

The Power Trip

Lynne Johnson-Harris, LVT, RVT | Editor in Chief



Recently, a story on a television morning show caught my attention. The premise of the story was that women own about one-third of the businesses in the world; however, the percentage of those at the “top” of a corporation (e.g., CEO, COO) is much lower.

Why did this story catch my attention? Veterinary technicians in leadership roles—whether male or female—probably fit the same profile.

A leading fashion magazine brought 200 top female leaders—representing industries from fashion to technology—to its Power Trip Summit to share their secrets to success. Below are a few of the insights I found particularly relevant to our profession.

Follow your passion. Whatever it is in your life that makes you want to lead, follow it. Lead, and don't be afraid to fail.

Veterinary technicians have a true passion for what we do. With that passion, we can become great leaders. Many times, however, we are afraid to follow our passion because we are afraid to fall down. **It's okay to fall.** Just get up, and shake it off. There are so many opportunities in our chosen career to lead with passion. It might be in management, or in obtaining a VTS, or advocating for animals in your own community.

It's also okay for your passions to change over time. Following your passion and becoming a leader go hand in hand.

Dare to be the first. Just do it! For example, if you see that your practice needs a good client education program, be the one to develop and implement it. (If you need an inspirational role model for developing initiatives, read Esther Klok's “What Moves You?” column starting on page 56.) Or maybe you want to be the first to become a

VTS in your working group. My election as the president of the NAVC Board in 2013 was a first not only for me, but also for the NAVC. Up to then, the president of the board had always been a veterinarian.

Delegate and empower. As a leader, when you give others responsibilities that allow them to shine and lead, you empower them. Delegation of responsibilities enables those around you to show off their talents, helps build their confidence, and ultimately lets them follow their passion and, perhaps, become a “first.”

If you stumble, consider it a “power trip”—an opportunity to help make you stronger, more passionate about what drives you, and a better leader.

Be hopeful for the future. You can't be a good leader without faith in where you are going and why you are going there. Myself, I am hopeful for the future of the veterinary technician profession. We are in for some change as our leaders in NAVTA actively work on our behalf to protect our title and strive for national credentialing. It will be challenging; however, I am hopeful they will succeed. Become a local leader and get involved in the campaign to gain recognition for who we are and what we do. Visit the NAVTA website (navta.net) and read the position statement on the term “veterinary nurse” for more information.

And remember: no one said it was easy. It's okay to fall, fail, and feel fear. Chances are very good that, at some point, you will. So if you stumble, consider it a “power trip”—an opportunity to help make you stronger, more passionate about what drives you, and a better leader. ■

Do you have a story you'd like to share? Write me at ljohnson@navc.com.