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7 Small Steps Women Can Take To Make Their Voices Heard At Work

Here's what you can do today.

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There are overt forms of sexism in the workplace that most women can easily see and name: unequal pay for equal work, a boss who tries to sleep with you, a dress code that forces you into heels and tight dresses while the men can wear suits. But subtle sexism, or [as author Jessica Valenti once put it](#), “the everyday slights women can’t tangibly attribute to sexism,” is a beast that’s somewhat harder to recognize and combat.

Unfortunately, these everyday sexist slights — being interrupted by men in meetings, seeing the best projects passed on to male colleagues, not getting invited to golf outings or other traditionally all-male events — are commonplace for many working women. And now that sexism has been amplified and empowered at the very highest levels of government, it’s not hard to imagine that [misogyny may trickle down](#) into our work spaces even more.

Enter [Meredith Fineman](#), CEO and founder of communications and leadership company [FinePoint](#). The Washington DC-native works with professional women, arming them with tools they can use to combat these subtly sexist work spaces.

The Huffington Post spoke with [Fineman](#) to find out what women can do on a day-to-day scale to elevate their voices at home, with friends and, especially, in the workplace.

[FinePoint’s mission](#) is to teach people how to pitch and promote themselves in professional situations such as interviews, networking events and online spaces. The organization often focuses on women specifically by teaching them “[how to brag and self-promote](#).”

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Knowing how to pitch yourself, Fineman said, is integral to success and ensuring your opinion is heard.

“I have yet to tell a woman what I do and have them not say I need your help. It doesn’t matter their age, race or years of experience every woman has said the same thing to me,” Fineman said. “People get embarrassed about it. They think you should know how to do this stuff yourself, but how can you? Nobody ever taught us. It’s not something you’re supposed to know how to do as women especially.”

Below are seven small, everyday things women can do at work to ensure their voices and those of their female colleagues are heard.

1. Brag about yourself.

“It’s not bragging if it’s fact,” Fineman said. “Your accomplishments are facts and it’s about sharing them strategically for your professional gain.” Self-promotion is key to succeeding at work, but all too often people — women especially — have trouble communicating their strengths.

Talking about your work, Fineman said, is a huge part of *doing* the work. “Women often get bogged down in having to check off every box before they talk about something,” she said.

2. Put your name in the hat.

“Put your name in to be quoted. Put your name in for a speaking engagement. What do you have to lose?” Fineman said.

The CEO told HuffPost that she often submits her name to press and speaking queries that she knows she’s not qualified for. Worst case scenario? They tell you no. “But, now, they know your name,” she said. “It matters to get your name in the hat, to then pick from later.”

3. Stop saying “shameless self-plugs.”

Wipe the phrase “shameless self-promotion” from your vocabulary. You’re proud of your work, so celebrate it.

“When you say something like ‘shameless self-promotion’ or ‘plug alert’ it tells me that you’re insecure about what you’ve done which then transfers that negative sentiment to me,” Fineman said. “I know that you’re uncomfortable with it so why would I want to praise it or share it?”



MEREDITH FINEMAN

Meredith Fineman, CEO and founder of FinePoint.

4. Knowing how to pitch yourself is half the battle.

Your LinkedIn profile, your Twitter bio, your business card — these things matter,

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because the first step to any new opportunity is getting your name out there and noticed.

Fineman's favorite pitching tool is the personal website. "A lot of people think a personal website needs to be you dancing across the page, but it's not," she said. "It's the only place where you have 100 percent control of the message and the appearance, otherwise you're beholden to everybody else's boxes."

Here are a few places women can start to [create a personal website](#):

1. [SquareSpace](#)
2. [About.Me](#)
3. [Wix](#)
4. [Weebly](#)

5. Speak up, speak up, speak up.

Speaking up and asking questions is like a muscle: it gets easier the more you do it. "The first step is learning to feel comfortable and raising your hand — in whatever setting, whether that's literal or metaphorical — and saying OK, I deserve to be here too, my work deserves to be here and my voice deserves to be here," Fineman said.

Women, especially, are told time and time again to stay quiet. But now more than ever we need to speak up. "Historically, positive attributes are associated with passive behavior," Fineman said. "Women are supposed to be demure and meek and basically shut the fuck up and look pretty." We say fuck that.

6. Support other women.

"Use your other female colleagues and male allies in your office and ask them to help you," Fineman said. "Tell them you want to be on X, Y or Z project, would you vouch for me?"

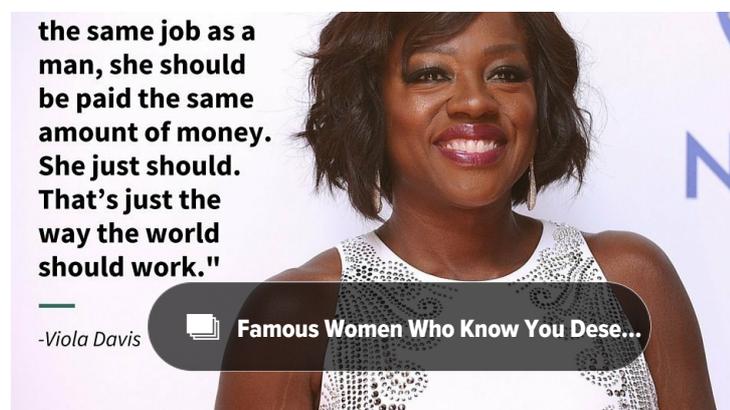
Fineman suggested using the "amplification" strategy, which involves women repeating each other's ideas in meetings and crediting the women who came up with them. [It worked for White House female staffers.](#)

7. Be happy with what you're putting out there.

Remember, this is about you. When it comes down to it, other people's opinions aren't necessary for you to be content with your work.

As Fineman told HuffPost: "As long as I'm OK with what I'm putting out and I feel good about what I'm creating and doing — then I don't really care what anyone else has to say."

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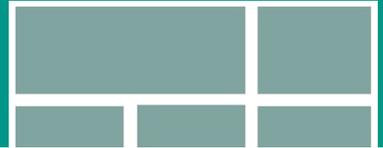
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