

## AN AMAZING FUSION OF WOMEN SCIENTISTS, ENTREPRENEURS, EXECUTIVES, AUTHORS, AND COMMUNITY LEADERS



### The Black & Pearl Photo-Shoot

Back row (left to right): Jennifer Smith – Attorney, Law Professor & Entrepreneur | Sandris Jeter - Realtor & Entrepreneur | Leisa Smith Lundy - Chemical Engineer & NYC-based Patent Attorney | Veronica Morris – Minister, Entrepreneur & Author | Darlynda Bogle - Attorney & Senior Executive US Social Security Administration | Susan Rowe - Entrepreneur & Real Estate Investor | Dr. Lesia Crumpton-Young - Engineering Professor, Career Coach, Entrepreneur & Author | Sitting on arms of chairs: Left: Tekoa Pousie - Entrepreneur, Motivational Speaker & Author | Right: Stormy Washington – Executive Assistant to VP of Philanthropy and Multicultural Insights, Orlando Magic | On couch: Dr. Diane Reed - Nurse, Educator & Author | Delphine Wharton - Private Banker, Executive | ME – Dr. Pamela McCauley - Engineering Professor, Entrepreneur, Author, Keynote Speaker | Renee Love - Medical Sales Specialist/Trainer (retired) & Community Leader | Maureen Wooding - Registered Nurse & Educator | Front row (on the floor): Left: Sheryne Flowers - Elementary Education teacher 2. Right: Annette Hemphill - Entrepreneur & Member Relations Coordinator ACMP

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**Women often don't go out with co-workers to have a cocktail after work because there's so much work at the office and then even more work at home.**

But women must do this – not necessarily drink – but socialize with other women, female co-workers, outside of the office. Lunch, afternoon coffee or even walking together to the next meeting is time together that builds the types of relationships that build trust, enhance confidence in your abilities and become the pathway to new opportunities.

We all face challenges in life on a daily basis; workplace issues, family demands, societal expectations, even self-induced and often self-critical personal expectations such as losing weight or being a Super-Parent. As an author who has studied and researched [successful women's leadership strategies, particularly in traditional male-dominated STEM fields](#), and having experienced first-hand immense life-hurdles, I know the critical importance of women supporting one another. Now, research supports friendships and “female fusion” between

women as a significant factor to both mental and physical well-being.

## **Women react to stress differently than men do.**

A study by UCLA Researchers, Laura Klein and Shelley Taylor on the relationship between friendships and stress discovered that women react to stress differently than men do as a result of the different proportions of hormones that are released into the bloodstream under stress. According to Taylor, women can be considered as being “hard-wired” for friendship largely due to the oxytocin released into their bloodstream in combination with female reproductive hormones. This response generates a desire in women to seek out friendships with other women as a means of reducing the stress they are feeling. Specifically, Klein hypothesizes that when the hormone oxytocin is released as part of the stress response, this actually buffers the “fight or flight response” that men experience, increasing the desire of women to want to gather with other women.

## **Friends make you happier and healthier.**

An article by Randy Kamen in the Huffington Post shares highlights of a number of studies regarding women and friendship and the common female “tend and befriend” stress response. He also points to a Nurses Health study by **Harvard Medical School** which suggests that the more friends women have, the more contented they feel and the less likely they are to develop physical impairments as they age.

During Women’s History Month, I reflected on the scientific evidence of the benefits of close female friendships and I began to take inventory of the amazing women that I have to support me in so many areas of my life; the women in my family, my incredible mother, my sisters and cousins. Then my mind went to my professional mentors such as Dr. Debra Reinhart, my spiritual confidante Sandra Jeter and the close circle of women in my world, known as the Sister Circle.

## **I decided to capture the love and beauty of the amazing friendships I share with these women, some going back over 25 years, in a photo-shoot.**

I requested Black attire to capture the elegance of the event and to show solidarity and Pearls because of the uniqueness of each of these women and the level of value I place on each one. Scientifically speaking, the process to create pearls is difficult and true good quality natural pearls are rare. In fact, even in some of the best pearl beds in the world, the rate of finding a “good” pearl is only 5 - 12%. So, as I looked at the pearls on each friend, I was reminded of how very special they are to this world and especially to me.



## **The photo-shoot was everything I had envisioned and more.**

As we glamorized ourselves at [Wet Orange Studio](#) with the help of The Lip Factory, listened to great R&B , laughed , hugged, told stories sipped refreshing drinks and nibbled on appetizers – I was almost overwhelmed with emotion and appreciation for all that these women bring to my world.

“Female fusion” is the term author and entrepreneur Vicki L. Milazzo uses to describe the bond that occurs when women come together and share their passions, visions, experiences, fears, and promises. This bond leads to, “The emergence of brilliance and insight that none of these women alone could have inspired.” Milazzo’s quote and the following exercise are detailed in my most recent book, [Transforming Your STEM career Through Leadership and Innovation: Inspiration and Strategies for Women.](#)

I encourage you to reach out and express your appreciation today to the women who’ve made a difference in your world.

## **Create your own sister circle or female fusion event:**

- Keep it simple

- Three or more women
- Two to Four Hours of uninterrupted time
- A goal (i.e. establishment of a revised career vision, for example)
- Creation of a safe environment by agreeing on the following: How to offer advice. Only when asked for? Or openly and freely? An informal confidentiality agreement.

Of course, it doesn't take a professional photo shoot or an organized event to demonstrate to the women in your world how much they mean to you. **Tell a woman today how much you value her and why.** There's proof that a dose of girl-friend time, supporting your female co-workers and tending to one another as women, especially when faced with adversity, is the best medicine for a brilliant, fulfilling and healthy life.

[Comment](#), [Email](#) or [FB message](#) me what you do to support or appreciate other women as well as your suggestions, your ideas and your goals for your own sister circle or female fusion event. Let's take advantage of today's technology to continue the conversation virtually and inspire one another to come together real-time.

With Great Confidence in You,  
[Pamela McCauley](#)

Dr. Pamela McCauley is an award winning full Professor in the Department of Industrial Engineering and Management Systems at the University of Central Florida where she leads the Human Factors in Disaster Management Research Team and serves as Director of the UCF Ergonomics Laboratory. She is the president of T-STEM Inc which provides program evaluation consulting and [expert witness services](#), as well as STEM education, leadership and diversity programming. <http://pamelamccauleybush.com>

Dr. Bush has received numerous awards (Engineer of the Year, The Distinguished Alumni Award, Engineering Educator of the Year, Fulbright Specialist Award and the Women Making a Difference Award, to name a few) in recognition of her professional accomplishments and community outreach efforts in the business, technology and education communities.

She is the author of [Ergonomics: Foundational Principles, Applications, and Technologies](#), a textbook that is used on college campuses around the world and is based on Dr. McCauley's almost two decades of teaching. She recently authored [Transforming Your STEM Career Through Leadership and Innovation](#), a research-based book on successful leadership strategies and principles. Her personal story of facing adversity to pursue her educational goals is told in her book [Women Don't Quit... Today They Call Me Bosses](#).

Studies highlighted:

(<http://www.ansold.org/ord/jender/friend.html>)

([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/andy-kamen-greidinger-edd/female-friendship\\_3\\_210302.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/andy-kamen-greidinger-edd/female-friendship_3_210302.html))

Figure 1. Source <http://fabulousfindings.blogspot.com/2009/08/male-to-pemale-story-behind-cadillac.html>

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