

Forward

Leadership has been long studied, well documented and theoretically categorized. Extensive models and definitions of leadership exist, yet to date the preponderance of this effort has been from an androcentric view that often limits application to the female gendered reality. Gender, as a type of social relation, is constantly changing. Girls and boys, women and men learn how to act and how they are valued within our homes, schools and workplaces. As women continue to work both in their private lives and in their public lives issues of leadership in their work roles continue to be problematic.

Whatever our view of leadership, what we share is the need to make sense of our experience. In *Do Your Shoes Match? 5 Strategies to Help Women Get Their Foot in the Door of the Corporate Boardroom* Donna Leibham paints an engaging picture of her meaning-making process. And, importantly, she adds to the growing, yet still woefully lacking number of studies of women seeking or in organizational leadership roles.

Donna Leibham provides an in-depth view of her own leadership journey; how she has come to make sense of her experience theoretically and practically. With wisdom gained through study and experience, and informed by reflective practice, Donna's voice rings with authenticity. She grounds her academic learning in a clear and helpful summary of leadership research, infused with her own engaging voice and those of her research participants.

In each chapter and section, Donna lights a path for others. Wherever you begin in this book you will enhance your own meaning making journey and you will discover that you are not alone. Donna weaves together succinct summaries of leadership studies from her own research, authentic and well-selected quotes both from her journal and from women she interviewed in *Corporate Calgary*. Through these and the self-assessment guides, strategies and 'tips from the trenches', you will find you are in good company. And perhaps your own understanding of your gendered socialization will enable you to embrace those qualities in ways that you have not previously understood. Ways that may indeed gain you entry into the Corporate Boardroom, whether your shoes match or not....AND the courage to leave when it does not!

I remember the year Donna decided to take her model and begin applying it in her consulting practice. I remember the development of her website and her growing determination to make women in leadership a central part of her lifework. I remember 35 years ago upon my first major leadership position, thinking that with continued effort, there would be equal opportunity for women and men in organizational leadership roles at least by the end of my work/career life. There is not. Gendered socialization patterns shape both women's and men's experiences in different ways. Donna has provided insights in to both why and how that journey may be more fruitful.

In clear reflection, upon her own experience, Donna provides understanding and strategies for women and men to bring voice and value to women in organizational leadership roles. It is a pleasure to know that many women and men will make more sense of their own leadership journey through the pages of Donna's book.

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