

SELF-LEADERSHIP • FEMALE POWER • LEADING WHILE SILENCED • EQUITABLE OPPORTUNITIES

choice

the magazine of professional coaching

BREAKING *the* GLASS CEILING

Coaching women
in leadership



VOLUME 18 • NUMBER 2
choice-online.com

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FEMALE POWER!

9 skills to create a supportive community

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Leadership is intentional work. If we, as coaches, are to help our clients achieve excellence, we cannot expect our own personal and professional support to come from our clients.

Just as we ask our clients to work on emotional intelligence, authenticity, well-defined boundaries of accountability, clear and direct communication, problem-solving, decision-making, self-awareness, and self-management, so we, as coaches must do the same. We must reach out to leaders we admire, as we create our own community of advisors, mentors and colleagues to support, inspire and encourage us.

As women, it can be challenging to identify our unique, personal style of leadership. You may feel that the old, hierarchical style of leadership doesn't fit

you, but you're not sure how to balance emotion with strong leadership. To answer that need, there's a new feminine style of leadership emerging – one that is based on building a supportive community as your foundation.

When we build our own supportive community, we can reach our potential to maximize our own performance. Building community is a powerful, yet subtle, influence that brings out the best in each member of a team or group to create a synergy of the whole accomplishing much more than any individual could. We say it's a feminine style of leadership because it pays attention to the human element, taking advantage of the behaviors, characteristics, and skills that women have quietly used for centuries to successfully guide their families.

Hopefully, you already have a supportive community in place with women who you admire and respect as part of your inner circle. However, in order to nourish your community of feminine leaders and keep it from stagnating, you must continue to master the following skills. These skills will magnetically attract the kind of like-minded women you want to both learn from and support.

1 Practice Mindfulness and Self-Awareness

Only you can control your reactions to others. Learn to identify how your body sensations reveal the way your emotions affect you. This requires you to slow down and curiously observe how your body is shaped by your thoughts, beliefs, and feelings. For

example, when threatened, you might cross your arms. When stressed, you may tighten your neck, shoulders, stomach, and hunch over.

Learning to recognize, name and experience each emotion, without judgment, gives you the power to reject unhelpful emotional reactions and adopt a more positive state, or way of being. Feminine leaders don't let everyday stressors make them rigid in their thinking and physiology. They've learned to soften the body and figuratively roll with the punches.

2 Know and Accept Yourself

An effective coach or leader models the behavior desired for their client or team. It's not a skill set you put on and take off. It's who you are intrinsically. The old "do as I say, not as I do" simply doesn't work. When you hide behind a persona and show the world a censored version of self, you're giving away your power.

It's important to regularly reconnect with your purpose and values. Embrace who you are now AND actively unlock the full potential of who you can dynamically become through mindful, personal growth.

3 Develop Healthy Interdependence

We begin life totally dependent. In our teen years, we strive for independence. The next stage in the natural progression of human growth is interdependence – learning that there is a social responsibility for playing and working together nicely. It's not all about "me"; more is accomplished by the synergy of "we."

Feminine leaders hone their sensitivity to the mood in a room, working toward understanding each person. You motivate by making an honest assessment and respectfully communicating the strengths you appreciate and where there are areas for improvement. Feminine leaders aren't afraid to show emotions when appropriate.

4 Fearlessly Shine the Spotlight on Other Women

Feminine leaders look for ways to connect, to hear and see others. We seek to inspire and build, thereby multiplying our impact, rather than separate and diminish our efforts. People respond to this caring energy. It fosters creativity and excellence, as others feel accepted and valued.

Don't be too busy to shine a spotlight on others. Make a daily practice of verbalizing or writing your gratitude for the way others participate in the world.

5 Model Healthful Living

A healthy body is the powerhouse behind attaining meaningful aspirations and dreams. Without clean water, nutritious food, and energizing exercise, the human body can't function properly. When you practice and model wellness you empower yourself, and by example, others to be the best version possible. Also, it's essential to nurture a powerful spirit that lets dreams soar, never giving up.

6 Invest in Yourself

Before you can give to others in your community, it's vital to have a continual commitment to developing self. This can be challenging because as women, we're often juggling multiple responsibilities and end up lacking the time, energy, or focus to do deep personal work.

Make a commitment to yourself to get away and seriously explore and clarify what you want. Visit lovely surroundings where you can de-stress and think deeply without distraction.

7 Strengthen Your Convictions

When you're strongly convinced that what you do and say matters and that what you offer is of great value to others, your energy shifts and you become more attractive and persuasive. The people you work with feel more at ease. It engenders a feeling of security.

This is essential as a leader, as it helps everyone concentrate on doing their best work because they see that everything is under control.

8 Be an Intentional Communicator

Take ownership of your career. You determine your vision, goals, and path. When you set intentions, you're sending a message to the universe and yourself about who you want to be, what you wish to contribute and how you choose to touch the lives of others. No one can do it for you. Don't let people underestimate you, because of the way you present yourself.

We recommend learning Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) techniques to help you earn respect and inspire trust, so people want to work with you, recommend you and promote you.

9 Be a Lifelong Learner

As a leader, complacency is dangerous since too many people rely on you. Leaders never stop learning. When lifelong learning is your way of life, you'll have a competitive edge in today's job market. You won't feel stuck in your profession, because you know you can learn new skills that will advance your career and make you highly sought after as an expert in your field. You never need to feel stuck when you can draw from talent within your community.

Even if you don't yet have an empowering support system, you can build your own, by being open to making new connections, reaching out, conversing, and sharing your hopes, dreams, and ambitions. For example, the authors of this article met and connected at a coach development program. Since then we have been working to build a business to empower women to be fierce leaders.

We, as women, have the privilege – indeed, the responsibility – to use our community to empower each new generation to come. Are you up for the challenge? •