



June, 2018 In The Know Summary

## **FEMALE VISION**

**Women's Real Power at Work**

**by Sally Helgesen, Julie Johnson**

### **What Did We Discuss?**

[Kari Uman](#) facilitated a discussion on the book *Female Vision: Women's Real Power at Work* by Sally Helgesen and Julie Johnson. The book examines the challenges women face in the workplace from a historical and cultural perspective—and presents a model of three elements of female vision: noticing, satisfaction day-to-day, and social fabric.

### **Key Concepts from the Book**

- **Noticing**
  - The notion of “noticing” maintains that what we notice determines what we see (and what we value). The book talks about how one’s vision is shaped by one’s capacity to notice. The book presents two types of noticing, “Broad Spectrum Notice” (associated with women) and “Focused Notice” (associated with men). Broad Spectrum Notice is not valued in the workplace, and therefore women can be seen as not being “strategic enough.”
  - Brain science – What we notice is determined by our evolution. Men and women leverage information from different parts of the brain (white matter vs. grey matter). Women can integrate information from the left and right brain, which allows for logic and intuition—and for viewing information more holistically. Men focus on a more narrow scope of information and are more effectively able to separate data from feelings.
- **Satisfaction Day by Day**
  - Women value social interaction, quality of relationships, cooperation, and work-life balance.
  - In many organizations, the organizational values reflect the 1950s—and these values do not motivate or appeal to women. (Causing many women to opt out of leadership roles or leave these organizations.) Establishing a women’s affinity group is not enough to influence the organization’s culture and support inclusion.
  - What would a reward structure that is relevant to women look like? For example: In a performance assessment, include recognition/reward for collaboration and for creating networks that help business/clients.
- **Social Fabric**
  - Social Fabric – Some organizations see growth as an end to itself. Organizations tend to focus on growth as opposed to the mission of the organization or in terms of how the organization fits into the community as a whole.

### **Discussion Highlights**

- How do you coach women who struggle with being “assertive enough” or having “sharp enough elbows” to play with the boys?
- Consider: To what extent is the lack of appreciation for Broad Spectrum Notice cultural? Does our culture value intuition?

- Times are a changing...Curriculum 2.0 in the school system – Children in US schools are now being assessed on skills such as analytics, meta-analysis, etc. Value on these skills mirrors skills now valued in the workplace.

### Strategies for Women

- Increase influence. How do you persuade others to see your point of view? Articulate your vision in a way that is aligned with the organization. Pay attention to what decision-makers value, and frame your discussion accordingly.
- Enlist allies. Allies are coworkers who have a mutual self-interest. Examine your relationships at work and understand the strategic nature of those relationships. Consider who the resisters are, and enlist them in support of the change (or of your career).
- Set boundaries. Do not say “yes” to every task and opportunity.
- Avoid multitasking. Focus on what you want to pay attention to.
- Learn, and let it go. Learn the lesson and then say, “Oh well.” (Don’t ruminate.)
- Hold yourself accountable. Enlist the help of an accountability partner. Example: Marshall Goldsmith has a friend he speaks to every day (regardless of whether he is traveling, etc.) to keep him accountable to his goals.

### Related Resources

- Center for Creative Leadership, [Standing at the Crossroads: Next Steps for High-Achieving Women](#)
- Scott Eblin, [Overworked and Overwhelmed](#)
- Carol Gilligan, [In a Different Voice](#)