



Soul & Money in Business Women's Secrets

What *prevents* us and, on the other hand, what *helps* us feel at home in the "men's" realm of business and worldly success? New Yorker Karen Sands addresses these questions through her interviews with a group of middle and upper class women. The first part of her research involved women's secrets which prevent them from entering this realm, and in the second part she presents four women who share their secrets of how they feel quite comfortable there. In both cases, these women are aware or are becoming aware of a connection between their inner lives and their outer success.



Each time I hear a new projection on the financial status of midlife women as they hit 65, I become so discouraged! According to consultant and author Tessa Warshaw, "72% of women over the age of 65 will be living in poverty in the early years of the new millenium." "NO!" I roar. *I can't let myself become poor and dependent. Not me. Not for my children.*"

What is it about "Soul & Money" that makes many of us run from talking about it. Makes others create excuses so they won't have to confront the disparity in themselves. And yet others *do* seem able to make peace with both!

These questions motivated me to ask other women how they relate to "Soul & Money." The women I interviewed are economically in the middle or upper class; they represent a variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds and range in age from 35 to 85. Some are living quiet lives and others are living in the spotlight. I wanted to include different lifecycles and lifestyles, while focusing on ordinary women who are living lives of accomplishment. My interviews included mothers, single or married; those choosing not to have kids; career women and stay-at-home women; divorcees and those choosing to never marry.

From the interviews I identified six primary means by

which women access money: 1) being born into money; 2) inheriting money; 3) marrying into money; 4) inspiring someone else to make money; 5) receiving a divorce settlement; 6) making it on their own. As several of these means may show up in a lifetime, they suggest that the lives of women move through cycles even in the realm of Soul & Money. How do we prepare for these cycles?

I believe preparation begins by asking questions that will reveal our true beliefs and myths about our soul and its relationship to money. We then risk lifting the veils that hide our own unconscious sabotage, thwarted passions and aborted dreams.

This study reveals three fundamental attitudes: a whole hearted belief that Soul & Money are very much related; a belief that one is incapable of bringing the two together, and a belief that the two should never meet. The responses confirmed my feeling that, regardless of age or lifecycle, there exists deep in our psyches a chasm that only a few women of our times successfully traverse.

Women Awakening

At one end of the chasm lie our perceptions and beliefs about money and at the other our precious desires to express

our souls. I pray that we now begin to recognize and heal this split.

Sharon, a single parent and corporate Financial Officer, age 39: "I used to be very compartmentalized. Work was work, and I was somewhere else. Now I want to align the 'me' that works with the 'me' that just is."

As I began asking questions it became clear that this was a topic women don't easily talk about. In many cases, women are ashamed to talk about it. Some think they have to have it *all together*, heal this split completely, before they can speak their truth. Money alone is a subject women shy away from. Put money together with soul, and this seeming duality elicits confusion and a wide range of emotions.

Denise, a 55-year-old divorcee and creative artist: "This is a very tough issue for me. Emotion just wells up in me because I've just begun to realize that money is a manifestation of putting your soul and passion into action in the world. Money gives you the freedom to do so many things and to be more of who you are. I feel so bankrupt."

Many of us have no idea how the money game works.

Nancy, wife, mother and partner in a family-owned business: "I wasn't taught how to manage money. What I'm coming to terms with now, at 53, is that I really didn't know how to manage my life, my money, my time. Isn't it amazing? I don't think I learned anything about any of this growing up...."

Denise: "I don't know how to play the game; they're playing a game and I don't know the rules. I feel a great sense of loss that I didn't come equipped with the right tools...I've been playing, pretending, that I have the tools and covering up for so long."

Middle and upper class women born in the 1940's, 50's, and even the early 60's, were brought up to expect to be taken care of; to be rescued by a knight in shining armor. Even today's most assertive and highly ambitious women hold in their deepest recesses hopes that their prince will come.

Kathy, 51 years old., wife, mother, ex-corporate Vice President, now an independent consultant: "The hardest thing I ever had to admit was that I really wanted my husband to take care of me. I had worked so hard at working hard and making a lot of money to prove that I was as good as any man. When I finally got off the merry-go-round, I had to face the real truth: half the time I was unconsciously asserting, "Damn you, I'll make it myself!" and the rest of the time, I was unconsciously demanding, "Damn you, take care of me, I'm entitled!"

For many women there still seems to be a pattern of striving to be Daddy's "favorite girl." Behind the striving is the little girl grabbing for her piece of the pie, yet secretly wanting to be taken care of — by her boyfriend, or her husband, or the

organizations she joins. Others remain the "good girl," inspiring and enabling the men in their lives, with no place for their own soul to express.

We hoped to eradicate all this during the women's movement of the early 1970's. Many of us dropped our aprons and donned a suit and briefcase — the first to leave the kitchen table for corporate desks and professional lives, the first to separate from our matrilineal roots. We were going to be different; we were going to do it differently. But were we prepared to head into the arenas of money making? How many of us turned our backs on who we are fundamentally — deeply knowing and sensitive feminine beings—to go for the gold ring?

Those of us who so courageously knocked down the barriers and changed the rules were women who wanted it all and wanted it yesterday. Many of us went full steam ahead, at the expense of our deepest passions, driven by an inner tornado that had a life of its own. Whatever the motivation was, our rage against centuries of inequities carried us forward like a torrential storm. It was as if we grew up overnight. Yet our hopes and dreams, rooted in all our favorite fairytales and comic book heroines, ran on underneath, an invisible countercurrent.

This is how women speak of those influences now:

Nancy: "My favorites were Dorothy in the 'Wizard of Oz,' Elizabeth Taylor in 'National Velvet' and Tara in 'Gone with the Wind.' All these women really sold themselves, thinking that they were expressing their true self. Only now I realize that they expressed themselves through a male. And in the end, they each uncovered the falsehood. Look at Dorothy, she finally finds the Wizard and exposes the truth that he really isn't what he appears to be. He is just an ordinary man, not the Wizard!"

Sharon: "The Princess and the Pea was definitely me. I believed wholeheartedly that if someone were to put me on top of that many mattresses, I would still feel the pea. I was always accused of being too sensitive. But I wasn't too sensitive, I was just being me."

Denise: "If I were really romanticizing I would dream of Snow White.... It's the classic story of being awakened by the Prince. She falls into a deep fog after the wicked witch tricks her into eating the poisoned apple. And then the Prince wakes her out of her deep sleep. There's that theme of being rescued by men threading throughout my life."

Susan, a 45-year-old retail entrepreneur: "Cinderella was my favorite. The famous shoe, waiting for the prince. I grew out of the dungeon, I'm definitely in the castle, on my own. But I'm still waiting for the prince to come and fit the glass slipper on my foot."

Rediscovering Soul

And now, many of us are leaving corporate positions and giving up professional careers to start families or to create our own businesses. Why? What is moving within and through us during this era of great chaos? Is it the return of the Great Goddess, emerging from our depths and calling us back to who we truly are? As the new millennium comes, we are searching for something we can hardly define—it is the call of our deepest nature, our soul, asking us to return home again. We are challenged now to follow our souls' calling and to reconnect with our inner knowing. It is as if we must discover, as if for the first time, what soul is for us. The women I spoke to defined soul very similarly, although the words did not come together easily. A composite statement could be this: *Soul is the essence of my being, my connection to God/Goddess...It's definitely who I am...the part of me that is always connected...I feel that soul when I am being my authentic self...My soul is my life source...*

In my conversations with women, the loss or suppression of our earliest connections to soul was pervasive. Many felt a sense of loss around the age of 7 or 8; others when they entered puberty. All experienced a general fog as to how or why. It is as if so many of us are just re-awakening.

Denise: "The idea of soul keeps coming up now, but in the past I used to just kind of brush it aside. I feel like I made this sort of intellectual search. I was about 44 or 45 when I got in touch with my soul again. I never told people about it...I was maybe 8, 9 when I shut down."

Nancy: "I feel like it was before I was 5. I was this free little spirit...my expression of soul was through my body, it was through my arms, my smile, my eyes. I think I expressed it very privately, by myself...afraid to let anybody else really see my true nature..."

Rediscovering Money

Most middle- and upper-class families never spoke about money or how to manage it. Typically, for the women in my study, money was part of the trade agreement for being a good little girl. For most of us, money was a non-issue. It would always be there when we needed it. We would always be taken care of by someone or something more powerful than ourselves—be it a man, or from big daddy corporation, or from the biggest one of them all, the magical Universe.

Sharon: "I think when you're younger, the lure of nice clothes or jewelry—you can get lost in it... A lot of the deals that we enter into when we are young, with men especially, we give something up and we don't even pay attention to what we're giving up. We sell it before we even know we've got something to sell...it's the hidden agreements, the little

unspoken agreements that women enter into when they meet a mate or marry. I think we give up more than we should..."

Denise: "In my life I have had...this sort of magical child thinking. That's been a very big part of my relationship with money...Believing that something will always turn up for me when I need it..."

Kathy: "Although I always made a big six-figure income, I would just fade out, lose my sense of time and space when it came to money. If there was something that caught my eye, I'd buy it—always expecting that the money would be there when I needed it.

"My father controls people through money...At about 10 or 11, my father said, "Okay, you're coming with me (instead of your mother), let's go." This was all through high school...I became my father's inspiritrice, confidante and psychic mistress...It always confused me...I would get very expensive gifts...ruby rings, diamond earrings, a ruby pin, a full-length raccoon coat...all inappropriate for my age."

Nancy: "Money was something that was just there, you didn't talk about it. It was there, it was this amorphous thing that existed. It was only talked about by the adults.."

In this era of "new age" thinking, many of us are waiting for the Universe to provide while we hide in our garrets creating our art, repeating our mantras, "If I do what I love, the money will follow." No one ever clued us in about *lag time!* Yes it will follow, but there's no telling how long it will take. So follow your passions, but let's get real. Let's get out of the ethers and down to earth. It takes doing—taking action—to ground our passions, to realize our dreams.

Maturing into New Messages

We can be creative, passionate spiritual beings *and* create financial well-being at the same time. No, money isn't dirty nor sacrilegious. In fact, I believe it is a representation of the flow and interchange of energy between what we do and each other. It is the only tangible currency which our culture has developed to measure the value of soulwork. Yet so many very talented brilliant women deprive themselves of monetary well-being by clinging to the notion that money itself corrupts, rather than acknowledging that it is how it is attained or utilized that corrupts.

Dorothy, a 39-year-old, single physician: "Before I always thought that there was not enoughness anywhere and no hope of there ever being. Money was an abstract concept for me. It only just became real when I picked it up and held it... When I first started working as a physician I hardly knew what to charge, I discounted fees substantially, and lost money any way I could! Soul and Money were as separate as Church and State! I was a classic, 'If I'm really spiritual, I can't

charge and make money.”

When I reflect on our upbringing and the times in which we have chosen to emerge from behind the shadows, I begin to wonder how in the world we will learn. How will we move into our mature womanhood in relation to following our soul's calling, listening to its passionate whispers and accessing monetary support? What have we learned from all our fierce fighting for our equal rights and freedom, both concretely and subliminally?

Kathy: “My life script has been a closeted ‘Daughter of the Patriarchy’ and servant to the masculine, just like the mother I tried so hard to be unlike. Speaking the lingo of the women’s movement, but hidden behind my battle shield I was alternating between the ‘good girl’ and the ‘rebellious teenager.’ Always appeasing and shapeshifting to the demands of the men in my life — father, husband and bosses. Even more destructively, I served my inner masculine in its kingly fashion. It directed my responses to life. As I strove for my equal rights and position in the world of money, fame and power, I gave up my birthright as a woman. — I pushed down

my inner knowing and earthy wisdom, in favor of the logical, that which could be analyzed and understood.”

How many of us are struggling between having families and making a career statement — or, desperately carrying the full load of *having it all* with no time to care for our own soul? Are we still playing out our mothers’ patterns, or in defiance of them? Why are we still spending too much and saving too little? Who is teaching us to “Say no to credit card debt!” And yes to our passionate stirrings and soulful expression? How are we preparing for ourselves to be soulful and self-responsible as we grow older?

Statistics tell us:

*The average US resident owns 9 credit cards with a balance of \$1900, and is paying high interest rates (CNN factoid).

*Babyboomers have an average *lifetime* savings of only \$1200 (Age Wave, Inc.).

*In 1993, 80% of retirement age women have no pension benefits (National Center for Women & Retirement Research).

Women of Passionate Means

There *are* women who appear to have healed the split between Money and Soul. As examples, I highlight here four women who seemingly “Have It All.” Their lives are full and richly abundant. All of them are accessing and acquiring money, while they follow the calls of their soul.



Josie Cruz Natori is a vivacious 49-year-old wife and mother of Filipino descent. Brilliantly creative as an entrepreneur, she has a quick mind and shows great depth and awareness. Josie spent 9 years on New York’s Wall Street as the first woman Vice President at Merrill Lynch Inc., a major investment firm. She left Wall Street to create and co-direct with her husband “The House of Natori,” an international high fashion lingerie and leisure clothes business. Her designs are sexy, sensual and feminine.



Mickie Siebert is 62 years old and single. Soft spoken, deeply caring, a visionary and masterful entrepreneur, she remains a mover and shaker on Wall Street and an outspoken change agent for women. Founder of Muriel Siebert & Co., Mickie changed the rules and transformed the playing field when she was the first woman to buy a seat on the Stock Exchange. Later, she startled them again by being the first company to offer discount brokerage services.



Miriam Novalle, 45, is a single mother. She is the epitome of the American entrepreneur — a veteran scrapper with wit and charm, a gift of gab. She demonstrates a continual flow of creative, successful business endeavors, blended with wise perceptions, big heart and simple gentleness. Miriam has progressed from selling cosmetics after school at the age of 14, to make-up artist for film and video, to a “Nose” for creating a series of body essences and her own highly successful perfume; and finally, to her latest venture as the “Maven of Tea.” She personally directs her “T” Salon in the Soho section of New York and has tea shops opening across the country.



Monique Shay, Sr. is a 64-year-old single mother of seven, grandmother of thirteen. Of French descent, she was a typical suburban housewife who became a locally adored French Cook and radio show host of "Good Cooking with Monique". She is now a nationally respected Antique Dealer in French Canadian furniture and artifacts, directing Monique Shay Antiques in Woodbury, Connecticut. Full of warmth and emanating gentle strength, she embraces you with a welcoming country elegance mixed with an incredibly sharp mind, and earned wisdom.

These four women inspire me; they move me with their passionate soulful lives and worldly accomplishments. I chose only entrepreneurial women to present here, because of the significant role they now play and will continue to play as we move into the next decades.

Fact: The number of Women-Owned Businesses is increasing faster than other businesses; they will increase by 18% per year and are creating 80% of the new jobs. (National Association of Women-Owned Businesses).

My interviews were designed to elicit answers to these questions: What makes these women so successful in business? Are they unique? How do they bring Soul & Money together in their lives? What are their secrets?

Mickie Siebert: "I think anybody that succeeds has to learn how to take a risk. I changed jobs three times because they were paying the men 50% more than they were paying me. At that point, you learn how to take a risk. You pick up your pencils and you move...Going off a salary...and onto commission was a risk. That was as much a risk as buying a seat on the stock exchange was later for me."

Monique Shay: "I had a crisis in my life: I lost my husband, I had seven very young children to support. I had never worked in my life, so I was not prepared...Making money was never the primary thing...Making money is something I do to survive...I asked the powers that be, 'What can I do? What am I going to do?' I heard myself answer, 'Well, I'm French and I know how to cook fairly well.'"

Miriam Novalle: "My sister is married to an Englishman and after eight years of my going to visit my sister in England and having afternoon tea with my sister's mother in law, I finally broke down and proceeded to drink English tea. It was awful, it was the worst cup of tea. I had to say, This isn't working for me. Somebody's got to have something better than this!" My brother in law said, "Then make it if you think it should be better." So that's what I did. I came up with a line of fragrance teas....I didn't know, I never expected it to become this big. In my wildest dreams, I thought it was going to be a cute little place, I'd sell some teas and have a couple of chairs and tables."

A recurring theme for these women is one of positive expectancy, an "I can do it" attitude. Life's twists and turns are reframed into opportunities.

Monique: "I went to Canada one day with my children, all seven of them piled into my station wagon for a vacation of four days. I stopped at a farm in the countryside because they had one of those wagon wheels outside that I said 'Oh, that will be very nice. I can make a light.' The farmer took me into his barns to see if there were other wagon wheels. I noticed in his barn there were some little armoires and such, painted blue, red, green, etc. I did not know the value of these things. On the way back home, I stopped in an antique shop and what do I see there? Little armoires worth a lot of money! So months later, I took the kids back to the farmer and bought everything. I furnished my house for very little money, buying the first armoire for \$5! ... One day, the owners of a major New York investment firm bought a house not too far from me and came for a neighborly visit. They asked me to decorate their house. I rented a huge truck, left my kids home, traveled all night, and bought and filled my truck with things. I worked from my basement, removing paint and refinishing while I continued my other jobs.... Absolutely my passion is to just find something old and give it life again, I really love it...."

Miriam: "If you have a desire, an inner passion within you, which is given to you in your soul...then you heat it up and in that heat, if you get it hot enough, you will make as much money as you want....If you get your path right and then put it into focus, and you put a concept behind it, and you wrap it into one whole thing and you roll it down the hill, there's nothing but money to follow. It's a snowball effect."

Monique: "I believed in something...greater than myself. I really am very positive...that's what helped me through. I just would say, 'Nothing is impossible. Somebody else did, so can I...' You just have to make the decision and then go for it! And you must be very clear about what you want and have great passion for it."

Not one of these women believe for a moment that *Soul & Money* are mutually exclusive. To the contrary, they all espouse the value of money to support their soul's passionate expression and to enable them to live their truth with great verve and compassion.

Josie: "So much reflects the two cultures in me, my feelings, the hard and the soft. In the Filipino culture, business and creativity are developed when we are young; it's like second nature. A lot of people can be successful in their life from the

outside, but deep down they're not fulfilled...I'm not contented with that. Just before I left Wall Street (after 9 years), I found myself with a lot of empty time. Because I'm a musician, I'm very in touch with my feelings. I saw too many people who had no choice. I'm not a person that will compromise in anything or just settle. So finally I said, 'Wait a minute, wait a minute. There's got to be more to life. I should be able to make money and at the same time feel good and excited and fulfilled.'

"I believe that I was fortunate to get to this state, where for me it's one and the same. I didn't have to give up one, or subjugate one, or to prostitute one for the other...I think that it is possible to have a life and be dedicated to something...It's really more the idea that whatever it is that you are doing, that your whole being should be one. It should not be two different lives, it should be one."

Monique: "Without my soul I don't know if I can perform right. I have to have this thing inside of me...I don't believe that you can really make money doing something unless it's driven from your soul's passion..."

Miriam: "My spiritual path is on all the time. I don't have to plan for that, I do that on a daily basis. I am spiritual, I have my gurus that I believe in and they are in my heart all the time...My painting is clearly my soul expression. Painting is what has kept my valve open all these years...I just love to paint for 8 to 10 hours a day, with oils all over my fingers...I still paint to this day..."

Josie: "What I've realized recently is Wow, what's really important to me is my family...it's so nourishing...And my music, my piano, reading, just giving space and time and reflecting. Of course, religion, church, even more, nature... I don't want to meditate or exercise, I don't have the time...I'm a workaholic, I'm a hyper person, so it's wherever I can snatch it from. I think it's important, I almost need to go to a different environment."

Self-aggrandizement is short-lived. Giving back is a motivating force. Whether it is with cash contributions or with the immeasurable contribution of their time and energies, each of these accomplishing women shares her heartfelt compassion and deep commitment to the betterment of others.

Josie: "It's like I'm creating this movement, and there's the concerto, it's never complete. I am going into the next chapter of my life. I'm very involved with helping the Philippines. I'm trying to make a difference in people's lives. Obviously I owe a lot to the country, so I'm trying to form a council, gathering all the creative people to make it a strong community. It's a wonderful satisfaction when you are able to feel a fulfillment in helping a nation and an industry...I don't want to be remembered for fashion, that's the last thing I want to be remembered for, please."

These women exude great pride in their gender, in combination with their personal heritage. For each of them, *being a woman* is an invaluable asset leveraged to bring them fame, fortune and great fulfillment.

Josie: "I've never believed you have to ever lose your femininity to be successful, that to me is really the one biggest asset."

Did they grow up differently? What are the roots of their willingness to risk and succeed? For some, a life crisis or loss forced them into action. For others, a major life event caused them to reflect on their life to date and then they took the opportunity to make a course correction. Some grew up surrounded by money talk or discovered a natural instinct for numbers and money. Others were spurred on by incredibly empowering women role models, while others were encouraged by parental teams that expressed both intimacy and mutual respect.

Crossing the Chasm: Women in Transition

For these four women, Soul & Money are not polarities at opposite ends of the spectrum. They are, rather, two aspects of a woman's wholeness, similar to the eastern concept of Yin/Yang. Bringing these aspects together and integrating them in our everyday lives moves us closer to a state of completeness.

Dorothy: "A lot led me to this new place. I came to an uneasy recognition that I will always be relating to money. Resigned to looking at it as the way of valuing what I do and exacting from the world the price of what I do. I now believe that Soul expresses in three-dimensional reality and it receives validation in the form of money. Money is a measure of the value of my work. Money is a symbol and it's the most real and immediate symbol that I work with on a daily basis. It permits me to continue and create a flow of energy that is money. A green material energy. It has very direct flow between or a tension with what Soul sees and does in the world. Money is the direct affirmation of the healing I am giving. Now I see the very aliveness of money. There is an explosive enjoyment and joyousness that I take from it."

These women of passionate means illustrate that it is possible to make peace with money. It is our birthright as women to express our souls in the world of money and power. We can leverage our inner treasures to create a full, juicy and secure future in the new millennium. If not now, when? ❁

Karen Sands, 50, is a teacher, counselor, speaker and writer on women's transformation and transitions. All quotations are excerpted from interviews for Karen's forthcoming books.