

The Standard Begins Within

What changed when I turned 50 and why the discipline of leading yourself well matters.

“You are weighty not because of a number that can be measured on a scale, but because your presence creates lift for others.”

Being a businesswoman doing her best is not about perfection. It is about alignment. It is about integrity between who you say you are and how you actually live.

You are weighty not because of a number that can be measured on a scale, but because your presence creates lift for others. Your discipline creates stability. Your warmth creates safety. Your excellence creates standards. Your voice creates clarity.

What this means is being intentional about what you are intentional about in love. Protect your focus. Steward your energy. Honor your assignments. Extend grace where it is needed, including to yourself.

The standard does not begin in the marketplace. It begins within.

Many women move through different roles across the years. But it is when we lead ourselves well that we can reach back and lead others.

I am a daughter, a wife, a mother, and a woman working in purpose. Over the years, I have served as an executive assistant, executive recruiter, executive producer, and now as an executive editor. The one role that has remained constant is my willingness to serve in the capacity required of me at the time.

At 50, I declared a quiet but defining transition in my life. I moved from being a servant leader to becoming a leader with a servant's heart. That distinction may sound subtle, but for me, it changed everything.

What made me change?

I once heard a woman say that when women reach this stage, for some reason their tone changes. She said it with such seriousness that I could not help but laugh. It was an uncomfortable laugh, but nevertheless a release, a reset for my nervous system that signaled to me the beginning of the next stage of my life.

And the truth is that realization can come at any age. A scriptural proverb reminds us that growth and renewal are always possible:

“Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” — Romans 12:2

I believe that as an encourager of people, I move with a servant's heart. That has never changed.

What has changed is my posture.

I now choose to move in spaces where I can lead with that same servant's heart. And the only place I boldly declare I am committed to leading in full grace is myself.

And when you lead yourself with grace, intention, and courage, everything connected to you has permission to rise.

Lead yourself well, and you will never have to chase authority. It will recognize you.

As you read this, I want to challenge you to pause for a moment and think of one woman who has made a meaningful impact on your life. Consider the ways her presence created stability, encouragement, opportunity, or strength for you. Leadership is often measured in titles, but impact is most often measured in the lives we influence along the way.

During this Women's History Month, it is also worth noting the leadership of Pamela McElvane, CEO of Promena. Set the Standard whose work for three decades has helped build a platform that continues to shape conversations around leadership, opportunity, and measurable impact.

Thank you to every woman, every day of every month who has led the way for herself and others.

Happy Women's History Month.

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