

I don't just read books, I devour them, with a pen in my hand, highlighting and making notes. After reading, I copy down all the notes and type them up, considering each idea all over again. Yet, I have often found that key learnings are too quickly gone from memory. That's why I started compiling these two-page book reviews for personal use. With the encouragement of friends and colleagues, I offer my notes now through the Creative Option C website so that others may gain the insight of these authors and perhaps be inspired to read the entire work.

TITLE:	<u>The Secrets of Six-Figure Women: Surprising Strategies to Up Your Earnings and Change Your Life</u>
AUTHOR:	Barbara Stanny, Journalist, Columnist, Motivational Speaker
PUBLICATION:	HarperCollins Publishers, Inc. 2004

PRIMARY THEME: To be financially successful, a woman must follow her passions and intend to be financially successful. Too many of us accept the cultural norm that good girls don't give money much attention. The women who earn higher-than-average incomes do not "sell out," give up their feminine side, or spend their days doing work they dislike. By being freely themselves, they attract wealth into their lives and provide an example to others.

SUMMARY DISCUSSION: By studying the lives and approaches of women who are financially successful, the rest of us can learn to prosper. The author began her work by interviewing 150 high-earning women, looking for commonalities. The book is her report on what she found, full of examples and the voices of the women themselves. Interestingly, many of the women she interviewed did not become high-earners until they were into the middle or late stages of their careers, a sign that it is possible to overcome early messages and myths about money and step into the world of those who value themselves, and expect to be valued for what they do. In our society, a person's income can be a reflection of their sense of self-worth. Here are seven strategies for increasing both.

CHAPTERS:

- *Introduction: Welcome to the Era of Six-Figure Women.* If it is a given that we manifest what we focus on, then focusing on the wage gaps between women and men only serves to widen the gap. By focusing instead on wage gains among women, we can grow personal wealth.
- *Chapter 1: The Queens in the Countinghouse.* The eight secrets are:
 1. Financial success is possible in almost any field; lack of education doesn't have to hold you back.
 2. Working hard does not mean working all the time.
 3. Focus on fulfilling your values rather than financial goals.
 4. Loving what you do is much more important than what you do.
 5. Feel the fear. Have the doubts. Go for it anyway.
 6. Think in terms of trade-offs, not sacrifices, to find a workable equilibrium.
 7. Sometimes you just have to shrug it off and have a good laugh.
 8. Appreciate abundance.
- *Chapter 2: The Low Down on Low Earners.* Women who undervalue themselves will perpetually settle for having less income than they need. Consciously and unconsciously they will erect barriers to their own prosperity, often by clinging to romantic notions of poverty or equating morality with lack.

- *Chapter 3: Raising the Bar.* To get out of the under-earning trap, women must accept personal responsibility, root out deep-seated beliefs and feelings, move through the anxiety caused when our adult aspirations conflict with childhood conditioning. An intent to earn money, audacity, resilience, and a source of encouragement are must haves. Financial know-how helps but is not an absolute requirement.
- *Chapter 4: Strategy 1: The Declaration of Intention.* The first step on the path toward any goal is to know what the goal is. If we wish to have financial resources, we must hold an intention to have financial resources. Even before we know how we are going to do it, we must intend to do it.
- *Chapter 5: Strategy 2: Letting Go of the Ledge.* You have to be willing to change your present circumstances, to let go of what is in order to bring about something else. Getting out of your own way is a lifelong process.
- *Chapter 6: Strategy 3: Get in the Game.* If the development of wealth is a game, here are the rules: 1) Decide Which Game to Play, 2) Jump In, Ready or Not, 3) Keep on Truckin' 4) Grab Opportunities, 5) No Excuses Allowed, 6) Ignore Naysayers, and 7) Never Personalize.
- *Chapter 7: Strategy 4: Speak Up.* Assertiveness can be especially difficult for women, but without a willingness to say out loud what we offer, and what that is worth, we doom ourselves to perpetual under-earning. Women interviewed for this book advised doubling our asking price, and negotiating down when necessary but never up.
- *Chapter 8: Strategy 5: The Stretch.* Be audacious. Get outside your comfort zone. Plan to do just a little bit more than you think you can. Stay realistic, but set goals that cause you to reach a little farther today than you did yesterday. Challenge yourself. Surprise yourself.
- *Chapter 9: Strategy 6: Seek Support.* "If it is true that a friend is a present you give yourself, then every day is Christmas for high-powered women... Whether they connect 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."
- *Chapter 10: Strategy 7: Obey the Rules of Money.* Making money and having money are different things. If a woman earns a lot but spends more, doesn't save or invest, gives money to others before providing for herself, she will lose control over her own destiny. If you don't have the know-how, hire someone who does.
- *Chapter 11: Claiming Our Power.* Power can be scary. So, sometimes we pull back when we get close – and these fears express themselves in lack of financial resources. Claiming power may sometimes mean rocking the boat – but the alternative is worse.

TOOLS: The author provides a series of exercises designed to help individual women move past blocks. There are journal exercises, meditative exercises with thought-provoking questions, a guided decision-making process, a value clarification exercise, a method of getting feedback from close family and friends, and an exercise for learning one's own motivational patterns.

KEY TAKEAWAYS: *"We'll resist success because of the way we were raised – how our families influenced us and how the culture regarded us. Their prejudices become our prototypes. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the gender myths that have delineated our roles and our relationship with money."* p. 95

"You know you are resistant if, when you set an intention to profit, you start procrastinating, forgetting, blaming, becoming too busy, making excuses, losing interest, creating distractions, or scaring yourself with worst-case scenarios. Resistance is normal. Notice it, but still be willing to lose your grip." p. 120.

"It's always difficult to deviate from the norm, especially a long-prescribed role... It feels awkward, unnatural, as if you're doing something wrong. Your immediate impulse is to go back to your old ways. Whenever we get too close to our personal authority, we're apt to have a similar reaction. Our feminine psyche will start emitting signals that are usually misinterpreted as intuition – inexplicable waves of trepidation, ever so slight ripples of fear – compelling us to, as one woman described it, 'water myself down.'" p. 241