

HEMISTEN



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Leadership for Women

Strategies for Empowerment and
Success for Women in STEM

Course Introduction & Objectives

Welcome to **Leadership!**

Leadership is a common challenge, especially for underrepresented groups like women in STEM. In this course we will understand what is leadership and we will work with main skills to be a good leader.

Course Objectives:

- A. Understand what means to be a leader, types of leadership and why the gender diversity matters in leadership.
- B. Compare common leadership styles and discuss leadership strengths often associated with women. Provide strategies to build confidence.
- C. Encourage to build an effective communication, professional networking and relationships, with balancing in personal and professional life.

What to Expect: We'll gain a deeper understanding of Leadership, recognize its impact on our academic and professional lives, and develop practical strategies to build good leadership, developing the next generation of women leaders in STEM field.



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What is Leadership?

Definition:

Leadership is the process of influencing and guiding individuals or groups to achieve common goals. It involves setting a vision, making decisions, and inspiring others to follow and work collaboratively towards that vision.

Key qualities of leadership:

- ❖ Visionary thinking.
- ❖ Strong communication skills.
- ❖ Emotional intelligence.
- ❖ Adaptability and resilience.
- ❖ Integrity and authenticity.

Leadership is not about gender; it's about capability, vision, and the ability to inspire others.

However, gender diversity in leadership contributes to a broader range of ideas, perspectives, and positive organizational outcomes.



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Leadership Theories

There are different types of leadership:

- ❖ Transactional Leadership: focuses on structured tasks and goals, with clear expectations and rewards. It is effective for short-term tasks and operational efficiency, but may stifle creativity and innovation.
- ❖ Transformational Leadership: inspires and motivates followers by creating a vision for the future, fostering innovation and encouraging personal growth. It promotes creativity, innovation and positive change, but may be challenging to sustain over the long term.
- ❖ Servant Leadership: prioritizes the needs of team members, promoting their well-being and development. It builds strong, supportive relationships, fosters trust and loyalty within teams, but may be perceived as too lenient or lacking assertiveness.
- ❖ Autocratic Leadership: take full control of their team and makes all of the decisions with little input from anyone else. Decisions are made faster and directions are easy to follow, but it is unmotivated and innovation can be suppressed.



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There are many ways of leading a team to success. Effective leadership styles come in all shapes and sizes.

“Being a great leader means recognizing that different circumstances may call for different approaches.” Daniel Goleman



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Gender Diversity in Leadership Matters

- ❖ Diverse teams bring a variety of perspectives and ideas, which leads to more creative solutions and better decision-making.
- ❖ Having diverse leadership teams helps organizations mirror the communities they serve. It fosters trust employees, customers, and stakeholders, who see leaders who reflect their values and experiences.
- ❖ Women in leadership roles serve as role models, inspiring other women to aspire to leadership positions.
- ❖ Gender-diverse leadership helps challenge traditional stereotypes that women are less capable of leading or making tough decisions.



Can you recall a time when you experienced or observed the impact of gender diversity (or the lack of it) in a leadership role? How did it affect decision-making, team dynamics, or outcomes?



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State of Women in Leadership

- ❖ As of 2023, women hold approximately 29% of senior management roles worldwide (source: Grant Thornton International Business Report). In Europe, women represented 30% of the workforce in managerial positions, with Norway, Finland, and Iceland leading the way in gender equality.
- ❖ **Gender disparities and barriers:**
 - Glass ceiling is the invisible barrier that prevents women from reaching top leadership roles despite their qualifications and experience.
 - Pay gap. On a global scale, women earn approximately 20% less than men on average (source: World Economic Forum). This gap is even wider for women of color. This gap discourages women from seeking leadership positions.
 - Prejudice in the workplace. Women in leadership often face biased evaluations, being judged based on traditional gender stereotypes.
 - Caregiving. Women are disproportionately affected by family caregiving responsibilities, which can hinder their professional advancement.



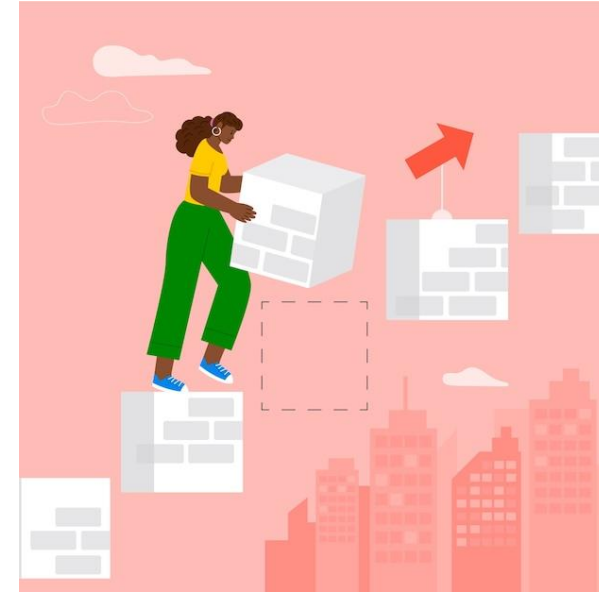
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Recent Progress and Key Achievements

- ❖ Increased Representation in Political Leadership. In 2021, Kamala Harris became the first woman Vice President of the U.S.
- ❖ Corporate Leadership Initiatives. Some countries have implemented gender quotas to ensure women's representation in boardrooms. Many companies are committing to gender equality in leadership, such as Salesforce, which has made significant strides in closing the gender pay gap within the company.
- ❖ Women in STEM and Technology. Companies like Microsoft and Google are focusing on increasing the number of women in technology leadership roles, through mentorship programs, and targeted recruitment efforts.
- ❖ Influential Women in Global Business. Mary Barra of General Motors became the first female CEO of a major global automaker in 2014, signaling significant progress in traditionally male-dominated industries.

Gender diversity in leadership is not only a matter of equity but also a driver of improved organizational performance, innovation, and societal progress.



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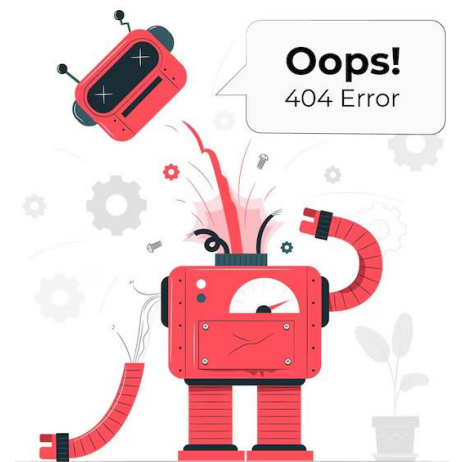


Which is your experience with women leadership?



The following questions may help you think about your surrounding and experiences:

1. What leadership style do you think best aligns with your values and strengths? How do you see this style evolving if you were to take on a leadership role?
2. Can you recall a time when a woman leader had a significant impact on you, whether in your career or personal life? What qualities did she possess that inspired or empowered you?
3. In your experience, how well are women represented in leadership roles in your organization or community? What are some barriers you have seen that prevent women from rising to leadership positions?
4. *How do you think your family, friends, or mentors influence your approach to leadership? How might their support (or lack thereof) shape your success as a leader?*
5. *Do you believe having more women in leadership roles would benefit companies or organizations? Why or why not?*
6. *Have you ever experienced or witnessed gender bias in leadership situations, whether in hiring, promotions, or decision-making? How did this impact the outcome?*



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Leadership Strengths Often Associated with Women

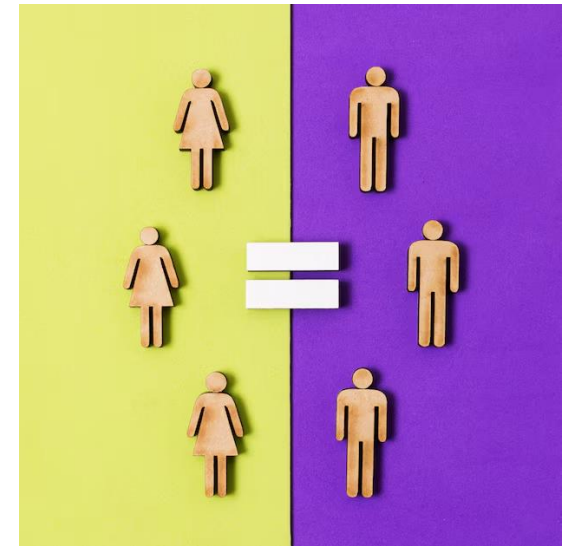
1. **Collaboration** is the ability to work effectively with others, valuing their input, and fostering a sense of teamwork.

Women leaders often excel in creating environments where everyone feels heard and valued, with inclusive decision-making. This also empowers the team, encouraging the growth of the team members fostering mutual respect.

2. **Empathy** is the ability to understand and share the feelings of others, and to respond to emotional cues in a supportive manner. Empathy is a key component of emotional intelligence, which helps leaders manage their own emotions while also recognizing and responding to the emotions of others.

3. **Adaptability** is the ability to adjust quickly to changing conditions and to remain flexible in the face of challenges. Adaptability fosters resilience, enabling leaders to pivot quickly, maintain focus, and inspire confidence even when facing setbacks.

4. **Emotional Intelligence** helps leaders communicate clearly, understand team dynamics, and address conflicts before they escalate.



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Do you recognize some of these stereotypes?



Tips for Developing your Leadership Style



- Recognize your Strengths. Your leadership style is inherently shaped by your natural strengths and inclinations. By identifying and embracing these strengths, you can develop your leadership approach that feels authentic and effective.

 - I) Identify your core strengths.
 - II) Seek feedback from others.
 - III) Leverage strengths in your leadership approach.
- Embrace Flexibility and Adaptability. You may have a predominant leadership style, but being able to adjust your approach depending on the context is crucial.

 - I) Assess the situation.
 - II) Be willing to experiment.
 - III) Learn to adapt to different personalities.
- Seek Regular Feedback. Receiving constructive criticism allows you to identify areas for improvement and refine your leadership skills. Feedback from diverse sources provides a well-rounded perspective on your leadership effectiveness.

 - I) Ask specific questions.
 - II) Create a feedback loop.
 - III) Act on the feedback.
- Develop Emotional Intelligence. A leader with high emotional intelligence can navigate interpersonal dynamics effectively, create a positive work environment, and motivate others even in difficult circumstances.

 - I) Self-awareness.
 - II) Self-regulation.
 - III) Empathy.
- Invest in Ongoing Learning and Development. Great leaders are always learning. The landscape of leadership constantly changes, and leaders must adapt to new challenges, technologies, and team dynamics.

 - I) Take leadership courses.
 - II) Learn from other leaders.
 - III) Stay informed.
- Lead by Example and Inspire Others. Leading by example not only builds credibility but also inspires your team to follow your lead. Whether it's demonstrating hard work, resilience, integrity, or kindness, your actions set the tone for the entire team.

 - I) Exhibit the values you promote.
 - II) Be accountable.
 - III) Inspire with your actions.



Communication Skills for Leaders



❖ Assertive Communication: Balancing Authority and Approachability

- Assertiveness is the ability to express your thoughts, feelings, and beliefs in a direct, honest, and respectful manner. It strikes a balance between being too passive (allowing others to dominate or disregard your needs) and too aggressive (violating the rights of others through forceful or disrespectful communication).
- Key components: Clear and direct language, respect for other's opinions, non-verbal communication help convey confidence and authority without being overly dominant, maintain consistency, encourage feedback, set boundaries with empathy.

❖ Handling difficult conversations: How you handle tough conversations influences your credibility as a leader. When done well, it shows that you can be trusted to deal with challenges and conflicts fairly and with respect.

- Leaders often need to navigate difficult conversations involving conflict, performance issues, or personal differences. Handling these conversations with care and professionalism can resolve tensions, restore morale, and strengthen relationships.
- Steps for handling difficult conversations: prepare and plan, stay calm and composed, listen actively, collaborate on solutions.



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Communication Skills for Leaders II



❖ Public Speaking

- Public speaking allows leaders to inspire their teams, share the vision, and rally support for initiatives. It's an essential tool for conveying ideas with clarity and impact. Leaders who speak confidently in public settings project authority, credibility, and influence. Whether it's in boardrooms, conferences, or town halls, your ability to communicate effectively elevates your leadership presence.
- Tips for effective public speaking: know your audience, tailor your message and speak to their emotions; structure your message, clear, concise, and focused, use visual aids; practice, practice and practice, rehearse your speech, record yourself; overcome nervousness, manage your anxiety, start small, engage with your audience.



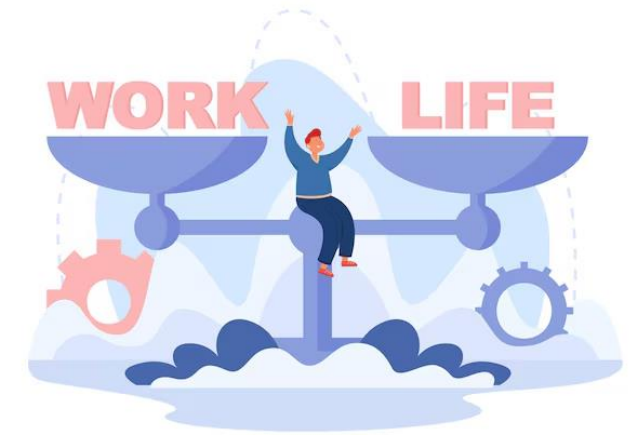
Work-life Integration and Leadership



- ❖ Leadership roles often come with significant demands on time and energy. As leaders juggle their responsibilities, they may find it difficult to balance professional obligations with personal life, particularly in high-stress environment.

❖ Key Challenges:

- Time management pressure. Leaders often have tight schedules, attending meetings, making decisions, overseeing projects and engaging with teams.
- Societal expectations. Women may feel pressure to be perfect both at home and in the workplace. This can lead to burnout and feelings of guilt.
- The “always-on” culture. With technology enabling constant connectivity, leaders may struggle to disconnect from work. Emails, phone calls, and messages can create a sense of urgency that never seems to end, making it difficult to maintain boundaries between work and personal life.
- Career advancement vs. personal time. Women often face the challenge of navigating the balance between pursuing career advancement opportunities (which may require longer hours, travel, or additional commitments) and maintaining personal and family commitments.

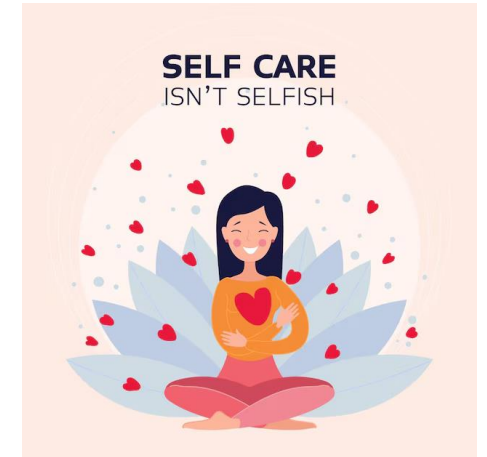


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Importance of Setting Boundaries and Self-Care



- ❖ Boundaries are crucial for maintaining a healthy work-life integration. Setting clear boundaries between professional and personal time allows leaders to recharge, avoid burnout, and maintain their mental and physical health. Without boundaries, leaders may risk overwork, decreased productivity, and strained personal relationships.
- ❖ Key practices for setting boundaries:
 - Establish clear work hours.
 - Set availability expectations with others.
 - Create physical and mental boundaries.
 - Practice saying NO to non-essential requests.
- ❖ Self-care is not a luxury but a necessity for sustainable leadership. Taking time for self-care enhances a leader's ability to perform at their best in all areas of life.
- ❖ Self-care practices:
 - Physical health, exercise regularly and healthy eating.
 - Mental health, mindfulness and meditation, seek support.
 - Rest and recovery, adequate sleep, take breaks.
 - Hobbies and personal time, engage in hobbies, social connections.



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Developing the Next Generation of Leaders

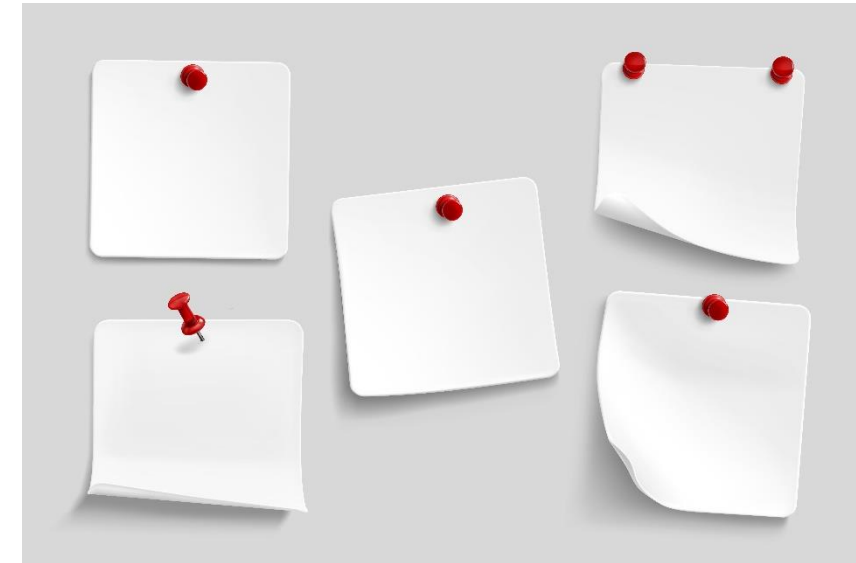


1. Importance of Mentoring and Role Modeling. A mentor provides guidance, advice, and support, helping mentees navigate their careers, develop their skills, and achieve their goals.
2. Women Leaders Can Empower Others. Women leaders have a unique opportunity to create an environment where all voices, particularly those of women and underrepresented groups, are heard and valued. How to do it? Encourage autonomy and ownership, provide constructive feedback and encouragement, create an inclusive environment, advocate for equal opportunities, share leadership experiences.
3. Building Sustainable Leadership Pipelines for Women. It is crucial to create systems that not only attract women to leadership positions but also equip them with the skills and resources they need to succeed and stay in these roles long-term. Key strategies: early identification of talent, leadership development programs, promoting women in STEM and executive roles, creating support networks, sponsorship, flexible work arrangements and career pathways, tracking progress and measuring impact.



Key Takeaways

- ❖ Women bring unique leadership strengths, which are essential in today's evolving workplace.
- ❖ Diverse leadership teams bring varied perspectives, leading to better decision-making, innovation, and organizational performance.
- ❖ It is crucial for women to recognize and confront the gender bias and stereotypes, to make the leadership journey smoother.
- ❖ It is important to balance personal and professional responsibilities and prove practical strategies for time management, setting boundaries, and prioritizing self-care.
- ❖ Women leaders can play a pivotal role in developing the next generation of leaders by offering mentorship, creating inclusive environments, and advocating for equal opportunities.



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Great leadership is not about fitting into a mold—it's about refining your unique approach and using it to inspire and empower others.

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World Economic Forum (2021). Global Gender Gap Report 2021



Additional Resources



Books on Leadership

Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead. Sheryl Sandberg

Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts. Brene Brown

The Confidence Code: The Science and Art of Self-Assurance. Katty Kay and Claire Shipman

Radical Candor: Be a Kick-Ass Boss Without Losing Your Humanity

The Female Advanted: Women's Ways of Leadership. Sally Helgesen



Additional Resources

Websites on Leadership

Catalyst. <https://www.catalyst.org>

Lean In. <https://leanin.org>

McKinsey & Company – Women in the Workplace Reports. <https://mckinsey.com>

The National Women’s Forum. <https://iwforum.org>

Videos on Leadership

Brené Brown: “The Power of Vulnerability” (TED Talk, 2011)

<https://youtu.be/iCvmsMzIF7o>

Simon Sinek: “How Great Leaders Inspire Action” (TED Talks, 2009)

https://youtu.be/u4ZoJKF_VuA

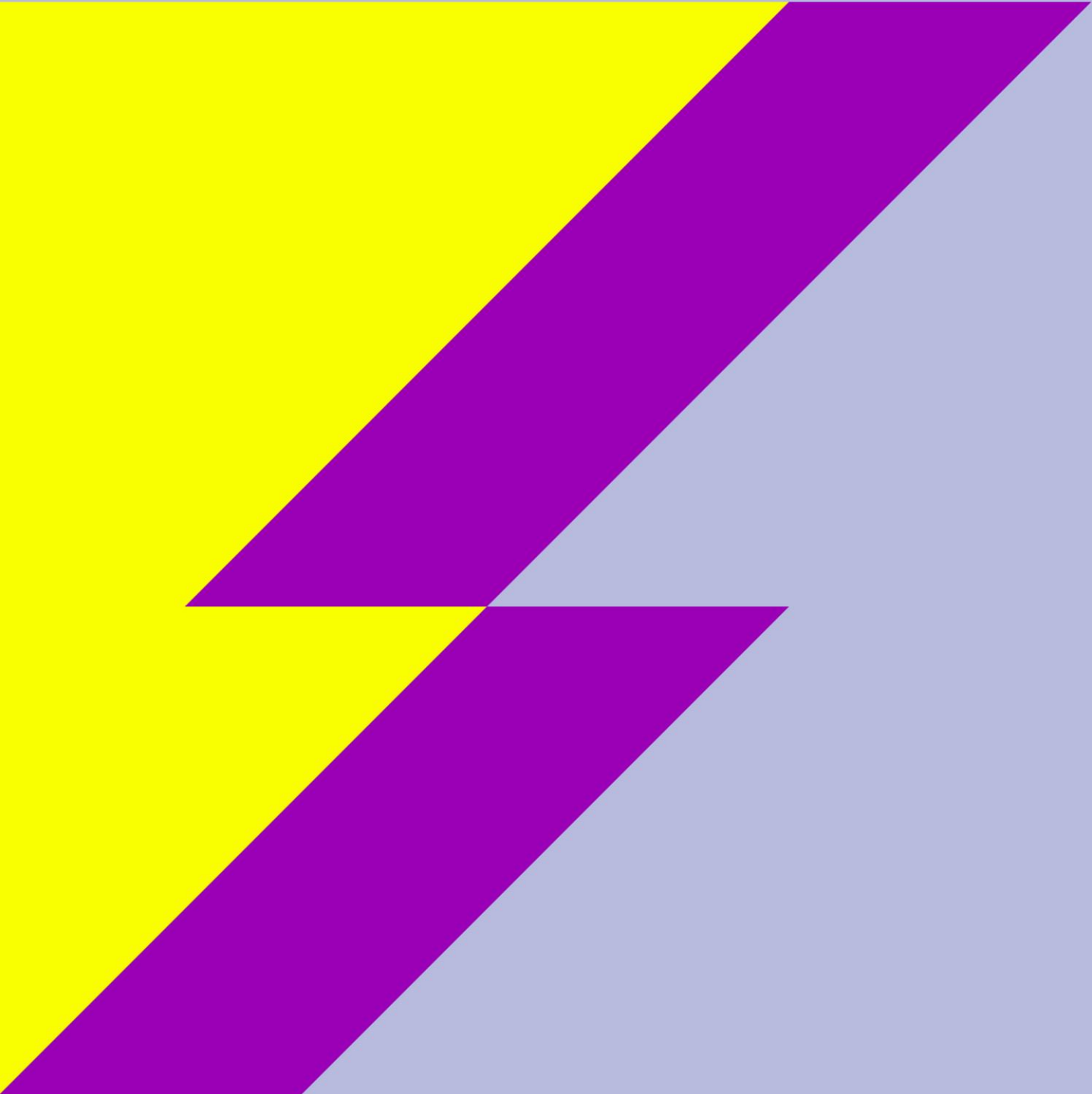
Robin Hausser: “The likeability dilemma for women leaders” (TED Talks, 2019)

https://www.ted.com/talks/robin_hausser_the_likeability_dilemma_for_women_leaders_sep_2022?utm_campaign=tedsread&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=tedcomshare

Sheryl Sandberg: “Why We Have Too Few Women Leaders” (TED Talk 2010)

<https://youtu.be/18uDutyIDa4>





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