



Valuing Yourself

During the past few months, I have had the opportunity to talk with many women about pricing and valuing - both themselves and their businesses - when delivering two of my popular seminars: profitable pricing and negotiation. The ability to value yourself, coupled with strong negotiation skills, are critical in terms of determining your own worth and value, and the value which others place upon you.

Society typically determines value through monetary measures - what you make in terms of salary if you work within the corporate realm, or revenue generated by your business if you are an entrepreneur. In last month's newsletter, I asked you to respond to the question of whether or not there were disparities in the value that society places on work performed by women. Over 65% of you agreed that there were indeed disparities. Not surprising when you look at the differential in earnings between men and women.

Yet, I also find that women help to perpetrate some of the devaluation that occurs. Does this make me mad? You bet. So, how do we perpetrate the cycle? Let me give you some examples.

Think back to the last time you changed jobs, asked for a promotion or submitted a bid on job that you wanted and perhaps, desperately needed. When it came time to ask for the salary you wanted or the fee you deserved, what did you do?

Many women I talk to tell me that they are guilty of what I term the "psychological" one-down. Instead of asking for what they wanted, they had a conversation with themselves telling themselves why they wouldn't get what they wanted. The outcome: they wound up asking for less than what they wanted or deserved, and in many cases, less than what they would have been able to receive. This sends a subtle message that we don't value ourselves and therefore, society doesn't need to either.

So what can we do to stop this cycle of devaluing women's work and worth in society?

First, take inventory of yourself and determine your unique value proposition. Second, determine the skill sets that you need and make time to practice those skills regularly. Third, help other women by placing a high value on the contributions that they make. And finally, remember believe in your value and others will too!

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