to people, to—you

know—be polite, be kind, be compassionate, be considerate. You're always taking second place to the needs of others. . . . The messages are so strong, and you're so absorbent of them when you're so young that I fight that second nature a lot."

Miriam, the architect, said "I've been told all of my life . . . that if I have something then I should give it to someone else. I think that is what women and girls are taught—to be generous and give—and boys I think are taught to defend themselves and keep and ask." Brian, the intensive-care nurse, agrees: "I think I'm better, generally [as a negotiator]. . . . I almost think part of that's a sort of societal conditioning, that as a man I have been raised with this sense of entitlement, that I should get what I want. And I almost think that societally women are conditioned that you don't always get what you want."

One of the things men are conditioned to think they should get is money. Becky, 50, a journalist, recalls that when she was a child her brother was given gifts of stocks but she was given dresses. This taught her brother very early on that the world of money and high finance were his rightful home, while she received the message that this was not to be her territory. This is a message—that money is outside their provenance—that girls and women get from all directions. They get it at home (remember Linda's daughter asking if girls have money or if it's just boys who have money?). They get it at school from teachers who let them know (often without realizing it) that girls are not expected to do well at math. And they get it from the media.

A 1999 study revealed, for example, that the percentage of women used as experts in business and economic newscasts on the three major television networks that year averaged a mere 18 percent (CBS used women as financial experts only 11 percent of the time); only 31 percent of all business and economic news stories on the networks were filed by female correspondents. The print media were no better. That same year, in *Time* magazine, only 11 percent of the authors of business and economic news stories were women, in *Newsweek* male sources cited in financial news articles outnumbered female sources seven to one, and in *Business Week* financial articles about influential individuals focused on men 92 percent of the time.<sup>16</sup> Even a child who is not interested in pursuing a profession in the financial world cannot avoid the none-too-subtle message that money is a man's business. This may make her feel less entitled as an adult to ask for more money than she's offered because she does not see herself as a part of the world in which people make a lot of money.

Girls learn other lessons about what they can do from popular culture. A few years ago, the Sesame Workshop, creators of *Sesame Street* and other educational children's television programming, launched a cartoon called *Dragon Tales* aimed at preschool children. The show follows the adventures of a young brother and sister who regularly visit a fantasy place called Dragonland to play with a group of friendly dragons. Their adventures are designed to help children learn how to work and play together, share, and solve problems. In one episode, the sister, Emmy, discovers on her arrival in Dragonland that her girl dragon friends are all members of the Dragon Scouts. Emmy wants to become a scout, too, but for reasons that go unexplained she avoids the obvious route of simply asking her friends if she can join. Instead, she lingers while her friends work on various scout projects, trying to help them and being coy about what she wants. Finally, at the end of the show, her friends invite her to join them, which the show presents as a victory for her approach. The message to little girls could not be clearer: Being coy and indirect about what you want and waiting rather than asking is an effective strategy—more than that, it is the appropriate strategy, and superior to directly articulating your wants and wishes.

Other messages come from children's books and movies. The classic *Make Way for Ducklings*, beloved by generations of children, tells the story of Mr. and Mrs. Mallard, a pair of "married" ducks. After much searching, the Mallards find a spot to nest, lay their eggs, and molt on an island in Boston's Charles River. Once the ducklings hatch, Mr. Mallard decides he wants to explore the river and departs for a week, leaving Mrs. Mallard behind to "raise the kids." While he's gone, she teaches them how to swim, dive for food at the bottom of the river, and walk in a line. From stories like this, children learn that men are free to pursue their own interests and satisfy their personal desires, but communal responsibilities must dominate women's actions.

A more recent example comes from the two *Toy Story* movies, much favored by moms and dads because they are imaginative, they include little violence, and, unlike many movies for children, they don't start with the death of a parent. In both movies, a toy is stranded outside the security of the child's home in which the community of toys resides. In each case, rescuers venture out to retrieve the lost toy, and in each case, male toys embark on the rescue mission while the female toys wait behind. The behavior of the female toys conforms closely to gender role norms for girls in other ways as well. Bo Peep, in the first movie, remains loyal to Woody (the "head" or alpha toy in the group because he has

been the child's favorite) even though Woody appears to have purposely flipped a new toy, Buzz Lightyear, out the window because he threatened his status. In *Toy Story 2*, after Woody has been stolen by a greedy toy collector, Mrs. Potato Head packs up supplies for Mr. Potato Head to take on the rescue mission, fussily including all sorts of things he may need to stay well-fed and safe. The message is clear: Men get to be the self-assertive risk-takers, while women are relegated to more secondary, other-directed roles. The second movie does include a feisty female character, Jesse, a cowgirl doll, but even she needs to be rescued by the male toys in the end.

A few powerful female characters have appeared on children's television in recent years, such as Xena: Warrior Princess, and the Powerpuff Girls. Nonetheless, recent studies report that of the 123 characters girls who watch children's programming on Saturday mornings may encounter, only 23 percent are female. Of the major characters, only 18 percent are female.<sup>17</sup> This tells girls that they are not the principal "actors" in life's dramas and that it is boys or men who take center stage in the world and make things happen. Girls play bystanders or supporting characters. This lesson is not likely to encourage girls to step forward and grab what they want for themselves; instead, it teaches them to watch and wait and accept whatever comes their way.

Computer and video games—many more of which are designed for boys than for girls—also promote gender-appropriate attitudes by cultivating "agentic" skills such as competitiveness, aggression, and self-interest at the expense of others.<sup>18</sup> In most of these games, the action figures are boys and the few girls appear as scantily clothed props.<sup>19</sup> This distribution of roles reinforces the notion that it is appropriate for boys to strive for success (by "winning" or achieving the highest score) but girls should remain decorative and passive. "Old-fashioned" toys are sex-typed as well—and widely recognized as such. "Girls' toys" include dolls and kitchen equipment (play ovens, tea sets, dishes); "boys' toys" include vehicles (cars, trains, planes) and construction sets (blocks, trucks, Lincoln Logs). Adults not only prefer to see their children play with "sex-appropriate toys" like these, they communicate this message so effectively that even when children are unconstrained they choose sex-typed toys the majority of the time.<sup>20</sup> Girls learn from the toys they receive that it is important for them to take care of others—bathing and dressing their doll "babies," serving "tea" to friends, preparing food and cleaning up after meals. Boys learn from their transportation toys that they can move freely through the world and from their

construction toys that they can define the earth around them by constructing buildings, roads, and complicated machinery. The net effect of this "toy-coding" is to teach girls to subordinate their needs to the needs of others and to teach boys to take charge of their environment.

Through these and related forms of socialization, stereotypes and gender-role ideas take hold very early in a child's consciousness. In the "pay allocation" studies described in chapter 2, for example, the researchers consistently replicated the adult gender gap in entitlement among schoolchildren. Using first, fourth, seventh, and tenth graders (with Hershey's kisses instead of money for the first graders), the researchers found that in every grade, girls paid themselves less than boys paid themselves—between 30 and 78 percent less. Again, the researchers found no gender differences in the children's evaluations of how well they thought they'd performed the set task.<sup>21</sup> Even more to the point, perhaps, the amounts girls paid themselves correlated positively with the perceived "masculinity" or "femininity" of their occupation preferences. Girls who indicated that they preferred "male-dominated" occupations such as firefighter, astronaut, or police officer paid themselves more than girls who indicated that they preferred "female" occupations such as secretary, nurse, and teacher. This suggests that the extent to which girls identify with traditional female roles influences their level of perceived entitlement.

The different messages boys and girls receive growing up may also affect their self-esteem, with research suggesting that women as a group have lower levels of self-esteem than men do.<sup>22</sup> Scholars have proposed numerous causes for this, with some sources blaming a bombardment of anti-female messages in the media. Whatever the causes, they don't seem to be genetic: After an extensive review of the existing literature on gender and self-esteem, the psychologists Kristen Kling, Janet Shelby-Hyde, Carolin Showers, and Brenda Buswell concluded that the different socialization messages boys and girls receive from our culture seem to be responsible. Boys are "expected to develop self-confidence," they write, "whereas displaying self-confidence has traditionally been a gender-role violation for girls."<sup>23</sup> Believing that you're good at what you do, assuming that you deserve to be amply rewarded for your good work, and asking for more—having a strong sense of entitlement and showing it—would clearly be displaying self-confidence, and would therefore be a gender-role violation for a girl.

The social importance of abiding by gender roles was illustrated by a recent study of adolescence and self-esteem. Researchers found that

boys in late adolescence (between the ages of 17 and 19) who had "agentive" or self-oriented conceptions of themselves showed significant increases in their self-esteem when they reached young adulthood a few years later (between the ages of 21 and 23). Similarly, girls at the same stage of late adolescence (between 17 and 19) who held "communal" or other-directed conceptions of themselves showed significant increases in their self-esteem when they reached young adulthood.<sup>24</sup> This tells us that abiding by the strictures of prevailing gender roles can have a positive impact on self-esteem, presumably because other people respond positively to boys and girls—and men and women—who behave according to expectations. It also tells us that behaving in ways *inconsistent* with gender roles may have negative consequences for self-esteem, because such behavior often elicits critical responses and negative feedback. The link between self-esteem and a sense of personal entitlement is not hard to see: If you have a low sense of self-worth, your sense of what you deserve is likely to be similarly depressed—and you're not likely to feel especially comfortable asking for more than you've already got.

### The Expectations of Adults

Because we all subconsciously adjust our behavior in response to other people's expectations, many researchers believe that the behavior of adults also helps to perpetuate society's gender-role restrictions.<sup>25</sup> A famous and sobering study demonstrates the power of expectations. In this study, two Harvard psychologists, Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson, administered two tests to a group of children at an elementary school (every child in the study took both tests).<sup>26</sup> One test evaluated each child's general ability. The other, Rosenthal and Jacobson told the children's teachers, could predict which children were about to experience an "intellectual growth spurt"—a substantial leap forward in their capabilities. The psychologists explained to the teachers that "all children show hills, plateaus, and valleys in their scholastic progress," and that they had developed the Harvard Test of Inflected Acquisition (or the Harvard TIA) in order to identify those children who were about to "show an inflection point or 'spurt' in the near future."<sup>27</sup> After administering both tests, Rosenthal and Jacobson gave each teacher a list of the children in his or her class who they said were about to experience a leap forward in their learning abilities.

A year and a half later, the psychologists returned to the same school and readministered the test of general ability. When they compared the new results with the results from the general ability test administered at their previous visit, the children the researchers had said were about to "spurt" had improved more than the others. While the "nonspurters" had gained an average of only 8.42 points on the test, the preidentified "spurters" had gained an average of 12.22 points in general learning ability—a difference of 50 percent. In addition, the teachers gave the "spurters" higher grades in reading and reported that they were "happier and more intellectually curious" than their peers.

The significant detail here is that the Harvard TIA was not a real test. It was designed to convince the teachers that the kids were taking a real test. But the researchers never scored the test or processed any results from it. Instead, they randomly chose 20 percent of the children and gave their names to the teachers. The change in the children's scores on the real test, the test of general ability, revealed the huge impact of the teachers' expectations on the performance of those children whose names were on the list. Because the teachers expected those children to "get smarter," they did.

The researchers speculated that the teachers paid more attention to the targeted students, expressed more enthusiasm when they did well, encouraged them more, and generally made them feel special—all behaviors that built the students' confidence, increased their motivation to do well, and led to the leap forward in their achievement.<sup>28</sup> When children whose names were not on the list did well, the teachers were less likely to notice or respond with special encouragement, thereby missing opportunities to build their self-confidence and motivation.

Since this landmark study (which would probably be considered unethical if administered today), a large body of psychological research has confirmed that people typically comply with the expectations others have of them—expectations that can be expressed in both overt and subtle ways.<sup>29</sup> And several studies have confirmed that expectations based on gender can be particularly powerful.<sup>30</sup>

Elaine, 55, a U.S. District Court judge, provides an example of how adults unthinkingly communicate their differing expectations of women and men. Elaine and two other women were appointed at the same time to her district court, which has a total of 13 judges and had previously been all-male. During her first week on the bench, Elaine and one of the other female judges participated in a meeting with several of the male judges. As Elaine tells it, "It was a very important meeting,

and everybody was talking, and we were talking, raising our hands and contributing to the conversation, and the chief judge was summarizing what everyone said. And he said, 'Well, Judge Josephson said this, Judge Harris said this, and Phoebe said this, and Elaine said that.' Elaine and the other female judge at the meeting exchanged looks—they both noticed immediately that the chief judge was calling the men by their titles and the women by their first names. She said, "I don't think he meant to demean us, but it was clear that he thought of us in different ways, and that comes across. And we thought of *ourselves* in different ways. I think it's hard not to be treated that way without having it rub off." The chief judge had inadvertently revealed that, like most people, he thinks of men as "assertive, dominant, decisive, ambitious, and instrumental," and therefore deserving of being called "judge," a title that confers the right to assert oneself and exercise personal power. He also showed that he probably thinks of women as more "warm, expressive, nurturing, emotional, and friendly," and therefore more appropriately addressed by their "friendlier" first names.

In Elaine's experience, this was only one of numerous times in her career when she realized how other people's beliefs could influence her behavior. Struggling with this reality, she learned that there was "a range of roles that I could play, and I had to work with not only what I looked like physically [as a woman]; I had to work with the roles that society was going to ascribe to me . . . and they changed over time, . . . modified both by my age and by society's expectations of who I was. You could push to a point, but you couldn't go beyond that if you meant to be successful in the world."

Simply ignoring a stereotype or refusing to behave as expected doesn't solve the problem, in other words. Suppose, for example, that a man believes that women make bad leaders. This man may express doubt and distrust whenever he encounters a woman in a leadership position. His response may range from rolling his eyes to disobeying her outright; in either case, his expectation, thus communicated, may shake her confidence. Understanding that she's not "supposed" to be a good leader, she may behave in more uncertain, less capable ways, stumbling over instructions she gives to subordinates, questioning her own decisions, and "leading" less capably.

If she doesn't let him "shake" her and persists in leading capably and well, this may actually antagonize him, with unpleasant consequences (we discuss how women can be punished for violating gender stereo-

types in the next chapter). Psychologists have also shown that when people encounter evidence inconsistent with their beliefs, they tend to ignore it.<sup>31</sup> So, the man who thinks women make bad leaders may completely disregard a situation in which a woman conducts herself effectively as a leader. (Similarly, the expectation that women won't push on their own behalf can make people ignore or undermine them when they do.)

Even memory can be affected by stereotypes, causing this man to remember every instance of poor leadership by a woman and forget events inconsistent with his belief, such as a woman leading exceptionally well. The man might even "remember" events consistent with the stereotype that did not actually occur because people often "create" memories that conform to their beliefs, memory researchers have found.<sup>32</sup> A final factor is that this same man might shy away from putting women in leadership roles, thereby limiting his opportunities to observe women behaving in ways inconsistent with his belief, as well as limiting women's opportunities to work on their leadership skills. All of these processes reduce the chances that his belief will be challenged and revised.

Regardless of the mechanisms by which these gender roles are perpetuated, it seems unlikely that our conceptions about gender roles will change quickly. Although the last 30 years have seen a marked rise in the proportion of women in the paid labor force, perceptions of women as other-oriented and men as self-oriented have remained fairly stable.<sup>33</sup> One study by the negotiation researchers Laura Kray, Leigh Thompson, and Adam Galinsky, published in 2001, asked undergraduates to write essays discussing who has the advantage in negotiations, men or women. By a large majority, the students' responses confirmed prevailing gender stereotypes, describing men as assertive, strong, and able to stand firm against compromise, and women as emotional, relationship-oriented, accommodating, and attuned to feelings.<sup>34</sup> In other words, young adults today hold many of the same beliefs about typically male and female behaviors that their parents and grandparents held. Before these beliefs can be changed, it would seem, we will need to find ways to change both the roles women play in society and our widely shared ideas about acceptable behavior for women. Teaching women to assert their needs and wishes more and teaching society to accept women who ask for what they want may be one of those ways.

### Why Don't Women Resist These Norms?

Existing gender roles and stereotypes hardly work to the material or economic advantage of women. Why then, don't women rebel against them? One explanation, perhaps the most straightforward, contends that socialization does such a thorough job of teaching little girls their proper role that by the time they reach adulthood, they believe that their gender-appropriate impulses and behavior—such as being nurturing, friendly, and selfless—are intrinsic expressions of their personalities rather than learned behaviors.<sup>35</sup> They may also believe that these behaviors are attractive and valuable, which of course they are. But so are many behaviors that boys are taught, such as exercising initiative and sticking up for themselves.

Elaine, the judge described earlier, is unusual in her awareness of the impact of gender stereotypes on her behavior and her sense of herself; most women, researchers suspect, don't realize how much they are influenced by social expectations. The Stanford social psychologist John Jost suggests that "women in general are relatively unaware of their status as an oppressed group," and consequently, "hold many beliefs that are consonant with their own oppression." He also suggests that what he calls "gender socialization practices" are "so thorough in their justification of inequality" that girls and women end up believing that the existing system of inequality and discrimination is appropriate and right.<sup>36</sup> In other words, "members of oppressed groups internalize aspects of their oppression, coming to believe in the legitimacy of their own inferiority."<sup>37</sup>

To understand how this works, consider a girl who has been taught that girls don't make good scientists. Believing this, she may try less hard at science in school (to avoid failing at something in which she has invested her energies—and her ego). Or she might become interested in other subjects at which she feels she can excel. In this way, she never encounters evidence to dispute what she's been taught—and she never learns that she can be good at science if she chooses to be. Since research suggests that evidence inconsistent with a previously held belief is frequently ignored or underweighted,<sup>38</sup> her belief that she is not good at science may even persist in the face of disconfirming evidence. If she does well on a science test, for example, she may ascribe this to luck rather than talent, or find some other excuse (such as dismissing it as

an easy test). Thus, traditional beliefs are passed down, generation to generation.

Linda had almost this exact experience, except that she was lucky enough to stumble into a situation that tested her unfounded beliefs about her abilities. As a child, like many girls, she thought she wasn't very good at math. She can't identify any specific comment from a parent or a teacher, or any other experiences that might account for this assumption, but being a girl she assumed that math just wasn't her subject, and no one tried to convince her otherwise. In high school, when some of her friends took calculus, she thought it would be too difficult for her. She started out in college planning to become a dancer, but after an injury forced her to stop dancing she became interested in economics. Economics at the undergraduate level, at least at her school, didn't involve much math, and Linda found that she was very good at it—good enough to go to graduate school in the subject. In graduate school, however, she discovered that economics at the Ph.D. level is almost *all* math, and very challenging math at that. But, it turned out, Linda was good at that too—she just didn't know this until circumstances disproved her conditioned assumptions about her own limitations.

The power of what John Jost calls "gender socialization practices" to convince women of "the legitimacy of their own inferiority" also manifests itself in what has been termed "the imposter syndrome." Many women who have ventured into fields that were previously closed to them suffer from "a deep sense of inadequacy that is objectively unfounded," the sociologist Gerhard Sonnert reports in *Who Succeeds in Science: The Gender Dimension*.<sup>39</sup> Among a large group of former doctoral-level fellows, all of whom won prestigious postdoctorate awards early in their careers, Sonnert reports that 70 percent of the men but only 52 percent of the women considered their scientific ability to be above average. This discrepancy has been documented in other fields as well.<sup>40</sup> Studies of women graduate students show that they have much lower levels of self-confidence than their male peers even when their grades are just as good or better.<sup>41</sup> Having advanced far up the rungs of a ladder that women are not supposed to climb, or achieved significant success in an area in which women aren't supposed to excel, many women secretly harbor the feeling that they're just "faking it" and that their inadequacy will soon be discovered.

In *Schoolgirls: Young Women, Self-Esteem, and the Confidence Gap*, Peggy Orenstein describes this feeling shared by so many women: "In



spite of all of our successes, in spite of the fact that we have attained the superficial ideal of womanhood held out to our generation, we feel unsure, insecure, inadequate." As early as her college years, she writes, "I became paralyzed during the writing of my senior thesis, convinced that my fraudulence was about to be unmasked. Back then, I went to my adviser and told her of the fears that were choking me. 'You feel like an impostor?' she asked. 'Don't worry about it. All smart women feel that way.'"<sup>42</sup> Secretly convinced that generalizations about women's abilities are true, women refrain from rebelling openly against those generalizations for fear that their weakness and inferiority will be exposed if they do.

Women also don't resist gender norm constraints because, in many cases, they are oblivious to their power and believe these norms have no impact on their own behavior. Faye Crosby and Stacy Ropp have shown that "it is difficult for most people to recognize personal injustices."<sup>43</sup> They also report that women are not likely to take action when they see their group—women—discriminated against but don't feel personally mistreated themselves. A woman might think, "Why should I rebel against something that doesn't affect me or how I behave?" A selection of quotations from short profiles of women lawyers in an issue of the *New York Times Magazine* devoted to "Women and Power" illustrates this point well: "I'm absolutely against blaming any type of failure on outside circumstances. I believe that you create possibility for yourself. I think the way people are treated follows naturally from how they perceive themselves"; "I don't have any obstacles, so if I don't get to the top, it will be because of my own personal choices. There's no discrimination except for the kind we face within ourselves"; "I think if you know your stuff you're going to be fine."<sup>44</sup>

Although the self-confidence of these women is admirable and will surely serve them well, their optimism is misplaced for two reasons. First, as we discussed earlier, other people's beliefs and stereotypes color the ways in which they see the world. So people around these capable and confident women are going to interpret, process, and respond to their actions through the lens of their stereotypes about women—often without realizing that they're doing so. As a result, the work these women do may be rated as inferior to comparable work by men even when the actual work product is identical. (We explore this phenomenon in the following chapter.) Their work may be "devalued simply because they are women," the social psychologist Madeline Heilman has shown.<sup>45</sup>

Second, it has been demonstrated that expectations and stereotypes can subconsciously influence a person's behavior even when those stereotypes are not embraced or internalized.<sup>46</sup> An area of research termed "stereotype threat" pioneered by the psychologist Claude Steele and his colleagues has shown that merely "activating" a stereotype by asking about it—that is, eliciting the information that someone belongs to a particular group—can have a significant impact on that person's behavior.<sup>47</sup> For example, asking about a student's race before a test of verbal ability can cause African-American students to perform significantly worse—25 percent worse—than they perform when they are not asked about their race beforehand.<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, asking an Asian student about his or her race before a mathematics test can actually improve that student's performance, because Asians are thought to have superior skill at mathematics. Similar results have been found in research that examined gender stereotypes.<sup>49</sup> In a study at the University of Michigan, undergraduate students were given a difficult mathematics test. One group of participants was told that there were usually no gender differences in performance on the test they were about to take, and among this group men and women performed equally well on the test. Another group was told that the test usually produced gender differences in performance (but they weren't told whether men or women tended to perform better). Among this group, presumably because men are believed to have superior math skills, women's scores dropped sharply—by more than half—while men's scores increased by about 33 percent.<sup>50</sup>

Scholars do not yet fully understand the psychological processes that influence performance in these situations, but most researchers suspect that "activating" the stereotype either evokes a surge of positive self-esteem that enhances performance, if the stereotype is a flattering one, or rouses concern about confirming the stereotype (concern that may not even be conscious), if the stereotype is an unflattering one. This concern, they suspect, increases a person's performance anxiety while also adding to the number of things he or she is thinking about—leaving less room in his or her head for doing other things, such as concentrating on complex math calculations. The result is a degradation of performance.<sup>51</sup>

Here's an example from Sara's own experience. When she was 28, Sara left a job as a publishing executive and decided to take some time to figure out what she wanted to do next. While she considered her options, she took a job in a bookstore to help pay her bills. It was a

small store, and most of the time she worked closely with the owner. This man had gone to business school and prided himself on the speed with which he could do calculations in his head. He also made no bones about the fact that he believed women were no good at math. The store was equipped with an old cash register that frequently forced Sara to do simple calculations in her head to save time. Sara had also always been good at math, and she considered herself fast and accurate at making calculations in her head. In her previous job she had been responsible for the details of complex contracts, and she always figured out the tip in restaurants when she was out with friends. Nonetheless, whenever the bookstore owner was standing by and she had to complete calculations in her head, she made mistakes or felt sufficiently unsure of her answers that she would repeat the calculations on paper to convince herself that she was being accurate. Although she knew this made no sense and felt exasperated with herself for what she perceived as a weakness, she was unable to combat the power of the owner's conviction that she could not do these relatively simple mental tasks.

This area of research suggests that stereotypes with negative connotations about the abilities of women may influence a woman's behavior even if she repudiates the stereotype or feels herself to be immune from its damage. While the studies described above found performance deficits when a person's race or gender was explicitly identified, stereotype threat can also occur in a multitude of situations that simply make a person's gender noticeable. For example, a recent study investigated how "tokenism" can affect performance.<sup>52</sup> The researchers in this study asked students to take a test of mathematical ability (from the GRE) in groups of three. Some of the groups were composed of three women; others were made up of one woman and two men. In comparing the results of the all-female groups with those that included two men, the researchers found that women in the "token" groups (women who took the test with two men) performed 21 percent worse than the women in the all-female groups. They concluded that when a person's "token" status becomes salient—when the makeup of a group highlights an individual's difference from the dominant group—this creates a self-consciousness in the "token" individual that can interfere with performance.

Linda had an experience that illustrates this clearly. One year, she was asked to serve as interim dean of her graduate school while a full-scale search was launched to fill the position permanently. Shortly after she took up the post, Linda found herself at an important meeting with

the university president, the provost, and the rest of the deans, all of whom were men. Although Linda had never observed any behavior to suggest that her colleagues were sexist and they had always been enthusiastic about her work, Linda felt acutely conscious of the fact that everyone else in the room was male. At this meeting, Linda was scheduled to present a strategic plan she'd developed for the school. She remembers thinking that she really needed to do a great job to show that women can be successful leaders and deserve to be "at the table." Yet she felt herself growing uncharacteristically nervous. By the time it was her turn to speak, she was petrified. Afterward, she acknowledged to her own chagrin that self-consciousness about her gender had interfered with her performance.

This suggests that even if a woman believes that society's gender-role requirements are inappropriate and even offensive, the mere knowledge that these beliefs are held by others may be enough to influence her behavior. If she is unaware that this is occurring, she may take no action to counteract it. And even if she does realize what's happening, like both Sara and Linda, she may have trouble fighting it. By causing women to perform less well under pressure, stereotype threat helps perpetuate negative generalizations about women's capacities and helps reinforce the very ideas that have caused them. And by making women more uncomfortable about demonstrating their abilities, damaging their self-confidence at crucial moments, and seemingly confirming the expectations they have been resisting, it may become an important force in pushing women's behavior into line with prevailing gender-role ideas. In this way the stereotype that women make bad negotiators, for example, may hamper women from discovering how good they can be.

### Prospects for Change

Change can begin at home, with parents examining their reflexive responses to their female and male children and the lessons they teach their children through their behavior. It can begin in schools, with teachers making sure that they don't send unintended messages to girls and boys about what is expected of them—and what is not permitted. It can begin with individual managers examining the beliefs they hold about women and men and trying to be more self-conscious about how they interpret the behavior of their female employees, evaluate their work, and make decisions regarding compensation and advancement.

Deloitte and Touche, the firm we described in the introduction, demonstrated that large-scale change is also possible—and Deloitte and Touche's success has already inspired other companies to follow suit. According to Sue Molina, a Deloitte and Touche tax partner and the national director of the Initiative for the Retention and Advancement of Women, other companies contact the firm regularly for information about the initiative. In addition, D&T's "human capital" group is beginning to consult for other companies seeking to improve the status of women in their organizations.<sup>53</sup>

Change is underway elsewhere as well. Accenture, a management consulting and technology services company, launched a "Great Place to Work for Women" initiative in the United States in 1994 (and expanded to the rest of the world in 2000), which seeks to "attract, retain and advance women by recognizing, fostering and maximizing their performance." To achieve these goals, the program "is customized locally to offer information, networking opportunities, policies and programs specific to each of the countries in which the program has been implemented. The company uses a variety of innovative processes such as geographic scorecards, global surveys and performance appraisals to ensure that company leadership remains accountable for the initiative's success."<sup>54</sup>

Accenture's program aims for more thorough change at all levels of the organization by making the company's leadership accountable for achieving success, which research has shown to be especially effective in bringing about real change.<sup>55</sup> Catalyst president Sheila Wellington singled out the Accenture program for praise because of "the scope of the initiative combined with the ease by which it can be replicated worldwide" and called it "a truly innovative effort."<sup>56</sup> (Catalyst is a non-profit research and advisory organization concerned with the professional advancement of women.)

Ernst and Young, an international accounting and professional services firm with 110,000 employees worldwide, launched a series of "women's development initiatives" in 1997 that increased women in executive management positions from 0 to 13 percent by 2002. During the same five years, the percentage of women promoted to partner at Ernst and Young doubled. The firm's commitment to making its corporate culture more hospitable to women earned it a spot on *Working Mother* magazine's "100 Best Companies for Working Mothers" list for five consecutive years, landed it on *Fortune* magazine's "100 Best Com-

panies to Work For" list, and made it one of three firms in 2003 to win Catalyst's award for "companies and firms with outstanding initiatives that result in women's career development and advancement." And, as at Deloitte and Touche, improving the firm's culture for women made a difference for men as well. Approximately 1,000 Ernst and Young employees had babies in 2002, and 949 of them took advantage of the firm's parental leave benefit—almost half of them men. In addition, both men and women have made use of the firm's flex-time options, including partners, principals, and directors, without suffering any slow-down in their professional progress.

The huge increase in firms applying to be considered for *Working Mother's* "100 Best Companies for Working Mothers" award since the program began in 1986 shows that American companies have begun to recognize the value of promoting women's professional progress. According to Amy DiTillio, a senior associate editor at *Working Mother*, as more firms apply, winning requires truly meaningful change, continually "raising the bar."

Most of the initiatives undertaken by these companies involve so-called "work/life" benefits, such as child-care services, flexible work arrangements, and elder-care and adoption assistance programs. Mother-friendly policies make it possible for these companies to retain talented employees in whom they've invested substantial resources. Steve Sanger, the CEO of General Mills, who won *Working Mother's* "2003 Chief Executive of the Year" award for demonstrating extraordinary commitment to creating a family-friendly workplace, explained why these policies make good business sense: "You know what's really expensive? Turnover. If we've invested in recruiting and developing good people, then we want them to stay."<sup>57</sup>

In addition to their positive impact on the bottom line, family-friendly initiatives can remove barriers to women's advancement by transforming women's "communal" impulse to take care of their families into a gender norm for both sexes. In response, men in these companies are flocking to take advantage of these programs.

Unfortunately, however, most of these companies have not gone as far as Deloitte and Touche in looking at the entrenched attitudes, unthinking responses, and unseen roadblocks to women's advancement that lurk throughout our culture. These companies—and many more—still need to remove many of the barriers that can prevent women from asserting themselves, asking for what they want, and getting what they

deserve. Change of this sort is not only possible, it's necessary—because another reason women don't resist the constraints of gender roles and stereotypes involves the consequences for violating those expectations. As our culture currently functions, women sometimes find themselves punished for behaving in ways that go against prevailing gender norms. Promoting their own interests by asking for what they want may be one of those ways. We explore this last reason in depth in the next chapter.

# 4

## Scaring the Boys

In the late 1990s, Jean Hollands, founder of an executive coaching firm in California called the Growth and Leadership Center, recognized a new need in her field: Someone had to teach tough, capable women in business to tone down their act. Women with enormous passion for their jobs and little tolerance for incompetence were intimidating their subordinates, coworkers, and even their bosses. As a result, these women's careers were stalling. A "tough" personal style, often an advantage for men in business, had emerged as a liability for ambitious women.<sup>1</sup>

In response, Jean Hollands started the "Bully Broads" program, which charges around \$18,000 (almost always paid by a woman's employer) to "modify" or "reform" tough women by teaching them how to be "nicer."<sup>2</sup> Does she acknowledge that there's a double standard? Absolutely. "Many of the things these women do would not be as inappropriate in a man," Ms. Hollands says.<sup>3</sup> Her son-in-law, Ron Steck, a vice president of the Growth and Leadership Center, goes further: "With a male executive, there's no expectation to be nice. He has more permission to be an ass. But when women speak their minds, they're seen as harsh."<sup>4</sup> To counteract this impression, Bully Broads teaches these women to speak more slowly and softly, hesitate or stammer when presenting their ideas, use self-deprecating humor, and even allow themselves to cry at meetings. They need to "become ladies first," Hollands says; they also need to appear vulnerable and use what she calls "foreplay"—elaborate apologies and explanations to soften bad news or unwelcome directives.<sup>5</sup>

How big a “problem” is women’s overly tough behavior? Whereas the majority of the men who go to the Growth and Leadership Center are sent by their companies to learn how to delegate work or handle stress better, a full 95 percent of the women are sent because their firms say their coworkers find them scary. This doesn’t mean that the world is suddenly being overrun by bitchy women. It means that an assertive personal style can be a gender-norm violation for a woman. As the psychologist Roberta Nutt, former chair of the Psychology of Women Division of the American Psychological Association, noted, “When women first entered the workplace they often tried to do things like men, but it didn’t work. We don’t accept from women what we do from men.”<sup>6</sup> This is true of objectively aggressive and dominant types of behavior, such as pointing at others, speaking with a stern expression on one’s face, and making verbal and nonverbal threats.<sup>7</sup> It is also true of nonverbal behavior that could be seen to express a dominant attitude, such as making a lot of eye contact while speaking.<sup>8</sup> Sadly, it has even been shown to be true of behavior that could be characterized as simply assertive and self-confident, such as speaking without the use of disclaimers, tag questions (“don’t you agree?”), and hedges (“I’m not sure this will work, but it might be worth trying”).<sup>9</sup> It can be true of simply disagreeing with another person as well—we accept this behavior from a man much more readily than we do from a woman.<sup>10</sup>

Unfortunately, many of these behaviors can be effective in a negotiation—but they carry risks for women. Marti, 28, who worked on sound design for toys at a recording studio and is now the registrar of a theater company and acting school, told us that she learned pretty early “that if a woman picks that hard-edged negotiation style she can often . . . come across as a bitch to people. And, still, I think, society looks at a woman who is a successful businesswoman and a successful negotiator, and somehow looks down upon her because she’s not as soft as she’s supposed to be.”

Gender norms limit the behavior of men, too, of course: Men aren’t free to cry or show weakness in most situations, for example. It isn’t, therefore, just that women must be more concerned than men about creating a good impression: It’s that particularly in the realm of negotiating, women’s behavior is more rigidly restricted than men’s. And an extensive body of research has found clear evidence that when women stray—or stride—across those boundaries they face penalties (what social scientists call “social sanctions”) for violating society’s expectations for their behavior. These penalties can range from resentment for “act-

ing like men”<sup>11</sup> to a devaluing of their skills and job effectiveness<sup>12</sup> to outright hostility and censure.<sup>13</sup> Their fear of these penalties makes many women hesitate to pursue their goals too directly. It can also be a major cause of anxiety for women when they need to negotiate on their own behalf because they’ve learned that by doing so they risk being punished in both subtle and overt ways. (Being sent to Bully Broads would be one of the more overt ways, especially since many women are told by their employers that if they don’t go they’ll lose their jobs). As psychologist Mary Wade writes: “Women do not frequently make requests for themselves, because they have learned that they may ultimately lose more than they gain. . . . Women have learned their social-normative lessons all too well.”<sup>14</sup> Many women decide, in other words, that the gains to be had from asking for what they want are not worth the price they may have to pay.

In this chapter, we look broadly at society’s double standard for judging the behavior of men and women in order to understand why women frequently feel punished for asking for what they want. We examine some of the constraints society places on women’s behavior—constraints that have persuaded many women that asking is not an effective strategy for achieving their goals. We then look at ways for women to ask for and get what they want without provoking hostile responses. And we look at ways in which society can change to make “asking” by women more permissible and effective.

### The Likeability Factor

For women who want to influence other people, research has found that being *likeable* is critically important—and that women’s influence increases the more they are liked. Since negotiation is all about trying to influence people, this means that women must be likeable in order to negotiate successfully. You might think that women also need to be assertive to negotiate successfully—able to present strong arguments, defend their interests and positions, and communicate confidence in their points of view. Unfortunately, research has revealed that assertive women are less well-liked than those who are not assertive.<sup>15</sup> This means that an assertive woman, no matter how well she presents her arguments in a negotiation, risks decreasing her likeability and therefore her ability to influence the other side to agree with her point of view. In contrast, whether or not they are liked does not affect men’s ability

to influence others, and there is no connection between assertive behavior and likeability for men. Men are equally well liked whether they are assertive or passive.<sup>16</sup>

This research is buttressed by studies showing that women are penalized far more than men for boasting.<sup>17</sup> In one study, researchers gave a group of students a "boasting" statement and another group a "non-boasting" statement. Some members of each group were told that the statement they'd received had been made by a man and some were told it had been made by a woman. They were all asked to rate the "likeability" of the person who made their statement on a scale of one to seven. The researchers found that the likeability of men fell when they boasted, but that women's likeability fell much further—42 percent more.<sup>18</sup>

The special pressure on women to be likeable can sometimes discourage them from asking for anything at all. Adele, the retired financial consultant, said she was raised to believe that being liked is of paramount importance for a woman. Afraid she would be disliked if she pressed for what she wanted, she would "never negotiate for anything" and taught herself to "ask for things very covertly." Melissa, 39, a social worker, said that in any type of negotiation, regardless of whom she's negotiating with, she's likely to ask for less than she really wants because her primary concern is for the other person to like her: "It sounds really kind of silly, but I don't want to ruin it somehow by being demanding in some way. And not being liked is something that's hard for me, and so I think that sometimes, if I feel like people are going to think, 'Oh, she's demanding,' I don't know—it's hard. Because . . . I want to fit into what they want."

The "likeability" issue can put women in a particularly tight bind, because self-confidence, assertiveness, and asking directly for what you want are often necessary to get ahead in the world. Consider, for example, situations involving hiring and promotion decisions. Since research has found that women are generally perceived to be less competent than men, women who compete against men in job situations need to counter this stereotype by demonstrating their superior capabilities.<sup>19</sup> Self-promotion (describing one's qualities and accomplishments) has been shown to enhance people's perceptions of one's competence.<sup>20</sup> But, as the psychologist Laurie Rudman writes, "self-promotion poses special problems for women." Although self-promotion may educate a woman's superiors about her qualifications, it may make her less likeable—and make her superiors less inclined to give her what she wants. As

Rudman writes, "women may be stuck in a Catch-22 in which they are damned if they do self-promote and damned if they do not."<sup>21</sup>

Other studies have shown that men (and sometimes women) react negatively when women adopt styles or communication patterns expected of men, such as acting assertive and self-confident rather than tentative.<sup>22</sup> But research also shows that women fare no better if they don't self-promote because men judge women who restrict themselves to more gender-appropriate behavior as less capable and "unsuited to management."<sup>23</sup>

Marcela, 48, a nuclear engineer, described a supervisor who gave her "feedback at a rating session that I was indecisive or too hesitant, which I thought was complete bologna because I don't see myself that way at all and I don't think that anybody else does either. That was just his perception and it was definitely a male/female thing. We had completely opposite styles of everything and I hated working for him, absolutely hated it!" In other words, using more "feminine" styles or communication patterns often won't get women what they want either, especially when what they want is to be given management responsibilities and the opportunity to rise into the higher levels of their organizations.<sup>24</sup>

### Style and Prejudice

Recent research on leadership by Alice Eagly, Mona Makhijani, and Bruce Klonsky confirms that we require different behavior from women in leadership roles than we require from men: Men are judged to be equally effective as leaders whether they use autocratic or democratic leadership styles, but women who use autocratic styles are judged less favorably than women who use democratic styles.<sup>25</sup> Sadly, women managers or "leaders" can be penalized for violating role expectations even when they steer a careful course between the extremes of masculine and feminine styles of behavior. In one study, researchers formed students into groups of four to rank the value of nine items (such as a first-aid kit and a map) to someone who has crashed on the moon. Each group included a confederate of the researchers (either male or female) who was trained to play the role of a cooperative, pleasantly assertive group leader. As each group ranked the items, researchers observed the facial expressions of the "nonconfederates" in response to the behavior of the confederate leaders.



The researchers found that the students responded very differently to identical behavior by men and women. Males playing the leadership roles elicited more positive than negative facial reactions but females playing leadership roles prompted the opposite response—more negative than positive reactions. The researchers later asked the participants to evaluate the personal attributes of the leaders in their groups. Across the board, they rated males who had taken leadership positions as having more ability, skill, and intelligence than the female leaders and rated the females leaders as more emotional, bossy, and domineering—this despite the fact that the behavior of the men and women playing leadership roles was exactly the same. However, when the participants were asked directly about their attitudes toward men and women in leadership roles, they exhibited no sex biases and believed that they held none.<sup>26</sup>

Researchers speculate that many people object to women playing leadership roles because their ideas about leadership behavior clash with their perceptions of how women should behave. To study this phenomenon, in the 1970s the psychologist Virginia Schein developed the Schein Descriptive Index, a list of 92 words and phrases commonly used to describe people's characteristics. Using this index, she looked at the correspondences between the characteristics people attribute to successful managers and the characteristics they attribute to men and women. She found that people chose many more of the same words to describe both men and managers (such as assertive and ambitious) but very few of the same words to describe both women and managers.<sup>27</sup> Later research in the 1980s reached much the same conclusions.<sup>28</sup>

More recently, in the mid and late 1990s, researchers noticed that this correlation has begun to change for female subjects but not male subjects—women have begun to see the characteristics of managers as being similar to the characteristics of both men and women, while men continue to see managers and women as dissimilar.<sup>29</sup> A 1998 study showed that males in particular continue to hold extremely negative beliefs about females with senior professional standing. In this study, a group of undergraduates was given the Schein Descriptive Index and asked to identify words that describe female managers. Although female subjects chose words and phrases such as *able to separate feelings from ideas, competent, creative, emotionally stable, helpful, intelligent, objective, self-controlled, sympathetic, and well-informed* to describe female managers, male subjects chose terms such as *bitter, deceitful, easily influenced, frivolous, hasty, nervous, passive, quarrelsome, and uncertain*.<sup>30</sup> Research

in Germany, the United Kingdom, China, and Japan has produced similar results. In each of these very different cultures, men see a high correspondence between the characteristics of men and the characteristics of managers—and little to no correspondence between the characteristics of women and the characteristics of managers.<sup>31</sup>

Taken together, these studies suggest that people's prejudices can powerfully influence the ways in which they respond to men and women without their realizing it. People may observe that a woman functions adequately or even extremely well according to objective measures—the number of billable hours she has worked or the number of clients she has brought in or the amounts of money she has raised—and still conclude that she lacks desirable personal attributes (she's not as likeable, or she's too emotional, bossy, and domineering, or she's too easily influenced, frivolous, and quarrelsome). This can be particularly problematic in an era, like our own, in which CEOs often become celebrities, as Rakesh Khurana, a professor of organizational behavior at the Harvard Business School, wrote in *Searching for a Corporate Savior: The Irrational Quest for Charismatic CEOs*. In this climate, writes Khurana, CEOs are "no longer defined as professional managers, but instead as leaders," with their ability to lead deriving largely from "their personal characteristics, or, more simply, their charisma."<sup>32</sup> In an atmosphere in which one's "personal characteristics" (pretty vague criteria) qualify or disqualify you for leadership roles, the subconscious prejudices people hold about women and their lack of fitness for management roles can translate into powerful deterrents when women ask to be considered for leadership positions.

As the psychologist Madeline Heilman writes, "Even when she produces the identical product as a man, a woman's work is often regarded as inferior" because often "women's achievements are viewed in a way that is consistent with stereotype-based negative performance expectations, and their work is devalued simply because they are women."<sup>33</sup> A woman may be told that she hasn't been promoted for vague reasons—she "needs more seasoning," "just isn't ready yet," or "needs to be a better team player." The woman may suspect that she has been unfairly evaluated, but because the criteria for evaluation are ambiguous, she can't prove it. She may conclude that something about her behavior has put her in the wrong—and that what put her in the wrong was asking to be promoted in the first place. This may make her reluctant to actively pursue advancement in the future.

### Double Trouble

Other research shows that responses to women may be especially distorted by negative stereotypes when they work in areas in which there are few other women. Rosabeth Moss Kanter, in her influential 1977 book *Men and Women of the Corporation*, demonstrated that when women are tokens (when there aren't many of them around) their personal characteristics are more likely to be seen as similar to negative stereotypes about women's characteristics.<sup>34</sup> In a 1980 study, Madeline Heilman confirmed this finding by asking a group of MBAs to rate potential applicants for a hypothetical job. When less than 25 percent of the applicant pool was female, the MBAs rated female applicants lower (and also perceived them as more stereotypically feminine) than they did when larger percentages of the pool were female—showing that women are more likely to be devalued when their numbers are relatively small.<sup>35</sup>

This means that the higher a woman rises in an organization, the more likely she is to encounter stereotyped responses to her behavior—because there don't tend to be many women at the higher levels of most organizations. There are of course exceptions—highly visible and influential women who have achieved enormous success despite the persistent discouragement encountered by so many others. But these women *are* exceptions. A study by the economists Marianne Bertrand and Kevin Hallock, which looked at the top five highest-paid executives in firms of varying sizes between 1992 and 1997, found that women held only 2.5 percent of these posts.<sup>36</sup> In an article in *Fast Company* magazine, Margaret Heffernan, a former CEO at CMGI, an umbrella organization for several different Internet operating and development companies, described encountering a young woman in an elevator when she was at CMGI. After inquiring if she was indeed Margaret, the young woman said, "I just wanted to meet you and shake your hand. . . . I've never seen a female CEO before."<sup>37</sup> This was not 15 years ago, but in the year 2000, and this woman's experience, Heffernan points out, is not unusual. "Most men and women in business have never seen a female CEO—much less worked with one."<sup>38</sup>

Another problem women encounter is that the more power and status involved in a job, the more "masculine" the job is perceived to be—and therefore, as the Schein Index studies show, the less likely people

are to see women's qualities as suitable for that work.<sup>39</sup> As a result, women may be perceived to be doing good work only as long as they are toiling away at less important jobs. Once they qualify for and start asking for more important, and therefore more "masculine," jobs, their work may begin to be devalued and their "personal style" may suddenly become a problem. This could explain why the women who are sent to the Bully Broads program usually hold high positions in their organizations—they're vice presidents, chief financial officers, and senior partners, all jobs that until recently were almost universally occupied by men. Presumably, for a long time these women were thought to be doing a good job, otherwise they wouldn't have been promoted again and again. But because the jobs they were doing were less important, they were less identified as "masculine" jobs—and their presence in those jobs posed less of a problem for their peers. Once they reached positions of significant power in their organizations, positions that are seen to be the province of men, their "style" became a problem.

Until she became CEO of Hewlett-Packard, a staunchly male company, Carly Fiorina's work was highly regarded. Then, all of a sudden, Fiorina's "style" became an issue. As Adam Lashinsky wrote in a November 2002 issue of *Fortune*: "Internally, rumors began to swirl. She had a personal trainer and personal hairdresser at her beck and call. She'd bought a new Gulfstream IV jet. She had her exercise equipment flown on a separate plane. She treated employees imperiously. None of this was true."<sup>40</sup> During the proxy fight that ensued when Fiorina decided to merge HP with Compaq, she was portrayed in the media "as a ruthless decision-maker—haughty and cocky."<sup>41</sup> Yet six months after the proxy fight was settled, Lashinsky followed her around for a few days and found her listening sympathetically to the concerns of a group of employees, teasing a sales manager and his boss, and getting an audience of "6000 sophisticated tech buyers eating out of her hand."<sup>42</sup> The impression conveyed is of an engaged and capable manager, not an arrogant, take-no-prisoners prima donna. Although one might conclude that Fiorina is smart enough to conceal her ruthlessness, hauteur, and cockiness when there's a reporter around, another interpretation also seems possible: that in the almost exclusively male world of proxy fights, where women hardly ever dare to tread, the ugly and inaccurate rumors about her behavior were provoked more by negative stereotypes aroused by her token status than by anything specific that she said or did.

### Not Just Your Imagination

Although women may suspect that they've been the victims of negative attitudes toward women, they can rarely prove it and often have no recourse. But a few studies have at least confirmed that women's suspicions are correct. In one, the economist David Neumark sent men and women with equally impressive backgrounds and résumés to apply for jobs as wait staff in the upscale restaurants of Philadelphia. He found that women were 40 percent less likely to get called for interviews and 50 percent less likely to receive job offers if they did get interviews.<sup>43</sup> In an even more dramatic example, the economists Claudia Goldin and Cecilia Rouse looked at symphony orchestra auditions. They found that the use of a screen to hide the identity—and thus the gender—of auditioning musicians increased by a full 50 percent the probability that a woman would advance in the audition process. They also found that the likelihood that a woman would win an orchestra seat was increased by 250 percent when a screen was used. Goldin and Rouse credit the switch to blind auditions as a major factor in the gains women made in the top five U.S. symphonies between 1970, when women filled only 5 percent of the chairs, and the year 2000, when that number had grown to 25 percent.<sup>44</sup>

In *Why So Slow? The Advancement of Women*, Virginia Valian looked at earnings and advancement in six occupations—sports, law, medicine, business, academia, and engineering—and discovered that men earn more money and attain higher status than women in each of these professions. Although Valian conceded that many factors contribute to this “sex disparity in income and rank,” she concluded that “gender always explains an additional portion. Women are required to meet a higher standard.”<sup>45</sup> This requirement makes it harder for many women to ask for and get what they want as freely and fairly as they should. And given what we know about the “accumulation of disadvantage,” this requirement represents a huge barrier to true gender equity.

The “C200 Business Leadership Index 2002,” a publication of the Committee of 200, an organization of women in business, includes several statistics that support the theory that women frequently encounter roadblocks in conventional business environments. First, the number of women-owned businesses grew 14 percent between 1997 and 2001—twice as fast as all privately held businesses. Second, during the same period, the average size of women-owned businesses grew at the

extremely rapid rate of almost 17 percent a year, compared to 2 percent per year for all businesses. Noting that both of these rates of progress far outstrip gains in the percentage of female Fortune 500 corporate officers, the C200 Index observes that “this comparison indicates a greater ability of women to succeed outside the constraints of the corporate environment.”<sup>46</sup> Although several factors probably contribute to this reality, the likelihood that subtle forms of sanctioning deter women's progress cannot be overlooked.

Even though much of the available data in this area can tell us only that a gender gap in earnings exists and not why, this we do know: Women as a group earn less than men, progress more slowly through the ranks of most businesses, and rarely rise as high. Looking at weekly earnings for full-time workers during the years 1994 to 1998, the economists Francine Blau and Lawrence Kahn, in a National Bureau of Economic Research publication, found this to be true not only in the United States, where women's earnings total only 76 percent of men's, but in Canada (where women make 70 percent of what men make), in Britain (75 percent), in Japan (64 percent), and in Australia (87 percent). The gap between the earnings of men and women is narrowest in Belgium, where women earn 90 percent of what men earn.<sup>47</sup> Researchers have yet to identify any country in which women's earnings equal or exceed men's. Using different data and looking at different occupations the answer is always the same—women are paid less.

Margaret Heffernan, the former CEO at CMGI, described her own experience of how gender can influence a woman's career in upper management—and limit how much she is paid—without her knowing it. “For years,” Heffernan reported, “I was the only woman CEO at CMGI. But it wasn't until I read the company's proxy statement that I realized that my salary was 50 percent of that of my male counterparts. I had the CEO title, but I was being paid as if I were a director.”<sup>48</sup>

### When the Punishment Is Hard to Miss

Sanctions such as some of those described above may be difficult to pinpoint and attribute to gender. Women may suspect that they've been unfairly evaluated but can't prove it. They may feel generally discouraged from asking for what they want and yet be unable to say why. But sometimes the sanctioning—the punishment—is hard to miss.

Sandy, 41, a full-time mother who spent part of her career working as a commercial lending officer at a bank, told this story. The bank was interested in persuading an important customer (an aluminum smelting company) to borrow a large sum from the bank. Other banks were also courting the client, and competition was fierce. Sandy had worked with the president of the smelting company, a man in his fifties, for the past year, during which time he had treated her in a condescending manner—tolerating her requests for information but making it clear that he was not happy to be working with her. When Sandy brought up the subject of the big loan, however, he railed against her and said he would not talk to a woman about his business needs. Women were not “business material,” he shouted, and he would terminate his relationship with the bank if she were not replaced with a man.

Sandy returned to the bank and described the meeting to her boss, a man in his early thirties, and to his boss, a man in his early forties. Both said they supported Sandy and offered to meet with the smelting company president and sort out the problem. At this meeting, with Sandy present, the president of the smelting company repeated his request that she be replaced in a loud, verbally abusive manner. Sandy said, “I don’t recall if he called me a whore, but I wouldn’t be surprised if he did because I was so utterly shocked by his behavior—it seemed suited to a back alley brawl!” The two bank managers immediately buckled to his request and said she would be replaced. Afterward, they refused to explain their behavior. Sandy was punished—not merely taken off this important account, but insulted and humiliated without protest from her superiors—simply for asking this man to do business with her. From his point of view, it was outrageous for her to think she could perform an important job, a job that he thought should therefore be a man’s job. Sandy observed that “this experience fit into a general prejudice that I had against men in the workplace—that their attitudes and perceptions of women made it difficult to ask for what was fair and right. I definitely had difficulty with the men I knew at the bank in asking for what I felt was fair for me.”

The punishment for venturing into “masculine” jobs can be equally severe at the other end of the social spectrum, in blue-collar fields that have long been male-dominated. The journalist Susan Faludi, in *Backlash: The Undeclared War against American Women*, reports the experiences of Diane Joyce, a widow raising four children on her own. Joyce landed a job on a Santa Clara, California, county road crew, coming in third out of 87 applicants on the job test.<sup>49</sup> When she showed up for

work, the experienced drivers of the county’s bobtail trucks who were supposed to train her gave her unclear, conflicting, and at one point dangerous instructions; her supervisor refused to issue her a pair of coveralls (she had to file a formal grievance to get them); and her co-workers kept the ladies’ room locked. “You wanted a man’s job, you learn to pee like a man,” her supervisor told her.<sup>50</sup> Obscene graffiti about her appeared on the sides of trucks, and men in the department screamed at her to “go the hell away.”<sup>51</sup> When Joyce later applied for a more senior road dispatcher’s job, they gave it to a man with three years’ less experience. She complained and got the job, but the man who lost it sued for reverse discrimination—and pursued the case all the way to the Supreme Court. He lost at every juncture, but this didn’t stop Joyce’s coworkers from continuing to harass her.

Faludi writes, “Joyce’s experience was typical of the forthright and often violent backlash within the blue-collar workforce. . . . At a construction site in New York . . . the men took a woman’s work boots and hacked them to bits. Another woman was injured by a male co-worker; he hit her on the head with a two-by-four. In Santa Clara County . . . the county’s equal opportunity files were stuffed with reports of ostracism, hazing, sexual harassment, threats, verbal and physical abuse.”<sup>52</sup>

Professor of management Judy Rosener offers this explanation for the intensity of men’s resistance to seeing women move into realms that have traditionally been male: “The glass ceiling for those below it is the floor for those above it. When we take away our ceiling, we take away their floor, and they have a fear of falling.”<sup>53</sup> As a result, high-powered women who are too self-assertive are sent to programs such as “Bully Broads,” women working at middle levels of management are paid less and promoted more slowly than their male peers, and blue-collar women are threatened, ostracized, and undermined in their efforts to perform their jobs. All of these forms of punishment discourage women from asking for the same things men want and get and enjoy, whether that is attaining high levels of success in their fields, getting paid the same as their peers, or simply being allowed to do the jobs they want to do.

Although our interviews produced numerous stories of “punishment” similar to those included here, overt sanctioning of this sort has rarely been the topic of systematic analysis, in part because it is less likely to emerge in the bright light of the laboratory. This is especially true because so much research is performed on college campuses, where the populations available for study are particularly sensitive to issues of

"political correctness" and have learned to refrain from voicing or acting out their prejudices. But even though many members of our society have become more cautious about expressing their prejudices, this doesn't mean those prejudices have ceased to influence their actions.

### Danger! Danger!—The Message Is Everywhere

Even women who have themselves escaped overt forms of punishment for pursuing their ambitions cannot ignore the messages from every side that it's risky for women to try to become too successful. Susan Faludi argues that this is because for many people the core meaning of masculinity is threatened by the improved economic status of women. This view is supported by the results of a 1989 poll, in which most people (men and women) defined masculinity as "being a good provider for your family."<sup>54</sup> One of our society's strongest gender norms for women, in contrast, is that they will be modest and selfless. As a result, many people don't consider being preoccupied by money or attaching a dollar value to their work and time to be proper or attractive for a woman.<sup>55</sup>

Linda Evangelista, one of the first models to be identified as a "supermodel," earned an avalanche of derision in the summer of 1990 when she admitted to a reporter that she and Christy Turlington, another "supermodel," had an expression they liked to use: "We don't wake up for less than \$10,000 a day." Loudly denounced at the time, she has been dogged by the remark ever since. As recently as the September 2001 edition of *Vogue*, an interviewer pressed her again to explain her remark. Evangelista said, "I feel like those words are going to be engraved on my tombstone. . . . I apologized for it. I acknowledged it. . . . Would I hope that I would never say something like that ever again? Yes." Keep in mind that Evangelista made this remark in 1990, after a decade (the 1980s) in which everyone from Donald Trump to Michael Milken boasted of his huge income on television talk shows, in the society pages, and in the financial news—a decade in which accumulating wealth and flaunting it amounted to a national obsession. But Evangelista's story tells us that what is good for the gander is *not* good for the goose. When a woman knows what she's worth—and feels proud of her abilities and of what she can earn—she sets herself up to be scorned and chastised.

Caring more about relationships than about personal gain represents another powerful gender norm for women. The media's treatment of an episode at the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City provided an object lesson for women on the dangers of violating this norm. Jean Racine, considered the top female bobsled driver in the world and the Olympic front-runner for the American women's bobsledding team, spent most of her career partnered with a friend (many media sources said her "best friend"), Jen Davidson. Racine and Davidson competed in the two-person version of the sport, in which one athlete, the driver, sits in front and steers while the other, the brakewoman, pushes from behind to get the sled started down the course and then stops the sled at the bottom. Brakewomen need to be very strong. Racine was the driver and Davidson the brakewoman until two months before the games. Then, feeling that Davidson was not as strong as another player, Racine switched partners—or, as the media reported it, "dumped" Davidson. Shortly before the games, Racine's new partner, Gea Johnson, suffered a hamstring injury, and Racine tried switching partners again, this time asking a relative newcomer, Vonetta Flowers, to join her. Flowers turned Racine down and with her partner, Jill Bakken, eventually won the gold medal. Racine and the injured Gea Johnson did not perform well and failed to win a medal.

This story was widely covered, with everyone from the *New York Times* to *USA Today* to the supermarket tabloids and both network and cable news programs weighing in with their judgments. The reporting, for the most part, reduced this story of personal struggle, hard choices, and disappointment to the realm of soap opera, a trivial squabble among women, with even such august news bodies as NBC dubbing the episode "As the Sled Turns." No one claimed that Jen Davidson was faster than the other brakewomen who made the U.S. team, and a few news sources even conceded that switching partners is extremely common in the sport, among male bobsledders as well as female. Nonetheless, press reports described Racine as "ruthless" and "without remorse," referred to her behavior as "scandalous" and "appalling," and implied that she deserved to lose because she had put her own interests above the claims of friendship. Flowers, on the other hand, deserved to win because she'd been loyal. "Perhaps warmth and sweetness have their place in the cutthroat world of Olympic bobsledding. Loyalty does, at least," wrote the *New York Times's* reporter.<sup>56</sup>

The thing is: Jean Racine was an Olympic-caliber athlete. Like any athlete, her chances to compete in the Olympics were limited, and she

wanted to win. That's what the Olympics are about, after all. And she put her personal ambition and desire—she put what she wanted—ahead of relationship concerns, a major taboo for a woman. For this, she was publicly lambasted. The message to women: If trying to get what you want means violating gender norms for women, don't do it. You may not get what you want, and on top of that disappointment you'll be roundly criticized and publicly shamed.

Faludi believes that men, and many women, combat their fear that masculinity is threatened by women's success by trying to shift the "cultural gears" into reverse. They do this by promoting the idea that the movement of women into the workplace is responsible for many of society's problems, especially those involving families and children.<sup>57</sup> So the media publishes stories with titles like "Feminism Is Bad for Women's Health Care" (from the *Wall Street Journal*)<sup>58</sup> and conservative thinkers produce books such as *A Return to Modesty: Discovering the Lost Virtue*, by Wendy Shalit<sup>59</sup>; *Domestic Tranquility: A Brief against Feminism*, by F. Carolyn Graglia<sup>60</sup>; and *The War against Boys: How Misguided Feminism Is Harming Our Young Men*, by Christina Hoff Sommers.<sup>61</sup>

In demonizing feminists and telling women that they're responsible for society's problems, these reactionary forces teach businesses that it's permissible to penalize women for asking to do jobs typically performed by men—or simply for pursuing their own professional goals rather than deferring to the needs and ambitions of others. They can also make women feel less sure that it's okay for them to want what they want, especially if what they want involves professional success. This can persuade them to scale back their ambitions and to hope for—and ask for—fewer of life's rewards.

### Women Have Learned Their Lessons Well

The oppressive but inescapable message—that women will be punished for exceeding the bounds of acceptable behavior—has come through loud and clear, and women have adapted their behavior accordingly.<sup>62</sup> Ariadne, 33, is an MBA who enjoyed a successful career in public relations before becoming a full-time mother. Ariadne has a very direct manner. Although she believes that a similarly direct man would be perceived as a "straight-shooter" or a "no-nonsense guy," her style has prompted people to call her a bitch or complain that she is too aggres-

sive. As a result, Ariadne learned in the course of her career to tone down her personal style and adopt a less straightforward manner. She would even avoid claiming credit for her own ideas (and asking for appropriate recognition) because she found that letting other people think her good ideas were their own helped get those ideas implemented, and backfired less on her.

An extensive body of research confirms that Ariadne's is not an isolated case: Women consistently adjust their behavior between private and public settings—revealing their clear understanding that they may pay a penalty for behaving freely when observed by others. Of course, both men and women behave differently in public than they do at home, but research shows that women adjust their behavior more. In one of the "pay allocation" experiments mentioned in chapter 2, for example, men and women were instructed to work on a task until they had "earned" four dollars. Although women worked longer and harder than men in the "private," unobserved condition (22 percent longer), they worked even longer if the amount of time they worked was monitored by the experimenter (52 percent longer than men). Men did not work longer when they were observed.<sup>63</sup> This tells us that women have learned that they must pay more attention than men to the impressions they make on others, presumably because they fear the penalties for counterstereotypical behavior.

Other research confirms that women conform more to gender roles in public than in private. In one study, researchers asked college students to estimate their grade-point averages (GPAs) for the upcoming semester either privately, on paper, or out loud to a peer. Although there were no gender differences between the male and female students' predictions in the private condition, the female students' estimates were lower in the presence of a peer (the males' estimates did not change).<sup>64</sup> A review of the research in this area concludes that unlike men, women "often limit their displays of achievement-oriented behavior to situations in which autonomy and privacy are assured."<sup>65</sup>

Women have learned, in other words, that asking through their actions to be recognized for their abilities and accomplishments can be a mistake. This self-consciousness about being observed extends to negotiation contexts, in which women request lower salaries when another person is present than they request when they assume no one else is watching. Men's requests, on the other hand, *increase* in the presence of another person.<sup>66</sup>



### Do Not Compete

Women don't just modify their behavior in public settings, one study suggests, they may also shy away from competition, especially competition with men. For this study, three economists, Uri Gneezy, Muriel Niederle, and Aldo Rustichini, asked female and male engineering students to work through mazes on a computer. At first, the students worked on their own and were paid a flat rate for each maze they completed (the "piece-rate" condition). In this situation, men and women completed the same number of mazes on average. Then the researchers asked the same students to participate in a "tournament," in which three female students and three male students would compete to see who could complete the most mazes in a set amount of time. The winner would be paid six times as much for each maze solved as he or she had earned in the piece-rate condition, while the rest of the students would earn no money for their work.<sup>67</sup>

Traditional economic theory would expect every participant to complete more mazes in the tournament condition than in the piece-rate condition because the reward for winning would give everyone an incentive to work harder. But Gneezy, Niederle, and Rustichini found that this was true only of the men. Whereas men completed 34 percent more mazes during the tournaments than they'd solved in the piece-rate condition, the number of mazes the women solved did not increase. The men didn't suddenly get smarter—the tournament setting inspired them to compete with each other and try harder. But the tournament did not have the same impact on the women.

One might conclude from this study that women simply don't like to compete. To explore this hypothesis, the researchers organized additional tournaments in which they segregated the groups by gender. They found that the performance of the men in the all-male tournaments was identical to their performance in the mixed-gender tournaments: The incentive of "winning" prompted them to increase their efforts over the piece-rate condition by the same amount no matter who they were competing against. But the most revealing data emerged from the all-female tournaments: The women completed far more mazes in the all-female tournament groups than in either the piece-rate condition or in the tournaments in which they were competing against men.

One explanation for these uneven results could be that women believe that men are better at solving mazes than women. Assuming they

won't win in a mixed-gender tournament, they consequently don't try. Or stereotype threat may play a part: If women believe that men are better at solving mazes, this could undermine their performance at a subconscious level. Although the authors could not rule out these hypotheses, we can find nothing to suggest that mazes, which involve pretty basic skills, are in fact gender-defined and perceived to be the province of men. Another possible conclusion is that women just don't like competing against men. Much of what we know about gender norms supports this interpretation: Boys learn that they are expected to compete, that being a good competitor is a defining male trait. They also learn that they are expected to demonstrate superior ability over girls in certain areas (intelligence, physical prowess, business success) and that this superiority is central to our society's definition of maleness. Girls also learn these lessons about males. Because negotiation contains within it a basic form of competition, both males and females in our culture may make the connection that this consequently cannot be a woman's domain. To compete with a man in a negotiation and win—to get him to give you a better raise than he wanted, or a better price for a car, or more responsibility on a project than he intended—may threaten his socially received idea of his own maleness. And women learn that this is rarely a good idea, because such a destabilizing threat will almost inevitably rebound in negative ways, punishing the woman who posed it.

She may pay a price in her private life as well as at work. In *Creating A Life: Professional Women and the Quest for Children*, the economist Sylvia Ann Hewlett reports that "the more successful the woman, the less likely it is she will find a husband or bear a child."<sup>68</sup> Although many men scoff at the notion that they feel threatened by smart women or are less likely to date them, this phenomenon seems to persist. Two female Harvard MBA students interviewed on the television newsmagazine *60 Minutes* in 2002 confessed that they no longer admit to men that they go to Harvard, because men feel too threatened by their success to pursue relationships with them.<sup>69</sup>

The popular cable television series *Sex and the City*, about the personal lives of four New York career women (one of whom quits working to get married), illustrated this dilemma in one episode.<sup>70</sup> Miranda, one of the show's four principal characters, is a successful lawyer and a partner in her firm. Having observed that her career success frightens off many of the men she meets, Miranda pretends that she is a flight attendant to see if men will respond to her differently. This fiction, to

her chagrin, turns out to be very successful: Men respond to her far more enthusiastically than before, concisely demonstrating the pressure women feel to downplay their accomplishments in order to protect men from being intimidated—and to protect their own chances of establishing relationships with them.

Marcela, the nuclear engineer, described how she learned this lesson. When she was growing up, she said, “girls being smart was definitely an issue; when you were in your dating years the whole thing was not to let the guys know how smart you were. Because if they ever found out that your SAT scores were a lot higher than theirs then they wouldn’t go out with you or whatever.” She also said, “There was a point at which . . . I was told that I shouldn’t be so obvious in my accomplishments.” This lesson influences Marcela’s professional behavior to this day. Periodically, she must write up an assessment of her abilities and accomplishments as part of her firm’s “rating” process for awarding raises, bonuses, and promotions. Implicit in the process is the expectation that she will indicate what she feels she deserves for the work she has done—a form of asking. She hates doing this, she said, because she doesn’t like “the kind of exercise where you have to either write about your contributions or your accomplishments. . . . Not because I don’t think that I’ve accomplished anything or made contributions but because I don’t like writing it down. It just makes me uncomfortable to have to self-promote. I’m not very comfortable being self-promoting.”

Marcela knows, in private, that she has accomplished a great deal, but she’s aware of the risks entailed in publicly acknowledging this. She also admitted that if she doesn’t receive an award or a bonus that she feels she deserves, “I would never ask for it. If it wasn’t freely given, I wouldn’t ask for it. I might gripe about it at home, but that would be the extent of it.”

### Ways of Asking and Getting

Ellen, the senior partner at a law firm, told us that when she was a teenager, her father said to her: “Honey, you know you can’t act like a tiger. You have to act like a kitten.” His point was clear: To get what she wants, a woman can’t be too aggressive or direct. Although society has changed in many ways since Ellen was a child, women still need to be careful about “coming on too strong.” Fortunately, women can be careful and—some of the time—still get what they want. Recent re-

search has identified ways for women to be influential and effective without making themselves less likeable and bringing social sanctions down on their heads. This research has shown that for women, the key to safely and successfully exercising their influence is to be “nice.” Like being likeable, being “nice” is expected of women—it’s a gender norm requirement. To be “nice,” a woman must seem friendly, act concerned about the needs and feelings of others, and avoid being confrontational. Several studies have demonstrated the efficacy of this approach for women.

The social psychologists Linda Carli, Suzanne LaFleur, and Christopher Lober videotaped male and female research assistants trying to persuade their peers to agree with a particular point of view—in this case, that it would be better not to make any changes in the cafeteria meal plan at their university (an unpopular opinion to hold). The researchers videotaped eight different versions of the same script, four with a man making the argument and four with a woman. The text and the message were the same in all eight versions, but the actors in the videos were coached to use different nonverbal behavior strategies in each: a “dominant style” (making constant eye contact, using a lot of hand gestures, speaking in a loud angry voice, and tightening their face muscles so that they appeared tense); a “submissive style” (avoiding eye contact, making nervous gestures with their hands, speaking in a soft unsteady voice, stammering and hesitating, slouching); a “task-oriented style” (frequently making eye contact, using only calm hand movements, speaking rapidly and with few hesitations); and a “social style” (leaning toward the audience, using unintrusive gestures, acting relaxed, communicating “friendliness and affiliation,” smiling). After the researchers screened the videotapes for mixed male and female audiences, they asked them to rate how much they agreed with each speaker’s point of view (this served as an overall measure of the speaker’s ability to influence); they also asked them to rate each speaker on a number of qualities, such as how likeable, competent, and threatening he or she seemed.<sup>71</sup> The audiences found that male speakers were most influential when they used a “task-oriented style” (rather than any other style) but that a “social style” worked best for women.

Other research by the sociologist Cecilia Ridgeway supports this finding. Placing female confederates in mixed male and female groups that were instructed to make a series of decisions, she found that the women were most influential in the groups when they were “friendly, cooperative, confident, but nonconfrontational, and considerate.”<sup>72</sup>

They were able to exert far less influence on the group's decision making when they acted merely self-confident and behaved in a self-interested way. This finding and the results of another study led Ridgeway to conclude: "Women seeking to assert authority can mitigate the legitimacy problems they face by combining their assertive, highly competent behaviors with positive social 'softeners.' . . . Using such techniques, highly competent women can overcome others' resistance and win influence and compliance. . . . The positive consequences of such techniques are not trivial. They allow very competent women to break through the maze of constraints created by gender status to wield authority. This begins to undermine the structural arrangements in society that support gender status beliefs."<sup>73</sup>

The psychologists Laurie Rudman and Peter Glick, in a study looking at hiring situations, produced similar results: Women were more likely to be hired when they paired competence with "communal" behavior (such as demonstrating an interest in the needs and challenges of those hiring them) than when they paired competence with more "agentic" behavior (such as focusing more on their own needs and ambitions).<sup>74</sup> As Rudman and Glick write, self-oriented or "agentic" women "are viewed as socially deficient, compared with identically presented men."<sup>75</sup> Being perceived as "socially deficient" may make a woman seem threatening. At the very least, it can make her seem less likeable and reduce her ability to influence others and get what she wants.

All of these studies tell us that when women go into a negotiation, in addition to arming themselves with information, ideas, and resolve, they must also bring along an arsenal of "friendly," nonthreatening social mannerisms; they must be prepared to be cooperative and interested in the needs of others; and they must avoid being confrontational.<sup>76</sup> This does not mean they need to back down or give in. Imagine that a woman who likes her job but feels underpaid receives a job offer from another company for more money. If she goes into her boss's office and says "I've received an offer for \$xx,000 more and I'm going to take it if you don't match that salary," he may react badly to her direct approach and tell her to take the other job. Starting out with something like, "Hi, I need to talk to you about my salary; is now a good time?" can set a different tone for the negotiation. Demonstrating that she knows he has many demands on his time shows concern for him and his situation. If he agrees to talk, she could explain that she's been offered the other job and mention the salary that goes with it. Then she might say, "I

really enjoy working for you, but I have to consider this offer because it's for so much more money. You've always treated me fairly and I want to be fair to you by letting you know about this offer." She might also say that she'll stay if he matches the salary she's been offered. This will not only reinforce that she cares about the relationship, it will also frame the situation positively (she wants to stay) rather than posing it as a threat (she'll go if he doesn't meet her demands).

Although this approach can often produce better results, many women (including the two of us) may resent that women have to work so hard not to offend in this type of situation. As Ridgeway writes, "there is a price associated with such techniques as well: They inadvertently reaffirm gender stereotypes that require women to be 'nicer' than men in order to exercise equivalent power and authority."<sup>77</sup> Rudman and Glick also concede that this puts an extra burden on women: "Treading the fine line of appearing competent, ambitious, and competitive, but not at the expense of others, is a tall order. . . . To the extent that women have to maintain a 'bilingual' impression of themselves (as both nice and able) in order not to be perceived as overbearing and dominant, their situation is more difficult and tenuous in comparison to their male counterparts."<sup>78</sup>

The psychologist Janice Yoder goes further: "Relying on women themselves to compensate for structural inequities is inherently unfair, even to successful women, and makes less successful women vulnerable to self-blame and victim blaming from others."<sup>79</sup> Although this is undoubtedly true, more pragmatic scholars prefer to point to the positive aspects of these findings, which can, in fact, help women. Social psychologist Linda Carli argues that more friendly, social behaviors need not be seen as expressing weakness or an excessive desire to please since studies show that communal behaviors (such as smiling) do not suggest low status.<sup>80</sup> She believes that pairing assertive and communal behaviors can allow women to become more successful and that these behaviors can be a source of real power. And while earlier research has suggested that acting tentative, apologetic, and uncertain (the Bully Broads approach) can also reduce the threat competent women pose in male domains, this type of behavior has the negative side-effect of making women appear less competent.<sup>81</sup> Using a friendly, social style provides a more attractive alternative, since it minimizes the threat posed by a woman in a leadership role while still communicating competence and self-confidence.

Whether or not this advice seems offensive or useful, it appears that successful women have taken heed. Research on the leadership styles of men and women has found that highly successful women do employ more communal types of behavior and a softer style than equally successful men.<sup>82</sup> An article in the June 10, 2002, issue of *Fortune* provides a good example of a woman whose social style has clearly helped her gain great power and influence in her field. The article, about the stock research firm Sanford C. Bernstein, described the personal style of the firm's then-chair and CEO, Sally Krawcheck, 37. Sanford C. Bernstein was famous for making tough calls and never pulling its punches. Bernstein would downgrade a stock every other firm was promoting and put out "buy" recommendations on stocks no one else wanted to touch. And the firm had an excellent track record for making good calls, which turns out to be unusual for securities analysts. How did Krawcheck succeed in running such a hard-hitting, uncompromising enterprise without suffering the punishment many women encounter for rising too high in their professions? What allowed her to become such an effective leader in a male-dominated field without being called a bitch or being sent to Bully Broads? Explained writer David Rynecki: "She has a gracious, refined manner that masks her toughness."<sup>83</sup>

### Smart Women, Smart Choices

How can the information we've presented in this chapter help women ensure that their work is fairly evaluated and free them to pursue their professional and personal ambitions without fear of punishment? We see three courses.

The first and perhaps most obvious is for women to start their own businesses. As the C200 Index figures demonstrated, many women have already given up trying to get fair treatment in conventional business settings and have decided to strike out on their own.

A second possibility is for women who work in male-dominated industries or organizations to do everything they can to reduce their token status: recruiting other women to their fields and their firms; mentoring younger women and helping them rise to higher levels; and working actively to build networks of women that can provide the same benefits men's networks have traditionally provided. These include serving as conduits for information, providing opportunities to establish

strong relationships with peers in related fields, and creating sources of mutual support.

The third course involves choosing wisely. Women can seek out firms where a lot of women already do what they want to do. Even in occupations that are mostly male-dominated, some firms will have more women performing those functions than others. Research has shown that a "lifting of sanctions" begins to occur when the percentage of women in a particular environment reaches about 15 percent; when 35 to 40 percent of the people in a given environment are women, the range of behaviors allowed to women widens considerably and the environment can actually become quite hospitable to women.<sup>84</sup> Women can also choose firms with an organizational culture that supports female advancement, discourages stereotyping, and maintains an open and well-structured system for evaluating people.

A well-structured evaluation system is particularly key, and several aspects of how a firm evaluates its people can make a big difference for women. First, women fare better when an evaluation process is more structured, includes clearly understood benchmarks, and is less open to subjective judgments.<sup>85</sup> A situation in which everyone at a particular level, in a particular group, or performing a particular function must meet similar performance benchmarks can work very well for women, for example. Second, women do better and suffer less harm from negative stereotypes about their competence when they are evaluated for their individual work products rather than for their contributions to the work of a team. When a team performs well or achieves a high level of productivity, evaluators can attribute the team's good performance to any one of the team members—and a woman on the team is least likely to be seen as responsible for the group's success.<sup>86</sup>

Choosing wisely also involves feeling entitled to "shop" for a job by doing plenty of research before you decide where to apply—and then asking questions during the application and interview process. In a "Careers" column in *Fortune*, Matthew Boyle offers this advice: "The first step, often overlooked, is to find out what suits you. . . . Then it's time to find out who offers that specific environment." Once you've done this much legwork and you're considering a particular company, Boyle says "ask how you'll be evaluated." He quotes Thomas Tierney, former CEO of Bain & Co., who said "It's amazing how many people don't ask that. . . . You're going to sign up for a game and not know how the score is kept?"<sup>87</sup>

### Transforming the Context

We don't mean to suggest that only women need to change. As a society, as managers and coworkers and clients and friends, we all need to examine our responses to women when they behave in ways more typically thought of as "masculine." Managers, in particular, need to recognize that stereotypes can influence how they evaluate people without their knowing it. They need to take strong steps to prevent this from happening when women are performing jobs that have traditionally been performed by men or when the proportion of women doing a particular job is very small. They need to establish transparent evaluation processes and criteria that minimize the impact of subjective responses in performance evaluations. By teaching themselves to react differently to women who assert themselves, and consistently applying fixed and well-known standards to the work of everyone they supervise, male or female, managers will free women to promote their own interests without censure or blame. Doing so will help them retain talented employees in whom their firms have invested substantial resources. But they shouldn't do it just because it's good business. As a result of the courage and persistence of one woman, it's also now the law.

In 1982, Ann Hopkins was the only woman out of 88 people being considered for partner at the accounting firm Price Waterhouse. Hopkins had brought in \$25 million in business and billed more hours that year than any of the 87 men, yet she was rejected for partner. "Her style was assertive, task-oriented, and instrumental," writes Virginia Valian. "She had all the qualities that gender schemas dictate successful men should have. Her problem was that she wasn't a man."<sup>88</sup> Hopkins sued, pressed her case all the way to the Supreme Court, and won each time. Instrumental in the case was the testimony of Susan Fiske, a research psychologist and expert on how stereotypes can influence people's judgment. Relying on Fiske's testimony and on an *amicus curiae* (friend of the court) brief filed by the American Psychological Association, the Supreme Court wrote:

In the specific context of sex stereotyping, an employer who acts on the basis of a belief that a woman cannot be aggressive, or that she must not be, has acted on the basis of gender. . . . We are beyond the day when an employer could evaluate employees by assuming or insisting that they matched the stereotype associated with their

group. . . . An employer who objects to aggressiveness in women but whose positions require this trait places women in an intolerable Catch 22: out of a job if they behave aggressively and out of a job if they don't. Title VII lifts women out of this bind.<sup>89</sup>

In other words, it is now illegal for "women who do not have a 'soft, genteel way' about them" to be told "that they should wear more make-up and go to charm school." (This is what Ann Hopkins's supervisors said when they rejected her bid for a partnership.)<sup>90</sup>

Although Hopkins had the self-confidence to fight for what she had earned, and changed the law in the process, many women prefer to avoid this kind of struggle and instead back away from asking for what they've rightly earned. The very real risks involved in displaying their competence, trying to ensure that their work is fairly evaluated, and promoting their own ambitions can cause many women so much anxiety that they choose instead to avoid negotiation altogether. We look at the sometimes crippling impact of anxiety on women's reluctance to ask for what they want in the next chapter.