

THE BRIGHT SIDE[®] OF CHANGE

Written by Donna Rae Smith

LEADING BIG: LESSONS FROM NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNERS

What a thrill it was to see three brave and determined women win the Nobel Peace Prize last week! I love these women's stories because they prove the power of personal resolve and commitment. For anyone who has ever wondered what can be achieved in the face of overwhelming odds, these women are a rallying call.



The winners are leaders in the truest sense of the word: in the face of difficult and dangerous circumstances, they took action when it mattered most. They could have easily felt hopeless. Or powerless. They could have wondered what possible difference one person can make. But that wasn't their attitude. They recognized that if they wanted change, they had to be the spark.

Their achievements remind us that each person's contribution is unique, and that who you are or where you come from doesn't limit what you can do, or what impact you can have. Prize winner, Leymah Gbowee, was an "average" citizen until, fed up with Liberia's civil war, she spearheaded a women's movement to demand peace.

Their successes show us the power of collaboration. Gbowee's movement brought together thousands of women across religious and ethnic lines for a cause they all believed in. The success of her movement was to be found in teamwork and partnership; she couldn't have had the same impact alone.

For years research has suggested that women lead differently than men, and the Nobel winners underscore those differences. They have demonstrated the effective leadership traits more commonly [associated with women](#), like higher levels of urgency, deep motivation and passion for a cause, collaboration, and bridge-building.

The Nobel laureates remind us that women don't need to lead like men. They need to lead like women, developing and honing their own innate strengths. Solutions to problems are best found when we include men and women in the problem solving, and when we embrace the value of different leadership styles.

THE EXPERIMENT:

Identify a woman leader who has a vision for significant change. What can be learned from her leadership? How does she engage, make decisions, get commitments from others, etc?

Send us a note about what you learned, and how this leader's style was different than what you've experienced in the past.

THE CONVERSATION: Share the results of your experiment in the comments below or contact the author directly at donnarae@bright-side.com.

ABOUT DONNA RAE SMITH

Donna Rae Smith is a guest blogger for Smart Business. She has forged a career, enterprise and an applied discipline on the practice of teaching leaders to be masters of change. She is the Founder and CEO of Bright Side, Inc., a transformational change catalyst company with an emphasis on the behavior-side of change. For more than two decades, Donna Rae Smith and the Bright Side team have been recognized as innovators in executing behavioral strategies coalesced with business strategies to accelerate and sustain business results. Bright Side®, The Behavioral Strategy Company, has partnered with over 250 of the world's most influential companies. For more information, please visit www.bright-side.com or contact Donna Rae at donnarae@bright-side.com.

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