



INSIDE EVERY WOMAN
Using the 10 Strengths You Didn't
Know You Had to Get the Career
and Life You Want Now

5 Promises that Can Take Your Life and Career to New Heights by Vickie L. Milazzo, RN, MSN, JD

In 1982, the year I turned 28, I realized my life was headed all wrong.

I had gone into nursing wide-eyed, thinking I could make a difference—even improve the state of healthcare. Then I bumped up against the reality that no matter how hard I worked, my efforts would never make a dent. My financial advancement was also moving far too slowly, and I was forgetting what it was like to have fun on the job.

It wasn't easy admitting I'd chosen the wrong career. I had worked hard to become an RN, earn my bachelor's degree, then my master's, and had worked six years in the hospital. Now my passion was dying and my potential was wasting away.

That was 60 million dollars ago. And that's when I first made my 5 Promises. I have renewed them daily for more than two decades. These 5 Promises transformed not only my career but my entire life. I promise they'll work for you, too.

PROMISE #1— I Will Live and Work a Passionate Life.

One of my passions was ignited in me when I was eight years old. For hours each day I taught an imaginary class. I was so absorbed with my class that my dad would come in and break it up to encourage me to play outside with my real friends. To this day I have no idea what I was teaching, but I was darned passionate about it.

At eight years old teaching was play. At 28, I turned that passion for teaching into a business, and I've been playing ever since. When I left hospital nursing to start my legal nurse consulting business, I promised myself I would work only my passions. Later, when I started teaching other nurses how to become legal nurse consultants, as The New York Times reported, I "crossed nursing with the law and created a new profession." That's the kind of Big Thing that can happen when you commit to Promise 1, to living and working a passionate life.

PROMISE #2—I Will Go for It or Reject It Outright.

If you want something better for your life and career, you owe it to yourself to go for it or reject it outright. Don't wait for the conditions to be perfect. That will never happen. People who wait or dabble usually end up at their retirement party rewarded with a glass of watery punch and a piece of white cake. Own up to your passions, then step out and grab hold of them with both hands.

Despite a fear of cliff-hanging heights, I stepped out of an airplane at 14,000 feet to sky dive. I was terrified. Once out of the plane's cabin I couldn't step back in. I was truly committed, even if not by choice, and the exhilaration I felt later at overcoming that lifelong fear proved to be a catalyst for future accomplishments.

Most of us stay in the safe cabin of everyday life. We never step out into the audacious dreams that smolder and spark inside us. What would your life look like if you didn't have the choice of that safe cabin? If your only option was to grab that dream and jump into it? To go all the way once you made the jump?

Fear will freeze you in place. Don't tell yourself, "One day, some day, I might get around to living my dreams." With that attitude one day, some day, you're sipping that punch thinking about all the things you didn't do.

If you want something, go for it all the way and go for it now.

PROMISE #3 – I Will Take One Action Step a Day Toward My Passionate Vision.

Dreams and visions are great, but without action they are nothing more than hallucinations. Without action your visions scud away and dissolve like clouds. I've met many people much smarter than I am who had dreams and ideas but didn't do anything with them. They didn't take action.

When a national news anchor from CNN asked me how I got to where I am today, in light of my humble beginnings, the answer was easy—one step at a time. I lacked business savvy, but with each small step I gained both knowledge and momentum. What I learned in the process and what still applies now is that it is less important what I do and more important that I do something.

By taking action every day you develop the habit and discipline to make your vision a reality. When you focus not just on the idea but on making it happen, you stay in motion, not just dreaming your passions but living them.

PROMISE #4— I Commit to Being a Success Student for Life.

All great athletes and performers practice every day. Even after they achieve a level of success, they continue to practice and take instruction from their coaches, learning new ways to reach higher levels. They are lifetime students.

Becoming a success student for life is about practicing being successful. What's hard today is easy tomorrow—with practice.

It is a myth to think you can launch a successful career or succeed in other life goals without learning, even if your driving desire is as intuitive as being a full-time mom.

Even as a successful CEO, I still learn every day—from my students, staff members, favorite writers, speakers and other business experts.

PROMISE #5—I Believe As a Woman I Really Can Do Anything.

I was lucky to go to an all girls' high school. Co-ed schools have advantages, too, but when I grew up men were expected to be the business geniuses, women to be helpful homemakers. I gained confidence in those formative years from not having teachers telling me the boys were smarter or calling on them instead of me. As a young woman I honestly believed I could do anything. Believing you can do it is 90% of the win.

Any time I have hesitated to go for it, it was because I had stopped believing in myself the way I did in those glorious adolescent years. Today, when an opportunity arises and I find myself hesitating, I remember, "I'm a woman. I can do anything." I think back to my past success as an RN in the hospital, making split-second decisions that were the difference between life and death for my patients. Then I remind myself: If I could save lives in the middle of the night while the rest of the world was sleeping and a doctor was nowhere in sight, surely I could make effective decisions in my career and life.

Find your own example, a personal or career accomplishment that gives you pride and encouragement, then use it to bolster your resolve. Any time you're not grabbing the opportunity, tell yourself, "I am a woman and I can do anything!"

Sometimes we make a promise, set about achieving a goal, and we do achieve it, but then it's over. Success is a journey. Apply these 5 Promises daily—you'll take your career and life to new heights. Promise BIG and promise NOW.

Inc. Top 10 Entrepreneur Vickie L. Milazzo, RN, MSN, JD, is founder and CEO of Vickie Milazzo Institute, a \$12-million education and publishing company. She has trained and mentored over 20,000 women to become entrepreneurs, many of whom have gone on to achieve six-figure incomes. She was credited by *The New York Times* for pioneering a new profession and has won the prestigious Stevie Award (business's Oscar[®]) as Mentor of the Year. Milazzo is author of *Inside Every Woman: Using the 10 Strengths You Didn't Know You Had to Get the Career and Life You Want Now* (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.) available at www.amazon.com or wherever book are sold.

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