

Will Sandberg's "Bossy" campaign diminish confidence of some girls? OK bullying by others?

I'm a great fan of Sheryl Sandberg and her inspirational book, *Lean In*. I'm glad she's embarked on a campaign to encourage girls to become leaders: girls are too often dissuaded from standing up for themselves and from saying what they think.

But I'm concerned about two facets of the campaign.

The campaign is heavily focused on expunging the term "bossy" from our vocabulary, suggesting that we call forceful girls "leaders," instead. But it's a mistake to equate being "bossy" (which [one dictionary](#) defines as "fond of giving people orders, domineering") with "leadership."

To me, a good leader brings out the best in others and encourages them to excel, in reaching common goals. Rather than call girls (or boys) who order others around "leaders," we should consider them candidates for leadership training.

Because some of them are bossy—([pushy, cocky, tyrannical, draconian, oppressive, dictatorial or anti-democratic](#)). And there's a fine line between "bossy" and "bully," regardless of gender.

What's more, there's a danger that too much focus on corporate leadership will diminish the confidence of girls who are not inclined to head companies, enter politics, or become "bigwigs" in highly visible ways. There are many ways and realms in which to lead—not just in business and government, but in sports, the arts; education, nonprofits, at all levels, in any job, community, school, or family. We should encourage girls to be authentic, to follow their own paths, and to

assume leadership in ways that will positively impact their own lives and worlds.

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