Inclusive & Innovative Leadership
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Hello ladies, how are you feeling today? Are you ready to be amazed and challenged this afternoon to think outside of the box and to re-think some ideas about leadership?

If you are here, and have responded to the bold and courageous invitation of President Caroline Demey to attend the Growth Academy, I can imagine that you are brave and curious.
And believe me, these two things, being brave and curious, are fundamental and the best way to experience an event like this.

And now let's begin!
I always start with a friendly suggestion, something I always ask the audience in front of me. It is an invitation to assume a "certain attitude" that will help you to be receptive and proactive.
I invite you to stay "open-hearted".

What does that mean?
It means to stay open, here in the region of the chest, to stay open within your heart. It means that what you are going to hear, is not to be received only through your mind, your rationale, your head,
but to listen and be attentive and decide if
-what you are hearing- also speaks to your heart, if it resonates in your heart, in order to take the best from the ideas, insights and perspectives I will share with you today.

You are already in a mood of courage and curiosity, so being "open hearted" will bring mindfulness and full presence.
That's exactly what we all need! ☺

Well, now that you are in open-heart mode, curious and courageous, I want to give you a big initial stimulus that maybe for some of you could feel like a little shock☺

The beauty of leadership lies in the fact that a person does not need a formal title to prove that they are a leader. People follow leaders because of their values, vision, passion, purpose, inspiration, and by their example.

So, it is crucial to understand that leadership is not about rank,

nor is it about power and neither is it about our place on the Soroptimist International org-chart.

It's all about becoming a good leader who inspires people to believe in themselves, to believe in their gifts, to believe in their potential, and who has a vision and shares it with the whole team or club.

People are the organization's biggest asset: many organizations including SI face the challenge of attracting and retaining talented women.
The new challenge is to convince potential candidates and SI members that Soroptimist International is a great place to be!

We are moving to a time where:
-if people don't feel they can learn and progress,
-if they don't feel they can proactively collaborate without constant struggle,
-if they don't feel they can make a difference,
-if they don't feel that they can make an impact,
-or if they lack a feeling of belonging to a community,
-if they feel all that, **they will quit the organization**,
because of the toxic & competitive atmosphere,
because of their obsolete and poor leaders, who actually are just bossy managers,
and last but not least,
they will leave because of a lack of shared vision and strategy.

So, here are the 5 big traps we can face on our way to developing as leaders:
<u>Trap number 1:</u> selfishness and power cravings (self-referenciality)
<u>Trap number 2:</u> poor leadership skills (no competencies)
<u>Trap number 3:</u> non cooperative and inclusive attitudes (egocentrism and hierarchy)
<u>Trap number 4:</u> maintaining the status quo (immobility, the contrary of being innovàtive)
And finally <u>Trap number 5:</u> micromanagement & complex bureaucracy

So, whose face do you see, when I say…maintaining the status-quo or selfish leader? :-)

The world is showing us - especially in the last couple of years - many examples of poor leadership in the form of selfishness and still too hierarchical leadership models. **This leadership model no longer serves organizations, society or the world!**

I want you to understand what leadership is all about; here is the truth:
Leadership, is not about us, leadership is all about others!!

I repeat it: **Leadership is not all about us, it's all about others!!!**
It means that as leaders we must be willing to place the needs of others above our own.
When we are called leaders, we must ensure that our people are inspired and motivated every day.

A good leader is a leader that inspires others to believe in something greater, for example for Soroptimist International
"Positively impacting the lives of the women across the globe".

That is what we call leadership, and that is what real leaders do.
When we have that type of influence,
and people choose to follow us voluntarily,
we are on the road to becoming a great leader.

People in our team deserve to be engaged in an organization where they really want to show up in their free time with leaders they want to work with!

They all want to have the feeling that their free time is well invested in meaningful interactions and high value activities
-without competition
-without jealousies
-without bossy and poor leadership behaviors and
-without emotionally and physically draining power struggles.

If you want to keep talented women, be inclusive!
Invest in SI members, in their different experiences, competencies and cultures, **and choose to be a leader who puts people first!**

That is what makes Soroptimist International a beautiful organization, we, our experiences, our competencies, our different backgrounds, traditions and cultures!

I.Part
Inclusive Leadership

What makes a leader an inclusive leader and why should you become one of them?
This doesn't have to be a complicated process.
Take a look at these 5 helpful traits to build inclusive leadership

 # Trait Number 1: Investing in people)

It is vital to invest in the most important asset of an organization, like Soroptimist International has: **people**

In these very dynamic times, Leadership is renewing itself profoundly and evolving towards:
-collective responsibility -collective commitment
-strong collaboration -in a word towards
"Co-Elevation" and "Co-creation".
Please, pay attention to the words I mentioned:
co-llective -co-llaboration -co-elevation and co-creation:
the point is to understand that:
we -as leaders- are not alone
nor are we at the center of the organization,
instead, we should invest in people, putting them at the center of the organization because as John Maxwell -a famous leadership coach says:
" You will only go as high as your team will take you. You will not achieve what your dream is; you will achieve the level that your team is".
That is to say that you cannot achieve any goal alone:
what you first need are people, that help you achieve goals!
Inclusive leaders have a genuine interest in others.
They have a desire to build a relationship with their team, to know the people working with them, and to encourage everyone on their team to be the best they can be.
So, dear female leaders, please remember **these 3 things:**

1st. thing: we are not alone on our leadership journey and we are not in the center as leaders
2nd. thing: we should come down from the ivory tower, in case any of us are still up there, and begin to train leadership skills in order to own those competencies
3rd. thing: we must put the people who work in our team or organization at the center of all our actions as leaders, taking care of them, appreciating their efforts and encouraging them.
And please also remember: if you are not invested in people, they will not be invested in you, and even if they don't walk out the door, even if they will not leave Soroptimist International, they will mentally check out and be disengaged!

 # Trait number 2 of inclusive Leadership: Diversity

Being inclusive is not only about investing in people, being inclusive means intentionally choosing to put together a team of people with different backgrounds, paths, and ideas.
So, what's I'm speaking about is not "gender diversity", we all know that - we women - can be real gamechangers in a male dominated business-context, and those organizations that don't realize the importance of women in the workplace are missing out.

No, I'm speaking about diversity as a more general principle.
Diversity that brings different ideas, perspectives, and narratives into the mainstream is critical to overall performance, productivity,
Workplace-environment and the wellbeing of the whole community,
and not simply just of a part of it.

Likewise, we should cultivate diversity in our organizations by enrolling women from other countries, other cultures, with different ages and abilities without fear: fear of confronting different opinions or different mindsets, in order to begin seeing situations or challenges from different perspectives.
Diversity means being intentional in putting together a heterogeneous group, including all: introverts and extroverts, artistic and scientific minds, mothers, daughters, old and young, single and married women, academics and professionals…
and realize that we -as leaders- **must create an environment in which all the talents, skills and abilities of everyone on the team can come to light and be valued.**
So, our duty is to create an atmosphere in which every member of our team can thrive!

#Trait number 3: Humanizing (

In my profession as a business coach, I very often find myself reminding my clients (university professors and entrepreneurs) that even when we are in a work and business context, we should remain human, and by that, I mean that we should remember that we are human beings who interact with other individuals.
A very famous Leadership Coach, Simon Sinek says: **"If you don't like people, you don't like business"** and this applies to for-profit organizations and even more to non-profit organizations like SI, that exists thanks to the voluntary work of professional women -like yourselves.

So, if people are the most important asset, as I said earlier, remaining human is a necessary competence to lead people and a good leader humanizes the organization using a crucial skill such as Empathy:
Empathy has always been a critical skill for leaders but, in 2022, it has become crucial to inclusive & innovative leadership as the simultaneous global crises of climate change, a pandemic, geopolitics, war and social injustice have left the entire world exhausted.

I would like to elevate empathy to a top management priority, helping promote empathy, a skill historically -still for many people- „unfit" for leadership, as a core, crucial part of new leadership.

Managers and leaders must exercise empathy themselves, if they are to bring to their organizations enduring values of trust, respect and caring, that are -in turn- necessary, in order to create a fearless culture.

One of my Mentors, the TOP Team-Coach Keith Ferrazzi from the USA calls empathy "**the great equalizer, the great trust builder and the great humanizer"** and it is indeed true: we humans are all vulnerable, regardless of status, position or wealth.

This leads me to introduce you to *# Trait number 4 of what makes inclusive leadership: Courage & Vulnerability*

Now it's time to lead with courageous vulnerability.

And this brings me to tell you why vulnerability is so crucial.

With the onset of major crises and a climate of widespread uncertainty, leaders have been pressured to show their vulnerability, insecurity and fear.

They, like all their colleagues and employees, have experienced loss, fear and a feeling of failure and isolation.

For leaders the only bridge to building empathy is vulnerability, showing ourselves vulnerable and authentic to the team.

This is far from easy, mostly because we as leaders are not used to opening up and showing our "private" side, and because until recently, we were reluctant to address the issue at all.

They too -like all colleagues and employees- have experienced loss, fear, and feelings of isolation firsthand.

Admitting is an act of courage.

One decides to show that one is facing an unprecedented challenge, without certainties, without ready-made solutions, without omniscience.

This is the opposite of what people expect from a "strong leader".

One of the foremost experts on vulnerability, the American Psychologist Brené Brown has performed studies on the combination of courage & vulnerability, showing that courage is a blend of 4 skills:

1. One- The ability to experience vulnerability
2. Two- The ability to live one's own values
3. Three- Having courageous confidence (dealing with conflicts, including dealing with emotions and ego)
4. And four- The ability to get up again

Dealing with vulnerability is the starting point of leadership. When we have the courage to show up as we are – not in defensive mode- but in learning mode, we also have the ability

to speak openly, addressing old, unpopular opinions at times, which might even mean going against the mainstream, thinking outside the box, and speaking up about unpleasant things, even if we are the only one at a meeting who thinks differently.

To live one's own values requires the courage to be completely honest and authentic, without pretending, without the mask and without the armor.
This is a way of demonstrating honesty and authenticity to oneself and to others.
So, if we show ourselves as vulnerable leaders, we show up authentic and this fosters trust, respect and humanity.
Moreover, it is a contagious behavior, paving the way for others to be courageous enough to show themselves vulnerable and authentic too.

#Trait number 5: Fostering a Fearless Culture

We are at a point in time where things, -as -they-were, such as the hero-leader model with all the answers or a bossy leader model, no longer apply.
As any great leader will tell you, they have made mistakes along the way.
They will be transparent enough with themselves and others to admit their wrongdoings so that those around them can also benefit from their learnings.

They call this **wisdom** and many leaders lack it -because they are too proud to recognize mistakes as valuable learning moments for themselves and others.
Here, humility makes up the lion's share, because only with humility can confrontations with one's own ego and that of others be resolved.
The topic of ego is thus always a sensitive issue in leadership☺

In uncertain times full of transformations like our current one,
the need for safety, to be understood in the sense of psychological safety, has always been of key importance.
This is a collective need that everyone longs for, which is completely understandable ☺:
we can only work well, master challenges and grow from them if we are in a safe and healthy professional environment.

This is an environment in which we don't need protective armor,
don't feel as though we are constantly being exposed to attacks
or have to be on the defensive;
an environment that does not cause states of anxiety, stress, burnout or depression.
Psychological safety is the answer to the human desire to work and interact in an anxiety-free environment.

Nowadays, the need for psychological safety has become a fundamental need, like eating and sleeping.

The way to a fearless culture is to build strong and healthy working relationships, which can only be developed through practicing empathy.

If relationships lack strength and trust, people will not be able to develop mutual empathy. Empathy is not a new concept in leadership as I said before, but it has yet to be elevated to a top management priority and must no longer remain just a nice concept or fantasy, like wishful thinking.

Managers and leaders must exercise empathy themselves if they are to bring to their organizations enduring values of trust,

respect, and caring that are, in turn, necessary to create a fearless culture.

Empathic leaders allow their team to know that they empathize with their challenges and demonstrate to them that they, too, are experiencing difficulties.

How can we create a fearless culture?

Please consider that culture in our organizations is more than "the way we do things around here". It's the gap between what we are saying and what we are doing.

Our culture is the behaviors we reward and punish.

So please let us stay authentic and courageous, also while failing!

At this point, I would like to refer to an event that took place in Germany - a fitting example for the afore mentioned skills, as well as of humility and authenticity.

While writing my book on Leadership in March 2021, something momentous happened.

For the first time in the history of Germany - perhaps even worldwide - a leader had the courage and the humility to openly admit their own mistakes.

Briefly: Germany's Ex-Chancellor Angela Merkel had proposed the so-called Easter Holiday in 2021 in her strategy to combat the third wave of the Corona Pandemic; a plan that immediately triggered huge criticism and discussion throughout Germany.

When Ex-Chancellor Merkel realized that this measure was not appropriate and advisable, she quickly called a press conference and openly and clearly admitted her mistake.

With her admission, she provided clarity, communicated openly and honestly, and ensured her credibility. (

She showed humility and she even had the courage to ask for forgiveness. These are qualities of a true leader, who is not afraid to expose herself or appear vulnerable, but can admit her mistakes and even assume sole responsibility for them.

Can you think of any other exemplary leaders from history who were able to keep their own ego under such control?

Ex-Chancellor Merkel's behavior was a worldwide landmark moment in leadership.

This lesson in courage and humility not only shows how to deal openly with mistakes, but also how to willingly learn from them and take advantage of any emerging opportunities and changes, as well as how to rethink one's own position.

Please remember, nobody can know everything, and everybody can be wrong!!

Here is some of the wording of the Ex-Chancellor's personal statement, which is very helpful, encouraging and above all, can be put into practice:
"I deeply regret this", "For this, I ask for forgiveness!", "A mistake must be acknowledged as a mistake. And above all, it must be corrected.
And if possible, this must be done in a timely manner."
(End of quote)

What is the crucial response here that makes a good leader?
Showing vulnerability!
How much more humane, authentic, and courageous could the whole world be in a relatively short period of time if more business and political leaders practiced courage and vulnerability?

These would be beneficial leadership lessons for the whole world in these confusing times.
Showing vulnerability and courage at the same time is a sign of strength,
Courage is also contagious: who knows?
Perhaps more public displays of courage could have positive effects on a global scale!

So, now that we know what makes Leadership inclusive, let's talk about what makes leadership innovative
The role of an innovative leader is not to have all the ideas;
It's to create a culture where everyone can have ideas and feel that they are valued.
The most successful organizations today recognize that the future is not what the organization is *today*, but what we must become *tomorrow*.
This requires transformation and transformation requires us to let go of the habits that are holding us back.
The ability to pivot quickly during times of change is absolutely crucial both for profit and nonprofit organizations.
We have to rethink the way we do things and lead our people, our projects, our processes and our partnerships.
And above all we must learn to see possibilities and not just problems!
This is a mindset: **looking at problems and seeing possibilities!**
For example, at Soroptimist International we know there are some problems, but we also know that by being courageous and vulnerable, by creating a safe space, by not being competitive, we can solve these problems together.

II. Part
Innovative leadership

As I did at the beginning of my keynote: I offered a friendly suggestion to you, **"to stay in open-heart mode"**.

I have now one more suggestion that sounds similar to that: please **"Stay open-minded and open-willed"** in order that you can see all the available options before you and then decide how to act!

I believe that an innovaative leadership style is the only way to help us to navigate these increasingly challenging and tumultuous times.

Yes, of course it is a choice, an important choice,

but what would be the alternative to an innovative leadership style?

-Poor and obsolete leadership?

-Remaining anchored to old-fashioned styles that no longer work, that serve no one and are dysfunctional?

-Or follow an obsolete leadership model that aims to maintain the status quo?...

- Which is incapable of grasping the signs of the times, or the clear signals that people at work are sending out, or the epochal phenomena that are taking place?

And I refer here for example to the phenomenon called the "great resignation" or even "the great quit".

A developing body of research is looking at what's driving people to quit. While mass resignation is not occurring in Europe like it is in the U.S., its lessons can be felt around the globe.

And it doesn't seem to be mainly about salaries.

New research by MIT identifies toxic culture as:

-a workplace where employees don't feel respected

-or where leaders are unethical

-or the number one cause, that the company isn't inclusive and diverse –.

A recent McKinsey report said that what most people who are quitting or who are considering leaving are looking for is to feel valued by their organizations and their managers.

I quote: **"By not understanding what their employees are running from, and what they might gravitate to, company leaders are putting their very businesses at risk"**, warned the report.

This obviously applies to all organizations, including non-profit ones such as SI, and indeed precisely because salary here is most definitely not a factor, non-profit organizations must also be more adept at picking up on the signs and signals from the volunteers who decide to devote their free time to their chosen cause, such as here at Soroptimist International.

☺ Luckily, I'm an eternal optimist. And what I find most hopeful about the Great Resignation and the reasons behind it, is that they reinforce my own beliefs in the positive, human and impactful role of business and leadership.

Changing the way, we treat team members and colleagues starts with the individual, the manager and the leader.

-It can begin with something as simple as checking in with each member of your team, or organizing a team activity that is not all about work.

-It involves listening to complaints and grievances and exploring ways to solve them.

-It can also mean thinking deeply about the merits of each team member, and asking yourself whether they actually feel valued in their current position.

None of this is a guarantee that employees and volunteers will stay - the situation is complex – but it's a start.

And here's another reason for optimism:

you can start doing this today.

You see, leadership *is* changing.

What are the skills and mindsets we need to master in order to lead innovatively?

I found five main traits that -in my opinion- make leadership innovative.

The first of these I have just addressed in the first part: "Inclusion", being inclusive, the others are:

->Capability to rethink and to cultivate an innovàtive culture
-> Having positive, relational energy
-> The Coaching Skill and
-> Becoming a Gamechanger

#Trait number 6: Inclusion

Since I've just addressed this topic in the first part of my presentation, let us skip to trait number 7

#Trait number 7: Capability to rethink and cultivate an innovative culture

If 2020 taught us something, it is that nothing is more certain than uncertainty.

Disruptive events and sudden changes in people's behavior might drastically occur overnight and we need to be prepared for that.

But how?

By keeping an open mind and developing the ability to *unlearn* and *re-learn*: this requires choosing courage over comfort, reconsidering our beliefs, embracing new ideas and new perspectives.The skill to rethink, to think again and create an innovative culture is a teachable skill.

Cultivating an innovative culture in the organization isn't simply a name or title change, it is a mindset and a skill-set change.
So, we need to be capable of rethinking the way we do things, our behaviors
and our beliefs - for example, leadership –
the way we lead people, projects, processes and partnerships and look at problems.

And above all we must learn to see possibilities and not just problems!
The ability to pivot quickly during times of change is absolutely crucial both in profit and non-profit organizations.
And yet, pivoting quickly and designing an innovative culture doesn't have to be complex if we follow these 3 steps that are actually 3 questions.

Question number 1: Outcome
-What are our desired outcomes?
Question number 2: Behaviours
-What behaviors will allow us to achieve our desired outcomes?
Question number 3: Enablers and Blockers
-What enables and blocks us from achieving that goal?

Mr. Alex Osterwälder the cofounder of Strategyzer and the creator of this method suggests that first we should "focus on killing the blockers".
So, we should ask ourselves
"What blocks me from developing an innovative culture right now in my organization?"
The first step will be to kill the blockers -to do this, it is good to stay in an "open mind and open will modus"- that is why I recommended it☺ before.

To kill the blockers needs the courage and the humility to ask oneself
"What are my, our blind spots? meaning "What am I not seeing?"
-Second to clarify and define what your desired outcomes are and fix them.
-And third to reflect about the behaviors needed to achieve the outcomes.
Designing an innovative culture is being intentional,
-being clear on what your blockers are
-what your goals are
-and then fix the behaviors to finally reach them.

As leaders, we have a duty of care for the people we lead.
Those of us willing to lay their ego aside, can grow as leaders and become better versions of ourselves at work and in life.
We all have an opportunity to create a meaningful, positive and thriving environment for our people.
This will not only have a lasting impact on the individuals we reach but create a ripple effect of increased social connection and inclusion across the organization.

So let us start to focus on killing the blockers that prevent us from achieving our goals and let us start by designing an innovative organizational culture.

#Trait Number 8: Having a positive relational energy
A study of the Yale School of Management shows that the greatest predictor of success is not power, charisma, influence, personality
or even innovative genius.
The factor number one that supersedes all others
is **"Positive Relational Energy"** that is to say the energy exchanged between people that help uplift, enthuse and renew them.
This is really the most under-utilized yet powerful predictor of leadership and organizational success.

I would like to give you some food for thought: "How we behave as leaders is moving our team's energy and productivity". We have to be conscious of this fact and be sure that we're dialing up and not dialing down people's energy.

Positively energized leaders are those that are able to enhance und uplift people in their organizations. They are called "positive energizers".
But it is not a superficial demonstration of false positivity;
"Positive energizers" demonstrate and cultivate virtuous actions,
like compassion, kindness, trust, integrity, authenticity, gratitude, humility in the organization, celebrating even small wins together and by uplifting others through value-based leadership, they end up lifting both themselves and the organization as a whole.

In this post pandemic time the ability to create and maintain Positive Relational Energy is the most impactful skill, as the pandemic has taken a significant toll on our well-being and energy and none of us can longer tolerate any more added stress, miscommunication or fights.
We have all become much more careful about our mental health and all the factors that threaten it.
I identified four toxic attributes that poison the SI Culture in the eyes of the Sorores an decrease energy. These attributes are:
ONE: Disrespect
TWO: Non inclusion
THREE: Un-ethical behavior
FOUR: Compètitive-ness

So, we as leaders need to worry about the factors that could make the culture in our organization toxic and talk about this – daring leaders are not silent about hard things.
Organizational change initiatives are more likely to succeed if leaders.

One: Communicate, focusing on the "why" not just the "what" of the change in order to increase the buy-in of members.

Two: Collaborate instead of compete, breaking down silos encouraging boundary expansion, and not tolerating competition

Three: Commit, adapting to challenges and staying positive & patient, maintaining an attitude of inner calm and basic confidence toward oneself, others, and the situation.
And finally

Four: Consider asking ourself and the team or club questions to test the degree of health or toxicity within the organization and to ensure that you systematically eliminate the toxic components that sap our energy. People who let the others feel de-energized, demoralized, diminished and uninspired are the so called "de-energizers".
Some might even can call them the "Energy-Vampires".

For example, one way to identify an energy vampire is to ask yourself…
When I interact with this person in my organization, what happens to my energy? Am I filled with energy or is my energy drained?
> To help you identify your team level of energy, here are some more effective questions:

- ➤ Do the team-members or club-members have space to bring up concerns or dissent?

- ➤ Do they feel that if they make a mistake or give open feedback it will be held against them?

- ➤ Do they feel others can undermine them?

- ➤ Do they feel valued for their unique skills and talents?

- ➤ Are we maintaining each other's engagement and elevating energy by celebrating successes together and demonstrating gratitude?

- ➤ Are we all pushing higher, pursuing innovation and transformation rather than the status quo?

These are examples of effective questions that can be helpful in fostering high quality interactions within the team and assure a high level of energy.
To know if you are a positive energizing leader the question is:
Are my actions inspiring others to dream more, learn more, and do more?
If the answer is yes, you are a positive inspiring leader!

Trait Number 9: The Coaching skill

This may be the most innovative and new skill of all and it is still the least practiced by leaders. It takes courage to ask questions rather than to offer up suggestions and advice or to find quick solutions. This is a completely new mindset; this is a coaching mindset that consists in mastering a simple yet profound technique and doing so you will support your team or people in a much more effective way.

A coach operates primarily through a conversation with an individual or a team.
By asking key questions, the coach helps the coachee (the person who is coached) define specific goals, identify the resources they need and establish a plan of action to achieve their goals.

You will not offer and find solutions but ask precise questions that will activate the personal resources of the people who, thanks in part to the reflection provided by the questions, will find the solution to their challenge on their own.

Leaders that own this skill will work less hard and have more impact.
This will make them very innovative and coaching a "must have skill" in their tool's repertoire.

What prevents the Coaching Skill from spreading and having a positive impact is the old leadership approach that compels managers and leaders to give advice instead of asking people, leveraging the right questions in order to help them figure out their own solution.

The leader of the past was a person who knew how to tell. The leader of the future will be a person who knows how to ask.

And indeed, what a large Google study revealed was that the first leadership skill was the coaching skill. People at Google that master this skill are the most highly regarded and respected leaders in that organization.

I designed 5 steps to help you own the coaching skill:
Step 1# Observe and ask ourself: "What percentage of the day, am I in "advice/opinion mode" vs. "asking effective questions mode"?

Step 2# Listen proactively to the complaints and grievances of your coachee or team

Step 3# Ask focused and specific questions and wait for an answer

Step 4# Explore the ways to activate the resources of your coachee or team that lie deep within them. Finally…

Step 5# Trust your coachee, trust your team, encourage and empower them.

Having a coaching habit for a leader is a mindset, a way of being, it's a habit that will take your leadership to the next level because:
you say less,
ask more and
change the way, you lead, forever!"

#Trait Number 10: Becoming a Game changer (GC)
Oh, I love these two words…Game Changer, Game Changing. I wrote a book about this topic last October "Six leadership skills, that make you a Game Changer" in German, it will be released in English too in September.

Maybe you will be surprised to hear that the most important skill to focus on in 2022 on **the TOP-10-Skills-List published by the World Economic Forum**
last January is the "Game Changing Skill".
(The others are: 2) Complex Problem Solving 3) Critical Thinking and Analysis
4) Creativity, Innovation, Ideation, Originality, and Initiative 5) People Management
6) Coordinating with Others 7) Emotional Intelligence 8) Judgment, Reasoning, Analytical Thinking, and Decision Making 9) Service Orientation 10) Negotiation)

So, what is a Gamechanger? and what does she do?
An what is Game changing?

Well, a Gamechanger could be someone who has recognized that things can no longer go on in that way,
or someone who questions the status-quo,
or someone who has the courage to admit that the rules of the game have become dysfunctional and obsolete and they no longer serve the organization.
Or she could be a leader who decides she wants to change the game,
could be a leader that chooses the future, by choosing to change the game.
Game changing is first a bold decision, then a bold strategy and also a bold mindset. Moreover, Game changing is a skill, a skill that can be learned!

I would passionately invite you to consider being an innovàtive leader by intentionally choosing to become a GC in your organization.

I can fully understand that maybe some of us feel this like a "mission impossible" because they feel they don't have the permission to enact a change.

But I want to encourage you, sisters, and tell you that this is possible by following these 3 Steps for changing the game

Step Number one -Accept or reject your responsibility to make a change

Step Number two -Be willing to take risks and

Step Number three -Make small steps

So, dear Sisters, care Sorelle, beloved Soroptimists, our first question we should authentically ask ourselves is:

"Are we willing to take responsibility for changing the game?"

A very famous coach made a statement that impressed me very much, it sounds like this:

"If you are willing to take responsibility and give away credit, you can do almost anything you want". This means:

if the small things you do fail, take responsibility,

if the small things succeed, give credit away!

The second question is:

"Are we willing -sisters- to take risks?"

This is maybe the difference between managers and leaders,

managers feel certainty in their daily life,

from leaders we expect them to take risks and be courageous navigating in

uncertainty, embracing the unknown and admitting not to always have the solutions.

Please remember: in Game Changing we are not always right, if it doesn't work, if we fail, we should admit it, we can call for support and above all we can try again tomorrow.

The third question is:

"How can we design the small and gradual steps in order to change the game?"

In a work environment where Game Changers don't believe they have the permission…the secret…,

the secret is to do gradual changes through small steps.

It's not about one single big move, it's a series of small steps, that occur gradually and continuously. Please remember: Game Changing is a transformational change; it doesn't occur overnight that is to say, it takes **time because it is a long-term transformation process.**

What we are transforming are the rules, that is to say our behaviors.

I want to remind each of us that **we** as leaders are in the position to choose the future of the organization by choosing to Change the Game, because -and here I quote Seth Godin a famous Coach

"This moment is a time, to do the work that matters,

for people who care"!!

So, let me conclude my presentation today by saying…

When everything out there changes, the "normal" no longer exists and disruption has become our routine, we -as leaders- must change too – or, if we cannot-

we must make way for those who can!!

Thank you