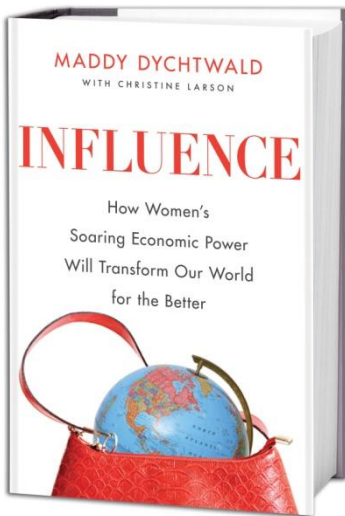


BusinessWeek

Book Excerpt: Women's Economic Power *In Influence: How Women's Soaring Economic Power Will Transform Our World for the Better*, Maddy Dychtwald asserts that women have only just begun to achieve

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By Maddy Dychtwald



An allegation I sometimes encountered while writing this book was that women "play small," that women focus most on their own families and children, that they don't dream big enough. But the determination of the Nobel Women's Initiative to bring a transformative democratic vision to every corner of the world is a ringing refutation of that allegation.

The more than one hundred interviews with women that I conducted for this book are a rebuttal to that allegation as well. When women are treated fairly, when they don't bear the burden of poverty and they're blessed with education, when they're not saddled with the impossible job of working full-time while doing almost all of the parenting and homemaking themselves, and when their safety and even lives are not threatened when they speak politically—when those simple

requirements are met, what happens next is so enormous, it looks like a miracle.

Meeting the basic requirements of survival and independence is still a significant challenge for most of the women in the world (57 percent of the world's population lives on less than \$2.50 a day; most poor people are women and children). Globally, "women perform 66 percent of the world's work, produce 50 percent of the food, but earn 10 percent of the income and own 1 percent of the property," according to a 2007 report by UNICEF.

But in the stories of Catherine DeAngelis, of Victoria Hale, of Priya Haji, of Jacqueline Novogratz, and of the Nobel Prize-winning women, we can find hope. And in the stories of countless other women, in this book and outside of it, we can see that when laws, community practices, and workplace policies give women even a small opening, lightening their loads even a little bit, women can change the world in ways no one dreamed possible. Yes, some women reach economic

confidence and stop there, simply enjoying the benefits of material wealth and security. But a growing number of women are climbing to influence and exercising that influence to create a lasting legacy by transforming their positive personal vision into action in the world.

As I write, the world is at the very beginning of women's shift to true influence. But already, we see that this shift can take many forms. Influence is Kawtar Chyraa coaching high school girls on their college entrance essays while finishing her internship at Toyota of Morocco and applying to business schools overseas. It's Ann Lininger running for city council. It's Cathy Benko designing a whole new career model for women and men at Deloitte. It's Jody Williams bringing about a signed international treaty to ban land mines, then bringing women around the world together to think even bigger about peace.

Women's economic influence is happening at every level of society, in every sphere, starting as a tiny ripple, spreading out ring by ring into waves, surges, tsunamis of new vision sweeping over our world. As I write and as you read, women are just beginning to unleash their economic influence, and the smartest workplaces, legislatures, and families see that they have no choice but to follow: It's the bright thing to do.

Visionary companies, lawmakers, husbands, fathers, and sons are already joining with influential women to make staggering changes. Imagine what will happen just a few years from now, as economic imperatives weed out the underperforming companies that fail to move women to management, as financial realities penalize countries that squelch the talents and resources of half their population.

Imagine what could happen if women didn't have to work the second shift.

Imagine what could happen if women were even a third of the voices in national assemblies.

Imagine if women in the global north looked to their sisters in the southern hemisphere and lent them a hand, choosing to buy products that lift the poorest women and their children from poverty, moving them closer to the day when they, too, can seize their own economic influence.

And to imagine that?

Think big.

Excerpt is from *INFLUENCE: How Women's Soaring Economic Power Will Transform Our World for the Better*. Copyright © 2010 Maddy Dychtwald. Published by Hyperion. All Rights Reserved. Available wherever books are sold.

Maddy Dychtwald is the author (with Christine Larson) of *Influence: How Women's Soaring Economic Power Will Transform Our World for the Better*. She co-founded Age Wave, a San Francisco-based think tank and consulting firm specializing in the maturing marketplace and workforce.