



## Exploring Your Potential For Leadership

**A**re you really exploring your potential for leadership? A big question but one that I thought that I would raise at the start of the year after reading the current edition of The Harvard Business Review (January 2011) and specifically an article called **Stop Holding Yourself Back - Five Ways People Unwittingly Sabotage Their Rise To Leadership**. I thought that I would share the author's thoughts with you and set you a leadership challenge for 2011 - to develop positive counter behaviours that enable you to avoid potential pitfalls to leadership. The authors identify what they refer to as five "barriers that stop people becoming exceptional leaders." So, here are the five barriers with a few proposed actions to overcome each of them.

### Barrier 1 – Overemphasising Personal Goals

It's okay to have goals and ambition and it's probably an important part of leadership but it's not sufficient. At least it's not sufficient in creating a great leadership legacy. Leadership is about enabling people and

teams to perform to the highest level of their ability in achieving the organisational vision and this means focusing on others and not just exclusively on yourself. If focusing on others is something that you find tough, park your ego for a while (it's probably fear driven anyway!). Try making 2011 a year where your measure of personal objectives achieved and success include how well you enable others to grow, develop and succeed.

### Barrier 2 – Protect Your Public Image

Your public image is "the ideal self that you have created in your mind" about what sort of leader you are and the behaviours that go with that leadership self image. Whatever your self image is, the key is not to be trapped by it and to be able to adapt your approach as the situation requires. In the first instance this requires humility and a desire to learn and grow. As they say, if the only tool that you have is a hammer, maybe everything looks like a nail!

So, what changes in approach and attitude will make you even more effective in 2011? Identify a situation where you are not getting the result you want. Are you trapped by your normal self image and approach? Try something different. Take the opportunity to learn something new and expand your leadership impact and influence.

***"It's Ok to have goals and ambition and it's probably an important part of leadership but it's not sufficient."***

### Barrier 3 – Turning Competitors Into Enemies

What are your relationships like with your colleagues? Are they based on mutual trust, respect and support? Where do you feel competitive with them rather than collaborative? Why is that the case? More importantly what can you change about your attitude and behaviour to foster more collaboration? Great businesses and teams are built on great relationships. Identify a colleague with whom you will build a better relationship in 2011. Get to know them so that you can challenge your assumptions about them. Find a new and better way of working in collaboration with that person to achieve different results.

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**Top Videos:** We list the best videos we've seen since the last issue.

**Women Hold up Half the Sky:** Karen Frost explores the advantages of having a gender balanced board room and questions whether expectations stifle womens' participation in the workforce.

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#### Barrier 4 - Going It Alone

Leadership can be a lonely place if you make it so. And many times we put increased pressure on ourselves as leaders to solve the *problem*. After all we are leaders are we not? The reality of course is that as a leader you are only as good as the team that surrounds you. And that team is so much more than just your work colleagues. It includes family and friends, mentors and all the networks to which you have access.

**“What are you waiting for? Leaders make things happen rather than waiting for someone to give them permission to take action. You don’t have to be the boss to lead and influence others.”**

The wealth of knowledge that is available to you is vast if you are prepared to ask for help and learn through the process. So, who is in your extended team? Tap into the ideas and thoughts of your **whole** team in 2011 and see what great new and creative ideas you develop as a result.

#### Barrier 5 – Waiting For Permission

What are you waiting for? Leaders make things happen rather than waiting for someone to give them permission to take action. You don’t have to be the boss to lead and influence others. As the HBR authors point out “healthy organisations reward people who decide on their own to lead. Power and influence are intimate companions, but their relationship isn’t the one we tend to imagine. More often than not influence leads to power, not the other way around.” So what great ideas do you have for 2011? What do you need to do to make them happen? Who do you need to influence to bring the ideas to life? You get what you focus on in life. As Henry Ford said “whether you think you can or you can’t, you’re right!” So, if you are holding back, change your mindset around what you believe you can achieve. Ask yourself a question that starts with “how can I...” and identify a new approach that really embraces your opportunities to influence and lead others. So, what choices will you make to explore your leadership potential further in 2011?

The HBR article referred to here is *Stop Holding Yourself Back*, by Anne Morriss, Robin J. Ely and Frances X. Frei and it can be found in *The Harvard Business Review*, January 2011.

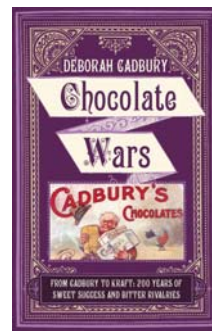


**John Frost**  
Managing Director, Values Based Leadership Ltd

## Thought Leaders

### Chocolate Wars

By Deborah Cadbury



I was fascinated by this book. Deborah Cadbury is a member of the famous Cadbury family and has the inside track on the rise of Cadbury as a major supplier of chocolate to a global market from family and archives. The book gives a real insight into the Quaker background of the family and how Quaker values were responsible for the way a business develops that does not happen now-a-days. The book tracks the growth of Cadbury over more than 150 years up until 2010 and the hostile takeover of Cadbury by Kraft. It is worth reading if you are interested in how family businesses can grow to become global concerns and how the style of business has changed so significantly over the past 50 years regardless of advances in information technology.

**Reviewed by Karen Frost**

Published by HarperPress (Oct 2010)

## Top Videos

**Chocolate Wars:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWq0SJiWJE4>

**Coaching Employees:** [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7aCuo\\_kzhQc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7aCuo_kzhQc)

**How Coaching Works:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UY75MQte4RU>

# “Women Hold up Half the Sky”

By Karen Frost

My title is a quote from Mao Zedong and one that I believe is very apt at this time in our history.

It seems that women in China are more ambitious than us in Europe and the United States. In a recent survey of college educated women, over 75% of women in China aspire to hold a top corporate job, compared with just over 50% in the West. Indeed the survey also revealed that 77% of Chinese women participate in the workforce, compared with 69% in the US and 59% across Europe, with the UK standing at 65%. China has a greater percentage of women in it's parliament - 21.3% and 8 out of 10 companies in China have women in Senior Management roles. This is all good news for gender diversity in the rapidly growing economy of China, but what does it mean for us?

**“Companies need good gender balance to create an environment where positive and ethical decisions are made...”**

I think it has something to do with expectations. In China, women are not just encouraged to participate in the workforce, they are expected to. The blistering speed of development means that the decision makers don't even stop to consider gender,

they are after the skills they need to meet the developmental requirements of their business.

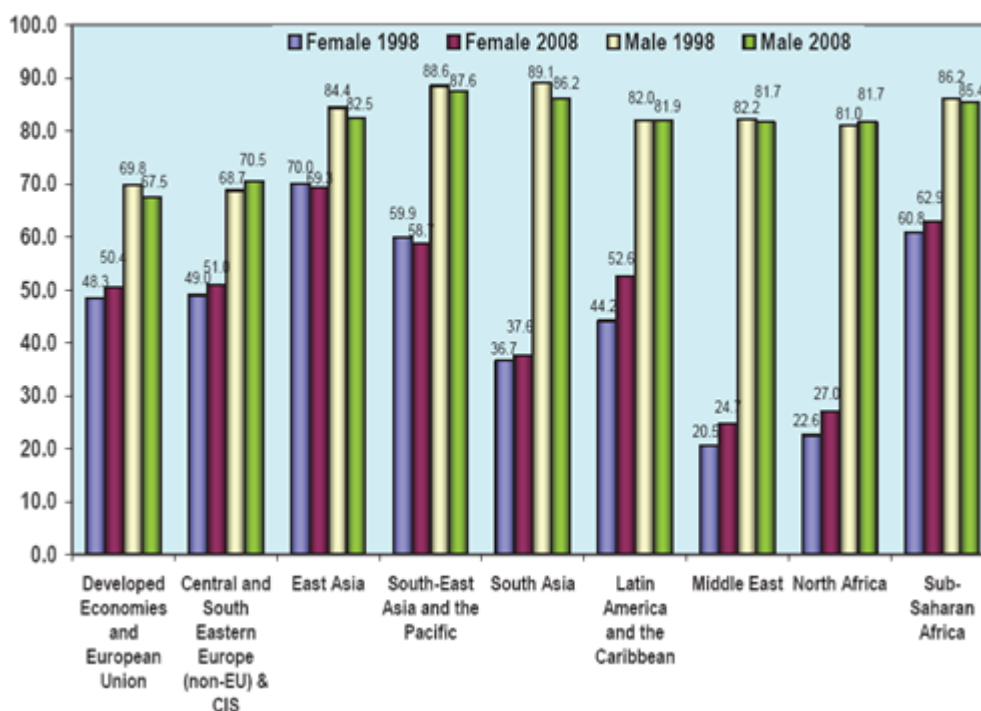
Recently I read a very disturbing article in a Sunday newspaper stating “women told to forget about babies if they want to scale career heights” a real negative expectation for career women. I believe the slower growth we are currently experiencing and the over supply of labour, is having a negative impact on the opportunities for women to be selected for any position, let alone a senior position in a company. This is not good for any company long term. Companies need good gender balance to create an environment where positive and ethical decisions are made both day-to-day and long term. As women in the West we need to take responsibility for ‘holding up half the sky’ and men need to let us!



*Karen Frost  
Director of Coaching, Values  
Based Leadership*

*Karen Frost recently spoke at the Vision Bristol workshop for the media industry. Her workshop focused on leadership and the skills specific to women that make them excellent leaders.*

Adult employment-to-population ratios, by sex and region, 1998 and 2008\* (%)



Source: [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)

## Thought Leaders

### More Time to Think A Way Of Being In The World

Nancy wrote her first book – “A Time to Think” over 10 years ago. I take time to re-read it every couple of years or so, simply to remind myself how important it is to take time to think of course and to create the environment where others have time to think.

#### MORE TIME TO THINK

A WAY OF BEING  
IN THE WORLD



The greatest gift we can offer each other is  
the framework in which to think for ourselves.

NANCY KLINE

How pleased was I when a friend of mine who is currently doing a coaching qualification bought me a copy of Nancy's new book “More time to think”.

I have relished reading this book over the summer and like her first book, it will be one of my special books that I pick up and re-read every few years.

Nancy defines very clearly the Ten Components of a Thinking Environment, adding stories and metaphors to bring the theories to life, then she helps to develop in a practical way, her approaches to enable people to think – in pairs and in groups.

*Reviewed by Karen Frost*

*Published by Fisher King Publishing (30 Sep 2009)*

information systems, including all costing & financial information.

I have inherited a team which includes two long service employees. Both have held higher management positions before being “discarded” into this team. These managers are viewed by the other members of the team as negative or cynical. I have a very challenging programme of improvements to deliver this year. What advice do you have for how I can best motivate these two managers? If they continue to contribute at the current level, we will not succeed.

It is not uncommon to find experienced staff/managers in slightly more junior roles later on in their career. It is important first to find out some of the facts behind how they came to be here. Is this a choice that they have made or is it an imposed move and if so why? Often these people can have excellent knowledge and technical skills, but have struggled when rising up to higher management ranks where better leadership and political skills are required.

An enquiry in the context of Maslow's “Hierarchy of Needs” may be of use to help understand their current behaviour. Given that you are dealing with more mature people, it is the higher needs of esteem and self actualisation that are probably most pertinent. Has their personal esteem been damaged by recent experiences in the company? Or is it more that they are frustrated by their perceived failure to self-actualise as they are feeling undervalued by the company.

***“Show interest in their past with the company, this will not only help you understand them and their capabilities more, but will demonstrate your respect for them and help to restore their self-esteem.”***

First and foremost, take the time to find out more about them. Get a balanced view from other managers in the business by all means, but crucially, talk to them yourself. Show interest in their past with the company, this will not only help you understand them and their capabilities more, but will demonstrate your respect for them and help to restore their self-esteem. Encourage them to think about what they are good at and by re-awakening these areas they will more readily see how they can contribute to your department's goals. There are various ways that you may approach this. I detail

*Continued...*

## On the Couch

With Andy Reeves



I have recently been promoted to head up a key service department to a large UK drinks manufacturer. I have a team of eight direct reports responsible for managing all business information. This covers the whole spectrum from basic attendance monitoring to advanced manufacturing

the approach through line manager coaching below, but if you cannot personally commit sufficient time or feel the degree of displacement these managers are feeling is of such intensity, then you may be better finding an external coach for them to use. For the line manager approach I would firstly recommend you set up regular 1-2-1 meetings with them. The clearer and more open you can be with them in these sessions the better, e.g. explain how their contribution is of value in the department reaching its goals and also to you personally.

Even more powerful is to engage with them in the setting of departmental goals; this works both ways, you benefit from their depth of knowledge & experience, whilst they meet their increasing need to feel that they are making a contribution.

***“If you go down the route of an external coach then it is essential that the managers concerned know that this support is there for them because you believe in them...”***

You may still need to deal with any negative behavioural traits that they are still showing. Often they may not be very aware of these as they have become habitual. To bring in Maslow here again: “What is necessary to change a person is to change his awareness of himself”.

Giving feedback is best covered in your regular 1-2-1's. Once you have demonstrated your positive intentions towards them, you are in a great position to give feedback, remember:

- keep it fact / behaviour based,
- ensure it is beneficial to them,
- and deliver it personally from you.

These improvements in behaviours will be crucial to ensure that other team members start to see these people in a different light too, indeed I have known similar examples where the other team members have eventually welcomed the “elders” as mentors for themselves.

If you go down the route of an external coach then it is essential that the managers concerned know that this support is there for them because you believe in them and that, without them you will not succeed in achieving your programme of improvements, rather than for remedial purpose.

In summary, such an approach will ensure that they feel valued and of value to the organisation, both strong motivators for these “elders”. The investment in coaching (whether internal or external) to support them to achieve their transformation should pay off handsomely with the wider team also benefiting from these behavioural changes.

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## Final Thoughts

***“Confidence is going after Moby Dick in a rowboat and taking the tartar sauce with you.”***  
Zig Ziglar

***“Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.”*** Ralph Waldo Emerson

***“Change is the law of life and those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.”***  
John F. Kennedy

***“You're a 'but' man. That's the difference between success and failure - the use of the word 'but'.”***  
Homer Simpson

Comments and/or contributions are welcome. Please address them to the Editor at the address to the left, or email: [emma@valuesbasedleadership.co.uk](mailto:emma@valuesbasedleadership.co.uk).  
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Voice is published four times a year by Values Based Leadership Ltd, Sterling House, 17 Church Street, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire HR9 5HN  
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