

From the Classroom to the Board Room: An Interview

Entrevue avec une femme en marche!



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SW If you were passing on some advice to young women about their careers what would you tell them?

BT To ask questions. Go to the people who are working in that field and find out what skills you need, what characteristics make for success, what opportunities are available. And then ask yourself the same questions. Do I have the skills? Am I willing to learn them? Am I basically the sort of person for this job and would I enjoy it? Would I take a chance and move into an adjacent field of work if the opportunity came? Will I take risks?

SW Before we began this interview you told me you started out to train as a nurse and left feeling very defeated. Can you talk about this?

BT Yes, I was asked to leave nursing because I 'wasn't suited' for such a career. It was the first time I'd felt a complete failure and it was hard to cope with. Now I realize that I wasn't the type of person who'd make a good nurse but at the time it was hard to accept. After that I spent the summer doing what I'd always done, recreation leadership, and someone suggested that I make it my job. I'd never considered making an avocation into a vocation, but it made sense. This time I really checked things out. I spoke to as many people as I could and looked at the jobs available and at my own likes and dislikes.

SW After you came into the Recreation Leadership training program you became the first woman student to be president of the Student Association. Why did you run for office and how did it feel to win?

BT I ran for the presidency because a man who was after the job told me a girl would never be accepted. I'd never considered my sex to be a handicap before, and it made me angry. So I worked very hard, much harder than the male competitors. I kept up my grades and campaigned for support. One of the reasons I was voted in, I think, was that I learned to speak out in pub-

lic. I was scared at first, but I persisted and it gets easier. It's a very important thing for young women to realize that they have to become vocal if they want to get things done. They have to learn to think on their feet and not to be put off because it's considered 'unfeminine' to speak out. Being a girl was no handicap in getting elected. I had many of the male students working on my campaign—they helped me a lot.

SW How did you come to serve on the Council of Regents? [the provincial governing body for the Community Colleges]

BT As a student president I represented my college in meetings with the Council of Regents. Very few students ever spoke or asked questions. I was articulate and outspoken, and I guess they remembered that. I was asked to serve on the Council the year I graduated and got my first job. Some people in my office found it hard to accept a young woman, new in the job, and a member of the Council. It's a thing that still rankles with some of them. But it's given me incredible opportunities for growth. I was terrified when I was first appointed and couldn't speak out at all. But one of the members took me aside and told me I'd been invited on the Council because I was articulate and I'd better prove my worth. The Council usually appoints a member for a three-year period but I was only appointed for one year—to be renegotiated. In all I served for four one-year terms, so I guess I managed OK. I feel I took quite a risk in accepting that position, especially starting to work the same year, but it paid off. Risks usually do, because you live up to your potential that way—you stretch yourself.

SW Now you are a member of the Board of Governors at Centennial College—what special contribution do you feel you can make to the needs of women students?

BT Well, as a previous student I'm particularly sympathetic to student needs and I know a lot about the College. It was much easier making this step than taking the Council job. One thing leads to another. I go into classrooms both in the colleges and in the high schools to talk to students about career choices. I feel the young women need role models; women who've made a choice and been successful even though they've been scared and had failures along the way. It isn't always easy but it is rewarding to reach a little and find you can move up if you work at it.

SW You told me you hadn't had much time to take stock of your life—you've been too busy until recently. Can you talk about that?

BT Yes, it isn't easy to keep a balance in your life, especially if you're a young woman on the move. You tend to pour all of your energy into your career. In fact, you have to. So this summer I made time to assess where I was going in my career and in my personal life. I decided I needed more time for me, time to plan, to decide where I want to be in five years, to keep growing as a person and time to have fun again. I also decided to go back to school and get some new skills. So I enrolled in an undergraduate program at Atkinson College, York University (night school), for a Bachelor of Administration degree. This is a new sort of challenge for me and I'm enjoying it.

SW One last question, Betsy, if you could pinpoint a time in your career that was a real turning-point, what would you choose?

BT That's hard....I think there were two vital times in my life as a student. The first was being turned down on my nursing career. That taught me it was OK to make mistakes. It forced me to assess myself and my future

very carefully and realistically. The other was deciding to go for president of the Student Association. Being scared and yet pushing myself. I learned a lot in a short time and I found strengths I never knew I had. And they've really helped me in everything I've done since then.

Coming into the Workforce? Some Women's Issues for High-School Students

Lorraine Prefontaine

Clay Van Dyck

Ailsa M. Watkinson



John F. Phillips

Ce qui suit est un questionnaire qui évalue la conscience d'un/e étudiant/e par rapport aux pratiques discriminatoires sur le marché du travail.

In the past decade women's issues have been continually in the news. Scarcely a day goes by without the media's referring to equal-pay laws, family and marital law, and protective legislation designed to give women a better deal in the labour marketplace. Royal Commissions have inquired into the status of women and provinces have established women's advisory councils. The public and private sectors are examining administrative initiatives in affirmative action.

Schools, too, are responding to women's issues. Stereotypic materials presenting women in a negative fashion are being examined and altered. School boards and teachers' organizations are much more aware of women's concerns in employment practices.

However, in spite of activity in the area of sex discrimination many students cannot recognize discriminatory practices. Perhaps the pervasiveness of these practices is such that students frequently do not see that problems of differential treatment may be a result of an individual's sex.

A Rights Awareness Test (RAT) has been devised which measures students' knowledge and attitude toward discriminatory practices based on sex. The cases posed in the RAT are ones that are frequently encountered by provincial Human Rights Commissions. A sample RAT is presented below.

1. A security and protection company needs new recruits. The job involves patrolling a shopping centre. It advertises in the newspaper for help. The advertisement, in part, reads:

'Recruits wanted. Applicants must be eighteen years or older. Minimum height 5'8". Weight 175 lbs.'

- (a) Is there a law which prohibits the above advertisement?

YES DON'T KNOW NO

- (b) If there is not such a law, should there be one?

YES UNDECIDED NO