



THE GOOD FIGHTER

This month, **Senator Barbara Boxer** shares the keys to her highly effective 30-plus years in Congress and demonstrates the importance of looking to history to fight today's big issues

In the beginning of Senator Barbara Boxer's memoir-cum-advice book, *The Art of Tough: Fearlessly Facing Politics and Life* (Hachette Books), she lists the wildest insults hurled her way over the years by politicians, pundits, and the general public—from a “detestable femi-Naz” to “the biggest doofus ever.” But above all, Boxer thinks that a 2005 statement from Ann Coulter best sums up just how vile some public discourse has become: “Barbara Boxer is a great candidate for the Democratic Party: female and learning disabled.”

“When you're out to make change,” Boxer contends, “you're going to come up against people who will try to shut you up, shut you down, stop you.” In *The Art of Tough*, just out in paperback, Boxer equips her readers, particularly women, with the tools she's acquired that have enabled her to persevere against extreme opposition—especially in the 10 years she served in the United States House of Representatives and 24 in the Senate representing California.

Raised in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, Boxer went to public school and graduated from Brooklyn College with a degree in econom-

ics. In a typical 1962 move, she got married at age 21 to her college sweetheart, Stewart Boxer. Less typically, Boxer spent the next three years as the sole breadwinner, working on Wall Street as a broker at J. R. Williston and Beane while her husband finished law school. In 1965, when the couple visited Boxer's sister in San Francisco, they fell in love with the Bay Area and decided to head west.

While raising her two children, Boxer started organizing community efforts against the Vietnam War. In 1972, she ran for a spot on the Marin County Board of Supervisors—her “first and only losing campaign”: While running a fundraising drive that requested “just two dollars” from supporters, she was shocked when she opened an envelope from one of the country's biggest Democratic donors—a woman—and found a check...for two dollars. “Barbara, you get what you ask for,” the woman later told her. After a two-year stint as a local newspaper reporter, then two years working for San Francisco congressman John Burton, she again ran for the board of supervisors—and won. In 1982, when Burton stepped down, he asked her to run for his seat. With the slogan

“Barbara Boxer Gives a Damn,” in 1983, she was sworn in to the 98th Congress. Of the 435 House members, she was one of just 22 women.

Over the next decade, Boxer became known as a fierce proponent of environmental and civil rights. When the Reagan administration failed to address the AIDS crisis, Boxer went on record: “Anyone who knows how to stop the transmission of AIDS and refuses to talk about it is guilty of murder!” “As my mother said, you can tell someone to go to hell,” she says, “but if you do it in the right way, they'll say thank you.”

On the heels of her public support for Anita Hill during the Clarence Thomas hearings, Boxer's successful 1992 Senate bid helped launch the so-called Year of the Woman: When former San Francisco mayor Dianne Feinstein also won her race, California became the first state in history with two female senators, tripling the number of women in the Senate. During her 34-year tenure in Congress, which ended in January, Boxer was awarded a 100 percent rating from NARAL Pro-Choice America and a 96 percent rating from the National Organization for Women; sponsored the 2004 Freedom of Choice Act; and introduced the 2015 International Violence Against Women Act. EMILY's List president Stephanie Schriock has called her “one of the most steadfast champions for women” in the Senate.

Now, even in her “retirement,” Boxer remains a political force. She's focused on winning back Congress for the Democrats in the 2018 midterm election, where she hopes to regain 27 seats by fundraising for candidates like Wisconsin senator Tammy Baldwin. Live in a state where you think your vote matters less, because everyone else votes the same way? Boxer suggests adopting another state's candidate and sending financial support.

All month long on ELLE.com, read Boxer's tenets on toughness. If you've been waiting to get involved in government, Boxer thinks there's no better time to start. “I can tell you what's at stake now in one word,” she says. “Everything.”

—Keziah Weir



SOUND COUNSEL

This August, get inspired by Boxer's most memorable experiences helping run the country

DON'T BACK DOWN

August 7
Compromise is great—unless it puts what you know is right in jeopardy. Boxer recounts a 1951 incident when, at 11 years old, she confronted a shoplifting friend.



HOLD THE RAGE

August 14
While outrage can be a useful driving force, Boxer documents how acting in anger will rarely get you what you want. Here's how to keep your cool and be effective.



ACCEPT THE BEST

August 21
Never settle for less than love, Boxer advises. Speaking truth to power can lead to loneliness if you don't have the right people by your side. Here's how she's always made sure that she did.

SING IT LOUD

August 28
Yes, sing! In office, Boxer was known for her political lyrics that fit famous melodies—whether chastising John McCain for his environmental policies or lobbying for access to the men-only House gym.

