Delusions of Gender: 
How Our Minds, Society and Neurosexism Create Difference
by Cordelia Fine

Week: 1 of 1  
Chapters/Pages: pp. 1-7, 40-52, 233-239

Themes:
- Overcoming sexism
- Gender in the workplace
- Self-confidence

Recommended Opening: Watch “Target Women” clip and discuss – (BGL should explain that this is “Target Women” is a web series put together by a comedian, Sarah Haskins, where she comments on products, advertising, and media aimed at women)  
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrXRN0zdoA0

- Why do you think cleaning products are targeted to women in the way they are?
- What assumptions about women are implied by the advertisements in these clips?
- What kind of messages do these ads send to women? What do you think about this?
- Why do you think Haskins calls her show, “Target Women”? How do you think the media affects how women think of themselves? Why?

Before Reading:
- Cordelia Fine has a PhD in psychology and currently lives and teaches in Australia. Fine’s book, Delusions of Gender, attacks what she sees as questionable claims about biological differences between males and females.

Recommended Reading Passages and Questions:

Read pages 1-7 (until “…priming gender seems to have exactly this effect.”):

- Why would the author title this section, “We Think, Therefore You Are”?
- What is gender priming? How does it affect how women think of themselves? Have you noticed this effect in your own life? If so, how?
- Why do you think the author starts this chapter with the quote she does? What is the message Jan Morris is communicating?
- What were your ideas about the differences between men and women when you were growing up? What are your ideas now? What do you think accounts for that change, if they are different?
- What is the Implicit Association Test? What do the findings from the test tell us about gender?
- Fine mentions some of the ways media reinforces ideas of gender difference and Sarah Haskins illustrates this as well in her “Target Women” clips. What are some other ways, if any, you notice the media associating men and women with stereotypical qualities? What are some ways, if any, you notice the media refuting or redefining these gender stereotypes?
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- What happened in the study when they gave women biographies of famous female leaders? Why do you think this happened?
- What are other ways you can think of that might change people's gender associations?

Read pages 40-52:
- Why does the author title this section, “I Don’t Belong Here”? What makes some women feel they don’t belong? Where is the ‘here’ she’s referring to?
- How does Fine explain why women tend not to enter traditionally male occupations? How does that compare to how society in general usually explains this phenomenon?
- What are some examples from the book of how women have been treated in traditionally male domains?
- What is Fine referring to when she says that many women, instead of turning away from the profession, “turn away from being female” (50)? What does it look like to turn away from being female in a workplace? What effect do you think it would have on that woman’s male coworkers? On her female coworkers? On herself?
- What’s your opinion about women who try to become as “unfeminine” as possible or showing antifemale attitudes in a mostly male workplace?
- What have been the male to female ratios at jobs you have worked at? Do you think that affected the work environment? If so, how?
- Do you have any expectations of what it might feel like to work in male-dominated trades? If so, what are they? How do you anticipate handling this?
- What examples does the book offer of things that made women feel a stronger sense of belonging in male-dominated professions?
- What possibilities do you see for changing the numbers and comfort of women in male-dominated professions?

Read pages 233-239:
- What professions are considered “appropriate” for women? What professions aren’t considered “appropriate” for women? Where do these associations come from?
- Why does the author say: “Take a look around. The gender inequality that you see is in your mind” (234)? What do you think she wants you to take a look around at?
- Do you think there are biological differences between men and women? If so, what are they? If not, why not?
- Where do you think your ideas about what it means to be a woman come from? Do you want to change how you think about yourself as a woman? Why/why not? If yes, how do you hope to do that?
- What is meant by the quote: “culture and psyche make each other up” (236)? What is the relationship between behavior and the mind related to gender stereotypes?
- How does gender play a role in a young child’s life? How might that affect their sense of gender difference as they get older?
- What do you think about the idea of gender-neutral parenting? What are some things a parent can do to avoiding reinforcing gender stereotypes with their kids?
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Recommended Poetry: “Celebrate With Me” by Lucille Clifton

- What is your response to this poem? What do you notice about it? What lines stand out for you, if any?
- The poet says that she had no model. What do you think she might mean by this?
- The poem mentions a bridge “between starshine and clay.” What meaning does this line have for you? What kind of bridge do you think she’s talking about?
- What is the poet celebrating in this poem? What sense do you get of her life and experience?
- What would you choose to celebrate in your own life? What have you survived or overcome? What kinds of things have tried and failed to destroy you?

Recommended Poetry Prompt: “Come Celebrate with Me”

Using Lucille Clifton’s poem as an example, write a poem about your own victory over the challenges life has thrown your way. Like Clifton, try using creative phrases to describe what you have experienced, and tell readers why your victory and survival are worthy of celebration.

Feel free to start with the line, “Come celebrate with me…”

Recommended Closing: “Woman power is Human power is always feeling my heart beats as my eyes open as my hands move as my mouth speaks” —from “Now” by Audre Lorde

Notes: