Reading

Why Are Women Leaving Science Careers?

Generations of women struggled for the right to pursue careers in science and technology, yet today nearly half the women scientists in Europe and the Americas leave their careers. The difference in numbers between men and women who advance and persist in their fields cannot be attributed to race, ethnic, or social group. The dire consequences of this loss may become more acute as the number of women entering science careers increases. Since the 1990s, more women than men have enrolled in college, earned higher grades, and majored in science or technology fields. If the trend continues and more than half these women leave their careers by their mid-forties, approximately one-third of all scientists will leave their careers in the next twenty years. So why are women leaving the science careers they worked so hard to attain? Studies by academic and professional associations show the causes for the loss of this valuable resource are threefold: time, family responsibilities, and lack of role models.

High-level jobs in science, in both the corporate and the academic world, require inordinate amounts of time. With increased use of the Internet, cell phones, and other electronic forms of communication, scientists are not only required to be in the lab or office ten to twelve hours a day, but expected to be available the rest of the time, too. Professional time demands are the same for both men and women, but many more women opt out than men because of significant issues that men do not face.

Although women are nearing equality in the professional world, the pressures of caring for family still rests largely with women. According to studies, professional women with children still bear the majority of the responsibilities at home. They spend more time with the children and on taking care of the home than men. Biology dictates that women require extended leaves of absence when they are pregnant and give birth, yet to advance in their careers, women cannot afford to take time off until their late thirties, when the optimal time for having healthy babies is ending. Women can devote the necessary attention to neither career nor home life, often creating intense frustration.

Discrepancies in opportunities and salaries still exist between the sexes. Because there are fewer female role models in the upper levels of science and technology fields, women have fewer mentors, who provide invaluable support. Without mentors, women in the sciences go without the support, guidance, and networking needed to lead them through the complications of corporate culture, to validate their ideas and secure funding for research, and to access those who can help them progress in their careers. Mentors also help scientists develop business expertise:

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Mentored scientists hold more patents, an important source of wealth. Women hold only 14 percent[1] of new patents awarded. Without mentors, women have to work harder to reach the same goals as men, and all the while, many women are still paid less than men for commensurate work.

To keep women scientists in the workforce, some companies are instituting mentoring programs, on-site child care, flex-time, and other innovative accommodations. Unfortunately, many companies are content to outsource or to bring in men from other countries to fill positions that valuable but frustrated women scientists leave behind.

Answer the questions about **Why Are Women Leaving Science Careers?**

Questions 1–3

Choose an ending from the list to complete each sentence. There are more endings than sentences, so you will not use them all.

A funding offered by the government.

B discrepancies in opportunities for men and women.

C pregnancy and childbirth.

D the type of guidance they receive in school.

E the need to divide their time between career and home life.

_____ 1. Women may request permission for long periods of absence from work because of

_____ 2. Women in science careers experience frustration because of

_____ 3. Women often don't progress as far as men in science careers because of

[1]BrE: per cent

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Questions 4–7

Do the following statements agree with the information in the reading passage?

Write

TRUE *if the statement agrees with the information.*
FALSE *if the statement contradicts the information.*
NOT GIVEN *if there is no information on this in the passage.*

_____4. Women scientists are hired for academic jobs more often than for research jobs.

_____5. Both men and women in science careers are expected to devote inordinate amounts of time to their jobs.

_____6. Women in science careers tend to get less support from mentors than men do.

_____7. Salaries for women in science careers are commensurate with men's salaries.

My Words

Write the words that are new to you. Look them up in the dictionary and write their definitions.

Words	Definitions

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Word Families

noun	approximation	Researchers don't know the exact numbers of women leaving science careers; these statistics are only an approximation.
verb	approximate	Studies often approximate numbers.
adjective	approximate	The studies tell us the approximate numbers of women leaving science careers.
adverb	approximately	Scientists are required to spend approximately sixty hours a week at their jobs.

noun	equal	Women have struggled for decades to be treated as equals.
noun	equality	Women have struggled for decades for equality in the workplace.
verb	equal	Fifty percent equals one-half.
verb	equalize[1]	Numbers of men and women in the sciences have equalized over time.
adjective	equal	Men and women do not always receive equal pay for equal work.
adverb	equally	Men and women are not always treated equally in the workplace.

[1]BrE: equalise

LIVEWORKSHEETS

noun	frustration	The difficulties of balancing career and family responsibilities is a cause of frustration for many women.
verb	frustrate	The lack of equality in the workplace frustrates many women.
adjective	frustrated	Many women are frustrated by the combined pressures of family and career.
adjective	frustrating	The lack of mentors for women in science careers is frustrating.

noun	guidance	Mentors provide guidance to their less experienced colleagues.
noun	guide	It is helpful to have someone who can act as a guide when starting out in your career.
verb	guide	People new to the field need a more experienced person to guide them through the complications of corporate culture.

noun	persistence	Persistence is an important part of success in any profession.
verb	persist	Some women persist in their careers despite the responsibilities they bear at home.
adjective	persistent	A persistent person will progress in her career.
adverb	persistently	Women have struggled persistently to achieve equality in the workplace.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

noun	validity	People doubted the validity of the research.
noun	validation	Validation is important for any professional.
verb	validate	It is important to have someone to validate your ideas.
adjective	valid	Scientists need to be certain that their research is valid.

Word Family Practice

Choose the correct word family member from the list below to complete each blank.

The lack of **1**..... for women in the workplace is a dire problem that has **2**..... over the years. Many well-educated women feel **3**..... by the lack of opportunities to progress in their fields as far as men do. Women in male-dominated fields such as science and technology do not have role models to **4**..... them. They cannot feel sure that they will get **5**..... for their ideas. Although it is uncertain exactly what percentage of women scientists leave their careers every year, an **6**..... figure is 50 percent.

1. equality	equal	equally
2. persistence	persisted	persistently
3. frustration	frustrate	frustrated
4. guidance	guides	guide
5. validation	validated	valid
6. approximation	approximate	approximately

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Dictionary Skill

Parts of Speech
Progress can be a noun or a verb. The stress changes with the part of speech.

Read the definitions below. Then read the sentences and write the letter of the correct definition for each sentence.

pro-gress [pro-GRESS]
A *verb.* to move forward
pro-gress [PRO-gress]
B *noun.* movement forward; advancement

_____ 1. Scientists need to spend long hours at work to *progress* in their field.

_____ 2. After many months of research, the scientists finally felt that they had made some *progress* in their work.

Listening

CD 1 Track 24

Listen to the talk. Choose the correct letter, ***A****,* ***B****, or* ***C****.*

1. The Robertson Research Lab is devoted to _____ research.
   A governmental
   B academic
   C scientific

2. It took _____ to get the funding to build the lab
   A exactly ten years
   B more or less than ten years
   C much more than ten years

3. _____ bears the responsibility for running the lab.
   A The university
   B The government
   C The Robertson family

4. Lab researchers provide science students with
   A funding.
   B guidance.
   C validation.

Unit 8

LIVEWORKSHEETS