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

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INTRODUCTION

The success of every woman should be the inspiration to another. We should raise each other up. Make sure you're very courageous: Be strong, be extremely kind, and above all, be humble.

—Serena Williams

PURPOSES OF THIS BOOK

Many of our readers of *Leading While Female: A Culturally Proficient Response for Gender Equity (LWF)* requested we write a book of reflective questions to accompany the book. We decided to write a companion journal to serve multiple purposes:

- As a workbook for leadership development in professional learning sessions
- As a personal reflection journal for leadership and professional growth
- As a workbook for professional learning communities focused on leadership growth and development
- As a guide for professional book studies
- As a bundle purchase with *Leading While Female* for a professional learning series for leaders
- As a companion book for university courses using *Leading While Female* as a main text for gender equity and leadership courses

We encourage readers to take advantage of the multiple purposes of this book. This book is designed for you to use individually as well as in your learning community. As with *LWF*, we invite female and male leaders to engage with the stories and reflective questions in this book. We also encourage you to invite emerging female leaders to join you on your cultural proficiency journey. *LWF* and this companion journal make an inspiring professional book study focused on gender equity, intersectionality, inclusion, overcoming barriers, utilizing support factors, sponsoring, and mentoring emerging leaders.

THEIR STORIES, REFLECTIONS, YOUR STORY

The current educational and corporate systems have suppressed women's leadership opportunities at all levels. As authors, advocates, and activists for gender equity, we continue to call out and confront systemic oppression of women and people of color in schools and districts. We also acknowledge male/female as a binary concept and yet a nonbinary spectrum of gender identities not limited to male or female identities exists. Some educational leaders who are members of the LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual/aromantic/agender) community fear being their authentic selves in the workplace because of systemic barriers they face. Throughout this book, we use terms to support learning about all equity gaps. The following terms are defined using the lens of cultural proficiency:

Woman/Women/Female: The co-authors intentionally begin our list of terms with these three words. We are aware that the historical use of these terms has been perceived to mean *White* woman/women/female. With this in mind, the authors seek to clarify that when we use these terms, we mean *all* women. We also use the words *woman/women* and *female(s)* interchangeably throughout the book. We use the term *women of color* (WOC), specifically, when referring to other than White females. Although we use the terms *female* and *male* throughout the book, we are well aware of the limitations of our language in expressing the vast spectrum of gender identity. At the same time, we wish to acknowledge that the use of such terms is extremely reflective of a very real system of oppression.

Advocate: An individual who seeks to use personal positional power to intentionally lift the talents of women leaders and rally for opportunities that allow women to develop the skills needed to be successful in executive positions.

Coach: One who supports potential women leaders in surfacing consciousness around areas for growth and advancement. Leadership coaches serve to mediate the person being coached from emerging skills to mastering leader skills.

Gender equity: The fairness of treatment for men and women according to their respective needs. Equity may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations, and opportunities.

LGBTQIA+: An acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual/aromantic/agender, and plus for other identities that are not straight and/or not cisgender.

Mentor: An experienced, well-seasoned veteran educational leader who imparts knowledge and personal experiences to women leaders who have been identified as candidates for future executive-level positions. Mentors consistently look for conferences and other professional learning opportunities to help position the female mentee for advancement. Mentors often support mentees through high-quality networking in organizations that provide interview skills to prepare female candidates.

Sponsor: One who actively uses positional power to partner with hiring authorities within their networks to advocate for the promotion of women leaders into high-leverage, decision-making positions.

Excerpted from *Leading While Female: A Culturally Proficient Response for Gender Equity*, pp. 11–14.

DESIGN OF THIS BOOK

This book is designed as a companion journal to *Leading While Female: A Culturally Proficient Response for Gender Equity*. Although this book will serve as a stand-alone journal, it is best enjoyed in tandem with the *LWF* chapters. Each chapter opens with a quote on which the reader will reflect and connect. Chapters 1–8 offer a leader's story aligned with each chapter title. A series of reflective questions follows the authentic leadership story. Chapter 9 presents a template for the reader to write a Stormy First Draft (SFD) followed by reflective questions.

Chapter 1: *Owning the Stories We Tell: We All Have a Story to Tell* reiterates the importance of leaders' narratives.

Chapter 2: *Cultural Proficiency: A Framework for Gender Equity* offers women a lens through which to examine the barriers to overcome in their personal and professional lives.

Chapter 3: *Confronting and Overcoming Barriers* reflects on the barriers found in systems of oppression and looks at the necessary steps for career development.

Chapter 4: *Moving Forward With Guiding Principles* requires leaders to examine core values, beliefs, and assumptions as support factors.

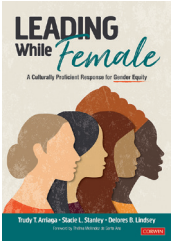
Chapter 5: *Understanding Feminism, Identity, and Intersectionality: Who Am I? Who Are We?* Understanding self and how the leader is perceived by others and understanding others are important parts of a leader's narrative and career path.

Chapter 6: *Men's Actions Allies, Advocates, and Mentors* reminds the reader that female leaders cannot do this work alone.

Chapter 7: *Next Steps?* focuses on planning and acting for the future.

Chapter 8: *Paying It Forward* comes when you still have something to offer the profession.

Chapter 9: *Template for Action: My Stormy First Draft (SFD)*.



▶ *Leading While Female means working together with female and male colleagues who are also grounded in values for equity . . . by sharing these barriers, support factors, and intentional actions, more women leaders today will interrupt current dominant narratives with their new stories of challenges and success.*

Leading While Female, p. 1

What might be some of your core values that will help you overcome barriers to working together?

In what ways do you see yourself *Leading While Female* using this definition?

We wish you well as you engage with these stories and reflective questions. Stay in touch. Our email addresses are

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