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Advice &
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Dreams

Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen,
Dahlynn McKowen, John & Elizabeth Gardner,
Tom Hill and Kyle Wilson



A celebration of dreamers who became doers

Chicken Soup for the Entrepreneur's Soul is a compilation of short stories from entrepreneurs, both large and small, who share their experiences of success, failure and courage, with helpful advice mixed in.

Many of these stories, told for the first time here, will enlighten you to new methods of entrepreneurship or simply help you believe in the possibilities of getting started. Read about Doris Christopher, a stay-at-home mother, who introduced her love of cooking to others through founding The Pampered Chef; Tom Chappell, who stuck to his instincts when developing Tom's of Maine and kept value at the core of his business; and Carol Gardner, who intimately shares a desperate time of debt and divorce until along came a bulldog named Zelda, followed by a greeting card line—Zelda Wisdom—which became one of Hallmark's number-one sellers. These entrepreneurs and many more will inspire you with their amazing life experiences and fascinating beginnings.

Jack Canfield and **Mark Victor Hansen** are the #1 *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling authors of the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series. **Dahlynn McKowen**, **John and Elizabeth Gardner**, **Tom Hill** and **Kyle Wilson** are successful entrepreneurs.

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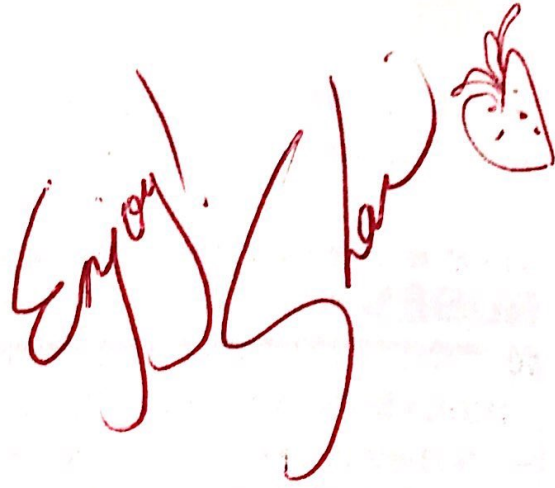


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The Sweetness of It All

I've been asked so many times if being a woman in the business world is difficult. My answer is a definite, "No!" I feel it has been an advantage for me. Women don't fit that typical stereotype of a businessman's man, as those of us women who are successful do stand out in a crowd. We're more sensitive when it comes to our businesses and livelihoods, and plus, we can juggle ten things at a time, even in an organized fashion!

Now in my case, I'm a mother of three growing boys (four, if you count my husband), which keeps me active all the time, between family and school/after-school commitments. Trying to establish my business and juggle my family was hard at times, but as soon as I learned that I must always put my family first, a lot of the difficulties went away. I learned to put my two "lives" into perspective; I have only one chance to be a mother and to raise and watch my children grow up, but I can work anytime.

But wait, I'm jumping ahead of myself. You don't even know my story.

I was destined to work with strawberries. When I was very young, my dad planted a strawberry patch for me, and that's when my love affair with this delectable fruit began.

My job was to go out and pick the berries—one for the bucket, two for me. I loved them! From my pickings, my mom would make yummy strawberry pies, the ones with strawberry gel and thick homemade graham cracker crust. She had to make two so I wouldn't be grumpy at the dinner table watching the size of the pieces she was cutting.

Jump forward about fifteen years, when I was working as a mortgage broker for my brother's company. I did well, made a lot of money and received many accolades including "Rookie of the Year" my first year on the job. Needless to say, I grew up really fast; the business was stressful, and I worked many long hours to earn that award.

Much of my success as a mortgage broker was due to treating my customers well. With the help of my sister-in-law who was a caterer, every year for the holidays we made homemade goodie baskets for my customers and realtors. But they weren't just any ordinary holiday baskets; they were filled with homemade chocolate-dipped strawberries. A creative person by nature, I enjoyed dipping and designing the different types of chocolate-dipped strawberries and creating the gift baskets. It became therapeutic to me and helped with my stress, and also became a great way for me to market my business.

My career eventually led me to the stock business, and I didn't enjoy it as much as the mortgage industry. But I did enjoy dipping strawberries, so I continued on, creating many different types of recipes and dipping patterns. One day, I took some of my sweet creations to a grand opening office party. My spread was even more beautiful than what the caterers had prepared! A gal in our office—a mentor and very important person in my life—said to me, "You're working for me, and you can do this?" Her question made me contemplate going into business for myself.

Things happened fast from that point, and in 1989 I opened Shari's Berries. The rest is history.

I have learned many things from starting a business from scratch—a recipe, if you will—which I attribute to my company's success:

- Always take great care of your employees. Your employees will never treat your customers any better than you treat them. Never ask an employee to do anything you wouldn't do yourself (and believe me, I've done it all).
- Every year, Shari's Berries sends out a present to its top 100 customers with a note telling them how much their business is appreciated.
- Take what you love to do and figure out how to make money and a living. Life is too short to spend so much time at a job you don't enjoy. I'm blessed to have the opportunity to make money, and a livelihood, doing something I truly enjoy.
- The customer is ALWAYS right. Nothing is more important than backing your product with the highest form of customer service. Remember the old rule: *A happy customer will tell three people. An unhappy customer will tell ten people.* My goal is to have only positive things said about my company, and I bend over backward to satisfy each and every customer.
- Support your community. A community loves to patronize a company that helps its own.
- My pastor once shared with me that he has never heard anyone on his or her deathbed say that they wish they had spent more time at the office. A job makes money for us to support our family, so it shouldn't ever hurt our family in any way.
- Count your pennies; the dollars will take care of themselves. This is something that my grandmother taught me a long time ago. Never stop overseeing your money. Oprah still signs every check!

Regardless of whether you're a female or male business owner, I'm sure you have your own offerings to add to my list. This is my advice to you: If I could do it, so can you, and build upon your list daily to become that successful entrepreneur. This will be your recipe for success!

Shari Fitzpatrick

EPILOGUE: Shari Fitzpatrick is the founder and president of the wildly successful Shari's Berries, Inc., the sweet fruit sensation that can be found throughout the nation via many stores and also at her award-winning online site www.berries.com.

Shari's Berries features over 200 kinds of exquisite hand-dipped fruit delights, her signature gift being Strawberry Roses. The roses are hand-dipped strawberries, set on hand-made stems with silk rose leaves. The chocolate roses are then arranged with baby's breath and fern to look like a box of elegant long-stem roses. The strawberry rose bouquets are so unique that Fitzpatrick was granted a patent, making the product a truly one-of-a-kind gift.

Fitzpatrick credits her success as an entrepreneur to three simple priorities: God first, family second and work third. According to Fitzpatrick, this special formula has proven sweet for her and her family.

To learn more about Shari's Berries, visit www.berries.com or e-mail her at shari@sacberries.com.

Dahlynn McKowen