

Judy Hoff asked me to speak with you today about being a strong woman, a leader, and what that means. I have a few stories to share about my experiences, some ideas that I can share for you in your lives, and a call for your action, to support you on your journeys.

When I think of strong women, the first person who comes to mind is my Grandma Pat. Grandma Pat worked in a restaurant and then went to work as a labor organizer for the culinary union. This was during an era when women weren't especially respected in the labor movement, so she had to fight to be heard! On my desk at City Hall, I have a photo of Grandma Pat and me with First Lady Rosalynn Carter, taken when I was still just a baby.

I'm not as feisty as Grandma Pat, but I know that I would not be standing here today if it weren't for her. She raised her two daughters to be strong women, and my mom raised me and my sister to believe that we could do anything we wanted. As you participate in this program, I hope that you will reflect on the strong women in your life that have brought you to this place.

Last year, I was honored to begin my term as the first woman to lead Mukilteo as Mayor. I grew up in Mukilteo, and it's truly amazing to now be able to lead our city. My vision for Mukilteo is of a sustainable, well-run city of safe, strong neighborhoods. I believe we are well on our way.

One of the new priorities that I brought to our city was a focus on preventing domestic violence. I know some people believe that domestic violence doesn't happen in our community. In fact, during my campaign I mentioned this topic during a conversation with a voter. The man on the phone had asked about my priorities for public safety and I said I believed we should focus on this issue. His response? Oh, but that doesn't really happen in Mukilteo, does it?

Sadly, our crime reports show that on average, more than one person a week is arrested in domestic violence incidents in our city. That is more than twice as many arrests as we see for DUI, with little attention from the media or public. We must continue to remember the victims and stories behind that statistic, the most vulnerable members of our community. These events can impact anyone- it doesn't matter what your social status

or income is, or where you live- it can happen in any community.

In my first budget, I was proud to include funding for a domestic violence prevention coordinator, and she is now working alongside our police officers, to provide the attention and support that these victims need, ensuring no one falls through the cracks, and doing the follow up that is so important.

In fact, the very first day that our coordinator was at work, she helped support our officers who had an encounter with a victim. The woman came in to the police station the day after an incident. She didn't recognize the seriousness of her situation, and she really needed to be connected with help and services to guide her to a brighter future. Our coordinator was able to be there for her.

That is support for a vulnerable Mukiltean that wouldn't have happened without that initiative that I pushed for. I'm so proud that our police department has more tools to help our residents, and that I have been a part of that. Part of being a strong woman is looking out for those around you that need a voice. Whether it's a

coworker who's too afraid to speak up, or a family member who's in an abusive situation, I challenge each of us to look out for one another and build each other up.

But being a strong woman isn't all rosy. It isn't always easy, and there are plenty of people who can feel threatened when we are strong and confident.

I found that out personally just a few months ago. A really big issue in Mukilteo relates to our large neighbor along the east side of the City: Paine Field Airport. No matter what your opinion on the issue might be, people in Mukilteo are united: We don't want commercial flights out of Paine Field. We believe the airport best serves the area as a place for high wage jobs and general aviation, and we don't want to see it change. We believe air service would impact our quality of life, from noise to air pollution to more traffic, and provide very little benefit.

As Mayor, it's my responsibility to protect my community and defend us. I've stood strong on this issue, and am standing up to a lot of powerful forces: Propeller

Airports, a company that wants to build a terminal, the County Council, and even our federal government. It takes leadership and courage to stand up to them and be the voice that my community deserves, and it's what I have to do as mayor.

Not everyone has liked my leadership. The CEO of Propeller Airports, the company that stands to make money by building a new terminal, didn't like my passionate leadership. So much so that in an interview with our local paper, he accused me of being too emotional about the issue.

See, this is a common tactic strong women face. When we stand up for ourselves, we aren't called brave or tough, we get called emotional. It was this CEO's attempt to tear me down and discredit me. All of my predecessors have taken the same stand I have, but since they were men, I guess their emotions weren't the issue.

The best part about his attack though, were the letters to the editor that poured in the next week from our residents, defending my stand and calling the CEO out for his shameful tactics.

I'd like you to remember to do the same—whatever that means in your life—to not back down when someone pushes back, to stand up and speak out.

Being strong isn't easy, but it's what we have to do.

It's so important to be strong in representing your others, and remember, that it's just as important, and sometimes more difficult to be strong for yourself! Part of my values and drive in life is to support other women and help them grow into leaders.

I know that I can always do more. You've probably heard the stat that women are paid 78 cents for every dollar paid to men. I asked our staff to look into pay equity and the gender gap inside the City of Mukilteo's organization, and I have to confess something- that pay gap exists at our city, as well. We have more men in higher paid director-level positions, more women in office and clerical positions. There is an 0.88 cent gap between my female and male department directors.

The way to solve this gap won't be easy, there isn't an easy way to change an organization. Part of the reason why there aren't more women in management positions is because they haven't had the same training and career advancement opportunities as their male counterparts, so they slowly fall behind. I am committed to finding ways to mentor the women in our organization, so that when management positions open up, they are ready to compete and win them. Not because they are women, but because they are the best qualified for the job. I'll keep doing what I need to do to support and encourage the women in our organization and other women that I know.

I know that you're all working on similar growth today and tomorrow. And, what you are doing here is important, it's the first step to gaining the skills and confidence to advance.

My final reminder to you: Be strong and advocate for yourself. One way that you can do that is to negotiate your wages.

Studies show that if you negotiate your salary (by asking for a higher amount!) just once in your career, you'll earn thousands more. There was a study about men and women with business degrees. It showed that the women would earn \$1m more over their entire career if they negotiated their salary just one time. So, doesn't that sound worth it!?

It might feel intimidating and risky to ask for a higher number- but you should remember that men do it all the time, bosses are used to it, and you deserve to be paid what your worth. Remember, too, that you are worth even more than you realize.

For me, my unique career choices have meant that I haven't been in a place to negotiate a salary-- I have done sales and been paid in commissions, and ran for office and am paid according to a set salary schedule.

However, I did have a similar experience, in taking a risk to ask for something I wanted. I had to jump in to run for Mayor in 2013, against a sitting incumbent-- our former Mayor. I did it because I believed I could do the work, that I could make positive change for Mukilteo—and also

because I had great friends pushing and encouraging me! You should find those great friends, the ones who believe in you at times when you are questioning yourself. There was a point during the campaign when my mom and my best friend were the only ones cheering me on, even when everyone else was telling me I would probably fail. We all need people like that, even strong women (and men!) need that kind of support. When you need support, look to them to push you to take the risk that you need to take.

If my Grandma Pat were here, I think I know what she would say. She would tell you that each and every one of you deserves a good job, a fair wage, and the chance to be whatever you want. She would also tell you to give them hell until you get it. I will sum things up this way: Believe in yourselves, stand up for yourselves, and look out for others along the way. If you do those three things, there is no limit to what you can accomplish.

Thank you for the opportunity to share a bit of my story with you, and I wish you all the best!