Sonia
MCDONALD

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Lots of speakers motivate. Sonia McDonald *ignites change.*

Neuroscience-backed keynotes, workshops and facilitation that leave audiences braver than they arrived.

Not just a speech.

A leadership experience.

Sonia McDonald is not your typical leadership speaker. She's a globally recognised voice on courageous, human-centred and future-focused leadership — with 35+ years in business, coaching and transforming leaders.

With her signature blend of sass, smarts and science, Sonia lights a fire in every room she enters. She fuses neuroscience with practical, no-fluff strategies that help leaders own their power and lead with courage.

Audiences don't just leave motivated. They leave ready to lead, ready to act, and ready to change the game.

FOUNDER, LEADERSHIPHQ & WORKSPARKS

35+	100K+	10	3
YEARS	LEADERS REACHED	COUNTRIES	BOOKS

> *From the moment Sonia walked on stage, the room shifted. Inspiring, extraordinary, energetic, and unforgettable.*
>
> QSUPER

Keynote Speaker

Neuroscience-backed keynotes that change behaviour, not just thinking. Your audience leaves different — and they stay different.

Workshops & Facilitation

Hands-on leadership facilitation that unlocks performance, alignment and trust. No trust falls. No death by PowerPoint.

MC & Conference Host

Energy, depth and zero boring. Sonia keeps your event on track, your conversations meaningful and your audience awake.

SIGNATURE KEYNOTES

Keynotes that *change leadership.*

First Comes Courage

LEADERSHIP STARTS WITHIN

Leadership demands more than skills and strategy. Sonia uncovers what it truly takes to lead — heart, courage and grit. Through powerful storytelling, actionable insight and a focus on authentic leadership, this keynote challenges audiences to step up, embrace vulnerability, and lead with purpose and heart, even when the path isn't easy.

Leadership Is an Attitude, Not a Title

HOW ANYONE, AT ANY LEVEL, CAN LEAD — STARTING TODAY

Leadership isn't about fancy titles or corner offices. It's about how you show up every day. An empowering session for leaders, aspiring leaders and anyone ready to lift their impact — in the workplace, the community or their own life. This isn't just a keynote; it's a wake-up call to step into your power and lead like you mean it.

Regulate to Lead

STAYING CLEAR,CALM AND COURAGEOUS UNDER PRESSURE

The leaders who win under pressure aren't fearless — they're regulated. This keynote brings the neuroscience of emotional regulation to the stage: how to stay clear, calm and courageous when the stakes are highest, and how to build a team that does the same.

- Why regulation, not confidence, is the real leadership edge under pressure.
- The brain science of staying calm in conflict, crisis and change.
- Practical regulation tools leaders can use in the room, that day.

IN SONIA'S WORDS

"I'm not just a speaker. I'm your secret weapon."

Every keynote is built backwards from the outcome you name in the discovery call — your audience, your pressures, your language. Sonia doesn't arrive with a stock deck. She arrives having done the homework on your room.

SIGNATURE KEYNOTES

The science and the *humanity.*

The Power of Neuroscience

UNLOCKING THE LEADER WITHIN

What if you could rewire your brain to be a more effective, confident and inspiring leader? Sonia reveals the science behind how our brains actually work — and how to harness it to lead with clarity, emotional intelligence and resilience. Cutting-edge neuroscience meets practical strategy, so leaders make better decisions and inspire their teams like never before.

Human First, Always

WHY THE BEST LEADERS NEVER FORGET THE HUMAN

In a world of AI, pressure and performance metrics, the leaders who win are the ones who stay deeply human. This keynote reframes leadership as a way of being, not managing — showing how empathy, presence and psychological safety aren't "soft skills" but performance drivers. Leaders walk away with practical ways to lead people, not just outputs.

Courage Before Clarity

LEADING WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS

Most leaders wait for certainty before acting, and that hesitation costs trust, momentum and impact. Sonia shows why courage always comes before clarity. Through real stories and grounded insight, leaders learn to move forward confidently in uncertainty, make better decisions under pressure, and lead change without burning out.

The Emotional Load of Leadership

HOW TO LEAD WITHOUT BURNING OUT

Leadership carries an invisible weight — decision fatigue, emotional labour and constant responsibility. This keynote gives leaders the language, permission and tools to carry that load without losing themselves. Practical, honest and deeply relatable, it equips leaders to lead sustainably, not endlessly.

THE FULL MENU

More keynotes to *choose from.*

The Brave Minute™
The micro-decisions leaders make every day that shape trust, culture and courage — one brave minute at a time.

The Super Leader
How leading with kindness and empathy builds engaged teams, resilient leaders and organisations that last.

Strong Enough to Stay Kind
Why kindness is a leadership advantage, not a weakness — and how it accelerates trust and performance.

From Capability to Courage
Why good leaders stall and great ones don't: naming the fear, self-doubt and people-pleasing that hold them back.

Just Rock It!
Silencing self-doubt and leading with confidence, not perfection — because imperfect action beats standing still.

The Future Me Theory™
Why playing small is no longer an option, and how to use the neuroscience of change to become your future self.

Trust Is the Leadership Multiplier
Why trust accelerates execution, reduces friction and directly lifts performance, retention and results.

Leading Through Uncertainty
Practical strategies for holding clarity, momentum and confidence in complex, fast-changing environments.

Influence Without Authority
Building credibility and impact when leading across stakeholders, functions and competing priorities.

Leading Performance Without Burnout
How high-performing organisations sustain results, energy and engagement without exhausting their people.

Empathy Is a Performance Strategy
Not about being nice. About leading in a way that drives engagement, accountability and results.

The Leadership Behaviours That Drive Results
Focusing leaders on the few behaviours that measurably improve engagement, performance and culture.

BUILT FOR YOUR ROOM

Every keynote is customised.

Sonia builds each session around your audience, your outcomes and your context — from a 20-minute conference opener to a full-day leadership intensive. Tell her what you need the room to walk out believing, and she'll design backwards from there.

BEYOND THE KEYNOTE

Workshops, facilitation & *conference hosting.*

Workshops & Facilitation

YOUR TEAM ISN'T BROKEN. IT'S MISALIGNED.

High-impact leadership workshops and team facilitation that align leaders, strengthen culture and drive performance. Every session is built on neuroscience and leadership psychology, then measured against the outcomes you set in the discovery call — not smile sheets.

- Discovery call → customised design → interactive facilitation → real outcomes.
- Formats: virtual, 2-hour, half-day, full-day, retreats and ongoing facilitation.
- Decades of war stories and tools your team can use the next morning.

MC & Conference Hosting

YOUR EVENT, IN SAFE HANDS

Energy, depth and zero boring. As MC and conference host, Sonia keeps your event on track, your conversations meaningful and your audience awake — from opening welcome to closing challenge.

Virtual Events

NOT A WEBINAR. A ROOM THAT HAPPENS TO BE ONLINE.

Sonia designs virtual sessions for interaction, not passive viewing — built to hold attention, surface real conversation and land practical takeaways, whatever the screen size.

COURAGE, IN WRITING

Three books. One message.

Leadership Attitude · *Just Rock It!* · *First Comes Courage* — available as an add-on for delegates, with signed copies and bulk pricing on request.

KIND WORDS

Real words from *real leaders.*

> *"Sonia is an outstanding motivational speaker who inspires her audience to be inclusive and balanced leaders and you always leave wanting to hear more. Thankfully she also has wonderful books to support your journey to not only outstanding leadership, but courage and growth."*
>
> QUEENSLAND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

> *"Sonia spoke at our company's annual International Women's Day event 2022 and all our team and our guests absolutely loved her presentation. This has been one of the best industry events we have hosted and having Sonia as a speaker definitely played a role in this success."*
>
> WOLTER CONSULTING

> *"Sonia facilitated the Women in Mantra leadership workshop for us on International Women's Day. Her passion and energy left our Team Members feeling inspired to achieve leadership roles at Mantra Group, and they have already set up local networking groups and put measurable goals in place."*
>
> MANTRA GROUP

> *"Sonia combines bucket loads of passion for her clearly defined purpose, a thorough grounding in the principles of leadership and neuroscience, and an engaging personal style which makes her an adaptable and engaging presenter in front of any audience. Presenting at the LeadX event Sonia had the audience captured with her energy and compelling story telling, leaving all attendees empowered to surround themselves with the right people and confident to take risks to learn and lead."*
>
> REVELIAN

> *"Sonia is on the top leadership level. Her words urge you to stop the excuses and step up."*
>
> AUSAID ABDUL RAZZAK

TRUSTED BY

The leaders behind *these organisations.*

hipages Group

VINCI CONSTRUCTION

AECOM

ANGLO AMERICAN

protech

amazon

Virgin australia

CANSTAR BLUE

CPB CONTRACTORS

SEYMOUR WHYTE

Gold Coast Health always care

RSA
Renal Society of Australasia

THE CALILE HOTEL

BOEING

NAWIC
THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION

lga
Local Government Association of South Australia

BESIX Watpac

TerraCom

Brisbane City Council
BRISBANE CITY

ALSO TRUSTED BY

Qantas · ANZ · KPMG · Coles · Telstra · Cross River Rail

If your logo isn't here yet — let's fix that.

Sonia
MCDONALD

LET'S GET SONIA ON YOUR STAGE

Make your next event *outstanding.*

Tell us the date, the audience and the outcome you want —and we'll come back with a short list of keynotes built for your room. Availability moves quickly, so early conversations are always welcome.

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