

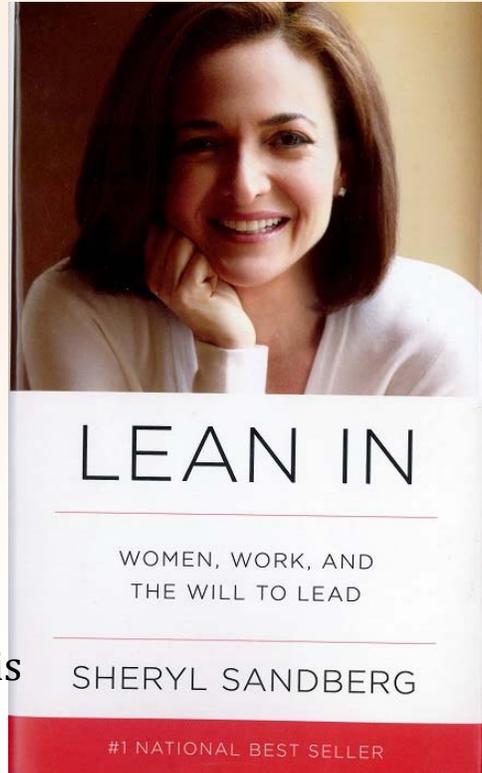
Lean In

Women, Work, and the Will to Lead

Sheryl Sandberg, 2013

Highlights

Thirty years after women became 50% of the college graduates in the United States, men still hold the vast majority of leadership positions in government and industry. This means that women's voices are still not heard equally in the decisions that most affect our lives. In this book, Sheryl Sandberg examines why women's progress in achieving leadership roles has stalled, explains the root causes, and offers compelling, commonsense solutions that can empower women to achieve their full potential.



Synopsis

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Lean In : Focus on what you can change yourself.

Introduction : Internalizing the Revolution

- The promise of equality is not the same as true equality. A truly equal world would be one where women ran half our countries and companies and men ran half our homes. I believe that this would be a better world.

Warren Buffett has stated generously that one of the reasons for his great success was that he was competing with only half of the population.

- Conditions for all women will improve when there are more women in leadership roles giving strong and powerful voice to their needs and concerns.
- A 2011 McKinsey report noted that men are promoted based on potential, while women are promoted based on past accomplishments.
- Whatever this book is, I am writing it for any women who wants to increase her chances of making it to the top of her field or pursue any goal vigorously.

Not all women want careers. Not all women want children. Not all women want both. We should not all have the same objectives. Many people are not interested in acquiring power, not because they lack ambition, but because they are living their lives as they desire. We each have to chart our own unique course and define which goals fit our lives, values, and dreams.

Chapter 1 : The Leadership Ambition Gap – What would you do if you weren't afraid?

- Among highly educated professional men and women, more men than women describe themselves as « ambitious ».

Women are also less likely than their male peers to characterize themselves as « leaders », « visionaries », « self-confident », and « willing to take risks ».

- Professional ambition is expected of men but is optional – or worse, sometimes even a negative – for women. « She is very ambitious » is not a compliment in our culture. Aggressive and hard-charging women violate unwritten rules about acceptable social conduct. Men are continually applauded for being ambitious and powerful and successful, but women who display these same traits often pay a social penalty.

When a girl tries to lead, she is often labeled bossy. Boys are seldom called bossy because a boy taking the role of a boss does not surprise or offend.

- Most leadership positions are held by men, so women don't expect to achieve them, and that becomes one of the reasons they don't. The same is true with pay. Men generally earn more than women, so people expect women to earn less. And they do.
- This is a social-psychological phenomenon called « **stereotype threat** » when

members of a group are made aware of a negative stereotype, they are more likely to perform according to that stereotype. **For example** : When girls are reminded of their gender before a math or science test, even by something as simple as checking off an M or F box at the top of the test, they perform worse.

- Women are not thinking about « having it all » but worry about « losing it all » (jobs, children, financial security, etc) because of the regular conflicts that arise between being a good employee and a responsible parent.
- Facebook creates a culture where people are encouraged to take risks. We have posters “Proceed and be bold”, “What would you do if you weren't afraid?”.

Chapter 2 : Sit at the Table

- “**The impostor syndrome**” is when capable people are plagued by self-doubt. Women tend to experience it more intensely and be more limited by it. When Sheryl Sandberg attended the Harvard Radcliffe final conference to their graduates, it was named: “Feeling Like a Fraud”. When the women gathered outside with their Harvard male counterparts, those didn't understand how this theme was relevant. Women graduates, who all loved the conference, joked that the men's speech must have been something more like “How to Cope in a World Where Not Everyone Is as Smart as You”.

Multiple studies in multiple industries show that women often judge their own performance as worse than it actually is, while men judge their own performance as better than it actually is.

When asked to evaluate themselves, female gave lower scores than the male students despite faculty evaluation that showed the women outperformed the men.

Even worse, when women evaluate themselves in front of other people or in stereotypically male domains, their underestimations can become even more pronounced.

Ask a man to explain his success and he will typically credit his own innate qualities and skills. Ask a woman the same question and she will attribute her success to external factors, insisting she did well because she “worked really hard”, “got lucky” or “had help from others”.

When man fails, he points to factors like “didn’t study enough” or “not interested in the subject matter”. When woman fails, she’s more likely to believe it is due to an inherent lack of ability.

In a situation where a man and a woman each receive negative feedback, the woman’s self-confidence and self-esteem drop to a much greater degree.

Tina Fey has admitted to having this syndrome and

finally responded: “I’ve just realized that almost everyone is a fraud, so I try not to feel too bad about it.”.

- **Opportunities are rarely offered; they’re seized.**
- **It is hard to visualize someone as a leader if she is always waiting to be told what to do.**

EXTRACT:

Women as well may have behaviors that enhance gender issues.

A few years ago, I gave a talk on gender issues to a few hundred employees at Facebook. After my speech, I took questions for as long as time permitted. Later that afternoon, I came back to my desk, where a young woman was waiting to talk to me. “I learned something today” she said. “What?” I asked, feeling good, as I figured she was about to tell me how my words had touched her. Instead, she said, “I learned to keep my hand up”. She explained that toward the end of my talk, I had said that I would take only two more questions. I did so, and then she put her hand down, along with all of the other women. But several men kept their hands up. And since hands were still waving in the air, I took more questions – only from the men. Instead of my words touching her, her words hit me like a ton of bricks. Even though I was giving a speech on gender issues, I had been blind to one myself.

TIPS

- When I don’t feel confident, one tactic I’ve learned is that it sometimes helps to fake it.
- One study found that when people assumed a high-power pose (for example, taking up space by spreading their limbs) for

just 2 minutes, their dominance hormone levels (testosterone) went up and their stress hormone levels (cortisol) went down. A simple change in posture led to a significant change in attitude.

Chapter 3 : Success and Likeability

● Heidi and Howard

experiment (2003) to test perceptions of men and women in the workplace. Equally competent, they just changed the name in a business case presented to students. Findings:

↳ Howard was a more appealing colleague. Heidi was seen as a selfish and not “the type of person you would want to hire or work for”.

↳ Success and likeability are positively correlated for men and negatively correlated for women. When a man is successful, he is liked by both men and women. When a woman is successful, people of both genders like her less.

↳ This bias is at the very core of why women are held back and hold themselves back. For men, professional success comes with positive reinforcement at every step of the way. For women, even when they’re recognized for their achievements, they’re often regarded unfavorably.

- Being liked is also a key factor both in professional and personal success. A willingness to make an introduction or promote

someone depends upon having positive feelings about that person.

- **When a man helps a colleague, the recipient feels indebted to him and is highly likely to return the favor. But when a woman helps out, the feeling of indebtedness is weaker.** She's communal, right? She *wants* to help others. When a woman declines to help a colleague, she often receives less favorable reviews and fewer rewards. When a man declines to help, he pays no penalty.
- Because of these unfair expectations, women find themselves in "damned if they do" and "damned if they don't" situations.
- This is especially true when it comes to negotiations concerning compensation, benefits, titles, etc. Men negotiate more than women. But **instead of blaming women for not negotiating more, we need to recognize that women often have good cause to be reluctant to advocate for their own interests because doing so can easily backfire.**
- Interestingly, **women can negotiate as well or even more successfully than men when negotiating for others** because their advocacy does not make them appear self-serving.

EXTRACT:

We can joke, as Marlo Thomas did, that "a man has to be Joe McCarthy (a real ruthless man) in order to be called ruthless. All a woman needs to do is to put you

on hold on the phone." Real change will come when powerful women are less of an exception. It is easy to dislike senior women because there are so few. If women held 50% of the top jobs, it would just not be possible to dislike that many people.

TIPS

- The goal of a successful negotiation is to achieve our objectives and continue to have people like us.
- Think personally, act communally.
 - ✦ Preface negotiations by explaining that women often get paid less than men so they are going to negotiate rather than accept the original offer. By doing so, you connect yourself to a group, like if you were negotiating for all women.
 - ✦ Pronouns matter. Whenever possible substitute "I" for "We". Ex. We had a great year.
 - ✦ Provide a legitimate explanation for the negotiation. **Men don't have to do this, they are expected to look out for themselves and their careers. Men are allowed to be focused on their own achievements, while loyalty is expected from women.**
Ex. Suggest that someone more senior encouraged you to negotiate (My manager suggested I talk with you about my compensation) or cite industry standards (My understanding is that jobs involving this responsibility are compensated in this range).

✦ **Be yourself** and combine niceness with insistence.

Smile frequently, express appreciation and concern, invoke common interests, express emphasizing larger goals, approach the negotiation as solving a problem rather than taking a critical stance.

- **Arianna Huffington**, founder of The Huffington Post, believes that learning to withstand criticism is a necessity for women. **Her advice:** react emotionally and feel anger or sadness or whatever. And then quickly move on.
- **Mark Zuckerberg:** when you want to change things, you can't please everyone. If you do please everyone, you aren't making enough progress.

Chapter 4 : It's a Jungle Gym, Not a Ladder

- The most common metaphor for careers is a ladder. As of 2010, the average American had 11 jobs from the age of 18 to 46 alone. Days of ladder are long gone. Careers are a jungle gym now.
- To apply to a job, people usually focus on finding the right role for themselves, with the implication that their skills will help the company. Instead, put the company's needs front and center and ask it "What is your biggest problem and how can I solve it?"
 - ✦ You might end up not where you expected it, but where you will develop your own growth potential.

- If you're offered a seat on a rocket ship, you don't ask what seat. You just get on.
- **Work where your growth potential is the greatest, where you have the greatest impact.**
- In negotiating, letting the other side make the first offer is often crucial to achieving favorable terms.
- **Women only apply for open jobs if they think they meet 100% of the criteria listed. Men apply if they think they meet 60% of the requirements.**
- **The Tiara Syndrome:** Women are more reluctant to apply for promotions even when deserved, often believing that good job performance will naturally lead to rewards. We expect that if we keep doing our job well someone will notice us and place a tiara on our head.
- The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any. Do not wait for power to be offered.

Chapter 5 : Are You My Mentor?

- If someone has to ask the question, the answer is probably no. When someone finds the right mentor, it is obvious. The question becomes a statement. Chasing or forcing that connection rarely works.
- At a conference Q&A of Sheryl Sandberg, **men wanted answers. Women wanted permission and help.**

- When you talk with someone with influence, **don't lose your one shot question with a vague question** such as "What is Facebook's culture like?" or seeking general guidance. Discuss specific opportunities that they could offer.
- Peers can also mentor and sponsor one another – All advice are autobiographical.

EXTRACT:

As an associate at McKinsey & Co, my first assignment was on a team that consisted of a male senior engagement manager (SEM) and 2 other male associates, Abe Wu and Derek Holley. When the SEM wanted to talk to Abe or Derek, he would walk over to their desks. When he wanted to talk to me, he would sit at his desk and shout, "Sandberg, get over here!" with the tone one might use to call a child or, even worse, a dog. It made me cringe every time. I never said anything, but one day Abe and Derek started calling each other "Sandberg" in that same loud voice. They kept it up. When having too many Sandbergs got confusing, they decided we needed to differentiate. Abe started calling himself "Asian Sandberg", Derek dubbed himself "good-looking Sandberg", and I became "Sandberg Sandberg". My colleagues turned an awful situation into one where I felt protected. They stood up for me and made me laugh. They were the best mentors I could have had.

Chapter 6 : Seek and Speak Your Truth

- Focus on improving your strength rather than diminishing your weaknesses.

- Someone's performance is assessed by someone else's perception.
- Communication works best when we combine appropriateness with authenticity, finding the sweet spot where opinions are not brutally honest but delicately honest.

*Fred Kofman reference book "Conscious Business".
- Recognizing the role emotions play and being willing to discuss them makes us better managers, partners, and peers.
- Take a moment to connect with people before diving in the subject.
- Leaders should strive for authenticity over perfection.

Chapter 10 : Let's Start Talking About It (Feminism)

- Sad irony it is that so many rejects feminism to get male attention and approval.
- The no-win situation: defending yourself that you succeeded because you're a women just makes you look... defensive.
- In business we are taught to fit in, but I was starting to think this might not be the right approach.
- **Men and women are more likely to interrupt a woman.**

TIP

Gently but firmly tell the group "Before we move on, I'd like to hear what [name of the woman who was interrupted] had to say."

- **Men and women are more likely to give credit to a man for an idea first proposed by a woman.**

- The “benevolent sexists” or “nice guy misogynists”: Holding positive yet outdated views about women (ex. Women are more moral then better equipped to raise children than succeed in business). They are unaware that their attitude hurt their female colleagues.

At a job offering for the job of police chief: respondents who claimed to be the most impartial actually exhibited more bias in favor of the male candidates.

- **Definition of Leadership** by Harvard Business School: Leadership is about making others better as a result of your presence and making sure that impact lasts in your absence.
- **By creating a more equal environment, Harvard’s students were all happier** (men, women, immigrants...) including American males who might seem to have less to gain in the process.

When asked, 24% of female in USA say they are feminists. But if you say before this **definition of Feminism:** A feminist is someone who believes in social, political, and economical equality of the sexes.

Then the % rises to 65%. Semantics is important, not everyone has the same definition.

Chapter 11 : Working Together Toward Equality

- We have to ask ourselves if we have become so focused on supporting personal choices that we’re failing to encourage women to aspire to leadership.
- Madelaine Albright: “There’s a special place in hell for women who don’t help other women.” **The more women can stick up for one another, the better. Act like a coalition.**
- **Once a woman achieves success, particularly in a gender-biased context, her capacity to see gender discrimination is reduced.**
- We need to be grateful for what we have but dissatisfied with the status quo.
- **We must raise both the ceiling and the floor.**