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About the Author



Cathryn Bond Doyle has spent decades studying and teaching about self-awareness, embracing change and creative problem-solving in human behavior and relationships. After graduating from the University of Hartford in 1978 with a business degree in Management, she became a marketing representative at IBM selling computer systems to financial institutions. Her expertise in new retail banking products led her to go work for a bank as Director of Electronic Banking for First Connecticut Bancorp in 1980, overseeing the installation of online branch teller systems and ATM machines at the 3-bank holding company. While at the bank, she set international consumer usage levels for ATMs and debit card acceptance, nearly twice the national and international averages at the time. She began speaking around the country about her unique consumer and employee training programs, and then went out on her own in 1984 to establish an international speaking and consulting career in retail banking.

Cathryn began speaking at regional, national and international banking conferences in the U.S., Canada, Great Britain and Mexico and was a speaker at seven annual European self-service banking conferences in Edinburgh, Scotland. She lived in England for 12 months between 1994-1995, working for several banks and building societies. She also made several training videos for banks, shared ATM networks and MasterCard. The common theme of her work was helping people overcome their fear of change and improving staff communications and customer service skills in comfortable ways.

In 1996, Cathryn became a stepmother and her focus and life goals changed almost immediately. In the process of settling into her new role, with a 5-year-old stepson living with her half the time, she found herself dealing with the unknowns and complexities of new relationships. Much to her surprise, she learned quickly that her previous training and experience didn't help her handle the stepfamily traumas she was experiencing. In her quest for greater understanding, less stress, a closer connection with her husband and a chance to care for (and get to know) her new stepson, she shut down most of her consulting practice and went to work on gaining new skills to improve her responses and approaches to stepfamily situations.

Cathryn started a stepmothers' support group, Step moms on a Mission (SMOMS), in 2000. This face-to-face group of women met weekly for two years and then became a monthly meeting and an online community when she created the smoms.org website and forum in 2002. During these two years, she also authored a monthly relationship column and hosted a bulletin board for phenomenalwomen.com, the second largest website supporting women at the time. Through these experiences and beyond, she discovered that many of the new lessons she was learning in her own stepfamily life were also helpful for other stepmothers. Together, she and her sister SMOMS worked to increase their self-awareness and skill sets, heal their personal emotional "hot spots," build stronger relationships with their partners and become their most empowered selves. This represented a dramatic shift in Cathryn's career plans and one she remains passionate about continuing.

From 2007-2014, Cathryn invested a tremendous amount of time, money and energy to work with various experts so she could learn more about dynamics related to families, couples, the impact of our upbringing on our adult behaviors, beliefs and power struggles so she could find answers. As a result of this effort, she has developed new approaches and skills specifically designed to help women feel strong and confident in their role as stepmothers while also improving their relationships with their partners and stepkids.

For the first thirteen years of her work with stepmothers, Cathryn offered all of her personal, group and website support services for free to every stepmother who sought her help. This included providing access to her website community forums and her many articles, training workshops and private consultations as requested. In 2013, feeling she was prepared and had acquired enough knowledge and field experience, she was ready to, once again, “hang out her consulting shingle.” She began offering paid website memberships, workshops and private consultation services to Stepmoms (and, when asked, to their partners), while continuing to provide a large body of written support materials for free to the public. This book represents the beginning of the next phase of Cathryn’s work helping Stepmoms and their partners, plus her work with therapists who want to better assist their clients dealing with stepmother-related issues.

When Cathryn is not working with Stepmoms, studying or writing to share what she has learned, she’s enjoying time with her family and friends, working on a quilt for someone she loves, or cheering on her favorite Philadelphia sports teams with her husband—they’re huge Flyers (hockey) and Eagles (football) fans!

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