



WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP ROADBLOCKS

SIX WAYS TO BREAK THROUGH

Coming from a background in rural Mississippi, Kimberly Pace was the first woman in her family to rise to a leadership position in a major corporation. Now as an executive educator she explains some of the cultural and practical roadblocks that hold women back – and shows us how to break them down.



SPEAK UP!

Too often women hold back and wait for a raise or promotion. If you need something, deserve something, or want your organization to adopt flexible working to help you h raising a family with being a manager - don't wait to speak up. "Don't let other people say 'No' for you."



KEEP OVERSHARING TO A MINIMUM

It's important to get to the point. Typically, when women make a mistake they want to provide a detailed explanation of what and why things went wrong, when it might be better to simply apologize and move on by offering a solution.



PROMOTE BETTER BEHAVIOUR

Being a nice person does not mean accepting poor behavior from colleagues or anyone else. Adopt a 'zero tolerance rule' and let it be known you will always call-out rude, aggressive or bad behavior. If you are interrupted don't seethe in silence, politely point it out and continue the conversation.





REMEMBER YOUR GOALS

If you have the ability and desire to be a leader the world needs you. Good leaders are in short supply. So, if you choose to take time out to raise a family, stick with your goals. Don't sacrifice the fulfillment you can get through achieving a senior leadership position because of societal or family pressures.



TAKE ON FEEDBACK

In her twenties, Kimberly was told she laughed too much. Initially defensive, she later realized this was good advice. As a leader, she needed to be confident and assertive in tone and to get down to business. She did not need to lighten the atmosphere with laughter. Feedback of all sorts, however trivial, is worth listening to and oftentimes acting upon.



REMEMBER TO BE YOURSELF

As a leader it's important to be your authentic self. One way to think about this is to consider your 'personal executive brand'. Think of how you are perceived and conceive a consistent 'brand' that highlights the particular strengths and values you bring to the team or organization. Present your 'brand' at three points: a) Pre-presence – your LinkedIn profile and what a Google search brings up; b) Presence – face-to-face and the qualities you project; c) Post-presence – saying thank you and communicating effectively in a clear, precise and timely way.

TIME FOR YOU TO REFLECT

Kimberly warns against ignoring feedback. Can you recall a piece of feedback you received recently, that you did ignore? Write it down here and consider again if it may or may not be worth acting upon:

In 2-3 sentences, describe your 'personal executive brand' based on the particular strengths and values you bring to a team: