

THE SIX 'A's

OF SUCCESS FOR WOMEN

A #WisdomCard Collection
by dr Anita Sands

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01 ASK

ASK FOR EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO SUCCEED – AT WORK AND HOME.

Research shows that men enter into negotiations four times more often than women and are more effective at negotiating on behalf of themselves. The effect of not negotiating your starting salary, title or terms of your promotion compounds over the course of a career.

- Do your research and know your market and worth.
- Prepare for the conversation; rehearse your lines.
- Frame your mindset as if you are asking on behalf of someone very close to you.
- Think about factors other than compensation that you'll need to succeed (eg budget, team numbers etc).
- If you have a partner, ask for the support you need at home and for an equitable division of household tasks.

ADVERTISE 02

DON'T ASSUME THAT IF YOU DO GREAT WORK IT WILL BE DULY RECOGNIZED AND REWARDED.

Unfortunately, that's just not the way the world works. Have you ever shared an idea only to hear it repeated elsewhere without attribution? Or worked on a team deliverable but didn't get to present it? Who gets the credit matters. All these assignments of organizational "value", be they conscious or unconscious, influence who gets ahead. Men, in general, are better and more comfortable with self-promotion.

- Be your own best advocate. Don't leave your career trajectory and success to others.
- Look for ways to make your contribution visible – make people aware of your skill sets.
- Speak up during Q&As so your knowledge is recognized.
- Address issues of non-recognition with colleagues (ideally in private and in a fact-based, non-emotional manner).
- Be sure to recognize the contribution of other women.

03 ASSERT

FIND YOUR VOICE, ARTICULATE YOUR OPINION AND ASSERT YOUR PRESENCE.

It's one thing when organizational conditions discourage you from speaking up, but another when you allow the voice in your head to silence you. Your presence, ability to ask great questions and level of articulation are a key part of your personal brand and how competent you're perceived to be.

- Invest in your communication skills – it will pay dividends every day.
- Learn the art of effective communication including how best to frame your remarks.
- If you're an introvert in meetings, rig the room. Have an agreed signal with an ally who'll draw you into the conversation or ask you a question.
- In asserting your presence, watch your words – don't be so quick to attribute your success to "luck". How you describe yourself affects how others see you

AUTHENTIC 04

**GREAT LEADERS ARE GENUINE AND AUTHENTIC,
WHICH MEANS BEING YOURSELF – SKILLFULLY.**

We all want to be ourselves at work. Leaders recognize the importance of consistently showing up as the best version of themselves given the context. This is far easier to do when you work in a place where fitting in with the dominant culture isn't a stretch given who you are. Having to pretend to be someone you're not is exhausting – like being smothered from the inside out.

- Authentic leadership requires great self-awareness. Know how you are perceived by others.
- Develop some style variation but don't adopt different personas based on other people's expectations.
- Be consistent around your core values and attributes, then tweak things slightly for the occasion at hand.
- Have coherence between how you feel, what you say and what you do. Otherwise, it's very difficult to be authentic.

05

ABDICATE

**KNOW HOW TO DELEGATE, LEARN HOW TO SAY NO,
AND HAVE NO GUILT ABOUT DROPPING THE BALL.**

As organized, competent and successful as you are, you're not superwoman. Nor should you try to be. As a wife, mother and professional, I believe I can do well at two out of three at any one time – and that's on a good day! Be OK with that.

- Give up the need for perfection and drop any semblance of guilt.
- Create leverage in all aspects of your life – at work and at home.
- Be clear about the outcome when you delegate, and truly empower others.
- Say no to things, especially thankless tasks unrelated to how value is recognized in your organization.
- It's OK to drop the ball on things at home – the world won't end!

AFRAID 06

IT'S OK TO BE AFRAID. EVEN THE MOST SUCCESSFUL WOMEN HAVE THEIR VERSION OF IMPOSTER SYNDROME.

Fear can play a far bigger role in our careers and lives than we realize because it rarely shows up as fear. Instead, kids, personal obligations, the idea of not being qualified enough etc become the reason we don't push ourselves ahead.

- All fears boil down to two varieties: the fear of not being enough or the fear of not having enough. Even procrastination, when you peel back the layers, is the fear of not being enough.
- A lack of confidence can become a self-fulfilling prophecy.
- Don't let the invisible hand of fear shape your destiny nor the negative room-mate in your mind ever silence your voice.
- Being afraid is a natural part of the process and the more you stretch yourself, the stronger the fear becomes. See it as a sign that you're on the road to something great and invite fear along for the ride!



About the #WisdomCards

Created in 2019 by Dr Anita Sands, the #WisdomCards share the distilled wisdom she has garnered over two decades of working with and observing some of the most successful organizations and leaders in the world. The topics cover career and personal development, leadership, business, technology, and a host of other areas. You can follow them online at:



About dr Anita Sands

Anita Sands is a Silicon Valley-based board director, author, and speaker. A former Fulbright Scholar, she holds a Masters in public policy and management as well as a Ph.D. in atomic and molecular physics. After a decade in financial services she now serves on the boards of directors of five technology companies - both public and private. She and her husband are parents to five millennials and a toddler and split their time between San Francisco, New York and Dublin.

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