I have had the opportunity to work with amazing individuals. I can count on one hand the great leaders I have worked with. Individuals who light a fire, individuals who inspire others to take risks, to run up and over brick walls, to seek something better than current reality. When asked if I would rather work for a great boss or be a great boss, I immediately replied, “work for a great boss.” Which upon reflection, made me realize no matter what position we are in we all want to find an individual who recognizes greatness in us that we might not yet see ourselves. We all want a person who helps us consider a future we might not have otherwise imagined. And when we try to go up and over that brick wall, and we fail, we want someone who will help us up, dust us off, and say, “try again tomorrow.”

I have yearned for titles and positions that will grant me that authority, that power I need, to make what I believe are long-lasting systemic changes in a school district that I love. And I have also shied away from opportunities of leadership, opportunities of title and advancement. Why? Because it is terrifying to think of myself as that powerful, frightening to think I can matter that much to other people. I have often made leadership something bigger than it is, I have defined true leadership as something that is beyond me.

Marianne Williamson wrote, "Our greatest fear is not that we are inadequate. [It] is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light and not our darkness that frightens us."

It is estimated that in individual influences 80,000 people in their lifetime. A stadium of influence one person at a time. Imagine a stadium filled with individuals you have influenced, what did that influence look like?

My call to action today is that we need to get over our fear of how extraordinarily powerful we can be in each other's lives. Instead of making leadership about changing the world, we need to redefine leadership as the opportunity to help one person change their understanding of the world. If as leaders we can change one person's understanding of their world, understanding of what they're capable of, understanding of how powerful an agent for change they can be in this world, we've changed the whole thing.

No matter what anyone says, just show up and do the work.
If they praise you, show up and do the work.
If they criticize you, show up and do the work.
If no one notices you, show up and do the work.
Just keep showing up, doing the work, and leading the way.
Lead with passion.
Fuel up with optimism.
Have faith.
Power up with love.
Maintain hope.
Be stubborn.  
Fight the good fight.  
Refuse to give up.  
Ignore the critics.  
Believe in the impossible.  
Show up.  
Do the work.  
You’ll be glad you did.  
True grit leads to true success.

*The Power of Positive Leadership (p.176)*