

HOLLY STIEL INTRO *(long)*

Our speaker tonight is a pioneer in every sense of the word, she has always known where she was going, even when she didn't know the way.

She is a settler—When Holly Stiel was twelve, she followed the route of the gold rush and traveled from the suburbs of Cleveland to the bridges and breadth of San Francisco, and said to herself—I am going to live here one day. Ten years later, when living in New York City, tired of her dingy basement apartment, she marched into a real estate office on the Upper East Side and demanded digs suitable to her imagination and ended up in the storied mansion, The Dakota. Still later, after making a home in San Francisco, Holly sought a house on the Northern Coast, something with a clear view of the water, but surrounded by trees; secluded, but close to town; in excellent condition, but not too expensive—in two weeks the house presented itself. Holly knows how to open doors.

Even in a profession defined by superlative service, Holly Stiel stands out as an authority and pioneer in the field of concierge services.

She is a pioneer in every sense of the word:

She is an innovator—In 1976, Holly became the first female concierge in the country when she created the desk at the Grand Hyatt Union Square in San Francisco. Two years later, she was the first American woman to be admitted to the exclusive Les Clefs d'Or Association for concierges. She recently received the association's Lifetime Achievement award for her broad contributions to the profession. Holly was the first female and non-corporate executive to receive the "Distinguished Visiting Professor" Chair from Johnson and Wales University.

She is an adventurer into the unknown—After 17 years as a concierge, Holly started her own company ThankYouVeryMuchInc. to adapt her hotel experience to a variety of classrooms. She innovated a method of training based on the practices and principles of the world-class concierge. Now, her teaching has been heard in over 25 languages from Japan to Johannesburg. Her client list reads like an honor roll of companies known for their distinctive service: Disney, Bank of America, Nordstrom, NASCAR, American Express, AVEDA, and Auberge Resorts to name a few.

She prepares the way for others—Holly is the author of three books on customer service which are commonly used as textbooks in hospitality training schools. Through partnership with her team at StielMedia, Holly has created three award-winning interactive DVD programs as well as the training programs for the new Hyatt Place Hotels, Hilton Garden Inns, Hampton Inns and Double Tree Hotels.

The word pioneer comes from the Latin for foot soldier or “one who has broad feet”, well, I don’t know if you noticed, but Holly has springs on her shoes. These feet have covered a lot of ground, so I can only assume the springs are to propel her into her next adventure. Armed with the concierge’s golden key, she gives new meaning to keynote address. For when Holly speaks, she opens the door to extraordinary customer service, she invites you on the path to possibility.

Please help me welcome the trailblazing service philosopher—Holly Stiel.