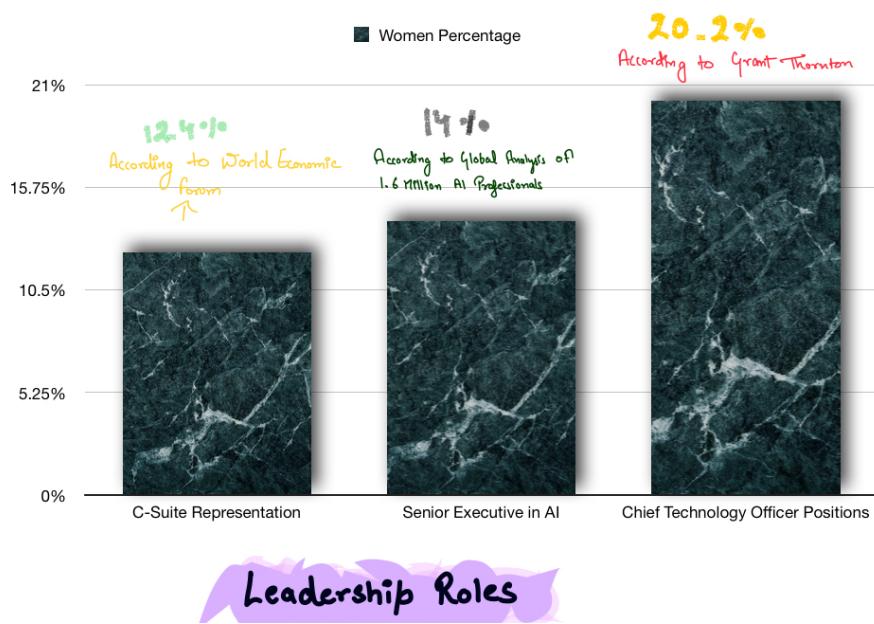


Chief in Tech- by Anna Radulovski

Chapter 1 notes - Taught me about barriers and belonging in tech.
- Anshita Mehra

After reading chapter one, I took some time to reflect and write down my own notes and insights. These are my personal takeaways shaped by the book. The book describes How to overcome from bias systemic challenges and Imposter syndrome. Before to talk about the breaking this barrier we need to first see the problem from the root.

The Gender Leadership gap and common Barriers Women Face in the Workplace- Why women are less than men in the Leadership roles? The number not only shows that women chose leadership career less but the deep rooted biases system including historical barriers. Can you imagine the number of women who are of different color, ethnicity and other minorities ? The answer would not



be surprising if you will say it would be worse ratio.

Lets talk about the root where it starts from, Society thinks that certain jobs or fields especially in Technology or engineering are better suited for men. As a results, girls are often encouraged to pursue careers in fields that are viewed as more appropriate for them, rather than being encouraged to explore technical fields. For Example : - Just by visiting to the toys stores you can see how toys are divided. One side it shows pink, Barbie dolls , kitchen set , “Cute” Little things while on the other hand, items like world of action, adventure and building sets. These division highlights that girls toy support caregiving nature, like dolls and tea set, while boys toys encourage boldness and construction — Science kits, action figures and Lego. The toys maybe not built in the way for encouraging such things but the intention behind it is obvious and easily understood. In the context of the toy comparison, the way toys are made and organised for two genders displayed a clear message about what it is expected and preferred for each gender. Girls are often focus to look pretty

and meant to take care of things. While boys are meant to take charge and to be bold. It's not bad to have a polite thoughtful and nice nature but it should not restrict us from pursuing leadership careers. While growing up, only 35 % women were encouraged to share their own point of perspective as per KPMG studies. The influences we experience from our upbringing in society don't simply vanish when we step into the workplace. It stays with us and influencing how we see ourselves and how others perceive us, often in ways we might not even be aware of. Why many women still have to think or need to take permission for their own space, to even voice their ideas confidently? Only 86 women make the same bounce, In every 100 men who promoted to a managerial position and the figures declines even more when we talk about women of color. It's more like you are preparing yourself for the marathon that hardly equally fair. There is no surprise to know about why we struggle more when we reach to our mid-career. The gap between the Male and Female gender becomes a chasm. It's not about women lack ambition or skills. Studies show that women have the same passion and aspirations to leadership roles as men. It is disputable how men can be assertive and seen as a strong leader. On the other hand, Women showing same behaviour is categorise as aggressive or unapproachable?



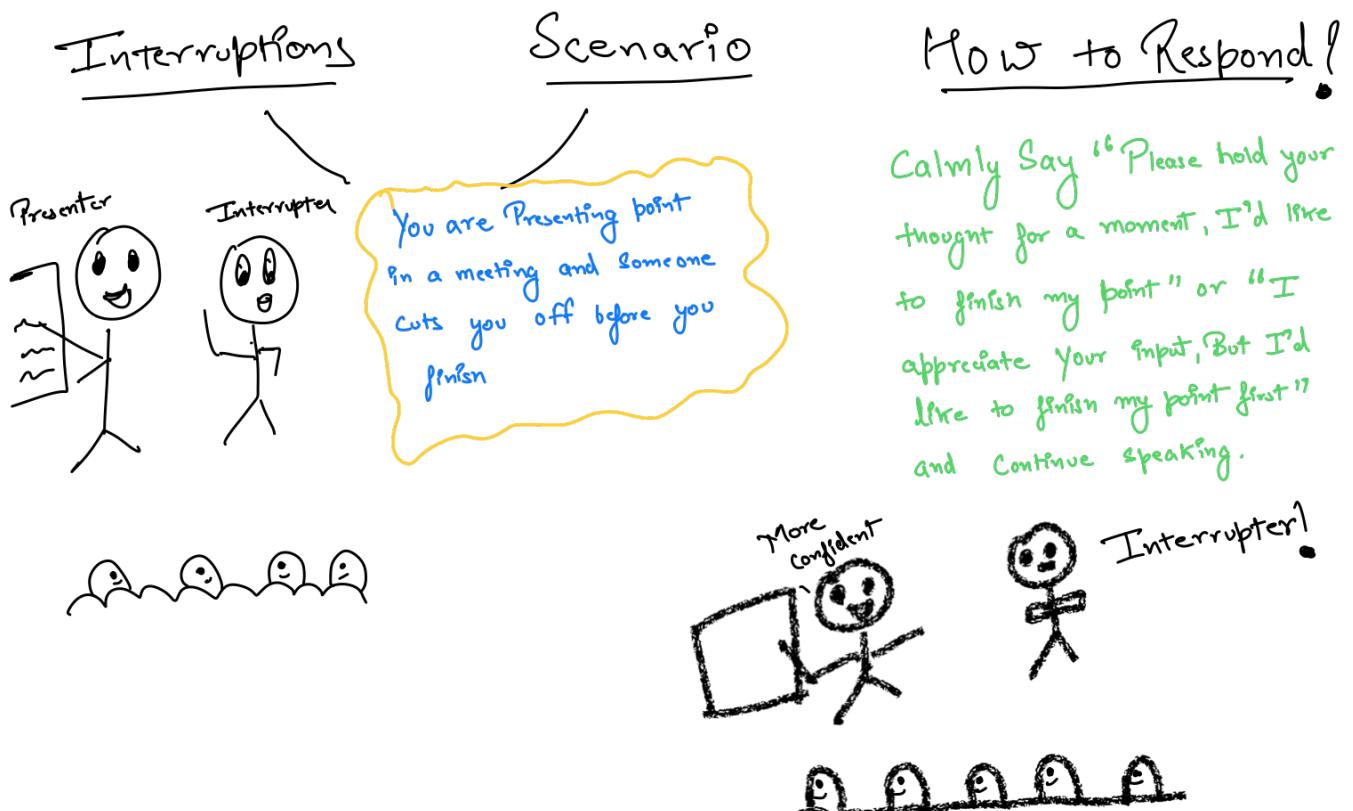
Image Is Generated by Gemini

One of the Primary factor is systemic bias. For example, many women might have found themselves in a room of different people who don't share the same background, might even doubt on whether you belong there! It's a reality for many of us. When it comes to biases it often lead to unconscious thought of what Leaders looks like and surprisingly its not us such as when company picture their next CEO, usually they visualising somebody who fits the character: often a white male who is following the same old leadership paths that have mostly left out women and minorities.

Performance is another way to see the bias in any company like opportunities that has been handed out to men and women. Mostly women are examine on their past experiences However, male on the other side, judge on their leadership qualities. It is a crucial part of seeing why less number of women are promoted in their earlier careers which means few women have chance to get leadership positions. For instance, there are countless women passed over because the system wasn't designed them to succeed and to support them even they had enough skills, were confident, ambitious and holding leadership qualities.

In many workplace, Specially in Tech there is well-Known culture that can feel almost impenetrable whether it's the after hours drinks you are invited to but don't quite fit into, the inside jokes that don't resonates or feel appropriate or networking events held over beer on the goal course or weekend trips that seem designed for everyone except women, these may seem like small issues on their own. But together, they create a barrier that is difficult to overcome. This culture influences meetings, decisions-making and who gets included both figuratively and literally at the table. Being left-out of informal networks means missing key conversations. When women do join, they face micro-aggression, comments that seem minor but gradually undermine confidence, like tiny paper cuts that build up over time. Everyday comments or behaviour that erode a person confidence called micro-aggressions. It also show impact on the team's overall performance. Evidence suggests that women are 2.5 times more likely to experience interruption in meetings than men.

Some of tips for you, to manage microaggressions scenario and how to respond them:

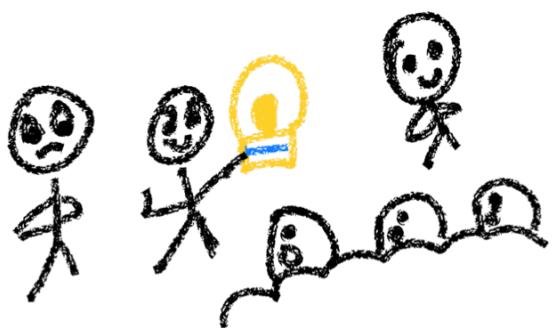


Credit theft

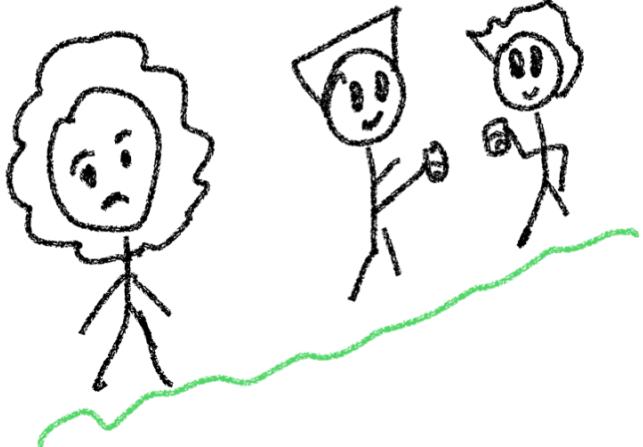


You suggest a strategy that I ignored until someone else rephrase it & gets credit.

Politely interject with, "I'm glad you agree with the strategy I mentioned earlier to reclaim ownership of your idea. Allies can support you with as [your name] mentioned earlier."

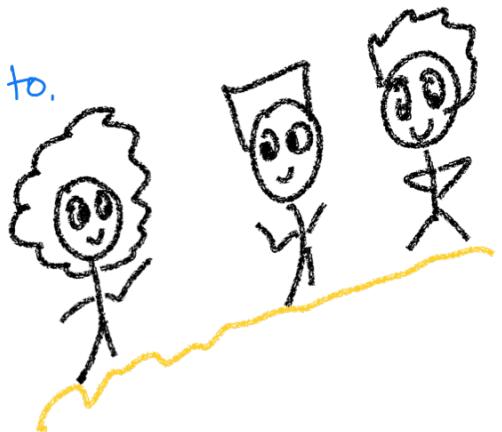


Exclusion from Informal Networks



Important discussions happen during informal gatherings you are not invited to.

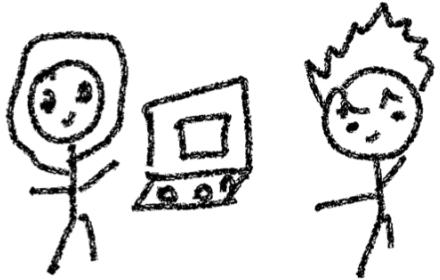
Proactively suggest inclusive team activities or directly express your interest. "I'd love to join next planning session. Can you keep me in the loop?"



Assumptions of Inferiority

A colleague says,
"you're very
technical for a
woman."⁹¹

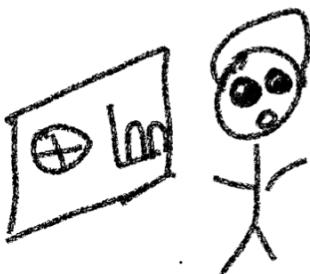
Respond with confidence,
"I've been working in tech
for 15 years, technical expertise
is a core part of my
career."⁹¹



Mansplaining

Someone explains
something to you in
a condescending way,
assuming you lack knowledge
on the subject.

Gently interrupt with
"Thanks I'm familiar
with this topic. Let's
dive into specific."



Tone Policing



You are discussing
an issue and someone
responds, "Calm down,
you are overreacting!"

Say,
I'm emphasizing this
because it's important
Let's focus on the
points I'm raising
please!"



How to deal with a doubt? (Imposter Syndrome)

Have you heard your inner voice sometimes telling you "You are not enough" that's where your imposter syndrome saying, it's not you. No matter how successful women get in their career life, most women experience this, especially in tech. Studies showed 75 percent of female executives faced imposter syndrome. It's like you are sitting in a big conference or in a meeting with full of confident people meanwhile, you are experiencing self-doubt instead of thinking about your qualification, experience and all the hard work you have put in. The syndrome does not only kill the confidence but it holds you back from reaching you to your highest potential and unfortunately it's deeply rooted in the systemic issues that has been discussed previously in this book. Kate Maxwell (Worldwide Education Industry executive) at Microsoft shared her story about how she once found out at her desk, a note stating you don't belong here it was anonymous. It shook her confidence, it did not only impacted her work but also her life. However, the bright side of the story is she reached out to her mentors, friends, therapist that support her to not only rebuilt confidence but her resilience. She mentioned : Now I know my worth and I do not attach to others opinions. Her journey is powerful reminder that imposter syndrome can be painful, it is possible to overcome from it. It can also become your power if you know how to deal with it. Then how can we handle this inner conflict? First we need to understand the root cause and recognising how common it is, mainly with higher achievers. First start acknowledging the feeling, it can decrease the power over you. Next, objectify the doubts that are running in your mind, what your inner self is telling you ? Are not you enough? counter this with " I have enough skills and experience to succeed" Replace your self-doubt with Self - affirmation. Try to focus on facts not emotions, ground your self with the reality, Pay attention to your next-Big steps to overcome doubts and negative thoughts. Don't afraid to say yes to the opportunities that might seem outside of your comfort zone it helps you to build confidence, that place is where you will learn the most. Celebrate your wins even it seems so small. You deserve recognition on How far you have came by yourself, and your hard work paying you off. Be your own friend, support and understand when its needed. Here is the important message

“ Every Room you entered , you belong there, no one can determine your worth, don’t even let any of them not even your own inner self, stand tall and own your space.

Limiting Belief :

One of the biggest part of creating imposter syndrome, is a limiting belief which are set up in different form throughout our lives. Most of us grew up being encouraged to be humble, to shrink ourselves and to doubt our capabilities. These conception can hold us back from chasing big opportunities especially when we have to speak up about our worth or any concept even knowing we are right. We have been taught that we have to be perfect at everything we do. Grace Perez (Chief digital Program officer) shared her thoughts, For years she thought she has to be perfect at everything before she goes for Leadership role. She believed that she had to tick every single word of requirements however, male on the other hand just go for it, even they marked only few points. It took her long to unlearn that conditioning. It happens because we have been instructed that good isn't enough. We have to be perfect. These kind of learning is tough to shake, but not impossible to break. Limiting belief can be deal by recognising barriers that need to be removed from our brain. We deserve to be into the spotlight but we are raised to stay hidden.

Lack of Role Models :

We need to talk about lack of role models for women in Tech. Imposter syndrome thrives when you don't see people like you in leadership or any path your are walking into. In a field dominated by men where all of the world's richest tech leaders are male Elon musk and Mark Zuckerberg, women like Mary Barra and Mira Murati remain rare exceptions. This lack of visibility makes it hard to believe you belong, and that doubt does not disappear with experience. Even senior woman often feel isolated, questioning if they are aiming too high. When you are one of the few women in the room, the pressure to represent all women can be overwhelming. Overcoming this mindset takes time, its about realising you deserve a seat at the table not because you are perfect but your presence matters.

Turning Barriers into Fuel:

Main important tool that can help you to overcome these barriers is Resilience. It is crucial tool in tech, its like every time you face problems bias or a challenge, you get opportunities to have a growth, to become more stronger and determined. In tech, challenges like bias, imposter syndrome and being overloaded are common but Resilience turns them into stepping stones. Every setback is a chance to grow stronger, when women succeed they clear the way for others to follow it's about lifting the underestimated, real change starts with empowering yourself and multiplies when you empower others, Speak up, find support, and keep pushing forward, your voice matters, your presence matters, together we can reshape tech one win at a time. These barriers can be your fuel to grow, learn and become the one to inspire others.