

## The ten best careers resources for girls

### Anthony Barnes

After browsing the careers section of a Sydney bookstore, I set myself the challenge of identifying the top ten resources for girls that should be in every school and college. Some new titles caught my eye but I also realised what we had lost. *The Penguin Careers Guide*, for example, has not been updated since 2008. I remember it coming out in 1978 as *Equal Opportunities: A careers guide for women and men*; but the first edition, called *The Peacock Book of Careers for Girls*, actually dates from 1966!

Now I realise that I am courting controversy by leaving out some of your favourites; but if you want to make a comment on Cegnet I'd love to hear from you. So, here goes, my top ten careers resources for girls and why!

### **1. A Woman's Framework for a Successful Career and Life by James E Hamerstone and Lindsay Musser Hough (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)**

I have never been one for dumbing down the way we talk to young people about careers. This book is unashamedly for career-driven sixth-form girls to get them thinking about the challenges ahead. It's definitely not a formulaic 'seven tips for instant career success' type of book. It focuses on the core skills that women need: leadership, communication, negotiation and networking, mentoring, career path navigation, work-life fit and personal brand. Each topic is backed up by summaries of key research, case study interviews and practical suggestions for readers on how to apply the advice to their own lives.

### **2. WISE - Promoting female talent in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) from classroom to boardroom (<http://www.wisecampaign.org.uk/>)**

Incredibly, the WISE organisation is 30-years-old this year. Its mission is still to inspire women and girls to pursue STEM subjects as pathways to what could become exciting and fulfilling careers. The 'women and girls' section of their website is perhaps not the most enticing but is packed with useful content. There's also a lot of useful information on the website for teachers and parents. The 'Education: schools' section has more resources and helpful links to other projects and initiatives. Each year, WISE make an award to a girl under the age of 18 with a passion for STEM whose outstanding achievements have already inspired other girls. Membership of WISE is also free for girls in school sixth forms and colleges!

### **3. Inspiring women campaign**

**<http://www.inspiringthefuture.org/about/inspiring-women-campaign.aspx>**

About a year ago, the Inspiring the Future organisation launched its 'Inspiring Women' campaign. It's great to see so many women volunteering to come into our schools to talk with girls about their jobs and careers. Schools can get involved very easily and students themselves can help organise events and encourage more volunteers, including from the alumnae of their own school.

### **4. Mrs Money Penny's Careers Advice for Ambitious Women by Mrs Money Penny and Heather McGregor (Portfolio Penguin, 2013)**

Mrs Money Penny is well-known to the readers of the Financial Times and devotees of the Channel 4 series 'Superscrumpers', but it is not too early for motivated sixth-form girls to discover her brand of humour and forthright advice on getting connected and getting ahead. Heather McGregor owns and runs Taylor Bennett, an executive search firm. She also chairs the educational charity Career Academies UK and is a founding member of the Steering Committee of the 30% Club. The book is mainly aimed at women wanting a career in business but the advice goes wider than that. It starts with 'go to the poshest university you can'!

### **5. Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead by Sheryl Sandberg (Random House, 2013)**

It was a toss up for this spot between Sheryl Sandberg's inspirational book on women's leadership and Karren Brady's equally engaging *Strong Woman: The Truth about Getting to the Top* (Collins, 2013). Sheryl Sandberg, Chief Operating Officer of Facebook, will start girls thinking about why there should be more women in top positions and how they can get there. She encourages women to work with the grain of male-female differences and points out how to avoid making common mistakes when faced between career and life choices.

### **6. icould <http://icould.com/>**

The icould website has a wide range of personal video stories and articles about women and their jobs (Enter "girls' women" in the search box). Davina McCall, TV presenter, is one of the well-known celebrities interviewed but the most interesting stories are about women out of the public eye doing jobs that are not well-known. If your students are allowed to access YouTube, they can find more stories about girls' careers from around the world.

## **7. The Wise Girl's Guide to Freelance Modelling: The Dos and Don'ts of Becoming a Successful Freelance Model by Lizzie Bayliss (Thames River Press, September 2014)**

Young people are often attracted to careers that are portrayed in the media as 'glamorous'; but they do not know enough to see these jobs as they really are or how to manage the risks and rewards they present. This book by industry insider Lizzie Bayliss is only just out but is a welcome addition to the careers literature on modelling in the fashion industry. It has advice on getting started and getting work without falling into any traps. It includes advice on profile construction, grooming, posing and essential business skills.

## **8. Working Mothers: The Essential Guide by Denise Tyler (Need-2-Know, 2011)**

One of the best careers resources for girls is, of course, their Mums and Dads! Girls can learn a lot from talking to their parents about how they juggled careers and mother/fatherhood. This is a practical book about managing to be a working mother that will help girls to think about the issues hopefully long before they have to make any decisions themselves. Need-2-Know publish a number of other careers-related titles in their 'Essential Guide' series that are well worth a look.

## **9. Diary of a Ballerina by Angela Royston (Heinemann/Raintree, 2013)**

I have long been an advocate of starting careers education in the primary school so had to include one resource for KS1 and 2 although I think older pupils with special educational needs will enjoy it too. The diary approach also appealed to me as pupils learn easily about careers from other people's stories. This book encourages pupils to keep their own diaries. There are five other titles in the series from this imaginative publisher. Have a look too at their pack of four eco-guides for 11-13-year-olds.

## **10. The National Careers Service**

**<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>**

If we had made more progress in breaking down gender stereotyping and segregation at work, I wouldn't need to have a list of the best resources for girls; but girls can benefit too from general information and one of the up-and-coming resources is definitely the National Careers Service website and especially its free app which every girl should have on their smartphone.