

# [***The Distraction Of Don Lemon In A Week About Women In Politics***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67M3-CNW1-DXVP-5363-00000-00&context=1516831)

Forbes.com

February 21, 2023 Tuesday

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**Length:** 730 words

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**Highlight:** In a week of big news about women in ***politics***, we instead focused on a man who seems oblivious to his own bias.

**Body**

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Head-scratching sexism: Let's talk about the vitriol lobbed at Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon and other women in ***politics***. (Photo by Jeff J Mitchell/Getty Images)

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**Here s an excerpt from this week s CxO newsletter. To get it to your inbox, .**

This could have been a week where we reflected on high-profile women. Scotland s first minister Nicola Sturgeon announced she was resigning, saying she doubted her ability to "keep going and keep going and keep going. Nikki Haley, the former South Carolina governor and UN ambassador in the Trump Administration,announced her candidacy for president.Like former New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, along with former House speaker Nancy Pelosi and numerous other women in ***politics***, they ve dealt with plenty of vitriol and harassment in public life.

Instead, we ve turned our attention to a man. To be fair, CNN anchor Don Lemon s on-air tirade about when a woman is in her prime was notable for its stupidity and sexism. According to a Google search, he said, women are pretty much done by 40. (**You can find his semi-apology for the inartful and irrelevant comment on Twitter, below a pinned 13-month-old tweet in which** ) Here are somelessons from his comments, as well as a look at the ageismandresearch on whether a 51 year old is past their prime as the 56-year-old anchor contends.

Onwards!. This morning, CNN announced thatLemon will return to CNN an odd way to reference the end of what we thought was a short vacation and will undergo formal training. (**May we suggest Google training, too?**) Will that help him become a better ally to women? Perhaps, though it s not clear if CNN s training program can also correct the I m-too-good-for-this-gig aura that s permeated his morning stint so far.

We all know what it s like to feel diminished and discounted because of our gender, race, age, or position in life, among other things. Lemon has talked about facing racism and he s had to deal with being viciously mocked by Donald Trump and others.

Being underestimated can occasionally work in your favor: As a young**Wall Street Journal** reporter covering the overthrow of Indonesia s President Suharto in 1998, I was given first dibs to interview the powerful Sultan of Yogyakarta because his handler told me the Sultan thought I d be more respectful than the old men standing by from rival publications (who appeared to be in their 30s).

But such instances are rare next to the missed opportunities that such bias can produce. Over the years, I ve dealt with other stereotypes and have become more aware of the need to challenge my own assumptions. We all have to battle bias in ourselves and others.

With sexism, as with other forms of bias, the challenge is how to bring everyone into the conversation. I ve often found that nothing clears a room of men like putting the word women in the title of a panel. Maybe they fear that conversation about the economy will instead turn to bust exercises, boys and babies if viewed through a gender lens. Maybe they worry about saying something that sounds tone-deaf or sexist, or think they don t have a right to contribute to the discussion. Maybe they wonder if conveying a dumb message will inspire calls to kill the messenger.

Lemon knows all about that. His missteps and obliviously sexist comments have sparked plenty of reaction. Take, for example, his insistence that women s soccer players were inferior to their male counterparts and deserved less money because men s sports were more interesting to watch. (**Lemon apparently did not Google attendance and revenue numbers for U.S. soccer, which suggest the opposite trend.**)

Moreover, he insisted that his views couldn't possibly be sexist because he grew up the only boy in a family of women." Then he turned to male viewers for reinforcement. Guys, am I wrong?! he said, as if the legitimate pushback from co-hosts Kaitlan Collins and Poppy Harlow was akin to being teased by some bossy sisters. You cannot make people become interested in things they aren t interested in!

Perhaps that is the real problem here. When confronted with facts that challenge preconceived and ill-conceived notions, we are supposed to learn, adapt and change. If Lemon isn t interested in evolving his views about women or himself, then he may be past his prime in this role.

**Load-Date:** February 22, 2023

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