



Dare to Be Different

Elaine Welteroth

Elaine Welteroth was the first African-American to be a beauty editor for Condé Nast by age 25 and editor-in-chief (of *Teen Vogue*) by age 29. Under her leadership, *Teen Vogue* expanded from covering just teen fashion to topics like social justice and politics, as well as cultivating a more diverse staff.

4 Ways to Leverage Your Differences

- 1. Use the value of your perspective.** “I knew my perspective was valuable and needed, and I could open the door for other people who could come in and shake things up with me,” Elaine shared at Leadercast Women 2019. “It took courage to throw out the formulas and try something different.”
- 2. Let your authentic self shine.** For Elaine, she quickly learned that her uniqueness was what would make her special in the workplace. “I found it crucial to bring my authentic self.” Most notably, she embraced her feminine traits as a leader. Elaine strongly stated that women should stop trying to lead the way men do and instead rely on their natural instincts.
- 3. Self care is a must.** Looking back, Elaine noted that her old mantra of “Bite off more than you can chew and chew as fast as you can” didn’t serve her well. She said that she felt burnout early in her career. “There is no glory in a grind that grinds you down,” Elaine commented, reminding the audience that it’s important for leaders to feed themselves as well as those they lead.
- 4. Don’t shrink. Expand.** Overall, Elaine implored the audience to remember their curious and confident nine-year-old selves. “We’re born with an unbridled sense of confidence, but the world beats us out of it,” she said. She challenged the room, “when the world tells you to shrink, expand.”