

6/12/14
Leslie

Questions/Answers -- F.I.N.E. Success:

1. What is one piece of advice that someone has given you that is most memorable to you?

I've had a very blessed life filled with wonderful personal and professional success, but there have also been some very challenging times personally and professionally. I'm a firm believer that life experiences, whether good or bad, have something to teach us. And, I've actually learned some of my greatest lessons during my most challenging times. My great friend, the late, Eartha Kitt herself, gave me the best and most realistic advice: "When they throw manure on you, use it as fertilizer and just continue to grow." This piece of advice sustains and levels me, and I use it to grow success and learn from missteps -- taking those steps in the right direction. Remember, fertilizer feeds the soil... and all lessons learned feed my survivors' soul!

2. Describe yourself in one word and why?

Passionate. Look at the definition: Showing or caused by strong feelings or a strong belief. That is definitely me. When it is something I believe in, there is no stopping me. And, right now, I believe that I am a force for positive change. As President of NAPW, I lead a membership team of intelligent, successful, professional women striving to break barriers to advance in the work place, build their own entrepreneurial ventures and make a difference in the lives of women and girls. We believe that you have to "own your own power." Additionally, with the creation the NAPW Foundation, our philanthropic effort that is dear to my heart, NAPW will become a force that stimulates change in the lives of women and girls as we support our partners the American Heart Association, the Breast Cancer Research Foundation, Dress For Success and Girls Inc. I am passionate about my beliefs – advocating for women, giving back to positively impact the world, creating awareness of health and social issues effecting the lives of women and girls throughout our communities and the world. When we stand together, we stand stronger. I've often said that we don't know our purpose in life until we're walking in it. Well, I'm walking in my purpose now!

3. How did it feel for you to find out that you were appointed the president of the National Association of Professional Women?

In a word: Fantastic! With this new chapter of my life, I've come full circle and expanded my reach. I truly believe that when we are supported, mentored and guided, specifically by other professional women, we have the power to unite and forever change the landscape of the world; thereby making a positive impact on the lives of young women as they step into their futures and young girls just beginning to dream of theirs. As President of NAPW, I believe it is my purpose to aid in the advancement of women, bring awareness to issues surrounding women and, ultimately, help get a woman into the White House! This new position allows me the opportunity to take the power of the public platform I enjoy in other aspects of my life and apply it to the issues important to women and keep those issues on the front burner.

4. What about this position (as the president of NAPW), do you feel is different from other positions you've held (Emmy-Award winning TV Host, Attorney)?

As the President of the [National Association of Professional Women](#) – the largest professional women's networking organization in the country, I whole-heartedly support the premise that women can have meaningful discussions while respecting each other's viewpoints...even though we might not agree with each other. This theme is a deep belief, ingrained in my psyche for all that I pursue in life. Success is about taking your destiny – all that a higher power places in your path. Then having the wherewithal and fortitude to take a realistic, un-idealized view of yourself and where you want to be, what you want to do, to do something that effects change,

motivates others and inspires greatness because we are forever expanding, growing and working toward a common goal to better ourselves as we strive to better the lives of others.

Over the past 25 years, I have been able to grow professionally through many opportunities. I started my career as a public prosecutor, became a television commentator, correspondent and host, wrote three books, produced several shows, launched multiple commercial ventures and became a political surrogate and committed philanthropist. However I, like many of you, wondered if I were fulfilling my purpose. This topic became an urgent issue for me when I found out I needed [Open Heart Surgery](#) four years ago. After all, we all want to try and contribute something valuable during the time we are privileged to be on this earth.

During my recovery, I remember asking my pastor, friend and mentor, Dr. A. R. Bernard this question, and I clearly remember his response. Dr. Bernard said, “We all have the same *purpose*, to serve God. Our *task*, however, is to discover how we can best serve.” I knew right then that my life had changed forever because my goals had changed. I started only doing things, working in areas and participating in projects that gave me joy and improved the lives of others. I still love adding my voice to the public discourse as a television commentator and host. However, when I became National Volunteer for the American Heart Association and the National Spokesperson for NAPW, I vowed to use every public platform available to me to advance the causes of women. In doing so, I discovered that advocating for women was the space that gave me purpose. My long-time friends and colleagues saw it first. Barbara Walters told me how proud she was; Robin Roberts said, “...this is what you should be doing;” and Joi Gordon of Dress For Success said, “...you’ve found your purpose.” You see, often, you don’t know your purpose until you’re walking in it. I’m walking in mine right now.

As a woman, I can state emphatically that this is our time; and as President of NAPW, I am proud to lead our “Year of Action.” I’ve come full circle. And, as President of NAPW I will lead our team to shape futures – our own, NAPW’s and the futures of women and girls everywhere to reach our higher purpose – to aspire to be the best we can possibly be, to connect with other professional women on the road to success, to achieve greatness for all women and future generations of young girls.

5. What are some things you hope to accomplish as president of the NAPW?

It is an honor and privilege to be President and National Spokesperson for NAPW. I have dedicated myself to helping to create a professional women’s networking organization worthy of our membership. Through expanding benefits; increased networking opportunities; new [Local Chapters](#), including our new Regions and our five new Regional Managers; an eclectic array of new products, services and discounts, including new [Career Services](#) educational opportunities; our annual [National Networking Conference](#) and Regional Networking Summits to come, including leading a new women’s mentorship program, my team and I are constantly striving to raise the bar for our highly valued, extraordinarily talented, successful NAPW members. In my new role as President, I will continue accomplishing and achieving for them! All of our Local Chapters are rallying around the NAPW Foundation philanthropic partners, the [American Heart Association](#), the [Breast Cancer Research Foundation](#), [Dress For Success](#) and [Girls Inc.](#) with their monthly initiatives. Even more inspiring is that they continue to work for other charities in their local areas, furthering the positive impact on the lives of women and girls while creating awareness of issues affecting everyone. Yes, our purpose is clear...to achieve something... to become something...something of value, something of greatness, something so grand it can change a life.

In the short term, we expect to continue to increase our membership by adding additional products, services, and programs that speak to the needs of women. Additionally we’ll be adding more networking events and creating professional Regional Networking Summits for women who are dedicated and focused on the collective success of other women while increasing our community profile through philanthropic efforts and increasing our national profile through gender and diversity advocacy. NAPW is growing by leaps and bounds. We are dedicated to diversity, opportunity and advancement. It is time to open doors, break ceilings and move to the next level. This is our Year of Action, and I’m proud to help lead it.