

MEN SHOULD LEARN FROM WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

Women's leadership is crucial to the success of your company. In this paper, I outline what I am learning from my current work and relationships with women clients. I appreciate these terrific examples of the way emotional intelligence creates highly effective leaders.

Women do not make good bosses?

First, let me dispel this old myth that "women do not make good bosses." In the past, and maybe in some small degree today, it may be true that some women have become hardened, or have changed from their natural selves as they have progressed in leadership. In many cases, this toughness is due to the long, hard fight they have endured in order to succeed and climb the corporate ladder in male dominated environments. Also, we must recognize that women have had too few role models in their companies, and perhaps they have never had female role models. Finally, please note that in my experience, I have known many more men who are not effective leaders.

I've stated many times that companies would have better financial results, stronger and more aligned cultures, and greater loyalty if leadership were shared between women and men, if both men and women would lead with their natural leadership qualities and skills, and learn from one another.

In my Common Sense Leadership consulting and coaching practice, I am blessed to have women clients who are top-notch people.

The women described below exemplify **servant leadership** – the natural feeling that one wants to serve first, to make sure that other people's priority needs are being served – and **emotional intelligence** – which includes self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. Note: I do not use the clients' names, as that is not appropriate, yet these descriptions are real.

Caring and firm leadership

The first client I want to highlight is an example of absolute devotion to one's responsibilities. **This woman leads with heart and a caring attitude, yet she can be firm and decisive when addressing difficult problems and people.** Usually, though, her firmness is not necessary, as her people do not want to let her down. She has built an amazing team around her. It is a large and successful company and her quiet leadership, with no ego or agenda, has a lot to do with its success.

When we began our coaching, she set out to build her inner confidence. As the only woman at the male-dominated senior management level, **she felt she needed to be more assertive** to assure that decisions made were in the best long-term interests of the company and its people. Remember, women in general are more risk aware and averse. **Through her commitment to asking purposeful questions, offering well-founded advice and sound judgment, she has gained additional respect from all of her colleagues.**

Servant values make a difference

A second client is successful, knowledgeable, hard working, and is doing a great job for her clients. Yet she, too, is doing so without ego or personal agenda. She is all about the team. She is readily available to help them feel good about themselves and to have success. She has a heart of gold, always thanks others for their hard work and contributions, and congratulates them on their successes, large and small. **And while very busy herself, she makes time to mentor those coming up behind her.**

When I asked about her values, as in what is most important to her in her business, she said delivering superior client service, having a sense of happiness in her work, and being effective as a leader and teammate. Her work ethic includes helping and teaching others and offering ongoing feedback, so they may learn, grow and enjoy success.

Servant leadership can change organizational culture

A third client to showcase here is a driven and highly successful professional. She expects a lot from herself and her team members, and she is ready to do whatever she can to help them succeed. **She treats each team member as an individual, and asks people what he or she need and want from her as their boss.** She truly serves her teammates as well as her clients.

In our coaching sessions, we have discussed her resolve to build a winning culture in which everyone works together with honesty, mutual admiration and commitment. She contributes to this culture by her example, by admitting that she has a strong personality – which as the boss required some humility, a sign of strength! Her people greatly admire her honesty and commitment to professional growth. They can see that she is not only about her clients, but also about the team – that the quality of her relationships with each of them is vitally important.

Setting high expectations and providing support can be powerful

A fourth client has had enormous achievements and leadership success at a young age. She has built a highly capable team of devoted professionals and wants each of them to shine. Her team senses this and are always ready to go the extra mile for her. She is appreciative and proud of each of them, and she comes out of her office and talks with them as much as she can. Yes, she sets high expectations of them, as well as for herself. Supported team members will try their best to live up to expectations.

When her team gets together, they share their priorities, their progress on responsibilities and projects, and they seek and welcome ideas and constructive feedback. Good communication is vitally important to a well functioning team and to quality relationships in business. Thanks to her leadership, she has developed a well-informed and dedicated team that is setting the standard in their field.

How fortunate am I to be able to learn from these women, who are truly exceptional leaders!

About The Author



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