



DEAR DR. HARTMAN

*EEO - ei, ei,
ohhhh*

Hello patients...

The topic for discussion this month is EEO - Equal Employment Opportunity.

Now I should make it quite clear from the start, I do not in any way support the fanatical aims of this silly feminist legislation.

I certainly never needed any of this workshopping nonsense when I was in training to be a neurosurgeon and part-time model.

But in recent weeks my clinics have been flooded with EEO co-ordinators on the verge of psychosexual collapse as the direct result of pressure at the office.

Here is a typical case.

A young lass rushed into my office just the other morning. She had huge padded shoulders, a very short hair cut, and she'd just been to her weekly power breakfast. I'm sure you know the type.

She sobbed as she told me this story.

Every day she has to walk into the offices of senior managers to discuss strategies for change. And every day she is confronted by unmitigated bigots who oppose even her most petty bureaucratic reforms.

She says that when she talks to these managers it's like communicating through a thick perspex screen.

She speaks in a very loud voice and never uses words of more than two syllables.

The managers smile and nod and appear to speak English.

But when they finally respond to her carefully researched presentation on systemic discrimination within the organisation, it soon becomes clear that they haven't really understood a single word she has said.

They just don't seem to 'hear' her in the Californian sense of the word.

According to my frantic EEO co-ordinator, all the average senior manager wants to talk about is how he hasn't noticed any problems for women among the 'girls' in his office. And, anyway, his wife has always been very happy at home looking after the 12 kiddies.

What really drives my EEO patient to distraction is that she can never say what she really thinks.

When she is confronted by these old dinosaurs she is expected to conciliate, negotiate, arbitrate and educate. Until, finally, she feels so burnt out by it all she makes those bushfires in the Adelaide Hills a few years ago look like a backyard barbie by comparison.

Fear not, my EEO patients, doctor is here!

At my clinics we have devised a series of Action Learning Role Reversal programs designed to rocket the EEO-resistant manager into the shoes of the target group.

For example, many EEO co-ordinators have enormous difficulty convincing senior executives that there should be disabled access to all buildings. Here is a simple solution to this problem - a solution recently put into practice in a major Australian city.

We simply kidnapped all the senior executives from all the government departments in the Central Business District.

We locked them up and we starved them for a week. Not a single morsel of food passed their lips.

Then we put each of them in a wheelchair and we chained them to the seat. And we dumped the lot of them right in the centre of town.

We then placed a ham sandwich on the third floor of every building. If they wanted to eat they had to get these sandwiches.

Within six months of this exercise there were ramps and rails and disabled toilets in every public building in that city. It was so simple it was frightening.

In another Action Learning Role Reversal program we were faced with a senior executive who refused to allocate any money to language classes for his non-English speaking staff.

In this case we simply airfreighted the chap to Japan and left him alone in Tokyo for six months to compete for a job on the open market.

He briefly gained employment as a chauffeur for a junior manager at Mitsubishi. But he got the sack for failing to obey an instruction to bow a little lower.

After a period of near starvation, he donned a kimono, masqueraded as a woman, and began training as a geisha.

You remember the scandal last year when the Japanese Prime Minister, Mr Uno, was thrown out of power because of the revelations of a loose-lipped geisha.

It's not widely known but that indiscreet geisha was, in fact, a senior Commonwealth public servant engaged in an Action Learning Exercise initiated by my clinic.

If you identify with any of these problems, please write to me here at the *Australian Left Review*.

*Send your problems to
Dr Hartman's secretary,
Julie McCrossin, c/o ALR.*