

Invisible Women by Caroline Criado Perez

Discussion Questions

1. In the preface, Perez states “the gender data gap isn’t just about silence. These silences, these gaps, have consequences. They impact on women’s lives every day. The impact can be relatively minor. Shivering in offices set to a male temperature norm. Or struggling to reach a top shelf set at a male height norm.”
 - a. What impacts on your own life, whether major or minor, have you noticed due to the gender data gap? Have you been able to ameliorate these negative impacts or are they still pervasive?
2. Throughout the book, Perez illustrates that a lot of problems that are seen as non-gendered such as snow clearing and car safety standards actually have large gendered components. Were there any examples of this unexpected gender bias that stood out or surprised you?
3. In the introduction, Perez notes how society often views male as default including using male pronouns for mixed groups or unknown subjects, using ‘man’ to mean human, and the male experience and perspective is seen as universal while the female is seen as other or niche. Have you noticed this bias in your own thinking? Have you taken steps to combat this default in yourselves or in others?
4. Perez notes that “75% of unpaid work is done by women” and that this gender imbalance is seen as early as five years old.
 - a. Did you see this play out in your own family growing up? Either with your mom or other women doing the majority of care work or being expected to do more than your brothers?
 - b. As an adult, do you notice this gender imbalance persisting? What steps, if any, have you taken to address it?
5. In Chapter 4: The Myth of Meritocracy” Perez notes that “women receive negative personality criticism that men simply don’t. Women are told to watch their tone, to step back. They are called bossy, abrasive, strident, aggressive, emotional and irrational.” and further notes that women in the workplace perform more undervalued admin work like taking notes and getting coffee than men in similar positions.
 - a. What has your workplace experience been like with regards to gender? Have you been on the receiving end of gender based criticism or added tasks? Have you noticed differences in male versus female dominated workplaces?
6. Time and time again, Perez notes that the proposed solution to problems arising from the gender data gap was “not to fix the male-biased system: it was to fix the women.” Have you seen examples of this in your own life? What, if any, actionable solutions can we implement in our life to combat this gender bias?
7. Perez relays that she “grew up heavily buying into the myth that women are just...a bit rubbish” and that “brilliance didn’t belong to [her]”. She blames these beliefs on the fact that she “wasn’t being shown women [she] could look up to” and that “all the people [she] was taught to admire were men.”
 - a. Did you get this messaging growing up? Who were your role models or idols? Do you think the messaging around female ability and empowerment has changed or improved since Perez was a child?
8. Although Perez focuses on the gender data gap, she alludes to other data gaps. Have you felt othered, invisible, or like the world just wasn’t designed for you due to factors besides your gender? Or can you think of other groups that have received this treatment?