

## Mother Touch Leadership

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*"A man's work is from sun to sun, but a mother's work is never done." - Source Unknown*

Normally, a young mother sets her foot on the path of life, with or without a husband; she hopes that the end will be better than the beginning. She cares and mothers her children, playing and giving them hope of life. When the night comes, and the path becomes dark, and as children shake with fear and cold, the mother draws them close and covers them with her cloak and the children say, "Mother, we are not afraid, for you are near, and no harm can come."

When life is too rough to bear: hatred through social injustice, times of abandonment and sickness, she gives them strength and hope: "A little patience and you will make it."

She spends time teaching them the challenges of life and survival. She sees them through transitions of life. It is a fact of nature that as the mother matures and grows weaker; roles begin to change. She can with confidence say to them:

*"I have reached the end of my journey. And now I know the end is better than the beginning, for my children can walk alone, and their children after them."*

And the children can say with confidence:

*"We cannot see her but she is with us still. A Mother like ours is more than a memory. She is a living presence....."*

It is a fact that the influence of a mother is greatest in the season of life when the foundation of a family is being shaped and set. Many a great leaders of the world confess openly that they owe the preparation of early leadership development to the up-bringing and nurture of their mothers. Their mothers' influence of tender and powerful leadership contributed greatly to the epitome of their fame. In some cases the mother bearing responsibility single-handed.

The amazing world, in which we live, has the audacity to question the ability of women to lead. Even the women themselves, do not with confidence, take on the opportunities when they occur, they have to be persuaded into leadership positions. However, as women realise their potential, through gender sensitisation and education, they are increasingly taking up leadership.

The history of the church as well as the history of many nations would have looked very different without women who have stood up as leaders, some openly and others privately on their knees pouring tears.

Miriam, Huldah, Rahab, Deborah, and Esther in Old Testament; Phoebe, Priscilla, Euodia and Syntyche, Lydia, and Junia in the New Testament.

Monica mother of Augustine, Bridget of Sweden, Katie Luther, Catherine Booth, Elizabeth Fry, Catherine of Siena in the history of the church.

History remembers: "mother" figure Golda Meir of Israel, Indira Gandhi, the iron lady Margaret Thatcher, and Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia.

Women leadership is increasingly evident in politics, business, and organisations and high-up in the church.

Helen Fisher and Judy Rosener from their research have both concluded that women and men have different gifts and that women bring to leadership talents such as emotional sensitivity, empathy, a affinity for long term planning, networking, a desire to reach consensus, and a collaborative leadership style.

The Caliper study provides evidence that women bring distinct personality and motivational strengths to leadership roles and do so in a style that is more conducive to today's diverse workplace.

The study finds that women leaders are more assertive, persuasive, have a stronger need to get things done, and are more willing to take risks than their male counterparts.

On being asked a pointed question on women leadership Golda Meir said:

*"Whether women are better than men I cannot say, but I can say they are certainly no worse."*

The saying of Aristotle "Let not the hen crow before the rooster" must be treated as an attitude of the past.

Women have come from far and time has come when searching for leadership 'the gender' lenses ought to be removed and consider them as creation of God who are equally gifted and capable on the basis of individual qualities a 'fit' for the job. As liberated leaders, the question should always be: Who has the qualities that best-suit the position specification?

Even the most confident woman sometimes struggle with a sense of low self-esteem, arising from one's skewed world view, questioning her own worth and doubts her potential as a leader. This inward struggle has to be overcome.

Dr. Musimbi Kanyoro, Secretary General, World YWCA, says that the invisible women leaders should be made visible through finding, and affirming them. Use the learning and experience that the women have as managers of families and communities to the management of nations, businesses, and religious institutions.

Then the words: "The greatest oak was once a little nut who held its ground" by unknown author. The growing oak is now in need of the more experienced leaders, holding the baton, to the position of hand-over as they run alongside through deliberate proactive identification and leadership development. Hand over at the appropriate time and to the appropriate flag bearer. The coaching will involve identifying those unique qualities and instilling confidence in the new leader.

*"Knowledge has to be improved, challenged, and increased constantly, or it vanishes." Peter F. Drucker*

**StratServe Newsletter is a monthly inspirational challenge to leaders in leadership**

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