

Heather Wood, Recognized By Influential Women, Transforms Tragedy Into Hope, Connection, And Purpose Through Love

SYRACUSE, NY, UNITED STATES, August 11, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Keynote Speaker, Strategic Leader, and Founder Creates a Legacy of Inspiration Through Servant Leadership, Mental Health Advocacy, and Meaningful Human Connection

Syracuse, New York — Heather Wood is a dynamic keynote speaker, storyteller, and strategic leader with more than two decades of experience in the credit union and financial services industry. She is also the Founder of Stupendous Love, a purpose-driven motivational brand and movement rooted in inspiration, servant leadership, positivity, and human connection.



Throughout her career, Heather has built a reputation as a people-focused leader who brings together strategy, innovation, and compassion. During her 23 years at AmeriCU Credit Union, she served in several key leadership roles focused on organizational growth, operational excellence, and strengthening employee and member experiences. Known for her ability to connect people, ideas, and purpose, Heather has consistently demonstrated that meaningful leadership begins with understanding and empowering others.

Today, Heather brings that same philosophy to her work as a speaker, entrepreneur, and community advocate. Whether she is leading organizational initiatives, developing leadership programs, or sharing her story on stage, she creates spaces where people feel encouraged to reflect, connect, and embrace the possibility of change.

Heather's path toward founding Stupendous Love began after experiencing an unimaginable

personal tragedy that forever changed the direction of her life. In 2023, her daughter, Ava, was tragically killed by her father, Heather's husband, who then died by suicide. After 23 years of building a successful career in financial services, Heather faced a moment that required her to rebuild her life from the ground up.

In the aftermath of this profound loss, Heather made the courageous decision to step beyond what was familiar and create something rooted in love, purpose, and legacy. In November 2025, she officially launched Stupendous Love, a motivational brand and movement dedicated to inspiring people to live boldly, love stupendously, and create a life they truly value.

The movement serves as a tribute to Ava's vibrant, intentional, kind, and joyful spirit. Through Stupendous Love, Heather seeks to carry forward the qualities that made Ava unique while encouraging others to find hope, connection, and purpose in their own lives.

Stupendous Love includes several initiatives designed to inspire individuals and communities. The organization's merchandise and apparel line provides wearable reminders of positivity, kindness, and connection. Through her keynote speaking platform, Heather partners with conferences, organizations, and events to share messages of resilience, servant leadership, and the importance of living with intention.

The movement also includes a Servant Leadership program designed to help organizations bring more humanity and compassion into their leadership practices. Heather believes effective leadership is not only about achieving goals but also about creating environments where people feel valued, supported, and empowered to contribute their best.

In addition, Stupendous Love has developed a growing charitable initiative that includes three scholarships established in Ava's name—two local scholarships and one national scholarship that received more than 3,000 applicants in its first year. Heather continues to expand efforts focused on fundraising for mental health awareness, suicide prevention, and educational access.

Today, Heather's work is centered on creating meaningful impact through connection and service. She continues to nurture each area of Stupendous Love while building relationships with leaders, organizations, and communities throughout Central New York and beyond.

For Heather, the greatest reward comes from witnessing moments of genuine transformation—seeing someone experience a new perspective, hearing authentic laughter, or watching a person recognize their own ability to create positive change. These moments allow her to see Ava's spirit continue through the lives she touches.

Heather attributes her success to resilience, purpose-driven leadership, and her ability to transform profound personal loss into meaningful impact. She believes that while adversity can change the direction of a person's life, it can also create opportunities to serve others in ways

that may not have previously been imagined.

After losing her daughter and husband, Heather chose not only to survive but also to rebuild with intention. Founding Stupendous Love allowed her to create a legacy centered around love, compassion, and helping others recognize the value of their own lives.

She takes pride in stepping away from a long-established career without a traditional safety net in order to pursue work that creates lasting value. For Heather, success is not simply about professional accomplishments or recognition—it is about making a difference and helping others discover hope, purpose, and connection.

The best career advice Heather has received is simple but powerful: put people first, and mean it.

While many organizations focus primarily on performance, outcomes, and perception, Heather believes the most successful leaders understand that people are at the center of everything. She believes results matter, but lasting impact comes from creating environments where individuals feel genuinely seen and valued.

Heather believes there is no true separation between work and life because people bring their full experiences, challenges, and stories into every environment they enter. When leaders approach others with humanity and recognize people beyond their professional contributions, trust grows and relationships become stronger.

By leading with compassion, authenticity, and genuine care, Heather believes people are able to perform at their best because they feel comfortable being themselves.

For Heather, success without humanity is incomplete. She believes leadership is not only about building stronger teams or achieving better outcomes—it is about creating cultures where people feel connected to meaningful work and supported as individuals.

She believes putting people first should not be viewed as a leadership tactic or strategy. Instead, it should be a standard that guides every decision and interaction.

Heather's advice to young women entering any industry is to build a career they do not need to escape from and to remember that success is ultimately built on people. She recognizes that many professionals become focused on titles, achievements, and external measures of success. While those accomplishments can be meaningful, Heather believes they should not come at the expense of personal fulfillment, relationships, or alignment with one's values.

She encourages women to consider not only what they want to achieve but also how they want to live. Creating a successful career means building environments where individuals can be authentic, supported, and connected to what truly matters.

Heather believes people should not wait for a future milestone before embracing the life they want. Instead, she encourages individuals to live boldly, stay connected to their purpose, and surround themselves with people who inspire growth and positivity. Ultimately, Heather believes success that appears impressive externally but feels empty internally is not true success.

Heather believes one of the greatest challenges in her field—and in life—is starting over after losing what someone believed their future would look like. She recognizes that rebuilding after profound loss does not come with a perfect plan or clear instructions. Instead, it requires taking each day as it comes, making intentional decisions, and continuing forward even when the path is uncertain.

However, Heather also sees starting over as an opportunity.

She believes that when people rebuild from a place of purpose rather than validation or status, they can create something more meaningful and aligned with what truly matters. Through Stupendous Love, Heather is building a movement based on authentic conversations, genuine connection, and meeting people exactly where they are.

In a world that can often feel disconnected, fast-paced, and transactional, Heather believes there is a powerful opportunity to create something centered on humanity, presence, and truth.

She believes people are searching for authentic connection now more than ever and is committed to creating spaces where individuals feel inspired, supported, and reminded of their ability to make a difference.

The values most important to Heather are authenticity, connection, and choosing to live boldly regardless of life's circumstances.

Heather believes authenticity means being real—not perfect or polished, but genuine. She believes trust is built when people feel safe enough to show up as themselves.

Connection is another value that guides her personal and professional approach. Heather believes in truly seeing people, understanding their experiences, and making them feel valued. She believes these meaningful relationships are what remain long after individual moments have passed.

She also believes strongly in living boldly. Heather encourages people not to wait for a perfect moment or hold themselves back for an uncertain future. Instead, she believes individuals should embrace the life in front of them, even during difficult seasons.

These values are more than principles Heather applies to her work—they are the foundation of how she chooses to live. They guide her leadership, shape her mission, and continue to inspire

everything she is building through Stupendous Love.

Through her story, leadership, and commitment to serving others, Heather Wood continues to transform loss into love and create a legacy dedicated to connection, compassion, and hope.

Learn More about Heather Wood:

Through her Influential Women profile, <https://influentialwomen.com/connect/Heather-Wood> or through her website, <https://www.stupendouslove.com/>

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