1.1

The main concept I take away from this course is the BATNA system. The techniques for negotiation and how to prevent myself from giving away too much while receiving too little was very helpful. Plus, the examples in the lecture and in the discussion forums completely resonated with me. So, I realize that there is plenty of room for improvement with a little thought and effort.

Secondly, I was found the studies concluding that women are equally capable or better with regard to possessing and exercising leadership traits very inspiring. With all the loose talk of how women are capable and efficient but not authoritative or leader-like, this was uplifting. So, next time I hear how women can manage but not lead, I am going to cite these findings.

Thirdly, the detailed definition and elaborate explanation of glass ceiling, secondary gender bias and the subtle ways in which discrimination is rampant was quite an eye opener. I realize now that by themselves, phrases and gestures and small acts of discrimination are insignificant, but together they do add up to major prejudices that negatively affect all women.

The next concept that I found very informative was the techniques by which women in leadership respond to gender bias. The examples and strategies are so varied and useful , that I am trying to carefully study them, so as to apply the same in the right context in my own life- personal and professional. I hope to positively counter any bias, however little that I face and also increase awareness among peers and friends about these issues.

The last week video about career, life balance was one of the best. Women DO juggle with career and life dilemmas, and this video nailed those issues. I really liked it because Professor Bilimoria has not only tackled the issue but also presented ways in which we can come out of this quagmire.

1.2

The negotiation assignment was invaluable because I learned that I can negotiate better with just a little bit of application and overcome a rigid, negatively conditioned mindset. I am trying to apply the technique to all negotiations – personal and professional to get used to it.

The self confidence assessment was very insightful. The quiz with the explanation are invaluable because I became aware of my own self in ways I was not before. Plus, the steps to better our morale and confidence are very handy. I found the lesson that 'success breeds success, but too soon can actually lessen our enthusiasm'- an eye opener. I am determined to act on the steps mentioned and make a difference in myself, one step at a time.

The second week's assignment of interviewing senior leaders and learning from their experience was a greta exercise in learning issues at the ground level. One cannot anticipate all the issues that come in a senior post; so getting inside knowledge from someone who;s been there, done that was valuable. Also, I realized that senior women have gone through the same phases as me, so it is smart to be prepared with that knowledge.

Another related assignment was the Power map exercise. Just chalking out our ideal jobs and gauging how favorable the response we get was empowering. Plus, the assignment asked to list ways in which we can turn negative influence to positive. That was really good. I sometimes get daunted by the obstacles, but this showed me that you have to move beyond and think of solutions. Gauging constraints is only the first step, finding solutions and acting on them is the real answer to getting ahead.

The first week's assignment about interviewing five people and asking them to state our strengths was quite impactful for me. While hearing others explicitly state my strengths was hugely ego boosting, it was also quite startling. The strengths I thought people would state did not match the actual answers. It really drove home the point that people's perception of us is not quite what we think. I am i the habit of soliciting feedback but I definitely need to ask more pointed questions and make them more specific to reach the goals I wish to attain.

1.3

I am trying to use the steps enlisted in the self confidence quiz and assessment in daily life. I am trying to immerse myself in new challenges and revel in the small successes to boost my self esteem. I have taken up two micro volunteering activities that utilize my coding skills for a worthy cause. I am doing it in small increments but keeping it fairly difficult to keep myself motivated. Also, I am trying not to brush off any success as exclusively team effort and trying to be specific about my unique contribution. It is difficult to implement the shift in thinking but I am getting there.

2-4

As a leader, the five most important values to me are leadership by example, empathy, self confidence, energy and problem solving /strategic thinking. Transparency and fairness in all dealings accompany a leader who leads by example. It inspires confidence in peers and juniors and invokes admiration. People are more inclined to trust and follow such a leader. Empathy is very important as discussed in the videos and forums. I also attach great importance to self confidence. It aids in making all sorts of decisions that a leader needs to take- tough ones, ones with far reaching consequences, in tricky situations and so on. by energy, I mean efficiency and enthusiasm, an air of capability; the persona to be thought of as someone who takes action and who invokes the same spirit in others. Strategic thinking and problem solving are other traits that are essential to the role of a leader. Progress and growth will come only with the right strategies, ideas and innovations for which one needs vision and the bent of mind to develop and implement techniques to achieve the same.

3-7

1. Communication skills
2. Learnability and Adaptability
3. Striving for Quality
4. Feedback Driven Efforts

Analytical mind

3-8

-Improve my negotiation skills- using the BATNA system; try to have more control over the proceedings. Go into any dealing with awareness of areas that I can compromise on and key items that are non-negotiable.

-Need to enhance my esteem and self-confidence. Based on the readings and discussion forum, there are many ways by which I subtly undermine my own worth- be it for being accommodating, for bonding, due to societal norms. I need to scrutinize my actions and language and remove any subconscious phrases or actions that might be taking away from my capable, competitive and affable persona.

-Learn managerial principles and techniques. I am planning to enroll in a course that teaches the same.

-Keep myself updated on latest technologies (UX and Big Data) and buzzwords by enrolling in online classes and subscribing to relevant groups and publications

-Learn touch typing. Since, I am involved in a lot of correspondence and communication electronically, touch typing can improve my efficiency unto three times. I am planning to devote at least twenty minutes every day to master this skill. (My current typing speed is average)

3-9

-Learning of the different methods employed by leaders to counter the Double Bind Dilemma. The examples given were quite useful and strategic. Definitely, more study and careful application will help leverage my career.

-Networking skills is an area I need to work on. Despite communication skills being one of my strengths, I fumble at networking events. A lot of practice, preparation, change in mindset and placing myself in networking events are ways to become a good networker.

-Mentee- mentor relationship is another area I will need to focus on. This course helped me understand the immense significance of having a mentor in any career. Accordingly, I have targeted few people who can help guide me to greater success. I am currently working out a plan to reach out to them and hope to put my plans in action in the next fortnight.

3-10

1. For networking events, I have subscribed to groups on LinkedIn that post details of such events.
2. I have started reaching out to acquaintances on LinkedIn and in person and informed them about my eagerness to improve my networking skills. In fact, I am also reaching out to mutual acquaintances on LinkedIn and in person who might help further my career goals by finding common ground and establishing first contact via messages, emails, casual planned meetings.
3. For mentorship, I have zoned in on few relatives and colleagues who will be able to guide me. I am planning to email/ meet with them in the next fortnight to be gain valuable insight on how to further my career.

3-11

1. The first person is a consultant (and a relative) who was formerly employed by companies like Yahoo, Applied Materials. His knowledge of skills and professional conduct in IT companies will be very useful in developing myself. I have already decided to email him and ask him to be a mentor. As a relative, the direct approach will not be too blunt or misinterpreted. As a consultant, his knowledge of different companies and people will be of tremendous help.

2. The second person is an acquaintance who attends the same playdates as me with her child. As a fellow Mommy, I already have a working friendship. She is in a senior position in the testing department of an IT company. With similar testing backgrounds, I can ask her to at casually introduce me to few acquaintances and inform me about networking events. I hope to take it from there and make the best of those opportunities.

3. Third target is one of my professors. He taught me a course on Software Development Processes for Businesses using Agile. As a consultant working as Advisor for many companies, he can further my cause. I plan to begin with asking for tips, subscribing and commenting to his blog and slowly showcasing my own skills. By regularly seeking guidance, I can ease our student-teacher relationship into mentor-mentee relationship.

4. The next person I have zoned in on is a former Senior manager (now head of region in home country) in my previous company. As a woman who worked up the ranks and is now an esteemed senior leader, her experience will be rich and full of practical advice. Besides, she can tell me about the different biases she faced or still faces and what works best in the situation she has encountered. She is also married with two kids, so her work life balance techniques will also be quite helpful.