

DEAR DAUGHTER,

I want to talk straight with you about the wage gap. A lot of people are going to tell you that you are only paid 77 percent of what a man makes because you're a girl. I want you to know that's just not true. The much harder truth is that how much you earn depends mostly on the *choices* you make.

When you go to college be aware that the major you choose will make a big difference in your future earning potential. Engineering and computer science just pay better than psychology and social work. Later, you might want to start a family and choose to work less outside the home when you do. You might want more flexibility and a job that pays less but works better for your schedule. Today girls like you have more opportunity and choices than ever before – just remember, all choices come with tradeoffs.

Too often we measure success solely by our salaries. But that's not how I want you to see *your* life. You can be President, run a major company, or choose a career that doesn't pay as much but that you find fulfilling. You can be a career woman or a stay-at-home mom, or anything in between -- I'll be just as proud of you. I just want you to be you and to take responsibility for your choices.

“Today girls like you have more opportunity and choices than ever before – just remember, all choices come with tradeoffs.”

There are people who will treat you unfairly because you're a girl. And there are people who will treat your little brother unfairly because he's a boy. But we are *all* protected under the law from gender discrimination, and you should never fail to defend yourself.

Just remember: It's the ability to *choose* that make us free. All the wishing and laws in the world can never eliminate the need for us to make tradeoffs, and often government intervention hurts the very people they say they want to help.

In the end, the world is what you make of it.

Love,
Mom

 independent
women's forum

www.iwf.org |  @IWF