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Apr 20, 2021

TTI - Issue #53 Empowering League of 2021: You're a wonder, Wonder ...

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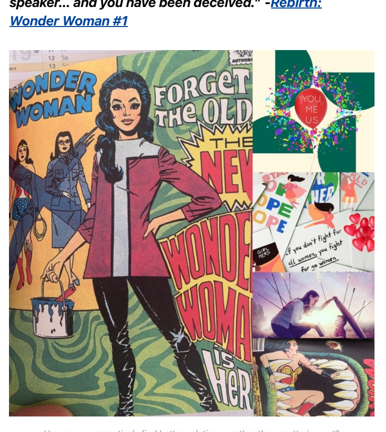
💭 *2020 was a push, you did great, now here are the goals for 2021 📈, you can do that, right?!*

💭 *Wait, wait a minute, where are you going?*

The current situation that I am hearing from many female colleagues is reminiscent of the Wonder Woman quote:

"You are many to many, peace-maker and war-fighter, supplicant, aspirant, penitent, the true friend and the boon companion, the trusted soul, and the truth-speaker... and you have been deceived." -Rebirth: Wonder Woman #1



How can we proactively find better solutions - rather than sputtering out?

Many women are saying things like "*I do not know how I can do this anymore. I am set myself the lowest bar of expectations, knowing that I will not be able to reach a minimal of good in any one area and am just waiting to see which area will blow-up. Honestly, the bar the women portrayed in the film "Bad Moms" is too high a bar to strive for.*"

These statements come from Wonder Women who have...

- been restructured,
- downshifted their expectations of career growth for the sake of flexibility and/or stability,
- found and lost new jobs during the pandemic,
- while homeschooling and being caregivers,
- during a time of political, social upheaval, and continued ambiguity,

These are the Wonder Women who are struggling to find the motivation to work it in the "*hire-me dance*", while continuing to juggle their myriad of responsibilities. These Wonder Women are running on all pistons, *TBH have been even prior to 2020*, and are they are sputtering out.

This is a reoccurring theme as the scales do not look like they will be coming into balance any time soon. Indeed the imbalance is seeming to get worse, particularly for women in emerging economies. At this point for many women, the financial calculation and workplace security is being weighed against their mental-health and well-being.

💭 *How prevalent is the situation?*

US-based National Women's Law Center "tallied a net loss of 5.4 million jobs among women since February 2020, or more than half of all jobs lost since the pandemic began." Now it is April and I am hearing from more and more women, who are struggling to juggle their work, children's schooling, their health, their other various responsibilities, and keep a semblance of sanity - and are questioning if it is worth it.

According to the Women in the Workplace 2020 study, "mothers are more than three times as likely as fathers to be responsible for most of the housework and caregiving during the pandemic. In fact, they're 1.5 times more likely than fathers to be spending an additional three or more hours per day on housework and childcare." 80% of adults not working due to caregiver obligations are women (Lerner Center for Public Health Promotion, in Vox)

"1 in 4 women are considering leaving the workforce or downshifting their careers versus 1 in 5 men. While all women have been impacted, three major groups have experienced some of the largest challenges: working mothers, women in senior management positions, and Black women."reports the McKinsey, The Pandemic Gender Effect analysis.

💭 *What are some of the reasons?*

On the one hand, "women are highly concentrated in sectors that are expected to suffer high rates of unemployment in 2020, including hospitality, food services, and retail. As of September 2020, only 53 percent of the US adult Black population was employed, compared with 57 percent of the corresponding white population,2 and 39 percent of jobs held by Black workers are vulnerable as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, compared with 34 percent for white workers. Vulnerable jobs are subject to furloughs, layoffs, or being rendered unproductive (for example, workers kept on payroll but not working) during periods of high physical distancing. Similarly, 65 percent of US Hispanics and Latinos work in the five sectors that are suffering the largest drops in GDP during the pandemic, including leisure and hospitality and retail trade." (McKinsey, Investing in Black Lives and Livelihood).

"If you are in a low-wage service-sector job, you're not able to work from home and try to take care of your kids in between conference calls," Emily Martin, the NWLC's vice-president for education and workplace justice, "Those are jobs where, if you have a caregiving crisis, you may just have to leave the workforce entirely." in Fortune

And Emily is right, in the US, in September alone, 617,000 women left the workforce just as school was ramping up - 8 times more than men.

Despite the fact that,

"Almost 40% of unemployed women in December have been out of work for six months or more. The impact on women of this crisis is going to be one that they feel economically for years to come," Emily Martin adds. "We're really in danger of widening gender and racial wage gaps—and that has huge impacts for the financial security of women, and of the families who are depending on women." - in Fortune

This "I see no other option than to leave" situation is given further credence in the PWC report, which states "Overall, women ranked lack of flexibility and work/life balance as a top-three reason for wanting to leave their current employer, just behind pay and a lack of opportunities for career progression."

This is then a big challenge then for women wanting to return - or them asking for flexibly options at work as detailed in the HBR 2020 article on What is Really Holding Women Back, a there is such a strong bias and narrative around the paradigm that "high-level jobs require extremely long hours, women's devotion to family makes it impossible for them to put in those hours, and their careers suffer as a result." In fact, "in a 2012 survey of more than 6,500 Harvard Business School alumni from many different industries, 73% of men and 85% of women invoked it to explain women's stalled advancement. Believing this explanation doesn't mean it's true, however, and our research calls it seriously into question."

"Women weren't held back because of trouble balancing the competing demands of work and family—men, too, suffered from the balance problem and nevertheless advanced. Women were held back because, unlike men, they were encouraged to take accommodations, such as going part-time and shifting to internally facing roles, which derailed their careers. The real culprit was a general culture of overwork that hurt both men and women and locked gender inequality in place. they highlight that "a 24/7 culture creates discontent for women and men alike and that the "accommodations" solution, ironically, tends to derail the careers of highly qualified women, leaving companies' senior ranks depleted of some of their brightest female stars" (Ely and Padavic, 2020)

On the other hand, in their work, Ely and Padavic challenged the work/family narrative as oversimplified and offered a "broader, more-nuanced, and data-driven explanation: What really held women back was the **crushing culture of overwork** at the firm. The unnecessarily long hours were detrimental to everyone, we explained, but they disproportionately penalized women because, unlike men, many of them take accommodations, which extract a steep career price."

Which leads us back to the statement at the beginning of this TTI post, which was essentially the story that folks have been hearing at their annual all-hands and objective setting - "*crazy year that 2020, you delivered incredibly, now let's add some more on top without real concessions to how, when, or priorities on what work is to be done.*" This pressure about what was, and is, necessary to deliver on these high expectations is at the heart of the matter - overpromising unrealistic goals, not addressing the causes of in-efficient work, that leads to feeling burnt out and not having the agency to defend oneself against the deluge and onslaught.

💭 This is, in my opinion, a huge elephant in the room that is causing many people to question "is this job even worth the mental- and emotional health strain - can I reasonably maintain this level of output any longer"?

In the Reimagine Work Employee Survey, 49% of Employees reported feeling some symptoms of being burned out at work. This number is considered to be an underestimate, as employees experiencing burnout are in general not as likely to respond to survey requests, and "the most burned-out individuals may have already left the workforce by the time the study had been run (December 2020 - January 2021)—as have many women, who've been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 crisis.

According to a McKinsey 20/20 report, the factors that can predict whether employees are considering downshifting their careers or leaving the workforce are as follows:

- Lack of flexibility at work
- Feeling like they need to be available to work at all hours, or "always on"
- Housework and caregiving burdens resulting from COVID-19
- Worry that their performance is being negatively judged because of caregiving responsibilities during the pandemic
- Difficulty sharing with their teammates or managers the challenges they are facing
- Feeling blindsided by decisions that affect their day-to-day work
- Feeling unable to bring their whole selves to work

As businesses and organizations, we need to deeply care and address these symptomatic and systemic issues, particularly for people of color, women, and other minority groups, who are losing out on hard wrought ground and whose place in organizations for delivering on increased creativity in teams, organizational performance and innovation is proven many times over.

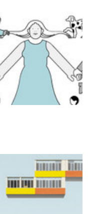
Each individual case is part of a broader story that we as HR, we need to help dig deeper to proactively address and help get energy, power, and a real system of support in place.

🎈 And we as an Empowering League are gathering ideas, inspirations, and practical research! So if YOU are interested or have resources /inspirations/ venting to share, let me know - there's always room at our table.

**Change their minds,
and change the world.
Wonder Woman, Wonder Woman.
You're a wonder, Wonder Woman.**

Quicker Fixes: Simple Actions - Real Impact For Yourself

Arianna Huffington & Marina Khidekel | Your Time to Thrive | Talks at Google



Arianna Huffington & Marina Khidekel discuss Thrive Global and their book "*Your Time to Thrive: End Burnout, Increase Well-Being, & Unlock Your Full Potential* in a Google Talk. Essentially, how do you break down things you want-to/ought-to vs. really need to do into small actions that will help you in your mental, physical and social health. Wonderful talk.

A free pdf of their book is here

www.youtube.com

How to Set Pandemic Boundaries for Relatives - The New York Times

You'd do anything for them in a crisis, but the crisis isn't going away. Here's how to get your life back. A couple of simple, yet encouraging ways to get a little bit of power over your life back.

www.nytimes.com

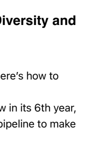
Building Work-Life Boundaries in the WFH Era

This article dives into some simple ways as a leader - for yourself and for your team on ways to more effectively find time and space to be productive.

hbr.org

Seeing The Broader Situation: Research Reports

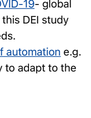
How the pandemic is forcing women out of the workforce, explained in a comic



This is a heart-and-mind hitting reality check of the common situation facing women who are leaving the workforce mid-pandemic.

www.vox.com

Survey: Some Employers Taking Steps to Address the Pandemic's Disparate Impact on Women - i4cp



A good pulse survey study by the Institute of Corporate Productivity (i4cp) on what companies are actually doing to help support. This article gives an insight into the high level results.

www.i4cp.com

Collection of McKinsey Reports - Focus on Diversity and Inclusion

1. Five Fifty: The pandemic's gender effect Women are disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 crisis. Here's how to help.
2. Women in the Workplace 2020 - A ongoing study, now in its 6th year, attention is now being played to efforts earlier in the pipeline to make real progress
3. Diverse employees are struggling the most during COVID-19- global research, spanning 11 countries and diversity groups, this DEI study offers insights in to the differing challenges - and needs.
4. The future of women at work: Transitions in the age of automation e.g. Women will need to be skilled, mobile, and tech savvy to adapt to the new world of work.

www.mckinsey.com

PWC Report Time to talk: What has to change for women at work

The 2018 survey of 3,627 professional women from around dives into 3 key areas to advance gender equality and help women's career advancement as they lead their enterprises into the 21st century: ***Transparency and trust, strategic support, and Life, family care and work.*** Showcasing the importance of fostering work cultures, whereby people are valued and rewarded for their performance over their presence.

www.pwc.com

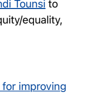
A year into COVID-19, U.S. labor market recovery is far from complete | Pew Research Center

Here's how the COVID-19 recession is affecting labor force participation and unemployment among American workers a year after its onset.

www.pewresearch.org

Addressing Resident Systemic Elephants in the Room

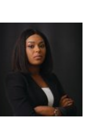
Brené with Aiko Bethea on Inclusivity at Work: The Heart of Hard Conversations - Unlocking Us with Brené Brown | Podcast on Spotify



Unlocking Us is here to Dare to Lead on inclusivity. Brené Brown talks with her colleague and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion expert, Aiko Bethea, about empathy, accountability, and the power of listening and believing. They do a great little role play on exiting convesations vs. sticking with it. *Awesome episode*!

open.spotify.com

RCIRCLE Talks to... Mehdi Tounsi... Unspoken themes in D&I (SE01E08)



I am a permanent co-host for the community RCIRCLE, where we address in conversations elephants, ideas, and inspirations across talent communities.

On International Woman's Day, I, spoke with my friend, Mehdi Tounsi to discuss unspoken themes in regards to #DEBI (diversity, equity/equality, belonging, and inclusion)

In addition to this TTI editions articles, we also talk about:

- Gender Bias in Hiring Report: Data-backed strategies for improving gender equality in the workplace,
- 2020: Delivering the Business Outcomes,
- BCEC|WGEA Gender Equity Series
- Social incentives for gender differences in the propensity to initiate negotiations: Sometimes it does hurt to ask
- Who Is Driving Inequality? You Are

www.youtube.com

Where are the female CEOs?

Proactive Talent's Jim Stroud, who will be speaking at #DoDiverse, tackles the question: When men and women are represented equally at entry-level, why are women not represented higher up the chain? Great blog post.

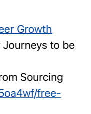
blog.proactivetalent.com

How the Best Bosses Interrupt Bias on Their Teams

Sometimes calling a spade a spade is what you need to do. This is a simple but honestly very helpful overview of actions that help interrupt bias in team.

hbr.org

Employee Voice: Why Listening Matters - 8Connect People & Change



"At work, voice means voluntarily offering suggestions, ideas or opinions about what needs to change or improve." How are we creating brave spaces where people's voices 1. can be raised, 2. will be raised, and 3. will be heard ❓ This post does a great job examining how listening encourages voice.

8connectpeople.com

Opportunity: Co-Creating A Better Path Forward

> "Wonder Woman, Wonder Woman.
>
> Now the world is ready for you,
>
> and the wonders you can do."

The transforming talent work as part of an Empowering League has taken many beautiful turns this year - and will continue.

- The collection of 65+ videos from the L&D Cares Career Growth Summit are now on YouTube (we are creating Learner Journeys to be published soon.)
- Next week, I am honored to MC #sosud #DoDiverse from Sourcing Summit. (win free tickets🎈 https://kingsumo.com/g/5oa4wf/free-sosud-ticket-for-ld-members)
- Welcome Into The Awesome collaboration to foster first time speakers will be June 25-26
- The *2.5 The In-Between and Transition L&D Cares Career Growth Summit* will be September 23-25 - and this is where the Empowering League will take the stage. If you would like to be a part or hear more, please just let me know!

If fostering voice, transforming the way you do talent, is something that is on your agenda, where I can help you, I look forward to talking with you!

Until then, be well, stay curious, and use your wonderful voice! We want to hear it!

Your Chief Talent Navigator,

Liz

Elizabeth Lembke, Transforming Talent

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Feeding the Passion for Transformation: Be it Talent, Culture, Work or HR

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