Business Advice For Women Leaders in Medicine

Jeanine P Wiener-Kronish, MD
Henry Isaiah Dorr Professor of Research and Teaching in Anaesthetics and Anaesthesia
Department of Anesthesia and Critical Care
Anesthetist-in-Chief
Objectives

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

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

Smith DM: Divide or Conquer, 2008
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
Problems 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%

Acad Med 2002;77:10
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

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

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
Multiple Problems = Labyrinth
Why a Labyrinth?

• Complex journey to a goal--requires persistence, awareness of progress, analyses of ongoing puzzles

• Acknowledges obstacles but not futility

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

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
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

More Recommendations

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

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
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

Individual Solutions
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

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
Positives at MGH
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
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
Acknowledgements

- Susan Chapman Moss, MPH
- Page Morahan, PhD, Executive Coach