



LEAD FEARLESSLY, LOVE HARD

*Finding Your Purpose and
Putting It to Work*

LINDA CLIATT-WAYMAN

JOSSEY-BASS™
A Wiley Brand

Lead Fearlessly,
Love Hard

Lead Fearlessly, Love Hard

FINDING YOUR PURPOSE AND
PUTTING IT TO WORK



Linda Cliatt-Wayman

J JOSSEY-BASS™
A Wiley Brand

Copyright © 2017 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. All rights reserved.

Published by Jossey-Bass

A Wiley Brand

One Montgomery Street, Suite 1000, San Francisco, CA 94104-4594—www.josseybass.com

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under Section 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without either the prior written permission of the publisher, or authorization through payment of the appropriate per-copy fee to the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc., 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, 978-750-8400, fax 978-646-8600, or on the Web at www.copyright.com. Requests to the publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, 201-748-6011, fax 201-748-6008, or online at www.wiley.com/go/permissions.

Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty: While the publisher and author have used their best efforts in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. No warranty may be created or extended by sales representatives or written sales materials. The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for your situation. You should consult with a professional where appropriate. Neither the publisher nor author shall be liable for any loss of profit or any other commercial damages, including but not limited to special, incidental, consequential, or other damages. Readers should be aware that Internet Web sites offered as citations and/or sources for further information may have changed or disappeared between the time this was written and when it is read.

Jossey-Bass books and products are available through most bookstores. To contact Jossey-Bass directly call our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 800-956-7739, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3986, or fax 317-572-4002.

Wiley publishes in a variety of print and electronic formats and by print-on-demand. Some material included with standard print versions of this book may not be included in e-books or in print-on-demand. If this book refers to media such as a CD or DVD that is not included in the version you purchased, you may download this material at <http://booksupport.wiley.com>. For more information about Wiley products, visit www.wiley.com.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Cliatt-Wayman, Linda, 1961- author.

Title: Lead fearlessly, love hard : finding your purpose and putting it to work / Linda Cliatt-Wayman.

Description: San Francisco, CA : Jossey-Bass, 2017. | Includes index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017008796 (print) | LCCN 2017012558 (ebook) | ISBN 9781119288534 (cloth) | ISBN 9781119288831 (epdf) | ISBN 9781119288817 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Educational leadership—United States. | School management and organization—United States.

Classification: LCC LB2806 .C5225 2017 (print) | LCC LB2806 (ebook) | DDC 371.2—dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2017008796>

Cover design: Wiley

Cover image: © Ready Set Productions

Printed in the United States of America

FIRST EDITION

HB Printing 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

In memory of Mona Cliatt, my mom
Thank you for providing Andrea, Denise, and me with
the foundational tools to LEAD:
Faith, Love, and Education

Contents



Acknowledgments	ix
Introduction	1
1 Envision	6
2 Discover	12
3 Select	17
4 Adapt	23
5 Synthesize	31
6 Rollout	37
7 Unveil	44
8 Implement	51
9 Amplify	61
10 Prepare	67
11 Audacity	75
12 Seek	81
13 Listen	88
14 Customized	94
15 Strength	101
16 Relentless	106
17 Steadfast	114

18	Realize	123
19	Confidence	130
20	Influence	139
21	Possible	147
22	Opportunity	154
23	Value	166
24	Courage	176
25	Purpose	181
	Index	189

Acknowledgments



I want to take this moment to thank my publisher, Jossey-Bass, for providing me with the forum to tell my leadership story. A very special thank you to my editor—Kate Bradford, copyeditor—Kathleen Miller, and production editor—Haritha Dharmarajan, who had the task of getting this book ready for publication. Their patience and insight were extraordinary. Thank you to the organizers of the Pennsylvania Conference for Women and TED .com for giving me the first platform to tell my leadership story.

To all of my leadership team members over the years—thank you for your dedication and intense focus on the success of every child under your care. Success happened because of all of you: Michelle Garcon-McCoy, Vanessa Green King, Annetta Jackson, Syida Johnson, Evan Kramp, Kenesta Mack, Jameka McGraw-Byrd, Melissa Schafer, Jacqueline Palone, Anna Shurak, Susan Skraitz, Jennifer Speirs-Robinson, Mike Spangenberg, Sonia Szymanski, Orick Smith, and Terri Wiley.

Thank you to my school police officer, Kevin Dancy, and to Philadelphia police officer William Eib, for keeping my students and staff safe each day, and for providing an exemplary model of commitment to the welfare of children for law enforcement officials everywhere.

To my wonderful family, my husband, Dana, my two precious daughters, Paige and Sasha, and my two sisters, Andrea and Denise—thank you for your unconditional love and patience during this project. To all of my friends, without your listening ear this could never have been accomplished. To my best friend, Winona Hurst-Waldon—thank you for your love, friendship, and unwavering support for over 30 years.

To Principals past and present—thank you for your selfless service to your students and this nation. Because of your sacrifice, children get to live their dream. How special is that?

And last, but certainly most important, I would like to thank God and his son Jesus for the source of my strength and the purpose for my life.

Sincerely,
Principal Wayman

Introduction



“You go!” The voice in my head was so loud, bold, and so unusually clear that I stopped in the middle of the hallway and responded to the voice with a grammatically incorrect question: **“Me go?”**

“You go!” the voice repeated. As I walked slowly to my office, calm but confused, I kept repeating the words I heard from the voice, **“You go, you go, you go!”** With every step it became clearer to me that the reason why I could not find a candidate for principal was because I was the candidate. I was the leader I was waiting and searching for.

“Persistently dangerous” was the label placed on the school I was chosen to lead. As of March 2015, the Pennsylvania Department of Education lists a school as persistently dangerous on its website “if it exceeds a certain number of dangerous incidents in the most recent school year and in one additional year of the two years prior to the most recent school year.” A dangerous incident has been defined as either “a weapons possession incident resulting in arrest (guns, knives, or other weapons) or a violent incident resulting in arrest (homicide, kidnapping, robbery, sexual offenses, and assaults).”*

*“Pennsylvania Unsafe School Choice Option: Frequently Asked Questions,” last modified March 2015, www.education.pa.gov/Documents/Teachers-Administrators/No%20Child%20Left%20Behind/Unsafe%20School%20Choice%20Option%20FAQs.pdf/.

Strawberry Mansion High School persistently dangerous! Was it really?

From 2010–2012, I was Assistant Superintendent for High Schools in Philadelphia, the leader of 52 principals and 61,000 children. I joined a central office team that was already well underway in finding ways to cut costs in the school district budget. Their attention was fixated on the schools that were underutilized. A company was hired to collect data on each existing school building. They were charged with recording the building capacity of each school and comparing it to the number of students who were actually attending the school, as part of a project called the “Facility Master Plan.”

After the company revealed their findings to the superintendent it was decided that one high school would close, another would relocate, and the two would merge into a third school, forming a three-way high school merger. There was one major problem with this plan—the decision was decided solely on building usage and financial gain, not the facts of each school involved in the merger.

The three schools that were set to merge were located in North Philadelphia, one of the most violent sections of Philadelphia. This area was known for its rival gangs, high drug use, high crime rate, and a poverty level that is among the highest in the nation. Sure, the school selected to house the three-way merger had wonderful features. It was huge. It had five floors, newly renovated science labs, a brand-new culinary facility, and a beautiful, new library. The construction of the building was ideal for a state-of-the-art school, but there was one more very important fact about Strawberry Mansion High School: it had been on the nation’s Persistently Dangerous Schools list for five consecutive years.

It was my job as Assistant Superintendent for High Schools to research, locate, and hire the principal for the first three-way high school merger in the history of Philadelphia Public Schools. The area where the school resided was well known for its violence, so finding a principal was not going to be easy. After a

national search for principals there were zero applicants for the job. As time passed, I made the painful decision that I would have to move another school leader out of an existing school to lead Strawberry Mansion High School. After careful review of all 52 principals, one candidate emerged. I called her in for a meeting to let her know that I had to move her out of her school and send her to Strawberry Mansion. She glared at me with grave concern and lifted up her shirt to display a small device on her hip—a heart monitor. “Mrs. Wayman,” she said, “if I have to do it I will, but it may kill me.” Without hesitation, my search for a principal resumed.

I started to believe that I would never find a principal to lead Strawberry Mansion High School. Then, I heard the voice say, “You go!” I walked back to my office and prepared to leave the central office for good. There was just one thing I had to do first. I had to inform the principals that I was departing. I gathered the principals for our last meeting of the year. I told them that I was honored to work with them and for them, but that I was leaving the post of assistant superintendent to return to the ranks as principal. The rumor had already circulated. I was just making it official. Then I announced that I would be the new Principal of Strawberry Mansion High School to oversee the merger of the three high schools in our division. I told them that the students in those three schools were my responsibility.

I was raised in North Philadelphia, blocks away from Strawberry Mansion High School, in poverty with my mom and two sisters. My mom always told us that education would be our only way out. She would often tell us “education can change your life.” She was right. It changed my life. I experienced firsthand the transformational power of education and desperately wanted all of the 61,000 high school students in the School District of Philadelphia to experience that same power. My story from poverty to endless possibilities has helped form the purpose for my work, why I do what I do. It is my life purpose to pull as many children out of poverty as I can, even if the school they will attend is labeled “persistently dangerous.”

Why do you do what you do? Why do you lead? What is the purpose in your leadership? These are some of the questions I want to address in this book.

I am also writing this book because there is so much focus on highlighting and decrying the myriad challenges facing educators today who choose to educate adolescents who live in poverty, yet there is very little information that focuses on how to succeed in spite of those daunting challenges. What has to be remembered is that there are literally millions of children whose lives depend on schools with all types of discouraging labels, so we have a moral imperative to succeed for them today, even in the midst of an incredibly imperfect system. So much of the heated debate about education is about improving systems from without. This book is intended to guide and inspire those who choose to lead from within. Rather than offering policy prescriptions or systematic reform strategies, leadership is the focus. I seek to inspire optimism and provide an example of what is possible when leaders take the lead on solving problems in any organization, no matter how daunting the task.

This book is not only for school leaders. It is intended for the public sector, nonprofits, and private businesses in need of turnaround leadership. I begin each chapter with a single word. Read it to yourself and then say it aloud with confidence. There is power in each of these words. Each word should remind you of an action, behavior, or mindset needed to lead a turnaround effort in any organization.

Then come along with me as I tackle real situations in my quest to keep my students and staff safe, and to educate them. Join me on my leadership journey, and learn why I answered the call to lead this persistently dangerous school when no one else would do so. Finally, discover why leadership makes all the difference when a school or company is off course.

As we take this journey together, I have included a section just for you at the end of each story: the “Thinking About Your Leadership” section. I would like for you to pause and reflect on “YOU” as the leader, just as I did before concluding each chapter.

This is the section where I wrote my story takeaways to help me focus my actions and behaviors as a leader. I have also included an “Examine Attentively” phrase that is a shorter version of my lesson takeaways for you to apply to your leadership mission. Read each word carefully and consider how you can use the word to guide your leadership. I also have included a “Questions for You” section. Sometimes reflection questions prompt more questions that could lead to answers in a particular situation. You may choose to read all three or just one reflection method. They are intended as a vehicle for us to take this leadership journey side by side, because, as you know, leadership can be lonely.

A final note: all of my stories are true, and some of my actions may not be typical. Leading a notorious persistently dangerous school called for unconventional tactics in order for my students, staff, and teachers to go home safely each night, and in order for my students to be educated. If you are faced with leading an organization in need of turnaround, make no apologies for your unconventional leadership, because I make no apologies for mine. As I always say, “If you are going to lead, you must LEAD.” Lead boldly to reach your goals, and watch what you discover about yourself in the process.



Envision

“I will take the blue one,” I thought to myself. Prior to my start date, I was asked to select a chair for my new office. I decided on a beautiful, blue leather high back chair. At the time, I did not know why I selected the color blue. From what I could remember, every principal I ever had over my 20-year career always had a black chair. I had never seen a principal with a blue chair; yet somehow, I was drawn to the blue one. The moment I laid eyes on it, I knew there was something special about that blue chair. It was a different shade of blue, not ocean blue or royal blue, but a dull blue that stood out in the catalog. When the chair arrived, it was what I expected. It was comfortable, it made me feel important, and it gave off a sense of peace.

When I arrived to work at Fitzsimons High School early the morning of November 1, 2003, I sat in that blue chair. I started to wonder about my journey to this place, in this seat, and in this position—a principal with a big fancy office, a beautiful, blue leather chair, and a private bathroom. How did I get here? It was always my dream to be a great teacher, but being a principal far surpassed my vision of myself growing up poor in the same neighborhood where this school resided. Ironically, my grandmother owned a home directly across the street from Fitzsimons, and my family church, Trinity African Methodist Episcopal was on the corner. My family had belonged to that church for approximately 135 years.

Fitzsimons High School had changed over the years. It was once a junior high school. Then it became a middle school, and in 2002, it began its transformation into a gender-separate high school. It would have two separate schools in one building—one for young women, and one for young men. Each school would have its own principal. I was the principal for the young women at Fitzsimons.

I was feeling proud of myself when I was suddenly interrupted by girls screaming “Get her, get her!” followed by thumps, and then more thumps. I jumped up out of my chair and quickly opened my office door. I saw multiple girls and their families fighting each other. There were a lot of people fighting. Crazy fighting. . . . I could not believe it was girls, high school girls and women. It was like a gang fight, a street brawl, but it was inside of the school. Hair and blood were on the floor. It was a terrible sight. I quickly charged into the fight in an attempt to stop them from beating each other to death. In my effort to stop them from fighting, I grabbed the arm of one girl in the midst of her attempt to pound on another girl. She looked at me in a very hateful way and yelled, “Get the F--- off of me!” I did not release her right away. I held onto her arm firmly. She said again, “Get the F--- off of me.” This time, I released my grip, because I thought to myself she must have me confused with someone else. Then I remembered that today was my first day as a principal, my first day as a principal ever. After working as a classroom teacher for 20 years, I had left to join Fitzsimons as a new teacher coach in September 2003. Two months later, I was named principal. My boss, Mr. Clayton, told me privately when he assigned me to Fitzsimons to be a teacher coach that there would be plenty of opportunities for advancement. I guess he was right.

How could she know that I was the principal?

After releasing my grip, I waited for the police to assist me in getting the fight under control. Once everything had calmed down, I announced for all the classes to come to the auditorium immediately. Before anything else could occur, I had to let the students and staff know that I was the new principal. Over

the public address system, I asked every teacher to escort his or her classes to the auditorium. “Are you sure you want to do that?” asked one of the teachers. I did not answer her. I just made my way to the auditorium. As I stood on the stage, I could not believe my eyes. It looked like a scene from the movie *Lean on Me*, but worse. Students were running down the aisles and jumping over seats. The teachers did not know where their students were in the auditorium. The students were loud, using an excessive amount of profanity, and yelling at the teachers for trying to make them have a seat. They simply refused to be redirected. At that split second, I understood what the teacher was implying when she asked, “Are you sure you want do that?” By the way they entered the auditorium, you could tell that they had not been to the auditorium in a long time for any kind of meaningful program. The teachers, most of them first-year teachers, did not know what to do. They made no attempt to bring their students to order. They just stood, staring and waiting for the next huge fight to break out the way it had happened moments before near the main office. I froze, and stared out into the crowd from the stage. Holding the microphone, I murmured quietly, “What in the world did I get myself into?”

Instead of looking at the students, the teachers stared at me as if to say “She must be crazy for taking the job as principal.” I wondered if any of them thought I was some sort of savior. Many of them seemed to want to burst into tears.

I focused my attention back to the students and tried to regain order in the room. I kept saying, “Young ladies! Young ladies, please take your seats.” Using a demanding tone, I said, “Teachers, please stand near your children.” I kept repeating that over and over until my voice echoed loudly over theirs. Then, in a harsh, bold tone this time, with my patience wearing thin, I said, “Sit down and close your mouths, or you will leave this auditorium and spend a few days at home with your parents.” I did not know whether my tone or my threat got their attention. I signaled for the police to come into the room and remove anyone who would not sit down. Soon, the noise died down. There was still faint talking, but I could be heard over their voices. I said very

loudly, boldly, and proudly to them all, “In case you do not know who I am, I am Mrs. Wayman, and I am your new principal.” The children started to laugh and were totally uninterested by my announcement. They looked at me as if to say “So what?” The title “Principal” meant nothing to them. Why?

The teachers, on the other hand, did not know what to think. They had started the first two months without a principal, and because I had been working as a new teacher coach in the building, I knew they were accustomed to doing whatever they wanted to do, when they wanted to do it. While they were all still digesting the news that I was the new principal, I proceeded to list my expectations for their behavior and what they would learn in school. Then, suddenly, a young girl stood up in the rear of the auditorium and shouted, “Miss, Miss!” I tried to ignore her because she was yelling completely out of turn. She was loud and out of her seat. Despite my desire to ignore her for speaking out of turn, she continued to yell, “Miss, Miss!” Finally, our eyes locked. We stared at each other and she said again, “Miss, Miss!” this time adding, “Why do you keep calling this a school? **This is not a school.**” I stood there speechless. I repeated her statement to myself over and over again. There it was, summed up in five words. This is not a school. That is what I was thinking when I walked up on the stage and looked into the audience. I could not figure out where I had seen this scene before. Then I remembered my own high school auditorium in 1976, in a school not too far from this one. That was when I first encountered the disparities in the educational system in Philadelphia for myself. We sat in the auditorium waiting to get our rosters and class assignments, and it was total chaos for a very long time. It was not what I was used to, coming from a school outside of the poverty-stricken area that I called home.

I quickly processed what she had shouted. (**This is not a school!**) Then, I responded by saying, “I am calling it a school because it is a school.” She said, in a much softer, concerned voice, “No, it is not.” I asked the young woman, “Then what is it, if it is not a school?” “Just a place to hang out,” she replied.