

UNDERSTANDING WOMEN & WORK

Chapter Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- define what some refer to as “women’s work.”
- identify how women’s work changed after industrialization.
- discuss women and physically demanding jobs.
- describe stereotypes that plague various cultures of women.
- understand the difference between the glass and concrete ceiling.
- argue equal pay issues.



What would the world be like without women? Based upon the theory of procreation, the world and its population as we know it would be extinct. But, is procreation the only type of work women are good for? This brings us to the topic of women's work—or is there such a thing? In addressing women as a diverse entity in the workplace it is essential that we address this topic of "women's work."

In order for there to be women's work there must also be men's work. But, when we go back to the days when people bartered for a living and everyone worked at home there wasn't this designation. Everyone worked the farm, did chores, cared for the family and participated in a skill or craft that provided a living for the family. Women chopped wood, worked in the fields, brought kids into the world and then went back to working. Everyone was paid equally by bartering for what the family needed, as there was no one "breadwinner." Yet, somehow working at home meaning domestic work, family maintenance, the reproduction and socialization of children became "women's work." This work typically earns no pay whereas working outside the home, a "man's job" earns pay.

Industrialization Changes Women's Participation in the Workforce

This term "women's work" was quite common prior to the Industrial Revolution as the free American born women performed their work tasks in the home and rarely worked outside the home. In pre-industrial America, women and girls not only performed much of the labor necessary for family survival but participated in the household manufacture of yarn, cloth, candles, and food. But, this simple definition of work life soon ended as the industrial revolution transformed many women's lives. By 1790, the availability of water-powered machinery such as spinning frames and carding machines enabled businessmen to substitute power tools for women's hand labor in the manufacture of cloth.¹ In December of 1790, the first water-powered spinning mill opened its doors in Pawtucket, Rhode Island.² By 1813, 175 other cotton and wool spinning mills, employing entire families,

punctuated the river rich New England landscape.³ This was the beginning of women working in factories.

Until the immigration wave of the 1840s many of the female factory workers were single, native-born Caucasian women recruited from middle-class farms.⁴ During this time, many of these women worked over seventy hours a week at substandard wages.

As more women were recruited to work in the factories, the women's experiences as factory workers varied according to their ethnicity, race, and class, and differed from those of men. An occupational hierarchy among women prevailed in which Yankee women enjoyed the greatest access to the best-paying women's jobs; daughters of immigrants concentrated in semiskilled positions; and immigrant women worked in the least skilled, most poorly paid occupations. As a rule, free African American women were excluded from factory employment and were kept mainly as poorly paid domestic workers.⁵

Rigid gender-based occupational segregation ensured that even the highest-paid, most senior female factory worker could expect to receive less than a man employed in the same establishment. Furthermore, by the 1840s women represented 50 percent of factory workers in the shoe and textile industries but even with these numbers they rarely worked alongside men; instead, they held jobs whose low wages affirmed the belief that women's work was less skilled than men's and less important to family survival.⁶

Most women holding factory jobs in the first decades of industrialization were single and could therefore participate as factory labor. Immigrant and working-class wives and mothers were more likely to participate in the wage-based labor market as outworkers. In New York City, the foremost manufacturing center of the antebellum period, outwork was the dominant form of female employment and it was also one of the most exploitive.⁷

Outwork enabled women confined to their homes to contribute to the family economy while still performing tasks as wives and mothers. But merchants took advantage of the women's limited mobility and bargaining power by withholding and cutting wages. Already doubly burdened by society's expectations of them as wives and wage earners, female outworkers coped with their precarious financial status by accepting more contracted jobs to make ends meet.

Although upper- and middle-class white women were typically spared the long hours and low wages that characterized both factory labor and outwork, they were nevertheless forced to contend with the ideological devaluation of housework that industrialization spawned.⁸ As "real" labor became more closely identified with work that had a concrete market value, women lost out.

Childbearing, child rearing, cooking, cleaning, and other traditionally female tasks, whether performed by elite women, working-class women, or a growing number of domestic servants, were demeaned. The household, increasingly perceived in opposition to a male-dominated market as a feminized space, came to be viewed as a site of leisure and consumption rather than labor and production. This left women's work out as a variable to be considered when determining the pay associated with these types of duties.

The Economic System & Women's Work

Would you believe that our economic system in the U.S. (capitalism) has set the tone for the wage-labor system (pay vs. no pay) used for men and women? Capitalism operates as a system where prices and wages are often set by demand and supply, thus making certain items valuable and others not so valuable which is determined by the desired demand for the item and the price paid for it. For example, we value a Mercedes more than a Pontiac not just because the Mercedes is a good car but also because it is pricey and that often denotes value. So when we put women's work into this context, we find that women's work is not valuable since there is no set price paid for it. Meaning women aren't paid for their work so it must not be valuable.

Whether you buy this argument or not, it is true that women's work continues to be seen by some people as natural functions, instinctive and of little importance when compared with men's work. This downgrading of what is known to many as women's work has been the cause of many myths surrounding women and their value to the workplace.

Up until World War II, most White married women living with their husbands worked outside their homes only if they were extremely poor or if a hardship was experienced, such as the husband was unable to pay the bills or unable to work.⁹ If this occurred the family was shamed and this often negatively affected the man's self-esteem because he was unable to fill this societal expectation.

But, does the above example prove that women were unable to work or do the same job as men in the workplace or was it that they were expected not to? Trust me, there is a difference. If we knew more about women's history we would know that being able to do a job is more a factor of an individual's personality, skills, heredity, learning ability, etc... than just a factor of one's gender. For every job that a man can do you will find a woman that is capable of doing that same job.

Women and physically demanding jobs

If you look at the physical challenges as it relates to male and female firefighters, they often don't have to meet the same standards: while men must be able to bench-press 200 lbs., women are asked only to bench-press 150.¹⁰ Does this make it obvious that men are stronger than women and women therefore can't cut it when it comes to a physically demanding job?

Karen Messing has a book entitled *One-Eyed Science* (1998) which deals with occupational health. Some of the ideas she presents in this book can help explain why differential strength requirements exist for male and female workers in such jobs as firefighting--though the argument has also been raised for construction work, police work, certain areas of the military, and other traditionally male occupations.

According to her chapter "Are Women Biologically fit for Jobs? Are Jobs Fit for Women?" (Ch 3) she indicates that tests of this sort are based on average abilities.¹¹ Of course, some women will be able to lift the same heavy weight that some men will not be able to lift and vice-versa. What may make a difference in a woman's ability to lift the object is how she is being told to lift it.

If workers are told that there is one appropriate way to lift an object (like a person in a fire), and that lifting procedure was developed using men who were the traditional workers in that field, then the procedure will most likely make the most of men's upper body strength.¹² What Messing and her colleagues found was that if women are allowed to develop their own techniques to lift heavy objects, then they will most likely shift the burden toward their lower-body strength and perform the task successfully; women will use their hips.¹³

For instance, when women hold babies for long periods of time - they balance the baby on their hips. This is a practical solution to the problem of holding and/or lifting heavy objects whether these objects are babies or adults

caught in a fire. When given some freedom to structure how women will perform certain tasks on the job, women are much more likely to be able to perform on par with men than when women are told "this is how it needs to be done."¹⁴ The argument Messing makes is that jobs traditionally held by men (such as firefighting) developed tests (such as strength tests) specifically with men's bodies in mind.¹⁵

In studying the history of various cultures, we find several examples of different ethnic groups that prove that women were valued or given the work responsibilities of men. There were also times in history where little distinction was given to the work for men vs. women. During the enslavement of Blacks, was it only the men that worked the fields from sunrise to sunset? No, the price of slaves was often based upon how healthy and stocky they were—men or women. The women worked in the field right along with the men and they sometimes did this with their babies on their back. These enslaved women also were beaten just like the men and put back in the field to carry on as their male counterparts.

Furthermore, in Messing's book she uses an example of a baker - also a traditional male job. The baker must carry sacks of sugar which could be of any weight - the decision to make sacks of sugar 40 pounds each instead of 20 pounds each is a political decision which takes for granted the strength of the "average" (male) baker who will be required to lift the bag.¹⁵ But such sacks of sugar could just as easily have been made 20 pounds apiece. Even though some women could likely lift the 40 lb. bag of sugar if she is allowed to develop a technique suited to her own body.

Messing's main point is that jobs are adaptable; they have usually been adapted to men since they were the traditional workers in those positions. When women come along and ask that the job be adapted to their average capabilities, however, this strikes people as being unfair, as somehow lowering the standards of the job, or as admitting that women are not as capable as men, or in creating "double standards". In fact, the job itself, the techniques, and the equipment used were designed to "fit" with men's average capabilities (they were and many still are - male standards) and so are biased in favor of male workers. Again, this is not to say that some women will not be able to perform the job, but too often the equipment and techniques used in a particular job are not suited to the average woman. Then this argument is used to justify the notion that the average woman is not suited for the job. However, Messing suggests we think of it differently, "Fitness for a job must be considered as an interaction between individuals (with all their possibilities for change) and a plastic, adaptable work environment."¹⁶ As long as the job gets done does it matter if you carry two 20 pound bags or one 40 pound bag?

In studying Native Americans, we will find many tribes not only shared the work between men and women (even when it was physically demanding) but many gave women power over the family and the tribes. If only the pilgrims could have learned more than just to survive from the Native Americans we would not have had to fight for rights for women. Rights that already existed in many of the tribes structure. If we go back and revisit the Thanksgiving Dinner that occurred at Plymouth Rock we will find that the Puritan women stood and waited as expected as there men were seated and ate whereas the Native American women ate right alongside their men because they were considered equal and were valued. Unfortunately, this country was founded not on the Native American's values but on the early settlers who believed women were second class citizens.

In addition, numerous rationalizations have been used by employees for not employing women in certain fields or for not paying women as much as men. Many women were and still are excluded from skilled jobs (opportunities to learn trades). They were and are often forced to accept low wages and poor working conditions. Basically, in prior times when there was enough men to meet the demands of the labor force the women who were free to work for wages could be treated with less favor.

Stereotypes of Women

The above treatment of women in the workplace is not just attributed to the culture that the pilgrims brought with them to start the new world but is also a result of stereotypes and sexism. Sexism results in the process of assigning life roles according to gender, which is passed down from one generation to the next. Instead of these stereotypes about women being unlearned they continue to be learned.¹⁷ Sexism is conditioning that can start very early in a female's life. But, even worse than this are the stereotypes that follow many women throughout their adult years. These stereotypes interact closely with racial and class stereotypes and they tend to form many inaccurate representations of women in the media.

For example, the "Jewish American Princess" concept dominated the film *Clueless* (1995) and is still a stereotype used in film today. Bravo television station created a reality show in 2013 by this title of Jewish American Princess. Shoshanna Shapiro was seemingly portrayed as a Jewish American Princess on the HBO show "Girls." From Shoshanna's perfectly coiffed hair to a pink Juicy Couture tracksuit to her admission that her parents are paying \$2,100 a month

for her Nolita apartment, this is in line with this stereotype that Jewish girls are materialistic, pampered, and narcissistic, as a result of an upper-class privileged upbringing. This stereotype is seen as negative because rather than show Jewish women as strong, independent, and wise it is showing them as overly dependent, spoiled and concerned only with finding a rich husband.

Black and Latina women often fill the roles of domestics, as in films such as *Forrest Gump* (1994) and *The First Wives Club* (1996) even today, mammy depictions are still shown in modern films such as *The Help* (2011), *Big Momma's House* (2000) and the current television show *The Contender* a Tyler Perry film on OWN channel shows both a Black woman and Latina as mammy roles. In some rap music, the stereotype of the Black woman as emasculating and manipulative is central to the message. Even though, as you watch the Miss America pageant you won't find the women gyrating across the stage (as in the rap videos) but is it any less demeaning to have women parading around in high heels and two piece bikinis for the title of Miss or Mrs. America?

Lesbians have had to watch as the pendulum of popular culture swings from the stereotype of man hating and masculine, to chic and fashionable, going from one extreme to another. Stereotypes have been used both to define women and to control them. They limit the possibilities women envision for themselves and therefore damage women's self-esteem and deprive society of a woman's potential.

The following have been some stereotypes that refer to women in our society. Many of these are sexual stereotypes of women that are currently in operation and were formed in the past century under racist and classist ideologies. Read below and see if you recognize any of the images that have been placed on women.

Anglo-American Stereotype

Anglo-American women of the upper and middle classes, as we have already discussed, were generally confined to the following roles: wife, mother, and one not discussed— also as a mistress. This class of woman was considered to be the White man's ideal companion and thus the mother of his children. The White woman was considered to be the "true woman."¹⁸ As the true woman she was often expected to have the following four virtues: piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity. The external physical signs of true womanhood were delicacy, softness, and weakness.

This true woman was placed on a pedestal especially during the antebellum and post-Civil War South periods. This true woman was to be protected by White men.¹⁹ We will later read of laws that were imparted to not just protect White women but to protect them from the evils of interracial relationships. But, what we must remember is that this true woman image did not often extend itself to the working-class poor White woman. The working class White woman while her image was tainted; she still was not viewed as negatively as a woman of color.

Native American Stereotype

Native American women have been stereotyped as strong, spiritual "earth mothers." During the period where the pilgrims took over the land as well as control of the Native people, the Native woman was not seen as a threat. She still is not often seen as a threat and therefore has not been subjected to some of the more rigorous stereotyping that other women have seen in recent years. In fact, she along with the males of her ethnicity has been deemed invisible and really not an important entity in this society.²⁰

However, this has not always been the case. During the period of colonization and the westward expansion of the United States, two dominant stereotypes of Native women existed. The first was a variant of the mammy stereotype who was loyal and trustworthy which made them useful to White men of power.²¹ The second stereotype was as a "squaw", in which they were just seen as servants to men--be it sexual servitude or domestic; they were also seen as maintaining the Natives' culture while their men hunted and acted as warriors.²²

Asian American Stereotype

Asian women of all nationalities are most often stereotyped as quiet, delicate and submissive, especially to male desire. The two most common sexual stereotypes are as a geisha or mail order bride.²⁷ While there have been instances in past history that used some Asian women as mail order brides, it is not a characteristic that is attributable to many Asian women. The sexual stereotype that prevails around Asian women is one where they lack aggressive behaviors appealing to the weak characteristic that the "true" woman was to exhibit.²⁸ According to the stereotypes of submissiveness and weakness, Asian women make ideal wives because they make few demands, never complain and exist only to serve. These stereotypes limit the roles and opportunities for Asian women and are as controlling as the role of weakness for Anglo women and the loud "ghetto" welfare mother for Black women.

African American Stereotype

In the nineteenth century, enslaved women of African descent were expected to be physically strong—able to bear fatigue and reproduce “property” for the White master.²³ African American women became the very image that the “true” woman was not.²⁴ She was often viewed as promiscuous and overtly sexual and after emancipation, the stereotype of the strong, Black woman turned into the controlling image of the mammy—who was a faithful servant to the affluent White family.²⁵ Often in the workplace, Black women have complained of being treated like a mammy where she is expected to appear warm and nurturing at all times.

But, if not nurturing and warm then she can be construed to be “the angry black woman.” The Sapphire Caricature portrays black women as rude, loud, malicious, stubborn, and overbearing. This is the Angry Black Woman (ABW) popularized in the cinema and on television. The Sapphire Caricature is a harsh portrayal of African American women, but it is more than that; it is a social control mechanism that is employed to punish black women who violate the societal norms that encourage them to be passive, servile, non-threatening, and unseen.

Other images exist such as matriarch and welfare mother. Where the welfare mother is characterized as having a lot of children and this concept goes back to the breeder role that was expected of Black women during slavery.²⁶ This same welfare mother with all of her children produced out of wedlock is also categorized as a bad mother who is content to sit around and live off the government. This unfortunately is not just a stereotype but a harmful myth as the largest beneficiary is White Americans. The fact is, more Whites receive aid than blacks or Hispanics. Two out of three welfare recipients are children, not adults. And contrary to the stereotype of families forever dependent, nearly three out of four women receiving aid get off welfare within two years. Many of the Whites on welfare are daughters and nieces of middle-class, suburban families who end up on welfare because of a divorce or an abusive partner.

The last stereotype for Black women as jezebel is another way to view black women as overly sexual. The belief that Blacks are sexually lewd predates the institution of slavery in America. European travelers to some countries in Africa found scantily clad natives. This semi nudity was misinterpreted as lewdness. White Europeans, locked into the racial ethnocentrism of the 17th century, saw African polygamy and tribal dances as proof of the African's uncontrolled sexual lust.

Historians say that these Europeans were fascinated by African sexuality. William Bosman in his writings described the Black women on the coast of Guinea as "fiery" and "warm" and "so much hotter than the men." William Smith also wrote and described African women as "hot constitution'd Ladies" who "are continually contriving stratagems how to gain a lover." The genesis of anti-Black sexual arch types emerged from the writings of these and other Europeans; stating basically the Black woman, as the Jezebel whore due to their interpretation of only what they saw but not what they knew about these African cultures.

Bottomline, the common theme of all these stereotypes revolves around the issues of race, gender and class oppression. Making African American woman much more susceptible to more stereotypes.

Latina/Hispanic American Stereotype

Oftentimes we find some overlap in these stereotypes as they apply to the various women discussed. The mammy stereotype is one not just used for Black women but also for the Latina as well.²⁹ Not only is she viewed as a domestic help to the white family but has also often been stereotyped to lack intelligence due to the incorrect English spoken.³⁰ By the 1980s, Latinos increasingly replaced blacks as Hollywood's domestics. The 1987 TV show "I Married Dora" was even about a man who married his Latina housekeeper to prevent her from being deported. Even megastar Jennifer Lopez played a housekeeper in 2002's "Maid in Manhattan."

Latinas are also seen as sexually aggressive in response to the cultural stereotype of machismo and sexually repressive. Latino women are commonly typecast as sexpots. Rita Hayworth, Raquel Welch and Carmen Miranda are some of the Latinas in early Hollywood who capitalized on their sexy image. More recently, Eva Longoria played a conniving Latina homemaker who used her looks to advance her agenda in "Desperate Housewives," and Sofia Vergara continues to play the role of Gloria Delgado-Pritchett on "Modern Family," which many prominent Latinas argue not only fuels the stereotype that Hispanic women are sexy but also loud, crazy and spicy despite being strict followers of Roman Catholicism.³¹

There are current day myths and stereotypes that plague the Latina, such as the image of a barefoot Latino woman running across the U.S.-Mexico border holding on to a rounded belly that houses her soon-to-be-born child is an immigration myth. The United States is known for being a nation of immigrants, but whites and blacks are largely not perceived as being newcomers to America. In contrast, Asians and Latinos routinely field questions about where they're "really from." The people who ask such questions, overlook that Hispanics have

lived in the U.S. for generations, even longer than many Anglo families.

Now after reading the above I ask you, do you think these stereotypes influence the way women are seen in the workplace? If the only image of certain women that you see are those portrayed on television does it influence what you think about those women—particularly women outside your culture who you have no direct knowledge of? Does the stereotypes contribute to the sexual harassment of women in the workplace? Do they impact the advancement of women in the workplace? Well, if you aren't yet convinced that there may be a correlation between our view of women (which is influenced by many factors including movie portrayal) and their equality in the workplace then read on to see if any of the following myths grab your attention.

Myths vs. Facts

MYTH ONE

Women are only best at being homemakers.
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FACT ONE

Throughout history when given an opportunity women have participated successfully in both the workplace and as homemakers.
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MYTH TWO

Women are too emotional to be good managers.
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FACT TWO

Women and men may have learned different approaches to dealing with emotions. Even though a woman's ways of expressing emotions are different, women and men—both express them.

MYTH THREE

Women have a low commitment to the world of work.

FACT THREE

Studies show that men job hop more than women.³² The perceived lack of commitment may be due to the fact that disproportionately more women than men are in dead end jobs.

MYTH FOUR

Women lack education and work experience.

FACT FOUR

As a whole, female employees possess more education than males, their major problem is getting promotions.³³

MYTH FIVE

Women are not interested in certain phases of business.

FACT FIVE

This may be partly true but only because women have been socialized different than men and therefore lack this type of business exposure.

MYTH SIX

Women are poor economic risks because they are frequently sick and quit work when they have children.

FACT SIX

There is no statistically significant difference in the absenteeism of men and of women employees.³⁴ Some women who leave the workforce to have children re-enter when the children reach school age but many mothers take just a brief leave and return after several weeks.

MYTH SEVEN
Women have equality in the workplace.
FACT SEVEN
Women have made substantial strides in the workplace, in large part due to Affirmative Action. ³⁵ But, there is still a glass

Now that we've addressed the above myths, it is necessary to review some other issues that significantly impact women in the workplace. One such issue is the glass and concrete ceiling that women face.

Glass Ceiling*

*The statistics found in this section is courtesy of The Business and Professional Women's Foundation (2005), "101 facts on the status of workingwomen."³⁶

The "glass ceiling" is a commonly used term today that implies that while many women can see the next step up the hierarchy of management, there is a ceiling/barrier preventing them from getting there. This is based on the fact

that White males still hold over 90% of all top management positions. Only 6 of the Fortune 500's CEOs were women in 2002. There were 2 in 1995 and only 11 in the Fortune 1000 in 2002. Only 3 of the Fortune 500's CEOs are African American. Among all Fortune 500 Companies, 393 have no women among their top 5 executives.

Women still comprise less than 5% of firefighters, less than 10% of state and local police officers, less than 3 % of construction workers, less than 15% of college presidents, and less than 10% of the senior-level jobs in major companies. In private industry, white men comprise 65% of officials and managers, with white women holding 24.8 %, men of color 6.5% and women of color 3.8% of these positions.

In trying to think of a rational reason for women to be so poorly represented in these male dominated fields your thought may be that women don't have these jobs because they don't want them. Sorry, but while this sounds good it is just not the case. Many studies show that women have been traditionally denied access to nontraditional jobs despite their qualifications.

The question then becomes: Why in this century do we still have these types of problems? Well I will offer you one possible explanation—leading psychologists would tell you that what we think about people, we often act out so if women are not perceived as “able” to do certain types of jobs then don’t you think this mindset will impact their employment in these fields? Since what we think of people often turns into how we act against them, having stereotypes and myths can prove to be very damaging as it relates to the progression of women in the workplace.

Another study was published that took this concept of the glass ceiling a bit further. The study revealed that the difficult but breakable glass ceiling really refers to the experience of White women in top management but there is another ceiling that women of color must break through—the concrete ceiling.

Women of Color and the Concrete Ceiling*

*The information in this section is an excerpt reprinted with permission from Catalyst Women of Color Report: A ‘Concrete Ceiling’ Barring Their Advancement in Corporate America. (July 1999).³⁷

In July 1999, the Catalyst *Women of Color Report* states that there is a “concrete ceiling” was barring women of color from advancement in Corporate America. *Women of Color* is a three year study that has been the largest and most comprehensive examination of African American, Asian American and Hispanic women managers in professional and managerial positions in the U.S. The study is based on a survey of 1735 women of color, 300 in-depth interviews and a one-year study of 15 major companies.

“The metaphor of a concrete ceiling stands in sharp contrast to that of the glass ceiling. Not only is the concrete ceiling reported to be more difficult to penetrate, women of color say they cannot see through it to glimpse the corner office,” says Catalyst President Sheila Wellington. “This study is ground breaking. It adds facts and hard data to the anecdotal information that has dominated the discussion of women of color in the workplace thus far.” The data reveals that of those companies that do have diversity programs, the diversity initiatives are not as effective as they could be or were intended to be for women of color. Seventy five percent of the women surveyed are aware of training in their corporation to address race and gender issues, but only 22 percent say their managers receive adequate training in managing a diverse workforce. More than half (53 percent) of the women feel their companies’ diversity programs are ineffective in dealing with issues of subtle racism, 26 per cent of the women say that career development is an important part of their companies’ diversity programs, and only 17 percent believe their managers are held accountable for advancing

women of their racial/ethnic group. And in evaluating their work environments, many women, particularly African American women, cite pervasive stereotypes.

"People assume that all women and people of color benefit from diversity initiatives," said Katherine Giscombe, PhD, Catalyst's project director for *Women of Color*, "But this simply is not true. In fact, many women in our study feel that they are overlooked in these programs. In order to make change for women of color, companies must zero in on these women and tailor programs to fit their particular needs. In this case, one size does not fit all."

Breaking the Glass and Concrete Ceilings

While some companies are making moves to penetrate these ceilings. There are also things that females can do early in the educational process to prepare for these obstacles.

*According to Donna Lopiano, of the Women's Sports Foundation, "Much of what women need to know to become successful entrepreneurs and businesswomen within large organizations can be learned on the playing field. In many successful women's view—they feel every girl should learn team sports because many corporations are modeled "exactly" after sports teams. One example of this is the phrase "team player." So, if you don't know how they work, if you don't know that language, you are at a tremendous disadvantage.*³⁸

Another glass/concrete breaker is when women learn to build professional networks and relationships. One way this can be done is by finding a mentor. Women in the workplace just like entrepreneurs need to carve a path. Within large organizations women tend to spend so much time fighting for their project to succeed that they rarely have time to come up for air. Yet networks and mentors are essential for long-term success; they are also unbeatable sources of advice at key moments. But, what if your company does not have a formal mentoring program? Well, I say create your own mentoring relationship. How? Seek out an experienced player (executive, manager, etc) who knows the rules of the game and is willing with encouragement from you to coach you through the process.

But what else can help women transition into these higher powerful positions? Money Smarts. It is necessary for women to have "money smarts" if they are to break that ceiling. The notion that there needs to be tension between making money and doing well is a false one that many boys are not usually burdened with,

said Godfrey in *Witness*. He states that even Mother Teresa was a powerhouse fundraiser, a fact not often recognized. Because she had people to feed, she understood the power of money and how to use it to make social change.³⁹

Actually, there is no “one” solution that can be offered to break the glass or penetrate the concrete ceiling but with the rise of women as CEOs, board directors and prominence in politics this illustrates the ceilings can be broken. While the glass/concrete ceiling is a very serious issue impacting the promotion of women in the workplace, there is yet another issue that seriously affects a woman’s ability to be successful in the workplace. This is the issue of equal pay, which can directly impact a women’s opportunity to financial gain.

Equal Pay Act

Since the early days of women working, they have often been paid substantially less money for their skill level. Also, as more women participated in male dominant jobs they have been paid less for doing the same work. You may think that this is not an issue in the twenty-first century especially with the passing of the Equal Pay Act of 1963.

But today, many years later, women still are paid less than men—even when they do similar work and have similar education, skills and experience. In 2002, women were paid 78 cents for every dollar a man received and still has not changed. That’s \$22 less to spend on groceries, housing, child care and other expenses for every \$100 worth of work women do.

Because women are paid less now, women have less to spend on their families and less to save for their futures. And when women retire, they’ll earn smaller pensions than men. Half of all older women with income from a private pension received less than \$5,600 per year, compared with \$10,340 per year for older men. Sure, women have made progress, but not nearly enough and not fast enough.⁴⁰ In the years since the Equal Pay Act passed, the pay gap between men and women has narrowed by less than half, from 41 cents per dollar to 22 cents. And most of the recent change is because men’s real wages have been falling, not because women’s have risen. But even at this current rate of change, it is estimated that women won’t achieve equal pay with men until the year 2050.

Equal Pay Is an Issue for All Working Women

Over the past few decades, laws barring discrimination in education and employment have helped give working women opportunities their mothers never had. Today, women work in many different fields each requiring different skills and experience paying different wages. But opening doors for working women has not closed the door on pay discrimination. Equal pay is a problem for all working women, just to cite a few statistics—based on 2003 data taken from *101*

*facts on working women*⁴¹:

- For women lawyers, their median weekly earnings are nearly \$373 less than those of male attorneys, and for women administrative support and clericals, they generally receive about \$100 a week less than male administrative support and clericals;
- For women doctors, their median earnings are nearly \$679 less each week than men's—or 58.3 percent of what male doctors earn—and for the 95 percent of nurses who are women they still earn \$90 less each week than the 5 percent of nurses who are men;
- For women professors, their median pay is more than \$244 less each week than men's, and for women elementary school teachers, they receive \$86 less a week than men teachers;
- For women food service supervisors, who are paid \$60 less each week than men in the same job, and for waitresses, whose weekly earnings are about \$46 less than male waiters' earnings.

It's an Issue for Children and Families and for MEN, Too

Equal pay is not just a working woman's issue, it's a family issue. If we ended pay discrimination against women, family incomes would rise.⁴² Working parents would have more to spend on household needs and more to save for their children's education or their own retirement security; working parents might be able to spend less time at work and more time with their families, a change that many families would welcome.⁴³

Ending pay discrimination would directly help men. When an employer ends discrimination by raising pay for jobs traditionally done by women (teachers, for example), men in those jobs get raises as well. If we had equal pay for work of equal value, the IWPR (Institute for Women's Policy Research at <http://www.iwpr.org>) estimates, women's pay would be 13 percent higher and men's pay would go up 1 percent. Furthermore, the law bars employers from lowering men's pay to correct discrimination against women.

Women Get Paid Less Because Employers Still Discriminate in Several Ways

Jobs typically held by women pay less than jobs traditionally held by men even if they require the same education, skills and responsibilities. For example, stock and inventory clerks, who are mostly men, earn about \$520 a week. General office clerks, on the other hand, are mostly women and they earn only \$474 a week.

Women still do not have equal job opportunities. A newly hired woman may get a lower paying assignment than a man starting work at the same time for the same employer. That first job starts her career path and can lead to a lifetime of lower pay.

Women still do not have an equal chance at promotions, training and apprenticeships. Because all these opportunities affect pay, women don't move up the earnings ladder as quickly as men do.

For instance in 2000, Ford Motor Company agreed to pay \$3.8 million to women and minority applicants who claimed they were denied jobs as entry-level assemblers because of their gender and race. (Michigan Employment Law Letter, 2000)

In 2000, CBS Broadcasting Inc. agreed to pay \$8 million to 200 female technical workers who were discriminated against in salary, promotions and training, as well as harassed and retaliated against for complaining about discrimination. (EEOC, 2000)

In 2002, American Express Financial Advisors Inc. agreed to pay \$31 million to settle a sex discrimination suit alleging that female professionals were paid less and unfairly denied promotions. (Daily Labor Report, Bureau of National Affairs, Feb. 22, 2002)

Discrimination Is Against the Law

An employer who pays women less than men or denies them job opportunities just because they are women is guilty of sex discrimination. Two federal laws, an

executive order and some state and local laws prohibit pay discrimination against women. These cases can be brought to court as shown above and are often with an appropriate level of evidence brought to justice.

- **The Equal Pay Act:** Under the Equal Pay Act, which covers most workplaces states the following: it is unlawful to pay women less than men for work that is "substantially equal"—that is, almost identical unless the pay difference is based on seniority, experience or other legitimate factors.
- **Title VII:** Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which covers employers with 15 or more workers, prohibits a range of discrimination, including paying women less than men even when their jobs are different if the reason for the pay difference is gender. Title VII also bars discrimination against women in hiring, promotion, training, discipline and other job aspects and makes sexual harassment against workers illegal.
- **Executive Order 11246:** A third measure, Executive Order 11246, is a long-standing presidential directive (which has the effect of law) that applies the protections of the Equal Pay Act and Title VII to companies that receive federal contracts.
- **State and Local Laws:** Many states and communities have their own fair employment laws and agencies that enforce equal pay protections and other prohibitions against sex discrimination on the job. These laws are similar to and sometimes stronger than federal laws.

How Do We Fix Pay Discrimination?

The laws that bar pay discrimination include "remedies." Proving discrimination can be hard and can take a long time. But women who win often get back pay, new job opportunities and repayment of lawyer fees and other money they spent to have their rights enforced.

What Can You Do if You Believe Your Rights Have Been Violated?

(Source: EEOC Website found at http://www.eeoc.gov/charge/overview_charge_filing.html)

1. File a discrimination charge with a federal or state anti- discrimination agency.

If you believe you have been denied a job, paid less, passed over for promotions or discriminated against in other ways because you're a woman, you can file a complaint with the EEOC office in your area. Generally, you must file your complaint within 180 days of the discriminatory action. You don't need a lawyer; the EEOC will help you prepare the case and advise you of additional rights you may have or steps you should take (including any requirements for filing complaints with state agencies). To be connected with the EEOC office in your area, call 1-800-669-4000. The EEOC also can give you information about state or local fair employment agencies in your area. You may also contact your state's Civil Rights Commission.

2. If you belong to a union, talk to your shop steward.

The steward can give you advice about your rights and help you file a grievance under the collective bargaining agreement. The steward may also be able to help you file a complaint with the EEOC office in your area.

So your question maybe: Why Sue the Company?

My answer is why not?

What else can you do when you have been discriminated against and the company will not rectify it? These companies almost always have a chance to fix the problem before it goes to court. It is this unwillingness that often prompts many judges to make the company pay. This is the United States way to rectify justice. Fighting for rights is not about greed, but about making companies do the right thing. What will force a company's hand? An individual employee, most often not. A court that mandates proper treatment, of course. It is not easy to win a case as the burden of proof falls on the plaintiff.

What Else Can You (whether you are a man or woman) Do About Equal Pay?

- **Support efforts to bring "pay equity" to your workplace.** "Pay equity" means paying equal wages for jobs of equal value to a company. You and your co-workers (or your union) can encourage your employer to implement a pay equity policy, including a job evaluation system that reviews and compares the education, skills and experience needed to perform different jobs. Your employer then may adjust pay rates so that jobs of equal value to the company are paid equally regardless of who holds them. In addition, your union can include pay equity among its bargaining demands. Unions have won hundreds of millions of dollars for women and men by bargaining for pay equity.
- **Support new federal and state laws designed to strengthen protections against pay discrimination and bring pay equity to the workplace.** Organize your friends and co-workers to urge your U.S. senators and House members to vote for the Fair Pay Act or other proposals that may be introduced in Congress to require employers to end pay discrimination against women. And push your state legislature to enact similar pay equity protections. In 2003, 23 states introduced 50 bills regarding equal pay.
- **If you work for a state or city government, find out whether efforts have been made to end pay bias against public employees.** Many have. If your state or city hasn't taken action to end pay bias against its own employees, tell your state and local officials that you want your tax dollars to go to equal pay for working women!

These issues of the glass/concrete ceiling and unequal pay can be discouraging—but women have continued to persevere forward and beat the odds. Women not only have fought for equal rights in the workplace but have fully participated in making this country great.

In many countries, you will even find that women have held the highest position of the land proving to be powerful leaders for their countries. But rather than I go on, how about I ask you to name 15 significant women who have contributed greatly to their countries well-being. Can you?

Well, like many people I would assume you probably had a hard time rattling off names unless they were of athletes or entertainers. But if significant women in other fields exist, why aren't we taught about their contributions?

If you were taught, at what point in your education did you learn these things. Many people educated in the United States would answer college. Yet, isn't it important for all people to learn about the contributions of both men and women as they grow into adulthood?

Even if a few women names have been thrown out there how often has this information been repeated in your educational process? Remember, learning is repetition. For learning to take place a permanent change or knowledge must be gained and remembered. That is why we often learn over and over again about this country's forefathers. I would ask you to name five men who are or were presidents/leaders of countries? Could you do it? Sure. What about five women presidents/leaders of various countries?

The political contributions of men have been a concentrated area of learning for many while the significant contributions of women have not seen the same platform. Throughout history, women were excluded both by law and often by custom from active participation in the affairs of the state. But, does this mean that women have not been represented in the political arena?

In the beginning of the 20th century women around the world demanded the right to vote. It has taken nearly 100 years, but women have achieved political rights in nearly every country of the world. The fight for these political rights as well as the leadership that women have exhibited is enough to be noted in history books.

But women's contributions often are not included in history books; I bet you could name 10 significant Caucasian men who contributed to history, but can you name 10 women? Even if you can't name the 10 men, I would bet if you were educated in your early years in the U.S., you were taught about significant men in history. While not knowing women's history (assuming that you don't) is no reason to feel incompetent and respond on the defense. I say don't GET ON THE DEFENSE because history is written by the victors. Women were not the victors and therefore in many cases were left out of the history books. But this by no means indicates that women were insignificant, weak or contributed nothing to their societies.

Political Dignitaries*

*Source: The information found in this section is courtesy of Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia found at <http://en.wikipedia.org/>

Let me share with you a few stories of women who have excelled in the political field despite the unseemingly odds and the incredible risks to their lives. There are so many women in U.S history and World history that I could discuss, but I will limit the discussion that follows to a few of the most respected women world leaders.

ELLEN JOHNSON-SIRLEAF OF LIBERIA

Born in 1938, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf a widowed mother-of-four in 2006, was sworn in as Liberia's president, making her Africa's first elected female leader. Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf becomes Liberia's first elected head of state since the end of the war in 2003. The 67-year-old grandmother won 59% of the vote in a November run-off election, beating Liberian football star George Weah. A former World Bank economist and veteran politician, Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf is nicknamed the Iron Lady but has promised to show a new, softer side as president. Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf drew much of her support from women voters, and from Liberia's small educated elite. She faces the twin challenges of trying to rebuild the country and of fostering reconciliation. One of her priorities is to reintegrate into society former child soldiers. She has declared a "zero tolerance" of corruption. Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf said her top challenge is to maintain peace, law and order after 14 years of civil war.

INDIRA GANDHI OF INDIA

Indira Nehru was born in Allahabad, India in 1917. During her early years she organized a Monkey Brigade, attended Somerville College at Oxford University, joined the National Congress Party and was eventually jailed by the British. In 1947, Indira's father became prime minister. In 1959, she was elected president of the National Congress Party then that next year her husband passes away. After this, Indira resigns her post with the party to take the place of her husband who had assisted her father. In 1964, Indira Gandhi's father dies and she gets appointed minister of information. In 1966, she was appointed as interim prime minister then five years later she was elected prime minister. Indira served two

separate terms as prime minister of India helping to lead her country to a premier position among the developing countries of the world.

QUEEN HATSHEPSUT OF EGYPT

Born in the 15th century B.C., Hatshepsut was the daughter of Tuthmose I and Aahmes, both of royal lineages. She was the favorite of their three children. When her two brothers died she was in the unique position to gain the throne upon the death of her father. To have a female pharaoh was unprecedented. As a favorite daughter of a popular pharaoh, and as a charismatic and beautiful Black (as defined today) woman in her own right, she was able to command enough of a following to actually take control as pharaoh before the reign was to be given to her nephew. She ruled for about 15 years during the New Kingdom, 18th Dynasty, until her death in 1458 BC.

She left behind more monuments and works of art than any Egyptian queen to come. Even though Hatshepsut's name was erased from many images and from her country's ruling timeline, historians have proven that she accomplished what no women had before her. She successfully ruled the most powerful, advanced civilization in the world. Even if there were some who resented her success, her success stands for all time.

BENAZIR BHUTTO OF PAKISTAN

She was born Benazir Bhutto in Karachi, Pakistan in 1953. Bhutto's father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was elected prime minister a few years after she entered Radcliffe. After her Radcliffe graduation, she attended and graduated from Oxford University. After this, she returned to Pakistan in 1977. During this same year, a military coup ousts her father and she herself was jailed numerous times. Her father was hung in 1979 and in 1984 she returned to England. In 1987, she married and then a year later she not only gave birth to her first son but also was elected prime minister. In 1993, she was reelected for a second term as prime minister. Both of these times, she was forced out of office, before the end of her terms.

WILMA MANKILLER OF THE CHEROKEE NATION

Wilma Mankiller was born in Tahlequah, Oklahoma in 1945. In 1957, the Mankiller family moved to San Francisco where she met and married her husband and birthed two daughters. In 1969, Wilma assisted in the Alcatraz takeover protest. In 1975, she divorced her husband and then moved back to Oklahoma. In 1977,

she took her first job for the Cherokee Nation. She continued to develop and implement community projects on the Nations behalf. In 1983, she was appointed Interim Deputy Chief then elected Deputy Chief. In 1985, she was elected as principal chief, the first woman to hold this position for the Cherokee Nation. In 1986, she remarried and then the next year was re-elected to a second term as principal chief. She finally retired as principal chief in 1995.

GOLDA MEIR OF ISRAEL

Born as Golda Mabovitch in Kiev, Russia in 1898, Golda migrated to Milwaukee, Wisconsin as a small child. There she lived out her youth. Many of her adult years were spent in Palestine where she helped to smuggle Jewish refugees as well as start her political career. In 1949 when Golda's sons were five and three, Golda Meir served as Israel's first minister of labor till 1956 when she then began to serve as Israel's foreign minister. In 1969, she was elected as Israel's fourth prime minister. She saw this as an opportunity to have her dream of a new homeland for the Jewish people come true. But she knew the establishment of the state was only the beginning of a long struggle for peace with its Arab neighbors.

MARGARET THATCHER OF BRITAIN

Born Margaret Hilda Roberts in Grantham, England in the 1925 she attended Somerville College at Oxford. After graduation Margaret ran for a member of parliament for Dartford. In 1953 she gave birth to twins as well as began her law practice. In 1959, she was elected as a Member of Parliament for Finchley. After having several leadership positions for her party and country, Margaret became prime minister of Britain from 1979 till 1990. She was the first woman to head a major Western country. She was also the longest serving British prime minister in the 20th century.

VIOLETA CHAMORRO OF NICARAGUA

Violeta Barrios born in Rivas, Nicaragua in 1929 played a significant leadership role in her country as she helped to rid Nicaragua of two repressive regimes. She served as her country's first democratically elected president from 1990 to 1996. She had previously taken over the paper, *La Prensa*, after her husband who was the publisher was assassinated. His assassination had to do with opposition of the Somoza government. However, his untimely death did not prevent Violeta from continuing opposition and in 1979 Somoza fled the country. In 1986 prior to being elected president, Sandinista government shuts down *La Prensa*.

CORAZON AQUINO OF THE PHILIPPINES

Born Maria Corazon Cojuangco in Tarlac Province of the Philippines in 1933. She attended both high school and college in the United States. In 1954, she married Benigno S. (Ninoy) Aquino, Jr. who was imprisoned 18 years later when martial law was declared. In 1978, Corazon spoke out for her jailed husband. In 1983, her husband was assassinated at the Manilla Airport. The following year, Corazon urged people to vote despite corruption of the government. In 1986, she became President of the Republic of the Philippines restoring democracy to her country after helping to oust dictator Ferdinand Marcos. Her presidency lasted till 1992.

Concluding Thoughts

The political contributions of women are only one area in which women have excelled despite the odds and women continue to excel in all areas of life and the workplace.

End of Chapter Questions

1. Why was there a change for women and work after industrialization?
2. What makes women able to do physically demanding jobs?
3. Define glass ceiling and concrete ceiling.
4. Why should men support equal pay for women?
5. Why are stereotypes of women dangerous in the workplace and what stereotypes have you noticed in the media or in the workplace?
6. According to the chapter, what can women do to break the glass or concrete ceiling?
7. Name two things the chapter states that either a woman or man can do to help with equal pay?

Internet Exercise

Using the Internet going to the following website, <http://www.nwlc.org/our-issues/employment/equal-pay-and-the-wage-gap> and read one of the articles on the topic if this site is not working go to www.google.com and type: unequal pay for women to find an article on equal pay. Now state the title of the article you chose and summarize what the article says in two paragraphs also indicate if you agree or disagree with the article's viewpoint.

End of Chapter Exercise

Take the Women's History Quiz

Do not use an encyclopedia, the Internet or any other resource to determine the answers to the questions 1-14 below. The knowledge MUST come from your own mind, and if you don't know the answer just leave the question blank.

1. First woman to receive a medical degree in the U.S?

2. First Black woman to become a millionaire?

3. Led the first revolt in Southeast Asia against the Chinese?

4. First U.S. woman foreign correspondent?

5. First African American and first woman of a southern state to serve in congress?

6. First woman to travel in space?

7. First woman to rule as emperor in Chinese history?

8. First woman to receive the Distinguished Flying Cross?

9. First woman member of a U.S. Cabinet?

10. Considered the first modern novelist?

11. First published poet in American history?

12. Warrior Queen who fought against the Roman conquerors of Britain?

13. First woman and first Latino surgeon general of the United States?

14. What month is women's history month?

Did you find it difficult to answer the questions above? If yes, why? If no, why?

What does this say about what we learn regarding significant women in society?