



WHEN WOMEN LEAD

*Some of the myriad reasons why
Many Women In Leadership*

=

A Better World

Shirley M Osborne

When Women Lead
Some of the myriad reasons why Many Women In Leadership = A Better World
2022
© Shirley M. Osborne

O.S. Press, Ltd
Phoenix, AZ
USA

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical photocopying or otherwise, without the prior permission of the author except in the case of brief quotations embedded in relevant articles or reviews.

ISBN pending

Printed and bound in the United States of America

Table of Contents

CLARIFICATIONS	7
WOMEN LEADERS	10
THE RIGHT TO LEAD	13
MORE WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP = CLEARER COMMUNICATION	20
MANY WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP = DEEPER EMPATHY	23
MORE WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP = HEALTHIER POPULATIONS	26
MORE WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP = HIGHER EDUCATION	29
MORE WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP = SAFER COUNTRIES	32
MORE WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP = HIGHER EARNINGS	35
MORE WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP = BETTER GOVERNMENT	38
WHAT WOMEN MUST NOW DO	41

Our world is on fire. In every sense of the phrase.

In 1976, Bob Marley produced one of his most popular songs was, *War*. The lyrics were a portion of an address made by Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia to the United Nations in 1963. Calling for global unity and a commitment to human rights and justice, particularly addressing the lingering effects of colonialism and racial discrimination, Emperor Selassie warned the world that,

“The Addis Ababa Conference taught, to those who will learn, this further lesson: that until the philosophy which holds one race superior and another inferior is finally and permanently discredited and abandoned; that until there are no longer first class and second class citizens of any nation; that until the color of a man's skin is of no more significance than the color of his eyes; that until the basic human rights are equally guaranteed to all without regard to race; that until that day, the dream of lasting peace and world citizenship and the rule of international morality will remain but a fleeting illusion, to be pursued but never attained.”

And Bob Marley added,

*“War in the east
War in the west
War up north
War down south...
Everywhere is war, and
rumours of war.”*

Fifty years later, nothing has changed. That is, quite literally, still the state of our world today.

The Rule of Law in Armed Conflict Online Portal (RULAC) of the Geneva Academy is currently monitoring one hundred and ten (110) armed conflicts in a world made up of one hundred and ninety-three (193) countries.

In large countries and small islands around the world, people are protesting loudly and in large groups against genocide, political corruption, police brutality, institutionalised racism, state violence and historical inequities.

The entire general population of the planet is experiencing financial distress, social upheaval and cultural disruption added to the ongoing wars, injustice and poverty. Everywhere, people are asking, “How do we set things right again?” “How do we come back from this?” “Can we move forward from here?”

There is, obviously, very much work to be done to set us right again, even just to give us a moment of reprieve and respite! This is an “all hands on deck” kind of storm – every body and our cats chipping in, scrubbing in, falling in, leaning in, digging through, to pull us away from this yawning hole. Any lesser effort, and we fall in. All of us.

This is a significant time. It is an inflection point that could bring us to reconciliation and ascending. It could be the portal into a world of communication and connection buttressed by goodwill and rightness. It could lead us into a world far better than the one we have lost. It could also get much, much worse.

I am hopeful. My faith in the power and resilience of the human spirit wanes at least as often as it waxes, but it never altogether fails. My faith in the power of women to be the difference never wanes. I believe unshakably, in the power of women to change lives, heal communities and fix the world. We have seen that women have the capacity and the ability to improve the world and we believe beyond the shadow of a doubt that women have the right to participate and contribute to the fullest extent that we desire. The facts show that when women do well, when women are fully engaged and included everyone benefits; everybody does better.

I believe that is where real leadership lies. I believe that is what the world needs now. This is what the people of the world will need deep into the foreseeable future. This is what women bring. So, yeah, nah! Not *any* woman. Not *more* women. *Many* women. Many women in leadership will absolutely, without question, bring us a better world.

It seems crystal clear that it will have to be the women who set this ship aright again. It will have to be a group of women who stand up, suit up, gear up, take on this massive task and lead the army of the World’s Women without blinking, no second-guessing, with blinders-like focus and raw determination.

Yes. There have been, there are and there will be women who function in the old, unhelpful paradigms. There will be those women who will hurt more than they help,

who will work against every positive thing that The Army of the World's Women will do. Those will be the "any" women, the ones who sometimes bring even me to wish we could be ultra-discerning and ultra-selective and just wait for the "right" women before we pick. But we cannot do that. We cannot wait. We must do the best we can with what we have. We must play against the odds – or with the odds or whatever. We must play to beat the odds. Or improve the odds. Or whatever. But we must play.

We will win some and we shall certainly lose some, but we have many women vying for positions so we shall certainly get many women in positions of leadership, not just the odd one here and there. The odds are, we shall certainly win more than we lose. And it shall be good for all of us – men included.

Shirley Osborne

Providence, Montserrat
Phoenix, Arizona

CLARIFICATIONS

*Leadership should be born out of the
understanding of the needs of those who would be
affected by it.*

-Marian Anderson

We should begin by making it very clear, first of all, that “women in leadership” is not an “*either...or...*” proposition. Contrary to what many people believe, women in leadership is an “*...and...*” situation. It is absolutely a matter of “*women and...*”.

There is absolutely no truth whatsoever to the rumour that women want to disenfranchise men, emasculate men, or rule men. In fact, we suspect that men have these fears only because, for millennia, men have taught themselves and women that it is the right and duty of men to exercise a certain brand of power, to have unquestioned command and control over others, to dominate and disenfranchise, to annihilate opposition, to see all others as threats and to eliminate all threats. Women do not want to do that.

Writing for the World Economic Forum, Leanne Kemp says, “*Ultimately, the problems we face are not technological, but human – the human system is broken.*” Women in leadership do not want to replace men in that broken system. Women

want to build a better system, to work in partnership alongside men. Women want both groups contributing the highest and best of themselves so as to improve, generate, create, arrive at the system that works the very best for men, women, children, community, industry, government, the planet, the cosmos, the universe.

Men have been the leaders of much of the world for a very long time now and during that time, much that is good and helpful has been brought to the entirety of humankind.

Women wholeheartedly acknowledge the natural abilities and honed skills of men, and we believe that there is a relationship of equivalence in diversity between those and the skills and abilities of women. Women want that equivalence recognised. The entire discourse around women in leadership rests, logically, upon the foundations of gender equality – equality of access and opportunity. That's it.

Men and women are different and that is good. Men and women are not unequal and that is good.

And yet, our societies and communities have been struggling with the burden of inequality for millennia. The motivations and the evolution of this imposition involve the males of the species. It is the story of oppression and tyranny, of uneven progress, of failure in advancement, of denied opportunity, and unrealised potential. It is also, because of women, the story of survival in spite of it all.

The human race has survived largely because women in general have endured, even though violence and exclusion have denied our needs, ambitions and desires. We have subsisted and procreated. Women have survived by renouncing merit, suppressing our humanness and subjugating the instinct for – and right to – sovereignty. These are they who kept the human race propagating – and safe from extinction – women.

There have been women who chose to die rather than live as chattel and non-entity owned, bought and sold by men; women who took to the hills, literally and figuratively, seeking to escape control and subjugation by men; women who sent their babies into the afterlife to save them the horrors of enslavement and dehumanisation; women who fought to the death for autonomy and personhood; women who railed against the system. And these are we who have kept alive the truth of the humanness and sovereignty of women, with all its attendant rights.

And so it is that, jointly, these two groups of women have enabled humans to survive millennia of horror and tragedy, trial and error, and success and failure. Jointly, these two groups of women have ensured that the human race has managed to survive to make the progress we have, to arrive at today, at this latest inflection point.

This could be another truly pivotal and transformational moment for the entire human race. This could be a moment when the one drop causes the cup to overflow. It could be one of those moments when that one last straw breaks the camel's back.

WOMEN LEADERS

In April 2020, Forbes magazine published a contribution written by Avivah Wittenberg-Cox entitled, *What Do Countries With The Best Coronavirus Responses Have In Common? Women Leaders.*

She followed that up in September with, *Women Leaders' Competence On COVID: The Proof.* In the second article, she cites the findings of academic research undertaken by Supriya Garikipati and Uma Kambhampati, of Liverpool and Reading universities respectively, in the UK, which “*confirms that COVID-19 outcomes are better in female-led countries.*”

In their research, Garikipati and Kambhampati matched female-led countries against those with male leaders based on COVID-relevant social and demographic variables and their data showed clearly that. “*it is, in fact, **leadership** that drives differences in initial COVID outcomes.*”

Sally Helgesen, said by Forbes to be the world's premier expert on women's leadership, wrote in 2020, “*First, highly visible female leaders such as Angela Merkel of Germany, Tsai Ing-Wen of Taiwan, Jacinda Ardern of New Zealand, and Mette Frederiksen of Denmark have offered strong examples of leadership during crisis, as have Governor Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan and Mayor Lori Lightfoot of Chicago...*”

Of course, leadership is a factor in every sector of human living at all times, crisis or no crisis. In fact, good leadership helps to prevent crisis. Every group that gathers, every organization that forms, appoints a leader, formally or tacitly, regardless of its size or functions.

Someone once said somewhere that, *"A leaderless organization is merely a "muddle of men and machine"; a country without leadership is anarchy; a society without leadership is a violent and dangerous place to live."*

The old, outdated tropes about leadership are being challenged and displaced, however, eroded day by day by new knowledge and new thinking – and by the entry of women into the highest chairs of leadership. The idea of the “supreme ruler” whose every desire is diktat is disappearing. “Domination and control” is fast losing its legitimacy and force.

In the Journal of Public Health Management and Practice, in 2015, Moran and Beitsch write, “Leaders help themselves and others do the right things. They set direction, craft an inspiring vision, and...guide their organization...to the right destination in a smooth and efficient way.”

Many decades before that, Chester Barnard had defined leadership as “the ability of a superior to influence the behavior of a subordinate or group and persuade them to follow a particular course of action.” Persuade, not force.

Influence and persuasion comprise a very particular quality of leadership, a more subtle and ultimately a more powerful kind than that earned through force or violence. Influence is unforced and un-forceable; the most powerful kind of leadership is also unforced.

With very few exceptions, the most ancient recorded histories recount events and developments that came about as a result of the activities led by men, specifically. Contribution by women has mostly been prohibited. History is replete, therefore, with some very unpleasant examples of what happens when only men lead, which is why it is often said that the history of humankind is a chronography of violence and war.

In 1673, Samuel von Pufendorf wrote, *"More inhumanity has been done by man himself than any other of nature's causes."*

The Robert Burns’ poem *Man Was Made To Mourn: A Dirge* includes the oft-cited,

*Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn!*

And “man” here would not have been intended to include women because in that era, the word man meant just that, men; women were not a consideration.

Steven Pinker, the Johnstone Family Professor in the Department of Psychology at Harvard University has written that, *“Cruelty as entertainment, human sacrifice to indulge superstition, slavery as a labor-saving device, conquest as the mission statement of government, genocide as a means of acquiring real estate, torture and mutilation as routine punishment, the death penalty for misdemeanors and differences of opinion, assassination as the mechanism of political succession, rape as the spoils of war, pogroms as outlets for frustration, homicide as the major form of conflict resolution—all were unexceptionable features of life for most of human history.”*

And were the malfeasance, almost exclusively, of men.

For the entirety of that “most of human history” timeframe, societies and countries were led by men. The times have changed to some degree, so that there are more women working at professions and pursuing careers in a wide range of fields, in some parts of the world, while in others women are still considered not only unsuitable, but incapable and divinely prohibited. One alarming development is that retrogressive forces are gaining strength in some societies formerly considered to be among the world’s most advanced, and are trying to force women out of public life and back into the shadows using both legislation and violence, and legislation enforced with violence.

What is encouraging, though is that the definition of “leadership” has already expanded to include women and the particular strengths and characteristics that women possess, and women are fighting hard to maintain the progress made. One of the slogans used by women during the US elections in 2024 was, “We’re not going back!” It continues to be the mantra for wide swathes of women in the country.

There will be no going back. That is a good thing. A very good thing. For everyone.

THE RIGHT TO LEAD

In the early years of women's entry into the corporate world, the expectation among both women and the organizations they worked for was that women would simply slot into the cultures and structures they met, though those had been designed entirely by and for men. As a result, write researchers, it was commonly assumed that any woman who aspired to a high position would need to adopt traditional male behaviors and style. That was the standard. Women tried. They failed.

The world has been changing and in 2020, more and more people are beginning to understand that a system in which any one group insists on supremacy, domination and oppression of another is fundamentally unjust, profoundly dysfunctional and woefully wasteful.

The male model of leadership is still very much the standard, however, but mostly because men are still very much the majority in the upper echelons of all sectors of human endeavour – in business, academia, politics and government, medicine, science and technology, media, the arts and, of course, religion. much of that, but a lot of change has also come to the realm since those awkward and uncomfortable early days.

There is more than enough evidence to prove that systems that oppress women and deny them opportunity and access are systems that deprive communities and societies of important and necessary contributions, and that they deny accomplishment and advancement also to men. There is more than enough evidence to justify and substantiate the unqualified rejection of all of those systems, everywhere.

In 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft wrote in *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, that she does not *wish for women to have power over men, but over themselves*; and that *It is justice, not charity, that is wanting in the world*.

Women want, simply, to participate and contribute to the general good without let or hindrance. Women want, simply, to not be obstructed in either the development or the exercise of our capabilities and competencies. Women want, simply, that it be universally accepted that human rights are also women's rights. Women want our rights; nothing more, nothing less.

If leadership is a right, it is also women's.

If leadership is a skill, women also can acquire it.

If leadership is a competency, women also possess that.

Indeed, women have proven time and time again, through all the ages of man that we are, in fact, capable and competent, and certainly strong enough and good enough to be leaders in our communities and societies. That is no longer in question.

BUT, FYI

The only safe ship in a storm is leadership.
-Faye Wattleton

The Pew Research Center reported in 2017, that in Zimbabwe, Malawi, the Gambia, Liberia and Tanzania, women account for at least 50% of the workforce.

In most European Union countries, the labor force is at least 45% female. Malta, with 38.6%, is the most notable exception.

The six countries with the smallest shares of female workers are the Palestine, Algeria, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Qatar. Israel, with 47.3%, is the only country in the Middle East where women account for more than 35% of the labor force.

Bhutan at 46.7% and Kazakhstan with 48.8% are in the top half of the countries examined, and the female share of the labor force in these countries roughly matches or exceeds the female share in the U.S.

Like the U.S., Canada has a relatively high proportion of women in the workforce, 47.3%. Five countries in the Western Hemisphere have an even larger percentage of female workers: French Guiana, an overseas region of France has 48.0%; Bermuda and the Cayman Islands, both British overseas territories in the Caribbean, have 48.7% and 48.8% respectively while two Caribbean nations, the Bahamas and Barbados, have 49.5% and 49.7% respectively.

Catalyst, a not-for profit organisation focused on women in the workplace cites a 2020 analysis of over 1,100 organizations across the world which reports on

women in leadership. Those figures are: executives 23%, senior managers 29%, managers 37%, professionals 42% and support staff 47%.

The Council on Foreign Relations says that in September 2025, only 19 out of 193 countries in the world have a female head of state, down from 23 in 2020. Of those 195 countries, 173 have a government that is less than 50% female, and some of those countries have not even one woman in their government.

According to the Global Peace Index (GPI), produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace for since 2006, there were only 10 countries free from armed conflict in 2016.

The results for 2020 show that the level of global peacefulness has deteriorated, with the average country score falling by 0.34 per cent. This is the ninth deterioration in peacefulness in the last twelve years, with 81 countries improving, and 80 recording deteriorations over the past year.

The 2020 GPI recorded a world in which the conflicts and crises that emerged in the past decade had begun to abate, only to have conditions worsened by 2025 to there being 110 armed conflicts in these 195 countries. There are wars on every continent, and civic unrest of varying degrees in cities all around the world.

The International Business Times and other sources place the United States and Russia at the top of the list of countries involved in conflict.

Iceland remains the most peaceful country in the world, a position it has held since 2008. It is joined at the top of the index by New Zealand, Austria, Portugal, and Denmark.

Afghanistan is the least peaceful country in the world for the second year in a row, followed by Syria, Iraq, South Sudan and Yemen.

Peacefulness has declined 2.5 percent since 2008 with 81 GPI countries recording a deterioration, and 79 improving. Fifteen of the 23 GPI indicators are less peaceful on average in 2020 when compared to 2008.

This year's report also looks at the trends in civil unrest over the past decade. It finds that there has been a sharp increase in civil unrest events since 2011, with over 96 countries experiencing at least one violent demonstration in 2019.

From 2011 to 2019, the number of riots rose by 282 per cent and general strikes rose by 821 per cent. Europe had the largest number of protests, riots and strikes over the period, totalling nearly 1,600 events from 2011 to 2018. Those have increased in frequency and intensity and the continent is now the theatre of an unrelenting war as well.

Sixty-five per cent of the civil unrest events in Europe were considered nonviolent in 2020. That has changed.

Civil unrest in sub-Saharan Africa rose by more than 800 per cent over the period, from 32 riots and protests in 2011 to 292 in 2018.

The only GPI region not to experience an increase in civil unrest from 2011 to 2018 was the Middle East and North Africa, with total civil unrest events falling 60 per cent over that period. However, 2011 was the height of the Arab Spring in the region, with protests and demonstrations turning into open conflict and civil war in some countries, most notably in Syria and the war of Israel in Palestine, Syria, Yemen continues, with the violence most recently spreading to bombings in Iran and Qatar.

Violence continues to have a significant impact on economic performance around the globe.

In the ten countries most affected by violence, the average economic impact of violence was equivalent to 41 per cent of GDP on average, compared to under four per cent in the countries least affected by violence.

The total number of natural disasters has tripled in the last four decades, while their economic impact has also increased.

Climate change is expected to create up to 86 million additional migrants in sub-Saharan Africa, 40 million in South Asia and 17 million in Latin America, by 2050.

More than two billion people already live in countries experiencing high water stress, with increasing discontent in the US recently linked to lead in the water and contamination in waterways caused by the proliferation of data centres in some states requiring massive input of water. Residents complain of both reduced supply and increased contamination.

MORE WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP = CLEARER COMMUNICATION

Ninety percent of leadership is the ability to communicate something that people want.
-Dianne Feinstein

Communication is the exchange of information. Communication is essential in all human interactions; it is vital to each and every successful relationship between and among humans. It would absolutely not be an overstatement to assert that communication is a life and death issue – how well one lives, indeed, whether one does live at all depends to an inestimable degree on the success of one's interactions and relationships. Relationships are built on communication. Relationships are more or less successful in direct proportion to the quality of communication between and among parties.

Under the word communication, every dictionary will say that communication is the imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium, or words to that effect.

One college textbook defines it as: *the process of generating meaning by sending and receiving verbal and nonverbal symbols and signs that are influenced by multiple contexts.*

Corporate and life-skills trainers teach that communication is simply the act of transferring information from one place, person or group to another. They also

teach that the quality of that act of transfer is oftentimes of greater import than the actual content of the communication.

That communication is essential for survival is a principle that stands on its own; needs no qualifiers; is applicable to every species and to all interactions between and among them. Communication lies at the core of the very existence of all species that live on the earth.

The most extensive, expansive and precise system of communication of all is thought to be that of the human species, and in that realm, scientists have identified four basic types of communication – verbal, non-verbal, written and visual.

Some theories posit that language was developed primarily by women in primitive societies. It is logical, the story goes, that women, interacting very intensely and for longer periods at a time with one another in the day-to-day routines of cultivating, gathering and preparing food, caring for children, the elderly, ill or injured and so on, would have of necessity, developed a complex and widely-applicable system of communication amongst themselves.

And yet, “Women talk a lot,” is standard fare for comedians universally. “What do women talk about so much?” men wonder. “Women don’t jus talk,” women say, “We communicate,” and that is a significant distinction. Communication and language researchers have found that women tend, more easily than men, to read between the lines and pick up emotional and social cues. Even as babies, this tendency seems clear. Boy babies are attracted to spatial stimuli such as hanging and moving objects, while girl babies pay greater attention to social stimuli like faces and voices.

Research indicates that women are very effective listeners and are also more expressive than men. Women tend to truly listen to what other people have to say; they allow people to tell complete stories or to just vent, whereas men will immediately start looking for a response or a solution, the upshot of which often is that they are effectively distracted from perceiving all that is being communicated.

One axiom has it that women empathise and men systemise; that women communicate to connect, while men communicate to compete.

In the realm of women, consensus, cooperation and sharing are foundational and entail more complex interaction and communication.

Researchers and experts conclude that since women listen well and are empathetic, they have a strong understanding of what drives people and can be very good at motivating groups and teams.

“While women certainly know how to talk – studies show that women tend to express themselves more eloquently than men – they’re also great at listening and hearing the other side,” writes Whitney English.

In the American Journal of Business Education, Priscilla Berry writes, “This most important of all skills (is) required to get your ideas across, resolve conflicts, persuade and influence others, and rise in the ranks of any corporation...”

Communication is the foundation of diplomacy, negotiation and compromise, all three being factors that contribute positively to good relations and the advancement of peace and development, and equality. Listening makes success possible in all three.

Suze Wilson, a researcher on leadership, says that the COVID-19 communication strategy of New Zealand’s Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, “is pushing political communication 10 years forward – it is highly inclusive, empathetic...and breaks the barriers that exist between politicians and citizens by directly listening to their needs and challenges.”

“...my writing earns me trust,” Arundhati Roy has said. “My real royalties, I feel, is this. The fact that I can go to places that are usually unwelcoming and, because of what I’ve written, be embraced and trusted and invited to stay for lunch.”

Trust is, above all, what powers leadership.

MANY WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP = DEEPER EMPATHY

*Leadership should be more participative than directive,
more enabling than performing.*
-Mary D. Poole

Empathy is often defined as the capacity to understand or feel what another person is experiencing, from within their frame of reference. Empathy is the capacity to place oneself in another person's position – in colloquial parlance, the ability to put oneself in someone else's shoes.

In the Journal of Social Psychology, Loren Roussaint and Jon R. Webb assert that much research has shown that women are more empathic than men. Citing a variety of sources, they write that the broad definition of *empathy* includes affective and cognitive components, that empathy has been defined “as accurately perceiving the internal frame of reference of another” and includes nonverbal communication. They cite B.S. Moore's assertion that empathy is “*an organizer and regulator of a variety of behaviors*” and quote Zahn-Waxler and Radke-Yarrow saying that “*empathy is central to what it means to be fully human.*” As such, they conclude, empathy is critical to moral development and justice, thereby acting as a catalyst for societal cohesion and unity, because constructive interpersonal relations are contingent upon a willingness to take another's perspective. Women do this more often and better than men.

It is important to clarify that empathy and sympathy are not the same thing, though they are often confused and used interchangeably. Sympathy is a feeling of pity or sorrow. Dr. Neel Burton writes that sympathy, 'fellow feeling' or 'community of feeling,' *"is a feeling of care and concern for someone, often someone close, accompanied by a wish to see that person better off or happier. Unlike empathy, sympathy does not involve a shared perspective or shared emotions, and while the facial expressions of sympathy do convey caring and concern, they do not convey shared distress."*

In an Entrepreneur Magazine article about women leaders' reliance on empathy, Tracy Lawrence advises that though empathy is pigeonholed as a 'soft skill,' implying that it is warm, fuzzy, weak and unhelpful, it is in fact crucial for motivating others.

In its Field Manual on Leader Development, the United States Army insists repeatedly that empathy is essential for competent leadership, but it was in fact, the US military that defined this and similar leadership skills as "soft skills". In a Forbes Magazine article titled, "Empathy Is An Essential Leadership Skill -- And There's Nothing Soft About It", Prudy Gourguechon writes, *"Empathy enables you to know if the people you're trying to reach are actually reached. It allows you to predict the effect your decisions and actions will have on core audiences and strategize accordingly. Without empathy, you can't build a team or nurture a new generation of leaders. You will not inspire followers or elicit loyalty. Empathy is essential in negotiations and sales: it allows you to know your target's desires and what risks they are or aren't willing to take."*

"Lack of empathy," she goes on, "is a major contributor to the tsunami of sexual harassment incidents that have dominated recent news and led to the departures of accomplished leaders. Commenting on an employee's body or, worse, grabbing her, requires a failure of empathy. If a boss were able and willing to put himself in the employee's shoes and understand how she would feel when subjected to his actions, he would be far less likely to do what he's doing."

The experts at Business Professional Women's (BPW) International point out that women have a tendency to encourage participation and collaboration when running an organization. They also have the ability to work with a clear vision, and earn people's trust because of that. Unlike men, they rarely use threats to change behavior, instead focusing on improving performance.

Of course, Professors Krewel and Karim remind us, there have been notable exceptions to the idea that female leaders are more compassionate, nurturing or nonviolent leaders. As U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton notably advocated for U.S. military involvement in conflicts in Libya and Syria. British Prime Minister

Margaret Thatcher started a war while in office, and famously slashed government funding for Britain's social welfare services.

It bears remembering, however, that despite differences in "natural" traits, both men and women are socialised to perceive and, therefore, enact leadership in the same ways – in male ways – because leadership has, for millennia, been entirely the territory of men. In her famous Tilbury Speech in 1588, Queen Elizabeth I of England said, *"I know I have the body of a weak, feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king..."*

In "The Power of Feminine Leadership" Tiffany Kelly tells us that, *"Masculine is a focus on self and therefore survival and feminine is a focus on the other and the ability to thrive...Men who are taught that they have to be masculine are leading in a way that is focused on survival, meaning that competition, the quest for power, divisiveness and fear are being used...lack true creativity and connectivity..."*

"Feminine leadership creates space in cultures for unique creativity, inclusiveness, collaboration and supportive competition."

MORE WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP = HEALTHIER POPULATIONS

*To handle yourself, use your head;
to handle others, use your heart.*
-Eleanor Roosevelt

Women are carers and caretakers. We are so by nature and/or by nurture.

By nature and/or by patriarchy, women are also the de facto fulcrum of the vast majority of families. In families and communities, large and small, women play a central role, an essential and pivotal, if often unacknowledged, role.

In societies across time and space, women have been socialized to provide care and maintenance to the family unit by procuring and preparing food, caring for dependent family members and by preparing children for productive adulthood.

“Thus,” say Goodwin et al., “in the International Journal of Global Health and Health Disparities, women’s roles within families have positioned them to become health managers or promoters of overall family health. A model that utilizes women’s roles within families to promote child and family health is appropriate for women of all nations.”

The studies that have been conducted by Goodwin and others show that the contribution of women to the health of their families extends beyond that of food procurement and preparation, and into the responsibility for ensuring that

dependent family members receive proper care of every kind. In most cultures, that is to say, in every country of the world, women still are actively socialized to become the primary caretakers of their familial groups. In some African and Caribbean societies, this socialization process begins the minute girls are mobile and can understand instructions, and starts with them working alongside their mothers doing household chores and caring for siblings.

As food preparers, caretakers and the primary socializing agents, the roles of women within families are often synonymous with health provider or family health manager. Along with other researchers and practitioners in the related sectors, Goodwin et al conclude that women essentially become “*producers of human capital*” by making decisions that contribute to the health of their children and their families, even extended families, as well as to their own health and ultimately to the health of the community.

In the Oxford English Dictionary human capital is defined as “*the skills the labor force possesses and is regarded as a resource or asset.*” It encompasses the notion that investments are made in people – education, skills training, and health, for example – and that these investments increase an individual’s productivity or capacity for production. Harvard University’s Claudia Goldin thinks that the concept of human capital goes back at least to Adam Smith and that his fourth definition of capital really says: “*The acquisition of . . . talents during . . . education, study, or apprenticeship, costs a real expense, which is capital in [a] person. Those talents [are] part of his fortune [and] likewise that of society.*”

A study undertaken by VOX-EU to consider whether and how the management of the COVID-19 pandemic was influenced by the gender of a country’s leader, confirms that female-led countries have fared better in terms of absolute number of COVID-19 cases and deaths, with male-led countries having nearly double the number of deaths as female-led ones. However, the researchers say, drawing anything definitive or altogether conclusive from these raw comparisons is difficult due to the massive underrepresentation of female-led countries in the sample. In the sample they used, only nineteen countries across the world were led by women, compared with the one hundred and seventy-four that had male leaders.

“*In a situation such as this, that pitted human life against economic outcomes,*” the writers say, “*women leaders showed themselves significantly more risk averse in the domain of human life.*” The literature on attitudes to risk and uncertainty suggests that women, even those in leadership roles, appear to be more risk-averse than men.

The conclusion in this case is that: COVID-19 outcomes are systematically and significantly better in countries led by women and, to some extent, this may be explained by the proactive policy responses they adopted. Even accounting for institutional context and other controls, being female-led has provided countries

with an advantage in the current crisis i.e. they have suffered fewer cases of this disease and remained healthier.

Three of the top ten healthiest countries in the world are Iceland, Sweden, and Norway. The Scandinavian countries also have a long history of women in leadership. In fact, the CATO Institute writes that, *“While Nordic societies are indeed role models when it comes to gender equality, this equality stretches back centuries before the modern welfare state and reflects traditional Nordic culture.”*

Health is one of those “soft” areas into which women politicians are routinely shunted, energy, finance, mining and such like being reserved for the men. Yet, Edwin Ng and Carles Muntaner professors in social work and nursing respectively, at the universities of Waterloo and Toronto, also respectively, took it upon themselves to examine whether there were an historical association between women in government and population health among Canada’s ten provinces. They found a connection with deeper implications and far wider ramifications between women in leadership in government and the health of populations.

The data told them that between 1976 and 2009, the percentage of women in provincial government increased six-fold from 4.2 per cent to 25.9 per cent, while mortality from all causes declined by 37.5 per cent – from 8.85 to 5.53 deaths per 1000 people.

Other studies show that this was not an isolated case.

MORE WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP = HIGHER EDUCATION

*The question isn't who's going to let me;
it's who is going to stop me.*
-Ayn Rand

If you educate a man you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a nation, is said to be an African proverb.

This axiom is printed in the very first pages of a commemorative book published by buildOn, an organisation whose mission is, in part, to break the cycle of poverty, illiteracy, and low expectations through service and education, and to change the world by building schools in some of the economically poorest countries on the planet.

In that same book is the story of a young woman in Nepal named Sonu. The story describes some aspects of the difficult life that Sonu has lived, how she almost got sold to human traffickers and then came close to being murdered by the same person who had tricked her with promises of marriage in India, and had been foiled in his attempt to sell her.

Sonu is a Dalit, which means she is of the caste referred to as “untouchable”. In classical Sanskrit, *dalit* meant broken or scattered, and is a term that has also been applied to ‘the working people, the landless and poor peasants, women and all those who are being exploited politically and economically and in the name of religion’.

Sonu does not know her precise age. She had never been to school but had worked as a child laborer doing domestic work from the age of about nine. She was illiterate, and of the several languages spoken in the mountain region where she lived was unable to speak any single one properly. Her verbal communication was a mixture of Nepali, Hindi and one of the local languages. Her lack of education and language made it difficult for her to think critically and use reason to arrive at decisions.

At some point, Sonu had accepted what she had thought was an honest offer of marriage from a man who had come to her village saying he was looking for a wife. She had agreed to go to India with him and be married there. Before they reached the border with India, however, they were intercepted by an organization working against human trafficking and she was freed. She eventually made her way back to a village in the Nepalese mountains and it was there that she came into contact with buildOn. She helped in the construction of a school building in the village and took one of buildOn’s adult literacy programmes.

The adult literacy programmes offered by buildOn teach women like Sonu to read and write, and how to start small businesses. Sonu is now one of these women whose personal empowerment has changed their own lives, the lives of their children, and their village as a whole.

As is reported by many other organisations working all around the world with missions similar to buildOn, this new knowledge helps the women gain some independence and begin to have some control over their own lives. They then educate their daughters, so there arises a new generation of women who are better equipped to avoid the traditional deep dependency and the kinds of dangerous situations that can so often come with poverty and illiteracy, such as had happened with Sonu.

On the basis of the education they receive, the women become a driving force in the development of their villages, and consequently contribute greater value to the wider populations. *“There is no tool more effective for development than the empowerment of women,”* said Kofi Annan, a former Secretary General of the United Nations.

“If you evaluate all the countries where poverty, hopeless and violence abound you will find that women are absent from the public square,” says Jodi Shelton, founder of Shelton Group in Texas, USA. *“The educated woman is a powerful force for good in the society.”*

Graça Machel, who has been the First Lady of Mozambique and later, of South Africa, was absolutely correct in her observation that *“When we invest in women and girls, we invest in the people who invest in everyone else.”*

MORE WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP = SAFER COUNTRIES

*You may encounter many defeats,
but you must not be defeated.*

-Maya Angelou

The African country of Liberia has endured two civil wars in recent history. The first lasted from 1989 until 1997, the second from 1999 to 2003. The 1st Liberian Civil War ended with the general elections in 1997 in which Charles Taylor took power. In 1997, after a rebellion and two coups, one successful and one not, and a civil war estimated to have killed more than a quarter of a million of Liberia's people, he was elected President.

During his time as president, more than 50,000 people were killed and thousands more were mutilated. His militias were known to amputate limbs, rape women, enslave survivors of their attacks and force boys into child armies. Under Taylor's iron rule, civil war broke out again in 1999. In 2003, Taylor resigned by force and went into exile. He currently lives in the United States.

During the Taylor years, a woman named Leymah Gbowee had led a group of women to form an organization called "Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace". She brought together more than three thousand Liberian women, Christian and Muslim and they staged years of non-violent protests around the country including in front of the President's offices. The women dressed in white for their protests, some of which were silent protests outside the President's building.

At one point, the women forced Taylor to agree to attend peace talks in Ghana, then showed up in Accra to keep up the non-violent pressure. Gbowee's website says this: She led a delegation of women to Accra, where they applied strategic pressure to ensure progress was made. At a crucial moment when the talks seemed stalled, Leymah and nearly 200 women formed a human barricade to prevent Taylor's representatives and the rebel warlords from leaving the meeting hall for food or any other reason until the men reached a peace agreement.

When security forces attempted to arrest Leymah, she displayed tactical brilliance in threatening to disrobe – an act that according to traditional beliefs would have brought a curse of terrible misfortune upon the men. Leymah's threat worked, and it proved to be a decisive turning point for the peace process. Within weeks, Taylor resigned the presidency and went into exile, and a peace treaty mandating a transitional government was signed.

Desperate for an end to the violence and war, Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace had settled on a very unorthodox strategy. They asked the women of Liberia to go on a sex strike until their men agreed to put their weapons down and end the war. Many, many women complied. And presumably, so did many, many men.

From New Zealand, in May 2019, Jacinta Ardern, the prime minister, joined France's President Emmanuel Macron to lead the Christchurch Call to Action, a coming together of 48 countries, the European Commission, two international organisations, and eight tech companies, with the goal of eliminating terrorist and violent extremist content online.

"The purpose of terrorism is to scare and divide. And so the Prime Minister reassured and united...And she (Ardern) channeled the grief and rage of her country into meaningful change..." reported TIME magazine.

In a 2018 study reported in the journal, *International Interactions*, in the section *Empirical and Theoretical Research in International Relations*, the researchers wrote, *"We have shown that women's participation in peace negotiations with voice and influence leads to better accord content, higher agreement implementation rates, and longer lasting peace."*

"As peacekeeping has evolved to reflect the populations we serve," says the UN, *"women have become increasingly part of the peacekeeping family – making operations more effective."*

"Our statistical results show a robust relationship between peace agreements with women signatories and peace durability. This relationship holds after controlling for conflict characteristics and the level of political and economic development, UN

peacekeeping, the numbers of women in parliament and in rebel groups, gender quotas, and general civil society inclusion.

“We further find that peace agreements signed by women show a significantly higher number of agreement provisions and a higher implementation rate of these provisions than those not signed by women.”

A publication from Germany’s Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development titled *Enhancing Women’s Leadership for Sustainable Peace in Fragile Contexts in the MENA Region*, said that Women’s participation in peace processes is crucial for the effectiveness of peace and security initiatives. Research shows the links between women’s inclusion and the likelihood of more durable and stable peace.

An analysis of forty peace processes since 1989, conducted by the Graduate Institute Geneva, shows that in cases where women’s groups were able to exercise strong influence on the negotiation process, chances were higher that an agreement would be reached than when women’s groups exercised weak or no influence. The strong influence of women on negotiation processes also positively correlated with a greater likelihood of agreements being implemented.

MORE WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP = HIGHER EARNINGS

*I didn't learn to be quiet when I had an opinion.
The reason they knew who I was is because I told them.*
-Ursula Burns

Money is important. Human societies have utilised the concept of money for millennia, in a variety of forms. Money is currency, is a universally-accepted medium of exchange for the goods and services we desire and need, and nowadays it takes the form of paper or coins and little cards made of plastic. Money is important for individuals and families as much as for countries and governments, and for non-profit organisations as much as for commercial enterprises. Generally speaking, the

more money one has relevant to the amount that one needs, the more comfortable is the life one leads.

We refer to money as income or revenue depending on the sector in which we are operating, but they really are one and the same thing. Income or revenue is what comes to us when we sell our goods or services to others. And, generally speaking, the more there is of that coming to us in the transaction, the better we feel.

When women do work that earns income, whether that is “unearned income” i.e. returns from investments, pensions, inheritances and such, or payment for work conducted at the home or out in the world, a family’s conditions tend to improve.

Women’s earnings are a boost to household income, and it is a very well-established fact that women spend income differently than men. Women everywhere spend more of their money on children than do men, for example. WomenDeliver finds that girls and women spend up to 90% of their earned income on their families, while men spend only about 30 or 40%.

Measures such as child-survival probabilities increase up to twenty times in some regions of the world, when unearned income accrues to women rather than to men. World Bank evidence from countries as varied as Brazil, China, India, South Africa, and the United Kingdom shows that when women control more household income—either through their own earnings or through cash transfers—children benefit as a result of more spending on food and education and we have already seen how women use their resources to become developers of human capital for their communities.

In a Forbes Magazine article titled, *“The Results Are In: Women Are Great For Business, But Still Getting Pushed Out”*, Janet Burns reported on a University of California, Davis Graduate School of Management study, which revealed that *“big California companies with at least some women at the top performed considerably better than ones with mostly male boards and executives.”*

The top twenty-five most gender-diverse companies in California have shown a median return on assets and equity that are at least seventy-four percent higher than for the entire sample of four hundred publicly-owned companies examined in the study.

The Peterson Institute for International Economics did a survey of twenty-two thousand firms from ninety-one countries and found that, a profitable firm at which 30 percent of leaders are women could expect to add more than 1 percentage point to its net margin compared with an otherwise similar firm with no female leaders. By way of comparison, the typical profitable firm in the sample had a net profit margin of 6.4 percent, so one-percentage point increase represents a 15 percent boost to profitability.

Joe Carella, the assistant dean at the University of Arizona, Eller College of Management, told CNBC, “We found that companies that have women in top management roles experience what we call ‘innovation intensity’ and produce more patents — by an average of 20 percent more than teams with male leaders.”

In an article bearing the title *Companies with more female executives make more money: here’s why*, CNBC reporting finds that a large female presence is also associated with higher status. According to the GFP Index, the “most admired” companies – according to Fortune magazine – have twice as many women at the senior management level as do less reputable companies.

According to The Petersen Institute findings, a strong female presence benefits the workplace environment in many ways. Having senior leaders who are female creates less gender discrimination in recruitment, promotion and retention, a factor which gives a company a better chance of hiring and keeping the most qualified people.

Catalyst Inc. whose work includes promoting the advancement of women into executive roles, deduced that, looking at financial results such as return on equity, return on sales and return on invested capital at the 500 largest U.S. corporations, those with at least three women directors had notably stronger financial performance, on average.

In return on equity, on average, companies with the highest percentages of women board members outperformed those with the least by fifty-three percent. In return on sales, the companies with more women board directors outperformed by 42 percent on average, and in return on invested capital, by sixty-six percent, Catalyst said.

The report, *Women in Business and Management: The business case for change*, surveyed almost 13,000 enterprises in 70 countries. More than 57 per cent of respondents agreed that gender diversity initiatives improved business outcomes. Almost three-quarters of those companies that tracked gender diversity in their management reported profit increases of between 5 and 20 per cent, with the majority seeing increases of between 10 and 15 per cent.

“We expected to see a positive correlation between gender diversity and business success,” said Deborah France-Massin, Director of the ILO Bureau for Employers’ Activities, *“but these results are eye-opening... the significance is clear. Companies should look at gender balance as a bottom line issue, not just a human resource issue. The business case for getting more women into management is compelling.”*

MORE WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP = BETTER GOVERNMENT

Some leaders are born women.
-Geraldine Ferraro

Only five percent of the countries in the world are currently led by a woman. Eleven women are serving as Head of State and twelve are serving as Head of Government.

Of national parliamentarians, only 24.3% are women. There are only three countries where women make up fifty percent or more of the members of parliament. There are twenty-seven states in which women account for less than ten percent of parliamentarians in single or lower houses, including three chambers where there is not even one woman in office.

This scenario persists despite established and growing evidence that women's leadership in political decision-making processes improves these processes and their outcomes. Experts say when women are better represented in government office, the gains are likely to spill down and improve the lives of all women.

Women's representation makes a difference in local and national governments. Women demonstrate political leadership by working across party lines through parliamentary women's caucuses - even in the most politically combative environments - and by championing issues of gender equality, such as the elimination of gender-based violence, parental leave and childcare, pensions, gender-equality laws and electoral reform.

UN Women research on *panchayats* (local councils) in India, discovered that the number of drinking water projects in areas with women-led councils was 62 per cent higher than in those with men-led councils. In Norway, a direct causal relationship was found between the presence of women in municipal councils and childcare coverage for families.

In 2005, Angela Merkel became Germany's first female chancellor. She was once dubbed the Queen of Germany and even the Empress of Europe. The BBC says that she cultivated the image of a prudent and pragmatic leader, and Deutsche Welle (DW) conceded that she fundamentally changed the country, while also saying, that, often praised for her calm demeanor, though her time in power has nonetheless been turbulent.

Chancellor Merkel has less power as political leader than the French, Russian and US heads of government, DW reports, but she has profoundly impacted Germany during her years in charge. Under Merkel's reign, Germany's economy prospered, despite the global financial crisis of 2007-08. Germany, which as recently as 2005 was still known as the "sick man of Europe," re-emerged as an economic growth engine. Over time, German unemployment fell by half, and tax revenue grew. And Germany's move in 2009 to adopt a balanced-budget provision marked a paradigm shift that literally paid off: The country has gone from public deficit to surplus.

German media declared itself impressed with her ability to transform the German capital into a hot spot of European diplomacy through her engagement with the eurozone crisis, the Greek bailout and Russia's annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula. The chancellor has proven herself a skilled conflict manager and is held in high esteem by the German people.

In 2016, The Atlantic published an article the title of which asked the question, Would Electing More Women Fix Congress? The answer offered in the piece is: If every man in the Capitol were replaced with a woman, we couldn't say for certain that more bills would be passed, or that party divisions would disappear.

The first paragraph of the article reads, *Only nineteen percent of the seats in the U.S. Congress are held by women, despite the fact that women make up more than half the United States' population. Congress being what it is these days—a snarling ragebeast incapable of compromise—it's an easy jump to wonder if this wild gender imbalance might be part of the problem.*

“The OECD, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, is an international organisation that works with governments, policy makers and citizens, to shape policies that foster prosperity, equality, opportunity and well-being for all. The OECD says that *“being able to measure people’s quality of life is fundamental when assessing the progress of societies,”* and that there is now widespread

acknowledgement that measuring subjective well-being is an essential part of this assessment.

It is very much worth noting also, that the data show that women in government everywhere pay greater attention to quality of life issues, those that directly impact the lives of individuals, such as health, education, leisure and social interactions, and the overall experience of life, measuring those things that the OECD refers to as 'subjective wellbeing'.

Experts agree that quality of life increases across communities when women are active in positions of leadership in government. Social science researchers Shannon Bell and Richard York report in their 2014 paper *Life Satisfaction Across Nations: The Effects of Women's Political Status and Public Priorities*, that "*people report the highest levels of life satisfaction in nations where women have greater political representation.*"

A previously cited 2019 ILO report based on an analysis of data from 186 countries for the period 1991-2017, found that, at the national level, an increase in female employment is positively associated with GDP growth.

The World Economic Forum's 2014 Global Gender Gap Report found a positive correlation between gender equality and per capita GDP. GDP measures the size of a country's economy, is influenced by a country's monetary policy and is, therefore, in many ways a reflection of the quality of a country's government.

One of the primary factors on which a country's economy and, therefore, its GDP depends is human capital. Denying women's right to contribute to a country's economy is choosing to curtail the value of a country's GDP and depriving the country of wealth.

WHAT WOMEN MUST NOW DO

*Finally, I was able to see that
if I had a contribution I wanted to make,
I must do it, despite what others said.
That I was OK the way I was.
That it was all right to be strong."
-Wangari Maathai*

As the old commercial used to go, "We've come a long, baby." And, as we are all very much aware, there is a long way still to go. A very long way. The advance must not be stopped. Progress must not be halted. We must keep pressing forward. We cannot stop now.

Women and our communities must ensure that the movement continues to forge ahead and elevate the world along with it. Leadership opportunities are everywhere. They exist in our homes, families and communities. They are prevalent in the workplace, in every sector of human living – in politics, business, academia, the arts, sports, religions, in leisure and entertainment – literally everywhere. They are, clearly, not going to be handed to us. It is we women, ourselves, who must fight for what we want and create what we want.

At a 2020 ceremony to recognize the landmark Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres told a High-level General Assembly meeting that it must review progress.

“It starts with the equal representation of women in leadership positions — in Governments, boardrooms, in climate negotiations and at the peace table — everywhere decisions are taken that affect people’s lives,” he said. *“This is fundamentally a question of power.”*

He was correct. It is a question of power – power that has been the stronghold of men for millennia, and power that men are very clearly not particularly eager to share. Studies, surveys and research of various kinds conducted in many parts of the world provide real, incontrovertible and mathematical data, as well as ample qualitative evidence proving that gender equality and the inclusion of women in the structures of power and leadership are of benefit to us all. Yet women continue to struggle for opportunities to participate fully.

When she was the head of UNWomen, Michelle Bachelet, two-time President of Chile and then United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, made a point of highlighting her belief that women's strength, women's industry, women's wisdom are humankind's greatest untapped resource. “Gender equality must become a lived reality,” she said. *“We simply can no longer afford to deny the full potential of one half of the population.”*

Entrepreneur magazine and the International Federation of Business and Professional Women confirm that women do have the chops to become transformational leaders. As Winnie Byanyima and Bachelet herself have specified, however, the changes occur when women are present in sufficient numbers. Numbers make all the difference. *“There is strength in numbers”* is both cliché and fact.

Everywhere, women are inching towards that restraining line and pushing against the limitations and restrictions, so progress is being made. Every day women are cracking class ceilings and breaking down barriers. In many places of the world, women and men are joining forces to support the equality of women across all sectors of society.

While progress does not always come in leaps and bounds, women are taking steps and every step that any woman takes, no matter how small it might seem, brings all women closer to equality of opportunity. Every step, no matter how small opens up yet another door into a better world for everyone.

Now, so that we might take our rightful place in our homes and societies, women must keep pushing.

Thank You for Reading!

I hope this book has inspired and empowered you to take your personal growth and leadership journey to the next level.

If you found value in this content, I invite you to explore more of my work.

Visit my website www.shirleyosborne.com to access additional resources, courses, and books designed to support your ongoing development. You'll find a variety of tools and training programs specifically created for women like you, dedicated to building confidence, leadership, and personal power.

Don't miss out on my upcoming courses and exclusive content! Stay connected and join the growing community of women who are committed to transforming their lives and leadership. Follow me and subscribe on Patreon and Substack, Instagram and Facebook, and be sure to check out the podcast series. Details on the website: www.shirleyosborne.com

Thank you for your commitment to improving our world.

With gratitude,

Shirley Osborne

<https://www.shirleyosborne.com>



Shirley Osborne is an internationally recognized advocate for women’s leadership. She is a writer and keynote speaker, whose work bridges grassroots empowerment, higher education, and global governance.

Her commitment to building women’s leadership extends beyond the United States. Shirley has taught leadership to college women in China, equipping the next generation of women leaders with tools for confidence, resilience, and influence. She has also served at the highest levels of international governance as Vice Chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, headquartered in London, and as Regional Representative to the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians of the Caribbean, Americas, and Atlantic Region.

With her unique combination of local insight and global perspective, Shirley inspires women to lead with courage and vision, and without apology.