

# The Influentials:

## Are You One of Them?

By Maddy Dychtwald

*Co-founder of Age Wave, public speaker and author of INFLUENCE:*

*How Women's Soaring Economic Power will Transform Our World for the Better*



As breathtaking as the technological and political breakthroughs over the past several decades have been, the increased employment of women—women just like you (or your wife, daughter, sister)—has contributed more to the growth of the global economy than either China or India or even the growth of global technology. That's big! And baby boomer women have been at the forefront of this change.

Think about it: a mere century ago, the world was a very different place. Cars were scarce, television hadn't yet been invented and apples were just a tasty fruit. More importantly, women couldn't vote, couldn't own property, and couldn't even open a bank account in their own name.

Education was available primarily to a very small group of wealthy women, and a woman's

path to personal success was often extremely limited. During the past century, women have gained these rights (often with the help of men) transforming their role in the family, the community, the workplace, the marketplace and the world at-large.

**Baby boomer women were the first generation of women in large numbers to pursue higher education which translated directly into them entering the workforce, thriving in their careers and taking on positions of power outside of the home. They have pioneered the changing role of**

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*Women have pioneered the changing role of women in our country and the world while providing a new role model for generations of younger women.*

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**Last year, 72 percent of all high school valedictorians were women. And, incredibly, 68 percent of all college graduates were women. For the first time in history, women now make up more than half of the workforce. While men's earning power has remained flat over the last several decades, women's has grown**

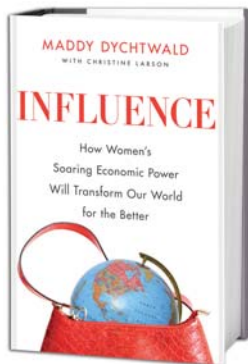
exponentially. Boomer women have pioneered this trend, providing women with the tools to be financially independent and then role-modeling the best ways to influence their families, communities, the workplace, the marketplace and the world at-large.

**Look at the marketplace: Today's** women are taking their earning power and unleashing it far beyond the traditional domestic purchases made by their moms.

Women now represent a whopping 83 percent of all consumer purchases, including 90 percent of all food purchases, 80 percent of all healthcare spending, 93 percent of all over-the-counter pharmaceuticals, 92 percent of all vacation dollars, 55 percent of all consumer electronics, 53 percent of all stock-market investments, and 62 percent of all new car purchases. They've become the primary market for just about everything.

**When I interviewed over 100** women for my new book, I had the rare opportunity to speak to incredible people who have pioneered the ascent of women wielding influence. For instance, Dr. Cathy DeAngelis, who is the first female editor-in-chief of the Journal of the American Medical Association, is now positioned as one of the most influential voices in the world of medicine.

Nobel Laureate, Jody Williams, is one of only 12 women ever to win the Nobel Peace Prize. She didn't stop there. She increased her influence even further by banding together with all the other living women Nobel Peace Prize winners to create the Nobel Women's Initiative, dedicated to promoting the role of women to make a more peaceful world.



And Indra Nooyi, CEO of Pepsico, the fourth largest global brand, who changed that company's mission to "performance with purpose." It isn't just well-known women, either. It's women like you and me. For example: in the U.S., women start their own businesses at twice the rate of the national average, keeping the spirit of entrepreneurialism alive, creating new jobs and helping to lead our country out of the recession.

No matter how old you are or where you live, you might want to try wielding your own personal influence to change things. Maybe it's mentoring a girl through Big Sisters or the Girl Scouts, or encouraging your daughter or granddaughter to pursue a career in technology or science, or even running for office in your local community.

It has been said that when you invest in a man, you invest in a

person while if you invest in a woman, you invest in a family. In fact, in developing countries, when women earn income, they reinvest 90 percent in their family and community while men only reinvest 30 to 70 percent. Just imagine what could happen if you and everyone—women and men—used their influence to make your community and even the world a better place?

*Maddy Dychtwald is a nationally recognized author, public speaker, marketing executive and entrepreneur. She has spent nearly 25 years deeply involved in exploring and forecasting demographic, lifestyle and consumer marketing trends. With her husband, Ken, she co-founded Age Wave, the nation's foremost thought-leader on population aging and its profound business, lifestyle and cultural implications. Maddy lives in the San Francisco Bay Area with her husband Ken and her two children. She can be reached at [agewave.com](http://agewave.com).*

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