



CHAPTER 2
SUCCESS FELT GOOD



It took nearly fourteen years of hard work, but I did it. I went from being the proud owner of one business to being the proud owner of six businesses, servicing approximately four hundred children, mostly African-American. I was truly busy!

I owned and operated day-care centers, kindergartens, after-school programs, and a bus company that transported my students. Also, during the summer, I operated a day camp. I employed forty to fifty-five people, depending upon the enrollment. Teenagers from the local high schools were among my employees.

My day-care centers were very active and happy centers. We went on monthly field trips, and we occasionally included skiing in Wisconsin and exploring Disney World in Florida or Disneyland in California. The puppet show man, Easter Rabbit, and Santa Claus were expected visitors at the day-care centers, and, of course, the decorations on the windows were changed each month to highlight the special event within the month. The day-care center's windows were the prettiest on the block.

My staff was predominately female and most were excellent. Naturally, they did the usual employee stuff. Keeping the teachers and fathers from forming personal relationships was the only serious and undesirable staff situation that continually emerged. Dating the married parents was against the school policy, and my teachers were given the school policy before they were hired. Yet, each semester, one or two of the teachers did not believe their services would be terminated if they broke this rule, but they were.

There were two teachers terminated for dating the same father at different times. After the second termination, I told the father, "I am going to tell your wife if you date another one of my teachers." Shortly afterward the child was taken out of the day-care center. I did not know why the child left, and I did not pursue it because I did not want to put myself in an awkward position, nor was I going to lie for the child's father. Of course, I missed the child and the child's tuition, but I certainly did not miss that father.

Otherwise, my up and down times continued, and it was business as usual. The employees continued to participate in the regular employee tricks, such as: borrowing the food and other items without asking, coming to work late, being absent and not calling, or just quitting and never bothering to notify me before or after they quit. However, I always had a list of substitute employees, and I used my list whenever necessary. And if an employee did too many tricks, I did what I referred to as "accepting your resignation." In other words, *I fired the person.*

Most of my centers were located in non-affluent neighborhoods, on the south and west sides of Chicago. In fact, many of the families I serviced received public assistance. Yet, more often than not, I saw in the eyes of the children a gleam that I had experienced as a child. They were mentally rich regardless of being financially poor. The more I thought about it, the more I believed that poverty and wealth *are* states of mind.

Throughout my life, I have heard the saying, "If you change your mind, you will change your life." I have no doubt there is a great deal of validity in that statement.

My experiences have also caused me to believe that one must also adjust one's actions in accordance with one's thoughts.

Using my education and business savvy, I was able to operate

my businesses with the skills of a professional, and my progress was rapid. I was in business more than twenty-three years, and I was financially stable within the first five years. I considered myself especially blessed because never was I operating "in the red." In business terminology, operating "in the black" is a most desired status, and I enjoyed this status with great pride.

I totally appreciated the up times, and I learned to deal with the down times. Of course, more often than not, I was prepared for whatever occurred. Being prepared was a part of the lessons I had learned.

No More Doing Without

With the money I had earned from my business, I bought the usual luxuries: clothes, jewelry, automobiles, a mansion. In my walk-in pantry, I stored enough toilet paper to supply an army. For sure, I planned never again to use newspaper instead of toilet paper. I owned plenty of toilet paper!

After being in business six months, I paid my brother the five hundred dollars that I borrowed and vowed never again to borrow money from him. And, my biological father lived long enough to ride in my Rolls Royce, sleep in my mansion, and whet his palate with my expensive thirst quenchers.

I will admit that quite often I wanted to ask my biological father, "Who is the smart person now?" Of course, I never asked him that question. At this point in my life, my sense of being a responsible person had started to nudge me regularly.

From a financial point of view, I have been poor, middle class, and rich. For me, rich was a lot better than poor and middle class, and there were times when I told myself, "Being very, very, very, very rich must be pure bliss."

Achieving my goals caused me to experience a special type of

joy that made my entire body tingle with delight. I noticed that this particular type of joy only came to me enclosed within the manifestation of a dream that had been uniquely nourished and cherished within the boundaries of my heart. This joy was spiritually fulfilling.

There was something beyond wonderful about having my heart's desires come true, and I reveled in the magic that came with each achievement. Goal-achieving was both financially and spiritually rewarding.

A Time For Change

Business was excellent. Yet, something was happening in my way of thinking. I thought more and more of not spending my entire life doing just two things. I loved the day-care centers and bus company, but they were not enough to fill my entire life. Inwardly, I was moving. It was time for a physical change.

The affirmation I said daily, "I can do that," continually stayed in the forefront of my thoughts. For no special reason, one day while driving to work, I remembered all of the positive words that Mama whispered into my ear and I thought, "I've come this far. I can't think of any reason why I cannot go further."

Thereafter, I often thought of the routine that caused me to succeed in the past:

~
*Nonstop work,
twelve hours a day,
six days a week.*

~
There were times of solitude when my inner voice said to me, "This routine for twenty-three and a half years, combined with

the basic success formula, caused you to be successful in the past, and this same routine, combined with the basic success formula, will bring you to success in the future."

I was ready for a change. I had changed my mind. My actions and my life were destined to change.

My change of mind called for less property and less responsibilities. It was time to sell some of my assets. But, before I sold my assets I had a Finally I Can Do As I Please, When I Please, Party. This was the last party I had in my mansion.

The party started at noon on a beautiful September day and continued until midnight. It was truly a party. Not only were the people and the conversation great, but the grounds and the house had a special aura. It was the kind of aura that caused my guests to smile for no particular reason. There was no need for me to say to my guests, "You are welcome in my home." The smiles on their faces told me they already felt welcomed, and they certainly acted relaxed.

The festivities started with a sit-down brunch, served by a catering service, under a huge tent in the back yard. The size of the back yard was two and a half acres. It was quite adequate for parking fifty cars, placement of a huge tent, and partying space.

In addition to my guests, also under the tent, on stage, was a hired blues singer and a three-piece combo. They supplied the music, and the guests supplied nonstop laughter and creative dancing. There was even a skit about day-care, in which I was the star, and several of my colleagues were the supporting cast.

There were approximately one hundred guests in attendance: relatives, business associates, old friends, and new friends. I knew eighty of my guests well. The remaining guests were spouses, dates, or friends of my friends that I met for the first or second time.

The party moved from the back yard into the house. Festivities