

# CHOICES

SUMMER 2019

## MASTERPIECE ISSUE!

DISCOVER THE EVERYDAY  
MASTERPIECE MOMENTS IN  
YOUR LIFE!

AN INTERVIEW WITH  
JIM ROOT



### MASTERPIECE MOMENTS

NEVER LET A MOMENT SLIP  
AWAY WHERE YOU CAN ADD  
TO YOUR MASTERPIECE



### THE MEANING IS IN THE PROCESS

BE DETERMINED ENOUGH  
TO SEE YOUR MASTERPIECE  
THROUGH TO COMPLETION



### LIFE'S THREE SIMPLE RULES

THREE SIMPLE RULES THAT  
CAN HELP YOU THROUGH  
YOUR MASTERPIECE LIFE

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# FROM THE EDITOR

*"Your life is your canvas and you are the masterpiece. There are a million ways to be creative and interesting."*

**B**eing both a writer and an art teacher, I often hear people say, "I'm not creative." Or "I can't even draw a stick figure."

Several of my students have recounted stories to me of when their elementary school teacher threw their story or artwork in the trash. One lady told me about an open house at her school when she was in second grade where all the student's art was displayed on the board for parents to see...except hers. When she asked the teacher where her picture was, the teacher replied, "It wasn't good enough to display."

I find it shocking that adults can discourage the creativity in children as they often do. Why do they have to be so critical? And, so cruel?

It is my belief that everyone is creative. Yes, even you! You have created the life you are living right now. Our creations are a result of our Choices. The choices we have made on a day-to-day basis have built on each other to bring us to this moment... this place in time.

Take a look at the ways you express yourself. How do you dress? What music do you like? Do you listen to music or do you create it as well? How have you decorated your home? What is the feel and the atmosphere of that home? Do you cook? Are your meals planned? Do you like to set a beautiful table? What does your yard look like? Have you planted flowers and trees?

What habits have you created? Are you disciplined and organized? Are you expressive and free? Do you write stories? Or tell stories to your children?

Everything we do is creative. Every word we say is creative. Are you creating a negative atmosphere or a positive one? Are you willing to take risks or do you hide in your comfort zone? Is your life truly a masterpiece or have you allowed yourself to become discouraged and given up on your creative abilities?

Our writers have, in this issue, concentrated on how each of us can create a life that is a masterpiece. By reading these articles, I believe you will realize that you, too, possess the ability to live a creative life, and one day, you'll look back on your masterpiece and realize what a truly talented creative person you are.

You Are More Than Enough,

## OUR TEAM

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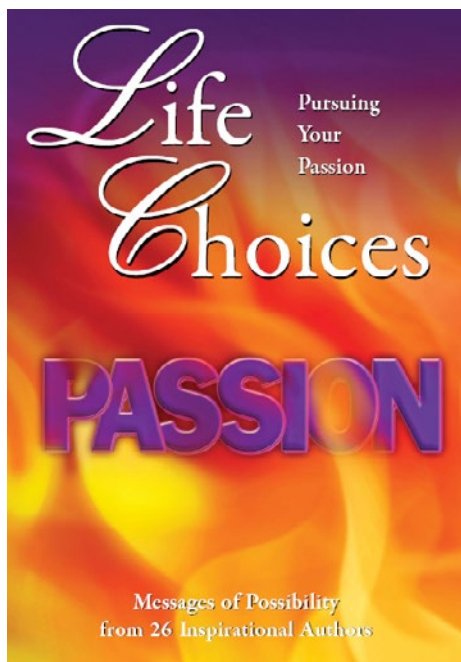
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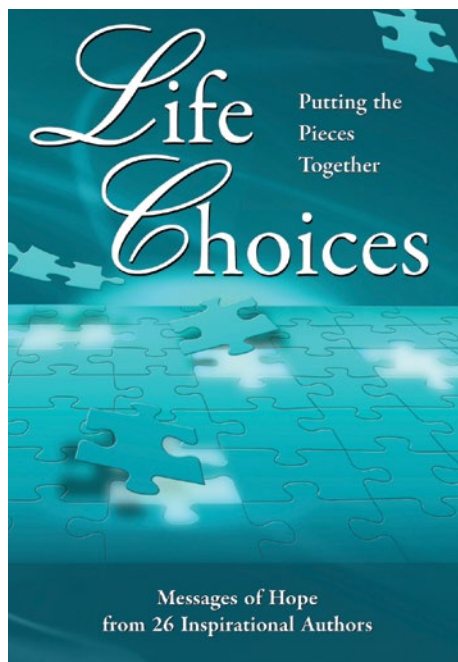
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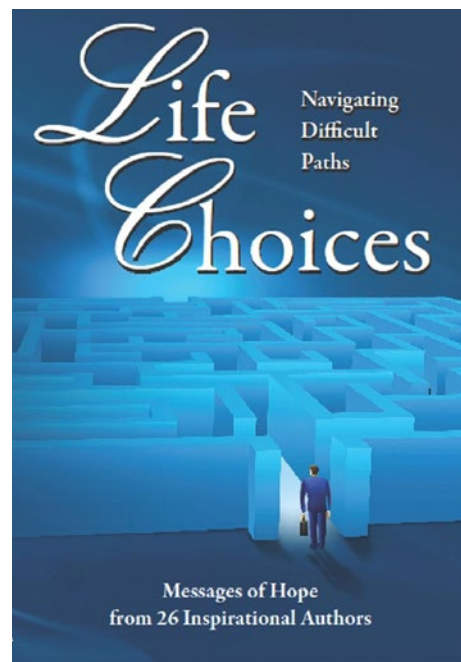




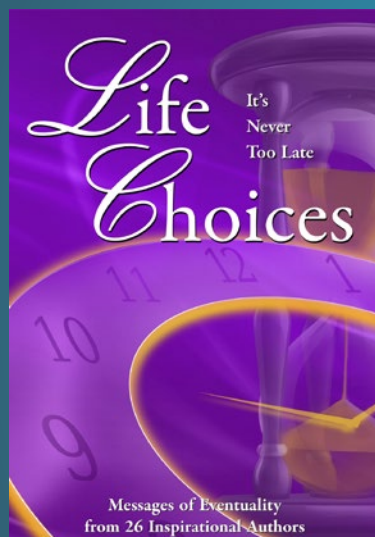
If you have ever had a dream that you wanted to pursue but didn't have the courage, if you've ever wanted to do something that you didn't think you could do, if you have ever wanted to go somewhere but didn't believe it was possible - READ THIS BOOK. Twenty-six authors share with you how they pursued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



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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

CLICK ON THE COVER IMAGES TO ORDER

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.

# LESSONS FROM A LITERARY MASTERPIECE

BY JUDI MOREO

**R**ational and reasonable, at least linguistically, are synonymous. In fact, Webster uses these words to help define each other.

Rational: Having or exercising the ability to reason: Of sound mind: Consistent with or based on reason (Webster's New Riverside University Dictionary, 1984).

Reasonable: Within the bounds of common sense. Not extreme or excessive. The capacity for rational thought, inference, or discrimination (Webster's New Riverside University Dictionary, 1984)

Our emotions are a reflection of our perceptions of what's going on around us, and in turn, they lead us to externally display one or more patterns of behavior in reaction to that stimuli. In any given situation, our emotions are going to have an impact on how we react.

When these situations are especially challenging, it can be difficult to maintain rational thought patterns and





behavior within the confines of reason;  
as portrayed by Portia.

If this were true, then should I  
know this secret.

I grant I am a woman; but withal

A woman that Lord Brutus took to  
wife:

I grant I am a woman; but withal

A woman well-reputed, Cato's  
daughter.

Think you I am no stronger than my  
sex,

Being so father'd and so  
husbanded?

Tell me your counsels, I will not  
disclose 'em:

I have made strong proof of my  
constancy,

Giving myself a voluntary wound

Here, in the thigh: can I bear that  
with patience.

And not my husband's secrets?

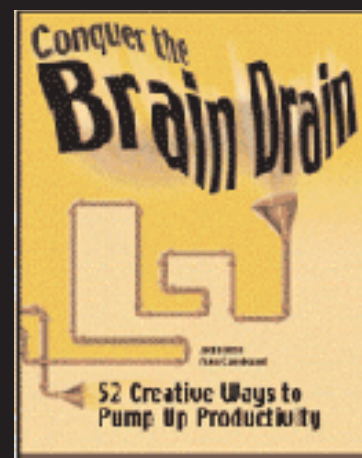
(*The Tragedy Of Julius Caesar*.  
(n.d.). Retrieved from Opensource  
Shakespeare: <https://bit.ly/2h7zeUu>)

Even though stabbing yourself in the leg  
is neither reasonable nor recommended,  
this one scene of Portia's highlights  
the major points of remaining rational  
during a challenging situation.

- Remaining calm in a high-pressure situation
- Maintain rational detachment
- Be attentive
- Recognize your limits
- Be mindful of your own actions

### REMAIN CALM

Notice how Portia isn't yelling and  
screaming at Brutus. She's completely  
calm. She knows Brutus is up to  
something because she can clearly see  
the effect it's having on him physically,  
how it's weighing him down, so when  
she confronts Brutus and puts herself in  
this situation, she remains completely  
calm.



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### MAINTAIN RATIONAL DETACHMENT

Portia refers to her breeding and her choice of husband here, as well. She's calmly bringing up her credentials as she sees them. She has some authority here, though not very much, but she's using what she has rather than taking the situation personally. Although she speaks about how Brutus's treatment of her is affecting her personally, she's not expressing that in an overtly emotional way in this particular scene.

Portia is attempting to diffuse a situation that Brutus is in, and she knows that if she reacts emotionally to the personal hurt, then she'll get nowhere. Instead, she states her case with a degree of rational detachment.

### BE ATTENTIVE

Portia chose this particular moment in the garden with Brutus because she thought it to be a good time to address their situation. She's mindful of her surroundings, and attentive to his current situation.

### RECOGNIZE YOUR LIMITS

Portia understands the limits of her standing as a woman in her society. Rather than making herself out to be too important to leave out of the equation, she pleads her case with Brutus by shining a light on her social and physical limitations, or rather, her limits as Brutus may see them as a man—even if she does mock his point of view just a tad bit.

When she stabs herself in the leg, she recognizes that it's painful, and addresses this fact in an attempt to portray her rational state of mind as a

strength. Her use of her physical and social limits reflects a stoic, and rational, state of mind even though she's probably very distraught.

### BE MINDFUL OF YOUR ACTIONS

Again, Portia is mindful of the fact that she's basically ambushed Brutus just before he's about to do something regretful. She doesn't know exactly what he's involved in, but she does have a feeling that it's something horrible.

She's completely mindful of her actions of ambushing Brutus, kneeling at his feet to beg, using every one of her tools in her arsenal to convince him to succumb to her will, even stabbing herself. At every phase, she remains completely calm, and rational in her thoughts and actions.

Rational thinking is the ability to consider all of the relevant variables in any given situation. Reacting rationally implies that your actions are a direct result of rational thought, even if some actions seem unreasonable.

Portia's display of feminine wiles in this scene depicts the Stoic philosophy of her day, and although it's a play, it's a perfect example of all of the components of rational behavior during challenging situations.

Obviously, stabbing yourself is never reasonable. Remember, this is an artistic expression from Shakespeare, so certain components were included with the express purpose of highlighting the mistakes Brutus made. However, the principal stands. Rational behavior is best deployed in highly stressful situations, even if others like Brutus, don't behave rationally themselves.

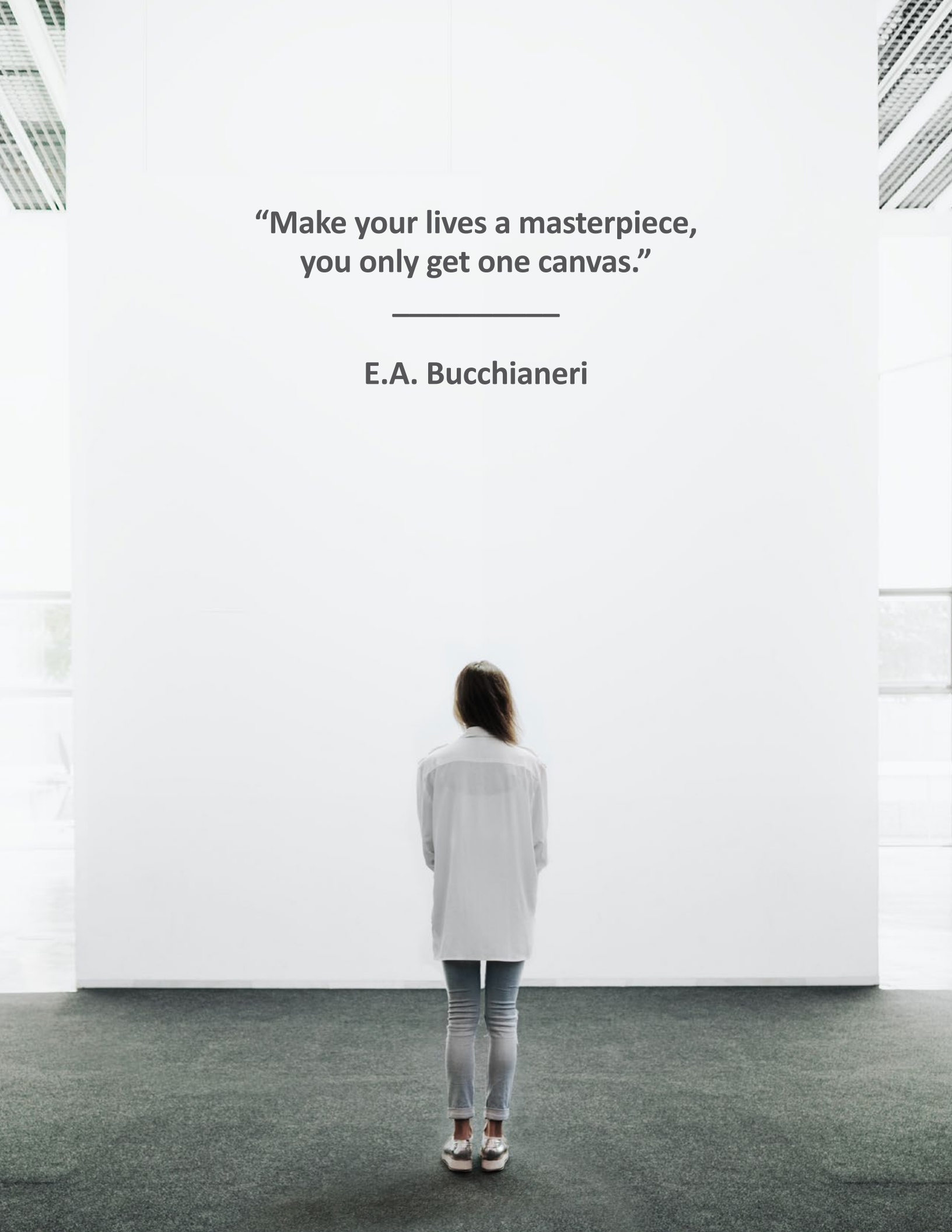


### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Judi Moreo is the author of *You Are More Than Enough: Every Woman's Guide to Purpose, Passion, and Power*, and it's companion, *Achievement Journal*. She is an award-winning businesswoman and motivational speaker. Her superb talent for customizing programs to meet organizational needs has gained her a prestigious following around the world. Her passion for living an extraordinary life is mirrored in her zeal for helping others realize their potential and achieve their goals. With her dynamic personality and style, she is an unforgettable speaker and inspiring motivator.

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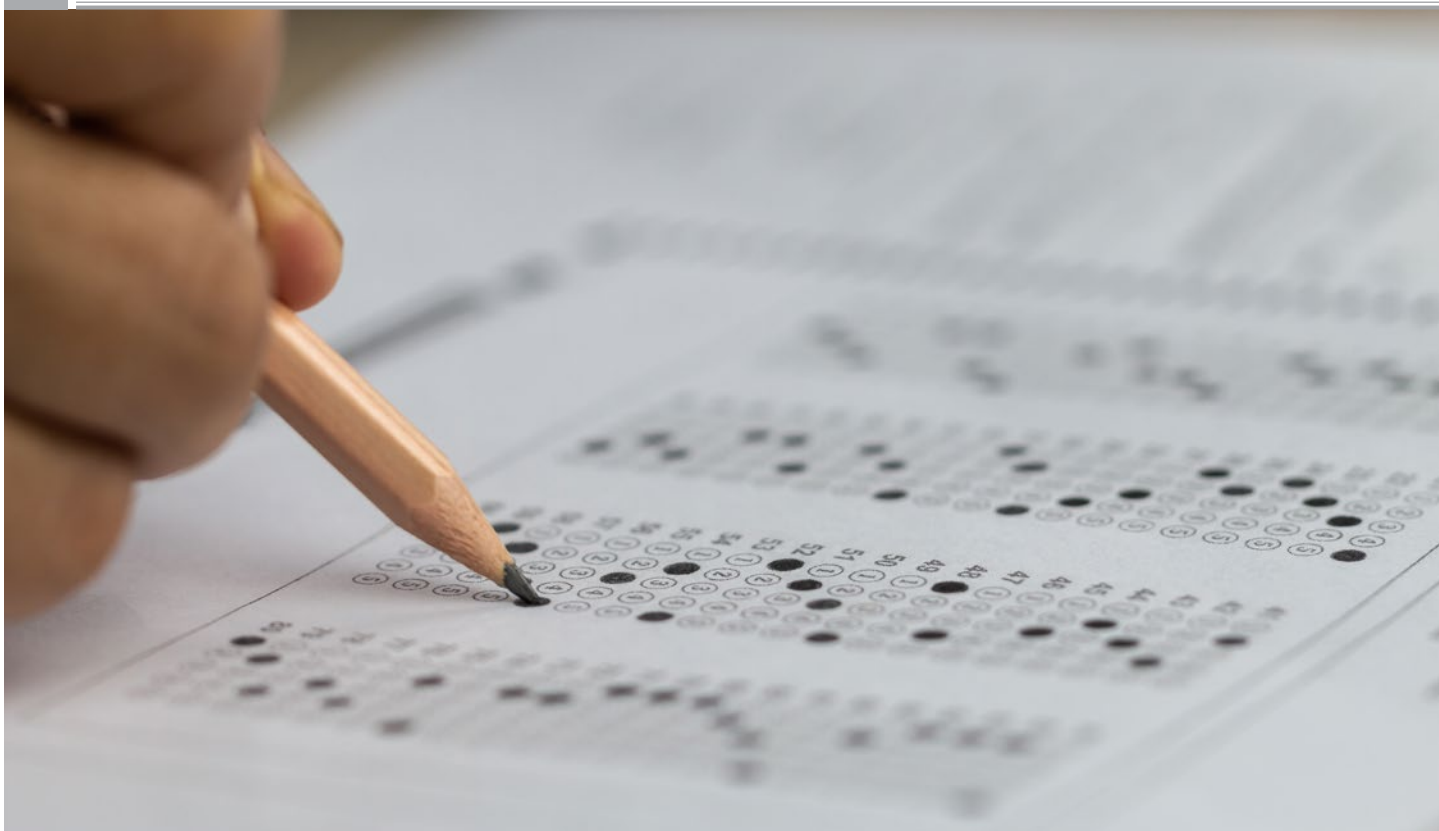


A person with long brown hair, wearing a light grey blazer, blue jeans, and silver sneakers, stands with their back to the camera in a large, bright white room. They are looking at a large, blank white canvas that fills most of the wall. The floor is a dark green carpet. The room has large windows on the sides, showing a view of a city with buildings and a bridge. The lighting is bright and even.

**“Make your lives a masterpiece,  
you only get one canvas.”**

---

**E.A. Bucchianeri**



# LIFE'S SIMPLE RULES

BY VITAL GERMAINE



Once upon a time a boy met a young woman. That chance encounter changed everything in his life. Her name was Miss Kyle. Joel met Miss Kyle when he was seven. History Teacher is the title the school gave her. Joel learned so much more than history. Miss Kyle shared with him the ultimate secret or wisdom regarding dreams, hope, and living the richest life one could possibly imagine.

One day at the end of a test that Joel had trouble completing, Miss Kyle crouched down, smiled and gave him

what appeared to be an old tattered, pale, yellow diary or journal.

"You have so much promise and potential Joel, but you're distracted by focusing on all the wrong things and getting too caught up with them."

The young boy was even more baffled. How much more complicated and tough can life be and I'm only seven, he thought to himself.

"I once sat in your shoes," she said. "And not only as a seven-year-old sitting in a boring and challenging history class." He cracked a hint of a smug smile.

She continued. "Throughout my life I dreamed of who and what I wanted to be, working so hard to become that. The paths adults established for me seemed strange. I felt bad when I failed a test, just like you right now. I hurt when I didn't understand something. I cried when I didn't fit in. I felt shame and anger when others were succeeding and living a better life than me while I felt I was going backwards."

Joel wondered what this all had to do with The Great Plague in Europe and Amerigo Vespucci... the test. He couldn't remember when and where Amerigo was born... crap; I'm going to



fail. He tapped his pencil on his paper more frantically.

His teacher tapped him on the shoulder. "This test will not define your life." She then invited him to read and keep the shabby journal.

He opened the weathered diary that night. To his amazement, the words made total sense except one word that he had to look up on his device. When he turned the last page and read the last word, he smiled. He sighed. He felt so full and complete. He couldn't believe how simple and incredible life would be from here on out.

"Good morning, Miss Kyle!" Class began.

The school day ended. Joel walked up to his teacher's desk. With a shy, yet confident demeanor, he thanked her.

"Well, what did you think?"

"I loved it." He handed her back the journal. "It's kinda like magic dust and potions. Harry Potter's got nothing on you, Miss Kyle."

She told him he could keep it... but on one condition. That he would one day share it with people he would meet who deserved and needed to be set free to live the richest life they possibly could.

"How will I know who those people are?" He asked.

"You'll know. It's called intuition."

Joel didn't know what that word meant.

Before leaving class that day, he asked, "Who wrote the diary?" Miss Kyle said that she didn't know. She had found it in an old shoebox in her grandfathers'

attic after he died. There was a small envelope with a short note and lots of dust in the shoebox. Emma Kyle was on the note in beautiful elegant cursive. Joel didn't know her first name was Emma.

"My grandpa's grandpa got it from a total stranger during his travels across endless continents in the merchant navy. Story has it that the book is over seven hundred years old."

*Now that's the kinda history I like!  
#awesome*

Twenty years later, Joel was going through a tough time in life. He'd forgotten the lessons learned from his history teacher. Well, what do you know? Out of nowhere he found the diary and read it again.

Page one read in very faded writing. Welcome to your masterpiece of a life.

He turned the page. There are three simple life rules.

The first rule was to be authentic. The simplest way to live is to be YOU without concern for the thoughts of others. Authenticity was the word he had to look up as a seven year old. Authenticity will always keep you on the right path. It means you are aligned with the universe and following YOUR north star.

The next page read...

Your Curiosity will open doors and create paths to more wisdom than you can possibly imagine. Curiosity is more valuable than formal education.... Standard education only provides a base from which to fly. Beware because education can imprison you.

Joel couldn't wait to read the next page.

Breathe deeply whenever facing doubt, challenge, fear, anger or other such emotions. All will be well when you experience those emotions and allow them to pass through you with the help of Enhanced Breathing. He had long forgotten to implement the power of Enhanced Breathing. Some call it intentional breathing.

Joel closed his eyes and took three deep enhanced breaths. He smiled and said thank you, Miss Kyle.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Vital Germaine is a top-selling author and Las Vegas' most engaging keynote speaker. He is the author of *Flying Without a Net* and *Flying Without a Net 2.0*. For more: [VitalGermaine.com](http://VitalGermaine.com)



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# MASTERPIECE REBORN

BY HENRY NOEL

**F**or we humans, Masterpieces are the pinnacle in represented artistry. The work of an artist, or sculptor, or any creative profession, is performed not for the end-result, but for the experience of achieving it. But, in all actuality, the masterpiece of an artisan comes to fruition through loss. The artist simply excavated the end-result from the medium within which they work. It is the observer's perceptions quantifying the result as a masterpiece. With that said, let us look at what constitutes a masterpiece from a different point of view, a change in our perception.

When we look at a sculptor's medium, we see a block of granite, marble, glass, or clay, and we superimpose the image we want to see onto the medium. But a sculptor looks at their medium as the imprisonment of their image. The image

is within the medium, and the sculptor releases it by losing the superfluous material preventing the image from being born.

We see a white canvas and cast our vision [our result] upon it. An artist applies paints to lose the whiteness of the canvass, thus releasing the image.

In an excerpt of a poem by my dear friend and author, Susan L Hart, entitled, "Loss Unveils the Masterpiece," Susan states it succinctly when she says:

"Michelangelo knew ...  
A most powerful  
tool of the Master Sculptor,  
Loss is.

It was the taking  
away that unveiled  
breathtaking David  
to the world.

'I saw the angel  
in the stone and  
set him free.'  
Inside every raw  
slab of marble  
awaits a Masterpiece  
to be revealed."

It is no different with us. We see ourselves as the image our learnings say we are. Our beliefs and emotions were all created for us by those who taught us, and we believe this is who we are. Now, let's look at us through the eyes of the artist who created us.

We can say we are the result of design: whether by the design of a supreme being, nature, otherworldly beings, or the blending of primordial chemicals? Whichever belief system we wish to use to justify our existence, the result is us. Our birth was one in four hundred trillion possibilities.

Regardless of how we got here, the fact that we are here constitutes us as a Miracle. A Masterpiece if you will.

Our birth created the Masterpiece and we took that Masterpiece and buried it beneath the rubble of our learning. We created this false us we have come to know and love. Our learnings taught us to fear, and our fears have led to anger and hatred. This anger and hatred are

fueled into discrimination and prejudice, which we perpetuate, resulting in the loss of the Masterpiece. Our learnings and beliefs surround us, and we see this image as us. It isn't until we begin questioning our learnings that we allow the Masterpiece to be re-born. Once we acknowledge we don't know who we are, we can begin to carve away the excess materials and expose the artist's original rendition — The Masterpiece.

The Masterpiece still exists. It's there under all the learnings that taught us to fear. As we chip away these learnings and begin to live life without the fears, anger, hatred, and discrimination, then, and only then, will we see ourselves as the true Masterpieces we are. Until we are willing to acknowledge we are the product of our learnings, we will always be the David waiting to be released.

*Find Susan L Hart's complete poem "Loss Unveils the Masterpiece" online at: [susanlhart.com](http://susanlhart.com) or [bit.ly/2FN7lcl](http://bit.ly/2FN7lcl)*



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Author, radio personality, inspirational speaker, spiritual teacher and healer, Henry's philosophies about who we are and our purpose here are challenging, and in-the-face of traditional philosophies. "If you seek fulfillment in your life, listen to your inner voice. Fulfillment isn't the stuff you have, it's the untapped inner wisdom we were given at conception. The answers are buried within and must be uncovered. Our answers are not out there."

Contact Henry: [Henry@henrynoel.com](mailto:Henry@henrynoel.com)  
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"Judi has the ability to enable you to do things that you would never consider doing. She helps you to open your eyes, and live your passion. She is extremely approachable, and always available to her coaching clients."

- Deborah Clark

"Judi Moreo is a true professional and I would recommend her coaching services to anyone who is looking to build their business. Judi understands business, coaching, and the steps it takes to help people obtain their professional goals."

- Mack Jackson Jr.

# ON THE COVER

## JIM ROOT

MARKETING COACH - BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT EXPERT



Jim Root has a unique perspective combining real-world experience with cutting edge concepts to find success for business owners.

As a lifelong entrepreneur, his strategies are tested and proven to get results.

In over 20 years as a marketing coach and business development expert, he has worked with clients in practically every industry, including manufacturing, retail, financial services, real estate, and direct sales.

His passion is to inspire, train, and assist businesses in their quest for success. He has discovered the key principles that can transform a business, and get it to the next level.

As Founder and President of “NX Step Academy”, a business training organization, he brings his action-oriented training programs to businesses who need direction and support. Jim is also the author of the upcoming book, “Million Dollar GPS - How to Navigate Difficult Decisions and Create an Action Plan for Success”.

**I know you put in an incredible amount of time and effort on behalf of our local National Speakers Association chapter without any thought of winning an award. What did you think when you**





**were announced the winner of the Judi Moreo Achievement Award?**

I don't think I have done very much, I have only tried to give support to the leadership and take some of the load from them. When my name was announced, I went through several emotional states in about 3 seconds - confused, surprised, humbled, then honored to have my efforts recognized. The feeling of community in this group makes me want to do more for the Chapter and everyone involved.

**What is your area of expertise?**

I am a business development specialist, I have developed several training programs for Entrepreneurs so they can build their businesses into something that gives them EVERYTHING they want.

**Is that what you speak about?**

Oftentimes I am asked to conduct training based on my programs, but mainly I speak about how to get moving and take the next step. I hope to give my audience the energy and confidence to ACT without Fear.

**So far, what has been your favorite speaking engagement?**

That is a hard question to answer - I volunteer to speak to young people through Junior Achievement and PAYBAC (Professionals and Youth Building a Commitment) and it is very rewarding, but I would have to say speaking at Chambers of Commerce have been my favorite - several people in the audience have reported back to me about the successes they achieved from my training, I LOVE hearing those stories.

**When and how did you get into the speaking business?**

I have been training and speaking as part of my other business ventures for many years, but I never considered making it my main business until I met Marvelous Mark Kamp at an event here in Vegas a couple years ago. He introduced me to the NSA chapter and I joined... now I am developing my speaking business to support my other activities.

**What made you give that up and go into professional speaking?**

I am still involved in entrepreneurial activities and working with individual coaching clients, but I love sharing my message and having an impact on a larger group of people.

**What's the best advice you have ever been given?**

My father (Arthur) was an entrepreneur and he gave me lots of business advice





but I am starting to see his advice also applies in life. My favorite “Arthur-ism” was “When you pick up a stick... you get BOTH ends”. It was years before I realized what he meant - Every action we take has consequences, and we should be aware of them before we act.

### **What inspires you?**

Watching someone overcome adversity. Adversity is a VERY personal thing, and it can be a heavy load - no matter how small it may seem to others. When I see

someone conquer the challenge facing them, it gives me the chills. The only thing better for me is when I get to be part of the experience WITH them.

### **Who inspires you?**

The greatest inspiration I get comes from the hidden people - members of our society that are often overlooked. A child giving an unsolicited hug to another child in pain. A parent working 2 jobs to support the dreams of their child. A customer service rep showing

patience and compassion with a difficult customer. An unselfish act from one stranger to another. These people are the TRUE inspiration for me and I want to live my life following their examples.

### **What is the biggest challenge you’ve ever faced? What allowed you to overcome it?**

This is a hard question, but MY biggest challenge is a mental one. I get caught up in my own thoughts and it can cause me to get stuck which can lead to depression. To overcome it, I surround myself with people who keep me focused on moving forward. Although I STILL struggle with it.

### **Where do you see yourself over the next decade?**

I take life 1 day at a time, so looking out 10 years is difficult... I hope to create a solid network of business owners with a desire to make positive change.

### **Have you written a book?**

I am working on one now, I have finished the first draft and it should be completed by the end of 2019. The process has taken longer than I expected, but I am excited to be close to the finish. It is called “Million Dollar GPS - How to Create an Action Plan for Success”.

### **What else should people know about you?**

As a workaholic, people might think I am always working - but I love to get out, connect with people, and enjoy life. If I get invited to anything, I will try my hardest to go.



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**"A friend may well be reckoned  
the masterpiece of nature."**

---

**Ralph Waldo Emerson**





# REDEFINE YOUR MASTERPIECE LIFE

BY HOLLY DUCKWORTH



On Monday, April 15, 2019 when the world woke up to the news of a catastrophic fire ravaging the Notre Dame cathedral in Paris, France, attention quickly moved to the masterpieces found inside. Were renown items such as the stain glass windows, the crown of thorns, alters, crosses and more lost forever? Our definition, our collective agreement, if you will, is that a masterpiece is something historic in nature, that has been created

with such skill and artistry it can never be duplicated. By our current dictionary definition masterpieces are not created overnight. They are in fact works of heart built, painted and conceptualized over time.

We often think definitions of words never change, take for example the word Amazon. It's a place. Or is it? Over time that word has been defined collectively as something different. The definition has expanded. Now most people first think of Amazon as the words largest

website connecting buyers and sellers. Definitions of words do change.

That got me thinking, what if like the fiery ashes of Notre Dame, we considered as a collective to redefine the dictionary definition of what a masterpiece is. What if a masterpiece did not have to be historical? What if a masterpiece could be in the now? Mindful, if you will. What if instead of masterpieces only being created by a person of renown skill anyone could create a masterpiece? What if our lives in fact were



masterpieces, both of experience and physical items?

I'd like to propose we write and live a new definition of masterpiece. A masterpiece is both an experience and/or item created everyday with the highest and best skill and artistry. An item or experience that anyone can create to make our world a better place. A masterpiece is no longer the exception but, in fact the new rule. A masterpiece: current work of heart created by each and every one of us. This change in the dictionary will create a world full of masterpieces. Letting go of the need for time and competition humans would be inspired to make more masterpieces. We

would celebrate the skill and artistry in every person, the sameness, the diversity all of the all that makes us human. It makes me sad to know it often takes a tragedy on the scope of Notre Dame burning down to remind us we are connected. Let's connect our good.

Today, redefine your life as a masterpiece. Choose to work on one piece each day. This could be an item or an experience from relationships to health, finances. Create something. We live in a throw away world where the finer things in life are not as prized as they once were. That is why on emotionally heart connecting days like April 15 we remember and revere our masterpieces. Each

day you have the ability to choose and create your masterpiece. You may not think of yourself as a painter, sculpture or builder but you are. Redefine your masterpiece one piece at a time. All we have is now.

Create the masterpiece in your heart and your life will out picture the masterpiece of your hearts grandest desire.



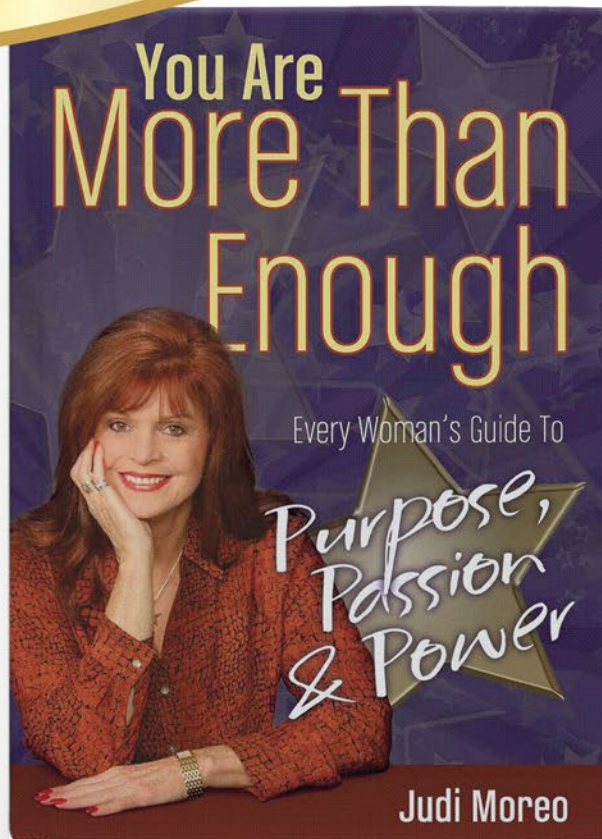
## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Holly Duckworth, LSP, CAE, CMP is known as the C-Suite Network Advisor on Mindfulness in the workplace, unleashes human potential through mindfulness techniques. She helps stressed-out leaders find and sustain greater focus, clarity, and inner peace, resulting in a more grounded and powerful presence and enhanced profits. She focuses on the Inner Game as a keynote speaker, facilitator, and coach as an applied mindful leadership advisor. She is a published and award-winning author and a contributor to the New York Times, Producer/Host of the Everyday Mindfulness show. She lives in Denver, Colorado. Learn more at [www.hollyduckworth.com](http://www.hollyduckworth.com)





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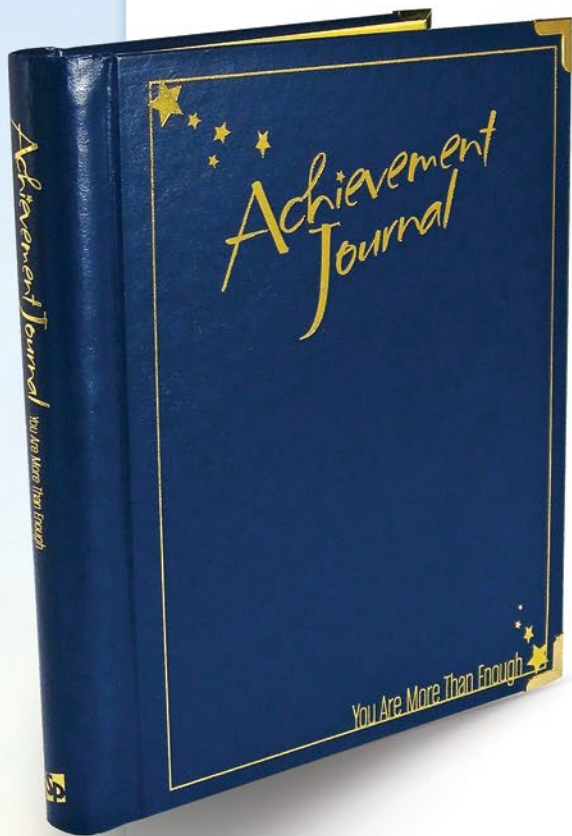
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## THE BEST OF EVERYTHING

BY JOAN S. PECK

**I**f you're like me, you want the best of everything. But when it comes down to it, what does that mean? For some, it might be owning the most expensive item; for others, it could be having the most coveted things in their lives according to society. But what about those who are looking for love or success? Those can't

be measured by a single yardstick because what one considers to be the best love or the greatest success doesn't have to be in alignment with what someone else thinks. It all depends on the individual's perspective, doesn't it? So, when I was asked what I personally thought was the greatest masterpiece that I'd seen so far in life, I had to give it thought.

To me, the word masterpiece immediately brings art to mind. I love art. Most any art brings out in me an emotional reaction to its beauty. Certainly, that was what happened each time I visited various museums and places around the world, and saw exquisite paintings, sculptures, glass works, different architecture, and so much more. It would be difficult for me to pick one piece of art



as the ultimate masterpiece because each creation has something unique and beautiful to share, no matter the medium.

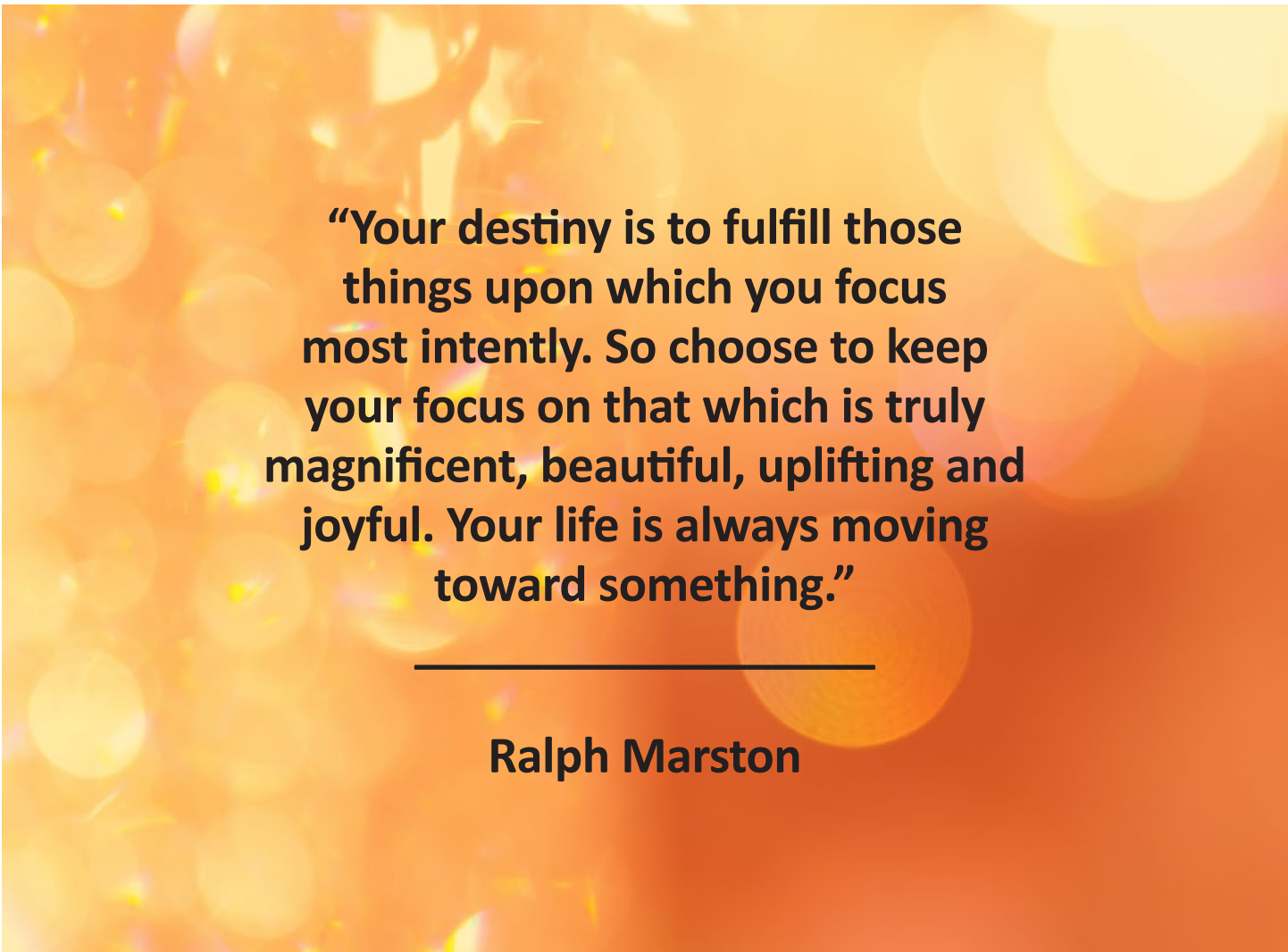
I closed my eyes and let my mind wander. I thought about a recent visit to a friend's house to view her new baby. I know I'm not alone in my reaction when I look at a newborn baby; I think as humans most of us tend to react the same. We marvel at all the baby's intricacies and the perfection of each finger and toe; each tiny eyebrow and eyelash, and each sound they make. We are awed because the baby represents something beyond ourselves, and we are humbled.

And that is when I knew what my greatest masterpiece is—the spiritual energy that ties all of us together. The energy of God, Buddha, or whatever name you give it. It's that inner knowing energy that helps to guide us to live the best way possible and comes with us into each new life we experience.

It's that same energy that delights us with a sunny day, or blows a warm breeze around us and ruffles our hair, or lifts our heart when listening to the sweet song of a bird, or brings us joy when seeing a flower peeking up from the earth, or makes us laugh when we watch our pets at play, or comforts

us at a time of loss of a loved one, or makes us hold our breath when watching someone perform a feat, or makes us proud when we see a positive act of human kindness.

It is that energy that makes life worth living. It reminds us that difficult times pass, and no matter what is going on in our lives, we are never alone. We are part of something that is bigger than ourselves and worth holding onto. It is that energy that we need to live the best life possible and is within our reach anytime we need to connect to it, and that to me is the best of everything—the masterpiece.



**“Your destiny is to fulfill those things upon which you focus most intently. So choose to keep your focus on that which is truly magnificent, beautiful, uplifting and joyful. Your life is always moving toward something.”**

---

**Ralph Marston**

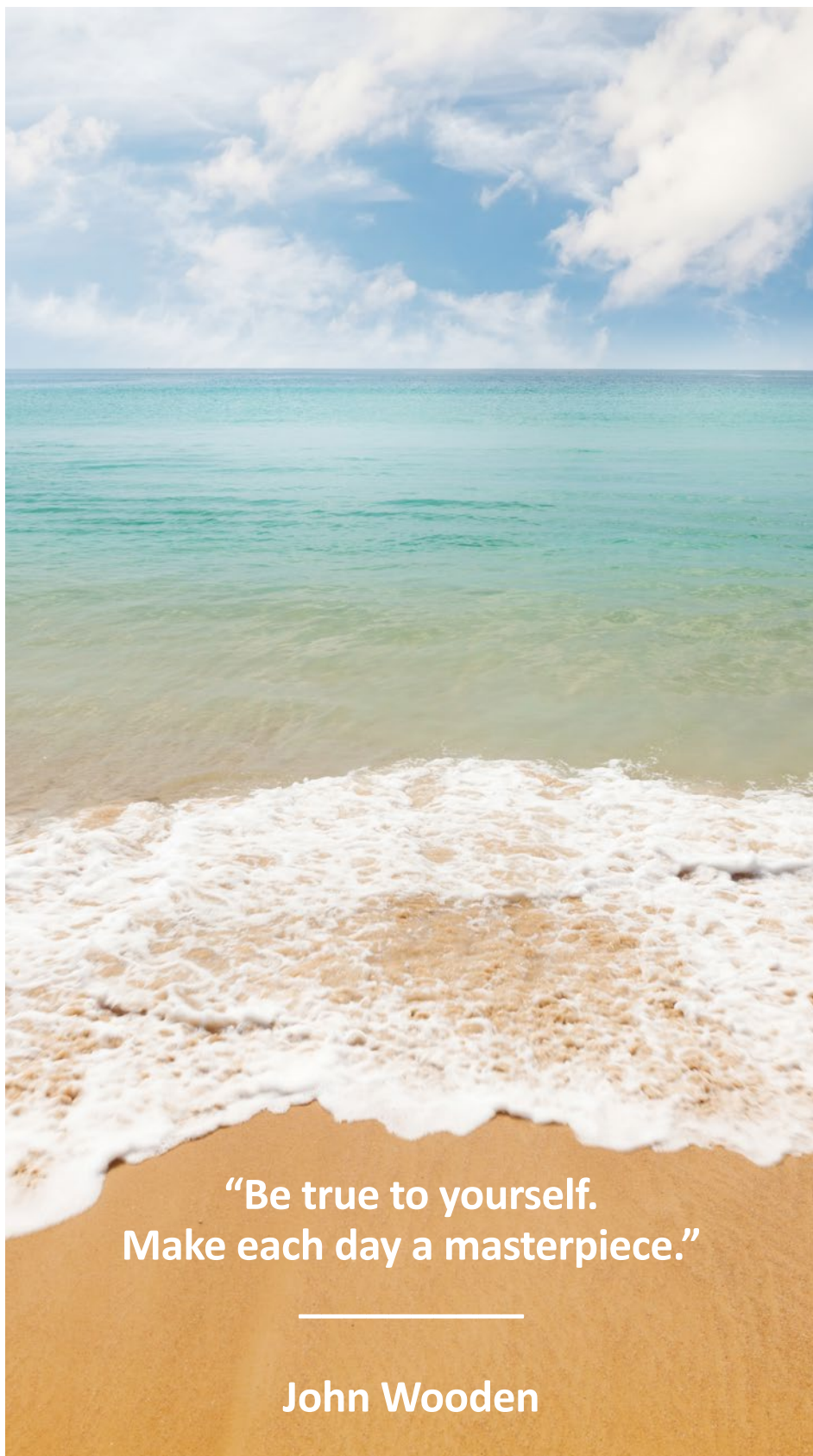


### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joan S. Peck is an editor and author of short stories, spiritual books and a contributing author in two of the books in the *Life Choices* book series. She also is a contributing writer for *Chic Compass* magazine.

Her latest authoring is the Death Card Mystery Series. "To me, the fun of reading mystery books is to become so intrigued with the story it becomes impossible to put the book down. The fun of writing them is to put ourselves in that same situation."

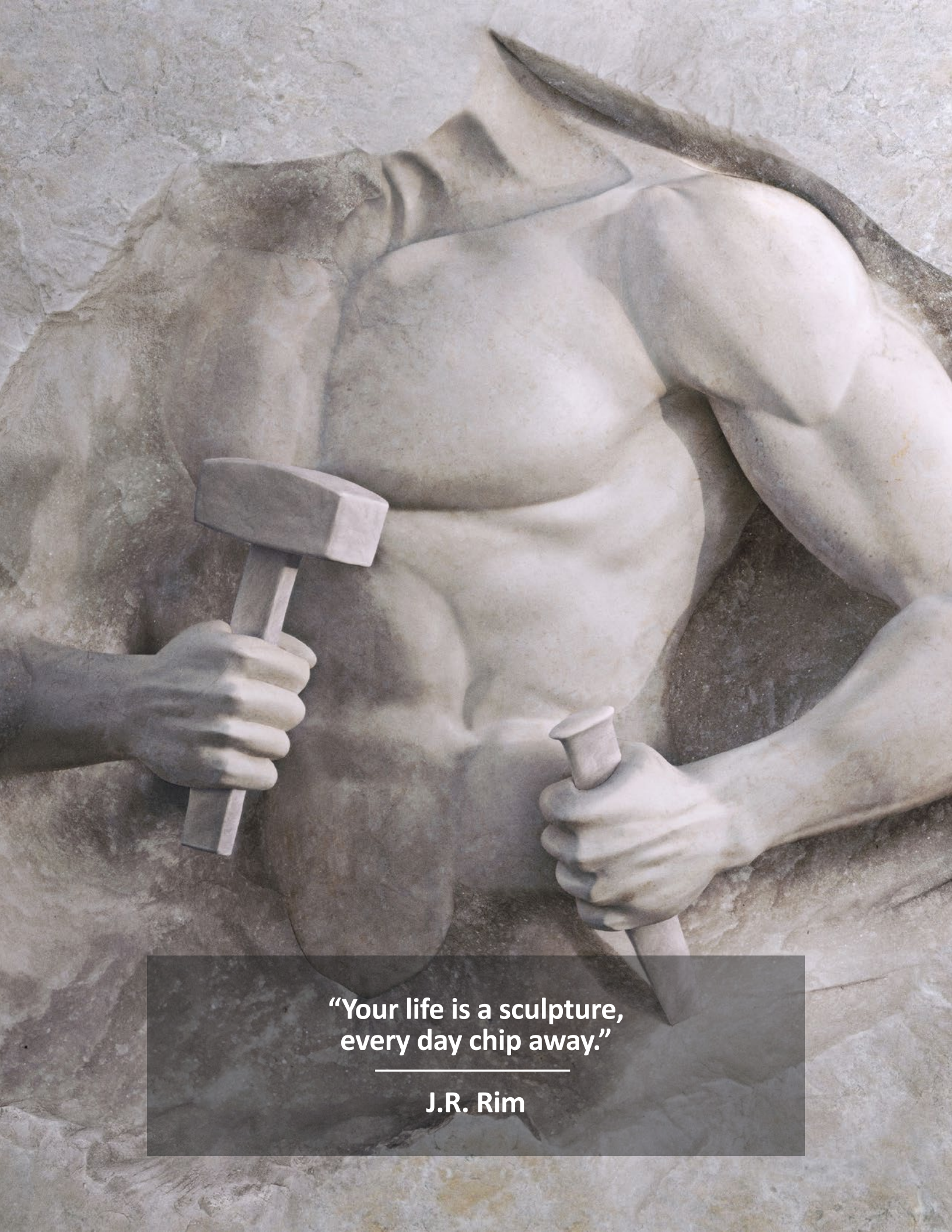
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**"Be true to yourself.  
Make each day a masterpiece."**

**John Wooden**





**“Your life is a sculpture,  
every day chip away.”**

---

**J.R. Rim**





# THE MASTERPIECE IS YOU

BY PAUL LEVIN

**A**re you caught up in the illusion, that you are a Human Being occasionally having a Spiritual experience? That belief is an illusion. The actual truth, is...

## ***You are a Spirit Being, Having a Human Experience***

Maybe you've heard this statement before. I certainly hope you have. It's true, you know. Now, let me ask you, how many beings are mentioned in that statement? Only 1. And it's a Spirit.

Wait, what about your body? What about your mind? How about the world around you? All those things are real. Aren't they?

No, they are not.

They are projections, like a scene playing out on the big screen in front of you at the theater; except, you're in the movie. When you go to the movies, do you often feel the characters are too fat, too short, too dumb? No, they're characters in a movie. They are exactly the way they are supposed to be.

In YOUR movie, do you see you as too anything, or not enough something? Do you see YOU, as anything other than a Masterpiece?

There once was a sculptor who lived in small village. He was a poor fellow with few friends, and no family. He made his living chiselling out the gods of his day, from granite, onyx, and jade. He often labored on a piece for weeks, only making enough money to feed himself, for half that time. Yet, it was his passion, his love, his joy. In his heart, he was a sculptor.

It came about one day, while working on an exceptionally beautiful and expensive piece, that he asked himself the question "Why am I sculpting this shape, this



god?" He thought for a moment, and quickly realized, he had no answer. He set his tools down and began to think.

"Why am I here", he thought? Yes, I have skills and talents. But, how am I using them? I want to create something magnificent, something amazing. What could I sculpt that would be completely perfect? Something that when the world saw it, they would be awestruck? As he sat on the hard-wooden floor of his one room home, surrounded by the products of his work, he fell asleep. As he dreamt, he saw people. First, it was neighbors and friends. He saw them clearly, vividly, for who they really are, beyond their fears and doubts. What could this mean, he pondered, while in the dream.

The scene changed to the village hall. Everyone was there. Somehow, he could see everyone in the room, everyone's eyes. And he was overwhelmed with their beauty. Around each person was a glow, a shining light. Their many individual colors melded together forming a sea of white light, which hovered over them.

As quickly as the village hall had appeared, it faded away to a new vision. Our sculptor saw a sea of people, hundreds, maybe thousands. More than he could count. There was something in the air. It made the hair on his arms stand on edge. It was something he did not understand. It was something powerful. As he viewed the ocean of eyes, he knew he was connected. They were all, including him, one being.

When he awoke the next morning, he ran to purchase a new piece of marble. It required every bit of money he had. Giving no thought to the cost, he knew what he must create.

He began to work. Day one, day two, three... ten... twenty...

The neighbors worried. The friends came calling. Potential clients had work for him.

He sent them away. He was busy. ... thirty ... forty days ...

"What are you doing?" they asked. "How are you surviving?"

He didn't hear them. He was focused. He could see the result. It was in the stone. It had been there all along, from before he purchased it. He knew that it would be magnificent. He worked on. ... sixty ... eighty ....

On the ninetieth day, at first light, he stood at the center of his village, and announced, "It's Ready." He would show his Masterpiece that evening. He covered the piece with a black cloth, and it was carefully moved to the village hall. That evening, he walked up on the stage and proudly revealed his work. The room fell silent, as people took in the sight. It was magnificent. They were awestruck!

People from near by villages started coming to see this magnificent masterpiece. Soon everyone was talking about him and his work. An offer was made to move this amazing item to the city for a huge showing. Our sculptor would be famous.

On that magical day, he looked out at the people attending the showing. He saw a sea of people, an ocean of eyes. As he pulled away the cloth covering his magnificent work, a silence came over the crowd as they gazed in wonder.

In the crowd was a small child. Upon

seeing the magnificent sculpture, yelled out, "What is it?" Hearing the child's question, our sculptor asked that the child be brought forward. When the child was in front of him on the stage, he knelt on one knee. Looking the child straight in the eye, he said, "What is your question?" The child replied, "What is it?" He paused a moment, smiled and said

"My dear child, this magnificent masterpiece, is YOU."



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul Levin is a speaker, emotional breakthrough mentor, and author of "I Deserve A Perfect Life." Paul is a Certified Hypnotherapist, and Certified NLP Practitioner specializing in Belief Systems. Creator of the Super-Consciousness Reality Shifting program, Paul shows young-adult women how to change a life of struggle into a life of happiness, inner peace and confidence in every decision they make. You may contact Paul at: paul@IDeserveAPerfectLife.com or call: 813-841-5583



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# CREATING A BUSINESS MASTERPIECE THROUGH PUBLICITY

BY CHRISTINA DAVES

**D**id you know you can elevate your product, service, or brand through the power of free publicity? Imagine what it would do for your business if hundreds of thousands, even millions of people found out about you. This is easily done by offering the media a good story idea. Using the following Get PR Famous Formula, you will stand out with the media and become an asset to them. Do your homework and find out what your customers are reading and watching and then implement the formula to pitch those specific outlets.

Being newsworthy is as simple as outside of the box thinking. Here are some tips to create newsworthy story ideas:

## **Step 1 – Be Newsworthy**

1) Take a national trend and bring it local. Follow the leaders in your industry and when they release data or a study, talk about what that means for your local market.

2) Niche what you do and pitch around that. Think of a target. The outer ring is your main industry. The middle ring is something you do a little differently than the broad outer ring. The red dot in the middle is the one thing you do

differently than everyone else. Create a newsworthy story idea around what's trending in your niche?

3) Sign up for Help a Reporter Out/ HARO, [www.HelpaReporter.com](http://www.HelpaReporter.com). This is a free media query service where media outlets are looking for sources and quotes for national magazine articles, television shows, newspapers, and blogs.

\*I've appeared in over 1000 media outlets, many from HARO. Get my free guide for successfully responding to HARO at, [www.FreeGiftFromChristina.com](http://www.FreeGiftFromChristina.com).

## Step 2 – Create Great Hooks

The hook is your subject line. It's how you get the journalist to read your newsworthy email pitch. A hook is as simple as what you see on a magazine cover. People are paid a lot of money to get you to make a \$5.00 impulse purchase in the grocery store check-out line based on the "hooks" you see on the magazine cover. My favorite is AARP Magazine. Just Google, "AARP magazine covers" and see what's there. Do the same for any publication you know your ideal customer reads and see what the magazine is using for hooks. Then, just modify the hook and plug and play your newsworthy story idea into it and you're one step closer to success!

## Step 3 – Find the Right Journalist

This step is vital because you don't want to send your business story to the food editor. People are always amazed at how frequently I get on television and in magazines and newspapers. It's all

about finding the right person to pitch. I'm always asked how I do it. Here is my top-secret resource for finding journalists.... It's Google. Google is a question search engine, "Who writes about [industry] for [name of publication]." Locally, you'll usually get their name, email, and phone number all in one search. Nationally can sometimes take a page or two of digging but they will be there. Another great resource I use is Rocket Reach, [www.RocketReach.co](http://www.RocketReach.co). Their database is tied to LinkedIn so if your journalist is on LinkedIn, you can get their email address. Give Rocket Reach a try if you can't find them on Google.

By putting these three steps in place when pitching the media, you will be light years ahead of your competition and you will stand out to journalists. The more you pitch, the more you are seen as a valuable resource and it won't be long before the media is reaching out to you for quotes about the real estate market.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR


Christina Daves is a do-it-yourself Publicity Strategist. She is the best-selling author of, *PR for Anyone™ - 100+ Affordable Ways to Easily Create Buzz for Your Business*, that shares her journey of getting exposure for a product she invented.

Christina taught herself everything she could about generating her own publicity. She has appeared in over 1,000 local and national media outlets including: *The Steve Harvey Show*, *Dr. Oz*, *The TODAY Show*, local affiliates of NBC, ABC, CBS, and FOX, magazines such as, *Forbes*, *Success* and *Entrepreneur*, Sirius XM Radio, *The Washington Post*, and many more. She also has a regular segment on Good Morning Washington.

Last year alone, Christina, together with her clients, reached over 873 million views and generated over 8 figures in sales from free publicity.







**“Work always as if you were a master,  
expect from yourself a masterpiece.”**

---

**Robert Henri**









## CREATING A MASTERPIECE MARRIAGE

BY BARBARA GROSSMAN



Marriage is very different today than it was a hundred years ago. The roles of husband and wife are more unclear, and our society seems to have no set rules for them. Even so, most people have great expectations for romantic satisfaction within marriage, as well as high hopes for healing and personal development. Each partner yearns, consciously or unconsciously, for the other to heal their early childhood wounds, and to love, accept, and cherish them.

Marriage is the melding of two separate individuals' lives into one. Creating a masterpiece marriage is a rocky road. In the beginning, the heat of romantic passion temporarily blinds you to the difficulties of this feat of alchemy. However, over time, the passion cools and over the years, each of you inevitably change. You find a growing need for self-expressing your individuality. You are not so accommodating. Commonly, you are left with two people who are locked in chronic power struggle because they don't know how to get the other person to satisfy their new expect-

tations. Resolving the power struggle is crucial to creating a satisfying and mature marriage and ensuring the foundation for a happy family life.

Creating a masterpiece marriage journey is a hero's and heroine's journey with many adventures including: the experience of facing your fears, finding courage, discovering mentors, learning new skills, and dying to your old sense of self which feels something like depression before it feels like a new and more vital life. It will take time to go on this adventure, but it is a worthy human endeavor. It promises to transform your experience of love into something much more intense than you could ever imagine.

In our book *The Marriage Map* and in our classes, Michael and I openly share

the experiences of our marriage—the difficult episodes and life transitions that are inevitable in most relationships. Understanding our process for encountering and resolving those experiences in the context of adult development will allow you to reflect on your own life and inspire you to use the challenges in your marriage for improvement and growth in your romantic relationship.

In every marriage, there are issues that create the same fight over and over again. The fight may take different forms and appear in different situations, but it remains the same conflict at the core. Think about your own marriage and your repeated patterns of unhappiness. A deep commitment to resolve those underlying issues in marriage requires each husband and wife to undertake a healing journey as an individual, and a combined healing journey as partners.

The process of creating a masterpiece marriage required us to learn new skills and acquire new abilities, all of which

seemed overwhelming at first. Listening to each other was something we had to learn to do—even if it was painful. And these skills include listening without interrupting, making requests nicely, understanding your partner's childhood wounds, sharing "ouches" before they become upsets.

The hero's journey is somewhat different for a man and a woman. After a man learns competence, he needs to learn humility. After a woman learns connection, she needs to find her voice. The path of the hero and heroine is not supposed to be a smooth ride. There are no shortcuts. Seeing the world, yourself, and your partner from a bigger perspective is always an intense process of stretching and letting go.

The idea that something should not be happening to us on this journey or that we don't deserve this emotional pain comes from that part of us that strives to preserve our ego's limited perspective. This attitude blocks progress on

the healing journey. From our point of view as a selfish, self-centered ego-centric being, we are constantly being shortchanged, cheated, mistreated, and not valued as highly as we expect. From a bigger perspective, we need to be worked on, cracked, molded, and transformed into a wise and loving being.

The emotional and cognitive development that is stimulated by the conflicts of two personalities in partnership and the simultaneous desire for love and family is both intense and rewarding. It is the catalyst for healing and deepening love. Our purpose is to support your journey so that you fulfill the potential of your marriage.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Barbara Grossman is a PhD marriage counselor with over 30 years of experience with 60,000+ client hours. Michael Grossman MD is an antiaging rejuvenation physician specializing in bioidentical hormone replacement and stem cell therapy. They have conducted marriage workshops for thousands of couples for over 25 years. They are the authors of *The Marriage Map: The Road to Transforming Your Marriage from Ordeal to Adventure*. Learn skills and perspectives in their online workshops at [www.themarriagemap.com](http://www.themarriagemap.com)







**“You are the most important project in your life. Spend time, work carefully, and act with positive intent as you work to create your best self. This life is your masterpiece. You are a masterpiece.”**

---

**Avina Celeste**



# THE MASTERPIECE

BY GP WALSH

**N**othing but nothing sums up a life's work better than that phrase "masterpiece". It is a designation, sometimes for a collection of work but, more often, for one particular piece that so transcends the level of even the highest attainment of the normal artist.

Leonardo Da Vinci created many masterpieces as did Michelangelo. But a

few of them stand above even the stunningly high level of their "normal". *David* and the *Mona Lisa* both possess a transcendent magic about them that just takes your breath away.

It is my deepest belief, one confirmed by years of interactions with extraordinary and quite ordinary human beings, that there lies in every individual the potential for a masterpiece. Perhaps not at the level of skill and artistry that was a

DaVinci or a Michelangelo or a Mozart or a Beethoven. But masterpiece is not really about skill attained. It is simply a question of does something transcend our ordinary and thus touch something timeless, something worthy of living after us.

If we look at it like this and ask, "How do we leave a legacy that will bless, enrich and inspire those who may never even meet us personally;" even if this ambition is never attained, will we not have brought about a qualitative shift in the level of our work and the quality of our lives? Would that not be a worthy aspiration for our lives? Isn't it possible that would guide us to higher and higher



levels of attainment... maybe even the level of a masterpiece?

You betcha!

You see, you can't actually create a masterpiece! You can't decide, "Hey, I think I'm going to make a masterpiece today." Much as we love to imagine doing so, and as much as we love to think we can, the only thing we can do is show up every day at the canvas with paint in our hands and earnestness in our hearts.

Obviously, if you don't show up or show up unprepared, no masterpiece is going to happen. But, if we do show up regularly, daily, moment by moment, day by day, year by year, we are standing in the only possible place for the masterpiece to materialize.

So, while we can't force a masterpiece to happen, we can certainly facilitate its

potential. To me, the masterpiece isn't the transcendent quality of the final product. It is the quality of the process.

Having been a musician for many years, I know it takes a long time to get to the place where your output is consistently good. You create a lot of bad, imitative and mediocre stuff along the way, punctuated by the occasional, "Oh my! Look, I did that!" Which is followed by a truckload more of output not worth celebrating. But, over time, the bad is replaced by increasingly consistent good until the normal is quite good.

And then lightning strikes. Something mysterious makes a quantum leap beyond the good and something wonderful appears, seemingly out of nowhere.

I wish I could say there is a neat, repeatable process to it. Our modern approach to progress is always this methodical,

process-oriented procedure that consistently guarantees results. Not on this planet.

The first instrument I learned was the drums. After years of playing, my drums sounded terrible. I couldn't make them sound the way they did for professionals. And I didn't have access to someone who could show me how. In fact, I didn't even know enough to ask.

But then one day, all of a sudden, my hands just started moving in the right way, turning the tuning key in a new way. When I finished they sounded fantastic. And from that moment on, they always did. To this day, I don't know how I did it. I don't know what was different. Something inside showed up for me. The masterpiece just happened.

What I do know is that every day I showed up the way a master would; curious, relentless, unyielding, resolute, unwilling to take no for an answer. I kept genuinely showing up.

This was even more obviously true when I started writing music.

In college, I fell in love with the piano and started playing it seriously. I had been playing for about a year, but I was not yet very skilled at it. Once again, I kept showing up, hours and hours a day.

One day, without any warning I started hearing music in my head. I was quite shocked but beside myself with wonder. The music I heard was way beyond my limited skills as a pianist and so it was a real struggle to keep up with it and write it all down. This was long before computers or personal recording devices.

That piece, by the way, got me dismissed from the theory class halfway through



with an A. The teacher told me I should just go write. And so, I did.

This masterpiece thing doesn't apply just to the arts. The same thing happened later in life when I was doing computer programming. I found myself in a circumstance where I needed to create a large-scale system that had never been done before. And, at that time, I was not the senior guy.

I remember very well facing this enormously complex thing that had to be built which no one had successfully done before. As I started working through it, I could see all the different permutations. I could see all of the different functions it had to do, all the things it had to account for, all the mistakes that could possibly be made, all the different systems it had to interface with, the way all of the apparently infinite number of variables had to fit together.

I would get an idea and start following it enthusiastically and a little voice inside would say "Nope! That is not going to work." Reluctantly, I would let go and wait for the next impulse. Then, completely without warning, something clicked, and the voice said: "Go!" And, sure enough, it did. I couldn't see the whole picture. It was one step at a time. Like walking from New York to Los Angeles, in the dark, with nothing but a flashlight. But that project made the technical press and won a very prestigious award.

All I did was show up at the canvas with my paint. I remember sitting there in utter confusion because it was so big and complex, I couldn't even hold it in my mind, let alone map every possible variable. I just sat there staring at this mountain of complexity and the blank

canvas. Again, without warning and in its own good time, things began to appear on the canvas. The masterpiece began to take shape.

By the way, I never had any training in computer science. My only skill was a willingness to show up at the canvas, my only credential a willingness to be present in the chaos long enough for an answer to appear and an almost naive curiosity. But that has been enough to produce several masterpieces in my life. My masterpieces are not going to be on display at The Met. But they do represent the best of me. They were those moments when my normal was unexpectedly transcended.

But let's talk about the biggest masterpiece of all.

You!

The stories of great artists who have achieved great things but had completely miserable lives are too numerous to count. The same is true of people who've made great accomplishments in business, technology, politics, entertainment, media, every aspect of human life. I personally know very well-known spiritual leaders and major figures in personal development. Outside of their one area of expertise, they are bordering on being incompetent in their lives.

They have unsatisfying relationships with their families and children. Some are tyrants with their employees in their offices. Some require deference and even adulation. Some are really horrible with just about everything in their lives, except that one area of mastery.

It's not enough to produce a masterpiece in one part and the rest of your

life be dysfunctional. People like Mozart and Beethoven were both completely dysfunctional in every aspect of their lives, save one.

I don't think that's what most of us really want. We don't want the masterpiece to be the one area of contentment and self-expression that we embody. We want today and every day to be a masterpiece.

So how do we do that?

Well, let me ask you a simple question and you must answer honestly. How do you show up every day in your life? Not just the big things, the meetings, the presentations, the dates, but also the little bitty, common, too ordinary to notice ways. How are you showing up on the canvas of everyday life? Do you have paint in hand and are not budging from that canvas? Do you act as if the masterpiece could show up at any moment and you have to be paying attention when it does?

Well, let me share what I do. Every morning I focus attention on what is most important for me personally. That is my particular style of meditation. For you, it could be setting an intention, chanting a mantra, doing a gratitude list, reciting a series of affirmations. It could even be a prayer, if you are so inclined.

When you do this, for even 10 minutes, you have started the day, from the moment your eyes open, standing directly in front of the masterpiece of your life. And it will set the tone for the entire day.

It sets the standard by which the rest of the day will be lived. It will balance the unbalanced, provide nourishment to yourself and those around you. You will





not get lost in one aspect of your life but will be seeing to all of it. Giving attention to you, your body and health, your family, your romances, your interests other than work.

You see it is really simple. It is the state of mind and state of heart you show up with. We show up with the idea that this moment right here is the masterpiece moment. This moment right here could be the moment where everything changes, where the world gets an inspiration that it's never ever going to see again.

Remember what I said right in the beginning? *You can't force a masterpiece to happen.* All you can do is show up at the canvas with your paints. Not showing up is the only thing that will guarantee that it won't.

This kind of showing up doesn't require extra, special energy. It doesn't require extraordinary skill or talent or genius. It only requires love. Whatever we love, we show up for. Whatever we love gets our attention.

I don't know anybody who falls in love and then has to force themselves to think of their beloved or want to be

with them. You don't need to schedule into your calendar when you're going to be reaching out to touch the loved one. You don't need to do that because your love is self-motivating. It IS the energy of showing up.

Your love for yourself is reflected in your life. That love is your presence in your own life and the lives of others. That presence is your masterpiece. If you're present in your life, your life will be present with you. If you are present with everything that matters to you and give it the attention it actually needs, you are making a masterpiece every moment.

That is the masterpiece I wish for you.

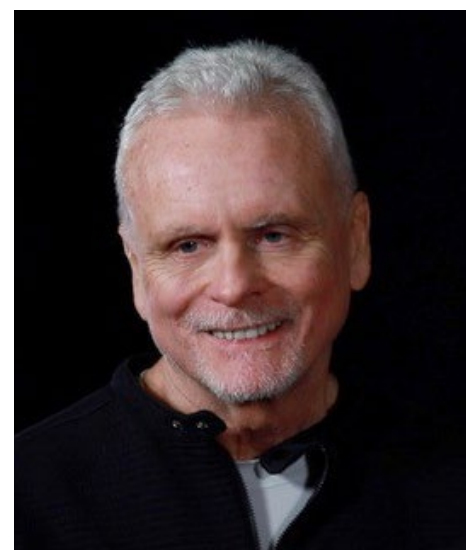
I'm in my late sixties now and I am still striving for that level of engagement, of connection, of authenticity, of reality because for me, it's the only thing that matters. I don't want a monochromatic life. I want the juice.

I don't want to wait for a future where some really great moment happens. I want a lifetime of great moments. I want an endless series of great moments... little and big. That means finding the greatness in this moment right here. Finding the diamond in the pile of

what might look like rubble. It means changing my everyday water into the finest wine.

The masterpiece is in the artist, not the paint. Show up in your life as a master and you will inevitably create masterpieces. They may not be on display at the Louvre but the impact they have on you and those close to you will be no less potent.

And remember, when all is said and done, a life, well-lived is its own reward. And you are the masterpiece.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

GP is a longtime spiritual teacher, meditation master, author and workshop leader. He's touched thousands of lives with his unique approach to emotional well being. He's worked with people from all walks of life: combat veterans with severe PTSD, burnt out Wall Street brokers, creatives overcoming blocks, and countless people with spiritual questions and broken hearts. He provides private counseling, group workshops, retreats and corporate wellness training.

Learn more at: [gpwalsh.com](http://gpwalsh.com)



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# KNOW YOUR EXPIRATION DATE

BE PASSIONATE. BE PERSISTENT.  
BE YOUR OWN CHAMPION!

BY DEBBIE KNOWLAN



**M**any of us are told early on in life that we are in control of our lives, and can achieve anything we desire. Then why do so many of us feel stuck, especially in our careers? Why do we allow someone else to create our paths? Do we need an expiration date? I think we do...

Having worked in professional sports, and now serving as a board member for W.I.S.E. (Women in Sports and Events) has allowed me to have many conversations with women regarding their careers. The reoccurring theme is “feeling stuck” or not knowing what steps to take next.

The one phrase I have been saying a lot during these conversations is one I have been using all my life – “Know Your Ex-

piration Date” - always be willing to have the tough conversation with yourself about what you want in life, your career, and find out if those around you support you and your goals.

I believe you should always do a self-assessment as to where you want your life or career to be headed, and understand what your priorities truly are. For women especially, these priorities shift a great deal due to career goals, relationships, family and/or children obligations.

Sometimes, the reality of the situation at your current company may not always support your goals; meaning the position or opportunities may not be available for you. If you are a person who is always looking to be challenged or to climb the proverbial “corporate ladder”, then you may have to look outside your current company for these

opportunities. Let’s face it, if we are not happy with our jobs, we are not happy in general!

Knowing your expiration date isn’t a negative conversation. It is about putting yourself first and never allowing someone or a company to dictate what your path will be. A lot of times women have trouble doing this! Evaluating your personal and professional priorities are essential to being challenged, happy and passionate in what you do on a daily basis.

## Four Questions To Ask Yourself Every Two to Three Years:

1. Am I happy where I am in my career?
2. Have I had an honest conversation with my boss about my career expectations – what I would like to take on, title I wish to have, salary

goals, as well as what steps to take to accomplish my goals?

3. Does my current company truly have the opportunities available to move me forward in my career? They may give you actionable steps on how to start to achieve your goals, but that doesn't guarantee you that you will get the desired outcome. Which brings us to the final question...
4. How long am I willing to wait in my current position/role in order to

achieve my goals with my current company?

The worst thing you can do is sit around waiting for something to change, or someone to come and give you your dream position, title, or salary. Waiting around will make you feel stuck, fearful of making a move, unmotivated, and stressed at work or in your home life. Don't lose your passion! Creating a different narrative for yourself is on the other side of fear, so don't be afraid of

change, as it will allow you to reach your dreams and goals!

You can achieve anything when you have a positive attitude and are willing to honestly answer these tough questions.

You are in control and sit in the driver seat. It is up to YOU to make your goals come to life by knowing your expiration date!



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Debbie Knowlan has two decades of diverse experience in customer service, CRM, project management, implementation of innovative new products and solutions, and has a keen focus on ensuring all business strategies are aligned with customer needs. Debbie recently launched the first to market customer service training program designed specifically for sports teams – **LISTEN | RESPOND | GO BEYOND - The Playbook on Winning at Service**, to enable sports teams in delivering the ultimate fan experience.

She is also a trainer/facilitator who assists companies in improving their customer focus and leadership skills.





**Resilient Survivor  
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# Resilient Survivor

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

**BY MARLENE LIVINGSTON CURRY**

**"This is a book about love, betrayal, and a mysterious death. The author, Marlene Livingston Curry, shares her personal journey through devastating circumstances in order for us to understand she has been where we are, hurt as we hurt, and felt complete devastation from the secret betrayal of the person she loved the most. She then shows us how to reclaim our self-worth, resolve the shame issues we may be dealing with, and rise to new levels of self-confidence, happiness, and success. Within these pages, you will find practical ways to meet challenges, overcome difficulties, and give up any feelings of brokenness."**

—Judi Moreo, author, *You Are More Than Enough*

**"This book is both inspirational and practical. It is the kind of book you will keep close at hand, refer to often, and actually use. It is full of simple, yet profoundly effective techniques that anyone can use to regain and maintain self-worth and confidence."**

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—Kathie Slaughter, Retired teacher

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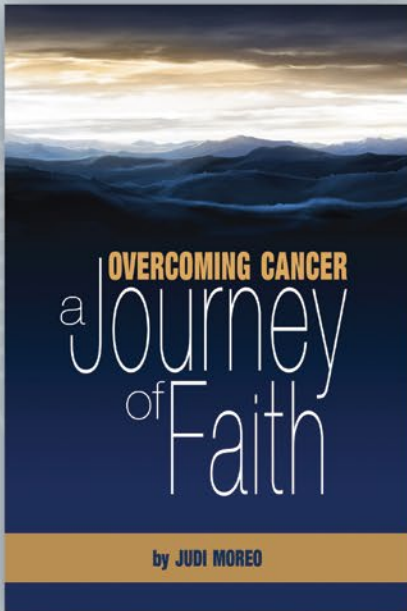
Marlene Livingston Curry is available for lectures and workshops based on her book *Resilient Survivor*.

EMAIL MARLENE  
[marlene@marlenecurry.com](mailto:marlene@marlenecurry.com)



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

# Overcoming Cancer: A Journey of Faith



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."

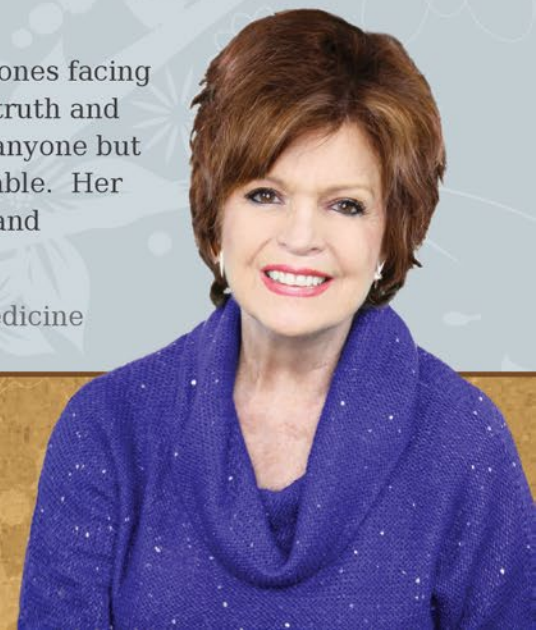
- James Sensnig, N.D., Founding President, American Association of Naturopathic Physicians; Former Dean, National College of Naturopathic Medicine; Founding Dean, College of Naturopathic Medicine, University of Bridgeport, Connecticut; cancer survivor

"This book is a must for those facing cancer and for those who have loved ones facing this fear-filled disease. Judi writes from the heart -- telling her story with truth and emotion. She highlights her course of action, not forcing her opinions on anyone but truly providing options to conventional cancer care that are sound and doable. Her recommendations for nutrition therapy and exercise are quite impressive and fact-based."

- Julie Freeman, MA, RD, LD, Licensed Nutritionist, Integrative Medicine

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**T**here's nothing like a milestone to make you take inventory of your life's accomplishments (or lack thereof). My twentieth high school reunion is approaching this summer. While I see a few fine lines in the mirror that confirm this fact, it's still hard to believe that my small class of twenty-three is standing on the brink of our fourth decade. In the midst of planning a family-friendly BBQ followed by an evening reservation for the adults, a former classmate made the amusing observation that "none of us struck it rich or became famous."

It didn't take me long to personalize this observation, not that fame was ever this introvert's ambition. Accomplishment was/is, and I'll be the first to admit that I haven't produced as many written works as I've wanted. While it's fine to recognize if we haven't attained all we've wanted, it's more important to analyze that which we truly value and start putting our efforts in that direc-

tion. Your personal masterpiece doesn't have to be renowned in order to have importance.

While works of art, literature, and musical compositions are not perceived the same by everyone, you'll notice certain pieces branded with such recognition that there's no denying their widespread "masterpiece" status. Think Michelangelo's *David*. Mozart's *Requiem*. Alexander Graham Bell's invention of the telephone. Anthony Doerr's recent Pulitzer prize winning novel, *All the Light We Cannot See*. Lin-Manuel Miranda's Broadway musical *Hamilton*. While the majority of us won't generate works of this caliber, we can admire those who have and set our sights on applying ourselves to work that matters.

## THE MEANING IS IN THE PROCESS

BY ALISA WEIS

### Making Sacrifices

Talent is easy to come by, but hard work is not. Before he created his fourteen-foot statue in the early 1500's, Michelangelo was recognized as an incredibly gifted sculptor, but other people's knowledge of that fact didn't prevent the intense toil before him. "As he worked, he would let the level of the water drop, and using different chisels, sculpted what he could see emerging. He slept sporadically, and when he did sleep, he slept with his clothes and even his boots still on, and rarely ate," his biographer Condivi reports. While we might not have commissioned work before us, those hoping to see a project through must adopt intentional work habits that allow us to declare our work complete. Those habits might include (but aren't limited to):

getting up an hour earlier, saying “no” to as many social outings as we’d like, minimizing time on social media, continuing even when it’s tempting to put down the brush, the pen or the music sheet, calling on a mentor for advice, and telling ourselves that we will see whatever we’re working on to completion. When the going gets tough and the “muse” isn’t showing up, we still show up after collecting our thoughts or taking a short break. Works of art aren’t completed by accident. So often, they require sweat, tears, and a few hours of lost sleep.

### Silencing the Critic

In presenting *anything* to the public, we open ourselves to criticism. While some people shirk off harsh words, many of us bite our nails at the knowing that as soon as our new book is released, we are under scrutiny for entering the arena. Research professor, Brene Brown, interrupts our natural inclination to self-protect with the reminder that, “Not caring what people think is its own kind of hustle.” Or, if we are paying attention to oppositional/corrective words in order to learn, we can at least say, “I see you. I hear you. But I’m going to do this anyway.” We can’t let the opinions of

other people override our own opinion of our work. After all, isn’t it more painful to shove a completed manuscript in a drawer than allowing several critics to grant our novel two stars on Goodreads?

### Valuing the Process

When you look back on all that was required of you to teach a class, construct or build a home, or start a non-profit organization, you’ll realize it was all the effort required that made it so meaningful to you. When I published my debut novel, *Swiftwater*, two years ago, it wasn’t the intimate book release that meant the most to me—though that was important too—it was the series of revisions and rewriting that gave the book its particular value. No one else will experience the final product the way you do. Before you walk away from it, you’ll have acquired more patience, more perseverance, and, hopefully, more respect for others invested in demanding processes as well. You learn that even if you’re the one whose name is on the cover, it wouldn’t have happened without your own determination and the supportive people who cared enough to inspire and lead you.

Perhaps you can easily identify your own personal masterpiece. If so, congratulations! I want to hear more of your process. Or perhaps you’re like me, realizing that while you’re making strides, there are a few daily practices you can brush up on to help clear your path. I’m one who believes that no matter where you are today, you are only a few steps away from making a greater difference both to yourself and others. You don’t have to be famous in order to do so. Hardly anyone knows they’re creating a masterpiece while in the midst of it. It’s a beautiful occurrence that happens after the person is determined enough to see a project to its completion.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alisa Weis holds a BA in English Lit/ Writing from Whitworth University (2003) and a Master in Secondary Education (2007) from the University of Phoenix. When she’s not teaching or writing, she enjoys attending personal growth seminars, exploring new coffee shops and spending time with her husband and two young children. Her first book “*Swiftwater*” is available on Amazon or through her website: [www.alisaweis.com](http://www.alisaweis.com)







# Do you wish you were more CREATIVE?

- Are you feeling stuck, trapped, or overwhelmed?
- Do you have a desire to be more creative?
- Do you want to overcome your doubts and fears about your creative abilities?
- Do you want to write a book, paint pictures, or begin a new creative project of some kind?
- Do you want to start a new business venture? Or, take your current business to a new level?

## If so, you will want to work with a Creativity Coach!

### What are Creativity Coaches?

- Creativity Coaches guide, direct, and help you stay focused on your creative work.
- Creativity Coaches help you get unstuck and move your projects forward.
- Creativity Coaches inspire you to push yourself to new levels of creativeness, innovation, and resourcefulness.
- Creativity Coaches help you build your confidence in your creative abilities.
- Creativity Coaches assist you in reaching higher levels of success.

Whatever your reason for seeking out a coach, Judi Moreo will help you acquire the skills you need to achieve your desired results. Your personally designed program will provide you with tried and true methods of getting from where you are to where you want to be in a positive and supportive atmosphere.

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# BUILDING A FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE MASTERPIECE

BY JULIE DELONG

**A**s a bookkeeper, it has been my privilege to work with hundreds of business owners as they follow their passion to build businesses in all kinds of industries. It is exhilarating when they thrive and can be heart-breaking when they fail. In any endeavor, but especially when building your own masterpiece, it is essential to consider the costs and make sure you have the resources to reach your goals. Since dealing with financial data is my specialty, I'd like to share three practical tips for ensuring your masterpiece business is financially sustainable and will be able to serve the purpose you dreamt for it.

## **First, understand the true cost of selling your product or service.**

Do you have a handle on what the cost per unit is in your business? If you sell a product, you have a cost associated with making or buying that product, but you have other directly related expenses, too: the time it takes to process or prepare the product, packaging costs, merchant fees, etc. If you are providing a service, you may have some payroll costs, processing fees, perhaps some supplies or travel expenses, and certainly the cost of your own time. What is the true cost per unit for your business?

When you know the true cost per unit, you can start asking the critical ques-

tions for business planning and development. Am I charging enough? Are there ways I could reduce my direct costs? Is my gross profit (revenue – direct costs as calculated above) enough to cover all my other operating expenses? Is it enough for me to pay myself? How many units do I need to sell to pay myself what I want to earn, or reach the goals I have for my business?

Knowing and understanding these numbers will help you build a solid financial foundation for your masterpiece business.

## **Review your balance sheet regularly.**

It's a common mistake for business own-





ers to neglect their balance sheet. They are so focused on making profits, they don't consider it very important and just focus on their income statement. However, the balance sheet is where the major bookkeeping errors show up. If you know you have less than \$10k in inventory, but your balance sheet shows \$100k, then something is wrong. If your balance sheet shows bank or credit card balances that are negative, then something is wrong. If any of the asset or liability accounts don't make sense or show an amount that seems unreasonable, then something is wrong. Maybe data is missing, maybe data has been entered in duplicate, but these are all signs that the numbers on your income statement can't be trusted, and you need to get professional help with your bookkeeping.

Another key when looking at financial reports is to review accrual-based reports, even if you are reporting cash basis financials on your tax return. Accrual reports will tell you so much more about the long-term health of your business.

Cash reports can only tell you how much money you have right now; they don't give you any clue whether you will still have money next week, next month, or next year.

This is why monitoring what's happening on a regular basis by looking at the right reports is so essential.

### **Pay yourself – the right way.**

Most business owners know they are supposed to keep business and personal separate, but they still treat the business accounts as an extension of their personal and draw money whenever they need it. It is healthier for your business if you treat it as truly separate and put yourself on a regular payment schedule. If your business is a corporation, then you are likely paying yourself via paycheck and additional distributions. Otherwise, you are probably just taking draws.

Either way, treat the business as a truly separate entity, with separate goals and

budgets. Think of it as your masterpiece and treat it accordingly! In a way, it has a life of its own, and you need to respect that. It is so easy as a business owner to make the business' money subject to your personal financial needs, but simply taking a larger draw when you have a higher than normal personal bill to pay, for example, can jeopardize your business' financial goals. Treat your masterpiece with the respect it deserves and give it room to achieve its true potential.



### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

In 2008, Julie DeLong cofounded Backyard Bookkeeper, a tiny accounting firm that served local small businesses. Today, the company has developed into a unique business model based almost entirely on stay at home parents, providing accounting services to businesses across the entire country in a wide array of industries. Julie has a bachelor's degree in economics, and she is passionate about business and helping other women succeed.

Find more information online at:  
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# MASTERPIECE MOMENTS

BY SHANA KAI

**A**

ll little boys and girls have dreams. This blue-eyed girl was no exception. One specific dream I've carried in my heart for many years was to travel to Paris. Through the years, I cut out pictures of the Eiffel Tower and displayed them on my dream board. Family and friends would often give me gifts that had little pictures and sayings about Paris. As fate would have it, I finally found myself standing on French soil. I had dreamed for so long of going there. I was chomping at the bit to start checking things off my bucket list! I wanted to walk through the Hall of Mirrors of Versailles. I also wanted to

stroll through the gardens and pretend I was a part of Marie Antoinette's Royal Court.

Both of those wishes I was able to fulfill. Every aspect of the tour I took was glorious. Yes, I walked down the Hall of Mirrors. It was interesting to say the least. As I gazed at my reflection, I quickly noticed it was distorted somewhat like the mirrors of a fun house. The mirrors were made with such an old technique they didn't allow me to fully capture my reflection. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and couldn't help but make at least one funny face while looking in the mirror.

As I walked slowly around the beautiful palace gardens, I imagined the conversations that must have taken place as the King and Queen strolled along. The gardens were magnificent. Everywhere I turned to look was breathtaking. Every detail was taken into consideration... the views, the placement of trees, the fountains and what they each represented. I even fell in love with the sound my shoes made on the gravel as I walked along. It was all so glorious, and I ran around Versailles like a little kid in a candy shop!

Next, I was off to the Louvre and check off seeing the Mona Lisa first-hand. No more just looking at her in a history book. As I approached the room she resides in, it was over-flowing with people who also wanted to gaze upon this masterpiece. Then I made my way closer to the front of the line. I noticed the picture seemed to get smaller and smaller as I got closer. It was finally my turn! Sure enough, I was in utter shock as I stood there and gazed at the actual size of the Mona Lisa. I expected to see a much larger painting of her portrait. Instead, I found it to be a much smaller size. Who knew, right? All these years I had in my head what I thought the Mona Lisa would look like. When I was actually standing in front of the Masterpiece painting, I was able to see her true appearance. It was totally different than what I expected. I wasn't disappointed... just caught off guard because of an assumption I had made.

Days later, as I sat writing in my travel journal, I began thinking about how often our thoughts can get distorted in life just like in the Hall of Mirrors. How sometimes our perception of people, places and things can be so far from reality. How many times have we met

someone and instantly made a quick judgment or assumption only to find out after spending more time with them, they were amazing human beings? We could see ourselves becoming good friends with them.

We sadly even make assumptions about ourselves. We can easily self-sabotage an amazing idea we have by simply talking ourselves out of all the reasons why we're not qualified. We listen to the naysayers in our lives that tell us it's impossible to do what we're daring. We let them talk us out of fulfilling our dreams and go back to playing it safe. We look in the mirror often and don't recognize the unbelievable person staring back at us. The one who dares to dream; dares to love again; dares to stand in the arena of life and fight to make a mark; the one who has so much to offer to the world by being in it. The thoughts we think can either help us become a more refined portrait and masterpiece or something that we scrap and set off to the side because we find it isn't quite good enough. My dear friend, Judi Moreo, says it perfectly in her book "You are More Than Enough!" Let those words resonate within your heart. They are so true! What I know for sure is every day is filled with little masterpiece moments. From the beautiful thoughts you think throughout the day not only about yourself but others to the masterpiece moments where you get to be an encouragement for another fellow human being. Every smile you give, every word of encouragement you share, every hug you're willing to provide, every hand you're willing to hold, every time you take a moment and simply spread kindness towards another is just one more brushstroke on the canvas of someone's masterpiece. Your painting shines a little brighter

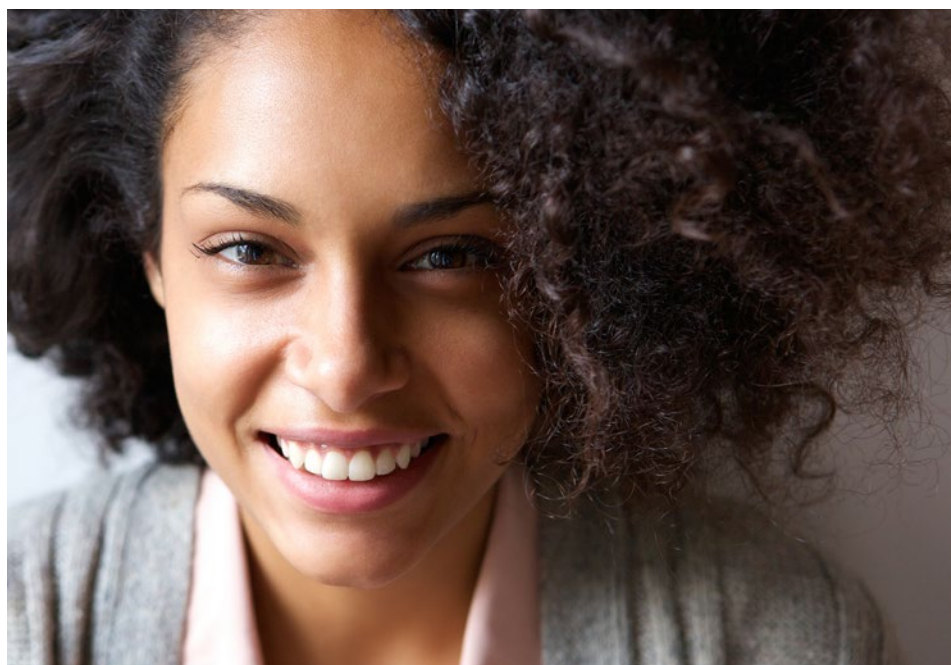
too because you've invested in another person.

Banking accounts can quickly go bankrupt. Depositing kindness, acceptance, and love into the human heart has the best return of any investment you'll ever make in this lifetime. I have always believed you reap what you sow. Love and kindness are so much more beautiful than assumptions, judgment, or negative thoughts we have about ourselves or others. My wish for you is that every day will be filled with masterpiece moments. No matter where you are in your life's journey, it's never too late to begin creating with intention. Your best life is waiting. There is someone within your sphere of influence who desperately needs a word of encouragement. Maybe the masterpiece you look at in the mirror today could use some as well. Either way don't let this day slip from your hands without making a brushstroke or two when confronted with opportunities to create your masterpiece!



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Shana Kai has been in the beauty industry for 32 years. She is a Licensed Master Esthetician, Licensed Instructor, Certified Professional Makeup Artist, Certified Eyelash Extension Instructor, Owner of an accredited cosmetology academy, Melange Boutique and Studio, and Inspired Beauty Salon.







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# MAKING EMOTIONS PART OF YOUR MASTERPIECE (AND NOT PART OF YOUR MESS)

BY LOLA PICKETT

**D**o you find yourself frequently overwhelmed by emotions (and aren't even sure if those feelings are yours)?

Are you often anxious, sometimes so much so that you avoid social events or activities that would help you grow in your career?

Have you struggled to maintain financial stability as an adult?

Do people feel comfortable with you right away, sometimes sharing stories with you that they don't usually reveal to others?

Do friends remark on how "healing" your energy is to be around (even though sometimes, you feel *worse* after being with *them*)?

**If—as you read through the questions above— you found yourself saying “yes” to more than a few of them, you**

**just might be an “empath”** - someone who takes the concept of “empathy” to a whole new level.

As an Empath, you don't just hold *compassion* for other people, you actually **FEEL** what other people are experiencing emotionally, physically, mentally, or even energetically. This creates an incredible opportunity and a natural ability to connect with others, but often detracts from being able to connect with *yourself*.

If you've been feeling lonely (and perhaps even more so when you're with other people), it's also a strong indication that, like me, you're an empath...

It's hard on us to spend our lives more connected to others than to ourselves. It might seem like it's a more generous



way of being, and it certainly can be. But when taken to extremes, it leads to feelings of resentment, isolation, anxiety, and even downright depression.

A lifetime of this—often unasked for, and sometimes even unconscious—sensory onslaught, can also lead to patterns of numbing out. I believe this is one reason so many of the Empaths I see in my private practice and inside my courses are struggling with patterns of addiction.

For many of them—perfectionism, workaholicism, shopping addictions, disordered eating, screen time, and other addictions are all ways for them to control (or reduce) the amount that they feel.

And yet, we empaths have some of the biggest hearts on the planet. So, wouldn't it be amazing if we could learn to harness our sensitivities to do better in the world, instead of getting overrun and derailed by them?

Well, the good news is that we can learn to do EXACTLY that.

**We can learn to make emotions part of our masterpiece: Instead of overpowering us, they can add color, texture, richness, and sensuality to our lives.**

But, how?

It's powerful to remember that we can't heal what isn't ours.

**You can't heal what isn't yours.**

This means, that unless the emotions, sensations, energy, or thoughts you're having are your own, you can't do anything with them except let them go. Learning to separate your own feelings from other people's helps alleviate overwhelm, and puts you back into right

relationship with your senses...

Suddenly, things like pleasure and presence are available to you.

Now, how do you KNOW whether what you're feeling is yours in the first place?

You can begin to sift through the confusing information inside you by asking yourself this key question:

**"What do I need right now?"**

As a giving, heart-centered human, you likely don't ask yourself this question very often. In fact, it may give you quite a shock or make you feel very uncomfortable when you ask yourself this!

But, asking yourself this question brings you to your own experience in the present moment. It's a powerful way to pull yourself out of other people's needs/stories/beliefs/feelings/etc. and back into your own mind and body.

Take stock of whatever arises in response to this question.

**"Do I need water? Rest? To cry? To shake out extra energy? To go for a walk? A raise?"**

Secondly, listen to those intuitive hits and take action on them.

In so doing, you'll begin building a relationship with your own intuition, your own emotions, your own self... This is sacred, deep, personal work... All starting with a simple, somewhat daringly "selfish" question.

As you practice this over time, you may find yourself suddenly feeling calm, when moments before you were overwhelmed. If so, it's a good chance that whatever overwhelm you were feeling

wasn't even yours.

Next time you feel "off", or are tempted to numb out, try asking yourself, *"What do I need right now?"* and see what happens! You just might find that the world looks a lot brighter and YOU feel more alive than ever before.

THAT'S living as an emotional masterpiece.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lola Pickett teaches empaths how to take back their sensitive superpowers in her flagship course EMPATH\*ology™.

Want to build on what you learned in this article? Knowing which type of empath you are (there are 8!) can help you find even more clarity on how to ease your anxiety, overwhelm, and other symptoms of what Lola calls "Empath Stress Disorder".

Discover your empath type and open yourself up to a whole new world at [bit.ly/my-empath-type](https://bit.ly/my-empath-type)



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# Writing & Launching Your Book

By Judi Moreo

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*The first tier with strawberry jam, vanilla custard cream, toasted almonds and strawberries. Heavier ingredients are on the bottom layer for stability with whipped cream reserved for tier 2 and top.*





# STRAWBERRY SENSATION

BY S. L. GORE



*With summer comes sweet, juicy plump strawberries crying out for shortcake and whipped cream. But I find those packets of little saucer-like spongy cakes at the grocery store, easy as they may be to serve up, a bit tired. And true shortcake made from biscuit dough is equally ho-hum if you're looking for a real special occasion sensation.*

With my American version of a Danish classic *lager kage*, a bit of effort produces a wow statement that is really quite easy. Nothing except the whipped cream and toasted almonds is made from "scratch." I use boxed cake mix, Bird's custard powder, strawberry jam

from a jar and strawberry glaze from a tub.

You'll need three cake pans of the same size to bake the layers. The larger the cake pan, the better as the circles will be larger and thinner. This cake is made

with standard-sized American cake pans, so my taller version is not as easy to slice and serve as its Danish cousin.

## Ingredients:

- Blanched, slivered almonds  $\frac{3}{4}$  c (you might not use all in the cake)
- Heavy whipping cream 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  c (you might not use all in the cake)
- Fresh strawberries 3 small boxes
- Strawberry cake mix 1 box – white cake also good
- Bird's custard cream or similar
- Strawberry jam
- Strawberry glaze (available at most fruit stands) – optional
- Granulated sugar
- Powdered sugar
- Vanilla extract
- Grand Marnier – optional

You can use any fruit to make this cake. Fresh peaches are divine!

## Steps:

1. Slice strawberries, add a sprinkling of granulated white sugar and 1 shot of Grand Marnier, mix well and set



Three cake pans of the same size. The larger the diameter, the better. In Denmark, the layers are quite thin and the cake easier to slice. Ready-made layers are packaged in threes at any supermarket. Bird's custard powder is English; you can substitute Jello vanilla pudding. Any strawberry jam will do. The strawberry glaze is sold at fruit stands everywhere in our area.





The first tier with strawberry jam, vanilla custard cream, toasted almonds and strawberries. Heavier ingredients are on the bottom layer for stability with whipped cream reserved for tier 2 and top.

- aside in refrigerator for minimum one hour. Several hours is best.
2. Mix up the strawberry cake mix and divide the batter evenly between the 3 pans.
3. Bake and cool thoroughly.
4. Toast almonds (see below) and toss onto plate to cool.
5. Slice the rounded top off of each cake layer with a bread knife.
6. Place the first cake layer on a plate.
7. Spread with a layer of strawberry jam.
8. Cook up the custard cream following the directions on the can for
9. Spoon on a layer of custard cream while still warm. It will cool immediately and thicken.
10. Sprinkle thoroughly with toasted almonds.
11. Add a generous layer of marinated strawberries. They should have created their own syrup and be very soft and moist.
12. Put on second tier of cake.
13. Spread a layer of strawberry glaze.
14. Whip up the heavy cream with a

ing Tbsp of powdered sugar. note: heavy cream doubles in volume when whipped.

15. Spread a layer of whipped cream on top of strawberry glaze.
16. Add a generous layer of marinated strawberries.
17. Spread another layer of whipped cream.
18. Put on top layer of cake.
19. Spread a layer of whipped cream.
20. Pile on the strawberries as many as you can.
21. Refrigerate until serving. Serve with any extra whipped cream and toasted almonds.

*Note: This looks very heavy but is really light as can be.*

#### To toast almonds:

Heat a skillet (a small wok is perfect), add blanched slivered almonds and keep turning with a wooden spoon until the almonds are golden brown. Lift the pan from time to time. Turn out onto a plate to cool. NO oil.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Born with wanderlust, forever living in a fantasy world, S.L. Gore escaped the prairies of Kansas and followed the yellow brick road on an odyssey that took her around the world. Love of history, languages, mysticism, food, shopping and romance helped create her romantic time travel thrillers of the *Isis Trilogy*. Her *Sex and the Zen of Shopping* is a self-help for the spirit and how-to for the practical. Joyously married, she and her Viking husband live in Coastal California.

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---

**Brian Tracy**





# BE YOUR OWN MASTERPIECE

BY ANTHONY BURNSIDE

“

What is your why?” Will Smith utters this phrase in the Hollywood film entitled “Collateral Beauty.” What is your

why is a very interesting thought in and of itself. It causes one to have some introspection. I have another question... how valuable is your time and why do you do the things you do? Do you ever stop to think about that?

In my books and past articles, I talked a lot about the RAS (Reticular Activation System) and how we can apply it to our everyday lives and how RAS is an integral part of determining what is your why.

I am a lover of art. When we think of a masterpiece, we probably think of some great body of work of art that we may have seen. I have had the privilege of visiting some of the finest museums in the world.

Once at the Louvre in Paris, I got to see the Mona Lisa and the Code of Hammurabi and Aphrodite (Venus de Milo) amongst others and at LACMA (Los Angeles County Museum of Art) I saw some beautiful African art that was incredible. On a trip recently to New York City, I was walking with a friend near the site of where the World Trade Center once stood and saw this huge massive strange looking structure called “The Oculus.” These creations are masterpieces, finished by artists of the

**“Our lives are shaped by our minds; we become what we think. Suffering follows an evil thought as the wheels of a cart follow the oxen that draws it. Our lives are shaped by our minds; we become what we think. Joy follows a pure thought like a shadow that never leaves.”**

---

**Gautama Buddha**

highest caliber. With that in mind, I want to challenge your thinking a bit here... What if we all are artists and we can piece together the mosaic of our masterpiece that is our lives? As humans, the process we use to learn things are all based on this particular conceptual algorithm of

Performance, Feedback, Revision. We perform (performance) a task and then we see how it turns out (feedback), then we revise as needed (revision).

We are all a work in progress and we can get better every day. This process (along



with the new knowledge and behavior) can become programmed into our brains and we affect change. Now, we must be careful to process this new information correctly or we can develop bad habits. What do I mean by this? I discovered that the average person has 12 thousand to 60 thousand thoughts running through his mind each day. That is mind boggling and out of that number, 60% to 80% of those thoughts running through our heads are negative thoughts.

Now conversely, 95% of those thoughts in our heads that we have each day are the same thoughts. So essentially our lives are shaped by our thoughts and we become what we think. It's all routine. We live our lives on auto pilot. Let that sink in. The good news is that

we can change for the better. It's easy, first realize that you and your time are very valuable.

There are two types of people in the world: those who genuinely want to be in your life. How do you know who they are? You both make an effort. It's that easy.

And then there are those who want to get your attention (attention seekers) to make themselves feel good or to revalidate their self-esteem (therefore satisfying their need from the second level of Maslow's Triangle) then they vanish and you won't see them again until they need another fix of your free attention. Don't chase them...these are sad and broken people (walking wounded), and they need help.

Time is valuable. Don't be someone's time victim to their time vampire. Not everyone is worth your time so don't be a constant people pleaser. It's important to note that constant people pleasing is a form of brown nosing. No one likes a brownnoser. How do brownnosers get treated? They get treated and talked to in a sometimes-demeaning fashion by others, don't they? Remember, in court, how the judge loves to hand down sentences of community service or prison terms... you want to know why? Not just because of punishment, it's also because psychologically...time is valuable, and it makes you think.

Paying a fine is the easy way out but spending your time leaves a mark and makes you remember what you did (Revision). Keep in mind that we all are unique, and it doesn't matter what kind of circumstances you have in your life ...whether fortunate or unfortunate. We can turn those negative thoughts into positive thoughts and create new positive behaviors. First change your thinking. Practice these rituals. Here's how.

1. Get out of your comfort zone and change your scarcity mindset into an abundance mindset. Break yourself of fear. Learn to do new things. (I started taking Krav Maga classes and let me tell you it got me out of my comfort zone.) Be yourself and get rid of all negative thoughts. Find a quiet area in your home and close your eyes, breathe in deeply and slowly push negative thoughts aside.

In addition to this breathing exercise, I want you to go a whole week without saying anything negative about another person. (It's difficult I know). Retrain your brain for positivity.

2. Find and spend time with positive people. Be in the moment when with



others. Actually talk to people and don't be distracted by your cell phone. Work towards your goals or purpose every day.

3. Know your value and set boundaries. Having the wrong people in your life will drag you down. Just look at them and ask yourself, "what purpose is this person serving in my life?" Don't be afraid to let negative people go. Stay focused on your purpose and agenda and keep it moving. In short, the good people who are meant to be in your life will catch up with you and stay there.

4. Don't be afraid to stand up for yourself and set boundaries. Remember you

don't get out of life what you deserve... You get what you negotiate, so get in the flow and create your Masterpiece!

I leave you with the wise words of Lucius Annaeus Seneca:

"We should every night call ourselves to an account;  
What infirmity have I mastered today?  
What passions opposed?  
What temptation resisted?  
What virtue acquired?  
Our vices will abort of themselves if they be brought every day to the shrift."



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anthony Burnside is the CEO of Ronin Group Consulting firm and a highly sought-after security expert/investigator for television programs and news interviews. He is also part of an elite group of close protection operatives tasked with protecting VIP's all over the world.

He has conducted protective operations at places like the S.S.I Conference at the prestigious U.S. Army War College for a former White House official and at the United States Air Force Academy. In addition, he has helped provide protection at worldwide televised events such as the Golden Globes, the Grammy Awards, and the American Music Awards.

In addition to his security background, he is also an actor, voiceover artist, author, and speaker.

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**“No masterpiece was ever created  
by a lazy artist.”**

---

**Salvador Dali**







CHOICES MAGAZINE  
SUMMER ISSUE 2019

# A FINAL NOTE FROM JUDI MOREO

As you experience the rest of summer, look at the world around you. Make note of the people, things, and places you love. How do these inspire you?

Carry a small notebook with you and make note of the things you see that are beautiful and how they affect how you feel. Think about these things.... did they just appear in your life or did you take deliberate action to have them there?

Did your day just happen or did you make choices about what to do, where to go, and who to be with?

Did you create moments and experiences that matter? Did you have inspiration? Did you do something differently? Did you express yourself excitedly or was your demeanor quiet and peaceful? Did you have conversation with others or sit in solitude? These are all choices you made. Be aware of them.

These daily choices you make create your experience of life. You possess creative powers and you use them daily. Perhaps if you become more aware of them, you will see that you have created your life the way it is for a reason.

If you don't like what you see at this point, or it doesn't seem quite right to you, then remember, you have the ability to change your choices. You are the one doing the creating. You can make your life into the masterpiece you desire.

You Are More Than Enough,

*Judi*