

gospel, though, has infuriated a wide swath of critics. A "backward march to bald-faced sexism," *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Stephanie Salter called it, while Star Jones and Barbara Walters trashed Hollands's theories on ABC's *The View* ("I never would have gotten this job if I acted that way," says Jones). Dr. Jean Baker Miller, director of a business and professional training institute at Massachusetts's Wellesley College, says, "It's not just women who abuse people at work. We need to stop the cycle of bullying for everyone."

In fact, Hollands is well aware that there is a double standard: Screaming and yelling by aggressive male executives is more readily tolerated, while forceful women are often seen as cruel and maniacal. To charges she is setting women back 50 years, Hollands replies that she is just being practical. "Relationships are everything in business," she says. "If you're frightening the people that you need to help you, then you

might want to soften your voice."

Hollands comes by her knowledge of Bully Broads firsthand: She once was one. The Hayward, Calif., native learned that "women could get things done and get ahead," she says, after her father, Carl Madsen, a building contractor and inventor, died when she was 15, forcing her mother, Helene, to work as a clothing saleswoman. Hollands earned a master's in counseling from San Jose State University in 1974 and began working as a marriage and family counselor the next year, after divorcing her first husband. "I was focused and in control," says Hollands, who ran her practice while raising four children. Remarried in 1979 to Don Wuerslein, an engineer (he died of lymphoma four years ago), she founded an executive coaching firm, the Growth and Leadership Center, in 1980, and often indulged in such Bully Broad behavior as dressing her staff down in public. After asking employees to do an anonymous critique of her, she real-

ized how her demeanor affected them and began changing her ways.

Hollands, who oversees a staff of 20, noticed that her female clients, many of whom were sent to the center by frustrated bosses, had similar concerns about how coworkers perceived them. "I was hearing the same complaints," she says. "So I thought, 'Why not cull a support group from my clients?'" Within months of her first group two years ago she had identified several types of Bully Broads: "There's the ice queen, who just listens and who everyone thinks is withholding judgment," she says. "There's the sounding-off tyrant, who always yells. And then there's the sarcastic one, the put-down artist. Most people are a combination of these."

Initially, Hollands's advice tends to elicit groans—particularly the part about crying. "Don't do it like a man and try to hide it," she says. "Crying shows that you're passionate and human." Still, Desa Zraick,

45, a top Sun Microsystems saleswoman who joined the group after being passed over for promotion, won't be tearing up at work anytime soon. "Some of this stuff seems insipid to me," she says. "But I've gotten smarter about seeing how I affect everyone around me."

A grandmother of seven who loves watching women's pro basketball in her free time, Hollands insists "I'm not asking anyone to act like dolts. Take what works for you." And while she good-naturedly shrugs off criticism most of the time, occasionally she will roll her eyes with mild exasperation—very ice queen and a no-no for recovering Bully Broads like Hollands. "Hey, I'm trying to get better," she says with a laugh. "I'm working on it."

- Alex Tresniowski
- Maureen Harrington



"My kids say, 'Grandma is less bossy now,'" says daughter Laura (center, with Hollands, her brother Todd and husband, Ron, in Hollands's home last month).