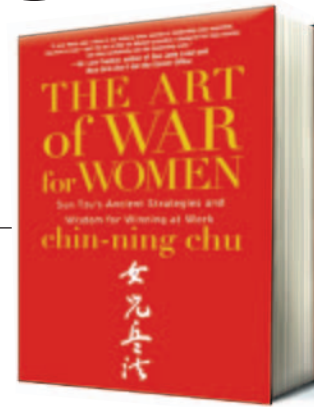


The Powerful Female

Ancient wisdom for today's women



As a relationship coach, author and radio show host, I have had my own challenges with diversity. While I welcome clients from all walks of life, I often wonder when it's appropriate and even preferred to speak to one small part of the population. When can we do this without fear of leaving people out? Without being politically incorrect?

These questions filled my head while I searched for a book with a diversity angle for this issue of *choice*. Surprisingly, what caught my attention was *The Art of War for Women* by Chin-Ning Chu. Now, I could fudge it and say the book fits the diversity theme because a woman wrote it or because it's based on ancient Chinese wisdom. However,

came to be passed down through the ages. She then skillfully weaves the original text with applications for present day circumstances.

I was hooked within the first few pages – and after reading the following in the preface, I found myself enraptured with the entire book:

“No matter what your goal is Master Sun’s advice is always designed to produce the best result with the least amount of conflict. This makes it particularly appropriate for women. As intelligent and accomplished as we may be, there are very few of us who are comfortable with either direct confrontation or situations where our triumph means someone else’s defeat. We are natural negotiators and problem solvers: most of us prefer win-win

tion of power (or lack thereof) as either ‘overly controlling’ or ‘too nice.’ She points to the reality that these labels refer only to behavior that is wimpy or dominating – not a true evaluation of females and female power in general.

Personally, my favorite chapter is “Real and Unreal: Illusion Is the Other Side of Reality.” What a fabulous lesson in how myths are created! The author outlines the “Myth of the Lone Fireman”: the perception that a woman wouldn’t be as good a firefighter as her male counterpart because she wouldn’t have the same strength to carry a person from a burning building. The truth behind the myth is that firefighters always work in groups. The drama of a lone fireman rescuing a victim from a towering inferno is an illusion created only for the silver screen.

The book covers a lot of ground for women in the workplace – from using our intuition as a central part of our strategies, to getting to the top in our careers while maintaining a balance in our lives.

Though I enjoyed reading the material from cover to cover, I agree with the author that it’s just as useful to dip in and out of the book. Either way, *The Art of War for Women* is an exceptional guide – a solid place to soak up practical ancient wisdom for the challenges women face today. ●

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“One way of honoring diversity is having the courage to speak to one slice without trying to please everyone.”

the truth is that the book popped off the shelf and with it came a divine answer to my questions: one way of valuing and honoring diversity is having the willingness and courage to speak to one slice without feeling guilty or trying to please everyone.

As you may imagine, *The Art of War for Women* is based on the long-standing military and business bible *The Art of War* written by Sun Tzu in 512 BC. Since then and through many translations, the original writings have been used by generals and CEOs alike as a strategic guide to fight the good fight – whether on the battlefield or in the boardroom.

Chu begins her contemporary guide for women with the intriguing history of *The Art of War* and how it

situations to winner takes all.

“You can’t separate what you do from who you are. This book will teach you how to use what you have to get what you want.”

Yes, women actually can be powerful, genuine and successful – and still be women. The author speaks to many issues specifically important to women today, such as childcare, the glass ceiling and sexual harassment. On each issue, using the foundation of Sun Tzu’s philosophy, Chu calls women to take leadership roles in their own lives. There is no room for victimhood.

In the section titled “Women Are from Venus ... Mars, the Moon, and Earth,” Chu addresses the tendency for people to assess women’s exer-