

CHAPTER 1:
10 GOOD CHOICES YOU CAN MAKE
FOR PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS

“You did what you knew how to do. When you knew better, you did better.”
– Maya Angelou (writer/poet)

What exactly is “working it?” By our definition, it is when you make the choice to use your talents, skills and abilities to get what you want. In effect, you work situations to your advantage to yield positive results. Your decision to read this book demonstrates that you are interested in “working it” to achieve success in your professional life and we assure you that you made a great choice! Now, it’s time to make some more.

Choices...Choices...Choices...

Each day we make personal and professional choices that can impact our lives for years to come. Therefore, it is important for you to attempt to make these choices, good ones, as you embark on your quest for career success. By “good” choices, we mean ones that will get you where you want to be, ones that you will gladly own and ones that you truly believe will make you happy. JaQuitta Williams, a thirty-something, Atlanta-based television news anchor, reporter and host, shares her journey of good choices with us:

“As a broadcast journalist, my career has presented more choices than the average professional woman’s, like for what TV station do I want to work? In what market do I want to work? What role do I want to take? Do I want to be an anchor, a reporter, or a little bit of both? Or, what about hosting a show?”

“More than ten years ago I chose to move up from market to market, starting with Augusta, Georgia, my hometown. I made the choice to start out at home because I needed a family base, and their support. After all, this is a tough business. When I was ready, I branched out to Tennessee, North Carolina, Kansas City, and now here in Atlanta, Georgia. I’m back in my home state.”

"I came here because, frankly, I grew weary of moving and being so far away from home. I was NOT a fan of the Midwest, so I decided to leave Missouri after two years. I told my agent that he could continue to look for television work for me in Atlanta and I would look for work outside of the business. Yes, I was considering a career change. But, as God would have it, NOT LUCK, I landed as a freelancer at WSB-TV (ABC). I believe God puts you where he wants you to be. The freelancing quickly turned into full-time work and I am currently the weekend anchor and reporter.

"I also chose to start at the bottom and work my way up through the ranks. I worked as teleprompter, studio camera operator, associate producer and eventually producer for the morning show. I later became producer/reporter then reporter/anchor and worked my way up to a 5 o'clock anchor slot in less than four years. This is NOT how every woman in this business moves up and from market to market, but this way was mine and I am happy with it.

"I eventually want to have a family, but finding Mr. Right (who actually doesn't exist—nor does Ms. Right) is difficult when you're always moving. But, I do plan on staying put for a while, here in Atlanta, unless an incredible opportunity presents itself. If that happens, I may pack my bags yet again. I'll cross that bridge when I get to it. I haven't stayed anywhere for more than three and a half years, but this, too, is a choice I've made and I am happy with it. I have made the choice to be patient. When it's time, it will come. I don't worry about when, or if, I'll meet someone. I choose to just go, to live, and if it happens it will happen. Life is a journey and I choose to consider myself to be, now and always, a work in progress. And I am happy."

Maybe you are faced with the choice of whether you want to do what it takes to get ahead in your current job. If all the people getting promoted at work are pulling 60-hour work weeks, compared to your 40, you've got to make a decision. Do you want to remain in your current position and spend more time with your family? Or, will you opt to take on a longer workday to vie for the next promotion?

Another scenario could involve pursuing employment elsewhere. Finding a new job isn't an easy task, but being stuck in one that doesn't satisfy you is even worse. No matter how many reasons you can come up with for not being able to land the job of your dreams, there are just as many reasons why you should try; for starters, you deserve it!

Imagine for just one moment that what you did for a living didn't feel like work. That most days you look forward to going to your j-o-b, *and* you get paid for doing something that you really love. How about taking a risk to turn your hobby into a career? It could happen.

We'll start with ten good choices you can make to achieve professional success. Are you ready for the climb?

1. Acknowledge your obstacles, then move on.

Sisters, we all have valid reasons for being where we are, but we don't have to let them stop us from living our professional dream. Instead of allowing obstacles to distract you, overwhelm you, or keep you stuck where you are, use them as the first steps in your plan for action.

If you have ever said: "I want out of this job, BUT..." I don't have time to look for another one; I don't want to go back to school; I don't know where to start; or, I don't know what else I would be happy doing, it's time to turn those stumbling blocks into stepping stones by changing your perspective. Say instead, "I want out of this job SO, I am going to make time to look for another one...go back to school...contact a career counselor...do something about it!" You'll be pleasantly surprised at how a whole new outlook just might be your catalyst for change.

2. Decide what professional success means to you.

Webster's defines success as the gaining of something desired, planned or attempted. How do you define it? Is that *something* money? Power? Respect? Personal fulfillment?

Your success is whatever YOU want it to be and the very moment that you define success in your own terms, will be the very moment that you take your first step toward achieving it.

If you want to do what you love and love what you do in the process of attaining success, take time to look at your whole self. It is critical that you conduct a thorough assessment of your needs, wants, values, and interests before you begin to climb. What's the point of the climbing to the top of the mountain if you'll end up tumbling right back down it?

Make the choice to **Work It, Girl!**

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