

PLAYBOOK

LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER



An essential guide to navigating the complexities of leadership roles within the workplace based on lessons learned the hard way.

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PLAYBOOK

LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER

Contents

Purpose	P 2
Leading by Example	P 6
Looking Good	P 7
Posture and Stride	P 12
Vocabulary	P 13
Feeling Good	P 15
Mystery Woman	P 16
Back Stabber	P 18
Emergency Drawer	P 22
Ambition	P 25
Don't Take Bait	P 26
Apologizing	P 28
Office Décor	P 31
Forgiveness vs Permission	P 33
Take No Prisoners	P 34
One Last Thing	P 35

PLAYBOOK

LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER

Purpose

If you are a newly hired, or recently promoted, female manager you may not know what you don't know and, even if you do *Playbook: Lessons for the New Female Manager* will give you a better idea of what to expect in the days, weeks and months ahead.



This is not your average 'how-to' manual. It's written with the intention of providing the 'special' help that most people won't tell you about, in addition to a few basics.

You might be a hard-working, tough-talking woman who usually gets what you want or a sweet, mild-mannered woman who works magic on others to get them to do what you want.

You might be quiet and reserved, but brilliant and seemingly indispensable to your company. You might be loud and opinionated, commanding attention, and good at getting the job done.

PLAYBOOK

LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER

All of these and many more types, personalities, and styles offer something that can get them promoted to management.

Young or old, new to the company or long term, if you have found yourself moving into the management ranks, there are some things you need to know beyond salary, position description and other miscellaneous things that go with management positions.

That's why *Playbook: Lessons for the New Female Manager* was written. Most of what I have to tell you are gems that no one is going to offer you.

The next book in the series will cover other stuff you need to know if you are going to be successful in management, such as:

- *Delivering 110%...* easier than it sounds
- *Making the Boss Look Good...* deserved or not
- *Taking the High Road...* even when it's painful
- *Containing the Jokester in You*
- *Making Enemies...* never a good idea
- *Stepping on Toes...*but, oh, so lightly
- *The Absence of Black & White* and living in the grey area
- *Speaking Up* intelligently, and much more.

Coming soon. Watch for it.

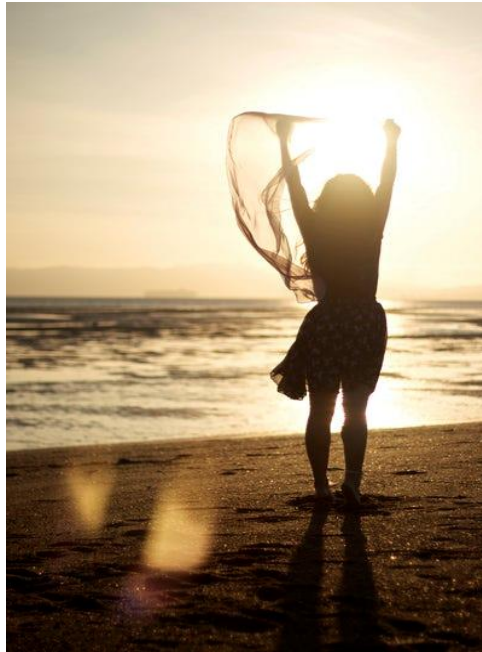
OK....

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Well, you did it. You worked hard, you jumped through all the hoops and it paid off.

YOU are a superstar and don't ever forget it.



You impressed the HR Manager and the hiring Manager and whoever else you had to meet with and now, you're starting your new job – whether it's a promotion within the same company or a new job with a new company, you have landed your first management position and you'll need some advice. Yes, you will.

Now, if you have been promoted out of a group of people you've been working with and have now become their superior...you may have a few more challenges than if you become the manager of a group in a new company or even a division of the same company.

You will likely have developed working relationships with your 'then' peers. It's possible that you developed personal relationships with them as well. That is going to

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LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER

be even more difficult so here are the first words of advice you absolutely must take seriously.

Begin as you mean to go on.

What this basically means is that you cannot hope to slowly transition from peer to boss. It won't work that way. You must walk a fine line. Professional and courteous but not overly sociable. Friendly enough though, because you don't want to appear to be lording it over them that you got promoted and they didn't, regardless if they wanted the promotion or not. In any case, you simply cannot behave the way you used to.

You're a manager now.

If you think getting this new position won't change things, you need to think again. It absolutely will change you and the way you look at your work and the way you interact with your old buddies.

It will also change your ex-peers and the way they look at, and respond, to you.

Let's not forget that you are now one big step closer to the line of fire if something goes wrong. Perhaps that sounds old school, but the reality is that you are now more responsible and accountable than you were before your promotion.

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LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER

Leading by Example

This is the first topic because you must get a handle on this before you set foot in the new office, cubicle, or at the manager's desk...before you even arrive at the workplace.

This cannot be learned as you go.

While there are many things you will need to lead by example on, punctuality and reliability are high on the list.

Now, these are basic, and you probably already have them down pat seeing as you've made it to management ranks. Nevertheless, people pay attention, and no one pays as close attention as your subordinates. They will follow your lead, or at least, some of them will.

Other things, such as the way you dress and present yourself, the way you speak to colleagues and subordinates, how you react in certain situations, whether you are known to be involved in the office rumor mill or gossip group, etc. will all be seen by your subordinates.

I could go on for days talking about things you must do or must not do when you lead by example but let's just say that you should be aware that you are being watched and studied almost all the time.

You should consider the example you set as being an important part of the informal training your people will get.

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Be sure to be on your best and most professional behavior always.

Looking Good

Regardless of what the dress code is – written or implied – you should always dress at the very top level of it. If it's super casual, then you wear top level super casual with flair. If the written or implied dress code is super business/professional, same thing...top level everything.

When it comes to your *clothes*, there are a few things that are important.

First, they must fit well. Your clothes, regardless of style, should fit to flatter but not to show off.

You should wear *colors* that work well with your complexion and hair color; certain colors will make you look alive, vibrant and energetic and others can make you look older than your years and sickly.

It should not be necessary to mention that your neckline should not plunge down so far as to expose breasts and your hemline should not be high enough to expose too much thigh, whether that is your personal style or not.

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LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER



This ^^ is not a managerial look!

If it's your personal style, that's fine for weekends but, no one at the workplace needs to know. No, it's not prudish...it's prudent.

If you want to be taken seriously as a manager at a place of employment...dress more modestly; more professionally. Even in the 21st century, women who wear clothing that reveals too much skin are seen as, well, women who reveal too much skin. Enough said.

What about shoes and boots? Well, the main thing to be said about **shoes and boots**, besides the fact that you can never have too many, is that they should suit the

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LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER

outfit and be impeccably clean and in good condition. Scuffed toes or worn heels are an absolute no-no.

High heels are great, but sky-high stilettos aren't necessary and probably aren't the best choice to accent a great office-appropriate outfit. They may be just a bit much for the business world.

Likewise, athletic shoes and flip-flops aren't the best choices even if others are wearing them.

Fingernails can be artificial or real, reasonably long or short, polished or not.



The only advice is they must be kept looking good – regular maintenance for fills, smooth cuticles, no biting, nicely shaped and without chips in the polish.

And don't get too playful with nail color, design and decoration. You aren't playful at work, are you?

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LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER



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LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER

When it comes to *hair*...the color, cut and style should be flattering, comfortable and natural for you.

Of course, your hair should always be clean and neat. Accessories worn in your hair should be attractive and not overdone.

Avoid looking like an ice cream cone or clown, at all costs.



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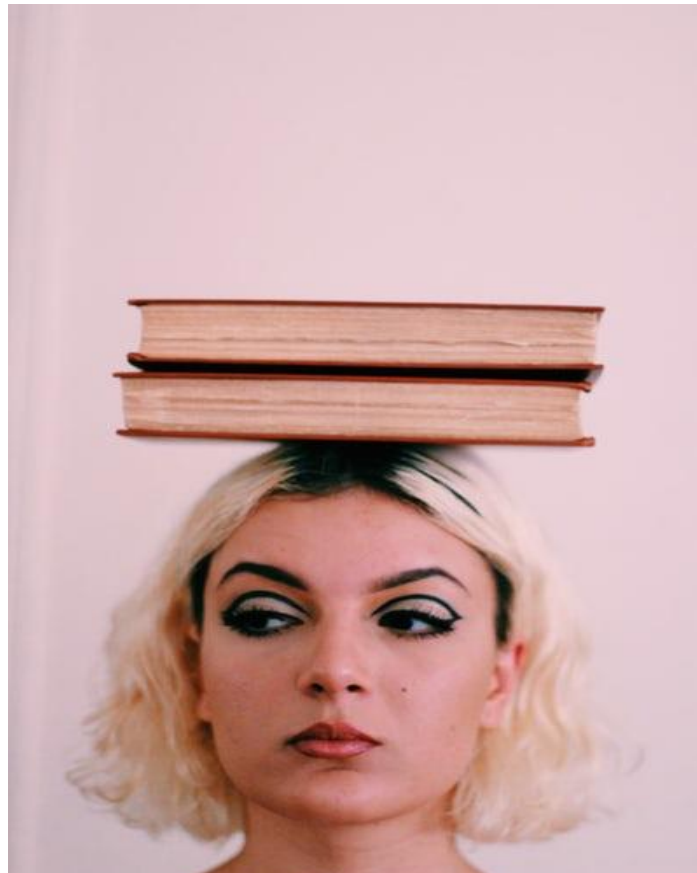
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Posture and Stride Speak Volumes

The person who stands straight and tall with chest out, shoulders back and chin up, and who walks with a purposeful, long stride will command much more attention than the person who walks with head down, shoulders slumped and feet shuffling along.

That's just the way it is. So, if you already have good posture you're all set.

If not, you have some work to do. It is worth it because the difference is huge.



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LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER

Expand Your Vocabulary

There is nothing better...no better confidence builder than knowing you have a superior command of your language.



There are people who use so-called 'big' words when they are trying to impress. I'm not suggesting you do that because it does the opposite of impress...it detracts from your overall presence.

When you find yourself in a meeting and someone starts throwing 'big' and (usually) unnecessary words around – and they will if for no other reason than they think that makes them appear smarter than others – be prepared.

Just for example, you may know the meaning and spelling of the following words, but many people don't.

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ANTIESTABLISHMENT

opposed or hostile to the social, economic, and political principles of a ruling class (as of a nation)

opposed to the establishment –

antiestablishmentarianism\ " +\ *noun, plural -s*

SEQUACIOUS

subservient, tractable

intellectually servile

SYLLABICATION

the act, process, or method of forming or dividing words into syllables

MISAPPREHEND

to apprehend wrongly: misunderstand

You probably get the idea.

Working on your vocabulary is easy, takes very little time and it's a huge and very worthwhile investment in yourself.

If you're not doing so already, get yourself onto a list of a company such as [Merriam-Webster](#).

They'll send you a new word every day and you'll build your vocabulary quickly and easily.

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LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER

Feeling Good

Apart from looking good and flawlessly portraying the image of a new manager, you also feel good. And, if you don't... *you fake it.*

You've probably heard that saying "Never let them see you sweat." Well, there's a good reason for that.

Think about the hyena at the waterhole waiting to catch a glimpse of a vulnerable zebra for their next meal.



When your enemy – or, let's say, your colleague who doesn't like you all that much or who is green with jealousy – sees that you aren't feeling on top of the world, they may see that as a golden opportunity to exploit.

Remember, no matter what, you feel good...always...and you always let everyone know it. Positivity is contagious, and it certainly wards off those 'evil colleagues' spirits.

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LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER

Be a Mystery Woman

I'm not suggesting that you keep totally to yourself or act like a recluse.

That wouldn't even be possible or reasonable in the workplace.

I'm talking about not spilling your guts about every little thing that you do, that you are going to do, etc.

For example, you find yourself getting to the office late. The only person who needs an explanation is your immediate superior. And s/he may not even expect one – only you will know that based on your experience with him/her.

Don't explain why you were late to your assistant or your colleagues. Let them wonder. There's nothing wrong with a little wonder! They don't need to know unless they were affected in some direct way.

For instance, if you were supposed to meet with Jane at 8:30 a.m. and you showed up at 8:45...common courtesy dictates that you tell Jane something – anything - to ensure she feels properly treated and understands that you respect her time and you're not a flake who is tardy all the time.

If you're going to be out of the office, let the people who need to know, know.

No one else.

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LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER



You don't need to advertise your comings and goings and keep everyone informed of your whereabouts at all times. You don't need to tell everyone when you're going to get your hair done, your nails filled, or your eyebrows waxed. OK? Same for your pap smear and mammogram.

Before you became a manager, you probably had more restrictions on your time and you likely had to report in more often.

To some extent - and only you will know how much - that has changed now that you are a manager.

Remember, every time you give out a piece of information unnecessarily, it serves no purpose other than to provide others with information – possibly about you - information they don't need to do their job.

You don't need to share every little thing. This is not social time or summer camp, or a game and you are allowed, and advised, to keep some things to yourself.

Sometimes, as managers, we come to regret letting people know too much about us.

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LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER

Beware the Back Stabber

No matter how hard you may try, there is always the possibility that you will let your guard down and become too much of a friend to someone who works with, or around you. That person is probably very interested in you, asks lots of questions and likes to listen to you; likes to offer support to you.

You may go beyond the 'friendly acquaintance' stage with a person like this.

Now, you are probably thinking of course you should have friends around you at work, what's wrong with that? Well, I'm going to tell you.

To be clear, though, I'm talking about having workplace friends as a manager. It's a little different than having workplace friends as a non-management employee further down the chain.

Also, even though you are advised not to get too friendly, you should certainly be amicable and have good relations with your colleagues.

Closer friends tend to know and remember things about you that can come back to smack you when you least expect it.

I'm not only talking about your deepest secrets, but everyday things as well, like what you did on the weekend and how much fun you had at the Karaoke bar when you drank a little too much last night, or how much you spent on ...whatever.

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LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER

Or something a little more exciting...they might know that you had a knockdown, drag 'em out fight with your boyfriend or husband over something like ...say, a rumor about another woman or substance abuse.

They might even know that you are seeing a doctor or other medical professional for something you would like to keep private.

And all that would be fine provided the friend who knows all these things – and maybe more – never turns against you. It would be fine if the friend is a good and loyal person who doesn't share with others.

Sometimes, though, they share your personal info because they're jealous of a promotion you got. Or you get a little too much praise from upper management and they don't. Trust me, betrayal from workplace friends is not easy to swallow and may not be easy to recover from, especially in a management position.

Regular (personal life) friends who betray you probably won't affect your work life. You don't have to socialize with them or have anything at all to do with them if you don't want to. But how do you handle a work friend who has betrayed you? You must see them, and work with them every day. Not fun, as you can well imagine.

Think you're a fabulous judge of character and that could never happen to you?

Think again.

Throughout history, it's happened to many women far more seasoned than you or I.

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LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER

Your female work 'friends' are much more likely to attempt to pull the rug out from under you than your regular friends.

You can't afford to take chances like that. When you least expect it, someone may pop out of nowhere to ruin something for you. I'm not sorry to have to give you this tip...



Trust no one in the workplace.

I'm aware that seems a bit drastic but...better safe than sorry, I always say.

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Of course, we should all avoid emergency situations but, when an emergency hits, be prepared!



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LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER

The Emergency Drawer

Why is it important to have a well-stocked emergency drawer?

So you never appear to be out of control, of course.

You never need to run around asking for help and you don't even have to tell anyone that you slept in and forgot your purse, or you tripped or broke a nail, or, or, or.

You're not some poor little thing who can't look after yourself, right?

You're not clumsy or forgetful or disorganized. You are on top of things and in control, so fill your emergency drawer with whatever you need to keep you that way.

What should you keep in your emergency drawer?

Most of the items suggested for your Emergency Drawer contents are self-explanatory. I've added a few comments for some, just in case.

Take a few moments to review the list and think about any other items, in addition to the things I've listed for you, that you would normally carry in your briefcase or purse, or simply items that you would be absolutely 'lost' without.

There are lots of blank spaces for you to use.

Start with this list and make it your own.

PLAYBOOK

LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER

- Tissues
- Band aids
- Hand sanitizer
- Mini sewing kit
- Feminine hygiene supplies
- Nail file (emery board), buffer, clippers – a broken nail can be very inconvenient. Apart from catching on things, it might even be painful. It can also be unsightly.
- Tweezers – Don't be driven crazy by an eyebrow hair that has suddenly popped up.
- Cash – coins and bills
- Mints, juice box, snacks
- Brush or comb, hairspray
- Toothbrush and toothpaste, mouthwash
- Blank card w/envelope – You never know when you might want/need to give a card to someone. Perhaps you forgot an occasion, or you want to say 'Thank You' to someone in a meaningful way.
- Spare keys
- Tylenol or Advil, Tums, Imodium, Gravol
- Facial towelettes, moisturizer, sunscreen, hand lotion
- Cosmetics – Just the basics you would need in case you were running late in the morning and didn't have a chance to apply your make-up or, if you lost your purse.
- Extra hosiery, if applicable
- Extra reader glasses, if applicable

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LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER



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PLAYBOOK

LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER

Ambition

There's no shame in letting people see, through your actions, that you are planning on moving up in the organization. You are ambitious and that's a very good thing for your employer and your colleagues, staff and customers.

An ambitious person, with morals of course, is a huge benefit to an organization and everyone who has anything to do with it because the intelligent and ambitious person will likely be willing to make a bigger contribution and will likely, also, make more good decisions than bad ones due to their higher level of interest and investment.

You should never be shy about your ambition. Make it clear to others, particularly those in a position to help you...but, in a very understated way.

What do I mean by that?

Well, it is not missed when you take on extra projects, when you come in early and stay late, when you ask your immediate superior for feedback regularly, when you ask what qualifications and experience are required for the next level, etc.

You can do all these things without wearing a placard that says "I'm ambitious so get out of my way" even if that is exactly what you mean.

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LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER

Don't Take Bait

There will be times when someone is really getting on your nerves. They may even be doing it intentionally, just to get a reaction from you. They may be doing it because they want to embarrass you.

So, if you find yourself in a situation where a colleague says something that you have difficulty finding the right words to respond with, and would rather throw something at them, here are some standbys you can use. Practice whichever ones you like the best and have them at the ready whenever a tricky situation comes up.

- That's interesting.
- I've heard rumors like that, sometimes concerning you.
- Does your spouse know you do that?
- You already know the answer.
- Did you get authorization for that?
- Can you expand on that?
- Perhaps you'd like to ask someone else.
- I'll get back to you.

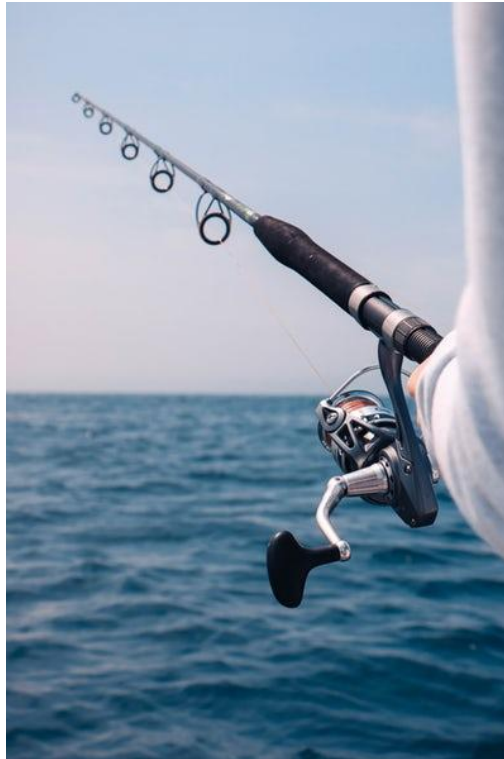
Quick Tip: If you decide to tell the offender to 'Shut up', be sure to say it very quietly so you can deny it later.

And, no, that does not take away from your integrity.

Another tip: If you are dealing with a jerk who is baiting you, you have every right to tell a little white lie. All's fair!

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Remember, unless you are being physically assaulted, or the other person is committing some sort of crime, whatever you do, **DO NOT MAKE A SCENE.**

Even if you are beyond frustrated with the individual or the situation, don't cry, yell or throw anything. ***Ever.***

Remember, if you are not the problem, and we assume you are not, then you don't own it and you mustn't *appear* to own it.

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Make No Apologies

For goodness sake, STOP saying you're sorry.

It's a pretty good bet that, as a female, you have apologized for way, way more than your share of wrongdoing. You've said you're sorry for things that people didn't even know you did.

You've said you're sorry several times over one incident.

You've said you're sorry for being run over by someone because you thought you might have been in their way.

Now, the point here is not to make you feel foolish. Most of the above is just the way a pleasant and polite person – particularly a female person - operates.

BUT...it must stop the moment you arrive at the workplace, particularly in a management position.



Because, you know what?

No one at work expects you to apologize for anything work-related unless you have done something so off the

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LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER

wall, that along with your apology, you should probably be handing in your resignation letter.

And, you know what else?

People at work will think you are a total wimp if you constantly apologize. Really...lose the habit.

So...no apologies. OK?

You are at work...it is not personal.

You ***are not sorry*** that you can't take on another project.

You ***are not sorry*** that it's taking longer than expected to get the job done properly.

You ***are not sorry*** that some staff member called in sick.

You just *are not sorry*. Period.

Whatever it is, may not even have anything to do with something you did or caused. Even when it is...remember what we said...it's business. So...

If you're late with a project, state the reasons why, never excuses. Suggest what you might do differently next time. Make it clear that you understand that the delay is not acceptable if it isn't.

If you don't get the results you were supposed to get, own it and offer an explanation about what happened and what is being done to get on track to get the results.

Your job is your job and *you* need to get it done, whatever it takes. Saying you are sorry will have absolutely zero effect on the outcome. Nor should it.

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LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER

You being sorry means absolutely nothing when it comes to your job.

Offer dates, actions, plans and remedies. It's not someone else's fault and no other department screwed up. Get it?

So, train yourself to stop saying "I'm sorry". It doesn't help anyway and **won't change the situation.**



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LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER

Office Decor

Your workspace should not be too flashy or too plain. It shouldn't be young or old, it should be just right.

To some extent, what you put up in your office or cubicle or on your desk may be determined by the type of company you work for and the position you hold.

Advertising vs Finance; Pet Food manufacturer vs High End Fashion...you get the picture.

Anyway, it can be personalized but not too much.

People at the office don't necessarily need to know that you think about your love of horses all day long...or that you've taken a huge interest in astronomy, or science fiction movies, etc. No one cares where you fell in love.



It's just too much and all of that is your business.

Cutesy pictures of grown men and women have no place on your desk, either. You aren't an emotional girl, right?

Don't think of the answer. The correct and only answer is "right".

If you see wedding pics in a male manager's office I can almost guarantee that the happy bride in said picture framed it and sent it to the office with hubby...so what can he do?

You, on the other hand, would have no such excuse. It's there because you wanted it there.

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LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER

OK.

Now, if you have little ones – or even not-so-little children – that’s a *completely different* story.

OMG!! It would be frowned upon *not* to have their pictures on your desk. **What kind of a Mom are you, anyway?**



So, smiling babies are one thing but, pictures of a guy or girl who is your spouse, lover, etc. – smiling or otherwise - are for home or wallet...not the office.

Strange, how it all works, I know.

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LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER

Forgiveness vs Permission

The saying goes something like 'It is easier to beg for forgiveness than to ask for permission.' There are a couple of reasons for this.

First, you may not get the permission you seek and if that's the case then you're not going to be able to act, whereas, if you act without permission, at least you got to do what you wanted to do.

Of course, you must be willing to accept whatever consequences there may be.

Second, you don't want to waste time and relinquish control by putting the decision into someone else's hands and you don't want to be that person who is always asking for permission; someone who is frightened to make a decision.

Again, though, you must be willing to beg forgiveness if it comes to that and you must accept any consequences, so govern yourself accordingly.

By the way, this is ***not a golden rule by any stretch.***

There are times when the ***only*** acceptable thing to do is to ask permission. You should feel that in your gut. You are an employee, after all...not the business owner and some things are very clearly not up to you. Of course, if you are the business owner then you just go ahead and do whatever you want...whenever you want.

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LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER

Take No Prisoners

Occasionally, you're going to fight for something at work. That may sound immature and it may sound political. It doesn't matter. At some point, it will happen.

Fighting fair and honorably is one thing but fighting with one hand tied behind your back because you are going out of your way to be fair and honorable just to be certain that you are giving others a chance is just ...well, dumb, to put it bluntly.

When you have decided to go for it, whatever *it* may be, in the face of opposition, then be prepared to go all in.

Take no prisoners. You go for it full tilt with the objective of winning. Nothing else will do.



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LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER

One last thing...

If you don't have a firm handshake, work on it. We hear that advice all the time, but I don't think it sinks in because I meet and shake hands with many people and the number of women who just barely touch my hand is astonishing. It's enough to make you feel sorry for them.

Even though a weak handshake, in itself, does not mean that the individual is weak, neither does it convey confidence.



I wish you all the success in your management endeavors.

I wish you all the success in your personal life, also, where having ***Best Friends Forever*** is a wonderful thing.

PLAYBOOK

LESSONS FOR THE NEW FEMALE MANAGER



Remember, I mentioned at the beginning of the book, the next one in the series will cover other management tips and advice that will be helpful to all new managers.

Coming Soon...Watch for it!

I always love to hear from you.

Contact me: joshill.2022@gmail.com