

LESSONS WE HAVE LEARNED



Accomplished leaders in their varied fields share their hard-earned wisdom about success, failure and not letting yourself off the hook.

RUTH SIMMONS

President, Brown University

So often in the workplace, women assume that they have to be just like everybody else, and downplay whatever is unique about them. I think it's just the opposite. Whatever I've accomplished in my life, I've done it precisely because I have been different. I have expressed different opinions, and I have been outspoken. I don't have any regrets about what remained unsaid or unspoken. The regrets I have are about decisions that I didn't take because I thought somebody else knew better.

I think women always have a little twinge of thinking that maybe somebody else is smarter, somebody else has the

secret formula for reaching the right decision. I have to fight against that sometimes. If you come to a leadership role on the basis of your experience, knowledge and ability, you have to assume ownership of that, which means you endorse the notion that you deserve to be where you are, because your leadership has almost unquestionably been vetted. You are entitled to make decisions.

But you're also required to withstand the criticism when those decisions turn out to be unpopular. Managing leadership is managing cynicism; sometimes you look like a fool or don't express yourself as well. Sometimes people criticize or say that you're too assertive. You have to accept that not because you like it, but because you know it

marshaling lots of groups to accomplish it. Brown had not been need-blind for admissions, so much of the community wanted it to be need-blind, because that's the kind of place we are. We believe in fairness of opportunity. We wanted to be able to offer a spot to any student who is deserving. And the first thing that I did, which I always advocate that leaders do, is understand and appeal to the culture of the place, and the most ardent desires of the place. Although people were very skeptical about whether we could afford to be need-blind, it was so emotional and so important that the community agreed that we should try to do it. And of course, it wasn't very difficult to accomplish in the end.

Now everybody looks back



NAVRATILOVA

MARTINA NAVRATILOVA

Hall of Fame tennis champion, winner of 18 Grand Slam singles titles, including a record nine Wimbledon

Athletes just do not quit until they get it right, whether it is shooting free throws or practicing serves or practicing one particular shot. It is getting up when you don't feel like getting up for your training session, it is going to bed early even though you want to go out with your friends, it is only drinking half a beer when you really want to drink two. Everything it takes to get to your goal—that's the mentality of an athlete or a successful human being. Period.

I think we know when we are letting ourselves off the hook. If you look in the mirror and you really look yourself in the eye, the image you see forces you to be honest with yourself. As a result, you'll make the right choices. And it's important to have a support team that can not only give you the positive

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comes with being a leader.

When I first got to Brown, I came up with a package of ideas centering around my plan for academic enrichment. It appeared to some people to be overreaching, too grandiose, impractical. It took

and they think, why didn't we do that before? Leadership is all about enabling people to see what they would really like to see, but they're afraid to undertake because it's a frightening world out there, and they don't want to have to test it.



SIMMONS

We tend to try so hard, but we don't necessarily have to do everything all at once. That's true whether we're spreading work and family across a lifetime or across a day.

support and reinforcement, but can also tell you "you know you really are full of it right now, you need to go take a look in that mirror again."

Now that I am playing doubles, I want to be the best doubles player I can be right now. And that means doing everything I can to get to that point. You set your goals and then break it down and try to figure out how to get there. Then it becomes a palatable, doable daily routine.

You say, "OK, how was my serve?" This is where I can make it better. "How is my level of fitness?" Well, I am in shape, but I could have better endurance. And then you get into the solution. Maybe I need to start running more long distance or I need to practice more of my backhand down the line or I need to think more about strategy. You break it down and you are into solutions. You figure it out. And all of the sudden you realize you are not such a bad tennis player.

Know how good you are and what your limit is and you are satisfied that you did do your best. Lead by example and you'll be able to achieve a lot more and make a difference in people's lives that way. But doing things half-assed and just kind of coasting won't inspire anybody.

ELLEN FUTTER

President, American Museum of Natural History, former president, Barnard College

I certainly try to be a very, very good listener. As a museum or college president, you're listening within your own community—whether that be your facul-



FUTTER

ty, your current students, your alumni, your board of trustees. What is really defining this institution? What counts most here? I also try to hear each side's needs and try to find ways to blend the two. When an issue seems intractable, mostly it doesn't need to be so, and there's a great challenge in finding ways to see things differently, to make modest adjustments that help everybody achieve their goals.

I would tell my own daughters to the greatest degree that you can, don't put too much pressure on yourself. I think we tend to try so hard, but we don't necessarily have to do everything all at once, and that's true whether we're spreading work and family and personal lives across a lifetime or across a day. Each moment you're focusing on what you're doing and you're trying to achieve a balance in some larger scheme but not for every single moment. And I think women should have a sense of time and take their time, be very supportive of each other as we go about that and be as nonjudgmental in that respect as we can. And in that sense,

experience is a wonderful thing. The more experienced I am, the more comfortable I am with what I don't know and in getting the kinds of assistance from people who are more deeply knowledgeable in particular areas than I.

I hope that over the years, I have developed a greater sense of ease about the roles that I play than I had when I was first assuming them. Youth is terrific because you're chock full of energy and ideas and spirit, which is not to say you lose those, because you don't. But experience gives you other things, and for me, that means a sense of ease in these positions.

What I'm going to bring to it is not necessarily a complete depth of knowledge about every subject—but the capacity to take information, work with it, formulate it, analyze it and reach decisions.

When I was younger I would have been happy to know that I wasn't the only one who did not have all the answers, that in fact very often people don't. It's not always clear what's the correct answer. Often, it's most important to just make a decision.

MEREDITH VIEIRA

Cohost, the 'Today' show

In 1991, I left my job as a correspondent for "60 Minutes" because I wanted to spend more time with my family. I think that decision disappointed a lot of women because ba-



VIEIRA

sically I was saying, "I can't have it all and I don't want it all." I wanted to set some priorities in my life so I went with what matters most to me, family. I never lost a night's sleep over it, but I remember one woman cornered me at a party and quite angrily said, "You've set back the feminist movement." My attitude was that I would have truly set back the movement had I lived a lie. You have to be true to yourself.

It's about being confident in your core. That comes with life experience. If my career suggests anything, it's that there's more than one path. I've been on paths and veered off in all kinds of areas. I feel like I've fallen off cliffs! I think sometimes people are so consumed with the path that they have to follow that they don't see anything else in front of them. And I don't think that lets you live your life as fully as you could. You can certainly set a goal and get to that goal. Maybe for me it was necessary to be able to veer off because I'm sort of a contrary person. I like to veer off.

My oldest son, Ben, is entering his senior year in high school and we've been looking at colleges. I always thought that when my kids left home, I would end up in the fetal position somewhere in the house. But even though I'm losing Ben, I appreciate what a cool guy he has become. There's a tremendous sense of accomplishment as a parent. I remember when they were little, I heard about this whole notion of roots and wings. I was good at the roots part but the wings made me nervous. I thought of Icarus. If I gave my children wings, would they burn in the sun? But now I see those wings sprouting and they look very good on Ben.

When I was contemplating this move to the "Today" show and the notion of change in my life at a time when things were very, very comfortable, it was my son Ben who sort of pushed me, nudged me, and said, "You tell us that change is



HODGES

good and that change is necessary because without it you really don't grow. Why aren't you taking your own advice?" He knew that would get to me—and he was right. I'll either survive this or one day I'll flip out on the air while Al's doing the weather. You'll hear me screaming in the background.

ADELE HODGES

Marine colonel, commander, Camp Lejeune

In the Marine Corps, you know exactly what you need to do—what courses you need to take, what experience you need to have—to get to the next step on the ladder. It doesn't matter if you're male or female. I've never worked in the corporate world, but I don't think that the structure is there for you to grow as fast as it is in the military. That was especially true when I graduated from college in 1977. The motivation wasn't there to promote women. You hear about that glass ceiling in corporate America. I don't think I could have gotten promoted to be where I am today in the corporate world.

In the military, we teach you to lead from day one. I feel I'm there to support the people under my command. They tell me their needs and I try to meet them. I try to empower my people to do their job to the best of their ability and take on the new challenges. And it is my challenge to make sure that

they have everything they need to be successful.

When I took command here in January, I knew I had to acknowledge in some way that I was the first woman and the first black to command Camp Lejeune. I'm about 5 feet 3 inches, so in my inauguration speech, I said, "Yes, the rumors are true. I'm short. I'm probably the shortest person ever to command Camp Lejeune." I don't want to command as a female commander. I just want to be the best commander of Camp Lejeune. That's my only goal.

RENETTA MCCANN

CEO, Starcom MediaVest Group, the advertising and marketing giant

Women have to be prepared for the fact that leadership is both isolating and lonely. You make the best decisions you can based on the advice and counsel that you have, but ultimately it's all going to come back to you. You have to decide for yourself what is right and wrong or what is appropriate or inappropriate in a specific circumstance. That's one reason why I really believe in mentoring. I have taken on that task by mentoring women and by mentoring young African-Americans who want to go into business. Being a mentor helps overcome those feelings of loneliness and isolation, and it also helps you maintain contact with the next



MCCANN

generation or even the next couple of generations. It keeps you connected.

The other thing I've learned is that you have to manage your fear. We often have this internal chatter that tells us to be afraid, to be very afraid. But at a certain point, you have to learn to be confident. I grew up a little bit after the first wave of women who believed we could have it all. You could have the job, you could have the great life, you could have the children, and you could have the husband. You could have the whole thing. And the truth of the matter is, you cannot have it all. But you can have the things that are very important to you. And I think you can have those as long as you're clear about the choices that you're making. And I think I am pretty, pretty good at that. That's what I mean by managing fear. I am confident that whatever the outcome of my choices, I'll be able to make another good choice.

You have to find heroes or role models. They can be real or imaginary, living or dead. How somebody else has played a role could be very important for you. One of the women I love to read about is Elizabeth I. She was on the wrong side from a religious perspective. At one point her father disowned her, her sister tried to kill her, her brother tried to kill her and her cousin tried to kill her. She ruled under what could really be considered some challenging circum-

ANNE STEVENS

Departing chief operating officer, Ford Motor Co.

This is not a business for the faint of mind or the faint of heart. You can't say, "Well, that happened because they didn't like me." It's not about like. You really have to be durable.



STEVENS

And that's the one thing that I stress, not only to women, but also to men. The COO position at Ford, which I resigned last week, was exhilarating, challenging and rewarding. It feels very satisfying to have had the opportunity to build infrastructure and confidence as a foundation to start a major turnaround in the automotive business at Ford. I have enjoyed this role, but now it's time to write the next chapter of my life. With the strong background and track record of growing businesses behind me, I look forward to working as a CEO somewhere else.

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stances. She was very smart about what she chose to reveal and what she kept secret. Her motto was basically see everything, but say nothing.

By training, I'm an engineer. So I love a technical, intellectual problem. What's the ergonomic impact of the dials with the human hand? What's

10 POWER TIPS

➤ **What are the real secrets of success? Here's what some proven winners say.**

1 Be competitive: "To succeed in business you have to want to win," says Liz Lange, founder and president of Liz Lange Maternity. "Too often, women feel they have to be nice. Don't," says Lange.

2 It's not about friendship: "Women want everyone to like them but it doesn't really matter what people think of you," says Renee Edelman, senior VP of Edelman. "It's that you get the job done and deliver results."

3 Stand up for yourself: Restaurateur Donatella Arpaia is

responsible for two restaurants and 140 people. "I protect my interests, their interests. If someone is going to mess with that, I cut them out like cancer."

4 Trust your instincts: Dozens of people tried to talk Lange out of growing her business, now a major force with nationwide distribution at Target. "There are a lot of naysayers out there," says Lange. "Shut out negative noise and go for it."

5 Always project confidence: Oscar-winning film producer Cathy Schulman says

presentation is key. "When someone asks 'How are you?' don't go into a litany of what's wrong with your life," says Schulman. Instead, present yourself as in control and happy.

6 Own your success: Say goodbye to fear and insecurity, says Arpaia. Have confidence in your decisions, and make them.

7 Reach out to other women: When Lange started her business, she called every woman (and man) she admired and asked to meet. "Don't be shy," she says. Schulman begins

each day by noting colleagues' accomplishments with a quick call or e-mail. "We don't have golf so create other communities of support."

8 Insist on being well paid: Don't view wanting money as inelegant or "not classy," says Schulman. "Men make decisions on the bottom line. Why shouldn't we?"

9 It's OK to make mistakes: When Arpaia realized a business partnership was doomed, she cut ties and moved on. "Don't obsess over things," she says.

10 Be a problem-solver: If something on Schulman's desk seems difficult to deal with, she tackles it first. "Big problems are an opportunity to grow."

-JULIE SCELFO

not control my growth. The growth controlled me. When you get successful too quickly, too fast, you fall very fast. Like Icarus. At one point, I was doing 25,000 dresses a week. I saturated the market. In 1978, on a Sunday, all the stores had markdowns with the dresses, and then all of a sudden I had \$4 million worth of inventory because when you're on the cover of NEWSWEEK, it's always the kiss of death—you get so much exposure!

Years later, when my kids were in college, my brand was horrible. It had deteriorated; it had lost the spirit that it had. And that was very painful. At some point 12 years ago, I had a cancer on the tongue, and I think it's because I felt like I couldn't express myself. It took me more than a decade to clean it up and take it back.

And then something happened about eight, nine years ago. I realized that the young, hip girls were buying my old dresses in vintage shops. There was a whole resurgence of that kind of fashion. That's when I started again. The second career is much more unbelievable: as I get older, my brand gets younger—I am so popular now with young women.

I have a young woman president. We're 97 percent women. The creative director is a man and the CFO is a man; but, other than that, in this company the men drive or clean! I love to support women. The women that work here are the women who I de-

the right balance between torque, horsepower and fuel economy? I got into those decisions in my position as a chief operating officer. It gives me a huge advantage because I know how to engineer it. And I've done it.

The customer has so much choice. This isn't about choosing from choice A or choice B, it could be making a choice among 30 different options. When you're competing in a marketplace like that, then you have to be competitive in every aspect of the offering.

You have to be physically, emotionally and intellectually durable. You have to take care of yourself. I wake up every morning at 4:30 and I work out. People come into my office and have cookies for lunch. I go get them a piece of fruit. I say, "Eat right. Take care of yourself. Get some sleep." Because we're a human body. If we're not in tiptop shape, how can we possibly have top performance?

DIANE VON FURSTENBERG

President, Council of Fashion Designers of America

Pay attention because you don't always know where your opportunities will come. A door may open where you didn't expect. Pay attention to the people you meet, pay attention to what people do. You can walk in the forest and see nothing, but if you pay attention you see a universe.



VON FURSTENBERG

I never liked being a child nor did I enjoy being a teenager. I always wanted to be a grown-up. I had in my mind this sophisticated woman in her early 30s who could somehow handle it all and do everything and who was in the driver's seat. I wanted to be that woman. I actually became that woman and then I glorified that woman with my designs.

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company. I had no knowledge about anything. I just threw myself into the water and learned how to swim. I went too fast too quickly, and I did

sign for. It's all very empowering, very coherent.

Interviews by Holly Peterson and Barbara Kantrowitz