



# FedEx Women in Leadership

## 1. What do you feel like is the single biggest challenge facing women in the workforce today? How can women rise above this challenge?

I'm glad you used the word "challenge"! Great leaders always see challenge versus roadblocks. And I believe it is in embracing and succeeding in the face of real challenges that we become strong...just as a tree grows stronger roots when it's exposed to the wind. There are many obvious challenges in the workplace, like attitudes and assumptions about gender (says the firefighter in me), race, age, titles, etc, but honestly (and I hope I'm not upsetting anyone here right off the bat!), I believe that when it comes to leadership, our biggest challenge as women often comes from ourSELVES and our beliefs about whether we belong among the best and brightest leaders in the organization.



Yes we do belong among the best of the best, and yes, we are equipped as women with so many tools that make us amazing leaders. But it's not about just believing in yourself...it's about EARNING that spot, training hard for it, and proving that you belong. I genuinely believe that exceptional women, whether it's in the corporate world, on an adventure racing team in the middle of the Borneo rainforest, or on a fire engine, write their own ticket in life. SO many doors are open for us when we're willing to get into the arena and show ourselves and others how strong and amazing and smart and worthy we are. It just takes the courage to turn that handle and the strength of will to push that door open. My presentation is all about exceptional leadership that builds world class teams which succeed against the toughest of odds. Extreme challenges know no gender, no race...they only know commitment, teamwork, innovation, perseverance, a consistent focus on what it takes to "win" vs simply 'not lose'...and they are only overcome TOGETHER; because one of us is never as strong or smart as all of us.

## 2. What inspires you and keeps you charging forward and making a difference? What advice can you offer others in terms of finding their inspiration and their own "voice"?

Ahhhh, this is where I live. :). What inspires me the most is helping others discover how awesome, talented, strong, smart, worthy THEY are. It's literally what I do every single day, on stage, with patients during emergencies, and as the Founder of the 501c3 Project Athena Foundation (my love and passion alongside speaking for the last 7 years). At Project Athena we help Cancer (and other) Survivors train for a complete a huge hairy audacious goal as part of their recovery--to prove that you're not ultimately defined by your setback....it's all about the COMEBACK. We have 5 major adventures each year for our Survivors (aka "Athenas"), from a 45 mile Rim to Rim to Rim Trek across the Grand Canyon and back in two days, to a 50 mile San Diego Urban Adventure Trek down the coastline in two days, to a 120 mile kayak and bike ride from Key Largo to Key West in 3 days. Athenas train for 6 months to a year with our coaching staff, and these adventures are their "I'm BAAAAACK" statement in a BIG way. It really is the BEST thing I've ever done in my life, and it was all triggered by a couple of hip replacements (cartilage is overrated, anyway :).

I talk a little bit about Project Athena in the Adversity Management section of my presentation, where we



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discuss the great things that can come from a setback with the right attitude, a new perspective on what you've gained, and a strong desire to utilize and "repurpose" your strengths and experience. I always tell people that Luck=Opportunity + Preparation. Prepare to be one of the best of the best in your specialty...then don't just wait for opportunity...CREATE it by living in your strengths and surrounding yourself with great people who can help you get there. And you'll be the "luckiest" woman in the world. Then your job will be take others by the hand and show them how amazing THEY are, too! And so the cycle of great leadership and teamwork continues. :)

### 3. What has been your most important revelation on the path to success?

Every single day we get to decide whether we get on the symbolic merry-goround (and do what we've always done and get what we've always gotten) or whether we get on the roller coaster, scare ourselves a little, push ourselves a little ---knowing that on the roller coaster there will be high highs and a low lows, but also knowing that in the end we will truly find our strengths, our passions, our weaknesses, and so much more about ourselves to love and respect along the way. If you're afraid to fail, afraid to fear, afraid to push, afraid of the dark and unknown, you will never know what it's like to stand in the bright sunlight. I guess my most important revelation is that an exceptional life REQUIRES a lifelong pass to the roller coaster. And every day, you need to inspire yourself to get on that roller coaster (AGAIN) by deciding that you want to "succeed" just that 1% more than you want to simply "not fail". And yes you'll be nervous, and yes you'll be uncomfortable, and yes you'll be scared. Everyone is! So just do it scared. :).

### 4. What skills/talents do you think are essential for professionals, specifically women, to develop and utilize for success in the workplace?

I think that one of the hallmarks of a great leader is that they set out to inspire the people around them versus impress them. In other words, they leave their ego at the front door and realize that their most important job as a leader isn't to just be amazing and useful to the organization--it's to create other leaders and find ways to let them lead. In my job as a firefighter, my favorite Captains are those who see their rank not as power, but as an increased obligation for the safety, success and happiness of the crew and the public. I also believe that great leaders do not see the words "management" and "leadership" as synonyms. A manager will always be a facilitator of her team's success. But the best managers realize that they don't have to always have all the answers and live in that leadership role; they understand that they are surrounded by smart, talented people that may be stronger in a given area than they are, and they let others lead based on their strengths (not their titles).

Women tend to be great situational leaders, too, because they have that strong empathy and awareness of what others need, and they can flow easily back and forth from friend, to mentor, to commander, to coach. In the Kinetic Leadership section of my presentation, we quickly go over a Harvard Business Review study about situational leadership and several distinct styles that are proven effective for bottom line results when utilized judiciously and in the right moments...and the top 4 leadership styles are ALL areas in which women tend to excel. :) Definitely a strong message for this group!



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### 5. Why are you the best speaker for our 2nd Annual FedEx Women in Leadership Summit? What actionable steps and advice can you provide? How will your message resonate and be different than the standard “girl power” speech?

Funny that you mention the standard "Girl Power" speech, because my presentation is everything but! I believe that we've achieved girl power when we can stop talking about being a "female business leader" or a "female fire fighter", or a "female speaker" etc, and just be recognized as being great at all of those things without the word "female" in front of it. :). And it's that kind of inspiration that the Fed Ex Women in Leadership will draw from my 8 Essential Elements of Human Synergy presentation. It's all about becoming a world class Teambuilder---not about becoming a world class FEMALE Teambuilder, as I truly believe that neither gender has a lock on or predisposition to greatness here.

Now for the reason why I'm your speaker for this event! WE HAVE THE BEST TIME TOGETHER! This presentation is an uplifting and unique mix of inspiration, laughter, exploration, awe-inspiring stories (you can't make this stuff up!), and a deep desire to have in one's life the kind of teams that they see and feel in my stories and in the adventure racing videos. A comment I hear just about every time I leave the stage is "I've been listening to these kinds of speeches in my career for X years, and this has touched me/changed me/made me think more than anything I've ever seen"...which, for a speaker, is the best thing on earth to hear. I also know that NOBODY in that room wants to be an adventure racer (maybe a few!), which is why the presentation has very little to do with sports. The truth is that Adventure Racing is NOT an athletic event, it's an interpersonal and physical epic odyssey that is the ultimate in interdependence with the people around you. Just as in business (and in life), you have small teams of men and women working together, struggling to navigate their way through a series of seemingly endless checkpoints, in search of a nearly impossible finish line, in consistently changing market conditions, facing ridiculous time deadlines --and we're all trying to do it better than anyone else in our industry. If that doesn't mirror your everyday life at Fed Ex, I don't know what does! :).

The 8 Essential Elements of Human Synergy Presentation offers truly unique, authentic, humorous, and very real examples of those make or break moments in life in which who we ARE as teammates and leaders is the difference between success and failure, and shows attendees how to apply those simple and universal teambuilding skills to every important relationship in your life. Nobody gets to the top of the podium alone, nobody truly builds a successful business alone, nobody creates a fulfilling life alone. People who continually rise to the occasion in any challenging endeavor or in times of great change aren't superhuman. The most important and enduring skill they have is their ability to continually create and inspire a world class team for the journey... a team that not only shares their strengths with one another, but that shares their challenges, and one that tows and carries one another when the going gets tough. Everyone in the room will leave the room buzzing with ideas and a new perspective on who and how they want to lead in every aspect of their lives. And I offer everyone in the room a link to my slides so that they can share their new inspired perspective with their colleagues, friends and families. I love my job! And I will especially love doing this job among the women of Fed Ex, whom I know will really "get it" at a deep level. If you want to go fast, you can go alone....but if you want to go far, GO TOGETHER!



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