



*Real Quotes from Real Women*

The following are responses shared when women leaders were asked the following question: **As a female leader, what THREE critical leadership skills do you wish you mastered earlier in your career?**

Let them inspire you!

Leadership Trait	Personal Quote
Authenticity	“Embrace that my style is different from other leaders I have worked with/for. Different is good, and I found actually very much appreciated and sought by those looking to develop and grow.”
Authenticity	“It’s fine to be an introvert, but as a leader, find parts of yourself to share more easily. It’s important to your team.”
Authenticity	“Don’t try to lead identical to other leaders. Be yourself and be you.”
Coaching and Developing	“Defining who I am as a leader – what is important to me, who I want to be and how do I show up as that person. To gain this, I had to take classes/programs on my own time, read and evolve into it.
Coaching and Developing	“Get a mentor early in my career.”
Coaching and Developing	“Finding a mentor who cares.”
Coaching and Developing	“I would have sought out female mentors, all of mine are and were men.”
Coaching and Developing	“Finding a POSITIVE mentor(s) – who wants you to be successful – and can talk straight. I think this is foundational to making other leadership skills work, build your confidence, and keep you on track.”
Coaching and Developing	“Confidence in proactively seeking promotional and development opportunities and not waiting for someone approaching me; having a strategic career plan and taking risks.”
Coaching and Developing	“Early in my career, I thought I should act on all feedback given to me by someone higher in level. Sometimes the feedback felt wrong and counter to my true-self. For years I changed who I truly was as a leader based on feedback given to me by less effective leaders higher in the organization. It took time for me to realize that just because



## TEN MINUTE MENTOR

Leadership Trait	Personal Quote
	someone is higher in level than you currently are, doesn't mean you don't have the potential to be a better or more capable leader than them – and it doesn't mean that they have the right leadership skills or traits! Never change who you are at your core and seek out feedback from the leaders you look up to, not just those in your direct management chain."
Coaching and Developing	"How to discern feedback - I am not talking about the traditional things– you listen and implement what you are being told – it is more about how to be able to filter the feedback appropriately, and then adjust based on that."
Coaching and Developing	"You don't have to know it all and be the expert. Developing others and seeking their diverse perspectives will always result in a stronger team and better decision-making."
Coaching and Developing	"I also think appreciating, accepting and growing with lateral moves. One just doesn't keep moving up the organization in a silo. You have to have a broad understanding of a complex technology to truly be able to lead the organization."
Coaching and Developing	"Learn to transfer knowledge the way the receiver needs to understand the information, NOT so much the way that you learn."
Communicating	"The art of saying "yes, and," instead of just saying "no."
Communicating	"Learning how to say no without apology."
Communicating	"Respectfully speaking up instead of people speaking over you."
Communicating	"Speaking my mind without worrying about whether or not I knew everything."
Communicating	"Don't be afraid to share your insights or opinions in topics. Be professional but be involved."
Communicating	"Storytelling and cultivating a message - this is so different from just presenting and more powerful."
Communicating	"How to tell a good story. The differences between vision and strategy, and how to create unique stories about both, tie them together, and bring people along."
Communicating	"Leaders I admire, both men and women, are good at relating what's being discussed to something else in their history/experience or other events that make things feel possible, get you inspired, or convey an idea in a more impactful way. I'm not sure



## TEN MINUTE MENTOR

Leadership Trait	Personal Quote
	storytelling is the best way to describe it, sometimes it's as simple as drawing an effective analogy. "
Communicating	"Knowing which questions to ask to probe a project instead of trying to have all the answers. Questions that help you find the problem points."
Communicating	"Finding my voice around a table of leaders. I can't tell you the number of times I've had a thought/suggestion/objection that I kept to myself thinking it wasn't that important, only to have the guy next to me put it on the table. It's not confidence, because I never lacked that, it more about recognizing the importance of your contribution. When men get promoted and go to their first leaderships meeting they want to leave an immediate mark - women often wait to get the lay of the land, see who the players are and then speak up. Not sure that works in our best interests."
Communicating	"I stopped taking notes or putting presentations together and it flipped my world around and my ability to engage in crucial conversations."
Communicating	"Being self-aware of the communication styles necessary to connect with ALL audiences, and being able to adapt quickly to communicate with others in the manner that works best for them."
Confidence	"Believe in yourself and what you have to say – you were put in that role for a reason, speak up!"
Confidence	"Fearless to stand for what's right and not [be] afraid to find my own voice."
Confidence	<p>"Don't second guess your ability, especially if it is recognized by your manager and others."</p> <p>"Turning down a project or position because you think you are not a 100% ready, even though you can do it with your eyes closed."</p> <p>"[Being] reluctant to ask a relevant question in a meeting and then wondering (annoyed) why the male peer was being praised for asking the same question you were thinking."</p>
Confidence	"Recognize you don't have to be perfect before you take that next step - learn from failure rather than being hesitant to take risks."
Confidence	"We are our own worst critics and if we don't believe that we can do it others won't either."



## TEN MINUTE MENTOR

Leadership Trait	Personal Quote
Confidence	“Bringing my input to the table based on what I know and believe will add value; recognizing that things don’t need to be perfect or concepts and ideas fully defined before I make a pitch; not worrying about how others will react to my ideas or input, rather taking their input or criticism as a ‘different perspective’ that could make the product or idea a better one, and that a conflicting input is one that needs to be considered as well to make sure we make great decisions.”
Confidence	“Listening to and trusting my intuition.”
Decision-Making	“Make a decision, if it turns out to be wrong- admit it and move in a new direction.”
Decision-Making	“Take action now and check and adjust instead of waiting for the perfect plan.”
Delegation	“How to effectively delegate to my team.”
Delegation	“Trust your team and take every opportunity to delegate. They will be more engaged and you will accomplish more. My way is not the only way, and may not be the best way. It took me far too long to fully grasp this.”
Delegation	“Manage your capacity to want to co-create with your team; allow others the time and opportunity to figure things out on their own.”
Delegation	“I engaged this leadership principle quite successfully later in my career, but spent the early years doing it all myself because no one could do it as well as I could. Along with this approach however, we women can't take on ALL the blame when a subordinate doesn't do it right. They need to face the consequences and learn from it.”
Delegation	“Better delegation skills – again, as women, we both think we can juggle it all (both at work and in the office) and that we don’t want to over-burden others. Delegation is important to keep your team challenged and engaged...and to keep yourself sane.”
Delegation	“Don’t feel like you need to do everything yourself.”
Delegation	“Depending on the job or who my audience was, I preferred to do it myself rather than holding people accountable to deliver on time and with quality.”
Delegation	“I learned how necessary that was as my roles escalated and I couldn’t do it all myself.”



## TEN MINUTE MENTOR

Leadership Trait	Personal Quote
Delegation	“Being a successful individual contributor makes delegating even harder, and with that comes the responsibility of developing your staff to be managers and leaders. This also takes sharing the successes and the hardships.”
Business Acumen	“Have a better understanding of the broader aspects of the business and not just the nuclear technical piece.”
Business Acumen	“More fully appreciating and understanding the business side of my profession. I got the technical side, but took me longer to realize I needed the full scope of the business to move into the higher levels. This takes personal initiative to learn before you are supposed to know the business, but if you do the personal commitment, it makes you more valuable to the organization, i.e. promotable.”
Listening	“Listen more and seek council from a broader range of people. There is so much value is diversity of thought and ideas. My younger self would have been much more effective if I had embraced this. Get input from those in the organization that you know don’t always think like you.”
Motivating	“Translating a vision into strategy development and through to execution; also includes understanding how to shape culture and ensure that the people we are trying to align are brought along in the journey; how important leadership communications are when you are working toward a vision in a way that gets people bought in, motivates them to get engaged, listens to their concerns, takes their input so the entire team can achieve results.”
Motivating	“Always remember to lead people and manage things – the two are quite different.”
Presence	“Executive presence – the confidence in front of a group, the ability to command the attention of the room helps position yourself as credible and strong. This skill includes the ability to pull together a well-developed message, oral communication skills and personal confidence.”
Presence	“Ability to speak up, sit up and show up in a way that is impactful.”
Presence	“Your body language and communication skills are keys to leadership presence. Not speaking up or sharing your opinion in a credible way. I’ve come to realize, you can “sit” at the table, even without sitting at the table. People will recognize you wherever you sit in the room when you appear confident.”



## TEN MINUTE MENTOR

Leadership Trait	Personal Quote
Recognition	“Accepting compliments with grace and a simple “thank you” instead of discounting the effort or deflecting the glory.”
Recognition	“How to slow down and celebrate successes and not let others take credit for my successes.”
Relationship Management	“Network, network, network with other business units.”
Relationship Management	“Strategically developing my professional network and grooming these relationships.”
Relationship Management	“The importance of networking and building relationships with the right people, both up and across, and internal and external to your organization.”
Relationship Management	“Building trust with others – not just those who know you personally.”
Resiliency	“Set high goals and don’t be afraid to fail. Imagine yourself in positions at the top of the organization and have the confidence to get there. There is nothing stopping you if you don’t get in your own way. If you have a setback, don’t let it own you. Accept failure and learn from it.”
Resiliency	“Being okay with being wrong or not having all the answers.”
Resiliency	“Accept your mistakes – don’t beat yourself up over them, learn from them, move on.”
Resiliency	“Failing fast - moving on and not overthinking.”
Resiliency	“How to forgive. Most of this comes with age and lived experiences, but I would have saved myself extra stress lines if I knew it was something to shoot for.”
Strategic Thinking	“Prioritize the strategic tasks over the tactical; just because a lot of things are getting done it does not mean those were the most impactful ones.”
Strategic Thinking	“How to think much more broadly and cross functionally (including the enterprise).”
Teamwork	“Not being the first one to be the “doer” unless I own the task. Rather, provide support and strategic advice.”
Teamwork	“I’m coming to value more and more the need to guide but not decide – to ask people I work with what they would do, what might get in their way and how to get around it, how I can help etc. without being the one to decide on an approach or next steps.”



## TEN MINUTE MENTOR

Leadership Trait	Personal Quote
Other	“I believed I was “passionate” about issues because I would identify them and bring them up to anyone who would listen – and I would get frustrated when people would in turn get frustrated with me doing this. What I didn’t realize was the difference between passion and emotion. Just identifying issues and broadcasting them can be perceived as being emotional, but identifying issues, sticking to the facts, and offering solutions is being passionate.”