



# Why So Slow?: The Advancement of Women

*Virginia Valian*

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## **Why So Slow?: The Advancement of Women** Virginia Valian

Why do so few women occupy positions of power and prestige? Virginia Valian uses concepts and data from psychology, sociology, economics, and biology to explain the disparity in the professional advancement of men and women. According to Valian, men and women alike have implicit hypotheses about gender differences - gender schemas - that create small sex differences in characteristics, behaviours, perceptions, and evaluations of men and women. These small imbalances accumulate to advantage men and disadvantage women. The most important consequence of gender schemas for professional life is that men tend to be overrated and women underrated. Although most men and women in the professions sincerely hold egalitarian beliefs, those beliefs alone cannot guarantee impartial evaluation and treatment of others. Only by understanding how our perceptions are skewed by gender schemas can we begin to perceive ourselves and others accurately. Valian's goal is to make the invisible factors that retard women's progress visible so that fair treatment of men and women will be possible. The book makes its case with experimental and observational data from laboratory and field studies of children and adults, and with statistical documentation on men and women in the professions. The anecdotal examples throughout provide a lively counterpoint.

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