Celebrating 20 Years & 10,000 Women Leaders

Women in Leadership™
A Linkage Institute

Best of WIL19
Keynote Highlights
More than 1,100 women leaders from around the world gathered in Phoenix, AZ for a journey of growth and discovery at Linkage’s 20th Women in Leadership Institute™.

Since 1999, the Women in Leadership (WIL) has equipped over 10,000 women leaders with actionable strategies to advance into senior leadership positions in organizations around the world. Through our research, inclusive of individual and organizational data from 200 companies and 3,000 leaders worldwide, we have found that women encounter seven Hurdles to advancement and must develop six core Competencies to overcome them. The Institute experience is a four-day immersive learning experience designed to focus in on these areas by leveraging a combination of 360° assessments, inspirational keynotes, skill-building competency sessions, eight hours of small-group peer learning teams, and strategic networking opportunities.

The 2019 faculty, whose keynotes are summarized on the following pages, explored the six core Competencies that are key to the advancement of women leaders:

**BOLD**
- Asserts self courageously & professionally

**CLEAR**
- Articulates ideas that enable forward momentum

**CONNECTED**
- Builds & expands network of trusted relationships

**INFLUENTIAL**
- Positively impacts organizational decisions

**INSPIRING**
- Engages the commitment of others

**AWARE**
- Seeks & utilizes reflective & in-the-moment self-knowledge
2019 WIL Faculty – Keynote Highlights

Susan MacKenty Brady | Being Aware

What we think and feel drives what we say and do. There are a lot of voices in our head competing for our attention—they often trigger us to feel grandiosity (one up) or shame (one down). These feelings can negatively impact our relationships, causing us and those around us pain. Susan MacKenty Brady, author of Mastering Your Inner Critic and 7 Other High Hurdles to Advancement, introduced us to her Inner Critic and gave us practical thinking to help us lead from a place of Compassionate Center.

What we learned:

- Leadership begins with us. We have to understand ourselves in order to lead effectively—and to navigate the seven Hurdles that impact us as women leaders.
- It is vital that we acknowledge, examine and address the societal and organizational barriers that hold women back from advancing in the workplace. The seven Hurdles faced by women in the workplace weren’t created or caused by women.
- Practice returning to Compassionate Center—start by pausing and noticing how you’re feeling before you react. Do not advocate, make a request, seek to repair or speak until you re-frame and are back to center.
- Your next destination is not where you’ll find happiness. Source how you feel about yourself from inside.

To hear more from Susan, follow her on Twitter.

Mark Hannum | Assessment Review: Unlocking Your Best Insights

From getting selected during the hiring and promotional process, to fitting in with an organizational culture imbued with masculine values, women leaders face many organizational challenges when it comes to advancement. On top of this, women leaders also face the “Double Bind”. That is, we expect women leaders to represent everything we expect of women (compassionate, affectionate, and warm)—while also expecting them to emulate what we expect of male leaders (assertive, competitive, dominant).

It’s a lot to juggle, and that’s where Linkage’s Women in Leadership Assessment™ comes in. All attendees completed this 360° assessment, which identifies strengths and key areas for growth opportunities. With Mark’s guidance, leaders began to consider these factors, while taking away valuable insights for the future.

Here are some ideas Mark asked us to consider:

- There’s no such thing as a perfect leader. Over more than 2 decades of debriefing these assessments and coaching leaders, Mark has never come across a 360° assessment with perfect scores. “Perfect” leaders simply don’t exist.
- Each leader is unique, from their personal style, to their personality traits. Every single person has a unique leadership fingerprint. Unique leaders value what sets them apart, and don’t try to become “average.”
- When you see a large discrepancy between how you rated yourself and how you were rated by others, there is an important area of opportunity to explore.

For more key insights from Mark, check out Linkage’s latest book authored by him; Become: The Five Commitments of Purposeful Leadership.
Dr. Tara Swart | Being Clear

Dr. Tara Swart, Neurologist and author of The Source, introduced the power of and the science behind The Law of Attraction. She challenged us to unlock the power behind visualizing our goals and discussed the control we all have to shape our futures.

What we learned:

- Clarity itself is the first step in becoming the leader you want to be. We have the power to change our destiny by reshaping the way we think.
- By using The Law of Attraction to visualize our goals, we are one step closer to manifesting them and making them our reality.
- Breakthroughs in neuroscience and behavioral psychology, including lessons in neuroplasticity, magnetism, emotional and logical thinking, and even hydration, self-care, and relaxation have proven the power of The Law of Attraction.
- Self-care is vital to gaining clarity. It’s important to take time to focus on ourselves so we can gain an understanding of who we are and who we want to be.
- When the goals you set come from the real you, they will be goals that you actually want to make happen.

To learn more from Tara, check out her new book, The Source and follow her on Twitter.

Abby Wambach | Being Bold

Two-time Olympic gold medalist, FIFA World Cup Champion, and the highest all-time international goal scorer for both male and female soccer players, Abby Wambach, took the main stage to discuss the importance of being Bold. An activist for equality and inclusion, Abby reminds us that bold leaders champion each other, lead from where they are, transform their failures to power, and take what they’ve earned.

What we learned:

- Women have never been “Little Red Riding Hood,” in fact, we all have a wolf in us. It’s up to us to find and unite our Wolfpack—when we do, we all come out victorious.
- To truly be bold, you have to show up as your authentic self—and that requires vulnerability.
- Even if you’re not in a position of leadership, find opportunities to seize the moment to make decisions or recommendations to move projects forward.
- Once you show up as your authentic voice, you need to be bold and leverage your voice and power—and support and champion other women in the process.
- Be fueled by your failures. They are an invaluable source of wisdom and power if you choose to learn from them.

For more from Abby Wambach, check out her bestselling book, Wolfpack, and follow her on Twitter.
Deep Dive Session: Mastering Your Inner Critic

Our Inner Critic is that voice inside our head that is critical of ourselves and others. We need to understand why intrinsic worthiness is essential to overcoming the Inner Critic, and furthermore, that confidence and worthiness are not the same thing.

In this session, we used exercises to identify our Inner Critic in action, and focused on how to coach our Inner Critic by unpacking the Four Practices:

1. Become Aware
2. Push Pause
3. Be Compassionate
4. Get Curious

What we learned:

• As a leader, the people who work with you and for you will react differently than you assume. Be aware that everybody has different triggers and different reactions. It starts with you.
• The challenge with the Inner Critic is its solitude. The subtlety is where the practice comes in.
• Pushing pause is difficult, because it forces you to stop reacting.
• Getting curious is the key to getting out of “One-Up” or “One-Down” and getting back to Compassionate Center.

Deep Dive Session: Mind and Body Presence

When it comes to mastering the seven Hurdles to advancement, we must start with our own well-being. This Mind/Body Presence session taught us the power of aligning the mind and the body to expand our capacity for presence, centering, and self-awareness as a leader. Together, we walked through a guided meditation experience designed to allow us to become in-tune with our bodies and our minds.

What we learned:

• Lie down on the floor or sit with your feet flat on the floor. Take a moment to appreciate how hard your body works for you. Listen to what your body is telling you.
• When we partnered up, we took time to simply look into each other’s faces, noticing what it feels like to be truly seen by someone.
• Through “heart meditation,” we took time to ask our hearts a question —perhaps one we have been meaning to ask—but didn’t know the answer to. What’s next? Where am I headed? Notice how your body reacts when you ask yourself these questions and make note of your reactions.
Molly Fletcher | Being Influential

Dubbed “The Female Jerry McGuire,” former sports agent Molly Fletcher shared her story of success as a powerful women leader in a male-dominated, super competitive field—the world of professional sports. In her keynote, she focused on the importance and the power of negotiation, and how that aligns with being an influential leader. Molly discussed the importance of relationship building to best position yourself to influence, and gave us tools and her best tips to propel each of us on our own leadership journeys.

What we learned:

• The ability to connect is imperative to being influential.
• Truly influential leaders are their own biggest advocates, they ask for what they want and need (and receive it).
• Influential leaders impact important organizational decisions, and being able to negotiate in these situations is critical to ensuring the future you want for both yourself, and your organization.
• Who we choose to give our energy to is incredibly important to us as women.
• Being influential and able to negotiate both require us to deliver messages in a way that leads others to listen and act.

To learn more from Molly, visit her website and follow her on Twitter.

Deep Dive Session: Strategic Networking

Laugh, learn and lean into your authenticity! Networking is an opportunity to share your story and build relationships. This interactive deep-dive session was designed to give the women leaders improv skills that foster confidence, presence, and creativity for connection.

In this session, leaders were able to gain flexibility and storytelling techniques to enjoy the moment.

What we learned:

• We need to get out of our comfort zones! Don’t hold back, and never be afraid to interact.
• Be comfortable with your physical and mental state in order to maximize your presence and network effectively.
• Be vulnerable. Everyone is in the same state as you.
• Don’t overthink it! Never be scared of what will come out of your mouth. Your most unique superpower is your uniqueness. No one can be you like you can. Own your authenticity in each interaction.
• Be an active listener. Here’s a tip to foster active listening; when you’re speaking with someone, instead of thinking about what you’re going to say next, be in the moment. Repeat what they are saying to you in your head and truly listen to what they are saying to you, before responding.
Deep Dive Session: Negotiation

Negotiation is a critical leadership skill. A good negotiator, just like a good leader: builds relationships, generates consensus, navigates tough conversations, and achieves goals.

In this session, we discussed the 10 best practices all good negotiators use to close the deal and get results.

What we learned:

• Ask for what you want, not what you think you'll get.
• Understand what matters most to the person you’re negotiating with. We spent a lot of time thinking about what we want, but the most powerful negotiation tool we have is our ability to understand the motivations and desires of the person we are negotiating with.
• There are four styles of negotiation, and it is vital that you understand the negotiation style of the person sitting across the table from you. With this understanding, you can tailor your approach and lead with the information that is most important to them. Take this quiz to learn what type of negotiator you are.
• Have the courage to pause and stop talking. State your ask and wait for the response. The pause sends a message about your intention.

2019 WIL Faculty – Competency Sessions

Shiza Shahid | Being Inspiring

Entrepreneur, technologist, investor, and impact leader Shiza Shahid took to the main stage to discuss how far women have come, and how far we still have to go. She challenged us to consider what’s most important today to further the empowerment of women and reminded us that we can each play a role in the advancement of gender equality in our businesses, our communities, and across the globe.

What we learned:

• There are moments when you have to decide who you are. Be guided by hope, not fear.
• In the business world, silence no longer equals neutrality. Silence is complicity. We need an ethical revolution.
• We need to advocate for ourselves while also mentoring others.
• By engaging others and inspiring them to contribute vs. trying to do it all ourselves, we are advancing the empowerment of our fellow women.
• As leaders, our goal should be to bring out the best in people and our teams. Once we are able to do this, they will have more faith in their own abilities.
• By praising and recognizing the hard work of our team members, we are stimulating a commitment that will inspire them to continue to do their best.
• Let your values and beliefs guide you, this will allow you to lead authentically.

To learn more from Shiza, follow her on Twitter.

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Panel: Linkage’s Women in Leadership Executive Impact Award

Jennifer McCollum, Linkage CEO, took the stage at #LinkageWIL this afternoon to introduce and acknowledge our 2019 Executive Impact Award Winners.

Wall Street Veteran and Co-Chair of #LinkageWIL, Carla Harris moderated the conversation on stage with all four winners. These incredible women leaders shared their insights on who inspires them, what being an authentic leader means, why proving our value is such a challenge, and advice for future leaders. They were candid and forthcoming—sharing stories from their childhood, family, and the professional experiences that have helped shape who they are today.

Each one of these outstanding women leaders have encouraged and inspired women within their organizations—and in their communities. They each exemplify what it means to be a purposeful leader.

Our heartfelt congratulations to the 2019 award recipients:

- Corinne Mescher, Vice President Marketing, Global Brand Strategy at MGA Entertainment
- Barbara Turner, President and Chief Operating Officer at Ohio National Financial Services.
- Nancy R. Corcoran-Davidoff, Executive Vice President, Chief Experience & Human Resources Officer at Hackensack Meridian Health
Carla Harris reminded us that, “Leadership is a journey from execution to empowerment.” You must engage with others in a way that empowers them.

And always—always—bring your authentic self to the table. Here’s how:

• Know who you are. Who are you today? You are not the woman you were yesterday, and you’re not the woman who arrived in Phoenix four days ago.
• Understand that we are all multifaceted. Own that.
• Finally; Relax. You are authentically you, so you can meet people where they are.

Carla encouraged us to give up the role of executing—you can’t get to second base when your foot is still on first.

She also discussed the importance of being intentional about cultivating mutually beneficial relationships and pushing ourselves to build relationships with others who can support our aspirations.

From there, she dove into the importance of networking. She acknowledged that while it may feel uncomfortable, it is an intentional action we all need to take. Building a network that we can eventually leverage is a powerful tool every leader should have in their toolbox.

Carla left us with a powerful message: “We all have a voice, which is powerful and influential if we use it.”

What we learned:

• The real way to grow your power is to give it away.
• The way you amplify your value in your organization isn’t to execute more—it’s to empower people. Just because you can, doesn’t mean you should. Resist the temptation to continue to execute. It’s not about who you used to be.
• If you are invited to the room, you belong in the room. If you belong in the room, you have a seat at the table. If you have a seat at the table, you have a responsibility to use your voice.
• Be authentically you: Know the environment you’re walking into. Own and embrace all of who you are, so you can relax and meet people where they are.
• Your voice is at the heart of your power. You must be intentional about using your voice. To be a powerful, impactful leader, you must be able to call a thing, a thing. When you don’t speak up, you lose the authenticity you brought into the room. That will cost you, in terms of trust and retention.
• We can all lead from any seat—and we must.

Looking for more from Carla? Visit her website or follow her on Twitter for more insights.