

Dr. Nicole FORD- FRANCIS

Writing the Codes of Success for Business,
Government, and the Soul

In the rarefied air of the C-Suite, where leaders are forged in the crucible of metrics, margins, and market share, the conversations are typically about strategy and scale. The language is one of compliance matrices, key performance indicators, and shareholder value. But when **Dr. Nicole Ford-Francis** enters the room, the conversation shifts. The **President of Visionaries in Partnership (VIP), Inc.**, a woman with a resume steeped in the exacting worlds of aerospace, defense, and NASA program management, begins her high-level leadership consultations not with a question about profitability, but with one of profound and disarming simplicity: “*Who are you, and what is your STORY?*”

This is the central paradox and the quiet genius of Dr. Nicole Ford-Francis. She is a **Six Sigma Master Black Belt** who speaks the language of energy healing. She is a former Program Manager for a **\$149.5 million NASA contract** who now consults on the power of plant-based medicine. She has built a career on a radical and transformative idea: that the vulnerabilities, traumas, and deep personal narratives of a leader are not separate from their professional effectiveness, but are, in fact, inextricably linked to it.



President | Visionaries in
Partnership (VIP), Inc.

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In a world that demands leaders segment their lives, she teaches them that true power lies in integration. She is an architect of both impeccable business systems and profound human healing, and she has built a formidable enterprise at the intersection of the two.

From Space Shuttles to Strategic System

To understand the depth of Dr. Ford-Francis's work, one must first appreciate the rigor of her foundation. For more than 25 years, she moved through the most demanding and technically complex environments in the country: aerospace, the Army, the Air Force, the Department of Defense, and corporate America. This was a world of precision, a place where there was no margin for error. As a **Program Manager and Board Member for the NASA Headquarters Research and Education Support Service (NRESS) OMNIBUS Contract** in Washington, D.C., and Arlington, VA, she oversaw a massive **8(a)/GSA Minority Business Contract** providing scientific, peer-review, and educational technical support across NASA's mission directorates. Her work touched the **International Space Station (ISS) Education/Science laboratories**, the iconic **NASA Space Shuttle Program**, **NASA's Educator Astronaut Program**, and **NASA's Earth and Space Science, Space Technology, Education and Aeronautics and Research Mission Directorates**.

Her expertise in process and quality is not just anecdotal; it is certified. In 2016, she earned her **Six Sigma Master Black Belt (SSMBB) Certification** from the *International Six Sigma Institute*, signifying the highest level of mastery in data-driven process improvement. This followed her **2011 Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI) Level 2 for Services Certification from the prestigious Carnegie Mellon University: IT Institute**. This background, combined with her experience as a **Sr. Vice President of Business Development for a Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) Defense Contractor**, makes her a formidable proposal manager and writer, a highly sought-after strategist who knows how to navigate the labyrinthine world of government contracting.

Her approach is meticulous. *"My first goal is to read the requirement completely and to create a compliance matrix,"* she explains, a nod to her systematic training. This ensures every detail of a complex proposal is addressed. From there, she builds a plan with the precision of a mission launch: assessing the need for teaming partners, executing Non-Disclosure and Teaming Agreements, and orchestrating a disciplined writing process with scheduled kick-offs, draft deadlines, and the deployment of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to ensure every technical requirement is met with unimpeachable expertise. This is the world she mastered, a world of logic, systems, and unimpeachable results.

The Bio-Sociology of the Boardroom

While mastering the technical systems of government and industry, another part of Dr. Ford-Francis's journey was unfolding. Early in her career, she began working with **non-profits and faith-based organizations**, including churches and the **NAACP HQ**. It was here she honed her skills as a grant writer, learning to translate the needs of a community into compelling proposals that secured vital funding. She found herself writing educational and youth-based programs, recognizing that a strong narrative and a clear mission were just as critical to success as a balanced budget.

This work with communities sparked a deeper inquiry into the human systems that underpin all organizations. She began working closely with the leadership of the **National Medical Association (NMA)** on critical projects related to minority health disparities and regenerative (stem cell) medicine. This experience bridged her strategic skills with pressing community health issues. It also illuminated a path toward a more holistic understanding of well-being, leading her to pursue certifications as a **Certified Spiritual Life Coach, Energy Healer, and Holistic Pain Management Specialist**. She became an experienced **Herbalist and Plant-based Medicine Practitioner**, delving into ancient traditions of healing. To an outsider, this might have seemed like a pivot. But for Dr. Ford-Francis, it was an evolution. She was moving from understanding the mechanics of an organization to understanding the well-being of the people who power it.

What's Your STORY? The Strategic Mindfulness™ Method

This synthesis of the technical and the holistic is the heart of her signature leadership design: **Strategic Mindfulness™**. It is a **Bio-Sociological methodology** that acknowledges a fundamental truth: a leader is, first and foremost, a human being. *"All humans have a physiological condition that is often due to the environment that they reside in,"* she says. *"This business model acknowledges and supports the Mind, Body, and Spirit of the leader as a Human-being that is made of those foundational components."*

To get to the core of a leader's strengths and vulnerabilities, she created the **STORY acronym**, a framework for a guided journey into self-awareness. She asks the C-Suite executives, Board Members, and other high-ranking staff she works with exclusively—in small, confidential groups or individually—to reflect on their:

- **Stress:** What are the persistent pressures you face?
- **Trauma:** What past experiences shape your present reactions?
- **Obligations:** What responsibilities, seen and unseen, do you carry?
- **Reality:** What is the unvarnished truth of your current situation?
- **Younger-Self message:** What wisdom would you offer the person you once were?

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Love your skin,
your hair and your
style. Create your
own standard and
be able to laugh
at yourself.”

This is not therapy in a conventional sense; it is a strategic intervention that begins the creation of a **Strategic Life Plan**. The process is designed to create what she calls *"a moment of enlightenment,"* a flash of self-awareness that allows a leader to see the invisible forces driving their decisions. By establishing a deep sense of trust and credibility, she guides them through this often emotional journey. *"The resilience comes after they have identified their stressors and trauma,"* she explains, *"and they are able to forgive themselves and to move forward in a positive direction."* The result is not just a better leader, but a transformed person, one who can lead themselves, their families, and their organizations with a newfound sense of clarity and purpose.

From Ghana to George Washington University: A Global Impact

The power of Dr. Ford-Francis's approach is evident in the breadth of its application. She has served as a **Governance and Leadership Consultant for the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) of Ghana**, providing specialized training to its Board of Directors and leadership delegates focused on best practices and continuous improvement for the country's healthcare system. As a **Leadership Coach for the prestigious Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) Mandela Washington Program at the University of Maryland-Baltimore County (UMBC)**, she helps shape the next generation of African leaders.

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She serves as **Chairperson for the Board of Advisors for Popya International, Inc of Namibia**, an organization that is a leading voice for mental health and **gender-based violence (GBV)** awareness across Africa, founded by a woman who survived severe depression and a suicide attempt.

Back home, her influence is just as profound. As an **Advisory Board member for the Transformative Leadership in Disruptive Times Certificate Program at the George Washington University School of Business**, in partnership with the **Z-School**, she brings her unique perspective to bear on the most pressing challenges facing leaders today. Her role is to address the needs of leaders navigating the trauma of a global pandemic, the political turmoil of events like the **January 6th insurrection**, and the economic and social fallout from corporate **DEI cuts that have left over 300,000 women of color unemployed**.

“Leaders are lost and fearful because our Democracy is being challenged,” she notes, observing that small businesses are having contracts cancelled for reasons *“clearly linked to racism.”* Strategic Mindfulness™ is her answer, a tool for building resilience when the very foundations of business feel unstable.



Funding Dreams, Writing Truths, and Earning Honors

Dr. Ford-Francis’s mission to empower extends to the practical, financial realities of building a business. As a **Business Loan Broker with VIP/ROK Financial**, she works to secure critical funding for small and medium-sized businesses, procuring loans from **\$10k to \$5 million** based on revenue alone. She speaks with empathy about the frustrations her clients face, particularly the challenge of being denied loans because their post-expense income is too low, even when their businesses are solvent.

Amidst this dynamic portfolio, she remains a prolific creator and a recognized leader. She is the author of **“A Journey to Womanhood: Poems from a Girl Grown-Up too Soon,”** published in **October 2013 by Xlibris Publishers**, which she is currently preparing to republish. She is also writing a new biographical work, **“Big Girls Don’t Cry: A Biographical Story,”** by **Dr. Nicole Ford-Francis.**

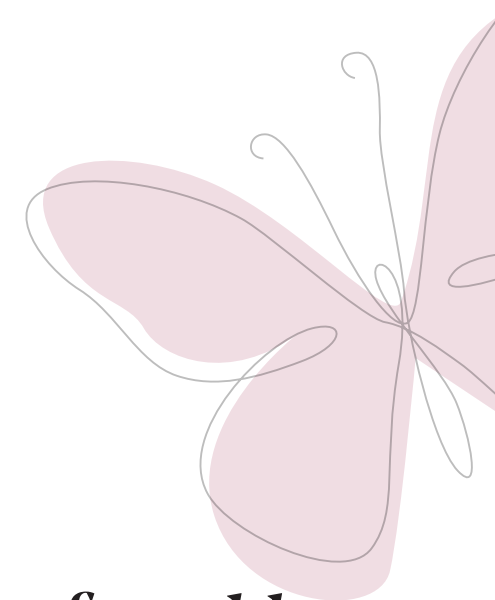
Her commitment has been recognized through a cascade of honors, from **NASA Education Enterprise Leadership Workshop Certificates in 2003 and 2004** to a **2012 Certificate of Appreciation from NASA Headquarters** for her support of the Space Shuttle Program. In **2015 and 2018**, she was honored by the **NAACP’s Salt Lake City, Utah Branch** for her commitment to education and excellence, and in **2016**, she was included in the **Roster of Top Female Executives by The International Women’s Leadership Association.**

Her personal life is her anchor. As a mother and grandmother and a native of Baltimore, MD, she finds balance by staying grounded in prayer, meditation, and nature. She actively combats what she calls **“leader loneliness”** by spending cherished time with her children, close friends, and loved ones. For her, personal success is not the world’s definition. It is *“peace, prosperity, physical health, spiritual health and lots of laughter.”*



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Do not base your success on “recognition.” You will be disappointed.



***Be confident, be comfortable
in any room and be comfortable
within a multi-cultural
environment.***

When asked what advice she would give to young Black women aspiring to lead, her counsel is a powerful blend of spiritual guidance and pragmatic steel. *“Pray in the beginning, in the middle, at the end and always,”* she begins. *“Understand that you must still be 10 times better than your white counterparts to even be recognized as present.”* She advises them to work with blinders on, to develop a tough skin, and to never base their success on external recognition. But this tough advice is wrapped in a message of profound self-love.

*“Realize that you are a beautiful creation and you are intelligent. **BE BRAVE** and be ok with your femininity... Never cry at work and be ok with your vulnerability. Now, work hard, study and become the Subject Matter Expert (SME). Love your skin, your hair and your style. Create your own standard... Be confident, be comfortable in any room... You were trained to succeed wherever you go, **Thrive!**”*

It is the distilled wisdom of a woman who has navigated the highest echelons of power not by conforming, but by integrating her full, authentic self. It is the ultimate lesson of Strategic Mindfulness™: know your story, heal your story, and then use it to change the world.

