

Introduction

Have you ever felt powerful, grounded, and living in the flow....when suddenly you realized that you had gone from feeling confident and energetic to insecure and depressed? What happened?! Where did that sense of personal power go? Did it leak away a little at a time or was it wiped out quickly by a devastating experience?

When I was working on my first book, *My Spirit Flies: Portraits and Prose of Women In Their Power*, I discovered how women access their power when they do what they love, speak what they believe, and share their gifts with the world. I became convinced that transformation could happen almost instantaneously when one's focus shifted from struggle and worry to purpose and passion. As I spent time facilitating workshops and speaking at conferences, women would share their life's experiences and wonder how to stay in their power more consistently. I started asking myself and others these questions: "What causes us to give our power away? How do we reclaim it after a challenging experience? How do we sustain it on a daily basis?"

By examining my own life, as well as the lives of others, I discovered that there are as many ways that we give our power away, as ways we step into it. When we realize how we're giving our power away, we can make conscious choices to do things differently. Often these choices are quite practical and attainable, and this is what inspired me to write *PowerBites*.

Power-Slams and Power-Leaks

Every woman I know has experienced Power-Slams and Power-Leaks. A power-slam is an experience that violently knocks you into a tailspin and leaves you feeling devastated. Maybe you lost your job. Maybe your partner left you. Maybe you were diagnosed with a serious illness. It could take days, months, or years to recover from the blow. In the end, it requires that you stand tall and say, "This is who I am, this is what I want, and this is what I'm going to do." As you start taking action, you start *reclaiming* your sense of power.

A much more subtle and insidious way we give away our power occurs on a daily basis. I refer to these behaviors as "power-leaks" because they drain away your sense of personal power a little at a time. Do you gossip? Do you continue to repeat your hard luck stories? Do you procrastinate? Power-leaks can leave you feeling anxious, depressed,

or disappointed in yourself. A key to *sustaining* your power is to identify your power-leaks and then make choices to think or behave differently.

Work it!

This workbook consists of **25 PowerBites and 5 Stories**. Together, they offer 30 strategies to help you reclaim and sustain your sense of personal power. The PowerBites are written to be simple and easy to digest. Each one is coupled with a brief personal example to help make the message real. You can chew on one PowerBite at a time or gobble up several at once. The Stories are longer and meant to be savored. They reveal how five women were knocked out of their power, and what they did to get it back.

I suggest that you read through the whole workbook first. Then **pick one** of the power-bites or stories and read it again. On the following page, you'll find a **question** that asks you to explore your own behaviors and desires around that particular topic. Let your thoughts flow and write whatever comes to mind. You'll then have the opportunity to choose **ONE THING** that you'd like to focus on. List **three action steps** and set a **target date** for each step. Breaking down a goal into simple action steps makes it much easier to attain. As you complete each action step, give it a **checkmark**.

Lastly, you'll be asked to think of **one word** that will describe how you'll **feel** when you've accomplished your goal. This last step is important. It has been proven that when we tie a feeling or emotion to an outcome, we achieve the outcome much more quickly. At the back of the workbook, there is a **checklist** that lists all thirty ways for reclaiming and sustaining your personal power. As you complete your goals, I encourage you to mark the checklist so that you can see your progress.

Concluding Thoughts

Last fall, I met a lovely Canadian woman who exclaimed, "You know you are in your power when you can walk through a room with your head held high and say, "this is who I am!" I am confident that if you implement the simple strategies in this workbook, you will walk through life with your head held high, standing fully in your power.

-M. Cathy Angell