

## Tamara Davenport's Story

Written by Angela Newman

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I'm so excited to be able to sit down and write a story about my best friend, Tamara Davenport. She is one of the most incredible women I know. We have spent countless hours together over the years getting to know one another, sharing in our life's tragedies and triumphs and everything in-between. Every woman needs to have a best friend that you can share your frustrations with, ask for advice, have someone to cheer you on, support your endeavors, and spend a girl's weekend out laughing, shopping and having a wonderful time just because you enjoy one another's company. Tamara is that person to me and I feel so fortunate to have her in my life. Because of her friendship, my life is so much better.

Although she is a very career focused and educated woman, she is also an amazing remodeler of homes. She does it as a hobby when she's not helping clients, traveling on business or cuddling with her boyfriend or cats. She has transformed old, dingy and ordinary rooms into comfortable, chic, and functional areas. And I don't mean by hiring people to do this; she does the majority of work herself. She's been known to put in new wiring, lay ceramic tile, hang sheet rock, paint, stain, and do some plumbing. I've had the pleasure of seeing the 'before' and 'after' of these projects and I can tell you first hand, what an amazing difference she makes. In fact, she is so good at it that her mom decided to enter her into a contest about a year ago which featured the remodeling of her entire upstairs; once an old and not so livable space to a gorgeous room filled with sunlight surrounded by a pool table, TV, paintings and memorabilia. Several people were nominated across the country in this contest. The winner would be the person who could transform their area the best and would be decided on by people voting from all over the country. No surprise to those who know Tamara, that her work won the Ace Hardware contest.

Although she does not currently work in the field of construction or remodeling, she did go to school to be an architect. After graduating she worked for a home builder designing homes with the plan to continue her education for two more years and get her architect degree. But while attending school she realized this is not what she wanted to do as a career, but as a hobby only. She said, *"That left me with a huge question...."now what?" I thought about*

*what I enjoyed doing and realized I loved working with computers, so I enrolled in night school and began working on my Masters in Computer Information Systems and Accounting degree.” During this time, personal computers (PC’s) were just starting to take off and when the company she worked for was moving from mainframe computers to PC’s she asked if she could assist with the project.*

They put her in charge of training over 1400 employees on the use of PC’s, wiring the building for network capability, then setting up, installing and supporting the PC’s. *“I was the only employee in the department and now when I look back, I laugh out loud at how insane that job was, but what a great opportunity. It eventually lead to a position as a Systems Engineer for the largest healthcare provider in the US. While at that company they asked me to move into a role that would require me to oversee the customer’s projects, negotiate contracts and manage the overall account relationship. While I had never done anything like that before, it was a great opportunity and lead to the next phase of my career. I now provide account management and sales to some of the largest healthcare organizations in the United States.”* She currently works as the Client Executive - Strategic Accounts for HealthStream located in Nashville, Tennessee.

As one can imagine taking on such a responsibility came with its own set of challenges. One of the biggest challenges Tamara faced was not having all the skills for the job, but what she lacked in skills, she had the intelligence, drive, and desire to do what it would take to be successful in the position and not be afraid of learning and working hard. She says having done so played a key role in her success. Some good advice she has for us is *“Don’t be afraid to try something that is outside of your comfort zone; you can’t grow if you aren’t willing to take on new challenges/risks.”*

In addition to taking risks, Tamara believes that goal setting is essential to success. *“Without goals I would not have finished college and I would not have been successful in my career. If you don’t have goals, how do you know where you are going or how to get there?”* Along with the goals, there must also be hard work and an attitude of never giving up. But she’s not all work and no play; I know that to be true. Tamara does like to take vacations, relax and unwind and does a great job of balancing work and leisure time.

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She reminds us that *“Relaxation is so important and something we often forget about while building our careers. Over the years I have kept physically and mentally active outside of my job. Exercising the body and the mind helps reduce your stress and allows you to really focus on building your career.”*

Tamara is a wonderful example to other women climbing their career ladder and has mentored and helped others throughout the years. She finds it to be quite satisfying when she sees them excel and climb their ladder to success. But as you climb your ladder to success, she says, *“We might not always have the support we want or need, so it’s most important to believe in yourself. People will either get on board to support you, or they won’t remain in your life.”*

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