

Damned If She Does, Damned If She Doesn't: Rethinking the Rules of the Game That Keep Women from Succeeding in Business

Lynn Cronin, Howard Fine

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Forty-five years after Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, women have yet to achieve parity with men in the workplace. Men continue to make more money than women, and women's representation in the higher management ranks continues to lag behind men's. This book asserts that certain respected rules of business actually work against gender equality. The rules inadvertently create paradoxes that put women in no-win situations, limiting their opportunity to succeed relative to men. Written by a woman and a man who have lived in the trenches of the corporate battlefield, this perceptive analysis exposes five of these paradoxes and concludes with a new model for business, which the authors call a coed corporation.

The tacit rules of corporate culture creating these parity paradoxes are:

- -Be a team player: While women rarely receive recognition comparable to men, if a woman seeks recognition for herself, she is seen as not being a team player.
- -Attract mentors and advocates: Talented women who work hard often don't attract the respected mentors or win influential, loyal advocates to the same degree as men.
- -Show commitment to the job: A woman fully dedicated to her career is often perceived as lacking a personal life. Conversely, a woman with a fulfilling personal life is dismissed as not seriously committed to her career.
- -Bond with coworkers: A woman who tries to bond with her male peers is seldom successful and tends to alienate both men and women.
- -Recognize your role in the system: If women accept their role, nothing changes; if they challenge it, they are stigmatized and their careers are limited.

With the insights that these two seasoned consultants provide, changes can be made that will finally achieve true gender parity in the workplace.



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