



Women ON THE RISE

Pivotal points to success
shared by members of
RISE Collaborative Workspace

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Our Greatest Fear

It is our light not our darkness that most frightens us

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.

Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our light not our darkness that most frightens us.

*We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant,
gorgeous, talented and fabulous?*

Actually, who are you not to be?

Your playing small does not serve the world.

*There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that
other people won't feel insecure around you.*

It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone.

*And as we let our own light shine,
we unconsciously give other people
permission to do the same.*

*As we are liberated from our own fear,
Our presence automatically liberates others.*

*—Marianne Williamson
Excerpt, "A Return to Love"*

Foreword

By Mary Jo Gorman, M.D., M.B.A.

I am unapologetically passionate about seeing women succeed.

When a woman has a dream, the only greater satisfaction than watching her achieve it is to be a part of her journey. I was able to be a small part of Stacy Taubman's journey in opening RISE Collaborative and seeing the community she has built has been a joy.

I first met Stacy for coffee in December of 2015. At that time, she shared with me her vision for a place for women of all ages to come together to build community, connections, and confidence. She wanted to build a pipeline of success for women and teen girls who want more for themselves and those around them. Stacy imagined something, much more than a functional place to work and meet, but a place to support other women in achieving their own success.

I was so impressed with her vision and energy that I agreed to mentor her once a month to support in her entrepreneurial journey. From refining her financial model to navigating the process of securing outside investment, I supported Stacy as she worked through the details of building out her business.

Any successful career is a long and arduous path and there are many opportunities for mistakes. Women often choose small

business, corporate paths and entrepreneurship to succeed. I've seen many capable professional women make a variety of mistakes: fail to develop their network, rely on the wrong "experts" or proceed without getting feedback and wisdom from others. People "don't know what they don't know," and that's why I have put my energy into educating women on their career paths, so they can advocate for themselves and make decisions that increase their chance for success.

It takes many and varied resources to build a community of successful, professional women. In addition to Brazen St. Louis, which focuses on growth seeking female entrepreneurs, and RISE Collaborative, it's great to have another resource for women who are striving to achieve their dreams. As an added resource, the stories in this book are important. They give you, the reader, a chance to learn from other hard-working women and hopefully, make one less mistake. Professional success depends upon making more right decisions than wrong ones—or at least making big right decisions and small wrong ones! By courageously sharing their unique journeys of missteps and lessons, failures and successes, they are making an important contribution to your success.

I am proud to have played a role in supporting Stacy along her journey to open RISE Collaborative. When women support each other, incredible things happen. I hope you are as moved by this collection of stories as I am and that you, too, pursue what you want and need in your life.

Mary Jo Gorman, M.D., M.B.A
Chairman of the Board, Brazen St. Louis

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Introduction

At RISE Collaborative, we live by the quote, “You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with,” by Jim Rohn. We all have had that friend or family member who leaves us feeling less than or defeated. Imagine the opposite: spending time with people who not only make you feel like the impossible is actually quite possible, but they want to help make it a reality. Those are the people we want to spend time with and can make a measurable difference in our lives.

In creating RISE Collaborative—a story you’ll hear more about in the first chapter—we set out to create a pipeline for success for women of all ages. A place where women can come to build authentic community and connections. The women who join our community share a few things in common. They are ambitious and driven. They are curious and creative. They’re also flawed and unafraid to be vulnerable. And they all want to see the other women around them succeed—because when you succeed, so do they.

We all come to this community with our own experiences, wounds, successes, failures, lessons learned and goals to be met. And unlike other spaces in our personal and professional worlds, we come to this community valuing collaboration over competition. We check our “sharp elbows” at the door and open our-

selves up to knowledge, referrals, conversation, and supporting one another.

In the stories that follow, you'll hear from 17 women. Each have a story to tell about a journey that shaped them, and pivotal points that fundamentally changed the way they viewed themselves, their world, and led them to where they are today.

Wherever you are in your journey, we hope this book helps shape you too.

Stacy Taubman
Founder/CEO

Kate Wiegmann
Partner/COO

From Place to Position

“Sometimes the smallest step in the right direction ends up being the biggest step of your life.

Tiptoe if you must, but take the first step.”

– Naeem Callaway

Over the past year, many, if not all conversations I have had centered on transition, change, and shift. To be transparent, during the same time, my personal and professional lives were also saturated with transition, change, and shift. I had found myself in this very interesting, unsettling space. To unpack this more, I was a little anxious and there was this bubbling feeling of anticipation deep in my belly. I’ve never delivered a child, but those feelings mimicked what little I knew about a pregnant woman right before giving birth. Not the pain, but the need to push.

This overwhelming feeling within was a nudge of urgency to push past my fears, doubts, and insecurities into unknown deep waters and new territory. The sphere where I would operate in—one in which I knew I had been placed on earth to do—was a domain where passion and compassion ruled my efforts. When in this space, I would give of myself, talents, and gifts to make this world better. Today, I get tickled when I reflect on that organized vision that was trapped in my grand imagination. It wasn’t that the

dream couldn't become a reality; the roadblock was me, myself, and I. I was the barrier between reality and what seemed impossible. It was in this period I exposed the fact that I was in place, not position.

In talking with mentors and those more seasoned in life, I discovered that this battle with insecurity and feeling ill-equipped is normal during transformative seasons. Growing up, my parents would tell me, "If you can think it, you can be it; if you can see it, you can have it, BUT you must put in the work." I discovered finding my rhythm to put in the work was the key to living a fruitful life, my best life.

Now in my adult life, I realize part of putting in the work consists of many factors. One key concept is moving from place to position. The dictionary defines place as cause to be in a particular point, area, or situation; an available seat or accommodation; a vacancy. Position is defined as a situation or set of circumstances, especially one that affects one's power to act; a person's particular point of view or attitude toward something; the location where someone or something should be; the correct place.

My interpretation of being in place means holding a spot, taking up the space while waiting to be moved; the need to ask for permission or be permitted to move, act, do, or say. At different points in life, we all have and will find ourselves in place—a spot in which we know we're kind of existing just to fill a vacant spot. The issue is, far too many of us have fallen asleep in place. It is here that we can lose the fortitude to push past barriers and challenges of life. It's here that many exchange their optimism for idle-

ness. Being in place allows you to show up but not have impact. Being in place provides the chance to dream but not pursue. It tells that one has surrendered to default living.

My clarification of being in position suggests operating with courage to do and be without apology or permission; having the nerve to serve in truth; and operating in purpose, on purpose while impacting lives outside of self. Someone who's in position shows up with contagious confidence others attempt to mirror. This person does not flee vulnerability. This person has pride by standing in their truth. S/He is always learning as much as they teach, giving as much as they collect. Being in position suggests an ability to influence an atmosphere just by being present. A positioned person has lips that not only share information but also impartation. It allows one to lead without a title. It communicates the individual functions with intentionality and purpose. They acknowledge they have imperfections, but realize this is part of being human and make every mistake into a personal learning experience. Fear is embraced and used to propel the vision.

My lifestyle and accomplishments screamed an indisputable fruitful life. I and those around me had no doubt I was living my best life. But what I was ignoring, and others turned a blind eye to, was the malnutrition of unfulfillment. Yes, I was producing great things and showing up in great places. What I didn't realize is that I was putting in the wrong work in the wrong space that didn't even align with the desires of my heart. I struggled to maintain my reoccurring performance in this drama series, but that bubbling within the pit of my belly intensely rumbled. I fought it by trying to

live in a comfortable place. One day it overcame me. I could no longer fight. The day I surrendered, I moved into position.

I tapped into a buried dwelling of confidence to push past self and a place of familiar comfort to get in position. It wasn't easy, but I pushed. How liberating it is to answer a life's call! I terminated my past successes by leaving an established career, ending board of director memberships, concluding volunteer roles, and even releasing some relationships. Make a note that these things and people were good but not good for where I was headed. With all of these changes I realized being in position was more than a physical location. It also included my head, heart, and hands.

Head Position

Clarity, Interpretation, Knowledge, Vision

Heart Position

Grit, Desire, Passion, Resolve

Hand Position

Act, Build, Collect, Serve

Mindset matters. Before anything happens in our lives—personally and/or professionally—thought must occur. Dominating thoughts have direct impact on the outcomes of life. Once I shared with others that I would be stepping down from my senior-level role into a start-up nonprofit, my spirit was trampled by negative insight, doubt, and intrusive questions. Had I not had clarity and belief in what I wanted for my life, I would have crumbled or remained in that unfulfilling, good-paying place. I had and con-

tinue to manage my head position by feeding my mind positive declarations. I stopped being my own worst enemy by not seeking approval or validation, stopped the comparisons, ceased the worrying, and scheduled downtime.

Following the heart serves as a guiding truth to take risks and push past self-imposed limitations. I realized that I first had to mend my heart and forgive myself. After years of dimming my own light, some restoration needed to occur. Next, I needed to unlock my passion. Confidence and grit strengthened when I began to make honest decisions, set up systems of accountability, move past failure, and visualize outcomes. These acts called for daily discipline; they were/are not one-and-done actions. Operating with heart position proved to power both my new victories and my willingness to consider and inspire others.

I had to shake hands and initiate new relationships with individuals from diverse backgrounds while nurturing former acquaintances. I had to raise hands and ask for help and resources from individuals and groups that had to be educated of my needs and passion. I had to extend hands and offer my assistance when needed. Knowing actions spoke louder than words, I had to push past being timid to exercise my hand position. This is the area in which I could have self-selected to abort the journey, but I learned to be comfortable being uncomfortable. I had to take action—not wait for action to find me—even when it didn't make sense to others or myself.

For me, getting out of place and into position was and continues to be a process. A daily commitment to discipline myself

to operate with vision, clarity, and actions has elevated my life from unsatisfied to fruitful. No longer am I dismayed by my own limited thoughts, self-doubt, and fear of taking risks. That bubbling feeling within me settled once I pushed past the “stuff.” Putting in the work has taken me off the sidelines of life and into the game. What’s interesting: I thought I had been living a life of delight and wonder; however, this joy and contentment I have today is worth more than accolades, silver, or gold. When the next nudge of urgency visits, I won’t ignore it. I will position my head, heart, and hands to respond, understanding I can’t do one without the other.

There’s no doubt I will continue to be engaged in conversations of transition, change, and shift. Moving forward, I will share my revelations and declare that no matter the pace, a decision to move from taking up space into courageous purpose must be completed. Despite the circumstances, pushing from place to position is truly the practice to live your best life.



As an advocate for inclusion and leadership development, Nicci Roach has been fortunate to partner with individuals, community leaders, academic institutions and organizations—both domestic and international. For more than 15 years, Nicci has served as a change agent, stimulating the inclusion of underrepresented populations while equipping advancing leaders. She currently serves as Webster University's inaugural Associate Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion and Senior Director for Community Engagement. As an adjunct faculty member, she teaches courses in leadership and organizational development.

Nicci is also the Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer of Mosaic Ceiling, whose mission is, "Empowering Women One Ceiling at a Time." Through diverse programming, individuals and groups are educated and equipped with strategies to help women advance while breaking down barriers.

Nicci holds a Master of Arts in Public Relations; Master of Arts in Human Resources; and a Bachelor of Arts in Media Communi-

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cations with a minor in Women's Studies from Webster University. She has completed two certificate programs, Diversity Management at Cornell University and Women in Educational Leadership at Harvard University. She is currently completing a doctorate in higher education leadership at Missouri Baptist University.

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Afterword

The Epigraph of this book began with one of my favorite passages by Marianne Williamson. It is a beautiful passage that especially resonates with me when she taps into that universal feeling of self-doubt. Williamson writes: “We ask ourselves: Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous?” As I navigate the early days of my career path, I have had many moments of fear and self-doubt, as I suspect you have at some point, too.

But I love that the 17 women in the book you just read chose to take William’s words to heart. Instead of giving into the temptations of fear, they ask in return, “Who am I *not* to be?”

Luckily, I was introduced to this brave way of thinking early in my career through a college internship with Stacy Taubman during the initial planning phases of RISE Collaborative Workspace. Almost every day that summer, we had coffee meetings with various impressive women in St. Louis. After each and every meeting, I left feeling inspired and honored that I got to hear their stories, some of which you read about in this book. And while I didn’t know it at the time, this internship dramatically shaped who I was and who I would become.

Most importantly, I learned that defining and growing your community is essential to your success. You cannot succeed without the women around you succeeding.

At the end of that summer internship, RISE Collaborative had not yet opened, but I knew it wouldn't be long before this dream became a reality.

Three years after that fateful internship, I have come full circle. I am now the Community Manager at RISE Collaborative and having been there from the earliest stages, I can honestly say the reality is even better than the dream. Stacy and Kate have built a community of dynamic and impressive women. RISE Collaborative has become so much more than just a place to work. Our members thrive personally and professionally being surrounded by like-minded women who encourage their career growth, and make connections which support their success. It's a place to focus on their business, host meetings, and get it all done.

At the time of this publication, RISE Collaborative's doors have been open just one year and the growth of community I have seen already has been astounding. Our nearly 200 female members are the secret to RISE's success. They all share the vision and dream that Stacy had for creating a strong cohesive community where women support other women. If you too want to become involved in RISE's growing community and learn more about our journey, visit us at RISEworkspace.com.

Rian Edwards

Community Manager

Going further.
Reaching deeper.
Daring for more.

Women on the RISE is an inspiring compilation of stories from 17 women who weren't willing to settle. Instead, they created the careers and lives they needed to put them on a path to professional success and personal satisfaction. Their journeys all came together at RISE Collaborative Workspace, an inspiring community of female professionals in St. Louis.

In this collection of stories are tales of channeling one's strengths, changing careers, overcoming loss, supporting other women, and rising to the top. No one woman's journey was the same yet they all find themselves further ahead today than they once dreamed possible. And none of them got there alone.

Readers will be inspired by the stories of women helping women, of women asking for what they deserve and not taking 'No' for an answer. If readers believe in the power of women not only being at the table, but leading the discussion, they'll be moved by these stories.

And if readers are feeling stuck or in need of inspiration to create change for themselves and their futures, *Women on the RISE* will help light that spark. It's impossible not to feel a connection to one—if not all—of these authors and take away an idea that will inspire movement.

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