

Notes for remarks by
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Leadership and Three Canadian Women Leaders I Admire

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Thank you.

I am honoured to have been invited to speak to you today and I'm particularly pleased to see so many current and future leaders here. It is my hope that you will each take some small inspiration away with you today.

I have been asked to talk about leadership and specifically about three Canadian women leaders I admire.

Now coming up with a list of names of Canadian women leaders wasn't difficult at all. Narrowing down to 3 names was very difficult.

I will talk about leadership generally, and about these women I admire and I will also speak a little bit about organizational leadership, because just as people become leaders, organizations can become leaders in their sphere. The leadership qualities brought to the organization by its people become the values and culture of that organization. But more about that later.

But back to Canadian women - many Canadian women, both past and present, are renowned for their leadership in areas like medicine, the arts, science, social policy, politics and the world of commerce.

And over the years, this forum has certainly introduced me to many women leaders who have earned my admiration. They have broken new ground in public service, business, sports, law and other areas. How about Sharon Woods, the first North American woman to conquer Mt. Everest, Michelle

Falardeau-Ramsay, the Chief Commission of the Canadian Human Rights Commission, Chief Justice Catherine Fraser, Kathy Sendall, a well respected executive and leader in the resource sector. All fine leaders and all have spoken in this forum.

Teachers – so important, so critical in the development of every young person. I, like many of you was fortunate early on to form very strong bonds with a number of my female teachers. As a teenager, I had role models who tried to steer me into leadership roles.

Teachers have that ability to recognize a youngsters interests and abilities and if they are active leaders, look for opportunities for students to grow. I had a teacher take me under her wing in Grade 10 and helped guide my interest in English literature with an opportunity to be the school yearbook editor. She coached me in my writing skills; she helped me develop the leadership skills necessary to publish that yearbook and then she pushed me to do it over again in Grades 11 and 12. By the time I graduated, we had a pretty good product!

It has been my experience that mature women have a profound influence on young women. In university I always found women, and indeed some men, who provided me with personal and academic mentoring. Without exception they recognized the importance of making time available to other people and were prepared to coach, mentor and provide guidance.

So as I cast my mind back, thinking about women who I've admired, women who have influenced me, I was flooded with images. Public figures, personal relationships, mentors, teachers.

But before I tell you which women I chose, I'd like to share some thoughts on leadership in general.

LEADERSHIP

What is leadership? There are many definitions and scholarly attempts to characterize it.

One definition that I like – and which as been attributed business and personal development guru Stephen Covey (he wrote the 7 Habits series) – is that, “Management is the efficiency of climbing the ladder; leadership determines whether the ladder is leaning against the right wall.”

Warren Bennis, another noted author and authority on leadership, puts it another way: “Managers,” he says, “are people who do things right, while leaders are people who do the right thing.” Mr. Bennis has also defined

leadership as “the capacity to create a compelling vision and translate it into action and sustain it.”

Recently, I heard the CEO of Ford describe leaders. To paraphrase, he said, “There are people who know what’s happening, people who don’t know what’s happening, people it happens to and people who make it happen.” Leaders make it happen.

By and large, I think almost all of definitions of leadership include the same core elements. They involve setting a course, providing a vision, motivating people, then giving them objectives to achieve, the tools to do the job, and defining the incentives to succeed.

To be an effective leader in today’s world – whether we work in business, education, government or other sectors, we must be able to see our situation as it is, and then move our organizations to where we think we should be. To make sure our ladder is leaning against the right wall, so to speak. Our ability to see changes in our world and to take action to respond will influence the course of destiny for our own lives, our organizations, our teams and ultimately shape our success as leaders.

While leadership is most often defined in the context of our academic and professional lives, I think it’s important to recognize that leadership qualities are also very important in our personal lives. Our world includes our family, our social circle, our communities.

A question that is often asked is, are leaders born or made?

Some experts in human behaviour believe that the basic skills of leadership can be learned, but they acknowledge the drive, motivation and desire of effective leaders is probably a genetic factor.

Others believe strongly that leaders are born, not made, but what they do with their leadership birthright is largely determined by how they were mentored and encouraged early in their lives.

My own view is somewhere in between. I agree that most of the characteristics of leadership can be learned, and that with training and coaching good leadership can become better leadership.

Learning from one’s peers and leaders at school, work and in the community – can hone a leader’s skills and abilities. And coaching and mentoring can help potential leaders increase their communications skills, their capacity for empathy, their people skills and self-awareness – all essential to today’s leaders.

But I also agree that great leadership requires a certain drive or spark that can't be bought or taught. With the proper training and development, good leaders can become very good leaders.

You may have picked up in my remarks so far that I am a great believer in the value of mentoring as a form of leadership development. As I mentioned earlier, personally I have benefited greatly from mentors.

The mentors we choose may include our parents, but often they pick up where our parents left off, complementing what we learn as children. One way or another we can all benefit from mentoring. We all come with certain potential and our environment shapes how that potential will be used. Mentors help us along the way, by helping us interpret our environment and responding appropriately to it.

In many ways, learning to be a leader is the same process as becoming an integrated and healthy person. It involves developing self confidence, empathy for others, and the ability to believe that by working with others, we can create change and have an impact.

Leaders also develop through on-the-job education. Experience.

Much of what there is to learn about leadership isn't spelled out in business books or courses. It has to be learned by doing. It sometimes involves trial and error. It always involves stretching out into new territory and taking on new responsibilities. And it always involves the very imprecise science of working with people and gaining an understanding of what makes human beings tick.

Don't get me wrong. I believe in the value of a formal education – the more the better. In today's world, it's an essential starting point. But I also believe in life-long learning, and a big part of that is learning from experience, and learning from people around us.

One of the important keys to success is an open mind and a commitment to life-long learning. Our capacity to be effective leaders in a changing world is only equal to our capacity to learn. It's a never-ending process. Leaders require an appetite for change and continuous learning.

There are, of course, many approaches and models for developing leadership. These are shaped by our own unique experiences and circumstances. The people we have met, the issues we've faced and the particular challenges of our individual life experiences have shaped our own approach. Each situation you face has the potential to strengthen you

as a leader; at the time, particularly if it is a difficult situation, you may not realize that you are learning something. But on reflection, after the fact you will have the choice to grow from the experience as you think it through.

A FEW PRINCIPLES OF LEADERSHIP

I want now to spend just a few minutes on the general principles of leadership. They are the elements I consider necessary for a solid foundation for leadership.

Leaders start with a vision:

To begin, I think creating positive change as a leader starts with a vision of the future. A lot of people can plan for the short-term. Real leaders have a vision that makes them successful in the long-term. They have in their minds a picture of the end state. They can see the result they are trying to achieve, they can see the finished product.

Leaders develop flexible plans:

Of course, leaders must have a plan to achieve their vision. Increasingly, those plans must be flexible. Leaders have to be prepared to adapt. From here to the goal is not a straight line. There will be challenges, bumps in the road. Leaders must roll with the punches, be prepared to make the changes to the plan that are required and at the same time never lose sight of the goal.

As a leader, you won't be right all the time. You must be prepared to establish plans and then let those plans evolve according to the changing environment and circumstances; you'll make course corrections, you'll revise the plan.

Leaders create an environment of trust:

Leaders can initiate change and help motivate change. But leaders can't force change to happen. The cooperation of other people is needed to make it happen. Leaders need to build a team, and influence the members of that team to work together for the common goal. Work together to achieve the vision.

And that means communication, which is a huge part of leadership. Communicating with people, not to them. And making sure everyone understands what is needed and what is to be done.

A leader has to get buy-in from people. You have to be believable. People have to trust you as a leader. You do not have to be right all of the time,

but a leader must be perceived to always be working in the best interests of the organization and the people in it.

Let me talk a little about the business I am in. In the pipeline business, we have the technology and the infrastructure to transport our products anywhere. But to do that successfully, Enbridge needs more than computers and pipelines. We depend on people – people to get the job done quickly, efficiently, reliably and cost-effectively.

Our success calls for talented individuals in many different fields who are highly skilled, well educated and expert in the latest technological innovation and thinking. We require enthusiastic, solution-oriented individuals who can adapt to changes readily. And of course success calls for lots of energy.

That brings me to my next principle – walk the talk.

Leaders walk the talk:

As leaders, there will be times when you will have to make declarations about important goals and objectives for the group you are leading. In each and every case it will be critical to back your talk with actions. Leaders cannot ask the people around them to do something they themselves would not do. Leaders must model the behaviour they expect in others in order to create a culture of integrity and openness.

These leadership principles – start with a vision, develop flexible plans, create an environment of trust, walk the talk – all place a great deal of attention on values.

I want to spend just a few moments now on the topic of values. Enbridge's corporate values – accountability, innovation, flexibility, value creation for shareholders and social responsibility – wouldn't have meaning for our employees if the company's leadership didn't live them.

Today, companies need to ask themselves: Do we add something of value to society beyond economic development? Are we actively involved in the community?

That's the kind of culture I believe we have at Enbridge. Members of the corporate leadership team, me included, are encouraged to be involved in the community. To contribute more than just economic benefits.

We know from our employees themselves that I am not alone in wanting to work for a company that reflects my personal values. Enbridge's culture

developed because it was the right thing to do. Now, we find it helps us retain employees, because they agree with that sentiment.

I believe that when you look at leaders as individuals, you also see a pattern of values. Values that leaders live by. Hard work. Dedication. And perseverance.

They are so vital to leadership that when I finally narrowed down my list of Canadian women leaders I admire, I chose three people who illustrate these values.

Let's turn first to hard work.

Being raised on a mixed farm with livestock and grain, I learned about hard work early on. Farming was a 365-days-a-year, 24-hours-a-day commitment. At that time, on a family farm you didn't start to work hard as an adult. You worked hard from the time that you were physically able to work. Hard work was very much a part of my upbringing.

Being a girl didn't translate into less work. I had the same expectations of physical contributions placed on me that were placed on my male cousins. At that time, there was actually more pressure on girls because while they were expected to work very hard on the farm, they knew the land would not be passed on to them and they would have to make a living another way. The girls had to help on the farm and get high enough marks to get into university.

HARD WORK – ROBERTA BONDAR

Canada's first female astronaut in space, Roberta Bondar, is someone I admire for hard work.

Breaking new ground in a non-traditional profession takes effort. And at an early age, Dr. Bondar chose to pursue non-traditional interests. She loved science and wanted to travel to space.

She had defined her vision and getting there certainly took a great deal of effort. Over more than a decade, Dr. Bondar earned two Bachelor of Science degrees (in zoology and agriculture), a Masters of Science in something called experimental pathology, a Ph.D. in neurobiology, and graduated as a medical doctor in 1977.

Eventually, in 1984 at age 39, she started to train as an astronaut. Almost 10 years later, following extensive training and hard work, she finally flew in space on the shuttle Discovery as a Payload Specialist.

The dream she decided to follow as a child in northern Ontario had finally come true – thanks in large part to old-fashioned hard work.

It takes years to build a career and it takes years to build the skills that you need to reach the heights of your chosen field. But all the steps along the way are valuable and worthwhile. It's worth giving everything you've got at each step of the way.

DEDICATION – JEANNE SAUVÉ

My second selection is Jeanne Sauvé, who I admire for her dedication. Jeanne Sauvé is known for achieving some significant firsts in her political career. She was the first Woman Member of Parliament from Quebec to become a Cabinet Minister. She was the first woman Speaker of the House of Commons. And in 1984 she became the first woman Governor-General of Canada.

But what I admire most about Jeanne Sauvé is her long-time dedication to social policy issues. This area was clearly an interest even when she was a student.

Dedication is important to leaders.

As a young woman, Jeanne Sauvé was active in several youth movements focused on social action. She went on to have a 20-year career as a journalist before entering federal politics. Later, as Governor-General, she focused on a mandate that included peace, national unity and concerns related to young people. She is also known for opening the first daycare centre on Parliament Hill.

Setting up a daycare may not seem all that ground-breaking today, but at that time it was. When I had my daughter in 1966 I had to quit my job. There was no such thing as maternity leave. When I went back to work there was no daycare. It was the Sixties. If you wanted to combine a career with motherhood, you were on your own. Fortunately in Canada that has changed over the years. I believe that one of the things that has really helped the advancement of women has been the fact that there is more accessible daycare and for Jeanne Sauvé to have made that happen on Parliament Hill is really quite exceptional.

What's more, her dedication to social policy issues was evident throughout her lifetime.

PERSEVERANCE – EMILY CARR

The third value I cherish is perseverance and one of the great Canadians to exhibit that was artist Emily Carr. You may have seen her work. She interpreted the beauty of the Queen Charlotte Islands on Canada's West Coast in a unique and spectacular fashion.

Emily Carr had a vision that was very different than what was considered acceptable art in her native Victoria in the late 1800s.

So different in fact that, after attending art school in San Francisco and parts of Europe, she returned home to a less than warm reception. As a result, she had to supplement her income as a landlord and by selling chickens, rabbits, fruit and pottery. She even bred sheepdogs and sold them.

Still she persevered. I think it's worth noting that although she was independent-minded, Carr still benefited from the encouragement of her friend and mentor Lawren Harris of the Group of Seven.

Amazingly, although she took her first art lesson at the age of 8, Carr did not have her first solo exhibition until she was 67!

It's an important lesson. With persistence and sticking with it you will get there. It just doesn't happen overnight.

IN CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I'd like to offer some parting thoughts on becoming a leader.

Look for mentors in your own life and look to women like Dr. Bondar, Jeanne Sauv  and Emily Carr for nuggets of inspiration. And look closer to home; look at your colleagues, look at your family, look to other important people in your life. And look not only to women, look also to men whose standards are high and who personify the values you believe in.

Seize every experience to improve your talents. Take advantage of opportunities that broaden your understanding of new cultures and new markets, and what it's like to live and work in our global village. Keep pace with new technology and new ideas. And don't forget the community. It's an important opportunity to make a contribution and to learn in the process.

There will be many leadership lessons for you to learn as you move towards your vision. Sometimes you will make mistakes in the process. But don't let that deter you from your goal. Remember that your vision is the first, important step on the road to success.

As Roberta Bondar once said, "We learn and grow one goal at a time. But to set meaningful goals, we need imaginative insight or vision."

Sticking with your vision sounds easy but it isn't always. Being dedicated to your vision can be challenging. To quote Dr. Bondar once more, she advises, "If you have a vision and you find that someone doesn't share that vision, you either change the vision or change the people you share it with."

As you work toward your vision, let hard work, dedication and perseverance be your guides. These are key leadership values that will ensure your success in whatever field you choose.

Thank you.