**Learning to Lead: What Really Works for Women in Law**

**Gindi Eckel Vincent, Author**

Mary B. Cranston, Advisor

---

**Additional Titles of Interest**

*The Road to Independence: 101 Women’s Journeys to Starting Their Own Law Firms*

*The Road to Independence* is a collection of 101 letters written by women who have founded law practices, whether as a solo, with other women, or with men. Focusing on the experiences, challenges, and opportunities of women-owned law firms, these women, in their personal voices, reiterate key themes: Of becoming businesswomen. Of choosing a practice area true to their passion and the high character they bring to the bar. Of controlling not only their days but their destinies. Of ambition in action.

Throughout this inspirational book, you will find business-savvy tidbits and practical tips for starting and growing a successful law practice in the words of the founders themselves. Grouped chronologically according to when each writer started her woman-owned practice, this collection implicitly portrays the profession’s growth, the society’s evolution, the economy’s fortunes, and the periodic changes in business models of private practice. Explicitly, these letters unite to reflect not only the drive to practice law but also, the impact of those cultural changes on women in private practice.

Product Code 4920046—For more information and to purchase this book, visit www.ShopABA.com.

---

**What You Need to Know about Negotiating Compensation**

Published by the ABA Task Force on Gender Equity, *What You Need to Know about Negotiating Compensation* helps you understand what information you need to know—and where to find it—before the partner compensation process gets underway. You will find specific strategies and techniques for how best to navigate your firm’s compensation system and to strengthen and leverage your negotiating position. You also will learn about the importance of sponsors and effective self-advocacy and what you need to say about yourself. This knowledge will help you level the playing field, maximize your ability to increase your partnership compensation, and close the gender pay gap.

**Additional Task Force publications:**

- ABA Toolkit for Gender Equity in Partner Compensation
- Closing the Gap: A Road Map for Achieving Gender Pay Equity in Law Firm Partner Compensation
- Power of the Purse: How General Counsel Can Impact Pay Equity for Women Lawyers

These four Task Force titles are available for download at no cost at www.americanbar.org/GenderEquity.
I have rows of books on my office bookshelves about (and by) women. The colors range from shocking pink to sober black. They all use action words in big, bold font. Each book in the stack shares insight into the gender divide. These books discuss important issues about why women don’t run America’s Fortune 500 companies, why women make 70 percent of men’s salaries for comparable jobs, what holds women back from achieving their full potential, and a panoply of other pressing issues. I’ve even read most of them.

You could fill a train from the East Coast to the West Coast with the research done about gender inequality and what makes women successful. It is important research. These are important books.

This book, however, does not attempt to add another cargo load to that train. Instead, this book has three simple goals:

To synthesize and distill the research, anecdotal evidence, and key concepts on leadership techniques that help working women, in any field, develop in their careers.

To tailor these ideas and principles for women practicing law, regardless of practice area, and create practical actions that lawyers can implement in their lives and workplaces.

To recognize the uniqueness of what success and leadership look like for each individual woman practicing law and to put the learning into practice by hearing from women who are leading in legal fields, including the judiciary, and by seeing real-life transformations with a total leadership makeover.

First, much of the research and writing done identifies real issues that women face in male-dominated workplaces. While not every workplace fits that definition, many do. Even in workplaces that are incredibly progressive in dealing with gender inequality, there are clients or customers or opposing parties that do not share the same viewpoint. Additionally, there are deep-seated gender stereotypes, and what you are not aware of will hurt you. Identifying these stereotypes...
and ingrained behaviors is the best way to develop an action plan to combat them wherever you work today.

Second, many celebrated books on becoming a successful woman identify issues faced in particular careers. The takeaway action items are valuable but could be more impactful in a female lawyer’s practice if tailored to some of the distinctive situations and challenges that confront women practicing law today. Identifying steps to take for building your network, taking risks, communicating with everyone you encounter, developing a reserve of energy, following your passion, and finding your highest and best use are key to becoming a recognized leader in your field and finding individualized success.

Finally, one of the stereotypes in the legal profession that has long been held, even by women, is that a successful leader in the profession fits into only one of a few boxes: The corporate executive. The managing partner. The Fortune 100 company board member. The president (of the United States or the ABA or any other widely recognized institution that hands out the title of president). Achieving one of those positions is not the only path to leadership in this noble profession. You can be the executive director of a nonprofit or legal aid organization. You can be a prosecutor. You can establish a reputable solo practice. You can be a respected part-time lawyer that juggles family, community, and the practice of law. You can lead a governmental agency’s law department. You can also be the managing partner of an Am Law 100 firm or a corporate executive or the president. There are so many avenues to finding what works for you and then developing the critical leadership skills needed to be the best of the best in your field and your sphere of influence. This book has assembled some of the most impressive women leaders in the law today and leading female members of the judiciary to share advice that will move you to action as you see how they developed into remarkable leaders over the course of their careers. And then you can observe this advice being put into action as you see total leadership makeovers of real women lawyers unfold in the final pages.

This book is intentionally short. When you use words like distill and practical for an audience of working women, brevity is key. Hopefully, imparting the most useful nuggets of wisdom into a useable format will inspire you to: (a) finish the book, (b) take action, and (c) chart your course to leadership and success.