

# HIDDEN BY GENDER GUIDE

WHAT WOMEN NEED TO KNOW ABOUT GENDER BIAS TO  
SHINE IN THE CORPORATE SPACE & THE MARKETPLACE



**BETH HAND**

A LEADERSHIP HAND<sup>®</sup> BOOK

# HIDDEN BY GENDER

## GUIDE

What Women Need to Know About Gender Bias to  
Shine in the Corporate Space & the Marketplace

Beth Hand

Copyright © 2015 by Beth Hand

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without written permission from the publisher or author. The reader is granted limited permission to download and print this guide for his or her personal, noncommercial use provided that all copyright notices are included on reader's copy.

Disclaimer. The information contained in this book is for education purposes and is provided "as is." The author makes no warranties, expressed or implied, and hereby disclaims and negates all other warranties, including without limitation, implied warranties, or fitness for a particular purpose.

This guide accompanies the book [\*Hidden by Gender\*](#).

### **Praise for *Hidden by Gender*, the Book**

*Hidden by Gender* illuminates the playing field for women leading in the corporate space and the marketplace. Hand presents the big picture--the global context for women, affirms realities and busts some myths about gender. When you have a big vision, it's not enough to have insight. This book helps you translate insight into powerful action with simple, practical tools and guidelines. The author's approaches will help you and your team achieve your business goals and contribute to the world.

**Monica Smiley**

CEO and Publisher, *Enterprising Women Magazine*

Beth Hand provides a clear, concise and global perspective on the progress and challenges faced by women in corporate leadership and as entrepreneurs. *Hidden by Gender* offers valuable insights supported by the author's years of business and leadership consulting experience, and provides practical guidance to strategize, set goals and focus on creating a positive impact.

**Michael J Tobolski**

Director of Corporate Relations, WEConnect International

*Hidden by Gender* is an invitation for all women to "engage in the game of trade" and become gender diplomats - boldly, brilliantly and with willingness to learn from all experiences - good and bad. It is an invitation to dare, supported by the science and knowledge of why gender inequality still exists and how to bring about a better future, for men and women, boys and girls alike. The simple and elegant SHINE model offers brilliant ways for women leaders to embrace what's possible, act now on the "tiny aha", and the wisdom found in our own stories of boldness.

**Magda Mook**

Executive Director and CEO, International Coach Federation



# Hidden by Gender Guide

## Table of Contents

Hidden by Gender Guide.....	1
What’s In Here.....	1
How to Get the Most of Out of This Guide.....	1
PART 1	
Understanding the Larger Context: How Women Are Hidden Around the World.....	3
Blind Spots and Double Standards that Hide Women .....	5
When Men Are Hidden .....	7
Including Men Increases Women’s Equality .....	7
PART 2	
When Gender is a Red Herring That Hides Women.....	8
An Alternate Universe Where Women Dominate and Men Don’t Have Equal Rights .....	9
A Practical Mindset: Engaging in the Trade Game .....	10
PART 3	
How to SHINE in the Corporate Space and the Marketplace .....	11
S: See your big compelling vision on the horizon.....	<u>1513</u>
H: Have a strategic framework to help you stay mentally focused and minimize distractions...	<u>1816</u>
I: Investigate, Explore, Innovate—learn how to learn.....	<u>2018</u>
N: Notice your bold brilliance, and help others notice theirs.....	<u>2119</u>
E: Embrace failure and feedback. Failure=learning.....	<u>2321</u>
Finally and Most Importantly, Recognize That You Are a Masterpiece .....	<u>2523</u>
You Are a Leadership Masterpiece .....	<u>2624</u>
Thank You .....	<u>2725</u>
The Hidden Stakeholders, Hidden Solutions Series .....	<u>2826</u>
About Leadership Hand LLC .....	<u>2927</u>



# Hidden by Gender Guide

## Hidden by Gender Guide

This free **guide** is to thank you for your interest in the **book** *Hidden by Gender: What Women Need to Know About Gender Bias to Shine in the Corporate Space & the Marketplace*.

The purpose of the book and this accompanying guide is to help you be your best at making a contribution and having a bigger impact in the world however you uniquely define contribution and impact. I want to help you show up every day, shining in all your brilliance, leading your own business or leading within a company, and helping others to show up in theirs.

There are some references to your team in here, but this guide focuses on you. Most of the questions and assessments can easily be adapted to your team.

## What's In Here

This guide, like the book, is divided into three parts. You can work through them sequentially, or if you want to dive into practical action for leading in the corporate space or marketplace, go to Part 3.

- **Part 1** includes reflective questions about seeing the global context, blind spots that hide women, and when men are hidden.
- **Part 2** includes reflective questions about when gender is a red herring that hides women, revealing the hidden playing field, and a practical mindset to play on it successfully.
- **Part 3** focuses on the SHINE model with the descriptions and questions from the book, a SHINE self-assessment, a strategic framework assessment, and stories to illustrate the different elements.

## How to Get the Most of Out of This Guide

**Read the book.** You'll need the context from the book to answer the guide questions for Part 1 and Part 2. Don't worry—the book isn't long, and it's an easy read. You may not need the book for the questions and assessments in Part 3. We added something extra to Part 3: excerpts from our newsletter, *Written by Hand*. Please be sure to read *You Are a Leadership Masterpiece*.

**Work with someone.** Nothing beats working one-on-one with a coach or in small group of peers with a shared goal. Even though I am a coach and CEO, I hire executive coaches to work with me and consultants to help me improve my business. Something powerful—even magical—happens when we work with another person. Ask a mentor, a trusted advisor, to be a sounding board for you as you work through each element. You could ask a colleague or friend if he or she would like to work through the model.



## Hidden by Gender Guide

**Form a small group.** You can form a small group of people who want to explore the idea of gender bias and its impact on how they lead. Or you can form a small group of women with business goals, whether entrepreneurs or in corporate roles. I recommend establishing an end date, say five weeks—a week for each element in the model. You can always reevaluate then whether to continue. For the group, establish a regular time to meet in person, by phone or computer. Manage your time well so everyone has chance to share what he or she has done, how it's working, or where he or she needs help.

**Most important of all, put the elements into action!** Reading without putting it into action is like, well, reading about an amazing experience without actually going through one. Write, talk, plan and put these into action. See what works, and adjust it to make it even better for you.



# Hidden by Gender Guide

## PART 1

### Understanding the Larger Context: How Women Are Hidden Around the World

1. On the same day Malala Yousafzai won the Nobel Peace Prize for her work advocating for children’s and girls’ education, the television aired a clip of Microsoft’s CEO, Satya Nadella, telling women they shouldn’t ask for a raise but to trust karma. When you read about these two people and what they are reflections of, what attributes do you think a woman needs to succeed in the corporate space and the marketplace? For example, when I think about Malala, I think about courage. She was shot, received death threats, and still continued to pursue her education and speak out about children’s education. When I think about Satya Nadella’s words, I think about how a woman needs to be aware that the playing field is uneven for women globally leading our businesses and our lives.

---

---

---

---

2. The World Economic Forum *Global Gender Gap Report* ranks countries for women based on:

- Economic participation and opportunity.
- Educational attainment.
- Health and survival.
- Political empowerment.

Where does your country rank? If it’s not in the top, how have you discovered ways to succeed in spite of, or perhaps because of factors that may not be favorable to women? Where do you have great hope for more equality, and how can you influence it as a leader?

---

---

---

---



## Hidden by Gender Guide

3. Ask a woman who is a generation ahead of you about the changes she's experienced in women's rights. Ask someone who is two or even three generations ahead of you. What has she noticed? Sometimes we inherit rights that we take for granted, for example, the right to vote (if we have it) or the right to get credit (if we have it) in our own name. The right to vote in my country is only a few years older than my mother who is in her 90s. Have you seen things taking place now that mean more equality for girls and women?

---

---

---

---

4. Why is WEConnect International's work getting women businesses into global supply chains so important to women businesses, corporations, and the global economy? When you hear the phrase "Women as an emerging market" what do you think that means? Do you feel excited about this? Can you see how you are part of it and can help others emerge?

---

---

---

---



## Hidden by Gender Guide

### Blind Spots and Double Standards that Hide Women

5. People, whether male or female, and groups that have power can be blind to what it is like for those who don't. As you think about what you see around you, does this ring true? If you are in a position of power or influence, what are you doing, or can you do to include or advocate on behalf of those who aren't?

---

---

---

---

6. Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook's COO, said that "Women are perceived as too soft or too tough, but never just right, and as competent or likeable, but rarely both." When women are leading in the corporate space, they often face this classic dilemma. When they are the founder and CEO of their own company, they have more freedom. If you've encountered this dilemma, how did you learn to navigate it successfully while being true to your own values and style? Who did you turn to—male or female—for guidance? What would you advise those you mentor, or those new in the workforce to do?

---

---

---

---

7. In the corporate space, powerful women can have blind spots and behaviors that get in the way. If organizational gender bias is present, these behaviors can become career limiting. Here are four to be alert to:

- When you are an expert and the smartest one in the room. Intellectual intelligence does not equal leadership intelligence.
- When you don't recognize the impact of your positional power (your role) and communication style (usually direct and certain).



## Hidden by Gender Guide

- When you haven't found your own leadership style and are emulating someone else's—male or female.
- When you are under major stress outside work.

Do any of these sound like they may be true for you? For the first three, what trusted advisor or truth-teller can you have a candid, confidential conversation with and ask for his or her objective feedback? For the fourth, have you acknowledged how much stress you are under? Where can you get support? One thing I've seen in my clients and in my own life is that what happens outside work directly impacts work, and what happens at work directly impacts our lives outside it.

---

---

---

---

8. When I was a child, I got the message from my mother that my entrepreneurial venture selling flowers from my red Radio Flyer wagon wasn't ladylike. This message was underscored by the regional cultural norms at the time. Fast forward to starting my business. I had problems marketing and selling. When I could see my family's and my culture's influence, I could challenge the message I'd received. Marketing and selling became easier. What messages did you get in childhood and young adulthood about being a leader, promoting yourself, or selling?

---

---

---

---



## Hidden by Gender Guide

### When Men Are Hidden

9. Men have been called “the disposable sex” by Warren Farrell in the 1990s. They are the ones we send out to the field and to war. They frequently experience depression that they are acculturated to not talk about because it is perceived as a weakness. Gender can hide men too. How is gender hiding men in your organization or business?

---

---

---

---

### Including Men Increases Women’s Equality

10. There are men who don’t recognize the inequalities between men and women, and others who want to preserve that inequality. Even when those mindsets directly impact you or others, how can you, male or female, be a gender diplomat—someone who educates and informs, someone who demonstrates respect for men by including them in the solution?

---

---

---

---



# Hidden by Gender Guide

## PART 2

### When Gender is a Red Herring That Hides Women

1. When I first began my research for this book, I wanted to discover where broad brush terms like “gender” and “gender equality” were red herrings (something that can be misleading) that prevent us from fully seeing women and men. For example, did you think that a masculine society would be less favorable to women? Were you surprised that the results from analyzing Hofstede’s cultural model with the data from the World Economic Forum *Gender Global Gap Report* revealed that whether a society is “masculine” or “feminine” makes little difference?

---

---

---

---

2. Can you see where we’ve conflated “male=masculine” and “female=feminine?” Imagine how we can overlook men who are modest and caring—traits typically associated with female/feminine. There are many. Or, how we can overlook women who are assertive—a trait typically associated with male/masculine. How would it change our societies’ conversations if we stopped using the words “masculine” or “feminine” to describe character traits of men and of women?

---

---

---

---



## Hidden by Gender Guide

### An Alternate Universe Where Women Dominate and Men Don't Have Equal Rights

3. In the ground breaking research of Uri Gneezy and John List, we learn women are as competitive as men given the right culture. In most of the world, however, men are the dominant competitors. We also know from their research that once women know the rules of the game, they'll play. If it's a matter of learning to compete, what new ideas come to mind for leading in the marketplace or the corporate space?

---

---

---

---

4. Women often don't have as much practice competing as men. They get the message that they have a deficit when their behavior differs from cultural norms for men and women, and they are confident differently. If these ring true for you, what do you do that allows you to succeed? How would you advise those you mentor?

---

---

---

---



## Hidden by Gender Guide

### A Practical Mindset: Engaging in the Trade Game

5. If women can take on the practical mindset of the trade game—engaging in a series of transactions—whether they are in the corporate space or the marketplace, they will understand it is about practice and being in the game. The more you practice, the more you play, the more you trust others and yourself. If you take on the mindset of the trade game, where would business get even easier for you? Where would you dare because it is a game (even when the stakes have an important social or business impact)? If you are already daring big, who can you share this mindset with to help them be at their leadership best?

---

---

---

---



## Hidden by Gender Guide

### PART 3

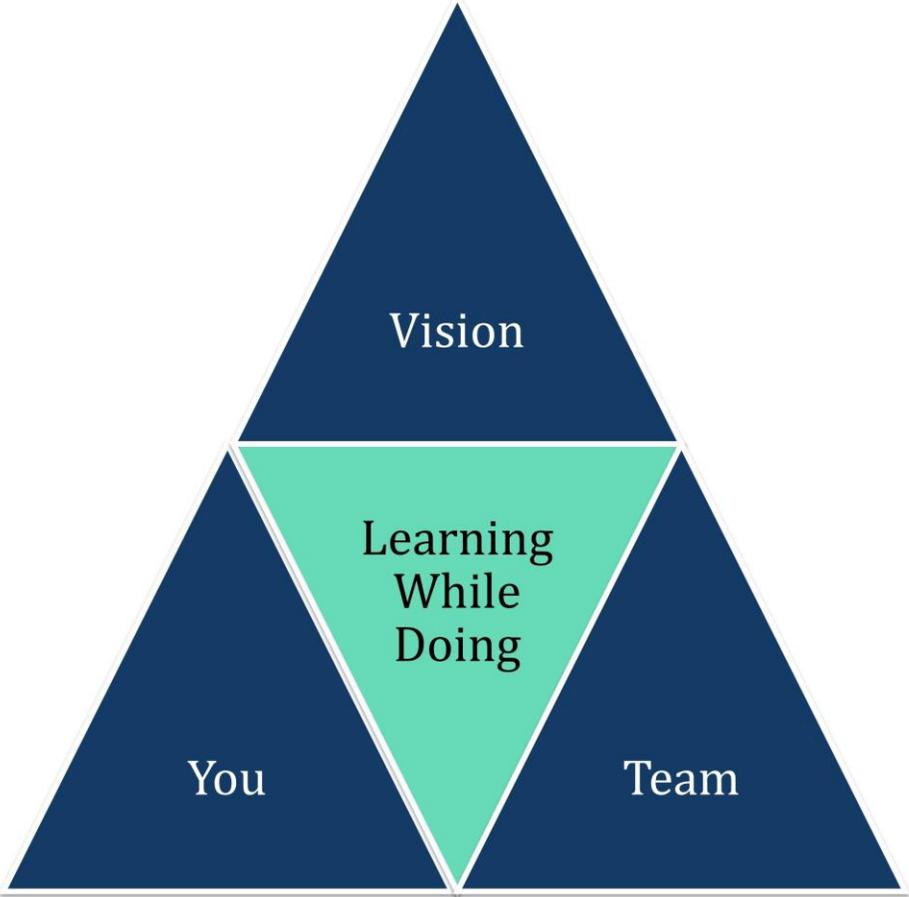
#### How to SHINE in the Corporate Space and the Marketplace

This simple Leadership Hand® ~~Systems View Development Model~~ offers us the big picture with a systems view of the **Vision** at the top, **You**, the **Team** and **Learning While Doing** in the center. When we look at it, we see a system and its interrelating parts. You could add a circle around it to include customers, clients, strategic partners, suppliers, etc. You could add an even larger one to represent the national or global marketplace.

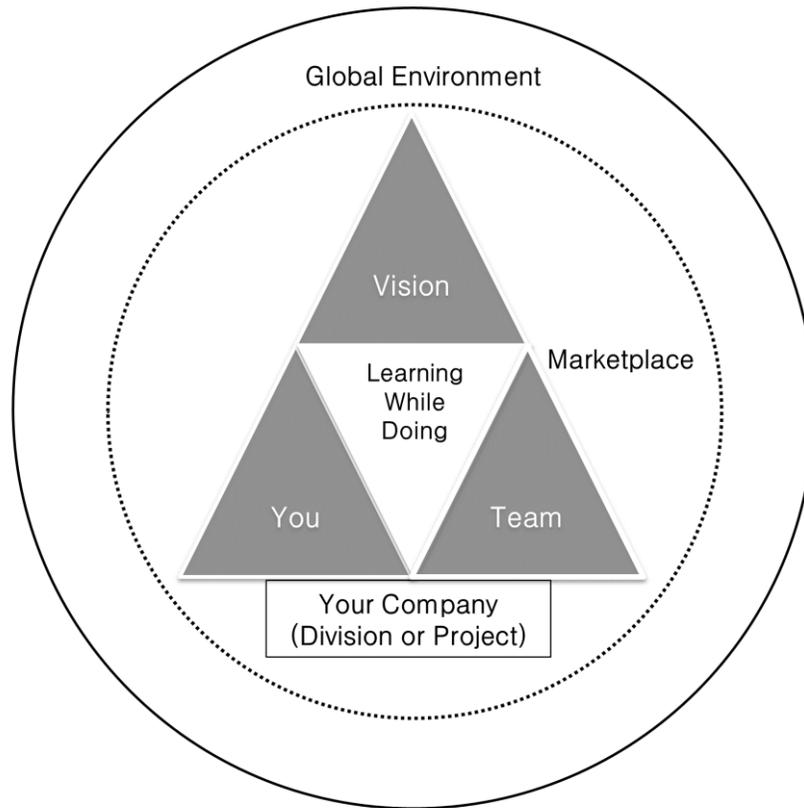
For now, let's keep it simple with the triangle. We're going to focus on *You*.

#### **Leadership Hand®** **Systems ViewDevelopment Model**





## Hidden by Gender Guide



<b>SHINE Self-Assessment</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
1. Do you have a <b>big compelling vision</b> for your business or company? Have you engaged your team in creating or enhancing it to create a truly shared vision? If you are in an organization, do you have one for your area of responsibility, whether that's for the company, a region, a division or program area?	
2. Do you have a <b>one-page strategic framework</b> to help you focus on what's most important for the year and minimize distractions? Have you shared it with your team or created one with them?	



## Hidden by Gender Guide

3. Are you a <b>relentless noticer who regularly investigates, explores and innovates</b> —someone who has learned how to learn? This is how you observe your own patterns, reflect on them, and leverage them or tweak them.	
4. Are you and your team cultivating the skill of learning how to learn? It means building in opportunities to reflect, capturing what you are doing right and well as a team, and making tweaks to improve your performance and results?	
5. Are you noticing <b>your unique bold brilliance</b> and sharing it with a trusted advisor, mentor or friend? Who are you offering the gift of your private victories to, the ones you've been too busy to notice because there's so much more work to do or too modest to share because you always give credit to others?	
6. Are you <b>noticing others' bold brilliance</b> —those you lead or collaborate with—and shining a light on them?	
7. Are you intentional about daring, creating opportunities to fail, and <b>embracing failure as feedback</b> --what Dr. Robert Epstein calls "controlled failure" versus risking it all?	



## Hidden by Gender Guide

### SHINE

**S**ee your big compelling vision on the horizon.

**H**ave a strategic framework to help you stay mentally focused and minimize distractions.

**I**nvestigate, Explore, Innovate—learn how to learn.

**N**otice your bold brilliance, and help others notice theirs.

**E**mbrace failure and feedback. These mean you are in the game, not on the sideline.

#### S: See your big compelling vision on the horizon.

What is it you want to accomplish in your lifetime in the best of all worlds? What difference are you making for your family, your employees, your customers, an underserved population or the world? From this, describe the big compelling vision (BCV) you see on the horizon in **three to five years**. Why only three to five years when it can take ten, twenty or more? Three to five years makes it more concrete and within reach. The vision, and seeing the big picture is so important I devoted the first book in the *Hidden Stakeholders, Hidden Solutions* series—[\*Hidden in Plain Sight! Rapidly Discovering Solutions for Your Business & Leadership Issues\*](#) to it.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

#### The Path to the Lotus Temple: Compelling Commitment

What are you choosing to commit that is both about you and serving others—your organization, the communities your company or business impacts, the world? What is so compelling that if you didn't work toward it, you would lose your orientation in the



## Hidden by Gender Guide

world or feel your life had gone unfulfilled? (This is an adaptation from an issue of *Written By Hand*, March, 2004.)



We were walking a pea-graveled path between immaculate green lawns—an unusual site in the dry dust of Delhi, India. The Lotus Temple with its beautiful dome of large lotus-like petals, the whole temple a lotus flower surrounded by shallow pools of water, was behind us. We turned down the narrow street lined with vendors' stalls selling food, replicas of Indian deities, and brilliantly colored powders like the red and gold that women use to mark their faces.

There was an unusual movement on the ground. A dark skinned Indian woman in a vibrantly green silk sari with gold border was on her side inching her way forward. A thin arm reached out to grasp a stone. She tossed it a few feet ahead, repeated the inching motion, grasped the stone and tossed again. People near her made way. Others passed by giving her just a glance. Some stopped to look. Among the dirt and the cow dung, she continued toward the temple under the arid heat of an Indian sun—her commitment total.

While we aren't necessarily on a religious pilgrimage, we are most certainly on a leadership pilgrimage—leading our business and leading our lives. To what are you choosing to commit? To what are you choosing to commit that is both about you and serving others—your organization, the communities your company or business impacts, the world? What is so compelling that if you didn't work toward it, you would lose your orientation in the world? If you don't know, take the time to find out. If you do know—periodically reassess every two or three years as you mature.

People don't mess around with those who are so committed. These people emanate an undaunted power and strength that is both theirs and not theirs, having tapped into something much greater. When commitment is to something larger than ourselves in the service of others and done with integrity, the key attributes of leadership arise—the ability to inspire, to draw people to you, and to influence.

Engage your team to create a big compelling vision, or to enhance an existing one. The vision is where deeply held values reside. It will pull you, your team and employees forward during the challenging times. When your vision is in service of something bigger than your company, it will unify and energize everyone while attracting talent and customers. A skilled facilitator, whether in-house or external, can be an excellent investment for creating a truly shared one.



## Hidden by Gender Guide

### What NASA Has That's Wildly Successful

NASA has a clear vision infused with and ignited by passion. It helps people transcend the difficulties that are part and parcel of any group of stakeholders working together toward an objective. (This is an adaptation of an issue of *Written By Hand*, January, 2014.)



The large red numbers on the countdown clock glare in the Florida night. It's an hour and a half until launch and seriously exciting to be here at NASA's Kennedy Space Center. I can feel the gentle salt breeze on my face, sitting on the bleachers with people whose passion is space. In the distance and across the water is Launch Complex 41.

Several miles away you can see the tall, white, magnificent rocket and the white plume of coolant blowing off it. Several prudent miles away. The invite included: "inadvertent circumstance, hazards including debris, blast, and toxics could occur."

This massive project is a technological miracle that NASA has accomplished yet again. But much more than that, it is a leadership and organizational feat. And that feat wasn't just within NASA. It was a feat that included myriad strategic and business partnerships and alliances—each with their own unique blend of strengths and challenges—all coming together.

Finally, amid the calm voices over the speakers there is lift-off. An initial explosion off in the distance. A bigger explosion, and then a bright fireball propels the rocket and its payload into the night sky—an utterly spectacular sight. We watch it rise. There is a delay as the sound travels the miles from the launch pad across the water, then a deafening thunderous rumbling washes through and over us.

What NASA has that's wildly successful when the leadership and organizational part is in place is a clear vision infused with and ignited by passion. The combination is like a satellite in geosynchronous orbit—so high it has a view of the entire earth 24/7. It helps people transcend the difficulties that are part and parcel of any group of stakeholders working together toward an objective.

In contrast, have you ever been part of a company or team that isn't in touch with a vision? There's a type of paralysis. The board and CEO are at odds, or the leadership team is a collection of people who aren't aligned. Good people just can't seem to pull together. Or you've got something worse than vertical silos between divisions; you've got horizontal organizational layers that are silos with poor information flows and where coordination is broken between them. In short, parts but no whole.



## Hidden by Gender Guide

### *A Clear, Compelling Vision Doesn't Solve Everything: It Lays A Framework*

Does NASA have issues every leader faces with his or her organization no matter their industry? Of course it does. Sometimes, astonishingly so. Issues that can be tragic. That make the front pages of world newspapers. There's no way to minimize mistakes of this scale, and they are made all that much worse because even seeming technological and engineering failures often come down to leadership and organizational ones.

When there is that combination of clear, compelling vision and passion, however, people align in service of something much greater. A clear vision doesn't solve everything, but it lays the framework for lift-off: for industry-, community-, or world-changing accomplishments. You'll still have hard work ahead: the leadership that makes this happen will be up to you and those you lead.

### **H: Have a strategic framework to help you stay mentally focused and minimize distractions.**

One of the biggest leadership challenges we all face is distraction. There are environmental distractions, like people stopping in your office, behavioral distractions, such as poor time management or decision-making skills, and strategic distractions that take us off-course, diluting our business impact. To minimize strategic distractions, complete a one page strategic framework as a team. Focus on what's most important—not just necessary, to bring the vision to life.



## Hidden by Gender Guide

<b>Strategic Framework Self-Assessment</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
1. Do you have a big compelling vision for your business or the company you lead or lead in? One that represents all your hopes, dreams and wishes for it coming true? Do you have a vision statement for the next one to three years? Yes/No	
2. Have you and your team talked about that vision, ensuring everyone's voice and opinions were heard? Did the vision change as a result? Yes/No	
3. Do you and your team excel at focusing on what's important? Yes/No	
4. Based on your vision, have you stated what the overall focus is for the year ahead? Yes/No	
5. Do you know the strategic mindset you personally need to bring your vision to life? If you are working with your team, what mindset do team members agree they need to bring the vision to life?	
6. Have you identified the one or two behaviors you personally need to engage in? If you are leading a team, what one or two behaviors must each member engage in?	
7. Have you identified three important objectives that if you accomplished them would powerfully accelerate your progress to your vision?	
8. Based on these three objectives, have you identified the quarterly projects for accomplishing them?	
9. Do you have a month-by-month break down for the quarterly projects?	
10. Have you scheduled time on your calendar (or your team's) to periodically assess and reassess your progress or what's changed?	
11. When you reassess, or there is a change like a new opportunity or perhaps changed circumstances, do you revisit your assumptions? Remember that a business that's too agile can make it fragile.	



## Hidden by Gender Guide

### Strategically Focused or Distracted: What Do You and a Firefly Have In Common?

This is an adaptation of an issue of *Written By Hand*, July, 2013.

What do you and a firefly have in common? Well, I doubt it's a bioluminescent abdomen, though that could be rather interesting in business meetings. It's that you can get deceived and distracted by false signals. For a firefly, it could be a matter of life and death. For you, it's a little less gory but still no way to waste your precious life.

You see, different species of fireflies have different blinking patterns to help identify other members of their species and for mating. And some nefarious female characters in the lightning bug world mimic other species signaling "come hither" only to summarily dispatch the male in a carnivorous (versus carnal) act.

So what does this have to do with you leading your business and leading your life? Think about it. How many blinking lights arise in the course of your day or week? How many of those are "false signals" mimicking something that seems important but isn't? Take a look at your calendar. Scan the prior week item by item. How many meetings or tasks were strategic—in thinking or in actions? How many were maintenance or just managing?

Here's how to keep from being duped. Create a clear, vibrant, and compelling business vision. One that invites strategic thinking and acting the moment you consider it. There's no mimicry here. This is the real deal. Then have a litmus test for how you spend your time, such as "How does this action (meeting, phone call, travel, etc) relate to my strategy and core objectives?" Preview your week and review your week with that test, and watch what happens...

You are a precious light. That's the one you need and the world most needs you to be true to. With no distractions from what is most important.

### I: Investigate, Explore, Innovate—learn how to learn.

You must become a relentless noticer—investigate, explore, innovate, in order to learn how to learn. This is what George Sheehan, a doctor who wrote about running, called "an experiment of one." As you lead your business and your life, how do you engage with unexpected challenges or windfalls? How do you engage with the everyday aspects of your life?

This element is tightly integrated with the next guideline, noticing your **bold brilliance**.



## Hidden by Gender Guide

### A Client's Best Practices for Growing as Leader

At different points in a one-on-one Leadership Hand® coaching engagement, I ask my client to reflect on what he or she has learned about learning. Here is what one client recently came up with. They are his best practices for continuing to grow as a leader:

**1. Engaging in regular reflection.** I can reflect on my day ahead or at the end of it. I need to do so throughout the day as well. “Am I doing what’s most important?” “Am I down in the minutiae, or am I being strategic?”

**2. Being aware that I have different time horizons to work with.** These are like three concentric circles: the most immediate, like today, this week or this month at the center; near term, like the next quarter or year, the next ring out; and the long term, the outer ring.

**3. Having a sounding board.** I make better decisions on what to take action on when I do. When the coaching ends, I can be more intentional about reaching out to a few peers in other organizations and asking if they’d like to create an informal peer group.

**3. Delegating more to the Board, and those handling operations.** I’ll know when I should be delegating more if I’m too deep in minutiae, or am getting feedback from trusted advisors that I should be. I’ll know if at the end of the day I feel like I’m doing too much, for example, taking on responsibilities that belong to a different role.

**4. Taking a systems perspective.** When something isn’t working in one area, scanning the system—different groups like the Board, different employee groups, those we serve, to see what’s influencing it. For example, if I take on more responsibility for how the Board operates than I should, it impacts my bandwidth for running the business, listening and attending to employees.

### N: Notice your bold brilliance, and help others notice theirs.

Smart, competent women regularly overlook their unique bold brilliance. Sometimes we have an inkling, but we really just can’t see ourselves in all our glory. Our acculturation as females, and our ability to see the big picture where we excel at discerning others strengths all play a part. We can be hidden from ourselves. This is true for even the most accomplished leaders. Here are the patterns I see most frequently:

- You’re so good at what you do that you don’t think twice about it, much less notice it.
- You’re focused on where you are going. There’s so much more to be accomplished, you haven’t even paused to see what you just navigated brilliantly.



## Hidden by Gender Guide

- You are in the habit of giving credit to others.
- You haven't had a simple practice that lets you see, feel and hear your unique bold brilliance.

### **Bold & Brilliant Exercise**

1. **Think of at least three times when you were at your most bold and brilliant.** You get to decide what constitutes bold and brilliant. It has a wide, wide range. Jot down a few key words to describe each example.
2. **Choose one and write a short paragraph describing it.** What were you doing and with whom? What was the challenge, and what was the result? Describe how you it made you feel.
3. **Share it with someone else.** Ask the person to listen appreciatively but not to evaluate or give advice.
4. **Notice what it feels like in your body.** You should be feeling increased energy and confidence. Really notice—your backbone, breathing, posture and face.
5. **If there was a “tiny aha” of insight from what you noticed in your story, what was it?** Was it that you dared even when you were afraid? Was it that you helped improve people's lives?
6. **Take turns with your partner.** If you are doing this with someone else, you can each do steps one and two at the same time. After you've done those, each person takes a turn sharing his or her story.

Gather up your bold brilliances. Bring them with you as you move forward.

### **Creating a Neural Network for What's Right and Well**

In business and in our self-evaluations, we often tend to focus on what's wrong or broken. You can change that by building your network (your neural network) for what's right and well.

This is an adaptation of a *Written By Hand* issue, June, 2013.



Our collective focus is often on what's wrong and broken rather than what's right and well, and where we are at our best.



## Hidden by Gender Guide

Is it human nature or the nature of business? What I discovered is that it starts in our minds.

Our brain is being very economical. It dwells on what is most familiar—the state that currently exists—for which we have more neural connections. Just like a river basin comprised of an extensive network of creeks, rivers, and runs, we have the equivalent network for our current state of being. Combine that with our animal natures, where we naturally focus on perceived threats. The current state and the problem state can become indistinguishable.

It will take persistent practice to carve a new river basin of neural connections for what's right and well, for where we and others are at our best. You can do it by a continuing focus on examples of what's right and well—examples that reflect the best of you and others. Times where you and others experience (or evoke) positive, strong emotions are invaluable.

As you increase the capacity to build these connections, begin to develop that capacity by helping others cultivate it too. With practice, you and those you lead will increase your joy, energy and even resilience with the new neural network you've carved.

### **E: Embrace failure and feedback. Failure=learning.**

Sara Blakely, the founder of Spanx and first self-made female billionaire, said her father asked her each week about where she'd failed. He wanted her to embrace failure. It paid off. What incentives have you set up that reward experimentation, and thus failure for your team and employees? Failure is really just feedback. Even if you're derailed for a period of time, failure equals learning.



## Hidden by Gender Guide



### Perfect Failures: A Woman, a Dog and a Ford F-150 Pick-Up Truck

This article first appeared in *Written by Hand*, October, 2014.

Whenever we set out on journey to our vision, there will be breakdowns and failures—ones we create and ones that happen to us. Be present to whatever unfolds, work with it and embrace it, while keeping your eye on the destination.



En route to a mountain cabin on the Shenandoah River on a rural road, my car suddenly lost power.

For miles, there had been no shoulder, but a wide grassy one appeared as if summoned before I ever knew I needed it. I pulled off, coasting to a gentle stop. Where I had no cell signal for mile after mile, I now had one. I called Dave, who helped find a tow and repair service: “Steve’s” in some place called Vaughn. In an unbelievably short amount of time, a pristine tow truck about the size of a fire engine, and just as red, arrived. The gentle, soft-spoken man was Steve ... Steve Vaughn!

I sat at a picnic table with a gentle breeze blowing through the trees overhead. Birds sang. The dog snuffled in the grass. My car needed parts that could be delivered the next day. No rentals were available in nearby towns. I wondered how this was going to work out.



## Hidden by Gender Guide

“How do you feel about driving a pickup truck?” Steve asked. “I feel just fine about it!” I said.

He handed me the keys to a Ford F-150 pickup truck with some rust over the rear wheels. Inside, there was a blue rag on the floor smudged with grease and a pack of Marlboro cigarettes on the dash. Talk about a ride with character! The dog jumped up on the bench seat, sitting tall. I jumped up in the driver’s seat, sitting tall too.

I headed to the cabin where the cabin owners were so concerned about all my “troubles” they offered to let me stay Sunday night too at no charge. The next morning I woke to cool mountain air and the rushing sound of rapids. I sat drinking coffee and watching geese raft in the river. By my second cup, Steve had called. I headed back to Vaughn for my car.

I had the perfect breakdown. I was fully present to each moment with my destination in mind but without being insistent on how (or even when) I got there. I had expected one experience and received an even better one.

As I look at this quarter and my annual business goals, I’m aware of a choice: where I insist that the path I have in mind and what actually unfolds match, or the path of being present to whatever and however it unfolds, with my destination in mind. That’s the one where wide grassy shoulders suddenly appear, where unexpected, generous help arises as if divinely sent, where there are geese honking on a river flowing with life. For today, I remember I have a choice, and I make it.

How do you remember you too have a choice and which path do you choose?

Here’s to breakdowns... I hope yours are perfect.

### Finally and Most Importantly, Recognize That You Are a Masterpiece

I shared the inspiring leadership story of Elizabeth Vazquez, Co-founder and CEO of WEConnect International, to help women businesses globally be seen in the marketplace in the book. Many years ago, I asked her about the top three attributes of women entrepreneurs. They are:

- Passionate.
- Tenacious.
- Collaborative.

As you read in *Hidden by Gender*—when we see the hidden playing field, when we learn to engage in the game of trade, it isn’t really about confidence. Go forth! See the hidden playing field; see where



## Hidden by Gender Guide

“gender” is a red herring; take on the mindset of the trade game whether you are in the marketplace or the corporate space. Put SHINE to work for you. And know that, woman or man, **you are a masterpiece.**

### You Are a Leadership Masterpiece

This article first appeared in *Written by Hand*, January, 2012.



We stood in the clean lines and intimate space of the Phillips Collection, listening to a teacher talking to high school girls. The girls, dressed in their white shirts and black-and-white plaid skirt uniforms, stood in a semi-circle looking at one of Edward Degas’ famous works: *Dancers at the Barre*.

This particular composition of two dancers—he often repeated a figure or figures with variations—is painted in vibrant colors. “Degas worked and reworked his paintings. You can see the smudges here by the legs that indicate it,” the teacher said. She showed her class pictures of the painting taken with special equipment. These revealed that he had painted a single leg multiple times as he tried one position, then another. This theme of continual reworking permeated the exhibition.

**You, too, have created a masterpiece. Hundreds and thousands of decisions, honed by application and experience. Working and reworking to create today’s reality and point the way to your future. There is brilliance and artistry in how you lead your business and your life.**

If, while coaching you or consulting for your company, I tell you where I am observing your leadership mastery, I can predict your pause. It’s inevitable for all but the supremely confident or arrogant. For some, the pause is due to new information. For other it is humility. My observation will be followed by a “yes, but” or some minimizing comment. Like Degas, you see where you think the composition needs to be reworked, or you will attribute the brilliance to others’ work. Stop it. Stop it right now. For this, too, is something you have mastered, but it is an insidious art form—one that diminishes your exquisite artistic ability. It doesn’t serve your business, your employees, or you.

You can start with something simple, as one of my amazing colleagues did: For months this individual practiced saying “Thank you” to any affirmation or compliment another person made. That was followed by advanced training, which involved saying “Thank you, I think so too.”

Enjoy your masterpiece, your artistry now. Yes, even as you choose an aspect you’d like to repaint.



## Hidden by Gender Guide

### Thank You

This **guide** is to thank you for your interest in the **book** *Hidden by Gender*. I hope it has helped you take time to reflect on and answer the questions, and given you some additional perspectives to build on what you read. To really leverage either guide or book, work with someone, form a small group to work through it, and most important, put your insights into action. That will help you take the learning, adapt it, and really make it your own. Go shine your boldest and brightest as a leader, and help others to show up in theirs. The world needs you.



I adopted Sam from the Mid-Atlantic Samoyed Rescue almost six years ago. Dennis Belmont, the photographer, wanted to shoot on a friend's porch because of the wonderful natural light. While he was preparing his cameras and I was changing from business outfits to a casual one, Sam discovered my friend's dog's toy—a stuffed otter—and tore it to pieces. White stuffing was strewn across her living room. (I eventually found a stuffed toy otter to replace it.) He was so thrilled with that adventure and all the activity, he could barely sit still for this shot.



# Hidden by Gender Guide

## The Hidden Stakeholders, Hidden Solutions Series

You can visit Amazon for other books in the series. A core premise of the series is that when we fully see all stakeholders influencing or influenced by a challenge, we discover powerful solutions to our business and leadership challenges.

Most of the books are short—a chapter to several print book-length chapters. They are all enlivened by wonderful real-life examples of brilliant leaders whose work contributes to global good. I've used them to illustrate Leadership Hand® approaches to offer your world class solutions.

- [\*Hidden in Plain Sight! Rapidly Discovering Solutions for Your Business & Leadership Issues\*](#)
- [\*Hidden by Assumptions: Seeing People & Solutions for Your Important Business Issues\*](#)
- [\*Hidden by the C-Suite: How to Find Solutions for Your Business Challenges by Including People\*](#)
- [\*Hidden by Leadership Paradox: How to Navigate to Solutions in Between\*](#)
- [\*Hidden by Your Customer: How to See People, Profits and Solutions\*](#)
- [\*Hidden by Gender: What Women Need to Know About Gender Bias to Shine in the Corporate Space & the Marketplace\*](#)



## Hidden by Gender Guide

### About Leadership Hand LLC

#### We Help Mission Driven Leaders Achieve Strategic Results

Leadership Hand LLC helps leadership and cross-functional teams ~~serves leaders and teams in small, mid-size to~~ Fortune 500 companies, ~~mid-size and~~ international ~~development enterprises, and mission-driven~~ interests worldwide make mission-critical decisions that drive strategic results. We ~~offer executive coaching, team facilitation and Leadership Hand® educational products to help you and your team achieve strategic results.~~



[www.leadershiphand.com](http://www.leadershiphand.com)

+1 703.820.8018 USA Eastern Time

