



**Secrets of Six-Figure Women**  
**Strategies to up Your earnings and Change Your Life**

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**Publisher:** Harper Collins  
**Copyright year:** 2002  
**ISBN:** 0-06-018548-1

**Authors' Bio:** Barbara Stanny is a popular motivational speaker and former journalist and syndicated columnist. She is also the author of *Prince Charming Isn't Coming: How Women Get Smart About Money*.

**Authors' big thought:** The author identifies the seven key strategies of successful female high earners while also addressing the phenomenon of female under-earners. Though the women interviewed came from widely different work experiences, they all had certain traits in common. Stanny calls the *must haves*: 1) A profit motive. 2) Audacity. 3) Resilience, and 4) Encouragement; and *big helpers*: 1) Self-awareness 2) Nonattachment and 3) Financial know-how

**Introduction: Welcome to the Era of Six-Figure Women**

- Never before have we seen so many women forging such lucrative careers, even in fields you'd never expect. These high earners include entrepreneurs, corporate executives, professionals, and part-timers. Women's chances of high incomes are increasing faster than men's.
- Such women are still a minority. Fewer than 20 percent of six-figure earners are women. Most women remain sorely underpaid. According to the Department of Labor, the average woman brought home less than \$25,000 in 1999. In virtually every field, women make 50 to 80 percent of what men make.
- The author spoke to more than 150 high earners. She asked questions about their upbringings and lifestyles, their dreams and disappointments, their successes and setbacks, and the reasons for their financial achievements.
- Women are pouring their money into the stock market and their hearts into learning about it. There was a significant level of passivity and resignation when it came to wages. No matter how deep their financial holes, most women never consider higher pay as a viable way out. For far too many women, their financial limits have become a fact of life. That all changed for the author when she learned the secrets of the six-figure women she interviewed. Her income soared before she even finished writing this book.
- The author also spoke to women who were making way below their earning potential. She wanted to know why these women – often bright and talented, and equally qualified as those making more- were struggling financially.

- Here's a seven-figure question: Why, in the face of such formidable odds and enduring barriers, are there millions of women actually making big money?
- The real problem is this: We've been paying way too much attention to the wage gap and not enough to wage gains. This book is meant to help us shift our focus from the income barriers to the women themselves who are breaking these barriers.
- The author's purpose in writing this book is: *to identify the secrets of six-figure women and come up with some straightforward strategies for applying those secrets to their own situations.* The point is to offer insight, hope, and guidance to those who aspire to earn more, regardless of how little they are currently making.
- The author's life altering lessons:
  - It's entirely possible for any one with average intelligence to increase income without selling your soul.
  - There are many ways to raise your standard of living without sacrificing, but rather *enhancing*, your quality of life.
  - These successful high earners have the most to teach us.
  - There are certain requisite traits every successful high earner possesses that are available to everyone.
  - When you deliberately hone or rigorously fine-tune these requisite traits, you automatically set in motion a process that will increase your income.

## **Chapter 1. The Queens in the Countinghouse**

- The interviews began with two broad questions in mind. What were six-figure women really like? And what did it take to make that much money?
- These women were not intimidating at all. They were personable, likeable, and pretty much like all the other working women she knew – trying to make a living, trying to get ahead in their careers, and trying to squeeze in a life outside of work.
- Their combined average income was close to \$500,000. The majority hovered somewhere between \$200,000 and \$800,000 a year.

*Secret 1: Financial Success is possible in almost every field, and lack of education doesn't have to hold you back*

- As one would expect, there are certain fields where you're more likely to come across six-figure women than others. There were investment bankers, financial advisers, doctors, and lawyers who were making big money. And then there were quite a few from occupations you wouldn't normally equate with big money.
- Among the high earners with impressive credentials and advanced degrees, everyone swore her education was responsible for her financial success.
- We may not all make six-figures, but there's no reason why any ordinary woman can't be making an above-average salary if that's what she wants.

*Secret #2: Working hard doesn't mean working all the time.*

- The women interviewed fell into two groups. One group, the Successful High Earners, loved what they did, worked passionately, but sensibly, consciously striving for (though not always perfectly achieving) some semblance of balance.
- The other, smaller group, the Hard-Driven High Earners were superwomen on steroids and were spun out of control. Their passion had turned to obsession, their work had become an

addiction, their long hours felt more like hard labor, and their generous salaries were but golden shackles.

- Many weary women said that they have to work twice as hard as men just to keep up.

*Secret #3: Focus on fulfilling your values rather than financial gain.*

- Many of the women were able to make more money working fewer hours. They were living proof that it is possible to pare down your hours and at the same time actually pump up your income. It was the intensity of focus on their work, not the number of hours they spent doing it, that factored so heavily into these women's financial success.

*Secret #4: Loving what you do is much more important than what you do.*

- With rare exceptions, every woman vowed it wasn't the money per se that motivated her success. It was something much deeper, more personal, and very individual. It was what money represented. They were more motivated by what they wanted to achieve than what they aspired to earn. Each woman had her own definition of what the money symbolized and what achievement meant.
- Each one had a vision for her life based on cherished values like recognition, security, challenge, or independence. Money became the by-product of their value-based ambition, and simultaneously, gave them opportunities to live out their authentic values.
- Passion for work played a more significant role in a woman's success than any impressive credential or high-flying career. Some women even took pay cuts to pursue their passions.
- Not every six-figure woman is employed in the job of her dreams, but the vast majority found work that was fulfilling and stimulating.

*Secret #5: Feel the fear. Have the doubts. Go for it anyway.*

- These women were supremely self-confident. That catchphrase – I can do anything – emerged as a recurring mantra through the interviews.
- Belief in yourself doesn't mean absence of doubt. Every woman admitted to grappling with feelings of inadequacy, incompetence, and fear- fear of failure, fear of rejection, and fear of criticism. But they looked and acted confident even when they didn't feel it. Many struggled with self-doubt but also were anxious that others would find out.
- Some reference to the Imposter Syndrome ran through so many of these women's stories.

*Secret #6. Think in terms of trade-offs, not sacrifices, to find a workable equilibrium.*

- The whole notion of trying to find success on the job and enjoy life outside of it is an ongoing struggle for practically every working woman. But it is especially tricky for women in the demanding jobs that pay the highest wages.
- It's no surprise that balancing work and personal life is the most mentioned, most taxing quandary these high-earners encounter, particularly as they try to merge their desire for marriage and family with their aspirations for financial success.
- The struggle for balance is even more apparent in the life of a single mom.
- The work/family dilemma is an intricate web of complex issues – issues of identity, autonomy, and a maternal instinct that exerts a fiercer pull than the force of gravity.
- Over time the majority of high-earning women established their own brand of precarious balance. They each found, usually through trial and error, viable solutions for preserving their mental health while managing their multiple roles. Those solutions came from taking a hard look at their personal priorities, what they cherished most in life, and then discerning between what they thought they should do and how they really wanted to live their lives.

*Secret # 7. Sometimes you just have to shrug it off and have a good laugh.*

- There's another battle that may be even more painful than juggling too many hats: contending with gender bias and sexual harassment. Not all six-figure women have to confront these problems. For those who do, it can be the most frustrating and distressing challenge.
- Discrimination has always been a workplace threat for aspiring women, and these days, the higher a woman climbs, the more acute the problem seems to become.
- Many of the six-figure women interviewed had themselves felt like an interloper. Corporate women complained of being excluded from social occasions, passed over for promotions, or ignored for tough assignments. Entrepreneurs resented not receiving the same referrals, networking opportunities, or start up capital as their male colleagues.
- Recognition, not resignation, is how most high-earning women deal with gender biases and other injustices.
- Many six-figure women also find strength in a sense of humor.

*Secret #8. Appreciate abundance*

- There's plenty of stress in six-figure lanes. Coping with multiple roles, a challenging workload, and their minority status is no piece of cake for Successful High Earners. As a whole, six-figure women are a very happy bunch. Their conversations are liberally sprinkled with words like gratitude, fortunate, lucky, and blessed. They were very joyful and appreciative.
- Money unquestionably afforded these successful women opportunity, freedom, well-being, and largesse.
- According to studies, the most highly compensated women receive less than 3 percent of what the best compensated men make. But instead of focusing on the disparity, or becoming disheartened by its implications, the women recognized and appreciated that they were making more than most Americans, certainly more than most women, and in many cases, more than they had ever dreamed they would.
- Taken separately, none of these secrets will put more zeros on your paycheck but in combination with the right strategies, they become a formula for financial and personal success.

## **Chapter 2: The Lowdown on Low Earners**

- An under-earner is anyone who earns below her potential. Under-earners aren't all poorly paid however. You can make decent money and still fall into this category. What distinguishes an under-earner is that she could bring in more, and genuinely wants to, but for whatever reason, she doesn't.
- It's estimated that one in three workers is an under-earner, most of them women. While the disparity between what men and women make captures so much attention, the far more insidious problem is our own proclivity to settle for less.
- Our own mental caps, our own self-defeating limitations, should be our first order of business. How can we ever expect to earn as much as a man if we can't even earn as much as we ourselves are capable of making?
- Under-earning is not to be confused with voluntary simplicity, a conscious decision to live with less.
- Under-earners are often overworked and financially strapped. They commonly live paycheck to paycheck, habitually scrambling to cover expenses, forced to go without in order to live on less.

- Living in scarcity is almost always an unconscious decision, often replicating our family coding. Instead of letting go of old messages, under-earners unwittingly re-create them.
- Overcoming under-earning is an important piece of financial recovery. Most under-earners will deny they are one to their dying day. The real reason behind the denial is fear. An admission of truth makes us accountable to change.
- Waking up, owning our own deficits and honoring our desires, is the first step toward financial independence and toward life as a six-figure woman, denial keeps us stuck. Recognition sets us free. Interviews showed that life turned around quickly once women open their eyes and elected to change.
- Under-earners actually had a lot in common with their more affluent peers. They are both extremely hardworking. They were capable, talented and educated. Many were quite ambitious. And all of them genuinely wanted to make money. So why didn't they?
- Under-earners have certain distinct characteristics that keep them in lower income brackets.

Attributes of under-earners:

1. *They have a high tolerance for low pay.* They consistently accept low-paying jobs or jobs that pay less than they need, usually for the “freedom” it gives them. Whereas high earners normally lean toward more lucrative fields or strive for the steeper end of the earning curve, an under-earner usually can't even imagine herself making a great deal of money. They are victim to their own limited visions.
2. *Under-earners underestimate their worth.* Women, in particular have a tendency to undervalue themselves, which is precisely what keeps so many earning beneath their potential. Women accept lower wages because they presume they must deserve less.
3. *Under-earners are willing to work for free.* Under-earners regularly give away their time, knowledge, and skills for nothing. High earners are adamant about putting a price tag on their work. Unfortunately, women in general are notorious for volunteering their time, and society readily, eagerly, exploits those who are willing. This is not good for your pocket book and is even worse for your self-esteem. Continuing to give our time away creates a self-perpetuating downward spiral of self-worth.
4. *Under-earners are lousy negotiators.* They are reluctant to ask for more, whether it's to increase their fees or to request a raise. Most often they hold back as a result of fear. It's hard for women in all income brackets to demand more. High earners might not like it but they do it. They do what they are afraid to do.
5. *Under-earners practice reverse snobbery.* They tend to have a particularly negative attitude, especially toward people who have money. There is no way that having this attitude they would ever let themselves be financially successful. In addition to their disdain for the well-heeled, under earners are often turned off by what they assume rich people must do for the money. They believe that real wealth comes at too high a price. The irony is that few people work as hard or obsess more about money – or rather, lack of it, than under-earners do.
6. *Under-earners believe in the nobility of poverty.* At the same time under-earners are spurning the wealthy, they are singing their own praises for surviving on so little. Yet virtually every under-earner is operating under unconscious assumptions, usually made early in life, that determine her relationship with money. Whether it's family messages, personal experience, or religious indoctrination, many under-earners genuinely believe money is tainted, materialism is bad, and there's something virtuous about surviving on a shoestring. Poverty, however, holds

no appeal to high earners who genuinely enjoy what money affords them, including the opportunity to tithe to their church and help others less fortunate.

7. *Under-earners are subtle self-saboteurs.* The common thread is their *propensity* to be *scattered, distracted, and unfocused*. And they'll repeat the pattern indefinitely until they *consciously* step back and realize what they're doing. Under-earners, typically, are quick to blame someone else- the government, their upbringing, whatever- for their problems. High earners know they control the world. Just as under-earners seek out a scapegoat, they will also search for a savior.
8. *Under-earners are unequivocally codependent.* Under-earners will sacrifice personal security and private dreams by putting other people's needs before their own. Subjugating our needs for the sake of others leads to resentment, depression, burnout and breakdown. One of the toughest challenges for just about every workingwoman is finding ways to satisfy her aspirations without ignoring her obligations or slighting those she loves. Six-figure women approach this challenge not as an issue of selfishness, but as a matter of balance.
9. *Under-earners live in financial chaos.* They often go from crisis to crisis, constantly moving money from one account to another, borrowing from Peter to pay Paul, careening hopelessly toward financial disaster. High earners are not all the savviest financiers. But with rare exception, they lived within their means and were fiscally responsible. They deliberately took the steps that spared them from the nagging weight of "not enough" that under-earners typically experience. Under-earners are experts at finding ways to avoid dealing with money – from not balancing their checkbooks to bartering for services. Debt keeps you from confronting your fear of success, making hard decisions about how to earn more, and experiencing the discomfort when life becomes more expansive."

The Under-Earner's biggest challenges: financial insecurity and reduced options

- Under-earners set themselves up for a lifetime of increasing uncertainty and diminishing options, of greater risk and fewer safeguards. Our ability to provide for ourselves is our best, and often our only safeguard to finance our retirement.
- Money affects virtually every area of your life. Lack of it leads to dependency and hardship. It can limit your access to healthcare and lifestyle choices. It can keep you in an unhappy marriage and an unsatisfying job. It perpetuates the cycle of poverty and debt, of discontent and chronic stress.
- The way out of under-earning is rarely by working harder. The challenge for most under-earners is to face the problem squarely, before you hit bottom.
- Start the process by asking these questions: Am I stressed about money? Or am I at peace with money? An honest response will give you your first clue as to whether under-earning could be an issue. Take the quiz on page 69.

### Chapter 3. Raising the Bar

- One of the author's biggest surprises in interviewing six-figure women was hearing how many were once under-earners. They became living proof of what's actually possible. Their message came across loud and clear: *Under-earning need not be a life sentence.*
- The financial achievements of former under-earners were always preceded by a financial challenge. More specifically, the shift to higher earning began as soon as they were willing to admit something was wrong. It was their willingness to confront the problem head-on that gave

them the impetus to change and propelled them, often very quickly, into the six-figure zone. All problems have a purpose – they are there to get your attention.

- Once we realize our challenges are purposeful, they need no longer be painful, once we stop seeing them as stumbling blocks, we can start using them as stepping-stones. *Our state of mind shapes our way of life.*
- Instead of relying on solutions solely outside of ourselves, we'd get quicker results if we included self-exploration. The inner work of wealth means identifying and overcoming those internal barriers that trip us up. Nothing changes until we do. As Einstein once noted, "our problems can not be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them."
- Never underestimate the power of your thoughts to create your reality. The mind is the most powerful tool you have for transforming your relationship to money and your ability to earn it. Six-figure women operate on different assumptions; worlds apart from the nine traits that describe the mind-set of under-earners. Consequently, they make different choices, and those choices are directly responsible for the amount of money they eventually earn.
- The inner work does take some internal reflection, ferreting out the beliefs and attitudes about money that were forged at an early age by family patterns and cultural precedents. These initial images are installed like software in our brains. Our actions go on autopilot.
- Over the course of our lives, most of us have been mindlessly making choices based on unconscious beliefs that have no basis at all in reality. The challenge is to bring these beliefs into awareness so you can consciously decide if they are serving you or sabotaging you.

#### *Six-figure Traits*

- Every single woman in the study had four attributes that their lower paid peers visibly lacked. These are the Must-Haves:
  1. *A profit motive.* Six-figure women absolutely expect to be well compensated for their work. They *want* to make money. They enjoy what money gives them.
  2. *Audacity.* Every woman came to a point where she had to step outside her comfort zone and do something she wasn't completely sure she could do.
  3. *Resilience.* They all had the grit to get back up and keep going when they didn't succeed or when they encountered setbacks.
  4. *Encouragement.* Six-figure women have tremendously nurturing relationships with one or more people, who believe in them, support them, continually root for them, and sometimes prod them along. Each one has remarkable friendships.
- In addition to these Must-Haves, there are three qualities that are extremely beneficial for financial success. Most of the women interviewed possessed each of them to some degree. The extent to which they did, however, made financial success easier to obtain and more enjoyable. These three are the Big Helpers.
  1. *Self-awareness.* They strive to know who they are and what they want – their goals, values, priorities, skills, and talents.
  2. *Nonattachment.* They are willing to let go of what doesn't work or holds them back.
  3. *Financial know-how.* The most successful women understand and follow the rules of money.
- The biggest secret to overcoming your past and upping your earnings: *You've got to be willing to be uncomfortable.* It's certainly not comfortable to face up to a challenge or to acknowledge

a problem, and yet it's especially unnerving to eschew our habitual ways of handling them. Yet, that's exactly what's required.

- The real work in raising the bar is to stop doing the same old thing you've always done, to try out new strategies, to ignore false alarms, to resist the urge to quit, and to refuse to fall back into familiar terrain. The discomfort is temporary, but the payoff is extraordinary.
- The real payoff is far more about personal enrichment than financial remuneration. This is the higher work of wealth.
- Traveling the path to financial success imbues you with the confidence, competence, and resources to make a genuine difference in the world, to achieve your dreams and help others achieve theirs. This is the gift your financial challenges have in hand for you.
- The key: Don't wait until you "feel like it" to start, and never give up because it "doesn't feel right".
- The following questions are designed to help you identify hostage holders. Ask yourself:
  - Do I really, really, want to earn more? Why?
  - If I don't, what's that about?
  - Do I believe I can increase what I make?
  - Is there a part of me that doubts my capacity to change?
  - How would my life be different if I had more money?

#### **Chapter 4. Strategy 1: The Declaration of Intention**

- Each woman could describe that point in her life when she said to herself, "It's time to make some money." In an almost uncanny way, the instant she made that explicit declaration to make more money her life took a definite turn. Not one of us will achieve financial success unless we make up our mind that's what we want.
- Understanding the profit motive was the key for every six-figure woman interviewed. Whatever these women did, they did it with the stated intent to earn a good living. They didn't necessarily aspire to a specific amount, nor was money their primary goal. But they were unquestionably motivated to make a profit.
- You need only be open and receptive to the possibility, not necessarily completely convinced you can do it.
- The women interviewed didn't know how precisely how they would achieve all those zeros. We need not fully believe something is possible, much less have a full-blown plan firmly in place. We just have to decide what we want and be willing to do whatever comes next. In the words of Martin Luther King Jr., "You don't have to see the whole staircase. Just take the first step in faith."
- When you commit to a goal without knowing exactly how you'll achieve it, you automatically trigger a tremendous power. When your intention is strong and your commitment is staunch, the how-tos invariably show up.
- Some attributed their success to a matter of luck. But luck is a frequent companion of a firmly fixed focus. The women interviewed regularly spoke of the synchronicities they encountered on the path to success.
- Strong intentions have been known to produce sheer miracles. When your intentions are deep and compelling, and your commitment strong and inflexible, you're more likely to keep going when the going gets rough. Your intention becomes your reality. It does so by focusing your

energy and narrowing your choices. What we focus on expands, and what we give our attention to grows stronger.

- The path to higher earnings is paved with decisions. It's a whole lot easier to make them when you're purposely headed in a particular direction toward a specific destination. Every time you act on your decisions, keeping your promise to yourself by honoring your intention, you build self-esteem. Stronger self-esteem only enhances your chances for success.
- If intentions are so powerful, why don't they always pan out? *You get what you want, not what you ask for.* The distinction is critical. You run into trouble when your expressed intentions are at odds with your unconscious ones.
- Why in the world would any of us intend not to be successful? In part because it's scary. Says the psychologist Abraham Maslow - "We crave and fear becoming truly ourselves." This is what becoming a Successful High Earner is really about.
- We'll also resist success because of the way we were raised – how our families influenced us and how the culture regarded us. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the gender myths that have delineated our roles and our relationships with money.
- Studies show that profit is the least important criterion for female entrepreneurs, while it's the *most* important one for men. Women are far more motivated to make a difference or be independent than to see profits grow.
- For many women who believe big money is a bad thing, hearing someone say "I want to make money" sounds tasteless, self-serving, and materialistic. Their motives seem suspect, their values seem askew. Such women automatically link the words *profit motive* with greed and self-interest, consider the concept immoral, and blame it for what's wrong with the government, politicians, and big corporations.
- Until you're able to give yourself permission to pursue prosperity in your own right, your best intentions will remain mere pipe dreams, or, at best, delusions of grandeur with no relationship to reality. A change in perception, a shift in your thinking, can transform a chronic under-earner into a six-figure woman.
- None of the six-figure women talked to had any qualms about openly declaring their desire to profit. These women take great pleasure in wealth, joyfully reaping the psychic rewards that come with big paychecks, mindful that the more money they make, the more options they have: the more freedom they can enjoy, the more secure they feel, the more they can do for others.
- We should be asking ourselves – Why wouldn't I want to make more money? A declaration of intention, by itself, may not be enough to get you over the hump. You also need to figure out what's holding you back.
- The inner work is so critical because you have to make sure your declared intention is an authentic reflection of who you are and what you want, that conflicting intentions aren't inadvertently impeding your progress, and that your intent to profit doesn't run counter to the way you were raised, the role you assumed, or the beliefs you embrace. Over and over, these women told how their financial success came on the heels of some personal insight.
- Honest reflection often evokes a host of emotions- anger for all the wasted time, fear of tackling the unknown, embarrassment for the mistakes we have made, confusion about what to do next. We *must* lift the veils for change to occur. Once they got a glimpse of their truth, once they realized their deepest desires and highest aspirations, they experienced a literal turn

of events. They took the time to figure out not just how to boost their earnings, but how to do it in a way that fit who they were. The secret to becoming a Successful High earner, and not a hard-driven one, is to keep these dual intentions always in mind.

- To help you discern and shape your intentions around money, try the following techniques:
  - Write your intention down
  - Watch yourself around money – look for the meaning you attribute to money. Observe your attitudes, beliefs, thoughts, feelings, decisions, and choices around anything financial. Journal about your insights.
  - Do daily affirmations – write them down. Post them in full view. Say them out loud as often as possible.
- A declaration of intention is only the first strategy of financial success, but it is the most crucial one of all. When your declared intentions are aligned with your deepest values and highest priorities, when conflicting objectives cease to control you, you'll have harnessed within you a powerful force that literally pulls you toward your desired future.

## **Chapter 5. Strategy #2: Letting Go of the Ledge**

- As every woman made her way to higher earnings she had to let go of the ledge. Their ledges took many forms, both concrete and intangible- from unfulfilling jobs to unpleasant relationships, from inappropriate goals to inaccurate beliefs, from damaging habits to detrimental emotions.
- *You must let go of where you are to get to where you want to go.* Carrying out this strategy entails incredible trust.
- Every successful woman interviewed, when she finally let go (as hard as it was), cited that single act as the springboard to higher earnings and a happier time.
- The concept of letting go is far easier to talk about than to execute.
- Amazing coincidences so often occur as soon as people let go. This is the inevitable outcome of the first two strategies working in tandem. While “intention” is a magnet that attracts what we want, “letting go” provides the space for our desire to manifest.
- Regardless of the circumstances, we'll remain under-earners until we firmly resolve that settling for less is no longer an option. Those who are satisfied with crumbs will never have the whole loaf.
- Letting go is never-ending.
- It's especially tough to let go if what we're giving up isn't all that bad to begin with. Leaving the acceptable to step into the void is the ultimate act of courage.
- The author never met an under-earner who wasn't blocking herself with erroneous thinking or misguided notions. Letting go of our “mental molds” is the crucial challenge for each of us on the path to higher earnings. If our minds are full of limiting thoughts, there's no room for the expansive ones. Success can only come when there is space for it to enter.
- Just about every one who grew up poor had to quit thinking that she wasn't deserving, that money was bad, or that she'd become superficial and materialistic if she had any.

- To really change your financial situation, you have to let go of that part of yourself that stands in the way of greater abundance. Only then can different choices be made from a different perspective.
- Whenever you feel stuck, it's time to let go. Invariably, what you need to let go of is the very thing you are most afraid to release. It's the fear, not the circumstances, that keeps us trapped.
- Fear and anxiety are to financial success what labor pains are to childbirth – an unpleasant, but unavoidable, part of the process. Every time we let go there is a loss, and loss produces anxiety because it poses a threat to our essence or core. It's your ability to tolerate and push through anxiety that gets you to your goal.
- Letting go often leaves us feeling vulnerable, volatile, and fragile. Rather than hazard the instability of change, we lean on the ledges as if they were crutches, finding all kinds of reasons why we need to stay right where we are.
- The key is to listen to our intuitive urgings instead of our preconceived notions about what's practical and reasonable. Being overly realistic or inordinately logical can be as much of a liability as low self-esteem. Acting on your intuition is yet another thing. When it comes right down to it, we'll cling fiercely to lack and limitation rather than endure the anxiety intrinsic to change.
- There are certain steps you can take to facilitate the process of letting go, which will make it easier, less traumatic, and more rewarding.
  - *Keep your intention in front of you.* Intense determination is the byproduct of a solid intention. It's what gave these women the courage to let go sooner rather than later.
  - *Figure out what you need to let go of.* The challenge is to identify what you don't need any more. You can do it by asking yourself some questions and being brutally honest and highly sensitive to your first intuitive responses:
    - What situations, relationships, beliefs, attitudes, thoughts, feelings and choices have I made that are no longer serving me?
    - If I had a year to live, where would I be? Who would I be with? What would I be doing?
  - *Replace the negative with something affirmative.* List the ten most negative ideas you have about money. Then invert them into affirmations.
  - *Take your time.* Sometimes it's better to gradually let go of a ledge than to take a flying leap. Letting go seldom happens overnight.
  - *Feel the fear – and still persevere.* This six-figure secret weaves its way through every strategy and everyone's story. Acknowledging the fear and acting in the face of it makes enormous creativity possible.
- At least be willing to let go. You have to believe you can do it – visualize it, affirm it, then let go.

### **Chapter 6. Strategy #3: Get in the Game.**

- This straightforward strategy – get in the game and stay in the game – may sound simple, even self-explanatory, but the game has very specific rules. Unless you play by these rules, you don't stand a chance.

*Rule one: Decide which game to play*

- People who play Not to Lose have one intention- to play it safe. The desire to avoid fear (whether it's fear of rejection or of disapproval, of success or of failure) is what keeps most of us in the Not to Lose game, and in low-paying jobs. Successful High Earners, on the other hand, play the game To Win.
- To win, *you go as far as you can using all that you've got*. There's a strong tendency when fear and stress come up, as they invariably do, to slip back to what feels safe, into the game Not to Lose. The whole key is to recognize, as quickly as possible, that you're playing to be safe and *not* to succeed. Desperation is the principal reason people finally stop playing Not to Lose.

*Rule two: Jump in, ready or not.*

- You set your intention, let go of the ledge, and just start. The real beauty of the game To Win is that you can begin playing any time, ready or not. It doesn't matter how much you know, it only matters that you're willing to learn. A lot of people bail out before they realize how close they are to taking the prize. The women interviewed may have been tempted but they never backed down. They felt the fear and stayed the course.

*Rule three: Keep on truckin'.*

- Persistence is a prerequisite in the game To Win. When you play by the rule of persistence and you're playing with intent to make money, hard work eventually bears fruit.

*Rule four: Grab Opportunities.*

- You begin the game To Win by jumping in. You play by perseverance. And you triumph by grabbing opportunities, or by creating opportunities yourself. Many people confuse the opportunity rule with luck or fate, and then bemoan the lack of it in their lives.
- The truth is, everyone's life is full of happenstance. The "lucky" ones realize that in every synchronicity lies potential opportunity and are quick to capitalize on chance occurrences.
- High earners are willing to go where under-earners fear to tread. This opportunity rule puts success within reach of all of us, even when all odds are stacked against us.
- The women spoken to were relentless in their search for opportunity. What counts in this game is that you stay in the game, cashing in on coincidences, regardless of how anxious, pessimistic, or unenthusiastic you feel.

*Rule Five: No excuses allowed.*

- If you fail to comply with this rule, it will show you out of the game faster than any pink slip or bad economy ever will. Much of the six-figure game is played in our heads. Here's how the best players gain an edge: *They concentrate more on what they need to do rather than what they hope to avoid.*

*Rule Six: Ignore naysayers*

- These people perform a valuable service. They come to test our level of commitment. Everyone encounters naysayers.

*Rule Seven: Never personalize.*

- Criticism and rejection are unavoidable in the six-figure game. If you're playing To Win, you can't take them personally.
- Faced with hostility or opposition, these successful women found ways to cope. Politician Adlai Stevenson told us years ago "Pain is inevitable. Suffering is optional."
- They deflected critical remarks by summoning their inner reserves, reading motivational books, or talking to a counselor or friends.

- Focus on a higher purpose instead of immediate gratification. Passion and purpose are powerful motivators.
- When the game becomes demoralizing, disheartening, or destructive, you need to know when to walk away and when to run. It's one thing not to take criticism to heart and quite another to tolerate abuse.

### **Chapter 7. Strategy #4: Speak Up.**

- "I wish I had screwed up my courage a whole lot earlier" – this is the Lament of the Latecomers. Their greatest regret was their reluctance to speak up.
- If there's something you want, you've got to speak up. This strategy is based on the principal tenet of high earnings: *If you don't ask, you don't get.*
- It's our fault because when, instead of asking for the salary we want or the promotion we desire, we acquiesce, we go along with the program, often resorting to two strategies that are common practice among under-earners. One is to silently stew. The other is to pack up and leave, only to meet the same fate somewhere else.
- Few people consider the long-term consequences of this kind of compliance. Every concession you make compounds over time.
- When you fail to speak up, you turn into a victim. But when we say what we want, and say it with conviction, as hard as it may be, it usually gets people's attention, and admiration.
- Perhaps of all the strategies mentioned in this book, speaking up is the toughest for women, who are less confident and have lower expectations in negotiations than men.
- As girls, few of us were encouraged to speak our mind, so we have trouble doing so when we're older.
- The double standard is alive and kicking – assertive men are respected, assertive women are resented.
- Underlying our unwillingness to speak up is a woman's own inclination to devalue herself. Until we learn to value ourselves, we'll have a hard time pursuing this strategy. The most salient point about speaking up is that you have to consciously and deliberately recognize your worth, and make sure others do too.
- When you have a sense of your worth, higher salaries seem to follow suit, simply because you are more inclined to make sure they do.
- You may not completely silence the voices that question your value. But that doesn't mean you have to listen to them. The challenge for each and every one of us is to keep raising the threshold of what we'll accept in spite of the unnerving racket of negative chatter that keeps playing in our brains like a broken record.
- These women built this "muscle" by continually pushing themselves to take a stand, ask for more, demand what they're worth, and say no when appropriate – despite their trepidation. Applying this strategy always entails asking for more than feels comfortable. Remember, the ability to tolerate discomfort is a requirement for raising the bar.
- Here are some suggestions learned from these women for pumping up their self-worth along with their net worth:
- *Raise your fees.* Test the limits of what you can charge and see what happens. Nine times out of ten, you'll get what you ask for.

- *Think big, then even bigger* – what most of us do is unwittingly limit our earnings by lowering our expectations.
- *Do your homework*. Research the going rate and find out your market value. Find this information in magazines, on the internet, in the want ads, from trade associations, employment agencies, headhunters and colleagues.
- *Go for more*. Every job has a salary range. The rule of thumb is to aim for the upper end of the curve. Get as much as you can up front by asking for more than is offered so you have room to maneuver. Negotiate down, never up.
- *Look beyond salary*. The real game is making bonuses and being on the right projects. The list of negotiable benefits is endless: bonuses, stock options, vacation time, commuting expenses, flextime, and early salary review to name a few. The key is to be creative.
- *Act as if you're worth it*. When you act as if you're worth a lot, you'll eventually convince yourself as well as others.
- *Embrace your "bitch"*. The surest way to get what you want is to be direct, self-assured, and candid. When you do speak your mind, you're often labeled a bitch! Which, contrary to popular opinion, is not a *bad* thing. Think of it as Being in Total Control of Herself. Talking tough, embracing your bitch, does not, by any stretch mean compromising your femininity, though several women have made this mistake.
- *Take the initiative*. You can offset a tendency to downplay your achievements or counter lowball offers by having tangible evidence of what you bring to the table. Taking the initiative is an effective means of demonstrating your value and your intention to the organization. Let the powers that be know exactly where your sights are set.
- *No is not always no*. Everything is up for negotiation.
- *Know when to walk*. When you walk away, you're saying to yourself, the other person, and the universe, "I am worth more, I deserve more, and there is more where that came from." Without exception, when a woman turned her back on one thing, something better came along. An alternative to walking away is shutting up or adopting what one writer called the "Hmmm" response. Not only is silence an effective negotiating strategy, but ironically, it can be a very potent way of speaking up.
- *More than money*. Speaking up as a strategy has ramifications that go far beyond money. Asking for more is an act of *self-love*. Saying no is a show of *self-respect*. Refusing to settle is a statement of *self-worth*. And walking away is a sign of *self-trust*.

## Chapter 8. Strategy #5: The Stretch

- The women interviewed somehow intuitively (if not eagerly) embrace this strategy as common practice: *Stretch, dare to do that which you think you can't*. Go as far as you can, then stretch even further.
- Audacity is the leitmotiv of the six-figure formula, the recurring note that echoes through every strategy mentioned so far.
- This particular strategy, while implicit in the others, requires a special kind of daring – a stretch beyond what's comfortable to the seemingly impossible. Typically, it's preceded by the

thought, I can't do that, and occurs at pivotal points in a person's career. The audacity to do what felt intimidating, if not out of the question, was precisely what pushed these women to the next level – often in earnings, usually in skills, always in self-esteem.

- Just as significant, any mention of audacity was conspicuously missing from conversations with under-earners.
- The classic six-figure stance was: *If it's not illegal or immoral, find a way to get it done.*
- The whole of this strategy can be reduced to three words. *Just say yes!* The quickest way to become a high earner is to not wait until all the bases are covered or for opportunities to fall at your feet, but to go out and consciously seek them.
- From the Road Less Traveled by Scott Peck: "Dare to be God". Dare to be all you can be. Dare to make a decision even if it's wrong.
- Not all daring acts are resounding successes. The true measure of success is not what happens but how you react to what happens. In the six-figure sector, resilience is as important as audacity. *The resilience to bounce back from defeat and disappointment is what distinguishes a stellar success from the run-of-the-mill.* Stepping outside your comfort zone, doing what you think you can't, means risking embarrassment, humiliation, rejection, or disapproval.
- Hard times, like heavy weights, build muscle.
- Audacity not only requires courage but also augments courage. Every leap of faith prepares us for bigger things down the road. Every memory of a hard-won achievement becomes a testimony to what's actually possible. Precious milestones for the psyche, these memories can be easily evoked to stimulate our flagging self-confidence.
- The way you reach the six-figure range is by putting yourself in the learning zone (Like the two circles that surround a bull's eye in a target) about 30 percent of the time: by making tough decisions, accepting difficult projects, attending meetings with people more advanced, participating on committees you know little about, assuming a leadership role, relocating to a strange city, speaking in public, doing whatever you must, whether you feel like it or not.
- The learning zone will become your comfort zone. And then it's time to push yourself into the next ring of learning. You must keep enlarging the circle, increasing your skills, testing your confidence. To stop stretching is to stagnate.
- Simply put that's how this strategy works. You force yourself out of your comfort zone and then force yourself back up when you take a tumble.
- Beware the trap: *Bite off more than you can chew, but not so much you choke.* The trick is to keep stretching without snapping is to challenge yourself on this side of what's reasonable, and to take manageable risks.
- Undue pressure, even if self-imposed, is bound to backfire – either by rendering you ineffective or by keeping you tethered to safety, unwilling to stretch. Under-earners are particularly vulnerable.
- Stretching makes only one demand: *You must take action.* You must do something, anything, in spite of your apprehension. Action is powerful.

If you feel stumped or discouraged here are some suggestions to get you started:

- *Do just a little bit more* by taking small steps at a slow but consistent pace. It's a self-perpetuating cycle that keeps spiraling upward exponentially. Each little step outside your comfort zone adds immeasurably to your sense of self and others' assessment of you, which continually emboldens you to stretch even further.

- *Turn inward.* Take time to reflect, to consider the risks, rewards, and worst-case scenarios. There's a lot to be said for feeling the fear. Looking fear in the face is like throwing water on a fire. Eventually the intensity will dissipate, the fear will run out of steam, and you can finally move on.
- *Start anywhere.* A stretch in any area of life, regardless of where, has a ripple effect on other areas as well.
- *Stop and say thanks.* Feel the gratitude for all you have and this will give you a much needed perspective. The women interviewed not only considered their challenges an asset but also appreciated *themselves* for tackling them head-on. The power of gratitude derives from a universal law: You draw to yourself whatever you dwell on.

## Chapter 9. Strategy #6: Seek Support

- Success is not a solitary journey. Six-figure women constantly spoke of the significance of other people to their financial success. They credited their families, friends, bosses, and colleagues. They emphasized the importance of informal networks, formal support groups, and influential connections.
- Six-figure women have two specific types of support that under-earners seemed to lack – *True Believers*, people who recognize their potential and offer encouragement, and *Way Showers*, people who provide the map and serve as proof that success is possible.
- They are both a stimulus and a supplement for all other six-figure strategies. They inspire us to set our intention high and stick to it when our faith falls short. They assuage our fears so we can stretch even further.
- While parental encouragement is wonderful, it's not essential. All the women found at least one person who wholeheartedly believed in their abilities, often before they fully believed in themselves, and offered them guidance by giving advice and/or setting an example.
- The combination of the roles, the True Believer and the Way Shower, inspirer and instructor, mentor and role model, created a synergy that fostered their aspirations, replenished their spirits, fueled their efforts, and bolstered their self-esteem despite snowballing doubts and endless hurdles.
- In fact, on the six-figure path, seeking support is not an option, but a requirement. True Believers and Way Showers frequently appear as if a gift from the gods, unannounced and unanticipated. But sometimes they don't. It's not necessary to idly wait for support to show up. You can go out and find it yourself.
- There are two ways in which a lot of us have trouble employing this strategy. The first is our reluctance to ask for help. Under-earners are especially guilty. The second way we can trip up is in failing to recognize or appreciate these angels of support when they do cross our paths. To benefit from support you need to be receptive. When we aren't willing to embrace offers of help or words of encouragement, because we either don't value ourselves or take our work seriously, then we virtually cut off the flow of abundance into our lives.
- Though all are not essential, the women who seemed to have the most balance and joy in their lives drew support from all of the following sources of True Believers and Way Showers:
- *From significant others*

- The nourishing support from a spouse or partner appears to be irreplaceable and irrefutably valuable. One of the most painful challenges for some of these women was “spousal backlash”.
- It’s particularly difficult when the wife’s career is on an upward trajectory and the husband’s is headed down the tube. Successful and financial disparity doesn’t have to break up a relationship.
- *From social networks*
  - Six-figure women had the most amazing relationships with friends and family. Whether they connected through formal networks, family ties, or personal acquaintances, these associations blossomed into deeply personal, profoundly nourishing relationships that fed their soul and fortified their confidence that nursed them through the darkest nights and paid tribute to their tiniest victories.
  - This strategy is about growing our support system. But it’s also about pruning what gets in the way. To uphold our intention to increase our earnings, it’s essential to be with people who will cheer on, not try to rein us in. Just as many if the women had left difficult husbands, many also lost old friends, and did so deliberately.
- *From professional contacts*
  - In the workplace, True Believers and Way Showers are otherwise known as mentors and role-models.
  - Quite a few of the six-figure women paid coaches or advisors to give them discipline, direction, validation, and sometimes a different point of view.
  - Most successful women had more than one mentor.
- *From spiritual beliefs*
  - Quite a few high earning women use their faith to give them strength and perspective. They believe that everything that occurs, good or bad, happens for a reason; that their intuition is the ultimate authority; and that their Higher Power is their most profound trusted ally.
  - No matter how busy these women got, no matter how nerve-racking their day, they made a deliberate effort to carve out time for these True Believers and Way Showers.
- Each of the strategies discussed so far can be used for increasing your support system as well as your income. Begin by declaring an intention to attract supportive people into your life and be willing to let go of those who aren’t. Then get in the game by joining a group and deliberately networking on a regular basis. Likewise, start speaking up and asking for a hand. Reaching out and soliciting help may be somewhat of a stretch especially for the shy and reclusive. But support, like success, is often found just outside our comfort zone.
- The surest way to find support, however, is to provide it- as what goes around, comes around.

## **Chapter 10. Strategy #7: Obey the Rules of Money**

- Very few of the women interviewed felt rich, and *very few are*. Less than half of the six-figure women had a net worth over a million dollars, far fewer if you didn’t count their home. Fewer still could stop working, even years down the road.
- It became increasingly apparent, in the course of these conversations, that *making* a lot of money is very different from *having* a lot of money.

- Six-figure women fell into two distinct categories. The majority were Modest Accumulators – high earners who spent too much and saved too little. Their ample earnings gave them the illusion, out not the security or freedom of affluence.
- The second and much smaller group was the Wealth Builders. These women had both substantial salaries and sizeable bank balances. They didn't necessarily have the highest incomes, but each had a growing net worth. Here's why: They faithfully followed the three-pronged strategy for creating wealth – *spend less, save more, invest wisely*. These three rules of money enabled them to retain and augment their income.
- High earners are as vulnerable to hard times and sudden change as anyone else. Ignoring the rules of money puts them at an especially high risk.
- *It's not what we have but what we do with what we have that gives us or denies us financial security.*
- While the best time to start is while you're young, you're never too old to begin. The biggest risk you take at any age, is to do nothing at all.
- What wealth building does require is consistent application of the three rules of money. You simply must make the following actions a way of life. You must do all three.
  1. Spend less than you earn
  2. Pay yourself first
  3. Put your money to work
- Wealth doesn't come from what you make, but from what you don't spend. Very, very few six-figure women had credit card debt. They were conscious spenders – often a dueling battle of extravagance and thrift which served as a built in checks and balances, a self-imposed safeguard against over-indulgence.
- Most six-figure women never spent more than they earned, though their considerable incomes gave them plenty of leeway. Some of them knew down to the penny, not only how much they were spending but exactly where they were sending it. These Wealth Builders were spenders who kept the brakes on, controlling their binges so they didn't incur debts.
- Getting out of denial is a prerequisite for prosperity. Credit card debt is insidious but not insurmountable. Many of the Wealth Builders had risen from the ashes of their once reckless spending.
- The women who worked their way out of debt usually did so by taking a series of steps.
  - They sought help they stopped using credit cards
  - They lowered their interest payments
  - They got clarity (by writing down everything they spent)
  - They stopped overspending (by putting their expenses into categories they saw where to make cuts).
  - They paid down their debt as quickly as they could.
- Savings is where six-figure women veer off the wealth-building track. The women who combined conscious spending with consistent savings were those who were rich.
- This is the way Wealth Builders live – a part of all they earn goes into their personal savings on a regular basis.

- Discipline, not deprivation is the ticket to financial security. Discipline is easy if done automatically. All it takes is a call to the bank; they'll send you a form to fill out. The money will add up surprisingly fast.
- The money you're putting away is for unseen emergency, not an unexpected shoe sale. Cash in the bank is a buffer against debt or undue sacrifice, a prudent reserve for unpredictable events and the pursuit of dreams. Just as wealth won't happen if you're paying 20 percent interest to Visa, it's also unattainable if all your money is earning 2 or 3 percent in the bank.
- The only way to counter the ravages of inflation and rising prices is to make sure at least some of your savings is working harder than it would in a bank. Economic independence is made possible by the third rule of money – invest wisely.
- Surprisingly, and unfortunately, many of the women interviewed were either investing too conservatively or not investing altogether.
- Managing money is not all that complex. The standard rule of thumb is:
  - Money you need in the next five to seven years – for emergencies, unexpected expenses, or short term goals – should be in cash or cash equivalents like money market funds, CDs, or short-term treasuries.
  - Money you will need in the next seven to ten years should be in a mix of stocks, bonds, and cash.
  - Money you won't need for ten or more years should be mostly in stocks.
- Anyone can become a disciplined investor by taking four simple steps.
  1. *Automate* – Wealth Builders make arrangements for a specific sum of money to be deducted from their bank account or paychecks and deposited in their brokerage accounts.
  2. *Delegate* – practically every Wealth Builder worked with financial professionals, or were considering doing so, even if they were employed in the financial field themselves. These women all sought professional help for the same reason: to get them on track and keep them on track.
  3. *Educate* – delegating didn't mean Wealth Builders handed over their money and went to sleep. Wealth-building women make it a point to participate in financial decisions from a place of knowledge, not fear, ignorance or habit. Although they are extremely busy, they find ways to stay informed.
  4. *Communicate* – many of the women interviewed were members of investment clubs in order to commiserate with others as well as educate themselves.
- Anyone at any time can make the transition from Modest Accumulator to Wealth Builder.
- One final word: make sure you have money in your own name. Even if you are supremely happy with your partner, it's important to have your own financial identity.

## Chapter 11: Claiming Our Power

- Although there are many reasons why women have difficulty making and/or managing money, more often than not it all comes down to one common denominator – our fear of power.
- What scares us most about financial success is not that we may fall short but that we may actually take flight and discover that we are, indeed, “powerful beyond measure”. When we claim our power, we raise the stakes.

- This book is really about *reclaiming our power that lies dormant within by realizing our potential, expressing our passion, and, for that, being paid properly*. Financial independence epitomizes power.
- This is the next step to solve the “problem that keeps us powerless”. We, as women, are not paid what we are worth. By restricting our earning potential we’re repressing our personal power.
- Part of the problem stems from our misunderstanding of what power is. Power, by definition, is the ability to make something happen. From a masculine perspective, that usually means authority, control, and dominance. To a woman, power means independence, influence and impact or – “to effect what I want in my life”. This is the power we’re seeking, *real power*, the ability to choose how we live, to be in control of our journey. *A powerful woman is one who knows who she is and chooses to express that in the world*.
- Simply put: We fear what we don’t understand. Women don’t understand power. Until a century ago, a woman could not attend college, enter a profession, keep her earnings, own property, obtain credit, or cast a vote. We were the property of our fathers or husbands.
- Those of us over 35 were groomed to collaborate, not compete; to bolster others rather than achieve our own goals; to marry a doctor instead of becoming one. The message that’s been hammered into our heads, both implicitly and explicitly is: Our needs don’t count, others come first. We were groomed to be victims, acquiring our clout through compliance or charm. So we live in reflected light as the nurturers and caretakers.
- Putting yourself first isn’t easy to do and is the primary reason women have difficulty embracing their power. *Recapturing one’s power is a self-centered process*. This how you do it: by honoring yourself, valuing yourself, and taking all of your desires to your heart.
- It requires tremendous fortitude to shake off the myths and messages from the past, to release the imprisoned feminine that is your powerful self, to make your welfare *as important* as everyone else’s.
- Be warned: Going against the grain is bound to have repercussions. Change is preceded by choice but often followed by chaos. Claiming your power means rocking the boat, and there will be people in your life who won’t want their boat rocked and will be angry with you for doing it. Our worry is that conflict will disrupt the relationship, especially if it involves someone we love. Fear of abandonment is our Achilles heel.
- Change is a threat, there’s no denying it. Nor can you avoid it, not if you’re going to assume your rightful power. The challenge is to assert yourself not only vigilantly and resolutely, but also compassionately, sensitive to others’ fears, yet always mindful not to sacrifice yourself in order to preserve a relationship.
- Here is an important distinction: *Money does not give you power*. It allows you to exercise power by providing choices. Your power comes from the choices you make, choices that reflect who you are, not what someone else thinks.
- There’s a fourth rule of money, which allows for the ultimate expression of personal power: Give generously.
- Together, the seven strategies in this book should enable you to release the extraordinary buried inside you – expand your potential, become all you can be, create more abundance, and share it with others. Together the strategies will prepare you to become the transformative

force you were meant to be – perhaps as a six-figure earner, but unquestionably as a more powerful woman.

**Recommendation:** This is an awesome book. It is insightful, thought provoking and empowering. No matter how much money you are currently making, this book will help you break through to the next level – both professionally and personally.

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**About the reviewer: Frumi Rachel Barr, MBA, PhD**

Many CEO's find themselves asking "What now?" to sensitive situations that only an experienced former CEO can understand. Frumi is brought in to solve problems and often remains to work with you, as your confidante and secret weapon. She has an uncanny knack of getting to the heart of your corporate climate and maximizing your team's performance, profitability and sustainability.

To schedule a free *Break From the Pack to Success* consultation email

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