

Dear All

Today is IWD, a day celebrated across the world.

The theme of this years IWD is "Choose to Challenge".

The choose to challenge theme focusses on:

1. Celebrate women's achievement.
2. Raise awareness against bias
3. Take action for equality.

I feel both men and women need to celebrate women's achievements. It will be unfair to ask women to celebrate their own achievement. So, what can we do at work and in our personal lives to celebrate the achievements of the women who we are associated with? Pls don't make this a tick in the box, more a genuine appreciation of their talent, personality and achievement. I find many brands doing some token thing and they think that showing a woman do a man's job is progress, I think that's such an outdated concept. As an example, India has the highest number of woman pilots in the world. I think many brands are still in the stereotype mold.

The point of bias is more nuanced than it sounds or appears. There are conscious biases we can work to resolve, but there are unconscious biases that we should think about. The unconscious biases are more dangerous than the conscious biases. Let me give you a few examples of unconscious bias: 1. Women are not good at Maths, 2. Women are emotional, 3. An assertive woman is labelled bossy, 4. Women cannot manage risk, 5. Women cannot travel like men. 6. If a woman says she doesn't know, its termed as lacking confidence while if a man says he doesn't know, its labelled humility.

I feel both men and women need to take action for equality. Men need to treat women colleagues on an equal footing and demand the same excellence and standard from them that they expect from their male colleagues. Equally when a woman leader leads men, she has to bring her own level of demands to the team, and not water down standards because she might be perceived as being demanding. The most important thing is that both men and women should have equal voice at the table. I say this because diversity is a fact but inclusion is a choice and an equal voice to all helps inclusion.

We need to see equality in the appraisal system and also the rewards system. This is a task for both men and women to undertake. The best way is to put the actual data at the table and not have a nuanced bias on it.

I have personally seen that women are very good at multi- tasking, they are willing to change their stance if you give them fresh information. Women add a very different emotional appeal and side to a discussion, especially around people and values. I benefitted from that.

Thanks, feedback welcome

Wr
Shiv