

Interview with Janet Napolitano

Governor, Arizona (2003-2009)

Washington, DC

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Janet Napolitano: In my first weeks as US Attorney I was with all men and they used acronyms and referenced cases I hadn't been familiar with. At first I felt mouse-like, observing and listening and learning the ways. And then it didn't take long to feel elephant-like.

Laura Liswood: What about women's intuition?

Napolitano: Women are listening better, knowing what the other is saying [underneath], their body language creates the sense that "women care"

Liswood: Why is it that women may be more risk adverse, in contrast to elephants?

Napolitano: Not as many women out there. Women's lives are more evaluated and you can lose or be rejected. It can feel like "nobody likes me."

The elephant may lack introspection to see who has the power and who doesn't and what that means.

Liswood: What about being aggressive?

Napolitano: For men that is different than for women. But I was trying a case for a jury. The plaintiff had two men and the defendant, one male and me. The jury was 50/50 men and women.

You have to become very cognizant of language, tone, pitch of voice. Your radar is constantly up which is like the mouse.

As more women come into public leadership, there will be a blurring of styles and adapting.

Women, like men, must learn to state their vision, talk to people and get them to follow you over a cliff

Arizona has lots of stereotypes-like it is old, slow and lots of cactus. It is one of the fastest growing and youngest states. The population of Denmark is less than AZ.

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