



My Best Advice To Women Looking To Succeed In A Leadership Role

Being a leader can be challenging, but it can also be extremely rewarding when successfully accomplished. Leadership is a journey, not a destination. If you are not where you desire to be in your journey, ask yourself this important question, “At this moment, what do I need most to find success?” Sometimes the things holding you back are not the big-ticket challenges. It’s incredibly important for you to be totally honest with yourself. Self-awareness is a necessary skill for effective leadership and it’s required for you to shift thinking and behavior. If you can’t clearly identify the areas where you may need improvement, try using this list to check off key areas that I’ve identified through my coaching practice as potential stumbling blocks for women in leadership roles.

⇒ Build, own, protect and promote your personal brand

Building a positive reputation is important. Operate with the highest degree of integrity. Remember that your reputation will follow you for a lifetime.

⇒ Know your worth & value it

Many women enter the workplace at a lower salary level than our male counterparts. Research your industry, talk to your colleagues and educate yourself to your industry wage standards. Ask for more than you may actually be worth, men do it all the time. If you discover that you are severely underpaid, ask for more. If you don’t ask, you will not receive. And, never fear the loss of your job. There is always another one.

⇒ Don’t fall into the perfectionist trap

Many women have thought, even me, that we must be perfect to advance and to be seen as a strong leader. Truth is, some of the most important lessons and learning come out of failures, setbacks and losses. Do not confuse perfectionism with performance. Goals are measured on the outcomes, not on the attempts to get there.

⇒ **Become respected as an activator**

Actions are the key to productivity. If you don't activate, you cannot produce results. Balanced decision-making in a timely manner is important. But doing nothing, doesn't demonstrate strong leadership skills. Don't be afraid to make a decision, own it and hold yourself accountable. If it's a good one, you win sooner, if it's a wrong one, you'll get there later.

⇒ **Embrace your authenticity**

It's perfectly natural and normal for leaders to admire other leaders and to adopt key behaviors and skills. However, it's equally important for you to create your own set of admirable traits and skills that your followers will want to emulate. We are all different, unique and have our own approach to life. Don't be afraid to be your true self. You never know who's watching and growing.

⇒ **Be bold and brave**

It's easy to talk about being brave until you actually need to step into those shoes. Strong leaders have the ability to conquer fear when it's staring you in the face. Speaking up and having a voice is critical to how others perceive you. If you can't speak up, how can you be trusted to be an advocate for your team when most needed. Boldness doesn't equate to arrogance or to unprofessionalism. Boldness has its place. It can serve as a complement to boosting confidence.

⇒ **Know when it's best to listen and when it's time to speak**

Most successful leaders have mastered the art of listening. It's hard to take in the facts necessary for decision-making if you are always talking and not really listening. It's a balancing act. Having a voice is important, but knowing when to use it is critical.

⇒ **Lift other women on your journey**

Women enter the workplace at a rate five times higher than men. However, when you examine the rise into leadership positions, we drop off significantly by manager/director level. In the C-suite, there are less than .01% of women occupying those roles. How do we change this paradigm? More women must be promoted, paid equally, and lifted into decision-making positions. We must stop seeing other females as the enemy or competition, and we must take an active role in helping other women succeed. Whether it's through mentoring, sponsoring or simply eliminating back-stabbing, we have an obligation to help other women succeed.