



**DO WHAT YOU
SAY YOU'LL DO**

And other tools to LEAD courageously

Dr Fiona Wood on Leadership

Dr Fiona Wood is one of Australia's most innovative and respected surgeons and researchers. A highly skilled plastic and reconstructive surgeon and world leading burns specialist, she has pioneered research and technology development in burns medicine. She was awarded Member of the Order of Australia in 2003, the Australian Medical Association's 'Contribution to Medicine' award in 2003, the 2003 and 2004 West Australian of the Year and 2005 Australian of the Year. She was voted Australia's Most Trusted Person for six successive years (2005-2010) and has been recognised as an Australian Living Treasure.

How would you describe your leadership style?

Flexible and responsive to the situation

Is there one single characteristic you have seen in great leaders you have worked with that defines and sets them apart?

Taking responsibility for the decisions made

What one action do you think any leader (irrespective of their experience) could make today, which would make a difference to the way that they lead?

Always check the moral/ethical integrity of the plan.

What do your patients teach you about leadership? In your interview with James Lush you talk about always improving and learning from today. What else do they teach you?

To witness suffering is a motivator to improve the care on all levels

I was interested in an interview you did with Dr Norman Swan a few years ago; where you talked about the period after the Bali Bombings. What did you learn about leadership and teamwork during that period that we can apply more generally? Would you say that as a very generalized statement, these sorts of tragedies usually (with some notable exceptions) bring out the best leadership in people?

Leadership based on respect is key in responding under pressure

Is there any advice would you give emerging leaders who are seeking to grow and develop into leaders that truly make a difference?

Respect what the members of the team bring together think of yourself as a conductor of an orchestra – the first violin has skills essential and different the conductor etc



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Many of the people I coach (and who will read this book) will be just starting to build a leadership career. Was there anything specific or consciously that you did when you were at that point, or was it only retrospectively that you realized that you were a leader.

I had no specific training or awareness and saw the situation developing over time. I feel education and training is preparation for performance and therefore I would have benefited by such training, which is now embedded

You've talked about surgeons who have made a difference to you and your career. Did you formally seek these people out as mentors, or was it only retrospectively that you can see the mentoring influence that they have had on you and your career.

I sought out those who would teach me surgery as a craft I as fortunate to connect with men who also taught me the art and science!

Would you recommend seeking out mentors as something that is vital for leaders, new and experienced?

Relationships are always important

You are passionate about education and making the most of our opportunities and potential. Do you think we are doing enough to engage the young kids of today to think differently and inspire them to want to learn?

Idea ideas, ideas, bounce them around, find one and then make it work, learn and generate more ideas!

What message would you give to young girls going through high school that would help them unlock their own potential?

Same as anyone: self belief is core to unlocking potential.

Do you see yourself as a role model for young girls and women?

No !! times change but the courage to take opportunities is the same I guess