

Alienating The Female Brain



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When women follow their dreams, live their passions or achieve their professional credentials, we applaud them for their achievements. Sometimes the reality of achieving that goal and then going on to create an income generating profession comes up short **when the female brain is facing a hostile male environment.**

While legal measures are in place to address gender discrimination, hostile environments continue to exist for female students and professionals. Despite the proficiencies of the female brain, **the male dominated areas of academics, technology, science and mathematics still are alienating.**

College female students report that it can be lonely and challenging if you are the only female in advanced math and engineering classes. There is also reported research of an unconscious bias at universities where resume and journal articles by females receive a lower evaluation than males. The *Journal of Psychological Science* reports a study by psychologist, Mary Murphy of Stanford University, who found that in science and engineering environments **women were less likely to participate when outnumbered by men.**

In 2005, the already controversial **president of Harvard University, Lawrence Summers**, set off a firestorm leading to his eventual resignation. While speaking at a conference on

Diversifying in the Science and Engineering Workplace, he **suggested the failure of women in the fields of science and mathematics to excel was based on their “innate aptitude.”**

In his apology then president Summers, tried to back peddle saying how he had worked to enhance the status of female academic positions at Harvard, however that was contentiously debated by faculty. *(Now, that's alienating! Nothing like making a female brain believe she is in the right place when the president of Harvard University infers to its female students, we will take you money and grant you a degree, but I don't think you have what it takes to succeed in certain professions.)*

In a 2007 study of approximately 2,000 women employed in tech jobs, **75% reported they would encourage women to enter the field but only 52% were satisfied by their company's favorable organization towards women.**

Women in the tech field reported feeling alienated when they found –

- they had less influence than men
- there was less input and demand for their services
- male counterparts often did not welcomed or acknowledged their views
- they received fewer chances to participate and lead in large projects
- technology organizations were not perceived to be inviting options to pursue their futures

The world of **higher education and the workplace may never be gender neutral** but alienating the female brain by **continuing to follow the ideal of male brain superiority is untenable.** Especially in a world where according to the *Harvard Business Review* –

“As a market, women represent an opportunity bigger than China and India combined. They control \$20 trillion in

consumer spending, and that figure could reach \$28 trillion in the next five years. Women drive the world economy.” (*The Female Economy* by Michael J. Silverstein and Kate Sayre)

by Joyce Hansen