INFLUENCER
AN OUTLOOK ON LEADERSHIP & CHANGE
HUMANdynamic

OWNING YOUR LEADERSHIP STORY: A PLAYBOOK FOR WOMEN LEADERS

Leadership is often measured by titles and performance outcomes. Yet one of the most powerful and underutilized leadership tools is personal narrative.

Owning your leadership story means understanding, articulating, and confidently sharing the experiences, values, and defining moments that shape how you lead. It goes far beyond a career summary. It reflects who you are as a leader — your struggles and strengths, your setbacks and achievements. Every meaningful leadership story is shaped by emotions, people, courage, and values.

When a woman leader connects her experiences to lessons learned and the value she brings, her influence deepens, and trust grows.

Every leadership story begins with honest reflection.

EMOTIONS

Emotional awareness is not a weakness; it is a leadership strength. Many women leaders, especially working mothers, carry the dual responsibility of professional performance and family devotion. Emotional ups and downs are natural, and moments of self-doubt, thoughts of stepping away from work, and feelings of self-blame may arise.

As a working mother of twin boys, I have also lived the tension between work responsibility and family care. I still remember the overwhelming joy when my family learned we were expecting twins. It was the happiest moment of my life, but followed by the quiet realization that balancing career and motherhood would not be easy.

There were days I locked myself in a room to handle urgent client calls while my babies cried outside, asking for their mother, even though my family was caring for them. In those moments, I questioned myself: Was I a good mother? There were times I forgot to prepare colored pens for kindergarten, and I arrived late to pick them up after school activities, seeing them as the last children waiting. I felt guilt and self-doubt.

Yet those moments became my strength. When my boys ran to hug me despite the delays, proudly handing me their colored pen drawings, I was reminded that love is not measured by perfection. Through these experiences, I learned to pause instead of reacting, to breathe instead of blaming myself. Each emotional challenge became a chapter of growth in my leadership journey.

PEOPLE

No leader succeeds alone. While family responsibilities can sometimes feel overwhelming, I have come to realize that family can also be the most powerful source of encouragement, motivation, and purpose when I choose to see through the lens of shared growth and love.

There were seasons when I felt stretched in every direction. Yet in those very moments, I could share my struggles and even my tears with my family. It was my family who reminded me why I kept going. Their patience, their quiet sacrifices, and even their simple daily smiles became fuel for my perseverance.

I have also been blessed with long-term colleagues in my company across the Asia Pacific who have walked with me for over a decade. Even without frequent in-person meetings, we stay connected through conversations and virtual discussions. They listen honestly to my struggles. Some have become my prayer buddies, supporting me both professionally and spiritually. Their encouragement has strengthened my courage.

My leadership story is not written by my efforts alone. It is shaped by the people who stand beside me.

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COURAGE

Career transitions, difficult decisions, and unfamiliar challenges all require courage. Harvard Professor Dr. Ranjay Gulati defines courage as "a willingness to take bold, risky action to serve a purpose that you perceive to be worthy, usually in the face of an abiding fear."

Courage is what enables women leaders to step into the turning points that ultimately shape their leadership stories. The courage to move forward often comes from a strong sense of passion and purpose for one's career, family, and society.

Throughout my leadership journey, I have had the privilege of stepping into different situations that were far beyond my original plans or expectations. When I first pursued my passion for mental health and Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) in Korea, the market was unfamiliar, and stigma remained strong. Expanding into Japan brought new cultural and business uncertainties. There were no guarantees but only conviction. My belief in supporting individuals and helping organizations build resilience carried me forward.

Looking back, I see that those moments of uncertainty have become defining chapters in my leadership story. They strengthened my resilience, sharpened my judgment, and deepened my credibility. Courage did not remove the challenges; it transformed them into milestones. Every time we choose purpose over fear, we write a powerful line in our leadership story.

VALUES

What we value in people often reflects how we lead, more strongly than what we say. Invite women leaders to try one meaningful exercise together - to use your name to identify and express your leadership values through each letter of your name, creating a personal and memorable leadership identity.

Leadership stories are never static; they evolve with every stage of life and career. Owning our leadership story means confidently claiming our experiences, values, and vision to create meaningful impact. Through reflection and story sharing, we rediscover purpose and inspiration. Sharing leadership stories not only strengthens individual leadership presence but also encourages and empowers others to embrace their own paths.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to humbly share my leadership journey and values, hoping to inspire connection, encouragement, and shared growth among fellow women leaders.

LINA – LEADING WITH INTEGRITY, NURTURING, AND AUTHENTICITY

Lina Lam
Chief Transformation Officer,
Human Dynamic APAC

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