

INTENTIONAL APPROACHES TO REDUCE UNINTENTIONAL GENDERED CONCEPT OF LEADERSHIP IN THE WORKPLACE

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HAVE YOU EVER?

- been told to be softer, behave more "lady-like," sit with your knees together or not run because you're a girl and he's a boy?
- been advised by your guidance counselor to choose more typical feminine-dominated jobs as your future career path?
- been asked to "smile more," "take notes because women are just better at it and have better handwriting?"



UNCONCIOUS BIAS AND CAUSES

- Unconscious bias or implicit bias is a flaw in human cognitive process where our brains often take shortcuts when making decisions or assessments (Storm et al., 2023).
- It is universal, usually noticeable from others but not in ourselves (TED, 2022).
- It can be both harmless and damaging (Reding, 2023).
- It gives inaccurate information and evaluation.

CAUSE OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

- Great Man Theory (Wilson, 2017)
- Cultural and Social Conditioning
- Cognitive Shortcuts
 - In-Group Favoritism
 - Fear and Uncertainty
- Lack of Awareness

THEORIZED CONCEPTS (Storm et al., 2023)

Individual, group, and systemic level

WORKPLACE BIASES (Perez, 2019)

- Affinity (or 'Like Me') Bias
- Confirmation Bias



CONSEQUENCES AND EFFECTS

SOCIALLY

- Gendered Organizations - rooted in the narrative that women's work from home carried into work centers (Calas, Smircich, 1993)
- "Traditional operations" - align with societal norms perpetuating gender bias
 - Motherhood penalty vs Fatherhood bonus
- **Labels** - masculine vs feminine associated traits
 - assertive, independent, competitive, emotional stoicism, career-focused
 - nurturing, empathy, graceful, cooperative, soft
- Self Monitoring leads to **code-switching**
- **"Fix Women"** - Where are all the good women?
 - New narrative instead - fix **organizational culture** to be all inclusive for all organizational leaders
 - Organizational culture - attitudes, norms, standards, and procedures not beneficial to women until women choose to challenge it
- Male-dominated work contexts
 - personify male interests to fit in
 - Reinforce feminity to keep men comfortable
 - Consciously unconscious regarding gender issues

ECONOMICALLY

- High self-constraint = **glass ceiling** (ladylike behaviors)
- Low self-constraint = **glass cliff / broken rung** (masculine behaviors)
- **Lonely at the top = Queen Bee Syndrome**
- **Wage Gaps - "equal pay for equal work"**
 - Women pay 82 cents for each dollar compared to men (Forbes, 2023)
 - A 20-year-old woman, a 20-year career loses **\$407,760** during her career compared to men (Forbes, 2023)
 - Fortune 500 CEOs are made up of only 8.8% women
- Retirements - 2nd order effects due to less pay
 - 30% lower in pensions due to a lesser salary and contribution (Forbes, 2023)
 - 20% less in Social Security payments



MITIGATIONS: SOCIETAL TRANSFORMATION

HOW CAN LEADERS CULTIVATE CHANGE?

Prejudice habit-breaking, an intervention developed by Dr. Patricia Devine from the University of Wisconsin, was designed to help promote concern about unintentional bias and discrimination, as well as to empower people to overcome unintentional biases – this was (and still remains) the only intervention that has been shown experimentally to produce long-term changes in bias (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2023).

Similar to classic unconscious bias training, prejudice-habit breaking also teaches people what [implicit] bias is, how it is measured, and how it affects others.

PREJUDICE HABIT-BREAKING STEPS

1. Take the **Implicit Association Test**.
- This test demonstrates how we all fall prey to unconscious bias to a degree, and then get feedback on personal levels of bias (Gino, 2021).
2. Learn how to overcome bias through a combination of strategies.
- These strategies include calling out stereotyped views, gathering more individualized information about people, reflecting on the counter-stereotypical examples, adopting the perspectives of others, and increasing interactions with different kinds of people (Gino, 2021).
3. Create ways to implement such strategies into your daily life.
- Participants of the Implicit Association Test are taught that the strategies reinforce on another, and the more practice, the more effective they will become; thus, creating an approach that truly works (Gino, 2021).

LANGUAGE OF LEADERSHIP

Conscious overhaul of language associated with gendered leadership concepts and qualities can make all the difference. While it can be taxing to overturn ingrained stereotypes related to gender, there are plenty of ways to be more thoughtful about the language that transmits those stereotypes.

It may be hard to believe that simple changes – to verbs, pronouns, adjectives or even phraseology – could lead to substantial changes in workplace gender balance (Ro, 2022). The discussion of the infamous "glass ceiling" for women in leadership must be cracked.

"Language reflects the world it's used in, but it is also active in maintaining or redesigning that world. It can be a tool of discrimination or one of empowerment. We can use it to foster sexism, even unintentionally, or we can use it to help make a fairer world" (Flaherty, 2022).

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL UB SOCIETAL TRANSFORMATION

- Stresses that "You Hold the Power."
- Creates empathy.
- Encourages interactions among people from different groups.
- Welcomes good practices and continued learning.
- Sets a broader strategy for broader impact.

INSTEAD OF FIXING WOMEN, WE FIX THE SYSTEM

"The onus is not on the women to change, it's really on the companies," ultimately, "it's up to organisations to ensure with their criteria that they're 'actually weighting these things appropriately and valuing them equally, regardless of whether the behaviour is shown by a man or a woman.'" – Alison T Wynn @ Stanford VMware Women's Leadership Innovation Lab



MITIGATIONS: ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

WHERE DOES COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUITY STAND?

As of 2019, only 56% of employees are committed to gender equity.

"When employees say their company is highly committed to gender diversity, they are happier and plan to stay at their company longer. This is equally true for women and men." (McKinsey & Company, 2019)

WHAT CAN THE INDIVIDUAL DO?

Become a student of leadership, ask for "more," challenge the status quo, explore one's unconscious bias versus group, supervisor role.

- Dedicate a little time - an hour each week - to becoming a student of leadership.
- Bring cutting edge leadership strategies to your team.
- Start making gender equity a priority in your organization by making it a priority for yourself.

MAKE A STAND AGAINST BIAS

- Bias training does not work. Treating bias as a bad habit, does.
- Treating bias as a habit can increase hiring of women from 32% to 40%.
- Find a Diversity Coach.
- Allocate work equitably.
- Diversity and inclusion at the bottom may not enhance inclusion or performance unless you have diversity and inclusion at the top.

- Endorse, sponsor, mentor those who are different than you. (Grant, 2021)

MEASURE DIVERSITY

- "In most organizations, what gets measured and rewarded is what gets done" (McKinsey & Company, 2019)
- Diversity is a numbers game and can be mandated (Stovall, 2018).
- Set diversity metrics for all levels of leadership from supervisors to c-suite (McKinsey & Company, 2019).

CULTIVATE INCLUSIVITY

"Inclusion is impact and must be cultivated" (Stovall, 2018).

- Invite people into the conversation.
- Mind where decisions are made.
- Make room for others thoughts and ideas.
- Encourage others in practicing inclusivity.

ACHIEVE REAL RESULTS

"Real problems require real numbers. If you aren't willing to set real numbers, then maybe you aren't real serious about diversity and inclusion" (Stovall, 2018).

- Real consequences drive real results (Stovall, 2018).
- Hold leaders accountable and reward them when they make progress (McKinsey & Company, 2019).



CONCLUSION

SUBTITLE

- Gender bias continues to exist in the workplace through subconscious thoughts and actions.
- It has significant impacts on lives, finances, and careers.
- Repairing the broken rung, increasing diversity, and cultivating inclusion begin with each of us today.

RETURNING TO THE BEGINNING

- Have you ever been told to be softer, or more "ladylike"?
- What careers did your guidance counselor advise?
- What tasks have you been asked to do because of your gender?

YOUR CHOICES, ACTIONS, AND VOICE BUILD THIS WORLD. LEADERSHIP CAN BE INITIATED BY ANYONE.

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