

*Afterword by Dr. Helene D. Gayle, President and CEO, CARE*

# LEADING WITH CARE

HOW WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD  
ARE INSPIRING BUSINESSES,  
EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES,  
AND CREATING OPPORTUNITY



MARY CANTANDO

Foreword by Sheila C. Johnson

*Founder and CEO, Salamander Hospitality & Global Ambassador, CARE*


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[www.josseybass.com](http://www.josseybass.com)

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Published by Jossey-Bass

A Wiley Imprint

989 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94103-1741—www.josseybass.com

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#### ***Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data***

Cantando, Mary.

Leading with care : how women around the world are inspiring businesses, empowering communities, and creating opportunity / Mary Cantando ; foreword by Sheila C. Johnson.—1st ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-470-49963-4 (cloth)

1. Women in development—Developing countries. 2. Poor women—Developing countries.
  3. Entrepreneurship—Developing countries. 4. Leadership in women—Developing countries.
- I. CARE/International. II. Title.

HQ1240.5.D44C36 2009

305.48'96942091724—dc22

2009019777

Printed in the United States of America

FIRST EDITION

HB Printing 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

## Praise for *Leading with Care*

“If you think your life is full of obstacles, read this book. Mary Cantando delivers a no-holds-barred account of women who have faced the toughest obstacles, yet managed to come out on top. *LEADING WITH CARE* captures the wisdom of women from the far corners of the earth who went from surviving to thriving. The Institute for Economic Empowerment of Women, a partner with CARE, helps women business owners feed their families and rebuild their countries. Together, we provide *Peace through Business*<sup>®</sup>. ”

—**Terry Neese**, cofounder and president, Institute for Economic Empowerment of Women

“*LEADING WITH CARE* provides readers with seemingly impossible accounts of women who glow by finding a way to succeed in the harshest conditions. Brimming with inspiration of extraordinary women, this book will prompt you to give gratitude to the blessings you currently have as well as motivate you to find ways to apply their lessons to your own life.”

—**Sandra Yancey**, founder and CEO, eWomenNetwork Inc.

“*LEADING WITH CARE* is no dry recitation of management theories. Rather, it introduces the reader to remarkable women, each eager to prove that anyone with passion and commitment can achieve her goals. Even the most successful women in business will be enlightened by the lessons Mary Cantando brings to light in this book.”

—**Helen Han**, interim executive director, National Association of Women Business Owners

“*LEADING WITH CARE* captures the essence of true leadership. When a woman reaches deep inside to find the courage and commitment to change the world around her, she exhibits a powerful lesson that is relevant from the board room to the village square. These stories teach that lesson.”

—**Caroline Whitson**, president of Columbia College and founder of the SC Alliance for Women

“*LEADING WITH CARE* recounts amazing stories of women from the far corners of the earth who have become successful beyond their wildest dreams. Mary Cantando has captured the wisdom of women who went from surviving to thriving in developing nations, and then brings them to you as the most unlikely, but powerful mentors.”

—**Marti Barletta**, author, *Prime Time Women* and *Marketing to Women*

“*LEADING WITH CARE* brings together the struggles and successes of some of the most amazing women in the world. Imagine starting a business with a loan for \$1.40 or being responsible for providing water for your entire community. These women are heroines in the truest sense, and once you meet them your life will be forever changed.”

—**Susan Solovic**, CEO, SBTv.com



For John.  
On a scale of one to ten,  
you've made my life an eleven.

And for the amazing young women in my life:  
Suzanne, Heather,  
Amy, and Megan.

## Foreword

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As a global ambassador for CARE, I have witnessed firsthand the remarkable ability of women to endure. In dirt-poor towns and ramshackle villages, I've seen women, young and old, maintain hope and optimism, even as the challenges of poverty, disease, and cultural biases shadow their every move.

What these women have is strength. What they have is a life force from which they draw a seemingly endless supply of power. That's why the humanitarian organization CARE puts women at the heart of its efforts to eliminate root causes of extreme poverty. CARE understands women's power to spark change—even in the poorest communities. Similarly, I am not surprised to read the author's conclusion that humanity's best hope to break the insidious cycle of poverty is to empower women.

Until women can vote and hold office; until they are allowed to start businesses, to own homes, and to teach; until they are afforded the rights, the privileges and, ultimately, the respect of full citizenship, such poverty will never end.

Even in the United States, one has to look no further than the poorest communities, especially in African-American neighborhoods in many of our cities. Whatever sense of family and community exists does so because of the enduring presence of a network of incredibly strong women. Those women—*we* women—are the linchpins of our families and our communities. And because we serve as the delicate threads that hold together the fabric of our societies, we have it in our power to effect meaningful and lasting change.

I once co-chaired a dinner to fund AIDS research, and we used the occasion to honor actress Ashley Judd and singer and humanitarian Bono, of the rock group U2.

I'll never forget Bono's comments. He bounded onstage, thanked us for his award, and then—with his unparalleled charm—compared women to lionesses.

Let me explain: An African friend had pointed out to Bono that the success of a lion pride is due largely to the females' ability to hunt and to protect the young. The "King of the Beasts" would be lost without the support of strong females.

Bono then started listing some of the powerful women who were in attendance that evening.

"Nancy Pelosi," said Bono, adding with a smile the phrase "Madame Speaker." He then took a beat and said in a half growl, "lioness."

"Ashley Judd," he added, "... lioness."

And he kept ticking off the names—one powerful woman after another—and after each one he would take a good long beat and say in that thick Irish brogue of his, "lioness."

Well, my friends, that's what you'll find in this book: stories by and about lionesses. I hope you enjoy them and can learn from them, just like those of us who work with CARE continue to learn from the countless strong-willed women who are working hard to create a better future for the whole world.

Middleburg, Virginia  
July 2009

Sheila C. Johnson  
Founder and CEO, Salamander Hospitality  
Global Ambassador, CARE



# Contents

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Foreword	ix
----------	----

*Sheila C. Johnson, Founder and CEO, Salamander  
Hospitality; Global Ambassador, CARE*

Introduction	1
--------------	---

## *Part One*

### **DEVELOPING SELF-SUFFICIENCY 7**

---

1. Creating Self-Sufficiency Through Training	11
2. Blazing a Path Through Sports	20
3. Overcoming Challenges to Achieve Self-Sufficiency	31
4. Gaining Self-Sufficiency While Helping Others	36
5. Implementing Self-Sufficiency in Your Own Life	41

## *Part Two*

### **CAPITALIZING ON OPPORTUNITY 45**

---

1. Capitalizing on Opportunity in Niger	47
2. Seizing Good Fortune	57
3. Building a Different Kind of Business	66
4. Overcoming Naysayers	71
5. Capitalizing on Opportunity in Your Own Life	75

## *Part Three*

### **BUILDING COMMUNITY 81**

---

1. Building Community in India	87
2. Building Community Everywhere	94

3.	Joining Forces in the Business World	103
4.	Creating an Advisory Board Community	109
5.	Building Community in Your Own Life	112

### *Part Four*

## **PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT THROUGH ACTION AND POLICY 117**

1.	Providing Clean Water in Mozambique	122
2.	Protecting the Environment Through Corporate Leadership	129
3.	Saving the Environment One Plate at a Time	139
4.	Building for the Future	145
5.	Safeguarding the Environment in Your Own Life	149

### *Part Five*

## **ADDRESSING DISCRIMINATION 153**

1.	Overcoming Discrimination Through Literacy	156
2.	Addressing Discrimination Through Corporate Leadership	163
3.	Learning to Capitalize on the Differences	175
4.	Overcoming Bias in the Legal Profession	180
5.	Addressing Discrimination in Your Own Life	185

A Final Note from the Author: Leaving a Legacy	189
--	-----

Learning More About These Women and Organizations	191
--	-----

Afterword	195
-----------	-----

*Dr. Helene Gayle, President and CEO, CARE*

Acknowledgments	203
-----------------	-----

About the Author	205
------------------	-----

Index	206
-------	-----

# Introduction

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When we think of women in developing countries, our minds immediately flash to what *they* need, what *we* can give to *them*, how *we* can help *them*. But what if we flipped this notion upside down? What if those of us who are well educated and well fed considered what *we* could learn from *them*—how *they* could help *us*?

Those who find the greatest success in business and the most satisfaction in life are often eternal students. This is especially true of women. We're always studying what others are doing and how they're doing it.

Of course, there are expected ways to learn these things: taking courses and workshops, reading books by accomplished leaders, watching how successful people get things done.

And there are unexpected ways.

Certainly, a successful, well-educated woman—a corporate executive in New York City, an entrepreneur in Dallas, or a non-profit leader in Seattle—would have little to learn from a woman struggling to feed her family in Bosnia, or one building a microbusiness in Zambia, or one teaching fellow villagers to read in Haiti.

Or so we think.

But the wisest among us know that life's most valuable lessons are often learned in unexpected places and from unexpected teachers. This book will bring you into the lives of these unexpected teachers—women whose minds and hearts have been ignited by the global humanitarian organization CARE.

## An Organization Making a World of Difference

Consider these statistics:

- Women do about 66 percent of the world's work but earn only 10 percent of the world's income.
- Women produce 50 percent of the world's food but own just 1 percent of its farmland.
- Of those living in extreme poverty, 60 percent are women and girls.
- Nearly 66 percent of children who do not attend school are girls.

Although these statistics demonstrate the unfair burden that women carry, they are also an indication of the *opportunity for change* that exists.

Each year CARE makes that opportunity real for fifty-five million people in sixty-six developing countries. As one of the leading humanitarian organizations in the world, CARE fights global poverty by equipping poor women with the resources they need to transform their lives. CARE supports women through community-based initiatives that advance basic education, improve health, increase economic opportunity, and meet emergency needs during and after disasters.

It is no accident that women and girls are at the heart of CARE's initiatives to end global poverty. Both domestically and abroad, restoring a community starts first at home by valuing education and health care. When poor women have access to resources and information, they are able to help their families escape poverty and strengthen their communities as well.

Formed in 1945 to support the rebuilding of Europe following World War II, CARE was initially known for the "CARE Packages" that they distributed to refugees across the war-torn continent.

From those parcels of food to programs that help people create their own solutions to poverty, CARE has touched countless millions of lives around the globe.

Drawing strength from over sixty years of experience, CARE approaches the needs of women and communities from five distinct perspectives, each providing an opportunity for dramatic change:

- Strengthening capacity for self-help
- Providing economic opportunity
- Supporting and building communities
- Influencing policy related to the environment and providing relief for emergencies and disasters
- Addressing discrimination

Following these guiding principles, CARE has proven time and time again that their focus on women and girls as agents of change creates exponential results. When CARE supports a girl's education, she passes her knowledge along to others in her family and her community. When CARE offers a woman health services one day, she returns the next day, bringing a neighbor who is also in need. When CARE provides a woman with a microloan and business training, she not only creates a livelihood for herself and her family, but she creates jobs for others in her village. With CARE, small investments in women show huge returns, not only for the women themselves but for their families and communities as well.

In today's world of ever-shifting borders, ongoing wars, and environmental uncertainty, CARE remains focused on rebuilding lives. Regardless of America's own economic situation, individual women, as well as corporations and institutions, cannot ignore the suffering in so many parts of the world. And as we look toward the future, we must provide for the education and health of the world's children—*our* children—who are our only hope.



For that very reason, many of the world's largest corporations support CARE. Having witnessed the lasting differences that CARE brings to communities in need, these corporate supporters, as well as individual CARE donors, have come to trust that CARE's enablement of community, opportunity, and education is one of our best hopes for righting some of the world's wrongs and building the future that our children need and deserve.

## **A Unique and Powerful Approach to Leadership**

Having built my business on supporting women entrepreneurs, I have long been intrigued by CARE's focus on women. The more I became involved with the organization and understood how women and girls bear the brunt of poverty, the more determined I was to do something about it. That is why I am so thrilled to share this book with you. It is the culmination of my eighteen months of research about amazing women who have struggled through unimaginable circumstances to achieve self-sufficiency and ultimate success.

*Leading with Care* is structured around CARE's five perspectives, listed earlier. Part One is "Developing Self-Sufficiency"; Part Two is "Capitalizing on Opportunity"; Part Three is "Building Community"; Part Four is "Protecting the Environment Through Action and Policy"; and Part Five is "Addressing Discrimination." As we move through each of these topics, you will see how every one of these principles can create a mind shift, both in developing countries and in your own world.

In each part, we first meet a woman who has improved her own life and the lives of those around her by taking advantage of opportunities provided by CARE. We witness firsthand how she is able to create a new business or lead a major shift in her community, while providing for her family and building a better future for the next generation. But these are not just stories; they are examples of real lives being changed. You will see how each

woman's determination causes her to do more, to be more for her family and her community.

And as you read these seemingly impossible accounts of women who have found a way to succeed in the harshest conditions, I challenge you to look for ways to apply their lessons to your own life. If a woman in Niger can build a successful business starting with a loan of \$1.40, what can you do with your resources? If a twenty-year-old in India can provide basic health care services for her village, what can you do to help your neighbors? If a woman in Mozambique can work seven days a week to bring water to her village, what can you do to safeguard the environment in your corner of the world? As you learn from these women and others like them, allow their lessons to carry over to the day-to-day activities of your own life: the way you save or spend your money, the way you support your colleagues and neighbors, the way you affect the environment.

After learning from a woman who has turned her life around with the help of a CARE program, we next explore the experiences of successful women executives on the same topic. Here, we discover what each of these executives has learned from CARE, how CARE's message resonates with her, and how she gives back. In many instances, the women involved had already been longtime supporters of CARE, but a few were introduced for the first time to CARE through their participation in this book. They found their own stories reflected in the accounts of the CARE women and are now benefactors.

After learning from these women, we wrap up each part by discussing ways to integrate the concept in your own life, and we offer specific questions to get you started.

At the end of the book, you will also find a resource section with further information on all the women, organizations, and events that you'll read about.

In an ever-shifting world, you will discover why CARE's message is timeless. You'll see how the women's practical approach to building businesses and self-sufficiency—in any economy, in any

nation—gives us all hope for the future. And you'll discover how to implement what you learn in your own life.

## **Moving Toward a Better World for All Women**

*Leading with Care* provides leadership concepts you could not learn anywhere else, in a format you've never before experienced. Through these pages, you'll gain years of experience from women who have earned the right to tell their stories.

No matter how successful you've been, traveling the path with these women will bring you to greater success. That's our goal: to learn from each other to create a more perfect world for women everywhere.

## *Part 1*

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# DEVELOPING SELF-SUFFICIENCY

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**J**ust what makes a woman self-sufficient? Is it money, education, a sense that she knows where she's going in life? Is it her ability to stand on her own in any situation and appear calm no matter what? Or is it her power to start with absolutely nothing and build a magnificent life? Perhaps she makes decisions based on what she believes is right rather than what is popular. Or maybe she has the ability to bounce back from every challenge that comes her way.

Regardless of your definition, I think you'll agree that a self-sufficient woman motivates others by the example she sets. She projects strength and energy. She brings calm to chaos, perspective to problems, reassurance to crises—and when things are going well, she *really* shines.

Those of us who live in relatively stable environments with the basic necessities of life may take self-sufficiency for granted. But what about women in developing nations who struggle to feed their children, women who walk several hours every day just to access water, women who cannot read or write because they never had the opportunity to attend school? How do such women step onto the path to self-sufficiency?