**BUSINESS SPEECH**

**FOR**

**AMIE CABAN**

Hello everyone and thank you for being here and thank you to this wonderful organization for providing the opportunity to come together, share ideas, and find the ways to strengthen and empower our mutual future and that of those that will look to, and learn from, us. (**If there is anyone in particular you would like to acknowledge, do so here**). I would like to express my gratitude to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for extending the invitation to speak with all of you and I am thrilled to be a part of the engine that propels this strategic conversation.

Recently, I saw a post on social media. It was a picture of a simple dial, and unlike the dials we saw on the amplifiers in the movie, “This is Spinal Tap,” this one was not notched from “one to **eleven**”.... as if achieving the ultimate “**TEN**” wasn’t good enough. This particular dial had just two settings.... the left, or weaker side was marked, “Complicit in My Own Dehumanization” and on the right, the “NE PLUS ULTRA,” the full blast side, the crank up the volume side, was marked, “Raging Feminist.” This is **2018**. I want to believe and I intend to support the theory that we have **finally** arrived at a point in our societal development that allows us to shift our focus from having to label and defend ourselves to concentrating on our contributions... our talents, our enthusiasm, our drive, and our unique purpose and mission in life, in order to get the job done. It’s time to focus on the humanity and strengths we all possess in order to work in tandem to encourage and nurture our sisters who will be the leaders of tomorrow...

I think one of the best ways in which we can empower the female leaders of tomorrow is to look back, look around us, and look inside us.... what were the influences that spurred our imaginations when we were younger? What sort of messages got through to **you**? What supported you in defining your purpose and in developing your strengths? When you take a look around in the quest for discovery and inspiration, where **did** you and **do** you look? As women.... as curious, engaged, invested, pioneers with entrepreneurial spirit and tenacity, we have the wherewithal to explore traditional paths and uncharted territory in preparation to finding the next steps to self and group realization.... personally, professionally, and societally.

We have history to remind us of the wisdom of people like Harriet Beecher Stowe, who said, “Women are the real architects of society.” We have contemporaries in other fields, recognized for their excellence in what they do, to discover a glimpse into their process. Meryl Streep reminds us, “I think the best role models for women are people who are fruitfully and confidently **themselves**, who bring light into the world.” And then we have new places to look.... we can find them in younger voices with fresh, contemporary perspectives, and although everyone sitting in this room has accomplished quite a bit, the door is always open to learn something new, from new and exciting vantage points. There is a young street artist named Meg Zany, known for her contribution to a previously male dominated medium. Zany shares her message in spray paint, on walls, in major cities around the world, and in places that will reach the women of tomorrow. Meg’s message is simple, playful, and **powerful**.

* “Courage: (noun) Being yourself in a world that tells you not to.”
* “We are women.

 We are warriors

 by necessary battle

 for personal achievement

 we fight with integrity

 on the field against evil

 surviving with angst

 strive to obstruct hate

 be kind to us

 have compassion for one another.”

* “You are the victim of your own rules.”

Every day we have the opportunity and occasion to learn new language.... **IF** we’re smart.... and I’m going to go out on a limb here and say that everyone in this room lands in that category. Whether it’s expanding into new areas of technology, learning new coding methods, finding more efficient algorithms, implementing new administrative and managerial systems.... or looking to younger generations to learn more about the evolution of society and its patterns, I believe that one important way in which to empower the female leaders of the future is to **listen**. Listen to what they have to say. Be open to suggestions and change. Be supportive and share your wisdom in ways that it will be part of a conversation and not a lecture.

Life is organic. Process is kinetic. To paraphrase P.W. Botha, “Adapt or die.” An integral part of the empowerment process is to demonstrate respect for others no matter who they are and what you may think they do or don’t know. Interact with young colleagues in such a way that empowerment is a **context** and not just an action. Respect is not assumed....it’s earned and it’s demonstrated in everything we do, and it’s imperative that we contribute to young women in such a way that strong and confident foundations are formed and fostered. 2018 is the year for this country’s mid-term elections. Just as a non-partisan statement of fact, I read that less than 14% of eligible young people voted in the 2014 mid-term elections. That low percentage is not just about the election process. It tells us **literally** that young people **don’t necessarily think they count.** That has to change, and it’s up to each one of us to engage our younger female colleagues so that they **DO** have a profound sense that each one makes a tremendous difference.... in every area of life and career.

Respect goes hand in hand with reinforcement of confidence. It’s important to acknowledge unique potential in everyone, especially in young females coming up through the corporate ranks. Priorities in professional life are shifting and the context of workforce itself is changing. In many ways, young people are being conditioned to view themselves as their own “brand.” Now more than ever, with the advent and growth of exposure on social platforms, we find that the medium truly has become the message and our industry builds on that. It’s a challenge for seasoned professionals to know how to portray themselves to an “instant public.” Young women need to be taught how to edit and create their own presentation in order to achieve success in their business as well as personal lives, and while more experienced professionals may not have complete mastery of the ever evolving modern toolbox of branding, we do have the innate intuition and skills to identify what works and doesn’t work when it comes to relating our stories... even in the media driven world.... as pros, we can use our skills to mentor and encourage up and coming leaders to set new and even more effective standards and to envision themselves in a global perspective-in every sense of the word.

We’ve made great strides in staking our claim as females in the workforce and in life. Over the past century we’ve gotten the vote, we’ve gotten to work, we’ve gotten to lead.... but it’s not enough. We have to know the strength of our individual and combined voices and we have to teach our sisters, colleagues, friends, and children to express their potential in every aspect of self expression.

The world in which we live and operate ... and **innovate** is changing, and while in many ways, thanks to technology and our contributions, many aspects are easier and more convenient, there is an obvious mandate for female solidarity and a call to action. We must prepare future generations to be strong enough and agile enough to build a viable future for all.... that starts with **us**. As I mentioned when I began, there still exists extremes.... we have to find our way out of “complicit in my own dehumanization” and discover the tools to take a stand and empower others. Whether that comes by taking steps to greater transparency in the workplace to active mentorship of the young women in our lives and beyond, it is our responsibility to see to it that no young woman feels left out, marginalized, or unchosen.... after all, we have no idea where the next great talent will be discovered.... and there is great potential to be unearthed in every single young woman we meet.

Most importantly, we must practice what we teach and preach. We need to find the means to our own ultimate effectiveness in authenticity, self expression, and creativity. We’re all very busy, but we can’t expect to inspire by rote. We have to “be the change” as Gandhi said. Our willingness to continue our own paths to enlightenment will be what ultimately inspires others to do the same. We already support organizations like Anita [B.org](http://B.org) that provide the impetus to encourage growth in all of us. Here’s to continuing and expanding the conversation and strengthening partnerships and connections that will inspire all of us and impact our future leaders with positivity, strength, and broadened perspective. Thank you all!!