



# Gender and Communication

- Gendered socialization creates different skills and styles
- Gendered socialization creates bias in recognizing skills and styles
- Burden of educating colleagues on style differences placed on women
- Best start? Knowing masculinist styles of leadership are an obstacle to optimal productivity <sup>1</sup>



# Gendered Language in Management

- *When a man says it:*
- He's showing leadership.
- He's going places.
- He's concerned.
- He's keeping people in the loop.
- He's reporting.
- *When a woman says it:*
- She's bossy or aggressive.
- She's too ambitious.
- She's nosy.
- She's a gossip.
- She's a tattletale.



# Recognizing Gendered Styles

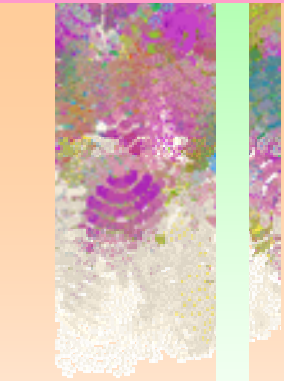
- What Signals Leadership?
  - “Top Dog” versus “Centerwoman”
- What Signals Confusion?
  - asking questions versus isolation
- What Shows Accountability?
- What Matters Most?
  - winning versus getting there
  - goal versus process
  - ego versus teamwork



Fran Lebowitz

(in

Metropolitan Life)



defines the problem of an especially masculine style of communication:

*“In New York, the opposite of talking isn’t listening, it’s waiting...”*



# Masculine Style

- *Both Men and Women Can Show This!*
- Achieving the goal is the point
- Leader requires recognition over team
- Leadership is / should be top-down
- Questioning about tasks signals weakness, indecision, or insubordination
- Bureaucratic accountability / it's not my area
- Interrupting subordinates is OK.




# Feminist Style

- *Both Women and Men Can Do This!*
- Decision making requires teamwork and personal accountability
- How the team works together matters as much as goal achievement: it is a goal.
- Questioning is clarification, sharing information
- Listening is part of decision making
- Lead by example



# Centerwoman Style:

- Concept from UCLA Prof. Karen Brodtkin (in *Caring by the Hour*)
- Foster a workplace culture that is welcoming, inclusive, caring
- Mark special occasions, achievements of the team
- Respectful interaction -- no sexual harassment
- You're not their mother...you aren't there to take care of their every emotional need.



# What's My (Gendered) Style?

- Code Switching: Gender and ethnicity in one's own communication style
- What contexts trigger my different styles?
- How do I communicate with a difficult boss or subordinate of the same/other gender?
- How do I deal with communication obstacles?



# *When Can Gendered Communication Become Sexual Harassment?*

- **The talk or nonverbal communication has a sexual content.**
- **The hearer / viewer, not the speaker /poster/actor determines if it's offensive.**
- **A complaint or verbal objection has to be registered (with witnesses or in writing).**
- **The perpetrator's supervisor can put an end to it immediately, and is legally responsible for doing so.**



# Feminist-Informed Conflict Resolution

- Use “I” statements, not “you” statements.
- Focus on the action, not the person.
- Point out implications of the action or inaction for the workplace environment, other people, team goals.
- Establish understood consequences for any repeat occurrence.



# PROBLEM-SOLVING

- Maria's boss gives orders and yells when things aren't done as he wants, but no one seems to know how he actually wants things done.
- One of the men on Tina's team tries to "get the glory" for everything their unit accomplishes. This bothers her a lot, especially when it works -- he gets raises when others don't.



# PROBLEM-SOLVING

- Audrey has just been upgraded and knows there are some people in her department who think there's nothing worse than a "woman boss."
- The professors in Jessica's department are patronizing toward the office staff and her as MSO. Everyone is fed up with it and she's their supervisor.



# PROBLEM-SOLVING

- Marlene participates in meetings where women defer to men who interrupt. Also, no one seems to listen to a point made by a woman until a man echoes it --and is given credit for the idea. What can she do?
- Gail's boss is a woman who's had a really hard time rising through the ranks. Gail understands, but is tired of a boss who acts no better than "one of the old boys". Options?