

CHOICES

AUTUMN 2014

THE PERSONAL GROWTH ISSUE

KNOW YOURSELF,
EXPAND YOUR
COMFORT ZONE AND
IMPROVE YOUR LIFE

AN INTERVIEW WITH MIKE RAYBURN

GUITARIST, COMEDIAN
AND ENTERTAINER

ADVENTURES IN ATTITUDE

CONTROL YOUR
ATTITUDE AND
CONTROL YOUR LIFE!



PERSONAL GROWTH IS A CHOICE

USE YOUR PROBLEMS AS THE
PUSH YOU NEED TO MAKE
YOUR LIFE BETTER



WHAT ARE YOUR "NIGGLY BITS?"

LEARN TO WATCH FOR THE
THINGS THAT DISTURB YOUR
SENSE OF INNER PEACE



HAPPY DISASTERS

LEARN HOW TO USE LIFE'S
DISASTERS TO HELP YOU
BECOME A BETTER PERSON

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FROM THE EDITOR

Personal growth can be difficult. It requires us to evaluate where we are and whether or not things are working in our lives. If they aren't working, we need to change. And, managing change can be stressful whether we instigated it or it has been instigated by an external factor. Being cognizant of this and strategically planning the change for personal growth are both critical factors to a successful outcome.

Most human beings are uncomfortable with uncertainty, therefore, they resist change. They insist on doing things the old way. When this happens, it can produce stagnation and limit growth. They will often resist anything that requires effort. Given the choice of doing something that requires little effort or doing something that is difficult, most people will opt for easy.

One of your biggest competitive advantages is knowing yourself. The more you are able to understand yourself, the better equipped you are to deal with issues and problems on a daily basis, especially those that take you out of your comfort zone. Self-

knowledge allows you to change any of your own inhibiting actions and unleash your creative abilities.

Make the practice of self-evaluation a habit. It is quite surprising that only a small percentage of people actually self-evaluate. You can greatly improve your effectiveness by doing this regularly. When you know more about who and what you are, situations are not so threatening. The more you study and observe yourself, the more likely you are to increase your understanding of why you do things the way you do. Sometimes, the way we do things can be to our detriment.

It is important for you to embark on a journey of personal growth. The more you know about yourself, the

more effectively you can live your life. When you are willing to expand your comfort zone and adopt new approaches to your thinking, you will effect changes in your actions. Take in new information as often as possible. You can do this by reading, observing, listening, and participating in any activity that introduces you to new ways of doing things. This will ultimately have an impact on your self-esteem and self-confidence, and you will be able to free yourself from unnecessary fears, insecurities, and behaviors and make better choices.

Judi

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PERSONAL GROWTH IS A CHOICE

BY JUDI MOREO

“The secret of getting ahead is getting started.”

Sahithi Setikam,

A Quick Journey From Being Single to Somebody's World

Life is what it is and it's up to us to make the best of what we've been given. Even though you may not have the resources or the circumstances you believe you need to improve your life, start with what you have and build the foundation that will allow you to find the resources and change your circumstances. Change doesn't usually happen all at once. It is a process of eliminations and additions until we find the desired direction for our lives.

Give Up Blame

Blame shifts the responsibility of our lives and our happiness, making it someone else's responsibility. We think, "It's their fault." "They didn't do what they were supposed to do." "They didn't hold up their end of the bargain." "It costs too much." "They talked me into it or out of it." "They prevented me from doing what I wanted to do."

The truth is you took the easy way out. You did what you wanted to do at that moment. Maybe you did it because you didn't think about the consequences. Or maybe you chose to buy something you couldn't afford, instead of sticking to your budget. Perhaps you were avoiding an argument or you were scared of the alternative. Whatever the reason, your life is your responsibility.

Stop Making Excuses

Making excuses is another way we shift responsibility. Instead of blaming people, we blame things or circumstances. "I didn't get it done because the copy machine was broken," or "I couldn't get the repair man out here to look at the machine until next week." Perhaps you could have taken it to a local print shop to have it copied.

My business partner was working on an important project when her copier broke. It was late in the evening and

there were no print shops open in the small town where she lived. She called the printer at home and explained her situation to him. He volunteered to come in very early the next morning so she could get her work done in time to meet her deadline. I asked her what she would have done if the printer hadn't agreed to come. She answered, "Then I would have driven 85 miles to the next town where there is a 24-hour copy store near the university and I would have gotten it done there." Where there is a will, there is a way.

Accept Responsibility

When we pursue our dreams, often the practical side of us says one thing while the emotional, mental, psychological, or spiritual side says disregard the practical side and go for what you want. We tend to believe we can't follow our hearts or pursue our dreams and still be responsible. That is erroneous thinking.

Nicholas Sparks worked as a pharmaceutical salesman while he wrote his first novel, *The Notebook*. He had a family and responsibilities. He didn't shirk that in order to do his writing. He did both at the same time and he got a \$1,000,000 advance for his very first novel.

Learn To Live In The Present

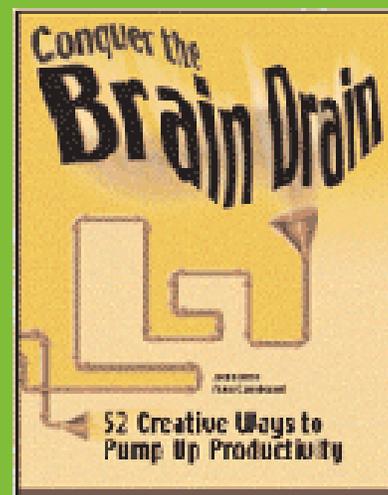
Instead of being passive, do something about your dream. The present is the only time we have. Think to yourself, "What can I do right now to make my life the best it can be? What one step can I take to advance in a forward direction?" Start by doing the best you can wherever you are and at whatever you are doing.

Years ago, there was a TV commercial that said, "If you had to sign your name to everything you did, would you do it better?" That statement really made an impact on me. Other people observe how you do things. When they see you doing your best, even when you are doing a job you don't like, they'll recognize your commitment to doing a job well and opportunities will start to present themselves. By doing your

best at whatever you are doing, you are taking control of the situation.

Allison had a PhD and a powerful job. She thought she deserved to be paid more than she was being paid, so she quit her job. She thought it would be easy to find another job. Months went by and Allison had yet to find a new job. As she had children to feed and other financial obligations, she took a job cleaning other people's houses. Allison is overweight, so hard, physical labor was not easy for her. Regardless, she did it to the best of her ability and was able to pay her bills and meet her obligations while looking for another job that would be more suitable to her skills and education.

When one of the people whose home she cleaned commented on the fact that Allison was so happy and pleasant in her work, she laughed and told this woman how she had quit her other job months before and had been unable to find a suitable position at the time. This woman so admired Allison for doing this housekeeping job to the best of her ability and having such a good attitude, even though Allison was extremely overqualified, she recommended



Are you using your creative energy to make your business more successful? Conquer the Brain Drain is about tapping into the creative wellspring we all possess. If you're on a team – or especially if you manage one – learning to think creatively and teaching others to do so will boost productivity, improve morale and inspire your team to greater success.

Short deadlines, downsizing, increased expectations and the need to do more with less all contribute to "status quo" thinking. Solving business problems and generating new ideas and strategies can't be accomplished using the same old brain-draining methods. If you keep doing what you've always done, you'll keep getting the same old results. If you want to build an innovative, creative, problem-solving team, then you need a new approach.

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Allison to a colleague for a position in the colleague's consulting business. Allison was able to use her knowledge, creative abilities, and expertise in her new job. This led to Allison's successful career as a television personality.

When life's circumstances put you in a position where you don't want to be, make the best of it. If you go about your work graciously doing more than is required of you, you will be surprised at the results you will achieve. If you are unhappy about the situation you are in, know that only you can change it. Do the best you can where you are and take steps to get yourself into a better position as fast as you can. In the meantime, don't complain to others. Complaining will not only make others around you miserable, it will be a constant reminder to you of how miserable you are.

Think of the things you've done today. Did you love what you were doing? Did you do them to the best of your ability? Could you have done anything better? Did you enjoy your day? Did you complain about anything? Did you take any steps to improve your situation?

Become A Problem-Solver

It is absolutely essential we become problem-solvers. Problem identifiers are a dime a dozen. Anyone can go around pointing out problems. On the other hand, problem-solvers are worth their weight in gold. Far too few people spend their time and use their minds looking for solutions. Problems give us opportunities to be creative. If you can identify a problem, you can certainly use your creative abilities to come up with a possible solution or two.

Don't confuse problem-solving with decision-making. Problem-solving is a



brainstorming activity where we look at all the possible options available to us to solve a problem. Decision-making is where we select one of those possibilities. Never make a decision that is not in everyone's best interest. Make your decisions based on what you know is the right thing to do. Be sure what you choose passes the test of your conscience as well as your integrity.

When you see a problem, prepare a careful analysis of that problem and any other problems it may cause. Make sure you are looking at the real problem and not a symptom of a problem. Once you are positive you are addressing the real problem, create a list of possible solutions and recommendations for alternatives. Then evaluate each option to be sure you are doing what is right for all concerned. If you feel in your heart it is the right thing to do, do it!

Remember, if you don't have problems, you aren't growing! Growth is always a creator of problems. These problems are opportunities. A problem just might be the push you need to do something differently.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Judi Moreo is the author of the award-winning book, "You Are More Than Enough: Every Woman's Guide to Purpose, Passion, and Power" as well as its companion, Achievement Journal. She is a Certified Speaking Professional who has spoken in 28 countries around the world. Less than 10 percent of the speakers in the world hold this highly respected earned designation. To contact Judi or book her for a speaking engagement, contact Turning Point International, (702) 896-2228 or judi@judimoreo.com.



THE NEW
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In August of 1974, I was attending a seminar in Little Rock, Arkansas led by a man named Gib Strammell. The seminar was called “Adventures in Attitudes.” At the time, this was a radical new concept...the idea that you could control your own attitude and, therefore, your life.

My own situation was quite ordinary; I was 50 lbs. overweight, smoked 2 packs of cigarettes a day, worked as a government clerk for \$525 a month, had a wife and a new baby boy. With no college degree and no money in the bank, I expected a very ordinary and unremarkable life. My parents had raised me to be a good person but I wasn't instilled with a desire to reach for lofty goals.

One of the seminar exercises was to write out my five year goal. Having recently heard Earl Nightingale, the Dean of Personal Motivation, on the radio I understood that one extra hour of study each day in your chosen field could lead to you becoming a national expert in that field. So, for some reason I 'went for it', I wrote this goal for myself: “By September 1, 1979, I will be a National Expert on Personal Growth.”

Considering my past and my present circumstances at the time that was a preposterous goal. “National Expert?” I don't think so. “Be realistic,” I could hear in my head. But it felt right somehow. So I put it on a card and went to work on it. Each day, I'd spend all of my spare time studying personal development, motivation, applied psychology and self-improvement. I listened to recordings, read books, talked with the few others I could find who were interested in it, too. I became, quite literally, a 'fanatic'



ADVENTURES IN ATTITUDE

BY JIM CATHCART

about personal growth. Then my life started to change.

It's interesting that when you start to change, so does the world around you. As I became more disciplined, I got more done. As I learned more about motivation, I became more persuasive and self-motivated. As I studied the great thinkers of history, I learned better ways to think about today... and tomorrow. My family and friends noticed the changes and approved. Some of my friends drifted away and claimed I was too serious about learning and improving. I wasn't their idea of fun anymore. That turned out to be a good thing for me. I had more time with people who were going somewhere and less time wasted just passing time.

The net result of this transformation was this. I lost 52 excess pounds, got into good physical shape for the first time ever, got promoted twice at work, became a leader in a civic organization, started selling Earl Nightingale's training programs, left my government job, and then was hired as the manager in charge of leadership training (personal growth) at the national headquarters of the US Junior Chamber of Commerce, the Jaycees. For 2 years, I collaborated to write training programs on goal setting, time management, interpersonal communications, and leadership. Then,

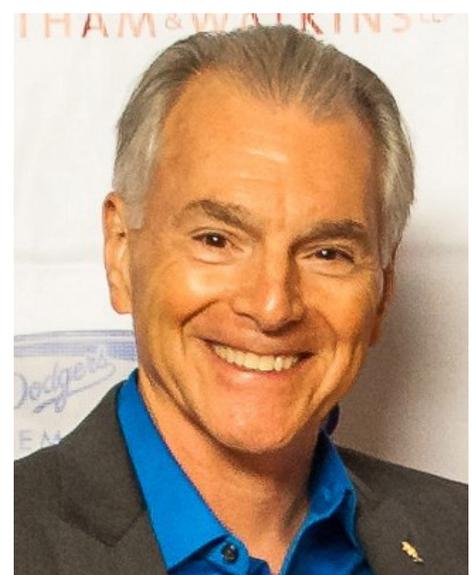
I flew around the country to teach others how to teach these programs. In 1977, I left the Jaycees to go on my own as a full-time professional speaker and trainer. Between 1974 and 1977, I conducted over 400 seminars around the country, starting in my home state of Arkansas.

On September 1, 1979, I was working from a penthouse office in Tulsa, Oklahoma and traveling around the country to conduct seminars and give speeches on personal growth. It had happened! No, I wasn't THE national expert, but I was one of them. Now, you maysay, "Big deal, it's not that much." And I'd say, "Yes, you're right." In the overall scheme of things, my achievements were not all that impressive. Unless... you stop to consider where I started. I had transformed my life by retraining myself bit by bit consistently over a five year period. You can do that, too.

Today, I'm at the top of my game in Personal Growth. Past-president of the National Speakers Association, author of 16 books published in multiple languages around the world, I've delivered over 3,000 presentations in over 20 countries for high fees, been inducted into the Speakers Hall of Fame, the Sales & Marketing Hall of Fame, received the Golden Gavel Award from Toastmasters International, the Cavett

Award and much more. My life has been truly blessed and I'm grateful. And, like I said, you can do it, too. You have the power to transform your life starting right now. It's simply an "Adventure in Attitude."

So, set your goal, not the one you expect to achieve, but the one your heart wants you to achieve. Then figure out how to change yourself in order to make it happen.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jim Cathcart is a Hall of Fame professional speaker, author of 16 books and past president of the National Speakers Association.

Contact Jim at www.cathcart.com

ARE YOU STUCK IN A BOX?

BY LAUREN MCLAUGHLIN

“

You can't keep doing the same thing over and over again and expect a different result.” Don't you want to scream

each time some well-meaning person says that to you? After all, you were just whining a bit about your life seeming in a rut.

Oh, you know they're right, but you're so comfortable with your current behavior that changing seems like a monumental job and one that would be bound to cause you some serious grief. Most of us avoid, or at least postpone, our next personal growth steps because the known is always more comfortable than the unknown. We like our ruts... sorta, kinda, most of the time.

It is human nature to develop habits and behaviors that keep us safe. In fact, we often set the parameters of our “safety zones” in stone so that eventually they entrap us. They literally box us in and we forget there is anything we can do to change the circumstances of our lives because, after all, that's just the way it's always been.

It is much easier to recognize the repeated, self-destructive behaviors

of others, because we don't have any investment in the careful construction of their boxes. But, we all know people like these folks who are trapped in their own “stuff.”

Paul is a college professor, who used to love his job but now has come to dislike it intensely. He'd really like to quit and write a book but he's very much afraid to take that step. If he stays where he is, he will be able to retire in 15 years with

a decent retirement income, so he has built himself a big BOX that says, “No matter what, I have to stay in this job at least 15 more years.”

Susan is a single mother who won't quit a job she really isn't qualified for, (and lives in fear of being fired every day,) because she is afraid of what could happen if her family doesn't have health insurance. She has some money saved and she'd really like to go back to school to become better qualified in her chosen field, but she has built herself a BOX that says, “Even if it kills me, I have to keep this job to protect my family in case one of us gets sick or hurt.”

Andrew and Mary have been married for 35 years and they literally can't stand each other anymore. But, their religion doesn't allow for divorce and they are afraid that if they separate, it will really upset their grown children. So, their marriage has literally become a BOX that they are destined to remain in unhappily for the rest of their lives.





Sam, who is 25 and still lives at home, is homosexual and would like to open up about it, but his Father, who hates homosexuals, has a serious heart condition and Sam believes if he told his Father about his sexual preference, it would literally kill him. So he lives (or dies) a little bit every day in a BOX because he simply won't risk his father's life to live his own.

We all build boxes for the purpose of becoming comfortable with our own decisions and, therein, lies the rub. Comfort always breeds discomfort because we are, at our most visceral level, ever-changing, ever-growing beings.

The good news? If you've built yourself a box which is becoming more and more uncomfortable, you can also dismantle it. The only person keeping you boxed-in is you.

And the bad news? As soon as you dismantle one box, you're going to begin to build a new one so that you can get comfortable again in your next growth step.

The secret to avoid being boxed in permanently, however, is far from rocket science. Enjoy your boxes as long as they're comfortable but then be prepared to break them down when they start to pinch.

Anybody seen my sledge hammer?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lauren McLaughlin is a speaker, teacher, writer, retreat facilitator and author of "Go to ELF! – Connecting With The Eternal Life Force," a book that offers the reader an opportunity for both entertainment and self-realization. An ordained Unity minister, Lauren lives in Clearwater, FL with her husband John and their cat, ELFER.

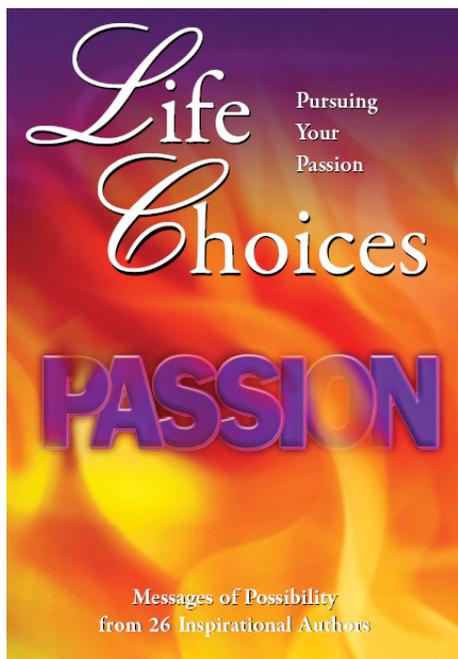


The Life Choices books are a series in which real people share their stories of overcoming obstacles, putting lives back together and following their passions to create successful, significant lives.

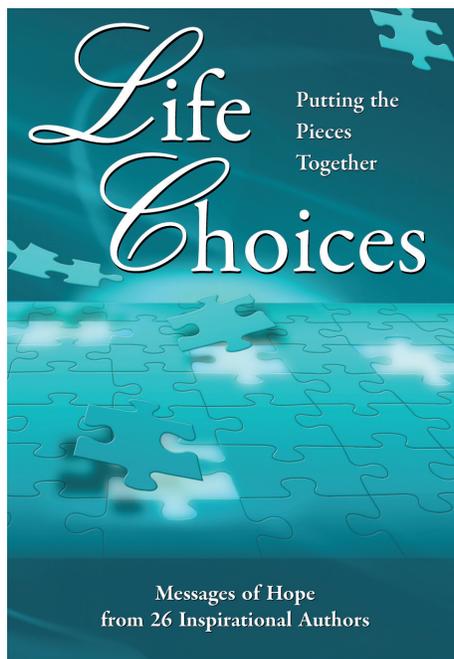
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While the stories shared differ in context, they share a common thread of courage, hope and fulfillment. No matter what obstacles you encounter, or how many pieces your life is in, there is a way to find a new path, make a new choice, follow your passion and create a better life.

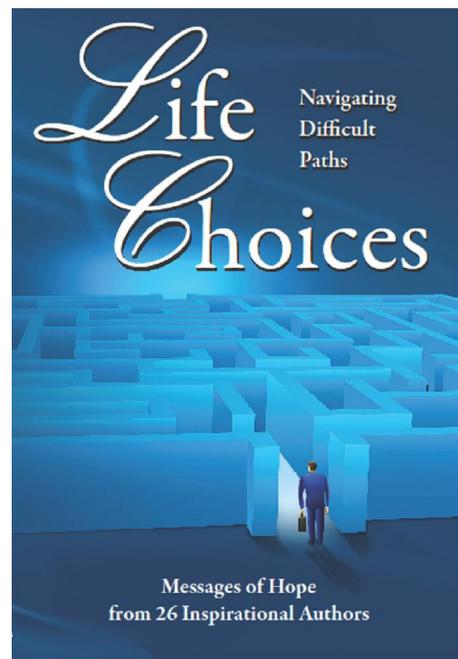
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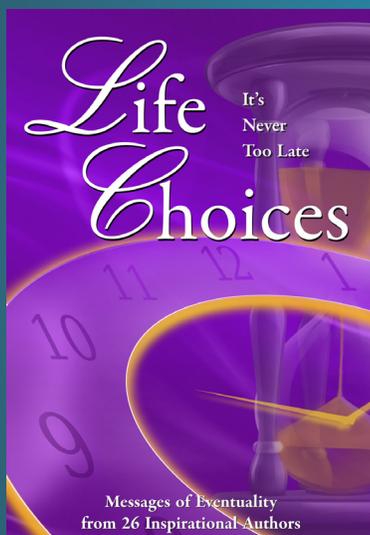
If you have ever had a dream that you wanted to pursue but didn't have the courage, if you've ever wanted to do something that you didn't think you could do, if you have ever wanted to go somewhere but didn't believe it was possible - READ THIS BOOK. Twenty-six authors share with you how they pursued their passions and made their dreams become reality.



Should you find yourself in circumstances that require the making of difficult choices, the stories in this book can offer you courage and inspiration. Each author has addressed hurdles they have faced in order to reach their current level of success. It is a collection of powerful true stories written by real people who have overcome the obstacles in their paths.



This empowering collection of stories reminds us that we all have choices and the choices we make are what determine the course of our lives. The authors of these stories are real people who have reached into the depths of their souls to share their inspiring journeys when navigating the difficult paths of their lives.



LIFE CHOICES SERIES

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No matter who you are, how old you are or your level of success, it is never too late to make the choice to be who you are meant to be. Don't be afraid to make changes. Don't be afraid to make an attempt to achieve your goals.

Within the chapters of this book, 28 authors tell their stories and share the lessons they have learned. Their enlightened knowledge can serve as inspiration for finding your own path to the understanding that it is never too late.

TRIP TO HELL CANCELLED RELEASING SHAME

BY BECKY GRAVA DAVIS

I was only seven years old and headed straight to Hell!

Granddaddy was a preacher and doted on my sisters and me. He took pride in taking us with him on his revival circuit in churches in rural areas. The potluck suppers were grand! I relished the food and the attention from the church members—those were the good memories.

The unsettling parts were the invitations at the end of each service; I was wide-eyed and scared out of my wits. Service after service, those in attendance were reminded in my granddaddy's booming voice, "All of you are born sinners! You could die in a car crash on your way home tonight and spend eternity in HELL! Save yourself and walk down the aisle NOW!"

I couldn't for the life of me remember just what I had done to feel the shame and guilt of simply existing. But, all I knew was that if I didn't muster the courage to walk down the aisle (a master feat for a painfully shy young girl), I was doomed to HELL! Scar-ridden knees from falling on the floor furnace as a toddler were a grim reminder of what it would be like to burn forever. I had to face the walk of shame.

I was "saved" at the tender age of eight and felt some relief that if I died right then and there (and almost did from embarrassment as my skinny little legs



shook as I stood at the altar confessing my unknown sins,) I would go to Heaven and live forever in the clouds with Jesus. Hallelujah! Saved from Hell, Fire, and Damnation. Or, so I thought.

The stage was set early on for feelings of shame and guilt I nurtured well into adulthood. My upbringing is not unique. Strict cultural practices, rigid religious traditions, biased stereotyping; dysfunctional family units, and unbalanced authority figures play a role in shaping shame-based young people who evolve into guilt-ridden adults.

For decades, I was the poster child for guilt-ridden adults and sought various

modes of counseling from talk therapy to pharmacological therapy to "you-name-it" therapy.

Serendipity opened the door to Heart-Centered Hypnotherapy created by the internationally-renowned marriage and family therapist, Diane Zimmeroff, author of several therapeutic books. During a recent stressful situation, a dear friend referred me to a Heart-Centered therapist trained by Diane and her staff.

My licensed professional counselor suggested that I participate in a group therapy program called Personal Transformation Intensive (PTI), the

brainchild of Zimberoff, who together with her husband, David Hartman, founded The Wellness Institute (www.wellness-institute.org).

PTI is a “Powerful Personal Growth Program for anyone seeking maximum healing and wellness” incorporating several modalities to include Heart-Centered Hypnotherapy, Breath Therapy, Energetic Psychodrama, Guided Visualization, Emotional Release Work, Chakra Balancing, and meditation. The program covers a five-month period that meets one weekend each month for over 180 hours of healing work.

My fourth weekend is fast approaching and I look forward to the work with “work” being the operative word. PTI is like therapy on steroids; for me, it is the most effective spiritual and mental healing I have ever experienced. I feel more whole, more centered, more balanced, and more certain of my purpose and direction in life than ever before.

Confidentiality is mandatory, so revealing specifics is not possible. Part of our required reading, however, is available to anyone—*Breaking Free from the Victim Trap* by Zimberoff.

Finally, the “ah-ha moment” when I was able to identify the role I had been unwittingly playing for the majority of my life—the Victim—and I was caught in what Zimberoff describes as the Victim Triangle.

During our first PTI weekend, we were introduced to the dynamics of the victim triangle as illustrated and explained in-depth in Zimberoff’s book. She explains that “the victim triangle is the basis for codependent dysfunctional families and addictions.” The victim triangle is played-out not only in families, but in the workplace and other organizations.

There are three roles:

1. The Victim—A major player at the top of the triangle who feels powerless and blames everyone else for his or her problems.
2. The Rescuer—The martyr who takes care of everybody and also “enjoys” the victim consciousness and feels responsible for rescuing or trying to “fix” the Victim.
3. The Persecutor—The enmeshed cast member who feels resentment for having to take care of everybody and then starts persecuting. Thus, the victim becomes the persecutor and the vicious cycle continues.

So, how in the heck did this author go from talking about an early life experience involving “the fear of going to Hell” to the Victim Triangle?

For me, it was about guilt for sins I had not committed but for which I had already been condemned. My grandfather loved me, I have no doubt. I don’t believe he ever intended to bestow guilt or shame upon his grandchildren or his parishioners. But, my grandfather’s messages were, in a sense, a benevolent use of guilt to control.

No, I am not condemning religion. My personal experience is just one example of the way in which society (families, the workplace, and various organizations) unconsciously uses guilt and shame to influence certain behaviors.

One technique used in PTI is releasing shame and uncovering the source of that shame which keeps us from reaching our full potential as healthy, whole human beings.

Thanks to PTI and Heart-Centered Therapy, I’ve released my shame and cancelled that metaphorical trip to Hell. I am at peace.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Becky Grava Davis is a full-time college professor and pursues her passion for holistic healing by practicing part-time as a certified integrative health coach and Five Tibetan Rites yoga instructor. She is a published author of several health articles for both print and online publications.

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For more than 20 years, Judi Moreo has traveled around the world, speaking each day to audiences from 50 to 3,000 people. She asked the participants if anyone ever felt that they were meant to be more than they were or achieve more than they had accomplished so far. More than 75 percent of the audience raised their hands.

In this high pressure, high stressed, fast-paced world, most of us set our dreams aside just to get by. In this powerful book, you will learn how to:

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- listen to your inner voice
- create self-empowering behaviors and stop criticizing yourself
- set boundaries

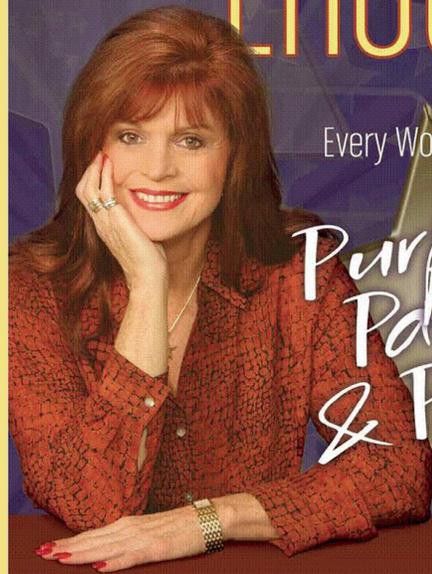
- make conscious choices about relationships, responsibilities and rewards
- communicate for understanding
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- recognize your strengths and make things happen
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practical techniques and illustrated by real-life situations. Use the ideas, techniques and exercises and you will dramatically improve your life. If you take this information to heart and make it a personal development course, you will soon find yourself getting the things you want, associating with the people you would like to have in your life, achieving the success you desire and living the life of your dreams.

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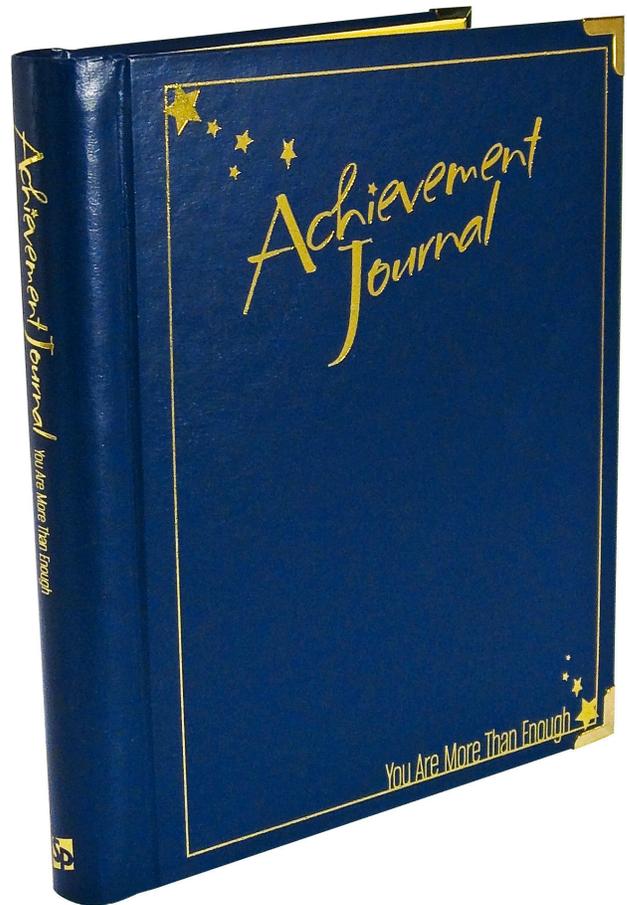
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UNLEASH THE POWER OF YOUR WHY...

BY RIDGELY GOLDSBOROUGH

From the moment you learn to talk, the most recited word in your vocabulary is “WHY?” As a child full of relentless curiosity, this burning question plagues your parents as you pester them repeatedly. WHY? WHY? WHY? Even the answers they give you are met with the same question again—Why? You want understanding, for things to make sense, for the world not to seem like one big question mark.

As adults, the curiosity gives way to a deep yearning. You move from questioning why the stars sparkle or the sun comes up to an absolute need to know the purpose of existing. Why are we here? What is the point? Sadly, most people die with that question within them. Or they have a mid-life crisis after waking up one morning wrought with a deep sense of unease—what’s the meaning behind this crazy thing called “life”? Why am I here—really?

At the root of it all, we crave a “feeling” ...one that equates to successful living, that somehow to someone we matter, our work matters, our existence carries weight in one sphere or many. And in this “feeling” lies the magic, the hard-wiring, the coding that guides our every decision. Because when we find the behavior that gives us that





“feeling” of success, we repeat it over and over again. We run every decision through a lens that is programmed to guide us back to a success that is already predefined. It becomes WHY we do all that we do.

What’s your WHY? WHY do you think the way you think, talk the way you talk, act the way you act? What if you could see the world through a different lens, a view that comes straight from inside you...from your own hidden belief system, your own WHY. What if the world just made a little more sense?

If you could hover above yourself and watch your own actions, you would see a pattern that repeats itself over and over. You would observe that you behave in the same fashion at work, outside of work, with friends, colleagues and even foes—always in pursuit of a “feeling” that gives you ease, comfort & safety ... a feeling that quenches the need for success, as defined by you. You seek to build trust or make sense out of the world or find a way to help or challenge the status quo. There is a programming that is yours and all decisions are colored by it, everything you think, say or do. We call it your WHY and when you figure

it out, it’s like being reintroduced to yourself. We all have one and are governed by it constantly.

Every individual and every organization needs to know their WHY. Inspired organizations live it on a daily basis. It’s your gift, what makes you unique and special. It’s worth taking the time to step back and figure it out. Don’t you want to know YOUR gift?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ridgely Goldsborough, a.k.a. The WHY Guy, is the author of The WHY Engine and co-founder of the WHY Movement. You can learn more about it at www.KnowYourWHY.com

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“NIGGLY BITS”

A PATHWAY TO BECOMING

BY PETER SHANKLAND

Taking responsibility for the constant and unending process of “becoming,” can be, at times, a daunting task. All around us, life swirls and we are pulled in many directions. Our attentions get diverted and we easily become distracted; we lose focus; we forget to enjoy the effortless unfolding of who we are constantly becoming.

This process of unfolding, this path of personal growth, takes many forms.

The interplay among our physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual growth is an interdependent web of influences. We all recognize how difficult it is to remain intellectually sharp when our physical bodies suffer pain, or, how we fail to attain spiritual contentment when our emotions are in flux. How best, then, can we balance these factors in order to grow and become?

It seems to me, attaining good physical health is an essential base from which to proceed. There are a

thousand and one different ways to attain and maintain our health. Find the one that best suits you and go for it.

Next, when addressing the emotional, intellectual, and spiritual aspects of ourselves, I say: *Watch carefully for the “niggly bits” that grossly, or subtly, disturb our sense of inner peace.* Niggly bits include things such as: misplacing our car keys, being repulsed by a wafting odor, or recognizing negative feelings a person may elicit in our psyche through no real fault of their own.

In each of these cases, we have the opportunity to examine the working of our minds, learn more about ourselves, and in the process, grow, become.

In the case of our missing keys, we can gain self-awareness of not being present, not being in the moment. We put the keys down but our minds are elsewhere, hence we forget. The simple teaching of a Zen master captures this nicely. He stated, “When I sleep, I sleep. When I eat, I eat.” How many of us actually do this?

The random wafting by of an odor can offer two paths for growth. One, if the smell is unfamiliar, we can gain awareness of how we suffer from





the continual process of judgment – the endless mental chatter of “I like this; I don’t like that.” Or, if the odor is familiar and invokes a memory, we gain insight into how our minds work and the memories stored.

These are but two examples of how such simple moments we all experience can be pathways for growth.

I find my final example the most powerful “niggly bit” when pursuing a path for personal growth – the person who, simply by the nature of his being, his presence, the way he is, disturbs us. Or, more appropriately stated, we allow ourselves to be disturbed by him.. This person provides enormous potential for growth.

When examined objectively, friends are nice but they generally support us and offer positive support. They fail to challenge our fundamental perception of ourselves; they do not provide the reflective aspect that best garners growth-unlike the “niggly bit” person.

The “niggly bit” person churns up our impatience, frustrations, and negative thoughts. S/he becomes an extraordinary mirror that reflects back on us something about ourselves that we should examine and address.

So, what are your “niggly bits?”



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Peter Shankland currently resides in Las Vegas, NV where he teaches massage therapy, and practices various complementary disciplines. See: www.peace.massagetherapy.com for more information.



MIKE RAYBURN

AN INTERVIEW

BY JUDI MOREO



ike Rayburn is a brilliant guitarist and entertainer. From Bach to rock, his “Classically Trained... Comically Derailed” show is an energetic odyssey of masterful guitar, outrageous comedy, and musical combinations you won’t believe—Bruce Springsteen sings Green Acres. Led Zeppelin sings Dr. Seuss. Jimi Hendrix sings Cumbaya. “If Victor Borge played guitar (and drank too much coffee) he’d sound like Mike,” says Carnegie Hall promoter, Mark Johnson.

In addition, Mike is expert on personal development and human potential. He has presented his motivational program, *The “What If...” Experience* to audiences around the world ...and Mike speaks from experience... he knows from having done it ... having achieved mega success.

His successes include eight performances at Carnegie Hall, voted “Solo Artist of the Year” by American Entertainment magazine, voted “America’s Campus Entertainer of the Year” three times in four years, has sold more than 200,000 CDs worldwide, and has recently

authored a personal development book entitled, “What If...?”

In addition, he has had feature stories in *USA Today* (business section), *Billboard*, *Gig*, *American Entertainment*, and *Successful Meetings* magazines and can be heard daily on XM/Sirius Comedy and countless morning radio shows including the nationally syndicated “Bob and Tom Show,” “John Boy and Billy Show,” and “Rick and Bubba” show.

I recently thought “What if I interviewed Mike Rayburn” for our *Choices* readers... and sure enough, the idea turned into possibility. Here’s what Mike had to say...

Did you always want to be an entertainer/speaker?

I always wanted to be a musician and an entertainer. Speaking is a career that found me when I was about 38 years old. Now, I can’t fathom life without it.

Who influenced you?

Musically, John Prine, Jim Croce, Eagles, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Bon Jovi. Guitar influences - Andre Segovia, Stevie Ray

Vaughn, Michael Hedges, Robert Fripp... but mostly my guitar-player friends - Pat Redmiles, Noah Herschman, Robin Crow. Entertainment... Mike Cross, Steve Martin, Ray Stevens, Josh Wainright, John Pinette. Speakers - Patricia Fripp, Dan Burrus, Mark Mayfield.

What inspires you?

God’s amazingness. A great performance by someone else and I think, “I gotta do something like that!” People who come up afterward who’ve been moved in some way by my program makes me want to be that much better.

What were the biggest surprises you’ve encountered?

The fact that I’ve been accepted and embraced by the meetings industry even though (and it turns out, because) I use guitar and comedy rather than PowerPoint and statistics.

What one thing do you wish you had known earlier in your career?

That I’m good enough and the things I write are not bad... and sometimes very good. I squelched turning out



material and just going for it because I doubted myself, my validity, I relied too much on the tried and true for fear that new things would not be that funny or relevant. That if I just work and turn out material, try things, put it out there, much of it is good and I would have evolved and grown as an artist much faster.

What is your proudest speaker moment?

My NSA General Session Keynote in San Diego July 2nd, 2014. I put over 1100 hours into 25 minutes I would perform once, including a guitar duet of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony performed with a hologram of myself. It worked and I made it count. I left it all on the stage and there's little I'd do differently.

||| **ABOVE**
Mike Rayburn

What has been the biggest challenges you have faced as a speaker?

My single biggest challenge was when my agent stole the greater portion of a year's income from me. He accused me of lying, which I never ever did, and used that to justify keeping an unimaginable amount of money which was mine. I have totally forgiven him but for a long time it screwed my family to the wall and put us in a bind at the worst time.

What's the best advice you were given about speaking?

There are a few things. After every performance, ask yourself two questions: What did I do right? What would I do differently?

The other was from a comedian friend named Kier Irmiter who told me to

script my entire program, every word, and then take out anything that's not funny.

To expand that for speakers, take out anything that's not relevant. The key to all of speaking- and all of life- is editing. If you can say it with seven words, don't use twelve. Editing is really a never-ending process. Brevity is powerful.

Finally, my own advice for speakers: Entertain your audience. However you do it, impress them, take them somewhere, move them in some way. You're not there to merely impart thoughts and wisdom. The difference in a keynote and a breakout session is entertainment value. If you don't move your audience, they may like you but they won't love you, and they're not likely to remember you.

What was the most important decision you ever made?

To quit going halfway, quit playing small and become a Virtuoso, or resolve to be the best. And I mean the best compared to no one other than yourself. It's not usually that people aren't good enough, it's that they don't want it badly enough. In January, 2015 I am launching my "Virtuoso Community," for people who've decided to dedicate their entire lives to excellence, to becoming virtuosos. I will provide thoughts and resources for that pursuit and it's free. To be part of it sign up on my email list at <http://www.mikerayburn.com>.

Thank you, Mike, for sharing your messages of purpose, possibility, and peak performance...with us and with your audiences around the world.



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HAPPY DISASTER

BY PAT TURNER

Y

ou must be thinking, “I thought this magazine was supposed to be filled with inspirational stories and articles of encouragement,” or perhaps, “Those two words in the title don’t belong side-by-side.” So, let me compare my choice of words to an artist’s world. When painting, there are what we call “happy mistakes.” This occurs when a part of a picture turns out better than expected. Say the sky comes alive or a tree captures the moment. This is especially true of watercolor. The picture seems to take on a life of its own.

Rewind forty-eight years from the present where the title of this article will become clear. Yeah, school is out for the holidays. I’m a senior, going on a date with my boyfriend, and a couple of other friends ~ life is good. The disaster is about to unfold as it will be three months before I sleep in my own bed.

It is very dark, blinding snow, and the roads are slick. We didn’t see the back of the snow plow until it was too late. That was the disaster, we hit it...hard...and as a result my right leg was amputated above the knee. That incident is not the end of my story. REMEMBER: regardless of how hard you get knocked down, your true spirit will show in how fast you get up. I did recover enough to receive

my high school diploma, and it was off into the unknown.

Regardless of how hard school was and my senior advisor saying not to worry about college because I wasn’t smart enough anyway, I decided during the weeks in the hospital I needed to get a degree in order to care for myself. Being a strong farm girl, as well as strong willed, I encountered a number of hurdles before heading off to college in my jazzy, red, two-door Chevy II Nova. My parents needed assurance I had a reliable car and reliable it was.

One of the first challenges of college life was getting around campus with

a fairly new prosthesis. Because of complications from the initial amputation, the Monday after graduation I had four more inches of bone removed, resulting in hospital staff infection. That didn’t give me much time to heal, be refitted with a new socket, and become proficient enough to walk.

Challenge two: Living with the curious stares from people. I understood but it was still hard because I was trying so hard to live a normal life. I did try to make light of their curiosity and friends helped with that. Sitting in the common areas, they would talk to me in one direction while, on my blind side, one of the guys would walk up and down



my prosthesis with his fingers. That got more curious stares than the robotic leg, and everyone had a good laugh.

That first year of college, along with my studies, I learned to three-track snow ski. I had skied since I was 5 and it was the thing to do. Thrilling hardly captures that first feeling of freedom with the wind in my face. I was actually skiing before I stopped using my cane on campus. The second year of skiing, I instructed at Mission Ridge, our local ski and board resort. I also entered a number of amputee ski races on Mt. Hood. It was such a new sport that I generally competed against men. I met a gentleman one year and was happy to see him the next. We (he had a coach with him this time) were shadowing the

course until they learned we were going to be racing in the same category. They left me on the mountain to practice by myself. Later, I sent him a picture my dad took of him getting his second place trophy. Yes, I won first! I know, not a good way to impress guys.

The disaster sent my life in a better direction than I had initially planned. It has been an interesting forty-eight years with many ups and downs. I became weary at times but knew in the bottom of my soul it would get better. And it has. Sure, I had to redefine my life but there are very few things I would change and very little I can't do. I have a good life! I am happy!

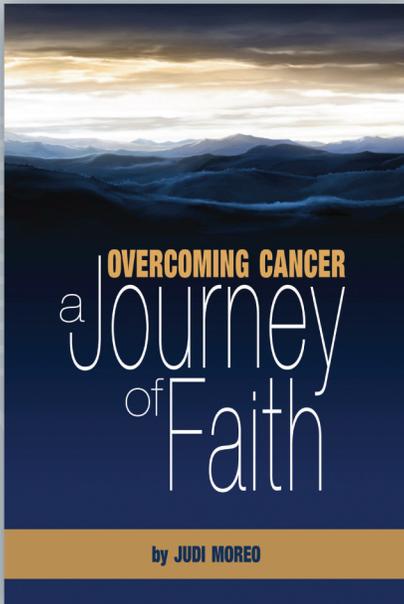
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pat Turner lives in East Wenatchee, Washington with her husband, Joe. She is active at her local ski area, Mission Ridge, learning to three-track ski in 1966. She received her B.A. in education from Central Washington University and Fifth Year from the University of Sacramento. Placerville, CA was her first teaching assignment then finished her career in the Wenatchee area. She enjoys working out at the gym as well as riding tandem bike with Joe. Her travels include New Zealand, Tahiti, Mexico, and Hawaii. Pat also enjoys watercolor painting, reading, writing, knitting, and crocheting. She is known in the Wenatchee area as the Bookworm Lady.



Award-winning author Judi Moreo knows what it is to travel the journey of cancer and shares that experience in this book.

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Through her personal story, inspiring quotes and practical suggestions, Judi shows us that cancer and fear are messages to us to make lifestyle changes. This supportive book can help the newly diagnosed cancer patient ask better questions, understand there are alternative and integrated treatments that can work and, most of all, maintain hope.

Even though traveling the cancer road was a rocky and difficult journey, it was also rewarding. The path through cancer requires enormous discipline, work, and change; yet it is filled with excitement, experiences and discoveries that can bring us to a new and better place if we are open to possibilities and focus forward.

"This book may help save your life or that of a loved one. Judi Moreo "gets it." She understands that the question is not "what kind of treatment do I undergo?" but rather "how do I heal myself?" Her personal experience with cancer taught her to recognize that recovery from chronic illness is often a recovery from an unhealthy life in many respects. With humor, grace and courage, she addresses the physical as well as the mental, emotional, psychological and spiritual needs for recovery in an easily accessible, practical way. Whether you are looking for help to reclaim your health from cancer or any other illness, let Judi be your guide."

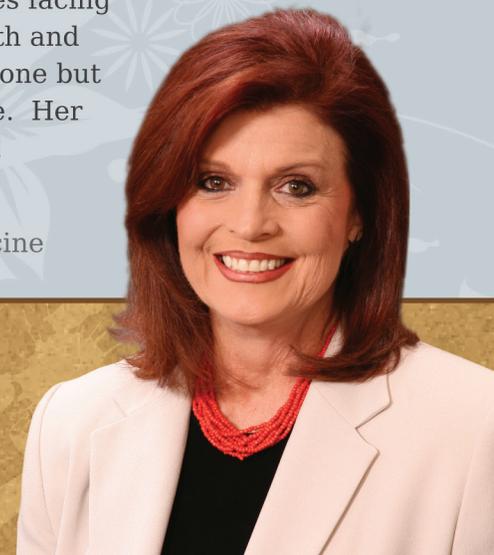
- James Sensnig, N.D., Founding President, American Association of Naturopathic Physicians; Former Dean, National College of Naturopathic Medicine; Founding Dean, College of Naturopathic Medicine, University of Bridgeport, Connecticut; cancer survivor

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DETOXIFICATION

GOOD FOR THE MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT

BY JULIE FREEMAN, MA, RD, LD, INTEGRATIVE NUTRITIONIST

In this day of pollution, plastics and other “convenience products”, genetically modified foods, emotional and spiritual stress, we often hear that a detox program is in order. And for most of us, it is, but, there is a catch.

Not every person’s system can detoxify properly, thus the vast array of detox formulas on the market can be harmful or at the very least, not doing what they are supposed to do. While there are lab tests that can be done to see if a person can handle the three phases of detoxification, they are quite expensive. It is important to check with a qualified health care professional who knows the product lines that take into account these three phases of detoxification – biotransformation, conjugation and elimination. Basically, what this means is that toxins are drawn into circulation, bound up and are then eliminated. If the toxins are not bound properly, they will be reabsorbed into the body to cause further damage.

There are many dietary approaches available and there are similarities in most of these programs. It is important to eliminate processed foods and to include fresh and organic foods during a detox. Gluten and dairy are most often omitted for the period of the detox. The reasons are simple, gluten and casein are proteins found in wheat/rye/barley and dairy foods respectively and these proteins are very difficult to digest. In addition, they are often genetically altered and may be pumped

with hormones and antibiotics, further compromising quality.

During this period, you should consume many vegetables, as veggies are abundant in enzymes that foster the detox pathways and support the liver and kidneys to do their jobs. Lean, organic protein is helpful for supporting tissue regeneration and blood sugar maintenance and healthy fats and oils support brain function.





A few detoxifying foods to consider adding to your repertoire include:

Cilantro – a mercury detoxifier, also high in antioxidants to support the heart and blood sugar metabolism

Pepita seeds – high in nutrients to support liver detoxification, as well as supporting elimination of parasites

Cruciferous vegetables – this includes broccoli, cauliflower, brussel sprouts, kale, cabbage, and bok choy, all rich in sulfurophane, assist in detoxifying carcinogens

There are many wonderful ways to prepare these foods, but let's look at a few simple ideas.

Stir fry broccoli, cabbage, bok choy in a little grapeseed oil (has a high smoke point, thus good for sautéing), onion and minced fresh ginger. Once tender-crisp, remove from heat and toss with gluten free soy sauce and sprinkle with oven roasted pepita seeds (350 degree oven for 5 minutes).

Add chopped cilantro to salads and toss with a lime dressing with grapeseed oil, lime juice, a pinch of stevia and pink salt (rich in minerals.)

While supporting the body to properly detoxify, one must take into account that the “other” pollution is negative thinking. Emotional distress, negative interactions as well as negative self-talk, will increase chemicals that are toxic. Have you ever heard of toxic emotions? Well, they are just that!

During the first few days of detoxification, one may feel sluggish, agitated and may experience some gastrointestinal unrest. This is all part of the process of elimination - to rid oneself of pollution. Consider taking it easy. Do not over-work or do much exercise. Rest as much as possible and drink plenty of clean water with lemon added.

The best seasons for detoxification are Spring and Fall, preparation seasons – the Fall prepares us for the hibernation when metabolism will slow down and Spring prepares us for the lazy days of the hot summer. Happy cleansing!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Julie Freeman is a licensed nutritionist with advanced training in functional medicine, yoga, reiki, mind-body medicine. She practices in Boston, MA, but has clients world-wide via skype. Contact Julie, juliefreeman57@gmail.com or check her out at www.juliefreeman.net.

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Do you recall a time when you had a grandiose view of changing the world for the better? Maybe you were going to found an organization to help cure AIDs, battle inequality, become a prolific writer or evangelize the globe. What happened? The results never likely materialized, and you became discouraged by the fact that Sallie Mae wanted you to begin repaying your loans.

Perhaps that wasn't your experience, but I have had this discussion with many colleagues and friends that feel like they really could have made a difference in the world if only they had gotten their big break. In my naïve and idealistic college years, I stumbled upon a quote that I wish I had taken more to heart.

"When I was a young man, I wanted to change the world. I found it was difficult to change the world, so I tried to change my nation. When I found I couldn't change the nation, I began to focus on my town. I couldn't change the town and as an older man, I tried to change my family. Now, as an old man, I realize the only thing I can change is myself, and suddenly I realize that if long ago I had changed myself, I could have made an impact on my family. My family and I could have made an impact on our town. That impact could have changed the nation and I could indeed have changed the world."

~Unknown Rabbi

Over a decade later, this quote has nearly beaten me senseless. With every good intention in mind, I have thrust myself into business, ministry, politics and raising a family. In each scenario, I have discovered that I have a lot of learning to do even after I foolishly believed I knew enough to do well in each of those arenas.

INVESTING IN GROWTH

BY JUSTIN WEIS



The wisdom of this Unknown Rabbi helped me understand that any worthwhile goal requires us to continue a path of personal growth and development if we ever hope to attain any sort of accomplishment. So, in light of following the advice of an ancient Rabbi, I have also chosen to use tools of personal growth that stand the test of time: motivational books and mentorship.

A daily reading habit that focuses on creating better relationships and personal excellence creates a magnificent result. John Maxwell states, "The secret of your success is found in your daily agenda." Since most everything in the life involves other people, my type 'A' personality can regularly get in the way of others' insights and emotions.

But, by studying authors who focus on servant or personal leadership, I have continually expanded how I approach most situations, which makes all the difference. Authors such as Ken Blanchard, Andy Stanley, Stu Weber, Tony Dungy and John Maxwell are great influencers. Their words have the power to transform you from the inside-out, if you'll let them.

Finding mentors is not as easy a task as picking up a book, and won't likely appear in your life until you have made strides toward personal growth by developing the afore mentioned reading habit. Working at growing yourself through a reading habit will create a law of attraction that others will notice; eventually, the right people will take heed. I have found this commonly attributed Taoist proverb to be true of mentorship, "When the pupil is ready, the master will appear." As you develop yourself, you will attract the attention of people that have gone before you and

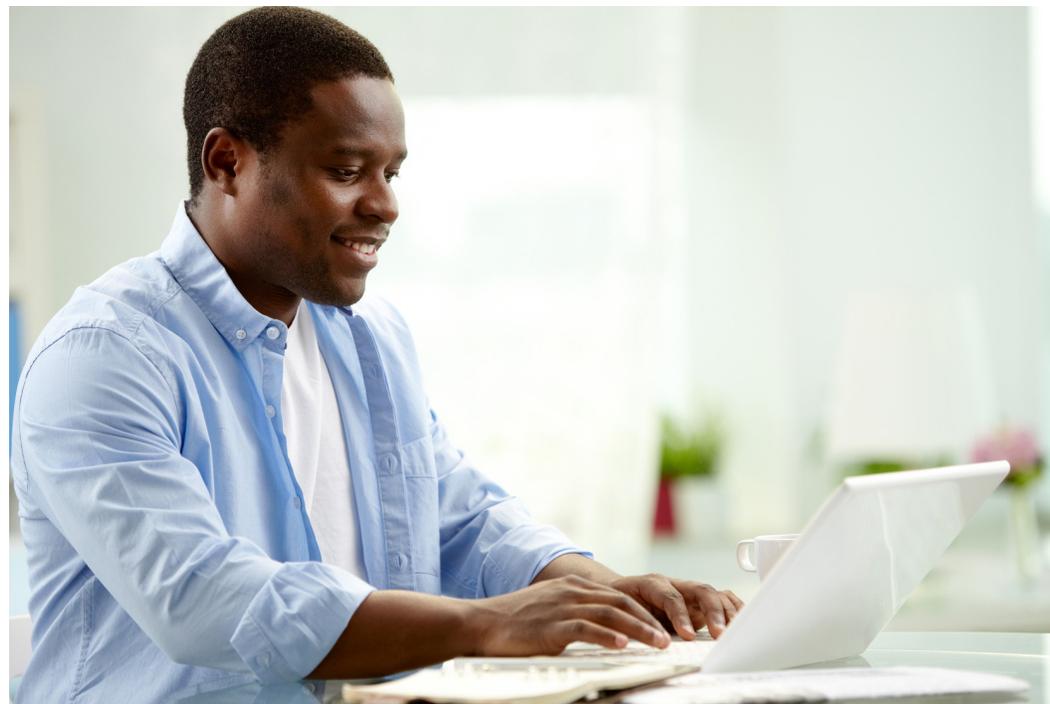
can guide you to greater places than they themselves have reached. It's important to remember that mentors are people, and all people are susceptible to failures. This is why I believe that you can learn something from anybody but not everything from somebody. What I have been taught to look for in mentors is several things: do they have success in the area that they are advising me and can that method still be modeled? Have they taught others to succeed in that arena in recent history? Do they have mentors to whom they themselves are regularly accountable? If these three questions cannot be answered with a resounding 'yes', then their wisdom may not be as beneficial as I thought.

Our world-changing goals don't have to be dismissed; even if we haven't achieved all we once set out for or accomplished them on a tight timeline, it's always possible to grow and inspire others in the process, if you are willing to make the investment in growth.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Justin Weis is a third generation business owner in eastern Washington. In addition to raising two young children, he and his wife, Alisa, are actively involved in professional development coaching. As students of personal growth and development, they have a passion to help others reach their full potential. Justin has led and organized volunteers to make differences in political activism and evangelical organizations throughout Washington State.





“Recognizing that you are not where you want to be is a starting point to begin changing your life.”

Deborah Day



HOW TO STAY “REVVED UP”

BY JUDI MOREO

Most of us experience our highest energy levels during the morning hours when we are refreshed from a good night’s sleep. Therefore, the sharpest and clearest thinking is usually in the morning. On the other hand, the afternoon is when our energy levels are apt to be lower and our thinking a bit duller, especially after a big lunch when all we want to do is take a nap and digest all that food.



ere are some suggestions for revving up your energy and remaining clear-headed, alert, and ready for anything – even in the afternoon.

Complete Things

If you have to do something, do it now. Do the worst part first and get it out of the way. Once you make that difficult phone call or begin the project you’ve been avoiding, you’ll realize it was the anticipation, rather than the doing, that was causing you to suffer.

Allow Some Time Cushions

When you schedule your time, allow time for thinking, planning, and reading. Re-negotiate deadlines if it appears you can’t make one. This buys time for you

and it gives others time to prepare for the change in plans.

Decide to “Want to Do”

Most people have things they have to do that they don't look forward to. In order to keep your energy level revved up, don't think of these things as 'duties,' think of them as challenges and opportunities to learn something such as patience, discipline, or how to deal more effectively with different types of people.

Implement a “Quiet Time”

Designate a specified time in the office when no one will interrupt anyone else unless it is absolutely necessary. If your company advertises that its office hours are 9 am to 5 pm, perhaps employees

should come in at 8 am and have the first hour as this 'quiet time' before you are officially open for business.

Avoid Negative People

Don't listen to people who complain or whine regularly. Don't become the office 'Father Confessor' or 'Sister Caretaker.' Ask yourself if you foster dependence or independence when you help one of these people. Do you always give the right answers, or do you show and encourage others how to find the answers for themselves? These people are energy sappers. You become tired just by being around them.

If you work with someone you don't enjoy, you can store up a great deal of negative

energy. Clear the air by communicating. Be assertive. Life is too short to waste on resenting situations and other people.

Exercise Daily

Park your car in the last parking bay so you'll have further to walk. Climb the stairs instead of taking the elevator. It may take longer, but the exercise can help keep you in shape and keep your energy levels up.

Prepare for Tomorrow

When the day is over, take a few minutes to put everything in order for the next day. This will give you a sense of completion, as well as feeling that you can enjoy a relaxing evening.



MY CLIMB OUT

BY JOAN S. PECK



W

hen I think of my own personal growth and where I am today, I believe in miracles.

As a child, I remember thinking, Where am I? What am I doing here? When my mother described me to others, she would always say that I was a bit whimsical and unworldly. That pretty much explains where I was in life for the beginning of my climb from underneath the rock of awareness, wisdom and experience.

Yet, it is important to mention that along the way, I have been more than fortunate to have mostly patient,

encouraging, loving people around me... people with good advice. Yes, I had the opposite of that as well. But the truth is, I had to learn things the hard way... on my own. And, it seemed to always take me several times of repeating the same experiences over and over before I got the lesson. Each time, I would feel like the child who has been carelessly thrown into the pond to see if she can swim.

I look around today and know that I am blessed beyond words to be in such a loving, peaceful place in my life. That rock no longer holds me captive and, to be honest, just reaching my older years may have a lot to do with reaching the

stage where fear is mainly out-of-the picture. After all, the difficult years and experiences brighten and enrich the little pleasures in life.

If you were to ask me the three most important things that I have learned in order to lift that rock up and get it out of my way, my answer would be:

1. I no longer feel that I have to control everything around me.

When anyone feels as if they have no control, they overcompensate by wanting to control everything. That was me at different points in my life. I felt responsible for everything, including

the weather, and would apologize profusely to anyone who was unhappy with something going on in their life. Acknowledging that I no longer have to feel responsible for things outside myself (including the weather!) was a great relief to me! Knowing that the only thing I can control is me provides such peace in trusting that all is working out as it is meant to be.

2. I no longer have to be “right” as there is no such thing as “right” or “wrong,” there is only truth ... someone’s truth.

Whatever beliefs that we have becomes our truth until we change beliefs or acquire new ones. For instance, in the conflicts in some Middle East countries, there is a belief that the United States is evil for all sorts of reasons, that we are a country that needs to be destroyed, etc. They teach that killing us and those who agree with our philosophies is a good thing to do and will make them heroes. So, for those young men who set off bombs or kill believing that, it is simply their truth. They cannot be right or wrong because that is a judgment outside of self. Their actions are simply outside our truths.

Although that might be an extreme way of looking at truth, once I could wrap my head around it, I could let go of being right or wrong. In other words, my truth is my truth, and your truth is your truth until one of us changes a belief and we can agree.

3. I no longer am willing to take away the space for another’s journey in life.

Many of us are lovingly involved with our family members, good friends, and others who periodically come into our lives. We want the best for them and gladly offer our advice of how they should handle a certain situation or even their lives. Certainly, there is no harm in giving advice when asked, or stepping in when the situation endangers them, but it becomes all too easy to fuss and moan over another’s choices. Yet, isn’t that their own journey? I have reached the point where I might not necessarily agree with another’s choices, but can step back and allow them the space for their own journey. To me, this is a gift I can give another... doing so with love.

It was no surprise to discover that personal growth is a personal journey.

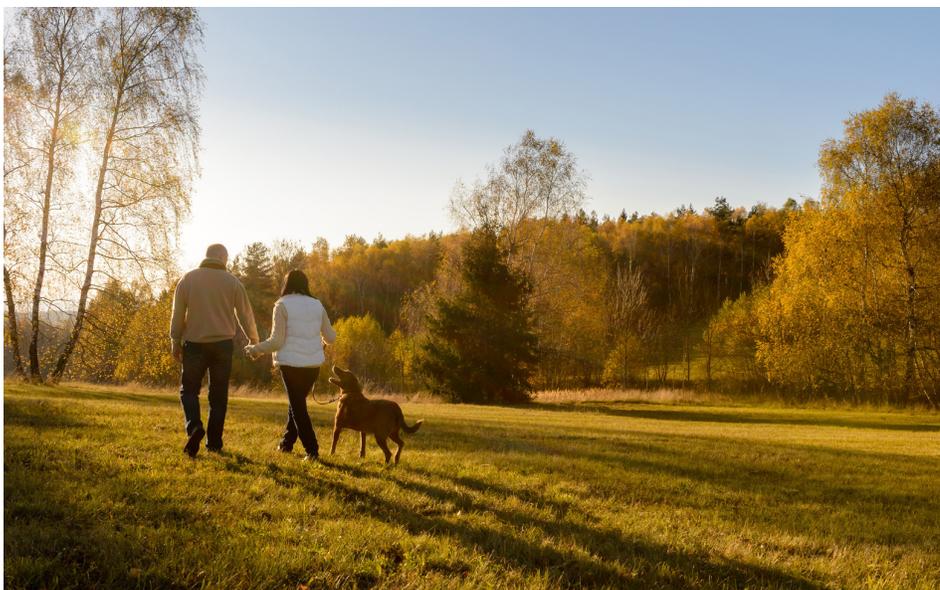
Yet, it often is through others that we unwittingly become filled with the abundance of learning who we really are and how we fit into the All That Is. How wonderful life is!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joan S. Peck is the author of several spiritual books and a contributing author to two of the Life Choice books. She has a new book coming out this fall – “Prime Threat- Finding Your Way Out of Addiction”, a book written with her son from the other side.

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“Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom.”

- Aristotle

IS YOUR SENSITIVITY A CAREER LIABILITY?

BY GINA YUVETTE DAVIS

Several years ago, I was giving a presentation to a board of directors for a project that was near and dear to my heart and I wanted their blessing and support. As I was giving the report, one of the board members made a rather offhanded remark about the project that made the entire board laugh. I was humiliated! This was, I felt, an important project and a partnership which would be beneficial to the entire organization – and they were laughing! As I sank down into my chair, one of the board members told me, “Gena, you are such a bleeding heart. You wear your emotions on your sleeve. How do you expect to get anywhere if you are going to be so sensitive?”

He was right.

Although, sensitivity can be a gift that could help others because of your attunement to environment, energy and thought patterns and because it is quite normal (nearly 15-20% of the population is sensitive in some way), being overly sensitive can actually hurt your career, if not managed correctly.

Here are a few tips to help you manage your sensitivity at work:

- Change how you view criticism – It is usually negative self-talk that secretly says, “I am not good enough.” Change that paradigm and view criticism as if you are doing something great and worthy of attention.
- Check your mood – sometimes it is not about what your co-worker is saying, maybe there is something deeper going on at which you need to take a look.
- Act, don’t react – say this like a mantra. Try not to blow things out of proportion or exaggerate. If you do, there is a strong possibility that people will not take you seriously and will assume you’re over-reacting and distorting the truth.
- Check your body language – Facial expressions and body posture say a lot. Remain relaxed and calm. Think: “This is not about me.” Keep your tone even and friendly.

Remember, it is okay to be sensitive: kind, empathetic, creative and love to help others. However, knowing how to effectively manage your sensitivity when

you are confronted with challenges will make you even more successful in your career and in life.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gena Yvette Davis, MBA, BCC, CCP is a board certified professional executive coach, organizational / professional development trainer, published author, brand marketing consultant and strategist who truly believes that the “*magic comes from within!*”

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SENSITIVITY

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As an international business leader, Judi knows firsthand what it takes to be successful. She has owned and operated businesses in both the United States and South Africa. In addition, she has spoken, consulted and presented both keynote speeches and training programs in 28 countries on four continents.

Judi is an accomplished author with 10 books to her credit, several of them award-winning best sellers. She has been a journalist, model, finishing school and model agency owner, a professional speaker, a corporate executive, an entrepreneur, a consultant and a cancer survivor.

Around the globe there are many men and women whose lives are a testimony to Judi's personal and professional success. It is no wonder that she has a collection of awards, but to her "life is not about awards. It is about the reward of making a difference in another person's life." And that she has done over and over and over again.



IS THERE SUCH A THING AS TIME MANAGEMENT?

BY JUDI MOREO

Do you feel as if your life is moving faster and faster? Today, we do everything fast: talk fast, drive fast, even eat fast. Time is at a premium and most of us are afflicted with “hurry sickness.” There never seems to be enough time to do the things we have to do, much less, those things we’d like to do. Many of us don’t even have time to think. Something is terribly wrong with this picture! There are probably times when

you feel as if you are a spectator watching your own life unfold, instead of being in control. You might even be wondering who you are and what your purpose is!

Time is the most precious and limited resource we have. In spite of our best efforts, time is unyielding. No one can stop it, slow it down, or save it. It is a rare person who has enough time to do all the things he or she wants to do. If you are like most people, trying to balance a busy professional life and a busy personal

life, you know what a challenge it can be to get everything done. Keeping current with what’s going on in the world, not to mention technology, your industry, changing expectations at work, and personal obligations, is becoming harder and harder.

For some reason, we keep adding “just one more thing,” and forget to eliminate another. The result is an ever increasing time crunch. Here are some questions for you to consider: “Do I take on too much?”



Do I have difficulty saying “No” to extra demands? Do I fail to set priorities? Do I fail to plan?”

Sit back, shut out your other thoughts, and imagine what it would be like to spend your life doing the things which are most important to you with no interruptions. Imagine using your work time on activities that directly relate to achieving your most important goals and to those tasks that must be accomplished and using your personal time to enjoy the things you really want to do. Create a picture in your mind. Envision yourself going through the day doing work that truly makes a difference. It feels good, doesn’t it?

Now, that you’ve spent some time exercising your imagination, let’s get back to reality. We still have the same amount of time we’ve always had. The clock still ticks off 24 hours every day. The calendar still has seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. So, why do we feel like we are running out of time?

Technology has reshaped the way we work, eat, sleep, play, and live. We are living in this age of instant everything. Information is transmitted at the speed of light and is received instantly. Replies are expected immediately. It seems there is far too much to do and too little time. You may be asking on a regular basis, “How can I get all this done in the time I have?” or “Is this all there is to life?” It’s possible you are feeling less and less satisfaction, as well as more and more stress. People in this predicament often say, “I need to manage my time more effectively,” or “I need to get control of my life.” Realize this! You can’t manage or control time. No one can. You can only manage yourself and your activities within the time you have.

LOST TIME IS NEVER FOUND AGAIN.

- BENJAMIN FRANKLIN





**Resilient Survivor
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Resilient Survivor

*A true story of GROWING through
BETRAYAL, DECEPTION and LOSS*

BY MARLENE LIVINGSTON CURRY

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Marlene Livingston Curry is available for lectures and workshops based on her book *Resilient Survivor*.

EMAIL MARLENE
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PATH OF LIFE: GIVING THANKS FOR THE TIME WE SHARED

BY DELORES RAMSEY MCLAUGHLIN

As I walked into her room, Cecilia waved her thin, pale hand at me. Remembering how it all started, a temptation of forgetfulness overpowering my mind... Cecilia, the patient, and me, the nurse. The boundaries of nurse and patient relationships kept in a bottle of minimal feelings. Keeping distance was also a pre-requisite. These boundaries were broken, never to return.

"Hi, Delores. I'm so glad you're here. The bumps and knots on my stomach seem to be getting bigger." I looked at her stomach and saw the engorging tumors taking over her path of life. I felt Cecilia's gaze penetrating every hidden thought I had locked in my head. "It looks bad, doesn't it? How much time do I have?"

The truth had to be told, but I couldn't do it. I loved Cecilia and I wasn't going to hurt or desert her in anyway. I

swallowed heavily and cleared my throat with such force that Cecilia looked at me with lifted eyebrows. The smell of dull roses and mirror glass reflections surrounded us both as we sat on the bed.

"Cecilia, I don't know how much time you have. Only the good Lord knows that. But in the meantime, let's enjoy it." I could smell the cancer as it camped near Cecilia's bed and waited its final attack. She reached over and grabbed my hand and just held it with the fear of ever letting go. I hugged her and felt the coolness and softness of her body. Her white, curly hair fluffed on the top of her head. The sound of muffled breathing heard through her weightless chest wall.

"I truly love you, Delores, and always will. Promise me that you will make me comfortable when my time comes. I don't want to suffer and above all, I don't want to be a burden to others."

I looked at Cecilia as she closed her eyes with a smile of content on her face. A boundary was broken in the professional realm of nursing. Feelings and involvement were a part. Boundaries are made to be broken. This one made an impact on both the patient and nurse's lives.

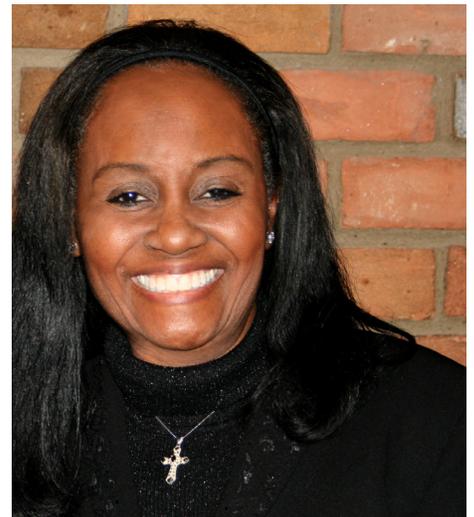
The growth of a person is captured when he or she understands the importance and appreciation of others. This individual knows how to release his or her own personal needs to be available for someone else. For example, Cecilia was transitioning to a place of peace and was willing to let me be a part of that process.

I experienced every portion of Cecilia's love from her stare, hug, smile, and the twinkle in her eyes when she laughed. Although, Cecilia was close to death, she was willing to share her journey with me. I am thankful that Cecilia allowed me to travel that path of departure with her. But, for me, it



was a path of life teaching me how to live my life with thoughts and acts of thankfulness. I was fortunate to be the nurse chosen for Cecilia and thankful for what I experienced and learned about life through my numerous visits.

Life is a journey of unexpected challenges with no course of direction. We each can decide to learn daily, love deeply, and grow freely. Life is a precious gift, why not grow with it?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Delores Ramsey McLaughlin is a motivational speaker who inspires audiences from corporate to faith based. She has a gift of making the most serious topics become less intimidating and more accepting. The founder & executive director of "All Out Communication" and "Freedom-N-Christ Ministries," she teaches effective leadership skills, conflict management, strategies to successfully pursue your dreams and how to bridge gaps between cultural and religious differences.

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LESSONS LEARNED FROM A BARBIE

BY PAM BURKE TYLER

When I was a little girl, like many little girls, I had a Barbie doll. I remember mine vividly. She was a Malibu Barbie, with long, blonde hair and an all-over sun tan. One of my grandmother's was a very skilled seamstress and made all sorts of clothes for my Barbie, so she always had the perfect outfit. And none of the other girls in the neighborhood

had any Barbie clothes that were as cool as mine.

In addition to her great wardrobe, my Barbie had something else that none of the other girls Barbie's seemed to have. She had spunk. She had an adopted daughter (a Little Wooden Doll, who seemed younger and smaller) and an exciting life. She drove a sports car, was a secret agent, owned a horse ranch and a hot air

balloon! Barbie had all kinds of great adventures.

As I grew older, and seemed to outgrow my Barbie, I brought her out less and less for adventures. The clothes became damaged, or lost. The sports car, horse ranch and hot air balloon had all been in my imagination. I slowly forgot about Barbie. She was just a toy that I had outgrown.

I grew up, graduated from high school, got married and gave birth to a son. I moved forward with my life, without even realizing that I had given up on all of those dreams that I had with Barbie.

I was happy and raised a wonderful little boy into a wonderful, caring, talented, handsome man. I built a career for myself in the kind of occupation that would have suited my Barbie dreams. I became an Operating Engineer and worked in the hospitality industry repairing equipment. I learned how to run a large facility, at a time when very few women entered into the trades. I worked hard to excel at my chosen vocation. Barbie would have been proud of that part!

Somewhere along the way, I forgot to also have fun and have adventures. I spent most of my time working, and always told myself there would be time for adventures later. I found myself believing all of the negative things that other people told me about myself. My self-esteem suffered and I lost my way. I spent most of my time working, but never seemed to reach the goal I thought I wanted. I became stuck in a routine, and was no longer happy.

Now that I am in my fifties, I am starting to have adventures. It was during one of my adventures that I rediscovered something that I had learned from my Barbie when I was a little girl.

This is what I remembered, and the beginning of my journey to reclaim the meaning of my childhood adventures with Barbie.

I decided to learn to ride motorcycles. My boyfriend had a Harley Davidson 2003 Sportster that he knew would fit me, and he wanted to go to the rally in Sturgis, South Dakota. I decided

that would be an adventure, so I met him there the last week of rally. Our first real night there (not counting a travel night) we sat in some chairs in our camp and looked over the town. Rally was in full swing. I suddenly remembered my Barbie, even though I had not thought about her in years! It came to me that in my imagination my Barbie was the “grown-up version” of myself. I had wanted to grow up to have an exciting life full of adventures! What was I waiting for?

It was time to start having the life I had intended. We had a great time in Sturgis, and I spent absolutely no time worrying about whether or not I would fit in. I just enjoyed the sights and allowed myself to have a great time. The weather was beautiful most of the time and the scenery was gorgeous. I even wrote an article about my adventures there!

The journey continues to evolve. I am now working on my fitness goals. A fit body will make it easier to continue having adventures. I am continuing to write, because that was one of my childhood passions that fell by the wayside. It is time to pick it back up again.

I will probably never be a secret agent, but I will be able to help people. I have a wonderful son, so I will probably not adopt a daughter. I have a fear of heights, so I may exchange the hot air balloon for an airplane. I would enjoy learning to fly! I plan to work toward the sports car and the horse ranch, because those both sound like something that I would still like.

Whatever I do from here on out on this journey, I am going to have the type of life that would suit my Barbie! And, I have come to a realization along the way. I believe that all of us had a

Barbie. We all had childhood dreams of the life that we would grow up to have and for whatever reason, most of us allowed that life to fall to the wayside. But it's not too late! You can still have the life you wanted when you were young! All it takes is a start! Take that first step and reclaim the life you imagined!

What are you going to learn from your childhood imagination? The choice is entirely up to you!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pam Burke Tyler is a long time resident of Las Vegas. She is a graduate of the Operating Engineers apprenticeship program, where she learned many of her “hands-on” skills. She later taught the apprenticeship program for several years. She is the Director of Facilities at the Muckleshoot Casino in Auburn, Washington. Formerly, she was the Assistant Director of Facilities at the Silverton Casino in Las Vegas.



CHOICES

WITH JUDI MOREO



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DEMENTIA

A POEM BY DANIEL MARCOU

his mind has holes
i reach into each
feeling my way
through the darkness
of memories dimmed
wondering
what i will grasp
that he can't
anymore

his mind has holes
yet his heart is full
beating with
each breath
like a clock
ticking the days
away
there is no future
there is no past
there is just
what there is
and even the present
doesn't
make sense
anymore

his mind has holes
i reach inside them
with the hope
of finding
my father
not for me
or my family
but to give
him
himself
again

his mind has holes
and through them
he journeys
in a circle
from obsession
to paranoia
and back again

his mind has holes
he waits
in a cerebral bread line
hungry for memories
starving for stories

his mind has holes
what was once whole
is now hole after hole
if only they
were truly empty
and not
so full
of confusion

In Memory of My Dad,
Donald J. Marcou
August 2014





CHOICES MAGAZINE
AUTUMN ISSUE 2014

A FINAL NOTE FROM JUDI MOREO

Start now to determine personal growth goals for yourself. Determine what your needs, wants, and desires are--- for now and for the future. You can't gain control over your life without knowing which direction you want to go and having a plan of action to get you there. Goals focus your energies in one direction...toward your vision. Defining your personal growth goals will put your imagination to work. You will start to concentrate on what you really want, rather than just getting by day after day. When you decide what you want in specific detail, then your mind will start to formulate a plan to make it happen.

You probably aren't even aware of how easy it will be to achieve your goals

when you step out of your comfort zone and take steps in the direction of your goals. Action is what it will take to make your goals a reality. Writing them down is your first action. Then, you will need to focus on the goals and work toward them...one step at a time. Don't worry about knowing all the steps at the beginning. Just start. With each step, you'll see how to go further and that will increase your self-motivation.

Self-motivation is the bridge between thinking about your goals and accomplishing them. Self-motivation is the desire you have to achieve, obtain, or become something. It is essential to have if we are to grow. It doesn't come naturally to everyone, but it can be

learned and developed. It is the inner desire that keeps us always moving forward in spite of discouragement, mistakes, and setbacks. You can build this desire and achieve your goals by staying forward-focused and allowing only positive thoughts to dominate your thinking.

When you are able to step out of your comfort zone, take a risk, and take charge of your life and your future, it won't be long until you find that you have passed through the growth zone and your comfort zone has expanded.

Judi