WLE Webinar
From Good Daughter to Respected Peer: Changing Influence Across the Career Lifecycle

1) The webinar discussed "circles"—the various overlapping and nesting groups you belong to, which determine your ability to influence and advance. Try to identify as many of your circles as possible.
    a. Which ones are important to your day-to-day ability to do your job?
    b. Which ones are important for your future advancement?
    c. Which ones hold you back or cause you difficulty? Why?
    d. Which ones energize you or make you happier? Why?
    e. Are there any circles where you spend a lot of time and energy, but which *don't* offer a lot of return in terms of your current or future goals? Which ones? Why are you focusing on them so much?

2) In the webinar, we discussed how credits are built by conforming to the key elements of a group's identity, and showing competence in whatever matters to that group. Considering those circles listed in 1a and 1b above, what are you currently doing to build or maintain your credit balance? What do you need to do more of? What should you do less of?

3) Who in your environment could be a follower—or, even better, someone with whom you trade off "follower" and "leader" roles in different situations? Strategize with this person to plan ways to show deference to one another, each taking the leader role at different events.

4) What's an upcoming meeting (event, program, project) at which you need to be influential? How can you work with your relationships to plan out support and sharing the burden ahead of time?

5) Take some time to observe your own behavior and how you code-switch when interacting with people above and below you in the organization's hierarchy. What behaviors do you need to change? What are 2 or 3 specific changes you can make in the next month? Imagine a situation where you might implement each change. Whom will you be interacting with? What room (or other physical setting) will you be in? What will you say and do? How do you think the other person will react, and how will you then respond? Thinking through these kinds of tangible details makes it more likely that you can implement your planned changes successfully.

6) How can your organization's women's resource group or other diversity initiative(s) help executives to reframe the signals that they use to judge

promotion potential? What data could be gathered to underscore women's successes in the absence of self-promotion or overconfidence?

7) We recommended securing sponsorship from more senior members of your organization. If you currently have a mentor, what do you need to do to convert that person into a sponsor? If you have no mentor or sponsor, who could sponsor you, and how might you approach them? Consider how you'll show value to them in such a relationship.

8) If you don't have good opportunities to be sponsored in your organization, at what point will you consider looking outside the organization? What are the incidents or dynamics that might create a "red line" for you—if your needs aren't met you will look elsewhere?

9) What steps might your team, department, or organization take to incorporate relationship building (and other skills that are more likely to be typical of women) into formal assessment and promotion criteria? How might these skills become part of training? Keep in mind that, even when these skills aren't unique to women, training the organization to value relational skills and orientations may be helpful for de-emphasizing self-promotion and overconfidence as key talent indicators.

Summary – Individual Strategies

1. Find a sponsor or convert your mentor to a sponsor
2. Use allies to advocate for your value
3. Look outside the organization when necessary
4. Deploy peer strategies such as peer sponsorship, amplification, showing deference, and advertising your achievements
5. Educate your colleagues about what competence looks like
6. Take a fearless inventory of your circles and assess how you're doing at building credit with the ones you need
7. Don't neglect your upward circles!
8. Engineer ways to display your powerful self upward
9. Have conversations about middle-management code-switching to build awareness about it

Summary – Organizational Strategies

1. Base hiring and promotion decisions on job analyses
2. Recognize relationship-management skill in performance standards
3. Ensure that women have access to sponsorship (train mentors if necessary)
4. Be clear about the behaviors expected in upward and downward interactions
5. Don't be hypocritical: Don't say, for example, that middle managers should be appropriately deferential with superiors and then reward only men for violating this expectation.