

Inspiring women of the future



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There is a simple truth that we should admire and respect individuals not necessarily because of the positions they occupy, but instead, for what they do and the legacy they leave behind.

There are, for example, a number of women who, over the years, both through hard work and longevity, have sustained visible positions of power and prestige to become role models that many admire and aspire to be. But we need more women like them, and for this to happen women need to break out of the moulds that they find themselves forced into; they need to cease conforming to accepted and acceptable models of behaviour where power and authority elude them and where their own opinions are held back in favour of the status quo.

In truth, they need to no longer be the perfect woman in a man's world.

Change is perfectly possible, but it often puts women wishing to advance themselves in positions where they are vilified. Rather, it needs to be possible for them to be able to display and demonstrate power and authority with the confidence that they will remain appreciated and respected as effective leaders.

Indeed, a more balanced distribution of power and authority at home, in society and in workplaces still remains elusive.

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Falling behind

Major European banks are a perfect example of where change is both possible and necessary, and yet they are falling behind on their promises to promote more women into senior roles.

According to Bloomberg, in the last two years not a single female chief executive officer has been appointed by one of Europe's top 30 banks. This is despite almost half of the CEOs in that group being replaced in the same time frame. Put simply, while the banks all had the opportunity to replace the most senior executive with a woman, none did so, even though they had many serving on their boards. (European Banks Promising More Diversity Appoint Only Male CEOs).

Of course, having more women on boards is to be welcomed but that needs to trickle down at the executive level and through the entire talent pipeline for the power and authority to be redistributed more evenly inside organizations.

Fundamentally, society needs more inspirational women who don't conform to what men think is their role. It needs freethinkers who are willing and able to offer strong opinions while holding and exercising power without guilt. And this requires a change in our collective mindset.

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