

The power of creating your own female tribe

 By Ann Nurock

11 May 2018

On Thursday at the One Club for Creativity's Creative Summit, three of the leading female creative directors, Ameer Shah (Droga5), Justine Armour (72andSunny) and Laddie Peterson (Wieden + Kennedy New York) were joined by I-Hsien Sherwood (Ad Age) to discuss, "The power of creating your tribe" aka the role of community and allyship in female career journeys.

“ ECD Ameer Shah on supporting female creatives: "Every phase in a creative's life is different. It's important to get into the details of what they want to learn and how you can help, whether it's by skillsharing, mentorship, or being their go-to." [#creativeweek pic.twitter.com/WbaX7TApPQ](https://www.creativeweek.com/pic.twitter.com/WbaX7TApPQ)— Droga5 (@droga5) [May 10, 2018](#)

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These three top female creative directors advised the audience that in the age of #metoo, things are getting better because there are more conversations and more allies. New women's groups have been formed with women supporting women, creating communities and working together. Everyone is being more mindful.



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Confidence gap

They stated that in their previous experience, being the only women in the creative department was daunting. Now it's different and even though there are still challenges, young women coming into the industry have more of an advantage than they did in previous years.

However, women still suffer from the "confidence gap." An interesting observation from Armour was that men apply for positions if they believe they have 60% of the competencies, while a woman will only if she feels she has 100%.

Shah still never felt never quite ready to sit at the table. She said that after many years as a creative director, David Droga, wanted to promote her but her response was "I'm not ready." She says, "I held myself back." I felt a lack of confidence and self-deprecation. But I did it and did it well.



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So what's the solution to this and what can agencies do better to help advance women in their careers?

Armour suggested that agencies should look beyond "the book" and hire women that they may not have had the experience. Turn your attention to people who have a spark and help them develop. It's about "potential vs experience."

Create the tribe

We need to acknowledge that every phase of a creative woman's life is different. We need to be more understanding of each other's roles. We need to create mentorship programs and be more flexible to understand every person's role.

It's about having a community mind said, Peterson. "Create the tribe. Women must support women." Shah adds: "We must be more aware of the women in the creative department. Are they getting the best assignments? Ask them what they want. Be aware."



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We as women are hard on ourselves. Agencies are tough places. We need to give people a chance. We must get better and give younger women a chance. The one single thing we can do is having someone you trust to talk to. Have allies and support system in and out the agencies.

Shah says we must support female creatives:

“Every phase in a creative's life is different. It's important to get into the details of what they want to learn and how you can help, whether it's by skill-sharing, mentorship, or being their go-to.”

ABOUT ANN NUROCK

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