

Forget About Fighting!

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It was a real pleasure and honor for me to speak with many of you during the WIFLE conference in Atlanta. As your columnist, it is important to *me* that I address issues that are important to *you*. When I explained this after our “work show” presentation designed to prepare women for navigating the double standard; I was thrilled that one participant sought me out with a request. She said she wanted me to address the concern centering around the perception of in-fighting amongst women.

As I informed her, I have already written some about “cat fighting” - Chapter 6 in my new book *Cracking the Double Standard Code* and a piece entitled *Catfights are only for Entertainment* ([click here](#)) which presents advice on this troubling phenomenon. I believe people are more likely to stop this contentious behavior when they can get a glimpse behind-the-scenes. Now, on to the point about the really destructive tearing down that comes with competitive battles among women.

“Crabs in a barrel” is a common phrase offered to describe minority in-fighting for promotions. This type of tension is typically spawned by a rumor that only one or two sought after positions have been set aside for minorities. Admittedly, it would be natural for anyone holding the view they are not competing for *all* vacancies, to not only become frustrated, but also to mud wrestle towards the perceived door that permits narrow entry. Forget that!

First, let’s examine the part of the buzz that suggests gender-based limitations on promotions. Let’s suppose that an agency exists that plans only to permit a certain number of women to be promoted to each grade level.

Now, let’s consider how frustrated the affected persons would be who believed that equal opportunity does not exist for them. Reactions of fierce competition for the “woman slot” including “kissing up” to the decision makers, “back-biting”, “back-stabbing” and even sabotaging other women would be conceivable in extreme circumstances. Sadly, as awful as this hypothetical is, it is reality in the practices of some agencies and in the minds and attitudes of some women - even more regretful are the negative results from these stances.

A particularly distasteful outcome of in-fighting is the big win for the corrupt employer that might not only evade requirements to become more diverse, but is able to use the behavior of minorities against them. The justifiable excuse manufactured by the employer is that not enough eligible women existed in the pool to promote, in part because of poor performance (i.e. inability to form constructive work relations, cannot get along with co-workers, bitterness, etc.).

In a word, this approach is *diabolical*. Keep minorities oppressed *and* use their behavior, albeit manipulated, as a rationale for their inability to rise. Actually, I don't have a problem with using cunning tactics. I just think a brilliantly calculated approach is one where equipped and highly qualified women collectively storm (and break) a contrived glass dome that will result in limitless opportunities for women, individually, to soar to the top.

As a member of WIFLE, an organization committed to equal opportunity for women, you have already taken an important step toward gender equality in law enforcement. Now it's time for a pledge to eliminate the "stinking thinking" that leads to an instigated fight against self where you can only lose.

Sisters don't fight - let's unite!