

Women Should Unite to Break Glass Ceiling

By Julissa Richards '20

Here's a challenge: name at least three Fortune 500 companies who have female CEOs. Many people probably can't even name one, since less than five percent of CEOs are women. One big reason for this is the glass ceiling theory, which suggests the presence of an unseen barrier that prevents a person of a certain age, gender, or race from achieving ultimate success.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the term was first used in an article published in *Adweek* in 1984. It is also reported that Marilyn Loden coined the term 40 years ago during a panel called "Mirror Mirror on the Wall." In a recent interview, Loden speaks of her anger towards the slowness of change in society. In Loden's opinion, instead of punishing women for allegedly not trying harder, society needs to take responsibility for the role it has played in the low success of women.

Many people may not understand how the theory puts young women at a disadvantage. For one, if young women continue to see that they will never be able to reach a certain level of success or even be seen as equal to their male coworkers, they begin to feel insecure. In their mind, they will never amount to anything and will have to settle for less, causing them to stop striving for success.

Ms. Wendy Menard teaches Algebra 2, Introduction to Python, Geometry, and Discrete Math here at Midwood. She recalls a time when she worked as a budget director at Lord & Taylor and became pregnant with her first child. When she asked her boss for an extra eight weeks of unpaid leave, she was given a stern "No". Back then, she simply left the company, but if she were to be in this kind of situation now, she would stand her ground.

Ms. Menard said, "I think I would be more vocal. I was very young at the time. I think I would be better at speaking up for myself now." Ms. Menard added, "Is it fair that you should have to hide things or not say things out loud that you want to say? No, but is it smarter, maybe. It all depends what your goal is."

Kierrah Jeffrey '20 has never experienced such an inequality, but she said, "I would use my voice to advocate for equal rights for not only me, but also for my other female coworkers."

In other words, in order to get ahead, many women have to learn when it is and isn't okay to open their mouths. This idea hints at the expression, "A woman should be seen, but not heard." This expression can be interpreted as a woman is expected to sit and look pretty but not say anything.

It's ideas like these that make young girls like myself feel that there's a one in a million chance of being equal to males. It's as if, no matter how hard we try, things will never change; women will continue to get the short end of the stick. Some of us feel that all we're good for is being someone's housewife.

This theory may also make some women believe that aiming for independence and prosperity isn't worth the effort. Eventually, this will hurt the economy since women make up about half of the world's population.

When Ms. Menard became pregnant with her first child, she immediately thought about how her pregnancy would

take her out of the competition for a higher position. She even said, "I took myself out of the equation."

Fortunately for the men in this world, this theory doesn't put them at a disadvantage. In fact, it helps them achieve more. If women are being held back, it is that much easier for a man to succeed, hold a high position, such as a CEO or a chairperson, and make more money. A 2012 study called "Money, Benefits, and Power: A Test of the Glass Ceiling and the Glass Escalator Hypotheses" concluded that the average white man earns \$10,400 more than the average black woman, resulting from the glass ceiling.

This is why society needs to begin educating tomorrow's adults about the lack of equality between men and women. As young adults in today's world, we need to be aware of these kinds of prejudices so we can know how to deal with these issues as we face them as we become older.

According to Ms. Menard, if equality and sexual harassment is taught, people may grow up to be better adults. Being educated on these topics will help us to learn what's appropriate and what's inappropriate for us to say to and about each other.

However, some say that it's women holding women back and preventing each other from succeeding in life. It could be that many women depend so much, or almost too much, on this theory and on the fact that women in this country aren't seen as equal to men. Many women use these unwritten facts as an excuse to explain why they haven't reached their full potential in life.

"When women join together to shine light on this theory, like how they do with the #MeToo Movement, action to fix the unfair career opportunities will be brought to the attention of people who can make changes," Jeffrey '20 said.

Lindsay Broder says in her article "Women: Are We to Blame for the Glass Ceiling?", "The women who complain about inequality in the workplace are often the same women who want flexible work schedules or other benefits so that they can have it all...You can have it all. However, you can't expect to be the CEO of a large multinational corporation if you don't put in the time".

Also, in 2012 the Federal Aviation Administration released a report on workplace bullying. The report found that same-sex harassment accounts for an astonishing 68 percent of workplace bullying, and out of that percentage, 80 percent of these reported cases are women on women cases. All this shows men that we don't respect each other as women and that we don't work hard for the things we want to achieve in life. Therefore, they have no reason to respect us or take us seriously.

While these statements may be valid, the glass ceiling still has a strong effect on women in society. Can women everywhere learn how to respect and uplift each other? Yes. Can we as a whole work much harder and put more time and effort into achieving our goals? Of course; why not? Once we find a way to break through this glass ceiling, there is no limit to how successful the majority of women in our society can be.

Plastic is taking over the ocean ...

That Cup Could Choke a Dolphin in 50 Years

By Annie Jiang '19

Summertime is finally here, and that means cold iced coffee and strawberry acai lemonade refreshers from Starbucks. But what that also means is more plastic and paper cups that end up in landfills and oceans.

Every year, over four billion Starbucks cups are sent to landfills, according to EcoWatch, instead of being recycled. In landfills, these cups persist for decades and take long amounts of time to biodegrade.

"In landfills, very little oxygen can penetrate piles of garbage, which means that planet-warming methane is emitted from decomposing cups. They affect the environment years beyond its original disposal," according to Stand.earth, an organization that advocates for Starbucks to make recyclable cups through the #BetterCup.

When these cups eventually decompose, they release methane, a greenhouse gas, that contributes to global warming. Many Starbucks cups, lids, and straws also end up in oceans, contributing to the eight million tons of plastic dumped in oceans annually, according to the Plastic Oceans Foundation, a non-profit organization. This can be dangerous when sea creatures mistake the plastic for food, which can lead to ingestion, starvation, suffocation, infection, drowning, and entanglement, according to Clean Water Action.



Photo Credit: Creative-Commons

Plastic waste harms our environment.

Imagine swimming in an ocean with more plastic than fish. Well, in 47 years, you won't have to imagine it because it will be a reality. In 2050, there will be more plastic in oceans than fish, according to the World Economic Forum in their report "The New Plastics Economy".

These cups are not only harming the environment through the way they are being disposed of but also through the way they are being manufactured.

These cups are made from fresh cut trees, and in order to make them, Starbucks cuts down more than one million trees each year and uses large amounts of water. The water used to manufacture these cups are contaminated with chemicals, which pollutes waterways, according to Stand.earth.

Although these cups are made mostly out of paper, they are not being recycled because of its plastic lining, which requires special equipment to recycle.

"This is particularly wasteful since paper cups are made from a very high-quality paper and, if recycled, could be reused multiple times," according to Stand.earth.

This crisis can't be solved by waiting on Starbucks or the government to act on their own. According to Stand.earth, Starbucks promised to make a fully recyclable cup by 2015, yet we still don't see that change. Starbucks also promised to encourage 25 percent of its customers to use reusable mugs, but only 1.6 percent of their customers use them. The only way there can be real change is with the customers themselves.

I know what you're thinking: Does this mean that I can't have my vanilla latte anymore?

No, you can continue enjoying your favorite Starbucks drink, but there are alternatives you might want to consider in reducing your environmental footprint.

BYOC: bring your own cup. Since 1985, Starbucks has been giving discounts to customers who bring their own cups. You can save ten cents for every drink you buy at Starbucks just by bringing a mason jar or cup. Not only are you reducing plastic waste, but you're also saving money. If you don't want to bring a cup, however, you can always purchase a reusable cup at Starbucks for \$2.

Iced coffee should be enjoyed in the park on a nice warm summer afternoon, but not to destroy the one planet we live on.

The Anti-climactic Life of Anna by Jerry Aneke

