

WiP THEME: *Stereotypes/Myths*

Here are some ideas for exploring stereotypes around leadership with your Women inPower chapter:

1. Host a discussion. Some sample questions you can ask your group:

- What are the stereotypes of women leaders?
- When are those particular qualities (described in the stereotypes) an asset or a weakness? What role do those qualities play in leadership?
- In what circumstances do these stereotypes serve women as leaders, and when do they hinder us?
- Let's think about the "double bind" for women: Women are viewed as either liked OR competent, but rarely both. Kind and nice are considered likable in a woman, and tough and decisive are considered shrill or abrasive in a woman. This double standard sometimes comes out when the same quality is described differently based on the gender of the leader: "He's assertive, she's aggressive" ("She's a shameless self-promoter, he knows his worth, he is a go-getter").
- Have you ever experienced this double bind in your own experience? What did you do about it? What was the result?
- How can women become leaders in the face of these double bind perceptions? Is there a way around them or through them?
- What specific steps could you take to advance your own career towards leadership? What could we do as individuals and as a group to move society beyond this double bind trap?

2. Work through an activity together.

- Break into pairs. Tell each other about a stereotype that someone might have of you.
- Describe how you fit that stereotype and also how you do not.
- Come back to the group, and each person tells a two-minute summary of their partner's stereotype and conforming to and denying that type.
- Discuss themes and take aways from the exercise.

3. Invite a speaker to talk about his/her experience. Some ideas for people you can ask:

- A female who works in a stereotypically "male" field.
- Ask your chapter for ideas. Pool your connections and identify someone you may already know.

How did it go? Did you find something worked particularly well or not so well? Did you follow the script or make up your own? What did your group learn? Share your experiences in the Women inPower Facebook group so we can all learn from each other.