



Paula Stone Williams

AUTHOR · INFLUENCER · TEDX SPEAKER

Workplace gender parity stalls in the same place inside most large organisations. The data shows the gap, training cycles run, and senior women still report that authority is extended to them differently than to male peers in the same role. Inclusion programmes struggle to move past awareness into anything that changes how a meeting actually runs.

Paula Stone Williams is a pastoral counselor and author whose work helps organisations move workplace gender equity and LGBTQ+ inclusion from policy statement into the substance of how meetings, decisions and authority actually operate.

Paula Stone Williams's 2026 Biography

AVAILABLE FOR

- Speaking

Why organisations work with Paula Stone Williams

- A first-person comparative account of professional life as a senior man and a senior woman, drawing on lived experience that almost no other speaker can offer at the executive level.
- A memoir published by Simon & Schuster (*As a Woman*, 2021), four TED talks with combined viewership over nine million, and sustained coverage in the New York Times, Washington Post, NPR and CNN.
- Substantive content on the mechanics of allyship for male leaders, framed as a practical capability rather than a values statement.
- A speaker who can address gender equity and LGBTQ+ inclusion in the same keynote without flattening either, useful to organisations where these conversations are usually held in separate rooms.

PAULA'S SPEAKING THEMES

- Culture Transformation
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Inclusive Leadership
- Storytelling & Business Communication

Biography highlights

- Author of *As a Woman: What I Learned About Power, Sex, and the Patriarchy After I Transitioned* (Simon & Schuster, 2021), optioned by Cannonball Productions for a limited series.
- Co-author of *She's My Dad* with her son Jonathan Williams.
- TED, TEDWomen, TEDSummit and TEDxMileHigh speaker; four talks with combined viewership over nine million.
- Featured in the New York Times, Washington Post, NPR, CNN, ABC Primetime News, Good Morning America, People Magazine and Red Table Talk.
- Pastor of preaching and worship at Left Hand Church, Longmont, Colorado.
- Pastoral counselor with RLT Pathways; doctorate in counseling.

LANGUAGES: English

Biography

Most workplace gender equity programmes are designed by people who have only ever held authority inside one set of expectations. Paula Stone Williams has held senior roles as both a man and a woman, and her keynote work is built on the comparative material that produced. The argument is empirical rather than rhetorical: the same person, the same competence, two markedly different professional experiences.

Her memoir *As a Woman: What I Learned About Power, Sex, and the Patriarchy After I Transitioned* was published by Simon & Schuster in 2021 and has been optioned by Cannonball Productions. Her TED, TEDWomen, TEDSummit and TEDxMileHigh talks have together passed nine million views. The New York Times, Washington Post, NPR, CNN, Good Morning America and People Magazine have covered her work.

Alongside the keynote practice she is a pastoral counselor with RLT Pathways and pastor of preaching and worship at Left Hand Church in Longmont, Colorado. The counseling background shapes how she handles the room, which matters in this subject area; audiences leave with material they can act on rather than only feelings they have processed.

The most useful thing she gives a corporate audience is a precise account of how allyship behaves in practice. Male leaders who want to support women and LGBTQ+ colleagues are often unsure what the substantive ask actually is. Williams names it directly, with examples, and treats it as a capability that can be learned.

Key speaking topics

- Workplace gender equity
- LGBTQ+ inclusion in corporate environments
- Allyship as a practical capability for senior leaders
- Authority, voice and credibility across gender
- Storytelling and narrative communication
- Resilience through identity and career change
- Bridging cultural and religious divides

Ideal for

- CHROs and DEI leads designing substantive inclusion work after initial awareness programmes.
- Senior leadership offsites where male executives are the intended audience for an allyship conversation.
- Women's leadership networks and ERGs commissioning an external voice on workplace parity.
- Universities, professional services firms and faith-adjacent institutions navigating LGBTQ+ inclusion under public scrutiny.

Audience outcomes

- A first-person frame of reference for how authority is extended differently to men and women in the same senior role.
- A concrete vocabulary for what allyship looks like inside a meeting, a hiring decision and a promotion conversation.
- A view of LGBTQ+ inclusion grounded in lived experience rather than abstract policy language.
- Material that male leaders, in particular, can repeat back to their teams without feeling they are reciting a script.

Meet Paula Stone Williams

Dr. Paula Stone Williams is an internationally known speaker on gender equity, LGBTQ advocacy and religious tolerance. As a transgender woman, Paula brings a unique perspective to her work on gender equity. She says, "The differences between living as a man and a woman are massive. There is no way an educated white male can understand how much the culture is tilted in his favor, because it is all he has ever known and all he ever will know."

Paula, with decades of experience in strategic communications within partisan spaces, skillfully employs narrative communication—a storytelling approach that intimately connects the audience with the conveyed message, fostering enduring change. Whether a corporate meeting, women's conference, company retreat or national gathering, Paula's unique perspective and skilled storytelling engages everyone as she humbly and effectively advocates for gender equity, LGBTQ rights and better communication and appreciation for the differences among us.

Paula has been the CEO of a large religious non-profit, the editor-at-large of a national magazine, host of a national television show and a corporate consultant. With her doctoral thesis on the DiSC Personality Profile, Paula has led hundreds of corporate boards and work teams to become more efficient and productive. Paula has served as an adjunct university professor in the United States and Europe, and is the author of eight books, including *She's My Dad*, co-authored with her son, Jonathan.

Paula's memoir, *As a Woman: What I Learned about Power, Sex, and the Patriarchy After I Transitioned* (Simon & Schuster), chronicles her transition journey and sheds light on the gendered landscape that impacts many in the LGBTQ+ community and women in the workplace and beyond. Her memoir will be turned into a limited series by Cannonball Productions.

In addition to her public speaking and corporate consulting, she is also a Pastor and Pastoral Counselor in Boulder County, Colorado. Paula has been featured in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *TEDWomen*, *TEDSummit*, *TEDxMileHigh*, *Red Table Talk*, *National Public Radio*, *Good Morning America*, *ABC Primetime News*, *CNN*, *People Magazine*, and many other media outlets. She has been a keynote speaker for hundreds of conferences, corporations, and universities around the world. Her TED Talks have had over nine million views.

Paula Stone Williams's 2026 talks & topics

I've Lived as a Man and a Woman. Here's What I Learned

A first-person account of how professional authority, voice and credibility were extended to her differently in each role, supported by data on workplace parity.

Key takeaways:

- A comparative frame for understanding why gender parity stalls past the awareness stage.
 - The specific moments at which authority is granted or withheld inside a meeting.
 - Why competence is read differently depending on who is in the room.
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Further Along the Road Toward Gender Equity

A follow-up keynote focused on the obstacles and opportunities to genuine workplace parity, aimed at audiences ready to move past introductory material.

Key takeaways:

- Where standard parity programmes typically stall and why.
 - What senior men can do that materially changes outcomes for women in their organisation.
 - How to read parity data without flattening the underlying behavioural patterns.
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From Ally to Apprentice

A talk on supporting LGBTQ+ colleagues that reframes allyship as an apprenticeship rather than a fixed identity.

Key takeaways:

- Why “ally” as a self-description has weakened as a useful term.
 - What an apprentice posture looks like in practice.
 - The behaviours that distinguish genuine support from performative support.
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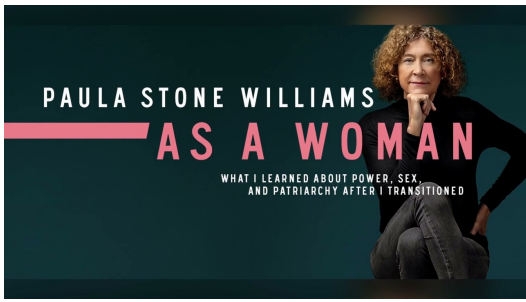
Break Barriers and Build Connections

A keynote on listening across difference as the foundational capability for inclusion work.

Key takeaways:

- Why most organisational listening is a turn-taking exercise rather than listening.
- The specific habits that signal genuine attention.
- How leaders can model listening as a visible capability.

Paula Stone Williams's Videos



What Paula Stone Williams's clients say

I'm sure you receive follow-ups like this all the time for Paula but WOW. Oh my gosh, what an incredible speaker. Personally I found it moving, inspirational, and funny, and the feedback I've been receiving has been exemplary. "This is beyond INCREDIBLE. MORE OF THIS PLEASE." may be the most explicit comment but it was in no way unique. People loved her. Please communicate my and Udemy's deep gratitude to Paula for joining us.

Udemy

The event was absolutely amazing!! We are so grateful to Paula for sharing her stories & insights.

SpiritAero

It was wonderful to hear Dr. Stone Williams' perspective on living as both a man and as a woman and how we need to be inclusive of transgender individuals to improve outcomes for all. It was truly the first time that perspective has been presented at SBM. Overall, it was a wonderful talk and we are so grateful she shared her lived experience.

Society of Behavioral Medicine

We hope you were surprised and delighted by Dr. Paula Stone Williams, a transgender pastoral counsellor whose moving speech blew the roof off.

Retail Week Live

It was fascinating to listen to Dr. Paula Stone Williams speak at Retail Week Live on Wednesday. As a transgender woman, she shared her personal insight into the difference between men and women and as she said, "The differences are massive!" I also loved the fact that Dr. Paula was a secret speaker so that many could benefit from her insights. A great way to drive the need for better inclusion and diversity.

Accenture (attending Retail Week Live)

WOW! Both myself and the team completely echo Mike's sentiment. We were blown away by your stories, authenticity, humor and anecdotes. Thank you again for spending the time with us and sharing your wisdom.

Upside Travel

Our company, Sparkfund, invited Paula Stone Williams to lead a conversation about gender equity and I have the utmost appreciation for her time, energy, and passion for the topic. As a 50-person start-up focused on improving access to energy efficient technology, we are actively working to incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) into the fabric of our organizational culture to foster our mission and make our company a better place to work.

I serve as the Chief People Officer, and invited Paula to speak to us as an external expert on the topic. She helped provide not just a unique perspective, but also helpful recommendations and action items to drive our commitments into reality. Following her 90-minute talk, I heard so much positive buzz from the entire company. Her insight was incredibly powerful, and we have continued talking about many of her points in the time since she was in our office. We have quoted her and praised her presentation as we continue to dedicate time and attention to DEI work.

For anyone who is interested in the topic, wants to learn from a powerful and engaging speaker, or enjoys hearing outside perspectives to foster growth and development, I would strongly encourage you to watch any of Paula's recorded talks and listen to her speak live!

Sparkfund

In a conference with 21 breakout sessions, Paula's was easily one of the most sought out, filling up completely on both days. Many employees stated that they came to the conference specifically to participate in her session, "Is Life Really Easier for Men." Working with Paula was an absolute joy! As the conference coordinator I found Paula to be engaging, compassionate and sincere - and that was just my initial phone call with her. Participants in her session stated that they wished her hour and a half session was four hours longer, as they could have listened to her all day. Getting to know Paula was, for me, a highlight of our conference.

Oregon Department of Revenue

Paula spoke at EPA to an audience of over 100 employees, or approximately 50% of the workforce in our building. Participation exceeded all events that have been held in our building in the last 10 years. In our office, over 50% of the employees are women and greater than 50% are managers, yet the women involved in the EPA's Federal Women's Program have been talking for years about how differently women are treated by each other and by men.

Paula's perspective as a transgender woman spoke to gender equity in a way that doesn't sound like complaining or criticism. Men left the talk feeling contemplative and many approached me afterward to express gratitude for opening their minds to the female experience.

Environmental Protection Agency

Hearing Paula Stone Williams has been one of the highlights of our year at Sparkfund. She made the women in our male-dominated office (and industry) feel seen and validated. She opened the eyes of the men with her unique perspective and real-world stories. She kept skeptics of "another HR talk" intrigued and engaged. And, most importantly, she motivated the entire company to tackle the often overwhelming problem of gender inequity with enthusiasm and empathy. There's no doubt that the current and future employees of Sparkfund will have a more caring and accepting workplace thanks to Paula's influence.

Sparkfund

Thank you so much for your incredible talk and for sharing your insights with the group on Friday! We are so grateful for your time and cannot say enough about the impact of your story on the providers and staff that attended the event. We hope to work with you again in the future!

University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

Following the event I had several team members say to me that they learned so much. A branch manager said the talk was inspirational and that she feels more equipped than ever with ensuring a safe and comfortable work environment for the LGBTQ population.

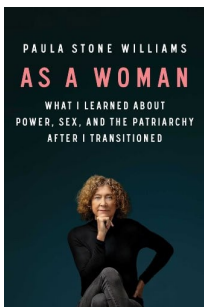
Personally, I was astounded with the statistical information surrounding the suicidal, and suicidal ideation, rates among members of the trans-community and hope that I personally can foster a comfortable presence. Moreover, as we discussed the unconscious bias that “privileged white males” have, I’ve begun reflecting on how I can keep myself in check in making sure I don’t un/intentionally silence the voices of my female counterparts.

Bank of the West

A quick note to thank you so very much for taking the time to join us and to share your unique perspective and extraordinary experience. We have had some amazing feedback from our attendees. We were all fascinated and inspired by your speech which will give everyone a lot of food for thought. I very much look forward to reading your book when it comes out next year and wanted to say how much we appreciate all you are doing to promote gender equity. Again many thanks for your time and for your invaluable insight and advice.

Bouygues UK

PAULA'S LATEST BOOKS



**As a Woman: What I Learned
about Power, Sex, and the
Patriarchy After I Transitioned**