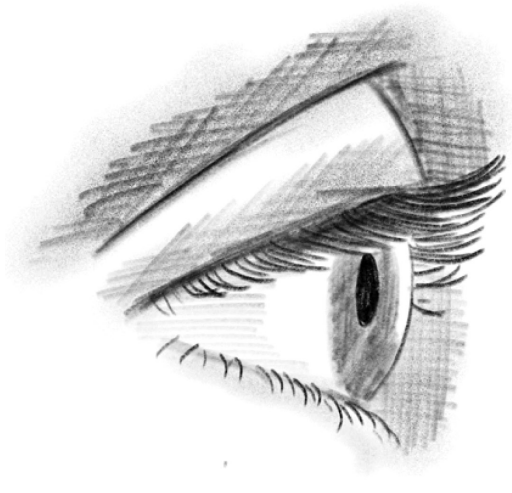


Introduction

Step Up is a book about a new future and new possibilities and you can be the designer of both. It is a practical guide that keeps self-awareness and choice as the cornerstones for what you need to do to build a life and work that you want.

The book focuses primarily on professional women like you who are already leaders as well as those aspiring to lead and accelerate their leadership impact. The tools and practices in the book are about YOU deciding what stepping up means to you and how you wish to do it.

UNDERSTANDING OUR INNER WORLD



Culture
Family Beliefs
Social Norms
Personal Experiences
Gender Role
Media

The Observer has many layers to it

We all want to meet our goals and lead powerfully. We train hard and, learn every skill that the world decides a good leader needs, and we constantly stay updated.

But are we missing out on paying attention to something primarily important?

We forget about what is happening inside ourselves - our inner landscape.

We forget we have to understand ourselves and look within so that we can begin to change in order to lead ourselves.

Paying attention to our way of 'being' allows us to better understand our external behaviour and inner drives.

Our personal history shapes us and all our experiences through our growing years, years of young adulthood including early years of work are all a part of the 'self'.

The 'self' has memories, full-blown experiences, filled with emotion and vivid images.

We carry this personal history everywhere. We carry it into our homes, relationships and it is present at work every day. The 'self' is where one leads from.

Our body too is a place of learning and re-learning-.

Self-confidence, ease, arrogance, aggression, and diffidence are all reflected in the muscle and the skeletal configuration of our body. Our body also has an inner dimension that is connected with breath, internal musculature, and sensations within.

As I work with leaders the somatic dimensions that emerge allow leaders to become aware of their bodies. Somatic work in leadership is a powerful approach to building the body of confidence and presence.

Centering is a somatic practice that I recommend to build presence. Centering helps us find balance by becoming aware of our internal states while continually also sensing the external environment through our senses.

Being present is like your GPS. Pay attention and it informs you how to navigate. A fully present mind and body together are able to connect with those around and see the concerns in that moment.

THE INNER CRITIC

All the messages and behaviors that we have adopted over the years show up in specific ways at work. They become a part of us and some of these inner messages and behavior are limiting.

When does your critical voice show up? Do these seem familiar?

- It shows up when we need to put our deeply held-dreams and desires into action.
- When we are in a tough spot and feeling low.
- When we are at the edge of our comfort zone and we need to stretch.
- When we are creating a breakthrough or in a creative drift.
- When we are attempting to design a new identity for ourselves.

The above situations stop us from - dreaming, aspiring, feeling confident, taking action and creating new possibilities for ourselves.

I call the limiting beliefs as REDs and the permissions that we give ourselves reclaiming our power as GREENs.

REDs	GREENs
Don't be important	I will acknowledge what I need
Speak only when you know it well	I can be a dignified learner
Be pleasing please	What I think and feel is important
Don't ask for support	I will ask for support when I need it
Don't relax	Relaxing is caring for myself

DESIGNING YOUR FUTURE

Culture, family of origin, and the way girls are socialized in our society, all of these reasons lead to certain assessments that we as women begin to hold about ourselves and the world around us. They begin to define what we need to care about. Often, it is others who have defined for us what we need to care about.

My work has highlighted for me that as women, many of us have buried our aspirations so deep that we have forgotten that they exist. Forgetting our dreams has helped us live our lives and work according to expected social norms.

Cares are connected to a future that we want for ourselves and others too. To have the future that we wish, we need to make new choices in life. The cares that we choose need to resonate with us deeply. It gives us meaning and purpose in our lives. It brings us value and satisfaction each day. Care leads to purposeful activity. It is connected to action in a way that it energizes us towards doing a set of meaningful tasks.

Care is the 'fundamental dimension to all our actions'. Aligning with our cares changes the actions we take.

We have cares in personal and professional domains. Being clear about our cares is a leadership practice. Knowing and articulating them not only heightens our energy but also impacts those around us, including work teams, family, and business partners. As humans with finite time, we need to choose where to put our time and energy in.

We live life in many of the following dimensions. Some of us have cares that lie in these different dimensions

- Family • Relationships • Home • Finances • Health • Spiritual • Learning and growth
- Performance - in which domain? • A social issue • Career • Community

Question to reflect upon:

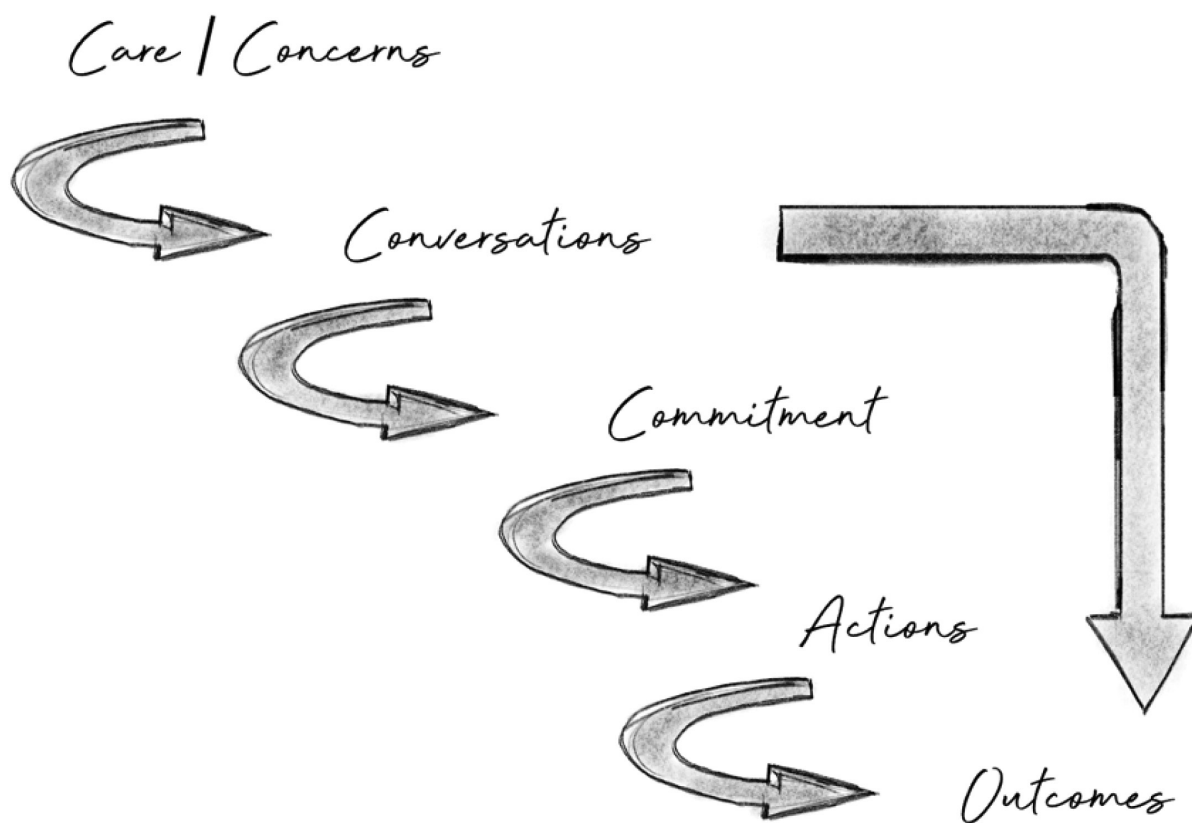
1. Identify some domains you wish to examine for yourself.
2. In those domains ask yourself what is currently going good.
3. Reflect on what aspect could be more effective and why does that higher effectiveness matter.
4. Identify in each domain, one small step you can change to help you take care of that care more effectively. Support yourself to start small.

DESIGN EFFECTIVE ACTION

An individual, a team, or an organization produces results because of the set of actions we take individually or collectively. Without action, there can be no outcomes or results. Relevant action is important to generate desired results.

Action comes from commitments. Powerful and effective conversations shape commitments. Powerful conversations often give rise to clear commitments. So conversations are generative because conversations generate commitments, actions, and new possibilities.

Expressing what we care about actively in conversations clarifies why commitments are required from the other. It clarifies why a task is relevant to us. Care brings meaning into conversations. As leaders, we need to analyze and ask if actions in our team or from another individual are coming from a place of fear or a place of will and clarity.



Anatomy of Action

In some relationships, there are missing conversations. These are conversations that matter but are not happening between two individuals, within a team, or in an organization. Conversations are ineffective and incomplete when no attention is paid to details that need discussion.

I have had several women share that they experience difficulty in having conversations because they believe they may appear as though they are criticizing or asking too many questions unnecessarily.

Completing conversations effectively and basing our commitments on understanding what is required of a task or an individual is an act of being responsible.

When we are committed to our care of growing ourselves into potent leaders we must bring ourselves to have missing conversations - be it with our leaders, teams, or significant stakeholders. When we bring our care into the conversation and share it, our motivations, interests, and purpose are revealed and this impacts the other.

Connecting with what the other cares about and supporting that process so they can achieve what they care about is a radical way of making a conversation and relationship rich and powerful.

OFFERS AND PROMISES FOR PUBLIC IDENTITY

An offer is what we make to satisfy a need either in the other person, a team, or an organization. Making an offer can change others' and our own future because we create value for self and others. If the other accepts our offer, we negotiate how to move forward and participate together in future.

- Offers allow us to recognize and value our competence, experience, and skills.
- Offers are a way of participating and being a contributor.
- Offers are about caring for the other's cares.
- YOU are an offer as a human being with potential, values, and unique strengths.

We must make offers in the domain of our care and others' care. Your offers shape your professional identity and how you will be seen in your organization.

More than any other language action, the way we make and keep our promises or commitments has a profound impact on the outcomes in business as well as in relationships. This is because the way we manage our promises is connected to our public identity - the way we are seen by others. A promise exists in the 'listening' that we have for one another.

Trust is established in relationships based on the promises we make and those that are listened to too. At work, our team members may be implicitly listening to our promises of taking care of their careers and their interests. When promises are not met, it leads to resentment and distrust.

4 aspects specifically get impacted when promises are met or not met.

- Trust
- Relationship
- Success
- Self-esteem

Managing promises is a relationship skill.

When we hold a promise, we take full responsibility for the fact that we have made the commitment. Promises are about designing our life. The promises we make as well as the manner we execute them change the way we are perceived in the world. They shape our identity.

For any professional, the bigger promise conversation is worth revisiting each year along with one's cares. It allows us to review our achievements in connection to what we care about and realign with new promises to where we can commit our time, energy, resources, and learnings in the year to come.

Support yourself through bigger promise by doing this:

- Centre yourself each time you begin with this exploration so you can bring in a mood of curiosity and ambition.
- Create your bigger promises not just in your mind or on paper but importantly through conversation. Seek out mentors, sponsors, and supportive peers.
- Make an inventory of your strengths and learning edges as you plan.
- Create small steps in the plan towards your bigger promise and define a timeline that doesn't make you anxious.
- See the journey being as important as the final destination.
- Get yourself a coach if required.

A FEW CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

In my journey facilitating women's groups, I met many talented bright women.

They wanted to move ahead in their careers and dream big, yet they were expressing stuckness. Many younger women I met didn't even see themselves as leaders as they thought leadership was only about role, title, and assigned power.

To them, I would say becoming a leader is about leading ourselves and living the life we wish to. It is about learning to say 'I can' and 'I will' in many areas of our lives. Without understanding of our inner makeup or our foundation, there is no way for women to deal with the self-doubt, overcome fears, and move towards their dreams.

What you just read is a very brief summary of what I have written in my book 'Step Up'. The mentioned topics have a lot more detail to them and there are many other engaging facets covered throughout the book. If what you just read motivated you, do pick up a copy of my book.

Live powerful and lead powerful!

Best Wishes,
Sai



Buy **Step Up** on Amazon

notionpress.com/read/step-up