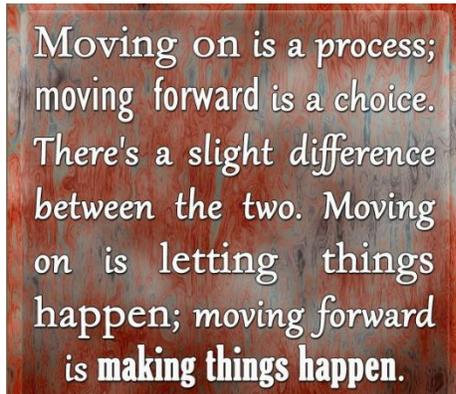


## Keep Moving Forward



Moving on is a process;  
moving forward is a choice.  
There's a slight difference  
between the two. Moving  
on is letting things  
happen; moving forward  
is making things happen.

During the last two decades, I have learned a lot about moving my career forward, even in a situation many would feel has a glass ceiling. I have benefited from my experiences and lessons learned and, through relationships within SDA, I have found tremendous benefits learning from others and their experiences also.

With ever-changing working environments, now more than ever, it is imperative we keep moving forward, remain positive, and understand the value we all bring to our firms. I want to share five lessons I learned over the last twenty years. They kept me moving forward, even

when I thought there was nowhere else to go. Sure, I have learned a lot more than five critical lessons; however, these were some of the hardest for me to learn.

I am interested in hearing what you might add to the list.

### **Be Confident**

I put a lack of confidence as one of the top three things that can hold you back in your career. A desire to be liked, taking too many things to heart, feeling lucky to have a job, and fearing unknown consequences are filters through which many women view their work, which influences the way we act.

However, the truth is, the filters blur our focus and keep us from achieving our goals. It is time to get over being so grateful for the opportunity. I mean this in the sense that it can cloud your ability to feel valued and worthy. If you're good, you should know it and own it! Of course, you also need to be prepared to walk away if you find yourself in a firm that does not value you. That is a strong statement in today's world. However, if you cannot set high goals and professional boundaries, the alternative is being unhappy in a dead-end job.

### **Have a Voice**

Have you ever heard of anyone who has been hired not to have an opinion or be able to help solve problems? Perhaps, but that is not conceivable to me. "A lot of getting ahead in the workplace has to do with being willing to raise your hand" is a quote by Sheryl Sandberg. While her book "*Lean In*" has received mixed reviews, it has become an instant catch phrase for empowering women. I personally feel that most of the content within the book applies to both genders.

I am not implying that you should throw out any idea to partake in the group. What you have to offer must be relevant, well thought out, and the intent must be for the betterment of the team, firm, or organization.

There is an article in Forbes magazine that I read written by Glenn Llopis, titled "*6 Reasons Employees Must Speak Up to Thrive at Work.*" I feel that all of his points speak to why having a voice is so important: Organizational Performance, Command Respect, Strengthen Your

Influence, Unexpected Opportunities, Solidify Your Brand, and Accelerates Your Career. It is an easy read and worth your time. [Here](#) is the link if you are interested in learning more.

If you have something of relevance to say, speak up, and have a voice. It is essential for your success and the success of those around you.

### **Be Visible and Willing to Promote Yourself**

Is it arrogant to want to keep calling attention to yourself? If you are not genuine, if you are sharing false accolades or being less than a professional when promoting yourself, yes, it has the opposite effect. It singles you out as insecure, bossy, arrogant, and all the things you don't want to be seen as to others. However, if you have worked hard to bring success to your team, your company, and the industry, you should absolutely be willing to talk about it when appropriate. Share it with others; teach what you have learned. Let me emphasize one area again – teach and share what you have learned as often as possible.

If you want something be willing to self-promote and ask for what you want. On a side note, you may want to be careful about what you ask for as you just might get it. I have heard it said, "I shouldn't have to ask to get promoted, to get a raise; it should be obvious that title or raise belongs to me." I say, "Bologna!" That is viewing your future through the filter of pride.

Be willing to share your efforts, your successes, and how they have positively impacted your company's vision and mission, as well as the bottom line if that applies.

Value your work and be your own best advocate. Don't be caught sitting around waiting for others to notice you. Charge the hill!

### **Build Alliances**



Allies are associates who provide support and, often, friendship. They can help validate your views and causes. They help find solutions to problems and provide guidance, and the right alliances are a great resource to any number of circumstances. Many times, you will find these people promoting you throughout your entire career.

When building these relationships, remember that effective communication is critical; you must treat your allies as your equals, exhibit professionalism, spend time together, always put forth your best effort when working with them, keep your promises, quickly resolve conflicts and disputes, and, most importantly, return the favor by becoming their ally in return.

Let us not forget to never backstab or blindside an ally. Building relationships is a delicate process that can quickly go astray.

Build alliances throughout your entire career.

### **Show Appreciation**

For the first ten years of my career, my focus was seeking out problems, fixing them, streamlining processes, tearing things apart, and rebuilding them. The tendency to find weaknesses and fix them crept into all parts of my life, and I found it was much easier to find

fault not only in situations or processes but also in people. That part of my past is not anything I am proud of today.

Working independently for years, I eventually had to push myself to work more with others. In doing so, I realized how common and easy it was for my associates to point out the faults of those around them, too; it was like I witnessed a flaw in human nature that so many of us shared. I don't recall the exact moment that this was no longer acceptable to me. However, my guess is it started when my own flaws were being exploited. Talking about a lesson to learn! There are great ways to help others improve; however, embarrassing people, bullying them, or going out of your way to show how smart you are to point out the imperfection of another isn't the way to help. Grace and humility are certainly worth considering when your expertise can help someone else.

Regardless, with a little self-reflection, I started looking for ways to change this part of who I had become.

The first change came when I read a book titled "*Strengths Finder*" by Tom Rath. This book is the go-to guide to help employees and teams focus on what they do best every day. This book helped me start looking at the strengths of those around me, not their weaknesses.

During that process, I started changing the way I felt about myself and those around me. Of course, changing habits did not happen overnight.

However, I did make one choice while in prayer one evening. If I dare ever to find a fault in others again, please give me the strength to share appreciation for all the positive and wonderful things people do every day. The more gratitude I showed, the better I felt, and since it was genuine, it positively affected others too.

Showing appreciation to others is one of the most important things I have ever done to keep my career moving forward. It helps build your confidence and those around you, it helps you have a voice and visibility, and it grows stronger relationships and allies. Mostly, it is the right and best thing to do for another person.

As you keep moving forward in your career, be confident, speak up, know your value, promote yourself, build alliances, and, most importantly, show appreciation to those around you.

Written By  
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**F O C U S**  
**ON SOLUTIONS**  
**THAT WILL SOLVE**  
**THE PROBLEM**  
**INSTEAD OF ASSIGNING BLAME.**  
AMY MCCREADY