

Triad Style Magazine-Greensboro New & Record

MY WORD

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NEWS BULLETIN: Woman found equal to man (film at eleven)

Last week an American woman named Pat Proud was treated the same as her male counterpart.. Bob Suave. They had both served as faithful employees at The Mertz Mattress company for twenty-six years. Bob had even purchased decking material in anticipation of his “shoe-in” promotion. He could close his eyes and see the wrap-around deck with permanent Tiki Torches. He had already purchased a Jimmy Buffet CD and a tropical shirt, the man was ready. Pat planned a quiet weekend at home, never imagining that she had a ghost of a chance at the slot.

Then the un-thinkable occurred. The boss, Mr. Harry Mertz, judged the two employees on a level playing field and found Pat more deserving of the raise based on her work record and not her sex. Bob furiously filed a complaint with the Mattress Union and demanded that he..and not Pat become the new manager of the coil assembly division. Bob lost and a new day dawned for the women of America.

Think this happened in 1982? Think again. It hasn't even occurred yet. Women are still being paid less for more hours, men still rule.

Oh...think I sound like some “Woman’s Libber” from the 60’s? Are you ready to remind me about that lady in Florida, the Secretary of State in the Vera Wang suit who held a country at bay? Yeah, like she was really calling the shots? Can I interest you in some river front property in Greensboro? And don’t even assume I don’t appreciate the importance of men... I happen to be the world’s biggest John Travolta fan. I loved Matthew Broderick as Ferris Bueller. I have a son who is the joy of my life. O.K.? Don’t start with me on the men thing. I am not on an anti-male rant. My dad was everything to me, but he still didn’t think women should aspire to become the CEO of anything except the kitchen. To my dad, Archie Bunker was a dramatic show. He bought my mom a lacey apron one year for her birthday. She laughed out loud. Now you know where I get this from!

As we start the new millennium off with a bang, do you think it is to much for a few of us (women) to dream that one day maybe, our daughters will be treated better? Is it so far-fetched to dream of a day when young women are recruited by Law schools or Medical schools

with the same zest and zeal as the young guys? (I always wanted to use the phrase “zest and zeal”!)

The nightmare is that most men already think women are already doing great. Being your average gal-on-the-street (hey..watch it!..not that street) correspondent. I took the trouble to take my own little poll . I asked the following three questions of twenty-three guys, all different ages, shapes, colors. Ready?

Here goes, guys out there reading this...answer honestly now!

1. Would you mind having an intelligent female as a supervisor?
2. Do you think a woman can run a company as efficiently as a man ?
3. Would you , as a boss; promote (or fast-track) a women for management if you knew there was a good chance she would want to start a family within a few years?

Thirteen men out of twenty-three wrote ALL “NO” answers down on a slip of paper and placed them in an un-marked envelope (hey...this was as scientific as I could get!). Are you one of the enlightened guys who answered “ YES..YES..YES “ We need to raise more of your kind! Oh, and all you women out there?...do you think I am not about to scrutinize the way you operate? YOU are harder on each other then you think. Men help each other when they can, women fear helping another women up the ladder. Think about it Miss Gucci...when have you told a female friend about a fantastic opportunity at your own workplace? HMMM...gotcha.

I am going to close this equality story on a very up-beat note. I recently heard a story while at a breakfast at the Civil Rights Museum on Elm Street in Greensboro. It seems that on February 1, 1960, the young men from A&T fighting for equality had some unlikely allies. We learned that three young females from U.N.C.G. took part as well. One woman was even threatened with a knife to her back, yet she did not move. The A&T students had to form a human wall around them to get them out of the building. Believe me, women know about fighting for their rights. We’ve been fighting for them a very long time! Support women’s rights! Make your Momma proud.