



WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP PUBLICATION
#MoreWomenLeaders

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A VOICE OUT OF POVERTY

There's no doubt we're going through a tough time now. Fuel, food and power prices are up and it's getting harder to make ends meet. No one likes times like these and yet, this is often where leaders emerge. And the need for more women in leadership has never been greater. Dealing with adversity builds and exposes exactly the skills that are needed in leadership as I know from my youth.

I grew up in an environment of oppressive poverty and abuse in a slum in India. But through it, and with the support and guidance of my wonderful mother, I developed the skills that helped me move out of the slum, build my own career, and support my family. For me two skills stand out as essential for all women leaders.

Your voice must be heard.

You can have all the best ideas and processes to help move people forward but unless they listen, understand, and value your thoughts, your voice will never be heard.

As a shy young girl, I grew up in everyone's shadows afraid to speak up. But when my new-born sister was dying, I had to find a way to get her milk. I stood and shouted at a street vendor "I need milk!". At first, he said "No! Milk does not come free so go away". But I refused to be ignored and persisted. In the end I got the milk, and it was the act that saved my sister's life.

It was also the act that made me realise I could speak up and influence my future. My new book is entitled "A Voice Out of Poverty"

because that's how I developed my voice. You have a voice too. If you're not using it now, then practice speaking up to get your opinions valued. Before women make it to leadership positions, they start by influencing organisations with their voice. If you're as determined as I was, eventually your voice will to be heard, understood, and valued and you're on your way to being a leader.

You must have resilience.

The most destructive part of developing as a woman leader is the constant knockbacks you'll get. They can sap your energy, enthusiasm, and drive.

My youth was a catalogue of constant change. Every time we found somewhere safe to shelter, we were moved out. At one time our home was beneath an external staircase by a public water pump and sewer. My mother always felt that if we were safe and together, we could get through anything. And we did. I think it was this constant facing and defeating challenges that taught me that whatever I faced, I could survive and then thrive again.

I suggest you spend as long looking back at the challenges you've met and defeated as you do looking forward at the current challenge. That will show you that you have the strength and resilience to take the knockbacks.

There's no doubt I had a tough childhood, but my success grew out of it. If you build these essential skills your success as a woman leader will grow out of them too.

THOUGHT LEADERS



Alexandra Ladbury is Head of School at Park Lane Primary School and Nursery. With a passion for nurturing children's learning and developing a positive and wholesome environment for them to learn in, Alexandra is laying strong foundations for Park Lane pupils' futures. Alexandra attended Birmingham City University, before completing her PGCE at University College Birmingham. Alexandra went on to join Park Lane as a class teacher for year one pupils and quickly rose through the ranks, teaching Reception and Year three, before becoming Deputy Head in 2018, and finally Head of School in 2020.



Dr Diahanne Rhiney is an award-winning Social Change Advocate, Activist, qualified Psychologist, Global Keynote Speaker, and an astute businesswoman whose Social Change Agency - Naked Truth, Domestic Abuse Charity - Strength With In Me Foundation (S.W.I.M), The Baton Awards – celebrating female achievers from diverse social groups, and 'Behind her Eyes' Podcast that showcases real issues successful women worldwide face, are amongst some of her biggest achievements. She is also an attributed Author of two self-empowerment books 'All about Me' - an authentic storytelling journey of life experiences underpinned by her concept 'Me-Ology™', designed to unearth the truth about who we really are and redefining the pillars of self-esteem; and "I am Intersectionality" – a powerful insight into the various types of systemic oppression in society and how to overcome them using inclusion and diversity.



Jillian Haslam is an international motivational speaker, business coach, educator, author, philanthropist, and survivor. Born to parents of British ancestry who stayed in India after its independence, she relied on the charitable kindness of others and the life lessons she learned on the streets to survive disease, malnutrition, continual abuse, and the deaths of multiple siblings at a young age. But Jillian learned to be resilient and resourceful, developing the ability to find her voice and make an impact. Now she shows others how to handle adversity, develop resilience, and fulfil their destiny.



Dr Drena Valentine is a Strategic and Operations Management Expert with over 25 years of experience strengthening and transforming businesses through leadership and management skill development. Dr. Valentine is adept at analyzing and improving processes and setting strategic and management priorities to align activities with their goals and objectives. Schooled and experienced in mastering leadership through theories and concepts, Dr. Valentine contributes to adults' knowledge and skills by continuing their education or improving their management skills through teaching, training, mentoring, and coaching. Dr. Valentine is uniquely qualified to ensure effective communication, lead and manage organizations, write grants and proposals, spearhead change management by using complementary management techniques and develop and manage budgets. She is a results-oriented leader with exceptional business acumen skills and strategic vision resulting in operational excellence. Dr. Valentine holds a bachelor's degree in accounting, a Master of Business Administration, and a Doctor of Management in Organizational Leadership. Dr. Valentine is also a certified Governance, Risk Management, and Compliance Professional (GRCP) by the Open Compliance and Ethics Group (OCEG).