



Establish a Strong Support System and Watch Your Success Soar!

In one of my signature presentations, Failure to Launch: 5 Common Pitfalls that Could Ground Your Career or Worse, I recently shared that one of the keys to my success has been my ability to build a strong support system.

Many of you may think you have a strong support system in place, but consider whether or not the following apply to you.

- 1. Are you over mentored and under sponsored? In a recent Harvard Business Review article (September 2010), the authors took a new look at why women don't move ahead as rapidly OR as far as men do. They found that women actually have slightly more mentoring experiences than equally qualified men do. So what gives?**

The big difference is that women often have mentors that are lower on the leadership hierarchy. Mentors are a great source of support, feedback and advice, which can help you to develop both your confidence and competence. However, if the mentor doesn't also serve as a SPONSOR, then you are not going to get the assistance and the protection that is often provided as you continue to move up the leadership hierarchy to obtain top positions.

- 2. Do you lack a personal support system? Women in leadership positions often realize – after the fact – they need to take better care of themselves. Because of the workloads we carry both at work and at home, we often put the needs of everyone else first and put ourselves last.**

So what should you do? Make an honest determination about the support you need if you are to successfully lead others. Then, do what it takes to get it. Support should include social/ emotional, spiritual, physical and professional. Once you know what you need then you need to make your needs known. ASK for what you need to be successful.

- 3. Have you taken time to build social capital? You've likely heard of financial capital, but you may not have heard of social capital. Simply put, social capital is the accumulation of resources developed through personal and professional networks. These resources can include ideas, knowledge, information, opportunities, and contacts.**

Men tend to be better than women at building social capital. And, this is one of the most important variables that hold women back at senior levels. You need to do a better job of building your social capital. That means that you have to overcome fears of putting yourself out there and being visible in order to attract opportunities.

Going it alone will do one of two things for you: get you nowhere and put you on the fast track to burnout. Establish a strong support system and watch your success soar!