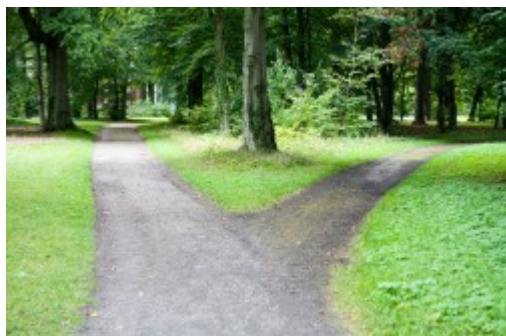


Rising to the Challenge Before Us - Leading Forward

Rising to the Challenge Before Us – LEADING FORWARD Guest Post for Jesse Lyn Stoner, Seapoint Center

*"I am honored that Irene Becker has allowed me to share her powerful guest post. There is an important message here – a vision of what can be, a sobering description of our challenges, and a Call to Action. Although this is a longer post, I urge you to take the time to read it carefully and to consider the implications for yourself personally and for our communities. **Watch this extraordinary video interview of Irene Becker**, where she shares her personal story of great achievements and losses. **Jesse Lyn Stoner, Bestselling Author, Full Steam Ahead, Executive Coach and Consultant***

My sincerest thanks to Jesse Lyn Stoner for hosting my post on her blog, www.seapointcenter.com the week of July 8th. I applaud Jesse's exceptional body of work, and extend my sincerest thanks to her for an important leadership footprint and for hosting my article. I remain humbled and honored.



The challenges we face too often inure us to the technological, scientific and communication wonders

before us. Rising to the challenge of 21st Century Leadership starts with recognizing our ability to do GOOD by building GOOD leadership, GOOD business, GOOD communities, GOOD families, GOOD lives. It means taking the road less travelled by finding new ways to move past the cloud of negativity, fear, complacency or reactivity that surrounds us. Problems, physical maladies that were death sentences are being turned around. What was once considered impossible is realized every day. Communication, our ability to learn, share knowledge and innovate has never been greater. Our potential to LEAD FORWARD has never been greater; but it is obscured by a primal tendency, a human default pattern of being drawn to what is not, rather than looking at what is and what CAN be. **Our brains are automatically set to be attracted to the negative, a vestige of days when survival meant being on the lookout for predators at every turn.** The ability to make the shift and reset default patterns of thinking and doing that no longer serve is real, it is doable. **We can retrain our brains, but doing so demands a focus on what can be and a desire to optimize our greatest potential.** Technology cannot not save us from ourselves. **The greatest danger we face is internal;** it lurks within our minds, it lurks within the epicenter of corporate culture, in lurks within the smallest to greatest of organizations. It lurks within families and communities, towns, villages and cities. It is here and it is real. Fear and negativity resonate with our most primal of instincts, we are all innately drawn to both, they can captivate us, they can blind us to the truth of what is.

We stand at a fork in the road, a place where we face either the greatest Renaissance humans have ever known or a descent into decline, chaos and destruction. I believe in our ability to do better, not simply work harder. I believe in the hearts and minds of the changemakers, the courageous among us who will stand up to the challenge before us. I believe in our power to make a difference and to be the difference.

It is time to embrace our potential by learning to see problems as the conduit to solutions and by developing the three "Q Skills" that can take us forward: whole-brain thinking (IQ), emotional intelligence (EQ), and spiritual

connection (SQ).

Fighting amongst ourselves, when we need to rally together and focus on what truly counts. is an expression of the fear before us and within us. Complacency and reactivity are the Molotov cocktail of destruction. Fighting about what is wrong, rather than looking at what is right will lead us nowhere. Burying the universal values that we know in our hearts and minds are the apex of sustainability will take us on a path of implosion. **What does not create value for others will ultimately crash and burn.** Ego, need and greed have systematically destroyed every empire and fiefdom in recorded history.

In another century, at a time of great chaos and crisis, Betsy Ross told Thomas Jefferson that ***times of great challenge demand great leadership.*** Today, the call to lead greatly speaks to us all. Some of us will lead our lives, others families, communities, businesses or large corporations.

WE ALL need to lead forward or give up our power. Lead forward or face a clear and present danger that will lead us to destruction. The values that sustain life, prosperity and goodwill must not only be spoken, they must be reflected in our smallest and greatest actions.

It is time to rise to the challenge of great leadership. Leadership that empowers people to learn new skills, new ways of dealing with and using change. Leadership that creates value for others, that contributes to better communities, better organizations and a better world.

The reality of a volatile world, workplace and marketplace can blind us to our power to LEAD forward. Whether we are afraid of the economic, geo-political or eco challenges we face, or simply the insidious erosion of job security, family life, quality of life and relationships, fear is around us and it is growing. Can we lead from fear? Can we lead from

discouragement? Can we lead from a place of complacency or hopelessness? Will we be blinded to what CAN BE because we can only see WHAT IS?

Leading forward is the greatest and most important individual and collective challenge we face – a challenge worth our greatest effort. When we have the courage to lead with our strengths and the courage to transform the challenges we face into a catalyst for our true potential, we become not only change agents, but change leaders. And whether we are leading our own life, our family, our community, a small business or large enterprise what we do counts because the imperative is to lead forward and to help others do the same. Every time we LEAD forward, we inspire others to lead.

Leadership is not simply learned; it is lived. It is acquired and honed at the front lines of battle. Today, no matter who we are, we face a battle. **We can choose to do as we have always done, or we can choose to develop a new mind set and skill set that takes us forward.**

Great leaders have always recognized and developed their intellectual capital, emotional and spiritual capital, because they recognized that being just smart was not enough, being just heart centered was not enough, and being just values driven was not enough. Leadership demands all three.

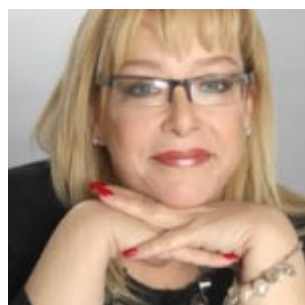
Developing these three “Q skills,” developing a new relationship with changes, challenges and with our potential is critical to our individual and collective future.

The only security we have lies in our ability to tie a knot around the courage, faith, hope, humanity and integrity that helps us LEAD forward. I resonated profoundly with the **Open Letter** by Howard Schultz, CEO of Starbucks, where he talks about the importance of being indivisible. Our values and our determination to build and co-create good lives, good business, good leadership, good communities must resonate in our hearts and minds and must be indivisible.

That spark of indivisibility is the soul of leadership, and it calls to us all. Take this moment to think of what YOU DO HAVE and what YOU truly want. Ask yourself whether you will let the challenges before you erode your true power, your ability to make a positive difference. Ask yourself what living a purposeful life means to you and for you. Think about the opportunities before us individually and collectively to do good, to be good, and to share good. Think about what it means to fail forward and learn from your mistakes with agility, and to live in alignment with values that are fundamental to social and economic sustainability.

Independence can found in a new form of interdependence or collaboration where we build communities of purpose that are championed by change-makers and leaders who are dedicated to building a better present and future. Idealistic? Altruistic? Yes, both. I believe in the possibility of doing better, not only working harder, and that **together we can evolve, grow and LEAD forward as one people sharing one planet.**

I believe that the change-makers amongst us are the leaders of the future; ombudsmen and ombudswomen who model what CAN BE and who inspire others to aspire to a better future where we can each contribute. A future where our intellectual, emotional and spiritual capital evolves and grows. A future where business for the good, leadership for the good, and communities for the good become not only what we aspire to but what we create.



About Irene Becker

First woman CEO of a steel company in Canada, Irene Becker has a track record of trailblazing accomplishments in business and in the community at large. An insightful and inspiring executive coach, mentor, speaker and writer, Irene helps clients achieve breakthrough results in their communication, leadership and lives. Passionate about the integrity of her work and its ability to help changemakers LEAD change, Irene helps smart people and organizations develop 3Q Leadership™ and effective verbal, written and social communication that builds reach, resonance and results.

For more information on Irene and the services she offers, visit her web site [Just Coach It – | The 3Q Edge™](#) . Follow her on Twitter [@justcoachit](#).