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### **“Take The Lead” Initiative Launches with Goal to Propel Women to Full Leadership Parity by 2025**

Women’s advocate and *NY Times* best-selling author [Gloria Feldt](#) and former investment banker [Amy Litzenberger](#) have launched the first comprehensive initiative to prepare and propel women to half of all top leadership positions by 2025. Core to the Take The Lead strategy will be supporting women in examining their own relationship with power and a focus on movement building.



Feldt wrote *No Excuses: 9 Ways Women Can Change How We Think About Power* after observing that the problem today is no longer that doors aren’t open to women, but that women aren’t walking through those doors with sufficient intention and numbers. “Women are poised to assume leadership positions at unprecedented rates now *if they seize the moment*. They earn 57% of college degrees, and [companies with more women in upper leadership make more money](#). But at the rate women are ascending in the workplace and in politics, *it will take another 70 years before we reach parity*,” Feldt says. “That’s too slow. We’re committed to getting there by 2025. You have to put a stake in the ground. You have to count up or it doesn’t happen.”

A life-long activist, former President and CEO of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, and someone who has studied how social movements succeed, Feldt says, “It’s time to change the narrative from one of problems to solutions, work together, and invite men to join the movement in order to change organizations as well as adapting to systems that are no longer functional for men or women.”

Having identified four keys to parity ([Teach](#), [Present](#), [Connect](#), and [Drive Change](#)), Take The Lead will provide strategically reinforcing pathways for women to build their leadership skills, connect with each other, and learn from women leaders and visionaries.

For Litzenberger, who had a successful career as an investment banker before taking

time off to raise her children, Take The Lead is an intentional second act. On women's leadership development she says: "There's always a little of this and that. I realized something substantial needed to be done." Having seen pay differences and gender dynamics in the financial industry first-hand, Litzenberger says one of Take The Lead's goals will also be making productivity, not hours spent at the office, the measure of a woman's worth in the workplace.

Take The Lead launched its [website and blog "The Movement"](#) at [taketheleadwomen.com](http://taketheleadwomen.com) in March 2013 and will launch an [online women's leadership certificate course titled "9 Practical Leadership Power Tools to Advance Your Career"](#). Later this year, a digital platform will synthesize these features with mentoring capabilities, learning programs, and role model presentations.

Feldt serves as Take The Lead president and Litzenberger is board chair.

The team just welcomed [Loretta McCarthy, managing director of Golden Seeds, Amy Hillman, dean of the W.P. Carey School of Business at Arizona State University and Lily McNair, provost at Wagner College](#) to the board and has established partnerships with three universities so far: Arizona State University, Vassar College, and Wagner College. [Feldt has penned a column for CNN](#) to show support for [Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg](#) (and partner organization [LeanIn.org](#)) and outline the work ahead.

Supporters include Sandberg and [Jacki Zehner](#), CEO of Women Moving Millions. Says Zehner: "There is so much talk about investing in women and girls... That is so true and good, but we also need to make a huge investment in women's leadership. The percentage of women in leadership positions in business, politics, and more have not budged in 10 years. It is time for a strategic intervention. It is time for TAKE THE LEAD."

Take The Lead is currently accepting donations and partnership proposals.

[Read Take The Lead's first white paper: "Leadership Fictions: Gender, Leadership, and the Media"](#).

[Read Gloria Feldt's Lean In story.](#)

Interested persons can learn more about and [sign up for the online leadership course titled "9 Practical Leadership Power Tools to Advance Your Career"](#).

Connect with Take The Lead on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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