

## Women in Leadership Seminar Highlights June 27, 2008



Candace Kaspers

### Women in Leadership - Highlights

**June 27, 2008: "Sexcess: The New Gender Rules at Work"** featuring Candace Kaspers, Ph.D., co-founder of Gender Plus+, Inc. and co-author of the best selling book of the same title. A management consultant in Atlanta for over 20 years, she's worked with corporate execs from coast to coast conducting communications audits, focus groups, interventions, coaching, teambuilding, and stress reduction programs. In addition, she's been a university department chair and college professor. Her community involvement includes president of WBO/Atlanta chapter; president, Anti-Prejudice Consortium, and past board chair for the YWCA. No one has more credibility in the areas of diversity and gender issues than Dr. Candy Kaspers.

### Key Learning Points:

#### About Males and Females

##### Mental Models

For men: it's about being "one up" or "one down" - Men and Women have different mental models. Men have vertical models and women have lateral models.

##### Body Chemicals

Women have the body chemical oxytocin, which propels us to make connections and create relationships. For men, it's testosterone that drives actions and behavior.

##### Brain Functions and Thought Patterns

When it comes to our brain functions, each sex is driven differently. Men have a laser-like focus and typically use one hemisphere of their brain. Women view the world with a wide-angle lens and utilize both hemispheres simultaneously. This helps to build "bridges" or connections between different ideas and generally helps women be more whole brain oriented.

Men compartmentalize ideas, situations, and other mental functions better than women. Women's thought patterns "bleed through" to one another, constantly keeping a running

tab on multiple ideas. For example, men think we hold grudges, when really whatever is bothering us is actually bleeding through to whatever else we're doing. Women just want closure so we can stop voluntarily or involuntarily thinking about it.

Stemming from the fact that men have a vertical mental model, men think in terms of one up or one down, which means they are always trying to be one up. For example, asking other people for advice puts a person one down, which in turn takes away a (an invisible) point.

### **Eyes**

Women have more cones in the back of their eyes, which help to pick up more details. Women also possess greater ocular range. The combined brain and eye function act almost as an "Antenna" for women.

### **Internal Processors**

In general, men and women have different internal processes. However, even though these processes are different, neither process is inferior to the other. Women's internal processors access a lot of input. One example of the difference between women's and men's internal processors is the way man and women make decisions. Generally, men make fairly quick decisions when it comes to most things. They go from point A, to B, to C; women on the other hand, internally weigh the pros and cons of most decisions, utilizing the wide scope lens, whole-brained, bleed-through mental model. Women go from point A to B, to L, to M, and then back to C.

Overall, men have an intense but limited focus. Women have a bandwidth where we need and want a back-drop. Women listen to tonality; men take things literally and don't necessarily look for, or pick up on subtext.

### **Approaching Tasks / Getting the Job Done**

Men don't like to compound tasks. In a lab experiment testing the way men and women approach tasks, each gender was given the same tools and tasks to complete in a three minute time frame. Subjects had to make 50 paper copies, a pot of coffee, a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, and answer a phone call. When the clock began the men applied their lazar focus. All of the male subjects started and waited for the 50 copies to finish, did the same with the pot of coffee, and inevitably ran out of time. The women began the copy machine, made the coffee while waiting on the copies to finish, and answered the phone while making the peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

Women are also trained to be self-efficient in a lateral network, which is a conservative approach. Men think that relying on another male is risky. When it comes to getting the job done women *over produce* the work, but often *under promise* to control for the potential of not completing the job or not doing it to the best of their ability. In the vertical mental model of men, "asking" for men is the equivalent of being "one down." Women should show more confidence and enthusiasm (move toward over promising). *Fake the confidence even if you don't have it.*

### **Communication**

Nature abhors a vacuum. Sometimes women read between the lines when there's nothing there. What women may interpret as someone's "intention," may not always be accurate. Men enjoy argumentation/debate because they view it as a vehicle to sharpen the mind. They must develop points that stick, and make these points indubitably (by interrupting, showing bravado, etc.). Women like to bridge gaps and are relationship oriented. In various discussions, women talk and men debate. Women need to know how to debate and not take it personally, which is how men debate.

Typically, women go to great lengths to say "yes" about most everything. For me, "no" isn't that difficult and when a man hears, NO, it's not an absolute. It simply means, "you haven't convinced me yet."

### **Motivation**

For men, business is definitely a competitive game. For women, it's often personal and the boundaries are more fluid (not so compartmentalized).

Men have their friends and buddies, share a "team" with them. Often one is the quarterback of the team. With women our friends are our confidantes. Men don't understand this relationship. If you share something with a male, it might put you "one down." Also for men, when they hear anyone vent, it's complaining....and they just ant to "fix it."

Re power, power shared is power lost for men...but for women shared is power added...and that kind of power is equally strong.

### **Leadership**

Male leadership model = inspiring others to follow. Women's leadership model = enabling others to contribute. Males hate to feel unappreciated; women hate to be invisible, talked over.

It's easier for women to play the game (men's game) because they're more adaptable (but they need to play the game their own way.)