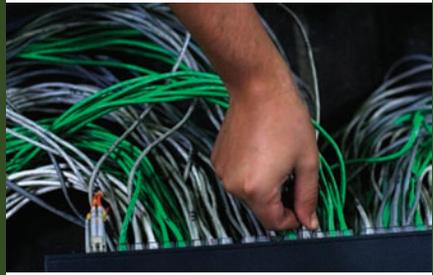


Law Firm
Management
and Economics:

Women on Top— The Woman's Guide to Leadership and Power in Law Firms

Ida O. Abbott, J.D.



WEST®

ALA®
Association of Legal
Administrators

Chapter 12

Strategy

- § 12:1 Develop a strategy for leadership success
- § 12:2 Plan for leadership
- § 12:3 Choose a leadership path: rainmaking vs. management
- § 12:4 Rainmaking
- § 12:5 Management
- § 12:6 Choose committees strategically
- § 12:7 Make yourself known as leadership material
- § 12:8 Get connected through internal networks
- § 12:9 Build and use outside networks
- § 12:10 Find mentors and champions
- § 12:11 Identify role models
- § 12:12 Acquire needed leadership knowledge and skills
- § 12:13 Practice self-management
- § 12:14 Set priorities and plan around them
- § 12:15 Delegate
- § 12:16 Juggling work and family

Appendix A

KeyCite®: Cases and other legal materials listed in KeyCite Scope can be researched through the KeyCite service on Westlaw®. Use KeyCite to check citations for form, parallel references, prior and later history, and comprehensive citator information, including citations to other decisions and secondary materials.

§ 12:1 Develop a strategy for leadership success

Vision is not enough, it must be combined with venture. It is not enough to stare up the steps, we must step up the stairs.

—Vaclav Havel

To become a leader, you must approach your career strategically. This means setting your sights on long-term leadership goals and determining which actions and choices will help you reach those goals. The planning process is straightforward, but it requires disciplined thinking. There is no single formula that addresses all women's ambitions and circumstances, and each woman's ultimate plan is unique to her. Because the strategy may take years to execute, staying on track is challenging,

and many women lose heart. Having a clear vision and a defined plan will remind you that you are working toward something important. This chapter will look at the process and components of developing a strategy for your leadership success. Table 12.1 presents questions for you to consider as you develop that strategy.

After discussing how to create a strategy, this chapter looks at the two most common paths to leadership: rainmaking and law firm management. Along either path, a great deal of leadership activity and opportunity takes place in law firm committees. So this chapter gives special attention to how to think strategically when you choose or are tapped for a committee assignment.

In addition, planning your strategy requires you to examine the current state of affairs in the firm, the obstacles you may face, and the resources you will need in order to make your strategy work. Gathering “intelligence” about current business conditions in the firm, its future direction, and the agendas of the firm’s leaders and powerful partners informs you about the current playing field and what to anticipate in the future. When you know the lay of the land, you can avoid hazards and exploit or create conditions that make your efforts more likely to succeed. As one leader said, *“If you see obstacles, create alternatives.”* The resources you need include mentors, champions, and role models, as well as supporters who will help you be recognized and accepted as a leader.

The latter part of this chapter addresses several areas where strategic thought and planning will facilitate your work as a leader. In order to carry out all of your leadership obligations, you need to acquire the skills and knowledge that you do not already possess. To manage effectively at work and at home, you must be extremely focused, efficient, and well organized. Delegating work to others and using assistants to do some work for you or help you to do it more expeditiously are important habits to learn. For women who have families, this chapter also looks at ways to manage your work and family life.

TABLE 12.1. Developing Your Strategy to Leadership

- What is my leadership vision? What will it look like when it is realized?
- Is my vision compatible with the firm's future direction?
- What is the best path to take to realize my vision?
- What goals will help me achieve it?
- What obstacles will I face?
- What fears, uncertainties, and doubts are holding me back?
- What resources will I need?
- What sacrifices will I have to make in other aspects of my life in order to be a leader in my firm? Which am I willing to make?
- Will I have to compromise any of my values? Which compromises am I willing to make? Which values are non-negotiable?
- What are my strengths as a leader? What are my shortcomings?
- What knowledge, abilities, and skills do I have that will make me effective as a leader?
- What knowledge, abilities, and skills will I need to acquire? How will I acquire them?
- Can I tolerate the risks I will face to become a leader and when I am a leader? How will I be able to deal with those risks? How can I minimize the chances of failure?

§ 12:2 Plan for leadership

If you don't know where you are going, you might wind up someplace else.

— Yogi Berra

When you are clear about what you want, you can start to translate your ambitions into action by developing a strategic leadership plan. The plan can be very simple, stating the general direction you want your career to take, or quite detailed, with specific, measurable goals, action steps, and a timeline. It will always be a work in progress, reflecting current priorities that will change as your life proceeds. The plan should be revisited regularly, and you can make midcourse corrections or add new goals as current goals are attained. The important thing is to shape an agenda for your future that reflects your values and ambitions, emphasizes your competitive strengths, and gets you where you want to go.

To plan strategically is to think critically about how you will

bridge the gap between where you are now and where you want to be. Your strategy outlines how you will get from the present to the future. The steps are logical:

- assess your values, strengths, and motivation
- define your vision and goals
- choose a path
- consider possible obstacles (internal and external)
- identify the resources and support you will need
- outline your action steps

The plan you create will be uniquely yours, and to a large degree you will make it up as you go along. There are no maps to guide you to successful leadership nor even clear road signs. The good news is that this allows for “multiple paths to effectiveness.”¹ You can create your own strategies and styles or study what works for others and combine those that appeal to you. You can try and adapt various approaches as situations and dynamics change. The downside, however, is that the multitude of possibilities can be frustrating, scary, and a barrier to your ability to bring all your talents to the forefront. It will help if you treat constructing your career as a grand and exciting adventure.

Leaders must be able to think strategically, and planning your career in leadership is a good place to practice your strategic skills. Understanding the context is critical, as discussed in Part II. After looking inward to see how your ambitions, values, and strengths fit into leadership possibilities in your law firm, you are ready to create your leadership strategy. To be successful, that strategy must be compatible with the culture and business objectives of the firm. Looking carefully at the demands of leadership within your firm helps you understand the rewards and costs, determine what is worth pursuing and at what sacrifice, and prepare the foundation necessary to support your aspirations and your strategy.

One key piece of information is your firm’s strategic plan. Knowing the firm’s strategic business goals allows you to test your own goals against the firm’s to ensure that they are compatible. A related and important item is where your department or practice specialty stands with regard to the firm’s future direction. You probably selected your practice out of personal preference for the area and enjoy it. However, if you intend to po-

[Section 12:2]

¹Ruderman, M.N., & Ohlott, P.J. (July/Aug. 2005), Leading roles: what coaches of women need to know, *Leadership in Action*, Center for Creative Leadership.

sition yourself for a leadership role, the current and long-term status of your practice group will be a factor. It will make a huge difference to your planning if your practice area is seen as critical to the firm's future growth, or if it is going to be phased out. Related indicators that are important to consider as you sketch out your plan include: client information (e.g., which firm clients are the largest revenue generators and which of those you serve), internal firm trends (e.g., where most of the firm's revenue has been coming from, how much of the firm's revenues are generated by your practice group), and marketplace trends (e.g., changes in client expectations, increase or slowdown in particular practice areas).

Many of the leaders I interviewed placed great importance on setting specific goals, saying the sooner you have a clear strategy and objectives, the better your chances of reaching your goals. However, goal setting is not the only way to proceed. When approaching the future, leadership researcher Annie McKee found that people use three different leadership planning styles: goal-oriented, direction-oriented, and action-oriented.²

- The *goal-oriented* approach is the one most lawyers are familiar with. You identify specific short-term and/or long-term goals and set concrete action steps to move toward them. This is the style most commonly used in other planning aspects of legal work and is supported by most law firm performance review systems.
- The *direction-oriented* approach to planning is planning toward a goal without the linear details. People who use this approach are big-picture thinkers and know the general direction they want to go in, but they stop short of getting too specific about goals. Guided by "an overarching set of principles, values, or a vision,"³ they watch out instead for opportunities they can leverage in pursuit of their objectives.
- The *action-oriented* planning approach is used by people who live in the moment without paying great heed to the future or to long-term planning. They see planning as a series of tasks and activities without worrying about where the steps will lead. Instead of planning for the future, they focus on the present, concentrating on who they are as leaders now rather than on who they might be, or what they might do in the future. A subset of this group "choose[s] each action according to the logic of the moment and base[s]

²McKee, A., Boyatzis, R., & Johnston, F. (2008), *Becoming a resonant leader* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press).

³McKee, Boyatzis, & Johnston (2008), *Becoming a resonant leader*.

the next decision on outcomes of recent past actions.” In other words, if they like what they are doing, they continue to do more of it or take it to the next level. If they do not, they move on to something else.

McKee emphasizes that each planning style has benefits and employs skills that are useful in planning for the future. She encourages leaders to be aware of their natural preference but to learn and include elements from all three styles. For example, if you tend to be highly goal-oriented, it would be useful to make room for some unplanned leadership-oriented activities. Adhering too strictly to your plan might cause you to overlook interesting opportunities that come your way. If you are direction- or action-oriented, you might include a few measurable goals that support your progress. Without any framework at all, you may find yourself wasting time on activities that get you nowhere.

The leaders I interviewed used all three planning styles. While some were very systematic, set goals, and worked assiduously toward them, others had no clear plans but a general direction; and a few had not considered leadership at all until they did it. Sometimes leadership opportunities fell into their laps and they rose to the occasion and made the most of it. One managing partner was surprised when she was approached about the position. She was not a major rainmaker, held no important management posts, and as a lateral, had only been practicing at the firm a few years. However, the firm was going through a difficult time, and partners were unhappy with their current leaders: prominent rainmakers whose main focus was on clients, not firm management. Partners realized they needed a different type of leader, a strategic thinker with outstanding communication, management, and people skills. In considering all the partners in the firm, they saw her as the most promising candidate. Despite initial wariness, she agreed to do it, liked it, and found she was good at it.

The women I interviewed who knew they wanted to be leaders took more proactive approaches:

- Women who were determined to play important leadership roles set and achieved specific business goals that enabled them to attain the positions they desired.
- Some women methodically found practice niches where they could use their attributes to their best advantage. One African-American leader successfully transferred out of employment law, where there were many women of color, and moved into IP law, where there were few, and she would stand out. Another woman switched from a large practice

group to a smaller one where there were fewer senior associates blocking her advancement to partnership.

- Several women became prominent leaders outside the firm, primarily in local, state, and national bar associations, which raised their profiles as leaders inside the firm.
- A few women used their previous experience in government or corporate legal departments to become leaders when they joined their firms as laterals. Some came to firms with established reputations as leaders, while others negotiated leadership roles as part of their agreement to join the firm.
- Several women got leadership experience by leaving their firms and moving to business, government, or nonprofits. They then returned to private practice in a higher leadership position, either in their former firms or more often, in other firms.

Whichever planning approach you use, having a vision of where you want to go makes it easier and more likely for you to spot serendipitous opportunities. It makes you alert to openings that other people miss. You can grab those opportunities directly, or if that isn't possible, you can develop a strategy to make it possible. For example, if there is a vacancy on the finance committee, and you are not an obvious candidate, you can put your name in the hat to be considered. Alternatively, you can ask an influential partner to nominate and lobby for you. To be in a position to do that, you need to lay the groundwork in advance: think ahead about what you want, know who the players are in that area, and start or solidify relationships with people who might be able to help you. Unless you build those relationships first, you cannot assume that they will know your capabilities or leadership desires, or that they will help you just because you ask them to; nor can you expect that opportunities will be available when you are ready or want them.

Keep your eyes and ears alert for existing openings and for developments, trends, and upcoming events that may signal a future leadership need in the firm. To ensure that you are in the best possible position for these opportunities, take stock of leadership experiences that have prepared you to take on new levels of responsibility. Ask yourself the following questions:

- What leadership positions do you hold now?
- What leadership roles have you held in the past?
- Which leadership roles do you find interesting and challenging?
- At which leadership roles do you feel especially effective?
- What are the aspects of leadership that you find exciting?

- Which aspects of leadership give you the most satisfaction?
- What parts of being a leader present the hardest challenges for you?
- Which leadership abilities do you want to improve?

Take advantage of leadership opportunities whenever you can, because demonstrating your leadership ability will open paths toward higher leadership responsibilities. When you see an opportunity, let decision-makers know your aspirations and readiness and ask them for the chance to prove yourself. If you are eager but inexperienced, ask a current leader how the leadership advancement process works in the firm, and what you can do to develop your leadership abilities and raise your visibility so that you will be well positioned when something appears in the future.

Also consider whether any of your current activities are natural preludes to other leadership roles. Some positions are stepping-stones to others. When the opportunity to move up presents itself, you can step right in. For example, many lawyers who head up the summer associate program go on to become hiring partners. Is that something that would appeal to you? If so, throw your hat into the ring; volunteer to chair the summer program.

The most focused and disciplined form of planning is the goal-oriented approach: You set the end points and decide how you will get there. Once you have a strategy, you can convert it into specific steps that carry you toward your goals. Consistent action toward your desired result generates momentum, keeps you motivated, and helps you get through any rough spots as you move forward toward completion. A general plan of action may suffice, but the more precise and concrete you make the steps, the better able you will be to execute the plan and measure your progress. No matter how broad or detailed you make it, keep your plan flexible because there are many things you cannot anticipate or plan for. Your strategy may be beautifully crafted, but it is subject to the forces of time and circumstance. So let your goals guide you but not restrict you. Pay attention to shifts and trends in the firm, the market, and the profession that may require you to rethink your goals or your strategy. Stay nimble, observant, and receptive to possible changes.

Being strategic means always being alert to unexpected opportunities that may not be part of your plan but will move you toward your goals—or to new goals—in a different way. When you are open to possibilities, surprising opportunities come your way. If you are offered a chance to do something that is not in line with your plan, your goals can help you evaluate whether

this surprise offer or situation is worth pursuing. You may want to become a practice group leader but are asked to join a political administration. You can decide whether this diversion will set your plans back too far for comfort and you should stay put, or if it is simply too exciting to turn down. If you accept the political post, your plan can be revisited and revised when the time comes for you to return to practice. At that time, you may decide to pick up where you left off in your original plan to become a firm leader, or scrap the plan entirely and stay in politics. One of the leaders I interviewed realized that the normal path to leadership in her law firm would take too long for her ambitions. So she left the firm for the public sector where she built a strong reputation and made important political contacts in a niche practice. When she returned to private practice, her experience, reputation, and client base catapulted her into a powerful leadership role.

Appendix A is a simple template for a leadership plan that you can use to state your leadership goals and the steps you will take to achieve them. It starts with a statement of your vision, which encompasses your ultimate goals. It then asks you to list two or three long-term objectives. For each objective, list interim goals and milestones. Interim goals may take a year or more while milestones are shorter-term, six months to a year from now. Reaching a milestone indicates that you have successfully taken the short-term steps that move you toward achieving your ultimate vision. The template also calls for you to identify people who may be able to help you and resources or experiences you may need. It contemplates that you may already know that these people can help you, or you may have to ask for their help, so you need to indicate when and how you will do that. The same is true for resources and experiences: indicate which you can put to use right away and which you will need to acquire.

Executing your leadership plan is a continual process that requires discipline and dedication. Not every plan goes smoothly. If you don't reach a milestone, or one of your goals does not work out, it does not mean you have failed. Try to figure out what happened. Was the goal too ambitious or unrealistic? Was it a lack of preparation? Did you allocate insufficient time to make it happen? Was there an external factor that you could not control, like a drop in demand for your practice specialty? Learn what you can from the experience and revise your plan according to the lessons learned. Then adjust your expectations, set new goals and milestones, and move on.

Planning and carrying out your leadership ambitions is serious business. However, it is good to maintain a healthy perspective and sense of humor about it. Said one leader: *"I am deeply seri-*

ous about what I want, which is to succeed at top levels. But I also see it as a big game and can be light about it too.”

It might be helpful to hear what women leaders said about some of the strategies they used and the advice they offer about choosing the right work, helpful people, and purposeful activities:

Distinguish yourself. Look for hot growth areas. Look for growth potential. What needs attention?

Go into a field where there aren't lots of other junior partners ahead of you who will block your way up, or work with someone who is retiring soon and will need to pass along his practice.

You need to think how you will jockey for succession to other partners' clients. You need to let the partner and client know you are interested in transitioning into the leadership role. Build on the client relationship. Turn it into an opportunity for you and the client.

Read business journals, not just law. Business trends lead to legal work. What do corporations and corporate counsel care about?

I'm strategic about choosing activities. I volunteered for the MCLE committee. It was easy to do without a lot of extra time. If I heard of a good program, I suggested to a partner that he should send someone. It showed the partner I was looking out for the firm's interests.

Don't limit yourself to what you know and are good at. Take a chance. Look for fields you don't see—there are so many possibilities; explore them.

Read the firm's new client and new matter openings. What's going on? What clients will need service? What do I know about the client or the law that others might not know about? Who's bringing in interesting work? Reach out to those partners directly, even if it crosses practice group lines.

Align yourself with premium, high-profile growth practices that the firm values. The firm will value you, too. It's hard to be distinctive doing commodity work and hard to distinguish you from your peers. Also, the compensation is not as high because of pressure on rates.

If you want to be a leader, tell people. Find mentors; take strategic assignments. The results will be better. Be in charge of your own agenda, and be sure you know how you're going to do it so that you do it well. Do not do everything the firm wants you to do but what you want to do. If the senior partner asks for your help get something in return.

I offered to help plan the firm retreat. I arrived early and had lunch with the planning group which included the founding partner of the firm, who is the most powerful person in the firm. Many people suck up to him. I knew that if he thought I was worth keeping, he would help me. At the retreat, I was associated with people he respects, and he saw that I was working for the good of the firm.

§ 12:3 Choose a leadership path: rainmaking vs. management

The two most common paths to law firm leadership are through rainmaking and management. Women who are preeminent rainmakers in law firms are still rare, and most women who bring in substantial business are concentrated in the middle ranks of the rainmaking elite. Most women leaders take the second route, serving in a series of management roles, especially on committees. There are pros and cons for either leadership path; you need to consider them and then choose the one that suits you best.

Both rainmaking and management require a large and steady investment of time and energy. Depending on your priorities—and those priorities may change over time—one or the other may be more appealing to you. If what is important to you is status, autonomy, and compensation, rainmaking is for you. However, if you like to work collaboratively, lead change efforts, or find solutions to firm problems, management is the way to go.

These two leadership paths are not mutually exclusive and, in fact, you may need to be a rainmaker at even a modest level in

order to be considered for leadership in some firms. Most successful women leaders do both rainmaking and management. A 2004 study¹ found that women who held leadership positions in management were also more effective rainmakers, and that being in leadership was a “pivotal success factor” for rainmaking. Women at every level who held leadership positions reported significantly higher business origination than their peers who did not. Many leadership activities provided them networking opportunities that they used to build relationships with more partners and thereby expand their internal referral sources. High visibility leadership positions helped them become known throughout the office or firm, again increasing possible referrals. Some committees and positions enabled them to become more visible to clients and business prospects and allowed them to meet new contacts. In all these ways, being leaders through management gave them greater prominence and confidence, which also made them more successful at business development.

Timing is a key factor in choosing the rainmaking or management route to leadership. Depending on your priorities and the status of your career, you may choose different directions at different times in your life. As a junior partner, concentrating on business development is essential in order to give you the power to decide what you want to do later. When your client base is stable, and your rainmaking abilities established, you may decide you want to do something else—such as take on more management responsibility; or, if you have done a lot of management work, you might want to switch in the other direction. Many women leaders who have been in significant management roles for several years step down for a while to focus on business development. They feel that with a more substantial book of business, they will be able to move into higher and more powerful levels of leadership. The experience of one woman I interviewed bears this out. This leader stepped down as office managing partner in order to focus on bringing in business. When she successfully established a robust and lucrative client base, she returned to management and was able to operate from a position of greater strength and credibility. Her practice benefited everyone: she kept other partners busy doing work for her clients, which made her partners and clients happy and freed her up to do the firm leadership work that she enjoyed.

[Section 12:3]

¹MacDonagh, C.A., & Borgal Shunk, M.L. (Dec. 2007), Women rainmakers: keys to business development success, *National Magazine*, Canadian Bar Association, http://www.cba.org/CBA/PracticeLink/leadership__marketing/women_rainmakers.aspx.

§ 12:4 Rainmaking

Rainmaking is the principal source of power in a law firm. As noted in Chapter 6, the more business you control, and the more work you provide for others, the more power you have. This comes as no surprise. Law is, after all, a professional service business, and without clients to serve, there would be no business. Those who produce business for the firm, and a livelihood for others, are valued most highly.

For women who aspire to leadership, rainmaking power opens many doors. You may want to wield that power in a formal leadership role, such as a seat on the Executive Committee. You may prefer to be an informal leader, lobbying for projects and policies you care most about and knowing that people will listen to you; or you may choose to operate indirectly by having your protégé placed in a leadership position. Being a rainmaker does not ensure that you will get what you want but it definitely gives you negotiating power.

Rainmaking sounds riskier than management, but it actually provides greater security. In fact, a solid client base is the only source of security for lawyers today. Management may seem safer because it carries less pressure for self-promotion and generating new business, but the feeling of safety is deceptive. Having a portable book of business allows you to move elsewhere if you need or want to leave your firm. Knowing that your client relationships will produce business and income may be the most important reason to make rainmaking your top priority.

However, many women with tremendous talent and potential for rainmaking deliberately avoid the rainmaking path. One unfortunate reason is that they approach rainmaking with a negative mind-set. Some women feel this way because they downplay their ambitions, as discussed in Chapter 2, or are afraid they will fail. Sometimes women face real stumbling blocks, but often they make up excuses to avoid it: “I don’t like doing it,” “I don’t have time,” “I’m not good at it,” “I don’t know any potential clients.” In most cases, these inhibitions can be overcome with coaching, encouragement, and adoption of a more positive outlook.

The leaders I interviewed recognized early in their careers that having substantial books of business gave them access to leadership as well as control, independence, and respect. They emphasized that their firms are businesses and contributing to a healthy bottom line is imperative. They also understood that despite what firms say they value, what matters the most is money. One African-American partner was recruited to her firm in large part because of her national reputation for work on diversity, but

she soon learned that her diversity work meant much less than the firm let on. *“I put the firm on the map for its work toward diversity. But they don’t care. The only thing they care about is how big is your book?”*

Leaders who want to be change agents are especially sensitive to the connection between money and power. Unless they have a strong revenue base, they do not have the power to drive the changes they seek. One leader stated the relationship precisely: *“Power and influence in the firm are all about revenue. Male or female, leadership depends on bringing in revenue. Hours, clients, new business, it does not matter so long as it produces money. If you are not connected to money, you have no power in the firm, both perception and reality. And if you have no power, it’s hard to bring along others you care about.”* Another leader echoed those thoughts: *“You can be a change agent without money, but it is not easy. It’s better to have the money first; then you can be involved in leading change.”* Still another leader, an Asian-American woman who had been the president of several bar associations, said that respect as a leader within the firm eluded her until she became a “player” by virtue of the book of business she developed.

Being a rainmaker provides more than access to leadership opportunities. It gives you the freedom to take charge of your career and your schedule. Although client service demands may be greater when you are the responsible partner, being in charge of the client relationship gives you the ability to manage those demands. One leader with three young children observed that being in control of her own clients made her life easier because she could make her own decisions and daily plans; she did not have to clear them with other partners.

Rainmaking can also be a great source of personal and professional satisfaction. One leader explained that she found many benefits in having her own clients: *“I came from humble roots and couldn’t rely on anyone to help me. I worked through college, always searched for the best jobs, the most money. I knew I wanted to get ahead, be in charge. I was ambitious. The firm I joined gave associates a percentage of the revenues they brought in and I saw that I could make more money if I had my own clients. It became like an addiction. I had more satisfaction at work and more control over my life and career with my own clients.”*

One thing to keep in mind is that while being a rainmaker gives you power and may get you a top management position, it does not necessarily make you a leader. It may be easier for you to attain executive positions when you are recognized for your client relationships and business development success, but whether

you will be accepted as a leader depends on your comportment in the role, and whether you gain the trust and respect of your colleagues.

In fact, being a rainmaker and being a leader may put you in a position of conflict with the firm. This may happen if your clients' interests conflict with those of the firm, or when you want to bring in a new client who creates a conflict of interest for other partners. As one leader said, "*When you are torn between your clients and your management responsibilities, you protect your client relationships.*" This is one of the challenges of leading a law firm while remaining in practice.

§ 12:5 Management

It is conventional wisdom that partners require a substantial client base in order to become leaders but that is not always the case. While it is essential to be well respected by clients and have strong client relationships, many partners attain leadership without a large book of business. In most instances, these partners have particular leadership skills or talents that the firm needs, and they have proven their leadership abilities through dedicated service to the firm over the years. Many of them move into full-time management roles.

Many women leaders find that being involved in management enables them to exercise talents and skills they cannot express in practice or as rainmakers. They find satisfaction working with people, making the firm stronger, and making a difference in firm policies and in people's lives. They also find that although management takes up a great deal of time, it is easier to control their calendars, travel schedules, and time commitments. If the key to leadership is the ability to influence change, these women find that their management roles give them a different, more concentrated and focused kind of power that is highly meaningful to them, such as the ability to increase diversity in the firm.

The nature of leadership through management is substantially different than leading through rainmaking. Rainmaking is focused externally, on client engagements; management is internal and deals with the firm and its people. Rainmaking appeals to women who love the tension, intensity, and drama of legal work, and who find fun and excitement in the challenge to bring in new clients. The controversies and deals that they work on are business matters with a beginning, middle, and end. Once they are resolved, the rainmaker can close the file, send it to storage, and move on to the next matter. Management is different. It has plenty of tension, drama, and challenges, but they are decid-

edly dissimilar. Leaders in management are wrapped up in personal and emotional issues of partners and employees. The problems often defy easy resolution and have no clear end point; some have lingering effects that the leader and others in the firm have to live with for a long time.

Another distinction is that as a rainmaker, you can accomplish a lot on your own. In managing client work, you can make decisions about strategy and tactics and direct others on the team to carry them out. Leaders in management have less autonomy in carrying out their work. Committee chairs and practice group leaders cannot direct partners to act; they have to get their buy-in and agreement. To do that, they have to coach and listen more, and take time to build consensus. Manager-leaders have to have patience for the slower process of law firm management, which involves collaborative decision-making and often tedious analysis in a constant dance of planning, implementing, assessing, revising, and planning again.

Many large and mid-size firms are moving to a more corporate model that places greater importance on professional management and leadership. These firms hire professionals, with or without legal backgrounds, from consulting, corporate, or other fields to manage areas such as finance, marketing, technology, or professional development. They are beginning to recognize that people in specialized management areas have critically valuable expertise that their firms need. Increasingly, some of those talented managers are lawyers who leave practice to do it. Many practicing lawyers are moving into full-time management and developing the expertise needed for the positions they assume. It was rare in the past for lawyers to give up law practice to do this but it is becoming less unusual. It is no longer uncommon for managing partners and firm executives to be lawyers who have made this move. Few of these leaders have formal training in management; most learn about management on the job.

If you move into full-time management, your status in the firm and your relationship with other partners may change. Transitioning from “fee-earner” to “overhead” may have a negative effect on both your identity and your relationships with other partners. Some partners may also view your move into full-time management as a drop in status to “non-practicing” attorney and treat you differently. How low you drop is variable, depending on your firm’s culture and the esteem in which you are held. However, the leaders I interviewed did not have that experience. Some remained partners while others gave up their partnership. In either case, they continued to have a warm relationship with their partners, and most continued to be invited to partnership

meetings and retreats. In fact, many of these women found greater career satisfaction in firm management than they did in practicing law.

One leader I interviewed gave up her equity partnership to become her firm's Chief Diversity Officer. She had practiced at the firm for 25 years and had held numerous leadership positions in the firm including several years each on the Management and Executive Committees and as co-leader of her practice group. During that time, she was also actively engaged in efforts to increase diversity in the firm. When top firm leaders came to her and asked if she would consider becoming the Chief Diversity Officer, she thought long and hard. She decided to do it because she realized that the diversity-related work she had been doing gave her great personal satisfaction, and this new role would allow her to devote more time to something she cared about deeply and to do something new and different in her career. Her partners supported the move. They continue to include her in partnership activities and make her feel valued, respected, and appreciated. *"No one cares or notices that I'm not a partner anymore."*

§ 12:6 Choose committees strategically

Whether you prefer rainmaking or management, committee participation is the most common way to enter law firm leadership. Many women become recognized as leaders through the work they do as members or chairs of committees. Because they work so hard and make sure that everything that should be done does get done—and gets done right—their results impress other lawyers and enhance their reputation for effectiveness. A substantial majority of the women I interviewed had chaired important committees as they rose to prominence in their firms.

In some firms, especially those that have few committees, special projects or task forces may serve as vehicles for moving into leadership. They are usually one-time events of some importance to the firm. After all, the firm is investing time and resources to undertake a project or scrutinize an issue. Being appointed to a special group studying a significant issue may increase your visibility and enhance your status.

There is disagreement about the value of committee work for women. Many marketing experts and senior women partners advise women to avoid committee work and concentrate their efforts on building a book of business instead. After all, rainmaking gives you power in the firm as well as self-sufficiency, so that if you have to leave the firm, you can. Committee work takes a lot of nonbillable time, and for women whose lives are already too busy, it is an extra burden to be avoided.

On the other hand, committee work can launch women into leadership and make their work more meaningful. Committees provide ample opportunities for women to gain visibility and reputation as leaders. Some law firms consider being head of particular committees as a training ground for significant leadership positions. Many women also enjoy committee work, find it a good use of their talents and strengths, and are able to influence and drive changes and policies that are important to them and benefit the firm.

Here are three leaders' stories of how they benefited from their committee experience:

- *I am on the New Business Committee. We deal with new client matters, accounts receivable, collections, and fee discounts for 20 to 25 partners . . . This committee gives me a better appreciation and exposure to what others in the firm are doing. It increases my understanding of how the firm operates and increases my client development opportunities. I can tell my clients about the firm's capabilities and can also get work from other partners who know what I do.*
- *I was asked to head up the Billing and Collections Committee, which was awful in that I had to push partners to collect. But I got to know many partners and they saw that I was tactful and did it well. It was the best year for collections that the firm had ever had, and I got a lot of credit.*
- *I was on the firm's committee on charitable activities and got involved in fundraising. We tried to marry the firm's charitable interests with those of our clients, so we had lots of firm support and I had the chance to interact with client representatives and community leaders. In the process, I was able to increase the prominence of the firm and my practice.*

Some women also enjoy the power that comes with certain committee positions. They are energized by being in the room when big decisions are made. Because they are involved in addressing the firm's top priorities or most pressing problems, people perceive them as powerful, which increases their stature and influence. They like having whatever power the committee role offers them and are glad to participate even if it takes time away from other priorities. One leader in a global law firm described her power this way: "*My source of power? Access and credibility. People seek out my help to get things done because I am on the Management Committee. I can affect how much money they get for business development. I can get exceptions approved. And I have direct access to the firm's Managing Partner.*"

There are other pros and cons about committee participation.

These are some of the advantages from the standpoint of leadership development:

- Increased status. Being selected for a key committee raises your standing in the firm. The appointment is perceived as both a reward for high achievement and an opportunity to showcase your leadership abilities.
- Inside information. You acquire valuable inside information about the firm, its people, finances, and strategies that help you make more informed decisions for your clients, your teams, and your career. You learn how the firm operates, how to get things done, and what the firm really values. You are privy to the interpersonal dynamics within and across practice groups.
- Connections. You learn who the players are, what's important to them, and what tensions exist between them. You get to know and work with them, which can help you find allies, mentors, and champions; break into the inner circle; and build your own networks. When you leave the committee, especially at the executive level, you will continue to have access to important partners through the relationships formed and the status gained as a co-member.
- Safe learning place. You can practice important leadership skills (e.g., collaborative decision-making, presentations, political give and take) on a small scale and in a relatively safe environment.
- Higher leadership. Some committees are incubators for developing leadership talent. The skills you learn, relationships you form with committee members, and visibility and respect you earn may lead to higher positions.
- Influence change. You have the ability to influence the future direction of the firm and can act as a catalyst for change. In certain key committees, you can reward those who do their best for the firm, discourage undesirable behavior, and get rid of bad apples.
- Access to resources. You gain access to resources and may have control of resources that can benefit your clients, your teams, and you.
- Validation. Some women find ego gratification in being acknowledged as a leader by chairing or serving on an important committee.
- Something new. If you feel the need for a break from the steady flow of client work, it gives you a chance to do something else of value.
- Compensation. Many firms look upon committee work as

firm-building. They expect lawyers to do it, and when setting compensation, treat significant contributions on committees as a positive factor.

Serving on committees can carry disadvantages as well. The drawbacks to committee work include the following:

- **More committee work.** If you are dependable and effective on one committee, you are invariably asked to be on others. This puts extra time pressure on you and forces you to re-evaluate your priorities and repeatedly make hard choices. While it gives you many opportunities to show how good you are as a leader, it also distracts you from revenue-generating work that is the foundation for compensation and advancement.
- **Lack of reward.** Committees take a lot of nonbillable time, and you may not be rewarded for your effort, financially or otherwise. Contributions are hard to measure and usually undervalued and, in fact, you may be financially penalized for this distraction from client work. Besides, your partners will never be satisfied with anything your committee does.
- **Too much burden.** If you are not careful, you may get stuck doing the heavy lifting for the committee. Women frequently take on more responsibility than they need to out of habit, the desire to do things right, or an inability to delegate, say no, or let go.
- **Futility.** Your efforts may not be appreciated, your recommendations may be rejected, and your projects may be ignored. Despite your best efforts, you may not have the clout to enact the changes that are important to you.

Partners generally care little for taking on management responsibilities, and (except for executive committees) they dislike committee work most of all. Firms commonly find it hard to persuade partners to accept committee assignments and even harder to find someone willing to chair a committee. So if you volunteer, the chances are good that you will get an appointment. For various reasons, you might not be selected at the time you ask, e.g., you are too junior, there is already someone from your department or group on the committee, or the seat has already been promised to someone else. However, if it is known that you want to be on a committee, you are highly likely to be asked at some point. This is what one leader said about committee work:

The first year I was an income partner, I was appointed to the strategic planning committee, even though all the other members were capital partners. This helped me get a reputation as a leader. It's easy to do—few people in management actually follow through and

get things done. So there were many opportunities to get things done, do them well, and become visible. Also, like many other women, I just want to get things off my desk, scratch off items on my to-do lists. And since most lawyers do not want management work, anyone who really wants it and likes it can usually get it.

If you are coming to a firm as a lateral partner, being on a committee is a good way to become integrated into the firm quickly, present your ideas, and establish yourself as a leader. You might make this part of the negotiation before you arrive. Consider the committees or other leadership positions that will bring you the most benefit. For instance, if the practice group you are joining is starting a strategic planning process, and you led that process in the firm you are leaving, ask to chair your practice group's effort.

Some firms include associates on committees. Associates who have leadership ambitions should not be shy about asking for committee assignments. It is never too soon to show your leadership potential and to get recognized and thought of as someone who works effectively with others and produces top results.

Sometimes you will be invited or appointed to serve on a committee; sometimes you will decide to volunteer. Before accepting or volunteering, think about it strategically: how will this committee advance your leadership goals? Here are several questions and suggestions to consider when assessing committee possibilities:

1. What committees exist in the firm? It is important to know what your options are. Many firms have numerous committees that address a wide variety of issues. If the firm has only a few committees, your choices will be limited.

2. Which committees are important? Committees have varying degrees of importance. Being a member of the Compensation or Executive Committee is powerful; being the chair of the Library Committee usually is not. Which committees are integral to the firm's core business strategy? Which committees control strategy, promotions, money, or critical resources? Those are the committees that are most important to the firm.

3. Which committees are treated as high priority by powerful people in the firm? Many committees have no real authority, no defined objectives, poor leadership, and are a waste of time. In contrast, if the committee is charged with doing something specific and important, and the chair is someone who takes it seriously and will ensure that you will have the resources to achieve its objectives, participating may be worthwhile. Being involved in a committee that gets the care and attention of people

in powerful positions is a good way to foster relationships with them and have them think favorably about you. One of the leaders I interviewed picked a project that she knew her managing partner was passionate about. Another woman selected the committee that made charitable contributions on behalf of her firm. She decided to join that committee because she and the chair of the firm both supported the same community group, and being on the committee together gave her a basis for more frequent interactions with him.

4. Which of these committees interest you? Considering that you will have to put in extra time, be sure that the committee's work interests you. If you really like working with associates, join the professional development committee. If you want to learn more about the business of the firm, be on a committee that will help educate you. As with anything else in life, do not join a committee dealing with something you dislike or find boring or unimportant. If you are interested and motivated, you will do well; if you are not, it will be an ordeal. Try to find committees that will challenge you and help you learn something new. It may feel comfortable to take on the same kind of committee assignments repeatedly, but rather than advancing your development, it will stymie you.

5. Which committees will help advance your career? Certain committees will advance your career goals while others will not. Whether a particular committee will help you depends on what your goals are and the responsibilities and opportunities you will be given. Any two women may view the same committee differently. For instance, some aspiring leaders want to be on the hiring committee while others avoid it. A few of the women I interviewed actively sought to become chair of their firms' hiring committee and used it as a springboard into higher leadership roles. They felt it gave them visibility because it is a committee that affects and interacts with lawyers at all levels across the firm. They characterized their work in leading the hiring process as taking responsibility for the future of the firm, and they gained insight into the firm's vision for the future by scrutinizing the factors that drove hiring decisions. Other women I spoke with resolutely avoided the hiring committee. They believed that committees related to personnel issues are too soft and stereotypically female. Instead, they sought positions on committees that deal with business, economics, and strategy. In their view, those business-oriented committees are more valued in the firm and more likely to demonstrate members' fitness and experience for leadership. One woman leader turned down being chair of the hiring committee, saying it "*did not fit with the image I want.*" She lobbied to become a practice group leader instead.

6. Who are the other committee members? If the other members are influential, considered rising stars, or people you like or want to get to know, that's good. It may be of special importance for you to serve on committees with partners you want to get to know because you want their support, introductions to their clients, or other reasons that further your career plans. This is an important consideration if you need to develop relationships with these people but do not see them often because they are in another office or practice area. However, if they talk a good game but do little real work, or if they are uninspiring or contentious, you may become frustrated, bored, or overworked because you will end up doing their work as well as yours.

7. Is this the right time? If you are at the point in your career where your reputation as an expert in your practice area is taking off, or your practice is gaining momentum, this might not be the best time to shift your attention to committees and other significant management responsibilities. If you accept the appointment now, and your practice development efforts are diverted, it might have a negative long-term impact on your practice. However, if you say no too many times, the firm may decide you are not sufficiently interested and will stop asking. Before declining, consider the likely consequences. If you do not take the position now, what are the chances this position—or something better—will be offered again in the future?

8. Who is asking you to take the position? The person who asks might make a difference in your response. If a valued mentor or key player in the firm wants to sponsor you or offers to appoint you to an important position, it is hard to say no. However, you still may be able to negotiate some limits on your obligations or other aspects of the work that will be required.

9. How will your compensation be affected? Some committees take a great deal of time away from your client work. How will your participation affect your compensation and your client relationships? How will you protect yourself against losing control of your clients? Will your income be reduced? Can you negotiate for more?

§ 12:7 Make yourself known as leadership material

Part of your strategy for becoming a leader requires creating the perception that you are leadership material. You need to develop a reputation as someone who is reliable and effective, is respected by clients and peers, understands the business of law, and is committed to the firm's success. Your abilities and contributions must be recognized and appreciated. Only when

that happens can you achieve the results that are important to you.

If you want to be a leader, you cannot be overly shy or modest. You must be known as a potential leader and it is up to you to make others think of you that way. Self-promotion makes many women uncomfortable, but it is a necessary part of a leadership development strategy.

Making yourself known as an emerging leader does not require you to broadcast your accomplishments although you should find a way to tell others about them. Some women find it easier to praise someone else than to talk about themselves. If that is more comfortable for you, team up with one or more colleagues to do internal PR for each other, or use the firm's women's initiative, network, or affinity group to highlight your achievements. If mentors and clients want to help you, ask them to give you public credit. When a client lauds you in writing, forward the note to the head of your group. One interviewed leader was surprised and thrilled when the firm's senior partner sent a memo around the firm praising her for an important victory she won in court. Whatever you do, do not shy away from the limelight; a leader's place is out front.

There are many ways to increase your visibility as a rising leader:

- **Show up.** It is essential to be present at firm meetings, events, and social gatherings. People must see you as an active participant in the firm. Many women do not attend partner meetings or major firm events. Partner meetings may be tedious and frustrating; firm social events may be boring to you; and you would probably prefer to be out with your friends or home with your family. You are undoubtedly overworked, overcommitted, and pressed for time. It is important to set limits, but if you ever want to be considered for a leadership role, it is equally important to be known, active, and engaged in managing the firm and participating in its activities.
- **Take the initiative.** Do not wait to be tapped on the shoulder or given permission to initiate a project that you think is worthwhile. If you see that something needs to be done, do it—or get someone else to do it. This will show that you are a self-starter who makes things happen. One interviewed leader acted as a change agent with every minor management role she took. When she was asked to administer summer associate assignments, she revamped the entire work assignment system; she did the same thing when she was

given responsibility for associate assignments. Partners saw her as someone who did not just carry out the administrative aspects of the job; they saw her as someone who thought about them, saw better solutions, and produced beneficial change.

- Be alert to opportunities and exploit them. Look for critical moments when you can make yourself memorable or prove yourself. Ask smart questions, and show that you are knowledgeable, a quick learner, and a deep thinker. Let others see that you are capable, dependable, and willing to be helpful. Here is the experience of one leader in a global firm: *“All the managing partners and practice group leaders were going to Harvard for a leadership program. Someone dropped out and I was invited to take their place. I was the youngest person in the room. This gave me an opportunity to meet people, get known, and make an impression. I soaked up knowledge and learned what leaders of the firm said and thought. Part of the program involved small groups. One of the senior managing partners in my group was impressed with me and recommended me to be the U.S. relationship partner for a global company they were pitching. When the business came in, I became the global client relations manager.”*
- Develop a reputation as a leader who achieves great results. Choose to lead activities that are important to decision-makers in the firm and produce the results they want. Many lawyers in management positions fail to follow through, so if you take your responsibilities seriously and get the job done, you will stand out. Get your name associated with positive projects and results, and make sure people realize you are looking out for the firm’s best interests, not just your own. To do your best work with the least exertion, choose activities that you enjoy and are good at—and be shrewd about your choices. As one leader cautioned, *“Do not do something if the managing partner thinks it’s stupid.”*

- *A fifth-year associate and I were working together on a project. My co-worker sent status memos to partners that told them what was happening on it. She highlighted herself, but in a subtle way. She made sure the partners knew her and associated her with what was getting done. That way she got attention and credit. I was shocked. I realized that I should do this too . . . so I would be noticed.*
- *A management team member asked me who I thought might be good in the role of leader for the firm's largest practice group. I was open with the fact that I thought I would be good. I also thought a few others would be as well and mentioned them. At the end of the day, they asked me to step up.*
- *As a new lateral partner, I got on the managing partner's radar screen by telling him that my practice group needed to be reorganized. I suggested a retreat for the sub-groups in the department where we could discuss it—and invited him to join us. He came to the retreat and saw how well I handled it. Soon the partners in powerful positions knew who I was.*

§ 12:8 Get connected through internal networks

Leaders must be well-connected and gain entry to powerful networks. (See Chapter 9.) Maintaining a visible presence in the firm and building a reputation as a rising leader will help you access those networks. Partners will see you in action and respect your work. Over time, they will be more interested in knowing you and more willing to talk with you, but you have to actively seek and use opportunities to connect with the partners who can open doors for you and bring you into their networks. At the same time, you should start building your own network within the firm. That network includes your mentors and champions as well as other leaders in the firm, partners who will introduce you to clients and business contacts, and others who can help you as your career progresses.

Committee participation in the firm can afford access to influential networks through relationships that you form with other members. As noted earlier, one of the reasons to join firm committees is the chance to work with other present and future firm leaders, but turning a committee membership into network access requires a strategic approach. When you are on a committee, form relationships with other members and find a role that enables you to demonstrate your leadership ability or to stand out memorably in a favorable way. Forming relationships with any members of a committee may be helpful, but to gain access to

important networks target partners who are influential and powerful.

Here are some additional ways to build network connections in the firm:

- Start immediately. Don't wait. An old proverb says that the best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago; the second best time is today. You should have started making strategic connections as an associate. If you are starting now, lay the groundwork by forming personal relationships and proving your value to others. If you have begun to build a strong network, continue and increase your efforts. In either case, be purposeful and shrewd, targeting the partners who hold the keys to the networks you need to enter and the business contacts you want to meet.
- Know what you have to trade. As discussed in Chapter 9, the price of admission to many influential networks is something of value that draws others to you. Be aware of what you have that others may view as valuable, such as specialized legal expertise, client contacts, or political connections.
- Reach out to partners with power and influence. Choose your network members purposefully. Keep a list of colleagues you know and others you want to know. Seek out partners who are already leaders or rising stars, and make it a point to meet them at firm activities, or give them a call. When you plan to visit another office of your firm, let them know in advance that you will drop in to say hello. When they are visiting your office, make it a point to see them. Develop relationships with them just as you would with clients. Ask about their practices, clients, and family. Give them small courtesies and favors, such as offering them speaking engagements, or sending them a book they might like. Use these interactions as the groundwork for building personal and professional relationships.
- Make smart introductions to others. One of the most appreciated gifts you can give people is introductions to others who can benefit them in some way. When you connect partners with business contacts, clients, or even members of your firm in other offices, they expand their own networks. They also see you as influential and well-connected—which makes you more intriguing to them.
- Become an information agent. Decide what information is important to the partners to whom you want access or by whom you want to be noticed. Put yourself in a place to

control who receives new information and related business, opportunities, or clients. Position yourself so that your personal information network affords you access to this information and allows you to distribute it. You might become a subject matter expert, engage in political activity, or become head of a firm task force. It should be a position or activity that gives you unique, little-known, and relevant information. Then become a conduit for informing others. Create a reputation for being the go-to person for the best information.

- Offer your time. The greatest gift you can give many partners is your time. Offer to assist a colleague on a project, take over a task, or get involved in a cause they care about. Giving some of your valuable time to help them is always appreciated and remembered.
- Introduce yourself to new lawyers. Mergers offer an excellent opportunity to start or enlarge personal networks. So does the arrival of any new partner. Make a special effort to meet all new partners who join the firm or at least those who join your office. Some of these partners will become rainmakers, stars, and leaders; and all are potential supporters and allies. People remember individuals who welcome them and are gracious when they have newly arrived.
- Socialize. Many network relationships develop casually, when people have lunch together, go out for a beer after work, attend firm social functions, or hang out to chat in someone's office at the end of the day. For strategic networking, devoting time to these casual social interactions is essential. One leader noted that men do more of this than women do (a fact that is borne out by research¹): *“Male lawyers like to be in the “aura” of the rainmakers. They waste time hanging out with them and chatting. They do this more than women do. Women do what needs to be done and don’t waste time by hanging out . . . But men will sit in the cafeteria and hang out. That’s how they get information and partners get to know them. Women associates hang out with their friends in the office, with peers rather than with partners who could be influential for them. I’d rather go*

[Section 12:8]

¹See, e.g., Wilder, G.Z. (2007), *Women in the profession: findings from the first wave of the after the JD study*, The NALP Foundation for Law Career Research and Education and the National Association for Law Placement, Inc. [NALP].

home, and since most women partners have kids, they would too.” These relaxed encounters are important investments in relationship building and expanding your social capital. You may think they are a waste of time because they are social rather than productive. However, if you spend all your time doing your work and do not take part in casual social interactions, your network will suffer, and you will miss out on important advancement opportunities. Plus, aside from their strategic value, these activities can be fun and offer relief from the pressures of work.

- Stay in touch. Use communication channels to keep people informed about what you are doing and what you have achieved, especially if it relates to something they prize or take a special interest in.

§ 12:9 Build and use outside networks

Networks outside the office can also be useful to highlight your leadership abilities and increase your standing and reputation in the firm. For many women, holding leadership positions in outside organizations for lawyers and professional women has been a popular path to influence and leadership within their firms. Many women join local, state, or national bar associations, women’s bar associations, specialty bar groups, political associations, women’s organizations, and nonprofit boards. In addition to finding professional satisfaction in these activities, women gain networking and leadership opportunities that are either closed to them or too fraught with risk inside their firms.

Participation in outside organizations gives you a chance to polish your leadership skills in safe environments where members are grateful for your service and supportive of your efforts. You learn how to run a business, deal with budget shortfalls, and handle personnel problems. You also develop personal relationships with others who share your interests as you work and socialize together. The bonds that form can be a powerful source of professional and personal support that is invaluable to you as a leader now and in the future.

As you rise through the leadership ranks of an outside organization, partners in the law firm will take note. If your work in an association or nonprofit leads to heightened visibility and favorable publicity for the firm or better yet, new business, you are taken more seriously, and new opportunities inside the firm should appear for you. When you are identified as a leader in the community, your good reputation reflects well on the firm, which benefits from its connection to you. Your affiliation with political

and bar leaders can make you attractive to partners who want access to those contacts because of clients' needs or personal aspirations; and most importantly, when you achieve prominence as a leader, your connections to important people in the community can become a rich source of business contacts, referrals, and potential clients. All of these connections can be a significant source of power for you in the firm, as others who desire access to your outside network see you as a player who must be reckoned with.

Leadership outside the firm can help you accomplish change inside the firm as well. One leader I interviewed specifically ran for president of her city's women's bar association so that it would force her firm to do more for its own women partners and associates. When she told the firm's managing partner that she intended to run for that office, "*He said great and helped me build support inside the firm. By endorsing my leadership of the Women's Bar he committed the firm to the goals we set for women during my time in office.*" She won the election and held him to his promise of support to the benefit of the women in her firm.

Another way to participate in powerful networks is to create new ones. You can sidestep existing networks and start your own, either for women only or for men and women. Depending on what you want to achieve and what is feasible in your firm or community, this may be an option for you to consider. One leader recounted her experience as a new lawyer working in government relations in Washington, D.C., 30 years ago. Women were excluded from the networks that might have helped them learn how to maneuver through the many agencies and bureaucracies they had to deal with and avoid the traps that made it hard to do their jobs. So they started an organization of women who worked in the regulatory field on Capitol Hill. Today, that group, Women in Housing and Finance, has become a powerful network with 750 members.

Leadership success in external networks will give you excellent leadership experience, raise your visibility, and enhance your reputation within the firm; but do not neglect internal networks. In order to translate your external success to internal leadership, you will still need important partners to champion you inside the firm and welcome you into the inner circles of power.

§ 12:10 Find mentors and champions

Our chief want is someone who will inspire us to be what we know we could be.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Few lawyers become law firm leaders on their own. Most enjoy the sponsorship of influential mentors who advocate for them, ensure that they receive the exposure and leadership experience they need, and persuade others to add their support. If you have become a partner, it is likely that you have had at least one or more mentors.

The positive impact of mentoring on career advancement is well established.¹ Mentoring has been associated with favorable career outcomes, including higher rates of promotion and compensation, and with greater clarity of professional identity. This is especially true for women lawyers who have prominent senior mentors. These women have been shown to have higher compensation and career satisfaction than women without mentors, and are more likely to hold executive positions. Mentoring is also an important factor for women in developing self-confidence and sustaining ambition.² One leader spoke of mentors as part of a “safety net” that women need as they rise up the ranks of leadership, not just for protection, but for reality checks, advice, and counsel. She said: “*Mentors, allies and sponsors are important because they can speak up for you during a contentious meeting, or come to you outside the meeting to fill you in or to help you change or develop strategies or techniques. They can tell you ‘Don’t let X get to you or make you angry. It’s a waste of energy. Focus on Y instead. Y can help you get it done.’*”

Having mentors who bring varied strengths and perspectives to the table is especially profitable to you as a leader or aspiring leader. Different mentors can be helpful to you in different ways. The value of mentors extends from their sending you clients, to explaining firm politics, to offering advice about how to dress. For aspiring leaders, one essential type of mentor is a champion.

A champion is a special kind of mentor who advocates for you and personally invests in your career success by appointing you to, or sponsoring you for, leadership roles. The distinguishing feature of champions is their power. They have the clout to make things happen for you. There is nothing better for your leadership prospects than having a powerful and established senior partner who personally champions your success.

[Section 12:10]

¹Abbott, I.O., & Boags, R.S. (2003), *Mentoring across differences: a guide to cross-gender and cross-race mentoring*, Minority Corporate Counsel Association.

²Higgins, M.C., & Thomas, D.A. (May 2001), Constellations and careers: toward understanding the effects of multiple developmental relationships, *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 22, 223–247.

Because men dominate the leadership of law firms, most of the senior partners who are in positions to help you this way are men. Indeed, the research shows that senior male mentors are more effective than women mentors in advancing women lawyers' careers in terms of promotions, leadership development, and compensation.³ In a law firm culture where success requires being able to thrive in a masculine environment, a male senior partner who is part of firm leadership can validate your legitimacy as a leader in the eyes of others. His sponsorship signals to the predominantly male leadership that you have what it takes to be a leader. He can also invite you into powerful networks, sponsor you for memberships and leadership in professional organizations, introduce and promote you to clients, put you in charge of client relationships, and send business your way. Having the ear and support of a powerful champion can enable you to avoid problems, get through crises, remove obstacles, and get things done. You need mentors who will champion your efforts, stick their necks out for you, protect you from unfair attacks, and alert you to new opportunities—or even create them for you. If you want to become a leader, make it a priority to find a champion.

Young women lawyers often feel that they should have women mentors with whom they can relate, who will understand what they are going through as women, and who will give them emotional and career support. Women mentors are extremely important. Unfortunately, there are too few of them to provide mentorship to all aspiring women leaders; and there are not enough women leaders with the stature, power, and influence to serve as champions for every promising female leader. Women can overcome this shortage by finding multiple mentors, women and men, for different purposes. While many lawyers believe that having one influential mentor is the key to success, research has found that a diverse, high quality “constellation” of mentors accounts for more successful long-term career outcomes.⁴

Having a constellation of mentors is especially important for women of color. Influential mentors have been strongly associated with minority women's career success, while lack of mentoring is a major factor in their career dissatisfaction and failure to advance. As partners and as leaders, women of color need advisors to explain or interpret the unwritten rules, sponsors to

³Ramaswami, A, Dreher, G.F., Bretz, R., & Wiethoff, C. (2009), The interactive effects of gender and mentoring on career attainment: making the case for female lawyers, *Journal of Career Development*, issue forthcoming.

⁴Higgins & Thomas (May 2001), Constellations and careers.

ensure they are taken seriously and treated fairly, brokers who steer clients and business their way, and champions who get them appointed to key committees and positions. The women of color who were interviewed for this book gave special credit to mentors and champions for many aspects of their career success. One African-American leader who was appointed to her firm's management committee later learned that the managing partner used his power to override the objections of another partner, a leading rainmaker, who opposed her appointment.

The mentor of another African-American leader, Lisa Gilford of Alston & Bird (and currently President of the National Association of Women Lawyers), was a white male partner, Mark Rochefort. Mark regularly recruited women and minority lawyers to volunteer for various diversity projects. He asked Lisa to coordinate a job fair for minority law students with DuPont, one of the firm's clients, which had made diversity a top priority. Lisa worked hard and did an outstanding job. Mark saw that she was committed to making the client happy, and the client was very pleased with her. Mark became Lisa's champion, making sure that she had more exposure to DuPont, chances to work on DuPont cases, and a personal travel budget to attend DuPont meetings and events. He asked her to talk at partner meetings about what she was doing with DuPont so that other partners could see her leadership prospects. Lisa and Mark came from totally different demographics and backgrounds. They practiced in different areas and never worked together until she had been a partner for several years. However, he gave her a chance to distinguish herself, and she took it, finding a champion in the process.

The experience of the leaders I interviewed confirms the importance and availability of a diverse constellation of mentors and champions throughout your career. Almost every leader mentioned having at least one, and usually several important mentors who offered assistance in a variety of ways. These leaders were highly strategic in identifying possible mentors to whom they reached out and in making use of the opportunities afforded by important partners who took an interest in them. In general, male mentors do not reach out to women as often as they do to men,⁵ but that was not a problem for these women. They attracted mentors through their strong performance, commitment to excellence and client service, and eagerness to learn.

Leaders frequently described some of their best mentors as

⁵Abbott & Boags (2003), *Mentoring across differences*.

unlikely candidates, partners whose backgrounds, styles, and personalities were completely different from their own. As associates, some of the women worked with partners with whom others did not want to work. Those partners appreciated the women's talent and interest in the practice and became their mentors and champions. They made sure that the women became partners and received the credit they deserved. One woman described her mentor this way:

I called him my "tormentor" because he was so demanding and frantic. But he showed me what was important. He was a rainmaker, but burned through associates and no one wanted to work with him. He kept after me. He was powerful, but he needed me. I learned by watching him. He was grateful to associates who would work with him. He gave me responsibility and credit. We had no life experiences in common and came from different demographics. But we found mutual value through our work.

The women I interviewed continued to have mentors after they became partners and leaders. Even when they were in significant leadership positions, these women had mentors who helped them in many ways: by sponsoring them for leadership jobs, putting them into positions of high visibility, educating them about the economics and operations of the firm, protecting them from unfair criticism, and inviting them into their personal networks of powerful colleagues. Besides partners who were firm leaders and rainmakers, their mentors included firm executives such as the Chief Operating Officer and Executive Director. These mentors were usually but not always in their firms, and they were predominantly but not always men. A few leaders had powerful women mentors who exerted considerable influence in the firm and on these women's careers. One of the most noteworthy mentor-mentee relationships was between two women, Amy Schulman and Heidi Levine. Their story appears later in this chapter.

Some law firms are beginning to institute leadership development programs for partners. As part of these programs, they often assign senior partners to serve as mentors to junior partners, both women and men, to help them with leadership and business development. These programs are highly beneficial in helping junior partners increase their leadership capabilities and present leadership opportunities that they might not otherwise receive. They often involve "action learning," in which the junior partner is expected to start a designated firm initiative or to solve a real firm problem with the guidance and support of the mentor. The project tests the ability of the new partner and gives her a chance to prove what she can do. Some firms assign

mentors (and projects) without input from the junior partner, but most firms will at least consider any ideas you present. If your firm has such a program, try to have input in deciding who your mentor will be. Use the mentoring experience wisely to forge a strong relationship with your mentor and to position yourself as an up-and-coming leader.

Formal programs like these leadership development initiatives are only one source of mentors. There are potential mentors all around you and you can initiate relationships with them on your own. You need to think strategically about the mentors that you want and need and make a determined effort to interest them in helping you. Sometimes you will be lucky and potential mentors will take an interest in you on their own. If that happens, let them know you welcome their help. However, the mentors you need may not reach out to you. One of the reasons that women have trouble finding mentors is that they wait, like Cinderella, for mentors to find them. Women leaders I interviewed agree with the research literature that women do not go after what they want as affirmatively and purposefully as men do. One leader noted that when she became chair of a global firm, "*Men lined up outside my door to be mentored. They felt entitled to it. Women didn't do it.*" If you want a mentor, you cannot sit back and hope that Prince Charming will locate you. You have to be proactive.

The most common way that lawyers find mentors is through working together and that was the experience of the leaders who were interviewed. As they worked with partners on client matters, committees, or other projects, the partners were impressed by their talent and drive, saw them as rising stars, and gravitated to them. Sometimes, however, it was the women who took the initiative and reached out to possible mentors. They looked for individuals who had the skills, behaviors, or connections they wanted to acquire and built relationships with them. In the course of building those relationships, they created their own learning and mentoring opportunities. The most important consideration for these women was not gender or race. It was more strategic: how the potential mentor could best help them achieve their particular work or career objectives. By being purposeful in finding mentors, they had multiple mentors from whom they learned and benefited in various ways.

What should you look for in a mentor? It depends on the kind of help you want. Few individual mentors have all the skills, attributes, and inclinations that will help you get where you want to go. Some people can make introductions and open doors for you because they are well connected; some can advise you about

firm politics and how to operate within the political culture; others can be advocates and sponsors for positions you want to attain. Once you know what you need, you can identify the people who are best able to help you, determine what would motivate them to invest their time in you, and decide how to approach them.

If you know them well, you might choose to approach them directly. Be specific about the type of assistance you are looking for and what you would like them to do. If you do not know the person, you need to lay the foundation for a relationship. You cannot expect someone to become a mentor unless they know you and believe that you are worthy of their time and effort. Before approaching them, find out about them. Introduce yourself (or be introduced by someone who knows them), and let them get to know you. You might look for an opportunity to work closely with a potential mentor on a client matter, a project for the firm, or a community activity. When a relationship forms, and you think the person would be receptive, you can tell them that you are trying to develop as a leader and would like their assistance in a particular way. You do not even have to use the word “mentor.” The relationship, not the label, is what counts.

Mentors may come from unexpected places and are not always obvious candidates. They may not be in your law firm or in the legal profession at all. From a strategic standpoint, all they need is a skill or attribute that you need and a willingness to help you. One partner who left a large firm to start her own practice formed a “personal board of advisors” who served as her mentors. One of those advisors was an insurance agent who helped her hone her business development skills. He taught her the principles of selling, coached her on how to sell her legal services, and was available to answer her questions about dealing with prospective clients. He was not a role model; she did not emulate his style or his interactions with potential clients. However, he taught her the basics that led her to become a successful business generator and gave her the confidence to do it.

Here is what three leaders said about their experience with mentors:

- A partner now in full time executive management: *My mentor recruited me as a summer associate. She wore a purple suit! She was a powerful, nationally known litigator. She helped me network with powerful and influential people in the firm and outside, so I always knew who those people were and they always knew me. My relationship with her gave me instant credibility with them.*

- The managing partner of a large office in a global firm: *I had a wonderful mentor—still do. At first glance, we have nothing in common. I'm from a small town on the prairie. We weren't even working class. I was the first in my family to go to college, much less an Ivy League law school. I was also an athlete and a beauty queen. He is very tall, elegant, and uncoordinated; he went to a fancy prep school and is an intellectual from a long line of lawyers. I thought he was the smartest partner in the firm and he was willing to teach me. That was a huge confidence boost that I needed.*
- A lateral partner: *I recruit mentors. Every organization has its own social mores and protocols that are new to you. Success at your prior firm doesn't mean success here. . . . In the interview process, I try to talk with people I'm comfortable with and make them comfortable with me. I try to get them vested in my success. I want to be someone they will want to take credit for.*

The Value of Mentoring: Amy Schulman and Heidi Levine

Amy Schulman and Heidi Levine have a relationship that epitomizes the positive effects of mentoring for mentors and mentees alike. Amy is currently the General Counsel of Pfizer Corp., but before that, she was a partner at DLA Piper, where she was also the most successful rainmaker in the firm. Amy was so extraordinary as a lawyer, rainmaker, and leader that Harvard Business School developed a case study about her. She was also a mentor to Heidi Levine and to many other women and men on her client teams.

What made Amy such an exceptional mentor? She invested in people so that they worked their hardest and did their best for her. She believed that each individual contributed something of value to the whole, and that by working together, they made each other stronger. She respected, encouraged, and empowered them as professionals, and felt great pride as her team members became successful lawyers and leaders in their own right.

Amy was also generous. She gave credit, including compensation credit, to junior partners. She did this well before she was a major rainmaker, when she had little monetary credit to give away. As she brought in more business, it became easier to be generous. Amy believes that being fair with people economically was one of the reasons her teams did so well. It prevented internal competition and fostered cooperation and support for each other and for clients.

Amy benefited from her mentorship as well. Amy wanted to accomplish a great deal in her practice and career and knew she

needed a strong team to help her. She needed to feel confident that her clients would receive the best possible service, and she believed that *“If the team is strong and committed, the work will benefit. I never worried that anchoring client relationships with strong younger lawyers would cause problems.”* So Amy fostered teamwork and collaboration. She gave team members respect, responsibility, and authority; and they, in turn, did their best for her and her clients. She cultivated a small inner circle of highly competent lawyers whom she could trust and rely on with no doubt of their loyalty or dedication. This enabled her to spend more time on other business pursuits.

One of the lawyers Amy mentored was Heidi Levine. Heidi is still at DLA Piper and is now a rainmaker herself, as well as a member of the firm’s policy committee, co-chair of the firm’s national women’s initiative, and co-chair of the mass tort/products liability group within the New York Litigation Department. Heidi credits Amy’s support as a mentor for helping her succeed and for inspiring her to be a mentor to the lawyers who now staff her client teams.

Heidi recalls many ways, both large and small, in which Amy brought out the best in her. Amy was willing to share her strategies and insights with Heidi, and she was willing to listen, too; she was as interested in learning from Heidi as she was in teaching her. They had an egalitarian relationship; they confided in each other, gave each other feedback, and Heidi felt that she could speak freely and voice her opinions, including opposition, without eliciting a negative reaction from Amy.

Amy’s conscientious mentoring efforts exemplify the many small things that a mentor can do to make a big difference in an associate’s development, identity formation, and advancement. Heidi cited many examples:

- *When we traveled together by plane, Amy upgraded me with her points so that we could sit together and talk about strategy, clients, etc. on our way to or from a meeting. It was our quiet time to talk.*
- *Amy brought me into meetings and conferences, first to observe and later to participate.*
- *When I was an associate, Amy never introduced me to anyone as an associate. She always said: “This is my colleague.” That empowered me.*
- *When we traveled together, we did things together socially, for fun, not just for work.*

Amy’s and Heidi’s mentoring relationship continued as Heidi became a successful rainmaker and leader. With Amy’s encour-

agement, counseling, and sponsorship, Heidi's career progressed steadily. When Amy left for Pfizer, the transition to Heidi as the head of her client team was seamless because Heidi had been functioning in that role for some time. Although she has developed a professional style of her own, Heidi continues to use Amy's collaborative and supportive approach with her own client teams and to serve as a mentor and role model for the lawyers on those teams.

Heidi and Amy remain close. Heidi says that Amy is still her mentor: "I can always call her for advice and she is always there for me, no matter how busy she is." Their relationship has one new twist, however — Amy is now Heidi's client.

§ 12:11 Identify role models

A role model is a person you want to emulate in some way. Unlike mentoring, which is based on a personal relationship, a role model does not have to be someone you know personally or may ever meet. Some mentors are also role models but role models are not necessarily mentors. They might be historical, political, or public figures, like Sandra Day O'Connor, whose example many women find inspirational.

Role models are important for women's leadership development. When women begin to develop their identities as leaders, they eagerly seek role models. Research shows that new leaders who are trying to project a leadership image look for other leaders to emulate. As novices, they think about what leaders are expected to do and engage in behaviors that they hope will lead others to accept them as a leader. As women mature and feel more comfortable being leaders, acting like other leaders declines in importance. They start to expand their ideas about what leaders do and how they behave. They worry less about how others see them or judge their behavior and become more concerned with how to be the best leaders they can be for their followers. As their leadership experience continues to grow, and as their comfort, influence, and impact increase, they eventually become secure and expert in their roles. During this development process, their orientation shifts from finding role models to becoming role models for future leaders.¹

Most women in senior leadership today had few, if any, women

[Section 12:11]

¹Ely, R.J., & Rhode, D.L. (2010), Women and leadership: defining the challenges, in N. Nohria & R. Khurana (Eds.), *Handbook of leadership theory and practice*, ch. 14 (Boston: Harvard Business School Press).

role models when they were starting out. Many current leaders were the first women in their firms to become partners or to achieve significant leadership positions. Now there are many women leaders in the profession who can serve as role models to junior women aspiring to leadership. However, young women often have exaggerated expectations, hoping to find women role models who are living the successful, yet balanced lives that younger women want. Senior women whose lives seem to be skewed in favor of work and career success, especially if they are single or have no children, are judged harshly as having “sacrificed too much.”

For junior women, it is important to remember that career choices are personal to each woman. They depend on your own personal values, priorities, and circumstances; and you cannot judge what is best for another person based on your values and preferences. All women who have become law firm leaders have learned lessons that younger women can learn from. Rather than reject women who are less than perfect role models, focus on their accomplishments, and look for interests and values you hold in common. If you do not want to emulate a leader’s entire style or career, look for aspects that you admire and might want to adopt. Maybe it appalls you that she travels so much that she communicates with her children through a webcam on her laptop, but she also has great presence in the courtroom. How does she do it, and how can you learn to do it? Find out what you can about her courtroom composure that might be of value to you.

As a woman leader, be aware that junior women want you to be their role model. As they try to determine what kind of professional identity they want to have, what kind of leader they want to be, and how to balance all the demands that will face them as leaders, they are observing you and looking for what they can emulate. Be sensitive to the fact that many of them do not want to lead the life you lead—even if their assumptions about you are unfounded. One leader who felt the sting of women’s criticism stated: “*Women criticize me, that I work too hard, seek validation from others, have no husband or kids. Women discount the value of my accomplishments. But I have lots of other things in my life.*” She understood where they were coming from but regretted that those younger women scorned her when she had a great deal to offer them.

Many of the leaders I interviewed echoed this leader’s sentiments. They appreciate that they made choices other women reject and may not be the best role models for all women. They realize that younger women do not want to be like them and accept the fact that “*you don’t have to do it my way.*” These

established leaders are also very conscious of being in the spotlight and make a special effort to behave admirably in order to show the world that women can be good leaders. Most importantly, these women want to increase the number of women leaders and are happy to serve as mentors and role models to junior women who are receptive.

§ 12:12 Acquire needed leadership knowledge and skills

In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities; in the expert's mind there are few.

— Shunryu Suzuki

Part of your strategy for becoming a leader is to polish the leadership knowledge and skills that you have and to acquire those that you lack. Some lawyers come to leadership fully prepared; their experience has gradually led them to the leader's chair, and they have picked up the necessary knowledge and skills along the way. Most leaders, however, realize that leadership is an ongoing process of learning and development and they constantly try to become better at it. No matter how much they know, there is always more to learn. One leader explained how she felt going from the Management Committee, where she had served for many years, to the Executive Committee: *"It was a tough transition. I did not have expertise in the issues we dealt with, which were more strategic. I would be asked for my opinion, or would have to vote on things, when I wasn't sure. It was all very intimidating. The ExComm was more about business, so I had to learn more about that."*

Not all of what you need to learn as a leader is substantive. Much of what you do as a leader involves personal and interpersonal dynamics among the firm's partners and employees, but little of what you do as a practicing lawyer gives you the tools to handle such matters effectively. Many leaders find that they lack adequate skills for handling these matters. You have to deal with hiring and firing decisions, negotiate with partners who can't get what they want, knock down high expectations, and cut people's budgets. While handling all those problems, you must balance the tensions between running the business and keeping people happy, especially when many of the people involved are your friends and partners.

There are many ways to prepare for leadership and to enhance your abilities. Once you recognize the skills you want to improve or the knowledge you want to acquire, you can use any one of many resources. Here are some suggestions:

- Reflection. Experience alone does not guarantee that you

will be an effective leader. You have to learn from that experience. This will not always happen automatically. Take time to step back and reflect on what you did, what happened and why, and what lessons you can take away. Otherwise, your experience may be wasted and your learning stunted. It is wise to make reflection a regular habit.

- Observing others. You undoubtedly have opportunities every day to watch leaders as they go about their work. Be observant. Think about what seems to be effective, and try to figure out why it is. Similarly, try to understand why other behaviors are unproductive and how you could do better.
- Ask colleagues. When you lack certain knowledge or understanding, ask people who know, inside your firm and elsewhere. Most people will be very happy to help you.
- Read, read, read. There are countless books on every aspect of leadership. They offer information, insights, and strategies that can be enormously helpful to you; and you can access them at any time. One leader I interviewed who is an avid reader keeps stacks of books on leadership in her office. When she thinks that someone she knows would enjoy or benefit from reading one of them, she gives it to them.
- Consultants. Professionals with expertise in fields relevant to the work that you are doing can be helpful when needed. If the firm is considering a merger, restructuring the compensation system, or planning its first big marketing campaign, working with an expert in the area is important for the firm generally, but for you personally as well. They can share knowledge, insights, and resources that give you the level of understanding necessary to make intelligent decisions on the present issue and others that may come up in the future.
- Internal mentors. Select and work with mentors in your firm who can help you acquire particular skills, knowledge, or experience that you need to be a more effective leader. Some of those mentors might be firm executives who have specialized expertise, like the firm's CFO or chief administrator. For newly appointed or elected leaders, the most logical and relevant source of specialized expertise is the person you are replacing. Leaders assuming significant management roles frequently shadow their predecessor during a transition period that may take many months.
- External mentors. It is a good idea to have mentors outside the firm who can impart their knowledge and wisdom to you. They may come from every aspect of your life. They do

not have to be lawyers; they just need to have something that will help you develop as a leader. You can initiate external mentoring relationships informally or through formal mentoring programs conducted by various organizations, including private companies and bar associations. Some of those programs are specifically for women.

- Coaches. Working with a coach can help you improve your leadership skills and performance in many ways. Coaches can obtain objective feedback for you by conducting interviews with colleagues about your leadership performance. They can conduct full 360 reviews, also seeking feedback from clients, staff, and others who would have useful insights. Coaches can help you stay focused and motivated as you set and work toward your leadership goals. Some coaches might be retained for a very specialized purpose, such as improving your presentation skills, time management, or handling difficult people.
- Leadership development programs. If you will be running a practice group, office, or firm, you are essentially running a business. You need to think like a business leader, not like a lawyer. Firms that realize this are encouraging partners to study business, management, and leadership. Many law firms now conduct their own internal programs or send their lawyers to customized leadership programs conducted for the firm by business schools, law schools, and leadership research and consulting firms. If your firm does not have such a program, there are leadership development programs that you can attend throughout the country. Many of the organizations that customize programs for individual law firms also offer leadership programs that are open to leaders of all law firms. Some law schools, business schools, and consulting companies offer leadership programs specifically for women leaders. One of those programs is the Hastings Leadership Academy for Women, of which I am the Director.²
- Leadership groups. It is helpful to share your experiences and questions with peers in leadership positions similar to yours. These groups (often called “roundtables”) meet together regularly to discuss the challenges and issues that their members face as leaders. The groups are relatively small, with the same participants attending each session. They might be organized and facilitated by a consultant or

[Section 12:12]

²See <http://www.attorneyretention.org/LAW>.

third person, or they may be self-directed, with members of the group alternating responsibility for setting the agenda and leading the discussion. If there is no such group for your type of leadership role, find other leaders in your area, and start your own!

All of these are useful resources that will benefit you as a leader. However, they are only supplemental to the key learning strategy for leadership, which is experience. You can study, take classes, hire advisors, and read books like this one to help you identify and consider what you need to know and do as a leader, but at its core, leadership is not an intellectual exercise. The best way to learn it and be good at it is to do it. Don't wait until you have studied every aspect and feel that you are fully prepared; you will never be perfect at it or know all there is to know. Jump right in and give it a try. If you have any doubts about your leadership ability, you will not be able to overcome those doubts unless you actually do what leaders do. If you feel that you need some seasoning, take on a modest leadership role in the firm or in bar associations, industry groups, or on boards.

Your client teams are also a source of good leadership experience. Leading a client team gives you an excellent platform to demonstrate your talent for leadership. If the team performs well and functions as a cohesive unit, its efficiency, productivity, and profitability increase. Leading profitable teams will get you noticed and perceived favorably by other partners. If team members get along, morale is good, and the work is interesting, others will want to work with you, spreading your positive reputation for leadership among associates, paralegals, and staff. As noted elsewhere, there are differences between being a client team leader and a firm leader; but many of the skills, attitudes, and behaviors that you practice with your team will also be useful in larger leadership roles. Plus, you can try out different leadership styles, approaches, and activities in this familiar and limited setting, which is relatively safe compared to the bigger firm or office stage.

Being a good team leader has an additional benefit for you. Client teams form a natural constituency for you if you treat them well. People's experience with you on these teams will determine whether, and to what extent, they will support you when you become a firm leader. Team members see you in action and know how you perform under pressure. The way you treat them and make them feel, the standards you set for yourself and them, and the way you deal with failure, these and other facets of their day-to-day experience with you give them intimate knowledge of your potential as a leader. If they believe that you are capable, effec-

tive, fair, and trustworthy, they will trust you to lead them and give you their loyalty and best efforts.

As you move up in the leadership of the firm, these team members will become your followers and supporters. It was noted earlier that achieving leadership is easier when you have support from partners who are influential and powerful. However, it is also important to have people who give you hands-on assistance and do the everyday work that helps you become known as a rising star. You depend on these people for the results that make you shine. They include not just associates and partners, but also legal assistants, secretaries, and other staff and employees who can make your life easier and get things done. When you become a firm leader, your partners may give you the authority to act, but these are the people that you need to handle the daily details and carry out your leadership agenda.

§ 12:13 Practice self-management

“I try to take one day at a time, but sometimes several days attack me at once.” — Ashleigh Brilliant

It is difficult for law firm leaders to maintain a sense of balance in their lives because there are so many demands on their time. It is easy to become consumed by work and neglect other aspects of your life, including your social life, family, and emotional and physical health. Whether you are contemplating leadership or are already playing a leadership role in your firm, time is a critical but scarce resource. One of your greatest challenges as a leader will be keeping yourself disciplined and organized enough to attend to all the things you have to do. The only way you can carry out all of your responsibilities is to set clear priorities, plan carefully, stay focused, and delegate as much as you can. People watch you closely. When you are highly organized, people may or may not take note. However, they will definitely notice if you are disorganized, and you will lose credibility and respect if you appear to be scattered or undisciplined.

Planning your schedule should reflect your priorities. Priorities include both the overarching priorities that are grounded in your core values and the shorter-term priorities that determine where you will put your energies during each day. One very busy leader who was asked how she found time to do everything answered: *“That’s not the goal. I can’t do everything. I do what’s important.”* It is not easy, especially when you are faced with conflicting demands and have to make tough choices, but it is essential.

No matter how well you plan your day, unexpected events will come up. Some of these events are crises that require immediate

attention; some may be noisy but can wait. Many of them involve people who have complaints, needs, or demands and want to see you right away. If you are not careful, these distractions can take a great deal of time and energy, and they can produce considerable stress. If you lose your focus, you will lose control of your priorities, and you will have less time to address them. The more organized you are, the better able you will be to cope with these distractions, and the less stress there will be on you and the people around you. Another way to prevent stress and manage better is to delegate work that you do not have to do yourself.

Women who have families have an extra source of stress and distraction. To manage effectively as a leader in the office, you also have to manage effectively at home. It's a constant juggling act that requires as much planning as your work in the firm. If you do not have the support you need at home, you can become overwhelmed by guilt and conflict. Here, too, good organization will help you maintain your focus and keep you in control.

§ 12:14 Set priorities and plan around them

Leaders constantly face conflicting demands. One of the keys to a leader's success is her determination to be true to her values and use those values to set priorities. Having a clear personal sense of what is important and acceptable to you helps you decide what you will do, when, and for how long. Your values inform your decision about what your priorities are and where to place limits on your work. When your priorities conflict, your core values help keep your options and their consequences in perspective. They make your choices easier. One leader at a 65-lawyer firm decided to forego a very attractive job offer from another law firm. The offer presented a tempting career opportunity but would require her to spend a lot of time away from her family. She explained her decision this way: *"There are some things I do not want to do. For example, I minimize travel. I gave up an opportunity at another firm because it would require travel. I could have built up a huge national practice at that firm, but it would have required 1 to 2 years of non-stop traveling around the country."*

Setting clear priorities and boundaries about where you will direct your time and effort sends important signals to the people around you. Letting people know that you will not be available at certain times each day or each week allows you to set that time aside for things that are important to you, whether it is your family, your health, or your religious beliefs. It lets you manage their expectations about what you will do and when. One law

firm partner I know refuses to send or respond to e-mails at night. Co-workers and clients know that she is available in emergencies, but in the normal course of work, they hear from her only during the day.

The way you spend your time also shows the people you lead what is important to you. Because you are a leader of the firm, they view your choices as representing the expectations of the firm. For better or worse, this gives you considerable impact on the firm's culture and work norms. If you work long hours, are efficient and productive, and take a three-week vacation every year, you show that you are hard working but appreciate the personal things that smooth out your life. If you work the same hours but seem to spin your wheels a lot and never take a vacation or time off to be with your family, it suggests that you expect others also to give up personal pursuits for work.

All planning involves making choices, and the choices you make determine how well you manage your time and how much you can get done effectively. You make big choices, such as the kind of law you practice, the firm you join, the city you live in, whether to buy a house or rent, whether to marry and when, your lifestyle, and so on. You also make smaller choices about what you will do each day, what will get your attention, whether you will eat alone in your office or call a colleague or client to join you, and whether to drive to work or take public transportation. Even when you think that your choices are restricted by external forces, such as the partner who threatens to quit unless . . . , or a critical client going out of business, you still make active decisions about where to devote your time and effort. You may shift around priorities to reflect the urgency of a situation, but you are nonetheless making a choice. Likewise, every one of your choices, large or small, has a direct impact on how much time you have for the other items demanding your attention. A leader who took control of her priorities and was very clear about what her choices were put it this way: *"I loved management committee stuff (who knew?), especially the people function. But I also knew that if it took too much away from my family, it would no longer be acceptable and I would walk away. Knowing that was empowering and liberating."*

In order to attend to all pressing matters and still have time to do the planning, strategizing, and other long-term items on your agenda, you have to do triage. You must prioritize the things that must be done now and those that can wait; those that require a disproportionate amount of time and those that you can get through easily and quickly; and those that will prevent future problems and those that will just put them off for a while. In

terms of scheduling, the best way to approach this is to organize tasks according to your priorities, rather than the other way around. Then you can organize your activities according to what is most important to you and keep as much control as possible in your hands.

Steven Covey has a very handy and useful approach to managing work priorities. In *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, he divides matters into four quadrants, as shown below in Table 12.2.¹ The two factors that define an activity are *Importance* and *Urgency*. Importance relates to results: does this matter contribute to my vision, my high priority goals, or the firm’s mission and business objectives? Urgency, on the other hand, is about immediacy: how quickly must it be done? Matters that are urgent demand your attention. Because they are “in your face,” you may be tempted to take care of them quickly whether they are important or not.

Table 12.2. Setting Priorities		
	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	I	II
NOT IMPORTANT	III	IV

You will invariably spend a good deal of time in Quadrant I because every leader regularly faces sudden problems and crises. Quadrant I activities deal with damage control. When important things must be taken care of right away, they will grab your attention and your time. You have to do these things, but you don’t want to be consumed by crises. To be most effective and efficient, you want to spend more time in Quadrant II, addressing the issues that advance your leadership agenda, such as long-range planning, client relationships, talent development, and communicating with the firm. If you are able to spend more time in Quadrant II, you can prevent many of the emergencies that threaten to keep you in Quadrant I. Quadrant III activities may be loud and glaring but will have little significance in the grand scheme of things. You cannot ignore urgent matters, but they can be a waste of your time. Many of these activities should be

[Section 12:14]

¹Covey, S.R. (1989), *The seven habits of highly effective people* (New York: Simon & Schuster).

delegated to others. For obvious reasons, spend as little time as necessary in Quadrant IV.

Another consideration in your planning is the impact of certain types of activities on your health and well-being. In their study of successful women leaders, McKinsey researchers Joanna Barsh and Susie Cranston stress the importance of placing high priority on activities that energize you.² These are activities that you find exciting and creative or at least enjoyable. Spending too much time on activities that sap your strength can lead to burnout. To the extent you can, delegate or outsource the things that you do not enjoy or that drain you, and incorporate as many things as possible into your day that strengthen you, replenish your energy, and keep you going.

To make more time for energy-building activities, you need to eliminate as many energy drains as you can. As noted above, you can choose where to place your effort. You cannot control everything as a leader since much of what you do is in response to the needs of others. However, you can make some choices that give you more energy for the good stuff and require less for the energy drains. This is an area where small changes can have a big impact. Starting small rituals—such as meeting with your assistant first thing every morning to review the day's planned events or organizing your desk before you leave at night so you can get right to work in the morning—can reduce time wasted on trivial and frustrating things. So can identifying the activities that exhaust you and finding ways to get rid of them wherever possible. To do that, try these steps:

- List the regular activities that demand your attention and energy in different aspects of your life (e.g., your practice, leadership, family, friends, community).
- Circle those that deplete your energy.
- Consider how a different choice might reduce or eliminate the energy-depleting activities.
- Determine what is preventing you from making that choice.
- Consider how different choices could give you more time for the activities that energize you.

Scheduling regular time for yourself is one way to replenish your energy. While it may sound paradoxical, taking regular time off may actually make you more effective. Research has shown that taking a set time away from work each week is actually beneficial for professionals and their teams. A four-year study of

²Barsh, J., & Cranston, S. (2009), *How remarkable women lead* (New York: Crown Business).

high-powered consultants at Boston Consulting Group found that requiring every team member to take a predictable block of time away from work each week led to better communication, greater work efficiency, and overall, better work.³ Moreover, individuals who participated in the study reported greater job satisfaction, less work-life conflict, and better work habits than those who were not in the study group. The researchers' conclusion was that knowing that people would be absent forced teams to plan work better and communicate more often and forced individuals to be more efficient and focused on their work.

There are many books, classes, and resources on time management. If it is a problem for you, it will be worth your while to invest in them or find a coach. The leaders I interviewed all faced strenuous time demands and managed to stay organized and focused (most of the time). Here is some of their advice:

- *Think more strategically about what you can realistically accomplish. Before diving in consider how long a project will realistically take so that you don't unintentionally bite off more than you can chew.*
- *How do I stay organized? Lists. Project management. They are both important. Also, I live downtown so I have no commute.*
- *Seeking perfection can lead to paralysis and keep women from speaking up or taking risks. Don't wait till it's perfect. Try out draft versions along the way. Tweak as you go.*
- *As a leader you set the agenda. Leadership does not take more time because you can delegate to your team. That frees you up for business development and other activities. I like to run things, I think strategically. I get other people to do the detail work.*
- *When my son was a baby, I took flights the same day rather than stay over so I could be with him at night, even if I was exhausted. It was important to me even if he didn't know or care.*
- *When my kids were young, I pared life down to the essentials. Only home, work, school and kids' stuff. More would have pushed me over the edge. As the kids got older, I added back civic, charitable, and cultural things.*
- *To be a leader you need patience. You need to realize there are trade-offs. You don't get to do everything. I was hugely invested in my job and parenting. Those were my priorities. I*

³Perlow, L.A., & Porter, J.L. (Oct. 2009), Making time off predictable and required, *Harvard Business Review*.

put other things—like reading, theater, friends—on hold for 10 years while I focused on those two things.

- *My clients have families. They respect my family time—they tell me not to expect to go with them in evenings even if I offer. Many of them have kids too . . . But you have to know, to sense, when you do have to go. If a client supports a cause and asks your firm to buy a table, you'd better be there. They will be, giving their time to it. So should you.*

§ 12:15 Delegate

A critical aspect of personal management is effective delegation. Robert Swaine, a founding partner of Cravath, Swaine & Moore, wrote in 1948 that:

The art of delegation in the practice of the law is difficult, requiring the nicety of balance which many men with fine minds and excellent judgment are unable to attain . . . The more nearly he attains the right compromise between [doing all the work himself or turning everything over to an assistant], the greater the amount of effective work a man can turn out, and hence the greater his value to the firm.¹

Of course, there were few women in practice at the time Swaine made these remarks, but the principle still holds true for men and women alike. When you are a leader, there are many things that you can and should delegate both for your own sake and for the benefit of those around you. Delegate as much as you possibly can. When you lead a client team, your personal involvement and close oversight are warranted because you are responsible to the client for the work product of the team. However, as a team leader, you do not need to do everything yourself. Likewise, as a firm leader, you *should not* do everything yourself. You can be a far more effective and efficient leader if you delegate more to others and give them greater responsibility and autonomy.

When you are a leader, you have to think broadly. Your job as a leader is to achieve the firm's goals *through other people*. The more people who are working with you and behind you toward the firm's goals, the more possibilities there are for success. It is not in the firm's best interests for you to be involved in every project. By delegating responsibilities to others, you can leverage

[Section 12:15]

¹Swaine, R.T. (2007) [1948], *The Cravath firm and its predecessors: 1819–1947*, cited in Henderson, B. (July 2008), *Part II: How most law firms misapply the “Cravath system,”* Legal Profession Blog, http://lawprofessors.typepad.com/legal_profession/2008/07/part-ii-how-mos.html.

your leadership to accomplish more and create better results than any single producer could do.

Men seem to have an easier time delegating. A leader who helped shepherd her firm's merger to fruition made this observation: *"I often feel I have power but don't use it. Most men are better at using power. During the merger, a woman and a man served as department co-chairs. Management would make requests—the woman would respond, prepare the paperwork, etc. The man always delegated it unless it interested him and could get him somewhere."* The work was done either way but the woman spent unnecessary time on it.

Women can become better at delegating once they appreciate that there are many tasks they can easily give up. Sometimes, they hold on anyway because they feel they are obligated to take care of every problem, or they fear criticism if they ask others to do something. If that holds you back, find techniques that make delegation easier. For example, a practice group leader learned from another leader in her firm: *"I learned from the woman who was our previous managing partner. Anytime someone raised an idea or complaint, she turned it back on them and asked 'How would you like to do it?' So I do that now. I let them run with it, even if they're not the best person to do it."*

A great deal of leadership involves administrative and other responsibilities that are tedious, time consuming, and for most lawyers, not very satisfying. Some of these things can be done by others who find it less tedious or even consider it an opportunity to learn and develop new skills. One woman who is a major rainmaker and sits on the policy committee of her global firm used to believe that she had to do everything herself; she felt she could not delegate even administrative tasks, so she didn't. So frazzled by busy work that she almost gave up her leadership goals, she came to the realization that *"If this work can legitimately and ably be done by someone else, why not delegate it? So I did, without remorse or guilt."*

There are many other reasons to delegate. One reason is that you simply do not have the time to do everything yourself. As your workload increases, and certainly when you reach the executive level, you need help managing your work and schedule. Many leaders have assistants who perform this function. One of the leaders I interviewed, the managing partner of a global firm, bills about 1,000 hours annually on client matters and spends another 2,000 hours on management. The demands of her job would take even more time but she is highly organized and delegates what she cannot or need not do. In addition to an assis-

tant, she has a team of lawyers to whom she delegates much of her client work, and she entrusts other matters (e.g., lateral partner hires, ethics questions) to partners better suited to deal with them.

Whenever you are asked to do something, whether work or leadership related, first ask yourself whether it is essential that you be the person to do it. If it is something that another person can handle, pick someone who would do a good job and hand it off. The global managing partner mentioned above is invited to attend many community functions on behalf of her firm. When an invitation comes in, she asks herself: *“How important to the interests and well-being of the firm is the goal to be achieved through my personal appearance? Can another person do it? What will be the impression and reaction if I don’t do it?”* Depending on how she answers these questions she either goes or sends someone else in her place.

Some lawyers pride themselves on delegating responsibility to others, but in reality, they stay closely involved. Some hold on because they are not sure how much responsibility the person being asked to do the work is equipped to handle. One managing partner was uncertain about the skill level of certain new practice group leaders especially with respect to financial matters. She had to determine how much authority the group leaders should have to act on their own. She wanted to trust them to act alone but felt that they lacked the skill set to be effective so she kept an eye on what they did. She maintained a delicate balancing act trying to oversee their activities and decisions without being accused of micromanaging them.

It is especially hard to give up control of projects that you have run successfully in the past. After all, you know what it takes to make the project successful and want to be sure that it continues to be done well. Your responsibility as a leader is to find competent people to take it over and to educate the new people in charge so that they know how to do it right. The problem is that some leaders feel the only way to be sure it is done right is to stay involved. However, as a leader, your interference can backfire even if the project is a success because of your effort. When you look over the shoulders of the people who have been given an assignment, you signal that you do not trust them. Leaders who insist on controlling the process and the end product breed distrust and resentment, not gratitude. Leadership is no place for perfectionism or micromanagement. If either is a problem for you, it will be a hard habit to break, but one that is important to overcome.

§ 12:16 Juggling work and family

Doing it all is a learned skill.

—Judge Carolyn Dineen King, United States Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit

All law firm leaders have lives outside the office (though it may not seem that way), and they struggle with how to balance competing demands from different spheres of life. To devote the necessary time to your job as a leader, you must be able to manage your personal life as well as your work. Women with children have the additional demands that family responsibilities bring. Most women try to find ways to combine career and family, but some women choose one or the other. If you have children, it means talking very honestly with your husband or partner about your respective career priorities and reaching agreement on how you will share household and family responsibilities. However carefully you plan, managing your career and your family is a constant juggling act, and you may frequently feel off-balance and in danger of dropping all the balls that you are trying to keep in the air.

Being able to manage your home life effectively is not just for your benefit but also for the well-being of the people you lead at work. Leadership comes with huge responsibility for others. You need to be able to give your work full attention and energy in order to carry out your duties, make good decisions, and give the people you work with guidance and support. If your home life is a distraction, your work performance will suffer, and you will let down the people in the office who depend on you.

To be a leader and have a family, you will need to create strategies and support systems that allow you to do your work, tend to your family, and preserve your peace of mind. However, you can keep many balls aloft successfully if you choose the balls carefully, stay clear about your priorities and stick to them, and have a plan to manage the things that you can control and back up for coping with the things you cannot.

When figuring out how you can possibly juggle leadership and motherhood, the first critical factor is your husband. As Sharon Meers and Joanna Strober point out in their book, *Getting to 50/50*, “The most important career decision you make is whom you

marry.”¹ Your life will be far easier and more manageable if your husband believes that your career has equal worth to his, enthusiastically supports you, and takes significant responsibility for the home front. Recent studies suggest that “the most stable high-quality marriages are those where men and women share both paid work and domestic work.”² If you are blessed to have such a husband, you enjoy a great advantage. Most of the married leaders I interviewed said their husbands were equal partners (or close) in caring for children and household. Several had husbands or life partners who stayed home with the children or had the primary responsibility for them. Almost every married woman with children said she could not have risen as high in her firm or career without her husband’s participation and support at home.

Unfortunately, not all women lawyers have such supportive husbands, but until men are equal partners on the family front, women’s careers will continue to be perceived as less important than their husbands’. Some men do defer to their wives’ career advancement, and a growing number of male lawyers are working part-time or dropping out of the workforce to be home with kids, but they represent a tiny number of fathers.³ In most cases, women lawyers still shoulder the responsibility for home and family even when they work as much as or more than their husbands. There is an underlying assumption that men’s primary focus is work, and that even when women share an equal career burden, they will stay in charge at home. In one study of well-educated women who dropped out of the paid workforce, two-thirds of the women cited as reasons for their decision the lack of their husbands’ support for home and child care, and the expectation that women should be the ones to cut back on employment when they had children.⁴

One of the reasons that ambitious women struggle so much when they have children is that their careers play second fiddle

[Section 12:16]

¹Meers, S., & Strober, J. (2009), *Getting to 50/50: how working couples can have it all by sharing it all*. (New York: Bantam Books).

²Coontz, S. (2009), Sharing the load, *The Shriver Report*, <http://www.awomansnation.com/marriage.php>.

³Chen, V. (Oct. 2009), Paradigm shift: power-lawyer mom, stay-at-home dad, *The American Lawyer*.

⁴Stone, P., & Lovejoy, M. (2004), Fast-track women and the “choice” to stay home, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 596, 62–83, cited in Ely & Rhode (2010), Women and leadership: defining the challenges.

to their husbands.’ A study of law firm lawyers conducted by the MIT Workplace Center found that 74% of male partners described their spouses as being less committed to their own careers, but only 57% of female partners described their spouses as being less committed to their own careers.⁵ If a couple decides that one of them should spend more time at home and less at work, it is invariably the mother who works less and seeks fewer promotions at the office. This is a reasonable choice if the woman is not passionate about her career and she and her husband agree together that his career should take priority. However, many women’s careers lose status by default; they believe that it is expected of them, or they feel so exhausted by having to do everything that they give it up.

If your career is important to you, and if you want to become a leader in your profession, then you have to make that clear to your husband. Otherwise, he may assume that your career commitment is lukewarm and that he is the one whose career should come first. When you discuss it, you may find that he underestimates how important your career is to you, or that you overestimate how much time and effort he wants to devote to his. You may also realize that there are many possibilities that will satisfy both of you, whatever your respective career goals are. Whatever you decide, once you are in agreement, you can make suitable arrangements for childcare and home responsibilities. The important thing is that both of you have to be forthcoming about your career goals and make these decisions together.

Preparing for this conversation will force you to come to terms with your priorities. Once those are clear to you, you need to reconcile them with your husband’s priorities. Each couple needs to work out their own way to approach what has to be done to pursue two careers and still keep their home and family life functioning. The key is for both of you to feel that you have equal ownership, input, and responsibility. This requires sitting down together to figure out how you will equitably share home and family obligations. You have to be ready for the unexpected, e.g., who will do what when both of you have to be out of town and a child gets sick, or when the nanny unexpectedly quits. Developing a plan together reinforces your mutual respect for each other’s careers and outside obligations, acknowledges that you both may have to make compromises, and lays out some of those compromises in advance.

⁵Harrington, M., & Hsi, H. (2007), *Women lawyers and obstacles to leadership: a report of MIT workplace center surveys on comparative career decisions and attrition rates of women and men in Massachusetts law firms*, MIT Workplace Center.

As the conversation progresses, you and your husband or partner may have to deal with assumptions about your proper roles as parents and spouses. You may feel that it is your responsibility as a wife to do all the cooking, cleaning, and child care. Your husband might feel that he has to work extremely long hours, earn a large income, and place his career ahead of his family. These assumptions are based on the social roles and expectations that you both have internalized. Trying to conform to them can impose unreasonable pressure on you when your long-held assumptions and your real-life demands come into conflict. To illustrate, let's say you believe that being a good parent means giving your children well-balanced healthy dinners. However, you travel a lot, and your husband serves the kids pizza most nights when you are away. You can deal with this conflict in several ways: stop traveling so much; accept that your husband is doing the best he can and that the children will do just fine; cook wholesome meals and freeze them so he can serve them when you are gone; or hire a cook or home delivery meal service.

If you don't reconcile your assumptions with the constraints that life presents, they can be a continuing source of friction and stress. It is important for you to confront those assumptions and the pressures they impose on you. The key is to put the conflict into perspective. (*How important is it, really? Is it worth stressing over?*) Then try to resolve it in a mutually agreeable way. If you and your husband do not challenge your respective assumptions and resolve the conflict, you will have a hard time fashioning a workable plan for managing your home and family. Unlike the number of hours in a day, your assumptions are not immovable limits but *choices*, and choices can be changed. Choosing to accept new views and attitudes may be hard at first but can ultimately be liberating.

This discussion can provoke deeply felt emotions. As you talk about these things, don't be surprised if you experience some disturbing feelings and disagreements. One or both of you may feel overwhelmed, stressed out, guilty, disrespected, or misunderstood. Some people are tempted to avoid bringing up these feelings but that will cause more distress down the road. These issues need to be addressed openly and dealt with before an unplanned event comes up. That is one of the reasons you want to start having these conversations early and keep them going.

Ideally, this conversation should start before you have children and continue indefinitely, because circumstances and priorities, at home and at work, change over time. If you are discussing

these issues for the first time when you get pregnant, or after there has been a major change at work or in your home situation, the added stress may complicate the conversation.

There are many aspects of home and family life that ought to be included in your discussion. Aside from caring for children and running your household, you and your husband or partner may have ailing parents, spiritual needs, community commitments, and other priorities that require your time and effort. Table 12.3 lists some questions to help you examine your needs at home and develop systems for dealing with them.

Table 12.3. Questions for developing a home and family management plan

- What are our needs? How are they being met now? Which are not being met?
- What future needs should we plan for?
- What is each of us contributing to the family? To the household?
- How much time is each of us spending in each category of family and household activity? How could that time be re-allocated?
- What do we want to keep the same?
- What do we want to change?
- What would each of us like to give up?
- What would each of us like to do more of?
- What would be a better way to do the things we are doing?
- Who else could do some of these things instead of us?

As you consider these questions, you may decide to make some larger changes than you anticipated. You might decide to take turns making career a priority, or one or both of you might reduce your hours or take less demanding jobs. You might decide to move closer to family members who can provide regular or emergency child care. You might put a priority on finding time for yourself or to be with your partner. There are all sorts of possibilities once that conversation gets going.

The outcome of your discussions should be a plan. As you go through the planning process, remember this: whatever you plan will not be perfect. No matter how well you plan, each of you will run into occasional conflicts. Things will go out of whack from time to time. Plan the best you can and be prepared for the unexpected.

The plan should designate how much of your time and energy will go into work, family, household chores, and other aspects of

your life. It should allocate responsibilities and address contingencies. It should also identify resources that you can rely on to meet those responsibilities. There are private and public resources that will make it easier for you to carry out your duties at home and at work. You cannot do everything that has to be done, even if you and your husband are both actively involved. So learn what is available and how they can help you. Aside from family and friends, those resources include:

- Nanny and child care services
- Day care centers
- Child care exchanges and cooperatives
- Sick child care companies
- Employer-provided benefits, such as on-site and emergency child care
- Health and family counselors
- Networking and support groups for working parents
- Take-out and food delivery services
- Online vendors for everything
- Cleaning services
- Bartering networks

Familiarity with these resources is especially important for single mothers and mothers of chronically ill or special needs children. Juggling work and family is harder when you are on your own or when your family requires extraordinary attention. It is vital to have a system of family, friends, or caretakers in place to back you up when work and family demands conflict.

You will always be juggling too many balls, and while you may be able to keep them in the air, you will probably never achieve a sense of balance. The greater your ambivalence about the choices you have made the more difficult the juggling process will be. Ambivalence will keep your guilt level high and your commitment—to work, firm, and family—in doubt. You can clear away a great deal of that anxiety and guilt by being clear about your values and priorities. Clarity does not necessarily mean certainty or permanence and you will periodically run into conflicts that make you question your choices. However, feeling centered, knowing that you have made a definite choice based on the things that are most important to you, and communicating your priorities to others will enhance your effectiveness and save you a great deal of unnecessary anguish.

The experience of the leaders I interviewed who were mothers bears this out. Almost every one of them said that she made family her highest priority. These women were often pulled away by work demands but never lost sight of what mattered most. They

chose to be lawyers and leaders as well as mothers, and worked hard at managing all three roles. One of the leaders said: *"I have two girls, 13 and 11. My career is my 'third girl.' I give them all what they need at different stages. I plan my career the way I plan my parenting. It's the only way to do all I want to do."* Another leader explained: *"I carefully choose what I want in my life. If it detracts from billable work or kids, it's because I want to do it. I don't feel guilty about it. When my children were young, I made sure there were no seconds wasted in my day. I put myself in the mindset that I can't do everything so my choices have to be careful. My husband is the same way. He is very engaged and flexible."*

While the majority of the leaders who were married had very helpful mates, several managed without a husband or partner or with a husband who did not share the work at home. Those women had more constraints and fewer options because they bore greater responsibility for both home and family. Some were single mothers at some point in their lives because of divorce, or a husband's death, or because they adopted children without marrying. Some had husbands with extremely demanding schedules who did little to help at home or with the children.

All of the women with children were extremely well-organized and resourceful, and few felt guilty about their demanding work commitments. They were proud of their careers and believed their work to be an integral part of who they are. Whether or not they had family-centered husbands, all who had children had a support structure at work and at home made up of family, friends, or hired assistants to help them deal with the stresses of leadership and the demands of the household. This support network allowed them to attend to their career, work, and leadership responsibilities with relatively little guilt, disorder, or stress.

APPENDIX A

Summary of My Leadership Vision: _____

Ultimate Goals/Objectives:

1: _____

Interim Goals/Milestones:

- a.
- b.
- c.

**Time
Frame:**

2: _____

Interim Goals/Milestones:

- a.
- b.
- c.

**Time
Frame:**

3: _____

Interim Goals/Milestones:

- a.
- b.
- c.

**Time
Frame:**

Additional Considerations:

**Time
Frame:**

People who will help me:

How and when I will enlist their help:

Resources or experiences I will need:

**How and when I will obtain these resources/
experiences:**

