

A Case study for effective leadership in Higher Education

HERS-EA Inaugural academy

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My first leadership position *disaster strikes*

- An only girl among 30 undergraduates - valued and supported
- My parents believed in me - valued and respected

- Graduating with my PHD in 1991, dumped into my first leadership position (acting head of Dept.)
- The Dean pulled me down, embarrassed me instead of nurturing me
- I lost my confidence, felt inadequate right at the beginning of my career


A new Dean *new hope*

- Three years later (1993) came a new Dean (supportive)
- Regained my self-worth, confirmed full head
- Despite the support, I stayed put as head up to 2004
- The policy environment was not conducive to women

- Almost all leaders were men (a traditional outlook)
- I had a young family (competition for time and money)
- Academic growth suffered at the expense of administration and family

Growing in administration..... *more responsibility*

- Elected Deputy Dean (2004-2009)
- More responsibility, more people, more departments to supervise
- Main task was to transform the school into a constituent college (vision, mission and development plan)


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- Internal pressures (administration), external pressures (other units in the university)
 - Increased demands required leadership skills
 - Selected and sponsored for HERS-South Africa

From Deputy Dean to Deputy Principal

- Elected Deputy Principal (2009- 2013)
- Main task: implement new college statute and college development plan
- More demanding, increased internal institutional and university politics
- Less time for academic growth (publication and research)
- Less time for family and financial growth

Challenges of deputizing men..... *many women only get to deputy positions*

- Delegated work: You do the implementation while they grow
- Selective roles: You do the inconvenient or unpleasant work
- Lack of time: Your desk is always full
- Take the blame: for any wrong decision by your boss since you implement his decisions

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- Financial limitations: You do not control the institutional budget
 - Your good ideas become his good ideas
 - He gets all the credit for your efficiency

Support for successful leadership.... *it is always by merit*

- Academic and technical requirements
- Skills for leadership
- Skills for communication
- Spiritual support from church
- Silent wisdom cultivated over the years
- A supportive husband and family
- Colleagues who believed and trusted me

Cultivating wisdomwisdom is how to use what you know

- Get to know and understand your character
- Read between the lines (in meetings, documents, conversations)
- Know who you are dealing with (analyze people and their motives)
- Get to know the trends (institutional, national, international)
- Learn to position yourself for success (train, network etc.)

- Do not block but promote others
- Follow up on actions immediately, reduce your desk burden
- Build supportive institutional networks and relationships
- Pick a man or two among your role models
- Dare to be different

What men do *that women often forget to do*

- An aggressive and well planned quest for leadership and growth
- Mark their competitors and have a plan to out do them
- Always study the policy environment looking for gaps to help them climb

- Build strong alliances (know who is who in your institution, outgoing, talk to them)
- Plan for financial growth alongside career growth
- Keen to get to know new people outside their usual circle
- Have their ear to the ground (grapevine informers)

Girl power *harness your attributes to help you climb*

- Efficient implementers
- High ethical and trust levels
- Often have an eye for detail and accuracy
- Make fewer enemies
- Less daring and therefore less prone to corruption
- More aware of institutional and social values

Retired but Re-tyred

- You have to plan your exit early – physically, work, financially
- How????????????? Faithfulness, Honesty, Loyalty, Merit
- I was still needed So I was called back
- Dare do something So I was requested to start an incubation centre

Fruit that remains



My family



Fruit that remains



Fruit that remains a girl child with options



Fruit that remains empowered communities



Thank you

My children call me super mummy

I carried them with me