

To get the administrative job she wants, the black woman needs to seek the assistance of a mentor, know exactly what her goals are, and work twice as hard.

## Making It Despite Double Discrimination

VONZETTA CAMPBELL

Women may constitute a majority of the teachers in American schools, but they still occupy only a small fraction of the decision-making administrative positions in education. In fact, there are fewer female administrators now than there were a decade ago (Freedman, 1980). The gains women have made are now being reduced due to decentralization, budget cuts, and decreasing enrollments.

Other obstacles remain, as well—especially psychological ones. Perhaps the greatest obstacles are tradition and the persistence of stereotypes of women in leadership roles. For black women, the problems are compounded. While discussions of women's rights generally center on the equal rights amendment or the aspirations of a relatively small segment of women, the plight of the black woman has largely been ignored—unless she has a strong sponsor, she is the last hired and the first fired.

Equal employment laws have, in



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some cases, changed behavior, but they have not changed attitudes. Discrimination and bias are going further underground and detection is becoming more and more difficult. Sometimes the most subtle stresses are the most difficult to handle as women attempt to make it in a professional world (Harrangue, 1980). Tokenism appears in myriad forms. The most obvious is having only one woman or black on a committee, council, or staff. The most subtle is allowing only a few minutes on the agenda for "her report" or asking her "to take part in this decision"—not because she is expected to add anything, but because it "just wouldn't look good to overlook her, especially with all these new government regulations."

#### Four Important Factors

A study of 100 female and 100 male administrators (Picker, 1980) indicates four major areas that appear to be significant for the career advancement of female administrators: (1) age, (2) sponsorship, (3) career aspirations, and (4) discriminatory practices.

While younger men and women had spent about the same number of years teaching before entering administration, older women had taught considerably longer than their counterparts. Younger women appeared to be entering positions on a more equal basis with younger males. The study also revealed that sponsorship of women seeking administrative positions was severely limited, a problem not encountered by males. Women frequently had vague career aspirations, allowing things simply "to happen." Some women had subordinated their own careers for those of their husbands. Good career planning and high career aspirations were found to be important factors for success. Finally, female administrators perceived discriminatory practices within school

districts: women needed more education and greater dedication than males.

Although these four areas are significant to all women seeking administrative posts, certain implications can be identified for black women. Many are older than white women and men when they achieve the educational qualifications and time to really commit themselves to leadership roles. Many black women, serving as single heads of households, have had to stay home until their children were grown. Others have had to work at low paying jobs, attending school part-time to attain a degree. Teaching jobs have made survival easier for some, but because blacks receive few promotions, few have bothered to seek them.

Sponsorship has also been limited since few blacks have attained powerful decision-making positions. No one can be effective in a position, title notwithstanding, if the job carries no "clout." In addition, men—because of their security, self-confidence, and the backing of sponsors—have been able to learn the job while doing the job. Unfortunately, women need more education to be hired for the same jobs and make the same salaries as men.

While men certainly need to build new attitudes about the things they take for granted, so must women. Attitudes among women who negate themselves and other women must also change (Jongeward and Scott, 1975). Since people do not willingly relinquish power, women cannot wait and expect new roles to emerge or power to be handed over. The more qualified, highly motivated women must decide that they are going to compete on an equal basis. They must take responsibility, become assertive, and participate in and influence decision making in each organization in which they are members. They must, if need be, become overqualified and flaunt their qualifications. They must apply for and demand serious consideration for promotions they have earned and appeal when denied promotions because of sex or race.

Minority women must begin to identify goals and increase consciousness about restrictions, discrimination, and alternatives. My advice is this: join networks of women that disseminate job opportunities. Find challenging, creative work beyond your daily tasks. Research areas of interest and see that your expertise gains exposure. Call or write colleagues so you will come to mind when potential speakers, job candidates, and so forth, are being sought. Recognize

the extent to which you will change your personal life and move to other areas if to your advantage. Decide how much you are willing to give up in career aspirations in deference to the black male ego. Apply. Apply. Apply. In seeking new positions, expect to be as highly compensated as negotiations will allow. Include the "what," "how," "when," and "how much."

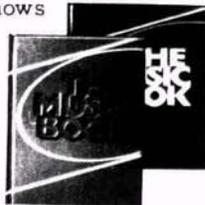
We can take hold of our lives at any time and direct them toward what we want them to be. The crux is taking the time to analyze and identify our attributes and weaknesses—then go with the positive. ■

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