

How to be part of the shift to feminine leadership



Feminine Leadership

If you ever wanted to raise your leadership profile, you don't have to wait for the glass ceiling to crack totally open. There's a crumbing from within that's creating an open door for the growth of feminine leadership.

Authors of *The Athena Doctrine: How Women (And The Men Who Think Like Them) Will Rule The Future*, John Gerzema and Michael D'Antonio conducted an international study on the attitudes towards male leadership and qualities of feminine values in leadership.

Their survey of 64, 000 people from 13 countries (Asian, Europe , the Americas) "... point to widespread dissatisfaction with typically "male" ways of doing business and a growing appreciation for the traits, skills and competencies that are perceived as more feminine ."

The respondents were divided into two groups. Half were asked to rate 125 words for their gender quality of masculine, feminine or neutral. The other 32,000 rated the same words only for modern leadership qualities.

Top ten leadership words

The top ten words identified as key qualities of a modern

leader were: 1) expressive 2) plans for future 3) decisive 4) reasonable 5) loyal 6) flexible 7) patient 8) resilient 9) intuitive 10) collaborative. These same words were compared to their gender ranking. Of these ten words only “decisive” and “resilient” were predominantly rated masculine. By contrast, the remaining eight words predominantly rated feminine.

Gerzema and D’Antiono see their combined data indicating an international shift in perception away from traditional male leadership and towards the inclusion of feminine leadership values.

As you can imagine, comments on the Harvard Business Review site that hosted Gerzema’s article *“Feminine” Values Can Give Tomorrow’s Leaders and Edge* were heated and questioned relevancy and bias. What I found interesting is that most of the comments related to gender i.e., focus on the words ascribed feminine value, with claims that men possess some of these qualities as well.

Regardless of how you view this survey, it indicates a discontent with current male leadership style and projects new leadership qualities needed to accommodate globally linked economies, emerging markets and the wants and needs of different populations.

“Two-thirds of survey respondents felt that “The world would be a better place if men thought more like women”, including 76% of the French and Brazilians and 70% of Germans. Those stats include majorities of men who equate masculine incumbency with income disparity, continuing high levels of unemployment and political gridlock.”

Women who step through the opening leadership door will still find challenges and obstacles. In some areas, change will be slow in others advances will happen faster. However, women with these leadership talents will be in demand, as will men, who adapt to them.

The key to being part of this shift in feminine leadership is two-fold –

First, focus on honing the skills of Gerzema and D'Antiono's top ten rated leadership qualities.

Second, realize this is a global shift in attitude about leadership qualities by both men and women.

Whatever leadership role you may find yourself in whether it's at the top of the corporate ladder or a local organization, more women all over the world are poised to make significant leadership contributions and you can be among them.

Source:

http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2013/08/research_male_leaders_should_think_more_like_women.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+harvardbusiness+%28HBR.org%29&cm_ite=DailyAlert-081313+%281%29&cm_lm=sp%3Ajoyce.hansen%40gmail.com&cm_ven=Spop-Email

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