

Leading Hearts

By Gail Ostrishko

Female business leaders expect the best of themselves and others, which results in self-fulfilling prophecies. They have a genuine and sincere desire to have a positive and permanent impact on the world, grounded in the courage to stand up for what they truly believe. Effective leaders are committed to building people and organizations from the inside out. While each individual is unique in personality and leadership style, there are several characteristics common to successful female business leaders that set them apart from their colleagues. Though these characteristics are not gender specific, they tend to be associated with women more often than with men.

Passion and Heartfelt Commitment to a Clear Purpose

Success takes risk, risk takes courage and courage grows from a strong faith in your purpose. Women business leaders clearly value and focus on giving of themselves and investing in the potential of others. Many successful women report listening to their hearts and trusting their intuition to guide and prepare them with the courage necessary to embrace risk with confidence. They are clear regarding their values and focused on their purpose, which manifests as passion.

What are you passionate about?

What is your purpose?

The answers to these questions, though elusive, are crucial in defining and achieving success. Look at your life and the areas in which you invest your resources. Passion is the desire to 'pass it on' and evolves from a deep sense of knowing what is most important in your life. The clearer we are about our values, the easier it is to commit to them fully.

Maternal Management Style

Women are naturally hardwired and socialized to be intuitive and nurturing. Though previously women rose to leadership roles as a result of emulating a traditional command and control style characteristic of their male counterparts. Now women are adopting a more inclusive and motivational approach to empower and mentor people toward reaching their full potential. They are leading by example.

What is your management style?

Do you make decisions with your head or with your heart?

The most effective leaders know that people are internally motivated by a variety of personal wants and universal needs. Meeting those needs requires a commitment to understanding and empowering individuals and groups to become self-governing. Actions speak louder than words, which means our behavior is our most powerful management tool.

Focus on Relationships

Most female leaders have a deep respect and commitment to understanding and meeting the needs of their customers. They realize that bringing out the best in others begins with helping others see the best in themselves. They value relationships over results and lead by example.

What value do you place on relationships?

What behaviors communicate that value?

Relationships are at the core of our effectiveness in the world. Our interactions and connections with others are the foundation of our ability to make things happen. Relationships are multifaceted, and require great emotional intelligence and investment to develop and maintain. People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. Knowing people from the inside out prepares us to support and empower their efforts. Seek first to understand, then to be understood, and your relationships will flourish.

Put Knowledge into Action

Successful businesswomen align themselves with intelligent focused people, learn from them and apply their wisdom. Knowledge is abundant and available to everyone. Wisdom is the application of knowledge. It is the consistent follow through of simple effective behaviors that sets leaders apart from their colleagues. They focus on areas that are in their control, the main one being attitude

What are your primary sources of knowledge and experience?

What is the wisest action you have taken?

Knowledge without action is useless. Lack of follow through is often the missing link separating the ordinary from extraordinary leaders. Be clear about what you know and put that wisdom into action consistently. Keep a written record of new experiences, lessons learned and potential application. Help others learn from their own experience.

Give Back

Successful women leaders have a sincere desire to share themselves with others by sharing their knowledge and experience. The popularity of mentoring programs has dramatically increased in the past decade, and most organizations have some structure in place. Altruism and community service have become the fabric of corporate culture, with many organizations offering employees paid time off to volunteer. Servant leaders freely share their time, talents and gifts with others and realize great intrinsic reward for their investment.

What gifts do you have and how do you share them with others?

What legacy do you want to leave as a result of your investment in life?

Giving is a fine art, cultivated by our desire to appreciate and connect with others and ourselves. Recognize the

investment you make in sharing your gifts through relationships, career development and community involvement. Give yourself credit for the value you add to every experience and relationship you encounter. Seek avenues for giving in ways that have special meaning for you. The reciprocity of giving is compounded by our heartfelt investment in our core values.

Strong faith and loving support of family and friends are consistently cited as universal underpinnings crucial to success in business and in life. Strong leaders of both genders often report that the love and pride involved in raising their families far overshadow any professional award or accomplishment. Women are raising the bar on the definition of professionalism, leadership and success. They take an in depth multi-faceted approach to building people and organizations from the inside out. The most successful and effective leaders know and demonstrate this timeless truth:

It doesn't matter what great things you accomplish if you don't have inner peace, and if you have inner peace, it doesn't matter what great things you accomplish.

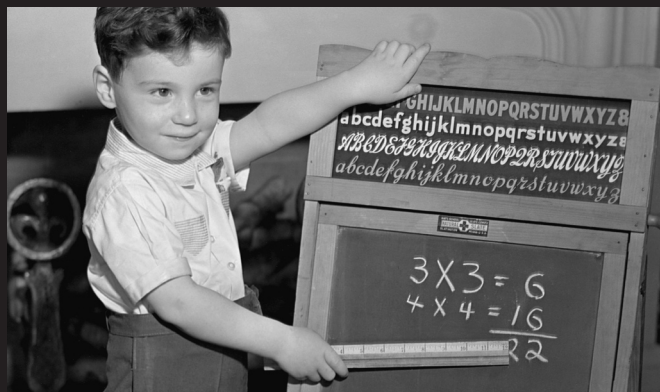
Inner peace is often the by-product of commitment to a clear and heartfelt purpose, investment in strong relationships, learning from experience and sharing our individual and collective gifts.

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Gail Ostrishko specializes in building relationships from the inside out through engaging and inspiring learning adventures. Anchored by a core belief that the best things in life aren't things, and grounded in years of experience as a counselor, facilitator, speaker and coach, Gail's gift for recognizing, articulating and applying universal principles through personalized experiences is unparalleled. Ranging from customized keynotes and corporate seminars, to intimate retreats and life coaching, these lively learning experiences are guaranteed to engage your mind, body and spirit in a very powerful and permanent way. Engage with Gail via email at gailo@gailo.com ○●○

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