

wPower

**The Strength of an
Empowered Woman to
Change the World**

Felicha Sinegar-Stanley

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This book is dedicated to my mother, Dorothy Spencer-Sinegar, my Godmother, Ms. Beverly Sterns, my mentors, Eleanor (Cookie) Hatch- Ford, Dr. Madelyn Hunt, Dr. Tina Jackson, Marilyn M. Bradford and my adult children Ariel Arrington, Jamaal Arrington, Jasmine Arrington-Minor, and Steven Arrington. My granddaughters, Zoe Priscilla Minor, Savannah Arrington, and Alexandria Rose Minor and grandson Raphael J. Leunah.

And to a good friend for being there for me
Clarence Fitzpatrick Mitchell

“When women succeed, nations are more safe, secure and prosperous. There is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women.”

Barack Obama, 44th US President

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Introduction

Empowerment is defined as “the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights” (*Oxford Dictionary*). This process began with my journey on a path toward personal empowerment through self-awareness, growth, educational achievements, adversities, and the help of others. We as women should be encouraging and supporting other women as often as we can. Women's Empowerment has taken center-stage all over the world. It is an exciting journey that I have embraced with great passion.

It all began in 2008 when I applied for an academic advisor position at Eastfield College in Mesquite, TX. I mentioned to-a former co-worker that I was seeking a job at the local community college. He informed me that he worked at Eastfield and agreed to talk to the director of that department. At the time, there were two advisor positions open, one full-time and one part-time. I had no experience, but the director hired me for a part-time position.-At the end of a brief three-month period, I was promoted to full-time with benefits.

I had an opportunity to get into the community college setting and learn what it takes to be a great academic advisor. I was able to maintain

successful partnerships with students and service providers for educational, career, program and service needs. I coordinated and developed programs involving recruitment, enrollment, advising, and course planning. I demonstrated technical knowledge with different predictive analytic systems, word processing, and other database applications. Some of the more personal successes were being a part of the hiring process and training other new advisors. I gained interviewing skills as well as major communication skills. I was able to grow and teach college classes at several college campuses. I was highly esteemed as I was promoted to lead a team of 25 advisors and was able to cultivate a feeling of community within the department. Supervising is one of the parts of my role that I enjoy the most. This is where I made a big impact on students from other countries. I did this by really getting to know them, where they came from, and where they are going. Also, I made it a point to find out how I could help them best. By showing an interest in the things that mattered most to them, let them know that I want to share in their academic and personal lives. Along the way, there was one person who came close to empowering me to excel and she was only my manager for two years. She was the one who was always open and honest with me about the goals that I wanted to accomplish. I feel that she did the best she could with what she had to work with. It was far from what I needed in the way of empowerment. There

were times she would talk in general terms which meant, I can only say certain words to keep you a little encouraged, but I cannot make major changes. I respected her for what little information she did share with me. I always felt like she wanted to put more into me, but she didn't know how to do it.

While working at Eastfield College, I met people who were both helpful and kind. It was a small population of faculty and students, and much of the student body were people of color. The culture of students was not diverse at all compared to other campuses. There were three other larger campuses in the district. However, didn't matter much to me at the time because my focus was on learning my new job. Coming from substitute teaching at Mesquite ISD, this was a great win for me and the students I would serve.

In the advising department, my-colleagues were willing to patiently train me and-allow me to develop my skills. I was careful to exhibit excellent work ethics, good character, and a positive attitude. I began building strong relationships by serving everyone with excellence, including the student body, as well as all levels of the staff and faculty. I went into this new job with an open mind and a heart for the students. I worked different shifts to make myself more marketable. One thing I noticed right from the start is the people working at this location

seemed to work well together. To my knowledge, I fit in well with everyone.

Here are a few of the learned while working on the Eastfield campus at this stage of my journey:

- Trust is earned over time, so start with mouth shut and eyes and ears wide open.
- Take advantage of every opportunity to learn from the lessons and the mistakes of others
- Treat everyone with respect and kindness
- While some will want to see you succeed-others may not
- Do not rely too heavily on anyone, because people come and go
- Do not take shortcuts
- Be helpful and willing to ask for help
- Working with a micromanager can be difficult – maintain professionalism at all times
- Don't take certain things personally nor too seriously to avoid non-productive behavior
- Be a peacemaker and enjoy your work

The most important lesson is to learn who the big players are on the campus in the beginning by asking colleagues. Don't be afraid to ask who influences the campus and how much of it. What type of politics is being played and what must you do to learn the game quickly. I saw a lot of my colleagues come and go, but my favorite was Dr. James W. Russell. He reminded me of my father, and we both had similar beginnings in our careers as K-12 teachers. His office was located conveniently next to mine and I learned much about being an advisor from him.

It was disheartening to learn that internal promotions were uncommon. However, lessons learned can be steppingstones for acquiring new jobs with increased pay on other campuses. I knew that it was vital for me to learn as much as I could to be ready to move when opportunity knocks.

The challenges that I faced as an advisor were numerous. The most detrimental one was not being able to move up the ladder of success in advising as quickly as I had hoped. I was anxious to move up to the next level. But it took four years to leave and get one position up on the ladder. When I was hired in the district, I already had my Master of Education degree. Once I got the first year of experience, I felt that I was ready for the next level. The challenge here was that I was not allowed to grow. There was no emphasis on personal and career growth. Only

people who had family members working at EFC advanced. I saw others who had less education with the same amount of seniority, move up to places they had no experience in. Unfortunately, our society teaches us that “it’s not always what you know, but who you know. Another ill-fated truth is that some people will do almost anything to get where they want to go.

Education and Empowerment Go Hand-in-Hand

Getting an education is not an option, it's a requirement. Education is the key to women's empowerment, providing better work opportunities, increased financial power, and participation in society. According to Global Education Monitoring Report, "Education is essential for empowering women to achieve gender equality, which is also good for sustainable development."

Education and empowerment are two of the main traits that women need to succeed. When one educates a woman, her self-esteem goes way up, and her confidence is really strong. There are so many amazing things an educated woman will do for her children and family. For example, poverty has a grave effect on families everywhere. Yet, one of the most effective ways to reduce poverty is by investing in the education of women. Every student has a right to a good education. An educated woman is empowered to make a difference in the reduction of poverty and many other great contributions to our society.

We as women make up over 50% of the entire world's population which makes us leaders in education.

Effectively educating young girls and women continues to be a challenge today. In some undeveloped countries, such as the Middle East and African countries, girls and women are still barred from learning. Women and girls are not valued, nor educated. They are seen as “the help” or as domestic workers.

While access to education has changed in the last few years, women in these countries and others are not being prepared for this century. These are two major elements in education and their impacts on women. According to www.prb.org, “Education’s has been emphasized by a number of international conventions, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Programme of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development.”

Because education is very important in empowerment, we should start with young girls and develop them from their teenage years. Ways that women can empower teen girls is by introducing them to what it takes to be financially independent at an early age, as well as create a space where girls can meet and learn what it means to help other girls. When girls begin supporting other girls at an early age, there’s nothing they will not be able to do as a woman.

My goal is to teach middle and high aged girls about empowerment in the areas of finances, employment, education, and health. I feel that we must start with the WHY. If we know why we are empowering young women, we will be able to be successful. You can't think empowerment without thinking about education because you are educating someone all the time.

Today young women are being educated at the most prestigious universities in the world. There was a time when women could not attend certain universities. No longer are women being left out of the equation...we are the answer to the problems that are faced by our communities today.

When women attend universities that embrace us and see the benefits that we bring everyone including men to learn. We are leaders in government, politics, military and any industry available. Women leaders are now helping others by reaching out to women on their jobs, in organizations, and random places. The beauty of it is that women have come to realize that to get ahead in life we must help others.

How I Feel

When I help other women, I feel like I have made a difference and my purpose is being fulfilled. You cannot empower another person and still feel the

same way as before. God has placed that special feeling inside of us as women to see that another person reaches their goals and dreams. -I read many women's publications and I watch shows owned and operated by women and they may all be different in the way they approach helping women, but the result is the same.

When a woman is empowered by attending a conference, watching a webinar, or participating in an event, she gets all the fuel she needs to take what she learned and take action to do whatever it is she wants to do. I have gone through difficulties during my 11 years on the job when I didn't feel empowered. But what I found out is when you are not being empowered you need to get up and empower yourself. I was told by an informal mentor, "Do all you can do to empower yourself." And that changed my life.

I knew that outside of work I had to use my time wisely even though I would get home after 7:00 pm every night and by the time I eat and relax it was bedtime. I would go to bed without taking the time to work on empowering myself.

When I began to wake up and realize that I can empower myself and it would help me empower other women, I became better at knowing what other women wanted and needed. I had to experience what it's like to need empowerment myself before I could empower others. I learned

about empowering myself is that there are holistic approaches to empowerment such as health & Nutrition, political participation, credit, technology, asset base, and marketing. All of which I had to learn that I am responsible for. Once I began taking responsibility for my health and participating in political affairs and doing research on how to help my credit; my whole world changed. I now have a sense of self-worth, a right to determine choices, exercise my right to opportunities and resources. One of the biggest is having the power to control my own life in and outside my home. I'm just loving influencing the direction of social change to participate globally in matters that affect women. My inner self was saying think about all you can do for others and just start with empowering one or two. I learned that I had to be passionate about what I wanted to do and make sure it lined up with my dreams. I also learned that when I was able to write out my S.M.A.R.T goals for empowerment, the more I was able to be excited and take action, along with my strength and I accomplished it.

At first, I thought it was hard to find women who needed to be empowered, but when I put the word out on Social Media, women came from everywhere.

Paying it Forward

The more you help others, the more you help you. Let me tell you help can come in many different

forms and at different times. You should get excited about how helping another woman can put you in touch with people you may not have encountered otherwise. Just imagine you help a woman whom you don't know and a few years later you get a call from that same woman and she gives you the exciting news that she has paid it forward to another woman in a foreign country. Then she goes on to tell you that the donations that she gave you without asking for anything in return; she used it to start a bookstore for women of domestic violence or created a section in her bookstore for young teens.

I can remember years ago when I needed assistance from "The family place," and they so graciously assisted me and educated me on where I could find the exact help that I needed, plus they provided help for me, too. Years later, I have been a big advocate for that organization by supporting those women who came after me. I provide a financial donation as well as go out telling other women about that organization.

On this journey to helping other women, I have thought about all the great ways I want to help women in other countries. If you are wondering why I want to help women in other countries, well there are women in many countries who need my help and I will do everything in my power to give them a hand-up. Yes, a hand-up and not a handout.

In-2020, I will be empowering women and girls globally using speaking engagements and workshops. This is just one example of how I plan to change the world one group at a time.

God has placed on my heart to help every woman who I can reach out and touch. I do want great things and I know with that may come some struggles, but I have strength. The strength of an empowered woman to change the world. Please don't even try to get in my way because I am coming through full force.

I am so inspired by the thought of impacting women in every city in the United States and every country that I'm able to get entry into. Getting women and girls energized by using empowering words, having gatherings with women and showing them how to empower one another. Words spoken were responsibility, accountability, determination, contribution, resilience, and perspective. Advising women to pledge to follow promises and know that they will make a difference in their lives. Anytime you take responsibility for your success, you can't blame anyone for the shortcomings you face. Next, when you are accountable, you will not allow yourself to have low self-esteem, or self-limiting beliefs or negativity of others keep you from achieving goals and becoming who god purpose you to be. The contribution is about earning the help you need by paying it forward for others. When

faced with rejections and failure, making these experiences the way for future success. Last, find strength, compassion, and grace through your trials.

It brings me great joy to speak to women's organizations and groups about women's empowerment. I spoke on education and empowerment, mentoring, the power of supporting women, what happens when you inspire an empower a woman, empowerment being a transformational experience, and men empowering women.-In addition to speaking on women's issues in the workplace, in business, and mentoring of women and young girls. My talk was empowering to the audience because they had never heard a person talk on empowerment and how it can make a difference in the lives of women. Another reason it inspired my audience is my story of how I so badly wanted and needed to be mentored working, never happened and how I took matters into my own hands and began to empower myself. Not every day you hear someone say how they needed something in the workplace, and they didn't get it. In today's time, almost all companies brag about their mentoring program and how their employees are matched with a person either in their direct department or someplace in the company. To make ever a greater point of it, some mentors are paired with another based-on gender. I'm not sure how the majority of women in the workplace feel about

being mentored by a man, but I welcome it. I have no problem with a man mentoring me. I do respect other women who only want a woman to mentor them. All I'm saying is that what a person wants and needs from a mentoring relationship can sometimes come from either a man or a woman. Another way I inspired my audience was to bring them into thinking about their situations and how empowerment is for them. I asked them deep questions to make them think if they are needing empowering and in what area of their lives. When you reach people and give them examples of how they can be empowered as well as empower others, you have their complete attention. I like to think that I gave each person in the audience a decision to make personally for them. It's like an action item once they thought about their situation. The room was filled with Toastmaster's, authors, entrepreneurs, and people from all industries, but each person has a different story and plan of how they could go out and empower another individual. My purpose was fulfilled during that speaking engagement.

Man's Story on Perseverance

What joy and honor I felt after giving my talk when a man walked up to me and told me his story and asked me to empower him by helping him complete his book. This man's story was about persevering during his time of incarceration. His story was very touching to me. When he went into details about his

story and he talked for thirty minutes straight without stopping. The longer he talked the more his story made me want to cry. During the middle of his story, he talked about being told about a life-threatening illness to find out later that the test results were false. All the twists and turns and issues that he was put through, but he persevered until the end. I'm sharing how he was able to ensure until the end, and it made him a better person. There is always a lesson to be learned when a person goes through something like what he endures for almost a year. Sometimes he felt like giving up and he cried and cried until he had no tears to cry, but he kept the faith and didn't give up. That's what we all must do when we face ups and downs that throw us off guard. It's not a matter of if but when. There's no way possible a human being can get out of going through life's trials and tribulations, it's all about how you handle it when it comes to your turn.

Different Ways to Empower Women

There are many ways to empower women. My favorite way is through education. Over the years, I have educated women as a classroom teacher, academic advisor, and consultant. Another way to empower a woman is by supporting her in crisis. I have supported women in crisis by helping with domestic violence situations, getting through a divorce, as well as supporting women who are pregnant and needing shelter. Helping a new mother

is an excellent way to empower a woman. Especially if this is the first child for the mother. There are a few ways that you can empower women daily that I have not mentioned. I consider these ways to be real-world in nature.

When you talk to a woman speak life, speak powerful words, and always give her some content that makes her feel like she is the most important person in the world. Every time a woman walks into a room, she should feel like she is the most important person in the room. The next thing you can do is compliment the women that you communicate with daily. Let them know what you like and appreciate about them. Always congratulate the women on all their accomplishments. The way I do that is either by calling, telling the woman in person, or posting on that person's Facebook page. Women sometimes don't have someone tell us that they are proud of us and what we have accomplished. It's in our nature to be jealous and keep it to ourselves. This comes from women getting jealous of what someone else has done instead of thinking of what you can do on your own. But, if we are mature, we want to lift another woman. I wish I could get notifications on all Social Media platforms every time a woman has a major accomplishment in her life.

Professionally and personally, I am a leader for women by doing the things I do. I try to be

positive, confident, supportive, and caring. On my job, I show young women that they can have it all if they follow me because I am going places.

Speaking up is one of the ways I empower women in the community. If I see a woman who needs me to speak up for her I do it. I have always been one to speak up for myself. There are times when I agree with others in situations that affect women and I don't apologize for it. I am soft-spoken in tone of voice, but my words are powerful. I do think critically before speaking words to others because they do have an impact on the results that I want.

I believe that it is important, to begin with, the young women. Young women are the next generation of leaders. To impact young women is to remind them that in today's time women can and do have roles that are equal to men.

Another way to empower women would be to accept them for who they are. Don't expect them to be the way I want them to be. Just accept women for who they are. You have to accept who you are first and be okay with yourself before you can be okay with other women. So many times, we as women look at the outside and forget to concentrate on the inside. People today are too visual and not heart-filled enough.

And lastly, an effective way to empower women is through mentorship.

Mentorship

Mentoring is great, and it benefits the mentor and mentee. You can be a voice for women inspiring others to use their businesses as a platform to empower. Also, you can mentor the next generation of women entrepreneurs. You can also help impoverished women become independent and support their families, by teaching entrepreneurship and life skills, providing microloans to start businesses, and offering jobs with mentoring programs. In addition to those ways, one can donate their time and money. A huge help is to buy from other women-owned businesses or get involved in community leadership.

When I look at mentoring it started in my own home with me mentoring my girls. As I did my research on finding a mentor, everything I read stated to use many mentors, not just one. I believe a woman should have one in her place of employment, at church, an-association or, university alumni association or a sorority group of acquaintances. I got lucky and found one at a repass after a funeral. Another great place to find a mentor is at the university where you graduated from college. In the workplace, I firmly believe that women do need a mentor. I will tell you, finding a good mentor is not easy. I suggest if you cannot find a mentor during the first year of a job you consider

your career, get an informal mentor. That is someone who you can call and ask for advice without the person having to sign a contract. Sometimes an informal mentor is better than no mentor at all. Mentoring can also impact a community if you choose a young woman in a nearby school.

While working at the college I met a young woman by the name of Marie Paule-Fofana. Marie had two young children that she was raising as a single mom with the help of her parents. I had the opportunity to empower this young lady by showing her how she can be a good mother, a good student, and achieve anything that she set out to do in life. I wasn't just a drive-by mentor to Marie but made myself available to her whenever she needed me. By offering words of encouragement and wisdom consistently, Marie's outlook on life began to change. Words can't express how it makes me feel knowing that I have impacted her life and the life of her family.

Another young lady named Amanda Plummer. I also met at the place where I'm currently working. I used this young lady as an intern for my education consulting business. I was not supposed to be her academic advisor because she was majoring in a STEM career and they have specialized advisors for their students, but when she said that she felt comfortable with me and my ability

to help her graduate, I became her mentor. This young lady would come to my office just for me to inspire her. I was a little tough on her sometimes, but my point or reason for doing it that way was she needed structure and consistency at this point in her life. The impact that I made on that young lady not only affected her, but it affected her mother and father, too. Her mother would call me and ask if I could assist her with confidence and persistence. Amanda had many challenges and struggles that interfered with her life daily, but she has a dream to attend Southern Methodist University and major in Game Design. I would not let her give up on herself. When everyone wrote her off, I empowered her with wisdom, powerful thoughts, and determination was all hers. Today, Amanda is taking classes at SMU-Southern Methodist University and doing quite well in her studies and living her dream. Amanda has so much potential to continue to grow and be powerful in her career endeavors. Although she faced many challenges as some community college students do because they have not matured enough for the real world. Amanda and I would meet weekly and I would empower her with some life skills that will take her farther in life than just college. I instilled in her about leaning on herself and not to be completely reliant on her parents. I taught her how to let her voice be heard and to stop hiding behind the veil. Amanda is a beautiful young woman who opened herself up to be empowered at the time in her life when she needed someone to

make her accountable for her learning and success. I was her accountability partner. When she came into my office with low self-esteem and self-limiting beliefs, I knew I had to begin working with her immediately. Amanda was afraid to do many things and we talked about them. At one point, I mentioned to her that she had to do it SCARED. I joked with her and said, Amanda, it won't kill you to ask your professors for what you need. In my conversations with this young lady, I always told her that when she faces rejection or failure, that's an opportunity for you to get back up and try again. I know that I will be at Amanda's graduation from SMU- Southern Methodist University smiling at what she has accomplished and expressed my happiness in the results of the fruit of my labor.

Empower Each Other

One of the things that hold women down sometimes is that we say and do damaging things to each other. We are not progressing by putting another woman down. Women should make a big effort to help other women in the workplace when and if they go through difficult times. There were many times in the ten years I was at my job that I wished some woman would have come along and helped me. I suffered through having a micro-manager and then a jealous manager and now one who is just waiting for me to move on. I was not equipped to deal with that kind of nonsense. When you see or hear of another woman on the job going through difficulty, this is when you can empower that woman. I will be sharing those stories and more about what I have gone through and you can do the same too. Nobody is perfect and every woman has a story to tell. Just telling your story may help someone in more ways than you could even imagine.

Another suggestion is to stand up for the women you work with and don't fight against your colleagues. This is how you can empower a woman professionally. Regardless of where a woman is, she can stand being empowered. I know from working in Education I would have loved to have a group of women empowering each other. It didn't occur to me that someone could empower me professionally.

Even now sometimes I wonder what my career would have been like if some woman had taken the time to empower me.

I suffered from not having someone to come alongside me and help show me the way. I got to the point where I was just upset about it and discussed it a lot. When I went to the TWU- Texas Woman's University to get my master's degree, I was too busy working and being a part-time student to seek out a mentor. I had no idea I was amongst some of the best mentors that a woman could have. There it goes back to, what you don't know can hurt you. I know that's no excuse, I should have empowered myself if no one did it.

I will tell any woman there is nothing wrong with empowering yourself. Maybe I would have been able to inspire and empower more women had I started early, but I am making up for it today. I strategically place myself where I can meet and talk to other women to find out what it is that they are needing at this time in their life.

Economic empowerment is huge across the world and one of the most amazing uprisings of the past. "Women get 33 million less capital than men for their businesses. Men begin with six times more money than women." (Bill Carmody, Inc.com). Women are indeed faced with financial challenges/difficulties when starting a business. The

two businesses that I started, I faced huge financial difficulties. But I overcame those difficulties. It took a while, but I was able to get capital to start my first business. When doing my research for this book, I came across a list of over twenty companies that made it their priority to propel women into success by focusing on women. Imagine the impact these companies have on all the women who took the challenge to open a business. I understand the value of providing opportunities for women to reach their potential. A person can't use what they don't know about. The following is a list of businesses who provide resources for women:

- 37 Angels
- Ladies Who Launch
- BusinessUSA
- SCORE
- Goldman Sachs 10000 Women
- Small Business Administration
- NAFE
- NAWBO
- Count Me In
- AWBC
- NWBC
- Bond Street
- USWCC
- Walker's Legacy
- SpringBoard
- Women's Business Development Council
- Million Dollar Women

- Women Startup Lab
- Female Rounder Stories
- WBDC
- CHIC CEO
- eWomen Network
- The Founding Moms
- ASTIA
- The Mogul Mom

I try and set a good example as a woman leader by walking the walk and talking the talk. I make decisions that affect not only myself but the people I am surrounded by daily. My management style and the way I solve problems are a true indicator of my character.

I remember having two different female bad bosses in my eleven years with this company. One micromanaged me, didn't trust me with projects and in a big way made me feel little. The other bullied me and always smiled in my face and cut me down to upper management. The last time this happened to me, I made up in my mind I would never treat any person like that as a leader.

Currently, I use my influence for good and encourage my workers and colleagues by giving them feedback and inspiring them. I am a person who will stand up for others when no one else will. When I witness something or hear something that is not right, I speak up!

The Power of Supporting Women

October 2019, I took the challenge and started a LeanIn circle group in downtown Dallas. LeanIn Circles are a small group of friends or colleagues who meet to learn new skills, mentor, and provide support. Circles are amazing because there are groups all over the world teaching women how to fight for equal rights and other matters that affect women. The group started with women from various parts of the Dallas Metroplex and different seasons of life. The group is open to women ages 18-65 years old. I like the support given for leaders of the LeanIn Circles. There is a Facebook page for leaders where you can connect with other leaders for support and suggestions. Leading a group like this will make a big impact on the lives of women who need it the most.

My passion is helping women by making it possible for them to reach their goals and aspirations. My philosophy is to always look for another woman to assist in reaching her next level. I am ready to work with women who are willing to take action and help young girls, too.

I have lined up a list of professionals to come and talk to our group about financial empowerment and how it can make a huge impact on a woman's life when she knows what to do with her finances

because she has been empowered. Also, I have a friend who teaches credit empowerment and how women can purchase anything with the right credit score. Yes, credit can be such an important area in a woman's life whether she is just starting to build credit, or she is needing credit repair. This is not something that we just know how to do. I learned how to make my credit work for me, and I can utilize the expert who helped me. The more you know about credit the better your financial situation can be.

Social Empowerment is another way that women may or may not have encountered. Women do need these skills to stand on their own two feet. I know that those are old sayings, but true sayings. We are living in times when women have been put in positions and forced to make decisions for the family. If we are never taught what to do, we cannot be empowered. When there are barriers to what women can do and be; there is no empowerment.

What Happens When You Inspire and Empower Women?

Most people have heard of Sheryl Sandberg who wrote the best-selling book entitled *Lean In*. She is the COO at Facebook and is on the Fortune's list of the 50 Most Powerful Women in Business and as one of Time's 100 Most Influential People in the World. Her book *Lean In* examines why women's progress in achieving leadership roles has stalled, explains the root causes, and offers compelling, commonsense solutions that can empower women to achieve their full potential. Sandberg stated in her book, "As women, we must be more empowered at work, men must be more empowered at home." I truly agree with that principle because more and more women are in the workforce and we need to be empowered where we spend the majority of our time and effort.

When a woman is inspired, she is excited and creative to do what she needs to do. Inspiring a woman gives her the tools that she needs to get her project started and finished. It's like a word or a green light to wake you up and say GO!

There is no stopping her now! She has all the necessary tools, blueprints, guides, and others that she needs to go forward. You had better get out of her way if you are not going to join her team. She wakes up in the morning ready for her day. She is

organized and knows what direction she is going. She is secure and working her plans to help other women. She is networking, fulfilling plans, and making sure that she talks to every woman she meets. She is on a mission. She will not stop until each mission has been finished. Imagine the strength that she has to move mountains and the power to handle most anything that comes her way. This empowerment is her life. She breathes is all day and night. She wakes up in the middle of the night to write down ideas or to research a thought that comes to mind.

Inspiration by my definition is to breathe movement into a person to get creativity out. It feels great when you inspire someone to live out their dream or complete a goal. When I inspire a woman, I feel that I am living my purpose and doing what God called me to do. It comes naturally to me to help another woman. I get that empowering spirit from my mother. She has always helped other women; not only in our family but in the community, too. Women were always calling her for advice, and she would inspire them to do what they needed to do. My mother would go to lunch with some women and others, she would go shopping with them to inspire them to dress well to be presentable.

The result of my empowering my daughters to get an education resulted in having daughters

with bachelor's degrees and jobs. Let me clarify why I said jobs and not careers. My oldest daughter is not working in the area of her college degree and my youngest daughter has worked in her area of education. My opinion is that when you find a job that you love, and you devote your time and effort to developing it into much more than a job, you have arrived. When going to work every day is like drinking water for survival; you made it your career.

Empowerment is Transformational

I read an article by Drew Hendricks entitled “6 Ways to Empower Your Employees with Transformational Leadership.” I thought I could use some of what I learned from that article to empower my employees. I will train them to work and not rely on me excessively and cultivate an environment where they feel empowered. I began asking my employees questions about how they feel and telling them encouraging words when I see something that they have done great. I do not wait until staff appreciation. I have found that when I add transparency to my work environment things work much better. I have regular 5-minute meetings with my staff at least once a week and let them know what is coming up soon. I also ask my staff their goals and then challenge them so that they can demonstrate and achieve their full potential. A few of the front desk employees were shy and didn’t have much to say when I first brought it to their attention. At least one of my employees said, “Ms. Felicha, you do care about me and my future.” With the information I received from these employees, I was able to add more opportunities to their times at work. I found out that when you are challenging people, you must be very careful not to take them out of their comfort zones too much, just enough for them to shine. You will never know how much of a transformational experience someone can have until

you give them a little control and flexibility to do things their way.

I just love working with young women because some of them are so creative. This new generation can teach us, baby boomers, a lot. I especially go to them for technology and the latest and newest ways to create programs.

As women, we are specially made and equipped to empower one another. We are to inspire another and give a hand up, not a handout. Women have been equal to men since the beginning of creation. Yes, we have also been leaders since the beginning, and we had important roles in the early church. Some women and men don't fully recognize how powerful women are. The strength of women has been underestimated for quite some time now. We have different kinds of strengths, when we march for equal rights or anything, we deem worth fighting for, we are strong and nothing or no one can break that bond.

There are strong women in all professions today. I challenge all women to empower young girls and show them the way. If we don't show them, nobody will. We need to start with young girls in middle school. Take a girl or group of girls and mentor them. Introduce them to what women can do when we put our minds to it and take action. I can't wait until my three young granddaughters get to the age where they understand their power, and I

will introduce them to women empowerment on a few different levels.

Now that we are breadwinners in our families and can choose what to do with our own money, we need financial empowerment. I strongly suggest women read Suze Ormon's books and find a female financial advisor/analyst you trust and begin early taking care of your wealth and retirement.

The Shift

Transformational experiences can happen at any place and time. It can show up unannounced which makes it interesting. In September 2019 I attended a conference for the Arthritis Foundation in Atlanta, GA. During the conference, a thought came to mind. What is happening here to people empowering people by telling their stories? Some of these stories that were told were transformational. These stories were also examples of people giving people a hand up, not a handout. Giving people the tools and resources to be able to help someone else. Wow, empowerment is very powerful.

I witnessed woman after woman stand in front of large groups and present dynamic helpful information. The impact this empowerment had on me is about what will cause me to take action and go out and spread the word. I wanted to convince my legislatures to take action and sponsor bills that will make it possible for those who suffer from arthritis to get the help that is needed.

It was so moving to share my story and hear the immediate impact that it had on those around me. I'm just amazed at how God always adds something to every event I attend. I was not expecting to empower others, but to be empowered.

I use the word empowered to drive a point. I see people use the word very loosely for everything. I cannot say enough about how empowerment outside of jobs/work is impacting young girls.

I met a young girl at the Arthritis Conference name Paige. She won the national baking contest on national TV. Paige has not only empowered other young girls with her story; she has empowered women, too. She is 10 years old and she has spoken to hundreds of women on stage about her arthritis walk, but in the process, her story has empowered many. There were many empowerment lessons learned from her story. The first one I immediately thought about was the fact that she won the contest of \$25, 000 and donated half to empower others. What an impact, doing it regardless of how you feel or what you're going through.

Women's experiences are not all the same. They are different because the workplace is different. I'm speaking from my personal experiences in the workplace. When you are in the minority such as race, gender, identity or have a disability - your experience is different from a woman whose race is in the majority, have no gender identity problems, and no disability. I have faced problems advancing in position and I received no support from my managers at work. I began almost at the bottom of the ladder in my industry

and I've only moved positions two times within eleven years.

And I'm still not in a manager position in my company.

Not to mention the pay. I am paid what new employees doing the same job as me who just got hired this year. It sickens me to know that I have worked my butt off for eleven years with a master's degree and now what pay I have risen to the company is starting the same level pay starting salary.

I certainly don't feel empowered or seen any transformation in this area.

Empower Women in Your Local Community

The first major way in which I made a huge impact on women in my community is I formed a LeanIn circle for women in my local area. LeanIn Circles are groups of women who meet once a month to learn new skills and develop professional development. LeanIn circles started by Sheryl Sandberg, COO of Facebook and LeanIn.org. I chose women who I know from my small circle of friends. Because we are all so busy with our own lives every day, I had to reach out to them on Facebook. Facebook is one of the best mediums to reach people in a short amount of time with a high response. I even reached those women who are out of my target area. It was not my intent to reach those outside of my target group of women ages 18-65. I am looking at more specific ways to be a blessing to others who are not in my target group.

When I made up my mind to start a LeanIn group, I knew that I would be able to empower others and be empowered. A circle of women from different backgrounds, industries, and ideas is what makes groups like this very unique. Empowerment is huge, but most importantly, it works. When I say it works, I mean that no matter how you empower a woman whether by financial education, mentoring,

educating, or economically, you are giving another woman a hand up that she didn't have before you came into her life. When you pour your knowledge into another woman you have opened up her world. Empowering other women makes me know that I have fulfilled my purpose.

Empowering others is amazing. Everywhere I go I talk to women and empower them. June 30, 2019, I was at one of my granddaughter's birthday party and I was talking to my oldest daughter's co-worker/friend who attended the birthday party with her 2-year-old son. As I listened to her I could tell that she needed to be empowered in the area of confidence and ideas on how she can make it as a single mother. Her words to me were, "I don't know how I can do this." I told her of my story as a single parent and what I did to make it. Her words to me were, I had no one to tell me how it can be done, and your daughter is blessed to have you as a mother who can give her encouragement. She also said that she would share the information with other young mothers who she has in her tribe.

First, I had to build up confidence in her so that she could believe for herself that she could do it. Second, I had to motivate her by telling her the benefits of being a single parent and show her how

she could have the closest relationship with her child if she took a lot of time with him.

Sharon Kathryn D` Agostino penned an article titled, "Ways We Can All Help Advance Women's and Girl's Empowerment," dated 3/17/17.

According to D` Agostino, we as people can act by inspiring change. And while education and financial independence are critical steps to empowerment, they are merely two pieces of a much larger and more complicated story. Each woman is a leader in different capacities of our lives, families, our colleagues, our friends, and our communities. She goes on to make a difference by identifying and supporting organizations whose work addresses challenges women and girls face because of their gender.

Help girls, we know who are in physically and emotionally abusive relationships.

Also, we can be mindful of subtle ways we can reinforce gender roles for our children, nieces, nephews - such as choosing books and watch the gifts we buy for them. Lastly, we can share our own

stories of overcoming the cultural norm or personal belief that held us back.

One Saturday, one of my granddaughters (Zoe Minor) and I watched the movie “Hidden Figures.” In the movie, Octavia Spencer told a white lady she would not accept the assignment to be promoted without bringing all of the other colored women with her. She was successful in getting the supervisor to accept the entire group of about 20 women. This is one woman getting a promotion and lifting all other women with her.

Pay It Forward

Ask yourself how you can do something impactful for a woman who has shown you kindness. This term or phrase originated in 1916 by Lily Hardy Hammond. According to Wikipedia, she used it in her book *Garden of Delight*. Recently there have been many instances of famous people paying it forward. You may even have your own stories to tell of paying it forward.

Paying it forward for a woman is huge. We need someone to pay it forward for us so why not has another woman pay it forward for you? This is not to say that a man can't pay it forward for women because some do. Don't let the word "pay" get you thinking negatively that it is something (debt) owed to someone because that's not the case. A good deed is what I'm talking about here.

A prime example is a Senior Advisor showing a first-year advisor steps he /she used to solve a problem that saved the newcomer some time, effort, research, and possibly frustration or stress. Think about someone doing some great deed like paying for your food in a Subway line and you get up to the counter and the cashier tells you, "You don't owe any money. The customer ahead of you paid for your food." I have done that before. I know that several celebrities have paid it forward for thousands of people. For example, Oprah Winfrey,

Tyler Perry, and the Keynote Speaker at Morehouse graduation paid off the entire 2019 graduating class student loan debts. Imagine how those graduates felt after he paid it forward for them.

Examples of paying it forward would be paying for a student's textbook so they can start class with the required tools. Another would take a friend out to lunch for her birthday. There are many benefits to paying it forward. One is the person who is paying it forward has a great heart and it makes them emotionally feel really good. Second, the receiver gets a reward for what is being given.

Paying it forward benefits from the life-long relationship that comes from the initial connection. It is an intangible gift and ripple effect. The parties will continue to connect from time to time while passing the torch to someone else.

Within families, a mother pays it forward when she teaches her daughter how to be a mom by example, paying it forward so that her daughter continues the knowledge. My grandmother taught my mother and she, in turn, taught me. I passed it to my daughters who are paying it forward to my granddaughters.-

When a woman pays it forward there is a feeling of strength, joy, peace, and burning inside. You cannot pay it forward and be the same inside. I look at it as a good gesture that gets repaid by someone else that empowers another.

I have a godmother, Beverly Sterns who lives in Nacogdoches, TX who paid it forward for me while I was in college at Stephen F. Austin State University. She was the one who I could say was an informal mentor to me. She worked at SFA and we saw each other at least once a week. She began to tell me how to do things and she would always add her opinion and say, “I’m not trying to tell you how to do things, I just want the best for you.”

I appreciated her taking the time to pay it forward, because of her example I have paid it forward. I wish that all women would pay it forward for another woman and young girl. It is our moral responsibility to teach young girls the way. If we don’t teach them no one else will.

Please don’t underestimate the power of paying it forward so that someone else can achieve their dreams and reach their potential. Just imagine you pay it forward for someone and that person becomes an Olympic gymnast or wins a Nobel peace prize or becomes the first female President of The United States of America. You never know where a person you impact will go with what you give them.

I dream big and you should, too. Don’t think it can’t happen, think it *can* happen! As I was typing this book an empowering thought came to mind. What if everyone who attends one of my workshops goes out and empowers women who want to

become doctors by providing them with the required resources to get into medical school. It may be a network of people who provide scholarships for young women who can't afford their first year in college. I could think of many ways to impact women, but I must add because you have the power inside of you; there should be nothing to stop you once you get started.

I wish I had known about women's power earlier in life because I would have made a difference while growing up. I never knew how amazing this journey would be, but I am loving it. I have a few friends that I am bringing along with me to reach women globally. From conducting my research, I came across some dynamic women all over the world who are doing creative things with little resources. Women, we are so bright, and we take it to a higher level by putting our minds together and making history.

Women Who Empowered Other Women

This is just a shortlist of women who have empowered other women.

- Maya Angelou, writer, and activist
- Lauren Graham, actor and writer
- Malala Yousafzai, writer and activist
- Lupita Nyong` O, actor, and activist
- Susan B. Anthony, activist
- Iyanla Vanzant, speaker
- Amy Poehler, actor and activist
- Stevie Nicks, singer/songwriter, and activist
- Melinda Gates, philanthropist
- Roxanne Gay, writer, and activist
- Anna Bulbrook, singer/songwriter and activist
- Barbara Jordan, Congresswoman & Professor
- Shirley Chisolm, first black female candidate to run for President of The United States of America
- Mother Theresa, Nobel Peace Prize Winner
- Lady Diana, UN Humanitarian Rights Advocate
- Michelle Obama, Former First Lady, Lawyer
- Barbara Bush, Former First Lady, Educator

These are just the name of women who you may recognize, there are many others not listed here. Consider adding your name to this list.

According to Shelly Zali's article in Forbes Mar 6, 2019 article entitled, "Power Of The Pack: Women Who Support Women Are more successful." A woman all by herself has power. Together we can impact. Shelly states in the article, "The truth is that raising each other and channeling the power of collaboration is truly how we'll change the equation." This tells me that we can make a difference when we come together and help one another.

Let Your Voice Be Heard

Let me start by saying there are many different ways women can let their voices be heard in the workplace, at home, and anyplace. When a woman does something great or wins an award for doing an outstanding job, speak out and congratulate her. There is nothing wrong with giving someone her props! You can also open the floor to another woman and allow her voice to be heard. Besides, practice speaking up whenever you can. I joined Toastmasters International to sharpen my speaking skills. I did that because I believe in how a person can become what you want just from being persistent and learning the skills taught. Don't stay silent, your voice was meant to be heard. When you do speak, always talk about the positives. A voice can be heard when you have the right tone. Yes, your tone of voice does matter when you are speaking. The tone can be changed until it is right for the message you're trying to convey. When you are talking to anyone, you must speak with intention. Always, Always, Always, be prepared before you speak. That means that you should always have an opinion about every subject. When you speak make sure that you pay close attention to your body language because you want to make sure that you are sending the right message to your receiver.

We as women sometimes tend to be too humble when we speak, but don't do it. Come out boldly with what you want to say and be very confident. Another suggestion when you are speaking is to find someone to introduce you or tell your story and that's what makes it so powerful. There's just no question about it, a women's voice needs to be heard.

Some men have said negative things about women's voices such as it sounds squeaky, or impersonal; anything to discredit a woman speaking up. Men who don't like women to voice their opinions complain and bad mouth women. U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginseng, the second female judge named to the highest American Court, said she gets interrupted by male colleagues, criticized for her voice or the way she speaks. But Ms. Ginseng firmly believes that women should speak up, use their voice, express their opinions, so men and society at large finally understand that, "women speak in different voices, and hold different views, just as men do."

My voice is a voice for those who cannot speak. I have been speaking my voice ever since I can remember talking.

September 2019, I attended an arthritis foundation conference in Atlanta, Georgia. During the conference, a thought came to mind. What's happening here is people empowering other people

to tell their stories. This is a great example of people giving others a hand-up.

When you give someone the tools and resources to be able to help others, it can change their life. Empowerment is so powerful. I witnessed women after women stand in front of groups and present dynamic information. The impact this empowerment has on me is what will cause me to take action and go out spread the word and convince my legislatures to take action and sponsor bills that will make it possible for those who suffer from arthritis and get the help that is needed.

It was so moving to share my story and hear the immediate impact that it had on those around me. I'm just amazed at how God always adds something to every event I attend. I was not expecting to empower others, but I did expect to be empowered. I use the word empowered to drive the point. I see people use the word very loosely for everything and that is not good. I cannot say enough about how empowerment outside of work is impacting young girls.

I met a 10-year-old girl named Paige at the conference in Atlanta, GA. She has arthritis and recently won a national baking contest on TV. Paige has not only empowered other young girls with her story; she has empowered other 10-year olds by speaking to hundreds of women on stage about her

arthritis walk, but in the process, her story has empowered and strengthened many.

There were many lessons learned that strengthened women. This young girl, Paige, donated half of the \$25,000 she won in this contest. What strength demonstrated by this young girl.

One of the most dynamic, vocal, political women of today's time is Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. I love the way she opens her mouth and speaks. Her story is heard every time she lets her voice be heard. I think the reason she has so much strength is that people have seen the changes she has made in her community. She started like all other community leaders. This young woman's strength is one to be followed. I believe that she is a great example for all girls and women today. There are so many lessons to learn from her. She speaks at town halls and people know what she is passionate about because she is firm and sticks to her argument. This is why she is successful as a Congresswoman. That is one of the lessons to be learned from Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. Another woman I have not mentioned previously, but I feel that this is a great time to mention her name because she has let her voice be heard throughout these turbulent times of this new age 2019. Elizabeth Warren is another woman who has spoken loudly. I love the way she speaks her mind and tells others about the change she would like to bring to this country. Elizabeth

does not back down to any Democrats or
Republicans in Washington.

Do Men Empower Women?

According to Sheryl Sandberg of *Lean In*, there are three ways she knows that men can empower women at work. She is the author who has been passionate about advocating for gender equality in the workplace. The first way Sandberg says men can empower women is to vocally give women credit for their ideas. For example, if there is a situation that comes up and a man is given credit for a project that a woman did, men should stand up and tell everyone that there was a mistake and acknowledge the woman whose work it is. I have experienced a man empowering women at work. Dr. James Russell many times, has empowered me by telling others about the great work that I did as an advisor. I was very grateful to him for that. We continued to increase my level of confidence because of his actions.

Another way is to include pregnant colleagues in conversations about opportunities. I have been on interview committees where the candidates interviewed were pregnant and they were hired. Sandberg said, “Men should not discuss in private whether they feel a pregnant colleague is ready for a new promotion or project.” Include women in social outings and meetings. An example Sandberg gives is the Harvard Business Review article titles: Men shouldn’t Refuse to be Alone with Female Colleagues.” United States Naval Academy

professor explained why gender division creates a culture of men being promoted over women. “When women are, in effect, banned from solitary meetings with male leaders.”

Equality Must Happen Now

We as women want equality in status and opportunities in the workplace. For many years, and even now, women do not experience equality in the workplace - especially in the board room. Now is the time for women to get paid equal to a man doing the same job. We should continue to fight until we have equality everywhere that we go. It is so important to us until we have walked, marched, gathered, as well as begged our elected officials to do something. The reason that didn't work is that men were mostly in those positions of making decisions. We will not give up but fight on until the victory is won. Women have fought in wars side by side with men but still have not received the equal recognition that a man has gotten. Men are no greater when it comes down to doing the work and making it happen.

Studies conducted by Marie Claire found that women pay more for common household items than men do. Another statistic shows that although the pay gap is closer than years ago, today women in the US working full-time or part-time, make 84 % of what their male counterparts make according to the Pew Research Center. Why should we need to work extra days every year to come as close as possible to men's pay?

Women overseas make about 10% less than women in America according to a report from the United Nation's International Labor Organization. Those statistics are even more alarming and disheartening.

When we as women empower one another, things happen. We can't wait for men to wake up one day and say, we will allow women to compete on an even playing ground. We feel sorry for them. When fathers began to wake up and say to themselves, my daughter is being affected by this horrible thing; let's make some changes because I want her life to be better than my wife's, then the move will happen. We need men to agree with us to a certain extent. We have always worked alongside men when it comes to difficult situations.

Presidents have often conversed or communicated with women or women to make a decision that affects women. For Blacks and Hispanic women, the number is even greater. In the past, women were underrepresented in different forms of government, but today that number has changed. Yes, 20 percent of women are in U.S. Congress. To add to that, women are in the minority in the executive suite at fortune 500 companies. There is not much to say about this other than this too must change and soon.

What are you willing to do to be a part of this change? Another place that women are in the

minority, is in the news media. Women of color make up a small percentage of the new media according to Women's Media annual report. That is crazy when you think about how many women attend college and get a bachelor's degree wanting to have a thriving career in the news media and then it does not happen for them. Imagine how that makes women feel. What can be done to increase women the numbers so that women in the news media increase to at least 45 or 50%?

What is equally stunning is the number of women in the tech sector. We make up 30 percent of the workforce at this kind of company, but we use technology every day and we are good at it. Minor as this seems, but in some households, women still do more chores than men. According to the U.S. government's National Time Use Survey, mothers are continuing to do more for the children and other duties as assigned. Why? Have we not made any progress from the 1960s? Women work just as hard as a man does if not harder, at a job outside the home and inside. The last point I will make about this is women of all ages are, in fact, more likely to live below the poverty line according to a report from the Institute for Women's Policy Research. The number is higher for minority women. That is real people.

The most popular two words I hear about when someone says or writes an article about equity

is, “Salary Negotiation.” Salary Negotiation is so important to equity until it’s everywhere. If you look at job websites *successful Salary Negotiation* or *Salary Negotiation* is written in bold letters.

Salary Negotiation is important to us women from what I’ve read, we are afraid to or have not been successful at getting the money we deserve. I’ve never worked a job where salary negotiation was possible. In education, when you apply for a job, a pay range is given, but the college district where I work, I was told that everyone starts at the beginning salary. The fact that raises are not based on performance makes it hard to get pay increases.

Wake-up women who have not been on the front lines marching for equality. Get up and stand up for what you want. What I see is a few women standing in the gap for all of us. If we truly all want equality, especially in the area of equal pay, what are you doing about it?

I asked myself that same question many times. In the world we live in today, nothing is going to happen if we sit down and stay silent. We cannot be heard unless we shout it out and let our voices be heard.

We should also get involved in politics. Helping another woman get started in politics is women empowerment. I cannot stress this enough. Anytime you take another woman and help her

reach her goal, you are participating in women empowerment. We as women have the power and strength to do anything we want to do. Why not help other women reach her destination and hold her up along the way?

I experience such fullness from helping another woman. No help is too big or too small when it comes to tapping into another person's life. Imagine what a huge impact you can make daily. I see at least 15 women as students daily and trust me, I try to impact them once I find out what it is, they are lacking in their lives and I determine what it is I can do to lift them to reach their goals.

Every week in the news, I hear of Women Leaders making and changing their countries for the better. Countries that have women prime ministers in charge and showing that they are moving closer and closer to equality. I ask myself why we are "The United States of America" still not open to women being President? I concluded that the men in charge of our country are so prideful, greedy, and self-centered until they are so afraid of a woman being successful and turning this country around.

At this time, Elizabeth Warren is the only woman close to becoming a Democratic Presidential candidate. The money donations are what has been keeping other women like Kamala Harris from continuing in the race. This is an example of inequality in funding for women who

want to be equal with men in running for the race. Women should have the same opportunity for funding as men, but we all know that's not the case.

Another inequality I see every day is the ratio of men and women presidents of community colleges and universities. All over the United States of America, men hold more of those high-level positions than do women. I know that we have proven ourselves time and time again. But the numbers are still uneven and not anywhere close. Ask yourself, what am I doing to close the gap in the area of inequality.

At my 8 to 5, I am an active member of a group that brainstorms ideas and then create opportunities for change in the area of inequality. We show videos of movies where inequality is and has been for some years now. I think that we as women can be the game-changers here and make the difference. I know some of you reading this will say, Felicha you sound like an activist. My answer to that is yes, I am an activist for causes I feel are worth fighting for. If we as women don't fight, we will never get close to equality. I know some of you would rather sit back and let people like me do all the hard stuff and allow you to just reap the benefits. That kind of stuff happens all the time. Well, I'm interested in all women benefiting. It is my first foremost concern is for all women to be empowered.

Women's Empowerment

We as women have the power to act at will. Exercising our rights is important to us. We are fully equal members of this world. Our empowerment matters because that is our beginning of growth. There has been some progress in the last 10 or 15 years, but we should be farther in our pursuit of full empowerment. One area in which we are growing and that is education. Women in schools have made progress, but not enough. Look around today and you will see more women leading companies, starting their businesses, winning in politics. Because we now work outside the home, we can and do make our own decisions on whatever we want. There is one point I must mention here: We still do not make the same pay as men for doing the same job. That needs to change NOW! How much longer do we want to wait? Just like men demand things and they put their money where their mouth is where it counts-changing laws.

It is in every person's best interest for women to be empowered and empower other women. Women's empowerment needs to start with young girls. When girls get it and know what they can do from an early age, they can begin making a difference at a time when they are growing and nurturing their future. Before I go any further, I should let you know what my definition of

empowerment means. For me, when a woman is given the power or the authority to stand up and either voice her demands, argue for other people and make a difference for the better of others. There are many ways in which you can empower a woman, you should do it based on what you must give and do it free from your heart. I will share a few ways in which you can empower a young girl: Support girls in positive activities and organizations, start a new group for girls who have high ambition or girls who need someone because the mother is not in the home. Another way you can empower a young girl is to teach her how to do tasks that women in power are doing such as journaling, speaking to groups, telling her your story. I'm sure you can come up with several ways on your own. The main idea of women's empowerment is Women! We are the ones who are on stage and in the limelight in Politics. We are the ones who are changing the world/nation. We are the ones who are advancing in medicine. We are more educated than at any other time in history. Women are starting, growing, and impacting businesses like growing grass. Now is the time for us to stand up for one another and continue the fight for equal rights, equality, and a sense of belonging.

A Changing World... A Changing Nation

I want to begin with quotes from strong women who have impacted Women and a nation.

“No woman should be told that she can’t make decisions about her own body. When women’s rights are under attack, we fight back.”

Kamala Harris

“Women will be hidden no more. We will not remain hidden figures. We have names... IT was a woman that gave you Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It was a woman that gave you Malcolm X. And according to the bible, it was a woman that gave you Jesus. Don’t you ever forget it.”

Janelle Monae.

“There is no limit to what we can accomplish.”

Michelle Obama

“When there are no ceilings, the sky’s the limit. So, let’s keep going until every one of the 161 million

women and girls across America has the opportunity she deserves to have.”

Hillary Clinton.

“A woman with a voice is, by definition, a strong woman.”

Melinda Gates

“There’s something so special about a woman who dominates in a man’s world. It takes a certain grace, strength, intelligence, fearlessness, and the nerve to never take no for an answer.”

Rihanna

“I am a Woman Phenomenally. Phenomenal Woman, that’s me.”

Maya Angelou

“Women belong in all places where decisions are being made...It shouldn’t be that women are the exception.”

Ruth Bader Ginsburg

“IT took me quite a long time to develop a voice, and now that I have it, I am not going to be silent.”

Madeleine Albright

“Feminism isn’t about making women strong. Women are already strong. It’s about changing the way the world perceives that strength.”

G.D. Anderson.

“To all the little girls who are watching, never doubt that you are valuable and powerful and deserving of every chance and opportunity in the world to pursue and achieve your own dreams.”

Hillary Clinton

“I raise up my voice - not so I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard...we cannot succeed when half of us are held back.”

Malala Yousafzai

“If you want something said, ask a man; if you want something done, ask a woman.”

Margaret Thatcher

The world is changing every minute of the day and we must change the way we look at women. Because women have more options and opportunities today is a better place to live.

This week I watched a PBS true story about a young woman who changed an entire nation by allowing her voice to be heard. She stood up in front of crowds of several thousand in familiar and foreign countries and told her story. Telling her story empowered women all over the world. That is exactly what women need today. We need to get out of our comfort zones or fearful situation and do it anyway. I hope that every woman reading this book will be so inspired that they will look for other women and girls to empower. I will go all over the world stirring up women so that they can empower other women. Women we tend to not like change unless we are talking clothing, shoes, houses, and possible situations. We need to look forward to changing and embrace it. Even though the world is changing there are countries where women and girls not being heard because they do not have rights. Young girls do not have the opportunity to go to school and get an education. It is our responsibility as women to help other women and girls to be able to have the same freedoms we enjoy. Digging deeper into the world-changing, let me get real. Women have been passed over and held hostage for hundreds of years. Now we have the opportunity to break free and run with urgency. Wake-up my

sisters. Men have been empowering other men for decades. Wouldn't you like to see an equal number of women in the same positions as men? Whether it be in IT, healthcare, education, or business. We need to be in those boardrooms as equal board members. We are decision-makers and our decisions affect not only other women but girls too. Young girls are looking to us for guidance and direction. I am so excited that God placed on my heart to empower, encourage, and inspire women. Women, we are special in every way. We are smart, intelligent, the brains of our organizations, caretakers, leaders, and decision-makers. We impact and influence every person that we come in contact with. I will continue to speak greatly of change because it almost always produces positive results. Change that affects someone's life is enough to make me continue doing as much as I can to support as many people. To some change may be painful or difficult, but it'd definitely worth the wait. If something is worth having, it should be worth waiting for. When I say changing, there were many changes to my plan for this book and empowering women from the time I began writing this book. Towards the end of the book, I realized that I was behind on my goals and especially the date of completion.

It was September of 2019, I finally decided to make a change and lead circle group of women for Lean In. Lean In is Sheryl Sandberg's most

successful work. This is the kind of empowerment that makes working with women all the better. I had no idea that God would have me leading such a prestigious group for a highly respected lady. I mentioned before, Sheryl Sandberg is one of the women who I look up to for a role model along with others like Melinda Gates and others. Being a role model or a mentor is very important to the success of empowering someone. To mentor or empower someone you must first develop a rapport and relationships with that person. Relationships are important in building that structure. For relationships to be successful one must have effective and collaborative communication. Yes, communication in groups of two or more is important for empowerment.

During the process of writing this book, I realize that it takes me pulling together all of my resources and other people's resources, too. The people who provide resources will change just as the needs of the women will change. Speaking of change, let me talk about Women Empowering Women in other countries. Outside the United States, there are my companies helping empower women and there are women still waiting to be empowered. I'm excited about that because I consider myself a change agent. What I can and will do to change their situation is to meet them exactly where they are. I will do what I can in my Women Power to meet with these women who I speak about

and spend some time finding out what it is they need. Whether it's career empowerment or financial empowerment; I will help them get on track to empower the next person. Some of the empowerment is about just being able to give a hand to a woman who had a dream of owning her own business or helping a Woman advance in her career. Change will happen when I meet that woman and impact her life.

Power

Power is a strong word with a strong meaning. Power to women is quite different than power to a man. Women can have power and it's not an ego thing. Women use power in positive ways to show their strength. I saw a PowerPoint presentation by Kathy Caprino, the career coach, and I was amazed at how she put power into perspective. Little did I realize how power played such a huge role in a woman's career until this. My mind opened up and understood why we need power to get things done in our lives. Caprino said, "Power is an essential component to a thrilling and impactful career, but many women shun it." Power is like a muscle and women need it all the time. I suggest that you take a good look at things that you have been trying to accomplish and have been unsuccessful and determine if you had used your power would your situation have turned out the same way or a different way. I use my power to help others and not tear them down. It gives me the ability to achieve, generate and manifest strength to be a person for doing good works. Also, influence to make an impact and change and authority to lead and work as I please. Power is an amazing thing when used the right way. When I feel powerful, I feel that I am doing something worth doing and that

I earn respect and being recognized for a job well done.

When I tell another woman a word of encouragement and give her a hand up and not a handout, I feel amazing. Women wake up and realize that you are greatly blessed with talents, skills, gifts, and abilities to do anything you put your mind to using power. Now more than ever are women speaking up for themselves and the causes that matter most. When we talk whether it be to our boss at work, or people we meet on the street or even a group of men; we should speak with power in our voices and be confident that whatever we say we will be heard and not just seen. We must be brave to speak up and be heard. These past few years there have been several women highly visible in the public who have spoken powerfully and who have made things happen for the best. Many women are afraid to speak out powerfully, but I am not one of them. I read and learn from many people some famous and some not so famous. You can tell people who speak powerfully by the message they deliver and the way it resonates with people. As I think about positive ways in which I have used power to make a difference in a woman's life, I think of a time when I talked to a young lady about a time when I had to be brave and speak up for

women who have been in domestic violence situations.

There are many different sources of power. There is electricity, physical force or strength, reward, coercive, legitimate, referent, informational, and expert power. All leaders should have the last six types of power. To be a good leader one must know how to use power.

Power is necessary for enacting change in any situation. I could give you many examples of power that I have used to be impactful. I have used the power within me to impart the power to others by speaking life into another woman's situation.

The choice of words being used and the vivid images from the words spoken are more powerful than one can even imagine. I learned about the power of positive thinking and speaking through Norman Vincent Peale. He wrote almost one hundred books on positivity and how powerful it is. I use the power to create such a force within someone by giving them what they need to get started in reaching their goals. It's almost like a life and death situation.

My influence over women who I communicate with allows me to use my power to help them. Sometimes the help is in the form of connecting women with other women and other

times it may be showing them a skill. I sometimes use informational power to give a woman information that she can take and learn to use it for her purposes. Other times I have used reward power where I have rewarded women for completing a college degree or a particular course that will enable them to grow professionally. I tell you power is astonishing when used the right way to give another person a hand up and not a handout. I went on Christmas vacation and I came across a few women that I felt I needed to give the power to for them to be successful with their new year's goals. One, in particular, stood out because although she lived in the mountains of North Carolina, she was very open to hear my ideas and she immediately said, "how powerful". I said to her, Power is great if used to empower another woman.

As a leader, I choose to utilize legitimate, expert, and referent power. The reason I say that is legitimate power is having a position of power in an organization. I have been in many women's organizations and held different positions. This can be helpful when you need to introduce women who need to be empowered with women who empower them. In my everyday walk, I use legitimate power and it's good. Next, I use my expert power by sharing my experiences and knowledge to help women in all industries with empowerment. I have worked in many industries and consider myself an expert in education, food service, business,

childcare, management, and speaking. Now only those areas mentioned, but I also use referent power because I am trusted and respected by my peers. Now, I hope you get the idea of the types of power I use to help empower other women. Women do not take power lightly, it takes strength to make it happen sometimes.

Lean In

To me, Lean In means to get in the game and make it happen. Every woman has the power inside of her to do what she needs to do with a little help. As a career woman, I have experienced trying to climb the career ladder without help and I can tell you it doesn't always work. Most companies have a mentoring program, but don't get it mistaken; not all mentoring programs are geared to specifically helping women succeed. There are some mentoring programs in companies that are only there in a name which means they are not in operation at this time. I charge all women working not only a 9 to 5 but also women business owners to create a mentoring program that works. For women business owners who truly have it inside to come along and mentor and support new and seasoned women in businesses. I can't tell you how important it is. As far as women's rights and equality; all women should LeanIn and put forth an effort to empower another woman. Whatever expertise you have, use it to pay it forward for another woman. Imagine the impact you can make on women globally by putting forth a little effort. It does not take much to make a big impact. My plan for women everywhere is to find out what I can do to make their lives better and just do it. I read about women in poor countries making an impact with less than what women in the United States of

America have in resources. I so look forward to making an impact on women and then young girls. Yes, women, we can lead by example and we will have many generations for young girls turning into women who want to impact others who will come behind. I especially charge women between the ages of 30 and 50 to create your group of women to pour into. Sheryl Sandberg did and now she has hundreds of LeanIn Groups all over the world and they are making a difference. I know because I am a product of one of her LeanIn Groups in Dallas, TX. Ever since I joined my first network marketing business in 2000, I wanted to help women succeed. All I saw at that time were men in the high positions making the most money and the women were left behind. There was no one making sure that women understood the concept. Yes, we could join network marketing, but no one took the time to make that playing field equal. Oh, how I wish that I would have known then what I know now. I would have let my voice be heard and maybe women in that industry would not have stood way behind men as we did back then. Women we need to Lean Forward and not backward in today's time.

We must stir up the will to lead in women who may be apprehensive, afraid, or need a little push. Some women may have all the tools necessary to empower women, what I say to them is do it even if you are afraid. We can't be bold in every situation that comes our way. I can't tell you how many

times, I have been afraid to fail, and I started a business anyway. When I failed, I got back up and started over again. If women all waited until they no longer were afraid or received enough money to fund their business for 5 to 10 years, or until they received a business degree.... We would not have many women-owned businesses.

With the power I have inside of me, I will never stop making a difference and impacting the lives of women. This will be the first of many books to come from me. Keep my name on your radar with your eyes open and your ears clear. I plead you to contact me and let me know how I can empower you in any way. I can't impact and empower what I don't know. If you know of a friend, mother, or young girl who needs my help contact me with their information and I will see to it that that person is empowered! I will add a blog for those of you wanting to keep up to date with what I'm doing and where I will be speaking in The United States and abroad.

The Beauty of Empowering Others

There is a blessing in helping other women reach their goals and dreams. When someone sets goals that are important to them and don't know where to turn to for help in reaching those dreams, they die. Imagine the confidence level of that person. A woman needs to have a high confidence level to set herself up to do anything she puts her mind to. It takes confidence as high as the tallest trees in the United States. As a young girl, I had this idea that I wanted to be a big and important person. Some of my friends wanted to be a teacher, others a dancer, and me, I wanted to be a Fashion Designer. Well, my desire only lasted until my second year of college. After that goal did not last, I had another goal of being a physical therapist. My dream was not nurtured but smashed by a college faculty advisor. A college advisor is a person who students meet with to get advice from about their academic program. This person is required to give the student the best information available. An academic Advisor is like a high school counselor that you would meet to discuss your dreams of going to college and getting a great job. You would spend a great amount of time with your college advisor. This was an opportunity where I should have been empowered to reach my goal of becoming a physical therapist. This is one of the points that I'm trying to get across to you. People should look for opportunities to make a

difference in the life of someone else. The things you do can make a difference in whether or not a person's dream comes true or crushed. This was a lost opportunity and sometimes that person may never get that chance again. No woman in my family had ever talked about goals or dreams that I can remember. That's what I mean when I say if you have no one directly near you to tell you about goals it does not just come naturally to you. After living life for some years, I realized that other women came into my life and made it possible for me to begin thinking of new goals. When I began going places and traveling and meeting people who were educated or had an interest in lifting me, things changed.

There is so much beauty in helping others until I know that God ordained it all by himself. The amazing thing about helping others, it causes you to appreciate and be thankful for what you already have. It can also give you a sense of renewal-to get back to feeling like yourself because life can make you feel down sometimes. I know it may sound crazy but, helping others can help you live longer. When you help others your body releases the hormone that creates harmony. Just think about that for a moment. It's beautiful to live longer by giving a woman a hand up, not a handout. There is a big difference between the two. When you volunteer in any capacity, regardless of where it is, and there are people all around you, altruism is contagious- a

ripple effect. I have volunteered for (The Family Place organization a place that empowers victims of family violence by providing safe housing, counseling, and skills that create independence while building community engagement and advocating for social change to stop family violence) and just knowing that I was a part of the healing of women and children made me felt like I was impacting their lives in a way that mattered. Others see the good that you are doing, and they want to join in. Most of the time when I did any volunteer work, I had my four little children with me. Yes, all four grew up and today they are volunteering at places they like and what matters to them. I would tell all my girlfriends that I was going to this food bank in Plano, TX and I looked again, I had everybody at the food bank, or the women shelter, and everybody was having a good time. This work is inspiring and heart racing to see in action, even just one time will do. As I volunteered as a woman in many places for women, I have made friendships and they became strong friendships where both parties contributed to keeping a mutually beneficial relationship going. I began to feel like I could take on the world and that is such a great feeling.

In the process of empowering women, I feel a sense of belonging. Each time I support, volunteer and share my gifts with another woman; I feel that I am exactly where I should be. I get a sense of

purpose and satisfaction from knowing that I have helped someone reach their dreams and goals and you can too. A dream is a part of a person's life that cannot be separated. People's dreams are real, and some do come true. Have you ever heard of Joseph in the bible and how he dreamed that he would someday rule over his brothers and they hated him when he shared his dream with them?

Dreams are significant and strong as Joseph's in the bible. Dreams give specific instructions and can warn of danger too. As in this situation, Joseph was hated for his dream, but it didn't stop him from dreaming. This should be a lesson to all of us. Not everybody can accept your dream and it's not for everyone to understand. Don't let others stop you from dreaming. Joseph's dream came true. He dreamed that his mother, father, and brothers would bow down in front of him (Genesis 37: 1-11) BibleView.org.

You must chase your dream no matter what it is. Women should pay attention to the details of your dreams. Write down the details of your powerful dream in a journal book that you can refer to them later. There are many lessons I have learned from my dreams, but the most important lesson is all dreams are from God. I am the only one who can tell others about my dreams. No one else can experience the beauty of my dreams, but me. The bigger the dream, the bigger the experience. Small dreams never got me anywhere. I had to fight for

my dreams to make them come true. Dreams are beautiful and lovely. Dreams opened up a new world for me. One of my biggest dreams is to be able to empower thousands of women all over the world. Another dream of mine is to win the noble prize for helping others.

I've talked about dreams and the beauty of empowering women because it is just that. The way beauty and empowerment are related because it's the quality present in a person that gives intense pleasure and satisfaction to the mind, body, and spirit from making a difference in the lives of another woman. This comes out when I go and help other women reach their financial fulfillment so that she can purchase a home or save enough money to put her child through four years of college. Another example is how I feel when I help a woman who has been in the workforce for forty years who has never attended college before; earn a degree which will elevate her and give her options to either stay at the current job or look for a better one. I have assisted young women in college who was able to get scholarships and receive an internship at companies like Disney and Amazon. The amazing beauty in the satisfaction from knowing that I had a part in helping her get to that next level is a great feeling in my mind and spirit.

My love for people, in general, is what I think about when I look for ways to out all out for women. We are special creatures and when we provided

with what we need to flourish I love seeing the beauty that comes from the hard work. If you are a woman reading this book and understand how it feels to help your sister, aunt, goddaughter, granddaughter or girlfriend; you know how it feels to be a part of millions of other women. My eyes open wide when I think about empowering women who I've never met or been in another country making a difference in the lives of women of many different cultures. I have always wanted to travel the world and meet women in other foreign countries and hear their stories. There is beauty in knowing that it's amazing when women come together to make a difference in many different ways. I'm on a mission to meet and dramatically impact every woman with the strength in me. When I put my strength against any force that comes towards me, I know I will be changing the world in a big way. I'm talking about mountain moving changes. Close your eyes and imagine the beauty of the mountains in Washington State or Colorado, or even Iceland. I am not only interested in changing the world where women gain additional rights, but also women, in turn, helping others with a domino effect.

Key Lessons for Empowering Women

- Find out what she needs first
- Provide her with helpful resources
- Advocate for women's rights
- Have open communication
- Provide accountability
- Get women into decision-making positions
- Actively participate in social justice
- Instill confidence in her
- Teach resiliency
- Teach self-motivation and self-awareness
- Provide the skills and training needed
- Share degrees of power with those on a lower level
- Try new ideas
- Show her how to build a network
- Be her support person
- Provide her with the tools to be successful

Empowering Women for Leadership



- Build your professional network of successful leaders
- Get out of your own way and start thinking positive
- Find a mentor who has been where you are trying to go
- Be intentional on how you show up
- Learn the behavior and qualities of good leaders and follow
- Build a powerful support group of people you can call on
- Volunteer for positions that lead to leadership roles
- Join organizations and take and gain experience
- Attend Women Leadership Conferences
- Look for a YWCA workshop in your area and attend

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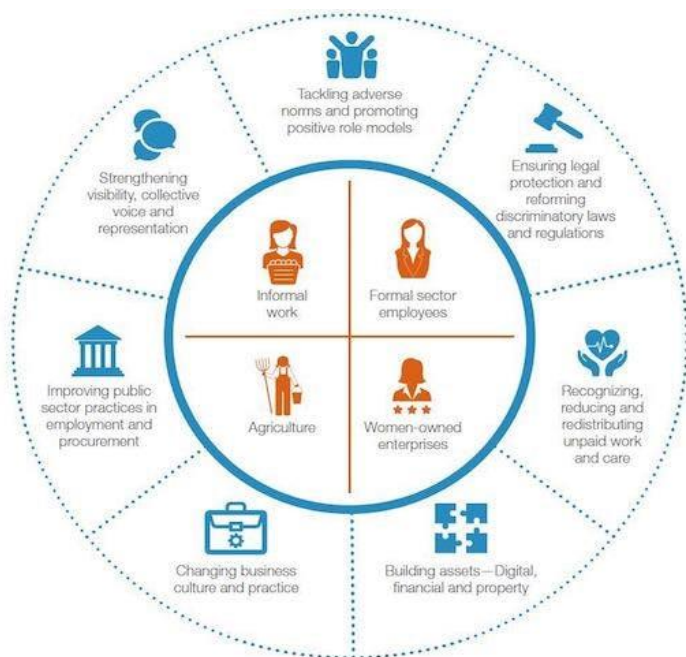
I Believe in Empowering Women

- Empowering women take the time to experience happiness and are inspired to change the world
- Changing the world can happen one person at a time or it can with many people at a time. You determine how you change the world but just do it.



Photo by: Sahasi Mahil Treks

Women's Economic Empowerment



Financial Empowerment Strategies to Empower

- Establish goals/plan (personal and professional)
- Seek out a financial planner/analyst (find someone you can trust)
- Safe first, spend later (you should always save for future)
- Own your finances (Know where your money is coming from and where it's going)
- Make the financial market your friend (have a diversified portfolio)
- Speak Up (talk about money)
- Go for balance (balance is good)

Resources

Charities That Empower Women

- United Nations Foundations’
- Shot@life Campaign
- Population Services International
- Tostan
- Girls Not Brides
- Heifer International
- Humanitarian Aid
- Violence
- Children
- Trafficking
- Women’s Health
- HIV/Aids
- Workplace
- Sexual Assault
- Women’s Fund
- Leadership

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