

**Super Tips
From An Expert:
A Conversation with
Marketing Consultant**

Cary Jehl Broussard

By Elizabeth Eggleston



Native Memphian Cary Jehl Broussard is the author of From Cinderella to CEO: How to Master the 10 Lessons of Fairy Tales and Transform Your Work Life and one of the country's top experts in marketing to women and diverse populations. Volunteer Voices sat down with Broussard to find out how women across the country are balancing their personal, professional, and volunteer time and to pick her brain for some tips that you can apply to your life.

What would you say are the biggest challenges facing working women today when it comes to managing their lives?

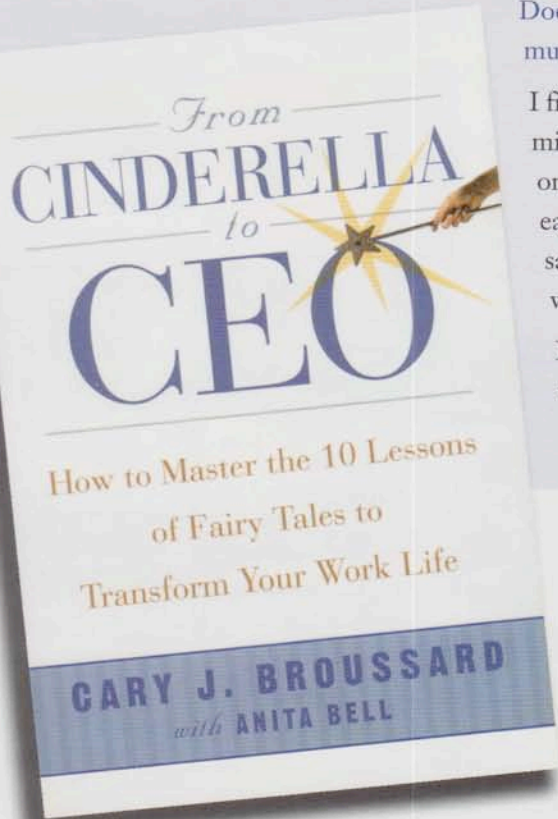
Some women have told me they can't find time to nurture a plant much less find time to have children or care for them. I chaired a women's council as part of Meeting Professionals International (MPI), and we did quite a bit of research on women meeting planners, how to help them grow their careers and balance work and life issues. Women face critical challenges relating to professional responsibilities vs. home/family management.

Women are great multi-taskers, which can be great, but can also be our big downfall. If we don't delegate to others, we get overwhelmed and tired. It can prevent us from making time for ourselves – or spending any free time we might have with family and friends. We have to learn to keep our work from spinning out of control and look for creative ways to balance our personal and professional priorities. We need to lead our careers in the direction we desire.

What would you say is the greatest modern-day tool to help women?

Technology for sure is the greatest modern-day tool - allowing flexible work schedules if you work for a corporation - and home offices, too, if you have your own business.

If you are searching for a new position and you require flex time, go to websites, like www.workingmother.com or www.catalyst.org and see what companies and types of industries offer flex-time arrangements. Typically sales jobs, real estate and/or commission-based jobs allow flexibility and you are in control of your schedule as long as you meet sales goals.



Does it appear to you that women who work, have kids, etc. are able to do any community work?

I find that your performance in a volunteer position is just as important as the commitments you make in your "real job." For instance, if you chair a committee or sit on a volunteer board and you do your job well and meet your commitments, you earn a reputation for being dependable. If you get in over your head, it's better to say "no" than leave people hanging, and you never know if you'll burn a bridge with someone who can help you later with a paid position.

If you have children and can only make volunteer commitments that allow you to still be around or involved with your children - then school PTA, church, synagogue, are great places to stay involved and gain valuable experience - it's important to stay connected - whether you are employed or not, and this is a great way to keep your contacts. Also a good tip, before you join an organization, board or agree to be a chair - do your research before you commit - talk to those who have gone before you - did they like it? How much time did it require? What did they get out of it?

What can employers do to help women balance their lives?

Employers need to be serious about the commitment first. Don't just pay "lip service." The commitment made should be to identify internal workplace factors that hold women back. This commitment has to be made at the highest level of the organization (CEO) so that the rest of the management will take seriously and follow through on the commitment. Consider developing a task force that develops a survey and/or conducts informal questioning to find out what women believe they need, what tools for example, to make their jobs more productive and more rewarding. And companies should also survey men for they, too, have ideas and goals about women in leadership and also know that they too have wives and sisters who are working - unlike it used to be where most male executives' wives did not work.

Do you have any advice for women who feel guilty about working? Or for those whose work makes them feel like they are neglecting the other things in their lives?

Most men have always known that work is not all "work" - why do you think golf was invented? Women can redefine work in a way that is meaningful and not draining to them. If you don't golf, then make sure you do some of your work over lunch with a colleague or clients. Manicures together, tennis, a girls' weekend - as long as you make the sale or accomplish your goals - it's not about being a drag. Remember to "whistle while you work," as that's how you attract the best people to work around you (nobody wants to work around a pill.) And yes, the best mentors can help you up the ladder of success, too, if they think you are someone with whom they can identify.

Bridge the Barriers to Delegation

(from Chapter 8 of *From Cinderella to CEO: The Red Shoes*)

1. Delegating is worthwhile, even if you can do the task faster or better.
2. Delegating will make you more valuable to your company, not less.
3. Don't be afraid to say "no" if you don't have the time to deliver what is needed.
4. When you negotiate, know in advance how you are willing to compromise.
5. Working moms do not have to feel guilty. Money is a family priority, too.
6. Alternative work arrangements give you more freedom and family time but sometimes at a price if you're ambitious.
7. When and if you're proposing an alternative arrangement to your employer, focus on the benefits to the company, not you.
8. Pace yourself. You can't work constantly. Strive to be a well-rounded, healthy person rather than a one-sided, one dimensional workaholic. You have to decide - is this what you want? And maybe it is.
9. With clever planning, if you travel for business, you can build in time for yourself and make business travel a pleasure.

Broussard's book can be found in Memphis at Davis Kidd Booksellers or Burke's Book Store and is available online at Amazon.com. She can be reached at cary@cinderellaceo.com.