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Vision Bootcamp

Embodied Confidence
and Vision-Telling
for Women





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Introduction

I tell my students, “When you get these jobs that you have been so brilliantly trained for, just remember that your real job is that if you are free, you need to free someone else. If you have some power, then your job is to empower somebody else. This is not just a grab-bag candy game.”

–Toni Morrison

When I read Morrison’s quote, I feel challenged that maybe I haven’t done enough as an individual. I am free. I have power. Have I freed another and have I empowered others? As I write this in 2018, the year I turn 50, I reflect back and wonder if I have been enough for those who needed me and those who may still need me. I think of all those who helped and inspired me along the way and I want to live up to what they gave me.

I am not sure how it happened but a few years ago, I was asked to speak to a group of Finnish and Estonian women about leadership in an international context and about my experience as female leader. Since that first speech, I have had the pleasure to be on multiple panels, give keynote addresses and run workshops for women. One followed another but although I felt these little events were wonderful, I am not sure if I made any real change for another.

I decided the format of what I was doing was not hands on enough and I needed to give women direct practice. I also felt that if the mind-body connection was missing from the discussion, I would not be able to give women the tools to overcome issues of presence. I wanted to tell all the tips and tricks that helped me, find ways to find women with potential and create a transformational experience; this is why I began the Aspire program.

I am one of those people confident to teach my own mishmash theory of what I learned by the expertise of others and my experience. The contents of this small ebook are still in a rough phase but I hope it can accompany you during the program and be a reminder of some tips after.

People who finish Aspire with me ask, what comes next? I am not so sure but I hope that it is you who come next to the stage. I hope I can giggle with you at a Directors’ meeting in the future.

With love, Kathleen Naglee March 2018



Why Choose Leadership?

Keynote address to the American Chamber of Commerce, Estonia March 2016. Kathleen Naglee. All Rights Reserved.

Why choose leadership? To answer that question I need to begin with my journey towards leadership. Although I am now a school director, my first position of paid leadership was on a painting crew when I was 18 years old. I painted houses in the summer while going to university. The reason like many of us who fall into leadership was by default. We had a small team and we were learning to paint houses and I was the only one who would climb the 40 foot ladder.

Let me tell you about 40 foot ladders (12 Meters, 38 kg). The 40 ft. ladder is the tallest commercial ladder available by safety regulations. You need two or more people to get it set up fully extended and it will reach the top of three-story building. I don't have a fear of heights but your body knows you are in danger and when you go to the top of the ladder-you feel it. You grip it tight, your body shakes and try to stay focused on each step. When I reached the top, you wonder how you will reach out to actually paint. I realized for some unknown reason of comfort that I began humming the Beatles song, Yellow Submarine, a song I had learned in second grade.

This is what it feels like when you enter into real leadership. You don't know what you are doing. The skills you developed below most likely don't apply up there. It's terrifying. Below feels grounded and populated and doable but now you are alone. It also feels that every false move will send you tumbling. No one from below can give you much guidance- the light is wrong and they may see shadows but you need their support to keep an eye on that ladder. They can't see the difficulties you are overcoming because reaching out at that level – outside the norm is difficult to see as well.

The funny thing with leadership and painting houses is that you have to go up and down all day. Each new day requires you to go to your place and in many cases it feels much more comfortable to stay with the details below. You have to leave what you know behind.

Eventually though, your body relaxes at that height and you realize the benefits of the vision it gives you. You can see the house and all the problems from another angle. You can also see what is happening in the neighborhood and see beyond. The difficulty is communicating this – those below often refuse to believe what you see and more frustratingly, they refuse to go up to see it for themselves. They also believe that as you stand up there that you know longer understand the problems at the bottom of the house and that you won't listen while you are up there.

So why do I choose to stay at the top that metaphorical ladder? What I've realized is that my vision and understanding of the problems of the house, the business or the school in this case is often radically different from others who lead and so are my 4 solutions. And it's not just me being different but I have



found out surprisingly there are large differences based on gender.

Despite equality, despite efforts to offset gender bias in schools, sports and employment, we have been trained by society to function in behavioral different ways that have affected our perceptions and although there are weaknesses it can surely be a strength in the way that we look and the way that we act. This is not the case for just women but any marginalized group in a society that is given a chance to lead.

My particular vision in my current work as a school director is focused on the well being of students above all other factors. It is what I believe in and my success in teaching and leading has always been grounded in this value. It is in the delivery of what we call school I see far differently then my colleagues and that's why I am here today in my path to leadership. I realized that if I truly was passionate about my convictions towards students that I would need to move from the comfort of the ground – my classroom and move through the hierarchy of the system to make effective change. I didn't plan on it but as problems began to feel systemic, I cared enough for the students to work for change in whatever role was needed. I am simply a problem solver. I was happy to take on these roles with confidence in those beliefs.

It takes courage to become this person and adopt an identity of a leader. Becoming a leader feels like an outfit you put on each day. You probably didn't know that I am bit like a superhero each day as I put on my identity. For me, it looks a lot like what I am wearing tonight. The way I dress is in contrast to most professional women in Estonia but we each have probably a little signature item that you carry these same powers. Madelaine Albright the former Secretary of State always wore a pin on her lapel. Some of you have a special bag or glasses or heels that makes you feel confident in your identity. But this is how I go out in the world to defend my vision. And when I am wearing my costume, I have the confidence and the bravery to say what matters to me. I put on my glasses and a blue suit and when I am needed I hope I can call up what we all have deep inside to do what is right. I hope that I am focused enough to notice when I need to lead.

A few weeks ago, I was in Dubai as a school inspector. I was visiting a school within a male patriarchal society and the school was having trouble with middle and high school boys- like many places on the planet. When boys are in a system where certain leadership views dominate towards power and control, the effects on students are similar and it breeds disobedience and violence. My experience in America was teaching in schools of high poverty with guns, drugs, riots and helicopters- the solutions are seen in metal detectors, campus police and prison like conditions. My success has been to upturn such a system with love and compassion to the “inmates.”

The difference of approach to teaching troubled teens can be compared to styles of martial arts. A typical response in schools around the world is like Tae Kwon Dowhen attacked; you take the opponent by the head and smash them with your knee. I practiced Aikido, which takes the energy of violence, which is really just fear after all and lay the opponent down- quickly and gently in which they find themselves on the floor without pain- resting. In those past schools, I laid their fear down and we created a world of compassion together.



At the school I was visiting, the deputy principal had put an internal pass card door system throughout the building- an internal lock every few hundred meters. He thought this would create more order but he had created a prison system or a mental health facility. We could see in the student surveys and other data that there was less trust, more oppression, more problems, and more expulsions. They blamed the students when any good teacher would know the teachers and the system was inspiring that behavior. The new female Principal understood this but because money had been spent, she was afraid to upset the apple cart and speak out against the security system.

In our team of 12 inspectors I was the only one to bring up this issue as a problem. Others too had been lulled into the story of security and blaming the students. But I have a vision that guides everything I see with children and I had my super hero suit outfit on that day. We had the power to make recommendations that could make change for this school and I made my case to the others and they joined my vision that this was unacceptable and it would be made to stop. I made the lives of 1600 students better in the country I didn't live in but it was because I chose leadership that I had a voice that day. I was able to take this problem down without violence but with an Aikido hand lock and spin. With leadership I have been given influence.

I bet every one of the women in this room has a belief about how you treat another human being that affects the life of your organization. I bet that you have your "thing" that you see ways that certain models constrain an organization to move forward. Being a leader is not about a title in your life. It's the willingness to take your views up that ladder and then seeing the system from above. It's about looking around after you get there and asking a system to change.

People ask why I bother. I could easily be in the classroom teaching history and find little struggle but I know that this world needs my vision- those kids in Dubai needed my vision. There are those students who I have yet to meet but I know I need them just as much. My work gives purpose and meaning in my life.

Almost to the day, 10 years ago I lay in the hospital in Tallinn on the verge of dying after giving birth to my son. I had a broken leg and an emergency C-section and things had worsened. I had a blood infection that usually kills a patient within 24 hours as organs one by one begin to shut down. And at that moment of desperation I made a special prayer to my students around the world who if they knew I was in trouble, they would come to my rescue. I called on them to send me all the love we had shared because I needed it now. I believe that they heard me and I took that love to heal me. I find it auspicious that I am here almost exactly ten years later telling these stories. I try and return that love every day to the world and fight for their well being. They have given me the courage to climb up that ladder.

Why choose leadership? Because we are needed. It's time to put on your pin, your suit, your special scarf and be that person for your vision for what the world needs. 6 Put on your identity cape and get up that ladder. Test the boundaries of your own fear and wrestle it gently to the ground. Ladies, go make a difference to the people around you and the world. Get up that ladder, we need you.

Thank you.



Executive Presence

The next section was adapted from the work of Sylvia Ann Hewlett who made a groundbreaking study into leadership by questioning over 4000 companies and interviewing 300 top CEOs to try and define what makes others perceive leadership in you and particularly in women. The findings focused on three elements: appearance, communication and gravitas. This summary covers highlights from her work, [*Executive Presence: The Missing Link Between Merit and Success*](#). Below includes some notes about what to wear from Coni Masciave as well in her work, [*Executive Presence for Women: Polishing Your Visual Facet to Look the Part*](#). There are excellent tips from executive speaking coach John Bates in the Communication section along with the tips from Hewlett.

There are three major elements that determine if a woman is to be perceived as a leader. The first is an instantaneous gut reaction that others have of you. Luckily, the first moment can be addressed with smoke and mirrors. The other two take patience and hard work but are achievable for all of us.

1 Appearance

2 Communication Skills

3 Gravitas

Appearance:

Unfortunately, for those women in teaching and education, the skills that have allowed you to work with children successfully do not readily translate to being seen as a leader. Educators hone the skill of approachability and women in particular excel in this area. Children, young adults, parents and community members find most teachers to be safe, warm and friendly. We picture these female educators in soft sweaters, bright smiles, and in caretaking roles.

Female leaders are expected to be both authoritative and approachable though- a delicate high wire act that is difficult to manage for all women. We are judged in milliseconds whether or not we are authoritative by the clothes we wear. If you do not get through this first gate of judgment, you are sunk and cannot recover. Google “female CEO” and you will see what this looks like in hundreds of pictures. One word that comes to mind is “pearls!”

Why pearls? My theory is that much of the recommendations of work wear for female leaders really



signals class and wealth. We have built in stereotypes that imagine female leaders to be wealthy- pearls are a short hand for wealth. Take a look at recent pictures of Prime Minister Theresa May- she almost always has a giant pearl necklace on. Why wealth? Maybe we imagine that those with money can 'handle' the money. As you ascend the ladder towards being a head of school or an executive, this is an essential question that will be wondered about endlessly- can she handle the money? If you look like the average female teacher, you don't look like someone from the upper classes. 8

The reality is that your current dress is probably not conveying leadership. Any dope of a guy can put on a tie and jacket and look like a leader. It is not so easy for women. We need to always look professional but this is difficult to understand with the myriad of choices in women's clothing. There was even a study that showed that women lost status in the eyes of their male peers if they appeared in a swimsuit at a corporate outing. We are always watched whether we like it or not. The male gaze and its expectations in an organization influences both men and women.

What counts as professional and authoritative dress? Coni Masciave aptly defines it into four levels. If you are serious about leadership, you must always be in levels 3 and 4. These descriptions come from her book.

Level 1

Sporty

Untailored, collarless t-shirts, hooded tops and jeans, cargo pants, sweatpants, shorts, open-toed shoes, sandals, sport shoes. Accessories: backpack, vests, parkas, messenger bags, sports watch, and Fitbits.

When: weekend, non-work events (careful of retreats!! and staff sports events). Fine for the PE teacher but even she should change into professional dress for meetings and special events.

Level 2

Casual

Collared shirt/blouse or sweater with trousers or casual skirt; flat or thicksoled shoes, unstructured handbag. Casual dress of lightweight material (cotton, polyester blends)- not tailored or formal. There is no "third piece" like a blazer or scarf.

When: Better choice for retreats and casual work events. You appear approachable, a counselor, a friendly co-worker.



Level 3

Professional

Tailored day dress, softly tailored jacket, sweater or scarf with unmatched trousers or a skirt and flats, boots or heels. Appropriate for less formal occasions including most meetings. You appear as an advisor- confident and knowledgeable. You convey accessibility and reliability.

When: Every day at work; evening events

Level 4

Expert/ Authority

Must be mastered by any woman who aspires toward leadership. Tailored matching suit that includes a jacket/skirt/trouser or a simply structured day dress that is perfectly tailored and refined shoe with a heel and appropriate hosiery. Dark/light contrasts, structured fabrics and lines: the same principals of a man's suit. If you wear a dress, it must be a substantial fabric and impeccably cut. You should wear Level 4 during any important meeting and anytime you lead a meeting or workshop. 9

When: If you are aspiring to leadership- most days alternating with Level 3 only unless on a retreat/sporting event. Always at important events, meetings and when you are leading/speaking in workshops or in public.

Here is the bad news, if you wear an item from the sporty or casual side of clothing, the whole outfit jumps to the lowest ranking. A suit with sneakers? Level 1 sporty not professional or authoritative. A formal business dress with clunky/chunky shoes? Level 2 casual not authoritative. An old sweater with a nice professional pair of trousers? Level 2 casual not professional. A suit with flats? Level 3 professional but not authoritative. I walk a lot at school and my feet cannot take heels everyday so my work wear although is generally authoritative sinks to professional. That's okay. Hovering between 3 and 4 is acceptable in your day to day work.

Now, I personally tend to dress in a masculine style, which before you freak out is not what I am telling you to do. My gender expression naturally works in my favor. I am the classic tomboy and wearing a suit makes me feel good and is my everyday look. If you tend to be androgynous or masculine of center, this can work for you too but there are pitfalls. Without my make-up, my longish hair, and an ill-fitted boxy cut, I signal queer. Suddenly, I am on the wrong side of the equation. If you are gender queer, trans or masculine of center, then there will have to be careful choices made of showing authenticity while adhering to expectations (at least until you get the job!). For my last interview, I wore tailored dresses, heels and expensive scarves. Anytime I am in front of the school community at important events, I put away my suits for a dress. I want them to listen to my message- not get caught



up in my clothes. I am not my clothes. I think of it as a sports player- you wear the uniform to be understood in your role. One day when you own the team, you can redesign the look.

Some women wonder if they will appear overdressed as compared to their peers? Yes, you will and many people will make comments at first. Others then begin to notice that you have your act together and start assuming that you are competent and organized. If you are young, you begin to receive different levels of encouraging support from older colleagues and supervisors.

When I lived in southern California, I wore a suit everyday to my job as a Social Studies teacher. I was made the Co-Chair of the Department in my second year at the school. The fact that I stood out as a professional among 100+ teachers back then made a difference in my career. Other teachers wore very casual clothes often looking sloppy and careless. The students once asked me why I always came so dressed up to school? I told them that my grandmother taught me that you always dress up for something important and teaching them was important. I dress up to show respect to the ones I serve everyday.

Communication

After you passed the quick judgment of how you look, then you are assessed in a myriad of other ways both unconsciously and consciously. Part of the training 10 concerns the communication of confidence. I am afraid that this cannot be faked but I believe it can be trained. Confident people are often unlikely to worry what other people are thinking. They are relaxed in every day interactions- there is a lack of selfconsciousness especially in larger groups. Humans instinctively feel this mental strength.

In this course, I will show you how to lift heavy weights. There are a number of health reasons for weekly resistance training: body composition, bone loss prevention and building, heart health, improved strength, functional fitness, increased libido, better sleep quality, etc. I will focus on mental strength. Speak to those who lift regularly about their mental health and they will often state that they feel mentally stronger as well. Lifting heavy activates the same parts of the brain that says I am physically and mentally strong. The mind sees no difference. When you need to feel a boost of confidence- lift something heavy. Your mind changes and your body reveal this to the world in subtle ways. People begin to read a change- shoulders are back, stomach is in, and there is a new ease to your frame. No, you won't get bulky unless you take steroids.

Communication is more than the confidence that you radiate unconsciously and thankfully there are many small tips that make a difference in your communication style.



1

Stance- when you talk to another person or an audience, allow your hands to hang naturally at your side. When you tell a story, have your hands open and facing the crowd slightly away from your side (Jesus hands). It sounds super unnatural but the audience sees this as an empathetic gesture. Keep your feet shoulder distance apart and grounded. No rocking or fidgeting. Move only to emphasize a point of a story. Try to keep your body symmetrical- watch for a tilting or bowing of the head- this is submissive. Use your hands to tell the story when they are not open at your sides.

2

Voice- the tone should be pleasant and with a lower register. Deeper voices carry authority. Think BBC World Service. Get a voice coach if your voice is squeaky or very high (like the TV show [The Nanny](#)). Learning to sing helps to speak from the diaphragm.

3

Pacing of Voice- speak slowly. Add pauses and silence for emphasis. Those who speak fast show a lack of power in the relationship fearing that they won't be heard if they don't get everything out quickly. It is very unpleasant, as an audience member to listen to someone who is speaking quickly- people will turn away. Think Bill Clinton speed- he was the master of speaking with pauses and slowly.

4

Eye contact- When you don't what you want to say, when you are recalling a memory, your eyes will turn up and away. You want to be overly prepared for any presentation. If you know your comments flat, you can focus on the audience. Look at one person at a time- they will be hypnotized. No note 11 cards, no Power Point. Every time you look away, look at notes or at a screen, you break rapport with the audience. They have permission to look away as well at their screens. Don't give them a chance to be distracted. Be prepared and be focused on them.



5

Be expressive in the details of any memory- use the five senses to guide the description. Tell the sights, sounds, textures, and smells. Tell about your inner world- thoughts, feelings, worries, and fears.

6

Smile- You are perceived as more intelligent if you smile.

I will discuss the details of storytelling later. Just focus on standing talk, speaking slow and not fidgeting as first steps.

Gravitas

Gravitas is the “it” factor. Do others see you as competent in your field as a respected member? Do others trust you, depend on you? Can you answer “six questions deep” as Hewlett states in your field on any topic? Can you hold an intellectual discussion about the problems, changes, and needs of your field? Can you debate anyone in the room without batting an eye? This is Gravitas. Hewlett broke it down into 6 qualities that the companies and CEOs found consensus in describing true leadership.

1. Confidence-

Hewlett talks about having grace under fire. There are many metaphors regarding fire, heat pressure in discussing confidence for a reason. Can you take the heat? Can you take the pressure of making decisions?



Everyone must be assured that you are absolutely qualified to do the job confident to perform. You cannot fake this- you must know your stuff. Read and discuss your field often with others. Find peers who think deeply. Know your views. I can get your body in shape but there cannot be intellectual laziness.

2. Showing your teeth-

Can you make someone back down? Can you stand your ground and make difficult decisions. Women are always asked this question. They think we will cave. Practice not caving especially on issues that are important to you. Men often push to have others cave as part of their upbringing- push back.

3. Integrity-

Hewlett describes this as “speaking truth to power.” This is the candor and courage to speak your convictions. This is what authenticity feels like to others. Speaking your views need to be tailored for the audience though. Read the room. Fine line for women.

4. Emotional Intelligence-

reading the room. What questions are the interviewers circling around? Mirror your interviewers body language.

5. Reputation/standing-

be respected in your community by stepping up for others regardless of being asked. Serve your convictions in the community school, local and/or global. Be known for being dependable and useful.



6. Vision-

this trait is the most important factor. Where do you see education or your field going? How do we navigate a rapidly changing world? How do you see your impact on system? Can you be inspirational to others? We want someone to navigate a path. We'll be working on this throughout the training.



How To signal Executive Presence



Check your appearance- Level 4
formal means- business dress/suit,
conservative heels, some make-up,
classic accessories (pearls, scarf, nice
pen), expensive fabrics, tailored look

Communication check: Take space,
ground your stance, Jesus hands, speak
low and slow, use silence, eye contact,
symmetry, avoid podiums and
Powerpoints at all costs!!!



Gravitas: CONFIDENCE
Grace under fire
Competent to perform

Gravitas: SHOWING TEETH
Making difficult decisions
Holding your ground
Defending your position



Gravitas: EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE
Reading the room
Understanding how men play
Approachability

Gravitas: INTEGRITY
Honoring your word
Speaking truth to power
Candor (with caution)



Gravitas: REPUTATION
Serving your community
Choosing the right path



Gravitas: VISION
Purpose and Meaning
Most important quality

Based on the work of Sylvia Ann Hewlett



Embodied Cognition; Embodied Transformation

What do I mean by “embodied cognition?” Historically, we have separated the mind and the body as if these were two distinct systems with one being primarily subordinate to the other (brain controlling body). Research has shown that in fact the body perceives all information through the senses and then through emotional pathways only to be later confirmed by the frontal cortex (the logic thinking part of the brain).

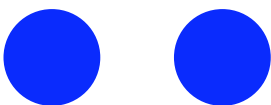
What that means for women is that it is through unconscious emotional processes that we have ascertained and performed in an environment and that others have unconsciously have assessed us through their emotions as well. For transformation to happen in our behaviors, it must become hardwired at an unconscious level. The body leads us.

Mirror neuron research indicates that much of our learning is through the mimicry of others. When we look at a speaker that we are inspired by another, our brain begins to mimic their story and live out their story as if it was our own. We become the other.

Dr. Immordino- Yang has demonstrated this process of inspiration under fMRI research. When we hear an inspiring story of struggle and are captivated by their efforts, our brain embodies those memories and thoughts deep within and then believes their story to be ours. This happens in reading the memoirs of others that we relate to and even in film.

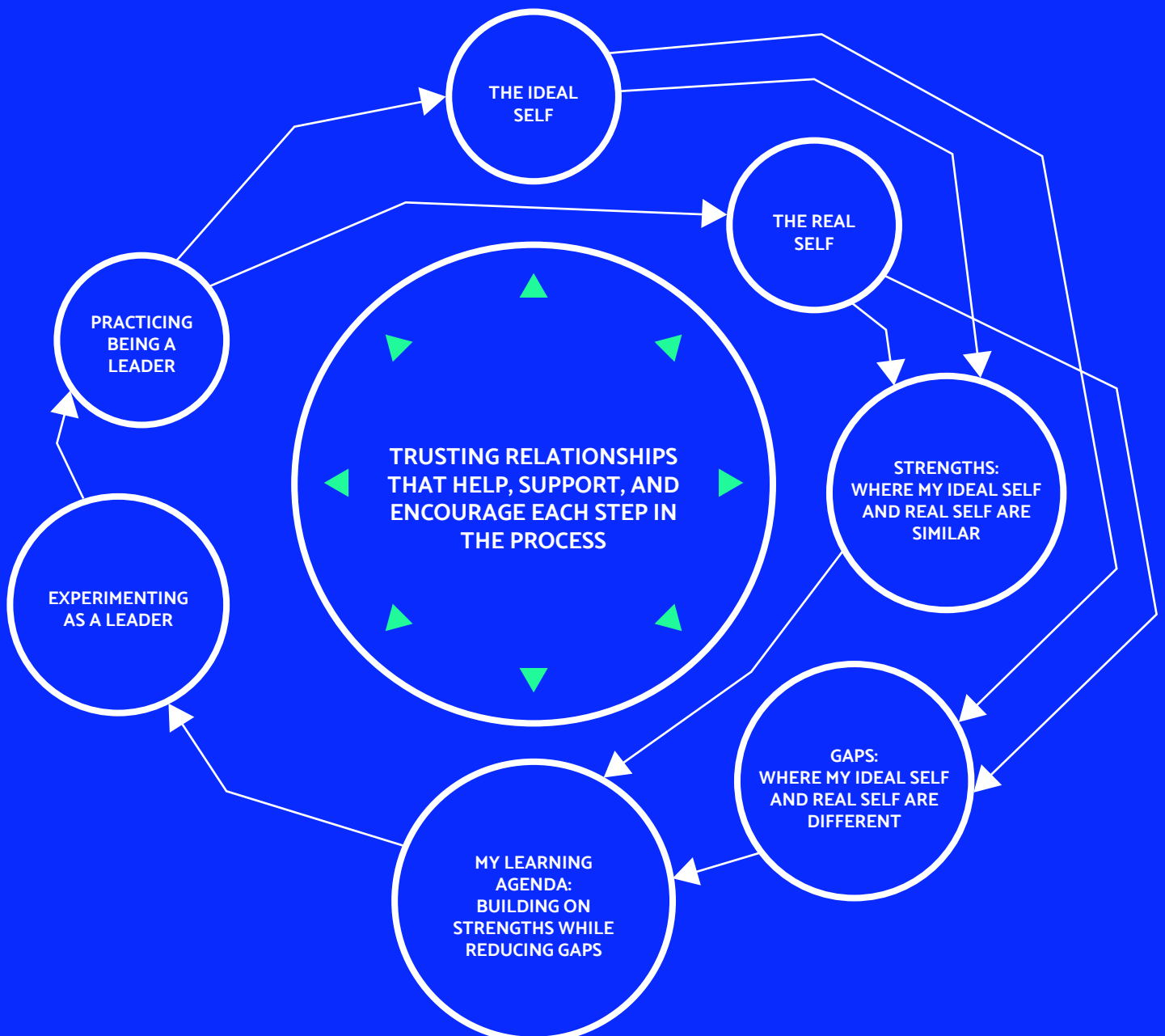
We need to hear the stories of how women overcome obstacles and struggles to embody their experience into our own bodies. We also need to make sure that students read stories that inspire them to change and that they relate to as well. If you believe in global change, than you need to “experience” the stories of others. This is how we first create the neural pathways towards leadership. We feel, therefore we learn.

I have read many memoirs of the Second World War and the stories of women who survived inspire me. I highly recommend Gerda Weissmann Klein’s [*All But My Life*](#) as a starting work.



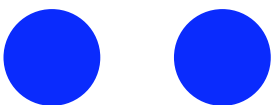
International Change Theory

INTERNATIONAL CHANGE MODEL





Boyatzis gives a map for real change- not January 1st resolution change. Change that lasts. Assess who you really are at this moment- the kind of person you have become. Decide what you want to become- what kind of person do you want to be? Truly picture yourself as this changed person. Visualize. Lay down the neural pathway of that story. Figure out your strengths and gaps. Get trusted friends to give feedback on those strengths and gaps. Think about building a learning agenda over the long term. Experiment with new practices. Find practices that work for you. Keep working at it. It is not a goal but more like experimenting with new habits and checking in regularly. This is an inquiry based learning process concerning yourself. Try out a new model of yourself. Give it a test ride. Keep driving it if you like it.





Storytelling

The most important strategy I can teach is how to tell your vision. We have instinctive needs to listen closely to others but much of modern living has taken away the processes to convey a compelling story with a lesson. The key is in every intimate moment you have had in a group- proximity to each other, undivided attention, and a captivating personal experience that others relate to- one in which they can picture clearly in the mind's eye.

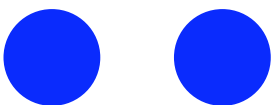
As humans, we love stories – fiction and nonfiction, books, movies, audiotapes, performances, dance, poetry, etc. When you have something important to convey- it must be carried by a story. The vehicle of understanding is the story. We need metaphorical language to scaffold.

Telling a vision is a simple act- tell a personal engaging, emotional story; tell us your view and tell us how the two connect. This feels awkward though because we want to move quickly. Here is the information. Here is my opinion. But, no one is interested in listening or remembering. If you tell an engaging story and can make a point with the story, people remember.

You can't tell a long and round about story though. We get bored quick. Get to the action. Get to the core issue immediately. Imagine telling someone on the phone that there was an accident. You say, "There was an accident. Mom's car slid on the ice, hit a tree and she's in the hospital. She's going to be okay." You don't begin with, "Mom made a shopping list before leaving the house." You can tell that detail later.

Find your personal insightful stories of your life and work. Be vulnerable. These are the most important stories to share when you are making meaningful points and messages.

The infographic below is a quick guide to remind you of our practice in class.





3 IMPORTANT STEPS TO COMPELLING VISION STORYTELLING

FIND AN EMOTIONAL STORY



Reflect on your own personal experiences and moments of meaning. People connect to your stories of failure and what you learned. Bring up stories that naturally bring up your own emotions. Be concise- get to the action fast. Be vulnerable.

DEFINE the PROBLEM

What big picture issue/problem are you addressing? Speak to important issues in your field. Establish your understanding. Let the story be the frame of the problem. Connect the story to this problem to resolve with your solution.



Story + Problem = Vision Solution



Time to be heard. State your solution without qualifiers such as "I think...I believe..." Don't be afraid to say that you learned though. We connect to your failures. We are inspired by other people changing their views, habits, and thoughts.

Never tell a story without a point. Never make a point without a story.