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Celebrating International Women's Day 2021

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By [Karen Clark Cole](#)

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I always aim to give people a vision to move toward — at work, at home, in life. I strive to lead by example and help people focus on what is going well by looking for positive change.

This is not to ignore problems but to help guide and encourage people to take one step at a time toward change — to provide hope and to ultimately create a vision for a world where everyone has equal rights, a voice, and a seat at the table.

I believe that if we can each find the courage and confidence to create this vision for a better world, we are on our way to getting there. In my [welcome speech](#) for 1,500 diverse girls at Girls Can Do, an event series I founded, I talk about building self-confidence by what we choose to see and believe.

The goal of the event series is to inspire a generation of girls to make a difference in their lives,

the lives around them, and the world. These girls are the future, yet generations of great women have gone before them, tirelessly paving the way toward gender equality. The following three change agents are from our political world; however, the list is long and diverse, and I encourage you to seek out a female mentor whose story resonates with you.

The first woman to run for president (in 1884 and 1888), **Belva Lockwood** said,

“We shall never have equal rights until we take them, nor equal respect until we command it.”

In 2014, **Chief Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg** followed by saying,

“Women today serve as presidents of leading universities and bar associations, law school deans, federal judges, state court judges, elected representatives on the local, state, and federal level, and in high executive posts. Three women sit on the current Supreme Court bench. Even so, there is a need for women of Lockwood’s sense and steel to guard against backsliding, and to ensure that our daughters and granddaughters can aspire and achieve, with no artificial barriers blocking their way.”

And today, we celebrate **Kamala Harris**, who harnessed the last four years and a century of momentum to once and for all shatter the glass ceiling. In her 2021 inauguration speech, she infuses us with even more hope and power.

“Even in dark times, we not only dream; we do. We not only see what has been; we see what can be. We shoot for the moon, and then we plant our flag on it. We are bold, fearless, and ambitious. We are undaunted in our belief that we shall overcome — that we will rise up. This is American aspiration.”



Vice President Kamala Harris beside photos of the vice presidents before her.

Each day, I like to count the number of times I felt brave and had courage to make a positive difference in the world — big or small. I invite you to join me in doing all that you can to help move the world toward a place where men and women live together, equally and in harmony.

On this International Women’s Day, I am excited to celebrate women today, this month, and always.