

Chapter XI

A Concluding Pledge: With Technology and Justice for All

This book has offered one feminist's perspective on how a deeper understanding of our dominator social system might clarify why women are underrepresented as developers, users, and beneficiaries of technology. I have suggested that we move beyond the attitude of simply providing access to the more encompassing goal of co-creating a partnership social system. This approach will increase the participation of women, as well as other currently underrepresented populations, in information technology. In the end, co-creating a partnership global IT industry is about building relationships founded in an attitude of empathy and caring that informs all of our human relations. Although I have attempted to offer a vision of what partnership in IT might look like in relation to media, language, education, and business, the best efforts to increase the participation of women as developers, users, and beneficiaries of technology will be broad-based, multifaceted, include many more perspectives than mine, and involve all of our social institutions.

In earlier chapters, I have suggested some places to begin. Breaking through false assumptions about the purpose and relevance of women's studies and feminist science studies, along with perspectives from many other disciplines, is a key to exploring a rich mine of ideas about how our current social system operates and how we might work together to co-create a more hospitable social climate for all.

Undoing the damage done by dualistic thinking and stereotypes will take us a long way towards a richer understanding of our shared human experience. Reframing some of the core assumptions of the philosophy of science—primarily the founding assumption that science is male and nature is female—will offer new perspec-

tives from which to understand our increasingly complex scientific and technical knowledge tradition. Citizens of the United States of America have learned to think of themselves as members of the world's greatest democracy. We call our nation the "land of opportunity" and we rely on the "myth of meritocracy" (the idea that anyone can achieve anything by their own efforts) without any acknowledgement of the institutionalized barriers that make it much harder for some. However, we have yet to live up to a true democratic ideal as a nation, and one of the reasons for this is the power of unnamed stereotypes.

Learning more about the power of media as a social institution to shape our views about ourselves and one another is a critical component of any lasting social change. Henderson (1996) describes the global mass information system as a new kind of "government" that she calls a "mediocracy" run by large businesses and financial interests (p. 112). At the same time, Henderson also shares my hope for what the media could do if we all participated in information technology: "Mass media could become a national feedback mechanism by providing a random-access conduit for all the wisdom, creativity, and diversity of our citizens" (Henderson, 1996, p. 117). That is the potential that a partnership approach to information technology can help us manifest.

Using partnership perspectives to reform education—a social institution with critical responsibility for enculturating the next generation of citizens—will encourage more to have a voice in our increasingly global society. We need to include the stories and the voices of women and people of color in our knowledge tradition and we need to teach differently. In *Re-Engineering: Female Friendly Science*, Sue Rosser (1997) asked, "What would be the parameters of a feminist or women-centered science?" and proposed the kinds of pedagogical changes that have proven more supportive for many more learners, not just women. Rosser (1997) names the following constructive pedagogical changes, encompassing a range of issues from curriculum redesign to classroom practices: (1) teachers who guide rather than solely challenge; (2) shifting from competitive to collaborative learning models; (3) placing computer science in a social context; and (4) using combinations of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods (p. 9). Robert Young (1987), a scholar writing about anti-racist science, also emphasizes the importance of taking "a historical and social approach to knowledge" that examines "the social forces and connections (or articulations) of scientific and technological disciplines and research problems" (p. 22).

Educating ourselves about the historical legacies of colonialism and contemporary global economics will create possibilities for the global IT industry to be of better service in relation to critical human needs. Eisler (2007) offers this perspective:

41 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/concluding-pledge-technology-justice-all/18813

Related Content

Gender Senitive Design Practices

Els Rommes (2006). *Encyclopedia of Gender and Information Technology* (pp. 675-681).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/gender-senitive-design-practices/12809

Gender, Place and Information Technology

Anita Greenhill (2006). *Encyclopedia of Gender and Information Technology* (pp. 699-704).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/gender-place-information-technology/12813

Gender and the Use of DSS in the Australian Cotton Industry

Dale Mackrell (2006). *Encyclopedia of Gender and Information Technology* (pp. 494-500).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/gender-use-dss-australian-cotton/12782

Individual Context

(2014). *Women in IT in the New Social Era: A Critical Evidence-Based Review of Gender Inequality and the Potential for Change* (pp. 158-176).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/individual-context/105219

Predicting Women's Interest and Choice of an IT Career

Elizabeth G. Creamer, Soyoung Lee, Peggy S. Meszaros, Carol J. Burgerand Anne Laughlin (2006). *Encyclopedia of Gender and Information Technology* (pp. 1023-1028).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/predicting-women-interest-choice-career/12866