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The Nia Guide for Black Women: Achieving Career Success on Your Terms

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To date, more Black women than ever before have gained and maintained managerial and entrepreneurial positions, warranting a book such as this one, the first in a series by the editors, who have extensive experience in corporate America. McKissack is founder, president, and CEO of Nia Enterprises, LLC; Huggins is editor-in-chief of NiaOnline and director of information services for Nia Enterprises. NiaOnline.com is a website for black women that McKissack launched in 2000. In this book, the editors combine motivational and helpful adaptations of articles posted on NiaOnline with transcripts from the Nia Leadership Summit held on April 30, 2004.

Though the transcripts are informative, obviously the nuances of the live talks are absent. In four parts and thirteen chapters, the book uses a conversational tone that makes it a quick read. The first section, “Sole Sister: Keeping Your Pride and Sanity,” offers three chapters that suggest various ways African American women can celebrate their cultural identity in the workplace, avoiding the pressure to assimilate.

The chapter “Shattering the Glass Ceiling” features two women, Daphne Jones, executive director of information management for Johnson & Johnson, and Patricia Winans, owner of Magna Securities, a Wall Street securities firm. This transcript describes their success stories and suggestions for upward mobility. According to Jones and Winans, securing mentors, having ambition, and working hard are important initiatives needed to shatter the “concrete” ceiling that they suggest stands in the way of many Black women.

In another transcript, Harriette Cole, author of *Jumping the Broom* and owner of Profundities, an image business, gives tips on how to “Become Your Own Brand.” Cole maintains that in order to build your brand, you must form relationships, hone your skills, look your best, and do quality work. Much of her advice might be common sense for some, but is still

useful to many.

Chapters also include quizzes, lists of resources, and writing prompts followed by a section for notes. The chapter that asks readers if they are earning what they are worth concludes with a “Compensation Self Quiz” that asks questions such as “How does your current salary match up to the market salary range?” and “Have your previous requests for pay increases been rejected?” After a chapter on the benefits of keeping ones resume current, the editors ask readers “to list three things you did on the job during the past year that went above and beyond the call of duty.”

If the second book in the series, *The Nia Guide for Black Women: Balancing Work and Life*, is anything like this one, it too will encourage women to take control of their own career paths and mentor others along the way.

Kaavonia Hinton