



Raymond A. Mason School of Business

WILLIAM & MARY

LEADERSHIP & BUSINESS PODCAST

EPISODE 40: PRISCILLA SHUMWAY – REAL WOMEN, REAL LEADERS

Ken White

From the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. This is Leadership & Business. The weekly podcast that brings you the latest and best thinking from today's business leaders from across the world. We share the strategies, tactics, and information that can make you a more effective leader, communicator, and professional. I'm your host Ken White. Thanks for listening. What makes successful women leaders successful? Well, that's a question our guest wanted answered, so she and a colleague identified a select group of successful women in leadership positions and asked them to share the details regarding their leadership journeys. Those stories, along with an examination of leadership competencies, became a book *Real Women Real Leaders* surviving and succeeding in the business world. The book has not only become a hit with emerging female leaders but also with men who are supporting a wife, sister, daughter, or female friend whose goal is successful leadership. Priscilla Shumway is co-editor of *Real Women, Real Leaders*. She visited the College of William & Mary recently for the Women's Leadership Summit and Stock Pitch Competition. Prior to speaking with the attendees, she sat down with us to discuss what she and others have learned from the book. Here's our conversation with Priscilla Shumway.

Ken White

Priscilla, thank you for joining us appreciate you taking the time to share your expertise with us today on the podcast.

Priscilla Shumway

My pleasure. Thank you for inviting me.

Ken White

You have a very interesting book, a topic that's covered, but your approach is very different. Tell us about the book and why this unique approach.

Priscilla Shumway

Yes, thank you. So the name of the book is *Real Women, Real Leaders*, and the subtitle is *Surviving and Succeeding in the Business World*. It's co-edited by myself and Kathy

Hurley, and the whole vision for this particular book in order to sort of stand out from other women in leadership books is to really look at how do women differ in their leadership styles from men and, therefore, how can we strengthen the areas that we are perhaps a little weaker in and then how can we maximize the strengths that we have. So what we did was we started with a research study that was done back in 2012/2013 by an organization in Utah, Zenger Folkman Leadership Group. They had done a research project for Harvard Business Review. They had identified 16 leadership competencies, interviewed over 7,300 people all around the world. And they found that women outscore men on 12 of those 16 leadership competencies. So we went out then and created a process where we found 24 women who are leaders in their fields. All of the women are different ethnicities different ages. They come from different industries and backgrounds, and we asked them to write their own personal journey to leadership. We gave them a series of guiding questions. We gave them the results of this leadership profile and asked them what they felt their top five were. And so that was the genesis of the book was how do you tell the stories of leading women, and how do we create a compelling version of what we want women to think about in the world of work?

Ken White

Right now, you, in the book, you've got eight particular headers that you really dive into. But before we talk about that, you mentioned early on what the differences in the styles between men and women. What were some of the takeaways that you've experienced in doing your research?

Priscilla Shumway

So the interesting thing is that for women, women typically are more interested in motivating other people, developing other people, very high integrity and honesty, a lot of teamwork and collaboration, very interested in supporting and building relationships. Kathy and I have worked Kathy Hurley and I have worked together in various different educational publishing industries for many, many years. And to give you an example, back in the late 80s early 90s, in the educational software industry, there were very few women in leadership. In that industry, it was very male-dominated. So Kathy and two other of her female friends who were executives at that point decided to begin a mentoring program for other women in the industry, and they called themselves the DOLS D O L S called the dirty old ladies of software, and they started out they had maybe 25 or 30 women, and we would get together at various different conventions and meetings and have dinner, but we always encouraged ourselves to bring someone new from the industry another woman bring them to dinner. So it became a networking opportunity, and networking then grew into mentorship. At this point, the DOLS is still ongoing, and they have over 400 members, and the men in the industry have become very envious.

Ken White

Yeah.

Priscilla Shumway

And they've tried to get these things starting, so now I think they have what they call themselves the DOGS, the dirty old guys of software.

Ken White

That's great.

Priscilla Shumway

So I think that's one of the strengths that women have is building relationships, supporting each other, helping to develop each other. But on the other hand, and you will read that in many of the essays, women can also be very catty about each other, and Ken, if they feel threatened by another woman, can often undermine them. And so that's also something that we have found is prevalent with women in leadership, and so we're trying to help people to overcome that.

Ken White

Yeah. Now some of the women who've written essays that the leaders you've talked to any common threads in the you said it's a pretty diverse group but any commonalities among them in terms of leaders or how they got there.

Priscilla Shumway

Yes absolutely. So we have the former governor of North Carolina, Beverly Perdue. We have a young woman who is the only female African-American pastry chef in the Hall of Fame for pastry chefs.

Ken White

Wow.

Priscilla Shumway

And yet many of the women's commonalities were that they came from very poor backgrounds, many of them were the first in their families to go to college. But the commonality is that there was someone early on in their life who supported them, who saw something in them as a young girl who said I believe in you. You can do something, who supported them. And many, many times, it was a family member, it was a grandfather, or a grandmother, or an aunt, and as well it was someone in their education, a teacher, a principal, someone who believed in them and who supported them and propelled them on.

Ken White

Yeah. And even if that relationship is no longer taking place, they still remember that.

Priscilla Shumway

Exactly.

Ken White

But you know, men would have had sort of the same thing. They would have had someone in their corner. What is it about the female executive that makes that so important? Why did they? What's so special about that?

Priscilla Shumway

Well, I think because it's been harder and harder for women to take leadership roles or to be given leadership roles or to be given the opportunity to lead that anytime they can be supported and mentored is going to be important. And because they themselves realize the importance of that, they're more apt to realize the value of doing it for other people. One of the recent research articles that I quote in my section in the book is that the Girl Scouts did a review of middle school girl scouts and asked them if they themselves considered themselves a leader, and a very low percentage of the girls considered themselves a leader. And then, they were asked what's the barrier why do you not want to be a leader. And at that age, at the middle school age. They were afraid that their friends would not like them.

Ken White

Oh wow.

Priscilla Shumway

And so that's another issue that we talk about here is, starting at a very young age. How do you encourage young girls to realize that there is a role for leadership? There are perils, and yes, always, there will be people who try to shoot you down.

Ken White

Yeah.

Priscilla Shumway

But how do we overcome that?

Ken White

Interesting.

Ken White

We'll continue our discussion with Priscilla Shumway in just a minute. Shumway's visit to William & Mary and her appearance on the podcast was made possible by the Women's Leadership Summit and Stock Pitch Competition organized by the Boehly Center for Excellence in Finance through its two student clubs Smart Woman Securities and Women in Business. The center provides hands-on learning for undergraduate students from all majors. Other opportunities at the Boehly Center include a fellows program, study abroad, mentorship programs, and more. If you'd like to learn more, go to boehlycenter.com. That's b o e h l y center.com. Now back to our conversation with the co-editor of Real Women, Real Leaders, Priscilla Shumway.

Ken White

And some of the elements you have in the book one really jumped out at me. A leader displays high integrity and honesty. It seems when I'm teaching, especially with corporate groups, the whole idea of authenticity and honesty is very important to people today, more so than it even was a few years ago. What did you find in that particular element what struck you?

Priscilla Shumway

Yes, and that was one of the very highest that women outscored men on was integrity and honesty, and we really didn't get into the why of that. So I'll give you my guess. My hypothesis. I believe that women are not so much strategic and goal-oriented for the long term, so they are more in the immediate of what can I do in this moment to be morally correct to do what's right, to support other people, to build relationships, to make sure that my team is working well. Men, on the other hand, where they score very highly in this particular research was developing strategic perspectives. So I think that perhaps there's a correlation there that in order to advance and move forward, sometimes the integrity or the honesty might take a backseat to that. That's just a hypothesis.

Ken White

Yeah, interesting. Interesting. Inspires and motivates others. What did you learn in terms of that particular element?

Priscilla Shumway

That was a big theme for every woman's essay in here was the understanding of how important that is. And again, I think it goes back to being aware of those folks who had inspired them. Who had supported them and realizing how important that was that they wouldn't be where they are now. Secretary of State for the state of Montana, former Assistant Secretary of Education for the United States. They wouldn't be where they are now if it weren't for other people who inspired them, who motivated them, and who supported them. So I think there's a sense of giving back.

Ken White

Yeah.

Priscilla Shumway

There's a real sense of nurturance that's innate with women. And perhaps it's biological. It's anthropological. But I think that that is something that is a little more prevalent in women. And so, therefore, they're more willing to mentor and develop other people.

Ken White

Somebody help me, and I'm gonna pass it on, right? It's my turn now.

Priscilla Shumway

That's correct. That's correct.

Ken White

Very interesting. Takes initiative that's interesting because, you know, in talking to a lot of people who study that the way a man is seen in terms of initiative is different than a way a woman can be seen. What were your takeaways from that takes initiative pillar?

Priscilla Shumway

So it's interesting that you ask that because I looked at the William & Mary Women's Leadership Summit website. And they have several advertisements videos from YouTube of current advertisers, and this whole push of women and kids young girls' vision of what being a woman is. And one of the ads, I believe it was for Always, which is a feminine hygiene product. They said you know, if a man takes initiative and takes control, the word that's assumed for him is boss. When a woman takes initiative and tries to take control, she's seen as bossy. And so there's sort of a different persona, I guess you would say, in corporate America right now. And so taking initiative for women is more and more women are realizing to use Sheryl Sandberg's we have to lean in. We have to sit up at the table, and we have to do it whether somebody is looking or not. And that's really what taking initiative is all about is seeing what needs to be done and getting it done happening. Creating a team whether or not you're being asked to do it whether it's being required of you or not. And women were scored very, very highly on taking initiative.

Ken White

Drive for results. What's that about?

Priscilla Shumway

Yeah. So the women the essays in here women were very conscientious about feeling that they needed to show that they were worthy of what they did. So they were very goal

oriented. They said that they needed to set a goal and show prove that they could do it. And part of it, many of them felt, was because they were a woman, they were judged by a higher standard. They had to do more to prove themselves in order to get the next promotion, et cetera. And I'm hoping that as our world changes and more and more lead women are leaders that women won't have to drive quite so hard or feel as though they have to drive harder for results in order to be considered competent.

Ken White

How much has it changed? Because as you're saying that, I'm thinking, boy, are we not there yet? For crying out loud, are we not there yet, and maybe we're not? But it has it. How have you seen it change from beginning of your career? My career today it's a different environment but are women progressing as leaders?

Priscilla Shumway

Yes, I think we are. I think for sure we are, and I think part of it is that more and more corporations are realizing the value of having women in leadership roles. We quote a lot of different statistics in the book about the companies that have more women on their board of directors. For example are, making more money having better customer service scores. I mean, it just goes on and on and on, so people are paying attention to that. And that's not to say that they're putting a woman on the board just so they can have a woman on the board. But I think that it is more apparent in the world today. And I think also because of technology, and because we can work virtually, there is more opportunity for women, especially for women who want to also have families for women and men who want to have families the ability to work from home so that you can be your soccer coach at four o'clock. You can still log in at eight o'clock and do a little extra work after the dad has put the kids to sleep or the mom or whatever, so it's not just a female issue. I think it's a male and a female issue. So virtual workers. Technology. There's a lot of things that are in play in our global society that are helping with that issue.

Ken White

Yeah, it's interesting. You know we have an online MBA now. A fully online MBA and one of the biggest demographic pieces interested in the online MBA is the woman who just stopped work for a couple of years to raise the family. They don't want to feel out of it. Well, this is perfect. I can stay home. I'll pick up my MBA, and you know what a great opportunity, so technology is definitely playing a role in a lot of different ways.

Priscilla Shumway

Yes.

Ken White

When you talk to people about your book, and it's so interesting the whole approach you've taken. What's the feedback you hear? What do people say that they like about it or what they've learned about?

Priscilla Shumway

So what we hear over and over again is that people love to read the stories. They're not so much interested in the research. There's a lot of hard facts out there about women in leadership. But we learn so well when we understand other people's stories. And so the book, really, I have often told people I kind of view it as a bathroom book. It's not a book that you're going to pick up and read from cover to cover. It's more a book that you can jump in and out of. If you find an essay or a person that might be of interest to you, you might jump in and read that. Jump back and forth in the book. We also have found that people are really interested in the appendix. There's a lot of resources in the appendix. Many people have said that that has been of huge value to them as well. So I think that it's the stories that resonate the most, and for many women to hear that in this particular research study, we outscored men on 12 of the 16. It sort of validates what they are already doing on a daily basis in their world of work.

Ken White

That's our conversation with Priscilla Shumway, and that's our podcast for this week. Leadership & Business is brought to you by the Center for Corporate Education at the College of William & Mary's Raymond A. Mason School of Business. The Center for Corporate Education can help you and your organization get to the next level with business and leadership development programs that specifically fit your needs. If you're interested in learning more about the opportunities at the Center for Corporate Education for you or your organization, check out our website at wmleadership.com. That's wmleadership.com. Thanks to our guest this week, Priscilla Shumway, and thanks to you for joining us. I'm Ken White. Until next time have a safe, happy, and productive week.