

Women and the Labyrinth of Leadership

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We are confident in our own tolerance and each of us considers himself/herself as a person without prejudices. But is it true? The stereotypes are imposed on us from our childhood, and we may even be unaware of them. It has been believed for a long time that the role of a woman in the society is only to keep house and to take care of her husband and children. Nevertheless, the Feminist Movement became a vivid example of what women can achieve if they want to. However, what do we see today? A man still cannot share his throne with a woman. How many women have you seen in top management positions? Was it easy for them to get these positions? The statistics and the psychological researches described in the article *Women and the Labyrinth of Leadership* by Alice H. and Linda L. Carli (2007) show us that for many years the situation of working women was very difficult and even today, there are still many problems to be solved in order to ensure this equality in the society.

The article *Women and the Labyrinth of Leadership* truly impressed me, because I have always thought that the modern society is devoid of all kinds of stereotypes and prejudices against women. The rant about equality entrenched in the minds of people too deep to make them pay attention to what is really going on. Scientific studies have shown that over the years, women have got a lot less money for the same work the men do. Although, in general, the article is positive and encouraging; there are a lot of accents placed on the idea that the men will never completely come to terms with the fact that women will stay with them on the same level. There are a large number of quotations and metaphors in the article related to the fact that a woman has to achieve the desired by a very hard work. Women's career is compared with a labyrinth with a huge number of turns and forks in the road, but not everybody is able to achieve the goal. I liked the idea that in this labyrinth, you have to look

from the top to cover all the nuances, all the possible obstacles, and ways to overcome them. As a result, reaching the desired height will be much simpler and faster.

However, the statistics speaks for the improvement; this fact relates to the ideas we mentioned in class. The researches have shown that the position of women in the workplace is gradually improving. In my opinion, it is possible because of the restlessness of the female nature. As the sex discrimination is prohibited by law, women often use this fact to move up the career ladder. What else can they do if the management does not want to notice their achievements, does not consider their opinion, and does not take into account their suggestions? As an example, this article includes a quote of the vice-president of a large company (she describes the reaction of the authorities to women's offer): "It immediately gets lost in the conversation. Then two minutes later, a man makes the same suggestion, and it's 'Wow! What a great idea! 'And you sit there and think,' What just happened?'" (Alice H. and Linda L. Carli, 2007, p.70).

In general, the article advises to give women a chance to show their ability, to reach their full potential. To achieve this, there are some useful tips in the article that would give women a chance to hold higher positions. We are proposed to disseminate the information that we still live in an unequal society, to do everything to dispel people's ideas that a woman cannot be a leader, to use the services of advertising companies to occupy a prestigious position. It is important to try to make a team consisted of the equal number of men and women, to be patient with those who have to spend more time with the family, to give people a second chance, and so on. I would like to add to this list that men should not look at women as at the emotional bombs. I mean that the woman in the family can afford everything she wants, but the woman at work (especially in a managerial position) often behaves even more worthy than a lot of men. Considering this statement, some men should take over many feminine qualities to solve the problem of gender differences in the workplace.

Traditionally considered feminine qualities are curiosity, compassion, gentleness, meekness, and responsibility. Are they bad for the leadership? Brute force and aggressiveness are not always well accepted by people; therefore, to bring in the harsh world of business a bit of softness and femininity would be both useful and effective. From my point of view, it is possible to achieve this with a positive and friendly attitude towards people. It seems to me that in recent years, people are too blinded, and everyone lacks a little bit of compassion and understanding. From this point of view, one can predict that after a certain period of time, this approach will give results in favor of reducing the level of aggression in the workplace and, as a consequence, reducing the amount of stress.

Thus, we can see that a woman can be useful not only as a maid, but she can do almost any job if to give her a chance. Women holding high positions can be no less impressive leaders than men. Unfortunately, the work over creating a more equal society is not finished yet, but the positive trend can be observed. Judging by the latest psychological researches and statistics, there has become a much more number of women managers than in the previous decade. Now, the future of our society is in our hands.

References

Alice H., Linda L. Carli. (2007). Women and the Labyrinth of Leadership. *Harvard Business Review*, 85(9), 62-71.