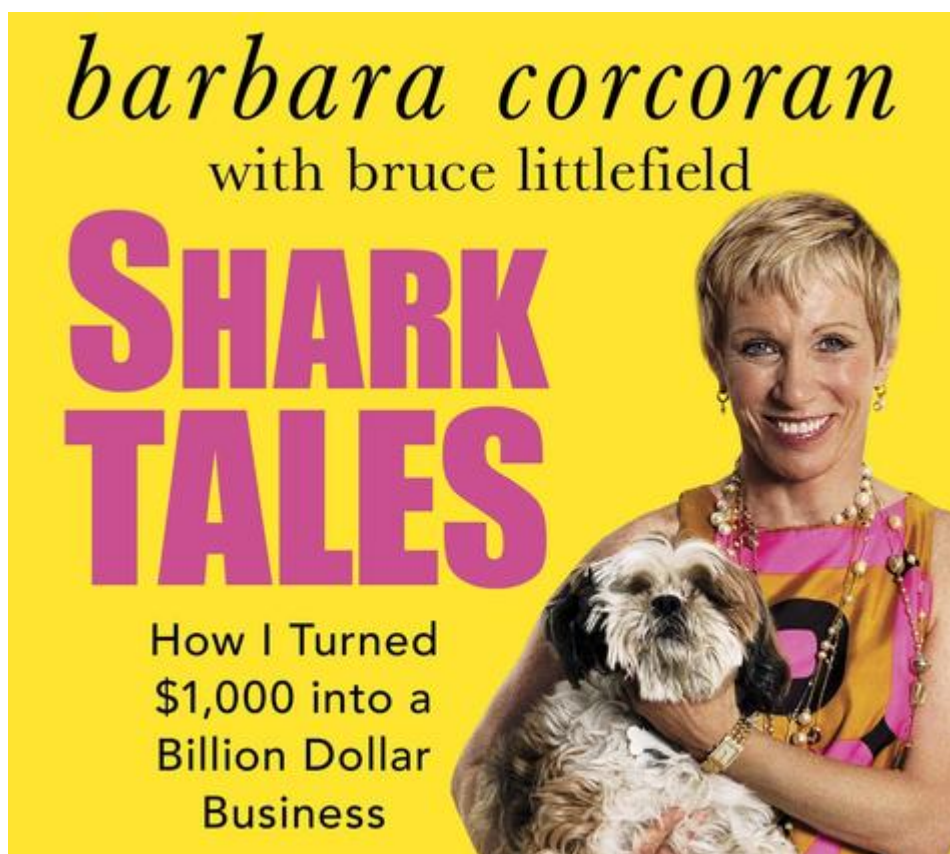


Exclusive Giveaway: 'Shark Tank's' Barbara Corcoran Talks Business, Relationships and 'Shark Tales'



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By [Lori Bizzoco](#)

If you're from New York or a fan of ABC's reality show *Shark Tank*, there's no denying that you've heard of Barbara Corcoran, the savvy real estate mogul who started her business with only \$1,000 (given to her by an ex-boyfriend) and parlayed it into a billion dollar company. She now sits among

a panel of business tycoons (all men) as they battle it out to invest their hard earned money into the next big idea or product pitched to them by starving entrepreneurs. For Corcoran, a woman who has been building a business all of her life, she says the show was perfect for her. More than a successful entrepreneur, she is a wife and mother, something she proudly speaks about. She says that most of what she learned about business was by watching her mother helm a household of 10 kids. Her inspiring story is chronicled in her latest book, *Shark Tales: How I Turned \$1,000 into a Billion Dollar Business*.

We had the privilege of speaking with Corcoran, who offered advice to single women who are interested in starting their own career. She also shared what she's looking for when choosing a new business. The answers may surprise you; it's not all about the numbers. Take a look at what she had to say:

What's it like being the only woman on the panel?

It's a HUGE advantage as much as it is a huge disadvantage. The advantage is that no cast remembers my name; they say "Oh, you're the girl on the show." So since I'm the only girl there they can't mix me up with any of the guys who are in suits because my legs are hanging out.

The disadvantage I find that during the actual taping of it is that I have a woman's voice, and they have a camera on each of the sharks for a full 12-hour day. If you were to get a hold of my unedited tape, it would be mostly me saying, "Uh, huh, ah," trying to get attention, and the men mull right over me. Not that I'm a shrinking violet, but they have bigger voices. So I have to work twice as hard as the guys there.

For the entrepreneurs, I think it's an advantage because they are quicker to trust a woman and believe what I have to say over a man regarding what I am promising to them. So there is a huge trust card there that I can leverage from being a

female.

What type of products are you looking to invest in on the show and what are your goals?

The things that would interest me have more to do with the individual and less to do with the product:

1. Handles Pressure: We watch people on the show unravel; they're nervous. When this happens, I immediately know if I am interested in the entrepreneur without even knowing what their business is or what they are going to say because I am watching them under pressure. You have to be really good in the bad times or you're not going to make it.

2. Salesperson: The entrepreneur must be a salesperson. There are so many people with great business ideas, and very often, the reason that they don't have success is because they can't sell their own product. If they can't sell, then I am not in, period – because they're my salesman.

3. Thankful: I'm watching to see if they're a thankful person. In many situations in my adult life, if someone isn't thankful for their family, parents, kids and their lucky breaks, then those people can become ugly partners when there are a lot of chips on the table. I want to partner with a nice person.

4. Hustler: A tremendous trait that must be there is hustle. There is no way to build a business with just having the right product. Even with the right investors on your back, and if you're on prime-time television with a national platform to sell your product, if you don't have the long-term hustle, you won't make it through the finish line.

So, what I am really focusing on is the individual. If all of those things aren't clicking in my head then I want to get out as quickly as I can. So it's less to do with the product and more to do with the entrepreneur.

What advice do you have for single women who want to start their own business?

I watch people who have saved for years and years to start their business, and they either lose the fire or they get into a position where they have too many bills, family responsibilities, etc. The advice I would give is to start early; begin as quickly as you can and as young as you can. Also, a great thing happens when you're young – you're not afraid. The lack of fear is such powerful ammunition, because the older you get and the more experience you get you're more aware of where you may fail, and that can stop you from trying.

Many women report that they have trouble finding a man who can handle a successful woman. Are there any particular characteristics of the type of men they should be looking for?

Yes – a secure ego. This is true whether it's your marriage partner, a boyfriend for 10 years or a business partner. What's important is that the person needs to be secure enough in what they've got, versus envying what you've got. That's when the trouble starts.

You cut ties with your business partner/boyfriend in the beginning of your career. Is there any advice you can share with women who are attached to the purse strings of a man and don't feel they make it on their own?

I think this quietly erodes your own self confidence and it's a dangerous position to be in. You don't know how much confidence or ability you have until you take that leap of faith. Like anything else that you do in life, it's hard to cut the strings that aren't working for you because you don't know what you are going to replace them with. But trust me – it's worth taking the jump, because you are wasting valuable minutes of your life.

How do you balance a relationship, motherhood and career?

The truth is that I haven't done it well; I gave up on it a while ago, and simply by admitting the defeat of that it became much easier. One technique I use is that I definitely separate my business from my family and my family from my business. One day a week is Barbara's day, one day is Kate's day (my five-year-old), another day is *Shark Tank* day, and so on. Separating my life into these compartments takes a lot of stress out of being a bouncing ball.

In your book, *Shark Tank*, you outline your mother's life lessons by chapter. Do you think any of these can apply to love and relationships?

One that should apply is No. 3: If the Sofa is Ripped, Cover it with Laughter. Lesson No. 16: Sweep the Corners and the Whole House Stays Clean. Why this applies at home in addition to work is that it means whatever is bothering you, get it out right away. If it sits in the corner, it rots. You need to communicate. That lesson is key to keeping your relationship going. Lesson No. 18: Moms Can't Quit. I can't tell you how many times I was ready in my marriage to call it quits, but you need to figure out a way to make it work. Moms can't quit.

How do you apply to be on ABC's *Shark Tank*?

It's a simple process; you go to ABC.com and fill out the form. Pictures are optional, but television is a visual medium so I would suggest making sure you send one in.

Any last tips on *Shark Tank* or what you are looking for in an entrepreneur?

The only thing I can say is that I am looking for someone who is flexible and open. That's the most important thing to me. People that aren't open to new ideas and are resistant to change rarely work out. At this point in my life, I want to work with someone who is pleasurable.

Cupid thanks Barbara Corcoran for her time! For more, visit her website at www.BarbaraCorcoran.com, check out her Facebook page and follow her on Twitter: @BarbaraCorcoran. And of course, don't forget to pick up her book, *Shark Tales: How I Turned \$1,000 into a Billion Dollar Business* and watch her every Friday night at 8 PM EST on ABC's *Shark Tank*.

~~**GIVEAWAY ALERT:** *Cupid's Pulse has teamed up with Barbara Corcoran to give a copy of Shark Tank to five lucky readers! To enter, tell us what invention or product you'd pitch to the sharks in a comment below. Please be sure to use your real email address so we have a way of contacting you if you've won — don't worry, your address won't be shown. If your email is not included you will automatically be ineligible to win. This giveaway will run until **11:59 PM EST on Thursday, May 19.** Good luck!*~~

This giveaway is now closed.