

From Good Daughter to Respected Peer: Changing Influence Across the Career Lifecycle

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REAL-LIFE
SOLUTIONS



PRACTICAL
ADVICE

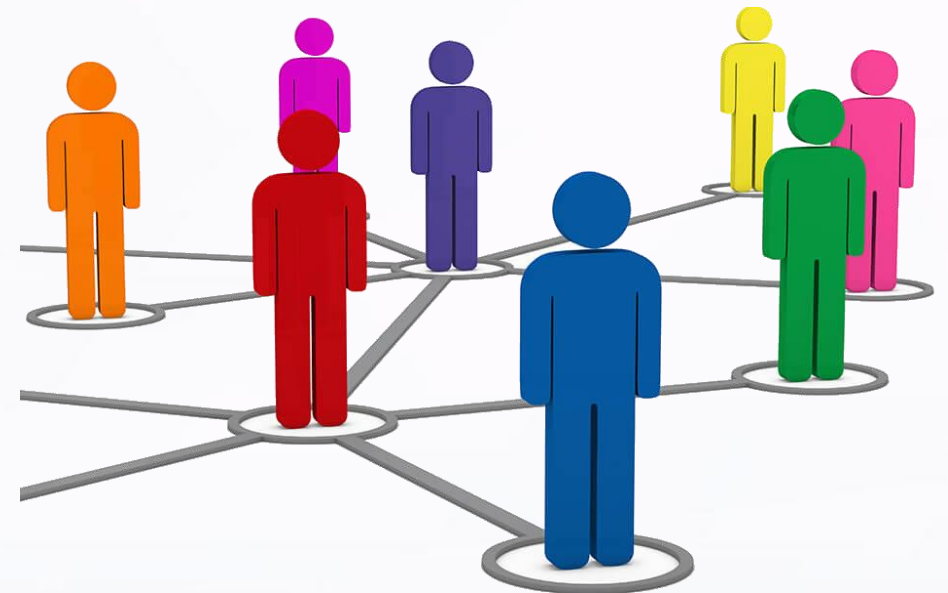


SOCIAL
SCIENCE

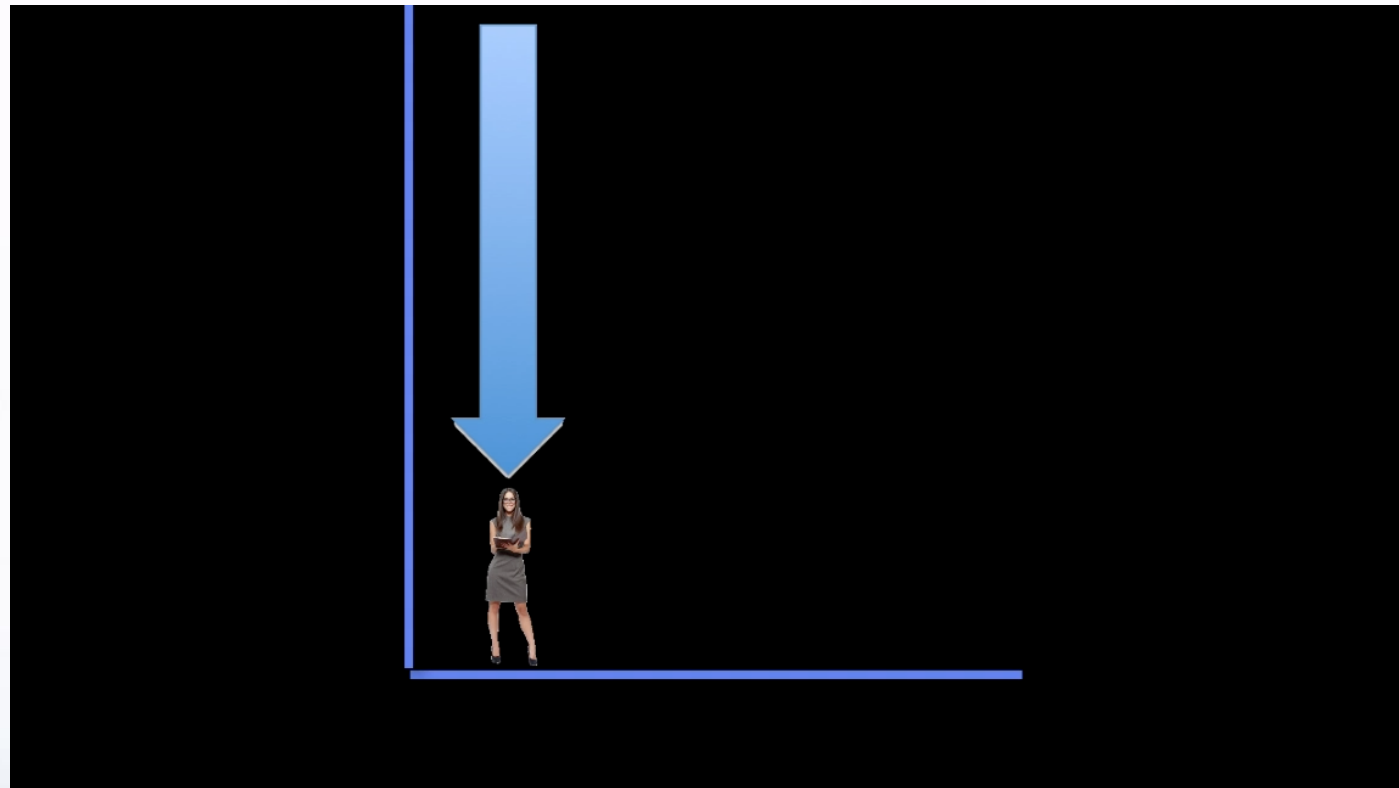


Let's start with Molly.

Goals of power change over the career



Power is not an individual characteristic



At work, you're embedded in multiple circles



Building credits: “Conformity”





Building creative competence”



Career Lifecycle – Power/Influence/Credit Phases

Early Career	Middle Career	Senior Career
<p>Be a good subordinate Be a good protégé Take initiative (but not too much) Start to act like a leader (but not too much)</p> <p><i>Distinguish yourself through personal merit and task competence.</i></p>	<p>Start shifting from protégé to peer Build matrix and relationship skills Start developing political skills Know when/how to code switch (and when not!) Cultivate followers</p> <p><i>Establish yourself through strategic, outwardly-focused actions.</i></p>	<p>Internalize sense of your power Build a stable of supporters Mentor and sponsor others Use influence strategically to achieve your goals Use alliances, resources to counter competitive challenges</p> <p><i>Embody organizational power while focusing energy outside yourself.</i></p>

A young woman with brown hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt, is smiling and looking towards the camera. She is in an office environment. In the background, two other people are working at desks with computers. A bookshelf is visible on the right side of the frame. The lighting is bright and natural, suggesting a window nearby.

Where do women get stuck?

Largely in the middle.

- By the time we get to senior levels, only 20% of management positions are held by women.
- Ernst & Young found that there were fewer female board members among companies on the S&P1500 than there were men named John or Robert or James or William.
- Clearly, women are getting lost at this transition point.



Women's behaviors?

- Often blamed
- Not adequate to explain the problem

Humanize study

- Men and women showed equivalent interaction patterns, including exposure to senior people.
- Women are doing the right things.
- The right things aren't leading to the same benefits for women.



<https://hbr.org/2017/10/a-study-used-sensors-to-show-that-men-and-women-are-treated-differently-at-work>

Key issues are social/organizational

- What kinds of interactions are women having?
- How are women's behaviors interpreted?

What kinds of interactions

- Are you being mentored?
- Are you being SPONSORED?



ACTION POINT: Change your interactions

- Find a sponsor
- Help mentors become sponsors
- Educate them about the difference
- Articulate the value of investing in you and the specific actions you hope the sponsor will take



What if your mentor won't sponsor?

- Peer sponsorship
- Amplification
- Recruiting followers to show deference



How women's behaviors are interpreted

- 'Leadership = extraversion, overconfidence'

ACTION POINTS:

- Highlight your actual competence and accomplishments.
- Enlist colleagues to note your achievements.
- Look for (or create) settings where the loudest doesn't always win



How women's behaviors are interpreted

- Top management makes poor attributions about behaviors linked to the middle-management role

ACTION POINTS:

- Remember your upward circles!
- Display your "power self" to superiors
Visible interactions with your team?
Step up in a critical situation?
- Discuss code-switching explicitly.



How organizations can do better

- Recognize the unique demands and skill set required at middle levels of management
- Develop evaluation and promotion criteria that recognize “hidden” skills in this domain
- Train and reward relationship building, not just self-promotion



Summary – Individual Strategies

- Find a sponsor or convert your mentor to a sponsor
- Use allies to advocate for your value
- Look outside the organization when necessary
- Deploy peer strategies such as peer sponsorship, amplification, showing deference, and advertising your achievements
- Educate your colleagues about what competence looks like
- Take a fearless inventory of your circles and assess how you're doing at building credit with the ones you need
- Don't neglect your upward circles!
- Engineer ways to display your powerful self upward
- Have conversations about middle-management code-switching to build awareness about it

Summary – Organizational Strategies

- Base hiring and promotion decisions on job analyses
- Recognize relationship-management skill in performance standards
- Ensure that women have access to sponsorship (train mentors if necessary)
- Be clear about the behaviors expected in upward and downward interactions
- Don't be hypocritical: Don't say, for example, that middle managers should be appropriately deferential with superiors and then reward only men for violating this expectation



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