

GLORIA
Mayfield
Banks
ENERGY IN MOTION

By Mikell Worley



PHOTOS: ERNEST WASHINGTON - ATLANTA, GA



After about five minutes into my conversation with Gloria Mayfield Banks, I became concerned that the phone lines might not be able to handle all that energy. She has been called “Energy in Motion” and it did not take long to understand why. She sprinkled insights and words of wisdom throughout our talk, as she gave an overview of her journey to success. There is no doubt Gloria has reached the peak many times throughout her life, and it is probably a safe bet to say that she has more mountains to climb.

Gloria is one of the top ten sales people in the world for Mary Kay, Inc. She broke a company record by achieving Elite Executive National Sales Director faster than anyone in the company’s 45-year history, and there are only five women in the company that hold that position. Gloria is also Mary Kay’s number one African-American sales person in the world.

Notwithstanding her accomplishments at Mary Kay, more than ten years ago Gloria partnered with Angie Onianwa to found Charisma Factor, Inc., a corporate-planning company. Banks is also an internationally sought after motivational speaker and trainer who has achieved success in Canada, China, Germany, Mexico, and Russia. This dynamo has a college degree and a Harvard MBA.

Aside from her stellar career achievements, Gloria overcame obstacles in her personal life and has a lot to share with other women hoping to do the same. “If you want an amazing man, be an amazing woman.” That is Gloria’s advice for women who are looking for an ideal man. “I have a wonderful husband, Ken, but there was a time when I was in an abusive relationship, and I have a lot of compassion for women who are going through that. I had an education, confidence, and a strong support system and yet I was still a victim.” She adds, “There are women who don’t have anywhere to go, feel that they won’t be able to make a living, and lack the confidence to leave.”

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In addition to being an advocate for women, Gloria frequently works with children, teaching them skills and habits that they can apply to build successful lives. As someone who suffers from dyslexia, she has great empathy for those with learning disabilities, and last year she received the 2008 Dare to Dream Outstanding Achievement Dyslexia Award.

Gloria credits her family for her positive attitude. “My parents raised us in a high self-esteem household. I am the third of four girls. We’ve all done well. Amy has a cake company in Chicago, Pamela has a writing business in Detroit, and Wendy was just inducted in the U.S. Hall of Fame of Gymnastics, and owns a gym in Harlem,” she notes with pride.

“We were surrounded by a very ‘on purpose’ Black Pride in our neighborhood growing up in Detroit,” observes Gloria. “In junior high I attended one of the first classes to be diversified. In 7th grade I was diagnosed with dyslexia. Having a learning disability is a challenge, and yet great things can be accomplished if we have support and encouragement and we work hard.”

Gloria was fortunate to have Doris Mason, a business guidance counselor, steer her in a positive direction in high school. The teenage Gloria entered a special program for students interested in the area of business. “I believed in my ability and always had an *esprit de corps* and a competitive edge. I became the captain of the cheerleading squad in a predominantly white school in the 1970s, a position that helped me focus my energy and sharpen my team building skills.”

From there Banks attended Howard University in Washington, D.C. After graduating she moved to Boston. “I became manufacturing supervisor at the Polaroid Corporation in the evenings. There were a lot of men – clearly a rough man’s world. I got caught in the racial and gender gap and after two years I decided to go back to school.”

“Ninety percent of what you worry about never comes true”



Harvard Business School was her next destination. “Keep in mind that I had a learning disability. I needed special attention and got it from Juliana Cornish Johnson. She read to me for two years,” Gloria fondly recalls. “I loved her name so much and for what she did for me that I named my daughter after her.”

At Harvard Banks soon realized that she needed to sharpen her people skills. “Half of our final grade was based on written work and the other half on verbal communication. My written grade would be weak because of the dyslexia, so I had to increase my charisma and articulate quickly, perfectly, and competitively. Harvard Business School provided me with a phenomenal education and a phenomenal dose of confidence.” Gloria describes the “practice of charisma” as the ability to pay attention to the other person’s wants and needs, leading to mutually beneficial results.

After Harvard, Gloria joined IBM where she became the top sales person in her branch. From there she became a marketing manager, then returned to Harvard Business School as assistant director of admissions. In February 1988, Gloria decided to sell Mary Kay cosmetics. She earned a new Pontiac car in five months, and within ten months Banks was made a director. All in all she has had more than 19 years of pink Cadillac status.

Gloria refuses to waste energy on worry. “Ninety percent of what you worry about never comes true,” she declares. “There have been many things that have brought me down from worrying over the years, and I finally realized that most of them never happened.”

Instead, Gloria focuses her attention on strategies that are more positive and on purpose:

- Become a people magnet. The more people feel good about being in your space, the more effective you will be.
- Create short-term, clear strategic goals backed by thinking big. Begin with a dream, then work hard to make it come true.
- Assemble a powerful circle of influence. Show me your friends and I will show you your future.
- Work the numbers. Opportunities are endless but fear of rejection often keeps us from asking or offering.
- Study hard to become skill based. Prepare and seek detailed understanding.

For more information see www.gloriamayfieldbanks.com and www.charismafactor.com ❖

Mikell Worley is the founder and president of Mikell’s Treasures. She has spent more than 20 years designing and delivering self-improvement trainings, has had several cover stories in various magazines, and recently illustrated her first children’s book. She is an advocate for women and children.