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The Changing Challenge: From Double Bind to Double Burden

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Has "fear of success" been overcome by our focus on individual achievement, or is to-day's working woman caught in an ever more exhausting circle of high expectations and guilt? The author of this article notes that professional accomplishment and femininity were once viewed as mutually exclusive, creating a double bind for women who wanted both, driving some to avoid too much success. But today, the economic interdependence of men and women is a reality, requiring that we move beyond the debate of the proper role of women and look at the real issues: burden sharing, support systems, and stresses on women and their families. The conclusion of this examination of why many working women feel both overextended and undervalued is that women will succeed and society benefit only if we all join in helping to find ways to resolve these pressures.

Though completely ecstatic about the news of her success, she nonetheless feels guilty. Knowing she is more ambitious and has more innate ability than her boyfriend, she fears that this will have a detrimental effect on their relationship and wishes she could stop studying so hard — but parental and personal pressures drive her. She will — finally — quit medical school and marry a successful young doctor.

— 1965 graduate

I would like to be a lawyer but I am turning more and more to the traditional role because of the attitudes of my boyfriend and his roommates — I am concerned about what they think.

— 1975 graduate

I lead a Dr. Jekyll–Mr. Hyde existence. Although I appear very confident and self-assured, my internal self is scared to death of success, scared that I do not deserve success.

— 1985 graduate

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Fear of Success and a Double Bind

As is apparent from the comments, and despite extraordinary changes in women's roles between 1965 and 1985, many young women have continued to experience a surprising degree of conflict about success and achievement in our society. The evidence suggests that the "double bind" reflected by these women has developed, to a large extent, because of the cultural paradoxes and mixed messages with which women's expectations have been simultaneously encouraged and challenged by society throughout the second half of the twentieth century.[1] The specifics, to be sure, have evolved with the times. As doors have opened and new opportunities have become available for women their expectations have been heightened; but the negative impact and net effect of the double message has been to undermine women's confidence in themselves, in their goals, and in their possibilities and ultimately to deprive society of the full exercise of their talents and potential.

Too many highly motivated young women, like the three extraordinarily bright and energetic college students quoted, have fallen victim to the double bind during this period. Despite admirable academic records and very bright prospects for the future, they have felt unable to "fully own," develop, share, or enjoy their talents and success and have been deeply affected by the kind of resistance or resentment they have encountered and by the negative consequences they have learned to anticipate and associate with pursuing or attaining success (fear of success). As a result, they were often unable to live up to their own high standards or to exercise their potential fully. There is abundant evidence that their self-esteem has suffered, that their career aspirations were lowered, and that their frustration and stress levels were increased, often without their awareness of what was happening or why.

It was the documentation of these effects that stimulated and defined the early and follow-up work on "fear of success." (See the Bibliography.) These issues have reappeared more recently, in slightly altered form, in the interesting work done by Pauline Clance, who has demonstrated the presence of an "impostor phenomenon" among many of today's high-achieving women.[2] They are also evident in the many achievement-related problems vividly portrayed by Colette Dowling in *Perfect Women*[3] and *The Cinderella Complex*.[4]

Dowling describes the double bind so many achieving women are experiencing as follows: "We walk a tightrope between two poles, always precarious in our relationship to the world, always struggling with the delicate balance between our desires and our fears."

Justifiable pride in their accomplishments is often overriden by disappointment. For many achieving women, she points out, it is a "pressure cooker" existence. They find themselves in an environment in which they feel, and are, both overextended and undervalued. How did all this come to pass? What improvements can we hope for in the future? How are the lessons transferred from one generation to another?

Absence of Role Models Creates Boundaries

The virtual absence of American women from the mainstream of thought, action, and achievement in our society from 1950 to 1975, as well as their absence from its most highly valued, respected, and handsomely remunerated positions, has been less than encouraging to young women. It has done little to enhance the development of their achievement motivations or to increase their optimism about the availability of options and possibilities for achievement outside the home. Nor has it done anything to reduce

materially the fear of success experienced by achieving women or to challenge their expectancy of negative consequences for daring to cross predetermined gender-prescribed role boundaries during this era.

The notion that women's place was in the home — not in the House of Representatives or in the executive chambers or boardrooms of America — was constantly reinforced. The widely practiced and publicly endorsed denigration of women's talents throughout society, in both private and public circles, reflected a no-confidence vote in their intelligence, energy, or competence and in their capacity for independent thought, action, or leadership, especially outside the home. Not surprisingly, this created a pervasive climate of "unexpectation" for women, one that all too many women internalized. It was an attitude reinforced by comments such as those made about the "exceptional woman" who was praised for "thinking like a man." Clare Booth Luce rejected such "praise" from a colleague, saying quite pointedly, "I must refuse the compliment that I think like a man. Thought has no sex. One either thinks or one does not."

The widespread practice of overt and covert discrimination against women was rarely challenged by anyone, male or female, until the mid- to late-1960s, when "token" changes began to occur in response to social pressure stressing the need for "equal opportunity" and "affirmative action." In light of severely limited opportunities outside the home, most women's aspirations, expectations, and accomplishments suffered accordingly; thus their continued economic and psychological dependence on men was virtually assured. Even during the powerful economic and social changes that occurred in the 1970s and 1980s, the legacy of "unexpectation" for women was remarkably resilient. While considerable lip service was paid to the concept of equality, progress — especially beyond entry levels — remained slow. Ewald Nyquist expressed his frustration at the repeated resistance he met in promoting women to superintendent positions in the New York State school system by pointing out that "equality is not when a female Einstein gets promoted to assistant professor; equality is when a female schlemiel moves ahead as quickly as a male schlemiel."[5]

The extraordinary resilience of traditional gender-role stereotypes and the extent to which they were internalized by so many of us did not become clearly evident until the powerful social, political, legal, economic, and demographic changes of the 1970s began to raise consciousness and to dramatically alter the social conditions and economic realities within which men and women had to live their lives, set their goals, and make their choices. The brutal economic realities of the seventies and eighties required women's participation in the paid work force at every level, but the full ramifications and implications of this sea change for public and private policy planning and for personal experience and reaction have only recently begun to be recognized.

Achievement: At What Cost?

Even before this change, however, a few pioneering women believed so strongly in Helen Keller's view that "one can never consent to creep when one feels an impulse to soar" that they dared to achieve and risk the consequences of challenging societal norms. Despite the odds, they were determined to "go down the road less traveled" by women in their day, and to venture into educational and employment domains conventionally regarded at that time as off-limits to women.

From their exceptional experiences, we learned a great deal about the relative costs and benefits that women could expect from pursuing aspirations or attaining goals that

violated traditional gender-role norms and expectations while conforming to societal standards of excellence. Both in research and in "real life" presentations, our images of "the achieving woman" were unappealing ones.[6] More often than not, she was described or portrayed as an unfeminine, acne-faced, unhappy, aggressive, unmarried, castrating, childless, selfish, uncaring, tall, unattractive, and basically unpleasant, unsexy or un-sexed woman. During the fifties and sixties, an age of domesticity, she was also, more often than not, assumed to be a "bad mother" and a "poor wife." The media's portrayal of achieving women consistently carried very mixed messages, thereby fostering the dou-ble bind that so many achievement-oriented women experienced.

As Barriers Fell

There is no question that the seventies were marked by a sea change in gender-role defini-tions and socially sanctioned behaviors. Barriers fell, assumptions were challenged, and women's aspirations and expectations rose sharply. The persistence and underlying simi-larity of the success-related conflicts revealed by the three students quoted earlier seem somehow surprising when one considers thus the scale and scope of the stunning changes in women's roles and expectations that occurred during the twenty-year period their com-ments span. Why wasn't the tension or conflict associated with successful striving and attainment by women more affected by these changes?
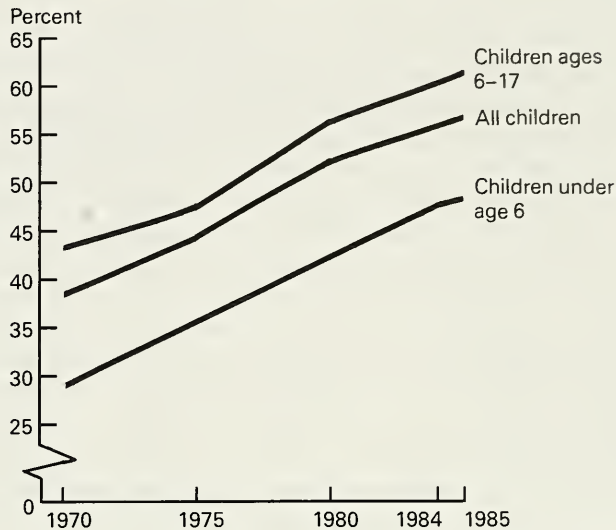
When the first student was graduated from college in 1965, career possibilities for women were very limited.[7] By the time the third student was graduated in 1985, career possibilities for women were seemingly limitless.[8] Between 1965 and 1985 not only did enrollments of women in college and professional schools rise dramatically, but the labor force participation of married women with children under six tripled. Projections are that by the year 2000, 75 percent — three out of every four women with young children — will be working, most because of financial necessity, and that in the very near future only 15 percent to 18 percent of the new entrants into the labor force will be white males (see Figure 1). These truly revolutionary social changes occurred in a very short time span. When considered along with the implications of population aging for our society, they are of considerable consequence and require first recognition, then new ways of thinking and responding.

The dramatic changes that have occurred are not only statistical, that is, *how many* women were enrolled in higher education or how many were actively engaged in the work force. They are also substantive, reflecting dramatic changes in why women want to work, in what areas they are interested, for what they are trained, and to what levels of achievement they aspire. They also suggest a change in definition of "family."

It is clearly undeniable that the status of women in society today is profoundly different (better?) than it was twenty to twenty-five years ago, when our expectations for and the options available to them were considerably more limited and the barriers were quite explicit. It is also undeniable that the social, demographic, and economic realities of today compel us to pause to examine the root cause, evolution, and consequences of these changes and to consider how effective they have been in challenging or removing the factors most responsible for the development and continued presence of a double bind or fear of success among many — too many — women. The continuing conflict suggests that the social, economic, and behavioral changes that have taken place have outpaced the emotional, structural, and attitudinal changes needed to support and sustain them.

Percent of Children with Mother in the Labor Force by Age of Children, Selected Years, 1970–1984 and March 1985

Working Hard Has Not Paid Off

Although the increase in the number of working women has been substantial in the past two decades, especially at entry levels, promotions and access to the upper reaches have been considerably more difficult. Hard work has rarely paid off. One report after another has tried to effectively demonstrate and document the *fact* and the *effects* of women's frustrating confrontation with the various glass and lead ceilings that have barred their progress and belied the promise of equity offered by this "revolution."

Setting the Stage for the Double Bind

For Men Only: America an Achieving Society

The achievement ethic that dominated American society during the fifties and sixties fostered a strong competitive spirit in Americans and encouraged their pursuit of excellence and innovation. It stimulated Americans' interest in vigorous entrepreneurial activity, enhanced our risk-taking behavior and determination, and encouraged pride in our accomplishments — but only if we happened to be born male. The same behavior in women led not only to pride in their accomplishments but also to guilt, shame, and fear. America was appropriately labeled an achieving society. Our economy boomed, confidence in the future was palpable, and it became fashionable for social scientists to dedicate considerable energy to understanding the dynamics and impact of achievement-related motivation on people's lives and on societal developments. More than twenty

years of work on this subject had revealed a number of intriguing gender differences, but until my work on fear of success these were by and large ignored. The inconsisent results were viewed either as unimportant or as puzzling, threatening, or annoying exceptions.[9] Women's lives and needs remained basically hidden both from history and from psychology.

For Women: America in an Age of Domesticity

During this same period "true womanhood," especially for middle-class women, revolved around success in marriage and child rearing. Excellence in domesticity, that is, tending to the domestic hearth as Penelope did for Odysseus, was the only socially sanctioned achievement goal for women. A long-term commitment to work outside the home was reserved only for men or for needy women; a middle-class woman could work without "fear" in a role-appropriate position — nursing, teaching, clerical — but only *before* marriage or if her husband "didn't make the grade," that is, if he was a "loser." "Manhood" was defined and evaluated primarily in terms of a male's capacity to venture forth like Odysseus and achieve; that is, he could command a handsome enough family wage that enabled him to be the *sole* economic support for his wife and children.

Meeting his "responsibilities" was an enormous source of pride and self-esteem for a man. At each step along the way, his achievements were richly rewarded by society. Higher education was considered a significant steppingstone to a man's happiness, future success, and higher lifetime earnings. Climbing the ladder and reaching the top was every deserving young man's dream, and marrying an achieving man was every young woman's fondest hope as well as that of her parents. Whereas a college education was viewed as a valuable tool in a woman's "bag of tricks" — making her more attractive as a potential wife and mother — advanced professional training was considered a stumbling block. Doctors and lawyers, who symbolized success and wealth, headed the women's list of most desirable potential suitors. A doctor was thought to be an especially great "catch."

In sum, a working wife was a symbol of a husband's failure to be a true man — a good provider. An achieving or aspiring career woman in a male arena was a curiosity and a highly criticized figure, "more to be pitied (and punished) than praised," condemned to live a life without love and even without friends. Reaction to women aspiring to become a doctor rather than marrying one provided the early evidence of fear of success among women.[10]

The Double Bind Is Born

Fear of success among women was only one manifestation of the prevailing view in society in the fifties and sixties, namely, that individual achievement, which reflected intellectual competence or leadership potential, and femininity, which was synonymous with domesticity, although they were desirable and attractive goals were also mutually exclusive ones. Recognition of the double bind this created for women who had been raised to value both goals was the catalyst for the early work that identified the motive to avoid success among some of America's most highly motivated, able, and professionally inclined women. It was not the case, as some assumed, that they had developed a "will to fail" or had an under- or undeveloped fear of failure or that their fear of success was biologicially driven. They were simply living in a world in which the dominant stereotype said competition, independence, competence, intellectual achievement, and leadership

reflected positively on mental health, on masculinity, and on being a good American but that these same attributes are basically inconsistent with femininity and are punishable qualities if openly demonstrated by women. As intelligent beings they had learned the gender-specific expectations of the social context of their day and responded to the social climate.

The expectation of negative consequences that most women had learned and associated with striving to achieve success in competitive, traditionally male-dominated areas outside the home caused many talented and highly motivated women to temper their motivation, deny or hide their successes, lower their aspirations, limit their horizons, and constrain the level of their accomplishment in these areas in order to limit or avoid the danger of negative consequences for violating established gender-role boundaries.

However, when women worked alone or in cooperative settings, their performance was outstanding, free of the adverse effects of competitive striving against men.[11] The relative ratio of costs (expectation of negative consequences) to benefits (expectation of positive consequences) as a result of competitive striving and success in primarily "male" spheres of endeavor was demonstrably high — more negative — for middle-class women than for men. For women who neither wanted nor could attain sucess in those areas, fear of sucess was irrelevant. Only among the most able and most motivated women was fear of success evocable or relevant for behavior. As a result a considerable amount of valuable female talent and potential remained underdeveloped and underutilized outside the home, at great cost for the women personally and society generally.

The Cost of Gender Bias

The end result was a startling inequality in the relationship between American men and women of comparable talent and motivation during the fifties and sixties. Many effective ways (overt and covert) were used to enforce role differentiation both in and out of the home and to maintain gender-segregated opportunities with respect to professional, educational, and employment opportunities. Whatever paid or unpaid work women did or were allowed to do was greatly undervalued and underpaid and often publicly denigrated. Unfortunately, almost every study done in recent years suggests that lower wages for women continues to be a systematic and widespread phenomenon. With very few exceptions, the more an occupation is dominated by women, the less it pays (see Table 1).

Not only did the women who worked outside the home do different work from that of men, but the money they received for it was less than that paid for the work men did, regardless of its overall relative value to society. An anthropologist investigating these differences could well conclude that whatever men do — no matter how "unimportant" — is more prestigious than what women do and is more likely to be viewed as a higher achievement.

Even the critically important and indispensable functions performed by women in our society — teachers, secretaries, and nurses, for example — were seriously undervalued and underpaid. Today we are reaping the unfortunate consequences of that fact, especially within our troubled educational and health care systems. The inadequate pensions of today's elderly women, who comprise the majority of our aging poor population, are also a legacy from prior unenlightened discriminatory practices in compensating "women's work" and from erroneous and shortsighted assumptions about what the future lives and responsibilities of women would or should be.

The Changing Challenge

Today, however, double bind or not, women work. They *must* work! Dramatic alterations in the role of women at home and in the workplace have been driven by significant shifts in the demographic, political, and economic realities of our day, shifts that have made economic *interdependence* between men and women an inescapable fact of life. As a society we have been remarkably slow in recognizing that fact and the implications it entails for us all. It is nonetheless compelling us to confront and revise, as necessary, whatever long-standing, resilient, but outmoded, gender-specific expectations we may still harbor and hold dear about the proper role and relative responsibilities of men and women in a number of life's areas, including policymaking, dependent care, paid employment, and public service. Economic reality has made men and women truly interdependent, and the two-income family has become the norm, born of necessity. Men can no longer be sole

Table 1

Proportion Female Workers in Selected Occupations, 1975 and 1985

Occupation	Women as percent of total employed	
	1975	1985
Airline pilot	—	2.6
Architect	4.3	11.3
Auto mechanic	0.5	0.7
Bartender	35.2	47.9
Bus driver	37.7	49.2
Cab driver, chauffeur	8.7	10.9
Carpenter	0.6	1.2
Child care worker	98.4	96.1
Computer programmer	25.6	34.3
Computer systems analyst	14.8	28.0
Data entry keyer	92.8	90.7
Data-processing equipment repairer	1.8	10.4
Dentist	1.8	6.5
Dental assistant	100.0	99.0
Economist	13.1	34.5
Editor, reporter	44.6	51.7
Elementary school teacher	85.4	84.0
College/university teacher	31.1	35.2
Garage, gas station attendant	4.7	6.8
Lawyer, judge	7.1	18.2
Librarian	81.1	87.0
Mail carrier	8.7	17.2
Office machine repairer	1.7	5.7
Physician	13.0	17.2
Registered nurse	97.0	95.1
Social worker	60.8	66.7
Telephone installer, repairer	4.8	12.8
Telephone operator	93.3	88.8
Waiter/waitress	91.1	84.0
Welder	4.4	4.8

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings,* January 1976, Table 2, and January 1986, Table 22.

providers nor women sole caretakers; the social system, which has yet to adjust realistically or effectively, has left women confronting the stress of an emerging double, if not triple, burden.

The implications and the nature of society's reaction to the changing role of women have been considerably more challenging to assess than the scope of the changes. Trying to understand how and why women's expectations about success continued to be so powerfully influenced by the reactions of others to the changes in their role throughout the seventies and eighties has been an illusive and impressive challenge.

A Debate on the Merits

Social change and the greater number of options available to women during the 1980s has been welcomed and embraced by many who view women's increased participation as a positive and potentially valuable humanizing force for society.

Others continue to view the changes in a woman's role with alarm and are determined to stem the tide, to reaffirm traditional family values, and to reassert cultural norms and expectations about gender-role-appropriate behavior. They attribute everything, from rising divorce rates and declining SAT scores to the frightening figures on illiteracy, adolescent pregnancy, drug abuse, and teenage suicides, at least in part, to the growing number of working mothers in our society. In so doing they have been fueling the mounting guilt of working women, especially among those who entered the work force by choice — considered a "selfish" reason — rather than through economic necessity.

Still others proclaim that little of true value has been gained by women and that the reality of their changing role has had precious little impact on improving women's lives and truly altering gender-role stereotypes. (Dr. Suzanne Keller, who suggested that gender-role stereotypes are our society's "cultural DNA" and are highly resistant to change, would agree.) Some argue that for many women, especially professionals, exhaustion, not exhilaration, has replaced the frustrations of their earlier exclusion from the workplace and from society's other opportunities for individual advancement.

The achieving woman is considered by many to be a victim of the so-called sandwich generation, caught between extraordinarily demanding professional and personal obligations. The stress of the double or triple burden on women became increasingly apparent during the 1980s, replacing or exacerbating the familiar problems and stresses of the double bind women confronted in the past and adding guilt and a new set of negative expectations about career success.

Many view the high-achieving woman as an exceptional figure and are aware that access, beyond entry levels, to a "room at the top" continues to be very limited for her. Not surprisingly, she both *feels* and *is* overburdened and undervalued. Systematic social support to help working women meet their ongoing dependent-care responsibilities remains virtually unavailable and unaffordable.

Few would disagree that the most dramatic and important change that has occurred has been the overwhelming influx of *women*, especially those with minor children, into the work force. The economic realities that have made double-income and dual-career families a financial necessity have placed the issue of dependable/affordable/quality care for America's dependent population, young and old, at the top of political agendas on local and national levels.

There is heated debate, academic and political, about the implications and unanticipated

consequences, positive and negative, of women, especially mothers of young children, entering the work force in truly unprecedented numbers, regardless of their entry level or their motivation for working outside the home.

Rapid and Extensive Role Change

In 1960, 85 percent of women listed full-time homemaker as their occupation; in 1985 only 32 percent of women did so.

The entry of mothers with young children into the work force was the greatest change. In 1970, 39.8 percent of mothers with small children worked; in 1975 it was 45 percent; by 1985 it had reached 60 percent. Today more than 50 percent of mothers return to work within a year of giving birth.

This is totally different from the 1950s, when the domestic nuclear household was the cornerstone of society and housewife/mother the ideal goal. This ideal is not shared by most of today's daughters, nor would it be economically viable for them if it were.

The substantive quality of these changes is captured in a comparison of related comments made by Dr. Benjamin Spock thirty years apart.

> *1946-vintage Spock*
> "It doesn't make much sense to have mothers go to work and have to pay other people to do a poor job of bringing up their children."

> *1976-vintage Spock*
> "Both parents have equal right to a career if they want one, and an equal obligation to share in the care of their children."

Theoretically, women who work do so out of personal choice. The fact is that the majority of women who work do so for economic reasons. Two thirds of employed mothers are single, separated, divorced, widowed, or married to men whose incomes are below $15,000.

Median household income is $32,000 if the wife works, $21,000 if she does not. Traditionally it has been assumed that men carry the responsibility to be the sole providers in their families, an assumption that has been overtaken by economic reality. We as a society must deal with that fact.

We hear much about the social, political, and economic changes that have occurred in society during the past two decades, especially those affecting the role of women and the relationships between men and women at home, in the workplace, in the boardrooms, and in the bedrooms of America. They are indeed impressive.

While a number of these changes have produced a virtual explosion of unprecedented *options* for women in education, in the workplace, in the professions, and in the family, it should not be assumed that their lives have become easier, less complex, more conflict free, or less stressful. There is abundant evidence to the contrary. And *all* women have not benefited equally. An honest look at the data would very quickly put that presumption to rest.

Emerging Constraints

A number of critical barriers are easily identified and some new obstacles of considerable consequence are beginning to emerge.

1. Illiteracy rates and feminization of poverty have been growing at alarming rates.

2. Differential patterns of promotion and pay, especially in the professions, continue to bar women's progress; prior discriminatory practices in this area are coming home to roost and are reflected in the inadequate pensions available to older and retired women.

3. Population aging and poverty are increasingly becoming women's issues because women live so much longer than men and too many spend those years alone and in poverty.

4. For achieving or successful women, new and unusual symptoms of stress have begun to be noted.

    a. WMS, the working mother's syndrome, recognized by Dr. Marilyn Heins, has replaced PMS, premenstrual syndrome, as a serious health issue.

    b. The tensions of the sandwich generation, those caught between caring for dependent children and aging parents while trying to meet their professional responsibilities.

    c. Large numbers of achieving and successful women feel they are impostors, and are therefore unable to "own" or enjoy their success.

Women increasingly have been reporting "being sick and tired of being sick and tired." A chronic fatigue syndrome has recently been identified in this group as have a number of distressing symptoms such as an epidemic of eating disorders, binge shopping, and even shoplifting. Startling reports that shoplifting is on the rise among career women — educated, affluent, outwardly successful women who would not normally even jaywalk — has given many pause about what it all means.

The areas of personal life reportedly most affected by careers among women from their perspective are the decision to have children; the success of one's marriage; the choice to marry; and effectiveness as parent.

Demographic Ramifications

Population aging and its associated problems and prospects has increasingly come to be recognized as a "woman's" issue. It is startling to realize that in 1900 only 3 percent of the population was sixty-five and over and that within four decades more than 20 percent of the population will be in that category. Since 1950 the number of people sixty-five and over has doubled to 28 million — more than the entire population of Canada. The number of elderly who are eighty-five and over has more than quadrupled, to 3 million. Women comprise a substantial majority of the elderly. While elderly men represent 9 percent of males, elderly women represent 15 percent of females. Within forty years elderly women are expected to represent one fourth of all women. One fifth of women over sixty-five live in poverty, but one half of black women that age live in poverty. These facts have important implications for our economy and our health, housing, and welfare policies. These

realities and inescapable facts require new ways of integrated thinking about how we develop and implement public policy and make choices about the allocation of resources.

A New View of Reality, Issues, and the Future

That today's economic and family life requires a new view of the world, and women's role in it, is not a new concept. The debate about how American society operates, and women's role in it, goes at least as far back as our Continental Congress (March 1776), when Abigail Adams advised her husband to "remember the ladies."

> Be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors [she wrote]. Do not put such unlimited power in the hands of the husband. If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion and will not hold ourselves bound by any law in which we have no voice.

Abigail Adams was well aware that the absence of voice was synonymous with the absence of respect, power, and influence. She knew too that, without voice, almost every kind of opportunity for women would be seriously limited and constrained. Whether women's voices were similar to or different from those of men was not her issue. More than two centuries later there is vigorous scholarly debate about just how much progress women have actually made, especially at upper levels. It is accompanied by equally vigorous discussion and disagreement about whether or not women bring a "different voice" to their activities in the classrooms, boardrooms, or the negotiating tables of America than men, and if so, whether that is good or bad.

Women At Work

Given the history described, it should come as no surprise that only one chief executive officer of a Fortune 500 company or corporation is a woman (Katharine Graham of the *Washington Post*), and that only three of the 800 "most powerful people in corporate America" listed by *Forbes* magazine were women. In 1984, 16,000 men, but only 400 women, served on major corporate boards. Whether this will change as the increasing number of women who have been attracted to advanced training programs and opportunities in business, management, and finance complete their training and enter the work force remains to be seen. Consideration might well be given to what kinds of mechanisms could effect the changes desired.

Despite the impressive influx by women into the corporate world, barely 5 percent of middle management personnel are women, and only one percent of top management positions are held by women. But these numbers are growing, and businesses are noticing. Women, albeit slowly, are edging into key decision-making positions, and even the marketplace is noticing.

A *Wall Street Journal* article reported that women represent 39 percent of all business travelers in the United States, up from just one percent in 1970, and are expected to account for 50 percent by the turn of the century.[12] The American Hotel and Motel Association estimates that women spent $23 billion on business travel in 1988, $10 billion on lodging alone. Hotels have taken note and are making every effort to attract and keep this clientele. They have recognized that "painting the walls pink" wasn't the issue. Women have different needs and values.

Vera Katz is Speaker of the House in the Oregon legislature and one of only four women who preside over a state legislature in our country. In a presentation on the role of women she stated that from her experience women in business and politics do bring a different voice to their responsibilities. "Women," she said, "are more likely to *'think Japanese.'*" They are more likely than men to place a higher premium on such values as consensus building, bottom-up decision making, and solving problems with community- and family-based mechanisms. Though the verdict is not yet in concerning the management styles and objectives of women bosses, it would not be unreasonable to ask whether the realities of women's lives have led them to develop a different set of priorities and values, which they pursue with a different style and analyze and explain with a different voice and from a different perspective.

Another interesting study on executive women was carried out by Ann Morrison, Randall White, and Ellen Van Nelson, who point out that women in executive positions are caught in a "glass house dilemma." Knowing that women's failures tend to be maximized and overgeneralized and that their successes tend to be minimized, if not "cocooned," women executives dare not fail and feel compelled to avoid failure at all costs.

As top women in a society in which top women are relatively rare, they are victims of the so-called glass house effect. They feel that everything they do is exceedingly visible, leaving little room for error. They know that they must do everything to avoid jeopardizing either their own future or the opportunities that will be available for women who come after them. They realize, "If I fail it will be a long time before they hire another woman for the job." Endless examples lend credence to these fears, from reaction to the fate of Geraldine Ferarro's pioneering vice-presidential bid to more recent suggestions that the fate of Michael Dukakis's campaign might be considered in light of the relatively high proportion of women on the campaign staff.

The authors argue convincingly that this additional burden leads women more often than not to play it safe, to be ultraconservative, and to opt out of seemingly chancy situations, fearing failure and its implications for themselves and for others so much that they dare not risk it. Their creativity is thus inhibited and limited with the obvious unfortunate consequences for them and for society. This pattern is not limited to the business community or politics but affects the expectations and performance of women in many fields. This puts additional expectations and burdens on them that extend above and beyond the already high level of stress and strain inherent in their professions.

Reeducating Society for Reality...

It has become increasingly clear and important to view the reeducation of men as an essential and integral part of our effort to empower women if that effort is to succeed. A critical part of the process, in addition to altering the workplace, would be increasing the presence of women on the faculty of our institutions as well as introducing and integrating materials about women's lives, experiences, and contributions into the curriculum. This would be as critical, if not more so, for the education and preparation of men for the realities of life in the 1990s and beyond as it would be for women to have role models and a sense of their history and possibilities. Changing expectations and challenging unfounded assumptions would have to be a critical part of the process. We, the mothers of the men of tomorrow, also have some responsibility to prepare our sons for the reality of interdependent relationships.

And the Contributions of Women

The new status and visibility of women's issues as legitimate subjects for study and political action are critical ingredients for empowering women and helping them to rise above the consequences of lowered aspirations and the long-standing benign neglect to which they and their lives have for so long been subjected. It is a fact that for much too long fostered the costly "silences" about which Tillie Olsen wrote so powerfully and lent substance to Virginia Woolf's observation that "throughout history Anonymous was a woman."

The fact that we did not read, or write, or hear about women pioneers has had powerful negative effects on the aspirations, expectations, and ultimate empowerment of women. And though this may well, as Carol Nadelson has written, "reveal more about those who wrote history than those who make it," it is critically important to achieving our ultimate goals that in recent decades the field of women's history has blossomed and progressed from (1) obscurity to recognition as (2) a politically controversial splinter movement and finally to the achievement of (3) academic respectability.

In many institutions women's experiences and contributions have begun to be mainstreamed into such traditional disciplines as history, economics, literature, sociology, and psychology. The burgeoning traffic, budget, and shelf-space requirements of Radcliffe's Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America lends concrete testimony to the fact that the new scholarship by and about women is finally emerging. It is indeed booming after a long struggle to be recognized as a respectable intellectual enterprise. Women's studies and women's history have broken the sound barrier and entered into even the most hallowed halls of academia, like those of Harvard and Vanderbilt.

Working Hard Is No Reward

Though progress of working women has been substantial in the past two decades, especially at entry levels, access to the upper reaches has been considerably more difficult. One report after another tries to capture women's confrontation with glass and lead ceilings and the consequences thereof. Certainly the price of achievement and access should not be a growing cadre of exhausted, guilty, professional women and hardworking mothers with working mother's syndrome.

In 1978 a Radcliffe alumna suggested to her classmates, "God must have hated women because he blessed them with teenage children, menopause, aging parents, and more recently a full-time job — all at the same time."

Ten years later members of the sandwich generation, who are having children later in life than their mothers did, confront the anguished conflicts of choosing between the simultaneous needs of their toddlers and their aging parents while juggling the responsibilities of a demanding profession, which differ from those of a nine-to-five or part-time "job." A grave mistake will be made if society continues to view these pressures on individual women's lives as "their problem" not "our problem."

The prevalence of WMS is not surprising, given that women are juggling two full-time jobs. As has been suggested, the employed housewife/mother today is the hardest-working person in our country — and maybe in history.

Acknowledging Women's Issues

Illiteracy, poverty, limited access to affordable housing, health care, child care, and elder care are critical barriers that have severely limited opportunities for large numbers of women and children in our society. Until very recently there was limited understanding of the consequences to society of paying limited attention to these issues.

It is good news, however, that more than a decade and a half of steady and dramatic advances in women's access to education and employment clearly have made it considerably more difficult to continue to dismiss or totally ignore the ideas, energies, interests, needs, aspirations, and accomplishments of women. Old habits of thought and attitudes regarding what women can or want to do or to become have surely been challenged, if not changed.

Women's interests have become factors to be reckoned with, even if they are not fully understood, appreciated, or valued. Women's issues, once viewed as a passing fad, have become more pressing and politically compelling. Such issues as the availability of dependable, affordable day care, elder care, and facilities and personnel for chronic care, as well as programs to stem adolescent pregnancy and to assist young mothers and their children, are commanding political attention.

Society — because it must — is on the verge of acknowledging the need to move beyond access to truly equal opportunity, to shifting focus beyond discrimination and sexual harassment issues to assuring an enlightened appreciation and enjoyment of the reality of the growing interdependence of men and women. Only then will women feel empowered to acknowledge and enjoy the true value of their talents and their contributions. True respect for women's competence and capacity to contribute, from both men and women, is the sine qua non of achieving the kind of equitable sharing of responsibilities, both in and out of the home, that the economic and social realities of our day require.⅋

Notes

1. See Matina S. Horner, "The Measurement and Behavioral Implications of Fear of Success in Women," in Atkinson and Raynor, eds., *Motivation and Achievement* (Washington, D.C./New York: Winston-Riley, 1974; L. Monahan, D. Kuhn, and P. Shaver, "Intrapsychic versus Cultural Expectations of 'Fear of Success' Motive," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 7 (1970): 60–64; Virginia O'Leary, "Female Achievement," in *Toward Understanding Women* (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1977), 78–105; Ralph Piedmont, "The Role of Fear of Success in Women's Performance — A Critical Review," unpublished paper, Boston University; Aletha Stein and M. Bailey, "The Socialization of Achievement Motivation in Females," in Mednick, Tangri, and Hoffman, *Women and Achievement* (Washington, D.C.: Hemisphere, 1975).

2. P. R. Clance and S. Imes, "The Impostor Phenomenon in High Achieving Women: Dynamics and Therapeutic Intervention," *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, and Practice* 15 (1978): 241–247.

3. Colette Dowling, *Perfect Women* (New York: Summit Books, 1988).

4. Colette Dowling, *The Cinderella Complex* (New York: Pocket Books, 1981).

5. Ewald Nyquist, *New York Times*, October 8, 1975, 9.

6. Matina Horner, "Femininity and Successful Achievement: A Basic Inconsistency," in Bardick et al., *Feminine Personality and Conflict* (Belmont, Calif.: Brooks-Cole, 1970).

7. Matina Horner, "Toward Women as Equal and Essential Participants," in H. O. Hess, ed., *The Nature of a Humane Society* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 186–219.

8. S. Rix, ed., *The American Woman 1987–1988: A Report in Depth* (New York/London: Norton and Company, 1987); S. Rix, ed., *The American Woman 1988–1989: A Status Report* (New York/London: Norton and Company, 1988).

9. See Horner, "Measurement and Behavioral Implications of Fear of Success," and Piedmont, "Role of Fear of Success"; Abigail Stewart and Nia Lane Chester, "Sex Differences in Human Social Motives," in Abigail Stewart, ed., *Motivation and Society* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1982).

10. Horner, "Femininity and Successful Achievement"; Horner, "Measurement and Behavioral Implications of Fear of Success."

11. Stein and Bailey, "Socialization of Achievement Motivation."

12. "Hotels Change Pitch to Businesswomen," *Wall Street Journal*, October 14, 1988.

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