

EXCERPT



**Front Porch Wisdom**  
*Navigating Leadership Pressures and Barriers as a Woman of Color*

June 17, 2025 | \$18, 208 pages, paperback | 978-1-5140-0888-1

*Front Porch Wisdom* fills a crucial gap in leadership books by focusing on faith and workplace journeys unique to women of color. With wisdom accumulated from a lifetime of leadership, Dr. Booker-Drew offers a safe and reflective space for thinking, learning, and growing as a leader.

## The Power of Mentors, Coaches, and Sponsors

During my high school years, I encountered an incredible woman who played a pivotal role in shaping my life. An advisor for student government, this woman had a genuine interest in my well-being and an unwavering belief in my leadership potential. I am eternally grateful for the positive influence she had on my life. This experience motivated me to become a guiding force for other women of color who need the same support and encouragement I yearned for during my formative years.

When I was starting out in my career, another experience also left a deep impression on me. I sought guidance from a successful woman in the nonprofit sector, hoping to learn from her expertise. I arranged appointments with her administrative assistant, but to my dismay, she was consistently absent when I arrived. This happened several times, leaving me feeling undervalued and unimportant. This experience inspired me to make a difference for young women by offering the support and mentorship I had desired but did not receive.

Several years later I had an opportunity to put this idea into action. During a gathering of ministry, business, and nonprofit leaders, a young man approached and said his friend wanted to meet me. Bemnet, a college student, told me she'd been inspired by my work and aspired to a similar path. Recognizing the importance of nurturing young talent, I made time for her and provided her with a volunteer opportunity that eventually led to a job. Our professional relationship continued for six years, during which Bemnet became my administrative assistant. After I left that role, she accepted a position with me at the State Fair of Texas. I have been immensely grateful for Bemnet's dedication and hard work. Now she is vice president at Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas, and I am fortunate to have the opportunity to collaborate with her as a consultant. Our professional journey together has been mutually enriching, as we have both learned from one another. My life is richer because she has been in it.

In order to succeed, it is especially important for women of color to have mentors and sponsors. A mentoring relationship is a crucial part of a support ecosystem. It's based on the experience and knowledge of the mentor and the guidance, support, and advice sought by the individual. Mentors share their expertise to help the individual reach their full potential, improve in a specific area, or achieve their goals. The relationship can be personal or professional.

Data proves that there is power in mentorship in the workplace for promotions and salary increases. In 2006, Sun Microsystems published a study conducted by Gartner and Capital Analytics to evaluate the effects of a company mentoring program. The study found that mentoring had a significant impact on employees' salary grade—25 percent of those participating in the program experienced a salary grade change compared to 5 percent of employees not participating. Moreover, the study revealed positive financial benefits for mentors as well. Specifically, 28 percent of the mentors in the test group had a salary grade change, while only 5 percent of the mentors in the control group did. These findings highlight the value of mentoring programs in the workplace, demonstrating their ability to benefit both mentors and mentees in terms of career advancement and financial rewards.



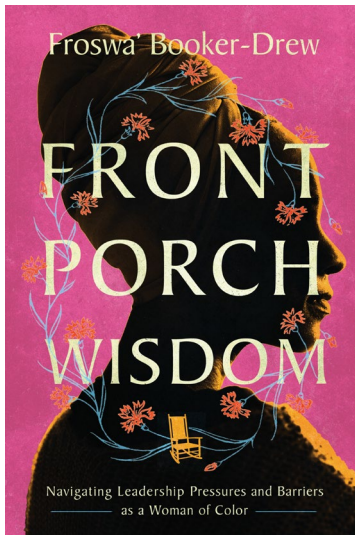
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While mentorship is critical for upward mobility in the workplace, it unfortunately doesn't happen as often for women of color. The problem is that in the workplace, people tend to mentor those who are most like them. According to Johnson, Thomas, and Brown, most senior-level roles are held by White men, which means their mentors were the same. For women of color, access to mentors is limited or almost nonexistent.

Even when women of color do find someone willing to serve as a mentor, they may or may not be a good fit. When choosing a mentor we often focus on titles and achievements, but these should not be the only criteria. Character is essential. Experience may open doors, but it is character that sustains relationships. A person who lacks integrity is problematic because their true nature behind closed doors may differ from their public persona, making it difficult to trust their truthfulness and consistency.

Jesus' ability to gather and keep twelve men around him for three years has always fascinated me. Their relationship was more than just working, worshiping, and traveling together; they also learned from each other. Jesus had to have been personable and engaging, as nobody would want to spend three years with someone who was not loving, compassionate, and fun-loving. Nobody would want to be constantly reminded of their sins or live in fear of being themselves due to potential condemnation. Jesus' life is a prime example of effective mentorship.

As a young woman I knew the importance of mentorship, but it wasn't until I was much older that I encountered the term "sponsor." Many of us confuse these roles, but author Rosalind Chow makes the distinction: mentors provide guidance and advice, while sponsors advocate for their protégés. She suggests that a sponsor is a type of intermediary impression manager, assuming the role of brand manager and publicist for the protégé and shaping how others perceive their potential and worth. It's important to note that the central relationship in sponsorship is not between protégé and sponsor but rather between the sponsor and the audience they aim to influence on behalf of their protégé.

Zeb played a significant role in ensuring my visibility and recognition during college and beyond. He made sure I was included in important discussions and that my perspective was represented even when I wasn't physically present. Zeb was not just a mentor but a sponsor, providing invaluable guidance and support. Thanks to his advocacy, I had the opportunity to lead a workshop at a conference for minority students. That experience opened doors for me, as I was later invited to speak at Notre Dame.

I firmly believe in the power of sponsorship. I've not only had sponsors such as Zeb but I've played that role for others. I've helped nonprofit leaders secure funding by advocating for them in their absence, and whenever I discover a funder's interests, I approach them with a list of organizations worthy of their consideration.

Within my professional network I am fortunate to have coaches as well as mentors and sponsors. Coaches are not solely cheerleaders; they also serve as guides, offering goal-oriented support that is structured, collaborative, and time-bound (not typically indefinite). Coaches can help with anything from managing a transition to improving health to boosting performance. Sandy is a coach who helped me during a time of significant transition, providing me with a tool that helped me pay attention to my self-talk. There are many different types of coaches available and certifications vary. Find someone who has the expertise and experience necessary to help you reach your goals.

—adapted from chapter four, "Who You Need in Life"



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BIO



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## **Froswa' Booker-Drew: Founder, Professor, and Author**

**Froswa' Booker-Drew** (PhD, Antioch) is the founder of Soulstice Consultancy providing philanthropic guidance, community engagement strategies, and leadership development for companies and nonprofits. She is the founder of the Reconciliation and Restoration Foundation, a nonprofit designed to amplify, support, and fund the work of Black-led nonprofits. She is the cofounder of HERitage Giving Circle, one of the first Black Women Giving Circles in the state of Texas and cofounder of both Power in Action-Dallas and the South Dallas Employment Project.

She is also an adjunct faculty member at Tulane University and a research affiliate at Antioch University.

Froswa' is the recipient of the 2023 Texas Women's Foundation Maura Award, the 2014 Big Heart for Global Poverty Award by Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., the 2022 City Square Hometown Hero Award, and the 2022 United Way of Metropolitan Dallas Public Service Award.

Froswa' is the author of four books: *Empowering Charity: A New Narrative of Philanthropy*, *Rules of Engagement: Making Connections Last*, *It's Time to Fly Away: Releasing Daughters into Womanhood*, and *Ready for a Revolution: 30 Days to Jolt Your Life*.

Visit the website of Froswa' at [www.drfrsowabooker.com](http://www.drfrsowabooker.com)



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