

ACE WOMEN'S Network™ Michigan

Mentoring Mondays
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Feeling frustrated when you see colleagues moving ahead in the organization and you seem to be at a standstill? If you are feeling stuck, you may have devoted too much time and energy to doing your job well rather than doing something about your career goals. Today, as we review the next chapter in “*How Women Rise*” by Sally Helgensen and Marshall Goldsmith, we will look at ways to break Habit #6.

Habit 6: Putting Your Job Before Your Career

If the above scenario has a familiar ring to you, don't feel like you have done something wrong - you are not alone. This happens often to women. Why? “The most common reason women put their jobs before their career is rooted in one of their greatest virtues: loyalty. Research shows that loyalty is a primary reason women tend to stay in their jobs longer than men. It's a virtue that can easily become a trap. The desire to be loyal can lead you to neglect your future, sacrifice your ambitions, and sell your talent and potential short. Others may benefit, but you do not.”

Let us take a look at Serena's story of personal loyalty. She had spent eleven years as a senior production assistant for a news show based in LA. “The producer Serena worked for had won a notable number of Emmys, and she always felt proud to work for him. . . . Serena liked the day-to-day rhythm of her job, valued her leadership role on the team, and felt she benefitted from her boss's prestige. But remaining a senior PA for so long had provided its share of painful moments. She says, a male assistant who joined when she did took off like a rocket, becoming a producer after just five years. He was no better at his job, but he was constantly on the lookout for opportunities. I waited for opportunities, figuring my boss and senior management would know when I was ready to move up.”

The bottom line is that she always wanted to be a producer, but figured when the right time came someone would recognize her hard work and it would happen. This approach leaves the decisions about your career in someone else's hands.

Serena finally found her voice after attending a leadership retreat, participated in workshops and got some individual coaching. She finally had “the talk” with her boss. She said, “Just the idea of telling my boss I wanted his support in becoming a producer basically filled me with dread. I was afraid he’d see me as disloyal for leaving him in the lurch. . . . Serena also realized that, although her boss had always been lavish in praising her, he mostly did so to staff and other producers. He’s never raved about her work to the senior network people in New York. Yet they were the ones who needed to know what she was capable of if she had any expectation of moving on. ‘Why wouldn’t he have talked to them about me?’ she wondered. Partly because she had never asked him to.”

During this experience, Serena discovered another vulnerability. “She said, ‘I had this incredible fear of appearing, or of being, self-serving’. . . . But now I think, what’s so terrible about looking out for your own interests? Knowing what inspires you and working intentionally to create it requires that you acknowledge and then act upon your self-interest.”

Don’t let the loyalty trap keep you stuck. Exercise your right to some “healthy self-interest.”

To secure your copy of “*How Women Rise*” visit www.hatchettbooks.com.