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Women: Follow The Five C's To Become Leaders In The Workplace



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The number of women leaders and CEOs is growing more and more each year, but it's not where it needs to be. Still, process leads to progress. A recent article in *Fortune* [states](#), "As of 2017, there are 32 female CEOs on the list, meaning that 6.4% of the U.S.'s biggest companies (by revenue) are run by women." Women around the world are taking a stand to speak and to be heard, despite what many were taught as kids.

With few women leaders in the workplace, a lot of the issues stem from what we learned as children. Women were educated by everyone from their mothers to their teachers and society's

influence to be good little girls. We were taught not to be too overbearing. Don't rock the boat. Don't be too loud. Don't try to be the smartest person in the room. Just let the men win. You have to cook and clean to keep a man. The list continues. Women have all heard these phrases, or something similar, before.

So, being a follower is embedded in a woman's thought process subconsciously, as she has always been told that she needs to play second and let the man be the breadwinner and head of the household while she takes care of the children. Many men in America don't realize that taking care of children is a full-time job. One must value taking care of our kids at home to really value the woman, because it takes determination, dedication and hard work — and our kids are the future.

I came to fully realize my potential when I wanted to run my own restaurant in Manhattan. The restaurant and food industry is dominated by men: successful chefs or restaurateurs. At the time, there were very few women owners in the forefront; I was in an industry where I would be dealing with all men. They pushed me around, tried to shut out my voice, and told me that I needed to sit and look pretty in an all-boys network.

However, I stood tall through the recession when everyone was closing and stayed afloat. That's where I learned how to lead. I began to speak up and use my voice. I began to tell my liquor and food distributors what I wanted. I spoke up to the health department inspectors. I was doing all this while juggling my marriage and my personal life.

Women are the true leaders in our society because they can lead in the workplace while also coming home to take care of their families and homes. That is true multitasking. The abilities of women far exceed what most of us think we possess because we have been socialized to think we cannot have more — but we can.

Here are my five Cs for being a leader rather than a follower:

- **Courage.** It's time to speak up and stop being afraid of what others will say. Most women are afraid of what people think about them in the work environment. I'm here to tell you that people will always have something to say about you, so stop worrying about them and start worrying about you. I told myself that, in order to be in charge of a business, I had to lead. I was afraid at first, but I knew I had to be courageous in order to survive during a recession.

- **Confidence.** You must start to realize that you are enough. Let go of self-doubt, anxiety and fear of getting things wrong in the workplace. If you never fail, you will never grow. This was the biggest hurdle for me to overcome because I was always a people-pleaser. However, when you are in charge of a staff of 20 and you need things to get done, you either build up your confidence or your business sinks.

- **Change.** Be open and ready for change. Many women are stuck in their own ways, playing it safe and not rocking the boat. No one wants to try anything new or different because they want to stay comfortable. If you don't step out of your comfort zone,

you will never know if you can shine. If you don't like change you can't be a great business woman. Nothing stays the same; every day, you have to be open to learning and doing something new.

- **Creativity.** Be creative. Step out of the box. Show your boss and your team that you think differently and want to try new things. Nothing revolutionary ever started without vision, and it takes creativity to put true vision into action.

- **Commitment.** You have to be committed to being a leader. You have to *want* success. No one just gives you success; you take it. When others give up, you keep going. You have to stay focused on what you want and never give up until you have achieved it.

Owning a million-dollar restaurant and dealing with mostly men on a daily basis made me realize that I loved connecting with people. But I also realized that owning my restaurant wasn't my calling anymore. I had a huge following and people trusted me. I listened and learned about human behavior from my customers and staff. It was the best way to learn how to be a leadership coach.

The restaurant business taught me who I was. And from this experience, I learned that I wanted to help women all across the world, because we all need a voice but most of us are too afraid to use it. It's our time to shine as women — in the corporate workplace or as entrepreneurs. Stop playing small; play big. The time is now. No one gives you an easy pathway for success or greatness — you just have to take it.

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