

Doing A **PhD** Being A
Woman!



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It's Your Academia Too!

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Introduction

It's no secret that women are not given the same opportunities in academia. And while some men genuinely support women doing PhDs, the system is still incredibly man-oriented.

That's something we must overcome to make sure that women get PhDs and achieve equality.

This book is all about how to do a PhD being a woman. How to overcome those obstacles in your way, and how to get the recognition you deserve for your efforts.

Emily knows what it's like to go through the PhD process as a woman, what it takes, how to overcome the inherent biases, get your PhD as a woman, and be respected. But let's address the elephant in the room. One of the authors, John, is a man. He's coming along for the ride in this book, and gives tips and information about overcoming these biases as well (he's eager to get more women involved because he recognizes how much they have to offer and that academia is missing out by marginalizing them).

Let's get back to the important issue here – being a woman doing a PhD.

The topics covered in this book include, how to deal with your fellow colleagues, many of whom are men, how to get respect, how to be taken seriously and not be immediately downgraded,

how to overcome the biases women face, how to deal with those situations that every woman dreads, and how to be comfortable in your own skin.

Let's start!

Academia As A Woman

It wasn't so long ago that, women in academia was a no-go. The sad thing is that, while more women are entering to do their PhDs, the "old school" way of thinking still permeates through the process.

It doesn't help that, the "old school" way of thinking is still underlying much of general society either.

What's it like being a woman doing a PhD?

Doing a PhD, in general, isn't a picnic – you've got so much to learn, a lot of work to do, often criticized by people you've never even met before (e.g. from journal reviewers), and sometimes long hours and poor supervision. That's for "a PhD student". (Emily and John have written some books about making these things easier, but that's not the point of this book – the point is about the challenges women face!)

Female PhD students not only have to deal with all of those challenges during their PhDs, but they also have to deal with the challenges such as not being treated as equals to their male counterparts, or being respected as much, or having their appearance factoring into the equation (male PhD students seem to be able to roll out of bed, run an eggbeater through their

hair, come to work, and no one even looks twice at them – the same can't be said of women).

So, the challenges that women face during their PhDs are unique. And they pile on top of the challenges already faced by male PhD students.

For example, I (Emily) remember often feeling out of place wearing something as simple as eyeliner – it's just eyeliner! I even remember getting a comment or two about it. So what? Just because I was a PhD student didn't mean that I couldn't wear it. And academia is full of things like this, some small and others big.

For example, I remember often being explained things that I already knew very well, sometimes

even better than the person explaining them to me!

But, you often feel like you have to sit there and listen because “making a mountain out of an anthill” is frowned upon, “you don’t want to make a scene” – I don’t remember the male students having to sit through the same thing, and if they piped up to let the person know that they already knew about the topic, then everyone accepted it. If I did it, it came across as “bitchy”, but I don’t want to use that word again because it’s demeaning, and we’re here to be equals!

Let’s cover these challenges and explain how to overcome them.

The “Fine Line Between Timid and Overbearing”

Following from the previous topic, one of the hardest things to strike right is the point between coming off as timid and coming off as bossy.

It seems so difficult to come across as a confident woman. It really can be. For example, if you're really enthusiastic and energetic, your male counterparts often think of you as bossy and pushy. But on the other hand, not being

enthusiastic about what you do comes across as being timid – and let's face it, we love what we do, why shouldn't we be enthusiastic about it?!

The problem that arises is that, the male academics blow it out of proportion, and it can make things more difficult – if they think that you're bossy, getting along with people becomes harder, or if you seem timid, then you open yourself up to being walked all over.

What's more, you want to be treated a certain way – with respect. If you don't pipe up when that's being infringed, then it can make people think that it's okay to give you less respect than you deserve.

That's the end of the sample.

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