**INSPIRATIONAL SPEECH**

**FOR**

**TAMMY NOLL**

Hello everyone, I am Tammy Noll and it is a great pleasure for me to have the opportunity to speak with all of you today. I always appreciate the chance to travel the world, meet new people and discover new perspectives when thinking of challenges and issues that need to be addressed and resolved… I a always eager to practice maintaining an open mind and learning something new… and let’s face it- whether we find ourselves in school situations, or those in the business world, I think we would all have to agree that every phase of life is all about discovery, creative problem solving and getting in touch with who we are and what is true for us, deep down inside!! As the world evolves and trends in technology and communication evolve with it, it seems like more and more information hits us at increasingly faster rates of speed. It seems like it is getting more difficult to concentrate and more challenging to have the time to devote to identifying and thinking about the really important things in life. Sometimes we just need to have the time to gather together, listen to what professionals have to say, and reconnect with your own personal passion.

As young women either embarking on careers in the workforce, or as more experienced professionals looking for a niche in which to create the greatest impact in the business world, it can be difficult to know what information to trust, who to listen to, and how to proceed with one’s life and with making a meaningful contribution professionally. It’s hard to find your voice and make a declaration of your self-confidence and intentions in life and business, but today there’s an opportunity for me to share my story so you can understand that even though it is tempting to sometimes step back and let others do the big jobs, we **do** have the strength to lead the world and we must find the way to appreciate all of our talents, chances, and blessings. Regardless of where our paths lead us in life or where we find our space to take a stand, we must not lose touch with the humanity of our own unique journeys. We had and **have** determination, curiosity and drive built into our DNA. Where did that lead us? Do we really believe that we were destined for success? Does anyone think the same goals would have been achieved if we didn’t work as hard as we did? This conference is a special arena filled with talented, accomplished leaders from around the world…. a very unique group indeed, yet we cannot take anything for granted. We cannot rest on our laurels. We cannot “judge a book by its cover” meaning that we can’t look at someone or some situation superficially- there is more to life than what we see right in front of us. We must always remember to dig deeper to broaden our scope of knowledge and experience in everything we do. Most answers to the mysteries of life are usually right in front of us… we just need to know where and how to look. That takes acknowledging who we are, believing in our own strength and potential, and always remembering where we came from and how we can contribute our own unique talents to any given situation.

We cannot assume that circumstances will work out as people think they might. Complacency is not an option. We must be vigilant and resourceful and have the ingenuity to think of alternate solutions to challenges. And most of all it is important to ask questions in order to get to know yourself and the world around you. As young women who are about to inherit the future, it’s time to discover your potential power in the world. It’s time to really get to work and commit to investing in the future. Mahatma Gandhi said, “Be the change you want to see in the world.” That means that if you think something needs change, it’s up to **YOU** to find the way to make it happen- even if at first it takes small steps. You may think you’re only one person in this big, vast planet, but now more than ever, each one of you has the potential for greatness. You just have to find the starting point and place one foot in front of the other to forge your path. And while on that path keep your eyes open for clues and connections.

You see me, standing here in front of you… I’m an executive at GE, world traveler, someone who is responsible for... as we say in business, “a lot of moving parts.” But I have to tell you that when I was a young girl, your age and even younger, growing up in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ I would never even have been able to imagine being in a place like this today…. but something inside me kept speaking to me… encouraging me… keeping me hungry for knowledge and thirsty for experience, pushing me on to reach further than my circumstances… you see, I grew up with practically nothing… impoverished… some of you may remember when you were younger having been upset that you didn’t have the newest technology or any resources that you thought were as critical to living life as breathing… well imagine this… my family didn’t even have a phone… we didn’t have a car…. we lacked so many of the things our friends and neighbors took for granted… but the **ONE** thing I had was a belief in myself and the drive to do what was needed in order to achieve my goals. We all have moments… times…. maybe weeks and months, when we think that we couldn’t possibly reach the goals we think seem impossible. You may have imagined at times that you’ll never be smart enough or fast enough or resourceful enough to make a difference in the world. If you think you will get agreement from me for those thoughts, you came to the wrong place!! I am living proof that **NO ONE** has to be a prisoner of her circumstances in life. I was determined to make something of my life- to find the way to contribute to the world and to give back to my family and my community. I was and still am, determined to support young women to realizing their own inner… and **outer**… greatness. My determination really took me places…I was the first person in my family to go to college. I was probably the first person in my family to get on a plane (**Is this true? You can always say “one of the first people in my family”**). The first time I was ever on a plane was early on in my career when I had to travel on a business trip!!! Imagine being nervous enough to wonder if you can get the job done… But then you have to get there first!! On a plane you’ve NEVER been on!!! (**Say that with emphasis and wait for the laugh**). That blessing of determination got me all the way to here…. and you know what? **YOUR** determination and belief in yourselves got you to this same place- right here, right now…. Isn’t that great???

I’m proud to say that my curiosity and focus took me many places in my career… Since that first trip I’ve traveled to over twenty-five countries throughout the world working with dozens of clients to see what can be done to support their healthcare needs. I launched my first global product in Africa in an effort to improve conditions and promote safe surgical procedures. That was in (**name the year**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Can you imagine how many lives have been saved thanks to the outreach we achieved by that product launch? … Wait until I give you an idea of the conditions and challenges we faced! I would like to think that I was a part of that product’s success. Can you imagine what life would have been like if I didn’t trust myself to take that first plane trip for work? And that’s just one example. I dedicate almost 25% of my year to traveling all over the world-from Israel to Sweden to China… I have had an incredible career. The chance to work with different cultures and people has been one of the greatest gifts of my life. I now work on multi-million dollar transactions, but I am still that same person that had that persistent dream to learn, to grow, to discover the world and find where I could make a positive impact in the lives of others.

Of course it was thanks to my mother’s inspiration and my family’s love and support that I found that inner strength to look further than my circumstances and I take that love and support with me wherever I go. Whether it’s a small town in Sweden or a village in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**name a country in Africa that you visit**), I take my family’s encouragement and spirit with me. (**Adjust this based on where you are delivering the speech**).

Over the course of anyone’s career there are cycles that form the wheel of achievement: In simple terms it can be known as “Be. Do. Have.” This means that first there is a concept, an idea, an inspiration. Then one has to think of a plan…. “What needs to happen in order for this goal to be accomplished? Identify the infrastructure. What are the tools, lessons, support systems, and budgets needed to get the job done? **What am I forgetting**? … That’s definitely part of this phase!! (**Wait for the laugh**). Of course the third part is completion. These three steps can be applied to any concept and whether it’s a personal goal, an educational issue, or a business project, it is more effective to break down a concept in order to implement the steps to reach success. In the process of working towards our goals we learn to do research, question the points we don’t understand, and most of all, we must always remember to be adaptable. Be prepared. Life and business are fluid and organic entities. By that I mean **EVERYTHING** is **CONSTANTLY** changing and in order to be successful we must learn to **embrace change**. Especially with modern day technology it is clear in every facet of our daily existence that information travels **REALLY FAST**. I am not certain who first said the phrase, “Adapt or Die” but it is a valuable mantra to keep with you at all times. As we have to adapt to change we also have to be prepared to adapt to new ways of learning and thinking. Technology will play bigger and bigger rolls in our lives for the foreseeable future and it’s really important to be open to learning new lessons every day.

Can you imagine what it was like for me, a poor girl from a marginal community to keep grounded while working diligently to make an impact in the business world? But somehow I believed in myself and in my ability to adapt and succeed in just about any given situation. When you think about it, the tools and personal confidence that are needed to build skyscrapers are the same forces of energy that are needed to motivate you to do **ANYTHING**. Once you have the personal technology and knowledge of how to access that spirit and those tools within **YOU**, you will be **UNSTOPPABLE!**! And imagine the partnerships you will have with your fellow students of life, friends, workers, family and community if you were to share the mechanics of achieving success. Imagine the global impact of a world in which young women from all over have the confidence to believe in themselves and their worth and contribution!! Talk about a critical mass! The world has not yet seen the true force of Girl Power!

As I think back on the steps I took in my development from challenged schoolgirl to determined student to eager employee to executive in a multinational conglomerate, I can think of some examples that will illustrate the steps that needed to be taken in order to achieve the required objective. I think that as I explain the process of conceptualization, research and development, and production, marketing, product placement, and distribution and how we all interacted to get the job done, you will get a clearer picture of the technology required to create, produce, and have results. (**Do you want to add little bits of your personal process in the below project explanations? If so let me know** **some details**)

1. Doing a business development acquisition in Sweden and Israel and the challenges and success.
2. Developing and launching a value anesthesia machine in Africa
3. Implementing a singular purchasing tool globally to buy pencils, contract resources, marketing studies, etc (**Do you want to keep this in? If so, please provide a little info and I will add a paragraph after Africa’s value machine**)

• Big GE acquired two small companies in Sweden and Israel and working on this transaction was a valuable and informative experience.  Each company was valued at under $50 million dollars and a little over 100 employees.  We acquired these companies to expand our product portfolio in ventilation. I was asked to be the integration leader.  I have never done a role like this before.  The role required me to integrate, or blend and assimilate everything within the company to GE systems and interface.  We literally had to take existing corporate cultures and work on every detail of business to preserve and improve functionality and efficiency on all levels. The first company we acquired was in Israel.  I had never been to Israel and didn't really understand the culture.  I soon found myself on my way there to meet the people - I was scared about the prospect of going to Israel - everything in the media is negative about the country, but found once I arrived that it was one of the safest places I've ever been.  Remember when I said earlier, “Don’t accept superficiality? Don’t settle for face value?” This is a perfect example of how NOT to take anything for granted. It’s so important not to assume…because as I explored and observed the set up of the company, its culture and its environment, I got to meet the people…. all **great** people, but I still worried about the prospect of working with them as we faced the potentially daunting process of joining big GE - would we have to cut people? How would logistics work to be located remotely with big GE? What would this affiliation ultimately mean for their company as a newly formed entity within GE?  I was also worried about the integration process. In this role I had to integrate everything from employee HR contracts to sales distribution agreements and product roadmaps, all the while finding a way to advocate for GE while respecting the corporate culture that had already been established.  Prior to this, most of my experience was in operations, but it was a great opportunity to learn sales, product development, HR.  Any change we made impacted how the employees felt about GE and if they were going to stay through the process - they liked their existing HR contracts, existing distributors.  How does one integrate while acknowledging the current culture? How do we keep what works while encourage the necessity of the new? They were excited about what GE would bring, but had their own personal attachments to their company’s existing processes.  Also any change we made needed to be considered carefully so we wouldn't negatively impact the company’s performance - we still needed to deliver on the financials.  Growing pains on the road to progress are expected. Negative results are not part of the goal! I had to use my experience in being willing to try something new, learn something new, listening, learning, etc.  I spent 50% of my time in Israel and 50% of my time in the US. It was important for me to be present, to know the employees, live the product and processes.  I also learned that the Israeli culture is very religious - not willing to compromise on that and that the people can be very argumentative… wait, that sounds a little negative… let’s say instead that the people were “steadfast in upholding their principles” (**And wait for the laugh**).  It's good to debate, but some of the things would go on and on.  I remember debating about brand - whose brand was stronger, GE or this small company? It seemed crazy, but it speaks to their culture to observe the staunch concepts and viewpoints the employees were devoted to maintain. They were always fighting for themselves and for their country.  I took what I learned from the Israeli experience and did the same with the company we acquired in Sweden.  I knew the integration role better, but still needed to learn the culture.  I couldn't take that for granted. The consistent theme that I noticed throughout the whole Israeli process as well as the Sweden project process was eerily similar to the challenges I faced growing up and in my early career, and that is, Change is scary, Change is challenging, and ultimately change is all we have in our lives. I am no different standing before all of you brilliant women here in Helsinki than I was trying to figure out how to overcome the obstacles of my youth. I am the same person that took my first flight to Florida…. to a strange business meeting. I may have been young and inexperienced but the excitement and adrenalin rush inspired by hurling myself into the unknown is the best fuel for self-motivation!

• Another project that had a great impact on the way I view life and approach business challenges was when I was called in to work on developing and launching a value anesthesia machine for Africa.

Five years ago, I was asked to run our value business and develop a value anesthesia machine, or in other words, how do we bring multi million dollar technology and positive effect to economically challenged areas of the world… where it is probably needed most? How do we develop and integrate value technology where none or barely anything existed before? What infrastructure is needed to support the functioning of the equipment? What natural and human resources are available for effective maintenance and running of the machinery? Let’s face it- the most marvelous and sophisticated equipment is just a pile of nuts and bolts without qualified human interaction. And don’t even think about robotics…. yet!! Hopefully that will be in the not too distant future, but for these projects we had to tackle the issues in real time. How long would it take to be up and running and how many lives hang in the balance while we identify and address the learning curve?  To know what the market needed, I needed to travel to places in the world that needed this product.  All of these locales were new and undiscovered to me; they were all places I've never been.  I was very familiar with what premium markets needed, like Europe, US, Australia, but never really got the value needs.  In the past, we'd simply take the premium products and defeature them … or strip them down and “insinuate” them into the value market.  But sometimes those features we cut were more needed in a value space, than in a premium space.  Understanding all of this, I traveled to Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Philippines, Thailand, Russia and India to learn more about each region, its needs and literally how to build a better, more efficient, more proactive “mousetrap.”.  I remember planning my trip to Africa and being scared about the country and my health and safety.  I worried about mosquitoes and malaria.  Worried about seeing poverty.  But at the same time, I knew that I needed to go, because I was going to help improve healthcare for them.  Delivering anesthesia happens in the hospital, in the operating room.  Most of us that have had surgery understand that we are given medicine to put us to sleep and are then hooked up to a machine to breathe for us.  All along the way, there is an anesthesiologist by our side to deliver the medicine and monitor our health.  Most people that go into surgery don't remember anything and all goes well.  That is what I had in mind for premium, but was unsure of the needs I'd find in value markets, like Africa.  On my first trip to Uganda, I learned that there are over **40 million people** and only **20 anesthesiologists**.  **TWENTY!**! I find that mind-blowing! Compared to Wisconsin, where I’m from, we have **6 million people** and **over 600 anesthesiologists**. **Wow, that's a difference**.  Nurses or general doctors deliver most of the care.  I needed to keep the skill level in mind when designing this new machine.  I was most shocked when I visited my first operating rooms in Uganda, to find that there were small, dirty rooms, the patients typically walk in themselves and the anesthesia that is delivered is all manual.  There’s very limited machine support.  That means that to help the patient breathe, breath by breath, the doctor or nurse needed to squeeze a bag, breath by breath…. for every patient that needed attention. Remember the statistics…. 40 million people… 20 anesthesiologists. Some may call that a growth opportunity… **I call it a crisis!!** (**If you want to emphasize this, see if it works and if appropriate, wait for the laugh**)   I met nurses and doctors that would do that manual breathing support for 3+ hours at a time.  One doctor said he would wake up at night sometimes thinking he forgot to squeeze the bag.  The needs in this market are very basic and I knew we could help them while we also worked to improve safe surgery.  My challenges here were learning about a value market, feeling comfortable going to another foreign country and then when I came back home to develop the right product. Once again, I was that young rogue en route to Florida, in that plane for the first time, but I knew innately that with faith in my abilities and with my enthusiasm to effect positive change, we would make a much needed contribution in that region as well. (**Give some statistics about the growth of the value machine project in Africa**). The program I describe was initiated in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. It took \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ years to get the systems up and running. It is now \_\_\_\_\_\_ years later and we’ve administered care to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ patients. In the same time frame in previous years, prior to GE’s participation, the hospital was only able to attend to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ patients. All of these projects are a work in process and each one serves as a model for future plans. The work we do informs the future and the lessons we learn feed the progression of improving healthcare and saving lives.

I also want to say that probably the best teacher in life is travel. By living among and learning from different cultures throughout the world, we have the potential to receive unparalleled insights and appreciation for the lives we have, and to experience compassion and a sense of community even half a world and lifetimes away from what we’ve grown up with is an eye opening and supremely gratifying gift.

As you can see I go back to the well frequently… in life and in my professional career. Many years ago the British filmmaker Michael Apted created a documentary for the BBC in England. It was called “7 Up.” The principle was to show a day in the lives of a selection of English school children, all seven years of age. Half the group was from privileged backgrounds while the other half came from working class environments. Apted based his story on the maxim, “Give me the child until he is seven years old and I will show you the man.” Apted subsequently revisits and documents the children every seven years. 56 Up debuted in England in 2012. I find the concept fascinating and highly relatable. I see so much of me as a young girl in the eager anticipation I experience while setting off on a new project, a foreign country, an unknown challenge. It’s the same young girl that got on that plane to go to Florida for that first business meeting, and it’s that same little girl that is attempting to move mountains in remote areas of the globe, while finding the means to provide health care systems for those that need them the most.

I am not that unique, but I am **determined**. Each one of **YOU** has that same drive and that voice within you that encourages you. I invite you to keep listening to it. It got you here today. Each one of you young women is at the point in your lives where you will begin to see that the world offers choices… I encourage you to find your inner curiosity in order to distinguish where your unique strengths may lie. I encourage you to **pay attention**. Maintain a vantage point wherein you can see the macro and the micro. Remember to step back and absorb the big picture- whatever it may be, but don’t take your eye off the details. There are lessons to be learned **EVERYWHERE**. It’s invigorating to embrace change and accept the gauntlet of challenge. That’s where your own personal growth will be discovered. Every one of us has her own special mountains to climb…. but it is up to us to turn those mountains into opportunities… like you’ve done with your lives to get you to this point. A long time ago Helen Keller said, “Life is either a daring adventure or it is nothing.” I want you all to know that I know for each one of you that “nothing” is **not an option**. You have already shown the world your potential and it’s wonderful!! **Believe in yourselves**. Believe in the strength of your curiosity. Keep being interested… this world is a fascinating place… there’s so much to see and to learn… and on behalf of GE, we want to thank you for reminding us how exciting discovery, sharing knowledge and believing in yourself can be! Thank you all!