



Play It Forward: From Gymboree to the Yoga Mat and Beyond

Joan Barnes, Michael J. Coffino

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Play It Forward details the remarkable journey of Joan Barnes, founder and former CEO of Gymboree, and how she learned to align her inner life with outward success.

Forty years ago Joan Barnes founded a play center in a church basement with \$3,000. Determined to enable women to achieve personal and entrepreneurial success, Barnes led Gymboree to become an innovative leader in a new industry: activity-based early childhood development.

The company eventually became a global billion-dollar brand. But this dramatic entrepreneurial memoir is also a cautionary tale and redemption story. When Gymboree's IPO became a phenomenal success story, Barnes was nowhere near Wall Street. She had left the company because of an eating disorder that threatened to destroy her and everything she had built.

Barnes overcame the disorder, charting a path that replaced demons with an enduring sense of worth and hope. She eventually resumed her business career on healthier terms, with a line of yoga studios, in an inspiring example of how women can triumph through reinvention.

Published to coincide with Gymboree's 40th anniversary, *Play It Forward* offers listeners a deeply honest perspective of the challenges of business building and seeking a work-life balance in tune with personal values.

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