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Quotable Quotes

"The quieter you become, the more you can hear." ~ Bab Ram Dass

"Take something ordinary and elevate it to something extraordinary." ~ Samuel Mockbee

"The first step to wisdom is silence, the second is listening." ~ Carl Summer

"Everything comes to those who hustle while they wait." ~ Thomas A. Edison

Dear Jean,

In the first quarter of this year, I have described some views on what leadership can be and what it isn't, the unique skills attributed to leaders and how to focus on a leadership style and path for self-development. I have also shared a few definitions and distinctions for leadership. This month I will relate a personal story of my journey into owning my role as a leader. Truly, my role as a leader was a very personal blind spot. While others saw the qualities of a leader in my actions and varied work and life roles, I was uncomfortable with the traditional 'Leader' descriptor for me. It is possible that you may identify with my story and be encouraged to define leadership in your very personal way. My wish for you is for the belief of who you are shared by others sparks your curiosity to listen more deeply and believe in yourself as a Leader.

With Joy,
Jean

The Quiet Leader *by Jean Strosinski*

"Do YOU see yourself as a Leader?" "NO!" - That was my answer to this question in 2004 - a very loud "NO."

Ten plus years ago I attended a branding seminar at a local coaches meeting. Immediately and very enthusiastically joined a group of other attending coaches to meet and support each other as we began to develop our personal brands. We worked collaboratively over the next few months challenging each other to discover the essence of our brand. When it was my turn to share what I had crafted as my brand, I was asked by more than one in the group as to why my brand didn't include a stronger element of "Leadership."



"Do OTHERS believe and see you as a Leader?" My colleagues at that time gave a resounding "YES, Jean, you are a leader." I physically shuddered at their pushing and probing on why I wouldn't include this in my brand to describe who I was. I was pretty insistent that what they perceived or knew of me did not reflect any leadership element. Their curiosity was peaked, I wasn't off the hook and they wouldn't let me simply dismiss this discussion and walk away from what they viewed as a significant element of who I am.

One coach very directly asked me, "So, how do you define leadership?" That was easy for me and my answer came quickly - a bit too quickly. I had always viewed a Leader as being a person in control, in charge, aggressive or assertive, demanding, and with a large group of followers behind him or her. I went on to define Leaders as strong decision makers and game changers. What was obvious to those listening in that moment, was that I was defining leadership as I believed the world defined it. The space around the coaches became very quiet and the coaches almost unanimously voiced a disagreement with my definition. What I realized was that I just didn't like the picture I had painted in my mind of what a Leader did, said or how they behaved.

A follow-on question from the group was, "Jean, if you could define leadership to describe the kind of Leader you would want to be, how would you define leadership?" I paused ... I hesitated - because if I answered this question then I knew I would be taking the first step to owning a leadership role in my life - the very role I said I did not have. When I did answer the question, my answer was, "A quiet leader." And I defined the Quiet Leader as a person who observes and listens, grows those around them so they are out in front of the leader, and inspires the followers to acknowledge and believe in their strengths. This simple act of giving a personal definition to leadership was a significant turning point in my life. My life shifted, my strengths in being a 'Quiet Leader' no longer remained in my blind spot. They moved front and center.

"How comfortable are you with this leadership role?" I have paused to reflect on this question a few times in the last ten years. Yes, I am more comfortable and more conscious of my role as a leader now. I realize that my journey as a leader started at a very young age in junior high school - maybe even before then. I have gravitated to leadership positions time and time again - with family, in professional groups, and at work. I also now understand that owning all my leadership roles and being consciously aware of the "Quiet Leader" within only strengthens my leadership competence.

The real answer is that the path to leadership is a journey. Are you traveling that road? When did your journey start? More importantly, how do you define leadership - YOU as a Leader?

Tools and Resources FROM THE BOOKSHELF

[The Leadership Code - 5 Rules to Lead](#) by D. Ulrich, N. Smallwood and K. Sweetman (2008)

[The Situational Leader](#) by Dr. P. Hersey (1984) A Leader lives in each of us.

THE INTERNET CONNECTIONS

[Womens Leadership Shouldn't Be Rare](#) - "You have enough hurdles; don't let your leadership confidence be one of them."

[Seven Transformations of Leadership](#) - "Leaders are made, not born and how they develop is critical for organizational change." (Harvard Business Review)

Reflections - Mine and Yours

My reflection for this newsletter led me to review the branding work supported in our coaching cohort ten years ago. Surprisingly, it was an easy find among all my computer files. The following texts were crafted in that discovery period of "The Quiet Leader" and still support my personal definition of leadership with a bit more focused language for my personal definition of a Leader.

My first share - the question was, "*What role does my business serve in my client's life?*" My answer, "*I am their silent partner that magnifies their voice.*"

A second share was what I named the essence of my brand. Simply stated in 2004 - "*Unleashing a Spirit of Leadership.*" Interesting that even then I accepted their push and wisdom to embrace a work focused on leadership.

My last share defines the role of a Quiet Leader as I believed it to be then. I still believe this today - what we called an outrageous brand credo. "*I work with inspiring Leaders ready to connect and integrate their personal strengths to performance excellence. They desire to be recognized for leading work performance that puts their name on the marquis and their person on-stage. I move the new Leader's creativity to an edge by nailing the truth and co-authoring their personal dictionary for a unique language of strengths. I share in the discovery of the positive "ahas," uncovering hidden perspectives and partnering in the brilliant rainstorm of ideas. Silent strengths are flexed in positive strategies...oh I can see them now...they are standing a bit taller in the leadership circle of their organization.*"

Now ... Your Time for Reflection:

AS you listened to my story, what makes you curious about the leadership role you have in your life? Are you ready to take a few minutes and pen your answers to the following questions?

- Are you a Leader? Why do you believe this? or Why don't you believe this?
- What is your personal definition of leadership or what it takes to be a Leader?
- Are you the Leader you wish to be? A Quiet Leader ... An Intuitive Leader ... An Inspirational Leader... OR _____ Leader?
- Where are you on your leadership journey?
- How comfortable are you with your role as a Leader?
- How satisfied are as a leader in your practice, your work, your relationships?
- What is the next step you will take along your leadership journey?

Choose To

Define leadership ... define your role ... infuse your leadership role with your personal touch ... be curious ... discover the Leader you are comfortable with ... ask others what they see in you, the Leader ... identify what you are satisfied with as a Leader in your work ... keep to the path ... continue the journey.



April Joyful Observances

Couple Appreciation Month

[Financial Literacy Month](#)

Workplace Conflict Awareness Month

Laugh At Work Week (April 1-7)

Explore Your Career Options (April 5-11)

National Volunteer Week (April 12-18)

[Money Smart Week](#) (April 18-25)

Gathering of the Nations Powwow (April 23-25)

National Dance Week (April 23 - May 3)

[International Whistler's Day](#) (April 5)

[National Siblings Day](#) (April 10)

Walk on Your Wild Side Day (April 12)

Take a Wild Guess Day (April 15)

[National Day of Silence](#) (April 17)

[Girl Scout Leaders' Day](#) (April 22)

Administrivia

My Constructive Choices Audience...

- * Professionals wanting to be at choice in their career and daily work,
- * New managers (and aspiring leaders) transitioning to establish a leadership role in their communities,
- * Individuals wanting to sort through the choices, build a more fulfilling life, life their voices, and...
- * Coaches who choose to step out, show up, and say - YES, it IS all about YOU!

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