**INSPIRATIONBASE**

*A collection of ethical leadership speeches*

Rose

Marcario



Rose Marcario is the former CEO of the outdoor apparel company *Patagonia.* Having served there since 2008, she stepped down from her position in 2020. She was a leading figure in the company’s mission to advocate for climate and environmental issues. Together with Patagonia founder Yvon Chouinard, she established *Patagonia Provisions*, a regenerative organic food company. She also created *Tin Shed Ventures*, Patagonia’s in-house venture fund to support businesses with an envrionmentally and socially responsible mission. In addition, she founded the digital platform *Patagonia Action Works* for environmental activists. She was also a driving figure in suing the Trump Administration to ensure the protection of land at Utah’s *Bears Ears National Monument* in 2017.

(<https://www.businessinsider.com/patagonia-ceo-rose-marcario-steps-down-legacy-advocacy-2020-6> )

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| **RM 1*.*** *Rose Marcario on Patagonia’s Purpose* | | | |  |
| I think it’s really a false choice to say you can either make money or do good. I think you can do good and make money. And the company has been a proof positive of that, I think. So our purpose is really to save our own planet. You know, we are in an existential crisis with climate change. And if we don’t save the planet, then we won’t have a business, you know. It’s like what David Brower said, you know, “There’s no business to be done on a dead planet.“ And we won’t have customers, and we won’t have employees. And we won’t have resources. And so it behooves all of us to work towards finding solutions to the climate crisis and to the environmental crisis that we’re faced with. | | | | |
| **Date** | 9/10/20  Accessed on 8 May 2021 | **Source** | Columbia Business School on YouTube  (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJKQxzVWQC0>); close captioning available | |

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| **RM 2*.*** *Rose Marcario on Creating a Culture of Innovation* | | | |  |
| Innovation is important to any business, no matter what stage you are in. And, you know, what I’ve tried to do is, well, we set up an in-house venture fund really to fund new innovations because a lot of these environmental innovations that we’re making - there aren’t a lot of people funding them. There are a lot of people with great ideas on how to fix the world’s problems. But, you know, there’s investors that are more interested in self-driving cars, or going to Mars, or whatever. So we need investors that really care about their ideas and wanna bring them forward. So I think creating just a culture where we welcome all that, and we welcome those people that wanna make those changes. I think it just creates this culture that feeds on itself that innovation is good, you shouldn’t be afraid of it. You should always embrace it. And then you’re gonna fail a bunch of times when you innovate, and that’s okay. | | | | |
| **Date** | 9/10/20  Accessed on 8 May 2021 | **Source** | Columbia Business School on YouTube  (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TpcfNffYQ4g>); close captioning available | |

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| **RM 3*.*** *Rose Marcario on Treating Her Team Like Family* | | | |  |
| I think when you’re working for something that’s bigger than yourself. Yes, we’re making an incredible product, but we have a much bigger mission than just the product that we’re making. And I think when you do that, you have a much more inspired workforce. You have people that would show up to work today, every day, wanting to fight the good fight. They’re excited about what they’re doing. They wanna jump on and do the work. And I think that’s a big part of what makes a company successful. I think we grew out of a family business, and so we treat people like that. We treat people like family. And, you know, we provide on-site child care, we’ve been providing on-site child care for thirty-six years. We have no issues with gender parody because of that. We have fifty percent women in management, fifty percent men in management. It’s because we support working families, and we support, you know, women and their children. And I think that makes the company really successful, and it makes our employees really devoted to the company. | | | | |
| **Date** | 9/10/20  Accessed on 8 May 2021 | **Source** | Columbia Business School on YouTube  (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pkmsSX580So>); close captioning available | |

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| **RM 4*.*** *Rose Marcario on Inspirational Students* | | | |  |
| I can teach you an observation that I have about speaking in some business schools and talking to a lot of students and student groups, and that’s that they want to do something good for the world, that they want their life to have more meaning than just making a quarterly profit. And then, if you could harness that in a productive way, then I think we could solve most of the big intractable problems that we’re looking at today. And I wish that more leaders would recognize that and be inspired by that. | | | | |
| **Date** | 9/10/20  Accessed on 8 May 2021 | **Source** | Columbia Business School on YouTube  (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3JMDX9b4Bk>); close captioning available | |

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| **RM 5*.*** *Rose Marcario, President & CEO, Patagonia* | | | |  |
| So I think like anyone, when you start out, you’re sort of striving to figure out who you are. You’re striving to do work that is meaningful to you, even though you don’t really know what that is yet. You’re just figuring it out. And I got to this place where my Italian immigrant family was like, “Wow, you’ve made it!” You know, you’re the CFO of a public company, I was in my thirties, and I was also going through a spiritual sort of journey. I was studying Buddhism at the time, and I got to a place where my work life felt completely separated from my personal life and my values. And it seemed to be that way with everyone that I was working around. It seemed that there was this bifurcation between your work life and your personal life and your personal values. And I just couldn’t bear that anymore, and then I started working in a private equity because I thought I’d have more freedom, it would be more exciting, and I was really disappointed by it. And I know some of you are gonna go, “Working price of equity,” so I feel kind of bad saying this. But for me personally, you know, I could see that the buying and selling of companies made very few people rich, and in most cases, in a lot of cases, hurt the people that were the actual workers, you know, and the people that had build the company. So, yeah, I went on a sort of personal exploration. I went to India, I took some time off. I took care of my ailing mom at the time. And I thought about different things that I could do with my life, and I thought, “Well, maybe I should work for an NGO,” but then I thought, “I know nothing about that.” And I thought, “Maybe I should become a Buddhist nun,” and then I thought, “That’s not so great.”And I thought I’d use sort of the skills that I had, which was making people money, being a really good operator, being a good leader, a good manager, but do something with it that was more aligned with my values.  […] I think that once you know that you want to make a change, I think you start to visualize that you are gonna make that change.  […] [N]ature, to me, it’s like a spiritual experience. And it’s an experience of awe. And we don’t get a lot of those experiences, I think, in our day-to-day life, and we wanna protect it. But I think what was more interesting to me that Yvon [Chouinard] had this model where he was basically saying, “You can have a great business, you can make quality product, but you can also do the right thing by the environment, and by your employees, by your community.” And that to me was like the most holistic vision of business that I had ever seen. And I wanted to see if it actually worked, and how it worked. And so that’s sort of what brought me to *Patagonia*.  […] [T]hat was really Yvon saying, you know, we had so fully embodied the old mission statement that we felt the urgency of the climate crisis and the extinction that we’re facing is so urgent that we felt everybody’s mission, every business’s mission should be to save our home planet. I mean, we’re facing this extinction crisis, and we can’t turn away from it, and we need the rest of business to sort of wake up and turn toward solutions and innovations and the things, you know, that will help us survive.  […] I mean, I think, at the foundation of the business is making a great product and then standing behind that product. So, I don’t think that is in any way bifurcated from caring about our planet or our environment. I mean, the business was founded by people who, you know, Yvon made so many first descents and climbs in his life. I mean, they’re people that love the outdoors and saw the changes that were happening to the outdoors over time. Because if we keep going back to these places, you can see that they’re starting to degrade, or they‘re being destroyed by the climate crisis. So I think Yvon saw that, and it’s embedded in the company. It’s been, I think, more important in the last few years because we have so many climate deniers in our government. It’s been more important for us to take more of a stand, and I think out customers understand that. And they’ve been with the brand a long time, and they appreciate that.  […] We definitely look at what could be the impact of certain actions. But most of the time we’re wrong for the better. And that’s typically what happens. We just decided last year we gave away the Trump tax cut. And this year we had another ten million we felt like to give away in addition. But we thought this year, “Okay, we’re gonna ask our customers to see if they’ll participate with us.” And our customers contributed ten million dollars to grassroot activists in seventeen days. And we set this bar thinking, “Ten million dollars, we might not get there.” But our customers did it. Because they are as worried about the environment as we are.  […] You know, when Trump signs away three million acres of public land with a stroke of a pen, we’re not gonna sit silent about that. And it was definitely a difficult choice to make, to sue the administration. But it was the best choice we had in that time. And, yeah, I mean, we’d do it again in a second. And we’ve sued him over the *Endangered Species Act*. And they make us briefs on a number of other issues, and the *Clean Water Act*. We’re not gonna sit by while all the protections to wild lands are dismantled. We’re just not gonna sit by and watch that. And I don’t think other companies should either. […] They probably be interested to know that a lot of their employees find a lot enjoyment in the outdoors and spending time with their families there. And if it’s gone because of, you know, greedy people, then we don’t get it back. I mean, it feels proportional to me. I mean, people say to me all the time, “You’re taking the biggest stand.” But it feels very proportional to what the company has been devoted to over the last forty-six years, and what we’re keeping devoted to.  […] What are they doing? Like going to Mars? I mean, how weird is that? I mean, our planet is like, “We’re in dire trouble here.” There’s unbelievable income and equity. There’s a rise in populism and fascism in the world, and it’s very scary right now. There’s a climate crisis that is affecting everyone’s life and causing billions and billions of dollars in damage. And a few very wealthy people could do something really powerful about it, and I don’t see them doing anything. I really don’t. Self-driving cars, going to Mars. I don’t get it. I don’t get it. And I think it’s the reason why a lot of wealth shouldn’t be concentrated into a few people because that’s what happens.  […] I don’t wanna think about what happened in a quarter. I wanna look into the eyes of my employee’s child and say, “What’s gonna happen in her lifetime?” And to me it’s like the whole idea of this short-term profit that makes a few shareholders very rich, it’s not a good model. I mean, it doesn’t mean that capitalism is bad. I love capitalism. I love the competition, I love the innovation, I love the working together and collaboration and the best ideas win. I love that. And that’s like the best part of capitalism and great products and great services and disruption and all of that. So, capitalism needs to evolve. That’s all. It’s not like necessarily a bad system. It just needs to evolve. And it needs to consider more things than just a financial shareholder or quarterly earnings report. | | | | |
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Collected by Daniela Ribitsch