

3 Takeaways From The Girls on Boards Forum

By: Helen Cashman, Young Director, Girls on Boards

While flying from Calgary to Toronto for the 2018 Girls on Boards Forum, I reflected on why I originally applied for the program. After graduating from the University of Alberta's School of Business in 2017 and starting my career, I worried about being cut off from the volunteer opportunities that were accessible to me as a student. Girls on Boards offered me a new and challenging role as a Board Director with Ask Her Calgary. The two days at the Girls on Boards Forum were sensational. I had the opportunity to learn new skills and felt empowered to contribute to the success of the organization. This was an inspiring, informative and thought-provoking personal development experience.

It is impossible to detail all of the many highlights this wonderfully organized girl-power super-summit weekend provided. However, here are my top three takeaways from the forum:

1) OVERCOMING IMPOSTER SYNDROME

An awesome presentation by Dr. Kristen Blakely on learning to overcome feeling like you do not deserve your success and that despite your accomplishments, you never feel quite good enough. This sense of anxiety has been especially destructive in the career ambitions of women. In just 60 minutes, Dr. Blakely offered concrete solutions that were both helpful and reassuring.

2) NEGOTIATION WORKSHOPS

This was a great three-hour session that entirely upended my concept of winning and losing when developing a negotiation strategy. This workshop by Insight Partners focused on re-framing negotiations from a competition into a process aimed at identifying and satisfying the needs of both parties. This fundamental shift in outlook lowers the intimidation factor, a valuable insight for women who have often been less successful in negotiating compensation and promotion. The awesome exercises involved in the workshop made the time fly by!

3) BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

From the welcome dinner to the closing debrief, the 2018 Girls on Boards Forum included non-stop opportunities to network with successful women from all walks of life, as well as the other impressive Young Directors. Sharing experiences and being exposed to new ideas helped us quickly build bonds that I hope will last a lifetime. It was exciting to see the next generation of women in leadership strengthen the support networks needed to overcome future obstacles. Also, a big shout-out to the organizers for developing a program that offered valuable insight for serving on a non-profit board of directors. The speakers explored; approaches to financial analysis, making your voice heard effectively, and the roles and relationships between board members and executive leadership. This was an amazing experience and I

