

## **Forging the Path: Supporting Women in Elected Leadership**

Women's Caucus of the League of Oregon Cities Conference

Thursday, April 25, 2024, 2:00-3:00 pm

### **Presenters**

Jessica Mole Heilman

Director, Center for Women's Leadership

Portland State University

[jmole@pdx.edu](mailto:jmole@pdx.edu)

Vicki Reitenauer

Faculty Co-Director, Center for Women's Leadership

Portland State University

[vicr@pdx.edu](mailto:vicr@pdx.edu)

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### **Session Overview**

- **Introductions and survey themes**
- **'Improvisatory leadership,' in your own words from the surveys...**
  - relational
  - collaborative
  - emergent
  - grounded in continuous learning and growth
- **Individual reflection. Use any/all of the following prompts as a starting place for your improvisatory leadership story:**
  - **Think about an example of your improvisatory leadership:**
    - What is/was the situation? How did you act to provide leadership in the situation?
    - In what ways do the situation and your choices within it reflect one or more of the characteristics of improvisatory leadership?
    - What happened as a result of your actions in this situation? What did you learn from your experience? How have you used and/or might you use that learning?
  - **Consider a current situation you're experiencing in which leadership is lacking:**
    - What is the situation? What are the challenges within it, and your position(ality) relative to it?
    - Drawing on the characteristics of improvisatory leadership, consider different actions you might take within this situation to provide the leadership you perceive as lacking.
    - What will you commit to doing in this situation as an improvisatory leader?
- **Small group sharing of our improvisatory leadership stories and follow-on small group discussion**
- **Large group discussion and closing**



## What is Improvisatory Leadership?

Leadership done or performed without having been planned exactly.

### Words of Wisdom

- Audre Lorde: “There is no thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives...Our struggles are particular, but we are not alone.” (from “Learning from the 1960s”)
- Grace Lee Boggs: “Our challenge...is to deepen the commonalities and the bonds between us, while at the same time continuing to address the issues within our local communities [through struggles] that not only say ‘No’ to the existing power structure but also empower our constituencies to embrace the power within each of us to create the world anew.” (from *The Next American Revolution: Sustainable Activism for the 21st Century*)
- Margaret Wheatley: “The energy now spent on self-protection can be converted into positive energy if we’re willing to encounter reality and see it clearly. Facing reality is an empowering act - it can liberate our mind and heart to discern how best to use our power and influence in service for this time.” (from *Who Do We Choose to Be?: Facing Reality, Claiming Leadership, Restoring Sanity*)
- adrienne maree brown identifies these principles of what they’ve named “emergent strategy”:
  - Small is good/small is all. (The large is a reflection of the small.)
  - Change is constant. (Be like water.)
  - There is always enough time for the right work.
  - There is a conversation in the room that only these people at this moment can have. Find it.
  - Never a failure, always a lesson.
  - Trust the people. (If you trust the people, they become trustworthy.)
  - Move at the speed of trust. Focus on critical connections more than critical mass. Build the resilience by building the relationships.
  - Less prep, more presence.
  - What you pay attention to grows. (*Emergent Strategy*, pp. 41-42)