



Angels IN THE Workplace

Stories and Inspirations for
Creating a New World of Work

MELISSA GIOVAGNOLI



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and Inspirations
for Creating
a New World
of Work*



Melissa Giovagnoli



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Preface

Why Angels?

Not only do 96 percent believe in God, most Americans also believe in: heaven, 90 percent; miracles, 79 percent; angels, 72 percent.

—USA TODAY/CNN GALLUP POLL

Angels are featured in Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and other religions. In countless Old and New Testament verses, we find angels performing their chief function—acting as God’s messengers. Other religions, including Buddhism and Hinduism, mention angels throughout their scriptures as well.

—LIESL VAZQUEZ, *ANGELS IN OUR MIDST*

There is strong and growing interest in angels in our lives. For me, angels in the workplace represent a transcendence that offers all of us new meaning and understanding of purpose in our working lives, in the place where we spend the majority of our waking hours.

It is important at the outset to recognize that we all “work,” whether in or out of the home, full-time or part-time, doing for-profit or not-for-profit work. Whenever we attempt to achieve an outcome different from our current condition,

In just a few of the cases, I’ve changed the names of the angels to protect confidentiality when needed.

we are working. Any mother or father taking care of children finds that the home is a work environment in which angel beliefs are no less important than they are in the familiar image of the workplace.

In this book, you will also find how important angel beliefs are to achieving work-family and work-life balance. The issue of balance is becoming increasingly important to men as well as women. A growing number of organizations are asking me to talk about it. In this book, I focus on balance from the perspective of taking time for yourself: getting quiet, to let the ceaseless activity of the mind settle so that you can see and hear more clearly who you really are. Once you are able to hear your unique voice, you become deeply aware of just how you fit in. You own who you really are and the purpose that only you can fulfill for the world—if you choose to own your purpose. In alignment with purpose, you activate a powerful catalyst to your spiritual growth.

In this book, you learn that work is one of the best catalysts for spiritual growth. Those who know how to turn work into a highly spiritual activity are better able to embrace the unlimited power of the divine. Whether your workplace has become unsupportive, or discouraging, or even fearful, you learn from others, just like yourself, that there is hope. Through the lives of people in every workplace environment, you gain support and insight for making your worklife work for you.

Further, by serving others you learn how angels make the kind of difference we so desperately need in our world today. It is this connection to serving that shows you the illuminated path toward the satisfaction you seek in the workplace, a path that any can travel. Mother Teresa and Princess Diana were just two of the many workplace angels who understand this potent connection to the divine. These two women realized that we each have a definite purpose in life and that our purpose always has something to do with serving others. Whereas

these angels were outside the traditional workplace environment, this book shares stories from everyday angels coming from all walks of life—from executives to janitors. You learn that the peace and purpose so many of us seek in our everyday lives is indeed attainable.

In this book, I have the privilege of sharing many inspirational stories of people I call workplace angels, the truest of leaders forging a new world of work. This new world of work is your individually created divine space, where you are personally rewarded. Here you become your own best advocate for supporting the basic beliefs (faith, hope, charity, courage, truth, trust, and love) that make up the foundation for a new world of work. However, it is not realistic to believe you can create this new world without help. The stories and strategies in each section serve as guideposts to show you just how you can travel the path to an enlightened workplace.

The people in this book come from different religious backgrounds. My intent has always been to include and respect all spiritual beliefs. I use the word *God* throughout the book not to exclude but to refer to recognition of a divine source that speaks all of our languages. I believe this is essential to creating a new world of work.

If I offend anyone, I sincerely apologize. This book is about the journey to joy; it is about belonging, feeling connected to something bigger than yourself—something divine—that in turn helps you realize you are not alone.

May the beauty and the light of the angels showcased in this book cascade into your life like warm morning sunshine, and may God bless us, every one of us, as we work toward a better tomorrow.



To Cindy, Cari, and Greg . . . to our victory



Acknowledgments

As with any successful book, it took a team of angels to achieve this finished product. I am thankful for the many wonderful souls who treated this book as if it were their own. They truly understand that no one can do it alone.

I would like first to thank Cedric Crocker, my editor, for his continuous excitement and support for this book. He enabled me to stay focused and filled with energy throughout the writing period. Thanks also to Cheryl Greenway, who was just as committed and responsive to the vision of the book. When it comes to angel teams, they don't get any better than the great production team at Jossey-Bass.

I would also like to thank my incredibly gifted outside editorial and research colleagues, Candy Gossling, Margo Pachona, Cindy Goodman, Jeri Sedlar, and Rick Miners, who were tireless in helping me locate angels and stay true to the seven beliefs of workplace angels. They are angels themselves.

This book would have blank pages if it were not for the many outstanding angels who shared their powerful stories. They have been catalysts for me every day to pay more attention to service as a lifetime vocation. (They are also personally recognized in the Resource section of this book.)

I also want to thank you, Dear Reader, for adding this work to your bookshelf. I have faith that you will use it as a tool to find the joy you so richly deserve, and that you will pass the joy on to as many others as possible.



Thanks also to the many clients, colleagues, and friends who have helped me build my belief in angels in the workplace—and in the “worldplace.” Their regular support has been invaluable to me.

Finally, thank you to my wonderful family. Abraham Lincoln called upon each of us to look for the angels within ourselves; I didn’t have to look too far to find angels among my family members.





The Author

Melissa Giovagnoli is a nationally known speaker and trainer, and the author of five other widely acclaimed, internationally sold books (including coauthorship of *The Power of Two*, recently released by Jossey-Bass) on the development of human potential. For more than eighteen years, she has worked with many of the world's leading organizations, assisting individuals and teams in building powerful workplace communities imbued with the seven principles she shares in this book. Her mission is to integrate the beliefs of powerful workplace angels within the workplace and out into what she calls the "worldplace." She is also the founder of Service Showcase, a twelve-year-old innovative management consulting and training organization located in suburban Chicago. Through her leadership, she has formed alliances with everyone from the federal government to schools to nonprofits and local organizations in her effort to get people collaborating to make a difference. She lives with her husband, Steve, and two sons, Graham and Gavin, in Schaumburg, Illinois.



Angels in the Workplace



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Introduction

The Seven Beliefs of Powerful Workplace Angels

In 1981, Steve Mariotti was mugged by five teenagers. Reflecting afterwards that they looked as though they came from disadvantaged communities, he decided to help kids like the ones who attacked him. He decided to teach disadvantaged youths. Even though he held an MBA from the University of Michigan and had worked in the corporate world as a financial analyst and later a small-business owner, he took a teaching position in special education at a high school in the Morrisania section of the Bronx.

His mission of helping grew stronger as he noticed that the most resistant youths in his class, the young men, grew interested in their schoolwork when he spoke about the basics of starting their own business. With this insight, he acquired a \$20,000 grant from the Boys and Girls Clubs of Newark and launched the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) in 1987. His goal was to improve society by teaching young people to start and operate their own small businesses.

According to a 1994 Gallup survey, 69 percent of high school students are interested in starting a business. Steve's firsthand experience confirms this data. To date, NFTE has helped more than eighteen thousand young people start businesses. The program is currently offered in fourteen cities in the United States. According to Bobby Austin, program officer

of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, extensive research shows the NFTE program to be a national leader in the field of youth entrepreneurship education.

As Steve says, "What other NFTE teachers and I have observed is that our students are less likely to have unwanted pregnancies and more likely to graduate from high school, develop self-esteem, and go to college. There is something about learning to start and operate one's own small business that is very inspiring for these young people."

Through the NFTE program—which includes entrepreneurial basics such as cost-benefit analysis, record keeping, advertising, and marketing—teens get the help they need to grow successful small businesses. "Teaching entrepreneurship is the single most important thing we can do to improve the lives of the poor," he says. As one young graduate of NFTE states, "My dream is not to die in poverty but to have poverty die in me."

Steve's passion to bring a new vision to troubled children in inner cities drives his daily work. When asked what makes a graduate successful, he quickly replies, "NFTE is just a tiny part compared to our students' spirituality, personal discipline, love, courage, and hope." He also sees all seven of the "angel beliefs" that this book discusses as important to his life's work, which is to create value in the marketplace by providing economic literacy for every child. "Thirteen million children live in poverty," he says. "If they learn the principles of wealth creation and ownership just as they learn their multiplication tables, we would find a world filled with more creative, passionate, and purposeful people." Right now there are only ten thousand kids graduating yearly in economic literacy programs like the one his organization runs. Together with partnerships with such corporations as Microsoft, NFTE can now implement creative processes that include replicating its program on the Internet. This allows schools to access a significant part of the program at a much lower cost.