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# Raising Daughters to Become Leaders

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***SIX-MINUTE MESSAGE PROPOSAL:  
INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP ASSOCIATION  
ASILOMAR CONFERENCE 2013***

## **Raising Daughters to Become Leaders**

### Session Description (up to 80 words)

The purpose of this six-minute message is to share, in an engaging way, some key highlights from a variety of studies on how high profile women were raised to become leaders. It will focus on what influencers (e.g., parents, siblings, and relatives) did to rear their daughters, granddaughters, nieces, etc. to become the influential women they are today.

### Session Abstract

It has become evident in the past few decades that there is a critical need for more competent, strong leaders in all countries and in all domains (e.g., community, workplaces, government, churches, social change movements). Developing more girls to evidentially fill those roles is of great import as we look to future generations that will have even more challenges and opportunities to navigate than we do today. Much of the existing research focuses on developing women once they are adults, however, research has shown that the development of leadership does and should start while individuals are young. Lorenzen (1996) explained, “a person’s inner sense of authority will be developed during childhood in the system of family relations, when the parents express their expectations, ideas, and emotions to their child” (pp. 25-26). In an interview with Coutu (2004), Manfred F.R. Kets de Vries stated that the women executives she analyzed had drives that “spring from childhood patterns and experiences that have carried over into adulthood” (p. 67). In a variety of other studies, female participants cited supportive families (mothers and fathers) who constantly “prodded them to achieve” as foundational elements of success (Hartman, 1999), and a stable family environment (Coutu, 2004) and feelings of competency (Wells, 1998) as essential to their general development. Stephens (2003) did interviews with 30 church, business, and higher education female leaders and found these women remembered having “strong voices and a keen sense of competency as little girls” (p. 51). These childhood and youth years and influences are clearly important in understanding the developmental processes of effective women leaders (Madsen, 2008).

The presenter has done a number of research studies in various cultures exploring the lived experiences of women leaders as they learned to lead throughout their lives. These studies investigated and examined the experiences, influences, backgrounds, career paths, opportunities, assistance, motivation, and perspectives related to the development of important leadership knowledge, skills, abilities, influences, and overall competencies. Important portions of this research focused on childhood and youth experiences, including the immediate family backgrounds and influences on these women. The purpose of this six-minute message is to share, in an engaging way, some key highlights from a variety of studies on how high profile women were raised to become leaders. It will focus on what influencers (e.g., parents, siblings, and relatives) did to rear their daughters, granddaughters, nieces, etc. to become the influential women they are today.

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Dr. Susan R. Madsen is a professor of management in the Woodbury School of Business and the Orin R. Woodbury Professor of Leadership and Ethics at Utah Valley University. She has published two scholarly books on the development of women leaders and has authored/co-authored nearly 60 peer-reviewed articles primarily in the areas of leadership, individual change, work-life integration, and academic service-learning. Susan is currently continuing her research on the lifetime development of women leaders in the United Arab Emirates, China, and the U.S. She is also an independent leadership and change consultant and is the founder and chair of the ILA Women and Leadership Affinity Group (WLAG).