

# 6 Tips for Being a Calm, Peaceful Woman in Helping & Social Change Careers

In Conspire Coaching's Women Leaders Emerging (WLE) Circles, mission-driven women gather by phone regularly to coach each other through career transition, advancement, and success. Members of our circles are all doing mission-driven nonprofit and public sector work. Guess what: Women in our circles regularly share with the group that they are overwhelmed, anxious, and exhausted from so much giving, and working within organizations that don't offer enough nurturing and support. This tip sheet shares some of the wisdom and advice WLE women have given to each other since 2012:

*Tip #1: Step back to define (or create) your vision for a nurturing work environment and then take ownership of implementing your vision.*

- What systems, conversations & resources would you like to have in place to leave work each day feeling alive, well, and supported?
- Get creative, pull out some magazines and markers, and make a vision board that beautifully mirrors you and your vision of deep support.
- Practice making requests. Ask for what you need. Start with something small that will make your work life easier. Your request may be denied, but you never know, and you could help shift the culture of your organization.
- Model the kind of positive, nurturing behavior that you believe your organization should take on. Take time to smile and say hello. Bring wellness exercises and stretches to meetings. Take the days off that are owed to you. Get that annual check-up. Take lunch breaks and really don't work.
- Track your energy and productivity. Work on aligning your favorite work with high-energy moments to get the most out of your strengths and passions. Save boring tasks for times of day when you have energy dips.

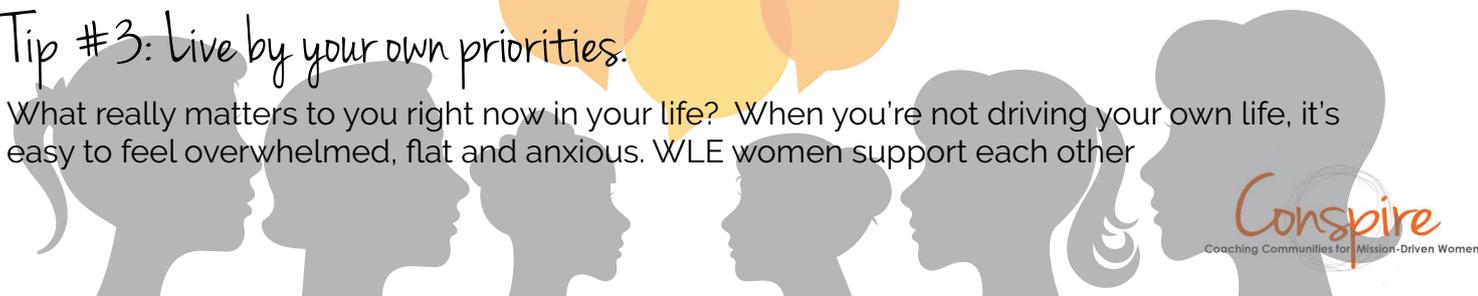
*Tip #2: Become a mentor magnet.*

A mentor is anyone in your life who helps you learn, develop, and live into your strongest, most successful self. To attract and cultivate these relationships, WLE women suggest the following:

- Take stock of who is right in front of you. Who naturally supports you? How could you deepen that relationship?
- What problems are you trying to solve? Who might you engage to help you solve the problem instead of doing it on your own?
- What is on your learning agenda? Who has the knowledge and experience that you are seeking? Set up phone calls or coffee dates and take ownership of your learning and development.

*Tip #3: Live by your own priorities.*

What really matters to you right now in your life? When you're not driving your own life, it's easy to feel overwhelmed, flat and anxious. WLE women support each other



# 6 Tips for Being a Calm, Peaceful Woman in Helping & Social Change Careers

in living with intention and driving their own lives. Here are some of the techniques they have tried:

- Write down a list of all the competing priorities in your life that are important to you. What are your top three priorities?
- Evaluate: How much time are you devoting to those top three priorities? What is taking up your time that does not fall in your top three? Find these things and reduce, cut, delete, delegate!
- Create rules, structures, and habits to honor your top priorities. If self-care and rest are truly a priority, honor that. Really make it a priority by keeping commitments on your calendar for wake time, meal plans, exercise, and bedtime. Seek out support and accountability partners.
- Exercise your choice when others ask for your time and energy. For the next week, pause before you say yes, and ask yourself "Does this match up with my priorities?" Another great tip for being at choice: when you add something new to your life, take another responsibility off your plate.
- Each morning, ask yourself, "What is one thing I can delegate and take off my plate?"
- Let go of needing to be liked or to be super woman. Focus instead on having integrity and thoroughness in what you commit to doing, and being known for saying "no" if you don't have the time to do something well and without exhausting yourself.
- Take a good look at your relationships. Spend time with people who respect boundaries and who want you to live a healthy, thriving life. Do you have an obligation to spend time with a friend or family member who is very in need? Be clear with yourself about how much time and what kind of support you are able and willing to offer without burning yourself out and stick to your plan. This is especially important for people in helping professions; you need to re-fuel when not at work.
- Get an inbox managing app like Mailbox to determine when you want to handle each incoming email.

*Tip #4: Come up with a plan. Are you "driving your own bus?" Have you given yourself time to consider the goals you are out to achieve, and the milestones you want to reach along the way?*

- Commit to one goal per month, and develop a plan for each goal.
- Use the Well Formed Outcome Model for goal-setting (a tool that we use in WLE coaching circles).
- Set SMART goals.
- What motivates you to achieve goals? Do you like check-lists that allow you to cross out items? Do you love rewards like sticker charts? Do you like to share your successes with someone you love? Are you at your best with external accountability? Think about what motivates you and build your plan around an execution that plays to your own style and motivation.
- Create a goals game with a partner or friend to make achieving fun.

# 6 Tips for Being a Calm, Peaceful Woman in Helping & Social Change Careers

- Consider whether your work environment is sustainable for you, and remember that you have a choice about whether to move on.

## Tip # 5 Disrupt overwhelming moments.

Test out and experiment with different behaviors and responses when faced with upsetting or overwhelming moments. Women Leaders Emerging Alumna recommend:

- Take several deep breaths and drink some water.
- Take a walk outside to clear your head.
- Touch your heart with your hand to calm your anxious energy.
- Go find someone to smile at and say "hello!" - you may need a brief moment of human connection. You're a people person, right?
- Develop affirmations or mantras to say during moments of anxiety or overwhelm.
- Post affirmations or visual symbols of things that bring you calm, peace, and joy around your work and living spaces.
- Check out the Thought Diary app.
- Move away from your computer or smartphone.
- Look up at the sky (out the window or outside) for a few minutes.
- Do a mental audit of your body and notice your breath and posture.
- Write down the negative messages you are telling yourself on a piece of paper, then turn the paper over and rewrite your script.
- Have go-to pick-me-ups ready when you notice overwhelm (a Stevie Wonder dance party, a special voicemail message, or read a love-note or letter from a dear friend). What never fails to boost your spirits and recenter you?

## Tip #6: Build a circle of powerful, supportive women around you.

Who are the women in your life that cheer you on and champion you? How do you ensure that you regularly tap their support and energy?

- Find ways to weave supportive, powerful women into your life in your regular schedule - find a workout partner, writing buddy, or goal setting accountability partner. Weekly or monthly rituals with your "home team" can give fuel and strength.
- Join existing women's professional or coaching groups. (Women Leaders Emerging is kicking off in September!)
- Re-align your relationships so that you phase out energy-drainers and surround yourself with positive energizers.
- Find an ally at work. Similar to identifying mentors, think about whom in your workplace might serve as a strategic ally. How might you deepen that relationship and tap into that support? We all need peers and allies who support and champion us.

