

## HPW INSPIRING WOMEN SERIES:

**Stacy Drosatou-Flauss, Leadership and Business Coach/Award Winning Communications Expert as our next Inspiring Woman for HELLENIC PROFESSIONAL WOMEN INC.**

### Questions

#### **1. What compelled you to become a Leadership & Business Coach, An award-winning Communications Expert, and lead to your expertise as a transformative change expert?**

Growing up on the island of Evoia in Greece, I could never have anticipated the extraordinary path life had in store for me. My journey to becoming an award-winning Communications Expert, a Leadership & Business Coach, and a transformative change agent has been anything but straightforward. It has been filled with surprises, challenges, learning experiences, and moments of profound bliss and serendipity.

For over 15 years, I navigated the dynamic terrain of corporate leadership, leading communications for some of the most well-known Fortune 500 and emerging companies in the world. Earning numerous accolades and awards, I appeared to have achieved success. However, this external pursuit came at a high cost, as I faced significant obstacles related to anxiety and health. These challenges, though difficult, were blessings in disguise and catalysts for my personal and professional transformation.

Interacting with some of the most influential and successful people in the world, I discovered that they, too, struggled with similar challenges. This realization led me to question the conventional values and benchmarks of success. I immersed myself in studying mindfulness, neuroscience, performance science, psychology, and positive intelligence, learning from experts at Berkeley, Yale, and Stanford, and working with some of the greatest coaches and mentors in the world. Through this journey, I discovered that high-ranking titles and the culturally accepted symptoms of stress, anxiety, overworking, people-pleasing, and imposter syndrome are not true indicators of leadership and success.

True leadership starts with leading oneself effectively. It means becoming your true self, connecting meaningfully with others, and creating a lasting impact grounded in your values and purpose. True leadership is about internal clarity.

Today, as a coach, I champion a leadership model that cultivates happiness, connection, fulfillment, freedom, and purpose. I use the best of what I've learned and experienced to guide high-achievers, leaders, and changemakers in overcoming their greatest challenges and increasing their freedoms and impact through the mastery of mindset and behavior. My mission is to unlock human potential and drive growth, a journey significantly influenced by my personal experiences.

Working with diverse clients, from executives to entrepreneurs, I have seen the profound impact of tailored coaching. My expertise in communication has been instrumental in helping clients articulate their vision, overcome obstacles, and achieve their goals.

I am deeply grateful and proud of my younger self for daring to be different, remaining curious, taking risks, and following her instincts, especially when things did not seem to go my way. This journey is rooted in a passion and deep commitment to helping others know themselves and unlock their fullest potential, guided by continuous learning and growth. It is an honor to support and witness the remarkable transformations of those I work with, continually reinforcing my dedication to this path.

## **2. Talk about your career trajectory as an acclaimed Communications leader in Fortune 500 and emerging companies in terms of your professional achievements and personal growth.**

Throughout my career as a Communications leader in both Fortune 500 and emerging companies, my journey has been fueled by a profound commitment to hard work, perseverance, and a relentless pursuit of personal growth. Each role has been a unique opportunity to develop new skills, gain invaluable experiences, and learn from both industry leaders and my own challenges. This commitment to continuous learning and self-improvement has allowed me to cultivate a growth mindset, pushing the boundaries of what I and others believed possible.

My career has always been driven by a clear sense of purpose. I never sought out Fortune 500 companies or worked with celebrities and people of influence for their prestige alone. Instead, I aligned myself with people and organizations whose values and missions resonated with me deeply. Working at Fortune 500 companies like NewsCorp and BlackRock allowed me to understand the complexities of corporate communications on a global scale. Here, I mastered strategic messaging, stakeholder engagement, and crisis management. One of my proudest moments was being nominated for a Webby award for my industry-leading work on communicating BlackRock's purpose as a force for good during the first Global Sustainability Summit.

This experience highlighted the tangible impact of outside-the-box thinking and leading by inspiring, demonstrating the power of effective communication in action.

In emerging companies, I found the thrill of building communication frameworks from the ground up. These fast-paced environments challenged me to be adaptable and innovative. Leading teams through periods of rapid growth and transformation, I leveraged my experience to create resilient communication and marketing strategies. A particularly significant accomplishment was playing a pivotal role in winning the 2017 Drum Marketing Awards' Music and Entertainment Strategy of the Year during my time at LoveLive, a music and entertainment startup. This achievement underscored the power of strategic communication in driving success and reinforced the importance of creativity and resilience in high-stakes projects.

What has remained constant throughout my career is my dedication to helping organizations and individuals realize their fullest potential. The accolades and industry recognition I've received are a testament to this commitment. Today, I channel this passion into my coaching practice, empowering both emerging and seasoned leaders to develop the very skills that have been pivotal in my own journey.

This path has not just been about professional achievements but about personal evolution as well. Embracing new perspectives, learning from those who came before me, and maintaining an open mind have been key to my growth. This holistic approach to leadership and communication is what I bring to every engagement, ensuring that the leaders I work with are not only successful but also fulfilled.

### **3. Describe your transformational approach to leadership.**

My transformational approach to leadership seamlessly combines radical self-discovery with rigorously researched theory and evidence-based practice. The result? Empowerment—equipping my clients with the tools, wisdom, and enduring skills that propel them into a life of limitless potential.

At the heart of my approach is the belief that true leadership is a journey, not a destination. It's about inspiring and empowering others to reach their fullest potential through self-discovery, continuous growth, and meaningful impact. This journey starts with a deep commitment to understanding and nurturing the individual values and strengths of each person I work with. Through active listening and empathetic engagement, I create an environment where people feel truly valued and heard—a rarity in this day and age. This encourages open communication and fosters a safe space for honest dialogue and vulnerability, building strong, cohesive leaders who are aware, resilient, and adaptable.

Leading by example is another cornerstone of my approach. I strive to embody the values and behaviors I wish to see in others. This means demonstrating integrity, accountability, and a relentless pursuit of excellence in everything I do. By showing a commitment to personal and professional growth, I inspire other leaders to do the same.

Empowerment and autonomy are also critical components of my transformational approach. I believe in empowering others with the tools, resources, and confidence to make decisions and take ownership of their work and their lives. This empowerment is crucial for individual development and overall success.

Furthermore, I place a strong emphasis on continuous improvement and adaptability. In today's rapidly changing world, it's essential to remain agile and open to new ideas and approaches. I encourage a mindset of lifelong learning and curiosity, where challenges are viewed as opportunities for growth and development.

In essence, my transformational leadership approach is about creating a positive and empowering environment where leaders learn to thrive, contribute their best, and collectively achieve extraordinary outcomes while increasing their freedoms in time, money, and purpose. By focusing on these key elements—self-discovery, leading by example, empowerment, continuous improvement, and adaptability—I aim to cultivate leaders who not only excel in their roles but also lead and live with a sense of purpose and fulfillment. This approach not only drives individual success but also fosters a culture of collective achievement and innovation that creates change in the world.

#### **4. Who has inspired you the most in your life?**

Reflecting on my journey, I realize that many individuals have inspired me at different stages of my life. However, the person who has profoundly shaped my path in recent years is my coach, Devon Bandison. His wisdom, example, and guidance have been instrumental in my personal and professional growth.

Devon taught me the importance of resilience, perseverance, curiosity, and the power of a positive mindset. The way he navigates life's challenges with grace and determination has instilled in me the belief that anything is possible with commitment and effort. His unwavering support and encouragement have been a constant source of strength, reminding me to never give up and always do my best while staying true to my values.

One of the most impactful lessons I learned from Devon is the significance of authentic connection and effective communication. He greatly demonstrates how true leadership is not about commanding authority but about inspiring others through genuine

relationships and heartfelt conversations. This insight has shaped my approach as a coach and leader, emphasizing the value of empathy, active listening, and understanding.

Devon also reinforced in me the transformative power of continuous learning and self-improvement. His commitment to growth and development, both personally and professionally, has inspired me to adopt a similar mindset. This has fueled my passion for helping others unlock their potential and achieve their goals.

Ultimately, Devon's example has been a guiding light in my life, encouraging me to embrace challenges, seek opportunities for growth, and make a positive impact on those around me. His inspiration continues to drive me in my mission to empower others and foster meaningful change.

Devon's influence has not only shaped my professional journey but also my personal philosophy. His way of being reminds me daily that true leadership is about serving others, fostering genuine connections, and continually striving for personal and collective betterment. His inspiration is a testament to the power of coaching and mentorship and the profound impact it can have on one's life.

## **5. Tell us about a few of your most proud accomplishments?**

Reflecting on my journey, I am proud of several accomplishments that have shaped my life and career, reinforcing my commitment to making a positive impact. Eighteen years ago, I moved to New York City from Greece on a tourist visa without a work permit. Through sheer perseverance and determination, I built an extraordinary life and a thriving career, teaching me the power of resilience and the importance of pursuing one's dreams despite significant challenges. Being diagnosed with an autoimmune disease in 2017 and choosing to overcome it through meditation instead of medication is one of my greatest and most profound accomplishments. This journey not only improved my health but also deepened my understanding of the mind-body connection and the power of mindfulness, inspiring me to integrate these principles into my coaching practice. Later in life, I made a bold decision to change careers and pursue a path that truly fulfills me. Succeeding in this new career has been one of my most gratifying achievements, demonstrating that it's never too late to find and follow your true calling. Becoming pregnant after being told I could not is a deeply personal and proud accomplishment. This journey underscored the importance of hope, faith, and persistence, reinforcing my belief in the power of one's mind and perseverance.

Investing time, effort, and money in truly knowing myself has been transformative. This personal growth has empowered me to help others on their journeys of self-discovery

and fulfillment. I am proud to use my experiences to guide others in unlocking their potential and achieving their goals. These accomplishments are not just milestones; they are testaments to the power of resilience, hope, and continuous growth. They have shaped who I am today and how I approach my work as a coach. Each experience has reinforced my commitment to inspiring and empowering others to lead fulfilling lives and make meaningful impacts. By sharing these accomplishments, I hope to convey that no matter the challenges, with determination and a positive mindset, we can overcome obstacles and create extraordinary lives. This belief drives my passion for helping others achieve their fullest potential.

## **6. What advice would you give to professional Hellenic-American Women today in their careers?**

Thank you for this important question. As a proud Greek woman and American citizen, I understand firsthand the unique blend of cultural heritage and professional ambition that shapes our journeys. My advice to Hellenic-American women navigating their careers today is to embrace your heritage, as our Hellenic roots are a source of immense strength and pride. Embrace the values and traditions that have been passed down through generations—resilience, learning, community, and a strong work ethic. Cultivate a strong network of coaches/mentors, peers, and allies who can support, guide, and inspire you, and engage with Hellenic-American organizations to find like-minded individuals who share your values and aspirations. Assert your voice in professional settings, sharing your perspectives confidently, and remember that having an accent can be one of your biggest assets. Commit to continuous learning and personal growth, seeking out opportunities for professional and personal development, and being open to new experiences. Balance your professional and personal life by prioritizing self-care, setting boundaries, and ensuring you make time for your passions and loved ones. Embrace challenges as opportunities for growth and learning, staying resilient and adaptable with the knowledge that you have the strength to overcome any obstacle. As you advance in your career, support and mentor the next generation of

Hellenic-American women by sharing your experiences, providing guidance, and being a source of encouragement. By drawing strength from your heritage, asserting your voice, committing to continuous growth, balancing your ambitions with well-being, and paying it forward, we can create a legacy of success and empowerment for future generations of Hellenic-American women.

## **7. What Impact has your Greek heritage had on your aspiring career?**

My Greek heritage has had a profound and inspiring impact on my career, shaping my values, work ethic, and approach to leadership and communication. Growing up in a

traditional Greek family, I was taught the importance of community and strong relationships, which has greatly influenced my professional journey by emphasizing the importance of building and nurturing networks, collaborating effectively, and fostering a sense of belonging within teams. Whether working in Fortune 500 companies or with emerging businesses, this sense of community has been a cornerstone in creating inclusive and supportive environments. The stories of resilience and perseverance that permeate Greek history and culture have been a constant source of inspiration, instilling in me the belief that challenges are opportunities for growth and that perseverance in the face of adversity leads to success. This mindset has helped me navigate the complexities of my career, from leading large-scale projects to supporting clients through their own transformations. Greek culture's strong emphasis on the pursuit of excellence, or "areté," has driven me to strive for the highest standards in my work, ensuring that I consistently deliver value and impact in all my professional endeavors. Additionally, the rich tradition of storytelling in Greek culture has been fundamental in shaping my career. Understanding the power of a well-told story has helped me craft compelling narratives that resonate with audiences, build strong brand identities, and drive meaningful change. This tradition has also enhanced my coaching, enabling me to connect deeply with clients and guide them through their personal and professional journeys. The wisdom of ancient Greek philosophers, such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, has provided valuable insights and frameworks that I integrate into my coaching and leadership development practices, encouraging critical thinking, self-awareness, and a commitment to continuous learning. Celebrating my Greek heritage has instilled a strong sense of identity and pride, enriching my personal life and bringing a unique perspective to my professional work. It reminds me to honor my roots while striving to make a positive impact in the world. In conclusion, my Greek heritage has been integral to my success and a continual source of inspiration as I support others in their personal and professional journeys.

## **8. Are you involved with the Greek community?**

Yes, I am actively involved with the Greek community, and it has been a deeply rewarding aspect of my personal and professional life. I frequently participate in and support various cultural events that celebrate our rich heritage and traditions, providing opportunities to connect with fellow Hellenes and the broader community. Each year, I mentor 1-2 young Greek professionals, offering guidance, support, and encouragement as they navigate their career and life paths. My philanthropic efforts, whether through fundraising events, charitable donations, or volunteer work, focus on education, mental health, and social services, aiming to make a positive impact on the lives of those in need.

**9. Please feel free to add any advice that comes to mind which we have not covered.**

Thank you for this thoughtful opportunity. Beyond what we've discussed, here's some additional advice that has been instrumental in my professional and personal success. Embrace lifelong learning with curiosity and a commitment to growth, as staying adaptable and resilient in a rapidly changing world is essential. Cultivate emotional intelligence by developing self-awareness, empathy, and interpersonal skills to build stronger relationships and create a positive work environment. Practice mindfulness to stay grounded and fully engaged in the present, enhancing focus and reducing stress. Adopt a growth mindset, viewing challenges as opportunities to learn and improve. Network with purpose, building meaningful relationships through genuine interest and reciprocity. Prioritize work-life integration, ensuring your professional and personal lives support and enhance each other. Be adaptable and open to change, seeing it as an opportunity rather than a threat. Give back to the community through volunteering and mentoring, fostering a sense of purpose and strengthening community bonds. Maintain a positive outlook, focusing on gratitude and surrounding yourself with positive influences. Finally, seek coaches and mentors and be a mentor, sharing knowledge and experiences to foster mutual growth. Together, these practices will help you navigate your journey with resilience, purpose, and fulfillment, creating a legacy of success and empowerment for future generations of Hellenic-American women.

Contributor: Frederica Bolgouras