



Dr. Eleonora Bonacossa

→ Instilling Humanity
in Business Leadership

Cover Story



Discover the innovative spirit of Dr. Eleonora Bonacossa, a visionary leader renowned for her ability to challenge conventional thinking and inspire transformative change. As the Founder and Chief Visionary Officer of ARETA, Eleonora is on a mission to revolutionize the landscape of business and leadership coaching, shaping the lives of countless leaders and organizations along the way.

At the heart of Eleonora's approach lies a commitment to placing people at the forefront, recognizing them as the most

valuable asset in any endeavor. She advocates for a harmonious integration of mind and heart, fostering a culture where decisions are made with empathy and strategic insight.

Diversity and multiculturalism are celebrated as essential elements of Eleonora's philosophy, enriching both her personal and professional spheres. She champions initiatives that empower women, viewing their advancement as integral to societal progress.

Through her involvement in esteemed global communities like G100 and

Soroptimist International, Eleonora actively contributes to the advancement of gender equality and inclusivity on a global scale. Her dedication extends to the grassroots level, with initiatives such as the "I Can Do It Program" empowering women in leadership positions within German educational institutions.

Eleonora's multifaceted approach to leadership is a testament to her unwavering commitment to innovation, empathy, and inclusivity. By challenging the status quo and championing diversity, she continues to shape a future where every individual has the opportunity to thrive and excel.

Guided by Awareness, Integrity, and Humanity

Eleonora describes herself as someone with a profound sense of awareness that influences her actions both personally and professionally. Rooted in a deep commitment to aesthetics and ethics, her decisions are guided by a strong sense of integrity.

Having grown up in a multicultural environment with dual Italian and German nationalities, Eleonora values diversity and sees it as an essential aspect of her approach to work. Regardless of the context, she remains authentically herself.

At the heart of her identity lies a profound humanity, characterized by a genuine interest in people and unwavering respect for individuals. Eleonora believes that human connection is paramount in all aspects of life.

For Eleonora, humanity and the centrality of the human person serve as



guiding principles in both life and business. She embraces a motto that reflects her pursuit of beauty and her belief that ugliness will naturally fade in its presence.

Meaningful Connections

ARETA is a pioneering coaching institute headquartered in Frankfurt, Germany, led by Dr. Eleonora Bonacossa, a visionary of German-Italian descent. The institute's name, "ARETA," draws inspiration from the ancient Greek concept of "Areté," representing excellence and virtue. Reflecting their holistic approach, the ARETA logo portrays a head with key words and a heart at its core, symbolizing their commitment to addressing challenges with both intellect and compassion.

At ARETA, they champion the idea of placing humanity at the forefront of leadership, recognizing that leadership is not merely a skill but a profound journey rooted in building meaningful relationships. They reject the notion of "soft skills," preferring to emphasize the importance of what they term "human & relational skills," essential for their transformative journey in exploring new perspectives on leadership.

Their flagship coaching program, 'I Can Do It,' spans a month and seamlessly integrates online and in-person coaching, complemented by a VIP flat-rate chat service available 24/7. The synergy between these modalities reaches its apex during in-person sessions at their institute in Frankfurt, where proximity, direct interaction, and shared experiences foster an invaluable coaching dynamic.

Following in-person coaching sessions, clients have the opportunity to unwind and engage in genuine conversation over an Italian cappuccino, as Eleonora infuses a touch of Italian hospitality into the interaction. This transition from formal coaching roles to a more relaxed exchange amplifies the significance of the interaction.

At ARETA, cultivating meaningful relationships isn't just an objective; it's their commitment. They deliver bespoke services tailored to each client's unique needs, exploring innovative perspectives on leadership while upholding their core value of humanity.

Impactful Coaching and Inspirational Speaking

What has contributed significantly to Eleonora's success as a coach and speaker is her remarkable ability to connect not only with people's minds but especially with their hearts. She considers this skill indispensable in her line of work and firmly believes in its profound significance. Eleonora asserts with humility, "If I cannot touch people's hearts, I don't step on stage!"

Additionally, Eleonora attributes her success to possessing what she describes as 'positive relational energy.' She acknowledges that this aspect is often underestimated but recognizes it as a significant predictor of success. For her, this positive energy originates from her deep connection to her Italian heritage and a conscious appreciation of beauty in both people and nature. She emphasizes that generating this positive energy is not a simple task, and those who possess and radiate it can indeed be 'game changers' solely through their presence.





In terms of values, Eleonora places great importance on cultivating meaningful human connections, even within a business context, as she believes it is this aspect that truly makes leadership transformational. She deeply appreciates individuals and organizations that align their values with their actions. Furthermore, Eleonora holds a profound reverence for those who prioritize caring for our planet Earth, which she considers our 'Common Home.' She cherishes the beauty and diversity of our planet, reflecting on awe-inspiring phenomena such as the Northern Lights, the panoramic view of Rio de Janeiro from the Christ the Redeemer statue, the majestic Grand Canyon, and the rich biodiversity of her homeland, Italy—an open-air museum boasting the greatest biodiversity on Earth.

Transformative Trends in Leadership Training

In her role as a business and leadership coach, Eleonora has observed significant shifts in leadership training and coaching practices, largely influenced by recent research findings, including those from a McKinsey study. Notably, individuals tend to spend approximately 10 years in managerial positions before seeking essential leadership training—a delay that often results in setbacks for both the team and the company.

Recent global events have underscored the importance of continuous development in leadership, making leadership training courses crucial for navigating the ever-evolving landscape of work, characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA).

During the disruptive years, there has been a noticeable pivot towards a more human-centric approach in leadership training, emphasizing emotional intelligence and relational skills. Additionally, there is a growing demand for authentic and inclusive leadership, reflecting organizational priorities towards trust-building, diversity promotion, and effective interpersonal management.

Technology has played a pivotal role in shaping these developments, revolutionizing accessibility and flexibility in learning through platforms such as e-learning, webinars, and apps. Moreover, technology has transformed coaching practices, with virtual coaching platforms allowing individuals to access coaching services from anywhere in the world, breaking down geographical barriers and



expanding opportunities for personal and professional development. Digital tools like video conferencing and online collaboration platforms have enhanced communication between coaches and clients, enabling more frequent and convenient interactions.

As the world of work undergoes transformation, Eleonora advocates for a hybrid blend of technology and proximity in coaching. It's about leveraging technology to serve humanity while acknowledging that we are social beings with the capacity to empathize, connect, and feel deeply.

Pillars of Growth

In her journey of growth as a business leader, Eleonora upholds three cardinal principles. Firstly, she maintains an attitude of openness, embracing an open heart, open mind, and open will. This commitment to openness is coupled with a dedication to lifelong learning, enabling her to re-evaluate

old patterns and explore fresh possibilities continually.

Secondly, Eleonora prioritizes attending 2-3 high-level events each year, such as the Nordic Business Forum in the Scandinavian countries, held annually in September. Over two days, she gains invaluable insights and has the opportunity to listen to top-tier speakers like Adam Grant, Brené Brown, and Amy Webb, among others, who offer new perspectives, trends, and insights on leadership. This experience consistently enlightens her and broadens her horizons.

Thirdly, Eleonora actively engages with leaders, mentors, and individuals from diverse industries, not limited solely to the consulting sector, whom she regards as valuable role models. Interacting with them provides significant moments of growth, validation, and encouragement, fostering an environment where she can continue to explore, reconsider, and implement new ideas with courage.



Authentic Leadership and Inner Work

Eleonora finds it astonishing that there remains a pervasive lack of courage among leaders—a deficiency that impedes humanity's progress on a global scale. She emphasizes the importance of various forms of courage, including the courage to challenge the status quo, to show vulnerability, admit mistakes, develop leadership skills, and provide authentic feedback. Additionally, Eleonora observes a shortage of inclination towards what is known as "Inner Work," which involves the ability for self-reflection and personal development.

It's crucial to recognize that these two competencies—Courage and Inner Work—are notably prevalent among women. Historically and culturally, women have been practicing courage and inner work for at least two millennia, granting them a competitive advantage in leadership. One exemplary figure is the former Prime Minister of New Zealand, who demonstrated resilience, courage, and authenticity even during the pandemic.

Eleonora believes that women should be more aware of these inherent strengths, as they are now crucial in leadership roles.

Vision for Team Processes and Game-Changing Leadership

Eleonora believes that organizations should prioritize team processes over individual heroics. Team processes encourage collaboration, knowledge sharing, diverse perspectives, and shared accountability, ultimately leading to better and more sustainable outcomes compared to relying solely on individual heroism.

However, Eleonora acknowledges that the concept of individual heroics has evolved in today's work environment. If there are to be individual heroes, they should be the game changers—those capable of challenging the status quo and shaping the future.

It's essential to recognize that even game changers rely on teamwork. While an individual may spark change, true game-changing requires the support and commitment of a dedicated team. For Eleonora, true heroism lies in the courage to propose change, take responsibility, and embrace risk. A game-changer leader demonstrates heroism by giving credit where it's due when things work out and by assuming responsibility for failures if they occur. This approach fosters a culture of accountability and growth within the team.

Guide to Leadership Success

Eleonora's three key pieces of advice for aspiring leaders are:

- Focus on Self-Management
- Engage in Inner Work
- Embrace the '6 Essentials'

Eleonora's primary advice for individuals stepping into a leadership role for the first time is encapsulated in the mantra: "Learn to manage yourself before managing others." She openly inquires with her clients if they possess a genuine interest in people and if they are sincerely committed to engaging with them, as she firmly believes that effective leaders must genuinely care about people. Without this inclination, they may not be suited for leadership roles within organizations.

The second crucial piece of advice Eleonora offers is the necessity of engaging in "Inner Work," which involves deep self-reflection. Without this introspective process, achieving personal or professional growth becomes significantly challenging.

Another essential recommendation from Eleonora is to encourage young

leaders to develop and internalize certain human skills that are often underrated but pivotal for effective leadership. She firmly rejects the notion of labeling these skills as 'soft,' recognizing their undeniable importance. Among these skills, she prioritizes the six competencies outlined in her book '6 Leadership Skills to Unleash the Game Changer in You & Your Team,' which include acknowledging that one doesn't have all the answers, actively listening, providing a sense of safety, expressing appreciation, demonstrating care, and offering encouragement.

Through her guidance, Eleonora hopes to inspire a new generation of leaders who understand that at the heart of every successful business endeavor lies the human element. Ultimately, it is in this intersection where leadership transcends mere management, embracing the richness of humanity in all its facets

