

Strategy: Women & Relationships

I was reading a novel by Anita Shreve, it's called *The Weight of Water*. Beautifully done, as far as I was concerned. Many would be surprised I was reading it. My wife calls it "chick lit" and is always surprised when I read something like that.

What I loved about it was the complexity of the characterization. I don't want to go too far with this, but I want to go too far with this. Women write characterization incredibly well, by and large (as in 99% of the time men don't). And what that is is really an incredible telescope on issues that deal with men and women working together as executives, women's leadership styles versus men's, selling things to women and so on.

I know people have said it a million times, and sometimes it's said in a jokey fashion, women look at relationships with more depth and complexity than men do. And it is astonishingly important to understand that. Men may *say* they have fabulous relationships, but most of it, to be fair to us, involves who's got the most statistics from the latest football game, or baseball game? Or how long was the fish that you caught on opening day of trout season?

And so if you're working with women in leadership positions and of course of women are working with men—and most especially, which is my narrow interest, if you are developing products for, and selling products to women, consumer or commercial—focus on the relationships. And if you're a guy, understand that you will never understand. And thank you, Anita Shreve.