

## Ladies, after clawing your way to the top, put your claws away... Please!

Women in today's business environment face more obstacles than ever before. Surprised to read these words? I know, you think "We've come a long way baby!" That works well for a commercial, but not for real life. Talented women in business are required to blend that talent with daily life issues, such as balancing family life, financial concerns, and of course, all those vying for the same business future.

So, with a fair amount of success you are promoted to be the boss, you might want to consider putting away the claws and giving your best to the job and those that work for you. Listen, I understand how you feel. All those backstabbing comments along the way, all those long hours working overtime to prove your worth; why shouldn't you flaunt your success? Answer? Because, you are better than that. You can be part of the solution to this potentially vicious cycle of 1. get success, 2. flaunt success, 3. misuse the power, 4. lose the position and 5. have men in power say "See women don't have the temperament for the job".

What causes this problem?

1. Woman's Suffrage: The baggage we carry.
  2. Scarcity Mentality.
  3. Absolute Power Corrupts, Absolutely.
1. Woman's Suffrage: the Baggage we carry; Women have been carrying the banner of (a) Minority, (b) earning the right for equal pay for equal work, (c) dealing with sexual innuendo, (d) not enough stalls in the ladies room, well, and so much more for the longest time. As a woman professional we sometimes interpret this baggage as our shield, our right to act without consideration. True, female CEOs still earn far less in that role than their male counterparts. In an article written for FAST COMPANY, Margaret Heffernan wrote about how blatant an issue this is. As female CEO of CMGI, she had the title CEO but the Company's proxy statement clearly reported her compensation at 50% of her male counterparts.
  2. Scarcity Mentality: Women who are insecure about their abilities manage their employees from fear of loss and the win/lose position. If their claws are out, those with talent can't challenge the authority. If a woman in charge believes that there isn't enough success to go around, she won't share or support the success of those in her employ or those peers under the same roof.
  3. Absolute Power Corrupts, Absolutely: Certainly a very well used phrase, but so true. Once a women achieves success, the position is foreign to them. The air up there can be very thin. The power of the position in the hands of the inexperienced can cause anyone to make bad choices to protect "the new turf". The classic example is Hewlett Packard. More

was written about Carly Fiorina and Patricia Dunn in the past few years than most controversial CEOs comings and goings. Some would say even bad news is good publicity and Hewlett Packard certainly got publicity. Women in the position of high profile CEO have been dissected via the Hewlett Packard story. Carly Fiorina's position as CEO appears to be an example of a talented individual rising from a Stanford and MIT business education to the first female CEO position in a "DOW 30" company. Her successes and failures were documented by the press, trying to decide if both were a product of her feminism or her cut throat approach. Replacing Fiorina was Patricia Dunn, former Chairman at Hewlett Packard. Her ego in the position of CEO and Chairman allowed her to forget "the rules" and use illegal methods to investigate Hewlett Packard's own Board of Directors. This is a classic and very public example of absolute power corrupting, absolutely. As women gain more and more positions of authority, they can and will learn how to follow the rules and do it the right way.

Now, on to the solution:

The solution is simple, calm down, yes, just calm down. Women who gain positions of authority have so much talent; now they need to have the self-confidence to utilize those talents to enjoy the position of authority. In my book "A Woman's Ladder To Success is Paved With Broken Glass Ceilings" our female executive Jesse Stevens finally gains the position of CEO. Daily she reminds herself of this important message: "*Great CEOs nurture leaders, then listens to them; dictators create and demand an abundance of followers who will never lead*"

Be that great leader. Become an example of mentoring, nurturing and embracing talented members of the team to teach those around you that you are a great leader. Create and stir the desire within yourself to teach others to be leaders. So, put your claws away. Hopefully they will be gone for a very long time.



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