
Read over what you just wrote and circle any “value” words. This is a word portrait of the working you so if you see any gaps, add to the description before you go on.

Where’s the Rub?

Most women who have spent time in the still male-dominated world have found their values and characteristic relational styles challenged. It’s important to get your frustrations and fears out, give them a name, and share them with others. For much too long, women had to suffer indignities and lack of respect in silence. Those days are over, but not everyone (especially men) has caught up! Use the following exercise to assess the degree to which you are being limited by outdated attitudes and behaviors (either others’ or *yours*). Read each sentence, then rate it for how relevant it is to your experience by marking an X in the appropriate box. 1 = always, 2 = often, 3 = sometimes, and 4 = never.

	1	2	3	4
I am treated with the same level of respect as my male counterparts.				
I feel comfortable disagreeing with my male coworkers when appropriate.				
I have full membership in the “club” at my job.				

	1	2	3	4
I am treated as a coworker, not an object.				
My contribution receives acknowledgment equal to that of the men around me.				
I feel free at work to be the same person I am away from work.				
I have access to what it takes, or can get it, to rise to the top of my organization, should I decide I want to.				
I feel equally comfortable relating to the men and to the women I work with.				
I understand and agree with the “rules” of courtesy in my workplace.				
I’m comfortable telling the males in my workplace how I want to be treated.				
I feel that my strengths have a legitimate contribution to make in my workplace.				
I have the same access to the people with decision-making power in my workplace that my male coworkers have.				
I feel free to speak up if I experience harassment of any kind.				
I am in an environment that recognizes and honors the positive value of diversity.				
I feel free to fail.				

	1	2	3	4
I can take responsibility for my mistakes and learn from them without fear of reprisal.				
I am willing and prepared to negotiate for my own recognition and/or advancement.				
I can live true to my core values in the workplace without fear of reprisal.				
I would feel equally comfortable working for a woman or a man.				
I would feel equally comfortable supervising a woman or a man.				

Look over your answers above. If you responded to any of the statements with a 3 or 4, you have identified an area needing growth. It's in the nature of these sorts of challenges that you may need to seek professional help or counseling. Talk to a human resources representative, a counselor, or your pastor. As part of the generation that is building a new era, you owe it to yourself and future generations of women to be proactive.

Embracing Independence

The right to become full participants in society has given women the opportunity not only to use talents and skills in the public arena, but also to achieve financial independence. When we look back in history and realize to what degree financial dependence kept women subjugated, we can only celebrate this development. But this also means that every woman has a responsibility to think and plan for her own future. Even if you're in a strong partnership, you can suddenly find yourself flying solo because of death, divorce, or disability. Are you prepared? Use the checklist below to see how well positioned you are for the long run.