

# What Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie Can Teach Us About Leadership

You may have read all his books or have hardly heard of his book *Americanah*, but you probably have seen the now famous quote from her 2012 talk "We Should All Be Feminists" that has started a worldwide conversation about feminism, and was published as a book in 2014.

Her work has been translated into over thirty languages and has appeared in various publications. She is the author of the several novels including *Purple Hibiscus*, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, and *Americanah*, which won the National Book Critics Circle Award and was named one of *The New York Times* Top Ten Best Books of 2013. She is also the author of *The Thing Around Your Neck*.

She has been invited to speak around the world. Her 2009 TED Talk, *The Danger of A Single Story*, is now one of the top ten most-viewed TED Talks of all time. Her most recent book, *Dear Ijeawele, or a Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions*, was published in March 2017. »

Here are 7 leadership lessons we can learn from Chimamanda N. Adichie :

## #1. Know Your Worth

As a human being and not only as a « happy african feminist », she knows exactly what she deserves and never underestimated herself. You are a leader. So stand with conviction and act like one.

## #2. Be Authentic

By promoting the ideas she believes in, she helps bring an effective change of mentality leading to the adoption of new lifestyles for Africans as well as non-Africans. She could sell a

lot more books (and therefore have more contracts and more money) if she said she was no longer a feminist. But, instead, she tells those who blame her for her determination but claim love her : « I love to be loved but I don't need that. So, Keep your love ». That is authenticity. For a leader, being authentic can't be separate from leading by example.

### **#3. Great Leadership requires Great Courage**

Chimamanda is a courageous leader. In writing about the Biafra war, a difficult subject that has cost ink and more blood, she is not only informing, she is taking a stand. Today, in a prestigious room of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in front of ministers, journalists, influencers and hundreds of fans who came to listen to her religiously, she did not hesitate to give an uncompromising opinion on delicate subjects such as the Mr. Trump's America, the CFA Franc, or the relations between France and Africa. She took a stand for equality for women, education of boys and reaffirm the power of literature. A leader must be able to affirm her/his position and take responsibility.

### **#4. Increase your Knowledge by Sharing with Others**

Knowledge is power. Chimamanda has sold millions of books and gave many conferences, her books had been made into movies (Lupita Nyong'o bought Americanah's rights ; The film will be produced by Brad Pitt) and she's now recognized as one of the most influential african woman in the world. She could lived peacefully in the US, writing her books and enjoying her rock-star influence. Instead, while writing a new book, she is giving workshop lessons to young in Nigeria where she lives half-time a year. Sharing is leadership.

### **#5. Communicate appropriately**

Not only she has a degree in Communications, Chimamanda masterises the art of Communication. With her skills and well-earned talent, she is a strategic storyteller who builds bridges

and connect people worldwide. She has an universal message and she knows how to deliver it effectively. Storytelling is Business and Communication is an important skill for a leader. It's the most important key to leadership success.

#### **#6. Use The Power of Humor**

It is well-known that "a sense of humor is part of the art of leadership, of getting along with people, of getting things done." Chimamanda, as a fearless and authentic funny leader, knows it. By using jokes and personal stories, she's more able to connect with her audience. For example, everyones left the debate today knowing that her grand-mother was a troublemaker (so might she be a feminist). It's good to give people a little humor break from all the facts and figures in order to gain their full attention to hear some motivational ideas. By acknowledging that the shortest distance between two people is a good laugh and that humor is an excellent leadership tool, good leaders use humor to their advantage. Be a perfect leader : laugh more.

#### **#7. Read To Lead**



Harry S. Truman said, "not all readers are leaders, but all leaders are readers." Chimamanda's suggestion to politicians and leaders is to read at least three books a week. It means : feed your brain. Read to lead.

**She is Fearless. She is Magnificent. She is a bold Leader.  
We should all read Chimamanda N. Adichie.**