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community, the ability to affect social consequences.”

What she learned from her mother: “It’s not what my mother said so much but what she did. I saw a mother who did it all.”

PERSPECTIVES II

Work on your business, not in it, says founder of Innovative Office Solutions

Jennifer Smith is the founder of Innovative Office Solutions in Burnsville, which she started eight years ago after growing her previous business to \$12 million in revenue and then selling it. She shared some stories at “Invest in Yourself,” a monthly seminar for women in business hosted by Janel Goff of The Goff Group in Minneapolis, part of Merrill Lynch.

“We compete with the big boxes every day,” Smith says, “Staples, Office Depot, OfficeMax.”

On managing people: “When you’re growing your business, once you get to a certain level you have to invest in yourself. Take leadership courses.

Take seminars. Focus on working on your business, not in your business. You have to have good people working with you. I’m really trying hard to work on my business.

“You have to set the values clear and concise, and then let them run with it.”

On the best advice she received:

“From my high school track coach, who said, if you want something you have to go for it.”

On lessons learned: “The three Cs of resilience: commitment; control; challenge. The relationships you have make you stronger.

“You have to be very, very decisive. You have to act on problems right away. Be very positive and optimistic. As a leader you almost have to take a news diet. It’s tough out there right now, and you really need to surround yourself with the positive.”

What she learned from her mother: “My Mom said it was OK to make a mistake, but learn from it and don’t repeat it.”

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