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Courage

A PRACTICAL ROADMAP FOR AFRICAN YOUTH.

THE COURAGE TO BE DIFFERENT.

DR. PROF. DIPANWITA BASU

BUILDING MINDS, BREAKING BARRIERS AND SHAPING THE FUTURE THROUGH EDUCATION



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THE COURAGE TO LEAD

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Dear Reader,

History remembers those who stood firm when retreat was easier, spoke when silence was safer, and dared to lead when the path ahead was uncertain. The courage to lead is not the absence of fear; it is the decision to let purpose speak louder than fear.

Welcome to **THE COURAGE TO LEAD**, an edition celebrating the integrity, conviction and responsibility required to inspire change.

Across Africa, leadership is more than a position of power; it is a responsibility to transform lives. The World Bank estimates that Sub-Saharan Africa needs to create approximately 15 million jobs annually to keep pace with its growing working-age population. Meeting this challenge requires leaders who build enterprises, strengthen institutions and turn potential into opportunity.

In this edition, we challenge you to lead courageously in business, education, governance and your community. Leadership begins long before recognition with the willingness to serve, the strength to persevere and the conviction to act when others hesitate.

Africa needs leaders who prioritise people over personal gain, accountability over excuses and solutions over criticism. We need individuals willing to challenge outdated systems, open doors for others and build a better future.

As you read, ask yourself: What kind of leader am I becoming? You do not need a grand title to make a difference. Your character, decisions and willingness to stand for what is right can inspire meaningful change.

Ultimately, leadership is not simply about being in front; it is about taking responsibility, empowering others and leaving communities better than you found them.

Lead with courage. Serve with integrity. Stand for what matters. Africa's future depends on leaders willing to use their influence for the greater good.

The question is not whether you have the potential to lead, but whether you have the courage to act.

Warm regards,

NTALASHA CHISHA
Founder & Visionary
Arise Africa Magazine

Courage



THE COURAGE TO LEAD: A PRACTICAL ROADMAP FOR AFRICAN YOUTH

Africa stands at a defining moment in its history, with the world's youngest population carrying enormous potential to reshape the continent's economic, political and social future. Yet, across classrooms, workplaces and communities, a difficult question remains: are young Africans prepared to take the initiative, challenge established thinking and accept the responsibility of building the future they desire? While many leadership structures continue to emphasise seniority, connections and formal positions, meaningful leadership often begins much earlier, with the courage to act when circumstances are uncertain and recognition is nowhere in sight.

LEAD WHERE YOU STAND

One of the most persistent misconceptions about leadership is that influence begins with a title, a prestigious office or the authority to direct others, when in reality, leadership is demonstrated through the ability to identify problems, mobilise people and deliver solutions. A university student who organises a campaign to improve learning conditions, an entrepreneur who creates employment in a struggling community or a young activist who advocates for the rights of marginalised people is already demonstrating leadership through action. For Africa's youth, the challenge is therefore not simply to seek positions of influence, but to recognise the opportunities for service and transformation that already exist within their reach.

HAVE THE COURAGE TO BE DIFFERENT

Courageous leadership requires more than the confidence to speak; it demands the conviction to challenge practices that undermine progress, even when doing so attracts criticism or threatens personal advancement. In societies where conformity can sometimes be rewarded more readily than independent thinking, young leaders must develop the ability to question ineffective systems, reject corruption and defend principles without becoming hostile to those who disagree. This responsibility is particularly important in Africa, where sustainable development depends not only on ambitious policies but also on institutions and individuals willing to uphold accountability, transparency and the public interest. True courage is therefore measured not by the volume of one's voice, but by the integrity of one's decisions.

TURN COURAGE INTO COMPETENCE

Although courage provides the foundation for leadership, lasting influence requires preparation, discipline and the ability to translate ideas into measurable results. Young Africans must invest in education, develop practical skills, understand the communities they serve and cultivate relationships that expose them to different perspectives.



They must also learn to manage resources responsibly, communicate effectively and accept accountability when their decisions produce disappointing outcomes. Leadership built entirely on passion may generate excitement, but leadership strengthened by competence earns trust and creates solutions that can endure beyond the enthusiasm of a particular moment.

START BEFORE YOU FEEL READY

Waiting for perfect conditions can become a convenient excuse for postponing the very actions that create experience and opportunity. Many young people delay pursuing worthwhile ideas because they lack funding, influential connections or the confidence that comes from previous success, overlooking the fact that experience is frequently developed through responsible action rather than accumulated through waiting. The more practical approach is to identify a problem, begin with the resources available, collaborate with others and learn from the results. Starting small does not diminish the ambition of a vision; it establishes the foundation upon which that vision can grow.

THE FUTURE WILL NOT BUILD ITSELF

Africa's transformation will require a generation that understands leadership as a responsibility rather than a privilege, recognising that the continent's future depends on the decisions made in communities, businesses, educational institutions and public offices today. Young people cannot afford to remain permanent spectators in conversations about unemployment, inequality, governance and development when they possess the capacity to contribute ideas, organise solutions and demand higher standards of leadership. The courage to lead begins when individuals stop waiting for someone else to create the opportunities they desire and start accepting responsibility for the change they wish to see.

Africa does not need its young people merely to inherit the future; it needs them to develop the courage, competence and integrity to build it.

“YOUR GENERATION DOESN'T NEED YOUR EXCUSES. IT NEEDS YOUR COURAGE.”



THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE COURAGEOUS: BREAKING THE MENTAL BARRIERS

Fear rarely announces itself as an obstacle; instead, it disguises itself as caution, convincing people to postpone opportunities, abandon ambitions and remain within the boundaries of what feels familiar. For many young Africans navigating unemployment, limited access to capital and pressure to follow conventional career paths, the fear of failure can become as limiting as the circumstances themselves. Courage, however, is not the absence of fear, but the ability to act purposefully despite uncertainty.

When confronted with criticism, rejection or unfamiliar challenges, people often imagine the worst possible outcome before taking the first step. A young entrepreneur may abandon a promising idea because investors might refuse to support it, while a student with leadership potential may remain silent for fear of public embarrassment. Over time, avoiding these situations can reinforce self-doubt, making opportunities appear more threatening than they really are.

Consider Andrew Mupuya of Uganda, who began producing paper bags by hand at just 16 years old. Rather than allowing his age and limited resources to define his possibilities, he pursued an entrepreneurial idea that eventually attracted support through the Anzisha Prize programme. His journey illustrates how initiative, persistence and a willingness to begin with limited means can create opportunities for growth. His experience does not suggest that courage eliminates structural barriers, but it demonstrates why those barriers need not automatically end ambition.

For Africa's young people, breaking mental barriers requires both a change in thinking and practical action. Starting a small enterprise, speaking up in a meeting, applying for an opportunity or presenting an idea to potential partners can gradually build confidence through experience. Equally important is learning to interpret setbacks as opportunities to improve rather than evidence of personal inadequacy.

Ultimately, courage becomes powerful when it is anchored in purpose rather than temporary emotion. Africa needs young people who recognise real obstacles without surrendering their agency to them, understanding that progress requires both personal initiative and stronger systems of support.

Fear may explain why you hesitate, but it should never be allowed to decide how far you can go.

DR. PROF. DIPANWITA BASU: BUILDING MINDS, BREAKING BARRIERS AND SHAPING THE FUTURE THROUGH EDUCATION

From India to Zambia, Dr. Dipanwita Basu's journey reflects the power of educational leadership, institutional vision and the determination to create opportunities that extend beyond the classroom.

Education has the power to change individual lives, transform communities and shape the future of nations. Yet, behind every meaningful educational transformation are individuals who choose to go beyond teaching lessons and commit themselves to building opportunities for generations to come.

Dr. Prof. Dipanwita Basu is one such individual. An educator, academic leader, author and institution builder, she has spent more than two decades in education, developing a professional journey that connects India and Zambia through a shared commitment to learning, academic excellence and human development. Born on 26 October 1979, Basu's academic journey began in India, where she attended St. Xavier's High School and St. Xavier's College. She later pursued a Bachelor of Science degree at Calcutta University, Kolkata, before advancing her academic and professional development through further studies and international academic engagements. Her career, however, would eventually extend beyond the traditional boundaries of the classroom.



FROM TEACHING TO INSTITUTION BUILDING

In 2020, Basu took a significant step in her professional journey by establishing Atlantic Cambridge School in Zambia. The institution represented more than an expansion of her career; it was an opportunity to translate her educational philosophy into an institutional vision. With a focus on Cambridge IGCSE and A-Level education, Atlantic Cambridge School was established to provide learners with access to internationally oriented academic programmes while promoting an environment that encourages intellectual development and academic excellence. Building an educational institution in a different country comes with its own demands, from developing institutional systems to nurturing educators, engaging families and maintaining academic standards. For Basu, this undertaking has required the combination of educational expertise, leadership and entrepreneurial determination. Importantly, her institutional vision also reflects a commitment to local empowerment. The school employs Zambian professionals across its workforce, including teachers, secretarial personnel and other members of staff, creating opportunities for local talent to contribute to the country's education sector. Her journey also illustrates the growing importance of cross-cultural exchange in education, demonstrating how professional experience and ideas developed in one country can contribute to educational development in another.

MAKING COMPLEX KNOWLEDGE ACCESSIBLE

Beyond managing an educational institution, Basu has made contributions to academic publishing through the authorship of A-Level and IGCSE textbooks in Mathematics, Biology and Chemistry. Her work in educational publishing addresses an important challenge in science education: helping learners understand complex subjects through accessible explanations and structured learning materials. For students navigating demanding academic curricula, the ability to understand concepts rather than simply memorise information can make a significant difference in their educational experience. She has also championed student-centred teaching approaches, curriculum innovation and teacher development, recognising that quality education depends not only on the learner but also on the capacity, preparation and commitment of educators. Her professional interests extend to institutional development, research, academic leadership and personalised learning.

RECOGNITION ACROSS BORDERS

Basu's professional journey has attracted recognition through a range of national and international awards and academic distinctions. Among the honours highlighted in her professional profile are the Zambia Business Award for National Lifetime Achievement in 2025, the She Millionaire Award for Women Leadership in Education in South Africa, and the Golden Glow Award as an Educationist in Kenya. Her 2026 recognitions include the Zambia Business Award for Educationist of the Year, another Golden Glow Award and the Community Builders in Africa Award as an Educationist, presented in Zimbabwe. Her profile also lists academic fellowship and professorship distinctions associated with Estonia University, alongside European academic honours from DHL University. These recognitions reflect the breadth of professional platforms through which her work has received acknowledgement, particularly in education, leadership and humanitarian engagement.

A LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY ROOTED IN PURPOSE

As Founder and Director of Atlantic Cambridge School, Basu's leadership responsibilities extend to mentoring teachers, supporting students and promoting innovation in STEM education and digital learning. Her professional journey also carries a wider message about women in leadership. Establishing institutions, influencing educational practices and contributing to knowledge production require the confidence to pursue ambitious ideas and the resilience to sustain them. Her commitment to human development also extends beyond the school environment.

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Cambridge School

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She is currently involved in caring for an orphanage of 35 children, reflecting a humanitarian dimension to her work and a concern for the welfare and future of vulnerable young people. This commitment reinforces the belief that education and opportunity should reach beyond those who already have access to them. Looking towards a broader impact, Basu is also in the process of establishing the AEDTC Foundation – Atlantic Education Training Centre Foundation. The initiative is envisioned as another platform for empowering Zambians through practical education, professional training and employment opportunities. Through the foundation, she intends to introduce certificate and diploma programmes in areas including engineering and secretarial studies, equipping participants with relevant skills and creating pathways towards employment. The vision is not simply to provide qualifications, but to connect learning with practical opportunities that can improve livelihoods For aspiring educators and entrepreneurs, her experience demonstrates that professional influence can extend beyond personal advancement when knowledge is translated into practical opportunities for others.

THE LEGACY BEYOND THE TITLES

In an era when educational systems are being challenged to respond to changing technologies, global competition and the evolving needs of young people, institution builders and committed educators have an important role to play. Dr. Prof. Dipanwita Basu's journey from India to Zambia offers an example of how educational ambition can cross geographical boundaries and become an avenue for institutional contribution. Ultimately, her story invites a deeper reflection on what it means to be an educator. It is not simply about delivering lessons, earning academic distinctions or occupying positions of leadership. It is about creating environments where potential can be discovered, knowledge can flourish and future generations can find the confidence to pursue their ambitions. Through institutional leadership, local capacity development, humanitarian engagement and plans for expanded vocational training, Basu's work reflects an understanding that meaningful educational impact must reach beyond the classroom. Because the true legacy of education is not found in the titles attached to an educator's name, but in the minds empowered, the opportunities created and the generations prepared to shape tomorrow.

THE LEGACY FRAMES



















BEYOND THE STAGE: WHEN TALENT BECOMES A TOOL FOR TRANSFORMATION.

For some artists, success is measured by the applause they receive; for others, it is defined by what remains after the music stops. In Botswana's Okavango region, gospel artist, author and community organiser Kebadile Clementine Wasenda, popularly known as Kaybee, is pursuing a vision that extends beyond the stage, bringing together faith, cultural identity and a commitment to community development.

Born in Sepopa village, Kaybee began singing in church in 2002, gradually transforming her passion into a musical journey shaped by faith and personal experience. Through projects including Forever, Wuparo, Ruhakitho and her six-track release Shoni Vuruke, she has developed an artistic identity that connects gospel music with her Hambukushu heritage. Her decision to sing the hymn Shoni Vuruke in her mother tongue reflects a wider commitment to preserving indigenous culture while sharing its richness with broader audiences.

Yet Kaybee's ambitions have never been confined to music. In 2015, she established the Okavango Music Festival to create opportunities for local artists and bring communities together through creative expression. She also developed Little Mr and Miss Okavango Culture, an initiative designed to celebrate cultural identity and encourage young people to embrace their heritage. Although economic challenges have forced these initiatives to pause, their journey highlights a reality confronting many African creatives: passion can inspire a vision, but sustainable funding and strategic partnerships are often necessary to keep it alive.

Her pursuits in education, strategic management and writing further demonstrate her interest in combining creativity with purposeful leadership. Her book, The Wait Prolonged, adds another dimension to her expression, reflecting themes of patience and the challenges of pursuing aspirations when progress takes longer than expected.

Kaybee's story offers an important lesson for Africa's emerging generation: talent becomes more powerful when it serves a purpose beyond personal recognition. Whether through music, entrepreneurship, education or cultural initiatives, young Africans have opportunities to create platforms that preserve identity, nurture talent and strengthen communities.

Ultimately, the measure of a creative legacy is not only how many people hear your voice, but how many lives are encouraged, empowered or transformed because you chose to use it.



AGRIBUSINESS AND ECONOMIC SOVEREIGNTY: THE COURAGE TO REDEFINE WEALTH

Africa imports food while millions of its hectares of arable land remain underutilised, and young people searching for economic opportunity often overlook one of the continent's greatest assets: agriculture. From the maize fields of Zambia to the cocoa plantations of Côte d'Ivoire, the fertile highlands of Ethiopia and the rice-growing communities of Senegal, Africa's agricultural potential is enormous. Yet, the continent's ability to turn this potential into widespread prosperity depends on a fundamental shift in how farming is perceived, financed and managed.

For generations, agriculture has too often been associated with subsistence and economic hardship rather than innovation, enterprise and wealth creation. Changing this narrative requires courageous leadership that positions agribusiness as a modern industry capable of attracting young entrepreneurs, technological investment and skilled professionals. Through irrigation, digital farming, improved storage and climate-smart production, African farmers can increase productivity while building enterprises that generate employment beyond the farm.

However, growing more food is only part of the solution. Africa must also capture greater value from what it produces. Exporting raw cocoa while importing finished chocolate, or selling unprocessed agricultural commodities while purchasing expensive manufactured food products, limits opportunities for industrial growth. Investing in local processing, packaging, logistics and regional trade would enable African businesses to retain more value within their economies while strengthening cross-border commerce under the African Continental Free Trade Area.

This transformation must also be inclusive. Young people, women and persons with disabilities deserve meaningful opportunities to participate across the agricultural value chain, from production and technology to processing and distribution. Accessible infrastructure, practical training, affordable finance and inclusive markets can help turn overlooked talent into productive enterprise, replacing dependency with economic participation and dignity.

Ultimately, Africa's agricultural future is not simply about feeding its population; it is about determining who controls its food systems, creates its industries and benefits from its resources. Economic sovereignty begins when African nations move beyond exporting potential and start building prosperity from it.

The soil beneath Africa's feet is more than a source of food; it is a foundation for industrialisation, dignified employment and continental self-determination.

BOOKS OF THE WEEK

THIS WEEK'S BOOK: DARE TO LEAD
Brené Brown
What does it take to lead when the decisions are difficult, the risks are real and the answers are uncertain? In Dare to Lead, Brené Brown explores how courage, vulnerability and honest conversations shape effective leadership.

THE LESSON: Courageous leadership is not about appearing fearless. It is about embracing difficult conversations, taking responsibility and leading with integrity even when it feels uncomfortable.
YOUR NEXT MOVE: Read a few pages each day and identify one conversation, decision or responsibility you have been avoiding. Take one courageous step towards it.
Lead with courage. Choose integrity. Make an impact.

THE ARISE CHALLENGE

For the next seven days, choose one thing you have been postponing and take one meaningful step towards it daily. Make the call. Send the message. Submit the application. Start the project.

DID YOU KNOW?
Breaking big tasks into smaller steps can make it easier to overcome procrastination and build momentum.
YOUR MISSION: Every day, ask yourself: "Did I move one step closer to my goal today?"
Stop waiting for someday. Start today. Unleash your potential!

TOOLBOX

THIS WEEK'S TOOL: GOOGLE CALENDAR
Use Google Calendar to schedule deadlines, meetings, study sessions, business activities and personal priorities. Reminders help you stay aware of what needs attention.

WHY IT MATTERS: Ambition without time management can become frustration. Leaders protect time for the activities that move their goals forward.

THE COURAGE TO BUILD WITH STRATEGY: HOW SARAH O HAPPY IS TURNING VISION INTO AN AFRICAN BUSINESS LEGACY



A COMPELLING ENTREPRENEURIAL STORY IS NOT JUST ABOUT DARING TO START; IT IS ABOUT HAVING THE DISCIPLINE TO BUILD, THE WISDOM TO ADAPT AND THE COURAGE TO MAKE DECISIONS THAT SECURE THE FUTURE.

Every great business begins with someone brave enough to imagine what does not yet exist. But courage alone cannot build an empire. Dreams require direction, ambition requires a plan, and growth demands decisions that are sometimes difficult, unpopular and even counterintuitive. For Sarah O Happy, Founder and CEO of SarHap Group™, the reported journey from a modest beginning in 2019 to a luxury beauty and lifestyle enterprise operating across South Africa, Nigeria and the United Kingdom illustrates an important lesson for Africa's next generation of entrepreneurs: courage starts the journey, but strategy gives it direction.

Building a business in the competitive beauty industry requires more than an eye for opportunity. It demands a clear market position, consistent quality, customer trust and the discipline to turn individual sales into a sustainable enterprise. Through its portfolio of brands, including SarHap Hairline, SarHap Skin and SarHap Academy, SarHap Group reflects an ambition that extends beyond selling beauty products: to create a business ecosystem connecting luxury, professional development and opportunity. Yet one of the most revealing tests of leadership is not how boldly an entrepreneur expands, but how wisely they respond when growth requires a different approach.

According to the account of her business journey, Sarah made the strategic decision to consolidate physical operations around a flagship headquarters after expanding across multiple locations. Such a move challenges a familiar assumption in entrepreneurship: that success must always look like more branches, larger premises and continuous expansion. Sometimes, the braver decision is to pause, reassess and strengthen the systems beneath the visible success.

This is where courage and strategy work together. Courage gives a leader the confidence to confront reality; strategy helps determine what must change. Rather than pursuing growth for appearances, an entrepreneur must consider operational efficiency, customer experience, financial sustainability and long-term priorities. The objective is not simply to build bigger, but to build better.

Sarah's reported investment in professional training through SarHap Academy adds another dimension to this vision. When a business equips other people with practical skills, it can extend its influence beyond its immediate customers. For women seeking economic independence and young people exploring entrepreneurship, access to relevant training can provide a pathway towards earning, self-employment and further opportunity. The scale of that impact, however, is best measured through tangible outcomes: people trained, businesses launched and livelihoods strengthened.

For Africa's emerging entrepreneurs, the lesson is clear. Start with courage, but do not stop at inspiration. Study the market. Understand the customer. Build reliable systems. Manage resources carefully. Measure results. And when the evidence tells you that a strategy must change, have the courage to change it. Sarah O Happy's entrepreneurial story offers a framework worth examining: vision identifies the destination, strategy maps the route, discipline sustains the journey, and adaptation keeps the business moving when circumstances change. Because courage may give you the boldness to build an empire, but strategic leadership gives that empire a chance to endure.



THE COURAGE TO BE DIFFERENT

Every generation celebrates the courage to lead, yet often punishes those who dare to think differently. We applaud innovation after it succeeds, celebrate visionaries after they become influential, and quote disruptors after the world accepts their ideas. But when someone challenges the familiar, questions established practices or pursues an unconventional path, the same society may label them difficult, unrealistic or rebellious.

For young Africans, the pressure to conform can be particularly powerful. Family expectations, social approval, economic uncertainty and fear of public embarrassment can influence decisions long before individuals discover what they are capable of achieving. Many abandon promising ideas, silence uncomfortable questions and choose familiar paths, not because they lack potential, but because standing apart carries a social cost.

Yet progress rarely emerges from unquestioned conformity. Africa's challenges require people willing to rethink how food is produced, how businesses create employment, how education prepares young people and how leadership serves communities. Innovation begins when someone dares to ask whether the accepted way is necessarily the best way.

The courage to be different, however, is not about rejecting tradition or opposing authority for attention. It is about developing independent judgment, questioning ideas respectfully and having the discipline to defend convictions with evidence, integrity and a willingness to learn. Genuine originality requires more than rebellion; it demands responsibility for the consequences of one's choices.

Young people must therefore learn to distinguish between criticism that offers valuable correction and criticism that merely protects the comfort of the familiar. Not every unconventional idea is brilliant, and not every popular opinion is wrong. The challenge is to think clearly enough to recognise the difference.

Africa does not need a generation that disagrees with everything, but one that is courageous enough to question what no longer works and imaginative enough to build something better.

The crowd may determine what is popular, but courage determines who is willing to challenge what is possible.

THE COURAGE TO BREAK FREE



WHEN BEING A GOOD WOMAN MEANS LOSING YOURSELF

For generations, women have been praised for how much they can endure, how quietly they sacrifice and how effortlessly they meet everyone else's expectations. Yet beneath the familiar celebration of the "good woman" lies a difficult question: what happens when the pursuit of being everything to everyone leaves a woman disconnected from herself?

For South African entrepreneur, author and women's empowerment advocate Sthe Magatsheni, this question became central to her journey of personal reinvention. After 18 years in the corporate world, including leadership experience with organisations such as FNB, SABC and Bidvest Group, she moved beyond established professional structures to pursue entrepreneurship, community development and authorship. Her evolution reflects a broader truth about leadership: sometimes, the most courageous decision is not climbing another ladder, but questioning whether the ladder still leads where you want to go.

That reflection finds expression in her book, The Good Girl Cage, which examines the expectations placed on women to remain agreeable, accommodating, sacrificial and acceptable to those around them. Through themes of relationships, divorce, motherhood, faith and entrepreneurship, Sthe opens a conversation about the invisible boundaries that can emerge when approval becomes more important than personal conviction. The challenge is not kindness or service themselves, but the belief that a woman must continually diminish her own needs to prove her worth.

Her work through the Siqua Foundation and the Soft Life Circle extends this conversation into women's empowerment and community development. Her understanding of a softer life challenges the assumption that ambition must come at the expense of well-being, or that exhaustion is the ultimate evidence of commitment. Instead, it invites women to consider how boundaries, self-awareness and purposeful ambition can coexist with responsibility to family and community.

Across Africa, women occupy diverse cultural, economic and social realities, and there is no single experience that defines them all. Nevertheless, the pressure to meet competing expectations remains a meaningful conversation in leadership, relationships and professional life. Redefining success requires creating space for women to exercise agency over their choices without being reduced to the roles they fulfil for others.

Sthe Magatsheni's story offers a compelling reminder that reinvention does not require abandoning the woman you once were; it requires having the courage to become more fully the woman you choose to be. Sometimes, the bravest act of leadership is to stop asking who the world needs you to be and begin discovering who you were meant to become.



“THE PROBLEM ISN'T THAT YOUNG PEOPLE LACK POTENTIAL. IT'S THAT TOO MANY ARE WAITING TO BE INVITED.”

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