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Business Advice For Women Leaders in Medicine

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Objectives

- Personal story
- Perceptions Regarding Women
Leaders- Catalyst data
- Labyrinth - Harvard Business Review
- Possible Solutions- institutional and individual



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Take Home Messages

- Other disciplines have data and suggestions we can utilize for institutional changes regarding women and leadership
- MGH has a large number of women in leadership positions who can mentor and teach women in medicine
- Women in medicine need to regularly analyze their own careers and take appropriate actions



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Characteristics of Leaders

- Survive Challenging Experiences-
- Build Strong Relationships -
- Find New Meaning -

Smith DM: Divide or Conquer, 2008



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PAR Method

Problem, issue or challenge

Action, activities to solve problem

Result, resolution, benefit



Personal History

- Surviving Challenging Experiences- no academic advancement as pulmonologist, Failures/rejections in research
- Strong Relationships - husband and parents, children worked with me, flexibility of research career, male mentors
- New Meaning - medical director of pre-op clinic, leadership of research administration board, ELAM, AAMC courses, team work in ICU





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Problematic Perceptions



Similarities Between Business and Medicine

- 50% of managers are women- 2005 [5% were AA; 3% Latina; 3% Asian]
- 1.8% of Fortune 500 CEOs women in 2006
- 0.7% women's representation increased in Fortune 500 companies between 2002-5
- 52% male leaders had > 20 years of managerial experience compared to 36% of women



Women in Medicine

- Medical students -45%
- Full time faculty - 28%
- Full professors - 12%
- Deans at US SOM - 7%
- Chairs at each SOM -2%



Problems for Women

- Stereotypes Persist-- Women “take care”; Men “take charge”
- Perception is that being an effective-problem solver is associated with high leadership ratings
- Women considered superior on supporting and rewarding subordinates
- Men were judged superior at delegating and problem solving



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Working with Women

- Views of women leaders depended on occupation; if “feminine” occupation, women were viewed as better problem-solvers
- Women leaders in “masculine” occupations [ie:medicine] are more likely to be viewed as poor problem-solvers especially by men

The Catalyst Guide-Best Practices for Corporate Leaders-2002



Double-Blind Dilemmas

- Women are viewed as : Too soft, too tough, never just right
- Women face higher standards and lower rewards
- Women are competent but disliked or likeable but not competent--never both



Other Gender Issues

- Ideal worker puts work first--women perceived as less committed
- Competence is associated with heroic individualism, ie: men
- Only “hard science” is valued; no value to qualitative sciences

Ely & Meyerson, Research in Organizational Behavior, JAI Press,
2001



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**Multiple Problems =
Labyrinth**



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Why a Labyrinth?

- Complex journey to a goal--requires persistence, awareness of progress, analyses of ongoing puzzles
- Acknowledges obstacles but not futility

Eagly AH, Carli LL. Women and the Labyrinth of Leadership. Harvard Business Review 2007



List of Career Barriers

- Prejudice-men promoted more quickly
- Resistance to women's leadership
- Leadership style issues- compassion vs control
- Family demands- no time for networking

Eagly AH, Carli LL. Women and the Labyrinth of Leadership. Harvard Business Review 2007



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Prejudice

- Men receive higher wages and faster promotions
- Men also undertake more hours of paid labor per year than women and had more years of job experience
- Scarcity of female corporate officers is the sum of discrimination at all levels



Resistance to women as leaders

- Women are associated with compassion
- Men are assertive, ambitious, dominating
- Women who are assertive, ambitious or dominating are evaluated more harshly than their male counterparts



Leadership Style

- Transformational leaders-- gain follower's trust and confidence--encourage development even in successful organizations
- Transactional leadership- conventional, clarify subordinates role, reward people for meeting goals
- Most leaders have both styles; women tend to be more transformational



Demands of Family

- Women tend to take more time off for family issues--fewer years of job experience
- Work/family conflict not eased for women



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Suggestions for Institutions



Recommendations:

- Clearly define and communicate performance evaluation criteria--not “innovation in approaching problems” or “demonstrated ability to execute”
- Create explicit decision rules about how evaluation criteria are weighted
- Evaluations by more than one person
- Diversity training- use data-based methods for assessment



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More Recommendations

- Confront inequitable situations immediately
- Become visible--seek high-level assignments and speak up
- Use clear and effective communication
- Minimize the issue

The Catalyst Guide-Best Practices for Corporate Leaders-2002



Underinvestment in Social Capital

- No time for networking
- “Fast-track” managers spent more time socializing, politicking, interacting
- Wal Mart - women told would not advance because did not hunt or fish



Intervene on Multiple Fronts

- Objective results - not time spent
- Explicit criteria so as to limit bias
- Open-recruitment tools to limit influence of social networks
- One woman is too few--need critical mass
- Give women demanding developmental job experiences to train for leadership



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More on Interventions:

- Family-friendly HR practices -job sharing, tele-commuting, flex time for all
- Extend time to promotion
- Alumni programs for women--alumni as a source of jobs

Eagly Ah, Carli LL Women and the Labyrinth of Leadership. Harvard Business Review; Sept 2007



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Individual Solutions



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Women's Successes

- High-performing women build success on portable, external relationships as they often lack access to internal relationships
- Women consider more factors than men when they switch jobs--including openness to styles, approaches, impartial performance measurement systems, cultures, values and styles--and are more often successful

Groysberg B How star women build portable skills. Harvard Business Review 2008



Things you can do

- Make a career plan
- Seek jobs with a chance of success -work with people where achievements mean more than time spent
- Know your own worth
- Be able to articulate your own achievements and how they help the organization
- Seek mentors who have succeeded and ask for constructive, honest advice
- Be able to network with all men and women



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Positives at MGH

















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MGH Strengths

- Successful women leaders at MGH:
VPs, executive Directors, VP in Nursing
--invaluable resource for all women and men
- Strong message from MGH leadership
RE: diversity and women



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Change

- “We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee.”

Marian Wright Edelman



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