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There is no place for gender bias in the auto repair industry

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I don't suppose there is a way to cover this topic without getting in trouble but I have never been one to avoid a touchy subject. I just read an article in one of those newspapers that likes to write provocative rather than balanced articles.

Why did I read it? Because the article was about a young woman who decided to leave her career as an engineer and become a "mechanic" because, "I was tired of getting scammed by the male-dominated auto-care industry."

Before I start my tirade, I want you to know how I feel about women working in the industry. I am 100 percent in favor of women doing whatever they want to in auto repair, except for bashing all men who work in it. Those of you who know me are well aware that I really have no concern about the secondary chromosome you carry. The truth is the majority of the professionals in this industry don't either.

We may not be sure what the protocol is when you are working alongside a female technician and a cast iron cylinder head has to come off an engine, do we offer to help or allow her to struggle with a part that is half of her body weight? Is it wrong to in turn ask a female technician with small hands to help fish a cabin air filter out of a space clearly not designed for the size many men's hands? According to my friend Bogi Lateiner of 180 Auto in Phoenix, that is one of the beauties of men and women working side by side, our differences can benefit one another in the service bay.

Back to my story about this article. There seems to be this new norm that if a business is male-dominated it is somehow evil and if it is female-dominated it should be celebrated. I am sorry, but if the goal is revenge for years of backward thinking on the part of men then go ahead and celebrate. I know a lot of women in this industry who are held in high regard by both sexes, and I would think that for anybody that would be the goal.

When anyone attempts to gain notoriety or position by undermining an entire group of people it should be pretty obvious that this type of stereotyping is wrong, but it seems like the message is, "Good for you! You go girl!"

Speaking for all of the repair professionals who offer the exact same fair and detailed information and service, regardless of sex or any other excuse for being “scammed” by repair shops, it’s time to stop being a victim and start doing your homework. An abundance of X chromosomes does not make you instantly honest or competent any more than having a Y chromosome makes you knowledgeable of engineering or dishonest. You have to earn your reputation, not have it handed to you.

Often the proposition that is presented to men is that we need to apologize for what men who lived one or two generations ago might have thought. Who cares about that? We don’t live then. We are here now.

Women provide balance to the work place in so many ways, but so do men. It is pretty clear we are intended to fit together. Why do some people work so hard over-thinking this?

If my 10-year-old daughter, Chase said, “Dad, I want to work on cars.” I would tell her she better be good at it because that’s how we do it in the Seyfer family. Oh, and greasy hands and dirty fingernails are not a right of passage. That notion is as outdated as the idea that women can’t fix cars.

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