

Podcast Script

Leading Women Series Episode 1 - What Comes to Mind?

This episode is the first in a series about how leaders and employees of all gender identities interact with women professionals. We decided to title this episode “What Comes to Mind?” because that is often the start of how a woman’s colleagues decide how they will view and treat the woman.

Think about a present or former boss you had or a coworker you’ve worked with who is a woman. What comes to mind? Some of us might immediately think about her leadership style, the last project we completed together, or the number of emails she sends per day. Some of us think about her facial expressions, how much we love, or hate, the cream-colored shirt she wears every few weeks, or how comforting the sound of her voice is in a meeting.

Whatever came to mind for you, it could represent the mental patterns you have in forming opinions about women, especially women who are professionals. Even those of us who think we are evolved, progressive, or at least equality-minded continue to perpetuate sexism. I recently caught up with a former colleague of mine who is now a corporate trainer and happens to be a gay male. When I mentioned the woman who was our supervisor when first started, his first question was, “Did her husband leave her yet? She was so devoted to the job.”

I did not have the courage to fire back with rage and school him on how sexist and unfair his remarks were. I simply said, “I believe they are still married, maybe he doesn’t mind.” As small as this scenario may seem, me not standing up for her told my former colleague that his judgments were perfectly fine to make. In this series, we will speak with professionals of different generations, cultures, and genders to uncover the thoughts, emotions, and bad examples that have sustained the mistreatment of women in the workplace.

Until our next episode airs this Friday, we challenge you to take a few minutes thinking about the professional women you know. Talk to them, ask them about work. With her permission, you can share the good, the bad, and the in-between with us on Twitter using the hashtag, #wgleadingwomen.