The Gender Pay Gap  
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The year 2017 seems to be one of unbelievable change. From an unexpected new president to the loss of an influential mother-daughter celebrity duo on consecutive days, could this year be one of constant and continuous change?

Over the last 50 years many salary advances have been made between men and women in order to level out the financial playing field. This slow creep towards equality in the workplace has become triumphant for women of power but it seems as if that gap is beginning to close (Blau & Kahn, 2007). While the gender pay gap significantly closed between the 1970s and the 1990s, since then women are still being paid an astounding 25% less than men that share the same title (Bielby, 2000). In this anticipated year of change, how can we decide what is equal enough and when to stop vying for paralleled salaries?

It is often argued that women are less valued in the workplace because, at some point, they will take a leave of absence, in the form of maternity leave, in order to start a family. However, it has been found that women in high or powerful professional positions are less likely to prioritize starting a family over building their career. But, if they do decide to enter motherhood only “roughly 50% of employed women [receive] job protected leave” (Berger et al., 2005). So, what about the other 50%? Why are they being financially punished for pursuing a biological right to bear children?

On the other hand, motherhood is a right that all working women possess and is mandated by the state. In most professional companies, women that are valued in their position are entitled to up to three months of paid maternity leave. During this time they are able to adjust to the new challenges of motherhood before they return to work. This new responsibility does not make them any less fit to perform their tasks (Berger et al., 2005).

So in this year of immense change, is it likely that we will see equality for women in the workplace? It seems that this is unlikely, but we will just have to wait and see.
Sources


Blau, F. D., & Kahn, L. M. (2007). The gender pay gap have women gone as far as they can?. *The Academy of Management Perspectives, 21*(1), 7-23.