Pushover to Passions in Pink

"I was the only girl in a team full of guys... and it felt as if there was an unspoken agreement that I would do all the work. Looking back, I'm so sick of it."

Contributor
Siddhi Raut, SpaceTourists founder + director

When I was younger, I was fascinated by all walks of science, but I had a plethora of dreams. None were as fond as my fashion designer era, where taped-up polka dot shopping bangs transformed into skirts and shirts. My mom's makeup had weekly raids resulting in... looks.

I will always be surprised at how fervently and quickly society places double standards on women. Hating being seen as too "girly," I ditched the part of myself that embraced femininity, and as I immersed myself in STEM, I felt an intense pressure to compete with my predominately male peers.

But, I was taken advantage **of**.
When my teammates slacked off, *I* was the one to do my part- and more. It was a silent agreement: "Siddhi will do all the work."

I can't hate myself for doing the work, now that I think of it. My grades mattered to me. I also had fun doing the project. However, I do wish I had the courage to speak up.

Confrontation (respectful when it needs to be, of course) is enough. Laying down boundaries is enough. No project is worth degrading oneself over, and learning this fact is so powerful and liberating.

Yet, I still struggle with it. I'm smarter than a lot of guys, but the balance between confidence and bragging has always been blurred for me (and I don't even brag LOL). There is progress, though. I LOVE pink and have learned to embrace my femininity (though if you don't that's also okay. My point is that I was shamed from embracing mine when I secretly loved it). People love to say women aren't interested in STEM. That's what's behind the whopping numerical disparity.

Deep down, I think they know they're wrong.

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