



### DID YOU KNOW...

Eleanor's first name was really Anna.

She was born into New York's high society.

She was very shy as a child.

She was an orphan by age 10, after her mother died of diphtheria, and her father was lost to alcohol and drug abuse.

Theodore Roosevelt, the President, gave his niece away at her wedding.

She considered her greatest accomplishment helping to write the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at the United Nations, where she was a U.S. delegate.

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## How to Lead like Eleanor Roosevelt

In an era of extreme poverty, intense racism, and horrid working conditions, an unexpected leader emerged—the First Lady of the United States, Eleanor Roosevelt. In her day, the role of the First Lady was simply to be a “backdrop” for the President, raising the family, and hostessing. Eleanor, already working for social justice and human rights, would step outside the traditional role of Presidential wife and reshape that role, becoming the most controversial and admired First Lady in history.



After polio ravaged Franklin D. Roosevelt's body, Eleanor stepped in to make public appearances on the President's behalf. Though she would be criticized for her role in advocating public policy, she boldly spoke out on behalf of women's and civil rights. She focused the national spotlight on poverty, racial discrimination, and poor working conditions.

### Using the Media



During the Great Depression, women were discouraged from taking jobs from men who had families to support. Two days after becoming First Lady, Eleanor held a press conference open only to female reporters, thereby forcing newspapers to hire women. She continued her weekly press conferences for the next 12 years as First Lady.

She also wrote a syndicated newspaper column called "My Day" that allowed her to share her political and social views with millions of people six days a week. She recognized the value of the mass media and used radio, newspapers, magazines, and later television, to bring attention to important social issues.

### Visiting the People

Eleanor would regularly visit Depression-Era labor groups assuring them that the White House was listening to their pleas. Donning a gray jacket and hard hat, she travelled 2 miles underground to witness firsthand the harsh working conditions of

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coal miners. She then spoke with 300 miners at the end of their shift.

During World War II, she visited U.S. troops around the world. Even her most skeptical opponent, Admiral William F. Halsey, admitted that her visits were a blessing. "She alone had accomplished more good than any other person or any group of civilians who had passed through my area," he later wrote.



## Challenging Racism

After the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) refused to let renowned opera singer Miriam Anderson perform at Constitution Hall in Washington D.C., Eleanor resigned her DAR membership, stating, "You had an opportunity to lead in an enlightened way and your organization has failed."

Eleanor then worked with the Secretary of the Interior to find a new location for Anderson's concert: the Lincoln Memorial. There Anderson performed before 75,000 people while a radio broadcast brought the concert to millions more.

## What Can You Do to Lead Like ER?

- Persevere in the face of adversity
- Make yourself available
- Lead by example
- Use alternative methods to achieve a goal
- Be courageous and make bold decisions

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