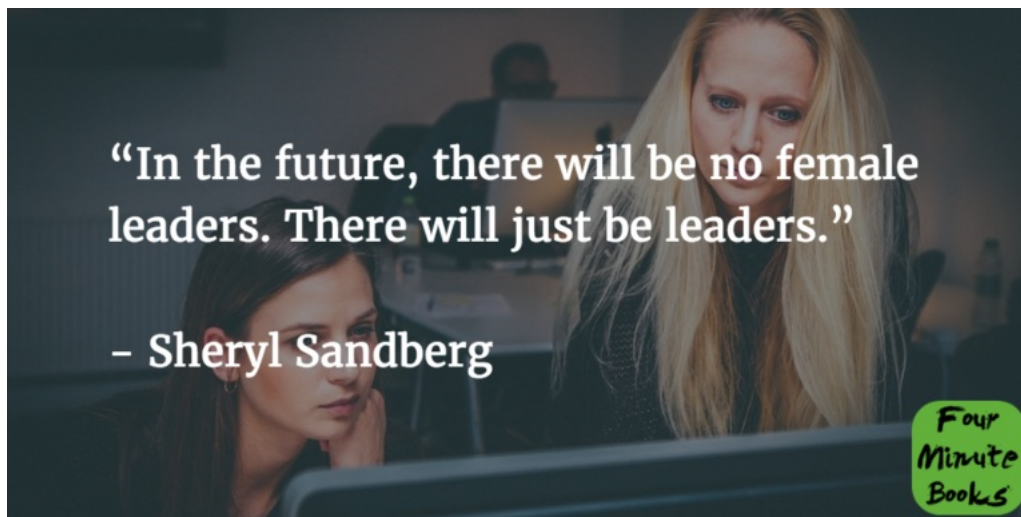


1-Sentence-Summary: *Lean In* digs deep into gender inequality and why women are still underrepresented as a valuable part of our global workforce, showing how they unintentionally hold themselves back, as well as outlining ways for us to enable and support them, including how you as a woman can take the lead and hold the flag of women in work high.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



One of Germany's biggest political debates over the last few years has been about gender quotas. As of January 2016, we at last passed a law that states 30% of board seats of the country's biggest companies have to be held by women. Historically, the quote was more along the lines of 10%, and now has risen to about 22% – because many businesses still ignore the rule.

Does this help deal with gender inequality? I personally doubt it. Yes, this will give some women who really deserve it a break and make their lives easier. But at the same time, some women will end up on board seats, just because of the rule, and if you know anything about mass media, you can tell which of these two perspectives will dominate public perception of the matter.

I'd love to hear Sheryl Sandberg's take on this in *Lean In*. What I do know is that she thinks we can't just mandate and legislate our way to gender equality too. We have to substantially change our attitudes and behavior – both men and women!

For now, use these 3 lessons to better navigate the working world as a woman:

1. Treat your career like a jungle gym.
2. Learn to strike a balance between ambition and appeal.

3. Before you become a mother, lean into your career as much as you can.

The working world is a tough place for women, no doubt about it. But it is what it is, so instead of crying, let's see how you can make the best of where we're at!

Lesson 1: Imagine your career as a visit to the jungle gym: there are many ways to get on top!

There's a lot of talk about the career ladder and how it's broken, rigged or leans against the wrong wall. Actually, there might be no career ladder at all. Just a career jungle gym. You know what that is? It's one of those setups on a playground with monkey bars, that you can climb multiple ways to get on top.

Today, careers develop like those jungle gyms. Think of yours as one huge, indoor, playground-like place for kids, with tons of ropes, wall bars and nets. How would you approach such a thing?

You'd probably keep going higher, **but you wouldn't stress much about which route you take** – because there are so many ways to get to your destination! If you treat your career exactly this way, you'll advance a lot faster, all while staying calmer and happier.

To do this, Sheryl suggests you plan both for the short and long term. Your long-term dream can help you decide what kind of work you'll take on, even if it's not entirely clear to you. When Sheryl thought about joining Google early in 2001, she ultimately chose based on whether she thought the job was meaningful and had potential for growth.

Add short-term (aka 18-month) goals to that, and you have a solid sense of direction, without too much pressure.

Lesson 2: Walk the razor's edge by balancing your ambition with your appeal to others.

For women to cultivate the right public image to advance their career is like walking on a tightrope. You can't be too ambitious, because others will just perceive you as rude, which often happens when women are assertive and go for what they want. If you're too nice though, people will put you into the "cute bucket" and not take you seriously, which is something you don't want either.

When it gets down to the nitty-gritty, you have to be nice and feminine *just enough* to not come across as rude, while arguing for what you want *without* making it seem like you're selling yourself too hard.

To pull this off, try avoiding strong words and statements like "this is wrong," "I want," or "you should consider." Instead, be nice and accommodating, but draw clear lines when you notice others approach them. It also helps to generalize and argue on behalf of a

group, rather than yourself, as well as quoting other leaders and industry statistics and facts.

Let's hope these kinds of verbal and behavioral acrobatics won't be needed one day, but for now, you're better off just learning them and using them when you have to!

Lesson 3: Lean into your career while you can and don't dial back for motherhood before you have to.

The one thing you should avoid at all costs is giving up before you have to, just because society tells you too. Look, I'm 100% in favor of having at least one full-time parent in any family. I really believe we need more dedicated moms and dads – it's probably the most underrated job in the world.

But even I don't think you should sell yourself short way before it's time to do that (especially if you're a woman). **Sheryl calls this leaning in, instead of leaning back.**

Your tendency might be to cut back and, for example, not take a promotion, because "you'll have kids soon anyway," but that's exactly wrong, because it'll lead you to make career decisions that are guaranteed to make you miserable by the time you actually have kids.

Instead, go full throttle for as long as you can, take opportunities, give it a shot and by the time pregnancy rolls around – you'll figure out that one too

Lean In Review

As I said in the intro, I think entirely regulating the playing field to "level" it 50:50 is not the solution to gender inequality. There will always be differences in men and women, and it's a good thing there are. However, there are places where life is just plain unfair, and that will require big shifts to improve. I'm confident we'll get there, but in the meantime, use *Lean In* to make the most of right now!

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What else can you learn from the blinks?

- How many cents per dollar women earn less than men
- What percentage of women works full-time 20 years after graduating college
- Which situations leaders can encourage equality in by simply pointing their finger
- The syndrome that damages women's confidence more than men's
- One simple trick to encourage others to be authentic
- What you should do to get a mentor instead of asking for one

- How women sometimes discourage dad's from doing their job
- Why guilt management is more important for women than time management

Who would I recommend the Lean In summary to?

The 16 year old girl president of the computer club, the 24 year old college grad, who's about to enter the workforce and has to get herself some thick skin, because she knows she'll enter a male-dominated industry, and anyone who complains about being disadvantaged because of their gender.