

WOMENS LEADERSHIP: THOUGHTS ON THE NEW FEMININE

I've been in the trenches for a long time fighting the feminist wars, and I'm not one bit sorry. There's no way we could be having the conversations we're having these days for what women want and what works between men and women unless we had been through all that.

I remember the 1950's and 60's before the women's movement began, and I wouldn't want to go back there. Women were isolated from each other and afraid of doing anything on their own because they had been told for so long that they were incapable. They were considered generally inferior to men, and had good reason to be pretty unhappy. Professional opportunities were scarce. Wife beating and rape were commonplace, and no one talked about either one, except to whisper that some women liked it. You couldn't get away from a bad marriage because divorce was a stigma, and life without a husband was the social and economic kiss of death. You couldn't even go into a restaurant on your own! No wonder so many women went to doctors for "mother's little helpers," just to get through the day. They thought that something was wrong with them because they weren't content with the roles and conditions that had been handed to them. Doctors were only too willing to help. Pills were handed out like candy to mollify trapped, bored, frustrated women so that they would be "feminine" and comply with social expectations. Women who didn't were called castrating bitches, (and they may have been), and no one wanted that. So we had the first generation of better living through chemistry.

Then along came Queen Bitch Betty Friedan, in about 1965, with *The Feminine Mystique*, which called this state of affairs "the problem that has no name." She named it, which it no doubt took a bitch to do. She said women are frustrated because they have minds as well as bodies, and ambitions of their own, and it really isn't enough to just be a wife and mother. Women need to be self-determined (you'll notice she did not say self-defined; that came later). The emperor—or empress of femininity—has no clothes, she said, and millions of women echoed a resounding "Amen."

That's how it began. I tell you this because you need to know. Women's history has a way of disappearing from the annals. Then we hear that the feminist movement took us down the wrong road, a rumor I hear a lot these days from people who weren't there and don't know. Well, I was there, and I'm telling you it was the only road in town that had any life to it from where we stood. It was more than a breath of fresh air; it was a veritable oxygen tank. Now, I'm not going to give you an entire history of the women's movement, though if you're interested, I would refer you to Ruth Rosen's wonderful history of the contemporary Women's Movement, *the World Split Open*. Anyhow, here's my point.

The first wave of the contemporary women's movement came out of a society that defined male behavior and attitudes as normative, without even thinking

about it. What do you expect from a species that calls itself Man, for goodness' sake? Doesn't that tell you something? But we didn't hear it. Male domination and male chauvinism were so much a part of the culture that they were invisible. That male standard of normalcy was, and still is, the problem (why do you think we have so many women on Prozac?). Simone De Beauvoir said way back in *the Second Sex*, the book that lay the groundwork and terms for the feminist discourse even some fifty years later, that men were defined as the "essential," the template of what it is to be human, while women were the "other." If men and men's character traits are the norm for human being, then, of course, women and femininity are deviant, other. But these aberrant ways of being called femininity were considered "our biological nature"--- talk about a double bind! We were told we were different and that that difference made us, de facto, inferior. Biology was destiny, according to Freud, and our destiny was *biologically*, to be subordinate. End of story. And we were expected to simply accept that with a smile. Do you wonder why women were angry?

As things progressed into the 1970's there came to be two models of mental health. One was the "feminine" model, left over from early psychoanalysis. That was the "biology is destiny" model. The other was the "healthy person" model, which developed in the 1960's from humanistic psychology, and they were diametrically opposed. A well adjusted woman was expected to behave in a feminine manner: docile, sweet, a little bit helpless, accommodating, passive, giving, dependent, motherly, selfless... You get the picture. Then along came this new, modern model of mental health that said that people were supposed to be assertive, self interested, responsible for themselves, even responsible for their own orgasms, for goodness sake. That was a new idea. We were just figuring out that we could have orgasms. So women who had "problems" were now judged by the new model, and were told that they were sick if they were dependent, passive, or god forbid, co-dependent (putting their attention on others' needs instead of their own). The very stereotype of a feminine woman, which women had been told to be, was now considered sick. Women couldn't win. This was no vast male conspiracy to keep women down, by the way; it was a genuine conflict of models. Everyone was caught in these overwhelming stereotypes, and actually no one could win.

It took courage to question all that—and we did--- from the very core of our being. As previously isolated women came together to speak pain and truth to each other, and as women began to write and analyze their position as a class, or caste, we realized that the very attributes of so-called femininity kept us subordinated. We further recognized that so many ideas of femininity came from cultural stereotypes that we had no idea what was real and what was cultural overlay. But one thing was clear: a woman who behaved in a feminine manner, according to those definitions and standards, could never, ever have power in the world. She'd be mowed down, and plenty of women were. On the other hand, if a woman behaved in an assertive manner, or argued for a different point of view,

had a mind of her own, or ambition to do something in the world, she had only to be slapped with the dread label, “unfeminine,” and often that was the end of it.

There was just one thing to do under the circumstances. We had to take the sting out of that threat. We threw out femininity, along with goo-ball bread, pin curls, and doilies. We threw out biological explanations along with it, since those had been used to justify confining women to a supine position. If femininity meant having to give up power and autonomy, we said, we didn’t want any part of it. Deciding that femininity was patriarchal propaganda, women opted for the “healthy person” model. It seemed like the best choice available.

I remember people asking, “But don’t you think there are real, natural differences between men and women?” and answering, “There may be. But we can’t know what they are for so long as we continue to buy into what we’ve been told. We have to strip everything away and see what emerges.” So women made one of the bravest ontological moves ever made by any people in the history of human liberation movements. We threw out all our definitions of masculine and feminine, and stepped into the void.

I am in awe when I look back on the boldness of that. No other people has had to give up knowing who they are in order to achieve freedom. Women did. We left behind the definitions that gave us identity in order to find out who we really are.

We had to experiment at first. Once we had thrown out our previous notions of femininity, we had only two possible ways to go, so we of course went three. The first was to imitate men. If they were the essential humans, and femininity was just a social artifact designed to keep us submissive, then we must be like them. Or better yet, we were all androgynous. Having thrown out biology, we thought maybe there were no intrinsic masculine or feminine characteristics. There were just human qualities, combining the best of both worlds. We asserted we were whole people, transcending gender, which of course meant we were masculine, since, as you recall, that was equated with human. We developed our assertiveness. We invited men out on dates, tried casual sex, climbed the corporate ladder, paid our way, experimented with lesbianism, and wore boxy pantsuits. We competed like men, swore like men, fucked like men, and tried to think like men. But it didn’t work. Our sensibilities were different. We kept getting hurt. Or sick. We wanted to spend time with our children. We wanted children. Success for its own sake didn’t satisfy, and neither, for the most part, did sex. We bonded, and they didn’t. What was wrong with them? Why were they so out of touch with their feelings? We soon became exhausted trying to manage it all. We wanted men to be more involved in what was important, meaning relationships and home life. We wanted more help with the housework. Why didn’t men notice the crumbs on the kitchen counter? Were they blind? Our relationships, which, according to our theories, should have been thriving now that we were equal partners, fell apart instead. We decided it was all men’s fault. We weren’t defective; they were.

Maybe, we thought, we were actually better than men. Certainly we were more in touch with our feelings. Maybe that was a good thing. Maybe we hadn't had our souls damaged as men had in the corporate world. Maybe Woman was the ideal model for human being. Still thinking that it was all socialization, we tried to socialize men to be sensitive, more like us. We tried to teach them get in touch with their feelings, and when they did, we hated them. They were whiny, selfish, petulant children. Why were men so immature, we asked? We dragged them to therapists who dutifully worked with them to process feelings and talk about relationships. Maybe if they could learn relationship skills we could have good relationships with them, talking about every nuance of feeling, like we did with our girlfriends. The poor guys tried their best to please us, but the more they tried to become like us, the more contempt we felt for them, and the worse sex got. Some men started going to Wild Man weekends where they would shout, drum, and tell stories. It got them out of our hair for a while, but it didn't do much for our relationships. Now they were angry, too. I was beginning to think heterosexuality was a cosmic joke. Everyone was pretty confused.

Some women rejected male ways completely at that point, insisting that all of western society was male. That really left us up a creek. Women were exhorted to reject linear thought, schedules of any sort, discipline, politics, academics, philosophy, religion, and any other institution that reeked of power and order. In fact power and order themselves were dubbed male, as was intellect. Feminist thinking was now supposed to be circular and intuitive. The department head of a Women's Spirituality graduate program was confronted by a group of women students, irate because she expected them to write a thesis, apparently a male form. What should they do to demonstrate competence, then? Simply bleed on a sheet of paper? It became absurd. A male doctor wrote a book theorizing that the alphabet was male, and asserting, therefore, that written language was the cause of male domination, in spite of girls' proven superior language abilities at an early age. Somehow we had devolved into what Rebecca Salome dubbed "naked headless feminism."

The pundits and Right Wingers who wanted to declare feminism dead made hay with this, and who could blame them? So here we are. Feminism is out of favor, and femininity is back in, but what do we mean by that? And who's saying so? Does this new femininity have to be antithetical to feminism?

These thirty-odd years of exploration have taught us some valuable lessons, both personally and scientifically, about our biology and history as women, and how these relate to our ways of being in the world, or our femininity. Rejecting the imperative that it was destiny, at first we dismissed biology, and later we became a caricature of it. Perhaps it is time that we understood it, allowing that knowledge to guide us as we embrace it, along with our full selves, men, children, and the world, while shaping our own destiny. Perhaps it is time to reclaim and define for ourselves the notion of femininity, based on a deeper

understanding and wisdom. Whereas in 1974 people really didn't know what gender differences were innate, now we have some ideas. They may not be definitive yet, but we've come a long way, baby, as the 1970's ads for women's cigarettes told us. And we still have a long way to go.

We learned through our own experience that even children "free to be you and me" come out different, sexually speaking. Like my friend Norma, the lesbian feminist, whose daughter was fully encouraged to be whatever she wanted---and what she wanted was ballet slippers and pink tutus. Or Michael, the father of three girls, who tells the story of the day his youngest came upon him repairing something on the back porch and asked if she could play in his toolbox. Michael was delighted, as a liberated dad. Of course, she could help herself, if she was careful. He watched proudly as his four-year-old turned the toolbox upside down, finding three wrenches in descending sizes. Taking each one in turn she said, "See, here's the daddy, and here's the mommy, and here's the baby." She spent the next hour having the wrenches play house in the upside down toolbox.

But that's just anecdotal. There has been some substantial academic research as well, with some of the same indications, as women broke into every discipline of inquiry as to the nature of life and being human: anthropology, neurology, theology, archaeology, sociology, physics, linguistics, biology, psychology. We asked different questions from those of our male predecessors. Sometimes they were humorous, like the friend of mine who was getting her Ph. D. in research psychology in the 1970's, when she noticed that all the rats running the mazes were male. She reported this to her professor, naively assuming it to be an oversight. She was told, "Female rats are too emotional to get consistent results." Now imagine! If that were a stereotype it would be disturbing enough, but if there were truth to it, it would mean that all the experiments that had been done for all those years would not be applicable to female behavior. And finally in 2003, we discovered that female rats under stress do behave differently from the classic pattern of fight/flight. Researchers at Stanford identified a pattern in female rats under stress which they called, "tend and befriend," meaning that female rats care for each other in stressful situations. That's important, because you can be sure that those rats are not socialized to behave that way. It's in their wiring.

That's one example. We've discovered a lot more. I'll touch on some of the high points of the huge breadth of academic research that's come out in the last twenty years, bearing on the question of gender.

Let's start with archaeology. We are now sure that not all societies have been male dominated. The societies in question were prehistoric, so we're only able to know what we can discern from remains and the archaeologists' interpretations of them, but as women entered the field, once again they asked different questions and saw things differently from the men. Things occurred to them that hadn't occurred to their male colleagues, like a shrine-like room in a 9,000 year old ruin in Eastern Turkey, interpreted by archaeologist Dorothy Cameron as a

birthing room. That would indicate that birth was sacralized, at least in that culture, which makes sense if you think about it.

Archaeologists infer social status from the way in which different people were buried, who slept where, wall paintings, etc. so they can tell with some degree of certainty that in a number of Middle Eastern and Central European societies of six to ten thousand years ago, some even older than that, women had a high position, higher than men's, in fact.

There is also evidence that in these matricentric, sometimes called gynocentric, societies, there was no war per se, or at least no militarism. Historian Gerda Lerner (no fringe, by the way, Lerner is the highly respected past president of the prestigious American Society of Historians) said there might have been occasional violent death in gynocentric cultures, but it wasn't a way of life. The bones point to little or no death by trauma in these apparently woman centered societies, indicating an overall peaceful way of life.

That doesn't necessarily mean that there was a golden age of matriarchies, or that women dominated in the same way that men dominated later. What it does mean is that if there were ever, anywhere in the world, societies in which men were not dominant, then male domination is not inevitable. And that's a big deal.

Finally there is a lot of iconography depicting what seem to be images of a female deity. Now that's pretty interesting. A lot of archaeologists now think that, at least in Central Europe and the Middle East, there was a long period in which the central image of god was female. And it seems to more or less correspond to the time of gynocentric villages with low violence and no war. Please be careful, because you can't then say that just because people have a female deity, women automatically get more respect and freedom in the culture. All you have to do is go to India to see that's not necessarily so. But there is some correlation, at least in pre-history.

So that's archaeology, briefly.

Then there's neurology. It seems that our brains are different in certain key ways, although there is no discernable difference in intelligence between women and men. The corpus callosum, which is the membrane separating—or connecting, depending on how you look at it—left and right hemispheres, is more permeable in the female brain, allowing for more communication between the two sides of the brain. That makes us more able to multi-task, more able to process feelings verbally, and various other things having to do with language skills. Male brains tend to be more focused on a single point. Researchers tell us that when scanning the brain of males and females, you can see when a piece of information is given to the subject. The parts of the brain affected light up. In the male brain typically, the activity lights up a single, focused area, while the area lit up by a single piece of information in the female brain looks more like a pinball

machine, with bells and whistles going off all over the place. This says women automatically put ideas and information together with other ideas and information. We think across discipline, to put a positive spin on it. Or, as we have sometimes been told in academia, we have trouble focusing. And if you've ever criticized your man for "not connecting the dots," you were probably right. On the other hand, a man is more likely to be able to perform surgery on a battlefield without losing concentration. It's the brain. And one is no better than the other.

Evolutionary psychology, biology, primatology, and animal behavior in general also tell a tale of difference, though female biologists have made short work of any attempts to interpret the data as evidence of inferiority or natural submissiveness on the part of females. But sexual behavior has been shown to reflect different reproductive strategies in males and females, which explains a lot of our social and marital problems. Females of nearly every species are more selective in their mating habits. Biologists and evolutionary psychologists speculate that this is an evolutionary adaptation to the unalterable fact that there is a greater investment on the part of the female, should she be impregnated from the sexual encounter. Males tend to employ the whore/Madonna strategy. They tend to stay around to protect and raise the offspring of the primary mate whose issue they are reasonably certain is theirs, while straying as frequently as they can get away with (without leaving their mate at risk to other males), to get a little strange on the side.

Now don't start thinking females are more moral or naturally loyal. Fully twenty percent of baby birds don't have their apparent daddy's DNA. Females go for the best genes, the genes of the strongest, highest status male they can get and then get some nice steady guy to bring home the bacon. In pre-hominid societies prior to pair-bonding, primatologist Sarah Hrdy hypothesizes that females employed a "multi-male strategy" to protect their offspring, because alpha males were likely to kill the infants of any female with whom they had NOT copulated. A lot of female sexual behavior depends on optimizing her own and her issues' survival chances, however that is done. So, in a nutshell, males go for variety and features that indicate reproductive health and high estrogen (full lips and hips, symmetrical features, shiny hair) while females go for strong genes and high status. Familiar? Think Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky.

That takes us to the final frontier: hormones. It's hard to believe unless you've experienced it what these little buggers can do to your personality, but once you've been there you know it's momentous. I know a woman who was put on high doses of testosterone for a medical treatment, and her entire personality changed. Suddenly she had no patience for feelings. "Just get to the point, can't you?" Really. And our hormones are fluctuating all the time, affecting our moods. This simply isn't true for men. Sure, they have testosterone spikes every ten or fifteen minutes, but nothing like our cycles. Theirs are like a gentle rainstorm compared to a hurricane. Sorry, but there was some justification for naming

hurricanes after women. And then there's oxytocin, known as the bonding chemical. Women generate large quantities of it with touch, more with orgasm, and the most when we give birth, which is a good thing, because it makes us fall in love with our babies instead of eating them. Our lovers, too, no doubt. We're very interested in relating, relating, relating with whatever or whomever has set off this chemical in our brains. If you've ever wondered why you were mooning over some jerk you knew you shouldn't be interested in, but had had sexual contact with in a weak moment, blame it on the oxytocin, not the bassa nova.

All this makes us very naturally interested in relationship. We think about relationships, work on them, talk about them, and use them as a moral barometer of greatest good. Harvard researcher and psychologist, Carole Gilligan noticed that Kohlberg's famous studies on moral development had not reflected differences between boys and girls. It was the classic question about a poor man with a sick wife, and whether or not he should steal the medicine to cure her. Classic moral dilemma: which is the higher value: preserving human life, or not stealing? Gilligan wanted to see if the same standards applied to girls. She decided to repeat the experiment to measure girls' ability to weigh values in order of importance. To her surprise she got completely different answers. The girls didn't choose between two principles; they weighed the relationships instead. They asked, did he love his wife? Had he tried talking to the pharmacist to see if they could work something out? After all, they reasoned, if he went to jail, she would surely die.

Now, before female researchers, this might have been taken as evidence of women's inability to think abstractly. But Gilligan had a different take on it. She developed a theory that women do think morally, but their criteria for moral discernment are relational. We weigh the effect of our choices on our various relationships, when we have a moral dilemma. Would this choice hurt our mother, father, husband, child, or whatever and whomever we consider ourselves related to? If it would definitely hurt someone, which one is the more important relationship? I am more likely, if I am morally developed, to choose to hurt a neighbor than my child. Women think like that. They tried the same experiment with unmarried, pregnant college students facing the decision of whether to have an abortion, and got similar results. The girls thought about their relationships to the fetus, their boyfriends, their families, etc., rather than applying abstract principles or avoiding punishment, as men tend to do when facing moral dilemmas.

Finally, there's sociology, childhood development, and learning theory. Girls in general excel at verbal skills, boys at motor and spatial skills. Boy children play differently from girl children. Boys on a playground tend to play organized games, with clear winners and losers. Anyone can play so long as he follows or successfully challenges the leader (read: Alpha male), and follows the rules, which seldom change. Easy. Girls, on the other hand, aren't very interested in rules. They're interested in (surprise!) relationships. Small groups of girls form,

each having more or less status than the next. There are “in” girls and “out” girls. The purpose of rules is to determine who is allowed in and who is kept out of each group, as members move from one to another, forming and breaking alliances. The rules change frequently, depending on what the “in” girls want, or whom they want to let in or keep out. We could say that girls are less prone to hierarchy, but the hierarchy is hidden in the relationships. There is always a queen bee. We could say that boys are more inclusive, but they demand obedience to the social order, while in the girls’ groups there is a loosely knit, ongoing negotiation.

So, what can we make of all this? What does it tell us about who women are? First we must understand that both socially and genetically, sex and gender are on a continuum, rather than at polar opposites. But certain tendencies and generalities do emerge that might be useful to consider, understanding that, as Harry Stack Sullivan said, we are all more fundamentally human than anything else.

1. Women are relational. Our hormones make us relate. Relationship defines our moral choices; our brains are wired for it. We think about relationship. We analyze and talk about relationship there’s no getting away from it. We are more interested in relationships than men are (did you really think your boyfriend was fascinated by the details of your sister’s upset with her best friend?). Consequently we’re better at managing them. Some of that is indisputably because we have more experience, but that circles back to our interest and our predisposition. So, as Justin Sterling (founder, Sterling Institute of Relationship) says, do you really want someone who has little interest and less skill managing your most important relationships? Women are the relationship managers of the world. More about this later.
2. Women are the choosers in the mating dance. Even the egg decides, by some mechanism we don’t yet understand, which of many sperm vying for entry, to let in. Males court us because we are more selective, and we need to be so. Males try to get chosen to spread their seed, so it’s in their interest to please us. They decide whom to court, but we are the ones who make the final selection. This is a power we had relinquished, ironically, in the early feminist era, which we need to reclaim. We say yes or no. We are the boundary setters, often giving off our signals non-verbally.
3. Women are more emotional, like it or not. Our hormones make us that way. Our moods and feelings are tempestuous; we are not steady state by nature. Our passions color the world. Our challenge is to allow our emotions to flow, enjoying and honoring them, while not treating them as revealed truth or using them to manipulate and bludgeon others (especially men) into submission.
4. Women are less militaristic, though not necessarily less violent.

5. Women connect the dots. We're synthetic thinkers. When you tell us about your Uncle Al, we think about our Aunt Frieda and muse, "maybe they'd get along." We were networking long before the word was coined. We put the pieces—and the people— together.
6. Women multi-task easily and naturally. We have better peripheral vision. Consequently we can often field interruptions more gracefully. We see the kids out of the corner of our eye, while picking the berries. We also see the crumbs on the kitchen counter, while wiping a child's nose and carrying on a conversation about the crisis in Sudan.
7. Women have vision and appetite. We want things, and envision how things might be, whether it's a rose garden in the back yard or world peace. Ask a woman what she wants for her wedding or her birthday, and you'll get a list the length of your arm. Ask a man the same thing, and the answer will be pretty simple. Sure men want things, and they have every bit as much right to get them as we do, but they don't necessarily envision a Hollywood production. Sorry if this sounds like a stereotype, but it's proven true across time and culture. Even men's sexual fantasies are a series of well-worn pictures they can flip through, not stories involving pirates and heroes. If you don't believe me, ask them. Or read the literature. And, by the way, a significant element in men's fantasies involve giving a woman exquisite, overwhelming pleasure. What might this tell us? Men, wanting to please us, will devise ways to give us what we desire, if only we tell them clearly and ask them nicely. It matters not whether it's a better mousetrap or an orgasm—or even world peace, for that matter. That's what *they* are wired for.
8. Women have the ability to place love before ego because simple ego gratification doesn't fulfill us for long. That's one reason so many women are leaving the corporate world and returning home to their families or starting their own businesses. We are love driven. Love and nurturance are our purpose, evolutionarily speaking.

Where does all this leave us? It definitely tells us that our differences are more than society deep, and not so simple as a stereotype. It gives us some general ideas of what men bring to the party, besides the beer, and what women bring, beyond home baked cookies. It raises interesting hypotheses as to what and who women really might be, and some ways of reclaiming our femininity, as we define it, powerfully, in our relationships and in the world.

I am not suggesting a return to the old stereotypes of femininity, which bound us like a straight jacket, nor to the economic and social dependency they fostered. Those didn't come from us, and you can be sure they didn't serve us. We are the ones who must say who we are. The most important thing that feminism brought us, the thing that come what may, we must never relinquish, is the right to define ourselves, name ourselves, and exercise ultimate control over ourselves. In the end, the roles we play are far less important than our choosing them. It's about writing our own play, and directing it, rather than simply playing our parts,

whatever they are, passively, as defined by others. This is a new femininity--- self-determined and self-defined—as a much-needed gift and power in the world.

Recognizing our differences will facilitate our using our feminine power to lead. We can connect the dots, creating systems solutions to many of the world's problems, by seeing how one variable affects another, and putting together the right people to work it out. We are visionaries, with appetites for the beauty of the possible; it's up to us to enroll the world into our vision. We are the relationship managers; our skills are needed to manage relationships between nations, as well as neighbors, communities, and families. As the boundary setters we need to say no the priorities governments and corporations are currently setting and the methods they are using. We need to say clearly and lovingly what we want: a world that works for everyone. Most importantly, we're the purveyors of love; now that we're gaining the power and freedom to do so, we can elevate that love beyond the personal into the public realm, nurturing and creating a future for all the world's children.

It's time for women to enter the fray of public life in large numbers as leaders in all fields, particularly in politics. Three quarters of Americans surveyed believe it's important to have women in political leadership, but women currently only occupy fourteen percent of the seats in US legislative bodies. That ranks us 60th in the world, well behind such progressive beacons as Rwanda. We can't create the future we want if we don't enter the public arena to speak the vision, set the priorities, and create the necessary consensus to get the job done, another of women's talents. And if we wish to retain our feminine ways of doing things, rather than having to "man-up" to the job, we will need a critical mass of women beside us, for support. When a woman acts alone, gender becomes the focus, and she once again becomes "the other."

Men will produce and defend, as they have always done, Women are the ones who define what is produced and defended, using our hearts as well as our heads. Men will produce what we ask for. They're doing it now, pillaging our oil and depleting the world's resources so that we can have our SUV's, our microwaves, and our catalogues full of stuff to gather without ever leaving the safety of our lovely homes. That's what we've told them we want, after all. Haven't you heard men say " I do it all for you, honey" or " I did it for my family," while you looked on, aghast? Right now they're defending us and our lifestyles in Iraq. If you need to be convinced of this, listen to the language of military leaders and foot soldiers when they're interviewed.

Women need to step up to the responsibility for creating the world of our larger vision, rather than that of our personal comfort. As more women move into public life, we can be clear and loving in bringing this about, because we will have the support we need. We can embody our femininity and our power, while graciously accepting and appreciating men for who they are and what they bring, acknowledging and applauding each step along the way. This is the new,

powerful femininity we are coming to know, from our research and from our lives. As leaders in our families and the human family, working in loving partnership with men, we might at last bring about the heaven on earth we have always known to be possible.