

## **What has inspired you to become active? What has been your experience of injustice?**

*I have been inspired personally by the lives and achievement of my female ancestors. I am also inspired by the varied career choices of my daughters and nieces. However, I am concerned about the largely unrealised potential I observe in many middle years female students due to lack of aspiration and adequate career guidance.*

*I personally have not felt constrained by my gender during many years of professional practice. In one weeklong selection camp for a leadership position, a male colleague noted that I did not seem to perceive the world from a clearly gendered perspective. I agreed, as I believe I tend to accept each individual person for who they are. I have also been fortunate, where I have had male supervisors, that they have all had strong feeling components in their personalities.*

Lecturer (1)

I have had a strong sense of social justice from a very young age. I was fortunate to have a natural love of learning and did well at school. I was also acutely aware of unfair/unjust treatment of others who struggled.

As an art teacher I related well with students who were considered 'behaviour problems'. This was a turning point because I realised that the students weren't the problem, it's the system.

Every position since then has been about trying to change the system.

Project Officer (1)

...Seeing girls with low aspirations in rural areas with no idea of what opportunities are available to them...

Curriculum coordinator - rural secondary school (1)

My lecturers were inspiring when I was an undergraduate student... they were working on a research project looking at the reasons why women don't enter into IT. They took me under their wings and I joined the project. They were/are very inspiring.

I did feel somewhat constrained as a minority studying IT at uni.

Ph. D. Student and volunteer for girls in ICT (1)

...Seeking management positions within my school and the system.

Principal (1)

Since I joined the teaching profession in 1960 I experienced many disadvantages as a woman, including:

- ◆ Starting at the bottom of the profession three times, through transferring interstate (following husband) and taking breaks for child rearing
- ◆ Limited access to superannuation until 1970s

Social Policy Committee Member - National Foundation for Australian Women (1)

*Core beliefs held for many years.*

*I have met fierce resistance when implementing non-standard ways of managing and leading schools - despite achieving goals and more.*

*Daily issue: hitting the wall is very tiring - it would be nice not to have to justify every opinion or method.*

Deputy Principal (1)

Listening to other inspirational stories from young people and motivating behaviour change.

Youth worker - urban secondary school (1)

i was inspired by the passion of  
the women who i first met at uni.

They had this incredible  
intelligence and confidence.

I study PE education at uni...  
certainly the sports arena  
restricts women.

Student (1)

- ◆ Sense of equality of rights for all
- ◆ Awareness of limits traditionally placed on women which have perpetuated economic dependence and limited choices
- ◆ Daughter of WW2 vet (TPI)
- ◆ Working class background
- ◆ Time as supporting mother
- ◆ Exposure to domestic violence as a young woman

Principal -Band 7 (1)

I am a sister of mercy. My entire life I have felt disadvantaged in my choice of vocation because there is no admitting of women to priesthood.

I worked as a gender equity consultant for 6 years and woke up to much more complex issues than this.

I have been Executive Officer 3 times when the Gender Equity policy for Catholic education SA has been reviewed - it is always a challenge to find people to sit on the review panel who are alert to the issues - this has broadened and deepened my desire to become active.

Chaplain (1)

*I first became inspired to work in this area after working in the environmental field for some years, both in Australia and overseas, and coming to a point where I felt that efforts toward ecological sustainability would be futile unless two things occurred - first that the ecological movement accounts for and connects with social justice more meaningfully, and second that women and girls in particular gain greater agency in their lives and communities.*

*I saw that the greatest or most fundamental barrier to them taking up this agency was the experience of abuse, violence and control at the will and hands of men and boys, and social structures designed for and by men and boys which privilege men and boys' interests, needs and entitlements.*

*As I progressed in this field professionally, I have also been encouraged to critically reflect on my own experiences of power, control and authority, which may have contributed to my attraction to this kind of work. Through that reflection I have become more aware of how my role as daughter and sister - or more simply, girl child in the family - has carried with it a great deal of emotional responsibility, too often at the cost of my own needs and interests.*

*In a sense and in hindsight, this was an experience of constraint due to my gender and the assumptions and behaviours of others as a result of that; through my involvement in the VAW sector I have been encouraged and supported to recognise how these family-based experiences contribute to the work that I undertake and the way I undertake it. Having this recognition has enabled me to make choices about the what and how of the work I do in the future.*

School Program Coordinator - Prevention of sexual assault (1)

I completed my masters by research in 2006 on "Audacious Leadership" which looked at what was behind the success/improvements for Indigenous students in the school I was working at the time.

Principal – Townsville (1)

*I am the daughter of a depressed returned soldier, and a sad and compliant mother. I married a depressed and controlling man 10 years my senior, and in hindsight I realised he has many symptoms of Asperger's. We had 3 children (2 of whom have Asperger's to differing degrees). During that marriage I was emotionally abused. He was an intimidating, powerful alcoholic man who was physically bigger than me. He controlled all the finances and every aspect of my life. I had never known how much he earned, or even seen a bank balance. I decided to divorce him, and went to uni to begin and gained my teaching degree.*

*I remarried and had another baby, and found out when he was 2 that my new husband was a gambling addict!! (Not enough swear words in the world for that one!). I was again left to bring up my family alone - which was far more attractive than bringing up my family with an alcoholic or a gambling addict.*

*I returned to uni to gain my 4th year qualification and by now certainly knew I was capable of anything and studied the foundation subjects to teach Technology Education (Manual Arts), because I knew I would have to be 'different' to gain permanent employment.*

*I happened onto the role of HRE teacher, and thought of the things I had survived in my life, and knew I could make a difference. My saying for that was "nothing like a good kick in the guts to give a person empathy!"*

Teacher - Human Relationships Education, and Learning Support (1)

1. Leading Social Change project. (2009). The Association of Women Educators. [www.awe.asn.au](http://www.awe.asn.au)
2. Piecing it Together: Understanding the Construction of Gender Training Module. (1996). Education Queensland.