



## Women and Leadership: Real Lives, Real Lessons

**Julia Gillard**

**Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala**

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Julia Gillard and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala's *Women and Leadership* takes a global look at women in places of power.

The book examines the lives of eight prominent leaders from a variety of countries and continents, including Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, Michelle Bachelet of Chile, and Jacinda Ardern of New Zealand. Longtime friends Gillard and Okonjo-Iweala, who are international leaders from Australia and Nigeria, began talking about the vital role of women in leadership in the wake of Hillary Rodham Clinton's 2016 loss (Clinton is one of the women featured in the book). Their conversation led them to posit eight hypotheses about women and leadership; these form the backbone of the book. Each hypothesis addresses a pertinent topic, including hair and clothes, motherhood, and the seemingly inevitable b-word, and is examined through the lived experiences of the women they interviewed.

The authors leverage their positions for unprecedented access to powerful women, and they offer their own stories with humility and clear eyes. Their posture in the book is the perfect portrayal of women eschewing competition to support other women—one of the most vital themes examined in the book. Every page brims with admiration and respect for women in leadership, the difficulties they face, and the diverse gifts they offer.

Despite the grim statistics about how few world leaders are women, the book is hopeful and encouraging. It showcases the resilience and determination of women leaders and the impact they have, bringing wisdom from a variety of disciplines, including neuroscience, psychology, and economics, to bear. Its ending calls out specific lessons for men, too, calling them to a supportive role for women leaders.

*Women and Leadership* is an examination of the lived experiences of women in political and economic leadership.

MELISSA WUSKE (March / April 2021)

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