

A WOMAN'S GUIDE TO LEADERSHIP

Leading WITH **Purpose**

*For Women Stepping Into Leadership at Any Level —
A Roadmap to Leading With Clarity,
Confidence, and Authentic Influence*

LEADING WITH PURPOSE

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By Debra Alford, CPC, CMT, CGL, CVC
Standup Coaching LLC

In the following pages you will find a practical, story-driven guide that helps women step into the leadership they were built for, whether they lead a department, a ministry, a household, or a community movement of one. Someone out there is waiting for the kind of leader only you can be. It's time to shine.

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INTRODUCTION: THE LEADER YOU ALREADY ARE

There was a version of you who made the decision without asking permission first. Who walked into chaos and brought order, not because she was told to, but because she saw what needed to happen and she did it. Who led naturally, before anyone gave her a title or a seat at the table.

Where did she go?

She didn't disappear, rather she got sidelined. Often through environments that rewarded compliance over conviction. By systems that promoted the loudest voice instead of the wisest one. By years of being told that real leaders look a certain way, talk a certain way, and carry a certain kind of authority that somehow never looked like hers.

This is not a guide about becoming a leader. You already are one. You have been leading in some form your entire life, in your family, in your friendships, in your work, in every room where you quietly held things together while someone else got the credit. The question was never whether you could lead. The question is whether you're ready to lead on purpose, out loud, with the full weight of who you actually are behind it. That's the work. That's what we're doing here.

LEADING WITH PURPOSE IN YOUR CAREER

Somewhere along the way, you learned that leadership was a position you had to earn permission for, not a posture you could carry into any room. That the fastest path to advancement was to keep your head down, deliver more than anyone asked for, and wait for someone to notice.

Ask yourself this: when was the last time you led something at work because you decided it needed leading, not because someone assigned it to you?

Leading with purpose in your career isn't about the title on your business card. It's about the way you show up in every conversation, every meeting, every decision that crosses your desk. It's the difference between managing a workload and shaping a direction. It's the difference between surviving your role and actually steering it.

Purposeful leadership at work starts with clarity. Get clear on what you actually stand for in your professional life, not what looks good on a performance review, but what you would fight to protect if nobody was watching. Then start leading from that place. Speak first in the meeting instead of waiting to see which way the room

leans. Offer the solution you believe in, not the one that's safest. Make the recommendation you'd stake your reputation on, because your reputation was built for exactly this.

I've watched women with extraordinary judgment defer to people with half their experience, simply because they'd learned that leading from the front cost more than supporting from behind. It doesn't have to cost you anything but the comfort of staying invisible. Practice making the call before you're asked, so the muscle is already built when the opportunity shows up and everyone in the room looks around for someone to step forward. Let that someone be you.

LEADING WITH PURPOSE IN YOUR CALLING

Somewhere, someone told you that a godly woman leads quietly, from behind, with her influence hidden so carefully that nobody can quite tell she's the one holding things together. That visible leadership is pride, and invisible service is holiness.

I want to challenge that, gently but directly. Deborah led a nation. Esther led a rescue. Priscilla led a church alongside her husband and corrected a preacher who had his theology wrong. Scripture is full of women who led visibly, boldly, and unapologetically, because the moment required it and they were the ones God had positioned to answer.

Your leadership in your calling is not separate from your faith. It is an expression of it. If God has placed you in a position of influence, your smallness does not honor Him. Your stewardship does. If He has given you a vision for something that doesn't exist yet, your hesitation doesn't protect anyone. It just delays what He was already building through you.

Ask yourself: am I holding back out of humility, or out of a fear that leading too visibly will make me a target? Those are two very different things, and only one of them is from God.

Humility doesn't hide. It serves. And sometimes the most servant-hearted thing you can do is stand up, take the lead, and carry the weight that was always meant for your shoulders. God did not build you with vision and voice and capacity so you could sit in the back row and hope someone else figures it out. He built you to lead. The classroom, the boardroom, the living room, the community center, wherever He's placed you, lead there.

LEADING WITH PURPOSE IN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

This is where it gets personal, because the people closest to you are usually the first to benefit from your leadership and the last to call it that.

You've been leading in your relationships for years. You're the one who holds the family together during a crisis. The one who sees the conflict before it erupts and steps in before it does damage. The one everyone calls when they need wisdom, direction, or someone willing to say the hard truth everyone else is avoiding. That is leadership. You just haven't been calling it that.

Leading with purpose in your relationships means owning that influence instead of apologizing for it. It means being willing to set the tone in your home, your friendships, and your family, not by controlling everything, but by being clear about who you are and what you stand for, and letting that clarity shape how you show up for the people around you.

This doesn't mean leading every conversation or making every decision. Wisdom still matters, and partnership still matters. But there is a world of difference between sharing leadership and hiding yours. One is collaboration. The other is self-abandonment dressed up as teamwork.

Ask yourself: in my closest relationships, am I leading or just maintaining?

Maintaining is easy. Maintaining is keeping the peace, managing the schedule, making sure nothing falls apart. Leading is harder. Leading means casting a vision for the relationship itself, for the family, the friendship, the partnership, and being willing to say out loud where you believe it should be headed, even when that risks disagreement. That's not a conversation you have once. It's a posture you carry, one purposeful decision at a time.

LEADING WITH PURPOSE IN YOUR SENSE OF SELF

Here is the foundation underneath everything else. You cannot lead with authority in your career, your calling, or your relationships if you don't first believe you were built to lead at all.

This is where the real excavation happens. Not in learning leadership frameworks or memorizing the right strategies, but in going back and asking the harder questions. Who told you that you weren't the leadership type? Who taught you that influence

was someone else's gift, not yours? Whose definition of a leader have you been measuring yourself against instead of building your own?

Somewhere along the way, most of us accepted someone else's picture of what a leader looks like and quietly concluded we didn't fit it. We learned that leaders were loud, aggressive, always certain, never shaken. And because that picture didn't look like us, we assumed we were something else. A supporter. A helper. A behind-the-scenes person. That assumption might have kept you comfortable for a season. But it will never let you become the leader you actually are.

Leading with purpose in your sense of self means separating the gold from the fool's gold. The gold is the truth that your way of leading, your particular blend of wisdom, empathy, directness, and quiet strength, is not a lesser version of someone else's style. It is your style, and it is exactly what someone out there needs. The fool's gold is the belief that real leadership has to look like something you're not, and that the version you carry doesn't count.

You already know which one is which. You've known for a long time. The question is whether you're ready to stop waiting for someone else's permission and start leading from the truth of who you actually are.

This is the excavation work I do with every woman I coach. We don't build a leadership persona from scratch, because a persona is exhausting, and it never holds up under pressure. We dig. We remove what was piled on top of your natural authority by others definitions, others comfort, others need for you to stay in a supporting role. Underneath all of it, every single time, we find the same thing: a leader who was there the whole time, just waiting to be uncovered.

WHERE TO BEGIN

You don't have to overhaul your entire leadership identity this week. Start with one room. One decision. One moment where you choose to lead instead of defer. Notice the moment the old narrative shows up to tell you someone else should be the one out front, and instead of listening to it, stay present. Make the call, even if your voice shakes. Especially if your voice shakes. A shaking voice is not a sign that you shouldn't lead. It's a sign that what you're stepping into actually matters.

Keep a short list, in your journal or on your phone, of the moments you led when everything in you wanted to step back. Read it on the hard days. You will be surprised how quickly the evidence adds up that the old story about you, the one who

follows, the one who supports, the one who waits to be asked, was never actually true.

THE INVITATION

Your leadership is not something you need permission to exercise. It is something you need to reclaim. It has been yours the entire time, waiting under the doubt, waiting for you to stop deferring to everyone else's version of what a leader should be and start being the one you already are.

This doesn't happen overnight, and it doesn't happen by accident. It happens one purposeful decision at a time. One moment where you step forward instead of back. One conversation where you lead with your conviction instead of your caution.

So here is your invitation. Step forward. Own your influence. Take up the space your leadership was always meant to fill. There is no need to apologize for the authority you carry, the vision you see, or the strength you bring to every room you walk into.

Five Tips to Leading With Purpose You Can Use Today:

1. **Make one decision without waiting to be asked.** Choose something today that you've been deferring to someone else or delaying until conditions feel perfect, and make the call yourself, because leaders don't wait for permission to act on what they already see.
2. **Name your leadership style in one sentence.** Write down what kind of leader you actually are, not the kind you think you should be, whether it's a **Visionary** – One who sets a clear, compelling direction and rallies people around it, while giving latitude on how to get there or **Autocratic** – Makes decisions unilaterally with little input from others; effective in crisis or high-stakes, time-sensitive situations or **Situational** – Adapts style based on the readiness, skill, and needs of the team or the specific circumstance, rather than sticking to one approach. Just to name a few.
3. **Speak first in one conversation this week.** It can be as small as offering your opinion before the room settles or as bold as volunteering to lead the next project, but let yourself go first instead of waiting to see what everyone else thinks.
4. **Journal three unfinished sentences tonight.** "The kind of leader I was before I started doubting myself was ____." "The leadership moment I keep replaying because I didn't step forward is ____." "The room or relationship that

needs my leadership most right now is ____.” You don’t have to share it with anyone, just let yourself see it written down.

5. **Start a leadership evidence list.** Keep a running record on your phone or in your journal of every time you led when you wanted to defer, and read it back on the hard days when the old story tries to tell you that you’re not the leader in the room, because that list is living proof that you always were.

Your hesitation was never proof you weren’t ready. It was just proof that what you’re stepping into is bigger than what you’ve been settling for.

It’s time to stand up and lead.

CHEERS!

Coach Debra

YOUR EXCAVATION WORK

A few minutes with these questions and action steps from Leading With Purpose will help what you just read actually change something.

CAREER

When was the last time you led something at work because you decided it needed leading, not because someone assigned it to you?

CALLING

Am I holding back out of humility, or out of a fear that leading too visibly will make me a target? Those are two very different things, and only one of them is from God.

RELATIONSHIPS

In my closest relationships, am I leading or just maintaining?

FIVE TIPS CHECKLIST

- ☐ Make one decision without waiting to be asked. Choose something today that you've been deferring to someone else or delaying until conditions feel perfect, and make the call yourself, because leaders don't wait for permission to act on what they already see.
- ☐ Name your leadership style in one sentence. Write down what kind of leader you actually are, not the kind you think you should be, whether it's "I lead by asking the questions nobody else will" or "I lead by staying calm when everything falls apart," because putting it on paper makes it real.
- ☐ Speak first in one conversation this week. It can be as small as offering your opinion before the room settles or as bold as volunteering to lead the next project, but let yourself go first instead of waiting to see what everyone else thinks.
- ☐ Journal three unfinished sentences tonight. "The kind of leader I was before I started doubting myself was ____." "The leadership moment I keep replaying because I didn't step forward is ____." "The room or relationship that needs my leadership most right now is ____." You don't have to share it with anyone, just let yourself see it written down.
- ☐ Start a leadership evidence list. Keep a running record on your phone or in your journal of every time you led when you wanted to defer, and read it back on the hard days when the old story tries to tell you that you're not the leader in the room, because that list is living proof that you always were.



Standup Coaching, LLC
Debra Alford, CPC, CMT, CGL, CVC
Women's Transformational Life Coach
International Best-Selling Author & Keynote Speaker
www.standupcoachingllc.net