

WOMEN CAN ELIMINATE SEXISM

We make up 54% of the population of the United States. If we made one little change, we could improve our lives immensely, and it would have spillover effects into other areas, such as how we raise our children, how we treat our elders, and our government's budget priorities. Of course, this is just my opinion.

Most of this summary paper is derived from my reading of the book, "[In the Company of Women; Indirect Aggression Among Women: Why We Hurt Each Other and How to Stop](#)," by Pat Heim and Susan Murphy. This book changed my life, and my understanding of why women are our own worst enemies. Tip: it's not our fault; we're wired that way, but understanding why we do what we do – it's based in the struggle for survival over eons – will help you feel more sympathetic and generous, not only toward other women, but toward yourself.

1. For a positive relationship between women to exist, you need to respect the "Power Dead Even Rule" (PDER; funny – this acronym makes me think of powder. As in, our go-to cosmetic tool). The PDER says that both parties must have equal self-esteem and power (except if one is a clear mentor). Powerful women must lend power to the lesser person to maintain the relationship. Laugh if you will, but this is why we respond to compliments with self-deprecation. It's not that we lack self-esteem or confidence; we're instinctively trying to balance the relationship back to level.
2. The currency used to effect the Power Dead Even Rule is "chips", and chip theory is covered starting on pg. 26. (Offering a compliment is a chip. The resulting self-denigration is a chip, handed back.)
3. For the most part, women are unaware of the PDER.
4. Need for homeostatis: a person will always seek to maintain a feeling of internal stability and balance. If she's being tortured at home she'll seek balance through work, whether that's thru excessive nurturing or torturing of others. Very typical in administrative assistants, who are treated like dirt by their bosses and in turn, treat other employees like crap.
5. "Tend and befriend" effects release of oxytocin. When we seek T&B from a friend and don't get it, we feel offended.

6. When we DO get it (T&B), it can backfire horribly in the following circumstance: let's say a coworker comes to us for comfort over the rudeness she just suffered at the hands of a high-status woman, like a boss who doesn't understand #1, above. The resulting bonding between us and our coworker, which is helpful to the wounded woman, can completely sabotage the boss woman, who may be well-intentioned but ignorant. You know I'm right. You can feel it, can't you? (I think this is why that TV drama, *The Good Wife*, appeals to me so deeply on one level. The powerful women characters never have to deal with this. They're very cut-and-dried and powerful at work, with no PDER. Kinda like men.)
7. Direct women and indirect women; not understanding this personality difference can mean the difference between success and failure. See p. 148.
8. Take the high road. If a woman undercuts another woman, model good behavior - but remember the PDER!
9. Women are better at interacting in small networks than in sprawling, multi-tiered networks.
10. Most women care deeply about other women. Without women in our lives, we feel lonely and incomplete. When women understand the above and begin to work together, they are unstoppable.

[There's more in my book review, here.](#)