



Striving for Helpability

Bonnie St. John

Paralympian, Best-Selling Author and Business Consultant

No one succeeds alone, but we leaders often try to take on everything by ourselves. For Paralympian and best-selling author Bonnie St. John, the idea that leaders should strive to be **helpable** seemed foreign at first. As a one-legged black woman who worked hard to prove herself in the world of skiing and beyond, enlisting help from others wasn't her go-to move. Most leaders would probably say the same. In her talk at Leadercast 2020—Ripple Effect, she shares why we win when helpability, both for ourselves and for others, is at our core.

Key Takeaways

Be a helpable leader. Bonnie shares a story about Ken Kragen, a Hollywood promoter who elevated many celebrities from star to superstar status. What got stars to the next level was not due to talent, but because they asked for help from those around them. “You have to be a more helpable person; you have to be able to enlist help from other people,” quotes Bonnie from Ken’s book, “Life Is a Contact Sport.”

Fight for the opportunities of others. Bonnie speaks on the importance of sponsorship for career advancement. Connect with people at the decision-making table who will advocate for you and then pay it forward: Get sponsored and be a sponsor.

Build a community of champions. When we collectively lift each other up, we all rise together, says Bonnie. Leaders should be committed to building a group of people who are devoted to excellence in themselves and others around them. This happens through sharing best practices, picking each other up when someone falls down and cheering for each others’ successes—that’s the Ripple Effect.

“Don’t just mentor somebody, go fight for their opportunities as well.”