

## impact executives

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**“...Life may be full of obstacles,  
but it is the mountain within  
that most often needs to be  
conquered ...”**

# A Mountain Within

by Herta Von Stiegel

Herta von Stiegel shares the leadership skills she used to lead 28 multinational people including seven disabled people to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro--Africa's highest mountain--and explains how readers can apply them in any business situation. It is a powerful insight into the emotional and physical journey as they take on one of the most feared mountains in the world.

Herta is executive chairman of Ariya Capital Group, a Botswana and London- based private equity firm focusing on sustainable investments in Africa. A US tax lawyer she has held senior positions at Citibank, JP Morgan and was former managing director at AIG Financial Products. Herta chairs the Prince's Trust Women's Leadership Group and is a member of the Women's Leadership Board of Harvard University's Kennedy School.

Each chapter begins with an overview of the adventure unfolding, followed by a leadership lesson covering key challenges that face leaders today, internally and externally. These lessons are as applicable in the world of business as they are in the mountains. Each chapter consists of a conversation with a global business or political leader who embodies the lessons offered in the chapter.

This book shows how difficulties can be overcome by weaving specific lessons from leaders into a real life story of overcoming personal fears and limitations on the slopes of Kilimanjaro. Described as 'a book for our time' it offers hope for the future when so much that the West has taken for granted has been shown to be wanting.

"This book is about leadership. It is about a new brand of business and political leaders who can overcome challenges and exhibit innovation, creativity, and courage to tackle obstacles as they arise." The Mountain Within - which bears the name of Herta's award-winning documentary - tells the emotionally charged story of the climb. The narrative reveals several invaluable lessons for today's business leaders:

- Ruthlessly prepare
- Use failure as a stepping-stone for success;
- Hang on to your vision;
- Know when it's time to come down from the mountain.

Her conversations are with some of the world's most notable leaders, including: Hon. Al Gore, former Vice President and Nobel Peace Prize winner Kay Unger, American fashion designer Sam Chisholm, Australia's leading media executive Botswana President and Christie Hefner, Executive Chairman, Playboy Enterprises and Baroness Patricia Scotland, the United Kingdom's only female Attorney General.

Each of us has a mountain within to conquer on the way to the top, whether that top is a great physical feat or a goal of extraordinary career success.

Each lesson is designed to be directly relevant to your climb in the corporate,

political or academic world. Not to mention directly relevant to the global economic and political challenges we currently face and need to overcome.

So what are the mountains that are inside us all? Leaders featured in this book spoke of one they needed to or had already conquered: vanity, excessive love of self, insecurity, fear of failure, perfectionism to name a few. Each one of them wants to make a difference to 'learn, earn and return' as Mary Wikstrom put it. In conquering the mountain, you conquer yourself.

Some quotations from the book include:

*"Shared vision is an essential element of a highly functional team"*

*"Trust is the glue that makes shared vision possible"*

*"Moral core is what unlocks the energy to give us the feeling that our work together is more important than any of us working individually"*

*"Fostering vision daily and modelling it is the best antidote to an oversized ego"*

The Mountain Within offers a wealth of revelations for any business leader--extraordinary lessons that will help to brave any unexpected challenge, recharge when faced with setbacks, and maintain focus even when the goal seems insurmountable. And by the time the summit comes into view, it is clear that there is nothing to differentiate the climbers with disabilities from the other team members. This amazing journey of the spirit shows us that it is often our hearts and minds rather than our bodies that limit all of us. No matter your challenges or where you are on your climb to the top, this unique work helps you become a resilient leader capable of guiding your team to achieve even the most challenging goal.

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