



KATHY RICHARDSON

BUILT  
TO  
RISE

REINVENT YOURSELF  
WITHOUT STARTING OVER

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***Built to Rise:  
Reinvent  
Yourself  
Without  
Starting Over***

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**Kathy Richardson**

# **Built to Rise: Reinvent Yourself Without Starting Over**

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*To God - Thank You for the resilience to endure what tried to break me, the clarity to see beyond temporary setbacks, the wisdom to grow through every season, and the discernment to choose alignment over comfort. Every step forward has been guided by Your grace. This work is a reflection of that faithfulness.*

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# Introduction

*As you stand at the crossroads of your career, feeling the pull to evolve, it's easy to believe that the only way forward is to abandon everything you've worked so hard to build. But what if there was another way? What if you could reinvent yourself without starting over?*

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I used to think reinvention meant walking away.

New city. New job. New title. New life.

That's the story we're sold, right? If you're restless, pivot. If you're burned out, quit. If you're underutilized, start from scratch.

But here's what I've learned after more than two decades across industries, titles, teams, and transformations:

You don't have to burn your life down to build something better.

You optimize it.

For over 23 years, I've worked across automotive, tech, digital marketing, analytics, mortgage, leadership development, and entrepreneurship. I've been the technical support rep. The executive liaison. The digital strategist. The analyst. The subject matter expert. The innovation specialist. The leadership coach.

And somewhere along the way, I realized something powerful.

The real growth didn't happen when I changed jobs. It happened when I changed how I showed up inside them.

I didn't start over.

I stacked.

I layered skills.

I connected dots other people didn't see as connected.

And that's what this book is about.

## The Lie of “Starting From Scratch”

There was a season when I felt stretched thin but also underused. Capable—but capped. Experienced—but still evolving. I had earned my degree from Michigan Technological University and later completed my Executive MBA at Michigan State University — Eli Broad College of Business. I had led teams. Resolved executive escalations. Improved customer workflows.

Analyzed digital performance. Built side businesses.  
Written books.

On paper? Solid.

In my spirit? Restless.

That's when I realized something important:  
stagnation isn't always about your role. Sometimes it's  
about your perspective.

Reinvention isn't demolition. It's redesign.

## Optimization Is My Native Language

I've spent my career improving processes.

At one point, I was enhancing workflows and value streams at Stellantis. Before that, I worked in digital ecosystems at Google, resolving platform issues, supporting partners, and advising on optimization strategies. Later, I rotated across business units at United Wholesale Mortgage, identifying inefficiencies and building strategic solutions. Today, I serve as a Leadership Coach, helping others strengthen communication, resolve conflict, and develop their influence.

My entire professional life has centered around one core question:

How can this work better?

Eventually, that question turned inward.

How can I work better? How can my skills work together better? How can my career produce greater

impact without sacrificing stability?

That shift changed everything.

## Skill Stacking Changed My Trajectory

Early in my career, I thought success meant specialization. Pick a lane. Stay there. Master it.

But my path didn't look like a straight line. It looked like a web.

Technical troubleshooting. Digital marketing. Analytics. UX thinking. Project management. Agile methodologies. Leadership development. Entrepreneurship. Nonprofit leadership.

For years, I thought those experiences were scattered.

They weren't scattered.

They were stacking.

Each skill reinforced the next. Each role added a layer. Each pivot wasn't a restart—it was an upgrade.

When I stopped trying to shrink my experience into one neat label and started integrating it instead, my influence grew.

That's when I moved from doing the work to shaping the work. From solving problems to designing solutions. From executing tasks to developing leaders.

## The Parallel Dream

There's another layer to my story.

# *Biographical note*

## **About the Author**

Kathy Richardson is a leadership strategist and business innovation professional dedicated to helping individuals and organizations operate with clarity, purpose, and sustainable excellence. With a career spanning corporate strategy, customer experience, and operational transformation, Kathy has led high-impact initiatives across complex organizations—guiding teams to align vision, optimize systems, and execute with focus and discipline.



**Kathy Richardson, MBA**

Beyond her corporate leadership, Kathy is an entrepreneur, author, and creative visionary. She is the founder of Kathy's Kreations, a custom designs and

graphics company, and the author of multiple children's books, including *Potty Troubles for the Doubles* and her recent release, *Ava's Brave World*. Inspired by her daughter, *Ava's Brave World* celebrates courage, confidence, and navigating the world boldly—especially for children learning to embrace who they are. Through storytelling, Kathy creates tools that empower both parents and children to grow with resilience.

Kathy is also the President of Daughter of Zion, Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to community revitalization and service. Through this work, she collaborates with business and community leaders to create sustainable impact in underserved areas, combining strategy with compassion to strengthen families and neighborhoods.

A devoted mother of three, Kathy considers her children her greatest leadership classroom. Their unique personalities, challenges, and strengths continually shape her perspective on resilience, patience, and purpose. Motherhood grounds her philosophy: strength is layered, growth is intentional, and love is leadership in action.

In addition to her books and nonprofit work, Kathy shares insight and practical guidance through her YouTube platforms, including SmartStart Tutorials, where she provides tech-forward resources and educational content designed to help others grow confidently in a digital world.

# BUILT TO RISE

Reinvent Yourself Without Starting Over

Too often, ambition leads to burnout—not breakthrough. BUILT TO RISE challenges that cycle.

Through strategic career positioning, Kathy Richardson reveals how to optimize your current role, expand your influence, and lead with clarity—without abandoning stability or starting from scratch.

This book is not about escape.  
It is about elevation.

## Key Learnings Inside:

- ◆ Navigate complex team dynamics as a catalyst for change
- ◆ Build credibility where you are
- ◆ Cultivate innovation regardless of title
- ◆ Stretch your influence across departments
- ◆ Manage emotional discipline in demanding environments
- ◆ Create sustainable excellence without burnout

BUILT TO RISE is for professionals who want to grow beyond their job title and lead from where they stand—rising intentionally, through refinement, alignment, and strategic reinvention.



Kathy Richardson is a Business Innovation Specialist, Leadership Coach, and Entrepreneur dedicated to helping professionals rise into influence by optimizing where they currently are.

