

## NOBLE LEADER EDITORIAL

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## TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR EXPERIENCE IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE?

One of my earliest memories of leadership was in my Kindergarten class when I was responsible for leading my class to recess in the courtyard - running a count down and ensuring everyone was accounted for in our 30 minutes of capture the flag. Fast forward to middle school, I was the first to put my hand up for public speaking, was eager to be the teacher's assistant, and ensured that no one ever ate lunch alone. My first formal leadership training was when I worked at Earl's - I worked my way up from a hostess to server, bartender, and then on the management team. When I started my first business in 2012, and hired my first employee - I recognized that I had a lifetime of experience behind me already. Over the last decade running my three businesses, coaching, consulting and leading teams of up to 20 people, I have committed to being a people-first heart-centric leader. The way I see it; leadership is not what you find in the pages of a book, or in the best practices manual, or any 7-step program. Leadership is showing up as my most authentic self, trusting the wisdom within, listening to my intuition and approaching challenges from my heart.



## WAS THERE A TIME THAT A LEADER DID SOMETHING “NOBLE” TO SUPPORT YOU? IF SO, WHAT WAS IT AND HOW DID IT IMPACT YOU?

I remember very clearly walking into a co-working space for the first time about a decade ago - I was bright-eyed, audacious and, a little naive. I had just started my business and was up against one of my first business challenges - I had spent a year of my life and 50,000 invested in building a website, and - when I flipped the switch to launch, it didn't work. Devastated and lost feeling like I hadn't even started my business and was already 'out of business' I met Hannah Cree - she saw the look in my eye and took me under her wing guiding me to my next right step. Her noble leadership

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empowered me to get back up and start over. I re-wrote the wireframe for my business and re-built it with a new plan. Her taking the time to support me, a complete stranger, was the reason that I carried on with my vision and didn't quit. That business, Date Night Canada is about to celebrate its 10 year birthday and has now expanded across the country. Hanna has played a role in my entrepreneurial journey over all three of my businesses - I hired her a few years later to be my resident 'Startup Mom' supporting with operations for my team and business Branded Magazine. And when I expanded The ACE Collective into a cross country brunch and conference, you better believe she was there - as a speaker at one of the branches and as a volunteer at our first conference.

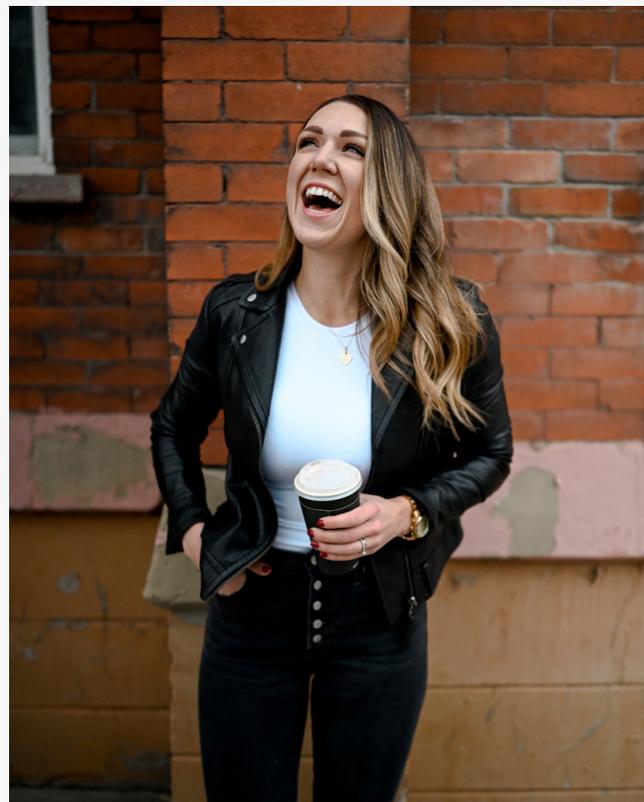
## WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES A "NOBLE LEADER"?

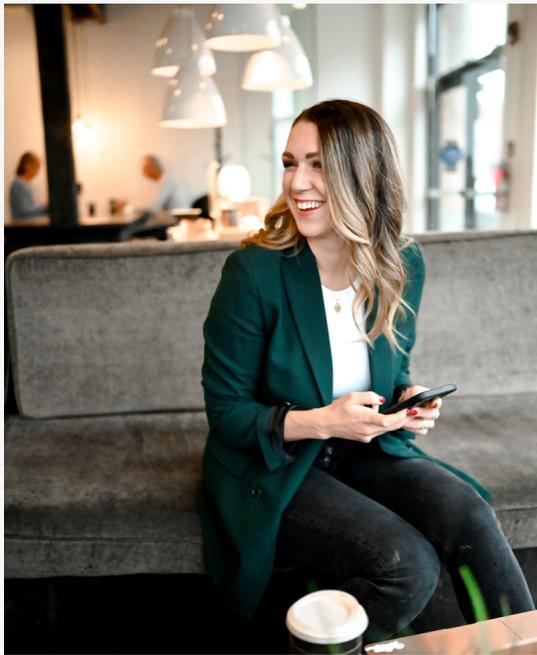
Noble leadership is about leading with heart, caring for others, supporting others, guiding others, and knowing that the needs of others are met while encouraging them to bring out their best. Noble leadership is built on integrity, strong values and inspires others through demonstrated leadership and care. A leader with a noble heart gives us a noble sense of encouragement. Leadership is unique to all of us - leaning into your truest version of yourself I believe will allow you to show up in your authentic leadership.

## IF YOU COULD GIVE A LEADER A TOOL OR STRATEGY THAT'S HELPED YOU ALONG THE WAY, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

I've learned that one of the most powerful tools for leadership is in ritualizing mindful routines such as

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## WHERE CAN READERS FIND YOU?

Connect with me directly on Instagram at @mandybalak or find out more about The ACE Collective's membership, leadership programs, and retreats at [www.theacecollective.com](http://www.theacecollective.com)

meditation, writing, yoga, and movement - these tools help to cultivate inner peace which allows me to step into discomfort with calm, steady confidence.

That and, another important one - The conversations you are avoiding having are the ones that need to be prioritized. If there is a challenge that's on your mind, name it and address it as soon as possible. Building a culture of empowerment that puts people first is so important to create transparent communication and speak to challenges as they occur. Early on, I avoided tough conversations and learned that this built-up tension, resentment, and miscommunication with teams and didn't offer space for people to grow. Now, a 15-minute conversation can not only keep things healthy but can offer the opportunity for both the employee and the leader to learn from each other and connect in a more meaningful way.

