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Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from My Leading While Female Journey.

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MY *LEADING WHILE FEMALE* JOURNEY

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Chapter 1

OWNING THE STORIES WE TELL

We All Have a Story to Tell

We need to reshape our own perception of how we view ourselves.

We have to step up as women and take the lead.

—Beyoncé



Every time I tuck my six-year-old granddaughter into bed, she asks for the same thing: *Please, Grandma, tell me a real story*. She specifically asks for a “real” story, one that is about me when I was growing up. She knows every neighborhood child by name from 60 years ago, every naughty thing I ever did as a child, and every lesson I learned, all through the ritual of storytelling. Storytelling is my way of passing on knowledge, important teachings, and the collection of my life experiences to my attentive, sleepy yet wide-eyed six-year-old audience.

We all have a story to tell. Our stories connect us to the truths about ourselves, our families, our communities, and our workplaces. This journal is designed to provide the space, forum, and opportunity to pause and reflect on our own stories as we are leading while female. We will recognize ourselves in each other’s stories.

In the book, *Leading While Female* (2020), we three authors reached deep into our life experiences to share our stories with each other and the readers. Perhaps most importantly, we wanted to share our stories with ourselves. Through our narratives, we shared fears, hardships, victories, failures, heartaches, jubilation, joy, and love. We learned of our commonalities as well as our unique perspectives and thus our individual contributions to the world.

Many of the stories in this journal, shared with us by our female sisters in leadership, illustrate the power of myths, biases, imposter syndrome, stereotypes, and gender inequities. As we read the stories of others and contemplate our own, this journal provides the counternarrative, a different story for emerging female leaders.

Our stories spark connections and connections build relationships. Relationships make better tomorrows for our children. As we convey our stories today, we hand the baton to future generations so they learn and do better than we have. Now we can all be vulnerable to the process of storytelling and reflecting so that we may learn from each other’s life experiences. Within these pages, you will be reading, reflecting, writing, learning, and *leading while female*.

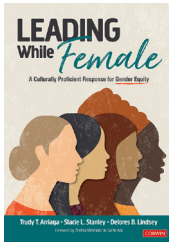


REFLECTIONS

As I reflect on my leadership story, when and where did my story begin?

Who are the main characters in my leadership story?

What crossroads or conflicts have I encountered?



► What happens, though, when stories are written about us before we have a chance to write or even imagine our own story?

Leading While Female (2020, p. 18)

What story may have been told about you that illustrated stereotypes, myths, biases, or low expectations?

What gender-biased stories have you heard in your lifetime that have contributed to your beliefs and values as a leader?

What might it take for you to be successful in altering the narrative of gender stereotype stories?

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