

- with permission, a message from Warren Farrell, Ph.D. author of:

Why Men Earn More

Father & Child Reunion

Women Can't Hear What Men Don't Say

The Myth of Male Power

Why Men Are the Way They Are

The Liberated Man

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From: Warren Farrell, Ph.D

To: anne cools

Sent: Tuesday, February 13, 2007 9:18 PM

Subject: The Next Time You Hear, "Men..."

Dear anne,

I'm sending you this for the next time you hear "men get paid more for the same work" and you'd like to give the best response. I think this op-ed, just published in *The Daily Journal* (a publication for attorneys and judges) is my best.

You have my permission to forward this to attorney or judge friends, and give them my permission to email it to their colleagues.

However, this op-ed, while inspired by my book *Why Men Earn More*, doesn't address its main purpose--to give women and men concrete career information about all twenty-five work-life trade-offs. In brief, to develop the best career within the best life.

If you care about someone who is in career planning mode, and you'd like to gift him or her a personalized copy of *Why Men Earn More* (see www.warrenfarrell.com), just send \$20 to me at 24 Marsh Dr., Mill Valley, CA 94941. (Tell me about them, and it will be more personalized!). Of course, I'll pay for the postage and always refund your money if you're not happy.

Meantime, please let me know how you are doing.

Warren

Why Men Earn More: The Startling Truth Behind the Pay Gap By Warren Farrell

When I was on the board of the National Organization for Women in New York City in the 1970s, I led protests against the male-female pay gap. I assumed the gap reflected both discrimination against women and the undervaluing of women.

Then one day I asked myself, If we can pay women less for the same work, why would anyone hire a man? And if they did, wasn't there a punishment called going out of business? In other words, did market forces contain a built-in punishment against discrimination?

Perhaps, I thought, male bosses undervalue women. But I discovered women without bosses--who own their own businesses-- earn only 49 percent as much as male business owners. Why?

When the Rochester Institute of Technology surveyed business owners with MBAs, they discovered money was the primary motivator for only 29 percent of the women, versus 76 percent of the men. Women prioritized autonomy, flexibility (25 to 35-hour weeks and proximity to home), fulfillment, and safety.

These contrasting goals were reflected in contrasting behavior: male business owners working 29 percent more; being in business 51 percent longer; having more employees; and commuting 47 percent farther.

To make a fair legal assessment of the value of these differences requires more than saying, for example, that people who work 33 percent more hours should earn that much more pay. The Bureau of Labor Statistics finds that people who work 33 percent more hours get about double the pay. For example, people who work 44 hours per week make more than twice the pay of those working 34 hours. (Not at the same job, but, for example, at a job like a national sales representative, that would not even be available to someone who could only work 34 hours per week.)

After a decade of research, I discovered 25 differences in men and women's work-life choices. All of them lead to men earning more money; and all lead to women having lives more balanced between work and home. (Since real power is about having a better life, well, once again, the women have outsmarted us!)

High pay, as it turns out, is about trade-offs. Men's trade-offs include working more hours (women work more at home); taking more-dangerous, dirtier

and outdoor jobs (garbage collecting; construction; trucking); relocating and traveling; training for more technical jobs with less people contact (engineering); taking late night shifts; working for more years; and being absent less frequently.

These are just 10 of the 25 variables that must be controlled to accurately assess the pay gap. And they don't include three of the most important variables: one's specialty, sub-specialty and productivity.

Is the pay gap, then, about men and women's choices? Not quite. It's about parents' choices.

Women who have never been married and are without children earn 117 percent of their male counterparts. (The comparison controls for education, hours worked and age.) Why? The decisions of never-married women without children are more like men's (e.g., they work longer hours and don't leave their careers), and never-married men are more like women's (careers in arts, etc.). The result? The women out-earn the men.

The crucial variable in the pay gap is family decisions. And the most important family variable is the division of labor once children are born: children lead to dad intensifying his work commitments and mom intensifying her family commitments.

The pay gap, then, is not the problem. It is a reflection largely of family decisions that we may or may not wish to change. The law can still attend to discrimination, but not by starting with the assumption the pay gap means discrimination.

Does the change in division of labor once children arrive imply mothers sacrifice careers? Not quite. Polls of people in their twenties find both genders would prefer sacrificing pay for more family time. In fact, men in their twenties are more willing to sacrifice pay for family than women (70% of men; 63% of women). The next generation's discussion may not be who sacrifices career? but who sacrifices being the primary parent? The real discrimination may be discrimination against dad's option to raise children.

Don't women, though, earn less than men in the same job? Yes and no. For example, with doctors, the Bureau of Labor Statistics lumps physicians and surgeons together. The male doctor is more likely to be the surgeon, work in private practice, for hours that are longer and less predictable, and for more years. When these variables are accounted for, the pay is precisely the same. What appears to be the same job (doctor) is not the same job.

Are these women's choices? When I taught at the school of medicine at the University of California, San Diego, I saw my female students eyeing specialties with fewer and more predictable hours (dermatology, psychiatry). Conversely, they avoided specialties with lots of contact with blood and death, such as surgery.

But don't female executives also make less than male executives? Yes. Discrimination? Let's look. Comparing men and women who are corporate vice presidents camouflages the facts that men more frequently assume financial, sales and other bottom-line responsibilities (vs. human resources or PR); they are vice presidents of national and international (vs. local or regional) firms; with more personnel and revenues; they are more likely executive or senior vice-presidents. They have more experience, relocate more, travel overseas more, and are considerably older when they become executives.

Comparing men and women with the same jobs is still often to compare apples and oranges. However, when all 25 choices are the same, the great news for women is that then they make more than men.

Is there, nevertheless, discrimination against women? Yes. For example, the old boys network. But in some fields, men are virtually excluded from getting hired as a male dental hygienist, nursery school teacher, cocktail waiter, or selling even men's clothing at Wal-Mart.

The social problem with focusing our legal binoculars only on discrimination against women is that the publicity those lawsuits generate leads us to miss opportunities for women. For example, we miss 80 fields in which women can work, for the most part, fewer hours and fewer years, and still earn more than men. Fields such as financial analyst, speech-language pathologist, radiation therapist, library worker, biological technician, funeral service worker, motion picture projectionist.

Thus women focused on discrimination don't know which female engineers make 143 percent of their male counterparts; or why female statisticians earn 135 percent.

Nor did my daughters know that pharmacists now earn almost as much as doctors. As I took my binoculars off of discrimination against my daughters, I discovered opportunities for them.

The biological instinct of most judges and attorneys, like all humans, is to protect women. When there was no societal permission for divorce, husbands supplied women's income for a lifetime so women had the protection of an income-producer who could not fire her. When divorces

became more common, the government became a substitute husband.

The instinct to protect women trumped rational analysis of whether unequal pay was caused by discrimination or by the differences in men and women's work-life choices. It prevented us from even thinking of radical questions such as Do women who have never been married earn more than married women because they have less privilege (fewer options) than married women? And if so, is men's tendency to earn more than women because they have less privilege (fewer options) than women? Is the pay gap not about male power, but about male obligation and female privilege?

The result? Employers today often feel in a precarious relationship with their female employees. Will the woman submitting her employment file today be filing a lawsuit tomorrow?

My goal is to give women ways of earning more rather than suing more, thus erasing the fear of companies to pursue women so as not to be sued by women; to give companies ways of teaching women how to earn more; and give the government ways of separating real discrimination from its appearance. This is the world I want for my daughters.

Warren Farrell is author of *Why Men Earn More: The Startling Truth Behind the Pay Gap--and What Women Can Do About It* and several other books. More at www.warrenfarrell.com.
