



## Harness the Power of a Mentor

Gloria's incredible personal story at the heart of this episode reveals the lasting impact a mentor who intercedes on your behalf can have on the rest of your career. And you also have the power to be that person in someone's life. Gloria offers the broad view of how having and becoming a mentor can strengthen you and the collective strive for women's empowerment.

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Gloria Feldt: Hello, and welcome to Power to You. I'm Gloria Feldt. I've spent my entire career advancing women's rights and equality in health, education, Corporate America, politics, and every other area from the boardroom to the bedroom. I'm so proud to have co-founded [Take the Lead](#), which prepares and propels women with training and coaching in how to harness your incredible power in your professional lives.

Like I always say, nobody gets there alone. So, what about Shakira and J.Lo's incredible halftime performance during the Super Bowl? I mean, aside from the fact that it was brilliant staging, costuming, and that Puerto Rican flag coat will go down in history for its outrageousness and political message, the message of the power of sisterhood came through as clearly as their sparkly gold and silver costumes. Does anybody remember the song we sang in Girl Scouts, make new friends but keep the old, one is silver and the other gold?

Well, believe it or not, that's what I was thinking about while I was watching those two gorgeous women shaking their booties together at the end of the performance. One was silver and the other gold. And to top it off, the incredible performance by J.Lo's daughter. Everything about this powerful show spoke to what I call #sistercourage. The fact that we need each other as mentors and sponsors to be our own best selves.

Sometimes that power of mentorship comes unexpectedly. My first boss, Mildred Chaffin, was director of the Head Start Program where I taught for five years. She wasn't overtly nurturing or sisterly. In fact, she was really hard to get along with. A crusty, crotchety, retired journalist. But she not only tapped me to take on roles that I would never have had the vision to ask for, but also, unasked, wrote a recommendation for me, literally on her deathbed.

I had heard that Mildred was terminally ill, so I went to visit her in the hospital. As I was leaving, she called me back and handed me a sealed envelope. When I got home, I opened it to find she had written a letter of recommendation. I broke into tears. At that moment, I was back in college working toward my teaching degree. I

had no idea how important that touching act of generosity would become very soon.

Because that Head Start position had been the only full-time professional job I had ever held, her one powerful recommendation was the only one I had. It was essential to securing my first executive director position, that in turn led me to the next four decades as a CEO, including being the national president of Planned Parenthood. It's a role for which, as it turns out, I'm well suited, but I would never have known it if that one person in a similar position hadn't seen leadership qualities in me that I couldn't see for myself. Because after all, I had never seen it among the women in my family, and only rarely in the culture at large. Mildred's example motivates me to write endorsements for people who request them from me, and yes, sometimes without being asked. To mentor and sponsor others routinely is just part of my life.

My board chair, Dr. Nancy O'Reilly, has a new campaign called Lift Women Up, taking off from her newest book, called In This Together. Her book has thoughts, advice, and stories from 40 successful women across a variety of careers, along with action plans on how all women can work together to break free from the binds of gender inequality and overcome gender bias.

When women support one another, we can create massive ripples of change that create better lives for everyone. This change begins when together we lift women up. When we mentor other women. When we sponsor other women. When we share. When we use the principle of sister courage. That's oh so true, so let's do it. Just channel J.Lo and Shakira and shake it up for #sistercourage.

Practice your power this week by doing these things: First of all, sign up for Lift Women Up, and when you do, be sure to check the box to receive Take the Lead's newsletter to keep up with the many ways we can help you lift women up, so that we can all take the lead together. Secondly, do one act of unmasked mentorship every month. And third, join one of Take the Lead's 50 Women Can Change the World cohorts to give and get sister courage.

Until next week, Power to You.

Power to You is produced by Lantigua Williams & Co. Cedric Wilson is our sound designer. Emma Forbes is our assistant producer. For more about my work, please visit [gloriafeldt.com](http://gloriafeldt.com), and follow me on social media @gloriafeldt. To learn about Take the Lead and our courses and coaching services, go to [taketheleadwomen.com](http://taketheleadwomen.com), and follow us on social media. You can also send me comments about the show and questions on leadership and power to [powertoyou@taketheleadwomen.com](mailto:powertoyou@taketheleadwomen.com). I might even use them on future episodes. Be sure to subscribe or follow on your favorite listening app, and please leave a review on Apple Podcasts, as those really help us know what you like about the show. Thanks.

**CITATION:**

Feldt, Gloria, host. "*Harness the Power of a Mentor.*" *Power to You, Take the Lead Women*, March 24, 2020. <https://www.taketheleadwomen.com/podcast>

Produced by:

