

WHY YOU NEED MEN AND WOMEN LEADERS TO BUILD YOUR BUSINESS

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THE COMMUNITY FOR IMPACT

“No individual woman is as creative, skilled, or powerful as we are together. We need to step up and take our place as leaders, and make a positive impact on our communities and our world.”

— Dr. Nancy O'Reilly



## WHY YOU NEED MEN AND WOMEN LEADERS TO BUILD YOUR BUSINESS

# DR. NANCY O'REILLY

**U**nfortunately, there is a common misconception that if you're for women and diversity, you're by default against men. This pandemic has shown that unless men and women come together, align their mindsets and truly support each other,

**we will not be successful in growing future-proof businesses.** Each company needs to start asking: "Do we support the women in our organization? And do we also support the men?"

Last year in Oxford, England, I gave a speech where I explained the importance of male mentors and male sponsors in uplifting women. It was a coed group, and I recall the visible relief from the men listening to me when I raised this topic. So when men are asked to help women or start that discussion, I've always seen something positive come from it. But importantly, you must ask. Another common misconception is that by helping women or minorities,

you're shifting opportunities away from existing employees, board members, or management. It's rare to find a leader with all the skills and attributes needed to run a successful company, so why not fill those gaps with those that do know? Surround yourself with a collaborative, supportive team that provides the missing skills in your company. Create new positions if necessary.

Women should not try to imitate a man's leadership style either. Many years ago, most women did not have role models to learn from — they mostly had men to emulate. One of my first jobs was at a large healthcare company, and I used to wear a suit and tie to work. It was the only signifier of success that I saw around me at the time. That has all changed now; there are millions of successful women worldwide on which to base our identity. Women need to lead as women to deliver the full benefits of their unique way of seeing the world. Women are problem solvers. They can see the big picture but can also focus on the small details that are so crucial in solving problems — at home, in communities, and within a business.

There are many examples beyond our Western way of thinking that shed light on how to harness the respective powers of male and female for good. For instance, I learned a valuable lesson from the indigenous Shuar tribe of the upper Andes in Ecuador. One of the Shuar women told me that men would go hunting but didn't know when to stop; eventually, there would be nothing left to kill and eat. So it fell on the women to tell men to stop hunting so much, adopt a more sustainable approach, and make sure there was enough food for the community. The immediate need of getting food by hunting was important, but so too was long-term survival. It's a great example of how men and women can work together for the greater good. ■

**Dr. Nancy O'Reilly** is founder of the WomenConnected4Good Foundation. She has turned her life's passion into a career that uplifts others and empowers women. Since 2012, her foundation has donated over \$1 million to organizations that create healthy families and communities, empower women, or work for leadership parity.



**“SURROUND YOURSELF WITH A  
COLLABORATIVE, SUPPORTIVE TEAM THAT  
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“*In This Together* will help us to create community, success, and well-being.” —Gloria Steinem

Are you ready to take your career to  
*the next level?*

The groundbreaking *In This Together - How Successful Women Support Each Other in Work and Life* by Dr. Nancy D. O'Reilly is now available on audiobook. **Download your copy today!**

    @DrNancyOReilly

### *Reviews are saying:*

“Easily digestible, clear, and direct, the book presents a good overview of a complicated subject, with a strong focus on intersectionality and actionable plans.” —*Publishers Weekly*

“Dr. O'Reilly's new insights, inspiration, practical advice, and innovative solutions give us a pathway to achieving gender equality. Finally.” —*Cheryl Benton, Founder/Publisher, The Three Tomatoes*

“Just as with getting clear on your goals and resolutions, you don't have to imagine all this from scratch. Check out *In This Together* to see how you can develop a community of like-minded allies ... there's a ton of actionable insights from 40 successful women that will help you harness the collective power of that community.” —*Ms Career Girl*

“This important and timely book brilliantly details how we as women can inspire and empower one another to build on our strengths and gain success in our workplaces, families, communities, society, and our world.” — *Dr. Sheila Robinson, Publisher & CEO Diversity Women Magazine*

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