SHERYL SANDBERG INTERVIEW
MAKERS: WOMEN WHO MAKE AMERICA
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

Sheryl Sandberg
Technology Executive
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Interviewed by Dylan McGee
Total Running Time: 39 minutes and 01 seconds

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ON SCREEN TEXT:

Makers: Women Who Make America

Kunhardt Film Foundation

ON SCREEN TEXT:

Sheryl Sandberg

Technology Executive

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DYLAN MCGEE:

I'm going to take you back to your childhood. Were you always like this? What were you like as a kid?

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SHERYL SANDBERG:

I don't think I ever thought my life would be like this, in the sense that I grew up in a family in Miami, very kind of middle class with good middle class values. My dad was a doctor, really believed in doing things he believed in. My mother was basically a community volunteer. She worked inside the home and did volunteer work. I didn't know anyone who was running a big business or the kind of person who gets interviewed. I didn't grow up like that at all, but I did grow up with a couple things.

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I grew up with a father who was very focused on doing well and doing a lot. Mine was a family where you went running. If you weren't feeling well, go running, you'll feel better. Don't lie around in bed feeling bad about yourself. Don't complain. Get up and do something. Very ambitious. My parents both had this very deep commitment to do something for the world. My family was a medical family. So everyone went to med school. My dad, my brother and my sister, my brother's wife.

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I'm a little bit the black sheep for not being a doctor. It was kind of unheard of to go into business. So I don't think I was… I certainly would've never thought I would be in business at all, and I don't think I was this ambitious, but I was kind of eager to learn and eager to contribute. I loved school. I loved studying. That wasn't a very cool thing in a Miami public high school. I was incredibly uncool. I was the geeky girl. I was certain no one wanted to go to

the prom with me. I'm not sure anyone did want to go to the prom with me, but I was a smart girl, and that was hard at times in Miami public schools.

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Something I've never told actually, but this is a true story. I was voted by my senior class, “most likely to succeed,” and I forced my friend, who ran the yearbook, to take that out and bury it and someone else was most likely to succeed, because I did not want to be listed as most likely to succeed in my yearbook because that was just too uncool. It is interesting to take yourself out of the yearbook as “most likely to succeed” or take yourself out of the yearbook as “most intelligent,” the other thing I kept getting voted at, but I was always, get myself out.

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I think there's a trade-off for women. The data's very clear that success and likability are positively correlated for men and negatively correlated for women, which means that as a man gets more successful, powerful, he is more liked, and as a woman gets more successful, she is less liked, and that's true by both women and men. So a man can proudly be “most intelligent,” “most likely to succeed.” A woman, if you're “most intelligent” or “most likely to succeed,” that's an embarrassing thing or something that's not considered attractive.

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I think that's what we need to change. I want to tell any young girl out there who's a geek in high school— I was a really serious geek in high school—it works out. Study harder. Find the friends who think that's okay. The game is

not about looking pretty. The game is not about looking soft. The game is about what you can learn and what you can attribute and what you can contribute.

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DYLAN MCGEE:
Tell me about your mom. What was she like?

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SHERYL SANDBERG:
My mom is pretty much the warmest person in the entire universe. She's the kind of person who everyone who meets her, hugs her in about three minutes. We were once at a show on Broadway. I forget the name, but that fabulous show of the woman who, it's a one woman show and she's a cancer patient. Do you know what show I'm talking about?

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DYLAN MCGEE:
Oh yeah. Kathleen Chalfant was…

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SHERYL SANDBERG:
Unbelievable. So we're in the show. It's a Broadway theater, huge theater, and then everyone leaves and somehow we're not leaving. I look over and my

mother is like 40 rows away in an empty auditorium with two women who were real cancer patients hugging them as they cry to her. This is my mom who meets total strangers and has such warmth that everyone shares their deepest secrets and cries on her shoulder. The combination of my father's drive and my mother's warmth is something that I think I've tried to live up to them.

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I've tried to live up to both of them. I don't think I do. You never quite live up to your parents. I'm not as warm as my mother. I had this boyfriend once who, once I said to him, "Am I as nice as my mother?" He looked at me. He said, "Of course not. No one's as nice as your mother." But that drive and that warmth is something I was really privileged to grow up with.

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DYLAN MCGEE:
Did you sense in the home a women's movement going on? Were you ever aware that your mother didn't have the opportunities that you did?

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SHERYL SANDBERG:
Yeah. My mother said that she only had two job options, she could be a teacher or she could be a nurse, and so she became a teacher. And I knew- she always said that if she had been in my generation, she would've gone to law school. She would've really liked to do something in the law. My house was

actually—and I've talked to my parents about this—pretty broken down on traditional gender roles. I mean, my father worked, my mother was in the home. My mother made dinner every night.

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I think there was a lot of- I had one sister and one brother, girls do this, boys do this. I don't think I was raised particularly as feminist or in a particularly gender neutral home at all. It wasn't something I really thought about, but I was raised to think that I could do anything. I was raised to think that I could go to a great school and could achieve anything I wanted to achieve.

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DYLAN MCGEE:
You moved out of Miami and you went on someplace else. Where'd you go to college?

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SHERYL SANDBERG:
I went to Harvard. I never thought I would get into Harvard. No one had ever gotten into Harvard from my high school. I went to a big public high school in Miami. I remember the day I got in, my dad got the letter and opened it. Probably shouldn't have done that, but he did, and I had never seen my father cry and I was the oldest child, and my father cried. He's like, “You got into Harvard.” I never thought that was something that was possible, but I'd gone

on a college tour with my parents that summer, and I'd gone to a bunch of different schools and I loved it.

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Maybe it was just a nice day, and I had a good college guide, but I loved it. Going to Harvard seemed to me to be just an unbelievable opportunity. In my high school, this was not very popular. Many people came up to me like, “I heard you're going to Harvard. Why would you want to go there? Isn't everyone going to be really geeky?” So, shows where I was going and where I came from.

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DYLAN MCGEE:
If you had to pick one kind of event that shaped your life moving forward, I mean, what was monumental about your time at Harvard?

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Sheryl Sandberg
If I had to pick one event that shaped my life, it would probably be my first job out of college. I worked at the World Bank with Larry Summers. He was my thesis advisor in college. He went to the World Bank. He took me with him as a research assistant, and then he said one day, “You know, you really should see what the World Bank does. I'm going to let you go work on a mission.” So we were in the research arm, but this was more the operating

arm. I got sent with the India Division Health Team to India on a mission on leprosy.

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I spent three weeks in India traveling around to some of the places, in Madhya Pradesh, places no one's been where there were flights once a week and no roads, and saw and worked with leprosy patients. And nothing is sadder actually—or maybe some things are—but I can't imagine anything sadder than leprosy in India at that time. 1991, people with leprosy were not just thrown out of their homes, they were thrown out of their villages to die in the field, and so a lot of them would die.

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Some of them would be gathered into these awful group homes where they were just lying on the floor untreated. It's a completely treatable disease. You look at that and you say, “Wow, I am so lucky.” You think to yourself, “I'll never be sad again about anything,” which actually doesn't work. You get sad about stupid things anyway, but you also think to yourself, “I'm going to spend my career trying to do something that makes a difference to someone but myself. I have to.” Because how can you see this and try to help this and then not try to spend the rest of your career trying to do something that matters?

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DYLAN MCGEE:

You mentioned Larry Summers. What did he see in Sheryl Sandberg? Why did he invest so much in you?

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SHERYL SANDBERG:

I met Larry when I was a junior. I took his class. He was teaching public sector economics. I think it was like, 1410, was the name of the class at Harvard. His description of it was that I sat in the corner and gossiped with my friends, and then when he asked his teaching assistant, who did the best on the midterm, it was me and he was shocked because it was supposed to be one of the people in the front, most of whom were boys, who were holding their hand up the whole time, who did well on the midterm. Larry was great. Larry took a bunch of the students that had done well in his class to the Harvard Faculty Club for lunch.

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No one I know had ever been to the Harvard Faculty Club. It was the one and only time any faculty member took me there for lunch, and that was a big deal, and he offered to help. He said, "You all are promising students in economics. Is there anything I can do to help you? Let me know." So, I then needed a grant. I needed to get $10,000 in grant money to buy the data for my thesis, and so I needed recommendations. Larry Summers had just offered to help, so I went to see him in his office hours and I said, "You know you offered to help, and I need a recommendation to get this grant money, to get the data from my thesis. Will you write me a recommendation?"

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And he did, and he also offered to be my thesis advisor. He went out of his way to find some of the students in his class and offer to help them. I was in the economics department at Harvard and I wrote a senior thesis, which is something a lot of people there do, and mine was on the economics of spousal abuse. So what I was looking at was, what were the economic determinants of spousal abuse? Not, "are the people who are abused wealthy or poor," but the gap in income between the partners. So, my hypothesis was that-

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-no matter what income level the couple were, if the man was making more of the money than the woman, there would be this income gap that might encourage her to stay in an abusive relationship, and so that these economic determinants were causing part of the social problem. Based out of the work that Gary Becker had done out of the University of Chicago, where he basically had a bunch of theories on economics things causing, or being determinant of our social behaviors.

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Probably the person who's the leader in this now is Steven Levitt. Steven Levitt's books are coming out of the Gary Becker school of economics, which is basically behavioral economics.

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DYLAN MCGEE:

You were in the public sector for a while and then you decided—and I just, listening to your story about your wanting to help people, must have been a hard decision—how did you decide moving from the public sector to the private sector and why?

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SHERYL SANDBERG:
So I was at the Treasury Department. I was Larry Summers', he was the secretary chief of staff for the end of the Clinton administration, and then just like the constitution says, they vote the other party into office, on January 20th at noon, you hand over the keys. So people say, "Why'd you leave the government?" I'm like, "Well, they kicked me out. They voted for the other side." I actually stayed and helped the new secretary, Paul O'Neill, for a week or so, transition in, and then I needed to get a real job. I really thought I would never, ever work at a business. Never thought I would work in a business, thought I would only ever work in nonprofits.

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I remember when I graduated undergraduate college, looking at the business school grads and thinking I would never go there, even though just years later I went. Shows you, never think never. I thought I would never work in a business, but at the Treasury, when you were thinking about it, I was there from like '96 to 2000, so this is 2001, this is the first tech bubble basically. We would meet with all kinds of people. You get to meet with all kinds of people in the government, and we met with nonprofit leaders and business leaders

and kind of old sector business leaders, car manufacturers, media companies, the tech world, and it seemed like what was actually changing people's lives the most to me was technology.

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So I wanted to work there, and I kind of had to get over the fact that these were for-profit companies, but I believe they were for-profit companies that were really changing who we were as people and how we interacted. So I moved out to San Francisco. I did not have a job. It took me five months to get that job. So for anyone who was out there looking for jobs for five months, I did not get hired anywhere, and I did a really thorough job search. I loved Google. I loved its mission. I loved the product. It wasn't very well known then.

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It was about 250 people. It was—I don't know—not a household name at all, but it was this little search engine that had a mission of making the world's information accessible to everyone, which seemed like a really good mission. So I went to Google.

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DYLAN MCGEE:
And what was it about you? Why did they want you at Google?

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SHERYL SANDBERG:

I think if you want to know why they wanted me at Google, you'll have to ask them. One thing about Google is, Google is and continues to be—and I actually think this is true of most, if not all of Silicon Valley—it's a very egalitarian place, and it's a place where it's not about formalities or appearances or gender or where you come from. It's about what you can do. So a lot of companies cared that I didn't have any corporate experience. Google didn't care at all. They cared about what I thought or what I believed or what they thought I could do.

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So I think Silicon Valley has been and continues to be a really good place for people to achieve on a very meritocratic basis.

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DYLAN MCGEE:
And what was it like in those early days? When you started, how many employees were there?

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SHERYL SANDBERG:
When I joined Google, Google had about- I think I was employee, like, 260 or something. Your phone extension kind of told you what number employee you were at the time, and there were a couple extras for conference rooms, but I was under 270. Google was one building. Almost all engineers. Many more men than women, and very young. Everyone was roughly Larry and

Sergey's age. I think they were slightly younger than, I don't know, 25-ish, late twenties, maybe early thirties at the time.

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Eric Schmidt had just joined, and he was the one who introduced me to them and helped bring me to the company. At the time, a lot of people said, "What are you doing? The tech bubbles over. You're going to go to a consumer facing internet company?" Then when I was first there, people kept saying, "You guys need an enterprise business. Consumers don't pay, advertising will never support anything on the internet. You guys need an enterprise business." So it was definitely a different situation than we face now.

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DYLAN MCGEE:
And what was your role in helping the company grow?

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SHERYL SANDBERG:
When I first got to Google, I didn't really have a job. I was supposed to be the business unit general manager, but there were no business units and there was nothing to generally manage. But I was working for Eric and Eric said, "Well, let's find something that's helpful for you to do." We didn't have a CFO, and one of the big questions the company faced was, "Should we go public? Should we raise money? How should we talk about ourselves to investors?" We'd never met with investors. So I did that. I pulled together the corporate

story. I organized meetings for Eric and other senior execs and Larry, Sergey with investors.

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We asked questions, investment banks, "Should we go public now? What are we worth? What's the right trajectory?" I spent about three months doing that. Then we launched this thing called AdWords, the CPC model, so the cost per click, automated model, and I believed it was the future of the business. So I went to Omid Kordestani who ran the business side of the company, and I said, "I really want to work for you, and I want to run that. I want to run the automated AdWords program." It was four people at the time, and he said, "Really? Why would you want to do that?"

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He said, "That's a tractor job and you're a Porsche," a story he told thousands of times. He kept saying, "That's a tractor job. It's a very operational job, and you're a Porsche. Don't you want to go do big deals?" I said, "No, I'm happy to be a tractor. I'm happy to take what I think of as the nuts and bolt, operating job of building this business, and I think that's the future of our business." And so I took this job at Google in the first place that at the time was not obvious, and then even within Google, I took a job that I considered a very roll up your sleeves, do the hard work of running something job.

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And it turned out to be a huge part of Google's business. Years later, no one asked why I wanted to do that. So I think it's really important to sometimes do the things that are less than obvious.

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DYLAN MCGEE:
Do you remember knowing Google was successful? Was there a moment when you said, “This is it?”

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SHERYL SANDBERG:
So when I first joined Google, we were worried about running out of cash. Then we did this AOL deal when AdWords was first getting started, a couple months after AdWords launched, and we were going to pay AOL to put our search results and share ad revenue on their site, but we had to make a revenue guarantee because we were competing against what was Overture at the time, which then got bought by Yahoo. It was terrifying. I mean, because that guarantee was enough to bankrupt the company. And literally Eric Schmidt, the CO, would stop by my little cube every couple hours, “How many advertisers do we have? How much money are we making?”

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I'd be like, “Eric, we're making like $3 more than we were last time because you were here an hour ago. Really, we're doing the best we can.” Larry and Sergey and Eric were bold, and they took big risks and that risk really paid off and grew the business. I remember Google was profitable before I joined, and I think cash flow positive, but it was when we made enough money to cover that big AOL deal—I don't remember what month it was—but I remember, oh

my God, we're paying off that guarantee, that we all knew this is going to work.

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DYLAN MCGEE:
And you talk about these three men in your life. What was it like being a woman at Google?

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SHERYL SANDBERG:
Being a woman at Google was always pretty great. The company is obviously run by Eric, Larry and Sergey, but there were a number of very senior women who worked there who were very important. So on the business side, Joan Braddi was the first employee on the business side that- Omid, who hired all the business people, and she ran all of the big deals. Susan Wojcicki was a really important product manager. Marissa Mayer was a really important product manager. Cindy McCaffrey was a really important voice. So there were senior women.

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Susan was really important to me because at Google, I had my first child, and it's scary to have a child and have a job, because you worry that you're going to go on maternity leave and someone is going to take your job away. I was really worried about this, and by the time I had my first child, the part of Google I ran was a big and important part. I was shocked at how many people

came out of the woodwork to volunteer, to cover my job while I was on maternity leave, and that made me really nervous. And the person who was so helpful was Susan because Susan had been at Google since day one.

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It started in her garage. I think she has four kids now. I think she'd had two of them already by the time I had my first, and she sat down with me and said, "Sheryl, you're going to go out. You're going to come back. Your job's going to be here and it's all going to work out," and it was great.

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DYLAN MCGEE:
Did you really take three months off or did you dabble in here and there?

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SHERYL SANDBERG:
My first maternity leave, I took three months off. I would say I probably did more email and stayed more in the loop than I should have looking back. I think I would advise people to do less and I did less my second maternity leave, but I was home. I did not come into the office, actually for a couple meetings, but not on a regular basis for those three months.

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DYLAN MCGEE:
Do you remember the day Google went public?

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SHERYL SANDBERG:

I do remember the day Google went public because I was very focused on not focusing on Google going public. Sergey Brin did something really great. He was on the road show of course, but I think Eric and Larry and all the others rang the bell. Sergey flew back the night before to be on campus and be in his office. So he was sending a message that we are all still working, this is not the beginning- the end, I mean, this is the beginning, I'm going to be here. So I remember being very focused on getting to the office and not talking about it or talking about it and saying, "Okay, we went public, whatever. Let's move on. We have a business to run."

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DYLAN MCGEE:

At some point at Google, you realize that you wanted to explore other opportunities. I want you to tell me about that Christmas party.

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SHERYL SANDBERG:

I met Mark Zuckerberg at Dan Rosensweig's Christmas party in December of 2007. I remember he walked in and we were standing by the door and someone introduced me, but everyone knew who Mark was. We had this very focused, business, interesting conversation about scaling companies and it

was great. People kept coming by to say things like, “Oh, that's a nice dress,” or “Hey, do you want a drink,” and Mark and I nicely were kind of like, “No, we're talking.” We really had a real conversation, and then we agreed—he was going away for vacation, I was going to wait for vacation—we agreed we'd have dinner when he came back.

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DYLAN MCGEE:
Tell me about when he came back. There was a series of, I think it's been called dating.

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SHERYL SANDBERG:
My husband called my dinners with Mark dating. It's kind of funny. So the first dinner we had, we went to a restaurant, a local restaurant called Flea Street Cafe, and Jesse who runs it is now a friend of ours and it's a great part of the history of the company in some ways. So we went there and then realized that I wasn't particularly well known, but there were a lot of people at Google in the area who would know me and Mark was very well known and being seen together in public was a bad thing because then it would be seen that I was talking to Facebook. So that was our one and only time out of the home for a while, and Mark would come to my house for dinner.

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Once or twice a week, he'd show up around 8:00 and around midnight I'd have to literally kick him out because I have to go to sleep, but we really spent just hours and hours and weeks and weeks talking. We didn't actually talk about working together very much. We talked about everything else, what we believed, what's important, how you run a company, how do you scale? What would the business model be for Facebook? All of those things are the kinds of things we talked about.

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DYLAN MCGEE:
So did you feel like you were giving advice or you were working together?

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SHERYL SANDBERG:
I felt like I was interviewing in some ways. Interviewing and getting to know someone, like a very intensive, "Could we be real partners? Could I work for this guy?" I mean, Mark was 23, and so you're going to go work for a 23 year old, you better get to know them. There's a lot of noise about Mark out there. A lot of early lawsuits and people didn't like him, and what was amazing for me is that the person I was getting to know bore no resemblance to any of those rumors out there, and I've since learned really bears no resemblance to any of those persons out, any of those depictions out there. Those just weren't true.

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DYLAN MCGEE:
When you're out having dinners and when you say you were interviewing, it makes me laugh. Did you want the job?

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SHERYL SANDBERG:
When I was first spending all those nights having dinner with Mark, I was certainly intrigued. I wanted him to want me to join Facebook, but I didn't know if I really wanted the job because I had to get to know him. I loved the product. I loved what Facebook was doing, but taking this job was very much going to work for this 23 year old, and I had to figure out if that was a good idea, and it really took some time to get to know him. I really knew that was a big decision. As I got to know him, I wanted the job more and more, and by the time he offered me the job, I was like, "Really, I want this job badly." So I was really happy when he did offer it to me.

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DYLAN MCGEE:
And did he call you? How did he offer it to you?

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SHERYL SANDBERG:

So the way Mark offered me the job is just kind of in the middle of a conversation. I said, "Well, if we work together." and he said, "Well, of course I want you to come work with me." I guess he thought it was, of course, because why would he spend months having dinner with someone if you don't want them to work with them? But for me it was the first time he had said it and I felt great. It was really exciting.

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DYLAN MCGEE:
Did you feel like it was a risk leaving Google and going there?

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SHERYL SANDBERG:
I think it was perceived when I left Google to go to Facebook that it was a risk. I mean, Facebook was certainly off to a great start. Facebook had 70 million users and was growing really quickly, but Facebook also had some trouble. They had the beacon thing. The growth was slowing. There was the famous Microsoft investment where it was valued at $15 billion and people thought, "Oh my God, this is a bubble," and there were questions out there about Mark, to go work for a 23 year old.

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So I think at the time it was perceived as kind of a riskier move, non-obvious, and I think now everyone looks back and thinks it was obvious. I have a friend who was looking for something to do and she's kind of a peer of mine

from a company, and she said, “I want a job like yours.” I said to her, “Of course, but I didn't take a job like mine because it wasn't like this two years ago. If you want a job like mine, you're probably going to have to take something that could be like mine and help it get there.”

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DYLAN MCGEE:
You're at the top of your career. Everyone wants a little piece of your time, and it's really hard. Tell me about the guilt.

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SHERYL SANDBERG:
I do feel guilty. I feel guilty a lot. I think people's mantras are kind of the opposite of our company's mantras, I've noticed this. Different companies I’ve worked at, some where they would say, “We're not hierarchical.” All day, they'd say, “We're not hierarchical.” It was kind of pretty hierarchical. That's why they said that, or some companies will say, “We're not political.” I walked around for the first two years saying, “I don't feel guilty.” Well, of course I feel guilty. That's why I kept saying I don't feel guilty, and now I'm kind of more self-actualized and I realize, “Oh boy, I feel guilty.”

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I worry that there are women who are just as talented and accomplished as I am, millions of them, and they're home with their kids and their kids are getting amazing, amazing care. Is my nanny, when I'm at work, able to do

that? I feel guilty when my daughter—I've told this story publicly—holds my leg and cries for me not to leave. I feel guilty when my son says, “Mommy, put down the Blackberry. Put that down. Talk to me.” That happens far too much. I think all women feel guilty.

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I think what's interesting is I don't know many men that feel guilty. I don't know a lot of men that feel guilty for working full time. And I wonder if there was more shared responsibility if more men would feel some guilt too, or more women would feel less of it. I try to prioritize my children. I joined the Disney board. Part of the reason I joined the Disney board is it was an activity I could basically do with my kids. There are retreats at Disney. They go with me. That makes a big difference.

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When I'm in town, I walk out of this office every day at 5:30 so I'm home for dinner with my kids at 6:00. And interestingly, I've been doing that since I had kids. I did that when I was at Google, I did that here, and I would say it's not until the last year, two years that I'm brave enough to talk about it publicly. So when I first exited maternity leave and came back with my first child, I was busy getting home to have dinner with this baby. So I still got home by 6:00 to have dinner, but I was not very forthcoming about it.

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It was not something I said publicly. Now I certainly wouldn't lie. If someone asked me, “What time do you leave the office,” I would answer the question, but I wasn't running around giving speeches on it. I was showing everyone I

work for that I was working just as hard. I was getting up earlier to make sure they saw my emails at 5:30, staying up later to make sure they saw my emails late. I used to do conference calls at work and pump. Literally, my assistant installed a lock and shades on my door. I would take off my shirt, put on the bra, pump milk on conference calls with people in another building.

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People would be like, “Sheryl, are you on campus?” I'm like, “Oh yeah, my meetings were really tight. I had to stay in the other building.” “What's that noise?” “What noise? Oh, that's a jackhammer outside,” as they could hear the “mmm-mmmm” on the conference call. I wasn't like, “Yeah, you know what? I'm in the other room pumping milk for a baby who's home.” But, I think now I'm much more confident, and so I'm more confident in where I am, and so I'm able to say, “Hey, I am leaving work at 5:30 on days I'm in town to get home and see my kids."

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And I say it very publicly, internally and externally, and I hope that means other women and men, importantly, and men, at Facebook feel comfortable going home to see their kids.

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DYLAN MCGEE:
What's it like being a woman in Silicon Valley?

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SHERYL SANDBERG:
It's interesting. I think the bigger divide in Silicon Valley than gender, is technical ability. So in Silicon Valley, there are engineers and non-engineers and I am a non-engineer. It tends to be that, because there are not enough women going into computer science, that sometimes, not always, but a lot breaks off on gender lines. I mean there are men on the business side and there are women in the tech side, but there are a lot more women on the business side of Silicon Valley than on the tech side.

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I think that not being an engineer thing is a real issue here. I think I'd be better at my job if I were more technical. The person, Mark and I said this, who has my job in the next generation will probably be a computer scientist. So I hope more girls and women out there go study computer science, because it's important.

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DYLAN MCGEE:
What makes you such a great leader?

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SHERYL SANDBERG:
I think the important thing about leadership is remembering that you don't have all the answers. The command and control leadership, I decide, you do what I want, that's not inspiring. It doesn't bring out the best in anyone and it

doesn't lead to the best ideas. So I gave this speech at the Naval Academy this past year. It was a four star lecture, which is their series on leadership, and I was the first woman in business to have ever been invited to do this talk, which is part of why I did it.

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I got on stage and I talked about leading by listening, leading by not making decisions, but helping other people make them, leading by having a very ground up, bottoms up type of culture. Leading a company where when people think Mark and I are wrong, they tell us loudly in our faces. I think those are the kinds of leaders who are going to be the right ones for the next generation. Not in every situation. I mean certainly in the military, there's a lot of command and control that needs to happen,-

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-and even in companies, sometimes we have to make our decisions at the top, but I think the more we can really empower people to do their best work, the better those companies will be.

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DYLAN MCGEE:
Have you ever had a terrible failure that you've learned from?

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SHERYL SANDBERG:

I've had many failures that I've learned a lot from. I was married. I had one of those starter marriages early on and briefly, and realized it was the wrong marriage and that marriage broke up. I was married to a great guy, and that was really painful, really painful because it felt like a very public failure. The people around me were kind of aghast. No one they knew had ever gotten divorced, my parents, my family, my friends, but being willing to admit that this was a mistake and that we both needed to go in a different direction was actually important.

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It got you to worry less about what other people think because at the end of the day, you can't live your life by what other people think. I've had failures in the workplace, bad decisions, famously. It was written about on famously, but it was certainly written about broadly. I made a million dollar mistake at Google. I went to Larry and apologized for this mistake, and Larry was great. Larry said to me, "You know what, Sheryl? Yeah, it's a big mistake. Don't do it again, but I'd rather see you make mistakes of moving too quickly, rather than moving too slowly. These are the mistakes I think are okay because it's doing too much, not doing too little."

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DYLAN MCGEE:
So now, fast forward to you are a mom with a great husband, and I've heard you talk about that, balancing it all. So what kind of household are you creating for your children? What's the work-life balance?

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SHERYL SANDBERG:
So there's no such thing as work/life balance. There's work and there's life, and there's no balance. The most important thing, and I've said this a hundred times and I'll say it a hundred times, is if you're going to marry a man, marry the right one. If you can marry a woman, that's better because the split between two women in a home is actually pretty even, the data shows, but if you're going to be married to a man, marry the right one, who's going to share. The number one thing that needs to change for women to succeed more in the workforce is actually not in the workforce, it's in the home.

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In the United States, if a couple is married- heterosexual, couple married, they both work full time, the woman does three times the amount of childcare and two times the amount of house care the man does, and that's if they both work full time. So essentially, he's got one job and she's got two to three. So when it comes time to drop out of the workforce, who do you think drops out? The person who feels like they can't do it all because they can't. We must change the expectations of who does what in the home.

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Go to any party with- there are families there with little kids, watch the baby cry, watch who gets up. It's pretty much almost always the woman. And when it's not, the man gets these huge praise, “Oh my God, you went to change a

diaper." We still live in expectations around child-rearing, even among very modern families and very modern couples, that the women's default in charge. If the women are default in charge, they will never succeed as much as men do in the workplace. So it's a huge thing that needs to change.

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I did an interview for an undergraduate college women's magazine thing, and I said—here's my quote, put it in big letters—I said, "Don't marry the wrong guy. If you insist on dating the wrong guy, go ahead. Just don't marry him." But find someone to marry who's going to do half. Not just support your career by say things, "Oh, of course you should work," but actually get up and change half the diapers because that's what it takes.

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DYLAN MCGEE:
Are you a feminist?

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SHERYL SANDBERG:
I think I am a feminist. I'm a feminist because I believe in women. I'm a humanist because I believe in people. It's a heavy word, feminism, but it's not one I think we should run from. I feel grateful to the women like Gloria Steinem and Pat Mitchell and Diane Sawyer who came before us and who worked really hard to give us these choices. Judith Rodin, another one. I look

at her and I say thank you. Thank you for all the things you do to shatter the glass ceiling.

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AND So I'm proud to be a feminist. That doesn't mean I believe that for a certain group of women at this point in the company, the traditional answers that the feminist movement has are the right ones. I have my own beliefs on that. In terms of, am I a feminist and that I believe in women? Absolutely.

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DYLAN MCGEE:
What is the message today for women? How does feminism have to change to succeed?

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SHERYL SANDBERG:
I think there are different answers for different women in different places in the world right now. I think we're facing different concerns. If you are born in Afghanistan, or you were born in part of the world where women have no civil rights, we need feminism in its most pure form. What Rwanda did—a horrifying situation of just awful, awful genocide, and also with a lot of rape and horrible things done to women—President came into and said, "I am going to put a certain percentage of women in my cabinet."

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It was brilliant and necessary and the most important kind of affirmative action there is. I'm a huge supporter of it. I think for the very educated women working in corporate America right now, I don't think quotas or traditional quota systems make sense, because I think it actually hurts us more than it helps us. I think for other areas of the economy, for minorities, for other groups, for women who have less education going in, I think some of those quota systems might make sense. So my belief is that you have to look at the situation and find the answers that are correct for those situations right now.

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DYLAN MCGEE:
There's no one size fits all.

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SHERYL SANDBERG:
No one size fits all.

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DYLAN MCGEE:
What's the most meaningful, useful piece of advice you've ever received?

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SHERYL SANDBERG:

Eric Schmidt gave me the best business advice I ever received. He said growth. Growth is what creates careers. Fast growth, everything goes well for everyone. Slow growth, nothing goes well for anyone. Worry more about growth than you worry about your position. It's great advice. I see all kinds of people wanting more senior positions and- rather than worrying about the underlying growth of the company, you're always better off taking more junior position in a company that's growing quickly than a more senior one in a slow and growing company.

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I did this. When I left Google, I had offers to be the CEO of lots of companies. I came to be the COO, the second person here, and it was a great decision, but I cared more about what the company was doing and the growth prospects than I cared about my own position.

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DYLAN MCGEE:
What did you want to be when you grew up?

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SHERYL SANDBERG:
I wanted to run a nonprofit. I always thought I would run a social movement, which meant basically work in a nonprofit. I never thought I'd work in the corporate sector.

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DYLAN MCGEE:
And how, as a kid, do you get that instilled in you, that you want to do a not-for-profit? I don't think I knew what a not-for-profit was until college.

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SHERYL SANDBERG:
My parents basically ran a nonprofit out of our home. They were involved in the Soviet Jewry movement, so the movement to help people who were Jewish or other religious or political prisoners in the Soviet Union, which didn't tolerate religion or strong beliefs, and a lot of these people were imprisoned, they were sentenced to Siberia, terrible things happened to them for having beliefs other than the communist government. My parents were really active, and they believed in freedom. They said that every American should have to go to Russia and see what it was like to live in communism so they could appreciate the freedom that we were given as Americans. So I always thought I would do something that was kind of a social movement.

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DYLAN MCGEE:
What was your first paying job?

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SHERYL SANDBERG:

My first paying job, oh God. I worked in my dad's office as a kid. I was the person in charge of the office on Saturdays, and I would open the office and then they would see patients on Saturdays and I would check the patients in and check the patients out. He was an ophthalmologist, read their glasses on the little machine, but I felt very responsible. At 16, I had the keys to the office. I was the first one in, the first one out. I then worked in a clothing store in the mall right before college because I wanted to earn extra money so I had more spending money in college.

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So the day I got into college, I marched off to the mall and got myself a job in this little clothing store. My mom told me just last week actually, that I never told her I was going to get a job. I just went to get a job. I think those experiences are really important. I think if you're going to run companies, it's really good to have had a first line sales role, or role where you are just taking care of things so you can always remember that there are real people in all the jobs in your company.

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DYLAN MCGEE:
What person that you've never met has had the biggest influence on your life?

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SHERYL SANDBERG:

I think if I had to say the person who I've never met, who had the most influence on my life, it's my great-grandparents who had the guts to leave their homes, which were basically shtetls in Eastern Europe and take what were horrifyingly, awful journeys to the United States. I just read my great-grandmother's diary. I just got it. My mother found it and scanned it and sent it to us. She described the journey from where they were coming from and what is now Austria-Hungary to the United States,-

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-and they were not well off because they were Jews, so they were kind of in a shtetl, but they were fine. They had enough food and clothing. They got on this boat with my great-grandmother- I'm sorry, it's my great great-grandmother who did this. My great-grandmother was a little girl, and she wrote in the diary they got on, they were steerage class, there was not enough food, the kids were sick and she wrote that what made her saddest about this three week journey was her children who got on this ship clean and well fed and got off this ship with vermin all over them.

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I feel emotional talking about it, but she changed my life by taking an unbelievable journey to a place where I would have more opportunity, and that's true of all of my great-grandparents. They all made that choice to come to this country.

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DYLAN MCGEE:

Do you think they'd be proud of their great-granddaughter?

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SHERYL SANDBERG:
I hope so. I hope they'd be proud of all of the offspring they had. Oprah said it this week. At the Sun Valley Conference, she got on stage and said, “If you were a woman born into this country, you are the luckiest woman in the world,” and that is true. If you are born to the United States, some of us are luckier than others. We come from all different families, but just starting off here is a huge, huge, huge opportunity and one I think we need to be really grateful for and really be focused on helping women in the other parts of the world as well.

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