

Submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence

ANONIMITY REQUESTED

Submitted by [REDACTED]

I am a [REDACTED] of over [REDACTED] years' standing. I now hold a position as an [REDACTED]

Some [REDACTED] years ago, I was married for a period of [REDACTED] years. This marriage ended in divorce after my former husband became uncharacteristically violent. In two incidents I vividly remember, he threw me onto the floor; and he caused a folding bathroom door to collapse onto me, in both cases while in a fit of rage. The abuse commenced subtly, with criticisms of me mounting and control over me gradually whittling me away.

My former husband is now a [REDACTED]

I have never been able to trust my judgment since then, and have never re-married.

I am writing to the Commission because I strongly believe that a crucial aspect of family violence is being overlooked.

I had counselling after my marriage fell apart. I learnt that it is not unusual for people whose primary role models – one's parents – are in traditional roles, with the father working and the mother predominantly working in the home, to find it very difficult to accept and reconcile any form of role reversal.

It is my view that as women become more accomplished, secure more senior roles in a vast array of fields, and gradually earn more pay – a trend we are thankfully seeing across the country (and the world), quite a considerable number of men, in particular, innately struggle with their perceived or sub-conscious loss of power, respect, masculinity.

It makes sense that family violence is increasing significantly at this time. This is the first time in history that women have broken free of the roles that their mothers traditionally fulfilled, and we are now at a point when many of these women (born in the 50s and 60s) are now reaching the upper echelons of commerce, industry, politics, etc.

Many women feel empowered to speak out assertively and forcefully about their views. They feel confident to be in charge.

Sheryl Sandberg's book "Lean In"¹ encourages us to step forward and take on challenges that we don't feel confident to tackle. It also profoundly notes, through research, that women who are confident, successful, assertive and "in charge" are rarely liked as much as males who display similar characteristics².

It is my contention and experience that as women become more successful, the chances are, we are going to annoy and irritate men, and we are going to get physically hurt because of it.

I have no suggestions about how to fix this issue, but I believe strongly that targeting this issue will address the epidemic of family violence in our community.

Otherwise, I can only hope that the following generations, who watched their strong mothers succeed in a wide range of roles and occupations, will not suffer family violence to the same degree.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

29 May 2015

¹ Sandberg, Sheryl – *Lean In*; WH Allen 2013

² *Lean In* (ibid) – Chapter 3, particularly pages 39- 42