

THAT'S

WHAT

SHE

SAID

JOANNE LIPMAN

"ATTENTION, GOOD GUYS:
this book is for you. It's a rare
guide on championing gender
equality that you'll actually enjoy
reading and it's full of strategies
for improving your workplace."
—Adam Grant, *New York Times*
bestselling author of *Option B*
with Sheryl Sandberg

What Men
Need to Know
(AND WOMEN
NEED TO
TELL THEM)
About
Working
Together

Cheat Sheet:

Tips and Takeaways for Men—and Women

The scores of men and women I interviewed have come up with multiple strategies to level the gender playing field. Here are a few that any one of us, male or female, can adopt:

1. **Interrupt the interrupters.**

Even female Supreme Court justices are interrupted three times more frequently than male justices. As powerful as these women are, they “are just like other women,” Northwestern University researchers wrote, “talked over by their male colleagues.” **Solution:** Institute a “no interruptions” rule for everyone, as *The Walking Dead* producer Glen Mazzara does. Alternatively, if a woman is cut off in conversation, cut off the interruptor: “Olivia was speaking. Let’s let her finish her thought first.”

2. **Use amplification and brag buddies.**

Women’s ideas often aren’t heard—until they are repeated by a man, who gets the credit. **Solution:** Take a cue from the women of the Obama administration and “amplify” the original speaker, by repeating her idea and ensuring that she is recognized for it. What’s more, since women are penalized if they talk about their accomplishments, they (along with simpatico men) can become each others’ “brag buddies.” They can share each others’ accomplishments with one another, and then each tout the other’s achievements.

3. **Diversify the interviewers, not just the applicants.**

More companies are adopting a Rooney Rule for the office, requiring a diverse slate of applicants for job openings. But bringing in female applicants is only a first step. If the interviewers aren’t

diverse—if, say, all the interviewers are white men—they are less likely to see her as a “cultural fit,” while she may feel so uncomfortable that she rejects the job even if offered. **Solution:** Mix things up. Expand that Rooney rule to the interviewers too: ensure that not only the slate of candidates, but the interviewers are diverse.

4. **She'll help your bottom line.**

Women are often boxed out of jobs or promotions because they aren't “a good fit,” or they are dismissed as “diversity hires” who are a sign of lowered standards. **Solution:** Marshal the facts. Adding women makes work groups more creative. Companies with female chief financial officers make fewer, better acquisitions than those with male chief financial officers. Firms with the most female board members outperform those with the least by almost every financial measure. Mixed groups can even solve a murder more accurately than single-sex groups. Want a recipe for success? Simply add women.

5. **She's not “sorry,” she's not “lucky,” and she's not asking you a question.**

Researchers have found that women often use qualifiers (“Sorry to bother you, but . . .”) to make themselves less threatening to others. If they do act assertively, they are penalized for it, considered bossy, bitchy, or difficult to work with. **Solution:** Women are highly aware of these verbal ticks and try to control them themselves. But if they don't, just remember the next time a woman ends a sentence in a question-mark “upspeak,” imagine she is instead stating it as a fact and banging on the table.

6. **Yeah, that's not a compliment.**

Women are often subjected to compliments that, intentionally or not, belittle them—like when I spent hours preparing for a television news interview, only to be told by a senior executive that I looked “cute.” **Solution:** Would you say that to a man? If not, you probably should not say it to a woman, either.

7. **She's pretty sure you don't respect her.**

Researchers have found that men get more respect than women—even if they hold the exact same position. **Solution:** Be on the lookout for slights large and small, and adjust your own behavior. When you meet a couple, do you ask the man about his work but ignore the woman? Do you listen to a man in a meeting, but look at your email when a woman speaks? That vigilance goes for all of us, myself included. In an early draft of this book, I unwittingly referred to a female doctor by her first name, but a male physician by the honorific “doctor.” Turns out that this is a common slight, researchers have found. Not a mistake I’ll make again.

8. **Don't decide for her.**

When a new opportunity comes up, I’ve often heard senior executives say that Mia would be ideal, but she has a new baby at home and wouldn’t want to travel . . . or she has young kids and wouldn’t want to relocate . . . or she wouldn’t want to take on the extra hours. **Solution:** Don’t assume. Ask her. Even if she declines, present the next opportunity, and the one after that. My own bosses did that for me when my children were young—and as result, when I was ready to rev up my career they were there, still offering me opportunities.

9. **Don't be afraid of tears.**

Barbara Annis and John Gray, coauthors of the book *Work with Me: The 8 Blind Spots Between Men and Women in Business*, identify emotion as one of the major pitfalls men face. Fear of tears can lead male managers to hold back from giving women the honest feedback they need to progress. **Solution:** If you’re a manager, check your employee reviews to ensure you evaluate men and women equally. And by the way, if a woman does tear up, understand why: She isn’t crying because she’s sad. She’s crying because she is frustrated—or because she’s *mad as hell*. When men are angry, they yell; for women, crying is pretty much the same thing.

10. **She's ready for a raise, but she won't ask for it.**

Men are four times more likely to ask for a raise than women—and when women do ask we typically request 30 percent less than men do, says Carnegie Mellon University economics professor Linda Babcock. **Solution:** If you're a manager, take a look at whether you are rewarding the squeaky wheel—whether men are demanding raises more often and outearning women with comparable experience on your team. And if you're an employee, arm yourself with salary data, available from companies like PayScale, Salary.com, and Glassdoor. Several states and some countries now require gender wage gap audits, with the results announced publicly.

11. **"Hire women your mom's age."**

That catchy headline on a *New York Times* op-ed by Sally Koslow, a former editor in chief of *McCall's*, perfectly captures the conundrum of older women. Many either quit or took lesser "mommy track" roles when their children were young. But as the kids fly the nest, women have as much ambition as ever, and are eager to rev up their careers. **Solution:** Hire them! Better yet, help structure work so that we don't lose them in the first place. For women who want to step back when kids are young, offer projects that don't require facetime but allow them to continue to contribute and grow—for example, by writing legal briefs or building financial models.

12. **She deserves a promotion. She just doesn't know it yet.**

Men are far more likely than women to raise their hands for a bigger job, whether they're ready for it or not. Companies including Google, meanwhile, have found that qualified women often don't nominate themselves. **Solution:** Make sure qualified women are in the mix, whether they have put up their hands or not. Be prepared to twist a few arms. Several executives I spoke with told me they identify women who have the right criteria, and ask them to apply. It doesn't mean a woman will get the job—but she certainly won't get it if her name isn't in the pool to begin with.

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