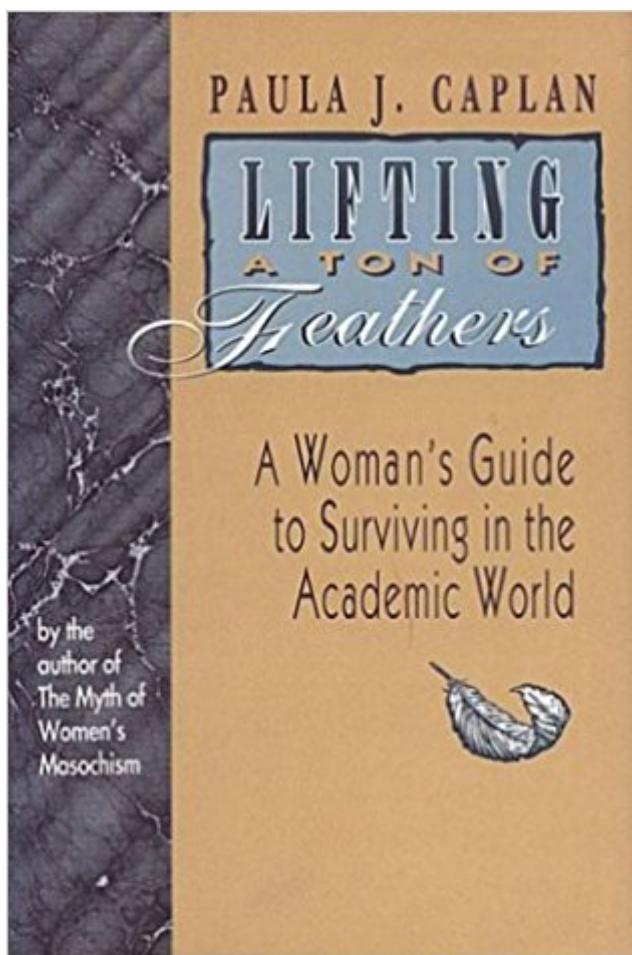


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# Lifting A Ton Of Feathers: A Woman's Guide To Surviving In The Academic World (Heritage)



## **Synopsis**

Lifting a Ton of Feathers is not only a survival guide, it is also a destroyer of academic myths about women's career chances in the university, and a revelation of the catch-22 positions in which women find themselves. Caplan demonstrates that while many women believe that when they fail it is their fault, their fate is more likely to be sealed by their encounter with the male environment, and by the manner in which they are tossed about by it. She aims to help women avoid self-blame and understand the real sources of their problems. Readers will find the information about the mine-field of academia for women infuriating, but the means of telling it highly entertaining. Women account for more than half of all undergraduate students in the US and Canada, yet they make up only 10 per cent of faculty members at the level of full professor. What happens to women between freshman level, the tenure track, and the ensuing following professional years that keeps them out of the highest levels of academia? Paula Caplan is herself a veteran of the academic career struggle, and she sets out to explore this question with not only her own observations but also those of many women whom she has interviewed, and with a strong backing of established research. With these tools she provides a clear-eyed assessment of what women who have embarked on an academic career, and those who are considering it, may expect. Forewarned is forearmed, and Caplan presents a list of the forms that the maleness of the environment take: two of these are the conflict between professional and family responsibilities, and sexual harassment. In addition, her book offers advice on practical techniques of how to prepare a curriculum vitae, how to handle job interviews, and how to apply for promotions and tenure. A final chapter is a unique checklist which serves two purposes: to provide guidance in a search for a woman-positive institution and to give suggestions for ways individual women, and women in groups, can work to improve the situation at their own institutions.

## **Book Information**

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## Customer Reviews

Any woman who's tried to break into the academic "old boy's club" can tell you horror stories. Paula Caplan sifts through the confusion, distills the facts on injustice and prejudice, and offers practical advice on how to survive and even thrive in the academic workplace. This concise, fully referenced, information-packed book isn't about complaints; it's about solutions.

'Caplan is lucid, devastating--practical. Caplan's genius is to explore difficult, always heartbreakin areas of injustice, without simplifying anything, and to then advise us on how to survive. She helps us understand where we are, what's happening, what's going to happen, and what our options are.

I got this book because recommended it along with one someone else told me about (Ms. Mentor's guide). I like this one better. The arguments are logical and supported, and in many cases the author told me things I knew subconsciously but had never heard articulated before. Some of the Myths about Academia are annoyingly overlapping, and in some places I found myself skimming, but in general I've found it completely reassuring. It's good to know there are other women who have experienced similar things. I like that the book made me aware that some of the things I thought I was imagining are in fact very real, and very common. I think all the negative reviews of this book are very misleading- the first chapter is an incomparably beautiful description of why we went into Academia in the first place- because there are a lot of great things about it. I will probably go back and reread this book over and over.

What impressed me the most about this book was the way Caplan integrated real life stories and anecdotes into her book. Not to say that there isn't a lot of research to back her points up as well, on the contrary! But if a picture is worth a thousand words an anecdote is worth a thousand more. Despite the sometimes depressing state of academic life for women, Caplan indulges neither in recrimination or despair. She includes a great deal of helpful advice for women, organized for easy reference by your career stage (from student through full professor). I regularly reread my copy. I

find that there's always something new and relevant to be gleaned from this book.

I thoroughly enjoyed this handbook. As a senior ready to embark into the unknown and scary land of graduate school, I'm glad I'll have this book to hold on to. Caplan doesn't just complain, she gives us ideas on how to fight back and plain keep our spirits up. I'd recommend this book even for women who have never experienced any angst over being a woman. I never have and I still love this book. It's not a downer, it's an up-lifting book that gives those who may have lost hope, hope and those of us who haven't experienced any negative comments a fair warning. A must for every womans home/office library

Caplan's book focuses on what a terrible place the academy is for women, without giving adequate attention to ways students and faculty members can avoid or solve problems. It's a pessimistic choice, so read it with caution. If you feel discouraged, this book might help you realize that you are not alone in facing patterned discrimination, but if you haven't had problems, it might make you want to give up before you have reached your goals.

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