

## “Designed for Success” Discussion Guide Introduction and Chapter 1: The Call to Action

“The Call to Action” sets the stage for the ten commandments by exploring and acknowledging the unique issues women face in the workplace. There really are different rules and expectations. There really is a “Glass Ceiling” and deeply seated stereotypes (about what women can and should do) still exist.

While the chapter acknowledges these real-time challenges, it also puts them in perspective. “Some of the challenges are built into the workplace. Others are built into us.” Here we are invited to focus on what we can impact—to work from the inside-out. This is an important concept. We increase our influence and empower ourselves when we focus on personal effectiveness. For example, how do we unintentionally “play into” the stereotypes about women in the workplace?

We don’t change anything about a stereotype by fixating on the injustice of it. We don’t break through the “Glass Ceiling” by pointing at it as an explanation for our results. We impact those attitudes by managing personal effectiveness.

As I work with women around the world, they can so relate to the challenges discussed in the introduction and the first chapter. They see a reflection of themselves here. It is encouraging and validating to know that others understand these issues and have had common experiences.

That was my original intention. I wanted to create common ground—that becomes a launching pad!

### **Here are five tips to get the most out of your reading and discussion:**

1. Prepare your mind to receive the information by reading the introduction and chapter headings. This will improve your comprehension and retention.
2. Review the study questions (on the next page) before reading the chapter. This “cues” your mind and acts as a virtual “highlighter.”
3. After skimming the chapter headings and discussion questions, jot down a few questions of your own about the topics covered.
4. Take notes and journal your way through the chapter!
5. Review the discussion questions again and make some notes about your observations and experiences.

## Questions for Discussion

1. Which of the workplace realities (in the introduction) resonated most with you? What realities would you add to this list?
2. From your experience, what do people (even women) expect from women in the workplace?
3. Which stereotypes did you recognize, and what would you add?
4. What preconceived notions do you suspect you are encountering at work? What tells you that may be true?
5. How might you be "typecast" in your role? How does one "break free" of a typecast?
6. What specific barriers or challenges are you facing at work?
7. What examples do you have of women demonstrating confidence, assertiveness, and the ability to think strategically?
8. Is there a situation in which you have given your power away by focusing on circumstances out of your control? How can you begin to take your power back?
9. How has (or is) your role changing? What skills will you need to "add" to yourself?
10. Successful strategies include career planning, networking, and mentoring. What steps have you taken to leverage these strategies?
11. What is the most important concept you are taking from this chapter? How are you going to put that concept into action?