

Women's Empowerment in Israel: Interview With Three Leading Israeli Women

Mar 7th 2011 at 2:21pm

Posted in Categories: Business | Featured

Tomorrow, March 8th is **International Women's Day**. The 2011 theme is *Equal access to education, training and science and technology: Pathway to decent work for women*. All week here at IsRealli, we will be giving you an inside look at women in Israel. Today, we asked three women who have devoted their lives to gender equality and women empowerment in the classroom and beyond to share their experiences.

9 tweets
102 shares
retweet Share



Shoshi Cohen

Ministry of Education

Manager of the Department of Science and Technology

Q: What is the main goal of your organization?

A: To advance the skills and knowledge of students in various fields of science, to encourage them to become productive members of society.

Q: Tell us a bit about yourself

A: Married to my husband Avichai. We have 3 kids – my daughter Einat and my two sons Guy and Eyal. We live in Modi'in. I love the city because it's so well planned, and centrally located between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. At the same time, it's still close to nature. I love the parks and the fact that we have a very good education system. My hobbies are sports, folk dancing, hiking in Israel and abroad, and cycling. Another hobby of mine is studying, which I have done my entire life. After graduating, I continued to take professional courses in a variety of fields such as nutrition and healthy living. I received my B.A. in biotechnology and my Master's in teaching science at Hebrew University. My thesis researched the gender gap of academic achievement in the sciences.

Q: Which Israeli from the past or the present inspires you most?

A: Golda Meir. She led our country through the Yom Kippur War in a highly complex and strategic situation. She kept her cool while others did not. In addition, I would like to point out two other women who have made great achievements and paved the way for other women. Professor Ada Yonat, Israeli Nobel Laureate for chemistry. The great honor she received has motivated Israelis students in general, especially girls in the fields of science and technology. And the third woman I would like to point out is Galia Maor. She is the CEO of Bank Leumi, Israel's second largest bank. She is a successful leading manager in the field of finance which is usually dominated by men.

Q: When you think of your mother, where do you see similarities and what are the differences?

A: The similarities between me and my mom are that we've both had a choice in our lives to build our own destiny and shape our lives the way we want them. The difference is the lack of education – my mom immigrated to Israel at a young age and was forced to sustain her

Subscribe via Email!

Delivered by FeedBurner



Recent Stories

NBA stars to join Maccabi Tel Aviv

Atom Smash! Israel Becomes Associate Member of CERN

For Fashion Week, a Shalom and a Salaam

S&P Upgrades Israel's Credit Rating to A+

Israel Ranked 22nd in Global Competitiveness Report

Categories

Select Category



Top Liked Posts

After Her Death, Elizabeth Taylor's Connection With Israel Is Revealed

49 1

Gene Simmons of KISS Slams "Israel Boycotters"

30

Vote Kim Edry for Miss Universe 2011!

27 6

Jon Voight Pays Hospital Visit for Weekend's Terror Victims

23 4

Perez Hilton Kicks Off Week In Israel

21 11

Powered by WP Likes

are excelling at our fields or expertise.

Q: What are the two main things which you have found to have greatly influenced the status of women?

A: More and more women are entering Israeli politics and that is being exposed more in the media and no doubt effecting young women. Tzipi Livni and Shelly Yechimovitz are great examples. The second being the bigger presence of women in advanced studies in universities. Unfortunately though, there is still a pay gap for women regardless of their level of education.

Q: What are the main challenges that every woman who wants to be a successful manager is confronted with?

A: I think it is the same challenges that men are faced with. You need to open your eyes to the bigger picture. Personal and professional vision, ability to set targets, pursue their fulfillment, and plan ahead. Ability to motivate people around a big staff. Persistence despite all difficulties. But also in addition, women are facing other challenges, mostly due to the fact they have to attend their own families.

Q: What was the important event in your life that led you to choose your area of specialty?

A: I was born and raised in a family that came from a very low socio-economic background. There are 5 girls in my family with no boys and my parents set very high expectations for all of us. My parents were wise enough to realize that the key to success in life is education, and that was the main value they nurtured throughout our lives. My motivation is to enable women to experience the same success I have experienced, coming from humble beginnings to something great.

Q: What changes would you like to see for the status of women in the near future?

A: First, I would like to see greater representation of women in all fields of life. They should have a meaningful impact on politics, banking and economy, literature, arts. I'd also like to see many more female researchers in engineering, tech and sciences. Secondly, there should be harsher punishment for cases of spousal and sexual abuse. Finally, we should help society design ways for women to raise their children without hindering their opportunities in the job market.

Miriam Erez

Israel Institute of Technology

Professor and Head of International Committee for the Advancement of Women in Science and Technology

Q: What is the main goal of your organization?

A: The committee's main role is to support the advancement of women in science and technology both in the academic field and job market. To have many more women participating in the fields of science and to enhance their role in leading positions of decision makers.

Q: Tell us a bit about yourself

A: Married and mother of two. Both are young members of the academic staff at the Technion. My daughter is specializing in medical computing and my son is in electrical engineering. For my hobbies, I would have to say spending time at the Knowledge Center for Innovation at the Institute of Technology

Q: Which Israeli from the past or the present inspires you most?

A: Ada Yonai. Her achievements are amazing, especially considering all of the obstacles she had to overcome. In addition, Ofra Strauss, who has a major food conglomerate, which is constantly acquiring new international markets as well as the young women from our institute Professor Yonina Eldar from electrical engineering, as well as Professor Hagit Atiya, from our computer science department.

Q: When you think of your mother, where do you see similarities and what are the differences?

A: Our similarity is the great emphasis on education as well as placing a great importance on Zionism and Judaism, not to mention our bold personality. The difference would be my flexibility and adaptability.

Q: What are the two main things which you have found to have greatly influenced the status of women?

A: One is the Law for Equal Opportunities and Pay. Acknowledging women's rights after birth as well as free medical aid for fertility treatment.

Q: What are the main challenges that every woman who wants to be a successful manager is confronted with?

A: The biggest challenge would be getting recognition in her ability to make decisions and lead. Building supportive social network that enables easier to hidden knowledge in order to have a better understanding of the true situation.

Q: What was the important event in your life that led you to choose your area of specialty?

Design by ToposGraphics, Wordpress
Adaptation by The Israeli Consulate in New York

Copyright © 2009 - isR... - The New Blog of the State of Israel - is proudly powered by Wordpress and

A: I grew up in a society that always believes in equality of the sexes. To a certain degree, gave women a certain priority when it comes to the public sphere. I can't put my finger on a single event but rather point out the nurturing environment. A few years ago I was asked to serve in the role of the Institute's President's Advisor for the Status of Women. That role exposed me to data and statistics and many conversations and interviews with fellow female staff members helped me better comprehend the challenges that women in the field of science are experiencing.

Q: What changes would you like to see for the status of women in the near future?

A: I would like to see men and women split family chores more equally, especially when it comes to children and being involved in their education. I would like to see more flexibility for women's work hours and I would like to see a higher percentage of women in the high ranks of science and politics. Most importantly, I would like to see women happy and filled with a sense of success and managing to balance their professional aspiration with their personal needs.



Tziona Koenig

From Equal Opportunities in the Labor

Q: What is the main goal of your organization?

A: Make equality in the labor for every gender, age, religion, ethnic origin. If you did military service or not, pregnant or not. If you're on treatments for getting pregnant.

Q: Tell us a bit about yourself

A: Married, mother to three kids. I'm 40, feminist, I love to read. In the past, I was the CEO of a lobbyist organization for women in Israel.

Q: Which Israeli from the past or the present has most inspired you?

A: My mother

Q: When you think of your mother, where do you see similarities and what are the differences?

A: With me and mother, we both have a highly acute sense of justice. And, feminist values which shape our lives. The difference is that my mother chooses fulfillment via psychology, literature and I am via public life and commitment to law and order.

Q: What are the two main things which you have found to have greatly influenced the status of women?

A: The subject of gender has been raised in public discourse and highly publicized legal battles such as the trial of Israel's former president Moshe Katsav.

Q: What are the main challenges that every woman who wants to be a successful manager is confronted with?


A: The challenge is that you have to find your place in a male-dominated world without giving up the advantages of being a female leader.

Q: What was the important event in your life that led you to choose your area of specialty?

A: The house where I was raised and the time where I became a mother.

Q: What changes would you like to see for the status of women in the near future?

A: I would very much like to see the condition of women in the labor market improve, and society will embrace the advancement of women not because of a law but because of the understanding that it benefits everyone.

 2 people like this post.
Unlike