

Simmons

LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

designing
SUCCESS

Insider Report



A review of the
4th International Simmons Leadership Conference
Dublin, Ireland
5-6 November 2019

Including notes, action points, and future learnings
from our world-renowned leaders brought to you by

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Simmons Leadership Conference

5-6 November 2019
Dublin, Ireland

Approximately 500 leaders from companies and organizations around the world attended the Simmons Leadership Conference that took place in Dublin, Ireland, on November 5-6, 2019. The conference has been recognized for four decades as the preeminent authority on women's leadership, and this year's theme, "Designing Success," focused on the need for women leaders to constantly reinvent themselves and redefine what it means to succeed.

The conference was emceed by Joyce Kulhawik, who holds an Honorary Doctorate in Communications from Simmons University, and is best known as the Emmy Award-winning Arts and Entertainment Critic for CBS-Boston (WBZ-TV, 1981-2008).

Highly accomplished and world-renowned keynoters included:

- ▶ **Yang Lan**, media entrepreneur and journalist who has surmounted multiple cultural and corporate barriers to advance gender equality and women's professional development in China
- ▶ **Diana Theodore, Ph.D.**, international performance coach and author who creates a rehearsal room to explore powerful principles and practices that will deepen your impact, engagement, and fulfillment
- ▶ **Tererai Trent, Ph.D.**, whose own determined pursuit of an education gained her a global platform to advocate for women's rights and universal access to quality education
- ▶ **Fatima Bhutto**, Pakistani journalist, author, and activist whose writings and leadership platform are informed by her family's political dynasty
- ▶ **Margaret Heffernan, Ph.D.**, entrepreneur, chief executive and author with a pulse on the future of coalition building and networking to solve the world's problems
- ▶ **Noreena Hertz, Ph.D.**, economist and author sharing exclusive research for transformative change across industries and cultures
- ▶ **Dr. Jane Goodall, Ph.D.**, the legendary primatologist whose groundbreaking work revealed the close connections between protecting chimpanzees and conservation of the entire natural world
- ▶ **Jameela Jamil**, model, talk show host and actor with powerful ideas on changing how the world sees women and how women see themselves



Building Bridges Instead of Walls

Yang Lan, Chairperson, Sun Media Group and Sun Culture Foundation

Is our world going to be more divided or connected in an information cocoon?

This was the overarching question linked to Yang Lan's opening keynote. One of the most powerful women in Chinese media, she is the co-founder and chair of Sun Media, a business empire spanning television, newspapers, magazines, and online publishing, as well as Sun Culture Foundation, which improves education and promotes philanthropy in China.

"Walls can be invisible, such as ideas and concepts," she said.

Having started her media career by competing among 1,000 college girls to host a new show and write the script for it, she did not compete as the "sweet, innocent and beautiful fresh face" the producers wanted. Instead, she boldly asked why the girls could not compete on the basis of their own ideas and voices. Lan won the opportunity by being different. She wanted to show her Chinese fans how big the world is through conversations on social and cultural issues. Sometimes it wasn't easy, even for the "Oprah of China," as she has been called.

Lan advocates bridging women and power as a design for lifelong success that will be handed off to future generations.

ACTIONS:

- ▶ Stay true to yourself. Presenting a different point of view may give you greater chances to make a difference in the world.
- ▶ Work for something bigger than yourself, such as a cause that affects other people. Your achievements will both bring a greater sense of fulfillment and be a part of your legacy.
- ▶ Help other women. Building circles of trust, rather than going at everything solo will shift the larger equation toward equity.

▶ **Simmons' News Pick**

Yang Lan: Breaking Gender Stereotypes Key to Empowering Women

(China Daily, March 14, 2019)



Performing as YOU:

A Rehearsal Space for
Designing Your Success

Diana Theodore, Ph.D.,
International Performance Coach,
Author, and Director

What makes you authentically you?

That question drives Diana Theodore in rehearsal rooms, on stages, and in the corporate coaching space. As an international performance coach and director of Theatre 4 Business in London, she applies her years of experience in professional theatre directing and dance to the principles of great performance on the business stage.

She advocated that “designing success” happens through continual growth, knowing who you are, and celebrating your story along the way. “Before audiences care about what you say, they have to know who you are,” she insisted.

Her advice was to pay attention to and invest in your life experience — “darkness and light, epic and extraordinary, powerful messages stored in your body at a cellular level, the ground on which you stand.”

Theodore advised to think of visibility as enjoying the spotlight a little bit more, and ignoring the glare — this is not arrogant, it’s valuing!



ACTIONS:

Invest in your life story by seeing your experiences as essential truths. Be open to talking about them with others.

Re-awaken “the child” since everything that made an impression is still in us today. If you remember who you were as a child, with more freedom and imagination, you can more easily realize that your impact and influence matter, and it’s never one-size-fits-all.

Claim the “I.” If you recognize that you possess many qualities and sometimes many roles, you strengthen your presence in the world.



Simmons’ News Pick

Reframing Authenticity:
Letting Yourself In

(Thrive Global, November 17, 2019)



Education Is a Human Right: Turning Oppression into Opportunities

Tererai Trent, Ph.D., Author and Educator

Due to the power of believing in her dream to be educated, 38,000 students have been educated in Tererai Trent's eleven schools. She became one of the world's most respected advocates for universal access to quality education and is an adjunct professor in the School of Public Health at Drexel University.

As she poignantly described on stage, she "dropped the baton of illiteracy and poverty" that her grandmother and mother attempted to pass on to her. In her village, only males were considered to be "the future" and therefore, deserved an education.

Through what seemed like impossible odds in rural, cattle-herding Zimbabwe, where she lived without running water and electricity, Trent clung to her sense of commitment and discipline in order to realize her dream of being educated in the United States.

And make no mistake: You may have multiple dreams over your lifetime. Give yourself permission to manifest all of them, insisted Trent. Are you committed? Are you disciplined?

Today, the design for Trent's success is leading the global charge in the fight for quality education for all children and women's rights. "I breathe the empowerment of women," she said.

ACTIONS:

- ▶ Connect your personal goals to the greater good. Through her education, Trent learned that education is an inherent right for all, and has worked tirelessly to provide it for others.
- ▶ Don't ever treat success as accomplishments that are cheap or easy; commit and exercise discipline until a goal is completed.
- ▶ Allow your ability to learn tough lessons and carry on to be your strength. If you can endure, your resilience will build your character.

▶ Simmons' News Pick

Zimbabwean Scholar Named One of the Most Inspiring Women in the World

(CNN International, May 9, 2019)



The Politics of Empowerment

Fatima Bhutto,
Author, Journalist and Activist

On the day that Fatima Bhutto spoke, we almost missed her live because of her struggle of obtaining a visa to get into Ireland! She said this incident "made her think how disempowering borders are."

Bhutto grew up surrounded by armored vehicles, having come from a family steeped in the politics and power of Pakistan. Many of Bhutto's greatest travels and accolades came with the need for her to be tenacious and strong.

"We're served by knowing our fear and moving ahead," she insisted.

She experienced the assassination of four of her immediate family members, including her father...as she heard the gunfire right outside their home. She is acutely aware of fear and how to be empowered by it. According to Bhutto, leadership and empowerment are built on seeking justice, and you don't have to come from a political dynasty to do so.

Bhutto has worked extensively with many charities and organizations to support women's empowerment, support Karachi's slum populations, and resist press restrictions, among other socio-political causes.

▶ *ACTIONS:*

If you want to be part of any community and wish to be at one with society around you, follow the trail of pain. You can affect change by observing that space closely for where pain is coming from, and exercising your leadership there.

Know that fear is a never-ending process, and do not run away from it.

▶ *Simmons' News Pick* *Fatima Bhutto on the Surge of Bollywood, K-Pop and Turkish TV*

(The New York Times, November 15, 2019)



The Future of Success

Margaret Heffernan, Ph.D., Entrepreneur, Chief Executive and Author

We are in a battle of leadership views, but one thing is certain: leadership styles and the very roles themselves are rising to the occasion of collaboration and high degrees of social capitalism.

"Instead of efficiency and toughness, we need to focus on resilience," Margaret Heffernan said.

In addition, "stale, male" ideals of leadership rooted in toughness, isolation, and long hours have led to some catastrophes. Heffernan, who is the former CEO of five businesses, and author of five books that explore business and leadership, has predictions about the future of success: Experiments will be fundamental to companies' resilience. Failure is acceptable as long as individual contributions are recognized and extracted for the larger picture. A corporate culture must include the most diverse participants in scenario planning, and be free of fear in order to be able to listen to and understand all voices. If companies are not rooted in inclusiveness, they will ultimately fail, because they don't reflect the individual contributors. This is a new kind of leadership.

Since Heffernan currently co-leads the faculty of the Responsible Leadership Programme at the Forward Institute, mentoring senior executives of major organizations about issues related to growth, strategy, and sustainability, we have hope!

ACTIONS:

- ▶ Take a radical appraisal of what management means to you, what you would like to change in 2020 and what actions may be required. Are you willing to try something new or feared to test your resilience?
- ▶ Be sure that empathy and listening operate how you interact with others every day.

▶ *Simmons' News Pick*

[Study Finds Communication Between Management and Workforces is Poor](#)

(The Irish Times, April 12, 2019)



The Five Forces That Are Transforming Our World

Noreena Hertz, Ph.D.,
Economist and Author

She is recognized as the darling of decisions. Her quote says it all: "In a complex world of hidden dangers and fleeting opportunities, we all need to be able to see snakes, as well as tigers."

Named by The Observer as one of the world's leading young thinkers, economist Noreena Hertz is a renowned thought leader with an impressive track record for predicting global trends.

Her latest work, *Eyes Wide Open*, lays out her vision for making smart decisions in today's complex world. These decisions may cut across the most formidable challenges of our day underscored by five key forces: geopolitical, economic, societal, demographic and technological—with "anxious" Generation K as the future-proof of it all.

We must fully understand who these 15- to 24-year-olds are, and why they are so different in order to rely on them. According to Hertz's research, they care more about technology, environmental justice, equality, fiscal responsibility, authenticity, and connection than other generations before them. Simultaneously, their decisions are largely based on their experiences, not just top-down messaging.

Hertz advised that if we want to appeal to Generation K, it is essential to convince them that we share their convictions, and help them improve the state of the world. We must also find ways to enable Generation K to express their true selves and passions in ways that they feel are valued.

▶ **ACTIONS:**

Think about how you make decisions and what factors drive the outcome.

Active introspection will position you better to make strategic choices and innovate, so carve out time to think.

Notice your environment. Notice your emotions. Ask yourself who it is you trust and why.

▶ ***Simmons' News Pick*** ***How Sustainable is the Fourth Industrial Revolution?***

(The Chartered Institute of IT, October 28, 2019)



Mobilizing the Collective Power of Individual Action

Dame Jane Goodall, Ph.D., DBE,

Founder, The Jane Goodall Institute, UN Messenger of Peace

A legend in the field of primatology, Jane Goodall is the world's foremost expert on chimpanzees. From her earliest days in Gombe, Tanzania, in the late 1950s, her research challenged conventional wisdom about chimp behavior and their social similarities with humans. In turn, her groundbreaking studies blazed a trail for women scientists to enter the field.

Ultimately, her first gift to the world was persuading scientists to look at animals differently. Her journey started at the tender age of 18 months when she brought earthworms into her crib (and later, at age four, when she went into a henhouse to investigate where the egg comes from). As a young woman, Goodall began playing a role in saving the earth. As a professional and international role model, with heart and head in harmony, she has founded sanctuary programs that have kept thousands of animals out of circuses, medical research labs and delicacy-based hunting.

Her mantra and mission today: "Women are keepers of the planet."

Goodall's organization "Roots and Shoots" is a global movement of youth who are empowered to use their voice and actions to make compassionate decisions, influencing and leading change in their communities centered on people, animals and the environment.

Through illustrative (and highly emotional!) videos and pictorials, Goodall convinced the audience that patience, nurturing, understanding, and kindness should now dominate the way we think, lead, and function. As we work for gender equity, we can look to nature's resilience as a model for our own.

ACTIONS:

- ▶ Allow younger people to influence you. Don't shy away from seeking their advice. Utilize their variety, passion and energy to solve problems and devise new, imaginative solutions.
- ▶ Only use social media for good—raising consciousness and spreading hope.
- ▶ In tough times, remember your own human spirit. We have tackled the impossible as a species.

▶ Simmons' News Pick

Jane Goodall Was Told She Was 'Just a Girl.' But Grew Up to Redefine Mankind

(CNBC, October 29, 2019)



The True Measure of Self-Worth

Jameela Jamil,
Actor, Presenter and Activist

Moderated by **Joyce Kulhawik**
Emmy Award-winning TV Journalist
and Simmons Alumna

Jameela Jamil has endured disability from a broken back, deafness, sexual abuse, anorexia nervosa, and bullying. Though her life has positively exploded as an actress, model, comedian, and passionate body neutrality activist, she feels an incessant responsibility to speak openly about mental health, #MeToo, and unhealthy body ideals.

As someone who “always wanted to be an activist and has experienced almost every kind of way that you can be marginalized,” Jamil is dedicated to shedding light on traditionally uncomfortable subjects and making lasting change. Jamil now brings her message about body neutrality to women around the world through her social media platform, *I Weigh*, where contributors can celebrate their accomplishments and self-worth, rather than a number on a scale.

“Impossible beauty standards are set for women. We must drown out this message,” she said.

Summoning a lot of laughter and applause, Jamil joined us via satellite from New York City and discussed the overwhelming need for self-compassion and sisterhood as the “ultimate” design for success.

ACTIONS:

Make a space for other women since you can draw much more strength from community than in isolation (or being lonely at the top).

Don't be afraid of judgment, which may be hard as a woman, but transparency and expression may lead to more opportunities and solutions than a choice to be silent.

Always celebrate life, celebrate yourself, and celebrate other diverse women who motivate and inspire you.

Simmons' News Pick
MeToo's Been Weaponized Against Us So Women Need to Hire Other Women

(Irish Independent, November 4, 2019)



Panel Discussions

Business Panel: Designing Success

Moderated by **Orla Coughlan**
International Human
Resources Executive

Devendra Malladi

Vice President, Cisco Customer Experience (CX),
Centers in the Asia Pacific, Japan and China (APJC), Cisco

Marie Moynihan

Senior Vice President of Global Talent Acquisition, Dell Technologies

Sharon O'Brien

Global Business Agility Leader, GRM Transformation Office, Liberty Mutual Insurance

Simmons' News Pick

Doing Well by Doing Good

(Forbes, November 12, 2019)

With a rare glimpse into the internal policies and programs of three multinational companies—Cisco, Dell, and Liberty Mutual—our representative executives discussed unlocking diversity to bring the best talent into their many markets.

According to Devendra Malladi, if you want innovation, you have to “make people feel safe, physically and psychologically, which then encourages them to be authentic.” In other words, “the best of me translates into the best of we.”

Humility, optimism and selflessness are a winning me-we combo at Cisco, Malladi emphasized. The company participates in the “Multiplier Effect,” a pledge to sponsor diverse individuals and challenge peers to support “full-spectrum diversity.”

At Liberty Mutual, Sharon O'Brien emphasizes the importance of the worldwide culture map, gender intelligence, and what female leaders bring to the transformation journey. In her role, she is responsible for overseeing the business delivery of a \$50 million transformation of Western European markets in conjunction with Global IT partners—her responsibilities touch hundreds of people, so she considers herself a “culture innovator.”

Dell's Marie Moynihan, who “went from being a child used to adversity in Northern Ireland, to being a global diversity leader,” shared that diversity is embedded as the center stage of talent acquisition and retention and not on the peripheral. In fact, Dell's MARC (Many Advocating Real Change) program is an experiential awareness program determining the true value of inclusion simply in which “everyone is different” and difference is the natural order of life as a whole.

ACTIONS:

- ▶ Do your part to create a conscious culture: speak up and frame meetings to automatically include different voices.
- ▶ Make mental health a priority among your team by fostering care, trust and expression.
Do you maintain and reinforce an “open door policy?”
- ▶ Have connection be the basis for your programs and policy.
Give your people specific examples of how their roles positively impact the company and customers.



Panel Discussions

Business Panel: Leading Inclusively & Embracing Uniqueness

Moderated by **Susan MacKenty Brady**
CEO, Simmons University Institute for
Inclusive Leadership Resources Executive

Javier Barrientos

Director, Diversity and Inclusion Engagement, T-Mobile USA

Asha George

Vice President of Global Diversity and Inclusion,
Dell Technologies

Darlene Slaughter

Vice President, Chief People Officer, March of Dimes

Simmons' News Pick

State of D&I in European Tech

(Atomico, 2019 State of European Tech Report)

What do you get when three top Diversity & Inclusion leaders talk about their superpowers?

Thanks to Susan MacKenty Brady's question out of the gate, yes, you get lively discussion. However, the most illuminating messages were drawn from their expertise in people development. These "superpowers" included curiosity, tolerance, listening, integrity, making a difference, and dare we say, "stereotype-busting."

T-Mobile is known for being a pioneering "un-carrier" breaking down barriers and rewriting rules. The company publicly talks about its D & I Network—groups where employees can come together to address tough topics, challenge assumptions and learn to be allies for each other and customers. Javier Barrientos is at the epicenter of programs like this, and advocates for more "respect" to meeting people where they are in life, rather than where you want them to be.

"The world is at a critical junction," Barrientos said. "Women's inclusion is key to facing the corporate, geopolitical and environmental challenges ahead."

Dell's Asha George shared that the company's thirteen Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) connect 37,000 team members around areas such as gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and backgrounds. These ERGs are communities that provide opportunities for personal and professional development through mentoring, volunteerism, networking, leadership development and community involvement.

Asha shared that by 2030, 50% of Dell's global workforce and 40% of its global people leaders will be women.

March of Dimes' Darlene Slaughter has had an imprint in D & I for decades as a "force for change but a quiet storm." She recently had the opportunity to facilitate diversity and inclusion conversations in Cairo, Egypt. Her strategies are attracting, retaining and developing talent across the "spectrum of humankind."

ACTIONS:

- ▶ Listen, which is key to inclusion. Try to understand differences.
- ▶ Don't be afraid of being uniquely who you are; only you can bring certain ideas and solutions.
- ▶ Remember that by opening up dialogue—even when it's uncomfortable—you redefine change.

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