

# **Chapter Thirteen**

## **The Power Of The Feminine At Work**

*'I would rather trust a woman's instinct than a man's reason'*  
*Stanley Baldwin*

We have all experienced good and bad managers and business people in our time, regardless of gender. There are some fundamental behaviours that are crucial to good business practice. It is the responsibility of the person concerned to undertake these behaviours, to constantly assess their own performance against the criteria and take ownership of their own 'journey'. Not many people take the time or have the moral courage to do so.

Women are well placed in the world to take this responsibility. Our capacity for longevity of performance, emotional stamina and moral courage is huge. If women make themselves accountable at every stage of their journey they will automatically emerge as a force to be reckoned with and a benchmark of excellence for others to emulate.

### **Examples of negative business behaviour**

- No EQ (emotional quotient)
- No political awareness (small 'p')
- Problem focused
- Delegate upwards
- Focused on skill rather than people
- Naïve about networks
- Recruits weak replicas because they are threatened by talent
- Bad delegators
- Operates from comfort zone of authority rather than responsibility
- Will manage a legacy rather than having the courage to make changes
- Tries to be everyone's friend
- Will abuse their status

### **Examples of positive business behaviour**

- Supports other people
- Builds good, solid networks
- Instils commitment and is a good influencer
- Motivates everyone
- Is self-aware and adaptable
- Finds solutions not problems and will volunteer

Not averse to conflict and will manage it well  
Communicates a clear vision  
Has a 'can do' attitude  
Excellent crisis management skills  
Decisive  
Operates with honesty and integrity and is a role model for others

The impact of the above on the organisation as a whole and the people within it is vast.

When the negative business skills are prevalent internally it is far more likely that a culture of mistrust, stress, uncertainty, resentment and competitiveness exists.

When positive business skills are the dominant style, conversely it is far more likely that a culture of trust, collaboration, sustainability, loyalty, collective vision and sharing exists.

***Where would you prefer to work? Which business would you prefer to own and run?***

If you are currently in the former and are not, at the moment, at the top rung of management, you may be sitting there thinking, 'I'm too small to be able to make an impact, change the culture or have a say'.

I'd like to quote the wonderful Anita Roddick who said

***'if you think you're too small to have an impact on the world, try going to bed with a mosquito in the room'***

## **Good business skills**

Good business skills are a combination of many attributes, virtues, skills, personality traits and communication expertise. Whenever I ask groups I work with, 'What makes a good manager/business owner' the same words always appear.

### **Enthusiasm**

For the team; the people in the organisation; their company; their role; the role of others; new ideas; the vision; and 'can do' attitudes.

### **Integrity**

A grounded, moral mind set; setting and sticking to a code of conduct; being clear of their values and living them; trustworthy and honest; completely incapable of being corrupt.

### **Warmth**

Having a genuine and sincere interest in the welfare of others; being approachable and open; allowing mistakes through learning; empowering others to succeed and grow.

### **Courage**

The ability to tackle crises with determination; moral firmness; vision; take appropriate risks; and create a feeling of protection and safety within others.

### **Judgement**

Making appropriate decisions, however hard; solving problems head-on rather than delegating and hiding behind their authority; being good judges of character and seeing the best in others.

### **Tough but fair**

Showing gentleness and compassion without being 'soft'; having a realistic vision of themselves and other people; showing strength and firmness but able to adapt and be flexible; being balanced with their treatment of people.

Let's face it, this isn't just how we *work*, this is how we *live*. We do all of this in our sleep, unconsciously, without even having to think about it. These are the values by which women live their lives.

We are born leaders, we do it every day, in every situation, naturally, easily, without thought or planning. Believe it, own it, and transfer that 'knowing' into the workplace.

### **Let's look at other areas of performing well in life and business**

I've already talked about what women on my programmes have said when asked the question 'What makes a good manager/business owner.' There are other dimensions to being effective in life and work. We'll take a look at these now.

### **MANAGING YOUR ENERGY**

#### **Minimising the lack**

How do you manage your work/life balance?

How good are you at prioritising – both at work and at home?

How good are you at maintaining enthusiasm?

#### **Topping up**

How good are you at keeping your energy levels overflowing?

How good are you at keeping focused and not letting distractions take you off course?

### **Being in the 'flow'**

Do you manage to be so engaged with projects that you are not aware of time – are you 'in time' or 'on time' focused?

When *in flow*, how do you maintain your energy levels and not allow yourself to become drained?

### **CAN-DO MIND SET**

#### **Being self-aware**

Do you acknowledge your skills and talents regularly?

Do you give yourself a pat on the back when appropriate?

#### **Staying positive**

How well do you cope with change and challenges?

How much to you 'buy in' to the collective negativity of others?

#### **Moving forward**

Can you shake off negative experiences and not take them personally?

Do you *pass the buck* and blame, or take responsibility and ownership?

### **MAKING CONTACTS**

#### **Building networks**

Do you have them? How good are you at it, internally and externally?

Empowerment of other people – how much do you help others to grow?

#### **Win/win**

It is all about what you get out of others, or do you understand and operate with a *win/win* mindset – you help other people succeed as your first priority?

#### **Being inclusive**

Are you able to see the people you work with as 'people' who bring the whole range of human emotions with them to the office?

Are you willing to ask for help when you need it?

### **BEING VISIBLE**

## **Your voice**

Do you manage to have a strong voice, especially in a male-dominated arena?

How happy are you to accept praise and take credit where credit is due, allowing yourself to shine?

## **Ownership**

How much do you own your journey of life?

Do you allow other people to dictate your progress?

## **Taking risk**

Are you happy to accept that the status quo is not always possible and sometimes taking risks is part of your job

How much do you retreat into the background for safety?

## **Flexibility**

Do you always have the end goal in mind, and are you never prepared to go off track, ever?

Or are you prepared to explore other avenues, being open to the knowledge that you don't know everything?

## **LIFE PURPOSE**

### **Being happy**

I have a cover for my iPhone that says 'life's too short not to love what you do' How much do you love what you do

Are you head or heart led? Are you willing to accept that sometimes your heart knows better

Are you happy letting everyone else know how amazing you are?

### **Leaving your 'dent' in the universe**

What impact do you want your time on earth to have?

How will people benefit from you being here, perhaps even after you've gone?

Think about yourself and all of the above. What are you currently honouring with how you live your life right now? Are there any areas you would like to address and improve on?