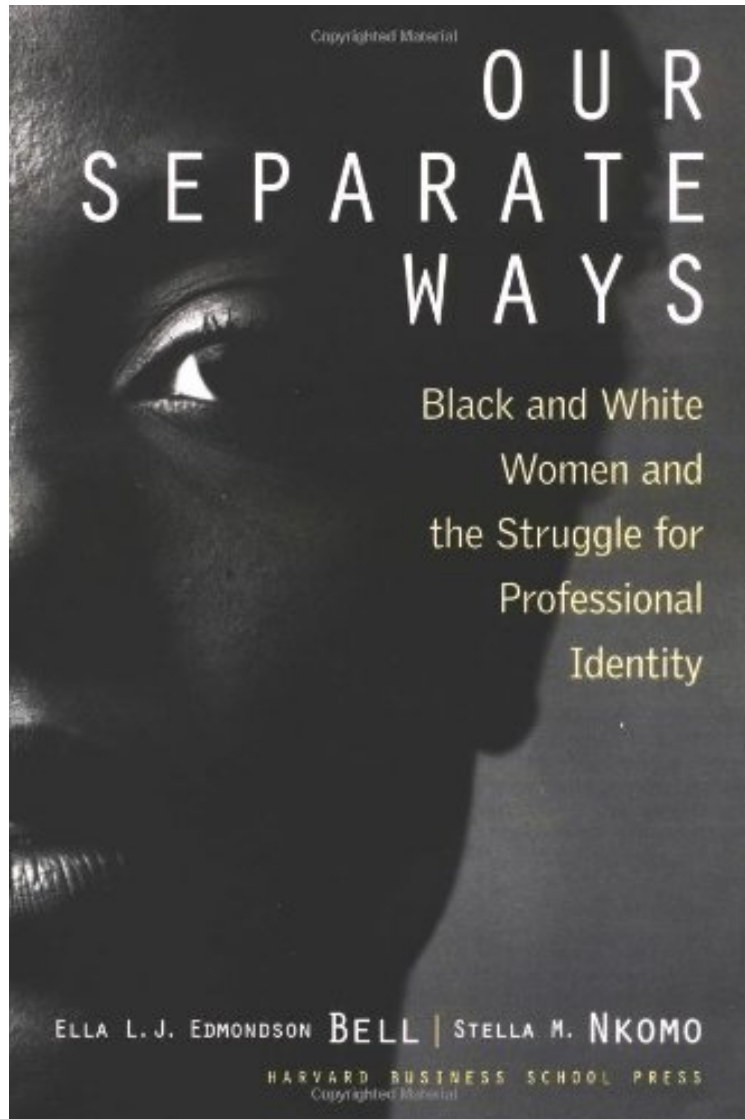


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Our Separate Ways: Black and White Women and the Struggle for Professional Identity

Ella L. J. Edmondson Bell, Harvard Business School Press, Stella M. Nkomo
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Ella L. J. Edmondson Bell, Harvard Business School Press, Stella M. Nkomo : Our Separate Ways: Black and White Women and the Struggle for Professional Identity before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Our Separate Ways: Black and White Women and the Struggle for Professional Identity:

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. At the Sharp EndBy J. B. PotterBell and Nkomo dive straight to the

heart of the matter. They base their findings on comprehensive personal interviews of African-American and white women working as managers or executives. Ultimately, the authors hit the reader over the head with the obvious: People from strikingly different backgrounds bring profound personal differences to the workplace. Too often, organizations stupidly attempt homogenizing everyone into minor variations on the existing (typically---older, white, and male) leadership theme. Unusually (Bell and Nkomo cited no such cases), organizations may wisely embrace the differences so that the organization and its people benefit from a more perceptive and inclusive world view. Folks who need not spend their working hours "fitting in" contribute (A) more (B) less to the organization. Leaders who accept their people for who and what they are get (A) more (B) less from their subordinates. Guess where the authors suggest the readers take their outfits. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. great product and great service. By M. Marinogood book to bring inform of current research on actual experiences of professional women in the market place. information on the disparity of treatment for women. 7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Imagining and working with the Other By Nkonge Zenzele If you are wondering why the Black woman in your section of your company doesn't seem to want to socialize with you or seems guarded around her White co-workers or why the White women in your organization get all riled up about sexism but are silent when it comes to racism this is the book for you. I recommend this book along with Divided Sisters for those who really want Black and White women to unite in the workplace. These two tomes will give you more than a clue. They'll give you guidelines as how to build a truly "diverse" workplace where everyone is welcomed AS THEY ARE and not as stereotypes others want them to play out. If you are a Black woman, you'll understand why you see your work status merely as a "job" and not as a career and why you feel so much like an outsider looking in at your organization. The only reason I didn't give this book 5 stars is that I wanted more in-depth analysis of how the White female managers confronted the idea of Black women as equals (and not just on the job), something I've experienced that White women have a difficult time doing in the workplace.

This is a study of the roles that gender, race and class play in corporate culture, revealing the trials and triumphs that have brought minority women executives where they are today. It examines the connection between corporate culture and the advancement of people of colour as well as examining the formative experiences - from childhood through early career development - behind today's female executives. By using a "life history" approach which includes interviews with 120 women senior managers, the text presents women's reflections on success as well as demonstrating the often complicated and difficult stories of women coming to terms with racially divided population, trying to succeed in the male-dominated business world and displaying their personal and cultural expectations.

From Publishers Weekly Drawing on an eight-year survey of 825 black and white female managers, and juxtaposing the stories of seven black and seven white women executives at some of the most prestigious companies in America, this book illustrates the profound impact of "early life lessons" on women's professional identities and "reveals the power of geography and social location when combined with race." Foregrounding "the first generation of [black women] to hold managerial or executive positions" (many took their first jobs in the 1970s), the authors show that "the combined effects of race and gender create not only very different organizational identities and career experiences, but also very separate paths to the doors of corporate America." Bell and Nkomo (business professors at Dartmouth College and South Africa's UNISA Graduate School of Business Leadership, respectively) are particularly adept at delineating the prejudices that create special problems for black women in the executive suite, without losing sight of the experiences they share with white women. They conclude that while there are crucial differences in the experiences of white and black female executives, the similarities suggest the enduring power of gender discrimination in the workplace and "the extent to which managerial careers are steeped in patriarchal ideology." An epilogue "offers suggestions on how to begin the sometimes difficult dialogue between black and white women executives. Bell and Nkomo have provided a well-researched and thought-provoking look at some important aspects of race and gender in corporate America. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Booklist "Our separate ways" is usually used in reference to a point of departure, but here it describes the quite different paths black and white female managers have followed to achieve success. Bell and Nkomo have been tracking the relationships among race and gender and advancement for more than 10 years. They discuss the results of their research, which included extensive life history interviews with 80 black women and 40 white women and in-depth surveys of 825 black and white women managers. Because "black women executives remain a mystery to others in their organizations," Bell and Nkomo focus on the individual stories and personal experiences of 14 women. These poignant narratives highlight six "significant flashpoints" in the women's journeys: breaking into management, adjusting to the corporate environment, encountering barriers, overcoming barriers, making change in the work environment, and coming to terms with personal life choices. Bell and Nkomo also consider the way black and white women managers view themselves and their female colleagues. David Rouse Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "A persuasive, insightful and poignant look at the fate of black and white female executives in the U.S.