

Pressure Makes Diamonds: Becoming the Woman I Pretended to Be

Valerie Graves

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Valerie Graves : Pressure Makes Diamonds: Becoming the Woman I Pretended to Be before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Pressure Makes Diamonds: Becoming the Woman I Pretended to Be:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. The "Mad Woman" of AdvertisingBy Robert F. MonementA very descriptive and brutally honest true story of how to succeed when you really try. Superior writing that includes many wise, inspirational life lessons.Anyone in the ad biz, or from around the Detroit area, or just interested in a serious and uplifting rags to riches story will find this book fascinating. Ms. Graves paints a vivid, intimate portrait of her epic

climb from humble beginnings in Pontiac, Michigan, to becoming the leading black, female creative in the New York advertising jungle. She has been hailed as "Legendary" and "Best and Brightest" in the advertising industry but you may think of her as the transfiguration of Don Draper in "Mad Men". I worked with Valerie briefly, early in her career. She was a brilliant writer then, she's a brilliant writer now. Bob Monement, Creative Director of 3 people found the following review helpful. Valerie Graves' True Application of the 'Pressure Principle' By Cecilia Bowie Valerie Graves has written an extraordinary examination of her successful life's journey from the mud side of Pontiac, Michigan's Lakeside Housing Projects to the crystal management offices of some of the nation's most prestigious advertising firms. Her story will resonate with anyone who has ever had a dream that seemed beyond reach. Valerie takes on challenges and difficult circumstances to create opportunities for positive change for herself and others. In turn, the reader gets a front row seat in observing how one black woman fearlessly and creatively takes the path less traveled to achieve monumental success in the advertising world. In so doing, America and the world gain the gift of a changed media who can no longer ignore and marginalize the contributions of those restricted by race and gender for far too long. This is an amazing story of perseverance and making the American dream a reality. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. DON'T MISS THIS EXTRAORDINARY MEMOIR By Customer 'Pressure makes Diamonds' is a beautiful and inspirational memoir for women of color (or any and all disadvantaged groups) who are starting to break through the glass ceilings in their careers. An important kernel of truth this book contains is that in spite of internal demons and insecurities, it's important -- even essential -- to step out of your comfort zone. 'Diamonds' understands the desire to give up in the face of isolation and prejudice, when in reality we should continue to be even more strategic and keep to set goals during these times. Is this the only piece of advice this book passes on? I would have to say it's the whole book! Victoria Gonzalez Vega Attorney, New York and Exhibiting Painter

"When you get dealt a tough hand, you might choose to fold or you might decide to hold. If yoursquore Valerie Graves, you reshuffle the whole damn deck...Graves's can'squost-stop-won'squost-stop energy offers a jump start toward meeting objectives and renews hope. Pressure Makes Diamonds is about more than overcoming." --Essence Magazine "This is the unflinching memoir of a Black woman's journey from the projects of Motown-era Michigan to the skyscrapers of Madison Avenue and beyond." --New York Beacon "A gem of a book . . . Valerie Graves has spun an appealing narrative with a protagonist who reads like an African-American female counterpart of Horatio Alger. Her journey from Mud Lake, Pontiac, an exurb of Detroit, to a corner office on Madison Avenue is exhilarating, marking her rise to the upper echelons of advertising and providing readers with an exposeacute; of her creative life and the world ruled by Mad Men." --New York Amsterdam News "Graves paints the picture of how she was a determined woman who faked it till she made it and made it big. [An] inspirational memoir." --Black Enterprise Library Journal "Graves established herself as a fierce force in the advertising field and a greatly admired role model for black professionals establishing themselves in American business. In a moving book steeped in perseverance and empowering determination, the author fully embodies the challenges of her culture and those of being a motivated businesswoman . . . Optimistic and galvanizing, Graves's message of hope and hard work is timely and applicable." --Kirkus Reviews "Barrier-breaking, highly celebrated creative director and advertising executive Graves is about more than glittery and impressive national advertising campaigns and her association with international celebrities and various Fortune 500 companies . . . No one was looking for her, but she showed up, spoke directly to the public, and captured the world's attention. Graves's well-told tale, set against a detailed social and cultural backdrop, of courage and success both personally (including a happy marriage) and professionally is moving and inspiring." --Booklist A story about an accomplished woman who is the epitome of grit . . . Whether recalling the guilt she felt as a working, absentee parent, or how she came to adopt new age thinking, the author's storytelling skills and use of humor, imagery, and figurative language is noteworthy. At an early age, Valerie decided she would fake it until she made it. Now a success by most standards, she no longer has to pretend. Anyone who enjoys reading about those who travel difficult paths in life will find Pressure Makes Diamonds to be inspirational." --Foreword Reviews This is the unflinching memoir of a female African American advertising executive's unprecedented and unlikely success, which began in the Mad Men era. It follows her journey from the projects of Motown-era Michigan to the skyscrapers of Madison Avenue and beyond. With marches, riots, and demonstrations as the backdrop, and rock 'n' roll as a soundtrack, this book accompanies Graves as she traverses the seismically shifting terrain of 1960s and '70s America on her quest to "be somebody." In the '80s and '90s, as Graves makes her ascent to the East Coast heights of the white maledominated advertising world, she turns familiarity with harsh realities like racism and sexism into robust insights that deeply connect with African American consumers. During the golden era of black advertising, she becomes an undisputed "somebody." Soon, though, she learns that money, success, a good marriage, and connections that reach all the way to the White House cannot entirely insulate her against the social ills that threaten to crush black Americans.

"The road to being as one of the most successful advertising executives in the country was not an easy one for Valerie Graves. As an African-American woman trying to be somebody'squost; in the 60'squost; and 70'squost;, she faced

criticism and discrimination on the path to success. In her new memoir, Graves shares her stories of struggle but the inspirations and hope that kept her going. Readers will see a new side to the advertising mogul and learn that nothing is impossible."--BuzzFeed