



KATE RAMSAY AND THE A n D COACHES WELCOME YOU TO OUR STAYING IN TOUCH NEWSLETTER.

This is edition # 100 and, as I flagged in edition # 99, this will be my final Value Adding newsletter. Why? After 100 newsletters over more than 30 years, I'm hoping this will free up my brain for some fresh writing projects. I am indulging myself in this edition by focusing on two topics about which I am passionate – effective leadership and equality for women at work. In **Learning moments** you can read about the benefits of an introverted, values-led leadership style and some ways to break the so called 'gloomcycle' of social media. In **Did you know?** are the recent gender stats at a senior level in ASX 300 organisations. In **A good read** I review a book that explores what we are getting wrong about gender equality and why men still win at work. And **To close** I quote that well known philosopher Miss Piggy.

## Learning Moments

### i Leading as an introvert

I thoroughly enjoyed reading an article in the September 23, 2025 edition of *Women's AGENDA* written by Shelley Friesen headed 'Why introverted, values-led leadership matters in creative industries.' Friesen opens by declaring that creative industries tend to reward 'volume over value'. She then shares that in spite of being an introvert she has successfully built and leads a 25-person agency. She describes her leadership style as 'listening first, leading quietly, and making space for people to do their best work.' She clarifies that this isn't taking a soft approach but rather a strategic one.

Friesen writes about how she grew her business by door knocking rather than only relying on an online presence, and that she believes her introversion turned out to be an asset:

*It meant I listened more than I spoke, I noticed the small things, and I was naturally drawn to creating space where other people could share ideas. That's where the best things happen: not in the loudest pitch, but in quiet collaboration.*

When Covid hit, she was determined not to lay anyone off. Her team backed her completely through these challenging years during which they doubled the size of the business.

*What I learnt through that period is that values-led leadership isn't just what makes a workplace feel nice. It's what holds it together when everything else is falling apart. Looking back, I think the leadership style I'd cultivated as an introvert played a big part in our success – the listening, the empathy, the steady calm in a storm carried us through.*

Good news for all you introverted leaders out there!

### ii Tackling the 'gloomcycle'

The Women's AGENDA 2025 survey has identified burnout as a key concern for women founders and business owners. The constant intrusion of social media and in particular the relentless updates about bad news in the world – be that a threat of world war, the frightening consequences of climate change or the latest activities of the 47<sup>th</sup> president of the US, the so called 'gloomcycle' can definitely contribute to burnout.

In an article in the June 27, 2025 edition of the Guardian Weekly Margaret Sullivan, a Guardian US columnist, offers three ways she protects herself from the 'gloomcycle':

1. **Set thoughtful limits** by putting your phone in another room for a period of time each day, by sleeping with your phone on silent and by negotiating with your nearest and dearest to not talk about politics for at

least an hour after waking and an hour before going to bed. Oh, and only return emails at set times in the day.

2. **Engage in self-care** maybe by going to the gym or for a run, having a bubble bath, listening to gentle music and/or reading literature unrelated to politics.

3. **Rely on trusted voices and sources of news.** We all know that the algorithms of social media platforms tailor our news according to our online activities. Ignore that news and choose news outlets that you trust. Call me old-fashioned, but to me that's ABC radio and TV and the Guardian Weekly.

## Did you know?

### i Gender statistics

The 2025 Chief Executive Women (CEW) Senior Executive Census is out. It finds that a quarter of ASX 300 businesses have gone backwards on women's representation: there are still 18 companies across the 300 largest listed entities in Australia that have no women in the executive leadership teams, and women now hold just 10 per cent of CEO positions on the ASX 300 and only 31% of executive leadership roles.

What's going on?

Those of you who have read my book *A hell of a lot of glass – achieving gender equality in the workplaces of Australia* will know this means a reduction rather than an increase in women at senior levels of businesses, despite the best efforts of DEI (Diversity, Equality and Inclusion) programs in most large organisations. (And for those of you who haven't read my book, let me know and a signed copy will be on its way to you.)

Some are arguing that the so called 'Trump effect' is influencing this drop in gender stats. He ordered the cancellation of DEI programs in US government agencies at the start of his second term, giving organisations where there is no commitment to real change, not only in the US, but here as well, permission to do likewise.

To improve the ledger by their 2026 census, Chief Executive Women are now proposing that businesses set 40:40:20 gender targets by 2030. My search explained that this is aiming for 40% men, 40% women and 20% a gender combination appropriate to the

organisation and industry. Further, CEW is calling for these targets to be tied to executive remuneration. Given gender quotas have been extremely unpopular, I'm keen to observe the response in executive Australia if remuneration is linked to whether our captains of industry choose to meet such gender targets.

## A good read

A friend alerted me to the book *Patriarchy Inc. – What We Get Wrong About Gender Equality and Why Men Still Win at Work*. Written by Melbourne Academic Cordelia Fine, I found it a thoroughly good read.

Fine defines the current status quo in organisations as *Patriarch Inc.*, and as it says on the back cover of her book:

- *That most lucrative industries are male-dominated – yet half of men think they're the ones being discriminated against.*
- *Post #MeToo, we're all committed to stamping out sexual harassment – but not to changing the conditions that foster it.*
- *Women work more hours than men and accumulate less wealth – while many children want more time with their dad.*

Using chapter headings such as 'Sex and Status', '(Re)producing Fathers' and 'Beyond Market Thinking', Fine explores these depressing issues thoroughly yet with a light enough touch that kept me reading.

She concludes that in terms of gender equality there is still so much to fix and indeed so much that we still don't see. In the last chapter she describes her vision for the future as:

*Liberation from a gender system that constrains our freedom to achieve well-being and that biases what we get in return.*

Fine concludes by describing an economy that supports well-being for all – bring it on I say!

## And to close

We close for the very last time with a quote from the oh so wise Miss Piggy:

*Feminism's future must be proud, positive, powerful, perseverant and, wherever possible, alliterative.*