



Gloria Perez and Paul Batz discussing viewer's questions.

How Gloria Perez Radiates Optimism to Lead Others

Brightness filled the latest Good Leadership Breakfast as Gloria Perez, President and CEO of the Women's Foundation of Minnesota (WFMN), shared how she radiates optimism to others as a leader, despite current uncertain times.

Perez noted how the roots of her optimism come from her grounding. "For me as a leader, when I'm feeling stressed, I really use my values to help ground me... so that when I'm working with team members, they are inspired to see that we are all resilient, and that we will get through this temporary crisis," she said.

Perez shared the values she's relying on now—empathy, focus, authenticity, self-awareness, agility and optimism—and how her personal experiences shaped these. "When I was 10, my father died. The grief and shock of that experience was really buffered by the strength and resilience of my mother," she said. "That experience taught me the value of empathy. When we experience challenges, we are going to need the helping hand of individuals, or a kind word."

Perez is optimistic about the future impact of WFMN. "In addition to grant-making, the foundation invests in leadership, research and policy to change systems so that women and girls and all people have the power to lead safe and prosperous lives."

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Three Takeaways on Optimism from Gloria Perez

1. **Power through your fears** –
 "I was terrified to participate in (an intervention for an alcoholic employee), but I did. And I did it because people matter."
2. **Learn from the unexpected** –
 "For a sabbatical, I was going to take time for what I called a 'wisdom tour' and interview leader I really admired. However my oldest sister was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor. The wisdom I gained was about the grace of letting go...and how to focus on what's really important."
3. **Problems and solutions can be found in the same place** –
 "The Young Women's Initiative of Minnesota, a one-of-a-kind partnership with the governor's office, is bringing together young women from around Minnesota who are identifying problems and solutions in their community."

Breakfast Findings

How do you feel about Productivity vs. Expectations?

- 33% - Has increased > 100%
- 20% - Stayed the same
- 45% - Slightly lower, 85-99%
- 2% - Much lower, <84%

How much energy does it take to be productive, compared to pre-COVID?

- 18% - Same
- 47% - 10-15% more
- 33% - 16%+ more
- 2% - Less than pre-COVID?

How well have you managed your resilience since COVID-19?

- 33% - My resilience is the same
- 57% - My resilience has increased
- 10% - My resilience has decreased

What does this mean?

What that means, is 80% of us say it's taking MORE energy, to produce LESS. The novelty effect of the COVID situation is gone. We're now mired into a workstyle most people wouldn't choose. And we're borderline exhausted.

What we all need now is encouragement that this equation is worth it. Or at least worth something. The best thing we can do now, is to create a picture of the future we want to see, and share that picture with our colleagues, friends, and family.

-Paul Batz

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DONATION:

\$2,130 raised by the generous donations of breakfast attendees and Handy Paint Pail

+

\$3,120 in ticket sales donated by Good Leadership

=

\$5,250 total donated to Feeding America



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