

STEPS TO THE TOP

“Believe in Yourself”

By Melinda Boyer

We all experience times when we don't know where we are going or how we're going to get there.

With that sentiment in mind, I'd like to share a little story with you. The year was 1993, and my father had gone back to school. At the time, I had no idea how much his accomplishment would impact my life. After my father completed his studies and graduated, I was influenced beyond measure. I was very proud of him for returning to school after a lapse of many years; and the fact that he did so when he was 50 years old absolutely amazed me. At first, I remember thinking “my dad is really smart”. As the significance of his achievement sank in, I thought ‘Wow! I’m so very impressed!’ Where did he get the motivation and the drive to go back to school after so many years? The answer was quite simple – he believed in himself and knew he would succeed, regardless of the obstacles. He demonstrated that we are never too old to learn and to take new steps in order to accomplish anything our hearts desire.

At the time, I was working as a temp in the data entry department for a financial company. I knew if I was hired, the company would pay part of my schooling. That wasn't important to me at the time; I just wanted to get my foot in the door. A position finally opened in customer service, and I applied for it and was hired. Now, the customer service area only had six employees: two were file clerks, three were customer service operators who took credit orders, and one person made all the files. Well, as you can guess, I was the one person who made the files and assisted the two clerks in their filing. Well I must have walked in the door right because after six months, I was backing up the three customer service operators. Within a month, I was taking orders.

Now, remember my father was going to college at the same time I began working in my dream job for a financial company. You see, for years I had wanted to be a suit person. What the heck is a suit person? Well, my image of a suit person was being important enough to wear a ladies suit to work and to carry a briefcase. You know like the prestigious business people they show on TV. I had finally made it - I was now a suit person. I had the suit and the job, but not the money, if you know what I mean.

The company I worked for was housed on 3 floors of a 16-story building. The 9th floor contained data entry, customer service, collections, credit analyst, file rooms and the mail room. One story up, on the 10th floor, were offices for account executives, secretaries, and auditors, as well as a reception area and a big conference room. A completely different division of the company was on the 11th floor. My goal was to climb my way out of the 9th floor and move on up to 10th. I promised myself that I was going to get there, but I didn't know how.

Then one day, I was asked to cover the Reception Desk on the 10th floor. I started talking to the executives, making sure I listened, asked questions, and paid close attention to

them. Their actions and demeanor were very different than what I was used to, causing me to reflect on myself. I believed I was capable of moving up, but did I want to become an auditor or an executive? I finally decided to be an auditor, because they had the opportunity to leave the office and learn more about other companies. In order to reach my goal, I went back to school and took courses that would help me move up.

I had a direction, but how was I going to get there? The following five traits helped me step up to the top, and they can help you, too.

1. Believe in Yourself
2. A Desire to Succeed
3. Courage to Take the Necessary Steps
4. Focus
5. Ability to Visualize Yourself Already There

Once I started applying these concepts, things began to change in my life. A position became available for a verifications clerk on the 10th floor, and as luck would have it, it was with the auditors! I applied and was chosen for the job. Within just months, I was managing the verifications department, which enabled me to accompany and assist the auditors on the audits.

Once you believe in yourself, you will be able to visualize yourself at the top. Nothing is ever out of your reach if you take the steps to move toward it. Too many people become so comfortable in their jobs that they become dormant. They wait for opportunities and success to come to them. The reality is that success is not going to just fall in your lap - you have to get up and reach for it. Focus on where you are going, close your eyes and see yourself there, then start to move toward it. Don't worry about what other people might say. They aren't living your life - you are. Right? So often, people listen to what others have to say instead of finding their own direction. When you follow your own direction and path in life, you work at your highest potential, and success comes much easier. In other words, don't follow someone else's blueprints; start drawing your own.

About five years ago, I found myself at the lowest point possible with no job and living with my parents again. I felt as if someone had taken the air out of my sail; I had no direction and was headed nowhere. Then it dawned on me that I had succeeded before, and I could do it again. During this time, I did some heavy soul searching and had to learn how to believe in myself all over again. I realized I had to redevelop and apply the five traits in order to feel confident that I could take the steps to move up again.

Today, I have a wonderful husband who believes in me. It is so important in life to have a partner that truly believes in you and the things you do - it's like a double B12 shot of energy and excitement! It has provided such a boost in my life to know that someone truly believes in me as we work at our fullest potential together.

I am very thankful for the people that have been a part of my life, and I am very fortunate for the jobs I have held. I never thought for a minute that I was not capable of those jobs or achievements.

I would like to thank my Mom and Dad for always telling me that I was capable of anything I wanted to do and encouraging me to believe in myself. Through his example, my father was my first mentor. He taught me that it is never too late to pursue any dream or accomplish any goal. All I have to do is my head up and move forward, without looking back. Thanks, Dad.