

The **OpEd** Project

changing the world's conversation

Loud and Clear:

Maximizing Your Credibility And Influence In the
World of Ideas

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Who narrates the world?



The Problem

Most of the voices we hear come
from an extremely narrow slice of society



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llpev8JXJHQ>



What is the cost to society if so many voices and minds are missing?



The Opportunity

**What if we invested
in our missing brain power?**

Starting Point: Women

Television

Pundits on political talk shows



16
%

Wikipedia

contributors



13
%

Hollywood

Writers, producers, directors



14
%

Opinion Writers

Top ten print and online outlets



15
%

Congress



17
%

Corporate Boards



15%

Women's overall share of voice: 15%

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Top ten print and online outlets



21%

Congress



20%

Corporate Boards



15%

Women's overall share of voice: 15%

Why so few women?

(an age-old question)



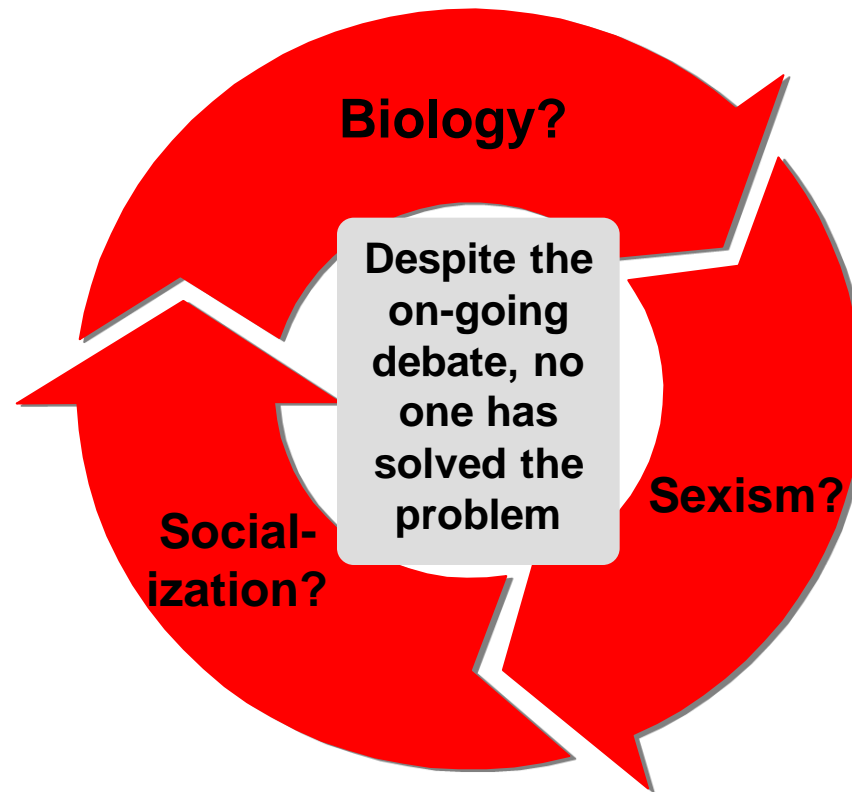
"There are issues of biological aptitude" that can explain why women may have been underrepresented "in tenured positions in science and engineering."

~**Larry Summers**, then President of Harvard University, at a Harvard conference

"I went to the editorial page editor, to try to get out of the column. I was a bundle of frayed nerves. Men enjoy verbal dueling. As a woman, I wanted to be liked, not attacked."

~**Maureen Dowd**

New York Times column



"When a newspaper goes out looking for opinions on Iraq and only asks men; when it goes three days in a row and runs 24 men and only one woman - that is a problem."

~**Susan Estrich**

Syndicated column

But what if the solution were simpler?

The Washington Post tracked submissions for five months.

Submissions:

Men 90%

Women 10%

Bylines:

88%

Men

Women 12%

→ Women don't submit.

Why does this matter?



**→ This is how
thought leadership
begins.**

How thought leaders rise:

Ideas
Op-ed & other
“front door” idea
forums

Social Media
(viral sharing)

Blog mentions

Expert
Citations

Credibility

Radio/TV
appearances

Book Deals

Speaking
Opportunities

Exposure

Funding

Fellowships

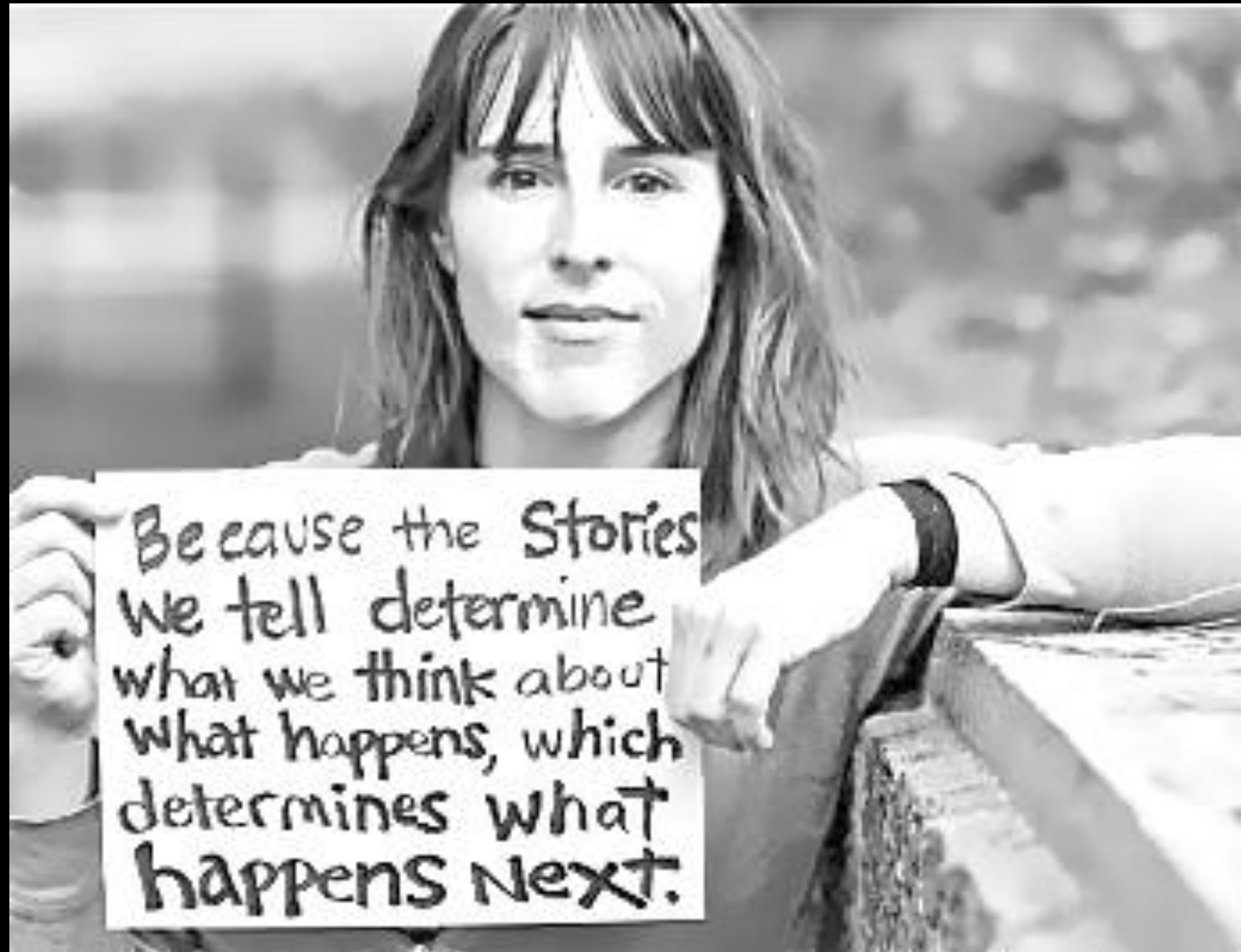
Policy
Consulting
Invitations

Leadership
Positions

Influence

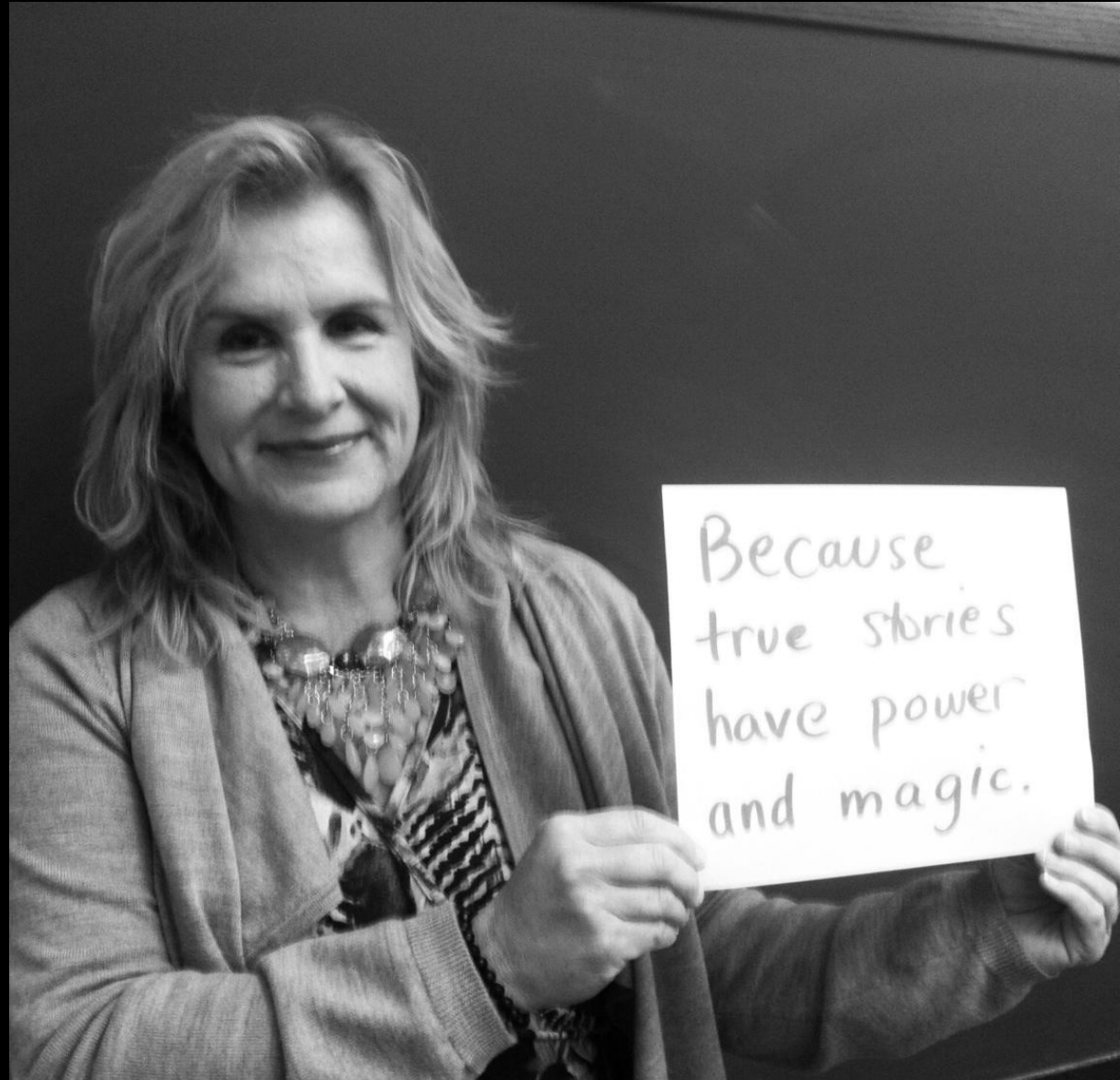
→ Ability to change the world

Ex: **Katie Orenstein**



Because the Stories
we tell determine
what we think about
what happens, which
determines what
happens next.

Ex: Michele Weldon



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4. What is the bigger picture – and how do you and your ideas fit into it?

FIVE CORE QUESTIONS

1. What is the source of credibility and how do you establish
2. How do you build an evidence-based, value-driven argument (as opposed to rhetoric)?
3. What is the difference between being “right” and being effective?
4. What is the bigger picture – and how do you and your ideas fit into it?
5. Do you understand your knowledge and experience in terms of its value to others?

Think Big





A live experiment in
PEAK CREDIBILITY

Hello my name is: _____

I'm an expert in: _____

Because:

We want everyone to try this sentence on.

But first...

What's an "expert"?

**Potential credentials: PhD, book, title,
fancy affiliation, experience, citations...**

Or...

Our definition:

Expert: You are the “go-to” person on your topic, out of everyone in this room – and potentially far beyond, but at least in this room.

Tips:

1. Be specific
2. Choose anything you want
– personal or professional
3. One thing – not everything

Hello my name is: _____

I'm an expert in: _____

Because: _____

What did we learn?

Shiny baubles

Quantify

Specify

Personal experience

Matter of fact tone

Jargon v. metaphor

Coherence

Evidence v. passion

What's so vexing about being an expert?



What if...





What if...

You
believed
you knew
the cure for
cancer?



Maximum
influence
driven by
maximum
awareness
of **your**
value to
others

And by the way:

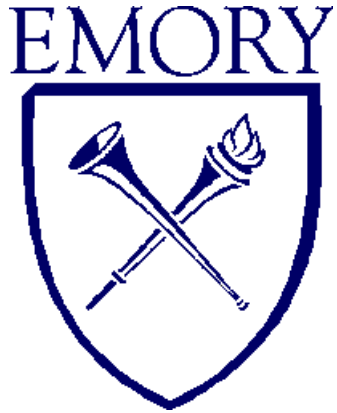
How do you feel about the term
“expert”?

Our definition:

Expert: You are the “go-to” person on your topic, out of everyone in this room – and potentially far beyond, but at least in this room.

Our definition:

Resource: You are the “go-to” person on your topic, out of everyone in this room – and potentially far beyond, but at least in this room.



Public Voices Fellowships



<http://www.northwestern.edu/povost/faculty/teaching/publicvoices.html>

vimeo.com/52204970

change the world's conversation!

- Write an op-ed
Whatever your version of that is
- Think of women you know who should have a bigger voice – and tell them so.
- Use us: www.theopedproject.org
Submission & Contact information, FAQs, etc.
- Track YOUR successes and OURS
TWITTER: @theopedproject
FACEBOOK: theopedproject

The **OpEd** *Project*

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