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JACINDA ARDERN, ELIZABETH BANKS, AND MORE ADDRESS SOLD-OUT TEXAS CONFERENCE FOR WOMEN

[Download Photo of Elizabeth Banks and Jameela Jamil](#)

AUSTIN, Nov. 16, 2023 – More than 7,200 people attended the 24th annual Texas Conference for Women today, where keynote speakers challenged conventional ideas about women’s leadership, empathy, imposter syndrome, aging, and more.

“When you break a glass ceiling, there are still some shards left behind,” said **Dame Jacinda Ardern, the former prime minister of New Zealand**. “And I felt like I was often deciding whether to let things slide, lest I'd be portrayed as humorless, or worry about the woman coming after me and push back.”

Ardern said that serving as prime minister taught her that empathy is a strength, not a weakness. “In my mind, leadership is about trust, and trust is built when you can see that the people leading you are human, too, so why not show that authenticity?”

Ardern added that imposter syndrome can also be a strength. “When you have a bit of a confidence gap, you're constantly seeking all the information you can to be as well-researched and well-prepared as possible. Having that humility will make you better at what you do.”

The Texas Conference for Women promotes women in the workplace and beyond. This nonpartisan, nonprofit event focuses on leadership, career advancement, and personal development.

Actor, producer, writer, and director **Elizabeth Banks** spoke in conversation with actor, host, and activist **Jameela Jamil**. “Our society puts a lot of obstacles in the way of women feeling like we are enough, and shame and guilt are two tools used to make us feel that way,” Banks said. But, she added, “I like to feel like my value is not so much in how I look but in my actions and behaviors and the quality of my relationships, more than anything.”

Banks also observed that on the edge of turning 50 in an industry that has long prized youth: “I feel like I am standing on my power in a way that I've never felt before. I don't experience impostor syndrome or any of those feelings anymore. I'm like, I know how to do my job. I'm good at what I do.”

Other keynote speakers included **Michelle Zauner**, a Grammy-nominated musician and best-selling *Crying in H Mart* author, and **Gail Devers**, an Olympic gold medalist, and Thyroid Eye Disease (TED) patient advocate.

Texas First Lady Cecilia Abbott and Liz McDaniel Watson, the First Lady of Austin, also addressed the audience together.

“We know that women are born leaders in all roles we play. Texas is home to 1.25 million women business owners, and because of their hard work, Texas leads the nation in job creation,” said **Texas First Lady Cecilia Abbott**.

“For many years, this conference has continued to address the changing needs of women in the workplace while keeping our collective eyes on the prize of creating environments that work for everyone,” said **Liz McDaniel Watson, First Lady of Austin**.

Several dozen of the nation's top experts on leadership, career advancement, and personal development also spoke.

The Texas Conference for Women, presented by Liberty Mutual Insurance, is part of the [Conferences for Women](#), the nation's largest network of women's conferences. The network's conferences in Pennsylvania, California, Massachusetts, and Texas attract more than 50,000 people annually.

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