



Emmy winner Helene Lerner offers career advice

“All too often, women hold themselves back,” said author and Emmy Award-winning producer Helene Lerner, who recently spoke at a JPMorgan Chase Women's History Month event hosted by the Women's Interactive Network. Sally Durdan, the group's senior co-sponsor and head of Consumer & Business Banking Strategy, moderated the chat, which centered on Lerner's new book, *In Her Power: Reclaiming Your Authentic Self*. Highlights follow.

Be collaborative, not commanding

Power doesn't get a great rap all the time—dictatorial power, command and control power, where you lead and everyone else follows. That's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about collaborative power and coming from a position of strength rather than holding back in fear. When we're fearful, we disconnect from our core values and we're not really ourselves.

Let go of negative beliefs

I don't care if you're entry level or a senior leader: we all have beliefs about ourselves that maybe we heard from a parent, teacher or supervisor, and we've internalized them. This can prevent you from stepping into your power.

Own your talents

Are you thinking big enough about yourself? Are there skills and talents you want to explore, but didn't because you didn't have time? Time is a big smokescreen for many of us, and there is fear behind it.

Get comfortable with being uncomfortable

We need to accept the discomfort of change. We relate stress to things that are going negatively. But when you have a new job or are learning something new, it's not going to feel comfortable. In those situations, it's natural to feel overwhelmed. But if you don't take risks, you don't grow.

Seek out honest feedback

Asking for help is not a weakness—it's a strength. If you're not getting honest feedback from a supervisor, you need to ask for it. And when you receive it, learn to listen. I've gotten very defensive when someone tells me something I don't want to hear. I've learned to take a deep breath and just listen.

Build a "power web"

Your power web is your own personal board of directors. This is a group of people who want to see you move to the next level. It can be anyone at any level. It might be intimidating to reach out to someone at a higher level. But remember, you might have something to offer them, as well.

Express yourself honestly

How do you speak up to let people know how you feel when it's important? How are you about setting clear boundaries—saying yes when you mean yes and no when you mean no? How do you represent your accomplishments? Do you shy away from telling people what you're proud of? If you're challenged by any of these, you're not in your full power.