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## Advance Praise for *Who Says It's a Man's World*

“Investing in this book is investing in your future. It’s smart and strategic, but savvy and saucy, too.”

—Cathie Black, Author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Basic Black: The Essential Guide for Getting Ahead at Work (and in Life)*

“In *Who Says It's a Man's World*, Emily has triggered a new and necessary conversation about how to best activate women’s career success—and it’s all about starting with a big shift in our perception. Between her illuminating research, probing questions, ferocious wit, inspiring examples, and practical activities, Emily has ensured that women of all ages will have the know-how and a step-by-step pathway to become influencers, or as she says, ‘rock stars,’ at any stage of our careers.”

—Alexia Vernon, Author of *90 Days 90 Ways to Onboard Young Professionals to Peak Performance*

“Unique in chronicling the personal and professional, the outer and the self-imposed, barriers women face. Even better, Emily’s expertise equips readers with the strategies we need to rule—not just survive in—today’s workplace. A rare and exciting book that reaches deep into the heart of a workplace and discloses not only its day-to-day inner workings, but also the very personal victories, problems, doubts, and joys awaiting its female members.”

—Selena Rezvani, Award-winning *Washington Post* columnist on women and leadership, and author of *Pushback: How Smart Women Ask—And Stand Up—For What They Want*

“Emily has hit the nail on the head with sharp, tactical advice for the aspiring CEO in all of us. With a wise (and wry!) perspective she brings humor and grace to a host of difficult workplace situations.”

—Kathryn Minshew, Founder and CEO of The Daily Muse & Company Muse

“Written with keen personal insight and humor (and a mega-dose of reality) this book is a must-read for anyone wanting more success and fulfillment in their corporate career than they are getting—but not knowing why they aren’t getting it. Bennington spells out step-by-step how to decisively make progress on your long-term aspirations by what you choose to THINK and DO every single day. She outlines the action steps to get there as clearly as she flags the self-inflicted, career-destroying mistakes many of us make.”

—Patty Azzarello, President of the Azzarello Group and author of *Rise: 3 Practical Steps for Advancing Your Career, Standing Out as a Leader, and Liking Your Life*

“Emily Bennington has a candid and real way of using anecdotes to draw us in and connect us through shared experiences. For those who prefer the mystery and call of self-reflection, she offers pragmatic and prescriptive tools as well as a good dose of prodding and wit. Amidst the pages, you will find, as I have, many kindred spirits.”

—Maria R. Lachapelle, 22-year crisis and corporate communications executive

“The ‘New Economy’ is every woman’s opportunity to define life and work on her own terms. Thanks to Emily Bennington for reminding us that we are living in a watershed time of professional reinvention and creativity where WE can truly create our own lives.”

—Amanda Steinberg, Founder, DailyWorth.com

“A terrific book that explains how to build on all of the wonderful parts of being a woman to achieve any goal we set.”

—Cali Williams Yost, CEO and Founder of Flex + Strategy Group and author of *TWEAK: IT: Make What Matters to You Happen Every Day*

“This is a book with A LOT of uumpph! I love that Emily brings her extensive study of holistic wellness into the boardroom to help women ‘tame the mental monkey’ and find peace and clarity in the midst of incredibly demanding lives and careers. One for the desk AND the nightstand!”

—Jodi Glickman, Founder of Great on the Job

“As a mid-career professional, I found this book to be enlightening both to my own personal path as well as my day-to-day work. I truly believe this is required reading for anyone looking to take charge of their life and career.”

—Pamela Ruiz, Director, Family Engagement  
Young Presidents’ Organization, Inc.

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who says  
it's a  
man's world

the girls' guide to corporate domination

EMILY BENNINGTON

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Perfectly nice guys will say to me, “You must be so happy you’ve won.” But when I reply, “Are you working for a woman?” they look appalled.

—Gloria Steinem

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Dedicated to  
iron ladies everywhere.

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Foreword by Ann Rhoades, Founding Executive of JetBlue Airways

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# foreword

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It is with great pleasure that I get to be the first raving fan to recommend *Who Says It's a Man's World* to all women (and men) as a must-read career guide. Had I read this book before becoming bona fide “executive,” it would have saved me from making a number of behavioral errors that Emily so accurately describes.

In fact, while reading the first part of the book—which focuses on behaviors that cause us to block our own success—I vividly recalled the *numerous* times I found myself in the exact same situation. In some cases, I know my behaviors actually could have—and may have!—set back my career. (Oh how many of us learn “the hard way” what *not* to do at work!) But that’s precisely what makes this book such an invaluable tool for professional women: We no longer have to question ourselves or wonder what the correct behavior is or isn’t. Indeed, when I was coming up through the ranks, I would often ask peers who were at the same stage in their careers about the correct protocol for executives. Of course, this was a mistake because they didn’t know, either! But peers tend to talk to peers, because we often do not feel comfortable asking our superiors. It’s happened to me hundreds of times throughout my career. Now we (both you and I) have a resource to refer to that correctly identifies those core behaviors we should emulate as we navigate the web of corporate life.

Of course, success is more than just knowing the behaviors to avoid, it’s also about aligning with the *right* actions, or what I’ve often referred to as being an “A-player.” This is where career books have typically missed the target, in my opinion, by focusing more on the management of others and less about “walking the talk” yourself. But *all* of the great models on leadership that I have observed in my career are about modeling what you preach, which is not new in theory but, ironically, is less emphasized as we move up the ladder.

However, as Emily correctly argues, being a living demonstration to others that you, in fact, believe your own message is—truly—the best way to have impact at work, and it’s where we should spend the *most* time. That said, as women, we often emulate what we have seen in our male counterparts as they attend to massive paperwork on their massive desks—when we should do just the opposite! We should get out from behind our desks and be with our teams, showing them through our behaviors what real “professionalism” looks like. (If you’re wondering what that is, you must read this book!)

*Who Says It's a Man's World* is a jewel of a book, and I would recommend it to every professional—both current and aspiring. I know you will benefit from the hundreds of bits of wisdom as I have, and even chuckle a lot, too—as I did.

—Ann Rhoades

Founding Executive, JetBlue Airways

# acknowledgments

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Three years ago I opened a new doc on my computer, called it *New Girlz Club*, and then stared at the blinking cursor, paralyzed, for well over an hour. From that day to this one, 10 titles and 200 pages later, has been quite a ride, let me tell you. So it is with deep gratitude that I acknowledge those who have been with me throughout this journey, and whose continued support enables me to live my dream each day.

To **Ann Rhoades**, for the exceptional Foreword and for being a true leader in values-driven business. Wish everyone “got it” the way you do.

To my amazing agent **Linda Konner**, for always being on my side. You are simply *the best*, and I look forward to many more collaborations!

To my editor and fellow Anglophile **Ellen Kadin**, who probably got into publishing for a love of the written word but then found herself working with authors like moi. Thank you for making me dust off my fierce stilettos and for giving me a chance, and then another chance, to write this book.

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To **Tory Johnson**, for making me walk on fire—literally—and for believing in me when it counted.

To **Kate Betts**, the first executive woman I ever knew—albeit from the TV screen and mastheads of *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar*—until the magic of Twitter brought us together.

To **Patti Johnson** and everyone at PeopleResults who prove that great kindness and great margins can and do coexist. (Patti, let’s “start the wave” on that one!)

To **Jan Fields, Valarie Gelb, Liz Lange, Ingrid Vanderveldt, Arie Ball, Julie Smolyansky, Dana Tickin Koplik, Heather Bresch, Susan Bulkeley Butler, and Ingrid Ciprian-Matthews** for sharing your stories, and to everyone who contributed to the survey research for this book.

To the big brains at *Forbes Woman*, especially maestro **Caroline Howard**, for keeping the gender debate lively and for giving me the opportunity to connect with so many women I love.

To my family, especially my dad, **Paul Bennington**, who has no idea how much being a latchkey kid prepared me to be an independent adult.

To my husband, **Johnny Tugwell**, who reminds me every day why the first step to “having it all” is marrying a true partner, and for showing me what it really means to lead by example.

To my munchkins, **Christian** and **Liam**, who are already showing a profound appreciation for strong women.

And to my divine spiritual teachers, who took me from a human *doing* to a human *being*, the greatest career lesson of all.

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## INTRODUCTION

# ding, dong! the bitch is dead

A FEW YEARS ago I worked for a corporate public accounting firm that hired a whip-smart new grad named Asha.

While our firm was among the 15th largest in the country, many top recruits heard the siren call of even bigger companies and Asha—being a star student—had her choice of any of them. I knew she had recently wrapped up an internship with a particular big firm-that-shall-remain-nameless and she had received an employment offer, too. So, over a cold beer at a baseball game we sponsored (a staple of corporate life) I asked her why she chose us.

*“The people.”*

She answered without hesitation—and I knew what she meant. While still being very corporate—right down to the boring gray walls and penalty fines for missing timesheet deadlines—our firm did make gallant efforts to marry high profits with the hospitality of its Southern roots.

For Asha, the culture-first approach to choosing her employer stemmed from a negative experience she had while interning for the firm-that-shall-remain-nameless. She spoke indignantly about how the company actively encouraged interns to compete with each other by announcing, for example, that only a fraction of those who survived the “three-month job interview” would be brought on full-time. Naturally, this caused the workplace equivalent of bum-rushing lifeboats on the *Titanic*. In one incident, an intern received a last-minute invitation to a reception where firm partners and clients would be in attendance. Sensing a huge opportunity (a.k.a. fish-in-a-barrel networking), the intern kept the event a secret from everyone else and went solo.

If that story makes you go “*Whoa! What a dick!*” you’re in the right place.

Because, given the title of this book, *Who Says It’s a Man’s World*, you may think this is another *get ‘em tigress* guide for women in pencil skirts who would do the same thing while simultaneously ripping a box of copy paper in half with their bare teeth. In fact, maybe you even semi-expect me to say that nice equals weak, emoticons are for losers, and a “survival of the fittest” attitude is the way to get ahead.

Well . . . sorry.

This stereotype of the take-no-prisoners alpha-femme—while promoted gleefully and relentlessly in the media—makes for great entertainment, but it is deadly to your career in practice. I learned the

firsthand at the entry level when I modeled behaviors I thought were “corporate”—only to fall flat on my face. (Think *Devil Wears Prada* ice queen except, sadly, without the Prada.) I remember walking out of my first-ever performance review—crushed—when my boss at the time (and future *Effectively* *Immediately* coauthor) Skip Lineberg told me that I had potential, but virtually no respect from the team. Ouuuuuuuch.

Of course, being a total doormat isn’t all that effective either, so the million-dollar question is:

### **“What does it take for women to win at the highest levels of business?”**

Judging by the minuscule number of women who have actually reached such levels, it sometimes feels like the answer is tucked away—Da Vinci Code-style—in a locked box under three feet of marble in an undisclosed location. Women make up half of the workforce and yet, the higher you go up the ladder, the more that number seems to drop . . . and drop. (*Forbes* once called this disparity the “*biggest disappearing act on earth.*”) In fact, as I write, women account for just 4 percent of Fortune 500 CEOs, 6 percent of top earners, and 16 percent of board directors and corporate officers. This is a shame for women *and* the bottom line, because when ladies are at the table there’s no denying it’s good for business. That’s not just ra-ra-girl-power talk, by the way. Countless studies have confirmed it, including a five-year analysis of 524 public companies by the research firm Catalyst, which found that organizations with the most women board members outperformed those with the least number of women holding board seats by 16 percent.

Still, after sifting through mountains of data on the business case for gender balance, I wanted to put my own ear to the ground to find out what, specifically, is holding us back and what is propelling us forward. As such, I’ve spent the last few years surveying more than 700 executive women, interviewing scores of super-achievers for *Forbes*, presenting at numerous women’s leadership events, and coaching countless professionals. This was obviously a complex undertaking, so it may surprise you that my conclusion to all this research can be boiled down into one simple sentence.

### **You must be a magnificent woman *first* to have a magnificent career.**

I know, I know. Sounds too simple, right? Like everyone else, you’ve probably been going about things the other way around—that is, laser-focused on the *job* and what you need to *do* to get ahead. That’s important, of course (and covered here), but more than just offering advice on the *what*, the journey is also about digging deep to help you figure out the *who*. In other words, before you can decide what to do in your career, it’s important to understand the kind of professional you want to be.

As you’ll see in the Woman 2 Woman narratives, the most successful women I’ve interviewed—McDonald’s USA President Jan Fields and Mylan CEO Heather Bresch, among others—all express this need for self-awareness, and by the end of this book you’ll be clear on it, too.

You’ll know, specifically, the attitudes and behaviors you need to kick to the curb and the ones you need to kick into gear. You’ll also have the opportunity to identify your personal core values and apply them to five key professional development areas—self-awareness, social skills, personal effectiveness, team development, and leadership.

This ain’t guesswork, people.

The origin of the personal values template is straight from one of the most accomplished people

American history—Ben Franklin—and the career plan template is similar to those used within large multinational companies and developed in consultation with HR executives serving the Fortune 100.

As you work through this book, and in effect develop your own career path, my hope is that you truly understand that “corporate domination” isn’t about kicking the door down as so many of us have been (mis)led to believe. (Seriously, save your stilettos.) It’s about melting it down one thought, one interaction, and one person at a time. Asha was right. Business is a game about people and—like everything else in life—it all starts with you.

To your magnificence!

@EmilyBennington

P.S. For additional inspiration along your career journey, visit me at [www.emilybennington.com](http://www.emilybennington.com).

## You Crafty Career Planner, You: How to Use This Book

*Who Says It’s a Man’s World* is divided into three parts.

**Part One**, “Cut the Crap,” focuses on behaviors that anyone (both men and women) must ditch to truly be considered professional. These are the most common and insidious roadblocks to success, what are unaffectionately referred to as “career-killers.”

**Part Two**, “Call in the Good Stuff,” is based on the universal law of attraction. In other words, whatever energy you put out in the world is the energy that comes back to you. In the sections here you’re going to get super-clear on what matters most so that you can bring your *whole*, ridiculous positive self to work each day—and teach others how to do the same.

**Part Three**, “Align with What Works,” is designed to help you walk in step with the core competencies of leadership. This is the part where I’ll outline, specifically, how you can have influence on the job regardless of whether you have authority (yet!).

Now, here’s the equation that ties it all together:

$$\text{You} + 15 \text{ Goals} + 60 \text{ days} = \text{Rock Star}$$

If you’re ready to get serious and create a roadmap for your success, I have a challenge for you. At the end of each of the first five sections in this book you’ll find an Action Plan and a list of professional development goals, each with an assigned point value based on level of difficulty. Your mission is to select three goals from these five sections (that’s 15 goals total, for English majors like me who need help with math) and get ‘em done in the next 60 days. Roughly, this will shake out to about two goals and two to four hours of time per week over the next two months.

What’s that? You want to read the book without creating the plan?

That’s a little like hoping your thighs will shrink because you’ve got a gym membership. It’s not the same as actually doing the work. Remember: *No one will ever care about your career—or your thighs—more than you do*. So don’t just “kinda” take ownership of what you want. Kinda is for people who will inevitably look back and wonder why they never achieved more. In other words, kinda sucks. But . . . if you’re ready to nix kinda and go all in, here’s what you do:

1. Start by reading this book in its entirety first. That way you’ll have a 10,000-foot view of the

whole picture as you pull your career plan together.

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2. Select three goals from the end of sections one through five that are most relevant to your career and handwrite them in the career plan template provided in [Section 6](#), i.e., the Toolbox. (Note: If you're thinking "What's handwriting?" you can download the e-version at [www.emilybennington.com/templates](http://www.emilybennington.com/templates).)
3. Once your goals are in place, check in with yourself regularly, crossing off items you've accomplished and rotating the others into your schedule as needed. When the 60 days are up, simply tally your points to assess your "promotability" on the following scale:

<b><i>Total Points</i></b>	<b><i>Promotability</i></b>
225 and above	<b>Rock Star</b> ( <i>Yeah!</i> )
150–224	<b>Backup Band</b> ( <i>Meh</i> )
75–149	<b>Groupie</b> ( <i>Ewww</i> )
74 and under	<b>Nosebleed Seats</b> ( <i>Sigh . . .</i> )

You with me?

Good.

Let's roll. . . .



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part one

## *cut the crap*

*Before we dive into learning new things, let's start by unlearning a few old things, shall we?*

**Section 1:**  
**SELF-AWARENESS**

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1	2	3	4	5
Self-Awareness	Social Skills	Personal Effectiveness	Team Development	Leadership
↑ You are here.				

### Core Principle

You take full responsibility for your own mind, body, and career with a *daily* practice focused on the process of continued growth and improvement.

### In this section, you will learn how to:

- “Catch and release” negative thought patterns.
- Sit still. *Be* still.
- Prevent your kid(s) from competing with your career.
- Mindfully manage stress.

### What Your Coworkers Are Thinking

*“There’s something different about Amanda.”*

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## CHAPTER ONE

# getting rid of the “hob” on your brain

*Learning to take responsibility for the nature of our thoughts is the most powerful way to take responsibility for our lives.*

—Marianne Williams

**AMBITION GAP**, schmambition gap.

Women aren't 16 percent of board directors and corporate officers because the other 84 percent don't want the job. Obviously, there's something else going on.

Glass ceiling, you say?

In some cases perhaps, but in others . . . well, we're simply holding ourselves back. Because much as we all like to wear our best corporate armor at work (*"I'm a pit bull in lipstick, bitches!"*) the truth is that a lot of us hit an inner glass ceiling long before we ever approach an outer one.

So let's start with that.

For example, let's say you have a colleague who doesn't respond to your e-mail. Instead of thinking, *"Hmmm. Maybe she's slammed,"* does your mind automatically leap to, *"Hmmm. Maybe she's mad at me"?*

Or, what if you have one of those coveted elevator run-ins with your boss's boss? Do you secretly scrutinize every minor word choice—*"Gah! Why did I say that?"*—for the rest of the day?

If so, you've got a hob on the brain.

In folklore, the hob (short for hobgoblin) is a grotesque little creature that exists for the sole purpose of making trouble for human beings. In our world, the hob is that annoying inner critic who always seems to find merciless new ways to say, *"Here's why you suck."* Now, of course there are a million different reasons to wrestle your hob into submission but, for our purposes, this is the biggie.

***Bold thinking* always precedes *bold doing*.**

Huge career (and salary!) leaps don't come from waiting until your performance review to be handed incremental bread crumbs. That's lame. They come from knowing your value, going after what you want, and bulldozing through any mental blocks along the way.

Yes, I know it isn't easy, but it *can* be. Truth! There's only one step between you and total freedom (a.k.a. complete hob annihilation) and it's beyond simple. All you have to do is understand—*to the core*—that your inner critic isn't real.

Seriously, it's nothing more than a crotchety, unwelcome houseguest in your head who never leaves. The "hob" has no power whatsoever, so don't give it any. Whenever you have a negative thought pop up—"I'm never going to get this done"—take a split second to acknowledge it—"Thank you for sharing"—then recast the thought into more productive phrasing—"I need to break the project down into smaller pieces." Get it? Initially, you will have to do this—quite literally—moment by moment and thought by thought, but eventually your brain will get with the (re)program. Think about it this way: You are training your mind like you train your muscles. Sure, it hurts at first, but that's how you get stronger.

## The Three Biggest Career-Killing Hobs and How to Handle Them

Okay, we all know there's some pretty appalling crap going on in offices today. (And, no, I'm not just referring to those white-collar jailbirds and the need for corporate bailouts.) I'm talking about pet peeve nonsense that—left unchecked—can derail your career faster than you can say, "Double-wide Cubesville4Life."

Of course, your little trickster upstairs loves this stuff—but don't be fooled. All of the behaviors I'm about to describe are muddy career sludge, and the moment you step in any of it will be the moment you stop . . . in . . . your . . . pointy . . . toed . . . tracks.

### CAREER-KILLER #1: NEGATIVITY BIAS

While a vigilant threat-and-danger watch was certainly a requirement back when we lived in caves and wore fig leaves, these days it just sucks the oxygen out of the room. Seriously—who are the people you work you'd hang with even if you weren't paid? Are they the ones who see the cloud in every silver lining? I doubt it. So, if you don't want to be around negative Nancys, chances are your colleagues don't, either.

*How to Recognize the Negativity Goblin.* When presented with a new idea, does your mind automatically jump to all of the reasons it won't work? If your first and loudest thoughts are always the ones that start with "This is unrealistic," "We've already tried that," or "It'll never happen," that's your hob talking.

**Take Action.** Before you enter a meeting with colleagues, think for a moment about the most annoying person you've ever met. Not someone mean, per se, just someone with mosquito-like qualities (and by that I mean pesky in a way that makes you want to slap 'em). Now, try imagining this person as the voice of your inner critic. Then, when a negative thought like "We've tried that already" pops up in your mind, it will be easier to dismiss.

### CAREER-KILLER #2: GRUDGES

A few years ago I was in a meeting listening to one of my colleagues over the mothership (a.k.a. the oversized orb planted in the middle of boardroom tables). At one point, she said something I didn't agree with and I looked at the guy across from me and rolled my eyes. It was a dumb move, and I immediately felt bad, so I did what I always do when I'm in a career pickle: I wrote about it on my blog. At the time I didn't think anyone cared about my site (NOTE: If you're in corporate, someone is always watching), and since I changed the names and a few other details, I thought I was safe. So you

can imagine my surprise when a few days later I got a call from my coworker inquiring whether the post was about her. (Oops!) I'm a terrible liar—even little white ones—so I confessed, apologized, and yes, even groveled a bit. Still, our relationship changed after that. I mean, cold shoulder city. Does she have a right to be annoyed? Sure, but we still had to work together and her inability to let it go created a lot of unnecessary tension.

**How to Recognize the Grudge Goblin.** This one's easy. If the very sight or mention of a particular coworker turns on a finger-wagging, self-righteous diatribe about all the ways that person has done you wrong, you've got a grudge.

**Take Action.** For starters, stop taking everything so damn personal. There will be many times over the course of your career where you'll be irked by a colleague's behavior, attitude, or poor choice of words. It happens. Since he or she probably didn't mean to offend you, why make life more complicated than it needs to be? In fact, allow me to channel Oprah for long enough to tell you that when you hold a grudge, it holds you too. You can't pick your coworkers (if only, right?), so if you have a beef—deal with it head-on if you need to, then release it. You're not letting the other person off the hook, you're just not giving him or her any control over your attitude or behavior. See the difference?

### CAREER-KILLER #3: WORRY

Not too long ago my mom had a suspicious lump on her breast that her doctor wanted to test further. Instantly, her mind took a Bolshoi Ballet leap to the worst-case scenario and she called me in hysterics, explaining—and I'm not kidding—how she wanted the money in her savings to be used for her funeral. Thankfully, the lump was benign, but the worry became a total mind-hijacker, and she was distracted and unfocused at her job for weeks. While a cancer scare is certainly serious, there are some people who apply that level of worry to *every little thing*, causing their brain to become endlessly distracted with “whatifs” rather than *what's now*.

**How to Recognize the Worry Goblin.** Worry is defined as freaking out over things you can't control. At work, it could mean worrying about things like whether your proposal will win the bid, whether the presentation you just made was good enough, or whether your flight will be delayed. In short, if you find your mind is constantly asking questions that you couldn't possibly have the answer to, you've got a worry hob.

**Take Action.** When your thoughts are racing with worry, all you have to do is stop and ask yourself one question: *What about this situation can I control?* Whatever that is, it's the *only* thing worth focusing on. Everything else has either already happened or might never happen. Regardless, worrying about it won't change the outcome.



Just being *aware* of any negative thought patterns (a.k.a. inner hobgoblins) can bring about tremendous professional growth because it's this awareness that reminds us *we* control our thoughts, not the other way around. So when you feel yourself headed straight for the negative, the grudge, or the worry in any given situation, remember that challenges exist to teach us something we didn't know.

before. And whatever it is, it's probably just the lesson you need to break through that inner glass ceiling and toughen up for the next level of your career.

### ***woman 2 woman: Knowing Your Worth***

“I’ve never had much time to focus on what I couldn’t do. I’d rather focus on knowing my worth and being able to articulate it, which—for me—has always meant understanding how to build the fundamentals of a business. I know how to build operations and get the right players in place because, I don’t care what you’re selling, everyone follows the same rules. You have to understand the benefit of your product and then develop a team based on a common vision and what’s best for the company. So, in that regard, I always delivered results. To me, that was my report card: What am I delivering—followed by what’s my pay, what’s my title, and how can I move within the company?”

“I’ve always been fair and polite, but I’ve also made sure I knew—and the senior leaders knew—what I was bringing to the table from the very beginning of my career. I remember when I first started at MasterCard, I was in Chicago and the company headquarters was in New York. So when my boss would be asked to go to New York for an important meeting, I would make sure I came up with an impactful reason to be there, too. I knew what rang my boss’s bell—and it was usually numbers—so I’d say, ‘*Let’s consider the fact that this customer was at a 17 percent share and our team has them up to a 57 percent share. I’d be glad to go with you and give a presentation that demonstrates how we did it. Three quick points . . . boom, boom, boom.*’ Then, after I met someone in New York, I’d keep in touch occasionally by sending info links I knew they’d find interesting, always copying my boss, so he didn’t think I was jumping over him. Before long, I had influence and sponsorship within the company that stemmed from my initiative and ability to produce.

“Frankly, I was surprised at how fast my reputation flew through such a large organization. I’d go to meetings in Asia and people would say, ‘*Oh, you’re Valarie Gelb.*’ I built my confidence on what I achieved, and I didn’t allow anything to hinder my potential.”

—Valarie Gelb, former executive vice president  
chief sales development officer, MasterCard

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