



"You cannot do great things. You can only do small things with great love."

Mother Teresa

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Inspiring Women Worldwide

The 10th. W.I.N. Conference in Oslo 2007

At the end of September 2007 I had the privilege to be a speaker at the annual W.I.N. Global Leadership Forum in Oslo. W.I.N. (www.winconference.net) stands for Women International Networking and was founded ten years ago by an amazing young Norwegian visionary, Kristin Engvig. This year's forum was therefore the 10th. anniversary and very appropriate that the founder's native country hosted the event. In recent years the conference has been held in various European cities such as Rome last year and Geneva the year before. The theme for this year was Taking the next step: fearless, graceful and together.

The mission of W.I.N. is to inspire women worldwide. That mission manifested this year where 700 women from all parts of the world sat spellbound at the various plenary sessions and listened to extraordinary women tell their stories. Women that had overcome adversity in various ways and pushed their humanity to the brink in some instances. The magical effect of such tales had a deep impact on all present in the room and it confirmed to us that we were at the right place at the right time.

What has drawn me to W.I.N. is the innate gift of the founder and director, Kristin Engvig, to always intuit perfectly how to balance the many programs by feeding all the human faculties; the intellect, the emotions and the physical. Apart from the intellectual stimulation of the diverse keynotes and workshops she made sure to nurture our hearts with music and culture, including visits to the Nobel Peace Center and the Oslo City Hall with its decorated walls and interesting history. For the body, mind and spirit W.I.N. routinely offers Body-Mind Awakening sessions every morning of the conference and this year they were enjoyed by big numbers of women.

There has been an increase in attendance at the W.I.N. conference from year to year. But this year was explosive. The organizers were expecting 500 women but ended up with 700. Maybe Oslo and Scandinavia was the attraction? Or maybe corporations worldwide are understanding the importance of empowering their female employees and leaders by inviting them to conferences like W.I.N. where they have an opportunity to learn, share, experience, grow and develop as leaders and as individuals all at the same time.

W.I.N. is backed by an impressive numbers of well-known international



companies. Some of these sponsors support W.I.N. year after year such as Hewlett Packard, IBM, Shell, Johnson & Johnson, Continental Airlines, Whirlpool, Proctor & Gamble and many others. This year IBM was the winner for sending the biggest numbers of participants. There were literally IBM women from all over the world everywhere.

Apart from me as a native Icelander and living in the US Iceland was represented by two courageous and progressive women, Elín Kjartansdóttir and Helga Benediktsdóttir architects, owners and founders of arkitektúr.is in Reykjavík. The experience exceeded their wildest expectations and they vow to go back next year and bring with them other Icelandic delegates. They also have a strong intention to have Reykjavík host a W.I.N. conference in the years to come. It would be a most wonderful opportunity for professional women in Iceland to be able to attend such a powerful event on their home turf and be able to show up in big numbers.

Rúna Bouius, Santa Fe, October 17th. 2007

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