

Women at the Top Leadership Research

It is always interesting to be curious about the ripple effect of role models, inspiring teachers, trail blazers bravery. How are those doors opened, glass ceilings dissolved, seemingly insurmountable cliffs scaled, limitations challenged, assumptions overturned? Is it simply one courageous or foolhardy person or a combination of many making those ripples spread way beyond what might be thought possible?

With BWB – Bristol Women in Business now in its 4th successful year connecting women both from corporates and large businesses in the city the opportunity to input another dimension became clear. Inspirational women at the top by sharing their story have influenced, intrigued and encouraged the realisation that we are all role models, inspiring teachers, brave trailblazers.

As a result my inspiration has been to invite women at the top to share their thoughts regarding leadership and create this series of interviews. I began with five questions and as the first interview was coming to a close two more questions were determined to be asked – What question would you like to have been asked? And then to ask the interviewee to answer it which was fun. And the other question was ... who would you like to be interviewed or suggest that I interview?

Donna Whitehead - Pro Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean, Faculty of Business and Law, UWE

seventh in the series - interviewed on 15 October 2017 by Halina Jaroszewska

You have no doubt inspired a lot of aspiring leaders – from where (or from whom) do you draw your inspiration?

I have worked with lots of other leaders and have observed good and bad leadership behaviours. I draw inspiration from those who inspire, encourage and build others up. That others describe me in a similar way is very important to me. I'm also inspired on a daily basis to be a role model to my children.

What would you say have been the biggest developments in leadership that you have witnessed in your years as a leader?

The transformation of what is perceived as 'good leadership'. There is still work to be done but authenticity, encouragement and showing weakness are now much more valued.

What do you think are the most significant trends and challenges faced by leadership today?

It's about how to encourage and enable high performing teams. The challenges include lack of diversity in top positions; enabling an inclusive workforce; and enabling flexible working.

What do you think today's leaders should be doing to keep moving leadership to a new level?

Keep reflecting; ask others for feedback regularly; show integrity and be clear about values; develop a culture of constructive challenge.

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What advice would you give to young aspiring leaders?

If I can do it, anyone can. Focus on enabling and encouraging others – the rest will happen.

What question would you like to have been asked?

What is your greatest strength and your greatest weakness? Greatest strength: visionary and good with people.
Weakness: detail

Who would you recommend to be interviewed?

Professor Zoe Radnor
Professor Jane Harrington
Professor Liz Cleaver

**To discuss how Halina Jaroszewska can help
email halina@halinajaroszewska.com**

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Halina helps fast track and aspiring leaders, also key teams, to turn uncertainty into a powerful tool for exponential growth. Her aim is to enable clients to switch surviving into thriving, take business and personal performance to the next level and maximise their potential during challenging times.