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share - making it vital for us to advocate for each other. I love this quote from our first female Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, who iterates, "There's a ...

Amy Vetter • Oct. 26, 2016



In [a recent column](#), I explored how women and their employers can make progress toward a more even gender representation in accounting firm leadership positions. From my experience, this is a piece of a larger puzzle.

While any and all support is important, there is a special understanding that women

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According to [Lean In](#), women feel more supported and often experience more career satisfaction when they are mentored by other women. Men tend to gravitate towards other men when looking to provide mentorship because they more often have shared interests. If women do the same they're given the opportunity to communicate on a wavelength that might feel more comfortable for them. For women at an executive level, providing unsolicited and helpful coaching to women that are new to executive level meetings or presentations gives them the real perspective and a better chance to succeed.

No matter what point you are at in your career, try to always be open to helping other women. You'd be surprised to learn how much people value your advice and support. Look for opportunities where you can offer your help to women leaders you admire as well. By helping others to succeed, it can also help your career as you will have someone at an executive level sponsoring you and fighting for your promotions.

Although these relationships can develop organically, some firms have organized mentorship or sponsorship programs. If yours does, seek it out and take advantage of it. Make sure the relationship is fruitful and not just a platform to gossip. It's important that as women we are all fighting for each other, no matter how you feel personally. The more women that attain leadership positions, the more opportunity there is for other women – as well as the added benefit to the entire organization as they have diversified thought at an executive level.

Encourage them to go for promotions before they're ready

Women are generally less confident than men. It's troubling to learn that men will apply for a job when they meet 60 percent of the hiring criteria, whereas, [women will wait till they meet 100 percent of the criteria](#). Adopting a 'fake it until you make it' attitude is part of what led Lisa Cines to become the [first female managing partner](#)

of a [top 50 firm](#) she worked at. Help other women by giving them a confidence boost.

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feedback on the skills you are lacking so, next time the opportunity comes around, you can be more successful.

Make an effort to shout out other women

If you notice a female coworker doing exceptional work, sing it from the rooftops. This could be something as simple as highlighting their efforts at your next firm-wide meeting. If there's a rewards or recognition system in place at your firm, put in a nomination for them outlining what they did and why they deserve it. For female managers or superiors, a simple gesture like taking out a hard-working female employee for a special dinner or lunch to celebrate them can speak volumes. People sometimes don't know if they're doing a good job until someone tells them, and women especially thrive with the right encouragement.

By looking for opportunities to support and advocate for our female colleagues, we can help propel them to new heights, ensure their talent is getting recognized and change the metrics of women at the top.

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