

Mary Kay ... The Lady!

By Zig Ziglar

MARY KAY WAS A GREAT LADY

In my autobiography I talk about my "Wall of Gratitude," which features the pictures of 26 men and women who have had a huge impact on my life. I mention the fact that six of those people were women, and one was Mary Kay Ash.



We moved to Dallas in 1968 to work with Automotive Performance as Vice President of Training. Unfortunately, because of a unique series of circumstances, many of which were beyond anyone's control, the training company went under and I was suddenly thrown into the marketplace, hoping to be a speaker but having no speaking engagements. At this point I met some Mary Kay Directors who invited me to speak to their Monday morning meeting at Corporate Headquarters. I gladly accepted and when I appeared I was greeted by a highly motivated, very enthusiastic group of Mary Kay ladies. As I was making my presentation I had no idea that Mary Kay Ash even knew I was in the building, but indeed she did and was comfortably seated around a corner where I could not see her.

After my presentation she sent for me and in the conversation that followed she said she liked what I had to say and the way I said it. She encouraged me to speak to her Directors and Beauty Consultants across the country. She opened that door for me and in the next two years I conducted 50 to 60 six-hour seminars all over the country and spoke at two of Mary Kay's National Conventions.

During this period of conducting the six-hour seminars I was able to formulate and lay out my complete philosophy of life, while gaining considerable presentation experience and realizing a much-needed income as a result. Mary Kay recorded the introduction on the set of tapes I had created for them and they were extremely well accepted by the field.

Over the years our paths crossed many times, and we became friends and periodically enjoyed extended telephone conversations. I missed those conversations after Mary Kay had her stroke and could no longer verbalize and express herself as she had done so beautifully all of her life.

My admiration for Mary Kay grew over the years as I witnessed the impact she was having not only on the hundreds of thousands of Mary Kay Directors and Beauty Consultants, but their families, communities and society in general as well. She always emphasized to them that they must put God first, family second and their Mary Kay business third. Her impact was felt around the world, and on the personal side I was privileged to watch her at the National Conventions stand by the hour, smiling broadly as her picture was taken with anyone who wanted a picture with her. Over the years hundreds of Mary Kay people have told me what that meant to them and what she had meant to them. She was truly an icon with a dream of giving women a legitimate opportunity to build a career while maintaining balance in their lives.

Since her death I have been humbled and gratified to learn that after her stroke and retirement, Mary Kay continued to listen to some of my tapes. It was inspiring to know that although she could not communicate verbally, she still felt the need for an encouraging message. I believe, knowing her as I did, that the major reason she listened was to **set an example**. All she could do was listen, so she was sending a message to her people that they needed to continue to grow and be encouraged so they could encourage others. She truly was a great lady and will be sorely missed.

... Mary Kay Ash died on November 22, 2001. Information about her life and her company can be found at MaryKay.com.