

Foreword to *The Eleven Commandments of Wildly Successful Women* by Pamela Gilberd, published by Macmillan Spectrum, 1996

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“Wildly successful women...” Three words that definitely go together.

From the founder of the children’s retail chain Gymboree to the publisher of the best seller *Random Acts of Kindness* and the construction-company CEO who lives down the street, women across America are enjoying – and creating – wild success in economic sectors from computer technology to winemaking. Women offer new visions of what *can be* in business and new means for achieving traditional goals. The list of women creating products, providing jobs, and making new rules for American business is a long one.

So if women already are wildly successful, why do we need this book?

Women’s economic creativity is one of the best kept secrets in business today. Consider this. Nearly eight million U.S. businesses are women-owned. Women are starting businesses at twice the rate of men. One of every four U.S. workers is employed by a woman-owned business. Yet a recent survey of newspaper business sections showed that only 14 percent of front-page references were to women.

It’s time to acknowledge the truth – that working women have the tools to create wild success for ourselves and others and that we use these tools every day. The economic achievement of women *is* the untold business story of the nineties. *The Eleven Commandments of Wildly Successful Women* gets that story out in all its richness. It helps ensure that the breadth of women’s economic power and profit-producing ability will remain secret no longer.

But there’s more. For every woman achieving wild success, there’s another who wants to...but feels stuck, stymied, unsure what path to take. A glass ceiling limits women to just three to five percent of senior-level positions in major companies, yet the total U.S. workforce is 46 percent female. There are few visible female role models in nontraditional fields, and finding mentors is harder for women than for men. Self-doubt keeps many women from getting credit and success they deserve. In the *Working Women Count!* Survey of a quarter million American women, women of all ages and occupations told of their distress at being taken less seriously than men on the job.

Furthermore, employees and employers are redefining goals. Our economic is increasingly based on small business. And in today’s service-based, technology- and knowledge-intensive organizations, nearly every worker has responsibilities for customer service and job innovation. Entrepreneurial spirit is vital to all.

Meanwhile, many women – and men – feel trapped in a workplace world they never made and seek new visions of success encompassing more than a fat paycheck or a title with clout. How to experience career success without forging relationships or suffering burnout...how to gain the skills and

confidence to create a wholly new kind of business...how to make money while making a positive difference in the world...Working women ask these questions and lots more.

*Eleven Commandments* offers life lessons, in the form of stories shared by dozens of successful women who have struggled with these issues. The stories are honest, acknowledging obstacles and failures that come before, during and after success and that teach its meaning. They're inspiring *and* hardheadedly practical, making clear that – in the same lifetime! – we need to assess our spiritual progress and learn the rules of the money game. Perhaps most important, they come from women of all ages, backgrounds, and circumstances – with college educations or without, with children to support or none, young and starting out or older and searching for the significant challenge that will utilize a lifetime's worth of hard-won skills.

Gilberd introduces us to so many different women who have created success on their own terms, there's no way to read the book without feeling you can do it, too.

Ultimately, though, real success is more than an individual woman making it on her own. By sharing hard-earned truths, affirmation and support, women help other women realize their goals. A good society – where individuals and families prosper and a million creative ideas can flourish – can be built on that. As executive director of BPW/USA – the nation's oldest and largest organization dedicated to the workplace advancement of business and professional women – this is an old truth to me. But in acknowledging the value of sharing one's success, Pam Gilberd has set her business book apart.

Gilberd's Eleventh Commandment may matter most. Share your knowledge, give back – and you'll create a success greater than you dream. Think of this book as mentors in a paper cover, role models in black and white. Read it. Learn. But don't stop there. You too have a story to share. You can help someone else on her climb. Keep the cycle going. Doing that, you'll achieve wild success – not only for yourself, but for all of us.

Now onward – to wild success!