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# Tough Choices: A Memoir

By Carly Fiorina



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**Tough Choices: A Memoir** By Carly Fiorina

**The *New York Times* bestseller by the most talked about woman in American business.**

For five and a half years, Carly Fiorina led Hewlett-Packard through major internal changes, the worst technology slump in decades, and the most controversial merger in high-tech history. Yet just as things were about to turn around, she was abruptly fired, making front-page news around the world.

Fiorina has been the subject of endless debate and speculation. But she has never spoken publicly about crucial details of her time at HP, about the mysterious circumstances of her firing, or about many other aspects of her landmark career. Until now.

In this extraordinarily candid memoir, she reveals the private person behind the public persona. She shares her triumphs and failures, her deepest fears and most painful confrontations. She shows us what it was like to be an ambitious young woman at stodgy old AT&T and then a fast-track executive during the spin-off of Lucent Technologies. Above all, she describes how she drove the transformation of legendary but deeply troubled HP, in the face of fierce opposition.

One of Fiorina's big themes is that in the end business isn't just about numbers; it's about people. This book goes beyond the caricature of the powerful woman executive to show who she really is and what the rest of us male or female, in business or not can learn from the tough choices she made along the way.



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## **Tough Choices: A Memoir By Carly Fiorina Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

For her six years as CEO of technology giant Hewlett-Packard, Carly Fiorina was one of the most public faces in business, consistently chosen as the most powerful woman in corporate America. But after being ousted by the HP board of directors in early 2005, she stepped away from the spotlight. She returns to the public eye with her new memoir, *Tough Choices*, the story of her tenure at HP and of her unprecedented--and unexpected--rise to the top. While much of the early attention to the book will no doubt focus on her battles with the HP board and her dismissal--and she lays out her side of that story in full detail--what is more likely to give her book a wide and lasting readership is her account of the choices she made to get to that point. As she says, she never expected to become a captain of industry; she never planned to go into business at all. But what she found, as she tells in a straightforward, personal style, was that she had a talent and a taste for working with people and making the kinds of decisions that business leadership requires. In a series of "tough choices" that give her book its name, she gravitated toward the most challenging paths that were offered her. Those choices, which many around her told her not to make, were what led her to the top in record time.

She visited the Amazon.com offices to give a talk to our employees about the book before it was published, and we were so impressed with what she had to say--and the open and focused way she said it--that we wanted to share some of her visit with you. Click on the image below to watch a section of her talk that explains what fear and choice have to do with leadership:



Watch Carly Fiorina talk about *Tough Choices*

### Two Tough Choices

We also asked her to tell us here about two of the many tough choices she writes about in the book:

**Amazon.com:** Why did you decide to drop out of law school, and why was that a hard decision?

**Fiorina:** I went to UCLA Law School mainly because my father was a lawyer and he encouraged me to follow in his footsteps. From the very first day it left me cold. Although I could respect the law, I felt no passion for it. I had terrible headaches every day and barely slept for months.

When my father came to visit, I told him I hated it. He was concerned, but he didn't want me to quit. He had always taught me that quitting was the same as failure--you stuck it out, even in a tough situation. And so, although I had planned to tell him I'd decided to leave law school, I didn't. I went back and stuck it out for another month.

Then I came home one weekend to visit. I was in turmoil. As dramatic as it sounds, I had an epiphany while taking a shower on Sunday morning. My body had been trying to tell me something with all those months of headaches. I suddenly realized I had no idea why I was in law school at all. At twenty-two, at that moment, it finally dawned on me that my life couldn't be about pleasing my parents.

I think of that as the day I grew up. I had made a truly difficult decision on my own.

**Amazon.com:** Tell us about the time when you were a junior sales person at AT&T, and you had to choose whether or not to attend a meeting at a strip club.

**Fiorina:** One day my senior colleague, David, let me know that the two of our most important customers were coming to town for a meeting. I was delighted. It would be great to have my first introduction to these customers come from a veteran like him.

The day before the meeting, David came to my cubicle. "You know, Carly, I'm really sorry. I know we'd planned to have you meet the two directors. The thing is, they have a favorite restaurant here in D.C., and they've requested that we meet there. It's the Board Room. So I don't think you'll be able to join us."

This didn't make any sense to me, until someone else explained that the Board Room was an upscale strip club for businessmen. Between acts, the young women who worked there would dress in see-through baby-doll negligees and dance on top of the tables while the patrons ate lunch.

I was both very embarrassed and very anxious. I sat in the ladies' room to think about it in private, and worked myself into a state of near panic. I had no idea what I was supposed to do in this situation. I couldn't tell myself it didn't matter--it clearly was important to meet these clients and to convince David that I should be taken seriously. It never occurred to me to be outraged and demand that they not go--and that wouldn't have worked anyway.

Finally, I went to David's desk and said, "You know, I hope it won't make you too uncomfortable, but I think I'm going to go to lunch anyway. I'll meet you all there." You could have heard a pin drop in the office as everyone watched this scenario unfold.

What happened the next day at the strip club is a funny story, but I'll save that one for the book.

From Publishers Weekly

[Signature]Reviewed by *Robin Wolaner*Fiorina may have had tough choices, but readers have an easy one: start at page 150 and read the Hewlett-Packard story first. As Carly Fiorina, the famously fired CEO of HP, vividly dissects the company's business, board and structural problems, her management views and talents are clearly visible. She also makes a compelling case for why she deserves some credit for the 2005–2006 turnaround. Less compelling are her claims that her introduction as CEO of HP was marred because "the one question we didn't prepare for was the question most frequently asked... about my gender." (Uh-huh.) When Fiorina dishes the board members, it's delish, especially when citing George "Jay" Keyworth's stated belief that "anyone who had leaked confidential Board conversations to the press shouldn't be allowed in the boardroom." (A wonderful irony since he initially refused to resign during the recent HP scandal when he was revealed as the source of confidential leaks.) Much of what Fiorina writes about the board will be in the

news around this book's release, but her revelations are valuable beyond gossip—because shareholders are demanding accountability from boards, it's fascinating to be inside a deeply dysfunctional boardroom. And it's just plain fun to see her settle some scores. The start of her memoir, however, is a tedious telling of her rise through the corporate ranks at AT&T and Lucent. It's not clear exactly what the business challenges were—the main thing she emphasizes about Lucent is her fondness for the "bold, red logo." These early chapters are filled with numbing passages: "In other words, our value-add would be to get everyone on the same page. Any organization is stronger when people are aligned to act together, instead of working at cross-purposes." While I didn't come away with a sense of Carly Fiorina's personality—much of what she writes about herself is unconvincing—her book does shed light on the complexities of running a giant corporation. I also learned that I'd bought into media coverage of Carly Fiorina that was superficial at best and misleading at worst. I owe her an apology for that, and she owes her readers one for not hiring (or heeding) a good editor to make her message more riveting. (Oct. 9) *Robin Wolaner is the founder of Parenting magazine, former CEO of Sunset Publishing and author of Naked in the Boardroom: A CEO Bares Her Secrets So You Can Transform Your Career (Fireside, 2005).*

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## Review

Fiorina wrote the book herself, without a ghostwriter, and it's well-written.

"Forbes"

A very engaging read Chapters dealing with her meteoric rise through Lucent are excellent.

"BusinessWeek"

Her prose is fluid and her voice is authentic. Ms. Fiorina has waited a long time to tell her story, and she does so memorably.

"The Wall Street Journal"

Ms. Fiorina is at her best when recounting the travails of a woman in a male-dominated business culture. The woman that emerges from these pages is cultured, sensitive, and vulnerable, even as she acts tough.

"The Economist"

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## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Andrew Nixon:**

This Tough Choices: A Memoir book is simply not ordinary book, you have it then the world is in your hands. The benefit you get by reading this book is actually information inside this reserve incredible fresh, you will get facts which is getting deeper a person read a lot of information you will get. This particular Tough Choices: A Memoir without we comprehend teach the one who looking at it become critical in imagining and analyzing. Don't possibly be worry Tough Choices: A Memoir can bring once you are and not make your carrier space or bookshelves' become full because you can have it with your lovely laptop even cell phone. This Tough Choices: A Memoir having great arrangement in word along with layout, so you will not experience uninterested in reading.

#### **Blake Westerman:**

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#### **Tracy Brown:**

In this particular era which is the greater man or who has ability to do something more are more special than other. Do you want to become one among it? It is just simple way to have that. What you should do is just spending your time very little but quite enough to experience a look at some books. One of several books in the top listing in your reading list is usually Tough Choices: A Memoir. This book which can be qualified as The Hungry Inclines can get you closer in turning into precious person. By looking up and review this publication you can get many advantages.

**Jack Bell:**

That publication can make you to feel relax. This specific book Tough Choices: A Memoir was colourful and of course has pictures on there. As we know that book Tough Choices: A Memoir has many kinds or style. Start from kids until adolescents. For example Naruto or Detective Conan you can read and believe that you are the character on there. Therefore , not at all of book are make you bored, any it offers up you feel happy, fun and chill out. Try to choose the best book in your case and try to like reading that will.

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