Women Working Together

Women Mentoring Women?

- Already mentioned
  - Few female mentors are available
  - Women usually don’t have extra time
  - Busy pursuing their own career
  - Women in less powerful positions than men
- Complexity of women’s relationships with women

GOLDEN TRIANGLE: One Explanation for Why Women Supporting Each Other is Not a Given

Source: Heim & Murphy, 2001. In the Company of Women
Power: Ability to get things done.

- Bases of social power (French & Raven):
  - Reward
  - Coercive
  - Legitimate
  - Expert
  - Referent
  - Associative (H & M)

Women exercising power in a precarious position

- Women more likely to frame work relationships as friendships
- Power and friendship not a good mix:
  - Friendship as sharing;
  - Power as taking or directing
  - Women exerting power thus seen as violating friendship.

The Self-Esteem Factor

- Self-esteem defined in terms of how one feels about:
  - One’s sense of one’s value
  - Accomplishments
  - Relationships
  - Abilities
  - Sense of responsibility
  - Others’ perceptions
- Power and Self-esteem are related
Chip Theory

- Notion that each of us has certain number of power chips that we exchange with others.
- Give and acquire chips 3 ways:
  - Interactions: Taking a genuine interest in other person (their family, activities, new project)
  - Birthright: Some people born with chips (wealth, attractiveness, talent, intelligence, whatever)
  - Active acquisition: people seeking chips through acquiring degrees, titles, wealth, beauty, prestige.
- Notion that people (more likely women) keep a score on each other – "chip bankbook"
- Key rule in Chip Theory: "We always make it equal in the end."

The Power Dead-Even Rule

- For a relationship between two women to be positive, the self-esteem and power of one must be perceived to be equal to that of the other by both women.
- Upset of balance by some sort of change needs to be restored for relationship to continue.

Relationship between Self-Esteem & Power in Dead-Even Rule

- Usually self-esteem rises with power
- In context of relationship: as power of one party increases, the greater the self-esteem of both parties, the more resilient the relationship will be.
Mentoring Problems in Context of Dead-Even Rule

- Mentor: usually is older and has more experience and is more powerful
  - Possible sources of power: legitimate, expert, and associative
  - Important questions about the nature of the relationship:
    - How mentor handles this power:
    - Self-Esteem of mentor once protégé acquires power of her own

Nature of undeclared conflict behavior

- Antithesis of Mentoring Behavior
  - Nature of Undeclared conflict
    - Spreading rumors
    - Divulging secrets
    - Public insults
    - Undermining or sabotage
    - Snubbing or withdrawing friendship
    - Gossip
  - “Catfight”

Resolution in Undeclared Conflict Between Women (Helm & Murphy)

- Pay attention to Power-Self Esteem Balance
  - Use care in exerting power
  - Pay attention to self-esteem of others in relationship
- Manage your chips
  - Keep in mind that others keep count
  - Learn who values what sort of chips
  - Create a chip surplus and avoid a chip deficit.