



## Unleashing My Superpowers: How to Navigate and Succeed in a Male-Dominated Mining Workplace (STEM)

**Patience Mpofu**

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*Unleashing My Superpowers is an expansive memoir-cum-self-help-text that emboldens its audiences to improve themselves and, by extension, the world.*

Part memoir, part self-help book, Patience Mpofu's *Unleashing My Superpowers* models ways for women to overcome barriers in their workplaces and beyond.

Mpofu grew up in Zimbabwe, and descended from a family known for its leadership and business acumen. She studied chemistry, earned her PhD, and got a job in mining. On top of demanding work, her father dying, and separating from the father of her son, she asked for one more challenge at work: she wanted to travel to mining sites to learn more about their operations on the ground level.

Later, Mpofu earned an MBA; she coached other businesswomen. A company restructuring forced her to pivot, and she turned her loss into an opportunity for further education. She studied at programs in Paris and Fiji, defining new goals for herself and launching a leadership institution of her own. In the course of her book, she also describes near-death experiences, depression, and facing everyday fears; all are covered with a sense of intensity.

The book starts out personal and ends global, mirroring Mpofu's trajectory. In her childhood, she dealt with high standards at home and at school, which taught her to excel at every endeavor; the book cites her mentors, from family members to authors, who helped her to succeed. Helping others to excel became one of her goals, as did pursuing global equity for women.

Though insightful, the text involves some repetition. It names systemic problems, and efforts to alleviate them, multiple times. But in pointing out that women face barriers that are both external and internal, the book helps its audience to confront both across disciplines. Indeed, Mpofu proffers valuable advice for living above and beyond one's work, and her chapters conclude with exercises for practical use.

Its tone charismatic, the book also conveys gratitude for Mpofu's successes—a sensibility that it complements with inspirational quotes and poems, which come at the head of each chapter. There's also a sense of humility in the narration, which highlights the times that Mpofu failed and learned from her mistakes. And personal photographs from safaris, conferences, and family events prove to be an able embellishment to Mpofu's adventurous, vivacious tale.

Capturing and utilizing her mentors' and sponsors' strengths, then passing them on to those around her by way of practical, encouraging words, this is an empowering book whose coverage of individual triumphs and struggles comes to feel universal. It names references from across genres, which are synthesized in a format that will prove accessible to fellow women in business who are interested in self-improvement.

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MARI CARLSON (November 6, 2021)

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