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The Everyday Leader

## Leading with Creativity and Courage: An Unexpected Encounter with Selina Trepp

Leadership

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is the director of site selection and incentives at Sikich, a leading professional services firm that helps clients achieve their goals across various industries and sectors. She holds the prestigious Counselor of Real Estate (CRE) credential, which recognizes her as one of the top experts in real estate consulting and advisory. With over 20 years of experience in site selection and incentives, Jenny helps companies of all sizes and stages find the best locations and secure the most beneficial incentives for their relocation and expansion projects. She has a proven track record of delivering successful outcomes for clients across technology, aerospace, logistics, life sciences, professional services, advanced manufacturing and agriculture industries. She also contributes to Forbes Business Council as a member and author of articles on site selection and incentives topics. Jenny is passionate about innovation, sustainability, and intercultural communication. She has completed studies in entrepreneurship, psychology, and crowdfunding at the Wharton School and HEC Paris, and has lived and worked in Japan for seven years and is

“I work with what I have” is a powerful philosophy. It encapsulates the idea of resourcefulness, adaptability, and making the most of the available tools, people, and circumstances to achieve desired goals. Every year, I have a personal theme and this year, I am incorporating this one.

Last week, during a business trip to Chicago, I had the privilege of staying at the 21C Museum Hotel, an establishment known for seamlessly blending art and hospitality. As I wandered through the art laden corridors, I stumbled upon an exhibition featuring artwork by Selina Trepp. I was previously unfamiliar with her work, but I firmly believe in the power of synchronicity, and I am certain that this encounter was meant to be.

In a world often dominated by routine and predictability, Selina Trepp stands out as an artist and a leader who embodies the principles of creativity, courage, and improvisation. Her journey in the world of art is a testament to the power of perspective and the transformative impact of embracing the unknown. Her work, characterized by its resourcefulness and adaptability, is an inspiration to me.

A multidisciplinary approach, combining performance, installation, painting, and sculpture, underscores the importance of diversity in problem-solving and creative thinking. She seamlessly integrates different mediums to create intricate setups, resulting in photos, drawings, and animations, showcasing the value of cross-disciplinary collaboration. Leaders should take note of this approach and encourage teams to bring together varied perspectives to drive innovation and tackle complex challenges.

In 2012, Selina Trepp embarked on her ongoing durational performance titled “I work with what I have.” From that point forward, she committed to utilizing only the materials already present in her studio. This mantra resonated deeply with me. It exemplifies our ability to harness existing stuff we have and transform it into something extraordinary. It’s not easy and it takes time and effort. This is a powerful reminder that limitations can be the catalyst for innovation. We should embrace constraints and leverage them as opportunities for creative problem-solving.

In 2020, Trepp initiated a compelling series of paintings aptly named “I’m Thinking About Painting” and includes a work called “Never Alone” (pictured). Within her continually depleting pool of resources, she entrusted ten canvases with her artistic vision. The artist’s ability to transform canvases by continually painting and overpainting them creates a visual narrative that acknowledges their rich history. These layers simultaneously reveal and conceal messages from the past. Top of Form To me, it is a metaphor for the cyclical nature of innovation, where each iteration builds upon the past to create something new and meaningful. Her work encourages me to reflect on the importance of acknowledging the past while pushing forward into the future.



Selina Trepp: *I'm Thinking About Painting*

Learning about Trepp’s journey as an artist was as inspiring as the work itself. A Swiss-American born in 1973, she has dedicated her career to researching economy and improvisation in the world of art. Her commitment to finding a balance between the intuitive and the conceptual struck a chord as I recognize the parallels required in the corporate world.

The artist’s life of adventure, driven by the pursuit of new perspectives, is a shining example of how courage mixed with joy can lead to innovation. Leaders in any field can draw inspiration from a willingness to take risks and embrace the unknown, understanding that great accomplishments often stem from stepping outside of one’s comfort zone.

We, as leaders, should recognize and leverage the strengths of our team members. Effectively, we must recognize that there is no single, ideal template for a team. Instead, we should harness the unique skills, backgrounds, and perspectives of each team member, acknowledging that it is this very diversity that fosters innovation and resilience.

classically trained as an archaeologist. She enjoys beekeeping, sailing and traveling in her spare time.

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The ability to work with what we have, valuing the individual strengths and contributions of our team members, leads to success and growth. It's about empowering and motivating the team to achieve their best with the resources at hand. Leadership can be challenging, and setbacks are inevitable. This philosophy emphasizes resilience and the ability to persevere in the face of adversity. Effective leaders maintain their determination and find new ways to achieve objectives, even when the going gets tough.

Inspiration often lies in unexpected places; we must remain open to these serendipitous moments. The power of the human spirit and its capacity to create something beautiful and meaningful, especially in the face of limitations, is distinct and rewarding. It encourages us all to dare to be different, take risks, and consistently push the boundaries of what is possible in our own leadership journeys.

In essence, "I work with what I have" is a leadership principle that promotes adaptability, creativity, and a proactive approach to achieving goals, even in less-than-ideal conditions. It's about making the most of the present moment and available resources to drive progress and success.

We paint our leadership journey with the colors of collaboration, inspiration, and adaptability. The canvases of our teams hold the stories of our shared history, and it's our role to bring forth the hidden treasures within ourselves and our team members. Through this layered leadership approach, we create a visual masterpiece, a collective expression of our unique capabilities and potential, as we navigate the complex landscapes of working together.

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