

ICGS Ep 19 Transcript

Girls Who Dare to Lead

[00:00:00] **Audio clip:** Well, I came to this conference and I thought, yeah, I am a leader but I think that I've learned a lot about leadership. I think the best thing that I've learned is that there are many different types of leaders and that anyone can lead if they're given the opportunity to shine. I like to lead, I guess I've found, and I, I think, I don't know if that's a good thing. That's a good thing I think.

[00:00:26] **Audio clip:** I think that as leaders, we always are vulnerable and insecure, and this is often seen as a weakness. Being vulnerable and open to people can be a very effective way of leading people and making you come across as more approachable and supportive of the people that you're trying to lead. And what I've learnt is that pressure and hardship really grow us as people. And once you put in the hard work, it always pays off in the end. Oh, that's, it's a really nice thing to know. It's a big comfort.

[00:00:58] **Trudy Hall:** According to the most recent Gender Equality Snapshot produced by the United Nations, as of 2020 women held less than 1 in 3 management positions around the globe—a somewhat depressing 28% of women are leading others. What's holding them back? Why don't we see more women CEOs, politicians, or managers?

[00:01:22] **Trudy Hall:** I am not going to pretend to solve that problem in this conversation. However, I do want to put a spotlight on a program that understands what holds girls back as they step into leadership roles. For the last 25 years, there has been an important gathering of teenage girls every January in Australia. They gather to talk about being leaders of their peers,

[00:01:42] **Trudy Hall:** the hardest kind of leadership there is. They share their fears and hopes; they come together in a transformational sisterhood to lean into their vulnerability and emerge with renewed confidence. I am Trudy Hall, your host for On Educating Girls, a podcast produced by the International Coalition of Girls Schools for parents of all girls everywhere, and today we travel to Australia.

[00:02:04] **Trudy Hall:** This year from January 16-18, 270 girls from 81 schools representing Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States and Zimbabwe were given the opportunity to participate virtually or in person in workshops, conversations, mentoring and networking as they gained insights into the mindset of a leader.

[00:02:35] **Trudy Hall:** As you listen, I want you to think about where your daughter is getting this sort of inspiration. Let me assure you that these girls are like teenage girls everywhere in the world. They note that their favorite foods include pasta, pizza, chocolate and ice cream—though fairy bread, seaweed and Lebanese cucumbers were also on the list of favorites. And they say they are inspired by some familiar names: Malala, Pope Francis, Emma Watson and Princess Diana.

[00:02:59] **Trudy Hall:** But what sets them apart is their keen interest in understanding more about how to lead. The student voices you will hear in this episode are those of students who participated in this year's workshops. And my guests will help you understand why this conference has become a raging success over the years.

[00:03:22] **Trudy Hall:** Joining me is Loren Bridge, the Executive Officer of the Alliance of Girls' Schools Australasia. This episode is especially well timed as the Alliance membership has just passed a vote to merge with the International Coalition of Girls Schools, and we're excited to bring these two wonderful organizations together in our shared mission of advancing girls' education globally.

[00:03:46] **Trudy Hall:** As a spokesperson for girls' education, Loren is frequently interviewed by the media and has written noteworthy opinion pieces for print and digital media on girls' education and social issues concerning girls and women. She is responsible for the vision of the leadership conference. My other two guests are “the proof in the pudding,” so to speak. Eloise Hall and Ashleigh De Silva attended the conference in their final year of high school, and then returned as mentors to share their experiences with those who were following in their footsteps.

[00:04:12] **Trudy Hall:** Lauren, I'd like to begin with you and ask you a few questions as you help us set up the foundation for our conversation today. First, congratulations on the celebration of a conference that has taught leadership to girls for a quarter of a century. From speaking with you, I know this is what you might call a just-in-time training for girls, meaning that you're gathering them at a very pivotal time in their journey as leaders.

[00:04:39] **Trudy Hall:** Can you share how this conference came to be and specifically what you're preparing these girls for in the near term?

[00:04:46] **Loren Bridge:** Thanks, Trudy. And um, yeah, it's a real pleasure to be with you. So, SLC or as we formally call it, the Student Leadership Conference, and um, you know, I know that that's not a very exciting name, but kind of after [00:05:00] 25 years we're stuck with it.

[00:05:02] **Loren Bridge:** So like a lot of programs and activities that, um, we've initiated in our girl's schools, the catalyst was really just a gap in the market. There

wasn't leadership training specifically tailored to girls, so we decided to make our own. There was stuff around, you know, boys were doing, um, leadership programs in boys schools and there was, I'll call it sort of co-ed, um, leadership style programs, but there was nothing for girls that focused on girls who had leadership positions in schools.

[00:05:32] **Loren Bridge:** There was kind of general leadership stuff, but not this very specific kind of thing that, that our schools were looking for. So the program focuses really on developing that leadership capacity and I guess providing a toolkit that the girls can take back to their schools with a whole lot of practical things that they can do.

[00:05:56] **Loren Bridge:** Um, so I, so I should say that they have been elected into [00:06:00] positions of, um, school leadership. So they're the school captains, the head girls, the prefects at their schools. So they come to this conference holding those positions and as they step into them, they're also stepping into their final year of secondary schooling.

[00:06:16] **Loren Bridge:** And you know, that in itself has a huge amount of responsibility. So we're aiming to help them shape their notion of leadership for that, that year ahead, and to help them to manage the responsibilities of leadership with the responsibilities that they have as final year students. Um, and I guess like really we want them to decide for themselves what kind of leader they're going to be.

[00:06:43] **Loren Bridge:** I think a lot of them have seen leadership in their schools from previous school leaders, of course, but we want them to be the kind of leader that works for them and not to feel like they need to, to please anyone else or certainly to be perfect, but that they should really try and be an [00:07:00] authentic leader.

[00:07:01] **Trudy Hall:** So over the years of this very, very successful endeavor that has been heard, uh, from, I mean, you've, you've actually, uh, had girls from around the world attending this.

[00:07:11] **Trudy Hall:** You've developed a formula with some key elements. Uh, talk a little bit about the things that you know, that are essential elements of the program.

[00:07:21] **Loren Bridge:** We keep our program very grounded in what's gonna be relevant for them, um, their cohort, I guess as, as a cohort of leaders in that year. And so, for instance, it changed very much during Covid.

[00:07:36] **Loren Bridge:** What we do try and do is engage, uh, speakers and presenters that are gonna be relatable to the girls, so they're not middle-aged,

high-profile leaders. People who have been successful or are successful of course, and who tend to tell the story of their own success. Um, of course, that's very interesting and, and motivational. [00:08:00]

[00:08:01] **Loren Bridge:** But it's distant and away from what the girls are going to be experiencing in the year that they've got ahead of them. So we try to keep very focused on what's happening in the next 12 months and not the leadership challenges that, you know, someone else might have faced, say, 20 years ago. We do a fair bit of pre-surveying of the girls if you like.

[00:08:21] **Loren Bridge:** So we try to find out what's on their mind, what they think the challenges are going to be for their year ahead, um, what they're looking forward to and what they're not looking forward to, and, and I guess what they think the conference can bring for them. So usually SLC is a five-day residential program.

[00:08:39] **Loren Bridge:** And what we do in, in to also make that really relevant to the girls is we bring back SLC alumni. So girls who, who have been at the conference in previous years. So they may just be one or two years out from finishing school themselves and they volunteer to come back because usually, they've had a great time at [00:09:00] SLC themselves, but they've really.

[00:09:03] **Loren Bridge:** Walked the walk if you like. They understand what the girls are gonna face in this year ahead, and they're really, um, happy to be there and to, to share the experience that they had and to help mentor the current cohort and give them some practical advice on, on what they're going to, um, face in the next year.

[00:09:23] **Loren Bridge:** I think the third thing that we try and fo is really fast-track relationships between the girls. So in the lead-up, we connect on socials, usually via Facebook, but we try and get a Facebook group started where the girls can chat and introduce each other, talk about what they, you know, they think they're gonna be doing in the next year, and what they think the conference is going to deliver for them.

[00:09:47] **Loren Bridge:** Apart from, I guess, the actual leadership skills and practical advice that we give them. One of the key things that SLC delivers is a network of, um, peers - girls who are in the same [00:10:00] position in different schools. And those relationships go on and I've, I've heard of SLC groups meeting up, you know, 10 years later, um, and still coming together.

[00:10:10] **Loren Bridge:** But it is during that initial year when they are school leaders that they can call on each other, they can ask the kind of questions that they might not necessarily feel comfortable asking their friends at school or their, you know,

their, their leadership team at school, but they can put it out to this group and say, Hey, I'm thinking of this or, Hey, what have you done in this sort of a situation? So it's really getting those networks and that friendship established right from the start.

[00:10:38] **Trudy Hall:** So I would like to shift from the philosophy behind the conference to the lived experience of it. Um, Ashleigh and Eloise, I'd like to ask both of you to share your personal history with the conference. Eloise, why don't you go first?

[00:10:54] **Eloise Hall:** Yeah. So it has been a while since I attended the conference. It's surprising [00:11:00] how long ago it was, but, um, I attended seven years ago and it was something I had never been to quite like it before. Um, it's really phenomenal to be in a room with people that are like yourself and to have a room of 100 or 200 girls, I'm not even sure how many, uh, were there at that conference, but it's a really special environment to be able to.

[00:11:24] **Eloise Hall:** Be yourself and know that that self will be respected and that there are other really quite ambitious and kind of go-getter kind of girls in the room. Uh, but to share the same, um, yeah, I guess passions in, in wanting to lead with authenticity and lead with courage is really, it's, yeah, it's, it's great to kind of learn amongst similar-minded people.

[00:11:48] **Eloise Hall:** Um, I also have this huge I guess gratitude for that conference in how much confidence it gave me in opening up my [00:12:00] vision, and I guess even just opening up my eyes into what I wanted to do with my time post-school. Obviously, we went to the conference thinking that we might leave better leaders and more strategically equipped to lead the people in our school, but, um, I think, yeah, what shocked me was how inspired I was to think even beyond that year ahead, but more so to what I wanted to do as a young adult and what that would lead into. Um, and I think as an adult now, um, having worked in a couple of industries, having the best kind of skill set you can have is to know who you are and what you're good at and where your passions lie. And I think that was the most pertinent part of the conference for me.

[00:12:46] **Trudy Hall:** Uh, let's go back to you, um, Ashleigh, and, uh, what's your, uh, what was your, uh, experience with the conference? ,

[00:12:54] **Ashleigh De Silva:** I didn't know what to expect at all. I just knew that it was gonna be a bunch of students from across the country, [00:13:00] um, and some students overseas all together for five days. And I was like, I'm not sure what's gonna happen. But my little introvert self wasn't sure how to take it, but it was honestly such a pivotal moment, I think, in every single student's life that attended that year and every other year. It's a pivotal moment in your life when you figure out what you

want to do on, you know, a theoretical level, but then on an also higher level than that, you figure out who you are, what kind of leader you want to be.

[00:13:30] **Ashleigh De Silva:** But then it's also the opportunity to just work amongst girls that are like-minded and maybe that aren't like-minded. And with that comes so many skills about how to communicate and how to, um, empathize with people's experiences and shared experiences as, um, at that as well. I was then lucky at SLC to hear a talk from, uh, Sarah Gully, who, um, is a New Zealand gal that was currently at the time running the Australian New [00:14:00] Zealand Oceanic Region of Girl Up, which is a UN founded organization.

[00:14:05] **Ashleigh De Silva:** Uh, I think it might have been the second or third year they had run the talk, but it just resonated with me on every single level. Girl Up is an organization that embodies exactly what SLC does so accurately get across to each student every single year. Um, it's an organization by girls, for Girls.

[00:14:24] **Ashleigh De Silva:** Um, and it was in, as Lauren said, just before, um, the Facebook group that was made that somebody posted the opportunity to apply for the regional leadership position, um, at Girl Up at the time, um, which I had a lot of imposter syndrome at the time, did not think I was qualified as, you know, 2019, the following year, a recent high school graduate, no experience, no university qualifications.

[00:14:50] **Ashleigh De Silva:** Um, but it was just that passion that I kind of kept going through SLC, through year 12, um, and then onto graduating high school that I thought, you know what? I am gonna apply. [00:15:00] I was lucky enough to get the position and then go back to speaker SLC for the next two years as well. Uh, which is really, really great to kind of see that experience from, I guess another perspective, um,

[00:15:12] **Trudy Hall:** Ashleigh, does it matter that it's a conference for girls? And if so, why?

[00:15:18] **Ashleigh De Silva:** I definitely think it matters. I think there were so many buzzwords that Lauren mentioned as she was, uh, speaking earlier. I think having an opportunity for girls to get together with like-minded girls that are so powerful. I think it's this infectious attitude that just buzzes around all the students in attendance, that it doesn't matter that you've known this person for, a mere eight hours.

[00:15:44] **Ashleigh De Silva:** You are already sharing all your deepest, darkest secrets and all your ambitions for the world. I think, yeah, being like-minded is so important. Um, and, it being a conference for all girls, girls have that [00:16:00] confidence to be the future change-makers in the world. And I, I think to an extent that would be

diluted potentially if it was a co-ed conference and there were potentially, um, other considerations or other distractions in that the girls aren't given the opportunity to put themselves on that highest platform and say, this is what I'm capable of and everybody's basically holding hands saying like, this is what we can achieve, and it's really, really awesome.

[00:16:28] **voice note:** I think it's so important to experience a leadership conference just for girls to not only become equipped with the skills that we can carry into the incoming year and beyond, but also to feel the energy within the room as everyone connected. I know it's cringe, but it was actually unlike anything I'd ever felt before. I think with a such prominent history of men being the only ones in positions in. It is extremely rare to have so many young female leaders gathered together, and it was really powerful to be able to relate with them on a level that is [00:17:00] difficult to fully capture. As an upcoming generation, we really are the future doctors, lawyers, researchers, and educators, and I absolutely love the idea of being able to involve more and more women in leadership roles within certain careers, or better yet, as world leaders.

[00:17:16] **voice note:** It has been so important to me to be at an all Girls Leadership conference because of the continued underrepresentation of female leaders in media, politics, and companies. Talking to girls from different schools about the pressures and life lessons learned in their leadership journeys provided me with something that I didn't know I needed. Comfort. Women still hold only 35% of senior leadership positions. It felt amazing knowing that I would go into that room and I would be surrounded by like-minded young women who are striving to change this statistic.

[00:17:44] **Trudy Hall:** So since it was such a powerful conference, do either of you have a distinct memory of something that happened during your time at the conference that was particularly useful to your younger self? It was something that your younger self really needed to [00:18:00] hear at that, at that moment in time.

[00:18:02] **Ashleigh De Silva:** The first memory that comes to mind is this, for use of a better word, I'll call it a 'sharing night' we had. It was an event in the main hall where SLC was run that year. Um, and they kitted out the hall with blankets and just made like really beautiful mood lighting with fairy lights and it was like a very warm environment. Um, and basically it was a sharing night where girls got the opportunity to stand in front of their peers and share their concerns for the year ahead or anything going on, you know, in their life that they wanted support with. Sometimes you don't feel comfortable speaking to the people that are supposedly closest to you in your life.

[00:18:46] **Ashleigh De Silva:** Um, and it takes being in this sisterhood, as we used the word before, with like-minded individuals and such a supportive environment to feel supported, to be able to share these stories. and I remember, I think [00:19:00] girls were just crying and crying just because it was just such a supportive environment and you just don't get that very often in society.

[00:19:08] **Ashleigh De Silva:** I think a lot of the time, as stereotypical as it sounds, women are pitted against each other. Being too successful is seen to be a threat or a fear, or you were trying to take somebody else's success away from them, which is never ever the case, and that's just a societal pillar that we need to tear down because it's so not true.

[00:19:27] **Ashleigh De Silva:** The thing is that when women support each other, It's just like magic. Something happens and everybody ends up just lifting each other up and becoming even more successful in the future.

[00:19:38] **Eloise Hall:** Yeah, I have a really distinct, uh, memory of the conference. Um, the conference actually very much influenced what I do with my life now.

[00:19:46] **Eloise Hall:** So I had a, a wonderful, um, keynote from Daniel Flynn, one of the co-founders of 'Thank You What Up?'. And that was the first time I understood the concept of social enterprise, which is [00:20:00] now the concept that I preach from every hill I can climb because for me it was that message of hope. So I had always been quite, um, a sensitive person.

[00:20:10] **Eloise Hall:** I was always running fundraisers at school and, you know, really wanting to give back and, um, hearing about the method of social enterprise, it got me so excited cause I thought, great, we can sell something that people would buy anyway and use the profits for good. Um, and so when I arrived at the conference, I still had that frustration of why is the world so unfair.

[00:20:31] **Eloise Hall:** And, you know, how on earth are we gonna kind of make this world a better place? And then hearing about social enterprise just really gave me that hope that I still have not let go of. So it really transformed, um, my life from that point onwards. Um, and then, yeah, to how we had the educators and also the peers in the same place for five days was such a beautiful space to explore that passion and share that hope.

[00:20:59] **Eloise Hall:** [00:21:00] Um, and when you share your hopes and you share your dreams and people are there to kind of just vouch their support for you, you've got that extra confidence to just go ahead and, um, yeah, and, and follow that passion. So, um, also alongside understanding my passions further, I do really distinctly remember some of the workshops we did about understanding our own.

[00:21:24] **Eloise Hall:** And so that was a really great place to kind of refine what I perceived as my position, um, in this world. A lot of identity kind of was unpacked in that conference as you, as you can tell, but that was probably the most distinct day for me.

[00:21:40] **Trudy Hall:** So now you're both, you're, you've finished the conference, you've gone back, you've helped at the conference, but now you're out in that real world that, as Loren told us before, is a very different place, um, than the conference was.

[00:21:51] **Trudy Hall:** So, Ashley, I'm gonna start with you and I wanna talk a little bit about what you took from the conference with you into the real world. Uh, you took your experience as [00:22:00] you mentioned, um, into Girl Up. Um, a phenomenal global leadership development organization. And so what have you carried from that conference into the work that you do at Girl Up or in Your Real World?

[00:22:12] **Ashleigh De Silva:** I definitely think it's helped me to formulate, I guess, a leadership toolkit that I take with me, um, at Girl Up. And when I speak to girls about how they can be change-makers in society, I've used the foundations of SLC to build up on that concept of being a leader, being a change maker, um, and created it into four really relatively simple steps to be a change maker.

[00:22:38] **Ashleigh De Silva:** It's being able to fundraise for a cause is really important, um, but also advocating for causes. And I think that's something that SLC helps you realize the value of your voice so much. In that if you're passionate about a cause, raising money for it is really, really important. But not only that, being an advocate and being able to use your voice [00:23:00] at such a pivotal stage of life when you know you are 17, 18 years old in your final year of school, the value of your voice is no less than any person potentially sitting in parliament or making the rules cause they're making the rules for the future generations.

[00:23:16] **Ashleigh De Silva:** And these students at SLC are the future generations. The third thing I think that's so important is being able to educate people on causes that you're really passionate about. As often, um, I tell girls, if you are, you know, holding an assembly presentation, speaking to a cause that you're really passionate about, it just takes one person in that crowd to also become passionate about that cause and want to create change and then educate other people about it.

[00:23:42] **Ashleigh De Silva:** And then that's how it kind of spirals and becomes this broader social movement, um, cuz you can have a really broad social impact by sharing stories. This leads me to the fourth point. Um, it's really important that you listen and [00:24:00] you share the stories potentially of those that might not have the same platform to have their stories heard.

[00:24:06] **Trudy Hall:** Um, so now let's turn to Eloise. You, you launched Taboo, um, a social enterprise with a specific mission to provide menstrual products to those who may not have had access to this very basic necessity. What did you take with you from the conference experience? I know you've already mentioned that this is where you first heard of social entrepreneurship, but in your day-to-day life at your work, is there anything that you use from the conference?

[00:24:31] **Eloise Hall:** Yeah. Um, obviously the practical learnings of what social enterprise is, um, was a very good start for me. Um, and the venture that I've had since the conference. Um, One, I do remember as well, um, at the conference, Izzy and I were my co-founder of Taboo.

[00:24:49] **Eloise Hall:** We were so inspired by Daniel Flynn and it was the first chance we had the confidence to be like, actually, let's just go up and have a chat with him. Um, so I guess we also started practising [00:25:00] that notion of putting yourself out there and taking those risks and just asking the question, getting involved.

[00:25:06] **Eloise Hall:** Um, that's probably something that we didn't have the encouragement to do, perhaps in such an outright direction at least. Um, and that has really stuck with me this, this whole journey of starting my own social enterprise, um, and being quite, quite proactively involved in the community. It's all an effort of, of actually just speaking out and, um, yeah, I guess taking up that space where we recognize that space needs to be taken up, um, to kind of represent and speak for the rights of women.

[00:25:37] **Eloise Hall:** Um, and in mostly my case, it's been, uh, the rights of girls and women's access to period products. Um, I guess the other thing that I learned quite permanently at the conference was how to work in a team. Um, obviously when myself and Isabelle, we were school leaders, we had a team of leaders to manage and there was a big focus at the [00:26:00] conference to understand your strengths.

[00:26:01] **Eloise Hall:** And again, that kind of was wrapped up in identity, but those methods of actually understanding your team's strength and really depending on them and giving them the kind of responsibility and opportunity they deserve to contribute to a team were something that I have continued to practice since the conference as well,

[00:26:21] **voice note:** SLC reexamined and reinforced the idea of the individual beyond the title of leadership. The conference showed me solutions to the struggle and pressure of leadership through the structured and supportive burn brighten structures, but also through the advice and experience of my peers as female student leaders as well. It provided me with a life lesson that couldn't have been solved by a Google search.

[00:26:42] **voice note:** I think that positive change can only come from a positive place and that in itself is rooted within being true to whoever you are. That would be the big takeaway personally. But there were so many incredible teachings throughout the entire conference, but I found that the message of authenticity [00:27:00] acted as a thread that tied the whole thing together, and that's what stuck with me the most.

[00:27:03] **voice note:** An important takeaway from SLC for me is that even in leadership positions where you assume that you need to be perfect all of the time, it is extremely important to be vulnerable, not only for the sake of your own wellbeing but also to make the words you say more meaningful and your actions more impactful.

[00:27:22] **voice note:** I found it so interesting to hear Layton at Burn Brightly tell us that sometimes we may be carrying around heavy baggage on our back, which is really weighing us down. But to offer this to someone else can be their food and water. I never thought of sharing my difficulties with someone else like that before, always fearing that I would be a burden.

[00:27:38] **voice note:** But it makes so much sense that hearing that someone else's failure to experience something similar to you makes you feel a lot less alone.

[00:27:46] **Trudy Hall:** I'm fairly impressed as I listened to you all talk, um, about how you took this formative experience and how you turned it into kind of a life mindset as you've moved forward and now remembering that this podcast is [00:28:00] for the parents of girls everywhere, I wanna bring Loren back in again and have the three of you answer a few questions.

[00:28:06] **Trudy Hall:** I want the three of you to think about this from your parent's perspective. Um, and obviously Ashleigh and Eloise, I would add, you know, what do your parents say to you? And for Loren, I would say, you know, as the parent of a daughter, um, but how should a parent best support a daughter who really wants to learn about leadership, who wants to be a leader?

[00:28:26] **Trudy Hall:** And lets start with Loren. Um, you are a mom and you talk about this a lot. What should a parent say to a daughter who wants to be a leader?

[00:28:38] **Loren Bridge:** I mean I think that I look at it from that perspective of really gender equality, which is such a driver for me in that you can do anything. You can be anything, but make sure you surround yourself with the people that are gonna support you to be the best that you can be.

[00:28:57] **Trudy Hall:** All right, so let's turn to Ashleigh and Eloise and, [00:29:00] and I'll let you guys choose who goes first. Um, what did your parents say to you that you found particularly helpful, and what do you think parents should say to their daughters?

[00:29:10] **Eloise Hall:** I remember when I graduated school there was a, a lot of, um, I, I had this vision of starting Taboo and I was really, really passionate about it and I wanted to see it work.

[00:29:22] **Eloise Hall:** And my dad runs a small business of his own and so he knows how hard it is and, you know, he believed that I was a smart kid, but could do whatever I wanted to do. Um, but he was quite apprehensive about me starting my own business. He said it's too hard, you know, go to uni, go get a job with someone. And sometimes I think back to that advice, and I think he was right.

[00:29:43] **Eloise Hall:** It is too hard. Um, but not at all in that. I have no regrets about that at all. And he actually heard, uh, Holly Ranson speak at our final speech date at school. And she was talking about how every day she did something that made her afraid for that was [00:30:00] she was afraid of for a year. And that night, dad came up to me, um, at, you know, end of school drinks and he said, you know what?

[00:30:08] **Eloise Hall:** Just give it a crack and if you fail, that's fine, you can just get back up and dust off your shoulders and start again. Do something different. And it was such a, such a relief to hear that invitation that he was gonna, he was gonna be there for me and look out for me. And, you know, he gives his advice here and there, whether it's wanted or not.

[00:30:28] **Eloise Hall:** Um, but really the other thing that I value from his direction, in particular, was just the freedom and the trust to just figure it out. Um, and that's certainly, from both of my parents. They just kind of, um, Yeah, had this faith that I'll work it out and that I think the most important thing for parents is to actually give your kids the space to actually genuinely explore who they are and what makes them tick, what makes them excited.

[00:30:55] **Ashleigh De Silva:** Oh, one thing that my mom has and used to always and [00:31:00] continues to say to me, which when I was younger, I thought was extremely corny, and I was like, all right, mom. And as I'm growing older, I'm like woah, that really is part of who I am. Um, she would always say, if not you, who? And I think as she would say in any situation where I was a little bit nervous to do something or I wasn't sure whether I wanted to try something new, um, or take kind of a leap of faith.

[00:31:26] **Ashleigh De Silva:** She says, if not you, who? And I think that's a really important skill that I've kind of taken with me my whole life in that I've kind of got the perception that I can do anything I set my mind to, which is good. And sometimes, you know, you fall, um, you fall down and you, you can't, you know, you're not always gonna be the most successful person in the room, um, with things. But the thing is trying.

[00:31:51] **Trudy Hall:** It has been a privilege to listen to all three of you. It really has and, and it's very clear that the SLC has been a launching pad [00:32:00] for a number of young women who really have formulated a leadership toolkit while together in that sisterhood. And you've learned things like the value of your voice and putting yourself out there proactively. Um, I am really feeling very good. My heart is full. To hear the next generation of leaders say that what you're doing is not just for you. Um, I think that Loren's right, uh, this generation of female leaders really has the ability to change the way the world turns.

[00:32:29] **Trudy Hall:** So it's been a privilege to spend this time with you, and I thank you very much. Thanks so much. Thank you. This has been on Educating Girls, a podcast produced by the International Coalition of Girls Schools to address real issues that impact the lives of girls we know. If you liked what you heard in this episode, we encourage you to rate and review it or simply forward it along so that others can benefit.

[00:32:55] **Trudy Hall:** As always, we welcome your thoughts, so please send comments and questions to [00:33:00] podcast@girlsschools.org and join us next time as we share insights and resources. Thanks for listening. It's important to the girls in your lives that you do.