



What If There Was a Different View of What Leadership Looks and Feels Like?

During my two decades as a partner at EY, I had the same meeting so many times.

Like clockwork, a brilliant young woman would request a meeting.

“What can I do for you?” I’d ask.

“I just...I love my job. But I’m having some doubts.”

“Doubts about what?” I’d ask—though I knew.

“Doubts about my future. About the partner track.

I worked for this my entire life. I’m driven. I’m focused.

But I’m just not sure...I’m not sure I want to be a partner.”

My response was always the same.

“Why don’t you tell me about the partner you don’t want to be?

Because I bet I wouldn’t want to be that partner either.”

It didn’t matter how successful and brilliant the young woman was.

She was playing a game that rewarded the dominant white masculine archetype of leadership.

Success in this environment requires molding oneself into the accepted and expected pattern. The effort to bridge this gap can be exhausting and soul-crushing. It can leave even the most talented, ambitious people ambivalent about their futures.

We are still playing “not to lose” as opposed to playing to win.

But what if there was a different view of what leadership looks and feels like?

Metamorphosis is hard work.

But it is time to break free.