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Run Your Own Life

Joeleen's job required her to make four or five coast-to-coast trips a month. After two years of exhausting cross-country flights, an airline bumped her up to first class on a flight from New York to San Francisco. The extra leg room and wider seats made the flight much more comfortable, the food was better (there was food!), she got more work done, and she arrived in California feeling much less tired. Back at the office, she mentioned to a colleague how much she'd liked the first-class trip. "You mean you've been traveling cross-country in coach all this time?" he said. "The travel office will always bump you up to first class for a long flight if you ask."

Penny, a successful businesswoman who owned her own company, thought she never missed an opportunity to negotiate. If she wanted something, she didn't hesitate to go after it. Then, on a business trip to Dallas, she and her business partner stayed in a new five-star hotel that had just opened. The first morning at breakfast, Penny's partner talked about how impressed he was with the hotel: the beautiful furnishings, the gorgeous view of the city, and the quality of the room service food he'd eaten for dinner. He said his bathroom was bigger than his kitchen in New York. He asked Penny what she thought. Penny agreed that the

rooms were lovely and the views were great, but she was disappointed that there wasn't a big spa-type robe in the closet, which is pretty standard at luxury hotels. Her partner laughed. "Of course they have robes," he said. "In a place like this? You just have to call down and ask."

A few months later, Penny had a second enlightening hotel robe experience. She and her family were staying at a Ritz-Carlton on vacation. There were robes in the closet for her and her husband but none for the kids. She told them that the hotel only had robes for adults but they wouldn't let it go, they wanted robes too. Rather than argue, she told her daughter to call the front desk—let them explain, she thought. So her daughter called down and within five minutes two kid-size robes were delivered to the room. She was astonished. Both incidents made her wonder: *What else have I been missing out on because it didn't occur to me to ask?*

Probably a lot.

We all know that we should negotiate the price of a house or the price of a car. We may not like it, and we may even avoid it if we can, but we recognize that negotiation is necessary in transactions of this type. But what else is negotiable? If you're like many women, the list of situations in which you believe you can negotiate is pretty short. You think that in most cases if attractive alternatives were available, you would know about them. At work, you expect that the people in power will advertise job openings, announce the existence of funds for training, and invite people to signal their interest in new projects. Outside work, you assume that the posted prices—for clothing, furniture, jewelry, snow removal, catering, vacation travel—are fixed and nonnegotiable. But many aspects of your life that you may accept as givens can probably be changed for the better.

Who's in Control?

Using what they call a locus-of-control scale, psychologists measure whether people believe that the controlling force in their lives is internal (they're in control) or external (outside forces determine their fate). Men for the most part believe that the locus of control in their lives is internal, that they "make life happen." Women are far more likely to believe that "life happens to them"—that they don't have much control. This is what we call the oyster-versus-turnip view of the world. Men see the world as their oyster (they're surrounded by opportunities, and they just need to choose which ones they want), while women are more likely to think "you can't get blood from a turnip" (what they see is what they get and they need to make the best of it). Although you may know some turnip men and oyster women, the underlying truth of the distinction has been conclusively demonstrated, and not just in the United States but also in countries with cultures as diverse as those in Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the former U.S.S.R., India, China, Mexico, and Brazil. These studies also showed that even senior female managers, women whose jobs involve high levels of responsibility and authority, still—far more than men in the same jobs—believe that their lives are subject to the control of external forces.

DO YOU BELIEVE IN CHANGE?

Linda and three colleagues developed a rating scale to see whether or not people view situations in their life as being amenable to change via negotiation. Women were 45 percent more likely than men to score low on this scale, meaning they saw far fewer opportunities to negotiate in their personal circumstances. Significantly, a difference of as little as 10 percent on this scale—that is, a score that was only 10 percent higher—translated into about 30 percent more attempts to negotiate.

Who Makes Sure You're Paid What You're Worth?

Organizational psychologist Lisa Barron asked both men and women to indicate whether or not they agreed with the following statement: "I determine my own worth and it is up to me to make sure that my company pays me what I'm worth." While 85 percent of the men in the study agreed with this statement, only 17 percent of the women agreed. But when Barron changed the statement to read, "My worth is determined by what my company pays me," the results were reversed: 83 percent of the women but only 15 percent of the men agreed. This study highlights an assumption that many women need to combat—the assumption that someone else gets to decide what their work is worth and what they should be paid. Not only does this give far too much control to other people, it's predicated on the notion that this "someone else" will be fair and that his or her judgments about the value of our work will be accurate. That's a lot of trust to put in other people.

Sandra—BADLY UNDERPAID BY INDUSTRY STANDARDS

Sandra was the vice president of a small architecture firm with seven employees. The man who owned the firm was extremely charming and worldly, qualities that were a major factor in bringing in business. But he also didn't separate his own finances from those of the firm. He went to the till whenever he needed money. Since he lived extravagantly, cash flow was always a problem. Rather than curb his own spending, he kept staff salaries as low as possible to make sure that his monthly commitments, the payments he couldn't put off, remained small.

Sandra put in many more hours than her boss and she'd designed two of the firm's most prominent and admired projects. She effectively ran the office and knew the firm would fall apart if she left. She liked her boss and liked working in a small firm. But her salary hadn't changed in three years and she knew she was badly underpaid compared to her peers at other firms. She kept waiting for her boss to give her a raise, but it never happened. Finally, she reached the point where she knew she had to get a salary increase or leave.

Arming herself with industry figures about salary ranges for her position in her region (she lived in Chicago), Sandra identified what she thought she deserved and went into her boss's office and asked for it. Her boss responded by shouting about the firm being on the verge of bankruptcy and her wanting to push it over the edge.

Instead of losing her composure or backing down, Sandra said in an even tone, "What would push this firm into bankruptcy would be my leaving. I love it here and I don't want to leave, but it's not just a matter of simple fairness. I have my professional self-respect and my future to think of too. I can't continue to work for so much less than I'm worth."

Sandra's calm response stopped her boss in the middle of his harangue. "He seemed so surprised that I hadn't backed down," she says.

"Well, how much did you say you want?" he asked.

Sandra named her figure. Without even trying to bargain, her boss said yes. A few weeks later, apparently terrified that she would leave, he raised her salary again.

Afterward, Sandra said, "I don't know why I waited so long. I just left it all up to him when I knew he'd continue to pay me as little as I let him." She'd let her boss limit what she earned instead of taking control of the situation and making sure she was paid what she was worth.

Who Chooses the Work You Get to Do?

It's a hard fact of business life today that to move ahead briskly and get paid a fair salary you need to hustle. You may expect your supervisors to take a proactive approach to management and reward good work, promote people as soon as they're ready, and cultivate the talents of everyone who reports to them. Clearly, these are things good managers should do. Unfortunately, in today's business climate, a lot of managers are too busy focusing on their own performance targets. Their management style is more reactive—they respond to crises and hand out rewards and opportunities to the people who interrupt their busy schedules and ask. This gives men a huge advantage since they're the ones who typically do the interrupting. They announce what they want to do next, make it plain that they're in a hurry, and push to move to the next level.

To determine whether you're leaving too much power in the hands of others, ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you usually wait to see what kind of raise you get or do you try to negotiate in advance for the raise you think you deserve?
- Do you wait to be promoted or to be assigned more responsibilities or do you ask for those things when you think you're ready?

- Do you think you're qualified to move up to the next level at work but assume your boss doesn't agree because he or she hasn't promoted you yet?
- Have you accepted being given the same sort of work to do over and over again even though you'd like to learn new skills and try different types of assignments?
- Do you think that if you work hard and produce outstanding results your superiors will recognize your contributions and reward you with the salary you deserve?
- Do you typically ask for changes at work that would make your life more convenient or do you tolerate small inconveniences even when you can see a simple fix?
- Have you identified the next step you want to take in your career? Does your supervisor know what you want to do?
- Do most of your colleagues perceive you as someone who's interested in moving ahead and rising in your organization or are most of your coworkers unaware of your ambitions?

If your answers suggest that you've ceded too much control to others, start volunteering for the projects on which you want to work (or projects that will earn you brownie points), don't wait to see whether you're assigned to them or not. Tell your boss, "I want to take this training course," or "I'd like exposure to another side of the business," or "I need some field (or sales, or line) experience." Don't expect people to keep you on their radar screens or to let you know whenever a new opportunity arises.

Above all, don't assume that because your boss likes you he's thinking about your professional development and the next step you need to take. He may just be happy that you're doing the job he needs done right now. He may be thrilled and relieved to have someone he can trust in an important position, and it may not occur to him that you're

capable of doing a lot more. Or he may be grateful that you're not asking for more because he's getting top-quality work at bargain prices. Don't leave it up to someone else to determine the shape of your career. Identify your professional goals and figure out how to achieve them. Tell yourself, "*This* is what I want to do," "*This* is where I think I can make the biggest contribution," and "*This* is what I want to be doing in five years." And then take the necessary steps to make those things happen.

Nora—DO WHAT YOU WANT TO DO, NOT JUST WHAT YOU'RE GOOD AT

Nora, a journalist, spent a decade covering science and technology for a large metropolitan newspaper. When her son was born she needed a job with more regular hours, and she found one in the communications department of a large university.

During her first year on the job, several newsworthy but tragic events occurred at the university. These included the death of a freshman from alcohol poisoning at a fraternity party, the suicide of a depressed student, and a terrible accident during a clinical trial at the medical school. Because Nora knew how to talk to reporters from her years as a journalist her boss made her the media contact for each of these events. Nora recognized that she was good at balancing honesty with damage control, but she was frustrated too. The university's science and technology departments were producing mountains of interesting work. Whenever the university announced a newsworthy discovery, her office coordinated the publicity, writing press releases and talking to outside science writers. Nora's interest in science and technology had led her to choose the job in the first place, but rather than writing about scientific breakthroughs she was spending most of her time trying to protect the university's reputation.

At a dinner party one night, her hosts asked about her job and she

described her disappointment about the kinds of work she was being given to do. "Have you talked to your boss about it?" one of the other guests asked her. "Why don't you tell him you want to do more writing?"

Nora turned this idea over in her mind for a few weeks and then went to her boss and explained her feelings. He promised to reduce her public relations burden and actually apologized for not letting her do the job he'd hired her to do. He still asked her to talk to the media on occasion but also made sure that she had plenty of time to write. "I was just doing what I was told," she says. "I don't think of myself as a passive person but I thought that if I said I was unhappy I'd be perceived as complaining."

What Can You Change?

Deepak Malhotra, now a professor of business administration at Harvard Business School, gave his students an unusual assignment when he was teaching negotiation at Northwestern University. He asked a class of adults working toward their MBAs at night to "go negotiate something in the real world." Of the forty-five students in the class, thirty-five negotiated something for themselves and ten negotiated something for an employer. The students negotiated for everything from the cost of a cup of coffee at Starbucks, the price of a wedding band, and a housepainter's bill to the terms of a performance evaluation, commitment from an employer to pay tuition and housing expenses, and increased compensation for taking on added responsibilities. The median amount of money saved by the students who negotiated something for themselves was $2,200. The median amount saved by those who negotiated something for their employers was $390,000 (and these were just the medians; some saved more).

Afterward, Malhotra asked his students to name the most important tactic that had helped them achieve these extraordinary results. Almost unanimously, they said, "Choosing to negotiate at all." The biggest benefit of completing the assignment, they reported, was learning that they could negotiate for things that they'd never thought were negotiable.

With this in mind, start thinking in a bolder way about what's available and about the possibilities for change. If you're unhappy with the status quo or there are certain aspects of your life that cause you constant frustration, start with the premise that they can be changed, and set about figuring out how to do so. Instead of wondering "Is that negotiable?" assume that it is.

Luisa—WAITING INSTEAD OF ASKING

Luisa worked at a small regional art museum that mounted two original shows a year in addition to hosting two or three traveling shows organized by other museums. Although she'd majored in art history in college, Luisa didn't have an advanced degree and had started at the museum as an administrative assistant to one of the principal curators. Since she was smart and hardworking, her boss quickly shifted more and more responsibility onto her shoulders. After ten years, she was working closely with the curators and assistant curators to develop the conceptual approach for each show. On her boss's behalf she made initial contact with curators at other museums all over the world when her museum wanted to borrow pieces for a show. She drafted catalogue copy and collaborated with curators in scripting the recorded guides for museum patrons to use as they browsed through an exhibit. She received regular raises and felt she was fairly compensated for her work, but in ten years her title had never changed. She was still an administrative assistant. She chafed at the inaccurate impression this title conveyed about her actual function, but she assumed her boss didn't change her title because she lacked that advanced degree.

One day an assistant curator who'd just been hired from a larger museum spotted her name among a list of contributors to the catalogue for an important exhibition.

"That's a bit grand for an administrative assistant, don't you think?" he said to Luisa. "Putting your name in the catalogue."

Luisa was incensed. The man's tone had been insulting and he clearly didn't know how much she'd contributed to conceptualizing and organizing the show. She went straight to her boss and protested. He apologized profusely and immediately changed her title to "senior project manager," saying, "We should have done this years ago." He also raised her salary 10 percent. "This place couldn't function without you," he said.

Afterward, Luisa wondered why she hadn't asked for the better, more accurate title earlier. Everyone who'd been at the museum for any length of time recognized how much she contributed. Her boss clearly did.

"I just assumed it was up to him," she says. "Since he hadn't changed it, I figured he had a good reason."

Instead, tied up in his own work, her boss never thought about it. The new assistant curator had motivated Luisa to do something she could have done years earlier: exert more control over her career by asking for what she wanted and what she'd earned. Instead she waited for something to change—and she waited a long time.

What Drives You Crazy?

In addition to fixing sizable problems, don't forget that you can probably improve many of the smaller, less-than-ideal aspects of your life too. Pay attention to daily irritants, those inconsequential things that happen all the time and consistently make you frustrated or annoyed. Does the man in the office next to yours regularly poach your office supplies instead of going to the supply closet to fetch his own? Talk to

him about it. Are the women's bathrooms at work always grubby and unclean smelling? Ask the office manager to discuss the problem with your firm's janitorial service. Does your boss frequently throw you an extra project at 4:00 on Friday afternoon? Go into his office at noon on Friday and ask him to spell out what he needs from you by the end of the day. Does the coffee at work taste dreadful? See if your company will invest in a better coffeemaker and better-quality coffee. Would you like to listen to music through headphones while you work, and actually think this would boost your productivity, but assume it's not acceptable since no one else does it? Explain this to your manager and see how he or she responds. Does the person who cleans your house always unplug your VCR to use the outlet, forcing you to reset the clock every week? Ask him or her to use another outlet in the room that only has a lamp and a CD player plugged into it. Sometimes small changes can make a world of difference.

Melanchtha—can exceptions be made?

Melanchtha worked for a downtown advertising firm in accounts payable. Until her oldest child moved up to middle school, she took a commuter train into the city from her house in the suburbs. The middle-school bus came fifteen minutes later than the elementary-school bus, however, and waiting for the bus with her daughter made Melanchtha miss her regular express train. If she took the local that followed, she arrived at work thirty minutes late. She started driving downtown instead. Only management-level employees were given parking spots in the company's garage, however, forcing Melanchtha to park on the street and feed her meter every hour or two. She worried constantly, with a feeling of mounting panic, that she'd get out there too late, and even so she began accumulating expensive parking tickets.

One day her boss stopped by Melanchtha's desk. "What's going on with you, Melanchtha?" she asked. "For the past few months you've

seemed like you have a cloud over your head." Melanchtha explained her parking situation and how distracting it was. "I can fix that," her boss said. Two days later, she returned with a sticker for Melanchtha's car and a pass card that would let her use the company garage.

Who Can You Ask for Help?

Like Melanchtha, a lot of women try to make the best of things, often at great personal cost, even when it becomes obvious that a situation is careering out of control. If you need help because your responsibilities or the demands on you or your personal circumstances have changed, try pointing this out. Ask for help in the spirit of "here's a problem we need to solve" rather than "I'm overwhelmed and can't handle my job."

Victoria—can't do it all

Victoria was a social worker at a large home for the elderly. When she started at the job, she had a reasonable caseload and no trouble keeping up with her paperwork. Five years after she started, she was promoted to supervisor of the social-work team, which included six full-time social workers and two part-time grief counselors. At the same time, the state instituted more rigorous reporting requirements for nursing homes and began biannual inspections. Victoria wanted to continue working with patients—that was why she became a social worker in the first place—but the responsibilities of managing her team and the paperwork she had to fill out for the state left her very little time. She grew increasingly unhappy about the quality of care she was able to provide to her patients and their families.

At her first performance review as supervisor, a year after she was promoted, Victoria told her boss that she needed an administrative assistant to help with her paperwork because patient care was suffering. She was worried that her boss would think the supervisor's job was too much for her, and the nursing home's management had always been resistant to change, but she was frustrated and worn out and decided to ask anyway. To her surprise, two months later Victoria's boss called her into her office to talk about the situation. Together, they figured out that even half-time clerical help would free up a lot of Victoria's time, and that the nursing supervisor could probably use help too. When her boss proposed to the nursing supervisor that she and Victoria share the services of a full-time assistant, the nursing supervisor's eyes filled with tears. "I can't tell you what a huge difference that would make," she said. "I feel like I'm always behind, always letting people down. But I didn't have the nerve to ask." Working quickly, Victoria's boss hired someone for the assistant's position within six weeks. Afterward, Victoria said, "Now I don't know how I did it all. I was exhausted all the time. My husband was pressuring me to quit. And I would have too, if I hadn't made up my mind to just see if the situation could be fixed."

How Do You Make Decisions at Home?

Negotiation can be a valuable tool outside of work as well. Although many women today think of their primary relationships (their relationships with spouses or life partners) *as* partnerships—partnerships in which they share both responsibilities and dreams—in practice working women continue to take on far more than an equal share of the household chores. Although your family may depend on two incomes and you couldn't stay home full-time if you wanted to, you may still feel as though you should be able to do everything a full-time mother and housewife can do. We've already talked about the stress and health damage this can cause. With that in mind, start asking for help with some of the chores that wear you down.

Sara—A BETTER BALANCE

Even after writing *Women Don't Ask* and encouraging women everywhere to ask for more of what they needed, Sara was stuck in an unbalanced household routine that she hadn't thought to change.

Sara and her husband are both full-time writers and work at home. For a long time, although they were both committed to a fifty-fifty split of chores and childcare, they weren't completely successful. Since her husband can't cook, Sara did all the cooking and the grocery shopping. Her husband hates yard work, so Sara took care of the garden. Sara's better at managing their finances and paid the bills. She'd sign the kids up for after-school sports and lessons, buy presents for them to take to birthday parties, and choose camps for them to attend in the summer. It wasn't that Sara's husband did nothing: He washed all the dishes, mowed the lawn, took out the garbage, and participated fully in taking care of their two boys before and after school and on the weekends. He took the car to be fixed when it needed servicing.

This arrangement worked pretty well. The kids' lunches got packed, the refrigerator was usually well stocked, and most of the time the toilets (at least) were clean. The one thing Sara couldn't seem to keep under control was the laundry. Morning after morning, she'd find herself running around looking for soccer socks for one child, a T-shirt for the other, and underwear for herself. Sheepishly, she sent her kids to school more than once with spaghetti sauce on their jeans and mud on their jackets.

One Monday morning Sara was dashing up and down stairs looking for her younger son's favorite shirt when she spotted her husband reading the newspaper at the kitchen table. She stopped. "Honey," she said, "I have a proposal for you. How would you feel about taking over the laundry? I just can't keep up with it. Could you take it on as your responsibility? Could that be one of your family jobs?" Her husband thought about it for a minute, and said, "Sure. I can do that. I'll be the laundry guy."

Now, although the kids' laundry isn't always in their drawers when they need it, it's usually washed and folded in a laundry basket, and that's a huge improvement as far as Sara is concerned. It was a small change, but it took a long time for her to realize that she didn't need to feel stuck with a situation that clearly wasn't working, and she didn't need to assume that the problem was hers alone to solve.

Anne—ASK FOR CHANGES AS SOON AS THE SITUATION GOES OFF-TRACK

The fall after they were married, Anne entered law school and her husband, Robert, started business school. In addition to her class work, Anne also managed their household—paying the bills, shopping for groceries, cooking meals, cleaning the house, doing laundry, running errands, and taking care of the yard. She'd done most of these things before they were married because she worked fewer hours than Robert. Now that they were both students with comparable demands on their time, it didn't occur to Anne that this could change. By Christmastime, she was overwhelmed and exhausted. She was disappointed in her grades and wished she had more time to study. The second semester wasn't any better. After only three weeks, she'd fallen so far behind that she thought she'd have to drop a class.

Then something unexpected happened. Anne fell walking down a flight of stairs and broke her leg. While she could still get to her classes on crutches and do her schoolwork, she could no longer handle most of the household chores. As a result, she and Robert essentially switched roles. Anne quickly caught up with her schoolwork and began to excel in her classes. Robert, on the other hand, started falling behind. He couldn't believe how much time it took to manage their household. He admitted to Anne that he'd thought she spent perhaps five hours a week on housework when it turned out to be more like sixteen or eighteen. He apologized for taking what she'd done for granted.

When Anne's leg healed, she and Robert sat down to reassess who

did what. After a few months of trial and error, they worked out a system that kept the house running smoothly and gave both of them enough time to do their schoolwork. "It never would have occurred to me to ask Robert for help if I hadn't broken my leg—truly, it never crossed my mind," Anne said. "Robert's not unreasonable. He wants me to succeed in school. But it took breaking one of my bones for me to realize that he could take on some extra chores now that I was busier."

The importance of negotiating outside work can extend well beyond the distribution of chores, however. Sometimes we're so busy we forget to ask ourselves whether we're really happy, if perhaps something is missing. Many of us also bring unexamined expectations about mutual decision making to our relationships. We take it for granted that we'll make important decisions together, as a team, or we assume that we're in agreement with our partners about shared goals even though we've never actually discussed them. Will you be ready to negotiate your new situation when your husband loses his job, or gets a great opportunity in another city, or you have twins, or your father gets Alzheimer's disease? You need to know how to recognize and speak up for your needs, and even negotiate hard to get them met.

Stella—DON'T LET YOUR LIFE RUN YOU

Stella was the managing editor of an arts and antiques magazine. Her husband Don was a sportswriter at their city's daily paper and traveled frequently to cover sporting events around the country (and sometimes around the world). They both made good salaries, they owned a beautiful apartment, and they dined at the best restaurants in every city. They traveled a lot and lived an exciting, cosmopolitan life.

Stella had always assumed that she'd become a mother at some point, and she even occasionally dreamed about the daughter she expected to have. But Don never signaled that he cared much whether they had children or not, and Stella turned forty without ever sitting

down with Don to make a conscious decision one way or the other. Then, when she was forty-one, Stella accidentally became pregnant. She and Don were surprised by how excited they were at the prospect of becoming parents. At ten weeks, sadly, Stella miscarried. She tried again and miscarried a second time. She and Don consulted fertility specialists, but she was forty-two by that time and the doctors told her it would be an uphill and expensive battle, and the odds that she'd conceive a viable pregnancy were small.

Stella was heartbroken. She hadn't stopped to say, life is crazy and good in so many ways, but maybe it's a little out of control and I need to take a step back. I need to assess where I am and what else I want. After several months of grieving, Stella realized that the game wasn't over. She could still become a mother if she really wanted to. A month before her forty-fifth birthday she and Don adopted a little girl from Guatemala.

Luann—WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT THIS FIRST

Luann was a successful clothing entrepreneur with her own line of high-quality athletic apparel for women. She'd started her business when she was twenty-five and fresh out of business school; by her thirtieth birthday, the company had annual sales of $150 million. When she was thirty-two she opened her first retail store, and within three years she'd opened eighteen stores nationwide. Unlike many women, she'd never really imagined herself as a mother and felt no strong desire to have children. She'd seen the demands that parenthood made on some of her friends, and she couldn't see any way that having a child wouldn't force her to scale back her career.

Luann's husband, Jason, had a successful career as a hospital administrator, but he also very much wanted to be a father. And he felt strongly, knowing Luann as well as he did, that Luann would be glad she'd had a child if she did it. Luann loved Jason and wanted him to be happy, so the two of them worked out—negotiated—a solution. They

agreed that they would have only one child, that Jason would take a leave from his job to be home with the baby for the first year of the child's life, and that when he returned to work they would hire a full-time nanny. Jason would do at least half the childcare when the nanny wasn't working and Luann would continue to travel as much as she needed to as her business grew. Once they decided to go ahead, Luann quickly became pregnant. When the baby was born, she found, just as Jason had predicted, that she immediately fell in love with her son. She's still just as invested in her career, though, and glad that she and Jason were able to think through the implications of their decision together.

So it's up to you. If you want more (more money, more responsibility, more interesting work, more opportunities, more anything) or you want something else (a new house, another child, a pet, a different boyfriend, a break in your routine, another degree, someone to mow your lawn) you need to resolve to get it for yourself. This is your only life. You might as well make the most of it.

4

Fairness—You Be the Judge

Most women do not think that they've been unfairly treated. Although the vast majority of American women believe that women in general suffer discrimination in this country, in study after study researchers can find very few women who say that they themselves have experienced discrimination. If you're one of those women, you might want to check again. You may be the victim of a phenomenon that the social psychologist Faye Crosby calls "the denial of personal disadvantage," in which members of a particular group recognize that other members of their group have suffered discrimination but believe that they themselves have escaped unfair treatment.

What could cause such a strange discrepancy between women's beliefs and their experiences? One explanation could be that it's hard to confirm discrimination in any particular case but easy to detect at an organizational or societal level.

This is how it works: Suppose that a man receives a promotion over a woman and the man has more experience but the woman has more education. The woman might conclude that her employer values experience over education, which is why the man was promoted ahead of her.