

4 Beliefs Critical in Helping Women Rise in Leadership: The Real Truth

Introducing FRw, helping women rise into leadership positions

- We can be good moms and good leaders.
 - Many feel you can only be one and to even achieve the one, compromises need to be made. And yes, CHOICES need to be made. But it is our own filter that defines them as compromises.
 - Two situations cause this: 1) Women shy away from demanding leadership positions because of their perceived assumptions of how it will impact their home life. 2) The mom guilt is debilitating.
 - These two circumstances together are devastating in creating a female leadership pipeline. In order to overcome this, we need to look at our roles of mom and leader differently and adopt some new behaviors that address the perceptions and the guilt so we can make choices without it feeling like compromises. These are:
 - Women need to create and leverage their village and feel ok about doing it. And even more, we need to understand that it can be good for our kids to have exposure to others who can be care-givers. That means we need to ask others to help and not just default to that it has to be us, especially if there is a conflict between work and life.
 - Women need to feel okay in choosing ourselves. As we have talked in a previous episode of PB characteristics that hold back aspiring female leaders, empathy and care giving can get in the way of pursuing what is best for us. We tend to put others ahead of ourselves because it feels like the right thing to do. We aren't suggesting you become self-consumed narcissists, but why do we feel like this? It is rooted in the traditional male/female roles? What our moms did for us? What maybe they and other moms feel like we should do? Instead, know when you choose yourself, you are sending the message to your kids (both male and female) to your direct reports (both male and female), to those who are watching, that it is ok to choose yourself.
 - We need to question the guilt. Why do certain situations and decisions cause us guilt? Is it because of a belief system we actually believe or what someone has imposed on us? Do we feel if we aren't 100% present for our kids that we are somehow failing them? That they will hate us? The truth is family can't always come first if we want to achieve executive ranks. But that doesn't mean our family suffers as a result. It means, new expectations need to be set.
- As smart, capable, ambitious women, it is our RESPONSIBILITY to rise and pull others up.
 - It is a bit of a Catch 22. We need more women at the top in order to get more women to the top. But that is the reality. We need more examples that younger, aspiring women leaders can relate to. They need to see that it is possible.
 - The more women we get in executive positions, the more 'normal' it will feel which then breaks the paradigm that it is 'impossible'. This means that smart, capable, ambitious women who can rise need to see it as their responsibility to rise. This isn't always an easy choice, but it is a crucial one to flip the paradigm.
 - We need to acknowledge that it is a team effort where we are the captains. This isn't a solo sport. We only succeed if we create opportunity for other aspiring female leaders.
- We are powerful.
 - If we don't believe in our ability to change the face of business, we are sunk before we have even begun. Ironically, the PB characteristics that can hold us back from aspiring to leadership positions (empathy, caregiver, fairness, and humbleness) can make us really good leaders when we get there.
 - Sometimes our power gets undermined by outdated stereotypes and processes which are imposed on us and which we impose on ourselves. Here are a few:
 - Women are the best care-givers, therefore they should take the lead. Are we giving enough credit to our partners? Is it really our responsibility or are we nominating ourselves?
 - Maternity leave means a loss of progress. No work, no results. Instead of a belief that you would have continued on the same trajectory. Some don't even do evaluations if you have been on maternity leave.
 - Self-promotion is seen as egotistical which results in win/loss and therefore should be avoided. Self-promotion is essential to rising. The work doesn't always speak for itself.
 - Refuse to play the game. Whether we feel it is a 'boys club', or it is just too much drama, or too manipulating. This just gets you a seat on the bench or worse in the stands. This doesn't mean you have to play it the way they are. But you need to get on the floor.
 - We need to stand in our power if you expect others to believe we are powerful.
- We need to acknowledge where we get in our way.
 - Sure there are real challenges to face that are outside of our control, but what we are talking about is what is in our control. Specifically, this includes realities like:
 - Not holding ourselves accountable for the commitments we made to our own growth and aspirations.
 - Not saying "no" to things that we feel obligated to do but no passion to do. And worse, letting people take advantage of our inability to say "no".
 - The other side of that coin is defaulting to what others expect of us because it is easier.
 - Feeling jealous of other women and their achievements and thereby undermining them.
 - Making all those that come behind us blaze the trail because we had to.
 - Not taking care of our physical, mental, and emotional health.
 - Making excuses versus taking action because we are afraid it will inconvenience others.
 - Playing small so as not to rock the boat or stand out.
 - Don't believe we are qualified.
 - These are just a few that we have experienced in our own lives and in coaching others. No judgment, but it is impossible to rise if we don't own it.

