



# Research Summary: Developing & Advancing Women Leaders in Policing

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## The Bigger Questions

### *Why is it important to support women's advancement in municipal police forces?*

- It's not just an issue of equity; it's also an opportunity to harness the strengths that women bring – and the contribution they can make – to their forces.

### *What are the strengths that women (in general) bring to their work and leadership within a police force?*

- Research has identified women's strengths and contributions specifically as police officers and police leaders, and also as leaders more generally across different types of organizations.

### *What are some effective high-level strategies for supporting women's advancement in municipal police departments?*

1. Ensure that women have opportunities to learn and develop the tactical, procedural and leadership competencies they need to perform leadership roles at every level of the organization.
2. Work on addressing external barriers to women's advancement (i.e., biased organizational policies / processes / procedures, unconscious bias on the part of men in the organization, tokenism, and the challenges of balancing career advancement and family (childbearing/parenting/caregiving)).
3. Support women to acknowledge and address internal barriers to their advancement (i.e., self-limiting behaviours and beliefs).
4. Help women find and connect with mentors – both male and female – within their own municipal department, or in other municipalities, or both.
5. Encourage women to join supportive networks for women in law enforcement and actively participate in learning sessions and discussion forums hosted by those networks.

# Leadership Development Programs in Policing

The links below provide examples of existing public enrolment leadership programs in policing.

## **Co-Educational Programs**

- Leadership in Police Organizations - <https://www.theiacp.org/LPO>
- First-Line Supervisor Leadership Training - <https://www.theiacp.org/First-Line-Leadership>
- Police Leadership Program (Toronto's Rotman School of Management) - <https://www.rotman.utoronto.ca/ProfessionalDevelopment/Executive-Programs/Programs-Individuals/Police-Leadership>
- Coaching Skills for Police Supervisors - <http://oxford-management.com/course/coaching-skills-for-police-supervisors>

## **Programs Designed for Women-Only Cohorts**

- Women's Leadership Institute (WLI) - <https://www.theiacp.org/projects/womens-leadership-institute>

## **Pros and Cons of Women-Only Programs**

Although women-specific trainings are helpful, there may be a concern that participation in such a program could “use up” an officer's professional development opportunities for a certain time period, making it less likely that she would have the opportunity to attend other valuable, specialized or prestigious trainings.

Source: National Institute of Justice. 2019. *Women in Policing: Breaking Barriers and Blazing a Path [Special Report]*. <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/252963.pdf>

## **Why ‘Soft Skills’ Are Essential as Part of Law Enforcement Leadership Training**

Leading a law enforcement agency is an extremely challenging job that requires mastery of what are often referred to as “soft skills” — such as communication, team building, problem solving and conflict resolution, as well as the ability to evolve their leadership style, and understand different perspectives. Only rarely does someone naturally excel in these skills without some formal training, combined with years of practice. Still, many law enforcement agencies make promotional decisions based largely on an officer's tactical skills without providing training in these all-important soft skills.

### Sources:

Fritsvold, E. *Case for More Effective Law Enforcement Leadership Training*. <https://onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/police-management-training/>  
Fritsvold, E. *What Style of Police Leadership is Most Effective?* <https://onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/what-style-police-leadership-most-effective/>



## Shifting the Conversation about Women in Leadership: From Equity to Contribution

*“The time has come to reframe the gender issue. Given this split – women’s potential on the one hand, and their relative absence from the highest levels of business on the other – it is tempting to keep banging on about “fairness” and “equality” on the one hand, or to assume that surely the women who don’t make it to the top must be doing something wrong on the other. But in fact, it is time to shift the discussion away from a lingering women’s problem or an issue of equality and instead focus on this as a massive business opportunity. Instead of continuing to discuss the problem, we ought to present solutions: roadmaps to businesses that are better balanced, arguments that help companies and managers understand and benefit from shifting gender balances. The shift is away from wondering what is wrong with women who don’t make it to the top, and towards analysing what is right with companies and leaders that do build gender balanced leadership teams – and tap into the resulting competitive edge.”*

Source: “It’s Time for a New Discussion on ‘Women in Leadership’” by Avivah Wittenberg-Cox (Harvard Business Review, March 2014).  
<https://hbr.org/2014/03/its-time-for-a-new-discussion-on-women-in-leadership>

*“For 30 years, I’ve worked with women leaders around the world, helping them recognize, articulate, and act on their greatest strengths and address the barriers that undermine their efforts to build rewarding and sustainable careers. During that time, I have watched as women’s perception of themselves as potential leaders has undergone a remarkable shift. Women have become far more confident about what they have to contribute. They have learned through experience the value of female solidarity and support. They have become more comfortable enlisting men as allies, just as men have become more open to being allies. Each of these changes has specific causes and effects, yet they all reinforce one another.”*

Source: “The Evolution of Women’s Leadership” by Sally Helgesen (strategy+business, July 28, 2020 / Autumn 2020 / Issue 100).  
<https://www.strategy-business.com/article/The-evolution-of-womens-leadership?gko=35543>



# Strengths & Contributions of Women Police Officers & Women Leaders Generally

This section summarizes evidence-based findings about the competence of women officers in police agencies – and the leadership effectiveness of women leaders in a variety of organizations and sectors.

## *Specific Competencies that Some Women in Policing Excel At but Are Not Valued in the Promotion Process*

The more traditional image of policing is that of the tough, male superhero who fights crime and arrests criminals (O'Connor Shelley, 2011). In reality, more than half of the work that police officers engage in today requires **skills in verbal de-escalation, compassion, problem-solving, and conflict-resolution** (O'Connor Shelley, 2011). Yet, female officers assigned to policing roles that have these skills as their cornerstone find their skills not valued in the competencies considered in promotion competitions in the same way that front-line policing skills are viewed (Murphy, 2006; O'Connor Shelley et al., 2011) despite their benefits to the police agency (see the next section / box below, "Specific Benefits...").

Promotion competitions that value non-gender-specific skills, such as communication, compassion, conflict resolution, and community engagement, would encourage male officers to develop and use these skills, and it would give credit to the skills that women bring to policing (Workman-Stark, 2015). Doing so would also serve to balance the gender disparity in promotion competitions, where operational skills, such as resource management and leadership, are favoured over skills that may have been more traditionally associated with women in policing. This might also have a corollary effect of reducing the number of use of force complaints and abuse of authority instances if male officers were credited with using verbal skills to resolve conflicts rather than physical skills.

Source: Davey, M. L. 2020. *Addressing Barriers to Promotion for Female Officers in Municipal Policing in Canada*. Major paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (Criminal Justice) in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of the Fraser Valley. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/323210821.pdf>

## *Specific Benefits of Having More Female Officers in a Police Agency*

There is a growing body of research demonstrating the benefits to having more female officers in a police agency in general and in certain service areas:

- Female officers generally use less force than male officers when dealing with the public (Lonsway et al., 2003; Rabe-Hemp, 2008a). As a result, women generally experience fewer complaints of abuse of authority and fewer complaints of excessive or unnecessary use of force that can serve to improve the relationship between police and the public and can also save the police and the community millions of dollars in legal costs (Alley, Waugh, & Ede, 1998; Lonsway et al., 2003).
- When women act as a point of contact for female victims of domestic violence or sexual offences, this contributes to more women reporting their victimization to the police and an increased satisfaction with the police in response to their victimization (Natarajan, 2008; National Center for Women in Policing, 2002). Having female officers investigate incidents of domestic or interpersonal violence increases victim cooperation, and the greater empathy and compassion shown by the female officer reflects well on the police agency (Grant, 2000; Lonsway et al., 2003; Miller & Segal, 2019).
- Women have also played an integral role in service-oriented policing positions dedicated specifically to interacting with the community (Martin, 1999; McCarthy, 2013). These positions, sometimes referred to as community policing officers, play an important role in generating the public's trust in the police because of their focus on working collaboratively with the community to find solutions to community-wide problems



(Lonsway et al., 2003; McCarthy, 2013). While it is possible and likely that men are capable of exhibiting these characteristics and qualities, research has shown that women operating from a place of care and support appear more respectful to citizens and demonstrate less cynicism (Belknap & Shelley, 1992; Rabe-Hemp, 2008a). In general, the research shows that when women occupy community-based positions, public trust in the police increases (Lonsway et al., 2003; McCarthy, 2019).

Source: Davey, M. L. 2020. *Addressing Barriers to Promotion for Female Officers in Municipal Policing in Canada*. Major paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (Criminal Justice) in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of the Fraser Valley. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/323210821.pdf>

Building on the points above, with partial overlap/repetition:

- Women are consistently rated as trusted by their communities and, importantly, are motivated to serve communities in an era of decreased police legitimacy.
- Women have high levels of interpersonal communication skills, which translates into more effective practices in the field.
- Women are found to have a calming effect on male partners in high-stress and dangerous assignments, resulting in fewer police deaths.
- Higher levels of female representation are associated with organizations that emphasize community policing.
- Female police officers have a positive influence on the perceived job performance, trustworthiness, and fairness of a police agency, perhaps increasing the public's willingness to cooperate in the production of positive public safety outcomes.
- Female officers are less likely to use force, use excessive force, or be named in a lawsuit than male officers.
- Research has found that male officers were more likely than female officers to be aggressive as a result of some quality of the encountered member of the public, such as race or socioeconomic class.
- Even though studies show that subjects use the same amount of force against female officers as against male officers, and in some cases, more force, female officers are more successful in defusing violent or aggressive behavior.

Source – with footnotes re. evidence base for each of the above: Roman, I. "Women in Policing: The Numbers Fall Far Short of the Need." *Police Chief Online*, April 22, 2020. <https://www.policechiefmagazine.org/women-in-policing/?ref=2ba34725db69fe5166d56ae855399c09>

## Gender Differences & Leadership

What are the competence differences, if any, between men and women, and how might they influence potential gender differences in leadership performance? In 2005, Janet Shelby Hyde, a prolific psychologist at the University of Wisconsin–Madison known for her pioneering research on large data sets on gender differences, reanalyzed forty-six meta-analyses on gender differences in competence. Crunching the data from millions of participants, she examined every domain of competence and ability ever studied. In an age where the proliferation of independent studies has led to concerns about the "replication crisis" in the social sciences, as the vast volume of research enables people to cherry-pick their findings and indulge in selective reporting, this review is the go-to resource for anyone interested in accessing the most reliable evidence on how men and women differ.<sup>2</sup> Its main findings:

- **IQ.** A focal point of Hyde's study concerned gender differences in IQ. Here, too, results revealed negligible differences between the sexes, though men have a clear advantage of women in spatial ability tests; this difference is largely caused by testosterone differences between men and women. Indeed, women with higher testosterone levels outperform men with lower testosterone levels on spatial intelligence measures,



and injecting either men or women with testosterone improves their performance on spatial ability and map-reading ability tests. On the other hand, women score higher on most verbal ability tests. But **generally speaking, there are no salient IQ differences between men and women.**

- **Leadership competence / effectiveness.** Women have slightly higher leadership potential in that they **generally perform better in management and leadership roles than men do, even when men see themselves as better leaders than women.** These differences in leadership competence are also consistent with gender differences in vocational interests, particularly women's preferences for working with people and men's preferences for working with things. These divergent preferences represent one of the biggest psychological gender differences ever reported.
- **EQ.** What about the stereotype that women are more caring than men and have higher interpersonal or emotional skills? **Although gender differences in EQ are far from substantial, with average differences rarely exceeding 15%, they do overwhelmingly favor women. Despite the small gender differences for EQ, as a group, women do tend to have higher EQs than men do. The effect has been reliably found across virtually all measures of EQ.** In fact, a recent meta-analysis of gender differences in EQ went as far as to conclude that selecting employees and leaders according to EQ would severely hurt men. But we can hardly call a focus on EQ reverse discrimination. Other things being equal, higher-EQ individuals deserve to be promoted, whether they are male or female. Here are some ways EQ helps at work:
  - EQ strongly predicts people's **resilience and tolerance to stress.** Bouncing back from difficult moments is an EQ problem. The challenge is about remaining composed and finding a way to maintain personal effectiveness during horrible and destabilizing circumstances.
  - Individuals with a higher EQ are also **less likely to be overconfident, excitable, moody, and irritable** at work. These calmer aspects of people's personalities are particularly helpful in management. How can you manage others when you have difficulties managing yourself? EQ helps solve both problems.
  - Individuals with higher EQs are **generally more effective in leadership roles.**
    - Studies have found a consistent positive association between EQ and **organizational citizenship** behaviors, so the probability that leaders will behave well and engage in prosocial behaviors while refraining from toxic activities increases with their EQ.
    - While EQ is not a perfect predictor of **integrity**, if an organization hired leaders on the basis of their high EQs, it would end up with leaders who were **more honest and ethical.**
    - Leaders with higher EQs are **better at the transactional elements of leadership**, such as assigning tasks, monitoring and managing employees' performance, and setting rewards and incentives.
    - A recent study showed that gender affects **leadership outcomes** and effectiveness because of the gender differences in EQ. Largely because women have higher EQs, **women's teams are more engaged and outperform those led by men.**
  - In addition, other important **leadership competencies that are enabled by higher EQs have been found at higher rates in women:**
    - **Transformational leadership.** With this style, the leader focuses on changing followers' attitudes and beliefs and engaging them on a deep emotional level rather than telling them what to do. Leaders better able to identify and manage emotions are also better able to motivate others. Transformational leaders excel at turning a vision into an actional plan for change, and they are strong role models for their subordinates and followers.



- **Personal effectiveness.** This is the ability to navigate everyday interpersonal challenges successfully, both emotionally and socially (requires a minimum degree of self-control and resilience, both critical elements of EQ).
  - **Resilience** – see earlier.
  - **Self-control.** Decades of psychological research show that from an early age, women display higher levels of self-control than men do, not least because girls and women have less license to be themselves than men do.<sup>17</sup> In leaders, self-control is an important antidote to abuses of power and other toxic behaviors. In fact, most antisocial behaviors are partly indicative of people’s inability to contain their short-term impulses—instant gratification—in favor of less problematic and more beneficial long-term goals.
  - **Anger management.** While we often think that there are quick and effective methods to tame someone’s anger or aggression, these intense negative emotions are mostly a function of an individual’s personality. Of course, we all get angry or aggressive under certain circumstances, but two individuals in the same situation will react differently, and this difference depends on their EQ. The higher EQ in most women explains why they are less volatile than men. Extensive research has linked gender differences in aggressiveness to testosterone, which is systematically higher in men than women. In fact, merely exposing men to women inhibits their testosterone bursts, making men less aggressive and helping them delay gratification.
- **Empathy.** EQ is strongly associated with empathy (the ability to know what other people are feeling and thinking), and empathy helps with **influencing others** (part of personal effectiveness). Empathic leaders also have the ability to see problems from other people’s perspectives makes them less self-centered and **more flexible in problem solving**.
- **Self-Awareness.** Being aware of what you are feeling and thinking – and also how your actions/behaviours affect others, and as a result, what others think of you. People with higher EQs have greater levels of self-awareness, which is a required foundation for leadership development. More accurate and more critical self-views—rating yourself more negatively than others rate you—are associated with superior leadership performance (perhaps because the individual’s humility and relative insecurity will motivate him or her to work harder to grow and succeed). For women, this is both a strength and a burden to bear. As with so many other differences between men and women, women’s higher self-awareness—and greater likelihood of seeing themselves in a worse light than others see them—is usually lamented as just one more thing that ambitious women will have to fix or get over. Women do report higher levels of depression and anxiety, and worry too much about what others think of them. And yes, it’s a challenge for many female leaders to learn to cope with the greater scrutiny and judgment they face. But the upshot of living under a microscope—and learning to see yourself as others see you—may be that it helps women become better leaders more quickly. Women need to buffer that self-criticality with frequent reminders not to be too hard on themselves.

Source: Chamorro-Premuzic, Tomas. 2019. *Why Do So Many Incompetent Men Become Leaders?* Harvard Business Review Press. Chapter 5: “The Female Advantage.”



## Other Evidence-Based Findings on Women Strengths as Leaders

For nearly 30 years, Dr. Jack Zenger and Dr. Joseph Folkman have devoted themselves to generating insights about what constitutes effective leadership and effective leadership development – based on hard data, facts, and statistical analyses from large sets of data. At last count, over the past 10 years, they had compiled a database of over 1.5 million 360-degree assessments (one assessment per rater/evaluator) of over 120,000 leaders globally.

Based on their analysis of their extensive database, Zenger and Folkman were able to identify the leadership competencies that act as ‘differentiators’ or competencies that differentiate great leaders from those that are not.

The number of differentiating competencies included on Zenger and Folkman’s list has varied over the last two decades as their database has grown, and as they have generated up-to-date analyses. The current list is shown in the figure.

### Competencies that Differentiate Extraordinary Leaders

Focus on Results	Personal Capability	Character & Self-Management	Interpersonal Skills	Leading Change
				
Drives for Results	Technical / Professional Acumen	Displays High Integrity & Honesty	Communicates Powerfully & Prolifically	Develops Strategic Perspective
Establishes Stretch Goals	Solves Problems & Analyses Issues	Effectively Manages Own Physical, Mental & Emotional Energy	Inspires & Motivates Others to High Performance	Champions Change
Takes Initiative	Innovates		Builds Relationships	Cultivates Customer & External Focus
Makes Decisions	Displays Learning Agility		Develops Others	
Takes Risks			Collaborates & Fosters Teamwork	
			Values Diversity	

Source: Adapted from: Zenger-Folkman. 2019. *The New Extraordinary Leader [Webinar]*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2yglU-wXgWc>

### Women Score Higher Than Men in Most Leadership Skills

While their research focuses largely on business organizations (vs. law enforcement agencies), their findings still apply, especially as leaders progress from being front-line leaders to mid-level and then executive level.

Recently updated research from Zenger-Folkman shows that women in leadership positions are perceived as being every bit as effective as men.

- Women were rated as excelling in “taking initiative”, “acting with resilience”, “practicing self-development”, “driving for results”, and “displaying high integrity and honesty”. In fact, they were thought to be more effective in 84% of the competencies that we most frequently measure.
- Men were rated as being better on two capabilities: “develops strategic perspective” and “technical or professional expertise.”

The data for this analysis was pulled from 360 assessments of over 60,000 leaders (22,603 women and 40,187 men).

Source: Zenger, J. and Folkman, J. 2019. Research: Women Score Higher Than Men in Most Leadership Skills. Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2019/06/research-women-score-higher-than-men-in-most-leadership-skills>

### Women are Better Leaders During a Crisis

Between March and June of 2020, 454 men and 366 women were assessed on their leadership effectiveness using Zenger-Folkman’s 360-degree assessment. Consistent with their pre-pandemic analysis, they found that women were rated significantly more positively than men. Comparing the overall leadership effectiveness ratings of men versus women, once again women were rated as more effective leaders. The gap between men and women in the pandemic is even larger than previously measured, possibly indicating that women tend to perform better in a crisis.

Women were rated more positively on 13 of the 19 competencies in our assessment that comprise overall leadership effectiveness, and comparable / even on the remaining competencies.



The interesting question is: *why women leaders are seen as more effective?*

Zenger-Folkman looked at the competencies that direct reports ranked as most important during the crisis. Notably, respondents put greater importance on interpersonal skills, such as “inspires and motivates,” “communicates powerfully,” “collaboration/teamwork,” and “relationship building,” all of which women were rated higher on.

Perhaps the most valuable part of this analysis is hearing from direct reports about what they value and need from leaders now. Based on the data, they want leaders who:

- are able to pivot and learn new skills;
- who emphasize employee development even when times are tough;
- who display honesty and integrity; and
- who are sensitive and understanding of the stress, anxiety, and frustration that people are feeling.

Zenger-Folkman’s analysis shows that these are traits that are more often being displayed by women. But as the crisis continues, and intensifies in many places, all leaders, regardless of gender, should strive to meet those needs.

Source: Zenger, J. and Folkman, J. 2020. Research: Women Are Better Leaders During a Crisis. Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2020/12/research-women-are-better-leaders-during-a-crisis> or <https://zengerfolkman.com/articles/research-women-are-better-leaders-during-a-crisis/>

### ***Controversial Perspective Based on the Empirically-Based Findings that Women are Rated More Highly As Leaders: Men Should Be Taking Leadership Lessons from Women***

Although the majority of people at the top of organizations are men, studies show that it is actually women who have what it takes to effectively lead. So, rather than advising female executives to act more like men to get ahead, society would be better served by more male leaders trying to emulate women. There are seven big lessons they can learn from the opposite sex:

1. Don’t lean in without the talent to back it up.
2. Know your own limitations.
3. Motivate through transformation.
4. Put your people ahead of yourself.
5. Don’t command; empathize.
6. Focus on elevating others.
7. Be humble.

Source: Chamorro-Premuzic, T. and Gallop, C. 2020. “7 Leadership Lessons Men Can Learn from Women.” Harvard Business Review Magazine. <https://hbr.org/2020/04/7-leadership-lessons-men-can-learn-from-women>



## External Barriers to Women’s Advancement in Municipal Policing

For an exploration of external barriers to women’s promotion in municipal policy – and recommendations for addressing these – written by an senior-ranked woman in police agency, see the following resources:

- Davey, M. L. 2020. *Addressing Barriers to Promotion for Female Officers in Municipal Policing in Canada*. Major paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (Criminal Justice) in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of the Fraser Valley.  
<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/323210821.pdf>
- Langan, D., Sanders, C.B., Gouweloos, J. and Cartmell, C. 2019. Gender, Policing and Inclusion: Opportunities for Change. <https://www.blueline.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Gender-Policing-and-Inclusion-Opportunities-for-Change-Final-1.pdf>
- Neely, D.A. 2019. Level the Playing Field: Are Law Enforcement Policies and Practices Rigged Against Women and Mothers? Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey California.  
[https://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/63488/19Sep\\_Neely\\_Dione.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/63488/19Sep_Neely_Dione.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)



# Women’s Internal Barriers to Advancement: Self-Limiting Behaviours / Beliefs

## *Habits that Get in the Way of Successful People’s Efforts to Rise*

At some point in most people’s career, behaviours that may have worked for them earlier in their career start to become ‘achilles’ heels.’ Since those behaviours were helpful and effective for so long, people tend to cling to them. But as you move higher and assume more responsibility, what got you here – wherever you are now – can begin to work against you. This is true for men as well as women. And while men and women have some self-limiting behaviours in common, for the most part, the behaviours that undermine women and men are different, as shown in the table below.

Gender Neutral Habits	Male Habits	Female Habits
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Passing judgment</li> <li>2. Starting with ‘no’, ‘but’, or ‘however’</li> <li>3. Making excuses</li> <li>4. An excessive ‘need to be me’</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Winning too much</li> <li>2. Telling the world how smart you are</li> <li>3. Claiming credit you don’t deserve</li> <li>4. Failing to give others proper recognition</li> <li>5. Using anger as a management tool</li> <li>6. Refusing to express regret</li> <li>7. Failing to express gratitude</li> <li>8. Passing the buck</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reluctance to claim your achievements</li> <li>2. Expecting others to spontaneously notice and reward your contributions</li> <li>3. Overvaluing expertise</li> <li>4. Just building relationships rather than simultaneously building and leveraging relationships in a ‘quid-pro-quo’ way</li> <li>5. Failing to enlist allies (i.e., draw on their experience and expertise) from day one; trying to learning everything by yourself and prove yourself first</li> <li>6. Putting your job before your career</li> <li>7. The perfection trap</li> <li>8. The disease to please</li> <li>9. Minimizing</li> <li>10. Too much emotion, too many words, too much disclosure</li> <li>11. Ruminating</li> <li>12. Letting emotional radar distract you</li> </ol>

Source: Helgesen, S. and Goldsmith, M. 2018. *How Women Rise: Hachette Books*. Chapter 4: “The Twelve Habits.”

## *Beliefs that Fuel / Drive Resistance to Habit Change*

Male Beliefs	Female Beliefs
<p>In <i>What Got You Here Won’t Get You There</i>, Marshall Goldsmith identifies several pervasive beliefs that keep successful people stuck (based on his observation of his coaching clients, 80% of whom were male).</p> <p>A main theme running through those beliefs is over-confidence, or the belief that you have succeeded, will succeed, should succeed, and have the power to succeed by doing what you’ve always done. This is an unshakable (and at times delusional) belief in their own godlike self-efficacy and rightness. They view success as their due, the inevitable result of their hard work and strategic brilliance. In this schema, good fortune and other people play minor roles.</p>	<p>While there are exceptions, even at the highest executive levels, overconfidence is rarely a major female failing.</p> <p>Instead, Helgesen and Goldsmith’s experience suggests there is a different set of core beliefs that lie at the heart of women’s resistance to change:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Belief 1: Ambition is a bad thing</li> <li>2. Belief 2: Being a good person means not disappointing others</li> <li>3. Belief 3: Women should always be role models for other women</li> </ol>

Source: Same as above (Helgesen & Goldsmith)



## **Lack of Confidence, Underestimation of Competence, Fear of Failure**

Many of the “habits” and “beliefs” identified by Hegelsen and Goldsmith in their work with women in a wide variety of organizations / sectors are found to be equally relevant in law enforcement, as outlined below.

- Female leaders are often **less confident** than their male counterparts (Sturm, Taylor, Atwater, & Braddy, 2013; White, Sanctis, & Crino, 1981). In a study involving 194 female leaders conducted by Sturm et al. (2013), researchers found that women often **under-predicted their competence** at leadership in the eyes of their bosses. This is further supported by Taylor and Hood (2011), who found that **women underestimated how well they were perceived** in their organization.
- White et al. (1981) found that **fear of personal failure** restricted female officer’s perception that she could perform the tasks required at leadership ranks in her organization. This contributed to her lack of desire to compete for promotion because she either did not believe she could perform the duties of that rank or she will fail and perhaps be ridiculed (White et al., 1981). This fear is exacerbated by feeling a need to prove herself to a greater extent than her male counterpart (Archbold & Schultz, 2008; Silvestri, 2007). This may induce feelings of fear of failure or a lack of feeling ready to compete for promotion.
- The emphasis the organization places in promotion competitions on operational experience may contribute to making a female officer feel like she is not ready or needs more time in an operational position (Shea, 2008).
- Lack of confidence and fear of failure can compound and contribute to a female officer feeling like she is not qualified for promotion or does not possess the skills to be successful at the next rank (Shea, 2008)

Source: Davey, M. L. 2020. *Addressing Barriers to Promotion for Female Officers in Municipal Policing in Canada*. Major paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (Criminal Justice) in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of the Fraser Valley. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/323210821.pdf>

## **Deeper Dive on the “Confidence” Issue**

Recent research has uncovered some important findings when it comes to how “confidence” plays into women’s advancement.

- Competence is an ability, whether it be a learned skill (e.g., singing, kissing, climbing Mount Everest, and managing people) or a personality trait (e.g., smartness, likability, persistence, and creativity)
- Confidence is the belief in that ability. Our self-esteem is strongly influenced by how good we think we are.
- Confidence is experienced internally by each of us – but also perceived externally by those around us.
- Most people look at a confident person and assume they are also competent – but research tells us that is not usually a safe assumption to make. But there is no simple way of determining whether someone’s confidence corresponds with his or her abilities unless you can measure the person’s abilities using some standardized or normalized measure. When people simply tell you that they are good at something, all you can do is guess whether they have accurately assessed their abilities and are telling you the truth.
- So are they telling the truth? Probably not! Almost of all of us are over-rating most our abilities (competence) most of the time to some extent. Decades of research suggest that on virtually any dimension of ability, we tend to assume that we are better than we actually are including on the job, which explains why we tend to have trouble receiving negative feedback, even if we are lucky enough to have a boss who gives them honest and constructive criticism.



- The extent to which we can accurately self-assess our competence depends on our level of mastery or expertise of that ability. The least competent individuals will grossly overestimate where they stack up. The most competent people will exhibit much self-criticism and self-doubt, so ironically, top performers will consistently underestimate just how much better they were than their peers. The more you know, the more aware you are of what you know and what you don't. Expertise increases self-knowledge, which includes awareness of one's limitations. Conversely, the less you know, the less aware you are of your limitations and the more overconfident you will be.
- Even when our assessment of other people's competence is wrong, their self-confidence can still have self-fulfilling effects, opening doors and opportunities to those who simply seem more confident. This is one of the reasons that so many well-intentioned people have advised women to be more confident to get ahead at work and in their careers. But this advice fails to recognize that confidence has two sides.
- Although confidence is an internal belief, it also has an external side, which concerns how assertive you seem in the eyes of others. This external side of confidence is the most consequential because it is often mistaken for real competence. Regardless of how confident we feel internally, when we come across as confident to others, they will often assume that we are competent, at least until we prove them wrong. This link between 'perceived confidence' and competence is important.
- Although women are assumed to be less confident than men and some studies have shown that women appear (are perceived by others) to be less confident, a closer look at the research shows that women are internally confident. In fact, men and women are both internally overconfident—even if men are still more internally overconfident than women. **Research does not corroborate the idea that women are less internally confident than men.**
- **However, it does reveal that women's confidence isn't always recognized by others.** Although both women and men reported feeling confident (internally), men were much more likely to be rated by other people as appearing confident (perceived externally). Women's self-reports of internal confidence had no correlation with how others saw their confidence.
- To make matters worse, in a study of female engineers, appearing confident had no leadership benefits at all. For the men, appearing confident translated into having influence, but for women, appearing confident did not have the same effect. **To have any impact in the organization, the women had to be seen as confident, competent, and caring; all three traits were inseparable.** For men, confidence alone translated into greater organizational clout, whereas a caring attitude had no effect on people's perception of men's leadership potential. **We are, it seems, less likely to tolerate high confidence in women than we are in men.**
- This bias creates a lose-lose situation for women. Since women are seen as less confident than men and since we see externally perceived confidence as pivotal to leadership, we demand extra displays of confidence in women to consider them worthy of leadership positions. However, when a woman does seem as confident as, or more confident than, men, we are put off by her because high confidence does not fit our gender stereotypes.
- **If women don't lack confidence, then why do we see differences in how men and women behave?** Why are women less likely to apply to jobs or to request a promotion unless they're 100 percent qualified? Why else would women speak less in meetings and be more likely to hedge their bets when making recommendations? If the answer is not how women feel internally, it must be how they are perceived externally. In other words, **differences in behavior arise not because of differences in how men and women are, but in how men and women are treated.**



- This is what the evidence shows: **women are less likely to get useful feedback, their mistakes are judged more harshly and remembered longer, their behavior is scrutinized more carefully, and their colleagues are less likely to share vital information with them. When women speak, they're more likely to be interrupted or ignored. In this context, it makes sense that even an extremely internally confident woman would behave differently from a man.**
- As Ely and Tinsley observed at a biotech company, the female research scientists were far less likely to speak up in meetings, even though in one-on-one interactions, they shared a lot of useful information. Leaders attributed this difference to a lack of confidence: *"What these leaders had failed to see was that when women did speak in meetings, their ideas tended to be either ignored until a man restated them or shot down quickly if they contained even the slightest flaw. In contrast, when men's ideas were flawed, the meritorious elements were salvaged. Women therefore felt they needed to be 110 percent sure of their ideas before they would venture to share them. In a context in which being smart was the coin of the realm, it seemed better to remain silent than to have one's ideas repeatedly dismissed."*
- In conclusion, as long as we continue to choose leaders by how confident they appear – rather than by how confident or competent they are – we not only end up choosing more men to lead us but ultimately choose more incompetent men (men whose level of competence does not match their level of confidence).

Source: Chamorro-Premuzic, Tomas. 2019. *Why Do So Many Incompetent Men Become Leaders?* Harvard Business Review Press. Chapter 2: "Confidence Disguised as Competence."

### **Putting a Positive / Pragmatic Frame on Addressing Women's Internal Barriers to Advancement (Self-Limiting Behaviours / Beliefs)**

"This book makes the case for leaning in, for being ambitious in any pursuit. And while I believe that increasing the number of women in positions of power is a necessary element of true equality, I don't believe that there is one definition of success or happiness. Not all women want careers. Not all women want children. Not all women want both. I would never advocate that we should all have the same objectives. Many people are not interested in acquiring power, not because they lack ambition, but because they are living their lives as they desire. Some of the most important contributions to our world are made by caring for one person at a time. We each have to chart our own unique course and define which goals fit our lives, values and dreams.

...Some, especially other women in business, have cautioned me about speaking out publicly on these issues. When I have spoken out anyway, several of my comments have upset people of both genders. I know **some believe that by focusing on what women can change themselves – pressing women to lean in at the table (vs. lean back or sit on the side) – it seems like I am letting our institutions off the hook. Or even worse, they accuse me of blaming the victim. Far from blaming the victim, I believe that female leaders are key to the solution.**

...I have heard these criticisms in the past and I know that I will hear them – and others – in the future. My hope is that my message will be judged on its merits. We can't avoid this conversation. This issue transcends all of us. The time is long overdue to encourage more women to dream the possible dream and encourage more men to support women in the workforce and in the home. We can reignite the revolution by internalizing the revolution. The shift to a more equal world will happen person by person. **We move closer to the larger goal of true equality with each woman who leans in."**

Source: Sandberg, S. 2013. *Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead*. Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House. "Introduction: Internalizing the Revolution." P. 10-11.



“Where are you right now in your work and your career? Are you in a place that feels satisfying and gives scope to your talents? Are you valued not just for your contributions but also for your potential? And do you feel your work is leading to a place that will satisfy your ambitions and help you make the difference you want to make in the world? After all, you get to define what success means to you; what it means to rise. Maybe it’s moving to a higher, more lucrative position. Maybe you want more say in the direction your organization will take in the future. Maybe you’re fired by the desire to help other women get ahead. The point is, your definition of success is always going to be personal, individual to you. But **one of the biggest impediments to rising is also personal and individual: being blind to the behaviours and habits that keep you stuck. These behaviours may have worked for you earlier in your career, which is why you may be tempted to cling to them. But as you move higher and assume more responsibility, what got you here – wherever you are now – can begin to work against you.**

**Our focus on behaviours doesn’t mean we seek to blame women who have not risen as quickly as they would have liked or that we don’t appreciate the role external barriers play in keeping women stuck.** Impenetrable old-boys’ networks, a male-dominated organizational culture, sexist bosses, masculine notions of leadership, men who seem incapable of listening to women or who claim credit for their ideas in meetings, career tracks that assume families do not exist, performance review criteria subtly designed to favor men, the unconscious biases that shape hiring and promotion: these impediments are real and unfortunately continue to play a role in stymieing women’s advancement....Workplace structures and expectations created with men in mind continue to frustrate many women’s talents and ambitions. So we repeat: **we are not trying to gloss over or deny obstacles that we know are real.** However, our primary focus in this book is not on identifying external barriers or providing road maps around them. It’s on helping you recognizing the behaviours that get in your way as you seek to become more successful on your own terms.

**After all, your behaviours lie within your control, whereas external forces like unconscious bias may not.** If the executive your boss reports to only feels comfortable talking with men he meets on the golf course, trying to change that will be an exercise in frustration. If your company uses performance criteria that subtly penalize women, you can be a voice for pointing this out and work with HR to explore alternatives, but it’s difficult to persuade your company to immediately jettison how it evaluates performance. However, **uprooting an unhelpful habit, behavior or attitude you’ve picked up over the course of your working life is the one thing that does lie within your control that can seriously improve your chances of success. At a minimum, making the effort should improve your daily experience of work and better prepare you to reach your goals in the future.**

Source: Helgesen, S. and Goldsmith, M. 2018. *How Women Rise: The 12 Habits Holding You Back from Your Next Raise, Promotion or Job.* Hachette Books. Chapter 2: “Where You Are.” Pages 11-13.

Given the tendency of female police officers to undervalue their own skills and contributions to policing, it would behoove police leaders to assist women in recognizing their contributions to policing whenever warranted. **However, it is not only the responsibility of police leaders to assist female officers; women must also be accountable for their own self-confidence and recognize their own success in the development of skills and leadership competencies. It is the combination of both strategies that will assist women in not only seeking promotion, but also being successful in the process** (Haake, 2018).

Source: Davey, M. L. 2020. Addressing Barriers to Promotion for Female Officers in Municipal Policing in Canada. Major paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (Criminal Justice) in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of the Fraser Valley. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/323210821.pdf>



## Mentoring

The following points are based on the comments of Deputy Chief Michelle Davey (Delta Police Department) and Inspector Kerrilee Jones (Victoria Police Department) when they spoke on a recent webinar hosted by BC Women in Law Enforcement on February 11, 2021.

- Women can benefit from having multiple mentors – male and female, inside their own municipal police department and from other departments in their region or in other parts of the country.
- There are certainly very specific benefits that come from woman-to-woman mentoring: feeling like your mentor “gets you”, feeling like you can communicate in your own natural way as a woman rather than having to constantly translate your every thought into “man-speak”, being able to discuss issues uniquely faced by women, etc. However, female mentors are still scarce at this time given women’s under-representation at all levels of policing, but especially at more senior levels.
- Male mentors are more commonly in positions of authority and influence and are less able to identify with a woman officer’s personal experiences, particularly navigating a male-dominated culture as a woman. That being said, many women have had positive experiences of being mentored by supportive men, noting that the male perspective was particularly helpful in navigating the leadership structure.
- Whether male or female, mentors from inside a woman’s own police department can offer valuable advice that takes into account the specific organizational culture of that department – and the specific promotional process and requirements.
- Whether male or female, mentors from outside a woman’s own police department (whether in the same region, province or another region in Canada) can offer a different and broader perspective on policing issues, are not embroiled in department politics, or in mentoring candidates competing for the same role, or caught in a conflict of interest if they are involved the promotion interview process.
- If you are a mentee seeking advice from a mentor, remember they are busy individuals. It may be better / easier to grab shorter amounts of their time (e.g., 20 minutes) than longer ones. And it is always recommended to walk into this meetings prepared with very specific, targeted questions and a clear agenda you can share with that mentor.
- Ultimately, it ‘takes a village’ of mentors, supportive colleagues, and supportive friends/family to get through a competitive promotion process successfully – and A LOT of preparation / rehearsal.

On a related note, BC Women in Law Enforcement (BCWLE) – in partnership with Ontario Women in Law Enforcement (OWLE) and Atlantic Women in Law Enforcement (AWLE) – have just launched “Wisdom Web”:

- *The Wisdom Web is intended to create opportunities to share knowledge and experience between our members nationwide. While not a formal mentorship program, through the Wisdom Web, we hope to connect members to other members who can provide advice, support and expertise about topics such as promotion, leadership, careers, specialties and much more!*
- *Click on the Cross Canada Wisdom Web List of Advisors below to view, select and contact one that fits your current needs. Please see links below for guidelines for Advisees and Advisors who would like to participate in this program. If you wish to become a Wisdom Web advisor, please contact Tanya McLachlan, [media@bcwle.ca](mailto:media@bcwle.ca)*
- At the moment, they have only recruited women “Advisors” (mentors) but their goal is to recruit men as well.

And on a final note, some advice for women who struggle to find a woman mentor:

- Murphy, W. 2016. “How Women (and Men) Can Find Role Models When None are Obvious.” *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2016/06/how-women-and-men-can-find-role-models-when-none-are-obvious>



# Networks for Women in Law Enforcement

While being mentored is ideal, being supported by – and supportive of – other women as they seek to advance can also be highly beneficial. The Ontario Women in Law Enforcement (OWLE) network was established over 20 years ago and is a great way to start networking and connecting with peers in other departments.

## *Women Can Benefit from Having Different Kinds of Networks*

Is there a difference between the networks of successful male and female leaders? New research suggests there is. A study found that different types of networks helped new male and female MBAs land executive leadership positions. Researchers found that men benefit not so much from size of network but from being central in the MBA student network—or connected to multiple “hubs”, people who have a lot of contacts across different groups of students. Women benefited in terms of post-MBA job placement from being central in the network too; but to achieve the executive positions with the highest levels of authority and pay they also had to have an inner circle of close female contacts, despite having similar qualifications to men including education and work experience.

Source: Uzzi, B. 2019. “Research: Men and Women Need Different Kinds of Networks to Succeed.” *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2019/02/research-men-and-women-need-different-kinds-of-networks-to-succeed>

## Additional Resources

- **Advice for female officers aspiring to leadership in law enforcement.** Perry, N. “Roundtable: Leadership Development for Female Officers.” *Police1*, August 1, 2019. <https://www.police1.com/women-officers/articles/roundtable-leadership-development-for-female-officers-m8JNsaAeBtVx9ACh/>
- **Advancing “WE” in Policing:** a collective voice on equity, inclusion and diversity in Ontario Policing. <https://www.wepolice.ca/>.  
For more information, there is a podcast interviewing police officer Natalie Hiltz, who is an executive member of the Canadian Society of Evidence Based Policing and a key member of the “Advancing WE in Policing initiative” (<https://www.blueline.ca/blue-line-the-podcast-acting-inspector-natalie-hiltz/>).
- **Isobel Granger, recently promoted to superintendent at Ottawa Police Service, is now leading the service’s newly launched Respect, Values and Inclusion (RVI) Directorate**, which will incorporate a whole-of-service approach to issues like workplace harassment, discrimination, human rights issues, as well as ethics, equity, diversity and inclusion principles. Supt. Granger started her career as the first Black female officer hired by the British South Africa Police in Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. As of June 2020, she is Ottawa’s first Black superintendent and is also the highest-ranking senior Black female officer in Canada. **She joins the Blue Line Podcast** to share her thoughts on the new work with RVI, living authentically, climbing and building ladders. <https://www.blueline.ca/blue-line-the-podcast-inclusion-authenticity-police-culture-with-supt-isobel-granger/>
- **WomenPolice Magazine** (international) - <https://iawp.wildapricot.org/womenpolice-magazine>
- **Preparing to Become a Police Sergeant** - <https://onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/how-to-become-police-sergeant/>
- **Law Enforcement Promotion: How Education Can Help You Climb the Ladder** - <https://onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/police-promotion/>
- **List of Top Police Blogs, Websites & Podcasts** - <https://onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/top-law-enforcement-blogs-websites/>

TedX – Sandra Spagnoli – Chief of Beverly Hills Police - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ERB1GI4aqFA>

