

The *Godly* BUSINESS WOMAN

All Women Are Business Women

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Magazine

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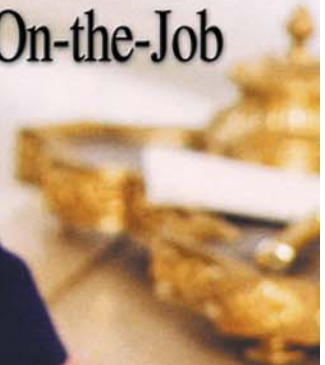
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*"God first,
Family second,
Career third"*

*Mary
Ray
Ash*



Mary Kay Ash

By Paula Mitchell



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Family
 second,
Career
 third."

“I believe that God gave women special qualities, but because of this, He also requires more of us. Everything a woman touches should be ennobled. We have an obligation to inject into world affairs all those traits that have long been considered female. These include such things as honor, integrity, love, and honesty. I believe it’s wrong for women to feel that they must emulate or copy men in order to succeed. You are God’s masterpiece - make the most of it.”[1] What a wonderful lesson to teach to woman today, but Mary Kay has been teaching by this principle for many years. She built her cosmetic company on this. Mary Kay is a loving example of the Proverbs 31 woman. I am sure that she would smile and tell me that she is no such thing. In reality she, like many women of faith, has taken her God-given talents and has changed her part of the world.

After retiring from a successful career in direct sales, Mary Kay found herself at loose ends. Not a woman to sit idle, she began to formulate her “dream company.” Dreams were challenges to

bring to fruition for this woman of faith. With her loving husband beside her, Beauty by Mary Kay (later changed to Mary Kay Cosmetics), was about to open. One month before the scheduled opening, the unthinkable happened. Mary Kay's husband suffered a fatal heart attack. "I believe that work is often the best antidote for grief. And so, despite my shock, I decided to open the business as planned."^[2] In 1963, disregarding advice from both her attorney and accountant, Mary Kay forged ahead.

"God first, Family second, Career third", had always been her motto. As a single parent, she had been available for her children at every turn. Vacations were for the children; in her mind time was more important than things. Mary Kay's children knew they were a priority in her life. Now her children knew that she needed them. Her dream had become their dream. Mary Kay's son, Richard, accepted a job with a salary of a mere \$250.00 a month. Quite a change from his then salary of \$480. Her elder and less mobile son Ben, vowed to join his mother and brother as soon as he could. He did, however, offer all his savings to keep the dream alive. How much more could her children "rise up and call her blessed." Blessings come in all shapes and sizes.

"I truly believe the growth of Mary Kay Cosmetics has come about because the first thing we did was to take God as our partner. If we had not done that, I don't believe we would be where we are today. I believe He has blessed us because our motivation is right. He knows I want women to become the beautiful creatures He created, and to use the wonderful God-given talents that lie within each of us."^[3] When asked to autograph a stack of \$1.00 bills, Mary Kay added the scripture Matt 25:14-30. Finding talents, hidden talents, is one of Mary Kay's greatest assets.

Mary Kay was no stranger to hard work and long hours. As a single parent, she would begin her day at five in the morning. Like that Proverbs 31 woman, she would rise early and prepare for her family. Lessons taught by example are often easier learned and teaching by example has been her forte.

"She sets about her work vigorously, her arms are strong to her tasks."^[4] What strong arms, this woman has! Her verbal as well as physical

hugs have touched many. Whether it is a letter of encouragement to a new consultant or a card when a sales director has been ill, her arms are holding strong; holding those hurting and applauding those overcoming hardships. "I just knew that I could do this," one Independent Beauty Consultant told me. "As soon as I got my kit, I knew she was behind me 100%."

There are no closed doors at corporate headquarters. Independent Beauty Consultants and Sales Directors are welcome to speak to other leaders within the corporation. "Without our consultant, we wouldn't have a company!" is the philosophy.

"Doing the right thing goes beyond what the law requires. It's a matter of doing what you know is right."^[5] Mary Kay began her business when women CEO's were not the norm. Having worked in a man's world for over twenty years, she knew what to expect. She had played the game by the rules of others and vowed to build her company on the Golden Rule. Respect and fair play were not just buzzwords on a brochure, but absolutes in her heart. When she invited the first Independent Beauty Consultants to her home, Mary Kay spoke from

her heart and won their devotion. Many work long hours for a paycheck, others for recognition; Mary Kay gave both. What a wonderful blend of confidence building and monetary gain. She knew that when the client was satisfied and happy, everyone won. No corners were cut, nothing but the best for her Consultants.

Before you begin to think that this woman never had a bad hair day, let me bring you to another point. Mary Kay has always believed that you could do anything you put your mind to, including overcoming a bad day. Looking good and feeling good do go hand in hand. When speaking to a group of Independent Sales Directors shortly after the death of her husband, Mel, it took all the faith and fortitude she had to smile. Never wanting to disappoint anyone, she stepped onto the stage, put her faith in God




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and sallied forth. “She is clothed in dignity and can laugh at the days to come.”, Proverbs 31.[6] Perhaps laughing isn’t always possible, but a cheerful heart is.

Motivating others takes many forms within her dream company. “You can neither teach nor motivate people who are at one another’s throats”[7] What a wise woman! Just another example of helping people to achieve their full potential. The Proverbs 31 woman leads those around her to utilize their talents. Not only does Mary Kay teach through her books and speeches, she also teaches by example. Independent Beauty Consultant, AnnMary Smith knows this first hand. In *From Our Hearts, 13 Stories of Compassion, Perseverance and Hope*, AnnMary Smith writes, “My gosh, I was important enough that the Company would call me. As I thought back on my experience at Leadership Conference and the call from my sales development director, the message just humbled me. It was then I knew I was not alone; I knew I could solve my problem myself. The words of Mary Kay Ash – ‘you are in business for yourself, but not by yourself’ – echoed in my ears as they do to this day”.[8]

“You can’t out give God!”[9] When I first read this in her autobiography, I said to myself, “Easy for her to say. Look at all she has!” Well, was my thinking changed as I continued to read. Her generosity comes from her heart and has nothing whatsoever to do with money. In her book *From Our Hearts* story after story shows the giving of Mary Kay. At a time when management by objective was the rule, Mary Kay grew under management by personal touch. She has been the leader with an open heart as well as an open door. Hand written letters and personal telephone calls were Mary Kay’s most effective motivation. With her as an example, is it any wonder that Mary Kay Beauty Consultants are welcomed with open arms. Helping to make each woman glow with her own beauty begins at the top and flows down!

Mary Kay has always taught experientially. If it didn’t work for her, she was not going to teach to others. Each step of the way, she showed women how to become a success. How wonderful to have a role model that believes a woman can be a mother, homemaker and called a success also! I spoke to a new Independent Beauty Consultant the other day. “I am so excited,” she said, “I am in charge of what I do. I am a success whether I get a Cadillac or not!” The sparkle in her eyes was almost blinding. This woman knew that “her company” as she put it, was behind her 100%. Quotas or dollar amounts did not overwhelm her. She just knew she had already become successful. When I asked what her goal was she mentioned she wanted to live her life like Mary Kay. “How interesting” was my first reaction. On further questioning, my friend said she wanted to be respected by others, loved by her family, giving to those in need, and look great no matter how she felt.

Nothing I can write can say more. This woman of faith has infused her life with love, laughter and giving. “She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come. She speaks with wisdom and faithful instruction is on her tongue.”[10] My thanks go to Mary Kay. Her life has been a shining example of priorities and faith. Her prayer and praise for God, love and attention to family and hard work have touched many. In Mary Kay Ash we see the Proverbs 31 woman. God first, family second, and career third. Thank you Mary Kay and God bless. *G*

A mother of two, Paula Mitchell is also a speaker and contributing writer for the GBW.

[1] Mary Kay, HarperCollins, NY, 1994, pg. 112.

[2] Ibid, pg 4.

[3] Ibid, pg 60.

[4] Proverbs 31, NIV.

[5] *From Our Hearts*, Mary Kay, Inc. Dallas, TX 1998,

[6] NIV

[7] Mary Kay, HarperCollins, NY, 1994, pg. 60.

[8] *From Our Hearts*, Mary Kay, Inc. Dallas, TX, 1998, page 22.

[9] Ibid, pg 38

[10] Proverbs 31, NIV