

## Excerpts from *Voices of the Future: Emerging Leaders*



I'll never forget where I came from, and I can't ignore the impoverished conditions that many people endure their entire lives. I look to my mother, a Cape Verdean farm girl who finally learned to write her first name after months of laboring at her kitchen table with a pad of paper and a pencil. That same drive and determination – identifying a problem, establishing a goal to address the problem, and persevering until that goal is achieved – is at my core. ~Armino Gonçalves

"I am not an Athenian or a Greek, but a citizen of the world," said Socrates in Plutarch's *Of Banishment*. And there cannot be a more accurate description of my personal understanding, experiences, and path in leadership; a continuous process that is extending my world beyond the professional growth and higher positions and titles of an organization; but also a self-transforming process, one of the most dynamic "unfoldings" in my life, as I constantly challenge my inner self to positively influence thinking and action in my community and even in the wider context of society. ~Mary Tolikas



Ultimately, leadership carries the responsibilities and burdens of the physician. You care for the patient, family, your coworkers, your team, and the institution. At times, the hours and stress are burdensome and exact a cost. Yet, the reward of providing exceptional care without exception at Boston Medical Center is overwhelmingly satisfying. As a young leader, I am grateful to Emerging Leaders of Boston for the education and Boston Medical Center for the opportunity to lead and hopeful that I can be a major leader in the healthcare arena. ~ Chi-Cheng Huang, MD

As a first-generation, dual-citizen African-American, born to naturalized U.S. citizens in Boston (mother born in Panama, Canal Zone, and father born in Barbados, West Indies), I was raised with a rich cross-cultural appreciation and the belief that I can do anything that I make up my mind to do. To my parents, hard work and a good education were the keys to success in America. To them, knowledge was something that "no one can take away." When they reflected on my future as a child of the 1970s, surrounded by the turmoil of busing and racial divides in the city of Boston, they often said: "Whatever you decide to do or be, 'Do and Be the Best.'" ~Sandra Best Bailly



As in any charged environment, confrontation and conflict struck frequently. I approached each day with quiet good humor, even when I had nothing to laugh at. As the department head, I led by example, believed in our combined talents, and when challenged, stood up for what was right. I was stubborn at times so as to push the edge, I confronted difficult personalities with patience and good spirit, and I never allowed troubling issues to fester too long and detract from our goal. After all, campaigns never have time on their side. No matter the gripe, we were on the same team. ~Hugh Drummond

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This is the first time that I've taken a job not for title, money, or prestige but just because I knew I could do great things and be part of a great organization. Those who knew me thought that I was nuts to leave a Fortune 500 company. After all, how could a job in a construction company make sense to my career? Well, I've got news for you: This construction company has won Best Place to Work in Boston, New York, and Providence—and this year became #1 in the large-employer group for Boston. Do you know why? Because the people who work here are passionate about what we do and feel a strong sense of team. This feeling emanates from the leaders of the company to each employee. You can feel it when you walk into the place. ~Lisa DeAngelis



In recent years, I've found an ideal way to give back to the community by merging my passion for music and my financial capabilities. I serve on the board of directors of the Boston Children's Chorus, a remarkable nonprofit arts organization. Since 2005, I've devoted a significant amount of energy to the BCC, because it's an organization I believe in: The mission of the BCC is to provide an intensive musical education for Boston children, with the goal of empowering them to achieve social change. By singing together, young people learn about teamwork, communication, and leadership. ~Nate Pusey

I have had friends and colleagues ask about why I made certain moves, why some so short and why so long in others, and how do I make a decision to take a chance? My response is simple and consistent. I follow my heart. If I can believe in the mission and I think that I will be challenged and grow in some way, AND I believe that the work will have a positive impact, then it is a no-brainer. Not all of my risks have panned out. I have learned some hard lessons. I have reflected on mistakes I have made and have had to revisit my strategies, but I have always learned something. ~Georgianna Melendez



Walking down Tremont Street, turning away from those men getting searched, was a pivotal moment for me. Anger from all of the discrimination I had endured in childhood and young adulthood was welling up in me, rushing to the surface like a volcano about to erupt. I set my briefcase down and decided right then that things had to change. I realized the best way to exact punishment on those elected officials who didn't stand up for our rights was to hold voter registration drives. We would register every possible voter in the city of Boston and vote those officials out of power. ~Ron Bell

I once worked at a place where we used to joke about getting promotions based on the parking lot. The president had someone report to him who stayed at work the latest. Someone would report to him whose cars were there at seven, eight, and nine at night. I found this out one morning when I came to work and this person mentioned how much I was appreciated at work. She had told the president my car was there later than hers—and since she was loyal, I had passed the test somehow. They had no idea what I had been doing that night. Truth be told, I was taking classes and often stayed at my desk to do my homework since I could not afford a computer. ~Deanna Yameen



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During my first year at Cathedral High School in Boston, one of my classmates stopped me in the hall and asked if I played football. "Sure," I told him in my newly acquired language, "I play football." He offered to introduce me to the coach and invited me to the following day's practice. That afternoon my aunt gave me money to buy football gear, and the next day I showed up at the football field. As I approached the players, one by one they turned to look at me and began to laugh. As it turned out, it was American football practice, and there I was, dressed in a soccer jersey, shorts, high socks, shin guards, and brand-new cleats, ready to play soccer. It was a comic moment, my introduction to American football. ~Paul Francisco

Organizations should promote a culture that celebrates true diversity. Differences, whether of gender, ethnicity, or opinion, should be seen as a source of strength and not a threat or a compliance exercise. Is the organization comfortable not just having people who look or sound different but also having people who question the status quo and are willing to disagree with each other? I believe dedication to diversity needs to be driven from the top of the organization. Otherwise, diversity will not be honored. Often, the easier way to operate is to ignore our differences. More organizations should focus on the business case for diversity, as opposed to promoting diversity because it is deemed to be the right thing to do. ~Pauliina Swartz



Our achievements through our development loop and our mentoring of others shape our legacy, which becomes synonymous with our character and, as a result, even our name. The decisions we have made over the journey shape what our character is to be and in the end is what we have to show for our life's work. This heightens the need to constantly measure our leadership style by the impact it has on others as well as ourselves. ~Michael Rawan

What are the most important natural leadership skills that you possess? What are the three to five situations that have heavily influenced your leadership ability? Most of us are born with certain natural tendencies (some of which contribute to leadership), and throughout life we pick up leadership lessons daily: with teammates, workmates, family, friends, and mentors. They may be inherent leadership traits or learned behaviors from childhood or from last week. These innate abilities and learned skills say a lot about who we are. It's important as leaders to constantly inventory our abilities so that we can utilize the skills when we need them and work to build the skills that we don't have. ~Amanda Trojan



As an IT director in the twenty-first century, I'm happy to see all of the different technology and process changes throughout the world. If knowledge is truly power, then real power is taking knowledge and creating successful actions. These successful actions are the processes that become repeatable and usable across functional areas. Successful leaders understand which processes work and which need to be fixed. Successful leaders also know how to create new processes for our changing technical environment. ~David Dance

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She did not speak about being a leader, but clearly she was one. She spoke about the skills of listening and making the commitment to listen; the dynamic of being in a position of power—perceived or real; and being proactive in bringing different voices together. Some of the things she has been able to accomplish, such as bringing together racially and economically divided groups in the Deep South as collaborative partners to work toward common benefits, were most impressive. ~Anne Marie Boursiquot King



As someone interested in developing my leadership skills, and of achieving leadership positions of greater influence, I have strived to be both self-aware in my decision-making process while simultaneously cognizant of how those decisions are assessed by others. By reconciling these two viewpoints, which often stand in stark contrast with one another, I find the final outcome is often of greater value than if I had simply acted from my own perspective or, conversely, that of others. ~David Halbert

My heart soars when I am leaving work and thinking about my children, seeing their faces, and hearing about their days. I feel fulfilled when I hear them play with abandon and I feel valued when I dry their tears and help them solve a problem. My job will never hug me back the way my children do. ~Christie Getto Young



As I pause at this point in my career, I realize that I have amassed nearly fifteen years of professional experience—that is, if you count my first job at a bakery, and I do. I know that from the moment I began receiving a paycheck, my eyes were wide open (and so too was my wallet) to take it all in. I wanted to do my job, but I also wanted to understand how to do it well, and I knew to look to my superiors and customers for guidance. ~Andrea Hurwitz

With regard to my own path to leadership, my career had been steadily progressing when it took an entirely unanticipated detour. Shortly after making a challenging career change and while still adjusting to the demands of becoming a working mother, I received the life-altering confirmation of my worries. Henry, then aged three, was diagnosed with PDD-NOS, or Pervasive Developmental Disorder—Not Otherwise Specified, which is a classification on the Autism Spectrum. I finally had a reason why my life caring for my beautiful son was so filled with inexplicable difficulties and demanding routines. But the diagnosis was only the beginning of a lifelong journey filled with challenges and uncertainty. In retrospect, it was also the beginning of an unexpected period of personal growth. ~Anonymous