THE LANGUAGE OF LEADERSHIP
HOW TO USE LANGUAGE TO LEAD

Erica Mills, MPA
Senior Lecturer, Evans School of Public Policy & Governance,
University of Washington

To ignite leadership for power, purpose, and impact you need...

PROSE

2,503

15,469,328

How many different words are you using?
LEADERLY LANGUAGE PRIORITIES

• Remarkable mission statement
• Great SUN Story
• Abiding commitment to leveraging language for power, purpose, and impact

“Leadership is a way of thinking, a way of acting, most importantly, a way of communicating.”

Simon Sinek

THE THREE MYTHS

1. Leadership is about leading others.

To see one’s own way.
THE THREE MYTHS

1. Leadership is about leading others.
2. Leadership requires a leader.
3. One style of leadership is better than another.

“Leadership isn’t about a person, it’s about a dynamic.”
Prof. Antonio Marturano
STAND FOR YOUR MISSION STATEMENT

“Once spoken, the speaker's words are gone except for the listener's abilities to remember them.”

Jay Conger
Inspiring Others: the language of leadership

Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education's mission is to serve all sectors of the Colorado Community by improving the collective effectiveness of environmental education.

Reading Ease: 0.0
Grade Level: 23.7

The National Churchill Museum's mission is to commemorate and celebrate the life, times, and distinguished career of Sir Winston Churchill and inspire current and future leaders by his example of resilience, determination and resolution.

Reading Ease: 0.0
Grade Level: 22.8

The Center for Justice is a legal advocacy organization that works to empower individuals and provides vigorous oversight and advocacy when community rights need to be defended and community voices need to be heard.

Reading Ease: 10.5
Grade Level: 20.2

The Alaska Kidney Patients Association is committed to providing support, education and advocacy for kidney patients and their families, encouraging organ donation, public education and the prevention of kidney disease.

Reading Ease: 0.0
Grade Level: 22.8
The Alaska Kidney Patients Association takes care of Alaska’s kidneys.

**SUN STORY**

SELF, US, NOW

Three stories every leader must know how to tell.

**STORY OF SELF**

“If I am not for myself, who will be for me? When I am for myself alone, what am I? If not now, when?”

Hillel the Leader

**AUTHENTICITY**

What’s your purpose?
STORY OF US

ME < WE

ALIGNMENT
PROSE PITFALLS

1. Being inattentive to your words
2. Using jargon

Jargon is evil.
PROSE PITFALLS

1. Being inattentive to your words
2. Using jargon
3. Featuring features rather than benefits

STORY OF NOW

"I can never tell you what you said, but only what I heard. I will have to rephrase what you have said, and check it out with you to make sure that what left your mind and heart arrived in my mind and heart intact and without distortion."

John Powell, theologian

ACTION

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

• Stand for your Mission Statement
• Tell your SUN Stories
• Be inspired by the power of prose to ignite your leadership for power, purpose, and impact
Erica Mills
enm@uw.edu

More resources at:
www.claxonmarketing.com