

# ENLIGHTENED POWER

HOW **WOMEN** ARE  
TRANSFORMING THE  
PRACTICE OF  
**LEADERSHIP**


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*Editors*

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**How Women Are Transforming  
the Practice of Leadership**

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"Without question, the best set of essays on women and leadership around. Every leader will need to have this one on their bookshelf."

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University of Southern California, and author,  
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"*Enlightened Power* is a book that all women from all walks of life can embrace. The personal stories and lessons contained in this book can teach us all how to become better leaders and, more important, better people."

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"The men and women who contributed to *Enlightened Power* generously share their personal journeys and observations. Readers will come away feeling that they've been privy to a unique and important dialogue; they will also be inspired to exercise their own personal power—and to nurture the best that resides in all of us."

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"No doubt, this book will engender spirited discussions among both men and women. Hopefully, one of the key ideas that will get attention is how important it is for all of us to keep thinking more creatively about leadership in organizations."

—Kenneth T. Stevens, CEO, Express

# Enlightened Power

Linda Coughlin  
Ellen Wingard  
Keith Hollihan  
Editors

*For our children*



David Gergen is a leader who has earned widespread respect and international acclaim for his impartiality, insight, and wisdom. Commentator, editor, teacher, public servant, best-selling author, leadership expert, and adviser to four presidents, David Gergen has been an active participant in American national life for thirty years. He served as director of communications for President Reagan and held positions

in the administrations of Presidents Nixon and Ford. In 1993, he put his country before politics when he agreed to counsel President Clinton on both foreign policy and domestic affairs and serve as a special international adviser to the president and to Secretary of State Warren Christopher. He is currently the director of the Center for Public Leadership at the John F. Kennedy School of Government. Also the author of *Eyewitness to Power: The Essence of Leadership*, David is a bipartisan, inclusive leader of global scale and a voice for enlightened power.

In this Foreword, David extols those leaders and thinkers who have challenged our basic assumptions around gender and leadership and makes a passionate call for further progress in balancing the inner and outer facets of the leadership-gender equation so that we may see tangible results and profound change in our lifetimes.

PHOTO CREDIT: David Gergen by Tom Fitzsimmons



## Foreword

# WOMEN LEADING IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

David Gergen

For more than two centuries, conventional wisdom held that women were incapable of climbing mountains. As he prepared an expedition to climb Mount Everest, for example, Sir Edmund Hillary refused a request to include women. He allegedly gave three reasons: women didn't have the qualities of leadership that were required, they weren't strong enough to carry the packs, and (that most ancient of all prejudices) they would become hysterical at high altitudes.

Fortunately, some women were bold enough to challenge conventional wisdom. Arlene Blum began experimenting with mountain climbs in Oregon and Washington. Lo and behold, she found that she had the leadership, strength, and temperament to make it. Soon she organized a team of ten American women to prepare a quest in which no woman and no American male had ever succeeded: scaling Annapurna, at 26,545 feet the world's tenth highest mountain. In 1978, they succeeded—magnificently—and Blum eventually wrote a book titled *Annapurna: A Woman's Place*.

As a white male, I am not sure I can ever fully appreciate how challenging it has been—and remains—for women to shatter old barriers. But I can say that as a participant in American public life for more than three decades, I am convinced that women are the equals of men in all fields of endeavor, starting with leadership. I can say that as a father, I want to be damned sure that my daughter, just like my son, has an untrammelled opportunity to become all she wants to be. And as a citizen, I can say that it's long past time to be

asking women to shatter old barriers: the twenty-first century should become the century of women's equality.

Over the past few years, I have been privileged to teach at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, where we have launched the Center for Public Leadership with a generous grant from the Wexner Foundation. There we are trying to put our money where our mouth is. Barbara Kellerman, a respected scholar in leadership studies, became our first executive director; Betsy Myers, who ran the women's outreach effort at the Clinton White House, has recently succeeded her. Our first academic hire was a woman, Hannah Riley Bowles, and several women have been visiting scholars. One of them, Deborah Rhode, published an edited volume partly as a result, *The Difference "Difference" Makes*, and it has been an important contribution to the field. In partnership with Swanee Hunt, who runs the Women and Public Policy Program, we have begun an annual leadership training program for women, and in the coming academic year we will devote our annual leadership conference to the advancement of women. The school itself, through Holly Taylor Sargent, has created a Women's Leadership Board that is increasingly vibrant. Are we doing enough? Not yet, but we are trying.

These experiences, as well as those stretching back to politics in Washington, have led me to three inescapable conclusions.

### **The Summit: A Woman's Place**

*First, women make great leaders.* For a long while, that issue was a matter of debate, similar to the mountain climbing nonsense. But the argument is now over. The evidence is in, and it's overwhelming: in one community after another, women are proving to be capable, effective, and—yes—tough leaders who get the job done.

Look at the largest state in the union, California. Carly Fiorina embarked on a high adventure when she took the reins at Hewlett-Packard and moved to a merger with Compaq. Many thought she would never make it; her judgment and acumen were attacked, and

it was whispered that her womanhood would be her undoing. No CEO lasts long these days, but to be sure Fiorina was a bold and visionary leader in her near six years at HP. She beat the odds that some of her critics gave her, and the merger worked out better than some of the spectacular failures engineered by male CEOs in recent years. Consider, too, the politics of California, a state that has often been a bellwether for others. Arnold Schwarzenegger got off to an excellent start as governor, but he is matched in popularity by Senator Dianne Feinstein. And from that soil has sprung many other women leaders: Senator Barbara Boxer; Nancy Pelosi, the first woman to become minority leader in the House of Representatives; Jane Harman, a major voice in the House as well. When George W. Bush was looking for a national security adviser, his first choice was Condoleezza Rice, then the provost at Stanford. Some Republicans believe she could one day change places and sit behind the desk in the Oval Office herself.

Many of these women have gravitated to Washington, D.C., and there they find themselves in the company of many other leaders who happen to be women—Sandra Day O'Connor, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Madeleine Albright, and Pat Mitchell among them. The spirit of Kay Graham continues to inspire there, as does that of her good friend, Meg Greenfield.

If you turn south to my native North Carolina, you will find equally impressive leaders. Elizabeth Dole is now serving the state well in the Senate. Until recently, the three major universities at the corners of the Research Triangle—Duke, the University of North Carolina, and North Carolina State—simultaneously had women at their helms, and all three were highly successful. When Nan Keohane became president of Duke, the university was undertaking the biggest fundraising drive in its history, shooting for \$750 million. She quickly raised the goal to \$1 billion, then higher, then higher again. At the end, Nan and her team pulled in \$2.3 billion, and she retired in a blaze of glory.

Women are racking up successes all over the country. Further south, Donna Shalala is not only maintaining football prowess at

the University of Miami but also guiding the school toward an intellectual renaissance. A little further north, Christie Todd Whitman commands widespread respect for years as governor of New Jersey and as head of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Shirley Tilghman is quickly making her mark as the new president of Princeton, recruiting other women to serve in top administrative positions and bringing in more women to the faculty. Together, they will make Princeton a magnet for promising young women going to college. At the University of Pennsylvania, Judith Rodin succeeded so well that when she stepped down as president, they recruited another woman to replace her.

In New York, of course, Hillary Clinton has become a powerful member of the Senate in her first term and could be heading toward the White House in her own right. When she went to the Senate, some worried that she would be a show horse; instead, she has become a workhorse, winning respect from unexpected quarters. I recently had dinner with the officers of a major corporation headquartered in upstate New York. Most of them were Republicans, and their company is in a place where there aren't many Democratic votes. But they said Senator Clinton had represented them more effectively than any other senator of either party.

In my adopted state of Massachusetts, a woman heads the Supreme Judicial Court and wrote the opinion recognizing gay marriages. While controversial, the decision is also pathbreaking and, in my modest judgment, will likely be embraced by more and more Americans in the decades ahead. When people are pioneers, they often take heat at first—but many of them also wind up on pedestals. We have a long record of women pathbreakers in Massachusetts, stretching back to Abigail Adams and Mercy Otis Warren. Today these pioneers are officially recognized.

Overseas, we see the same pioneering leadership. I've had the experience in recent years of coming to know Mary Robinson. After her success as president of Ireland, she went on to head up the Human Rights Commission at the United Nations. Some criticized her for her handling of a human rights summit in South Africa

where Israel was unfairly targeted, but she struck me as brave for going forward with the enterprise at all. Coming from Japan, which has had trouble fielding strong diplomats, Sadaka Ogata served with distinction at the United Nations. So did Gro Brundtland, who headed the World Health Organization and who earlier, as prime minister of Norway, pulled the world forward toward sustainable development. All over the world, then, women have proven themselves to be good leaders. The argument is over!

## **Circles of Influence: The New Leadership Style**

*Second, we have learned that women seem ideally suited to the new leadership style that has been widely embraced. The old style was top-down, command and control, and directional. If you see the movie Patton with George C. Scott, you will spot it instantaneously. There are many other examples: Lyndon Johnson as president, “Chainsaw Al” Dunlap as CEO, Bobby Knight on the basketball court, Herbert von Karajan conducting an orchestra.*

Today that kind of command-and-control leadership has given way to a new approach, often called an influence model of leadership. Instead of picturing a leader at the top of a pyramid, we envision her in the middle of a circle with spokes extending outward. Instead of hurling thunderbolts from atop Mount Olympus, the new leader persuades, empowers, collaborates, and partners. The best leader, we are finding, is one who identifies top talent and nurtures them to become leaders in their own right—a leader of leaders. Serving on the board at Yale University, I was extremely impressed by how effective Rick Levin, its president, became by recruiting and then empowering such strong talent around him. He built such a great team that no less than three of his appointees—two of them women—have now been tapped to run major universities on their own. That is the mark of a good leader.

Adapting to this new world, the way we teach leadership has changed considerably. If you ask an expert like Rosabeth Moss Kanter at the Harvard Business School, sign up for an executive session

with the Center for Creative Leadership, or attend one of the training programs for our Women in Power series at the Kennedy School, you will find that leadership is viewed as a series of concentric circles. In the innermost circle is the individual leader—you. To be a leader—regardless of gender—you must first know thyself and then achieve self-mastery. Leadership is a journey that starts from within, as I have found in working with and studying U.S. presidents: those who have been most effective over the years have first made their own journey. Franklin Roosevelt was transformed as a leader by his struggle with polio, for example. The second, larger concentric circle—containing the first—is the organization of which you are a part. After learning self-leadership, one must learn to lead this larger group. In the framework of emotional intelligence popularized by Daniel Goleman, the essence of leading others is to develop empathy with them and to develop the social skills that will persuade them to work toward shared goals. Much of the literature about leadership is devoted to this second circle. Increasingly, leaders within organizations discover there is yet a third circle just beyond, which also must be mastered: the multitude of other organizations with which yours must cooperate, coordinate, and partner. Whether you are running eBay, the Red Cross, or the Centers for Disease Control—all now headed by women—you must learn to work across silos, collaborating with others in order to move your own work forward.

Recognizing these concentric rings, it is easier to understand the value of what I call 360-degree leadership—that is, leadership that requires you to listen and learn from others all around your outer circles. In days gone by, a CEO might pay attention only to those directly beneath him in the pyramid. A president might pay attention only to those who form his political base or share his ideology. But that approach is no longer sufficient: it means that a leader is making decisions with only a fraction of the information and insight that she needs. We live in such interconnected environments that to be effective, a leader today must seek out information from a wide array of people, especially those who *don't* share his or her biases.



Whatever his personal flaws, I found that Bill Clinton often made excellent decisions in the Oval Office because he was insatiably curious about the views of everyone around him. As president, he not only wanted to talk to his fellow Democratic chieftains but also wanted to hear from those who have usually been in the shadows of national power—African Americans, Hispanics, and women seeking a place at the table. Overseas, he wanted to hear from Europeans, of course, but he also wanted to know the perspectives of people in Africa and India. To this day, Nelson Mandela remains a staunch friend, and Clinton is hailed in India. John F. Kennedy showed a similar approach during the Cuban missile crisis when he assembled a team around him that represented not just his cabinet secretaries but men who had diverse views and personal knowledge of Nikita Khrushchev. Both Clinton and Kennedy were practicing 360-degree leadership.

Women leaders, as it turns out, seem perfectly tailored for this new style. Think about the words we use to describe the old-style leadership: *aggressive, assertive, autocratic, muscular, closed*. When we describe the new leadership, we employ terms like *consensual, relational, web-based, caring, inclusive, open, transparent*—all qualities that we associate with the “feminine” style of leadership. One can argue whether this feminine style is in women’s genes or is created by socialization. It doesn’t matter much. The key point, as Sally Helgesen points out in her book *The Female Advantage*, is that women are knocking on the door of leadership at the very moment when their talents are especially well matched with the requirements of the day.<sup>1</sup>

Before setting down this argument, however, we should recognize that there are times when a leader must be decisive, aggressive, and autocratic. In a crisis, for example, a president or a CEO does not have time to roundtable a question for several days, hammering out a consensus. If someone in your organization chronically underperforms, you must first ask him to do better, but sooner rather than later you must put him off the bus. Effective leaders, in other words, must mix together masculine as well as feminine qualities. The psychologist Carl Jung argued that each of us is born with a feminine

as well as masculine side—an anima and animus. Typically, one side dominates and the other is more hidden. In Jung’s view, an individual achieves a healthy personality when he or she fully recognizes both sides and integrates them into a balanced whole. The best leaders are those who achieve that balance in their approach to others. One of the reasons Rudy Giuliani was so inspiring on September 11 was that we saw his caring side as well as his decisive qualities. Of all our presidents, Lincoln demonstrated the greatest balance of masculine and feminine traits, and he remains today a beloved leader.

In the same way, women who have the qualities that we associate with the new style of leadership need to have a masculine side that they integrate as an authentic part of their personalities. Carly Fiorina certainly has a steely edge—one that helped her during her long run at HP. In her early days as First Lady, Hillary Clinton struck many as so overly aggressive that she was off-putting, especially for older men, but in more recent years she has matured into a more balanced and more appealing leader. Madeleine Albright turned her many hats into a trademark, and everyone knew she had a softer side, but she could also be tough as a boot. If anything, the Defense Department thought she wanted to send troops into too many countries. Donna Shalala, one of my favorite leaders, once told me a story that illustrates the importance of this masculine integration for women who aspire to the top. When she was president of Hunter College in New York, the trustees at the University of Wisconsin were seeking a new head. Donna soon found herself on the short list and was the only female candidate. She had a reputation then as a liberal and a keen feminist. That didn’t drive off the trustees at Wisconsin, but they did have one concern. During their interview with her, very gingerly one said in effect, “As you know, our football team hasn’t been doing so well lately, and we want to know how you would feel about building a good team.” Donna seemed to confirm their fears when she said, “No, that would not make me happy.” Then she continued, “If your ambition is only to build a good team, I’m not your person. I want a great



team, and if you're willing to do that, I'm willing to do the job!" As it turned out, Donna may have been the only candidate who showed a keen interest in football. The trustees hired her, of course, and she built one of the best football programs in the country. Eventually, the University of Wisconsin went to the Rose Bowl, and Shalala rode on a float down the streets of Pasadena. There's even better news to the story. So happy were the regents and the state legislature with her successes in football that they supported her financially on nearly all the academic programs she wanted! She was a memorable president—one of the best. The masculine and the feminine sides, coming together, form a powerful whole.

### **The Gap: Our National Shame**

*Third, we know that our commitment to equal opportunity for rising women leaders is riddled with hypocrisy.* In my view, we should be ashamed as a nation that we have so few women in positions of power, authority, and influence in our national organizations despite knowing that women can lead and, in fact, are well suited to the new leadership style. In February 2004, the magazine *Fast Company* looked at this matter of leadership, and its headline asked, "Where Are the Women?"<sup>2</sup> Where are they, indeed. Women constitute 47 percent of our workforce and 63 percent of all workers earning the minimum wage or less.<sup>3</sup> Yet they represent only 13.6 percent of the Fortune 500 boards,<sup>4</sup> and as of this writing only eight Fortune 500 companies have women as their CEOs.<sup>5</sup> The Bush White House has made a public commitment to equality, but tellingly, the prestigious White House Fellows program in recent years has hovered around 20 percent or less in female selections. In every major university of which I am aware, more than 50 percent of the student body is now female, but not a single one of the big universities comes close to having women represent half of their top faculty; rare is the university whose recruits to junior faculty positions are half female. In other words, when female students sit down in college classrooms across the country, they almost always have a man