

Inspire COACHING

International Women's Day - #GiveToGain

The IWD theme for 2026 almost sounds backward at first: **Give to Gain**. In a world that often rewards visibility, velocity, and volume...this theme actually invites a quieter, yet more powerful strategy in leadership.

The Early Career Myth: Gain First, Then Give In the early stages of a [technical] career, the focus of "gain" makes sense. Gain competence. Gain credibility. Gain certifications. Gain promotions. Gain reputation. Gain confidence. You build expertise. You solve hard problems. You stay late when the system breaks. You earn your seat at the table through performance. That mindset works - for a while. But leadership is a different equation. What got us here, won't get us there.

The Leadership Shift: Your Impact Multiplies Through Others At some point, often subtly, the work changes. You're no longer measured by the results only you personally complete. You're measured by the people who grow because you were in the room. This is where Give to Gain becomes more than a slogan. It becomes a leadership operating system. As you evolve in your career, your leverage increases. And with leverage comes responsibility.

You gain influence by giving:

- Clarity when others are overwhelmed.
- Sponsorship when others are unseen.
- Context when decisions feel chaotic.
- Psychological safety when voices hesitate.

Why Give to Gain for IWD 2026: Many women in technical industries are taught (implicitly) that they must prove before they can contribute beyond their job description. But the leaders who create lasting impact do something different. They share:

- What they've learned.
- What they wish they'd known.
- The shortcuts that reduce unnecessary struggle.
- The introductions that open doors.

Not because they have extra time. But because they understand the compounding effect of generosity. And here's the paradox: When you give strategically - you don't shrink. You expand. The leaders who rise are the ones who create lift for others.

Your reputation grows. Your network strengthens. Your influence deepens. You become known not just as technically capable - but as someone who elevates the system.

Give to gain. Not because it sounds noble.
Because it's how sustainable leadership is built.
Happy International Women's Day.

Be Inspired. Be Inspiring.
Stacie



Stacie as Client Story

At higher levels, the shift of giving to gain became even more pronounced. I was gaining:

- Enterprise impact by giving away control.
- Strong successors by giving stretch opportunities.
- Strategic clarity by giving space for dissent.
- Culture strength by giving recognition publicly and often.

Power became less about hoarding knowledge or guarding status. It became building the capability around me. As I climbed in my leadership roles, I understood that leadership is not a zero-sum game.

What did this look like for me: It wasn't martyrdom. It wasn't over-functioning. It was not saying yes to everything. It looked like:

- Mentoring my team with intention.
- Sponsoring team members in a room they're not in.
- Offering candid and direct feedback with care.
- Sharing credit - loudly. Recognizing the team - a lot.
- Asking, "What do you need to succeed?" and listening.

This International Women's Day, **instead of asking:** "What do I need to achieve next?" **Try asking:** "What can I give that multiplies impact beyond me?"

Because the longer you lead, the clearer it becomes: Your legacy won't be the models you built. It won't be the optimization you ran. It won't even be the title you held. It will be the leaders who rose because you did.

*"WE MAKE A LIVING BY WHAT WE GET, BUT WE MAKE A LIFE BY WHAT WE GIVE."
- WINSTON CHURCHILL*