

Book Study Guide by Michael Gurian
for
Leadership and the Sexes:
Using Gender Science to Create Success in Business
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Welcome to this book study guide. It is designed so that each chapter of the book, and the discussion starters in this guide, can be read over a one-week period, then discussed during a weekly staff or team meeting. If your leadership team finds specific meaning in a particular chapter, don't feel bound by time—take as much as you need. There is some revolutionary material in this book, and it needs honest discussion from all team members.

The beginning of this guide is front-loaded with instructions in order to help you set the stage for discussions of gender, gender science, and practical GenderTools in your leadership, management, and marketing/selling. After the initial setup, each chapter guide will focus on discussion starter questions and instructions.

However, because the GenderTool chapters (4–7 and 10) are already set up as study and action tools, this study guide will generally refer you to the chapters for discussion starters. If you follow along with the chapter checklists, you will have a significant number of discussion starters.

Selecting a Discussion Leader

While your team may already have a leader who naturally steps in to lead discussions of the book and guide, you might want to also experiment with having different leaders, both women and men, lead each chapter's discussion. By both leading and being led, we learn a lot about one another and can build teams most powerfully. You might also enjoy trying woman/man tandem leaders for one or more chapters.

No matter how you work with this book and guide, its ultimate goal is to help you build gender leadership and intelligence in your team and business. As the success data in the book shows, workplaces gain in bottom line, competitive edge, and retention of talent when gender leadership and gender intelligence increase.

For more information on our consulting programs, trainings, and eLearning based on this book, click www.genderleadership.com on your browser.

Introduction: How Gender Intelligence Leads to Balanced, Authentic Leadership

Look at where there is clear need in your business for greater understanding of gender. To help you accomplish this visioning, answer the questions on the first two pages of the Introduction.

Look at yourself and the other team members you work with. Begin honest discussions with one another, using the book as a guide. As discussion starters, ask each team member to tell his or her own “gender story,” and while doing so, answer these questions:

- How did where you grew up and who raised you affect your sense of your own gender and other people’s gender traits?
- When did you notice that boys and girls think, act, and behave somewhat differently, i.e., you began to suspect there are not just anatomical differences between us?
- What were your most influential models of gender while growing up—your parents, friends, community members?
- When did you first notice that adult men and women are inherently different in some crucial ways?

Read the “Snapshot of Gender Differences” in the box on pages xx and xxi. As you go over each one of the differences, discuss which ones fit the women and men around you (and yourself), and also note the folks you think are exceptions to the differences.

Discuss the “gender evolution” that brings us to where we are now as women and men. How have you seen gender roles change in your lifetime? What challenges do each of you see remaining for both genders? Make some initial comments about the changing history of gender and gender roles in preparation for moving forward through the book.

Part I: The Theory:

Gender Intelligence: The Natural Differences Between Men and Women

Chapter 1: Understanding the Science of Gender (pp. 3–24)

Discuss the epigraph by scientist Richard Haier. Why is it important to think about this science-based perspective on gender?

Discuss the Lighthouse metaphor. Make sure everyone is clear on the difference between “gender” and “gender roles.”

Discuss the possibility that gender is marked on the brain via chromosomes and in utero hormonal surges, then nurtured by society. How does this “gender science” approach possibly alter your understanding of gender in the workplace.

Look at the brain scans and talk about the science surrounding them.

Discuss brain plasticity and what it means to each of us as growing human beings. Biology is not destiny; biology is proclivity. What does this mean to you? Can you think of other ways, besides your gender, that you “just seem to be who you are,” i.e., personality traits that don’t seem very “plastic.”

At the same time, discuss the problems inherent in stereotyping, i.e., taking gender traits so far into generalization that we end up limiting “male” and “female.”

This discussion can lead to the importance of talking about “bridge brains.” Talk honestly to one another and wonder, “Who is a bridge brain?” “Am I a bridge brain?” “Where might I fit on the gender/brain spectrum?”

To help enjoy and answer these questions, go to the Appendix, and take the brief survey there. As a team, compare your surveys! The survey is just a beginning point of self-understanding and discussion—but it can be a fun beginning point.

Do the situational exercise at the end of the chapter. Discuss the chapter summary points and the tasks and principles.

Chapter 2: Understanding How the Male and Female Brain *Work* Differently (pp. 25)

Now that you have set the foundation for taking a gender science approach to gender in your team and workplace, look at each bolded heading in each chapter to guide your discussions. Discussion starter questions follow along with the bold headings. Remember to take time to do the situational exercises at the end of the chapters, and discuss the principles and the tasks.

In the introduction to this chapter, the CMO and CFO clearly seem to come from “different brains.” Do you know men and women like this? Do you know women and men who are exceptions to this difference?

Three Primary Areas of Brain Difference

- What tends to happen when you give toddler girls trucks and toddler boys dolls?
- Have you noticed boys and men using objects (balls, twigs, even videogame scenarios) to try to relate to and care about each other?
- Have you noticed girls and women using more sitting and talking together?
- What have you heard about girls vs. boys in math/science. Had you heard some things that were false or misleading?
- How does male spatiality appear in meetings or offices? Is there more tapping of pencils and tossing of objects among the men than the women?

Answer the questions on pp. 31 and 33 in your next team meeting. Look at white matter and gray matter differences.

- Have you noticed the effects of a larger cingulated gyrus in women? Do the women around you tend to notice and ponder certain things for longer periods of time than the men?
- Have you noticed the effects of the rest state, especially among men who zone out?
- How do the men and women in your team remember differently? What types of details do each of you seem to remember best?
- What intrigues you the most about male and female brain chemistry? What detail resonates for each of you?
- Have you noticed the buyer/seller scenario in your own work?
- How do each of you, as a woman or man, react to stress differently (and similarly)?
- What can both women and men learn regarding their own success path by understanding the secrets of male banter?
- Is it okay with your team to openly discuss hormonal cycles and their effects on mood? Does it help open up the discussion to know that men have a biochemical cycle too?

Burning Question: Do Women Have to Become Men to Get Ahead?

Have women had to become men in your corporation in order to get ahead? Openly discuss this issue. Hear women's stories, and also respect men's observations.

Do the situational exercise at the end of the chapter, and discuss the principles and tasks before going on.

Chapter 3: Understanding How the Male and Female Brain *Lead* Differently (p. 56)

Many useful discussion starters appear in this section through the bullet points. Before going through each section and discussing the bulleted points, talk as a team about the differences noted in italics on pp. 58–60.

Going through all the differences and bullet points will take one or more hours if discussion is to be lively and well balanced.

Read the box on p. 67. Can you re-think women's tears as a strength, not a weakness? What do you think about the male leader who smashed phones? Is there a double standard in your workplace regarding male and female anger, i.e., male anger is generally rewarded, but female anger is suspect?

Leading Differently: The Success Story of Pam Gomez Gil

Discuss Pam Gomez Gil's story. Can this kind of targeted female leadership work in any part of your company or firm?

Transforming Your Team

- Do you recognize the intention and spirit, if not the literal details, of the leader stories in this section?
- What can you do right now to transform your team to a more gender intelligent one?

Do the situational exercise at the end of the chapter, and discuss the principles and tasks.

Part II: The Tools:

Putting Gender Intelligence to Work Immediately

Chapter 4: GenderTool 1: Improving Your Negotiation Skills with Both Genders (p. 81)

Get to know the layout of these chapters, and discuss the bullet points and stories in each. Don't worry if you don't cover them all. A good way to see what your team is most interested in—and thus gauge how much of the team meeting each GenderTool should take—is to ask the team to vote on a part of each tool to spend the most time on. Let majority rule.

Don't leave this Negotiations Tool without developing a specific plan for how to implement male/female balance in the next major negotiation your company is involved in.

Chapter 5: GenderTool 2: Running a Gender-Balanced Meeting (p. 91)

Don't leave discussion of this tool without noting together which of the ten essential skills in the chapter need improvement in your team meetings.

Chapter 6: GenderTool 3: Improving Your Communication Skills with Women and Men (p. 100)

Don't leave discussion of this tool without exploring in depth the ways that men and women communicate both verbally and nonverbally.

Make a plan for re-training leaders and others in your corporation regarding communication skills as necessary.

Communication Differences in Sales

Spend specific time applying this tool to sales and marketing. How do women, men, and your company's advertising, marketing, and selling strategies need to adjust?

Chapter 7: GenderTool 4: Improving Your Conflict Resolution Skills with Men and Women (p. 112)

Make sure to focus on how conflict leads to success for your team and company, but not if it is handled in highly negative ways.

Don't leave this tool without honest discussion of the one or two people who are constantly creating conflict. If these people are dragging down a team, a forum must be created for helping re-skill them toward better communication.

If at this time your company or team is involved in any kind of litigation around sexual harassment or gender discrimination, it is very useful to use this tool as a forum for trying to understand the systemic basis in the company, and/or the personal hurt in the suing individual, that led to the suit or claim.

Part III: The Applications:

Ensuring Gender-Balanced Leadership in the Long Term

Chapter 8: Helping Women: Retaining, Motivating, and Working with Female Talent (p. 125)

How is your company doing in:

- Attracting female talent?
- Retaining that talent?
- Motivating that talent?
- Satisfying the leadership needs of that talent?

Use the boxes in this chapter to identify negatives and positives in your company or firm.

Success Stories: How Gender-Balanced Leadership Improves the Bottom Line

Look carefully at what Deloitte & Touche and IBM did. Does your company or firm need to do something like this as well, including diagnostics of the corporate culture, then training and tool-making to solve issues women are facing?

How much money can you estimate that your company or firm would save/make if it attracted, retained, and advanced more female talent?

What Women Want? No, What Women Need!

Discuss the difference between want and need. Make a list of what our team believes are “wants” and “needs.” The box can help you.

Confronting Obstacles to Meeting Women’s Needs

Go through these obstacles one by one. How many and which ones exist in your company or firm?

Do the situational exercise at the end of the chapter. Discuss the principles and tasks before you move forward to the next chapter.

Chapter 9: Helping Men: Recognizing Men's Leadership Strengths and Solving Issues Men Face (p. 153)

Discuss Judy Mepham's words that begin the chapter.

Have men's strengths and needs been under-discussed in the gender dialogue of the last few decades. Why?

Do the exercise on p. 154. Compare results.

Clarifying and Maximizing Men's Strengths

Make your own list of men's strengths. Compare them to the list on p. 155. Discuss the results of the lists and comparisons.

What specific strengths do you see in men around you?

Understanding Issues Men Face in Leadership

How much male bashing goes on in your company or firm? Ask men to be specific about what they've heard. Ask women to be specific also. Sometimes women hear things men don't.

Men Need Work/Life Balance Too

Discuss work/life balance issues in your workplace for both men and women. Compare how men and women feel about it.

- Are you required to work ten hour days six days a week, often away from your children?
- If so, how can this actually be detrimental to productivity?

For Women: Tips for Supervising Men

Role-play this tool. Let each person, if they wish, play both the role of supervisor and of supervisee.

Do the situational exercise at the end of the chapter, and discuss the principles and tasks before moving to the last chapter.

Chapter 10: GenderTool 5: Practicing Gender-Intelligent Mentoring and Coaching in your Corporation (p. 179)

Like the first four GenderTools, this one is set up with checklists you can use as discussion starters.

- Mentoring is a key technique for putting in place many of the improvements we are suggesting throughout this book. Does your company or firm have enough and appropriate mentoring systems in place?
- Does your team and do your managers know how to mentor, supervise, and coach both women and men as needed?
- How can you specifically improve the way men mentor and supervise women?
- How can you specifically improve the way women mentor men?

Epilogue: The Future of Gender

- How has your book study changed your sense of gender and gender issues?
- What must your company or firm do now in order to increase its success?