

**“Grabbing the Patriarchal Tiger by the Tail; is this the way to go?” An interview with psychiatrist and Corporate Executive coach, Dr Carlos A. Raimundo**

With the Women, Management and Employment Relations Conference coming up on the 24th and 25th July, PR/Media Liaison for the Pearl Beach-Patonga Chamber of Commerce, Rosemary Ruthven, took the opportunity to interview one of its presenters; psychiatrist, published author and Executive coach, Dr. Carlos A. Raimundo. His presentation is entitled, “Grabbing the Patriarchal Tiger by the Tail- Is this the way to go?”

RR: A catchy title – Why did you choose it?

Dr C: For me the “tiger” is a metaphor for anything you’re desperately trying to grasp, emulate or conquer. The thing is, when you do capture it, you run the risk of either becoming the tiger yourself; the very thing you wanted to defeat, or its prey. This is what I’m increasingly hearing from women executives in my coaching sessions. They broke through the “glass ceiling” a long time ago but feel they’ve lost themselves along the way. Now women are facing the “glass cliff”; a topic for another time.

RR: When you say they’ve “lost themselves”, are they referring to missed opportunities with spouses and children?

Dr C: No, this is something different; it’s broader than that. They’re talking about a loss of their own interpersonal style of relating with others; a feeling of being disengaged from themselves. Here are some direct quotes from women I interviewed on the subject recently.

“How can I embrace my essence as a woman and still succeed?”

“Why do women need to behave like men to succeed?”

“We live in fear of failure and fear of the inability to demand respect from co-workers.”

“I feel pressured to borrow male behaviour; to use it as a mask in order to succeed. I’ve lost myself. I don’t know who I am.”

“Women become like the men they don’t want to be”.

In other words, women in leadership positions want to maintain their own unique personality and management style without falling into the trap of “copying” familiar stereotypical behaviours, just to get the job done.

RR: Are women more likely to fall into the trap of “copying” stereotypical leadership styles; even those they don’t particularly admire?

Dr C: Emulating what we perceive to be “successful” behaviour is something humans do; male and female. We all have role models. The reality is that statistically there are fewer female role models; good and bad, simply because the corporate world has historically been “patriarchal”.

The reality is we need more women in leadership. I want to motivate women to continue to aim high without feeling pressured to adopt behaviours or pseudo-

roles that undermine their personal integrity. I want every woman to develop a management style that is based on a foundation uniquely hers in order to become successful.

RR: How do you define "success"?

Dr C: Success is the achievement of desired life objectives while maintaining a sense of personal well-being and peace. Some people call this "Shalom".

RR: How easy is it for women or people in general to lose sight of who they are and what they value?

Dr C: It is very easy for anyone. Social pressures, expectations and fears create internal constructs in the brain that detour us away from who we really are and how we want to relate. This starts very early on in life.

RR: How can we recognise when this is happening?

Dr C: A good parameter is to ask myself the following:

As I achieve my professional goals, how much energy is left for me to celebrate life?

How do I engage with others and how do they feel about me?

Do I find the management of my staff energising or draining?

Am I leading the members of my team to perform to the best of their potential without burnout?

Am I being true to my values?

Do I need to disengage myself in order to get something accomplished?

RR: Do you think disengagement is more of a women's issue than a man's?

Dr C: I wouldn't say that. I believe this is a human issue; both men and women around the globe are suffering this malaise but I believe women may find it more difficult. People sometimes misallocate energy to roles and behaviours that move them away from the life they truly want to live; especially at work.

RR: What advice will you be giving to women, specifically, at the Women, Management and Employment Relations Conference?

Dr C: More than advice. I want to give women strategies to help them stay true to themselves as they go about the business of managing and leading others. This is what I offer in my Three Session Coaching process. At the conference I will be demonstrating a technology I created 20 years ago called the Play of Life which gives an instantaneous visual picture of where people are presently, where they want to go and how they want to get there. I want to give each woman a moment to pause and reflect on where she is in relation to her life objectives. I want to encourage each woman not to emulate the patriarchal tiger but to be the lioness she is uniquely designed to be in the workplace.

RR: In other words, to be "Queen of her Jungle"?

Dr C: [laughing] Of course!

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