



The Top 10 Reasons I Didn't Save the World This Year

A Template for Leadership and Advocacy Workshops for Medical Women

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PURPOSE: The Federation of Medical Women of Canada's Annual General Meeting was held on June 22-24th 2007 in Ottawa, Ontario. Its goal was to showcase leadership excellence in women physicians and to provide strategies and practical tools to empower and enable female physicians to become leaders in their own communities. This poster highlights the wisdom, vision and motivation that the amazing women at the conference conveyed. It can be used as a template to recreate a similar leadership and advocacy workshop in an effort to discuss ways around the barriers facing medical women today.

CONTENT:

1. I didn't know it needed saving

May Cohen MD, CCFP, FCFP Family Medicine

A fearless leader and mentor, May has spent her life speaking out against wrong-doing and speaking up for what she believes in. She is the absolute model of respectfully speaking out, but has also demonstrated the importance of sticking to one's ideals and honouring one's values.

Take home pearls:

- The world is still far from being saved! There are still many 'glass ceilings' in place for women physicians and still many health issues affecting the lives of women
- Speak up for what you believe in, and believe in what you do (find that 'fire in your belly')
- Find good mentors and be a mentor yourself
- Remember that health care cannot be seen in isolation from the society we live in

4. I didn't know women doctors could do that

Jan Christilaw, MD, FRCPS- OB/GYN

From the passion for her work at health centers for disenfranchised women, Jan assured us that she actually hasn't ever found anything that women docs couldn't do!

Take home pearls:

- Be who you are, but know who you are
- Let go of identifying yourself by your achievements
- Find your passion, and live your day up with your passion
- Keep asking questions and challenging the answers. Create new ideas and inspire others to do the same

7&8 University and Hospital politics & Association and Government politics are too messy

Panel Discussion Chair: Dr. Susan Phillips, FCFP Panel: The Hon. Carolyn Bennett, MP Dr. Ruth Collins-Nakai, FRCPC(C) Past President CMA, Dr. Wendy Graham, Dr. Ruth Wilson, Dr. Janice Willett

There are hardly words to describe how powerful this panel discussion was. It was a stimulating look at how these successful women have demonstrated political courage and managed to navigate the political landscapes of our major institutions of change.

Take home pearls:

- Be prepared for messy and remember that leaders are needed at every tier
- Be hard on the issues, not on the people
- Take the high road when you can, and keep your enemies close

2. I couldn't decide where to start

Marla Shapiro MD, FRCPS, CCFP Family and Community Medicine and Media Spokeswoman

Through her honest and eloquent self-examination, Marla role modeled courage in the face of adversity. She also powerfully demonstrated the importance of self-reflection in understanding where each of us can effectively make our mark.

Take home pearls:

- Start by standing still, knowing yourself and clarifying your personal values
- Create attainable, measurable and specific goals
- Know that if you don't do it, it won't get done
- Remember that things aren't stressful if they are your passion
- Find your balance, relax and take charge!

5. I plan to, but will get to it later

Janet Dollin MD, CCFP, FCFP Family Medicine and Mamta Guman MD, FRCPC(C)

Via a fun and interactive small-group discussion, time-management strategies and ideas were generated.

Take home pearls:

- You can do everything you want, just not at the same time
- Choose what you want to do; set your priorities for yourself, your family and your work
- If it makes you feel guilty, do it (you have a right to guiltless self care)
- Procrastination is often a symptom of being overextended
- Deal with your addiction to urgency to make time to prioritize

9. I wanted to but was too busy carpooling and caregiving

Andrea O'Reilly, PhD Assoc Prof Women's Studies, York University

Andrea is the author of *Rocking the Cradle: Thoughts on Motherhood, Feminism and the Possibility of Empowered Mothering*. She was invited to introduce this discussion but was unfortunately unable to attend due to illness. This important topic will have to be deferred to another conference, and indeed there is enough potential to make this discussion a full day of its own!

3. I had no time

Elizabeth May, LLB, Leader of the Green Party

Elizabeth May is an environmentalist, activist, writer, lawyer and recently elected political leader. A brilliant lecturer, author of the book *How to Save the World in Your Spare Time*, and the recipient of numerous prestigious awards, it is evident that Elizabeth May was the perfect person to share her passion with us.

Take home pearls:

- You are in charge with what you do with your time; you can blindly comply, cheerfully cooperate or get creatively excited!
- Working at the policy level needs an understanding of politics
- Look outside of medicine
- Learn to leverage your position and use your voice
- Engage strategically with the media, make your topic "sexy"

6. I tried to but nobody would listen to me

Shari Graydon, BA, MA, Media Consultant

It is without question that the confidence Shari carried with her onto the podium gave participants a taste of the kind of courage and self-confidence one needs to get their message heard.

Take home pearls:

- A speaker's credibility is influenced by superficials such as physical and vocal presentation (if you're short, stand on a stool!)
- You can learn to speak, to project and to present yourself with maximal influence. Consider asking for guidance
- You must learn the mechanisms by which print, radio and TV media present ideas in order to get your message out most effectively

10. I tried and now I have no more energy

Nedra Lander, PhD, Clinical Psychology and Danielle Nahon, PhD, Clinical Psychology

In this intimate discussion, Drs. Lander and Nahon led a group exploration and ranking of personal values which influence daily decision-making. Understanding these value rankings, and continual self-reflection are needed to find harmony in one's personal and professional lives.

Take home pearls:

- Honouring our values and living with integrity is the most profound form of self-care
- Most stresses stem from a clash of values

NEXT STEPS: We plan to capture these pearls in a toolkit describing the talks and the discussions and insights generated. This toolkit can then be used as a template for future discussions to be held at FMWC events across the country.

FEEDBACK: "Real people, real women leaders. I felt honored to be in the room. Magic."

"Wonderful. Speechless with gratitude for this incredible experience"

"I will become involved in local medical politics at a higher level, emboldened by the panel's strategies"

"Be the change you want to see in the world"

-Gandhi