



Women Changing Work (Contributions in Women's Studies; 112)

Patricia Lunneborg

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Drawing on in-depth interviews with women employees, Lunneborg asks five broad questions: How do you approach your job differently than men do? What subtle differences do you notice in the way you do your job relative to men? How do male/female value differences in your occupation affect the way work is done? What are the strengths of women for your occupation? How would increasing the numbers of women in your occupation change your job and workplace? These probing questions generated important answers, including the basic finding that women relished managing and organizing people, data, and things. The women employees' style rejected the traditional male hierarchical competitive, controlling style for one accenting more sharing, consensus-building, tolerance, support, and openness to change. . . . [T]he material is extraordinarily important and thoughtfully analyzed. *Choice*

This new work is organized around four main themes found in interviews with more than 200 women workers. All of these women were doing men's jobs; they were doctors and lawyers, engineers and landscape architects, brokers and state legislators, police officers and firefighters, carpenters and electricians. They were asked five simple questions which tested the feminist thesis that women will make work more humane and egalitarian. Some of the questions include: How do you approach the job differently than the men?; What are some differences from the men in the way you do this job?; What do you see as your strengths as a woman for this job? From responses to these questions, the author shows that women are changing male-dominated work in four major ways: through a service orientation to clients, through a nurturant approach to coworkers, through an insistence upon a balanced lifestyle, and through an attraction to managing others using power differently than men.

A prologue based on feminist literature precedes each of the book's four sections. Then within each of the four sections are three chapters devoted to minor themes (No Us Versus Them, Not Living with Stress) illustrated with direct quotes from the interviews. At the book's conclusion is a chapter titled Reforming Men, which offers further documentation of how men have changed to be more like women in their work values, attitudes, and behaviors. This book was written for all working women and men, and can be used in variety of courses, including: Women's Studies, Business Management, Industrial Relations, Sociology of Work, Sex-Roles and Sex Differences, and Careers.

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