



## ***THE POWER OF ENLIGHTENED SUCCESS***

Excerpt from ***Embracing Your Power Woman. 11 Steps to Coming of Age in Mid-Life***

by Barbara Wilder

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The word success has an almost magical ring to it. Say it. SUCCESS! Listen to it. SUCCESS! The resonance in the heart is like a reverie. We dream of success. We long for success. We plan for success, and we support our partners, our children, and our friends as they strive for and often achieve success.

But if in the second half of our lives we haven't yet attained what we consider to be success, we may have become resentful of our partner's, our friends', or even our children's successes. And though we may have become successful in our first half of life careers, we may still yearn for success in different contexts, or for different accomplishments. A woman who has a successful law practice can feel like a failure if her original dream of success was to be a wildlife photographer.

The choices we made in our young adult years were often directed by others' desires for us, by a society that didn't support women's bigger dreams, and by the necessity to focus on our children. I had a successful career as a production accountant in the film industry. My family was very proud of me. But my dream was to write movies, not count their costs. When, at forty-six, I renounced my lucrative accounting career for the uncertainties of a writer's life, many of those near and dear to me were horrified. They talked about how successful I was. They couldn't understand this sudden change. They didn't realize how unsuccessful I felt. Eschewing one's dreams, no matter how good the cause may be, scars the soul. In the second half of life it is time to become truly successful at what our souls desire.

### **QUESTIONS TO PONDER**

- *What does success mean to you?*
- *Who in your personal acquaintance did you consider successful in your youth?*
- *What kind of successes have you striven for in your life?*



### **WHY NOT ME?**

The desire to succeed is deeply rooted in all people. Not succeeding is crippling. Many of us can look at our mothers for examples of the effect that not succeeding beyond the home has on older women. As a sex we are quite practiced at suppressing the pain of failing to succeed. We were taught as teenagers to let the boys win, to not be selfish, and to never take the best for ourselves. We were taught that competition was unladylike and that our success lay not in our achievements in the world, but in the bosom of our families. And, of course, those of us who are mothers did/do need to focus on our children. Raising healthy, happy children is a success that we can and must celebrate. But in the second half of life we are ready to move into new successes.

No one consciously plans to not succeed. No one purposely goes through life making one unsuccessful attempt after another at achieving her dreams. But the obstacles standing in the way of success seem often more than we can overcome. We may find ourselves standing on the sidelines watching others achieve success and finally cave in to the false “reality” that there is no way we are ever going to have similar success. By the time we have reached our forties, fifties, and sixties, many of us have given up all hope of finding the success we dreamed of in our teens. Some experts correlate difficult menopause with the lack of successfully achieving our dreams in the years preceding it.

Even if you have achieved some success, you may not have had the awareness to realize and embrace it. In our society there is an ever-upward spiraling expectation cycle that keeps us from taking the breathing time to recognize the successes we have achieved.

**"Success is a state of mind. If you want success,  
start thinking of yourself as a success." -- Dr. Joyce Brothers**

Begin to imagine yourself as a successful human being. To be something splendid, we have to be able to imagine it first. We all have great imaginations, though we may not be aware of the fact. Too much emphasis is placed on the practical in our society, and imagination is often relegated to the frivolous. In truth, there can be no success without imagination. No invention was ever created without the inventor imagining it first.

Once you have imagined yourself successful, allow your heart to open and experience what it feels like to be successful. Don't be surprised if tears begin to flow. If this is a feeling you haven't experienced much in your life, it can be a bit overwhelming. Accept it and cry for joy.

### **SUCCESS WITHOUT THE STRESS**

Achieving what we have come to define as success in our current culture is extremely stressful. The majority of people who succeed must strive hard to overcome obstacles. They

must work countless hours while others who are less driven rest or sleep. They must be competitive and ready to put their success above everything else in their lives.

For a lot of women, this was, and is, too high a price to pay. Even with careers that they love, most women cannot compete for success with the same drive as men, because quality of life and the value of family and friends are more important to them.

For the past couple of decades there's been a lot of talk about the "Supermom," the woman who has it all – career, family, friends, success, and, above all, STRESS. There doesn't seem to be any way around the stress.



### **ADD MEDITATION TO YOUR DAY**

Nothing we achieve is stress free, but by adding meditation to our daily lives we can reduce the tension immensely. Twenty minutes of meditation each day will lengthen our days, teach us to prioritize, and help us breathe more easily as we move through the day. Meditation is our connection to the Divine. When we are linked up to the universal life force, we suddenly aren't alone. We don't have to handle everything ourselves.

How many women do you know who fall under the category of "Control Freaks?" A lot I imagine. This absurd notion that it is our responsibility, alone, to handle everything in our lives and in the lives of our families keeps our blood pressure up and our stress level at a fevered pitch. But by connecting through daily meditation to a greater force, we become able to let go and allow the universe to carry the major load. With this kind of help, we can expect success to be ours in the second half of life.

### **QUESTIONS TO PONDER**

- *Do you think a woman's definition of success might be different from a man's? If so, how might it be different?*
- *Do you remember ever being mentored for success? If so how did that feel?*
- *Did anyone ever laugh at you or deride you for desiring success? If yes, how did that feel? What did you do with those feelings?*
- *Who or what has kept you from achieving success? Do you harbor resentment toward these people or events? How do you think you can diffuse it?*

### **NEW STANDARDS OF SUCCESS**

The old ways of achieving or experiencing success no longer serve the planet or the way women like to live on it. The competitive dog-eat-dog world one must leap into to achieve success repels me. As I look back over my twenty years working in the film industry in Hollywood, I realize that that model of success contributed to my failure to achieve what I

longed for. I wasn't able to adjust my emotional senses to a setting that would numb me enough to play in that arena.

In the 80s, a popular bumper sticker declared: "He who dies with the most toys wins." Competition plays a major role in how we measure success, the prizes being political power, intellectual snobbery, social status, or just having more stuff than the people next door.

This false sense of success insinuates itself insidiously into our daily lives. For example, you may have had a wonderful year and are feeling very proud of yourself and the success you've achieved, when someone in your crowd gets a new car. At first, you may feel a little jealous, but you're happy for them. Then another friend buys a new car. Suddenly, all of the pride in your success evaporates, and you find yourself needing to buy a new car so that you will feel successful again. It is an addictive vicious circle.

Real success means moving into harmony with our life's purpose. Ambition pushes us toward the old paradigm model of success. Our Spirit nudges us lovingly toward our purpose and our enlightened success. But it is important to listen more and more deeply, so as not to misinterpret our soul-urge or get it confused with our ego's ambition.

Each one of us must create our own definition of success in our hearts. Once we've defined it, we can begin to move toward achieving it, one step at a time. We can leave the stress and competition behind and begin moving toward our purpose with the guidance and support from our Spirit. In this mode, success can be measured by the joy derived from each new revelation of our purpose, no matter how large or how small. It is in the subtleties that the greatest strides are made. Enlightened success comes as we allow the whispered direction of our Spirit to guide us.

Most of the women leaders of the Suffrage movement were all over fifty when they began their work, and most of them lived well into their eighties and even their nineties in an era where the average age was fifty-five. When we are connected to our enlightened purpose the passion drives us to live long, successful, productive and exciting lives.



These are broad shoulders that we are standing on. Let us never forget them.

Learn more about the ***Power of Enlightened Success*** and all of ***the Eleven Points of Power*** when you buy ***Embracing Your Power Woman: 11 Steps to Coming of Age in Mid-Life***

***Enthusiastically endorsed by Deepak Chopra, Shirley MacLaine, Jean Houston, Caroline Myss, Joan Borysenko, Angeles Arrien, and more.***

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The Eleven Points of Power are:

The Power of Self-Love  
The Power of Creativity  
The Power of Self-Trust  
The Power of Health and Beauty  
The Power of True Wealth  
The Power of Our Own Direction  
The Power of Partnership and Community  
The Power of Authentic Leadership  
The Power of Enlightened Success  
The Power of Freedom

I would happily credit the artists whose beautiful art I have included here if I could find out their names. As I continue the search, I honor their beautiful art with love.

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