



By Jeff “Chief” Urbaniak
COLUMNIST

DEAR CHIEF: I’m a female vice president for a large corporation that is mainly led by men. Despite earning my way to my current position, I still have other male vice presidents constantly criticizing my policies and leadership ability--and they do it right to my face in front of others. I know I’m not perfect but some of the criticism is unwarranted. Any suggestions on how I should react?

BELEAGUERED VP



DEAR BELEAGUERED VP: Some men, unfortunately, have a difficult time with women being in charge. And sadly they will do anything to discredit those women. Usually, it is the “weak” man who criticizes women for the sake of criticizing. That kind of man doesn’t deserve one second of your energy so don’t give it to him.

Once upon a time during a White House meeting hosted by President Ronald Reagan to discuss economic policy, Canadian Prime Minister Pierre

The best response can often be no response

Trudeau sternly confronted British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, telling her that she was all wrong and that her policies wouldn’t work. She stood in front of him, keeping her head up and listening until he was finished. Then she walked away.

Ronald Reagan, observing what happened, went up to Margaret Thatcher and said, “Maggie, he should never have spoken to you like that. He was out of line, just entirely out of line. Why did you let him get away with that?”

Thatcher looked at Reagan and said, “A woman must know when a man is being simply childish.”

Margaret Thatcher had no doubts about her abilities or her beliefs, making her absolutely secure as a leader--and so should you!

You are vice president of a large corporation for a reason. You didn’t get there by looking in a mirror. You proved yourself over and over again and the powers to be decided they needed you at the helm. Don’t give the arrogant and insecure men of the world the response they’re trying to incite from you. They

want you to come uncorked so they can use it against you. Don’t give them that satisfaction. The best response to them is no response at all. Just like Margaret Thatcher, look at them with conviction should they criticize you, then walk away when they’re finished.

Of course sometimes there’s a time and place for your direct response, especially if someone were to become extremely unprofessional or threatening, but those occasions require your keen judgment and emotional intelligence.

When it comes to your role as a leader, just keep doing what you’re doing. It’s apparently working well so don’t change anything unless you have an experience from which you learn a valuable lesson. The world needs strong women like you. Stay strong!



For an opportunity to have your question, issue or concern addressed in the Dear Chief column, go to www.DearChiefAdvice.com and submit your comments or email them to Jeff@DearChiefAdvice.com.