

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

By Sue Morem

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As I write my last advice column for the Star Tribune. I'm remembering the day I got the call informing me that the idea I had pitched would become a column.

I was as thrilled as I was terrified: What if I can't deliver what I promised? What if people don't like what I write? What if no one responds? I had plenty of doubts, but I tried my best to put them aside and take a chance.

I put my trust in you, the reader, to guide me and thankfully you did. Without your feedback and response, this column never would have lasted as long as it has. Your replies kept it going and growing. I got my column into the Chicago Sun-Times and I answer questions on the BusinessKnowhow.com web site.

Some columns were harder to write than others. It was easy to offer generic advice. Taking a stand or revealing too much about myself was much more difficult, but every time I did, the reader response increased. It's funny how many of you wrote to tell me you'd never responded to a column before. You took a risk and thereby encouraged me to take more risks, too.

Just as my more controversial columns affected you, the tone of your letters and email affected me.

There is a common theme among the many columns I've written over the years, helping me to refine my most frequently used advice: If you're having problems with someone, unhappy with your current situation or simply hoping things will improve, stop hoping and do something. The only person you can count on is you; no one else will take care of you.

If the people you work with are difficult, perhaps it's because you are being difficult. If you have a question or need help, speak up. No one can read your mind or know what you want unless you tell them. If you're feeling stuck or aren't where you think you ought to be, change, move on or do something to better yourself. Don't be afraid to fail; learn from your mistakes. You've got everything you need to succeed, but you must believe in yourself. Go after your dreams; anything is possible.

When I wrote my first column almost 10 years ago, I was full of fear and doubts. And now, as I write my last, I am filled with many different emotions. I am grateful for this

opportunity. I am excited about the release of the two books I've just completed and I am ready to move away from the weekly deadline I've had to meet and move on to other projects.

If anyone had told me when I was young that someday I'd get paid to speak, write books and dish out advice to businesspeople, I would have thought they were kidding. It's not that I didn't have a desire to succeed, but nothing in my youth or my education would have suggested such a career path.

I never graduated college. I attended the University of Minnesota for two years before leaving to pursue my entrepreneurial yearnings. If I had listened to those who told me it was unlikely, if not impossible, to accomplish what I set out to do, I'm not sure where I'd be.

I remain steadfast in my belief that anything is possible and that dreams really do come true. More than anything, I hope you believe it too.

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