



GETTING RID OF THE

Golden Halo

Do you simply knuckle down and get on with it while the rest of your colleagues shout from the rooftops about their achievements? Well *Pride* is here to help you take some of the shine off that golden halo of yours. Within reason, of course...

Everyone has a colleague with a serious case of Golden Halo Syndrome. You know, the type that silently goes above and beyond in order to complete whatever task they've been charged with, singing a sweet chorus of, "It's no trouble at all," and, "I'm just doing my job" - never once shining a light on their achievements in the futile hope that someone else will notice and give them a solid pat on the back for their efforts. Sadly, what happens instead is that someone who's contributed comparatively less but shouted just that little bit louder is rewarded with a swift ascent up the career ladder, leaving you stuck on the bottom rung.

THE GOLDEN HALO DILEMMA

When you put it down on paper, the whole thing seems a little ridiculous doesn't it? Yet, there are countless women risking their professional advancement everyday as a result of Golden Halo Syndrome. It's understandable when you factor in society's attitudes and how the educational experience differs between the sexes. The majority of women who were academically successful at school were rewarded for their achievement - no questions asked. They put in the work, performed well in their exams and as a result earned good marks and places at the universities of their choice. Unfortunately, old habits formed at an early stage in life make it difficult to adapt to a professional environment in which the dog that barks the loudest often gets the bone over the dog more deserving of it. Frustratingly, this proves to be a problem that affects women in particular, a fact not lost on consultant and author of *Rocking Your Role*, Jenny Garrett. "The way we, as a society, have constructed our images of men and women's roles really needs to evolve. Strong, successful women are seen as fierce, aggressive and scary, whereas strong men are seen as attractive and charismatic."

TEAM PLAYER OR LONE RANGER?

Global talent management company OI Partners recently conducted a survey into the traits that employers find most valuable in their staff. Of the 174 employers whose opinions were polled, 71% said that they valued employees who were team players and contributed to the working environment in general, while 65% favoured employees who motivated and encouraged others to achieve excellence. Such evidence would suggest that women already have the right idea. Working hard, making little mention of every little personal 'win' while simultaneously supporting your fellow colleagues (rather than solely looking out for number one) is surely the hallmark of someone destined for career success. Or is it? "Absolutely not," argues Jenny Garrett. "Self-deprecation is a dangerous approach for you at work, as your competitors are waiting in the wings for any sign of weakness. You know what they say: if you act like a doormat, people will wipe their feet on you." Zoe Sinclair, businesswoman and founder of Employees Matter - a leading provider of seminars and initiatives that engage employees and bridge the gap between work and life - also agrees that giving your fellow colleagues a boost at your own expense is only a recipe for disaster. "The world now is so competitive that people will happily overtake you if you are willing to let them. Many women are willing to sit idly by while the promotion ship sails away."

NO MORE MRS NICE GUY?

So how do you go about making your boss aware of the excellent contributions you're making without coming off as completely obnoxious or, worse still, being cast pantomime villain-style as the 'ruthless office b*tch'? Striking a balance between the two is struggle that a lot of women still face, according to Dr. Lois Frankel, careers coach and author of best-selling book, *Nice Girls Don't Get the Corner Office*. This is because, deep-down, many women still harbour a desire for acceptance. "It's important to both men and women to be well-liked at work but you can't build a career solely around that. The trick is to find a balance between being a wishy-washy 'nice girl' and a woman who's too headstrong. Find your voice and be clear without demolishing the other person, but also be inclusive. Share your opinions and ideas, but also make others understand that you care about their opinions too." Jenny Garrett and Zoe Sinclair both have their own tips to help women overcome Golden Halo Syndrome and blow their trumpets to get the recognition they deserve, without coming off as vainglorious in the process. "Try stating your role in events quite factually," suggests Jenny. "For instance, 'I led the team to deliver this project', or 'I am really pleased I was able to deliver on time and to specification, as I have done for the last 3 projects'. If you find this really difficult, how about collating feedback from your staff and peers and then informing others what's been said about you? Then you're sharing others' communication and thoughts, rather than your own." Zoe proposes an interesting analogy to help you feel more at ease when explaining why you are better suited to or more deserving of a promotion than perhaps another colleague. "The oxygen theory comes to mind here. In an aeroplane, staff always tell you to put your own oxygen mask on first, then look after your family. This applies to the workforce as well. Sometimes you have to take care of yourself first in order to be part of a good team." 