

from the editor

Suzanne Takowsky-Ferre

We're Back...

Time for Hollywood awards season to begin: Fun, Fashion, Glamour, Red Carpet Gossip, New Couplings, Great Winner Speeches, Bad Loser Smirks... I can't get enough!

As for me... those of you who thought I died or moved out of the city—NOPE. For years I've been writing a book at a snail's pace on the Myths, Truth, Lies and Tricks of the Trade of life for a woman in a man's world. So, with 20+ years of publishing under my belt, and hundreds of interviews with women and men across every industry, plus added fuel for the fire from friends and co-workers—I decided to put pedal to the metal, take a break from the world of 'magazine' and finish the book. BTW did I say to remind me NEVER to write another book again? As the days, weeks and months flew by I started feeling more like a houseplant than a woman on a mission. Nevertheless, I stuck with it and what kept my engine going was two+decades of interviewing women and men who never slowed down on the way to their better and best. The brilliant, successful, hard-working and talented people I've met over the years prove that nothing can stop us if we stay committed to finish what we start. One of my favorite quotes is by Joan of Arc who when confronted by those determined to squash her ambition stated, "I am not afraid. I was born to do this."

The successful people I've met and interviewed over the years... almost none came from a privileged life. Au contraire. Most came from impoverished backgrounds, were raised in less than desirable circumstances, and had little or no encouragement to make their dreams come true. What these self-made women and men did have however, was the determination to 'make it' regardless of obstacles in their way. What these people have accomplished and make look effortless in reality are years and years of hardship, disappointment and refusal to give up in the face of fear, disappointment and failure.

As most females in the battlefield of 'LIFE' can confirm, it's not easy for a woman to make it in a man's world. And, it wasn't easy for our mothers or their mothers. Don't get me wrong... I didn't say impossible—just not easy. Climbing the corporate ladder has never

been a slam dunk for anyone; triple that if you wear high heels. And, those who achieve their goals do so not only because of themselves. In most cases it takes others to reach out and offer a hand, give us a chance, help us along the way, open a door and say... "Come on in." From there it's up to each of us what we do with the opportunity that is presented. Opportunities are around us everywhere, but most of us are too preoccupied with our day-to-day to see them, grab on, hold tight, and refuse to let go. Anyway we look at it... life is never about ONE. Life is always about MANY. Whether we are just starting out or at the top of our game, we should always stay mindful of the importance of helping NOT hindering others as they make their way to their better and best. Nobody can afford to get too big for their britches to appreciate those who've helped them along their journey because what we have today can evaporate in the blink of an eye when we start believing our own press.

I've been fortunate to live and serve in a community that opened its arms and invited me in to do a job I love. Unfortunately, this isn't always the case, and some people struggle more than others to find a pathway to their dream come true. Now more than ever with political upheaval, cultural divide, gender discrimination, social barriers and economic imbalance doing their best to separate us and pit one against the other—we have to work overtime to nurture harmony among us. Gathering different perspectives from women and men all ages over the past 20+years not only broadened my horizons, but the words of many who appeared in my first magazine in the 90s, *Women On Top* and since in the *Beverly Hills Times* have turned the tables on what it takes to go after and get what we want AND what fallacious nonsense works against us. I've included many people and their stories in my book. Thanks to all for a road trip that's been hard to forget. I'll post when the book is out. ■

