

Raising girls to be future leaders

Despite a strong focus on female empowerment, equal representation of women has not yet been reached within the corporate sector.



By [Kay Vittee](#) 5 Aug 2013

The empowerment of women is not something we can only tackle in business as we need to see a more rapid change in society at large. In order for this to occur, empowerment needs to start at home with parents instilling values in their daughters that will prepare them for the future.

Stop the stereotypes

Little girls may like dolls and little boys may like sports, but that does not mean they can only play with children of the same gender or stick to playing gender-stereotypical games. If you ensure that your daughter interacts with boys, she will grow up to be at ease in a male-dominated environment. And playing rough with the boys will help her to develop a thick skin which will stand her in good stead in the business world.

Anything is possible

When the older generations were growing up, they were told that women could only have certain types of careers, if any at all. However, today our girls have an endless array of options. By telling your daughter that she can be anything she wants, whether it be the president or a sportswoman, you will instill in her the confidence to go after her dreams and she will never doubt her ability to achieve based on her gender.

Encourage curiosity

Passion and drive are needed to do well in your career, so when your child starts to show an interest in something, encourage her to satisfy her curiosity and give her the tools to explore her interest without restricting her to so-called gender-appropriate things. Although this particular passion may not last very long, the exploration will certainly teach her new skills and will also make her accustomed to breaking new ground.

Foster competitiveness and team work

Collaboration is essential in the workplace, as is the drive to shine as the leader. Team sports or other activities can teach your child not only to work well with others, but will also develop her competitiveness to rise above her peers. Mixed gender activities will especially teach her to emerge as a leader whether it is men or women that she must lead.

An independent woman

Independence is gained through self-confidence, which not only comes from praise, but also from learning to do a job well. As parents, we naturally want to solve our children's problems for them, but by taking on a guiding role and giving your daughter the chance to face challenges and come up with her own solutions, you will develop her confidence. It may start out with a small task like tying her shoelaces, but as she gets older and the challenges more intense, her sense of independence will ensure she is well equipped to show those around her that she is capable of tackling the job at hand.

The importance of identity

Most importantly, ensure that your daughter knows who she is and allow her to develop her own set of values. With a strong sense of identity in place and no matter the environment she faces, she will be able to know, with conviction, what she has to offer the world and will not easily be brought down by those around her. Preparing our children for the unknown future is difficult, but if we instill in our daughters the skills and understanding that will lead them to become strong women, then they will be empowered to take any challenge in their stride.

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