



How We Lead Matters

Reflections on a Life of Leadership

By Marilyn Carlson Nelson, McGraw-Hill, 2008

Marilyn Carlson Nelson has achieved global recognition for the Carlson brands of hotels, restaurants, travel, and marketing services.

But that's only part of the story.

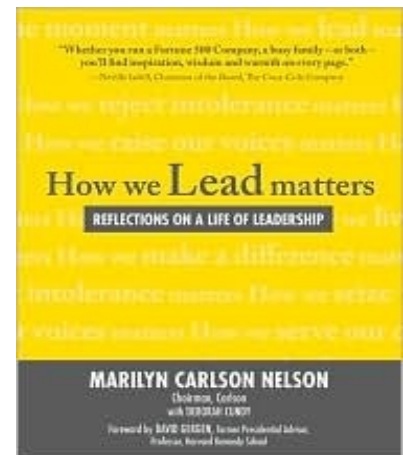
As a daughter, wife, mother, and grandmother, Marilyn has always put people first. When her grandson asked a simple question about her life, she decided to write it all down – her fondest memories and deepest insights – in "How We Lead Matters: Reflections on a

Life of Leadership".

She talks about what it's like to be a woman in today's business world, while reflecting on an engaging array of subjects – from equal rights to corporate wrongs, world leaders to motherhood.

Most compelling of all, she reveals how a meaningful legacy is built one day at a time.

BOOK OF THE WEEK



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Why You Need this Book

This thoughtful book offers a surprisingly personal glimpse into a multi-faceted woman who became one of the world's most successful global CEOs. It will inspire you to take a moment to let those who are to follow know you and perhaps remind them that life is made up of a series of days and choices and that, most importantly, how we lead matters.

In an increasingly complex and interconnected world, business leaders must pause and contemplate the way businesses can best interact with the non-profit and public sectors. It's not unlike the way the ancients looked at the skies: some just saw stars, but others saw the patterns of dogs, bears, goddesses, and hunters. They connected the dots, and we'll never again see the sky in the same way.

Star Gazing

Knowledge of how to combine is the mother of all other forms of knowledge.

~ Alexis De Tocqueville
(French Historian)

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Business is one of the most powerful forces on the planet – for good or for ill. Its domain is far-reaching and pervasive. Those of us who are “called to business” as our life pursuit must learn how best to leverage our influence and work across sectors on complex problems for the common good. We must be what is called “integrative leaders.”

Wanting it All

It's never too late to be what you might have been.

~ George Eliot
(British Novelist)

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“WHAT I KNOW NOW: Letters to My Younger Self” is a unique book of advice letters, edited by Elyn Spragins, from successful women such as Maya Angelou, Madeleine Albright, and Queen Noor written to their “younger selves.”

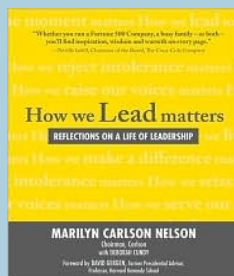
Here's an excerpt from Marilyn Nelson's own letter to herself:

Dear Marilyn:

You have ambitious dreams that seem to include every possibility under the sun. You want to be a mother. You want exactly four children. You also want to be a political leader or diplomat. You want to serve as a community leader and you want one day to have a meaningful role in your family's business at Carlson.

Those who know you wonder why you think you can do it all. How can you possibly reconcile all those dreams into one

ABOUT THE BOOK



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lifetime? Maybe you should let some go. What I know now is that women can actually come pretty close to having it all, but you just can't have it all every day.

If you look at each stage of your life as an opportunity to [make a difference], your effectiveness will increase, your reputation will grow and extraordinary possibilities will present themselves. In the end, you weren't really dreaming about titles or position or even about being a wife or mother. Rather, you were dreaming about living the life that would complete you.

Let it unfold,

Marilyn

Coming Together

The true meaning of life is to plant trees,
under whose shade you do not expect to sit.

~ Nelson Henderson
(U.S. Author)
∞

It's a bit outrageous to think that someone one day would decide that he is going to get together a special club and hold a meeting once a year at the foot of a mountain in Switzerland to solve the world's problems. But that is how the vision has unfolded for Klaus Schwab, who created the concept of the World Economic Forum in 1971.

Like magicians with their adroit movements, Klaus is a master at focusing all attention on the object at hand whether it be peace, social responsibility, economic vitality, or world

health. He lends his vision, he attracts the audience, he sets the stage, and most important, he lets the magic take over.

It is indeed "amazing," as Harry Truman once said, "to see what you can accomplish when you don't care who gets the credit."

Love, Honor, &?

Love one another, but make not a bond of love...
Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping.
For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts.
And stand together yet not too near together.
For the pillars of the temple stand apart,
And the oak tree and the cypress grow not
In each other's shadow.

~ Kahlil Gibran
(Lebanese poet)
∞

Not too long after becoming Minneapolis police chief, Tony Bouza arrested his wife.

In the 1980s, anti-nuclear weaponry passions ran high. Erica Bouza, along with hundreds of others, had made very public their plans to stage a protest at the headquarters site of the defense contractor Honeywell, timed to disrupt the company's annual shareholder meeting.

As the story goes, Tony asked her at breakfast what she was going to do that day. She answered that she planned to protest at Honeywell. She then asked him what he was going to do that day. "I guess I'm going to arrest you," he replied.

That same year, Tony shared at the annual United Way campaign in Minneapolis. His was a

passionate and credible voice in describing the city's needs, but the news of what had happened that day was obviously on everyone's mind.

Immediately after the conclusion of his compelling speech, a member of the audience asked him how he could possibly arrest his own wife.

"She is very impressionable," he said with a wink. "I never should have taken her to see the movie 'Gandhi!'"

The Long View

So when a great man dies
 For years beyond our ken,
 The light he leaves behind him
 Lies upon the paths of men.

~ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
 (U.S. Poet)
 ∞

It's been said that the mark of a true leader is thinking well beyond his or her years, that is, establishing a leadership culture in an organization that becomes the organization's hallmark.

Only then can a leader's impact be known. Did the company or organization stay the course? Did it produce other leaders who were just as successful?

When we think about the world's great leaders, did their impact not become better understood decades later? Only time made clear who was truly great.

Rather than expend all their energies on the short term, leaders who aspire to greatness beyond their time might be well advised to ask themselves this question:

What will generations say about them "years beyond their ken"?

Secret Ingredient

The eye cannot say to the hand,
 "I have no need of you!"
 And the hand cannot say to the feet,
 "I have no need of you!"...
 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it;
 If one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

~ Saint Paul
 (Apostle, from 1 Corinthians)
 ∞

In today's pop business culture of motivational phrases and self-improvement books on successful management, there is no shortage of slogans about the value of teamwork:

"There's no 'I' in teamwork."
 "TEAM: Together Everyone Achieves More."
 "None of us is as smart as all of us."

The fact is, they all convey what we know instinctively: TEAMS ARE POWERFUL.

Through our own experience and supporting research, we are convinced that complex problems benefit greatly from the creativity that comes from diverse thought, backgrounds, and styles.

But many people have yet to see a slogan that reveals the underlying secret of the very highest performing teams.

A major consulting firm figured it out. The researchers studied "successful" teams and the true "breakthrough" teams to try to determine the differentiators between the two. They looked at the size of the team, the combination of management levels, the gender and culture mix, among many other variables.

In the end, they concluded that the greatest determinant of a breakthrough team is that they members of the team care as much about each other's success as they do about their own success.

It's well worth the investment to institutionalize a method for hiring people that's based not only on the capacity to do the job but also on the capacity to care. That is, if you care about more than just getting the job done.

Looking Up

We need heroes so that we might become heroes.

-Robert Dilenschneider
(U.S. Author and Business Executive)

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The Greeks, who had a wise saying for everything, said, "A people are known by the

heroes they crown."

Today, we crown many heroes simply because of their good fortune, their good looks, or the fact that they've enjoyed a good season or two. We too often confuse "cool" with "courage" and in doing so incorrectly instruct our youth and even ourselves about what is important.

Many do not see society's quiet heroes – teachers, police officers, enlistees, public servants. There are some of us, though, who do see the quiet but significant contributions they make to society and mentally crown them heroes, adding their vocal and, when appropriate, financial support.

It would do us all some good to examine our own personal heroes: Why have we chosen them, and what does it say about us? Even better would be to discuss with our children and grandchildren who they have chosen as their heroes and why.

From this we will better understand them and glimpse the future they will create for themselves.

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