



# LIFE BOOSTS

## VOLUME 3

**Strategies, tactics and ideas to boost  
your health your wealth, and more!**

Libby Adams • Maija-Liisa Nyborg Adams • Dr. Jackie Black • Nancy R. Bartlit • Carol Bausor • Jen Beck  
Amy Charland • Helena de Jong • Kim Ellet • Suzanne Evans • Liz Fabiny • Paula Fallon • Elaine Gibson  
Marsha Gleit • Anita F. Green • Michelle Bryant Johnson • Bonnette Jones • Linda R. Jordon • Janine  
Kennedy • Mously Le Blanc • Ruth Levy • Julia D. Lewis • Dani Lin • Cathy Lins • Eva Medilek  
Tori Michaels • River Nice • Jo Ousterhout • Magdalena Raj • Mary Jo Rathgeb • Angie Ringler  
Kim Root • Patsy Sanders • Harriet Watson • Adam Weber • Larry Winget • Julie Zolfo





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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                                                              |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Where's MY Damn Rehab? by Dr. Libby Adams                                                    | 1  |
| Do You Understand? Improve Communication, Build Relationships<br>by Maija-Liisa Nyborg Adams | 7  |
| The Five Principles of Winning Relationships by Dr. Jackie Black                             | 13 |
| Separation Is a Heartbreak by Nancy R. Bartlit                                               | 19 |
| Stay in the Ring—And Learn Something New by Carol Bausor                                     | 25 |
| Diets Work! But Not for Long—How to Create Lasting Weight<br>Loss by Jen Beck                | 30 |
| Life Is Too Short Not to Be Doing What Lights You Up<br>by Amy Charland                      | 36 |
| Stop Fixing Others and Start Living Your Life by Helena de Jong                              | 42 |
| Nothing Stops You but You! by Kim Ellet                                                      | 48 |
| Where You Are Right Now Is Where You Have Chosen to Be<br>by Suzanne Evans                   | 53 |
| Are You Stuck Going in Circles? by Liz Fabiny                                                | 57 |
| The Truth About Lying to Yourself by Paula Fallon                                            | 63 |
| Are You Waiting for a Crisis? by Elaine Gibson                                               | 68 |
| There Is Always a Giant to Slay—Who Is Your Goliath?<br>by Marsha Gleit                      | 74 |

|                                                                                                      |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Comparing Yourself to Others Is Losing Before You Start<br>by Anita F.Green                          | 79  |
| Fear Forward by Michelle Bryant Johnson                                                              | 85  |
| Value-Driven Education by D. Bonnett Jones, PhD, MBA                                                 | 89  |
| Disengaged Employees Are Costing You a Ton of Money!<br>by Dr. Linda Jordon                          | 95  |
| Five Keys to Better Health and Energetic Living by Janine Kennedy                                    | 102 |
| Love Me or Die! by Dr. Mously Le Blanc, MD                                                           | 107 |
| My Dox in a Row by Ruth Levy                                                                         | 113 |
| Laziness Is a Decision That Costs Too Much by Julia D.Lewis                                          | 120 |
| Why Eat Healthy When We All Die Anyway? by Dani Lin                                                  | 126 |
| Learn to Get Good with the Bad by Cathy Lins                                                         | 132 |
| If I Only Had the Time—How to Reclaim Your Day to<br>Accomplish More with Less Stress by Eva Medilek | 137 |
| You Must Be Out of Your Mind (to Have What You Want)!<br>by Tori Michaels                            | 142 |
| Would You Rather Burn \$22K or Go on the Trip of a Lifetime?<br>by River Nice                        | 148 |
| The Simple Millions Blueprint: Three Straightforward Steps to<br>Wealth by Jo Ousterhout             | 153 |
| How Do You Grease the Skids of Business? by Magdalena Raj                                            | 160 |
| People Pleasing Pleases No One by Mary Jo Rathgeb                                                    | 166 |

|                                                                                                 |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Go Naked at Home—Your Package, or Lack Thereof, Might<br>Just Save the Planet! by Angie Ringler | 171 |
| Don't Panic, It's Only Chaos! by Kim Root                                                       | 177 |
| Hiding in Plain Sight by Patsy Sanders                                                          | 182 |
| Misery or Success Are Both Waiting for You—Which<br>Will You Choose? by Harriett Watson         | 188 |
| Workplace Stress Is Hurting Us by Adam Weber                                                    | 194 |
| Your Life Sucks Because You Suck by Larry Winget                                                | 200 |
| You Think You Know What Will Happen, But You Do<br>Not! by Julie Zolfo                          | 205 |



# Where's MY Damn Rehab?

*Dr. Libby Adams*

“God, help me,” I whispered, head in my hands.

Sitting at the kitchen table, facing the pile of bills I couldn't find the money for, my eyes burning from exhaustion and my chest tightening from the amount of responsibility that befell me once my husband entered rehab, all I could do was think, *Keep going*.

I had two little boys, the oldest only four years old, and they needed their mommy to be strong. But how do you face the world when your partner is MIA, leaving you with a huge mess to clean up, and you're feeling like you can barely lift your head off the table, let alone take on this challenge?

That's when the director of the twenty-eight-day inpatient treatment center called me.

“Your husband is doing really well; he's the president of the Rehab Group.” The director's voice was upbeat, damn near jovial, and all I could think was that if given the chance, I'd punch him in the face.

*Great! My husband's doing REALLY well, while I'm over here dealing with all the fallout and consequences of his actions,* I thought. *Where's my rehab?*

I had to face the truth that so many people get hit with at the lowest point of their lives: Life is hard. Not only is life hard, but marriage is hard. Being a parent is hard. Work is hard.

No adulting handbook gives us all the answers in a neat bow. Nope. We fail our way through life so we can figure out how to succeed, and this moment for me—this was a moment where I was at my wit's end, and I knew it.

What I needed was a place to rest. A place to collect my thoughts, reorganize my beliefs, connect with my Higher Power, and overhaul my life so I could get back on track and live the life I knew I was meant to have.

Have you ever felt like that?

At that moment I realized that I needed my own rehab—a twenty-eight-day Spiritual R.E.H.A.B. that would take my broken pieces and put me back together again better than before. And that's what I created. But not just for me. Spiritual R.E.H.A.B. is for anyone who is at a crossroad or understands the importance of getting in alignment with the expression of their true potential. It's a place where you can transform your breakdown into a breakthrough.

Spiritual R.E.H.A.B., just like rehab for addicts, is based on the following two principles:

1. Admit you're powerless over the situation that plagues you—that your life has become unmanageable in this regard.
2. Believe that a Power greater than yourself can restore you to sanity.

One of the biggest lessons I had to concede to as an adult is that we all are powerless over something. You might be powerless over how a relationship is going, powerless over that promotion you might not get, powerless over a medical diagnosis being hurled at you, or powerless over a loved one dying.

While there is a lot in your life that you do have control over, there's a whole host of things that you don't. This is especially true of a situation that's been besting you, taking your energy, and upending your life in some way that you don't know how to correct.

To complicate matters further, when you feel powerless, your natural response is worry. It's like a knee-jerk reaction to the point at which worry is not optional—but how long you feel that way *is*.

It's vitally important that people learn to rehab their emotions, so that is a key component in Spiritual R.E.H.A.B. Learning how to process and control our emotions isn't something that's talked about very often. Instead, our conversations center on how our emotions are affecting our lives at any given moment. We're not often taught how to healthily work through and regulate

our emotions so we can receive the messages they're giving us without staying in unwanted states of being.

Take worry, for example. It's a gateway emotion, allowing other negative emotions to seep in and take form. Whether that's sadness, anger, or guilt, the emotion underlying the perpetuation of those feelings is worry, and this affects your sleep, your health, your job performance, and your relationships.

So how do you overcome worry when it's plaguing your life?

Surrender to a Higher Power.

One of my favorite quotes from the "Big Book" of Alcoholics Anonymous is: "Lack of power, that was our dilemma. We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be a power greater than ourselves."

That isn't just the dilemma of the alcoholic; that is actually the human dilemma. As people, it's easy to take on too much. As a high achiever, you get so used to being able to do things that other people can't that when you hit hard times in your life, you simply take on more. You endeavor to be more, carry more, shoulder more, and give more—but the problem is that you're not intended to do it alone. And when you show up alone in your struggle, there's no room for flow to come in and support you in fixing it.

The greatest truth I've uncovered thus far in life (and I've seen this repeated more times than I can count) is that the antidote to worry is *faith*. A belief in some kind of Higher Power you can trust to support and guide you frees you from the chains of worry and gives you emotional regulation superpowers when it comes to this gateway emotion.

Problem resolution is a lot easier when you don't have to do it alone, and that is the premise of Spiritual R.E.H.A.B.: twenty-eight days of an intentional life and self-re-haul program, with a technique I developed at the heart of it called Transformational Meditation™, designed specifically for problem resolution.

The truth is, you don't have to be an addict to need rehab. If you've ever engaged in self-sabotaging behaviors, lost your way on the path, or felt like you were fighting a war on all fronts blindfolded with one arm tied behind your back—then you've needed Spiritual Rehab.

In an episode of *Grey's Anatomy*, one of the doctors, a veteran from Iraq with PTSD, blew up her upcoming wedding by sleeping with someone else. When confiding in another doctor who was getting good results in Alcoholics Anonymous, she said, “Is there a recovery program for people who trash their lives and can’t blame drugs so that they can get some of that sweet program Zen Master stuff that you have?”

She was asking, “Where’s MY damn rehab?”

SPIRITUAL R.E.H.A.B. is the answer to this call.

R.E.H.A.B. is an acronym for five elements of recovery:

**Reclaiming Who You Are**

**Educating you to control your Thoughts, Emotions, and Actions (TEA)**

**Having clarity about what you really want and how to get it**

**Accelerating your growth through a connection with a Higher Power**

**Becoming peaceful, happy, and productive**

I took six people through my pilot R.E.H.A.B. program. One was a world-class race car driver who, after the program, won first place in his division. Another was a commercial airline pilot who felt like every time he flew, he was “playing Russian roulette.” He was able to overcome this fear that began after 9/11. Several lost weight. What they all experienced in common was a relief from worry, which created more harmony in their relationships because they stopped contributing to the disharmony.

Over the past eighteen years, I have been blessed to work with people from all walks of life, from all over the world, in the R.E.H.A.B. program. The transformation that takes place when people surrender their situations, challenges, and sabotaging behaviors to a Higher Power and commit to the discipline of walking a different path is unparalleled. It’s humbling to watch.

The worry that comes with believing that “life is difficult” stunts who you are—who you were born to be—and keeps you from going to the next level in life.

The secret to rehab success for high-achievers is one-on-one daily support and accountability over a twenty-eight-day period; this enables them to have time to do their transformational work and to course correct. The accelerant of success is the connection with a Higher Power, creating a cascading improvement in all areas of life such as career, finances, health, and relationships.

In many cases, a good rehab can save the life of a substance abuser, but a “good 28-day program” for a high-achiever looking to optimize their life can also improve, enhance, and liberate them from the challenges that hold them back. Rehab isn’t just for addicts anymore. Spiritual R.E.H.A.B is a movement that can catapult the success of those who have the will to go after what they deeply desire.

## Libby Adams

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**Dr. Libby Adams** is a speaker, author, and transformation strategist, using her more than thirty years of experience in education, leadership, and personal growth to help hundreds of high achievers transform their lives from the inside out and reach their goals in record time. She is also the founder and president of the International Academy of Self-Knowledge, a master practitioner of neuro-linguistic programming, and the creator of Transformational Meditation™.

Dr. Adams is also certified in the Dr. Albert Ellis™ method of addiction counseling and is the creator of Spiritual R.E.H.A.B., a twenty-eight-day transformational journey for people who do NOT have alcohol or substance abuse issues but who still want to “rehab” something without needing to check into a facility. She has devoted time as president of the Association for the Integration of the Whole Person and as presiding president of the AIWP Board of Directors.

If you're interested in learning more about Dr. Adams' work, visit her website to check out her free eBook called *The Positive Purpose of Negative Emotions*.

[transformationalmeditation.org](http://transformationalmeditation.org)

# Do You Understand? Improve Communication, Build Relationships

*Maija-Liisa Nyborg Adams*

Let's face it—when we talk, we're often misunderstood. From personal relationships to political and diplomatic relations, misunderstanding is at the root of many of today's challenges.

As I consider the challenges we have right now in the world, most stem from political, social, interpersonal, and even pandemic divides, debates, and distractions that make it even more challenging to communicate effectively.

**Relationships are a foundation of daily life. Misunderstanding erodes that foundation.**

Misunderstanding is costing you. It's costing you in your personal relationships, even in your professional relationships. You can't be successful in parenting, team building, leading, or in any area of life unless you are understandable.

Would you like to know how to communicate so friends, family members, colleagues, and clients understand you? How you hold a sales meeting, treat customers, hire or fire, manage a team, and lead others shows up in all your relationships, even those you love most. If you feel unable to clearly communicate ideas that are understandable, keep reading. This is for parents and leaders who realize that what you say and how you say it can make or break your relationships.

## **Sheila and Sam**

Sheila (not her real name) felt great that her son Sam (not his real name) was home after summer term at the university. She wanted to know all about his classes and his plans for the fall.

“I’m old enough to take care of myself,” Sam said.

Sheila was surprised at her son’s response. “I just want to know your plans.”

“I’ve got it handled, Mom!”

Her son was testy with her. She was concerned for him. He hadn’t liked summer term but didn’t share why. This reminded her how alone, unseen, and not good enough she felt when she first arrived at that same university, years earlier. But she didn’t share her thoughts either. She kept her memories to herself, even though she knew he might be feeling something similar.

“I am going to work instead of going back to school in the fall,” Sam said.

Sheila had done the same thing.

Sam was in that independent yet dependent stage, the toddler stage of adulting. He did not want to hear anything that felt like he was being told what to do.

Sheila got him to help her understand his plans a little bit better. Finally, he said he was going to keep working until he saved five thousand dollars. She immediately understood. Could they work as a team to earn it? What could she do to help him? She wished she had raised five thousand dollars for herself. She wished she could teach him and his siblings how.

As a result of misunderstanding, relationships suffer. And when relationships suffer, all those things that relationships support—families, business opportunities, political/community action—begin eroding. Misunderstandings are like cracks in the foundation of our lives.

## **Communication Skills: Reinforcing Relationships**

Just as steel reinforcement bars strengthen concrete foundations, good communication supports relationships. In all your relationships, you’re more successful when you clearly communicate your ideas so people understand what you are saying. It all comes down to three simple things: Ask, Listen, and Act.

**1. Ask.** Ask genuine, specific questions.

“How can I communicate better with my family members?” Sheila prayed. The thought came: “Take time to reflect.”

When you talk to someone, remember that it’s not about you; it’s about them. It’s about their interests and needs. So first get them talking. Ask specific, open-ended questions. Sheila realized her tendency was to ask, “Why did you do that?” or “What were you thinking?” especially when she felt her expectations were not met. Even though she wanted to understand her son’s thought process, her questions sounded like accusations. They put her son on the defensive. We have a tough time recovering from those types of questions.

Ask one thing about the person you’re talking to. Stay focused on them. Connect by seeing how you can help each other—by offering advice or a service. Give before you ask. When they answer, listen. Then ask, “Is there more?” Stay quiet and let them answer. When you ask them to tell you more and you stick around to actually listen to what they have to say, trust and appreciation increases.

**2. Listen.** Listen intently. Listen like your life depended on it. When I was in full labor and delivering my first child, my doctor abruptly stopped and said, “Stop pushing! Her umbilical cord just prolapsed.” He explained that this was dangerous, and he needed to perform an emergency Cesarean section because we only had a ten-minute window. He had my undivided attention. With his sixteen years of experience, I trusted him. His nurse, also with sixteen years of experience, encouraged him, “Let’s try one more time.” That got *his* attention. I could see him thinking, and then he nodded, looked me square in the eyes, and said, “This will work if you listen only to me and do exactly what I say, when I say it! Do you understand?” I nodded. Then I pushed only when he said to push, I stopped when he said to stop, and I pushed again when he said to push again. My daughter, now a mother herself, was born shortly afterward.

What could happen to your relationships if you always listened like your life, or the life of your loved ones, depended on it?

**3. Act.** Sheila experienced information overload while seeking answers to help Sam. She'd searched social media and the internet, but the right answers eluded her. She was reminded to read the Bible for the answers to the big questions, and right now communication was huge. Sheila wanted to get to the right answers so she could achieve better results. Years earlier when one sister-in-law, a new mother, asked for the best parenting books, Sheila remembered that another sister-in-law replied, "Parenting answers are in the Scriptures."

As Sheila contemplated how to communicate better in her family relationships, she felt a suggestion come to mind to reflect and express her feelings.

No one can argue with what you feel. Your feelings belong to you. Be willing to share your feelings that may help another understand that you get them. Take inspired action.

Use your newfound understanding to make life better for your family members, colleagues, or clients. This is where "actions speak louder than words" makes a real difference.

Communicating effectively take practice. Practice takes time. It takes consistent effort. It takes patience and persistence. But in the long run, you will develop that muscle when you ask specific questions, listen intently, and take inspired action. Ask, Listen and Act!

## **The Rewards of Good Communication**

- **You build trust.** Family members, friends, colleagues, and clients will rely on you when they feel you understand them and have their best interests at heart.

- **You're more effective in setting goals, and you achieve them faster.** When people trust you, they're more likely to embrace your goals and help you achieve them.
- **You improve results.** Communicate standards clearly to people whom you trust and are helping you and get ready to see quality go through the roof.

Begin today. Think of a relationship with a family member, neighbor, or business colleague that could use some help. Then go to work on rebuilding. When others sense your genuine interest, it can be surprising to see how quickly they respond. When you're understandable, they're often more understanding.

## Maija-Liisa N. Adams

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**Maija-Liisa N. Adams** is the founder & CEO of Maija-Liisa Speaks, an Idaho-based TEDx Talk coaching firm. Over the last six years, Adams has helped more than 100 clients understand how to land, nail and use their TEDx talk to grow their impact and increase their income. As a keynote speaker, she has addressed hundreds of individuals, including the International Women's Day Conference and BYU-Idaho, where she serves as an adjunct professor in public speaking and professional presentations. Before starting her business, Adams was a Regional Sales Manager for a \$1.4 billion global software company. Adams is also an esteemed member of Christopher Kai's GPS global speaker community, where its members include #1 best-selling international authors, thought leaders, world-renowned athletes, and seasoned executives who reside in 120 cities, 30 countries, and six continents.

# The Five Principles of Winning Relationships

*Dr. Jackie Black*

My friend Janice was driving me to the airport, and I noticed a red light on her dashboard.

I said, “Did you know there is a red light on your dashboard?”

“Yes, I know,” she said. “Anything to do with this car really freaks me out, so I just ignore it and hope it will go away.”

I said to myself, “Oh Lord, please let me get to the airport and make my plane.”

What I said out loud was “*Hmm!* How long has the light been on?”

“A long time,” she said.

This did not make any sense to me. I was sitting in a luxurious, plush leather seat in a \$100,000 car looking at that ominous red light on the mahogany dashboard.

Janice is smart, competent, and successful—but she was ignoring a warning light clearly visible on the dashboard of her car.

What was I missing?

Janice shared with me that when the red warning light suddenly appeared on her dashboard, it was completely unexpected, and she was scared about what it might mean.

Sometimes SMART, COMPETENT, SUCCESSFUL people freak out and ignore important warning signs when they are faced with something unexpected and scary.

Many people don’t pay attention to things that are not OK in their bodies. They ignore what’s not working in their businesses. They ignore warning signs

about money. Many couples ignore problems in their relationships, hoping they will just go away.

Ignoring anything is a terrible strategy when it comes to managing challenges in any area of your life, yet millions of people use exactly this strategy in their life, their business, their health, and their relationships.

We use this very same non-strategy strategy with our money. Most people have a very difficult time having money conversations or refuse to have them at all.

My colleague Margaret was a retired teacher. She had the opportunity to buy another teacher's tutoring business for a modest investment that she could easily afford, and she believed this was a sound investment with a huge upside. Margaret's husband, George, was vehemently against this investment, however, and forbade her to buy it and then refused to talk about it further. Instead, George suffered in silence week after week. No matter how many times Margaret tried to talk to him, he refused to even acknowledge her. They had always been each other's champion no matter what, and they had never inserted themselves in each other's businesses. Margaret was confused and saddened that George was doing that now, especially in such an unkind and unloving way. In spite of this, she decided to proceed.

George was furious and frequently threatened to end the marriage. Within six months of buying the business, Margaret saw a 60 percent increase in her monthly revenue and had already recouped her investment. George moved out of their home, and they were divorced shortly thereafter.

There was a problem, but for some reason George was unwilling or unable to talk about it. Margaret never understood what the problem was, and without knowing specifically what George wanted, they were not able to achieve a resolution.

Your business relationships cannot be ignored, either. You hire people because you are excited about who you think they are and the kind of job you think they'll do. Then, *BAM!* They turn out to be far less than you ever could

have imagined. Try firing them, though. It's expensive, painful, and time-consuming to get rid of a bad employee.

My friend John was a professional speaker, and he had several salespeople. One of the new hires was suddenly making fewer and fewer sales calls. Week after week John ignored this man's poor performance, hoping that he'd walk in the door the next day reinvigorated and recommitted to the job.

One day it dawned on John that he had made a mistake in hiring this man. He recognized that his inaction was resulting in fewer sales, which created two big problems for him. His sales numbers were way down, and now he had to have a very difficult conversation with this employee, one he hoped he'd never have to have.

How much time have you wasted and how much heartache have you suffered ignoring a problem that you hoped would just go away? No matter who you are dealing with and what it is you are unhappy or frustrated about ignoring the problem won't make it go away.

Here's the good news: there are five proven principles that you can use when you're ready to stop ignoring the problems with your health, money, family, and your business (employees, clients, customers).

## **Five Principles of Winning Relationships**

1. ***Identify the problem.*** You must have a clear understanding of what the problem is, for whom it is a problem, and why it is a problem.

My client Bob remembered this principle when one of his long-time employees came in one day very upset. When the employee finished speaking, Bob said, "I want to be sure I am accurately addressing your problem. What specifically doesn't work for you?"

It turns out the day she was scheduled to work was her son's birthday, and she was having a birthday party for him. Having a clear understanding of the problem allowed for effective problem-solving to happen.

- 2. *What do you want to be different?*** What do you want the outcome to be?  
If you could make a change, what would that change be?

Les and Holly are former clients of mine. Holly noticed that Les was busier than usual in his business, and she was feeling a little rejected. Instead of getting into a power struggle with him about his work being more important than she was, she remembered to ask herself, “What do I want to be different?”

Holly figured out that she wanted them to have coffee together in the morning, meet for a quick lunch on a Tuesday or a Wednesday every week, and order dinner in once a week so they could just hang out and eat delicious food together.

- 3. *How do you have to change to achieve your desired outcome?***

Obviously, all of us would love to have everything fixed without us having to change a thing! Unfortunately, that isn’t the way this works. You are going to have to do something . . . or stop doing something.

My neighbor Walter was upset and frustrated about money. I asked him the questions related to the first two principles. Then I asked him, “How do you have to change in order to achieve your desired outcome?”

He thought about it for a minute and said, “Ah, I see what you mean. I have to do something different so my money stuff can be different!”

- 4. *If you need something from someone else to accomplish your desired outcome, what do you need and from whom?*** This step is critical. You are not the problem *and* the solution. It is legitimate to need someone else involved in the problem to participate in finding solution to the problem.

My former client Virginia was the head of a department in a large company that was charged with onboarding new employees, and she was consistently not getting what she needed from another department.

One day I said to her, “Can I ask you a few questions about your frustration?”

“Of course,” she said.

I asked her the first three questions related to the first three principles, and then I asked her, “If you need something from someone else to accomplish your desired outcome, what do you need and from whom?”

Her eyes opened wide, and she said, “Oh! I can go have a chat with Robert in HR and brainstorm what might be possible.”

**5. *What action are you going to take? What’s the next step?*** All the information and awareness in the world is useless if you don’t take some action that will cause the problem to shift and be resolved.

My good friend Mark’s son would always forget to fill up the tank with gas after he used the car. This wasn’t about money; he had Mark’s gas card for the service station, which was very close to their home.

Mark had already applied the first four principles to this problem, but then he recognized that he had to take an action.

Mark and his son had a final conversation about this issue. Mark told his son that if he didn’t fill up the car the next time he took it out—and every time after that—he would stop making the car available for school, work, or other activities.

You have relationships with yourself, your employees, your customers and clients, your body, your money, your family members, your spouse. And you manage all those relationships in the very same way.

Learn to use these **five principles** to deal with any problem you have in any of your relationships, and you will be happier and feel a deep sense of peace and contentment in all your interactions with others.

## Jackie Black

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**Jackie Black, PhD, BCC**, guides couples who are loving, amazing, and crazy busy entrepreneurs and professionals to make every day feel like they are on their honeymoon. A highly regarded relationship expert, marriage educator and board-certified Coach to Couples, she was named by *Cosmopolitan* magazine as one of their most beloved international love gurus.

Dr. Jackie has more than thirty years of experience guiding couples across cultures in eight countries. Once-distant couples now experience deeper, more meaningful connections and intimacy and gain the tools and know-how they need to experience an extraordinary relationship.

Dr. Jackie is the author of the *Cracking the Code* series of relationship-focused books and an internet syndicated columnist. She has been featured on hundreds of radio shows and podcasts around the world.

To immediately increase romance in your relationship, visit [www.DrJackieGift.com](http://www.DrJackieGift.com) and download Dr. Jackie's free gift, *Your Romance Checklist: 5 Simple Actions You Can Take to Immediately Increase the Love and Closeness in Your Relationship*.

[DrJackieBlack.com](http://DrJackieBlack.com)

# Separation Is a Heartbreak

*Nancy R. Bartlit*

*History—with its flickering lamp—stumbles along the trail of the past,  
trying to reconstruct its scenes, to revive its echoes, and kindle—with pale  
gleams—the passion of former days.*

*—Winston Churchill*

The heartbreak of separation ensnares us all. The war against an invisible virus reminds me of the heartbreak of the last large world war. More than a year has passed since “the pandemic” was declared. At last, enough American citizens have been vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus to allow students to again walk the halls of their schools, churchgoers to gather for worship, and chums to break bread together while keeping social distance in the restaurants that have survived the economic distress. The exuberant response is described as “back to normal.”

The separation from the familiar has been painful as well as creative. Around the nation more and more restaurants, stores, and theaters are opening their doors to customers who are excited about getting “out” after staying at home for months. Many are tired of experiencing a daily ritual of looking into a square box on a screen to greet co-workers or friends. No hugs, no shaking of hands, no touching except for elbows had become the norm. To preserve lives, visits to loved ones in nursing homes were through a glass plate. Relatives could not visit dying relatives, nor hold traditional funerals for some 600,000 Americans lost to the virus plague.

Yet, for those Americans who had access to the internet, most are grateful for a software called Zoom which easily allowed students and employees to continue their work and friends and family to connect by sight and sound. Quite a treat, and free to the user!

In 2020-2021 separation lasted longer than a year; maybe it will be two. But how many persons could endure three-and-a-half years as their grandparents did? What was the difference? America was fighting two wars: one in Europe and one in the Pacific. Wartime separation was honorable and tolerable when the country had to defend itself and our form of government. Every family's life was impacted.

The tools of communication were so different from what we have now. It was an era when long-distance telephone calls were expensive, and overseas calls rare. Instead, letters were the common way people connected. A time lag between deliveries heightened the anticipation of news from a loved one.

Today Americans expect to take photos on their cell phones and send them along with a few quick clicks. In the 1940s, photos were snapped in a camera using a roll of plastic film to record the image, which then needed developing in chemicals before being printed on special paper in selected sizes. If one wanted to share a picture, one ordered several prints, taking about a week.

"Before cell phones" with instant capture and "to send" ability, telephones had rotating dials. There were no computers—just typewriters; no texted emojis to say "hello." It is amazing how thoughts and feelings fly around today, and millions of followers can watch a video. Technology has changed communication so much that even youngsters can do their thing, not with walkie-talkies, but texting with cell phones.

Separation today may not be separation at all as we knew it. Real separation and the pain of a loved one's absence have histories. Do you remember your first love, around the time you were in high school? You wanted to "go steady," but there were house rules. Do you remember how all you could think about was that person? You drew their picture while studying; you wanted to hold hands whenever you were with them. The attraction between the two of you was like two strong magnets.

So it was for Art and Bessie of Santa Fe. In 1939, a young, handsome high school graduate named Art Smith joined the New Mexico National Guard to

bolster his family's income, which was sparse during the Great Depression. The reputation of the rural Western guardsmen as sharpshooters filtered up to Washington, DC. The result was the federalization of 1,819 guardsmen to become the 200th Coast Artillery Battalion. While America's leaders worried that war was inevitable, the local guardsmen were ordered to master new skills in El Paso, Texas, to prepare to defend the distant Philippine Islands, far across the Pacific. After Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and Manila on the same day in December 1941, the 200th showed their valor.

Art had a girlfriend named Bessie Pacheco. Bessie was in Santa Fe when she learned that Art was being shipped out. She begged her father to drive 350 miles to El Paso to say goodbye to Art before his battalion departed. Despite the distance and the cost of gasoline and tires, her father gave in to her entreaties and drove her to where the men were stationed.

As they neared their destination, they saw a train pulling out, packed with troops. Bessie recognized Art wildly waving out a window as he recognized her father's car. She saw he had something in his hand which he flung out the window as the train sped away. Bessie found the *Life* magazine that Art had thrown. On it he had written these words: "Wait for me."

And she did. For three-and-a-half years, she waited. She wrote every day to Art, but after April 9, 1942, Art became a prisoner of war and never received any more of her letters since the enemy did not distribute mail to the POWs. Art was allowed to send a postcard once a year through the Red Cross. The card was addressed to his family, but it contained a special love code Bessie and Art had agreed to before he left for war. When the war had ended and Art was waiting to be rescued, the jubilant camp of freed POWs in Japan received provisions dropped by parachute from US war planes.

And, yes, when Art returned and regained his weight from years of starvation and disease, he and Bessie were married. She wore a flowing wedding dress made from a white silk parachute that Art brought home to her. They bore two healthy sons and had a happy marriage. Ironically, their home borders the former site of the Santa Fe Internment Camp.

Many other stories of perseverance and patience can be told by the 4,555 men of Japanese descent who were sent to the Santa Fe camp from 1942–1946. Because of their professions and leadership within the ethnic communities along the West Coast—but with no deeds of being disloyal to America—they were removed by train as a perceived military precaution. They were categorically considered “dangerous enemy aliens.” Some older internees were American-born citizens. Some were immigrants who had lived in the US for at least two decades with established families and successful careers. They were separated from their families who were assigned to different US Army camps.

When Bill Nishimura of Los Angeles, who was interned in the Santa Fe camp in his early twenties, spoke at a dedication of the Santa Fe camp marker in 2002, he said with a smile, “The government really starved us. . . . We got enough to eat, but this was an all-male camp, so we were starved for female companionship.”

As the war progressed, internees at the Santa Fe camp were reunited with their families in other camps scattered throughout the West. Yet, for the duration of the war, some 120,000 persons of Japanese descent remained in captivity in the camps, held behind barbed wire fences and watched by uniformed guards from towers. Fathers missed watching their children grow up even though they could exchange letters through a censor. Sons from all camps—American-born citizens—either volunteered or were drafted to serve in Europe. They served with great honor in the 442nd Regiment or in other military assignments. Bilingual youth, both female and male, served in the US Military Intelligence Service in the Pacific as translators, while their families were still held in camps. Talk about irony—besides the head of the household being separated from family and career, they also were separated from their life savings and business assets.

Thirteen years after the end of World War II, I took a train from the Atlantic coast to the Pacific coast, then a freighter from San Francisco to Taipei, Taiwan (then Formosa) to Yokosuka, Japan (Tokyo’s port). I then boarded a train heading north to Sendai, where I would teach American English in a Japanese college for two years while my sweetheart finished his schooling. We

kept in touch through daily letters. From those years in Japan, I understand the heartache of separation and the daily belief that the relationship would last. Another day would come. But homesickness, lack of hearing a voice or touching a hand, and all those emotions of being separated from a loved one made the second year away from home difficult. Yet my trust was rewarded when I returned. I am not sure if I could have waited, like Bessie, for three-and-a-half years. Could you?

Might these human stories be a form of vaccination against the heartbreak of separation? Imaginative use of today's communication tools, with patience, can help overcome the pain of longing.

## Nancy R. Bartlit

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**Nancy R. Bartlit** is a historian, author, worldwide researcher, and long-time lecturer of how New Mexico helped to shorten World War II in the Pacific. With a history degree from Smith College, she taught in a private academy for girls in Sendai, Japan, thirteen years after WWII before settling in Los Alamos, where her leadership in government, historic preservation, and health and environmental concerns are well known.

A popular keynote speaker, her topics include New Mexicans who played a key role in the outcome of the War in the Pacific: US Army survivors of the notorious Philippine Bataan Death March, Navajo Code Talkers whose code simplified communication to capture Pacific islands ever closer to the enemy's home base; males of Japanese descent considered enemy aliens interned in a Santa Fe camp, and the researchers sent to a secret laboratory in Los Alamos where the atomic bombs were developed. Her compelling presentations are enhanced by rare archival photos taken from her travels to Pacific World War II and American internment camp sites.

Nancy is revising *Silent Voices of World War II*, a long-time approved textbook for New Mexico schools. Check out [www.pajaritopress.com](http://www.pajaritopress.com) to follow its release.

[nancybartlit.com](http://nancybartlit.com)

# Stay in the Ring—And Learn Something New

*Carol Bausor*

It's 7:40 a.m. on a weekday, and I'm standing in front of the door of the gym, my kit bag on my shoulder, wondering if I have made the right decision and thinking, *What on earth am I doing here?*

Have you ever had gym anxiety—that terrible feeling that everyone else in the place is super slim, super fit, and know EXACTLY what to do with those complicated machines? Whereas you are just standing there looking stupid. Sounds pretty silly, doesn't it? But it can be paralyzing.

I met Simon at a networking meeting, one of those events where everyone introduces themselves and says what they do. When he introduced himself as the head of a boxing fitness studio, my ears pricked up. I was interested . . . and tempted to sign up. I had done some boxing before as part of a fitness program and had really enjoyed it. Something about being able to strike out and get rid of a lot of anger and irritation, maybe. I had enjoyed channeling that energy into a few punches. And I had to admit that I could lose a few pounds. So I enthusiastically enrolled for my first boxing session, thinking I had found a great solution. *I'm in, Simon!*

First quandary: What does a middle-aged woman wear for a boxing lesson? How many women—and maybe men, too, for all I know—stop to think about how they are going to look in a gym, that temple of slim and fit young people and energetic workouts? GYM ANXIETY can be a little like the nervousness we feel whenever we are about to embark on a new activity, right?

Second quandary: How to get there? Being on time is generally important to me, and so at 7:40 a.m., I had found the right bus and gotten to the gym. There I was, pushing open the door.

A coach welcomed me, and I told him my name. It didn't seem to ring any bells for him. And then he said something a little strange: "Are you a hairdresser?" Why on earth was he asking me that? Do I *look* like a hairdresser? What does a hairdresser even look like?

Now, I happen to be a language teacher, and I know that sometimes when you are learning a foreign language, you understand the words people are saying to you, but you have no idea what those words actually mean.

I told him I was there for an 8:00 appointment with Coach Yvan, and that still didn't seem to ring any bells for him. With no explanation of his weird question, he directed me to the changing rooms. I wasn't feeling comfortable—no warm welcome, no coach for me. And there were no hooks in the changing rooms—no lockers either. *Maybe that's how it is in a boxing gym*, I thought, trying to have a reassuring dialogue with myself. What had I expected, a red carpet?

When I came out of the changing room, the coach was busy giving a lesson to a guy . . . and a group of *hairdressers* were arriving for their lesson with a different coach. *OK! I get it now!* Boxing activity was going on all around me. But what was I supposed to do with myself since my own coach still wasn't there?

Now you may not know this, but there is absolutely **nowhere** to sit in a boxing studio. To make matters worse, none of the people engaged in boxing around me took the slightest notice of me. I alternated from thinking I was perhaps invisible and feeling pretty stupid! You had better believe that I was having a really bad case of gym anxiety. Worst of all, I was annoyed with myself for feeling this way in such an everyday situation. I am a grown woman, after all—what was I afraid of?

Well, time passed oh-so-slowly while I tried to disappear by merging into the wall I was leaning against. And still no coach! I buried my nose in my phone, tried to look busy and unconcerned, while I just hated being there. I felt worse and worse. Where was my damn coach? Fifteen minutes is the **longest** time when you don't know what to do.

At last! At 7:58 I got a message on my phone. Coach Yvan had jauntily written to me “I am going to be a little late. I will be there as quick as I can.” *Whaaaat? You are **already** late, Mister! I really, really don’t like that!*

What should I do? Wait, and certainly be late for my next appointment? Or spend fifteen more minutes feeling stupid?

What would you do?

I ran! Yes, I ran away! I changed back into my street gear, forgetting my gym pants in the changing room to add insult to injury, texted Yvan that I was **not OK** with his new, non-negotiated lesson time, and left! For goodness sake, what sort of customer service was that? I was not going to tolerate it! Nobody in the place had been expecting me; nobody even said, “Don’t worry, he will be here soon.” And my coach thinks he can show up late for a first lesson? Of course I left . . . I was so in the right . . . I mean, wouldn’t you have left too?

Except . . . I didn’t feel happy with running away.

Does that seem ridiculous to you? If you are a member of your local gym and have been going for ever, I’m sure it does. If you ever find yourself uncomfortable in new situations, maybe you will be a little sympathetic about my cowardly behavior.

What makes it worse is that I teach people like you not to be afraid, and I am very good at it. Not to be afraid of speaking a foreign language, for instance. My clients—adults who have studied a language at school but can’t speak a word of the language they spent so much time learning—describe the anxiety, fear, and embarrassment they feel, and their desire to run away . . .

At that boxing studio, I experienced the same thing—the same sort of anxiety when faced with an uncomfortable situation! Sure, I could blame it on the terrible customer service, the unprofessional coach, but really, if I were totally honest, I would have to admit that I had already brought my gym anxiety along with me in my kit bag, even before I pushed open that door.

I could have kicked myself, because I really wanted to give boxing another try, but if I was going to have the pleasure of boxing, then I had better put my gloves on. **The first fight you have to win is always against yourself.**

So, I took a deep breath, called the boss, told him what had happened, and told him that I wanted another coach. One who arrives on time. And *boom! Kapow!* to Yvan! *Zat! Splat!* to my fear! I booked another lesson . . .

Guys, it's true that when you want to learn something new, the first fight you have to win is ALWAYS the one you fight against yourself.

Do you need to win that first fight? To win the battle against the fear of trying something new?

It's time for you to put your gloves back on—to get back into the ring. Turn that fight into a party, where you win the grand prize of pleasure in your own accomplishments every time. Wouldn't that feel great? How many doors would that open for you? How many great opportunities for you, your professional life, and even for your whole family?

My speciality is helping people fight the fear they feel when they want to start speaking in a foreign language without feeling stupid or embarrassed. So, if that's your case, and you have ever felt frightened of going into a situation where you need to speak a foreign language, well . . .

Let's get back in the ring!

## Carol Bausor

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**Carol Bausor** ran away from England to France when she was eighteen years old to study French for a year. She never quite got around to going back! Today she has lived in her adopted country for longer than she lived in Britain, so she is not quite sure what nationality that makes her. (Definitely French as far as fashion and cuisine are concerned . . .) What she is sure of, though, is how much pleasure she gets from helping people to realize that—contrary to what they thought when they got out of school—it is REALLY easy to learn to speak a foreign language.

Can you imagine watching romantic Italian films in Italian? Going shopping and dining in amazing French restaurants, and ordering what you wanted . . . in French? Talking to members of your Hispanic family in Spanish? How fabulous that would be!

Carol not only speaks several languages herself, but she can help you learn the language you yearn to understand and speak—easily, quickly, and in a really fun way. She is the owner of a language school in France and has personally coached thousands of adults to language success. You don't even have to learn any grammar! She knows how to help you with that terrible problem: daring to speak without feeling embarrassed that you are making a mistake. You too can learn how to be confident when speaking the language of your choice. For free personal advice on how to begin, visit Carol's website.

[www.carolbausor.fr](http://www.carolbausor.fr)

# Diets Work! But Not for Long—How to Create Lasting Weight Loss

*Jen Beck*

Every day, people wake up desiring more out of life. **More** money, **better** relationships, a **bigger** business, **more** happiness, **better** health, and a **smaller** waistline.

Some people wake up with a plan, but they are the minority. Fewer still wake up with a plan *and* the commitment or resolve to do what it takes to make it happen.

Why?

Because to do what it takes to be successful, they have to give up some of what they currently have. They must destroy old habits that have gotten them where they are in order to create new habits that will move them closer to their dreams.

Better health and a smaller waistline take action; achieving these require destroying the poor habits that created your current situation in the first place.

Your brain doesn't like change at all. Neuroscientist Evian Gordon states that "the key organizing principle of the brain is to keep us safe." The uncertainty of change definitely doesn't make us feel safe. Even small changes can feel threatening.

So if you change all your habits at once, your brain can rarely maintain them all in the long-term. It is too traumatic for your brain to experience that much uncertainty. It wants to run right back to its comfort zone.

Every year people set New Year's resolutions to lose weight. They go crazy by cutting out sugar, carbs, soda, and alcohol, etc. And they do it simultaneously, which is a clear recipe for disaster.

Not to mention, a study concluded that the people who start a diet January 1st start an average of five to seven more diets that same year, because they continue to fail.

There is no shortage of diets and exercise programs that claim to help you lose weight, right?

Last year alone the US spent 72 billion dollars on the diet and weight loss industry, yet more than two-thirds of Americans are overweight—and our obesity rate *increased to 42 percent in 2020*.

Let's take Bridget for an example of how this plays out in real life.

Bridget was at the end of her rope when she came to me. She was tired of being sick, tired, and fat. None of her clothes fit, her career was suffering, her family never got the best of her, and she felt she couldn't live another day like that.

She had just finished a program at her local hospital where she drank three shakes a day to lose weight. She had lost four pounds TOTAL over the last year. She had done Weight Watchers two to three times per year for over twenty-five years along with a handful of other programs such as Jenny Craig, supplements, etc. Nothing had worked. She was still more than fifty pounds overweight and had other medical conditions as well.

Instead of just focusing on the number on the scale, we looked at how to help her body heal at a cellular level while regaining its highest function by making strategic micro changes. **In just three months, she had put her rheumatoid arthritis in full remission, lost twenty-five pounds and eliminated two of the three blood pressure medications she had been on for over thirty years using the principles I share below.**

Yes, you can drop some weight by overhauling your life, but what happens when you go back to your old ways? You gain it all back (and then some!). And how much damage have you done to your gut and your metabolism with all the craziness?

I promise you: you *CAN* shed the excess fat you've been carrying, but it is not going to happen with deprivation or starvation!

## Three Key Principles

1. **Create Appropriate Goals and Identify Your “WHY.”** This is one of the most important steps in creating lasting results!
  - WHY do you want to lose the weight?
  - Why is it important?
  - Who else is it going to impact for you to be healthy, have tons of energy, and be able to move freely?
  - What will life look like when the weight is gone and your health restored?
  - What will life look like in five to ten years if you do NOT make the changes now?

When you set your goals, you must consider WHY you want to lose the weight and WHO else is going to benefit. (Most people will do more for other people that they love than they will do for themselves.)

2. **Take Responsibility for What Goes in Your Mouth.** Don't be a victim of circumstance. YOU choose what goes into your mouth; no one else does.

When you say things like “My mom won't take no for an answer,” you are giving her authority over your life, your health, and your waistline. If she was accidentally serving you arsenic instead of sugar, would you eat it? She thinks it's sugar, but you *know* it's rat poison. Are you still going to eat it, regardless how hard she pushes? NO!

So don't use her as an excuse. You are the only one that decides what you eat, so OWN it!

You have to give yourself permission to be “*that*” person. In a restaurant, tell the server what you want to eat versus letting the menu telling you what to

eat. Decide what protein you want and then decide which veggies you would like that they offer. Simple and easy!

Eating junk because it is fast or convenient doesn't serve you long-term. Cramming yourself with sugar because you are stressed trying to manage others' needs only to have a hangry episode later doesn't serve anyone. Take care of yourself first, just like the flight attendant tells you to do with your oxygen mask, so you can take care of the ones you love.

Taking care of yourself is a loving act—both for you and your loved ones. If you don't take care of yourself, who will?

**If you want to create lasting weight loss, you get to make yourself a priority!**

You can eat whatever you CHOOSE. Just make sure you understand the consequences and OWN your decisions, because they are ultimately YOUR decisions. As the Bible says, **“Everything is permissible, but not everything is beneficial”** (1 Corinthians 10:23)

**3. Eat Real Food!** Real foods are whole foods. You know, foods that don't come with a label on them or a list of ingredients you can't pronounce. Items that grow in the ground or are raised on a farm. When you eat something that is not processed, you will reap the greatest amount of nutrients from it and avoid the toxins and additives in processed foods.

Did you know there are over forty thousand food items in the grocery store? And did you also know that the majority of those foods are more accurately food-like-substances than actual food? Food manufacturers spend BILLIONS of dollars every single year to create the “bliss point” of sugar, fat, and salt to make sure that you fall in love with and become addicted to their creations.

### **Remember:**

- Food industry packaging puts marketing on the front and facts on the back (in the ingredients list).

- See it on TV = Don't eat it. If it is on TV, they are spending more money getting you to buy their product than they are on the quality of the product itself. Think about it: When was the last time you saw a commercial for cucumbers or broccoli?

**The more educated you are about real nutrition versus fake nutrition, the easier it is to protect your health.**

Every person is unique in their needs and their journey! Understanding *your* body is the foundation to your success!

**There are two components to understanding your body for *lasting* weight loss.**

- 1 ***Know YOUR Metabolic Design.*** This is the amount of protein, fiber, and fat that is ideal for *your body*. Knowing your Metabolic Design helps you understand what *your best fuel* is. One person's nutrition is another person's poison (or at least ten extra pounds).
- 2 ***Understand WHY You Are Carrying Extra Weight in the First Place.*** There are actually a dozen reasons why you could be holding that extra fat. Getting the root cause and resolving it is fundamental in releasing your excess weight for good.

If you only focus on losing weight without determining the root cause of why you are overweight, you will be significantly more likely to regain it.

For example, a low-functioning or underactive thyroid may lead to weight gain, which you may choose to address with a crash diet of calorie restriction. Unfortunately, although you may lose a few pounds initially, you will also be slowing your metabolism even more. This could put you at significantly greater risk when you return to your old ways and regain the lost weight—or even more.

Understanding your own unique Metabolic Design, your “WHY,” and which nutritional foods provide your best fuel will provide the foundation for you to recover from your lifestyle, restore your vitality, and reclaim your life. Then it's up to you to TAKE ACTION!

## Jen Beck

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**Jen Beck** is a registered nutrition consultant, integrative holistic coach, speaker, author, and the creator of the acclaimed 7-Day Sugar Reset, The Metabolic Miracle, and Simple Wellness for Life programs.

After attending Normandale College and the University of Minnesota, Jen became a registered nutrition consultant with a certification from the School of Nutritional Sciences in California and a certified corporate health coach from the United States Wellness Chamber. She is also an advanced certified L.I.I.F.T. Untherapy practitioner.

Through her own transformation from a diet of sugar, caffeine, and convenience food, Jen knows firsthand the shifts and steps, both physically and mentally, necessary to achieve and maintain optimal wellness. She is dedicated to helping you create complete health—not just the absence of sickness, but true vibrant, energetic aliveness.

Over the last twenty years, Jen has helped thousands of individuals recharge their bodies and reclaim their lives by teaching them how to satisfy their body's individual and specific needs instead of grasping at every fad diet that comes along. Her simple and powerful system teaches busy individuals how to succeed despite the roadblocks that inevitably appear. The result? Weight loss, lower risk of disease, and greatly increased energy and vitality.

Today Jen spends her time speaking, writing, and personally coaching clients. She is available to provide keynotes, lunch and learns, and workshops. Jen also offers self-study programs, group coaching, and VIP one-on-one support.

# Life Is Too Short Not to Be Doing What Lights You Up

*Amy Charland*

“Tim is dead.”

That’s what a colleague whispered loudly in my ear as I entered the office. I stood there frozen for a moment, letting the realization sink in that I would never see Tim again. A montage of memories flashed through my mind—such as just seeing Tim yesterday in the break room, sipping a cup of coffee as he proudly showed me a picture of his family on their new sailboat.

Now Tim is gone. He will never have another cup of coffee; he will never be able to hug his kids again or go sailing. Tim loved to sail. He had dreamed about retiring early and sailing around the world. Now none of his hopes and dreams would ever be realized.

Tim no longer has any choices, but you do. In fact, you have a staggering number of choices because you are still breathing. You tell yourself you don’t have choices, but this is a lie you tell yourself to feel safe and comfortable. You tell yourself this lie if you’re unhappy. If your bank account is underfunded. If the relationship with your spouse is strained. If your kids ignore you. If your job stresses you out. If your business is hemorrhaging money. You have the choice to make a different decision right now that could change the trajectory of your life forever.

But you probably won’t. You won’t change because it’s easier not to take responsibility for your actions, your results, and your life.

According to a study conducted by the University of Scranton, only 8 percent of people achieve their goals. Why? Because they don’t change their behavior. When was the last time you set a personal goal and achieved it? I’m

not talking about a simple goal like getting the laundry done or paying the bills on time. I'm talking about a goal so big that it makes you question if it is even possible. A goal that would light up your life if it were achieved.

The first step toward living the life you want is telling yourself the truth about where you relinquish responsibility. Steven Adler, a founding member of Guns N' Roses, was fired from the rock band due to heroin addiction. Years later he was quoted as saying, "You can have all the riches and success in the world, but if you don't have your health, you have nothing."

You're likely not addicted to heroin, but if you're not taking responsibility for your health, you're hooked on deceiving yourself. Self-deception is a killer. Spending hours sitting on the couch scrolling through social media or binge-watching all seasons of *Schitt's Creek* while eating takeout puts you at risk for chronic health conditions, such as stroke, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease. According to the World Health Organization, 80 percent of all chronic disease is entirely preventable. Each day, if you were to put down the fork and lace up the walking shoes, you could avoid the catastrophic costs of poor health down the road.

Not taking responsibility harms your health, and it also destroys marriages. One of the most common reasons marriages fail, based on the findings of the National Center for Biotechnology Information, is fighting among couples. As they say, it takes two to tango. In other words, both parties have equal responsibility for the marriage. But when one or both partners refuse to take responsibility for their half of the partnership, the consequences are often divorce—or worst yet, a miserable existence in a loveless marriage . . . until death do you part.

When it comes to retirement accounts, many Americans are choosing not to change their saving habits, instead using a "hope for the best" strategy. In a survey conducted by Northwestern Mutual, 41 percent of those surveyed stated they were worried about the amount of money they had saved for retirement but had taken no action to alter their situation. Hoping for the best may make you feel good now, but when working in a fast-food restaurant in your seventies to make ends meet, you're going

to regret buying designer clothes for your virtual avatar while sipping on iced white chocolate mochas.

One of the most insidious ways many of us relinquish responsibility is around employment. We've made our employer responsible for our happiness, the state of our finances, and our health. If you hate your job, you blame the boss instead of leaving. If you cannot afford the newest gadget, you complain about your salary. If your blood pressure is through the roof, you blame the job stress instead of taking a relaxation class to learn how to cope better. Yes, corporate America is in desperate need of an overhaul, but that doesn't mean you are powerless. By taking full ownership of your life, you become part of the solution.

Once you acknowledge the truth that you have taken a back seat in your life by abdicating responsibility, you are left with two choices: You can continue on the same path and accept the consequences, or you can choose to make a change to create a life you love.

Now, if you're still not sure you've given up responsibility in some area of your life, look at your emotions. Anxiousness, frustration, and resentment are often key indicators that you are not taking command of all areas of your life.

Let's say you get angry at the dog for chewing your favorite retro high-top sneakers. Did you take the time to train Spot to obey so he knows not to destroy household items? Did you take Spot on enough walks to keep him happy and content? Did you put your prized weekend shoes where Spot couldn't get to them? Poor Spot—he's responsible not only for your happiness but for your wardrobe as well. Sounds ridiculous, right? But we blame everyone and everything when we fail to take responsibility.

Pause and look at your own life. Are you happy? Do you wake up excited for the day? Are you living the life you want to live? Do you feel in control of your life? If not, you have not been taking full responsibility. Your emotions and results prove it. Start noticing and tracking where you are giving up responsibility in your life. The results may surprise you.

Once you've assessed where you are relinquishing responsibility, the next step is to stop making excuses and blaming others. You are now in the driver's seat of your life. You get to decide where you want to go and how to get there.

Here's the thing, though. Once you decide how you want your life to be and take control of the wheel, it will feel very uncomfortable. You will likely experience feelings of overwhelm and apprehension because your previous life had been devoted to avoiding responsibility. It's a shock to the system.

You will want to run back to how things were, finding shelter in the shadow of what other people want you to do. Don't let the false promise of comfort derail you from your goals. It is a lot easier to have someone else tell you what to do, but you will resent it. You won't do it either, so you might as well spend the time and energy to determine your own path.

Be aware that taking responsibility requires courage and patience. It's like jumping into the deep end of a pool and flailing about, fearing you will drown, desperate for someone to save you. And then you finally realize you are in complete control, and all you have to do is relax and allow yourself to float.

Being able to stay afloat and learn to swim like an Olympic athlete requires that you take a step each day toward your goals. Each day you need to practice the skill of self-leadership. Taking consistent action will be one of the most challenging things you ever do because it requires you to do something when you don't feel like doing it. You will not have someone to save you or someone to blame.

The good news is that there is a way to make change easy. We tend to make change hard by trying to change everything at once. When we do this, our brain reacts as if there is an immediate threat that must be eliminated. The key is not to take massive action but to take small actions each day, leading to massive results.

Start with tiny steps. By starting small, you won't put the brain on high alert. It's like you are sneaking in the back door of a dark house. As you go

from room to room quietly turning on lights and doing some light housekeeping, the brain notices but doesn't get all freaked out about it because you don't seem to be a threat. Eventually, the brain invites you to stay awhile and have a cup of tea.

Using the approach of taking small actions each day will help you develop new habits that will be sustainable long-term. Stop waiting for the perfect time to do what you love. Start doing what lights you up today. Step-by-step, you will create a life worth living.

## Amy Charland

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**Amy Charland** is a coach, speaker, and writer on a mission to help people live a life that lights them up. Her dedication to serving others in creating a freedom-based lifestyle stems from her transformational journey.

After achieving her master's degree, Amy was excited to start a new life as a college administrator. She quickly moved up the career ladder to attain her dream job of managing her own department, but it all came at a high cost to her happiness, health, finances, and relationships. Alone, severely overweight, depressed, and owing more than she was making, Amy realized she had to make a drastic change in her life.

After discovering the power of self-leadership, Amy turned her life around and founded Lights On Again Coaching. She has fifteen years of coaching experience and multiple coaching certifications, including the acclaimed credential of National Board-Certified Health and Wellness Coach (NBC-HWC). As a highly sought-after reinvention specialist, Amy's clients start living their ideal life faster than they believe possible.

[amycharland.com](http://amycharland.com)

# Stop Fixing Others and Start Living Your Life

*Helena de Jong*

Would you really rather die by helping others solve their problems and sacrificing yourself along the way? Wouldn't you rather lead your own life and take care of yourself first so that you can really be of service?

When you try to solve other people's problems instead of letting them help themselves, you will get exhausted, fatigued—and you probably will get sick. And you will blame others for it.

What's wrong with helping others solve their problems? It is good to help others! People like to offer help; it feels good. But here's the catch. It's not about helping others with their problems—it's about the way you do it!

What does *help* actually mean? According to Google, *help out* is defined as “make it possible for (someone) to do something by offering his services or resources.”

Helping is about providing people with the resources they need to make it easier for them to take action or solve their own problem. It's not solving it for them with whatever means you have! That doesn't help anyone, but rather deprives someone of the opportunity to learn and develop for themselves!

I learned that myself the hard way. My father got sick when I was seventeen years old. I had to drop out of school to help my father in his business. Our family lost everything bit by bit, and in the end my father left us. This situation left me depleted of energy and sick, and I had to start over.

It's all about *how* you help people. People who truly help others don't solve someone else's problem for them; they show that person how to solve their own problems. That builds the person's self-confidence and trust.

When you solve problems for others, you indirectly say two things to them: 1) I'm doing this for you because you are not able to solve your own problem, and it makes me feel good; and 2) I can do it better than you. This makes the other person feel very insecure. It is not what you consciously or directly say to them, but it's the message you're giving them on an unconscious level.

Imagine what this is doing to the people around you—your children, your partner, your friends. They will all learn to lean on you. What will this do in your job, career and in business?

Everyone will end up depending on you! Knowing that you do the best work, that you can solve every problem, they will let you do it! You will get all of the work! This will not give you the success and ease in life you want. There will be no time to recharge. Frustration, exhaustion, anxiety, and stress will be a daily experience. You will lose the joy of living and working.

## **That's why you have to stop solving problems for others and help yourself first!**

When you are struggling in your life and career, it's easy to blame circumstances and other people for your problems. Someone else isn't doing their job well or they have other priorities. If you start doing the work yourself so that the project comes to a successful conclusion, you will fall behind in your own work. You don't want to fail or feel responsible for this, so you blame the other person or situation for it. You also don't dare to speak to the other about the situation; you're afraid it will turn into a conflict or damage the relationship, or they might think you are not able to do the job.

Making this choice ensures you will not be successful in your career. You'll continue to fill in for others, afraid of how they would respond if you talked to them or asked for help. You just keep doing the work at the expense of getting your own work done. If something needs to be done and someone asks for volunteers, you are the one who has already raised your hand. It doesn't even occur to you that someone else could do it too. This affects the thoughts you have about yourself and your own abilities. It affects your self-esteem.

Why does something that looks so obvious on the outside feel so different on the inside?

Realistically, you have everything it takes to take good care of yourself, do a great job, and enjoy life. It all depends on how you choose to live your life, how you build your career or business, how you want to raise your children.

There is a reason why you do what you do. You unconsciously resolve the things outside of yourself in the hope that something will be resolved within yourself, but that doesn't happen. So you think, *I have to try harder and work harder*. As long as you are busy arranging and solving everything for everyone else, you have the idea that you are of added value. Because you believe you add value this way, you will continue the cycle you are in. As a result, you do not live the life you actually want. If you don't have the success you want, your work won't give you the fulfillment you hoped for, and your relationships will not develop the depth you desire.

It's time to start thinking differently! It is not about what the world does or how it reacts; it is about the choices you want to make now. That means you have to break through this vicious circle. As Mahatma Gandhi says, "If you want to change the world, start with yourself." The real issue here is that you must stop fixing others and start fixing yourself first so you can live life on your terms.

The reason you are reading this book is that you are looking for answers that really make that difference in your life. Answers that will give you lasting success, valuable relationships, and better health. No control but trust. No must but may. You want time for yourself and your family and the freedom to do what you want to do in your life, in your career, or business.

What are you waiting for?

**Stop solving for others and start focusing on your life today!**

**Five Principles for Living Life on Your Terms**

1. ***Educate yourself.*** Start with developing yourself to be a good leader, parent, partner, and person. In this rapidly changing world, you need

knowledge. You need to be flexible, to act quickly when necessary, and to make the right decisions. You need to know who you are as a person, where you want to go, what you want to achieve, and how you want to interact with others. You want to feel better about yourself, proud of what you have achieved. Educate yourself of how it can be done differently. Personal development brings happiness, wisdom, and confidence.

2. ***Delegate your work.*** You've already discovered that you cannot do everything on your own—that is, at the expense of yourself, your health, and your success. Moreover, you don't get the chance to really show what you can do, to demonstrate what else is in you. There is no time for that. Let go of the control that everything has to be perfect. If you learn to delegate, everyone will have the opportunity to show their talents and develop themselves. Together you can achieve much more than you could ever do on your own. Delegate whatever someone else can do cheaper, better, and faster than you. With a well-composed team, you will achieve better results and have more time for yourself and your family.
3. ***Train your people.*** Train your team and inspire them! Instead of doing it for them, let them do it for themselves. Build a team based on trust, support, and loyalty. Help each person to grow in their role, and this will make you grow too. This creates new leaders who take responsibility for themselves. This results in better performance and a closer team.
4. ***Communicate openly and honestly.*** Good communication builds genuine relationships. Authenticity and openness ensure more commitment and interaction with one another. Communication also means giving feedback. Giving feedback can be tricky, but they are some of the most valuable conversations we can have with one another to perform better and grow. Giving and receiving feedback is a skill you can learn through practice and development.
5. ***Take care of yourself.*** Make the decision to take care of yourself first every day. A fulfilled, successful life depends on it. Then you will be able to really help others. Are you an inspiring example for your children, your

partner, your team, and your family? If so, you will have time to sit on the couch with that book without unrest or guilt.

Now is the time for action. Don't believe your own excuses that you can't do it or you'll never get ahead of where you are now. That's not what you really want! Focus on what you want to achieve: your dreams of freedom, better health, deeper relationships, and success in your career. Spend time with your kids and family and relax more! Stop fixing others and start fixing yourself first, so you can live the life you desire!

## Helena de Jong

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**Helena de Jong** helps managers and CEOs become high performers without adding to their workload. Through her unique leadership training and consulting, her clients are recognized as experts, respected by their teams, and able to make a greater impact.

Her Keys to Inspired Leadership Method uncovers and transforms the root behaviors of leaders so they get more results from their teams in less time. She teaches that the way people experience work and life can best be described as a mirror of the beliefs and choices they have made and the way they are programmed to behave. While you cannot change what life brings on your path, you can change how you deal with those challenges. By transforming how you deal with these challenges, you find inner strength and resilience, which makes you an inspiring leader.

Helena has worked with numerous organizations in the Netherlands, including TNO Innovation for Live, G-Star Raw, *Belastingdienst*, Government services, *Advieskeuze.nl* (a financial platform), and MKB businesses.

[zekerjezelfzijn.nl](http://zekerjezelfzijn.nl)

# Nothing Stops You but You!

*Kim Ellet*

A month before our fourteenth wedding anniversary, I found out my husband was dating other people. I found out on April 1st—April Fool’s Day—which seemed appropriate. . . . The Universe certainly loves a good punch line!

We’ve all experienced unexpected events or life-changing moments, whether it’s a diagnosis, losing a job, or circumstances not going as planned. It’s understandable to feel overwhelmed with grief, fear, or blame, but taking a step back to look at what you’re learning can help you get through the process. That’s what I did.

I learned that I DO have a hard-stop, “enough is enough” boundary.

I learned that I am stronger and braver than I ever realized.

And I learned that nothing really stops you but you—what you say about things, what you do, and how you react.

It’s not easy to come to that realization; it’s much easier to play the blame game. But it’s also true that you’re either making a change or making a choice. You can choose to tolerate the pain, to hold tight to what’s not working. Or you can choose to make a change. I chose to make the biggest change in my life when I filed for divorce and opted for a different ending to the story I was living.

We have all had to make hard choices: making a job change, moving to a new city, firing a long-time employee, letting our children have more independence, or making a tough medical decision for ourselves or a loved one. Change is hard, scary, and uncomfortable, so we avoid it at all costs. In fact, we typically don’t make a change until the pain of staying where we are—the pain of staying the same—hurts more than doing something different.

So where do you begin? How do you navigate past the very real feelings that are keeping you stuck?

I recommend focusing on three main steps:

- 1. Define the Problem.** First, identify what's not working. What's "killing you"? What's keeping you up at night? As a business owner, maybe you are afraid of losing your company. Your sales are down, and your team is draining you by underperforming and making costly mistakes.

As a parent, you could be losing sleep over the crowd your teen has recently begun hanging out with, or perhaps their grades are falling. Whatever the issue, the first step is to truly identify what's not working and what it's costing you to maintain the status quo and do nothing. This sounds easier than it is because we are wired to pretend that everything is OK—to focus mostly on what's going right while wearing our rose-colored glasses. It's important to focus on the positive, but it's imperative to also face the reality of a situation. Don't fool yourself and exist in denial until the situation gets to a point of no return. Once you get clear on what's not working, you'll be able to decide if you are willing to do something about it. Remember, you're either making a choice or making a change.

- 2. Paint the Picture.** Next, examine what you are losing by not making a change. Decide how you want things to be—design the ideal outcome. If you were not going to lose your business, how would it function instead? What do you want to be different in your financial picture? How about your health? If your marriage has ended, visualize how you want your life to feel after the divorce. Paint a clear picture and drill down on what is below the surface.

Let's say you want to win the lottery. It's important to look behind that desire. WHY do you want to win the lottery? Do you want to buy a

house, pay off student loans, expand your business, or perhaps travel the world?

When you get clear on your actual motivation—what you truly want—you're now open to creative possibilities to bring that vision to reality rather than spending a lot of time trying to win a game of chance. If you're interested in world travel, perhaps you can work in a travel-related field, teach English to local students, or seek an international assignment with your current employer. There are many options once you can clearly name your aspiration.

**3. Get Going!** After unambiguously defining what's missing and what changes you're wholeheartedly committed to, the next step is to figure out what's getting in the way and get into action. Why haven't you already reached the goal? What are the obstacles between the relationship you are in and the one you'd like to be in? Remember, no one stops you but you. Who do you need to be? What can you say, think, or do to improve your relationship? What's standing in the way of completing your first marathon? What is preventing you from growing your business?

This past year we had many opportunities to face things getting offtrack, from the pandemic, businesses and schools closing, and losing loved ones. It is understandable to blame events beyond our control, especially when it feels like there are so many of them! But remember, nothing stops you but you. What CAN you control?

*When we are no longer able to change a situation,  
we are challenged to change ourselves.*

—Victor Frankl

Once you realize what is standing in the way of living a life you love, you must take charge of your thoughts, words, and actions. That's all you can really control anyway! No matter what is going on around you, you can take time

to reevaluate what really matters. Are you spending time on things and people that you truly care about?

I had a myriad of thoughts, words, and actions following my April Fool's Day revelation several years ago. Those that proved most fruitful were the ones that focused on how I wanted to design my new life, my post-divorce reinvention. I had my share of nonproductive thoughts too; it was all part of the ongoing and necessary healing process. But when I got clear on my commitment to win at this, that's when I began to take control of my story. I went back to school for my coaching credentials, channeled my previous business experience into starting my own company, and surrounded myself with great people. Nothing was going to stop me—certainly not me!

How can you get into action and not let yourself be stopped in the face of a health challenge, corporate downsizing, or any other situation that you may not have seen coming?

You may not be able to change the circumstances, but you can control where you focus your thoughts and spend your time. Concentrate on your values; reflect on how you can live your life with purpose, joy, and love.

Be willing to follow the simple steps of identifying what isn't working, defining what you truly want, and getting into action by controlling what you think, say, and do. That's where the dividends are. And always remember, nothing stops you but you!

## Kim Ellet

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**Kim Ellet, CPC, CMCC**, has been there and defied the odds. She went from career-woman to stay-at-home-mom and back again after navigating an unexpected divorce, the loss of her business interests, and a return to school.

Kim's experience as a certified professional coach working with business owners and executives has helped many leaders get out of their own way and reach goals they didn't think were possible. As owner of The Growth Coach of Metro Atlanta, she helps leaders take charge of their business and their life. As a speaker, her insightful, real-life stories motivate and inspire her audiences get into action, armed with a new perspective.

Kim leads a weekly online interactive workshop, The Leadership Lab with Kim Ellet. She coaches business owners in the Strategic Business Mindset Academy and is a certified consultant for Cultural Mastery. Kim is a member of the 2021 Steering Committee for Cobb Executive Women, Leadership Cobb Alumni Association Board of Directors, Cobb Chamber Diversity & Inclusion Council, and the Marietta Visitors Bureau Board of Directors. Reach out to Kim for executive coaching, team workshops, and to learn more about bringing people together through the Cultural Mastery program.

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# Where You Are Right Now Is Where You Have Chosen to Be

*Suzanne Evans*

Where you are right now is where you have chosen to be. Take a moment to think about that. Depending on where you are, this may feel amazing, but it might not feel so great.

Your mindset is an incredibly important part of the business-building game. Moreover, it is directly related to the impact that you're going to have in this world.

There are five basic questions you must ask yourself when building a business or looking to take an existing business to the next level. These are all related to mindset.

1. Are you afraid of messing up?
2. In other words, are you waiting to take action because you don't want to fail?
3. Is building your business really overwhelming? Do you find yourself not knowing where to start sometimes or maybe even a lot of the time?
4. Do you compare yourself to others? (This one's really important.) Do you find yourself comparing yourself to what's coming into your inbox? Are you looking at what other people have on their social media or what they have accomplished and basing your self-worth on that?
5. Do you believe (without hesitation) that you have the ability to make multiple six-figures and beyond? Are you so certain in your sales conversion calls that you close at over 90 percent?

If you answered yes to #1, #2, or #3, or no to #4 or #5 (essentially negative responses implying a lack of confidence in your business), it is time to take a hard look at your belief system in regard to building your business, because today you decide where you will be in the very near future. It is up to you.

**First, it is important to know that there is no competition.** People often come up to me and say that they really want to do something, but there are so many other people already doing it that they aren't sure if it's what they should do.

What people quite frequently forget is that there can only be one YOU! Do you know how many marketing and mindset coaches there are out there? There are hundreds, if not thousands, if not tens of thousands of them out there, but there is no one doing it like me. There is no one else doing it Suzanne Evans-style (and God bless them if they try). Likewise, no one can do what you do like you can.

Let go of the idea of competition. There is no competition. The only competition you will find is a manufactured competition that you have created.

Another issue people have related to mindset is that they wait for everything to be "just right" to launch a product or to even start their business at all. This kind of perfectionism holds people back from helping people, making money, and really making a difference in the world.

There's a great Marianne Williamson quote that says "Your playing small doesn't serve the world. It also doesn't serve your family, your spouse, or your church, or your community, or your friends."

I often hear people saying, "I would do this, but I have to take care of my ninety-five-year-old mother," or "I would do this, but I have three toddlers at home," or many other excuses beginning with "I would do this, but . . ."

By playing small, not being in the right mindset, not asking for clients, not marketing yourself, or not putting all the pieces together, you are being a terrible example for your children, community, family, and friends. When you are a leader and you step up and build a business that makes a difference in this world, you change everyone's mindset, and indeed you change the world.

So many people want to change the world but fail to realize that the only person they can directly change is themselves. You must start with your own mindset. Your sales conversions, your ability to make money, whether or not you are comparing yourself to others, and any uncertainty that you're experiencing are all reflections of your belief in what is possible for you.

**A quick commentary on the word *mindset*.** Please note, I use two words when describing this because *mindset* is really about getting your mind “set” in the right way. Treat your belief in yourself like a thermostat, not a thermometer. You set it where you want it to be.

When I realized and began implementing this, clients literally started finding me. My belief in myself was firm. People want to be around that. No one wants to surround themselves with uncertainty and insecurity.

Continually ask yourself, “How am I showing up?”

People are attracted to authority, and authority inspires!

## Suzanne Evans

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**Suzanne Evans** went from secretary to seven-figure CEO and is now known as the “tell-it-like-is,” no-fluff boss of business building. She provides support, consulting, and business development skills to the over 30,000 entrepreneurs enrolled in her wealth and business building programs.

Emboldened by her ability to get clients in what was the least likely of places (between the bananas and tomatoes at Whole Foods), she realized that her success in business would depend on her ability to master marketing and sales and inspire clients to “share their mess” as a pathway to getting clients and making money.

In supporting thousands of small businesses, she has grown her empire from humble beginnings to huge success. From working alone inside a 350-square-foot apartment in Manhattan to building a fifteen-person team, being on the Inc 500/5000 for five years in a row, and working with clients around the world, Suzanne Evans means business. She currently lives with her family in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

DrivenInc.com

# Are You Stuck Going in Circles?

## *Your Decisions Got You Here, and They Can Get You Out*

*Liz Fabiny*

One day I see this guy come out of the store, hop into a sedan of an unusual green color. As I'm looking, I see him drink three (yes, three!) cans of Red Bull energy drink. While being amazed that anyone would or could even do that and wondering why, there's a disturbing noise. Automatically turning to look, I see Mr. Red Bull leaning out of the car door retching. He's just relocated the energy drink from the store onto the parking lot. He pulls himself together and drives off. *Wow, poor guy. Hope he's okay*, I think.

Two days later, I drop in for a cup of coffee, and who do you think I see? It's Mr. Red Bull. He's sitting in his car. And . . . wait for it, yes, he does . . . he drinks three cans in a row. *Hmm, why is he doing that again?* I wonder. As I exit the store, coffee in hand, our guy leans out of the car, vomits, pulls himself together, and drives away. I don't get it. I look back at the cashier and say, "Did you just see that?" To which he replies, "Yes, ma'am, it's his morning routine. Says it's what he's got to do to get through the day."

What's wrong with this picture? The same guy is using the same parking space, buying the same things, consuming them the same way, and getting the same unpleasant result. I'd wager that most of us would consider that poor decision making. Not only that, but the store owner's business can't be getting an uptick of return customers who use that parking slot before the next good rain.

The moral of the story? Never make the mistake of thinking you don't

have choices. Very often your best choices are sitting in one of your blind spots. Left neglected, these hidden barriers will deliver the same crappy results with the same crappy situation again and again. Mr. Red Bull is tethered to a routine where he doesn't believe he's got better choices.

Spending years in a situation that makes you so miserable that it overtakes your life, your job, your health, and relationships causes real pain. It's like living in a roundabout, going in circles. Invitations for get-togethers with friends become less and less appealing because you simply don't have the energy. Or perhaps those invitations have stopped coming. Your spouse is disappointed, but you're secretly glad you don't have to wear your happy face. You know that's not who you want to be, but you feel stuck and aren't entirely sure why. This is a type of personal pain that is insidious, relentless, and often has a remedy hidden in plain sight (yep, blind spots again).

If you aren't doing what you know you need to be doing, either you secretly believe it's temporary, it's someone else's fault, or something magic will come along and solve it for you. If this is you, you're not stuck—you're lazy . . . or maybe you've given up and become comfortable with your discomfort.

The dead giveaway here? You show up as the indignant victim, checked-out spouse, parent, leader, employee, friend, and probably all-around pain in the butt. The sad paradox is that you don't see it, but everyone else does. They see you, hear you, and most definitely feel that big bag of anger you're toting around.

Or perhaps you're the one whose solution is to work harder, longer, and suffer silently because you "should" know all the answers. This is the fallacy of thinking that your future self has more time available than your present self. How's that working out for you?

You know life can be better. You must act. Your thinking must shift. You don't get to a place where it no longer hurts through inaction, bad action, or the same action. Figure out where you are, where you want to be, and how to get there. Tactical efforts can't pay off until you determine what's holding you back.

You are not alone here. Let me share some common beliefs and why they are not true:

- “I know exactly what to do.” Just think of all the people who won’t ask for directions when lost, convinced they are a natural at navigation. Learn your limitations. Find your options.
- “It’s not fair.” There are things in life we control and others we don’t. Learn the difference.
- “More is better.” This belief has a dastardly side. Afraid to say “no” to every request? Get ready, because “more” is coming your way. Forget time management; you won’t have any.
- “If it doesn’t help me, then screw it.” Get clear about this. Does it not help you—or are you unwilling to try or to stick with it?

How much are your blind spots costing you—in a day, a month, a year? You’re vigilant about adjusting the automobile mirrors to eliminate these. Now envision the potential cost (to life, limbs, lawsuits) of skipping this step.

Aren’t you tired of living like this? OK, now you’re thinking straight, and we can discuss what will solve your problem.

The main thing you are really struggling with is understanding exactly where you are and taking responsibility for it. It’s you being honest with you about what’s really going on. It’s serious, and it takes work. There’s a messy way and a smart way. I know you’re smart, so we’re sticking with that path. Here’s what it takes:

**1. *Develop a real awareness of what’s got you stuck.***

- a. Figure out exactly what bothers you about your situation.
- b. Figure out what you value and look for areas where your values conflict with the way you are living, what you are doing, and where you are right now.
- c. Figure out what’s true. Under the enormous stress of operating with blind spots, your thinking becomes disordered. It can show

up as ruminating thoughts, anxiety about what others think, how you think about yourself, defensiveness, sadness, and more. You're drunk-driving. You need to pull over and sober up if you want to get home safely.

## **2. *Identify your priorities.***

- a. Everything is not urgent and important. Learn how to sort and prioritize within every area of your health, wealth, business, and relationships. With a strategic sorting technique, I can guarantee you will find blind spots.
- b. Identify and discard the useless. Work with the rest.

## **3. *Work your plan.***

- a. Take a hard look in the mirror and honestly evaluate your change readiness. Adjust the plan accordingly; this becomes your final first draft. Your plan will live and grow with you.
- b. Using what you've learned, work backward from your vision.
- c. Find and adjust your blind spots. Otherwise it's like you're walking around with a "kick me" sign on your back.

What if you could take the energy it takes to live in this pain and redirect it with efficiency to a better place? A place where life is solid and balance.

What would it feel like to know that you have choices and to be clear about what they are? To follow a path of your own design and end each day satisfied with yourself? No angst, no indecision.

Feels great, right? Now we get to the fun part. How will you get this done? You have three choices:

1. Do nothing. Have another Red Bull and continue to muddle through.
2. Take the do-it-yourself (DIY) route. Read books, watch online videos, perform web searches, ask friends and family, experiment. This is time-consuming and typically filled with starts, stops, and sputters. Results will vary.
3. Get a pro. If the plumbing in your house sprung a major leak, would you fix it yourself? No, you'd engage help that is outside of your expertise.

All this is about is giving yourself some priority. This applies to any important high-use investment that you must rely upon. Your home, car, technology—your *health* . . . why would you treat yourself differently?

Don't dabble around; do it right. You need a better life and lifestyle, not simply a patch here and there. And you need it now. If the windshield of your car shattered, would you let it go? When the house springs that leak, would you take the wait and see approach? Of course not. The critical point here is you have an urgent need to stop the pain.

A professional health coach will help you search out, identify, and eliminate your blind spots. You'll learn to stay accountable to yourself with the support, structure, and resources you need to remedy the problem quickly. The only limiter is your willingness to put in the work.

Now, take your very best next step. Decide once and for all to stop going in circles. Exit that roundabout!

## Liz Fabiny

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**Liz Fabiny** is a National Board-Certified Health and Wellness Coach with a thirty-five-year background in the healthcare industry. As a medical technologist, with specialty in transfusion medicine, a Project Management Professional, healthcare IT professional, and client account executive, Liz unifies the science and art of these fields to co-create a personalized, pragmatic, and powerful pathway into better wellbeing for her clients.

Having worked with those on the frontlines and behind the scenes, Liz now uses her experience and skill to make a difference in the way we give and receive care. She is passionate about working with others to facilitate healthier, happier, and more productive lives. Liz holds the following certifications and credentials: NBC-HWC, Lifestyle Coach (National DPP), MHS, PMP, and MT(ASCP)SBB. She offers proactive health coaching as well as healthcare information technology consulting.

[FiveSeasonsHealth.org](http://FiveSeasonsHealth.org)

# The Truth About Lying to Yourself

*Paula Fallon*

We all lie to ourselves! I do it . . . you do it . . . we all do it! Most people believe the stuff that's happening in their lives is because of circumstances beyond their control or the actions of other people. We've become a society of blamers! It's so much easier to blame someone else than to get honest with ourselves and be accountable for our thoughts, words, and actions.

The problem with not being honest with yourself is that it shows up in your life in a big way! It shows up in your relationships, your finances, and your health. The truth is . . . no one likes to feel bad about themselves! I don't, and I'm sure you don't either. When you blame others instead of taking responsibility, it allows you to feel better about your situation and yourself—but that doesn't solve your problems!

How is this showing up in your relationships? Your finances? Your health? What are you struggling with right now? Take a minute to sit quietly and think about this. Are you blaming everything that's wrong in your relationships on others and what they say and do? Are you blaming your financial situation on someone else or your circumstances? Are you struggling with health issues?

The only common denominator in all the things that are happening in your life is you! You're the common denominator in your failed relationships, your financial setbacks, and your health issues. It's all on you. WOW . . . that can be a hard pill to swallow! Getting honest with yourself is hard stuff. I know because I've been there.

I was a blamer for most of my adult life. I didn't have the healthy relationships, the financial security, or the health I desired—and blaming didn't change a damn thing!

We all think we know what we want, but do we? Are we truly honest with ourselves about what we want—or are we living our lives to please others? In reality, most people have never taken the time to think about what they honestly want and get clarity around it.

I do this great exercise with my clients and myself. It really helps you get crystal clear in all areas of life. I call it “The Clarity Probe.” Are you ready to change your life? Get out a piece of paper—or just go ahead and make notes right here on this page, then dog-ear it as an easy reference whenever you need to refresh your memory. I recommend doing this exercise once every three months. Different seasons in life can shift our values, so it is important to revisit this exercise on a regular basis. It will bring your focus back if you have fallen away from asking the important questions you should be asking yourself.

Write a list of your top five values in life, the things that are most important to you. Let me give you an example of what I’m talking about. My number one value in life is having optimal health. The second most important value to me is having healthy relationships. Once you’ve written your top five, put them in order of importance.

Now that you have them in order of importance, take a moment to make sure that these are really the five *most important* values to you. If not, make the necessary changes and prioritize them again. If they are, then you’re ready to take a look at three questions that will help bring clarity to your life.

Whenever you need to make a decision, ask yourself these three questions:

1. ***Is this going to support my value of (fill in the blank)?*** For example, if you value healthy relationships and you’re having an argument with someone, is what you’re saying and how you’re behaving supporting a healthy relationship? Remember, it doesn’t matter how the other person acts. How you act and react is all that matters. If the answer is no, then what changes can you make that will support a healthy relationship with this person?
2. ***Is this going to enhance my value of (fill in the blank)?*** For example, if you value financial security, every time you’re about to spend money, first

stop and ask yourself these questions: “Is this a want or a need? Is it going to move me in the direction of financial security?” If you’re trying to get out of debt, learn how to save money, and create a sound financial future, limit your spending to only necessities for a period of time. Make a list of the things you want and save your money until you have enough cash to pay for those wants instead of creating debt.

3. ***Is this going to advance my value of (fill in the blank)?*** For example, if you value optimal health, ask yourself if what you’re putting in your mouth is going to make your body feel good and be healthy. Are you exercising or are you sedentary? Your health is a combination of what you put in your mouth and exercising. If you’re eating a lot of processed food and sitting on your ass, is that going to help you to have optimal health?

If the answer to any of these questions is “no,” then don’t do it. Period! It’s not any more complicated than that. Stop overcomplicating things! I am a firm believer that less is more and simple is best. Simple concepts make it easier to see things clearly. Thinking this way helps get rid of all the clutter that surrounds you on a daily basis so you can have a better understanding of what you need to do to create the life you want.

When you make this a regular way of thinking and you’re honest in your answers, you can make decisions that make your life much easier. Your relationships will get better. Your finances will grow. Your health will improve. You will be able to create the life you want.

Studies show that people who are truly happy are living a life that is aligned with their values. So many people do what they think they are “supposed” to do instead of being true to themselves. My stepdaughter was one of those people. She went to college as a bio-chem major and flunked out her first year. One night after dinner she told me that she chose a bio-chem major because she thought that was what her parents wanted, and she didn’t want to disappoint them. What she really wanted to do was go into fashion design. I encouraged her to have a conversation with her parents and be honest about

her passion. I reminded her that her parents loved her and would support her dreams. And of course they did! The very next summer she was doing an internship in Italy at one of the top color design houses. Today she has an amazing career that she loves.

When you choose to make decisions in your life based on whether or not those decisions support, enhance, and advance your values, you will be in a position to create a life that brings you tremendous joy and happiness. Your life is your responsibility. You must take the time to recognize where you are and take responsibility for it. Once you have this kind of clarity, then you can start the process of figuring out where you want to be and start making a clear plan to get there.

It all starts with clarity. Nothing changes without being clear. You have to be willing to ask yourself the tough questions and then be willing to answer those questions honestly. You must have this conversation with yourself if you want clarity. Sometimes it also helps to have this conversation with a coach or a mentor. Talk to someone who has no personal vested interest in the answers and can ask additional questions to help you dig deeper than you may be able to dig on your own. There is great value in this kind of support.

But it all starts with you. You are the answer to all the problems in your life. What are you going to do? Are you going to get clear on where you are and why? Do you value yourself enough to do that? By looking at your values and making choices that support them, it becomes so much easier to take actions that will change your life. There will be no obstacle too large, no challenge too great, and no problem too difficult to overcome once you are clear!

So, my friend, it is time to stop lying to yourself. It's time to get crystal clear. Take a deep breath . . . now do it! Do the work! Start it now . . . today . . . this minute!

## Paula Fallon

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Health coach **Paula Fallon** shares the same principles that she has used with her own family for more than thirty years. Her honest, nonjudgmental approach helps her clients gain clarity, set attainable goals, and get going!

Paula started her journey of studying the relationship between food and health when her first child was struggling with food sensitivities. She was determined to understand the correlation between what we eat and how our bodies react. When her second child turned four, he was diagnosed with ADHD, and the doctors recommended Ritalin as the solution. Paula knew there was a better way through nutrition and behavior modification, and her quest began.

After implementing changes in their nutrition and creating structure in their daily lives, Paula's two children began to thrive. Today they are healthy, successful adults who inspire others to take care of their health.

More recently, Paula was working as a successful Realtor with a thriving six-figure business when she was diagnosed with an autoimmune condition. The doctors told her there was no cure. Paula took her knowledge and experience, applied it to her situation, and pushed her autoimmune issue into remission.

As a Certified Holistic Health Coach, Paula works with people who are struggling with health issues that are affecting their relationships, their wallets, and their life satisfaction. With her coaching, her clients are seeing life-changing results.

To learn more visit Paula's website or follow her on social media at [fiercenesswarrior](http://fiercenesswarrior.com).

[fiercenesswarrior.com](http://fiercenesswarrior.com)

# Are You Waiting for a Crisis?

*Elaine Gibson*

The problem: 39.5 percent of men and women will be diagnosed with cancer. 23.5 million Americans suffer from an autoimmune disease and 39.6 percent of adults have obesity.

Elaine Gibson here. I was just like you, and this is what happened to me.

I remember the day I fell to my knees on my beautiful needlepoint rug. I can still taste the salt as the tears ran down my face.

That was the day that my medical team told me that I had stage four non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. They did not believe that I would live to see my grandchildren grow up. Seriously. How does anybody say that to a Jewish grandmother from New York City? I guess they hadn't met the mama bear species before.

I looked up and said, "OK, God, I know I'm not going to die. Just tell me what you want me to learn."

The journey began as I searched to figure out what the real foundation of health is at the cellular level. What do the healthiest people do?

I knew that traditional protocol was not for me as my first line of offense. Putting toxins in my body, when I actually felt that this was exactly what got me here, was not my preference. There had to be a path I could trust.

I'm an athlete, so I went into training.

This is important for you to know. You catch the flu, but you don't catch cancer or any other chronic diseases. It is an inside job. You are the one who creates it through your actions, choices, and decisions. Even though you may believe you are living a healthy lifestyle, you don't get symptoms until it's often too late. You do it to yourself, and you are the only ones who can undo it.

There's so much that you do not have control over, but you have 100 percent control over what goes into your body. This is great, great news. **You do not have to wait for a crisis.**

## **There Is Magic in the Whispers**

Inspired by Oprah and her concept about how our body is always whispering to us, I became more aware of what was going on.

Your body is always talking to you, but you are so busy living in the fast lane that you don't stop to listen. You are designed to be healthy and to function beautifully.

The answers for relieving symptoms that you are experiencing, whether extra pounds, exhaustion, inflammation, or chronic ailments, are all there. The answers to creating your extraordinary health are birthed in the whispers that your body gives you, but you are not listening because you are too busy.

Here are several examples of early whispers:

- *Well, you should expect to be constipated.* No, you shouldn't be.
- *You should expect not to sleep.* No, you shouldn't be exhausted.
- *It's normal to need diuretics.* For many years, I took diuretics because my fingers, ankles, and legs were swollen. Once I decided and learned how to create a healthy, vibrant lifestyle, my rings started falling off. This is your body whispering to you. If you can't get your rings off, something is wrong.
- *You're supposed to have backaches and allergies.* No, no. You deserve better.
- *It's okay to feel overwhelmed.* Interestingly, sometimes you feel like fatigue and overwhelm are badges of honor, because you are doing so much. No, no, no, no, no. That's not how you are supposed to be. You deserve to experience optimal health, vitality, and joy every day.

Somehow we have become a society that treats the symptoms, not the underlying causes. You deserve better. You've heard me say it before, and you will hear me say it again . . .

You deserve better.

So, when your body starts to whisper, it's in response to the symptoms that are showing up. It is how the Universe gets your attention. Not only is the answer in the whispers, but they reflect your cumulative patterns and habits in your lifestyle.

Start to look back at what you were doing thirty days, sixty days, ninety days prior. You will uncover the choices that led to the warning signs.

You are the result of all the decisions that you have made.

As you begin to understand and embrace the fact you have control over your health and well-being, you can begin to answer the whispers.

There is magic in the whispers.

I come in contact with so many amazing, beautifully busy women who are taking care of everybody else and somehow forget to take care of themselves.

The greatest act of being unselfish is taking the time for yourself. The people you love are counting on this. Self-care is not selfish.

## **Are You Sick and Tired of the Weight?**

Maybe it's the extra pounds that have you frustrated because you can't zip your favorite jeans or just the weight of everyday life, everyday experiences, and everyday overwhelm that is all around us.

As you continue this life's journey, your body is filled with calories, and your cells are craving nutrients. Your cells are starving, and when this happens your body is in crisis mode; nothing works well.

And it's important that you understand that those unwanted pounds and the extra weight of life are linked to other things that are showing up. Carrying around extra pounds can play havoc on you.

You are designed to thrive in Nature. I like to think of the journey as the stepping-stones through God's garden. It keeps me grounded, and it keeps me making choices that come from Nature.

You have been taught that everybody puts on weight with age. It's not true. Extra weight is dangerous. It carries toxins that compromise your health.

Fad diets take you down temporary roads that never last. You need and deserve a sustainable lifestyle straight from God's garden.

When I was fighting for my life, I turned to nature for solutions. I lost twenty-eight pounds and four dress sizes. I created a simple, intentional, sustainable lifestyle that keeps me looking and feeling better than ever before.

It is not about dieting. It is about eating for radiance. It's about saying yes to yourself instead of no.

You are exhausted from attempting to make good healthy choices amidst the noise. Decision fatigue sets in, and you defer to your status quo because making new choices requires a clear mind and energy.

The status quo is stealing your dreams.

Women share that they just cannot learn or do one more thing. Actually, eating for radiance is the easiest enhancement you can make. You are eating anyway. You merely swap out choices.

This is not like going to the gym! Please tell me I am not the only one with a fitness membership that is not being used. The key is to shed your unwanted pounds, increase your energy, create disease-free, optimal health naturally and realistically, without feeling deprived, disrupting your busy life—or even giving up chocolate.

## **The Fountain of Youth**

I didn't know what I didn't know!

Here is what I learned: the food we eat, the water we drink, and even the air we breathe can throw off our body's natural balance, interfere with our health, and accelerate the aging process.

It is all about the immune system!

To function properly, every cell in your body needs an alkaline, oxygen-rich environment. **This could be considered the fountain of youth.**

Maya Angelou has taught us: "When you know better, you do better."

The concept of alkalinity never came up until I entered my health journey in 2008. I *thought* I was leading a healthy lifestyle.

Here are three simple, actionable ideas you can begin to use right away:

- Add these seven most alkaline foods: spinach, broccoli, celery, cucumbers, kale, bell peppers, and avocado to your food plan.
- Begin your day with hot water and lemon. This will hydrate you and increase your focus, energy, and elimination.
- Reduce sugar, dairy, and wheat.

## **You Deserve Better!**

Imagine having an abundance of real energy throughout the day and loving the way you look and feel. Imagine living a life where disease simply cannot find a home. Your body, mind, and soul work together to keep you happy, healthy, and living an extraordinary life! You deserve to dance vibrantly, youthfully, in your own unique style. This is my dream for you.

## Elaine Gibson

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**Elaine Gibson** is an extraordinary woman, cited as one of the world's top ten natural cancer survivors by Extreme Health Radio. Having beaten Stage IV cancer without traditional protocols, Elaine shares her hard-won lessons for living a clean, healthy, and natural lifestyle. Once she began making healthy changes, she lost twenty-eight pounds and dropped four to five clothing sizes. Today Elaine, the founder of Renewed Living, is a published author, sought-after motivational speaker, workshop facilitator, and private coach.

For the last several years, Elaine Gibson has trained and coached high-achieving men and women in a new way of approaching their lifestyles—by harnessing the power of positive intention to create an extraordinary life to regain their zest and step into their own version of extraordinary. She works from the principle that it is possible through natural clean living to counteract the stressful and health-damaging effects that modern living has on the body, mind, and relationships. The men and women she works with love to feel good about themselves and learn how to get there with the least amount of hassle and confusion.

Elaine has been featured in *VA Woman Magazine*, the award-winning film *Cancer: The Integrative Perspective*, The Global Cancer Symposium, Take Back Your Health Conferences in Washington, DC, and California, Inspiring Women, Unscripted Power, Cure 2 Cancer Conference, Annie Appleseed Cancer Conference, and the Quest for the Cures documentary series. She is a contributing author to the newly released books *Don't Waste My Cancer* and *Midlife Transformations*.

Her proudest accomplishment is being a green juice-loving grandmother.

# There Is Always a Giant to Slay— Who Is Your Goliath?

*Marsha Gleit*

As the front door closed behind me, I could hear my great-niece galloping down the hallway to greet me. “Aunt Marsha, Aunt Marsha,” she screamed with exuberance and glee. “Do you remember the story of David and Goliath? I just heard the story on the Google machine you gave me.”

I laughed. She still called the Google Home we gave her three years ago “the Google machine.” But as we talked about the Bible story, all I could think about was how I could relate to David. I recently had given one of the biggest talks of my short speaking career—to a group of Microsoft employees—and as I went through my pre-speech ritual, I had felt more nervous than usual. Could it be that on that particular morning I was feeling like David? Would I have to conquer Goliath?

The well-known, three-thousand-year-old biblical story goes this way: Goliath, a giant and the champion of the Philistines, challenged the Israelites to send out their champion and decide the outcome of their ongoing war in a single battle. The Israelites’ ruthless King Saul sent David, a fifteen-year-old shepherd, to fight Goliath. In the story, armed with only a slingshot and five stones, David was able to hit Goliath in the head with one of those stones, and down went the giant. David then ran toward Goliath and chopped off his head with Goliath’s own sword. David knew that size didn’t matter. It was his heart, courage, and commitment that mattered. We all can apply the same principle and same level of thinking to life and the challenges we face. Think bigger than the challenge, be bigger than the obstacle, and act as if you can’t fail.

I did face the challenge and gave the talk of my life.

I attribute my success to self-confidence and happiness. What if your happiness and self-confidence could help you maintain your success? Success, by definition, is the accomplishment of an aim or purpose. In David's case, winning the battle would be his ultimate success. Was he prepared for what would happen if he won—or worse yet, if he lost? These are the same questions we need to answer when we set out to do anything in our business or personal lives.

Where can you begin to use this concept in your life or business? Let's begin with clearly defining the outcome. What is it that you want? What is the one thing that feeds your soul? The one thing that you can see, touch, smell, and embody with all of you—the one thing that would change the trajectory of your life or business. Accomplishing this one thing would be the ultimate success by your personal definition of success. Think of it like a needle in the haystack. When you define the needle that will move your business forward, it will blow the doors wide open, ultimately opening up infinite possibilities for you. It might mean new sales calls or styles, new programs or productions, or maybe new relationships or joint ventures. Clearly defining your outcome gives you areas in which to grow and prosper.

Are you excited? How do you feel right now when you envision life with that outcome? Is it a new job, a new relationship, more money, more clients, or better health? Can you see the happiness that this outcome might bring to your life and the confidence that you would feel? How about how it might propel you to wanting that next big thing, the next big outcome?

Now, once you have that clarity around what you want, you will do whatever it takes to get to the finish line. You will be more likely to use every tool you have to get you there. David's goal was to win the battle. He may not have had the size that he thought he needed, but he had clarity, and he had his tools. His slingshot and stones and his knowledge were the tools he would use to fight the giant; Goliath had his sword and his size. Tiny David was able to fight without having to get too close to the Goliath, hence crippling him and using his sword against him. I had my speech, my subject

knowledge, and my research that enabled me to speak with authority to the Microsoft audience.

You may have your knowledge, your education, your research, your business plan, your sales prowess, your best self. If there is a tool you don't have, you can acquire it. The good news is that there is always someone who has done it before. Someone has written a book or a blog post; someone has done the research. We are lucky—today we have all the answers and more at our fingertips with the internet. We can search for any information we need, and we can find an expert in the field or a coach or mentor to help us along the way. You would never go into a battle without your weapons, so why would you run your business that way? Successful business owners never stop learning. Never stop adding tools to your toolbox; never stop acquiring the tools of your trade.

Just like David, all of us will come face-to-face with many giants throughout our lives. It's how we handle those experiences that matter the most. We need to be prepared for the wins, but also be prepared for the losses. The successes that come as we've expected or that exceed our expectations lead us to the feeling of accomplishment and drive us to move forward with great momentum. But the true win is sometimes in the failures. Learning from our failures or mistakes can be a driving force as long as we do not go down the road of discouragement and self-doubt. Looking deeply into the lessons learned from your losses can make all the difference in your business. The "pick yourself up, brush yourself off, and start all over again" theory builds resilience and grit. Seeing the lessons in the failures, big or small, sets you up to accomplish what you want in a different way the next time and can lead to an even bigger success. The lessons can be applied to other areas of your business. If a particular outcome does not exactly meet your expectations, this does not mean it is a failure. That is up to you. Ask yourself, "Is this outcome bad—or just different? How can I grow from it? What is my plan B?" Therein lies the journey we call business and life.

David met the challenge the king put in front of him. He was able to conquer the giant. I met the challenge of my talk at Microsoft. In the end, the

leaders at the big multinational company needed to hear my message. The attendees were given new tools to apply to their jobs. I in turn was able to use the high from that talk to go on to give many other talks. It was the springboard that I needed to move my speaking career forward. This involved doing something bigger than my expectations of just being a speaker, assessing the size, and not being intimidated by the giant. It is the process set out in this short chapter that have helped me in my business and helped many of my clients succeed in theirs. Utilizing my tools and always learning new tools ultimately kept me on the path to writing my first book, *You Can't Be Good for Them Until You Are Good to You*. And each and every day allows me to move forward in my business and my life. You, too, can conquer the giants in your life!

## Marsha Gleit

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**Marsha Gleit** holds a BA in Business/Economics from the University of California Santa Barbara and an MBA in Finance from Pace University in New York. She is also a Certified Life Coach, California Real Estate broker, and has spent thirty years in corporate finance and accounting. The founder and CEO of Levity Leadership, Marsha is also the author of the book *You Can't Be Good for Them Until You're Good to You*.

When Marsha was hospitalized for a blood infection that led to the amputation of three toes, she realized the importance of self-care. She began practicing and teaching self-care strategies to leaders and entrepreneurs so they, too, could create a happy, self-confident, and productive lives. She now travels the world both virtually and in person, helping men and women personally and professionally understand the importance of self-care using her unique, four-step strategy.

Marsha resides in Irvine, California, with her wonderful husband, Bruce, of thirty-four years. They have two adult children, Danielle and Max.

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# Comparing Yourself to Others Is Losing Before You Start

*It's Costing You Time, Money, Relationships, Health, Happiness, and Success*

*Anita F. Green*

You are on top of the world! You are wearing the most stunning dress on the planet; it fits you like a glove, and you can't wait to show it off. As you walk into the special party you've been looking forward to for months, feeling like a princess, you immediately see a number of your friends gathered around another friend, Suzanne. As you move closer, you hear them raving about Suzanne's dress and about how gorgeous she looks. One of your friends turns around, sees you, and says very casually, "You look nice tonight." *Nice* is what you say to your grandmother. So how do you feel now? Hopefully, you are happy for Suzanne, but you are more than likely feeling deflated and starting to doubt how great you look. You might as well be wearing a potato sack.

Nothing actually changed between the time you arrived and now, except your NEW perception of how you look compared to Suzanne. What happened? Theodore Roosevelt used to say, "Comparison is the thief of joy." That is so true!

If you want to make sure your life is stuck in a state of perceived comfort and mediocrity, then continue comparing your reality to the fictionalized, sanitized, touched-up version of others. Continue being manipulated by social media posts making you believe that others have a better life—that

everyone else is happier, more successful, and definitely having more fun than you are.

Remember the time when you were in a huge fight with your date and your friends decided to take a group picture? You snuggled up and smiled for the picture and appeared to be perfectly happy. The picture showed this beautiful happy couple, but you knew the truth—you were miserable. Things are not always what they appear to be.

Social media and advertisers everywhere are telling you that you are not smart enough, attractive enough, or successful enough—and your teeth are not white enough either. The good news is that they have just the right products and self-help books to fix you. You buy these products, but nothing gets fixed, and you end up feeling even worse about yourself. Psychotherapists say that this mind manipulation can cause anxiety and depression and that you may end up buying the products as a coping mechanism.

When you compare yourself to others in an attempt to make an accurate assessment of yourself, it is not a fair comparison. You are comparing your “behind the scenes” to everyone else’s “highlight reel.”

Science says that you spend 10 percent of your day comparing yourself to others. So, if you sleep eight hours a night, that means you are spending one-and-a-half hours a day thinking, *She is prettier or he is smarter, or they are happier than I am.* That’s an hour and a half wasted. What if you spent that hour and a half having more fun with your family and friends, relaxing, or making more money? By the time you were eighteen, you had already received 148,000 negative messages, which set you up for having these self-doubts.

Look at your results in each area of your life: finances, relationships, health, and lifestyle. Your results are a direct reflection of how you are thinking and feeling about yourself. The good news is that you do have control of your thoughts—right now, today.

Do you have an inner scorecard or an outer scorecard? Ask yourself if you would rather be the best parent in the world and have everyone think you are the worst parent, or would you rather be the worst parent in the world and

have everyone think you are the best parent? Replace *parent* with anything that resonates more with you, such as *friend* or *boss*. This is very telling.

The inner scorecard is where you are comparing where you were in your life yesterday to where you are in your life today. This is a positive way of motivating yourself to be a better version of you every day—and progress is happiness. The outer scorecard is where you are comparing yourself to others. This can be useful in small doses; it can motivate you by showing you possibilities based on others' achievements. Unfortunately, it is more likely to drag you into self-doubt and negative self-talk, and it can be particularly destructive when you don't acknowledge that others' perfection is an "illusion."

### **Why Does This Matter to You—And What Is It Costing You?**

Comparison turns friends and allies into enemies because of the resentment and jealousy it causes. And while you are out comparing yourself to others, you are robbed of valuable hours you will sadly never get back.

Comparison is costing you a lot of money. You likely are buying things you don't really need or want due to peer pressure, social media, and advertisers bullying you. It's not the buying that is destructive, though; it's the "why" behind the buying that causes you anxiety and depression. Trying to keep up with the fake standards shoved in your face all day, every day, is exhausting. It's like chasing a mirage.

Think about what comparison is doing to your kids when they compare themselves to other kids, or when they hear you comparing them to other students. "Johnny got a 1600 on his SAT, and you only got a 1300." What do you think this does to your kid? Conversely, what if your kid is the high achiever and you compare him to the lesser achiever. This is equally detrimental, because you are still instilling a pattern of comparison into your kid's brain. Comparison contributes to suicide rates, self-mutilation, and eating disorders in schools and universities, and all of these are on the rise. We all want our kids to excel, not by comparing them to others, but by helping them become their personal best.

NO ONE on this earth can be a BETTER YOU than YOU! You were uniquely and divinely designed to embrace and deal with your own personal combination of challenges and accomplishments. You don't really want anyone else's entire life. You just want to cherry-pick their best areas. Guess what? They are probably comparing themselves to your best areas as well!

Success comes from being focused on becoming your personal best and only comparing where you are today to where you were yesterday.

So, how do you outrun social media, savvy advertisers, and everyone else that is telling you that you are not enough, that you can't keep up? You can't outrun them, but you can outmaneuver them by reframing the way you think about things—realistically, without the illusions.

The most important step for becoming your personal best is to DECIDE that working on you is not a SHOULD, but a MUST, and you are willing to do whatever it takes. To achieve this, you'll need to leverage the pain of what not focusing on becoming your best is costing you to instead focus on the pleasure you will have as you make progress. BEWARE, though: old habits "play dirty" to keep you stuck where you are by convincing you that where you are is good enough, that you'll lose something by going for more, or that you should be grateful for what you have. The only limitations you have are in your mind, and you have total control of what you choose to think.

Make a list of what it's costing you in each area of your life to not be your best, and then make a list of all the benefits you will see when you start making progress. It is important to practice loving where you are today while you are creating more.

When you start going down the rabbit hole of negative self-talk (and you will), you will need to interrupt this negative pattern by replacing it with positive thoughts. You cannot stop a thought without replacing it. Make a list of all the things you love and are proud of about yourself and focus on these things whenever you notice yourself starting to fall into the comparison trap.

This will require awareness, discipline, repetition, and support. It's the same discipline you would use to become an elite athlete. Condition your thoughts until they become your new habit, then test them by trying to compare yourself to others. When it seems more unnatural to compare yourself to others than to focus on being your best, you'll know you are making great progress. Repetition is the key to making this your new normal.

You've heard the saying that knowledge is power, but knowledge without execution is just entertainment. You get to DECIDE!

## Anita F. Green

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**Anita F. Green** is a success and relationship coach, speaker, author, and a personal stylist for men. For forty years, Anita has successfully helped men become their personal best by creating their most powerful look, optimizing their self-confidence, and multiplying their success. Through her comprehensive online course, [www.optimizededge.net](http://www.optimizededge.net), and her one-on-one VIP coaching program, she helps men reach a level of success, respect, and relevance they never thought possible.

Working so closely with men, along with years of research, inspired Anita to create a customized one-on-one coaching program for women that helps them “speak the way men listen.” This makes a huge, positive difference in women’s personal and professional relationships with men. Once women are enlightened with this awareness and language skill set, their relationships with men in the workplace and in their personal lives soar to new heights. Women become more successful, more confident, and happier when they get exactly what they want, in a way that empowers the men as well. Everyone wins!

[anitafgreen.com](http://anitafgreen.com)

# Fear Forward

*Michelle Bryant Johnson*

Summertime! New ice-cream flavors, popsicle brain freeze, tall, fast water-slides, swimming pools, the beach, amusement parks, steep roller coasters, summer camp, airplane flights . . . yay! Remember experiences perhaps giving you PAUSE before you participated? Then, once you did participate, you felt great, courageous, and had an awesome sense of achievement!

You were excited and proud of your decision!

What happened?

You have dreams, goals, and desires.

What's holding you back, keeping you stuck?

FEAR—False Evidence Appearing Real?

IMPOSTER SYNDROME—thinking you're not good enough or someone will find out you are figuring it all out? Well, so are they! No one knows everything about everything!

Other culprits like perfectionism and procrastination can amplify fear.

You can't feel equal to if you feel less than.

You are more than enough. More than a conqueror.

*Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.*

*Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.*

*It is our light, not our darkness*

*That most frightens us.*

*We ask ourselves*

*Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?*

*Actually, who are you not to be?*

*You are a child of God.  
Your playing small  
Does not serve the world.  
There's nothing enlightened about shrinking  
So that other people won't feel insecure around you.  
We are all meant to shine,  
As children do.  
We were born to make manifest  
The glory of God that is within us.  
It's not just in some of us;  
It's in everyone.  
And as we let our own light shine,  
We unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.  
As we're liberated from our own fear,  
Our presence automatically liberates others.*

—Marianne Williamson

Surround yourself with talented people to support you!

## **Push forward. Take risks.**

Fear is not a reason to not pursue your desires. Think about **WHY** you want what you want. If you **only** think about **what** you want, fear can set in and keep you stuck.

## **Three Tips to Push Past Fear:**

- Tune in to your mindset.
  - *What is your self-talk?*
  - *Are your thoughts positive?*
- Be mindful.
  - *Focus and clear the clutter mentally and physically.*

- *Tap into your miracle mentality, the way you did when you were a child and everything was possible.*
- Project your “Me.”
  - *Project confidence.*
  - *Awe your audience with your authentic you.*

Embrace fear—step into your brilliance. Adjust your mindset, tap into your miracle mentality, and project your “Me” to wow your audience with your presence; be your authentic you!

## Michelle Bryant Johnson

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**Michelle Bryant Johnson** is a personal development coach with global impact experience who loves to work with ambitious, curious, smart cookies like you. She helps her clients get unstuck to pursue the beautiful life of their dreams. Michelle helps her clients experience transformation of fear, procrastination, and imposter syndrome to move to their desires to the next level and beyond.

Prior to her corporate role, Michelle directed Community Relations for a major community arts organization, facilitating marketing, community relations services, business development, and special event efforts for the largest nonprofit arts organization in the east, between Atlanta and Augusta.

Michelle collaborates with a network of professionals to complement client needs and desires. She is available for private and group consultation. Contact Michelle at [michelle@michellebryantjohnson.com](mailto:michelle@michellebryantjohnson.com) or 404.720.8265.

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# Value-Driven Education

*D. Bonnette Jones, PhD, MBA*

*Give me your child at thirteen years of age, and I will tell you where he/she will be at twenty-five years of age. Don't give me your child at thirteen years of age, and I will also tell you where he/she will be at twenty-five years of age!*

*—D. Bonnette Jones, PhD, MBA*

Most students cannot fully celebrate their high school graduation ceremony due to a lack of believing that they have pursued and mastered tangible, proficient academic programs that will springboard them into a life of multiple possibilities. Instead, a large percentage of American students leave high school feeling totally inadequate and unprepared to enter the “Next Critical Chapter” of their lives: ages eighteen to twenty-five. Thus, more and more students are frustratingly “throwing in the towel,” choosing not to compete in an ever-changing, technologically driven, internationally diverse occupational arena. Consequently, to reverse this detrimental trend, American schools must strive to produce more well-rounded, intellectually astute, technically gifted professionals who do not require substantial “skillset retooling.” This will enable graduates to make positive, direct, “concrete,” profitable impacts at the onset of their employment.

## **Setting the Stage: Student-Parent Failure**

Upon the review of their very own academic pursuits, which is often in contrast with the nuances of many present-day educational systems, parents often enter the world of “Academic Olympics” feeling far removed from today’s advanced K-12 theoretical content, at a loss as to how they can be of scholastic help to their children. Often “this reality” creates an “anxiety-rich” environ-

ment that prompts many parents to pull back from the “Educational Maze” all together, consequently leaving their children unsupervised, having to figure things out on their own. Unfortunately, students who feel like they must go it alone due to “scholastic parental abandonment” usually end up struggling unnecessarily, which prompts all types of negative impending outcomes that might affect their lives and future income potential for decades to come.

Concerned that they did not receive pertinent specific information regarding their son’s upcoming graduation, Mr. and Mrs. James demanded an immediate meeting with their son’s guidance counselor. Upon reviewing son John’s transcript, historic and current exam scores, and recent report card grades, the James’ disappointment in what they learned was visibly apparent, daunting, and sad to admit, customary. Characteristic of most “Johnny-come-lately” parents, Mr. and Mrs. James chose to blame the school instead of take responsibility for themselves and their child.

No parent living in today’s modern technological arena can claim ignorance regarding their child’s “real-time” academic status. However, too often parents will wait until eleventh or twelfth grade, when it is usually too late, to DECIDE to COMMIT to being their child’s number one Educational Manager. In fact, in order to secure a student’s current and future academic career, hence life positioning, the coveted role that a parent plays should be maintained throughout preschool, elementary, middle, high school, and beyond, while also enlisting school faculty as first-line support specialists.

## **The Know-It-All**

Conscious of his considerable high IQ scores, Andre, “The Gifted One,” felt that he had all the answers. Wearing his intellect as a “badge of honor” and an authority above most others, he questioned all adults, especially those he felt were not intellectually astute or his intellectual equal. Exercising the generous “rights” he and most students enjoy consistently throughout their K-12 educational experience, Andre took advantage of his ability to say and do whatever he wanted—with little or no ramifications. This “comfortable climate” allowed him to challenge every teacher,

counselor, administrator, and even parent that told him anything he did not deem relevant to his view.

Ultimately, as he proceeded to run the course he deemed to be correct for himself, the forever all-knowing, bright, argumentative Andre put his guidance counselor in “her place” whenever she counseled him about the best academic course and career pathways he should consider. Ultimately, after losing a scholarship due to his uncooperative attitude that negatively affected his grades, he was kicked out of the state college. He enrolled at the community college a year later, only to behave in the exact same manner. Subsequently, he was kicked out of the community college and later joined the Armed Forces. Refusing to take orders from those he considered below his intellect, he was once again kicked out. He ended up dating an Ivy League teacher, who physically and emotionally abused him. When he retaliated, the police were called, and he was arrested. As a result, he was forced to call upon his mother and his old guidance counselor to help him recover from the TRAINWRECK missteps of his once and still brilliant, promising life. Ultimately, fifteen years later, Andre’s old high school boss at a local convenience store took a chance at rehiring him. Currently he continues to pick up the pieces of his unfortunate choices, lives with his mother, and is attempting to return to school at thirty-five years of age to complete the very degree he could have completed successfully over a decade prior.

## **From Vocal Artist to Medical Doctor**

Always singing and dancing through school, and into the main office, Erick waltzed into the guidance counselor’s office just to say “hello.” As with all her students, she greeted him, then immediately posed her legendary life-trajectory question: “Besides your desire to perform, what are your plans for the next chapter of your vibrant, promising life?” Erick stopped dead in his “happy tracks” to contemplate this life-defining question. Meanwhile, the guidance counselor began her deductive, forensic review of his comprehensive academic status, thoroughly examining his academic grades, exams, effort, and conduct scores from elementary throughout ninth grade. It became extremely obvious

to her that no one had ever taken the necessary time to take a serious, progressive look at this young man's comprehensive educational record, not even his assigned guidance counselor.

Taking the initiative, the non-assigned counselor highlighted Erick's overall apparent genius within the areas of Mathematics and Science. She requested an emergency meeting with his mother to address the mandatory, timely "academic trajectory shift" that he had to make to reconstruct his academic plan to include a more challenging curriculum. Seeing the possibility of a new, progressive vision for himself, Erick obliged and the counselor immediately replaced, and even doubled up, his schedule with tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade honors and Advanced Placement Mathematics and Science courses. And just like that, his life's path "turned on a dime" in a positive manner. As a result, Erick's GPA rose to the top 10 percent of his class. He was accepted in a competitive premed undergraduate program. He graduated from the University of Miami School of Medicine and recently completed his three-year residency specialty in Dermatology.

## **The FIX**

Because of the decline in conventional student services due to high student-to-counselor ratios, increasingly scholastically concerned parents are choosing to seek the independent services of Educational Counseling Consultants as a way to "level up" their children's imminent potential and occupational futures within the high-stakes academic-workforce landscape of today. As one of these private academic counselors, I utilize a host of skill sets to achieve desired educational goals, as I build heightened personal and intellectual self-esteem through the pursuit and mastery of a higher-order curriculum. My colleagues and I construct, monitor, evaluate, and revise strategic educational plans to build solid, resilient students who can tackle multiple, elevated levels of higher-order Mathematics and Science courses. I coined the term "Academics Income-nomics" by which I mean the act of strategically leveraging the POWER of strong, higher-order, fearless K-12 and college

educational pursuits to meet the needs of an ever-demanding, competitive, objective workforce. I have created a comprehensive student services program that expands and elevates each student, using a holistic, intentional, proven approach that takes academic guidance counseling out of the elite educational arena, thus making it more accessible and client friendly to students, parents, and other stakeholders.

At my company, Strategic Academic Navigation, we believe that the worst investment parents make is not investing in their children's educational pursuits. That's why we put Family Educational Planning at the forefront of our business! We offer Quantum Leap Academics academic counseling to parents and students who are unaware of or do not understand the intricacies of today's school systems related to their children's educational pursuits from Pre-K throughout graduate school. Ultimately, we guide students successfully through various educational channels into higher educational institutions and careers that best suit their academic strengths and personal aspirations.

Furthermore, we believe that the initial careful assessment, identification, development, and management of academic pursuits, through creative and strategic planning, designing, advisement, guidance, and development, is the best collective course of action to employ and render desired client results. Throughout each articulation/matriculation educational stage, our series of integrative approaches address various aspects and phases of K–12, college, and graduate counseling, preparation, and admissions processes. Equally essential, we strive to align our students with programs, higher educational institutions, and professional majors that offer the “right fit” and matches students' unique needs, desires, and individual objectives.

We also increase parental involvement and understanding, identify students' core passions, vision, and personal purpose, and reshape, restructure, enhance, rejuvenate, and improve students' academic growth and standing. Ultimately, due to the strong demand for more diversely astute, proficiently prepared student-employee candidates, the earlier students make conscious, strategic decisions for their future, the better future they will create, attain, and enjoy.

## D. Bonnette Jones

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Prior to entering the educational arena, **D. Bonnette Jones, PhD, MBA**, was in the business world and worked as a mental health therapist. During her tenure at the fourth largest and most diverse school system in the United States, she worked at the elementary, middle, high, and adult educational levels, specializing in gaining a greater understanding of the overall integration, final output, and actual transferability of the comprehensive knowledge acquisition of students, in relation to the tools and strategies utilized to assess, place, develop deliver, and track students' successes, within and outside of K-12, undergraduate, and post undergraduate level academic, career, and psychosocial advisement/guidance programs.

Always placing students and relative stakeholders at the forefront of priority, she enjoys the challenges of assessing, developing, and administering programs that propel young adults to heightened levels of overall success. Through the deployment of her "tell-it-how-it-is, structured-but-nurturing" style, Dr. Jones molds, guides, and mentors her students toward multiple successes, during their K thru 12, college, graduate school, armed forces pursuits, and beyond. Dr. Jones' personal and professional philosophy, educational and specialized background reflect the vision, programs, services, strategies, and overall proficient environment she strives to create for all her students.

Dr. Jones is the CEO and Program Director at Strategic Academic Navigation/Ask Dr. Jones.net. To learn more about the purpose, intent, and program offerings of Strategi Academic Navigation, visit her website.

[StrategicAcademicNavigation.com](http://StrategicAcademicNavigation.com)

# Disengaged Employees Are Costing You a Ton of Money!

## The Importance of Having an Inclusive and Diverse Culture

*Dr. Linda Jordon*

A recent study by Gallup indicates that US-based companies are losing \$350 billion per year due to disengaged employees. Research has also shown that culture has an effect on the formulation of organizational strategy as well as on overall company performance. When there is a lack of diversity and inclusion, employees become disengaged. Building an inclusive and diverse culture in the workplace creates a healthy work environment and helps to build relationships. To remain competitive and compliant, companies must focus on their culture and the ability of their employees to effectively collaborate and partner with one another.

An organization's culture is its internal environment; it incorporates the values, beliefs, and strategies that all employees share. An organization's culture affects employees' performance, their behavior, and their overall engagement in the workplace. If an employee is not engaged in their work, then they are not satisfied with some aspect of the work environment.

Creating and maintaining a strong culture can be a challenging task. Corporate leadership must provide consistency by integrating many diverse elements into a set of beliefs, values, assumptions, and behaviors. The term *corporate culture* can be confusing to employees within an organization, but basically it is the pattern of basic assumptions, values, norms, and artifacts shared by all members of the organization. The senior leadership team is

responsible for sharing these patterns with the rest of the company so everyone has the same level of understanding regarding the everyday life of the organization. Although sharing of information is critical and should be a best practice within the organization, it's not always the norm in some organizations. From the top down, leadership must make this a priority, though, if they want their employees to have a high engagement. The more leadership can make employees feel valued, the more those employees will internalize the company culture.

Inclusion has three indicators:

- the degree of influence employees have over decisions that affect them at work
- the degree to which employees are kept well-informed about the company's business strategies and goals
- the likelihood that employees will keep their jobs

Being inclusive means that the organization values all employees, and everyone has the opportunity to develop and grow their skills, talents, and capabilities. An inclusive organization basically means that the employees are engaged, supported, and connected.

Every day, managers must be able to motivate their employees. Managers should be able to determine when their employees are engaged in their work and when they are not engaged or are not being productive. Managers must also remember that each employee is different; therefore, what motivates one person may not motivate someone else.

Employee ownership can be motivating. Some opportunities companies can offer their employees include a stock option plan, restricted stock plan, employee stock ownership plan (ESOP), and 401(k) plans. Ownership gives employees the opportunity to understand the company's strategy as well as see the value of being more cost-effective when it comes to budget time. Although providing stock ownership in the company is a good way to motivate employees, it isn't the best alternative for employee engagement because there

is no guarantee as to how long the employee will be with the company. Stock ownership and compensation are good short-term motivators, but keep in mind that they have no long-term effects.

Thirty years ago, employees that worked in the public sector placed a greater value on job security. Since that time, employee behavior changed slightly, and the focus shifted more to salary and benefits. Most recently, studies have shown that employees feel valued when managers take the time to show them personalized appreciation for a job well done. Employees want to know that someone cares about them. They want to be able to trust their leaders, and they also want to know that the work they do brings value to the organization.

Keeping high-performing employees motivated and engaged requires the same amount of energy as motivating an employee who has average performance. Managers have to determine what motivates their staff. Each employee has a different way that he or she would like to be recognized. Most employees have three goals in the workplace:

- to be treated fairly and with respect for equal pay, equal benefits, and job security
- to have a sense of accomplishment
- to have good partnerships with colleagues

Unfortunately, some managers tend to assume that providing additional compensation to employees will make them happy and productive. Monetary incentives may consist of awards, additional pay, bonuses, or gift cards. Although employees may be grateful for receiving these incentives for a job well done, they are not completely satisfied or happy. Employees want to be respected by their co-workers and leaders, they want to be treated as adults, and they want to know that their job is not at risk. Managers and business owners who take the time to stop by an employee's work area to see how they are doing or just say hello will have a productive and engaged staff.

## **Diversity Training**

These days it's wise to invest in diversity training for your employees. A diversity, equity, and inclusion training program describes the concept of unconscious bias, identifies how these biases can affect critical management decisions in the employee life cycle, help individuals to identify early childhood experiences that may inform the assumptions and biases they hold, provide a description of micro-inequities and the impact on diverse employees, identify individual behaviors that can create or erode inclusion, and implement actions for managing one's biases and behaviors. Diversity training also provides the importance of building and maintaining trust, managing expectations and styles when dealing with cross-cultural issues, and recognizing and responding to work style differences. Providing robust diversity training helps employees understand the importance of how diverse interpretations and predictive models lead to more accurate predictions, how multiple perspectives improve problem solving, and how a diverse equipped group, when managed correctly, can be more productive than a homogeneous equipped group. In addition, participants typically can take a self-assessment during the training to determine their strengths and areas for development within inclusion and diversity.

Another area of focus in the diversity, equity and inclusion training is stereotyping. Stereotyping refers to assuming others have certain characteristics or attitudes simply because they belong to a certain group or category. Although someone might work for a large company, there are still areas within the business that have stereotyping issues; these might be based upon physical appearance and lack of departmental fit. Self-stereotyping varies depending upon the identity of the gender or race, and it depends upon what a person thinks of himself or herself. When employees stereotype themselves, it tends to impact their work attitude and performance. In most cases, this will also lead to demotivation in the workplace. A manager who is attentive and notices this type of behavior can take the necessary steps to interrupt and change this pattern. Having this type of leader in the organization is critical. An effective leader should be someone who can identify an employee's

performance without causing disruption, someone who can lead the organization, drive change, and inspire the team. It is also very important to have a leader who can relate well to cultural differences and adapt to a changing environment.

The importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace is to ensure that everyone understands how to address differences because these have an impact on how employees perform and interact in the workplace. It's also making sure that everyone has an awareness of contrasting values and sensitivities, thus eliminating and reducing obstacles that prevent others from being more inclusive and fully engaged. It is very important to demonstrate respect and fairness in the workplace with clients, employees, and stakeholders.

### **Engaged Employees Are Productive Employees**

If managers, supervisors, and other leaders in the company are not keeping their employees motivated and engaged, those employees will eventually leave. Here are four ways to determine if your employees are disengaged:

- The employee is just going through the motions and not giving 100 percent effort.
- The employee does not show an interest in establishing relationships with colleagues.
- The employee is not striving for excellence; they are just satisfied with being "OK."
- When communicating virtually, the employee does not show an interest in the meetings.

Here are four ways to keep your employees engaged:

- Get to know your employees on a personal level and let them know that you care.
- Provide your employees with developmental opportunities.

- Keep your employees informed about the company. Let them know they are a part of the company's success.
- Recognize the team and the individual contributors for their hard work and the success they have achieved.

Your employees are your most valuable resource. Make sure you build a healthy culture that affirms diversity and inclusion and focuses on a high-level of employee engagement, and you'll be on your way to realizing a happier workplace and a more profitable business!

## Dr. Linda Jordon

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**Dr. Linda Jordon** is a leadership coach and diversity and inclusion trainer/consultant with more than thirty years of experience in management, leadership development and training, leadership coaching, business process improvement, diversity and inclusion, contact center development and management, and organizational development and training within the US and abroad.

As a leadership coach, Linda works with business owners and professional leaders, helping them identify and close gaps in the workplace by setting goals and creating a strategy to increase productivity and growth in the workplace. Linda has assisted with leadership assessments and performance management.

As a diversity and inclusion trainer/consultant, Linda supports organizations in facilitating diversity and inclusion training. Linda has assisted with organizational assessments, harassment training and employee engagement surveys.

In her years at GlaxoSmithKline, Linda led Sales Operations Teams to support the sales force and healthcare providers with product and medical information. Linda also led Employee Contact Center Teams and Employee Relations Teams to support employees and leadership regarding human resources, benefits, payroll, and employee relations.

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# Five Keys to Better Health and Energetic Living

*Janine Kennedy*

The wind lashes my face, blowing my long hair back as I speed downhill on my bicycle. Quickly, another hill approaches. As my muscles jump into action to make the steep climb up that hill, I do not miss a beat. My heart rate is steady. I feel powerful. My strength is constant. I have an abundance of energy. My mind is clear.

At sixty-one years old, it feels great to be alive!

Yes. Sixty-one.

For many of us, our bodies start breaking down in our forties, thirties, or even twenties. Chronic illness, hidden disease, and prescription solutions hold us hostage from living our best lives.

Too many of us feel worn out and tired. Or maybe we feel like we are “doing okay” without really feeling good. We diet, exercise, follow one nutritional program after another, take a variety of supplements, always looking for an answer to make us look and feel better—or just give us enough energy to make it through the day. Our zest for life is gone.

Meanwhile our society teaches us to accept that as we age, our health will decline. We can’t be vibrant. We can’t be healthy. We can’t challenge a diagnosis. We just have to accept all the different medications we are told we need. We act like mere sheep blindly following a shepherd who has lost his way.

What if there was a solution?

What if there was a way to feel energetic, vibrant, and alive, even in your later years? What if you had the mind, energy, and strength to be actively engaged with your life right up until you died?

What if there was a plan that you could implement right now that would change the course of your life and your death?

There is!

Right now, before you read any further, grab a pen and paper. Take a moment and physically write down what you would love your health to be like for the rest of your life.

Now that you know exactly where you want to be, you're ready to implement the following five keys. They sound simple, but there are many layers to this process, and it requires time, commitment, and a dedication to your total wellness. You're on your way to a lifetime of vibrant health and energy!

- 1. Develop a Healthy Mindset.** To achieve the state of total wellness, you must become your own personal wellness advocate. You are the only one who will rightly advocate for your own wellness. Instead of wandering around as a participant in your care, you must show up. You must fight. You must actively take a part.
- 2. Align Your Systems.** In order to achieve total wellness, you have to know, understand, respect, and align your systems.

We have a lot of systems that make our bodies work, which makes them both exciting and complicated at the same time.

It's time to stop treating your body as a wasteland—a toxic dump. What you put in your body makes a difference. "You are what you eat" is more relevant than you realize. If you are going to eat foods that you know will give you a headache and stomachache, you're setting yourself up for disaster. It's like the check engine light on your car: if you don't stop and give the car what it needs, it will stop running.

And so will you. You may mutter and sputter through a few more years, but eventually you'll crash. And all because you did not pay enough attention to the warning signals.

Just like a car runs much better given the right fluids, the human machine is no different. There is an abundance of great foods and nutrients that will give us greater energy and life!

**3. Recognize That Your Body Regenerates Itself Every Seven to Eight Years.** For the most part, healthy cells don't get sick, and sick cells don't get healthy; they get replaced. Every minute of every day, our body is renewing itself by reproducing new cells. Cells die and cells are born; it's the cycle of life. Our body's primary rebuilding period is while we sleep. During this time billions of new cells are created. If fully nourished, each cell is a healthy, exact duplicate of the original and functions optimally. Active prevention means building your body and immune system so it is strong enough to overcome the harmful microorganisms that weaken and destroy.

The quality of the new cells determines our health in the future. Our cells are affected by the foods we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe, the sunshine that warms us—anything that gets into our body through the skin. Exercise, rest, and even our thoughts also affect the quality of these cells.

**4. Renew Your Body.** When your system regenerates, you've essentially reset your body. It is not a cleanse; it's a renewal. As part of renewal, you must have a plan of action in place with two lines of defense.

The first line of defense is continuing active wellness through proper nutrition, pure water, fresh air, sunshine in moderation, a healthy environment, exercise, rest and relaxation, stress reduction, and a positive mental attitude.

The second line of defense is regular periodic visits to your healthcare provider.

That's right. This plan doesn't keep you away from your primary health-care provider. It allows you to take control of what that visit looks like, though,

because your body is new and alive. Diseases can still appear from the years of previous damage inflicted on our bodies. But now we have a better way to heal them. And we focus on wellness, not on disease, because we understand that disease can only exist in the absence of wellness.

- 5. Sustain Harmony and Balance.** Our bodies crave harmony and balance. Living in harmony with nature means keeping all aspects of life into balance—a balance that is deeply satisfying and promotes a healthy experience of being fully human and fully engaged with life. That's why when we are out in nature, we feel a sense of calm (unless our body's fight-or-flight response disrupts these harmonious responses).

So how do you achieve harmony and balance?

You take care of your body. You put together a wellness action plan that puts your mental health, your physical health, and your spiritual health at the forefront of everything you do.

These five steps are the roadmap you can use to live a full, energetic life, no matter what your age!

## Janine Kennedy

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**Janine Kennedy** is a Registered Nurse (RN) with a doctorate in Naturopathic Health (ND) and is Board Certified (BCND). She is also a bio-resonance and alternative-therapy expert with over forty years' experience in healthcare and sixteen years' experience in biofeedback alone. She has given hundreds of seminars and lectures and has been a guest on various radio programs throughout the United States.

With a history of her own personal health battles coupled with an insatiable desire to learn how to help others with health challenges, Janine worked at different hospitals throughout the US, hoping to discover their healing secrets. Disappointed with the focus on toxic drugs along with symptom care, Janine was instrumental in leading some of the first wellness retreats in her area. After witnessing how the body heals itself even in the most challenging cases, she now devotes herself fully to her lifelong passion of helping others learn how to stop disease and regenerate, replenish, and renew their body at a cellular level.

[quantum-health.us](http://quantum-health.us)

# Love Me or Die!

*Dr. Mously Le Blanc, MD*

*I woke up and shot upright in bed, my heart racing and ready to burst out of my chest. I struggled to breathe through the sharp chest pains. My thoughts were racing. “What is happening to me? Am I having a heart attack? But I’m a healthy thirty-something without a family history of heart disease. . . Wait... is this a panic attack? Oh my god, I think I’m having a panic attack! **ME?** How could I be having a panic attack? I thought panic attacks were totally fake!”*

That was the moment that forever changed how I practiced medicine. It was a moment when the healer needed healing. I had made a career as an Ivy League physician and scientist, but my eyes were completely opened when my suppressed emotions and stress put me in a vulnerable health situation. I discovered the immense power of emotions in the healing equation, a factor that science disregards.

Circumstances occur in life that produce THOUGHTS. These thoughts can be either positive or negative, uplifting or demoralizing, hopeful or hopeless. We then experience EMOTIONS as a result of these thoughts. Emotions are, in fact, energy in motion (e-motion). All energy is experienced as high vibration (peace, joy, love, forgiveness) or low vibration (anger, fear, grief, guilt, shame, regret, blame). When we repetitively have low vibration emotions, it’s like running a car engine on a near-empty tank, hoping you’ll make it to your next destination. When we run our cars with low gas levels, dirt and grit are picked up and form sludge, which can damage the engine. Similarly, when our energy becomes stagnant and blocked, it is prevented from moving to other parts of the body for normal and healthy function. Over time this creates disease. Our body attempts to warn us through the pain. Unfortunately, many of us ignore the warning signs until a full-blown disease develops.

The solution is to effectively manage our emotions. Many of us choose to stuff down or ignore our feelings. But whether or not we acknowledge our feelings, these emotions continue to affect our physical body, and hence our health.

For optimal physical and emotional health, it behooves us to face our emotions and work through them. Conversely, high vibrational emotions appropriately fuel our bodily systems for effective healing and good health. When we make healing a priority, we tap into the true power that we have within ourselves to recover and thrive.

As doctors, we are always looking to fix people, but the root cause of so many illnesses are stress-related. I learned the hard way that when we place ourselves last on the priority list, it is a clear sign of an unhealthy self-love quotient and makes stress and burnout highly probable. So rather than ignoring the elephant in the room, I decided to address the root cause of my patients' health issues directly. Before prescribing any pharmacologic medicine, I would first start with addressing their self-love.

Self-love is very different from self-esteem. Although we often lump the two terms together, the two terms are very different. Self-esteem says, "I'm great and lovable BECAUSE [fill in the blank— your family, the neighborhood you live in, the car you drive, the degrees you hold, the title and position you have, your network, your looks, etc.]." Self-love says, "I am lovable . . . period." It's an innate quality that comes from within. It takes being able to see into our souls and acknowledge the treasure within. It's the ability to extend kindness, grace, and acceptance to oneself, flaws and all. It's figuratively staring naked into the mirror and, despite the flaws, knowing we are intrinsically precious and valuable. We all have some degree of self-love. I challenge you to fight to have a healthy amount of self-love.

## **Symptoms You Are Deficient in Self-Love:**

- You are critical and judgmental of yourself and others.
- You are a people pleaser, denying your happiness for others.

- You have weak boundaries and find that people take advantage of you.
- You are a perfectionist.
- You think asking for help makes you weak.
- You deny yourself joy and fun because you're too busy checking off items on your never-ending to-do list.
- You have difficulty connecting emotionally with your feelings and being vulnerable with others.
- You offer unsolicited help and advice.

If these symptoms sound familiar, do not be alarmed. They are common, and most importantly, they can be worked on. The first thing I recommend is to create a self-love practice. What started out as an experiment to address the elephant in the room has now become a process I take all of my patients and clients through.

## **Begin to Incorporate a Self-Love Practice**

Commit to doing three things a day that bring you joy. If that sounds too overwhelming, start by doing just one thing a day. Start by brainstorming to create a list of pleasurable activities and then schedule what activities you will do each day over the course of your week. Include easy activities that can be done regularly, such as enjoying your favorite beverage in peace and quiet, reading magazines, meditating, watching your favorite show, or calling a good friend. Also include stretch items, such as getting a massage, taking a trip, or going out with friends. It's important to be intentional when engaging in these activities; say to yourself, "I am now doing my self-care/ME time/special time. This will allow you to be more present and savor the experience.

Self-love (acceptance of self) is fostered by regular self-care activities. If you can't find a way to allow yourself five minutes of joy through self-care, how can you truly believe that you are worthy, loved, and accepted? It's not about the specifics of the activity. It's about creating a regular habit of telling yourself and others that you deserve to be a priority and are worthy of happiness. Our

actions will always speak more loudly than words. Know that caring for yourself isn't selfish. It's not only a gift to yourself but a blessing to your family and loved ones. Self-care isn't about "me first"—it's about "ME TOO."

If you treat yourself poorly, is it any wonder that you would treat your neighbors, family, and friends poorly? No one will love you more than you love yourself, and conversely, you cannot give love to others if you have not first experienced that love yourself. For example, how can you forgive others if you've never forgiven yourself? I implore you to fill your cup first.

An analogy I use to illustrate this point is what I call a "love cup." Imagine holding your love cup; it can be any size, but let's use an eight-ounce cup. No matter how many people pour their love into your love cup, it will only hold eight ounces at any given time. It may be overflowing, but you will still only have eight ounces (or less) in the cup, never more. This explains why people can have so much love around them and still *FEEL* unloved. Self-care works to both fill your own cup *and* increase your capacity for more love. It allows you to subconsciously choose a bigger cup (perhaps eventually a gallon container!).

### **The results of this self-love experiment are nothing short of amazing.**

After doing this exercise for just two weeks, countless patients reported that their pain had dramatically decreased, even as much as 50 percent; some stopped taking pain medications because their pain disappeared completely. They began to see the connection between their emotions and their pain level. Rather than taking meds, they now understood that pain was a sign that they needed to invest in more self-care or in managing their emotions rather than stuffing them inside. Other clients were able to quit smoking cold turkey after decades of smoking—even when cancer didn't motivate them to stop. Learning self-love was what kept them from putting another cigarette into their mouth.

Applying the self-love concept has the ability to heal relationships and improve wealth. I've helped many women bring back the passion and love

into their marriages when they were on the brink of divorce by teaching them to focus on self-love. These same concepts have helped those struggling with worry and sadness to feeling in control of their emotions. I have helped those who were grieving to heal their broken hearts with the same tools. I've also worked with many entrepreneurs to shift their mindsets with the same principles to triple their income and more!

Self-love is like the keystone at the center of an arch. The other stones lean upon it, and it dissipates the force outward to reduce tension and maintain the strength of the structure. It is this arch structure that gives all bridges their immense strength. In fact, an arch made of stone using a keystone doesn't even need mortar to stay in place! Self-love is to our physical and emotional health what the keystone is to an arch—purely essential. It's the foundation of everything in our lives. By focusing on self-love, you get to the root of the problem rather than treating the symptoms.

**Therefore, love is medicine, and it starts with you as self-love.** Don't wait until you get a life-altering diagnosis or have a panic attack to start living. The path of love (self-love) is the shortest route to creating your dream life!

## Mously Le Blanc

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**Dr. Mously Le Blanc**, affectionately known as Dr. Mo, is a highly awarded and sought-after Ivy-league-educated physician, intuitive healer, and abundance coach. Her medical practice takes a holistic approach to care that addresses the mind, body, heart, and soul.

In addition, Dr. Mo coaches ambitious, purpose-driven women who are experiencing burnout to get off the hamster wheel of overwhelm and find self-acceptance, balance, and courage to create a life of B.L.I.S.S. She incorporates energy healing techniques with coaching to quickly and effectively empower women to transform their lives and fall in love with their purpose. As a motivational speaker, she has been featured on CBS and FOX. Dr. Mo also loves to inspire women with her *Unleash the Healing Within* podcast and her new book with the same title.

# My Dox in a Row

*Ruth Levy*

There I was, up to my elbows in a file cabinet drawer. The army discharge papers stood at attention in a drawer above the boxes of forgotten crackers and accompanying mouse droppings. One drawer above were check registers and statements, ancient in bank years, all meticulously organized and completely useless. This was the file cabinet phase of document archaeology—panning for gold in the paper piles.

**The need for Dox in a Row was clear with my first client.** I had been managing my mother's documents and cash since she had fallen in her home and entered rehab. Several months, later, a friend asked if I could help her parents with the same sort of tasks. I agreed, and when I walked into their now partly vacant apartment of fifty years, all I saw were piles of paper on the floor—tippy piles upon tippy piles of paper in what used to be the dining room.

This was a space I had visited countless times during my childhood, for TV watching, hanging out, for joyful holiday dinners, complete with singing and robust meals. That was gone. What had taken its place were the paper piles, gathering dust. Paper that spoke of medical emergencies and the time when their recently deceased daughter had taken over the financial duties for her parents. Emerging from the scratched wood floors, the printed words told of taxes and insurance and family history. The stories were stacked, often unrelated, intermingled with emotion and distraction.

I started deconstructing the piles and piecing together information. Through forensic tracking and LinkedIn research, my friend and I recovered \$75,000 from a lapsed long-term care insurance claim and reestablished regular reimbursements. Next, we unearthed a thirty-thousand-dollar mutual fund

and some small life insurance policies. Further exploration of the file cabinets revealed sentimental treasures. The family reclaimed their resources and were able to make clearer decisions because of this. Life returned to a new normal with the parents living in assisted and nursing care. In all, I served this family for five years.

**Your paper piles are your unique constructions. Dox will help you to evaluate each document and simplify life.** With your document and papers, you'll "Know When, where, and How Long to Hold 'Em"—like your property tax bill—"and Know When to Shred 'Em"—like your credit card statement. Having one go-to place that organizes and consolidates your vital information will save you time and energy. Locating your original Social Security card is much easier when you are fact-finding than when it's crunch time. I know that sorting through papers may fall under the category of tedious torture or "the-important-stuff-I avoid." When you face what you avoid or dread the most, you become your own hero.

**This process of material organization is also a metaphorical internal inventory, involving your head, hands, and heart.** Seeing your landscape of self, health, and wealth in one frame may spark insights and generate solutions. You might investigate your claims to a pension plan left behind with a past job, decide to relocate, or invest your resources into something you thought was impossible to attain. This is an invitation to take it all to the next level.

**Dox is divided into three sections that corresponds to the self, health, and wealth framework.** At the end of each section are archiving and secure storage suggestions culled by financial and legal experts. This is important because, once you have completed any part of Dox, whether by yourself or with help from a family member or financial professional, this **inventory is gold—literally**. There will be suggestions how to secure this valuable information. For now, guard it as you would a treasured family heirloom.

Dox is a "living" document that will continue to grow and change over time. Reviewing your information yearly, maybe as part of your birthday celebration, will help keep it current and complete.

## Working Through My Dox—And Getting Things Done in General

**Create Your Environment: Everything Needs a Home.** Start with Your Command Center. A Command Center is the place where you can get your organizing genius work done. Think of it as the brains of your operation. It receives and sends signals, makes meaning of information, and determines strategy. It's the place to take care of business, see the big picture, and take action. Your Command Center will help you:

- Track projects
- Sort incoming information, prioritize, and delegate
- Print, photocopy, and sort important papers
- Stick to a schedule

Google “command center” for inspiration and ideas about design and function. Your Command Center does not have to be perfect. It is a work in progress. The Command Center is not:

- A place where everyone unloads their junk for you to sort
- A place to hide out and read a romance novel

### Key elements:

- ✓ A comfortable, well-lit area with everything you need within arms' reach
- ✓ A writing surface
- ✓ A paper organizer: this may be parsed out as tasks.
- ✓ A hanging folder or pocket attached to the wall for each family member
- ✓ A wall calendar
- ✓ Paper, pens, highlighters, calculator, stapler, paper clips, sticky notes

- ✓ postage stamps, envelopes, and shipping supplies
- ✓ Files and work supplies

### **Nice to have:**

- ✓ Bulletin board or white board to post timely info and track projects and their progress
- ✓ Computer, laptop, tablet
- ✓ Printer
- ✓ Scanner
- ✓ Shredder
- ✓ Charging station

### **Habits and Routines**

Dox includes ways to use your paper habits to your advantage:

#### **If you're a Paper Piler:**

- Make paper piles in your file sorting categories.
- Do a monthly paper pile to sort of your bills and papers.

#### **If you're a Little Piddly Pieces of Paper Person:**

- Every week, take all your little piddly pieces of paper, turn on the dictate mode on your phone or computer and read off everything on these little notes.
- Organize the notes into categories and make them operational.

Dox has habit schedules for routine, daily habits, and monthly, weekly, quarterly, and annual tasks. You'll also have access to free online trackers and budget tools such as NerdWallet or Wave Accounting.

## **Your Year Month-by-Month:**

You'll see a quarter-by-quarter organizer so you can highlight throughout the year different tasks and significant goals that you want to accomplish so you can see the big picture and the big detail. Though this may be counterintuitive, sometimes seeing the big picture helps put the details into perspective.

## **Rules of Thumb When Organizing Papers:**

- Err on the side of caution: if in doubt, keep documents longer than the rules
- Read contracts or get help reading them
- FedEx or send by priority mail anything with a value greater than five hundred dollars
- Track transactions as thoroughly as possible
- Aim to touch each piece of paper only once and give it its rightful home

**DOX IS NOT JUST ABOUT SHUFFLING PAPERS.  
IT'S ABOUT GETTING CLEAR,  
ALIGNING YOUR VALUES WITH YOUR MONEY  
TO CREATE TRUE WEALTH.**

Yes, your head, hands, and heart are needed for this project. As you work your way through Dox and your papers, you will see tangible proof of your work, the fruit of your labor. Buried feelings and memories may become unleashed and emerge during this process. All kinds of emotions come out when you delve into your archives and survey your finances. Voices from the past that have burrowed deep within these paper piles may find their way out in surprising and not always comfortable ways.

To help sort through these metaphoric piles, Dox provides questions and exercises along the way to help you explore your relationship with money. You will have the chance to visit your money memories and explore money myths and decide which ones are still relevant and helpful. It's a time rewrite your money story and to even celebrate the mistakes!

Your relationship with money, papers, and all things financial is as alive as you are. Ironically, something so basic and important as financial literacy is rarely taught in school, so often these skills and knowledge are pieced together and learned as you go. In fact, in 2020, financial illiteracy cost Americans \$415 billion—that's \$1,300 per person on average. This only adds insult to injury.

Here is your opportunity to not only get your docs in a row, but also get clear on where you are so you can rewrite the next chapters of your money history. Along with fewer paper files, I hope that Dox will bring you more peace, clarity, and fortune.

## Ruth Levy

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While campus director of an acupuncture college, **Ruth Levy** stepped in to handle the financial affairs of an ill family member. This was the birth of her money management firm, 365 Financial Care. Starting with a degree in nutrition and subsequent MBA, Ruth's career spanned global not-for-profits, several Fortune 500 companies, and US Peace Corps, Ukraine.

Ruth's Dox system, a fusion of wellness principles and best business practices, is a practical approach to get organized and financially fit. Her coaching services help clients align their values with their money to create true wealth. Ruth lives in Chicago.

Ruth Levy is a local leader and certified member of American Association of Daily Money Managers (AADMM).

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# Lazy Is a Decision That Costs Too Much

*Julia D. Lewis*

As I looked in the rearview mirror, I could see my daughter's clothes flying across the highway. Panicked, we immediately pulled the truck over to readjust the tarps covering her possessions. Although the rain had stopped temporarily, the winds were gusting, and passing cars were splashing water all over as we repositioned the tarp and tightened the ropes again.

This was the third time we had to stop. As my eight-year-old grandson watched me, he yelled out, "Hey G-Ma! Why don't you put the rope through those holes?" Looking at the grommets around the edge of the tarp, I thought, *Of course! I should have used those in the first place.* I didn't bother because I was in a hurry. I was lazy and took the easy way out.

Once I took the time to use the proper resources and do it right, the tarp quit blowing around, and we didn't have to stop again.

My laziness cost me time, frustration, a few articles of clothing, a lot of tension between my daughter and me and could have been dangerous! Laziness can cost you freedom, happiness, health, and even your wealth. How often do you take the easy way out when it comes to your life? You are not going to earn what you want, enjoy good health, or even have great relationships until you decide to quit being lazy.

Let me ask you: Do you absolutely love EVERYTHING about your life?

- Are you satisfied with how much money you make?
- Are you happy with your weight?
- Do you love how the way you feel?

- Are you content with ALL your relationships— family, friends, co-workers?

None of us love every single thing about our lives. There is always something we'd like to change, something we'd like to improve.

If there are things you want to change, why haven't you changed them?

You probably haven't changed them because it doesn't hurt badly enough for you to make the change.

Just like driving that truck, I was not willing to do something different until clothes started flying across the highway.

Your life may not be exactly what you want it to be, but in your mind, you believe it is too hard to change. It is easier to settle for "less" than to change to obtain "more." So, you have the amount of money you have, you weigh what you weigh, and your relationships are what they are because you are lazy . . . you have settled. You are actually comfortable with your life; you have become just fine with the way it is.

NEWS FLASH: Being comfortable with your life will NOT get you the outcomes you desire and deserve!

Fear and stress are the two biggest indicators that determine how well your life is going. The more fear and stress you have, the less freedom and happiness you have. Fear attacks all areas of our lives. Some people:

- Fear losing their jobs
- Don't like their jobs but are afraid to do anything about it
- Have already lost their job
- Struggle with changes in their work environments
- Battle loneliness, fatigue, and boredom
- Have unhealthy relationship issues with their spouse, partners, children and/or co-workers.
- Are petrified of getting sick
- Have gained a lot of weight and are NOT feeling GOOD.

These kinds of fears cause anxiety and depression, as well as physical, emotional, and financial stress.

Are you feeling similar fears and stresses? If so, are you acknowledging them and doing anything about them? Or are you being lazy and trying to ignore or suppress them?

Do you know what that laziness is costing you? The ripple effect of that laziness AND your decision not to change impacts you and everyone you know.

Take a minute and rate the areas of your life to identify what areas may need to change. Circle the number that best represents how satisfied you are with your life in that area.

## Life Assessment

|               | Very Unhappy and Dissatisfied |   |   |   |   | Very Happy and Fulfilled |   |   |   |    |
|---------------|-------------------------------|---|---|---|---|--------------------------|---|---|---|----|
| Health        | 1                             | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6                        | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Relationships | 1                             | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6                        | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Time Freedom  | 1                             | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6                        | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Money Freedom | 1                             | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6                        | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Vocation      | 1                             | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6                        | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

If you did not score a nine or ten in every area of your life, you are settling. Things are going to stay the way they are until you stop settling. Until you let go of being comfortable with the way things are, nothing will get better.

So, what does it take to change?

Change starts with the basic acceptance of the fact that you have settled. It is understanding that you are not going to do anything differently to make things better until a CRISIS hits.

That takes changing the way YOU THINK about the way things are . . .

So, how does the way you think about things show up in your life? The most common examples are New Year's resolutions, diets, and reading self-help books. The change people are looking for generally lasts a couple of months, or sometimes only a month or even just a week.

When our lives start to hurt a little, we typically reach out externally; we read an article, buy a book, sign up for a training, even hire a coach. We look for something we can do to fix it. It works for a while—but only for a while because the fix is temporary. It is just as easy to get derailed by some other external input. It only takes one well-meaning friend to tell you, “That’s not going to work,” and you are done. Doubt creeps in and you quit. That friend influenced your thoughts just as easily as did your external solution. Doing something different because someone tells us to or we read somewhere that we should does not work either. Why? Because you are changing your actions, but you are not changing YOU. You’re not changing your thoughts, your beliefs.

Real, permanent change comes from going internal and changing the way you think. When you change the way you think about things, you can achieve permanent change in your behavior. Your mind and body work together to produce your results. Internal change begins with your thoughts.

### **Your Thoughts => Feelings => Actions => Results**

Your thoughts cause you to feel something. Your feelings cause you to act or not act. Your actions are what causes the results you are getting.

**If you want to know what you have been thinking, just look at your results. Your results are an exact reflection of the way you are thinking.**

That is why you must change the way you think about the way things are.

You can start today to go internal and improve your results permanently. Use the 3 Ds below as a guideline on where to focus.

1. **Define.** Clearly define your areas of stress and anxiety. Look at your life assessment ratings. What is it about those areas that causes your unhappiness and dissatisfaction?
2. **Design.** Design what you would love in the areas you want to change. What would those areas look like and feel like if they were exactly what you wanted them to be? Be specific—clarity is power! When you build a

house, you don't merely tell the architect you want a nice house; instead you tell him how many bedrooms and bathrooms you'd like, you describe the kitchen island, and you detail everything you want. Be your own architect and design exactly what you want.

3. **Decide.** Decide you are not going to be lazy anymore. Commit to the life you have designed by deciding that you will change the way you think now. The amazing thing is that once you decide on something, suddenly opportunities show themselves that you would have never seen if you had not made that decision. Decision making is the most critical part of the process and the foundation to your success.

You didn't wake up this morning wanting today to be no better than yesterday, did you? You are not reading this book to stay the same and not get any better. You actually do want your life to be the way you have been telling yourself you want it to be, right?

- Don't let laziness cost you the life you deserve.
- Choose to change how you think about things.
- Use the resources in front of you to live a life you love.

Are you ready to start getting the results you want and deserve? Awesome! Start now by changing the way you think. NOW is the only time you have, so ACT NOW.

## Julia D. Lewis

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**Julia D. Lewis** is a Transformational Life Coach, speaker, author, mom, and grandma. As the CEO and founder of Love Your Life Consulting, Julia coaches and speaks directly from her life experiences, both successful and unsuccessful, to help others gain the wisdom, knowledge, and skill to take advantage of everything life throws at them. Julia spent thirty-three years with the same company as a customer service and training leader. Known for her ability to listen, problem-solve, and effectively lead teams, she traveled nationally and internationally creating, training, and developing extraordinary leaders and highly successful teams.

After the company was sold and her corporate career ended, Julia became a certified Life Mastery Consultant. Using her wealth of experience coupled with powerful mindset mastery tools, Julie helps overworked and underpaid professionals attract the jobs they want and increase their income while eliminating stress so they can more fully enjoy their lives and their successes.

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# Why Eat Healthy When We All Die Anyway?

*Dani Lin*

You may think you're eating healthy when you're actually sabotaging your health!

You might be like the physician's assistant and former college athlete who would grab a protein bar before heading out the door to work. It was a quick and easy breakfast, but he'd been gaining weight and decided to take a closer look at his bar. The front of the package boasted high protein, but the nutrition label on the back of the package revealed high sugar too. Not as healthy as he thought.

Or maybe you're like the woman from the library who tried the keto diet. She loved the foods and had no problem eating high fat and low carbs. The problem was that eating keto seemed to make her cholesterol numbers skyrocket, so much so that her doctor advised her to stop!

Sometimes food might be healthy but addictive. Ria loved to buy big bags of popcorn from Costco. Although she intended to have just a few handfuls as a snack, once she got going, she couldn't stop. As someone with diabetes, eating unconsciously was costing her health!

You may be committed to one specific way of eating that you believe is healthy. There's a huge push these days for vegan and vegetarian diets. More plants, less meat. Plant foods are healthy, no doubt, but there are junk-food, Oreo-eating vegans. There are also lots of vegetarians who eat more carbs than vegetables. While vegan and vegetarian diets may work for some, others begin suffering with mental health issues by excluding animal protein.

Then there's the paleo diet. Lots of animal protein, but no bread, pasta, pizza, beans, or ice cream. If you've ever heard of Whole30, it's where you eat

paleo for thirty days straight. As you can imagine, people on Whole30 are not fun to be around and often turn down invitations from others. They seem to go into isolation while eating this restrictive diet. Many who try to complete thirty days of eating paleo make it halfway, then quit and binge on junk food (I speak from personal experience!). All these rules for eating healthy can backfire. And what's the point of jumping through these hoops when we're all going to die anyway?

Perhaps you don't see any connection between your food and drink and the annoyances you put up with in your life. For many of us, the only time we think about the food we eat is when our pants get tight. Doctors don't associate what we eat with medical issues, so why should the average person? It's so much easier to buy a product to help with pimples or eczema. We tell ourselves that our tiredness and creaky joints are an inescapable part of getting old. High blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, or autoimmunity? There's a drug for that. No wonder the roughly 60 percent of Americans with chronic disease costs the US \$3.7 TRILLION! Would it surprise you to learn that the number-one driver of chronic disease is food and that 11 million people die each year from a *bad diet*? Depressing statistics for sure—and yet there's hope.

Changing what you eat can absolutely make a difference. Health practitioners like me have been using food and lifestyle to improve health and even reverse diseases like diabetes. The results take time, but when you learn to use food for health, you can solve the problem rather than merely alleviate symptoms. Our focus on fast, easy, and convenient has been killing us. Rather than searching for a magic pill or diet to make you healthy, you can take steps toward better health today by doing some simple things.

***Forget the experts and go back to the basics.*** It sounds boring, but it's so powerful. You don't need a bunch of rules. Just eat real foods that have no ingredient label because they consist of one ingredient, like BEEF. CHICKEN. BROCCOLI. Shop for quality rather than the lowest cost. Getting your meat at rock bottom prices typically means you're getting meat from an overcrowded

factory farm where the animals are fed a diet that's not natural for them. That leaves them more prone to disease, so they're given antibiotics. Remember that whatever chemicals the animal is given, you're ingesting them when you eat that animal. It pays to know what you're really buying.

***Spend time with people, both making and enjoying food together.***

Rather than view cooking as a chore, think of it as a way to spend time with another person. Not only will it make the job seem like less work, but you'll also get to connect with each other. One of my favorite things to do is have someone in the kitchen with me even if I'm the one cooking. It usually involves a glass of wine, something to munch on, and lots of conversation. If you're single, plan a Zoom date to cook or just dine together to get that connection time. Even virtual connections around food and drink can be deeply satisfying!

***Focus on sneaking in the good stuff rather than taking out the bad.***

Denial is hard. Changing your perspective to "What good stuff can I have?" is much more freeing than a list of "can't have this." With that freedom comes satisfaction and less resistance to change. Add in more fruits and vegetables, beans, and grains in their whole form. Eat meat on the bone rather than overloading on boneless, skinless chicken breasts. You'll get more of the good stuff like collagen and gelatin—plus it has more flavor! Challenge yourself to try a new vegetable or smoothie each week.

***Remember when you felt your best and aim for that.*** Want to be able to hike when you're seventy? Play with your grandkids? Take up an active sport? Think about what it will take to be able to do the things you want as you age. Dream big and know that by focusing on wellness, you're being intentional about preventing illness. It's about being proactive rather than reactive, which is a complete shift in the way many Americans think. Whatever your current state of health, you'll need motivation to carry you when you hit a bump and fall off the healthy eating wagon. It will happen, being that you're human, so expect it. Remember, it's not all or nothing when it comes to health.

***Start small and don't try to be perfect.*** Don't make too many changes at once. Pick the low-hanging fruit, like eating fruit for dessert instead of ice cream. Or learn to make ice cream out of bananas! (There is such a thing.) Need more water? Set a reminder on your phone at different times throughout the day to drink a full glass. Short on time? Make use of prepared foods to make life easier. Rotisserie chicken is your friend. You can use the meat as a meal and then use the carcass for soup!

Make simple dishes that don't require following a recipe during the busy weekdays and save your time and effort for the weekend. Learn how to spin leftovers into another meal so there are a few days each week when you don't have to think about what's for dinner. Using leftovers and what you have on hand greatly cuts down on food waste, saving you time and money.

***Trust yourself and give yourself grace.*** You know what works for you. Maybe you thrive on a structured eating plan, but you don't need to eat solely paleo, keto, vegan, or any of the diets out there to find good health. Make up your own eating based on real foods. If you aren't confident in the kitchen, find YouTube videos and learn to cook. Approach the act of making food as something fun and adventurous. Cooking is a great way to explore the world without having to leave home. Rediscover your heritage around food by finding and making family recipes. Find out what people in different countries eat for breakfast; explore different cultures through food. Your meals don't need to look like a Food Network creation, but when you go through the effort, celebrate it!

I was happily munching on French fries when my mom said, "Greasy food will make your acne worse." *Ugh.* I was going off to college, dealing with stubborn acne, and enjoying some fries. The dermatologist said it didn't matter what I ate, so I was eating whatever made me happy! His treatment was antibiotics and zit cream. Even though it helped a little, it appeared to be my only option. But something curious happened when I got to college. Because the food was so awful, I ate lots of salad. After few

months of this, I noticed that my face looked clearer, with less acne. It was a light bulb moment. Could food make a difference even if the doctor didn't think so?

Healthy eating doesn't have to be complicated or require sacrifice and denial. You're in charge, and you have the power to change your future health one meal at a time. Ditch the idea that fast, easy, and convenient is good and slow down. Good health is a lifelong journey, meant to be shared with others over a satisfying meal.

## Dani Lin

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**Dani Lin** is a food and lifestyle coach who helps women increase energy and improve health. She'd fallen into the trap of fast, easy, and convenient solutions for years before going back to the basics of making real food and enjoying it with others. Now she teaches women to use food as medicine to manage issues ranging from headaches to blood sugar imbalance, and even autoimmune disease.

As a wife and mom of five, Dani understands the demands women face, especially working moms. She gives practical ways today's busy professional woman can get food on the table that's healthy and delicious. Her relaxed approach to health and wellness puts her clients at ease. As a Certified Holistic Health Coach, Dani looks at the whole person, listening, making recommendations, tracking progress, and listening again.

You'll never feel deprived of tasty food when you work with Dani. She's been gathering people around the table for over twenty years with delicious food that's also healthy.

[danilinwellness.com](http://danilinwellness.com)

# Learn to Get Good with the Bad

*Cathy Lins*

Let's start with a question: Why is it so hard to tell the truth? And why do we go to such incredible lengths to keep it buried?

In literature, writers often refer to the “shadow history,” where either fictional or real history is claimed to have been deliberately suppressed, forgotten, or ignored. Take *The Wizard of Oz*, for example. It tells the story of Dorothy, her ruby red slippers, and her adventures in the Land of Oz, including her encounters with the Wicked Witch of the West. But *Wicked* tells the story of what was happening in the land of Oz before Dorothy ever arrived, including how the Witch of the West came to be so wicked. The story includes dark secrets and personal tragedies that have shaped the history of Oz.

In real life, we all have had bad experiences happen to us along the way. They might not be as dramatic as a house being caught up in a tornado and falling on us, but tragedies like business failures, financial debt, health crises and injuries, betrayals by intimate partners, violence, or natural disasters befall us all.

But those experiences are not what show up on our social media posts, are they? On social media, we have picture-perfect lives—perfect spouses, exceptional children, adorable pets, great jobs, tons of wonderful friends, and endless success.

However, the surveys and studies suggest otherwise. According to the World Happiness Report 2019 (among others), Americans are increasingly unhappy, with the lowest ranking in fifty years—which, according to the 2020 Gallup Poll, was made worse by COVID-19 and civil unrest.

Try as we may to deny it, we all have shadow histories that we deliberately suppress or work very hard to ignore. You may think that hiding your pain from sight is somehow going to make it disappear. I can tell you from experience that it isn't.

The more we try to bury it, the more we cling to our unwillingness to come to terms with the truth, the more these shadows run our lives. Often this is the “why” that is driving the actions we take.

We play a game of pretend—if no one knows, if they can’t see it, maybe it didn’t happen. We don’t want anybody to know because we’re ashamed. We don’t even want to admit it to ourselves.

How do I know this? Because I did it too. I grew up in a violent home as a kid. When I left home at age seventeen, I made the decision that I would never speak of those years again. “It’s done. It’s over. Let’s move on,” I told myself. And I went on to live my life.

I have gotten to do some really important projects with nonprofits around the world. It was all great—until it wasn’t. Because there’s a universal truth: That which you don’t acknowledge and own, owns you. It runs your life. The “Real Story Going on here” comes to roost.

Of course—and here’s the funny part—I, like many of you, was still thinking, *Well, at least no one knows*. But the reality is that telltale signs always give us away. How do I know? I finally shared with a good friend and colleague about what was really causing my breakdown. She looked at me, smiled, and said, “Oh Cathy, I’ve known that for years. Maybe not the details, but I had a good hunch what was up.”

“You knew? But how?” I said.

“Cathy, you never said anything, but it shows up in everything you do: how you react to people and situations; how you make decisions. It’s obvious.”

We think no one knows. We think nobody’s ever going to know. Well, guess what? They do.

Let’s talk about what this looks like in our lives. We’ll start with money. Think about the people you know. You can spot a person who is faking that they’ve got money, that they are rich. They have the latest gadgets and “must have” items.” They engage in “retail therapy.” At the same time, they seem anxious or withdrawn. They look tired and have trouble sleeping. They start avoiding friends. The real truth is that they are in serious financial straits.

You can tell when businesses are struggling. This happened frequently during the COVID-19 pandemic. Representatives would call and say, “I’m following up because you’ve been such a valued customer to us. We would like to extend your warranty on your heating and air conditioning system.” Then they hope you’ll buy another three-year warranty for only seven hundred dollars. The truth is, folks, they’re broke, so they’re trying to drum up some money because they’ve got payroll next week.

It’s the same in our relationships. Have you ever walked in your friends’ house and when they met you at the door, you can tell they just had a fight? But because you have arrived, they act like they are extra happy. In reality, though, you can just feel the fight that just went on. And nobody in that house is glad to see you. We think we’re covering up the negativity with a big smile. But others can always tell.

As soon as we go into hiding, we put up a wall. Doing this instantly cuts us off from our connection with others. It’s a barrier they feel they can’t cross. If they are honest, they would tell you, “I feel like I can’t reach you. There’s this coldness.” As a result, people feel like they can’t trust us. And if they can’t trust us, they won’t want to do business with us. They don’t want to be in relationship with us either. It’s too much work.

This is a problem that will show up in pretty much all areas of your life. It’s killing your life. It’s killing your business. It’s killing your relationships.

You’ve lost your power. You’ve traded connection for protection. In your effort to not feel pain, you will have also blocked your ability to feel joy. It’s a high price to pay.

What action can you take to regain your power? Here are three key steps:

- 1 ***Figure Out Where You Are and Take Responsibility for It.*** Take stock of your life—the good and the bad.
- 2 ***Decide What You Are Going to Do with This Discovery and Where You Want to Be Going Forward.*** Acceptance requires moving through it—grieve what was lost, if appropriate. Identify how the bad had held

you back. Then choose your next steps forward. You could keep it all to yourself and move on—or you could choose to share your story to help someone else.

**3 *Decide How You Will Use This Discovery to Grow and Cause Your Life to Really Blossom.***

- a. What knowledge do you need next?
- b. What actions will you take next?
- c. What people will you involve to help you get there?

As I talk about this around the country, many people have asked me, “How do I go forward powerfully?” I tell them, “Own your story. All of it—not just the pretty parts.” When you shine a light on that shadow history and face it, the shadow disappears. Yes, it’s a process, but frankly, it is a huge relief not to carry that baggage anymore.

Does it really make a difference? Absolutely. I saw it in my own life while doing a training. One of the participants actually told me, “I’ve never seen someone so comfortable in their own skin.” And I knew that was a turning point for me. I had owned my story. I stopped trying to hide it. And others now could feel that authenticity; they could feel that connection. I was someone they could talk with and trust.

Growth is painful. Change is painful. But nothing is as painful as staying stuck somewhere you don’t belong.

If you don’t want to live this way anymore, learn to get good with the bad. Own your story and walk confidently into your future.

## Cathy Lins

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Speaker and workshop leader **Cathy Lins** helps women professionals live powerfully by owning their whole story—not just the pretty parts. She has spent years working with health centers and community organizations to create better programs and get needed funding to address mental health, substance abuse, family violence, HIV/AIDS, and homelessness. Her humor, positive energy, and depth of knowledge makes her a popular choice for trainings and on-site technical assistance and coaching.

It was only after her own life completely broke down after years of running from child abuse and subsequent violence that she did the work to reclaim her life and create a better ending to her story. Now she is sharing that message with others, raising awareness of and advocating for better mental health services and support for victims of violence. She is available to speak at women's conferences, faith-based programs, and national service trainings. You can contact Cathy at [cathy@dev-plus.com](mailto:cathy@dev-plus.com).

# If I Only Had the Time—How to Reclaim Your Day to Accomplish More with Less Stress

*Eva Medilek*

There never seems to be enough time in the day to do everything that's on your plate. You are already so busy with work and other life obligations that you just don't have any time left to spend with your family and friends. No time to have fun, relax, and do the things that are important to you because you are too busy trying to do it all.

One day, my then seven-year-old daughter came home from school, furious at her crossing guard. "That crossing guard doesn't know how to do her job! She's so stupid. I hate her!" she announced. When I asked what happened, she replied, "She told me to hurry up, when I was going slow."

"Why were you going slow, honey?" I asked.

"Well, because the sign said, 'slow children,' so I was going slow."

Together we went back to the scene of the crime and sure enough, right there on the yellow street sign and on the ground, it indeed said "SLOW CHILDREN."

Apparently, my daughter thought that the "slow children" sign was meant for her, so she was doing what the sign said. The pressure she felt to hurry up stressed her out and pissed her off—much like the pressure we feel as adults to always be in the rat race of life. The expectation to keep moving, doing, and not slow down can cause many of us to feel stressed and overwhelmed. And that can make us feel like our time is always being hijacked by other people's agendas.

The pressure to hurry up and do more so that you can have more and keep up with the demands of work-life and family-life is exhausting. Have you ever

found yourself feeling stretched too thin and saying things like “If I only had the time,” “I need more time,” “I don’t have the time” when someone asks you to do something fun—or even do something for yourself? It never feels like there is time to just be when you are always busy doing.

I once read a bumper sticker that said, “God put me on earth to accomplish a certain number of things. Right now, I’m so far behind, that I will never die.” That pretty much sums up how most of us are managing our time and our lives. The problem isn’t that we don’t have the time. The problem is that most of us have no clarity around how to spend our time. A lot of people have the belief that in order to have it all—and by having it all I mean more money, success, and happier relationships—they have to *do* it all too. And the price we pay for trying to be it all and do it all, is that we end up not having any time left for the things that matter the most—things like our health, our happiness, and our relationships.

I think we all know someone who is sacrificing their health because they don’t have time to eat right or exercise. Or maybe you know someone who is always busy, but not very productive. You might know people who are always rushed, not fully present, always late, and have to leave early because they are so busy. Perhaps that someone is you.

If this is you, think about how feeling being busy all the time is stealing your joy. How is this affecting the people around you? How is it affecting you? What is being busy costing you in your health, your relationships, and your general well-being?

It’s time to give yourself permission to stop trying to do it all. It’s not about how to do more so you can have more. It’s about determining the right things to do and what you need to give up so you don’t lose what’s important to you in the process.

Jen Sincero said in her book *You Are a Badass* that “time comes to those who make it, not to those who try to find it.” Living an awesome life is all about making choices that make you happy. What have you been choosing to spend your time on? Are you spending your time on the

things that matter the most to you? What things are moving the needle forward on your priorities?

Are you a person that says “yes” without really thinking about it? Do you say “yes” because you don’t want to disappoint others, or you’re worried about what others might think, or you just feel bad if you say no? You probably end up overcommitted because of it. Overcommitment leads to overwhelm, which leads to increased stress, less patience, and poor health.

That good old Mr./Ms. Cranky Pants syndrome can impact your relationships, because, well, you are doing too much, and it’s wearing you out, and you are taking it out on the people that matter the most. Now that you’ve said “yes” to everyone else needs, resentment moves in because you haven’t said “yes” to you, and you don’t have much time left for your priorities. When you are aware of and own the choices that you’ve made, you can stop making choices that make you cranky and begin to make choices that bring you what you really want.

To effectively do that, you will need to give up your old way of thinking about things. Thinking like “You have to do it, and you are the only one that can do it right.” Or “Everything is important, so it all has to be done.” When you give up that way of thinking, you’ll have the time to do the things that are important to you.

So many of us are in the silent suffering of trying to do everything—trying to do it now, and trying to do it perfectly. Because of that, we are always busy. Let’s not confuse busy with being productive. Just because you are doing a lot doesn’t mean you are getting a lot done. Being busy can impact our relationships because we are often too busy to give our friends and family the time and energy needed to develop a deeper connection.

Here are three things you can do to have more time and energy to spend on the things that matter to you.

***First, set clear priorities.*** When you don’t have clear priorities, you tend to make poor choices that lead to undesired outcomes and frustration on your part.

***Second, establish firm boundaries.*** Boundaries are essential in taking control of your time and energy. Once you've got your priorities and boundaries established, you will be able to make the tough decisions required so that you can control how you spend your time.

***Third, develop habits, practices, and principles that support your priorities and boundaries.*** Develop habits for planning your day, week, month, quarter, and year. Schedule your day by working from of a blueprint of your priorities. Schedule your work, rest, fun, and time to do what makes you happy.

When you don't consciously and intentionally choose where to focus your energies and time, as well as get clear on your priorities, other people will. Your boss, your co-workers, your clients, and even your family members will make those choices for you. You can either empower yourself to make bold choices based on your priorities, or you can allow other people's priorities to control you.

We don't initially start out choosing to spend most of our time and energy on things that take us away from having better health and happier relationships. But now, decide what you are going to give up. How are you going to give it up? And how much of it do you need give up?

How you spend your time, money, and energy is a direct reflection of your values. When you base your decision making on your values and your priorities, you are willing to let go of what doesn't move forward or support your priorities. One of the reasons it's so hard to set priorities is that we think everything is important, so we've got to do it all. That's why setting boundaries is important.

According to hospice workers, the number one regret expressed by people on their deathbeds has to do with time. They regret not spending more time with their families, not taking more vacations, and not spending so much time spent working. When you decide to say "yes" to what really matters and "no" to what doesn't, that's when you can live a life of purpose without regret. It's not too late to take control of your time and decide to spend it on living a life you love. You have the freedom to choose to make time.

## Eva Medilek

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**Eva Medilek** is an executive certified high-performance coach, international speaker, and author. She is a graduate of Ascension Leadership Academy, the High-Performance Institute, and the Evolutionary Business Council's Certified Master Trainer Program.

Eva has been nominated for the Evolutionary Business Council's UNSTOPPABLE Award, MORE Award, and the council's 2020 Bronze Mentorship Award. A featured speaker at the Women's Economic Forum in London, she continues to speak and hold high-performance workshops throughout the year.

Eva is the author of *The Intimacy of Race*, a book that seeks to support allies of underserved and minoritized communities and victims of racial biases. She is also the creator of The Intimacy of Race Facebook group and is committed to sharing support and resources for allies of people of color.

An executive contributor to *Brainz*. magazine, Eva was selected as one of 500 people featured on the Brainz 500 Global list of 2020! She continues to share content via her blog and newsletters.

Eva specializes in helping busy professionals have more money, time, and success without sacrificing health, well-being, and relationships in the process. She shows her clients that it's possible to have it all without having to do it all.

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# You Must Be Out of Your Mind (to Have What You Want)!

*Tori Michaels*

This being human thing is a complex myriad of occurrences and perceptions. From the day we're born, we have experiences that we get to respond to and learn from. We also have countless emotions, feelings, thoughts, and opinions about all of it. We call them good or bad. I like it; I don't like it. But they are actually not good things or bad things.

The truth is, nothing is anything until you are there to perceive it and then judge it. You and you alone determine the goodness or the badness of everything. The world is actually neutral. People are being. Situations are happening. Places are existing. That's it. That's all there is. Yet every day you decide that you like something or you don't like something. Yuck vs. Yum all day long.

## **Your Yuck or Yum**

Every single yuck or yum, or your opinion about whatever is happening in your world, is a direct reflection of the beliefs, stories, and judgments that have been programmed into your mind by your geographical location, upbringing, familial beliefs, society, religion, and your responses to what has hurt, beginning with childhood. This complex system of beliefs makes up how you interpret your world and what is happening in it. Meaning is what creates your reality, and you are the meaning-maker of your life. The interpretations you assign to everything will determine how you think, feel, and react, as well as what you commit to, allow yourself to experience, and do.

So, here's this perfectly impartial world just being. Then you come along, bringing with you your beliefs, programming, generalizations, assumptions,

opinions, and projections, and apply them to neutral events. You experience your co-worker, boss, or employees as being lazy and/or stupid; your sibling as being selfish and self-centered; and your ex as a complete idiot. But none of these things are true or untrue until you show up. It's possible that your co-worker, boss, or employees are actually very intelligent, but they don't think exactly like you; your sibling is just better at saying no than you are; and your ex is no different than who they've always been, but you just experience them differently now.

## **The False Payoff of Limiting Beliefs**

Why do we create these limitations by labeling people and situations? We do it because we get a payoff! No human being does *anything* without a payoff. You might get to be righteous, which allows you to feel superior. You might get pity, which allows you to feel comforted. Or you might get attention, which allows you to feel seen. All situations and your perceptions are based on your opinions. Therefore, your opinions are the source of your joy and your suffering. Always.

Think about how you assign meaning to someone cutting you off on the highway, someone rejecting you, the promotion going to someone else, how much money you make/owe/have, and what others think of you. It's not just the world outside that you have opinions about. What do you tell yourself when you make a mistake? When you feel rejected? When you see others' joyful Facebook posts? How hard do you work at making sure people think you are generous/nice/smart/sexy/lovable/successful? What do you say to yourself when you look in the mirror? How do you treat yourself when you believe your body is too fat, thin, old, or ugly—and what's the basis of that belief? Where did that come from? How many diet/health/antiaging books and products will it take for you to realize that you made up the idea that your body is somehow flawed, and in so doing, you create suffering for yourself? The truth is, if you really wanted to change your body, you would. But if you have an

incongruent belief based on something that's outside of you, how can you possibly find peace with your body or the energy to improve it?

## **Limiting Beliefs Show Up Everywhere**

I promise you this shows up everywhere in your life. For example, think about money. The conscious and unconscious beliefs you have about money and prosperity determine how you experience abundance in all areas of your life. Many people grew up being told that money is the root of all evil, rich people are greedy, or money doesn't grow on trees. These beliefs are simply programmed into our minds. Because these opinions come from the people who love us, we view them as unquestionable truths in our conscious and unconscious minds. Since you don't want to be associated with evil or shunned by your family for not agreeing to generational beliefs (we think this because we have always thought this), you can literally prevent yourself from having abundance, which can show up as chronic money issues.

But programmed beliefs don't just stop with one part of your life. How you do one thing can show up in how you do everything. If you believe there isn't enough money, you might also experience relationships that don't last because it seems like there's a limited availability of love. You might experience chronic health issues because you believe there's a limitation on your access to healthiness; you might deem life unfair because it seems there are not enough opportunities; you might feel inadequate because you believe you are just not enough.

All of this comes from the opinions, beliefs, and thoughts that you assign to the world, which remains neutral. Therefore, you make the people, places, and situations in your life responsible for your misery and for your joy. You suffer when you see the outer world as the problem. You decide that the situation is wrong, and then conclude that if this person, thing, or situation would just be the way you *think* it should be, then you would be happy, content, satisfied, wealthy or whatever else you want to have or be.

## **Your Inner World Shows Up in Your Outer World**

Your beliefs will spill out all over your outer world and literally dictate how you experience your life. In case you are still skeptical, I will show you how your inner world is being reflected in your outer world. The closest example of your outer world is the place you live. The attitude that you have about your home, whether it's a mansion, house, apartment, tiny house, or a room you rent, reflects the attitude that you have about everything. Your home is an expression of your personality. You do this purposefully when you choose your décor. Everything in your space is there because of something you did. How you keep your home and what you have in your home reflects your state of mind, self-value, emotions, attitudes, priorities, and what you are really committed to.

Think about your bedroom. Is your bedroom the first place you decorated when you moved in? Is it the place you make sure is always impeccable and inviting? Visualize looking into this room from the doorway. Imagine you are seeing it for the first time as it is right now. Notice how looking at this room makes you feel. What is it communicating? Write down three words that you would use to describe it:

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Now think about your beliefs around romantic love. Write down three words that describe your experiences with romantic love:

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Do you see a correlation?

Look around your home. Ask yourself, "How are my opinions, thoughts, and beliefs showing up in my home, and *therefore* being perpetuated in my life?"

## **The Power of OBTs**

Everything that you are creating in your outer world is a direct result of your opinions, thinking and beliefs, or your OBTs. Your OBTs create your environment and your experiences everywhere in your life!

We have about 70,000 thoughts a day, most of which are repetitive, generalized, and unquestioned judgments, assessments, and opinions, and they create our daily lives. What you have in your life right now is the result of your OBTs! Your external world will show up with everything your internal world is focused on . . . not occasionally, but all the time.

Here is the truth: you don't need anyone or anything to be different for you to be happy. I know that's a hard one to comprehend. But if you make everything outside of you responsible for your happiness, you will always be reliant on those things for your happiness. This disempowers you and keeps you stuck. You are literally controlled by your unquestioned OBTs, and you are a slave to the opinions and behaviors of others. All your perceived limitations are just that: your perception. The good news is that like putting on a new pair of glasses, your perceptions can change.

Being willing to question your OBTs is profoundly illuminating and life-changing. When you become aware of how you have been a slave to your OBTs, you can begin to consciously replace them with new beliefs. It has been my experience that the first belief most people need to shift is believing that they matter and that they are deserving of what they desire. If you believed in your core that you matter and you are deserving, what might be different and possible in your life? Your opinions about others and your experiences might become more neutral and thus allow thoughts that inspire and uplift. You might even experience perpetual gratitude. This is how you begin to live an authentic, empowered life—one where everything is possible.

## Tori Michaels

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**Tori Michaels**, Master Transformation Coach and Trainer, Modern Feng Shui Practitioner and Evidential Medium and Founder of the Whole-Life Transformation System, has supported thousands of people across the globe in stepping out of fear and anxiety and into successful, meaningful lives. When she was four years old, Tori became aware of her ability to communicate with people who have crossed over. This has always given her an aptitude for deeply understanding people, environmental energy, and human nature. However, it wasn't until she chose to save her own life in 1993 by getting sober that she made it her life's work to help others understand that they matter, and they have a contribution to make to this world. Her studies and experiences in the field of transformational mastery, and with various teachers including Debbie Ford, Deepak Chopra, and James Van Praagh, have honed her natural talents and expertise in working with individuals and groups. Tori leads workshops and retreats, and she works one-on-one with people who are ready to live the life they came here to live. Receive your free guided meditation just for visiting her website!

[torimichaels.com](http://torimichaels.com)

# Would You Rather Burn \$22K or Go on the Trip of a Lifetime?

## *River Nice*

I'd bet you \$200 that you wasted \$100 this month.

Now, I'm not saying you lit a \$100 bill on fire. I'm not even saying you spent it on lattes and avocado toast. All I'm saying is that if I went through your credit card and bank statements, I bet I could find a total of \$100 (or more) spent on things you either don't remember or don't care about.

Let's see where that habit takes you: \$100 a month adds up to \$1,200 a year. If you continue in that habit for thirty years, that's \$36,000. Is spending \$36,000 on things you either don't remember or don't care about going to help you achieve everything you want in those thirty years?

We all get caught up in doing things that aren't important to us, and then we wonder why we aren't getting any closer to what we truly want out of life.

One of my clients wanted to buy a house. He was making six figures, but he wasn't saving anything, and his credit card debt kept growing. From digging into his credit card statements, I found out that over the last two years he had spent \$22K on wine. When I asked him about it, he said that in his social group, he's known as "the wine guy," and he feels like he always has to bring multiple bottles of expensive wine to share whenever he sees his friends. I wonder if he thought one of those friends who always drank his wine would return the favor by buying him a house.

We're living in a culture of consumerism, especially here in the US. Every waking moment, from the day we're born, we are brainwashed to be good consumers in order to keep the economy growing. So we spend our money on clothes, cars, beauty products, smartphones, essential oils, fast food, sneakers—and the list goes on and on.

I teach my clients and students how to make budgets all the time, and I can tell you that most people have an inaccurate perception of how much money they spend. A client will say, “I probably spend \$300 ordering food in a month,” but when we look at their credit card bill and bank statement, it adds up to \$600 a month.

I’m not the first to tell you that you’re wasting money, and I think we’re all sick of hearing about lattes and avocado toast. You’re probably thinking about all the things you “should” spend less money on, and maybe you’re feeling guilty for spending it in the first place or angry because you think I’m going to tell you what to do with your money.

I don’t tell anyone what to do with their money. My role as a financial planner is to show people the hard facts that they avoid, project where their habits are going to take them, and offer them a new set of habits that can take them where they actually want to go.

Here’s what I want you to do. I want you to sit quietly for five whole minutes (set a timer) and really think about what you want during the time that remains in this one life you’ve been given. What trips do you want to take? What problems do you want to solve? What do you want to share with the people you love? Where do you want to live? How do you want to spend your time? How do you want your body to feel?

Five minutes. Don’t worry, I’ll still be here when you’re done.

OK. Now, some of the goals you came up with are easier to put a price tag on than others. It’s complicated to put a price tag on fixing your back pain (though unfortunately, here in the US fixing your back pain probably does come with a price tag). But if you have a dream of spending three weeks in Amsterdam with your partner for your honeymoon, you can spend half an hour online to find out the cost of plane tickets, lodging, food, and the activities you want to do. So let’s run with that! Let’s say I want to take my partner to Amsterdam for three weeks.

Right now plane tickets from Philadelphia (where I’m writing this) to Amsterdam are about \$1,000 per person for a round trip.

We could stay for three weeks in a small, beautiful Airbnb in a cool part of town for about \$3,000.

We could buy used bicycles for maybe \$75 each and use those to get around most of the time. I'll set aside \$450 for attractions and entertainment. And I'll estimate \$1,400 for food and recreational substances—this is Amsterdam, after all!

So, based on my twenty minutes of research, I'm estimating \$7,000 for this trip. Doesn't it sound amazing? A once-in-a-lifetime experience and life-long memories to treasure with my partner!

What I want you to get from this is how to think through that dream you have and then estimate how much it would actually cost. Now, \$7,000 might sound like a lot of money or like not very much at all. Either way, knowing what it costs makes the dream more real. We're not waiting for a winning lottery ticket to fall from the sky; we're creating a specific, measurable, actionable goal.

The next question is: What am I willing to do to make this dream into reality? What would it take to put 7,000 dollar bills into one pile, and not use any of them for anything else?

I'm self-employed as a financial planner, and I'm currently working with thirty-four clients, who each pay me \$250 per month. I also run a group financial education course that earns me about \$3,500 per month. My monthly business expenses are about \$7,500, and I'm setting aside \$1,100 each month for taxes. My mandatory personal expenses cost about \$2,200 per month. That leaves me with \$1,200 for my discretionary spending and saving.

Some of that \$1,200 usually gets distributed to things like eating out, buying clothes and household items, donating to causes I care about, going out to bars and clubs, and enjoying live entertainment. The rest of it goes into my various savings accounts for my short- and medium-term goals.

If I reallocated this \$1,200 each month toward the Amsterdam trip, I would have the full \$7,000 available in six months. But this all-or-nothing approach isn't realistic! I have yet to meet anyone who can deny themselves

all fun and convenience for six months in order to have lots of fun and convenience for three weeks. I know that I just won't do it.

I will ask the question again: What am I willing to do to make this trip to Amsterdam happen?

Maybe I'm willing to cut back my habit of eating at restaurants here in my home city by 50 percent. Maybe I'm *not* willing to stop donating to the causes that are important to me. Maybe I'll still go to bars and clubs and live shows, but I'll only pay for ginger ale instead of cocktails or wine.

If I can get my discretionary expenses down to \$600 per month, then I can put the remaining \$600 per month into a savings account. In twelve months I'll have \$7,200 ready to go!

Look, I don't think I've taught you anything new here. You could google "how to estimate the cost of a trip" or "free budget template," but the truth is, I worry that you haven't taken the time to figure out what you want, estimate what it costs, and make a plan to pay for it. It's too easy to just keep going with what the people around you are doing, or what they expect you to be doing.

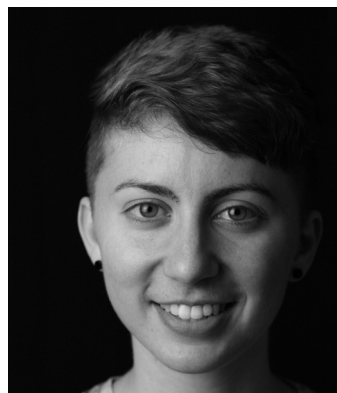
What about my client who was spending money on wine instead of saving for a house when he came to me for help? After talking to me, he cut back on the wine (but didn't cut it out entirely!), cut back on some expenses that weren't actually important to him, asked for a raise at work, paid off his credit cards, and started contributing a portion of his income to his employee stock purchase plan. His wholistic financial plan and new money habits have him on track to buy his dream home in just two years!

This person could have easily made a budget for himself, but what he really needed was an honest conversation about what he wanted from life. He got so caught up in what his friends expected from him that he wasn't working toward his own goals.

What about you? Are you being intentional with your money and living your dream life? Or are you just stuck in habits that you didn't consciously choose?

## River Nice

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**River Nice** became a financial planner to educate and advise young adults in the LGBTQIA community. After two years at Ameriprise, they launched their independent firm, Be Intentional Financial, which is named after their number one piece of financial advice.

Over the years, River has helped more than one hundred clients gain confidence and control over their money and collectively save over \$200,000.

Based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, River teaches both live and virtual financial education courses and workshops for the LGBTQIA community (and allies!) and also works with a select number of private clients all across the US.

[beintentionalfinancial.com](http://beintentionalfinancial.com)

# The Simple Millions Blueprint: Three Straightforward Steps to Wealth

*Jo Ousterhout*

Overwhelmed, intimidated, and stressed? Or clear, calm, confident? It's your choice.

- 73 percent of Americans rank their finances as the number one stressor in their lives.<sup>1</sup>
- 7 out of 10 couples report that finances are a leading source of tension in their relationship.<sup>2</sup>
- 8 out of 10 women will end up alone and responsible for their own finances, often for a decade or more<sup>3</sup>

Are you one of these statistics?

Are you overwhelmed when you think about your money? Intimidated? Feel you don't know enough? Don't know where to start or what to do to have that life you dream of?

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.cnn.com/2016/05/11/health/73-percent-of-americans-rank-finances-as-the-number-one-stress-in-life/>.

<sup>2</sup><https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-love-doctor/201008/don-t-let-money-ruin-your-relationship>.

<sup>3</sup><https://www.ubs.com/content/dam/WealthManagementAmericas/documents/2018-37666-UBS-Own-Your-Worth-report-R32.pdf>.

The life where you confidently stride up to the departure desk without worrying about how you're going to pay for your vacation. The life where the year-end holidays are a time of celebration, not filled with constant angst about facing the bills in January. The life where you don't always have that 3:00 a.m., back-of-your-mind worry about how you'll never have the money to enjoy your retirement, never be able to afford all those things you've been dreaming of for years.

Many of us work hard on all kinds of fitness—physical, mental, and emotional. We do yoga, we run, we lift weights, we walk ten thousand daily steps. We meditate. We spend intentional, quality time with our families and cultivate our friendships. We garden and take walks in nature. We consciously and actively work on fitness in so many areas of our lives. But we ignore money and our financial fitness.

For some reason, we act as though we expect money to take care of itself. We think that somehow, miraculously, we'll have enough of it when we need it. When we want it.

Unfortunately, it doesn't work that way.

For most things, we take conscious action to fix what we need to fix. Most of us wake up every day with issues on our mind—some big, some small, some crucial, some not. Maybe it's a family issue: you and your partner are not speaking, again. Maybe it's your job: you're unsure just how to bring that new project in on time. Maybe it's your home: the toilet's leaking.

You know that not waiting to act only compounds the problem. Your partner grows even more silent and withdrawn; your work deadline looms closer, and you're no further along with the project; and the toilet leak turns into something even more problematic.

So, to solve all these issues, you take intentional action. You have a conversation with your sulking partner. You dedicate time to get that work project moving and in on deadline. You call the plumber.

But your money—important, but not urgent—is ignored. It just doesn't seem like an immediate issue, so you avoid it. Sometimes a specific issue forces

money into the “urgent” category: it’s time to pay your taxes. Or your car’s engine dies and you need to find the money to pay for the repair. Or someone close to you has an unexpected health emergency. And then you’re even more stressed, worried about finding the money you need.

And always in the back of your mind is that niggling worry, that small voice saying things like:

- “If I’m worried about paying for these expenses now, how will I ever have enough to retire?”
- “I want to travel with and give gifts to my family—how will I ever afford that?”
- “I’m making OK money now, but what about the future?”
- “How much is retirement going to cost, anyway?”
- “What about my dream of . . .?”

The future and those dreams seem far, far away. So years go by, and money ends up taking a back seat to all the other stuff you deal with every day. It gets shoved onto the “yes, I’ll look at this someday, just not today” list. Important but not urgent. Important but not actionable, at least not right now.

If it’s true that “misery loves company,” the good news is that you have lots of company; plenty of people ignore, are stressed by, and are scared of money. You’re not alone. But you are miserable.

It doesn’t have to be this way.

Imagine what it would feel like to be clear, calm, and confident about money. Imagine what it would feel like to close the door to your home as you head off on vacation, secure and happy that you have the money to cover all costs? Imagine what it would feel like to be able to help others without wondering how you can possibly afford it? Imagine what it would feel like to wake up at 3:00 a.m. and *not* be worrying about paying for your retirement?

Well, you can. You can improve your financial situation. You can become clear about your dreams, confident about your ability to manage your finances, and calm about your progress toward those dreams.

Your profession isn't important. Your connections don't matter, and neither does your lack of formal financial training. There are secretaries who retire with \$8 million, janitors whose estates give away \$5 million, and receptionists with high-school degrees who have \$3 million. Ordinary people, just like you, none of whom have formal financial education, Wall Street experience, or financial world connections.

But they all know what they want, and they follow a plan consistently to get there.

Do you want to be like them? Yes? Then you need to do what they did.

Twenty years on Wall Street and an MBA in Finance from Wharton have taught me that a few simple steps can pave the way to clarity, confidence, and wealth.

Can I promise you that you'll be a multimillionaire and get everything you've ever wanted by following these steps? No, of course not. But will following these steps, intentionally and consistently, significantly better your finances? Will you feel clear, confident, and calm about your money? Yes! Here are the steps:

**1: Assess.** To start any journey, you need to know where you are. And with your money, that means getting real about your current financial situation. Start with the basics—assess your income and your expenses. Your credit/debit cards most likely offer a free analysis of your yearly spending—take a look.

Look also at what you own—your bank accounts, 401(k) or other retirement savings, and any other investments. Know what you owe—mortgage, student loans, credit cards, car payments, etc. Write these all down.

Take the time to get specific and real. A few hours spent with your financial records will give you a good picture of your current financial state. And, if it's not what you want it to be, don't judge yourself; you are where you are. Congratulate yourself on taking the first step! And now that you know where you are, you can do something about it.

**2: Dream.** Now for the fun part. You don't want to worry about money, right? What exactly does that mean to you? The answer to that will differ depending on where you live and what you want to do. Living in a log cabin in Maine is different from living in Denver or on the beaches of Florida. What do you want: Travel? Grandchildren? Rescued pets? Gardening? Do you want a big house with plenty of room for extended family and friends to visit?

Be detailed about what you want your life to look like. Take the time to write out your priorities, and specific goals/dreams. Do research to determine the costs of what you want. Then ask: "Are my spending patterns helping or hurting my chances of achieving my dreams?"

**3: Make a Plan and Follow It.** You've heard it before: "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail." If you don't know where you want to go, it can be pretty hard, if not impossible, to get there. A plan connecting the dots between where you are now and where you want to be is a critical step.

For most of us, that means spending less, saving more, and having our money work for us through investing and the magic of compounding. All the ordinary millionaires mentioned above invested, even small amounts, consistently. And they didn't touch these investments for years, with their gains and interest/dividends consistently reinvested to generate additional earnings over time.

So that's it—three simple steps, steps you already take to solve issues in so many areas of your life. Sometimes you take these steps all by yourself, and

sometimes you need someone to help you plan and to hold you accountable. Either way, you do it. Money is no different.

As INC 500 entrepreneur Suzanne Evans says, “Money isn’t the most important thing in life, but it touches everything that is.”

So stop ignoring your money. Stop putting your money at the end of your to-do list. Start now, with simple, practical steps toward your goals, toward your dreams.

You can do it! And the time to start is right now.

## Jo Ousterhout

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**Jo Ousterhout** helps successful, motivated women develop personalized, goal-based financial plans so they can live exactly the life they want. She has mentored hundreds of women to grow their wealth quickly and develop unshakeable confidence in making the best financial decisions for themselves and their families. A former senior executive on Wall Street, Jo has also been an entrepreneur, consultant, board chair and ED of a not-for-profit. She has an MBA in Finance from The Wharton School, a BS in Biology from William & Mary, and has completed the Series 65 exam, required for individuals to act as investment advisers in the US.

[acumen8.co](http://acumen8.co)

# How Do You Grease the Skids of Business?

*Magdalena Raj*

“Do you live your life with intention or on autopilot?” We were all sitting somewhat blank-faced, each person lost in contemplation at the question. And as we were plumbing the depths of our respective lives, a lilting voice rang out from the back of the room. “Honey! Let’s be honest. Some days, it’s just great to know you made it through with all your pieces and parts intact.” Well, that cracked the heavy silence and cracked up the participants of the business workshop. When the laughter subsided, there was a lot of commentary on how often what Karina had described was, in fact, true. Frequently we get so busy covering all the bases, it does seem like making it through the day should be a well-celebrated victory in and of itself.

Later, at the bar, Karina had more wisdom to share. “I tell you, honey, my success was built on a diet of late nights, early mornings, missed weekends, while juggling demands and outracing deadlines.” More laughter and then lots of serious nods. We decided success was not just a testament to skills, efforts, and abilities. It could also be measured by the running tab of trade-offs—things missed out on, condensed, or crammed into the remaining minutes not allocated to building a business or career. Everyone had certainly had more than their fair share of that.

Then the underlying heartache became more palpable. Achievement had brought success, but not necessarily satisfaction. Lives were beginning to fray across the edges, and relationships were taking on edges. For some, health was sliding into the questionable zone. Why was it getting heavier, harder? What were we missing? Had “doing it all” to achieve success become our Autopilot? Maybe the path back was to focus on Intention.

Well, if that really had solved everything, I should probably end this chapter right here and declare victory. “Doing it all” is not the solution. Living with intention is the key to changing our lives. However, since then I’ve arrived at a different conclusion. True, the power of Intention is legendary, but I think we were dismissing Autopilot too soon. On the surface, Intention and Autopilot seem to be disconnected polar opposites, but they are not. I am convinced that the secret lies in learning to use them as complementary levers. Together they set the stage to achieve the results you truly want: more success with less effort and greater joy. Intrigued? Good.

## **Meet Your Operating Model**

On any given day, you have a standard way of acting, engaging, and responding. It’s your Operating Model. There are things that you pay a normal level of attention to and things that you barely notice as you address them. Call these your Normal bucket and your Autopilot bucket. Acting with Intention kicks it up a notch. It’s a special bucket. You are firing on all cylinders to bring about a desired outcome. Direction, focus, clarity equal better results. There’s a reason Intention is the subject of so many books and workshops. It works. Setting Intentions takes forethought, effort, and time. It warrants its own bucket. Now, it may not be achievable if your usual method is a dragon-slaying-hair-on-fire or a “wing it” approach. But for most of us, this should be an acceleration tool in our toolbelt. So why isn’t everyone using Intention to be wildly successful?

Ah, this is where Autopilot comes into play. Over time, as you have reacted to life in general, you’ve created a set of references based on your experiences and assumptions. This framework allows you to shortcut a lot of thinking and just act or respond.  $A + B = C$ . It takes less effort or concentrated thought from you, which is great. Using your Autopilot bucket free up more brain power for daily work, creative thinking, and problem solving. What a great Operating Model, right?

## Explore the Challenge

Well, it could be, except it's skewed by YOUR experiences, assumptions, and biases. Your Autopilot may not be ready to support that great Intention you set. Say you are very introverted and have just set an Intention to secure three sales calls at tonight's networking event. That might be tough. Whereas someone else can rely on their Autopilot responses to smile, engage, and chitchat comfortably, that's not the same for you. Your brain has to concentrate on achieving that Intention as well as do all those other activities I mentioned, while not sweating profusely or running from the room. Is it any wonder you feel totally drained afterward and potentially less likely to attempt it again?

What comes down to is this. The wider the divide between the Intention you are seeking and your Autopilot mode of operating, the harder and more draining the interaction is, and the lower the likelihood of achieving a successful result. This can happen whether you are trying something new or revisiting something you *used* to be able to do.

While all this may be interesting, why is getting a handle on how your Intentions and Autopilot contend with each other so important? Because if you do not have your interactions sorted into the right buckets, you will have problems. And problems at work cause problems at home that come right back to work. The circle can work for you or against you. In order to grow your business or accelerate your career, you are going to have to take on challenges successfully. If you can do that with more ease and less effort, your results will multiply, and you will have a happier, healthier life as well.

## Hit The Jackpot

Up to now I've only spoken about this in relation to you. But don't forget that others are watching. The litmus test for how well all your inner buckets are working together is simple. How are you showing up in the world? Who is the person that the world sees and how consistent is that appearance? Are you normally Gandhi, and then Bridezilla under stress? How you show up answers the only question that truly matters to everyone else. Can they trust you?

That's really what people want to know and feel. Everything else depends on that answer. Trust is the strongest foundation for building relationships, forming strong alliances, and weathering business challenges. It is what makes every interaction easier and require less effort. You see, trust moves risk to the back burner. That in turn let's everyone else dial back their defenses and become open to possibilities (since they no longer have to watch their backs for that possible proverbial dagger). Is it any wonder that trust is one of the fastest accelerators for business (and relationships)? Think of it as HUMAN WD-40. This is where you reap the magic of getting your buckets right. Sounds divine, doesn't it?

Only one problem—you can't get all those wonderful benefits of more success with less effort and greater joy because you can't gain trust if you are sending out mixed signals when you show up. The quicker you get yourself in sync, the sooner things will happen for you. It's time for a tune-up for your Operating Model.

## **Time for a Tune-Up**

Grab a pad and read through the questions below. You may not have answers to them all right away, and that's OK. Following this guide will tell you where to focus to get a better handle on whether your Operating Model is in sync with YOU and which parts are not. Dig deep. Take action. Recalibrate.

1. ***Get SQUARE with yourself.*** It's been a while since you have consciously looked at your buckets. If you aren't even sure who you are, you won't get far.
  - Know where your edges, your boundaries, are. Do they exist or are they as porous as Swiss cheese?
  - Know where the pointy corners that might poke others are. How do you use them?

- What about all the facets of your life—business, personal, romantic, familial, spiritual, and physical? Is there any consistency in how you show up for each? Where do your priorities sit?
- What are your principles, values, and key beliefs?

## **2. *Check your underlying motivators.***

- Make a list of your biggest hopes, fears, regrets, and expectations—no more than ten total.

## **3. *Does your Operating Model reflect and support you?***

- Fix your buckets, giving the right Intention to the right interactions.
- Question long-held assumptions and address underlying motivators.
- Get rid of what isn't serving you; put priority where it needs to be.
- Hone the skills you need so they run on Autopilot.

## **4. *Check your progress by tracking how you are showing up.***

Optimizing your Operating Model is incredibly powerful. Since that workshop, I've come to realize that my cohorts and I were far from the only people feeling the crunch like we did. I hear echoes of that night in so many conversations I've had since then with career professionals, business owners, and solopreneurs. If you are not showing up as you want to be seen, you won't be. And that could make all the difference.

## Magdalena Raj

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**Magdalena Raj** is a Business Strategy Coach who helps ambitious business owners and career professionals accelerate their income without crushing their lives. Whether already successful or aspiring, Magdalena's clients have one thing in common—they've realized that success is more than a number—and they crave a richer life as well.

During her more than twenty-five-year corporate career, Magdalena criss-crossed different industries and was a leader in organizations from Sales to Technology. Working in intense, market-driven environments was exciting, rewarding—and maybe a little addictive? One fact that was consistent is that many hard-charging, successful people around her also had relationship, health, or financial issues teetering on the edge in the background. Realizing she wasn't alone in that was slightly comforting but very disheartening. Something needed to change.

Today Magdalena blends her business experience with coaching and healing skills as the founder of Mold Your Life. When not coaching, Magdalena speaks at summits and conferences about architecting your life to so you can stop doing it all to get what you want. Her book *Doing It All Gets You Nothing* will be published late 2021.

Magdalena lives in Atlanta with her husband, Anthony, serving as personal assistants to their two fabulous felines. The couple's three adult children reside nearby.

[www.moldyourlife.com](http://www.moldyourlife.com)

# People Pleasing Pleases No One

*Mary Jo Rathgeb*

People pleasers—those nice guys (and gals) who finish last—also end up broke, lonely, or sick. Their main goal in life is to make people happy, even when it interferes with their own happiness. You know you are a people pleaser if you avoid conflict at all costs—like the character in Fredrik Backman’s novel *Anxious People* who thought robbing a bank for one month’s rent was a better choice than having a direct conversation with the soon-to-be ex about needing money and a place to live. You know you are a people pleaser if you would rather be seen as agreeable than speak your mind. You smile at the antics of others even if you are feeling uncomfortable. You would rather let bad behavior go unattended than risk getting someone mad at you. You know you are a people pleaser if you give away your time, money, and/or energy to other people, expecting love and approval, but then end up feeling resentful and unappreciated.

What is people pleasing? According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, a people pleaser is “a person who has an emotional need to please others often at the expense of his or her own needs or desires.” It usually starts out as an adaptive behavior in childhood as you learn what is socially and culturally acceptable. You learn to get approval, praise, and validation from others when you please them, so you keep doing what works. Then by the time you realize what you are doing as an adult and want to stop, these habits have become ingrained.

## **The Downside of Being a People Pleaser**

The need to please **pushes people away** instead of bringing them closer. People pleasers put on masks and don’t let others get to know who they really are. Instead of being open and honest, they say what they think others want to hear

and hide their true feelings. They try to gain love and approval by doing or saying what they think others expect of them.

This **impacts their health** because they're so busy putting other's needs ahead of their own that they don't take care of themselves. It **impacts their careers** because they hit plateaus and cannot advocate for themselves for pay raises or promotions.

If you are a people pleaser, this is **costing you money**. You are not happy because you're too busy trying to make everyone else happy. You are broke because you are laying down every time there is a price objection, or you are underpaid or undercharging to begin with. You're wrecking your schedule because you give in to everyone one who puts a demand on you. You are not as impactful for your clients if you are trying harder to be agreeable than truthful. None of this is making you happy, and it's not making anyone else happy either. People pleasing pleases no one.

For most of my life, I have been a people pleaser. Initially I was proud of it. I had to learn the hard way that people pleasing is a fancy way of disguising neediness; it involves manipulating the situation and trying to control others. What looks and sounds good on the surface may have misguided intentions behind it. There's a fine line between people pleasing and genuinely serving people from a place of wholeness.

Having coached hundreds of people, I have seen how people pleasing impacts careers, relationships, health, and businesses. It is far more prevalent than most of us realize. People pleasing shows up in many ways, in many cultures, in both men and women, and across all ages. It is important to understand the difference between being seemingly agreeable and nice for selfish reasons and being genuinely kind and compassionate.

When you focus on pleasing people, often you come from a place of wanting to feel more comfortable yourself. You may think that by helping the other person, you can get them to think, feel, or do what you think is best for them. Your people pleasing tendencies have become manipulative and a means of controlling others. This might include giving unsolicited advice, jumping in to fix things, flattery, little white lies, placating, and other inauthentic interactions. This results in disconnection versus authentic connection.

## What Kind of People Pleaser Are You?

The good news is that problematic people pleasing is a learned behavior and can be unlearned. There are six big ways it might show up. Review the list below and check all that apply to you and your situation:

- **The Advice Giver:** the chronic need to fix other people, whether they have asked for it or not
- **The Approval Seeker:** The need to be liked and approved of by everyone, to the detriment of liking yourself
- **The Muted One:** a chronic inability to speak up for oneself and voice your true opinion
- **The Doormat:** the inability to set healthy boundaries around your time and money; saying yes when you mean no, and vice versa
- **The Emotional Controller:** the need to make everyone happy at all costs, even if it means making yourself miserable
- **The Chameleon:** Fitting into any group you're with by hiding who you are

Once you can identify people pleasing behaviors in yourself, you can address them head on. Begin with the one that is most problematic for you and work on changing it. Here are some suggestions for getting started:

- If you identify with being **The Advice Giver**, stop giving advice unless it is asked for or you are being paid for it. Most people don't want advice; they just want to be seen, validated, and heard. Listen more; fix less.
- If you see yourself as **The Approval Seeker**, turn inward and set your own personal metrics for success so you can provide your own approval instead of seeking praise and recognition outside yourself. Release being agreeable for being authentic.
- If you are **The Muted One**, speak up and share your thoughts. If this is not something you can do in your current family or circle of friends,

seek groups and places of support where you can be heard. Realize that conflict is natural and not something to be avoided at all costs. It's OK to have disagreements.

- If you've been **The Doormat**, start standing up for yourself by setting healthy boundaries for yourself. Only say yes when it's something you really want to do. Begin saying no to requests you do not have the time for or will resent doing. Learn to handle disagreements and push back; stand your ground.
- If you admit to being **The Emotional Controller**, let go of the urge to control anyone else. Get in touch with your feelings—both the “good” and the “bad” ones—so you can show up authentically and stop pretending that everything is fine all the time. It's OK to cry and feel sadness and anger. Feel your emotions and let them move through you. They will pass faster than you expect.
- If you act like **The Chameleon**, just be yourself and see what happens! People will appreciate and gravitate toward your colorful self; those parts you think others will find weird and tend to hide are what makes you interesting.

If you care about your results and your happiness, stop being a people pleaser. Instead, be kind to yourself and others by taking responsibility for yourself and learning to meet your own needs. Don't make other people's happiness the criterion for your self-worth. Know that you are valuable and worthy in your own right. Being kind is sharing who you truly are with others. By sharing your thoughts, expressing your feelings, and allowing others to get to know who you are, you will be contributing to the world in a way that only you can.

Imagine being grounded in your core values, knowing your worth, freely feeling all your emotions, and speaking your mind without fear of rejection. You will have a new sense of freedom that comes with being authentic. You will attract those who enjoy your energy. You will see your relationships, your health, and your wealth improve. Instead of people pleasing, you will be a pleasure to be with, work with, and live with!

## Mary Jo Rathgeb

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**Mary Jo Rathgeb** is a Professional Certified Coach (PCC), Energy Leadership Master Practitioner (ELI-MP), RIM Facilitator, and Human Design Consultant. She specializes in guiding people through career changes so they can make more money, work less, and feel more fulfilled in what they do for a living. She helps her clients shed people-pleasing patterns that are keeping them stuck in unrewarding work and relationships. Her mission is to help people learn to accept and value themselves so they can take their work and lives in creative new directions.

Prior to becoming a Certified Professional Coach (CPC), Mary Jo engaged in a thirty-year career in Media Marketing. She worked at diverse corporations, including Playboy Enterprises, Meredith Corporation, and The Walt Disney Company. She has a BA in English Literature and an MS in Grief Counseling. She believes it is never too late to let go of habits you have outgrown, realign, and evolve into the next version of yourself.

[creativedirectionsforliving.com](http://creativedirectionsforliving.com)

# Go Naked at Home—Your Package, or Lack Thereof, Might Just Save the Planet!

*Angie Ringler*

As the sun begins setting in Central Florida, I'm outside enjoying the end of a beautiful day. I can feel a slight coolness in the air, and I'm easily hypnotized by the Spanish moss hanging off an oak tree as it gently sways to and fro in the breeze. As my eyes fixate on the tree, it occurs to me that we are quite similar. Not in the way we look, although some days I feel scattered like the leaves on the ground, but similar in the way I learn and grow in life.

About ten years ago, a friend stopped over for a quick visit. I popped a bottle of wine and heated up some leftover egg rolls for us to snack and chat. As I pulled the black plastic tray from the microwave, steam billowing up in front of my face, she looked at me and said, "You know reheating food in the microwave can kill you, right?" WHAT? What kind of statement was that?

I asked my friend to explain herself and she gave me some half-ass explanation of how when plastic is reheated in the microwave, the chemicals used in making the plastic containers can leach out into the food, and over time those chemicals accumulate in our bodies. In my house, reheating—damn, even cooking—in the microwave was the norm. I'm pretty sure my mom cooked all my childhood meals in the microwave. How could it be killing me? This was a regular part of my daily food intake for almost my entire life!

I didn't press her for more details. Quite honestly, I didn't want to know more. Her statement left me confused, unsure, and a bit angry. The next day, though, I couldn't stop thinking about her comment. How could the plastic be so bad? They, the powers that be, would never allow or encourage us to

reuse and reheat these containers if this was true. I took a deep dive into the internet, and what I found in the rabbit hole scared me—and it went way beyond food!

According to an article by Harvard Medical School<sup>1</sup>, when heated, the leaching chemicals in those food containers can move from the plastic packaging into our food, especially oily foods. The chemicals then get stored in the fat cells of our bodies. Some of these chemicals have been linked to health problems such as metabolic disorders (including obesity) and reduced fertility. I shudder when I recall the number of Styrofoam food boxes, plastic food storage bag, coffee cups, and plastic soup and deli containers I've reheated my food in.

My first plastic-free switch was to stop using bottled water. It was the most frequently mentioned swap I read. I put a mason jar with a lid in my car. Living in Florida, we have a good hurricane supply kit, water filter included. We've lived through a few big storms, finding ourselves without power or usable water for more than fourteen days, so our emergency kit looks much different today than it did ten years ago. I unpacked that water filter and placed it on the kitchen counter.

When I think back to why we didn't use the water filter sooner, it really came down to habit. For so long, we just bought bottled water from the store. I can't even remember why it became such a habit, but it was ingrained in every visit to the grocery store.

My next trip was to the bathroom. What I saw lined up in my shower and on my counter was not pretty—so many plastic bottles. They say plastic lasts forever, and as my research revealed, so do the rules that govern its safety. To get science-y for a minute, when a polymer (synthetic organic materials used as plastics and resins) is approved, it is approved forever. The FDA doesn't require reassessments to deem a material safe today, even with increased exposure to our population or advances in scientific knowledge. The FDA standards rely on manufacturers to place our health and safety above their production. We want to think they will do that, but we're only kidding ourselves if we really believe that.

But these plastic bottles in my bathroom shouldn't harm me, since I didn't heat them up, right? But could the ingredients *inside* the bottles hurt me? I picked up the first bottle and could only pronounce about a quarter of the ingredients. Damn! Down another rabbit hole I went.

I looked at my toothpaste tube, shampoo bottles, the hand soap pumpers at every sink, deodorant in the twist-up plastic tube, bulk-size body lotion bottles with pumpers, makeup compacts with plastic cases and mirror inserts—plastic was everywhere. Even in things I never thought twice about, like laundry soap and toilet paper!

So many questions and too much information on the web—my brain hurt at the thought of reading through it all. Plastic packaging for products seemed as important as water and food to the mighty oak tree. But the idea of a naked product, something without plastic packaging seemed sexy. Was that even possible?

What I found next was magnificent!

Naked products are beautiful—and even better, they are ACCESSIBLE! I found mouthwash tablets sans plastic bottles. Toothpaste without the tube. Waterless cleaning products such as condensed detergent, dish soap, and shampoo sold as solids and activated by water. I even found a company called Loop that works with big-name stores like Kroger and Walgreens to offer tons of products, even well-known brands like Clorox, Häagen Dazs, and Seventh Generation packaged in refillable glass, aluminum, and stainless-steel containers.

I felt like that oak tree in its sapling years, just getting rooted in this new knowledge. As the tiny acorn, I didn't know plastic-free alternatives existed. But today, stores have popped up all over the world that offer refill stations for body and cleaning products, zero packaging options for personal care items like toothbrushes and razors, and more offerings in glass, cardboard and aluminum. There are even solid bar options for shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, and lotion!

Trying these new options consistently made me stronger. In the same way a deep root system strengthens the oak tree, I too was growing stronger in my

decisions. As my plastic-free options broadened, my purchases resulted in less and less packaging. Hygiene products were the easiest to swap and eliminate the plastic. When I used a product for two to three months and still liked it, it had a really good chance of sticking around. That's when it required little effort in thought or action and became a new habit, my new normal.

Consistency and success with a few new habits naturally leads to branching out and trying more new things. Like a mature oak tree with solid roots and branches full of leaves, when our actions become solid, we have more of a willingness to branch out in other areas.

Like that big oak tree, I scatter my “acorns” of knowledge around, hoping my tidbits will find nutrient-rich soil in which to grow. That is what I'm doing in this chapter—scattering my bits of knowledge in hopes that you take them in and they grow for you.

## Get Started with Three Simple Tips

1. ***Buy Bars, Not Bottles.*** Whenever you have the chance to buy a bar form of a product instead of one that comes in a plastic bottle, buy the bar! Examples are hand soap, shampoo, dish soap, and laundry detergent. I felt so strongly about this that I spent years formulating these exact products and then started a company. Now my products are available to others through a network of physical and online stores.
2. ***Grow Something—Anything—at Home.*** I'm not talking about farming at home—just growing something simple, like one of your favorite herbs. You can even pick a seed out of the next vegetable you buy and push it into some soil. You might be pleasantly surprised with your own gardening abilities! Our connection with the Earth deepens when we get a little dirt under our fingernails. So go ahead, get dirty! You can always use that bar soap to come clean!
3. ***Read Food Labels.*** When you learn about food ingredients, you then can make an educated decision about what you will and will not allow in

your body. This change leads naturally to reading other product labels. A starting point to learn about ingredients is by using the database at Environmental Working Group (EWG.org). Currently, it is the world's largest database of ingredients for food and cleaning products.

Assessing how you live today and making sure it's not costing you everything tomorrow—well, that's just a good way of living. So go ahead, skip the packaging when you can, and buy naked products. I promise the planet and future generations will thank you!

1 [https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/is-plastic-a-threat-to-your-health#:~:text=Studies%20have%20found%20that%20certain,includ-ing%20obesity\)%20and%20reduced%20fertility.](https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/is-plastic-a-threat-to-your-health#:~:text=Studies%20have%20found%20that%20certain,includ-ing%20obesity)%20and%20reduced%20fertility.)

## Angie Ringler

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**Angie Ringler** is the founder of the environmentally conscious business Tan-gie LLC, doing business as WasteFreeProducts.com. Her company is a carbon neutral business, using only plant-based ingredients, and is certified cruelty-free with Leaping Bunny certification.

What makes Angie a unique eco warrior is the fact that she taught herself to discover solutions for her own personal health and skin issues. Through her resourcefulness and investigative spirit, she developed a unique manufacturing process which eliminated plastic bottles needed for liquid household cleaning and body products.

Her life journey has been insightful, and she has promulgated her belief in reducing single-use plastic by not using any plastic packaging or shipping in her business. In Angie's first book, *Going Plastic Free Room-by-Room: The Ultimate Guide to Sustainable Swaps*, she tracks her journey of the plastic-free options she's adopted and implemented in her life, along with all the research she undertook. She brings a realistic approach to reducing plastic in your life by sharing practical tips that will help you develop day-to-day habits to minimize wasteful consumption. Visit Angie's website to get a download of her book.

To discover more about her and her mindful products, please subscribe to her podcast, *The Grateful Redhead*, and follow her business on social @WasteFreeProducts. Try her package-free products and get 15% off your order. Use promo code: GETNAKED15.

wastefreeproducts.com

# Don't Panic, It's Only Chaos!

## *Releasing Attachment to the Emotional Storm*

*Kim Root*

*Today me will live in the moment, unless it's unpleasant, in which case,  
me will eat a cookie.*

*—Cookie Monster*

Life is full of unpleasantness—every day. Emotions often seem to come up out of nowhere. They are a natural occurrence. They are never wrong. They are a sophisticated sense, just like our five senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. They give us signals and tell us about the world around us and inside of us. But many times we don't like them, we resist them, and we try to hide or push them away.

Unrecognized emotions are running our lives, tearing apart families, causing wars, and ruining the earth. In the same way a small child can manipulate a parent's behavior and disrupt the shopping experience of everyone in a grocery store, your emotions will manipulate your behavior if you do not "hear what they are telling you," and allow them to move on.

This is not about controlling your thoughts and behavior. It's also not about "managing" your emotions. Trying to constrain, hide, or push down your emotions will bring on stronger emotions and even undesirable physical conditions. That sounds like stressful work to me. Instead, this is about allowing your emotions to do their job without knocking your life off course. This process can be fun. Yes, it is possible to enjoy even the difficult emotions.

Did you ever notice how your breath changes with different emotions? With some emotions, your breathing will quicken; with others it will slow down. Imagine, for instance, what happens with your breath when you are angry. What happens with your breath when you are sad or frightened? Your breath and your emotions are intrinsically linked. The good news is that we can consciously shift our breath to allow emotions to flow. This is not trying to make the emotion go away; it's allowing the emotion the space to move. By not letting your emotions dictate your breathing but instead consciously regulating your breath, you can navigate tense and difficult situations while allowing those emotions to release through you.

Imagine yourself in front of your computer, ready to begin an online presentation. You're so proud of what you have accomplished, and you're excited to begin. You turn on the computer and open your Zoom room expecting to see everyone . . . but . . . what happened? No one is there. Where are they?

Texts and emails begin pouring in: "I can't get into the class," "Zoom is asking for a password," and "What's the password?"

Wait, what? Suddenly you realize that you've made a mistake and now they can't get in. You feel the constriction in your chest and the heat building in your face. Your anxiety is growing. A cloud of conflicting thoughts are swirling around in your head. *You idiot!* you think. *You were so sure of yourself and feeling so proud! Now what?* Time for a cookie . . . or three? No.

Consciously inhaling through your nose, feeling the cool air hit the back of your throat, and exhaling through your mouth, you transform that rush of heat in your face down through your body. You feel a warm tingling in your thighs down to your toes, and you let your shoulders drop. The anxiety eases, and you're free to focus on the issue at hand. Finally, after ten minutes of investigative tinkering, the problem is resolved—and you're ready to begin.

Although you may not experience this particular circumstance, you may be able to relate to something similar in your daily life. Anxiety, which is essentially driven by fear, is a weekly, daily, or even several times per day occurrence for many these days. By recognizing the emotion and then working

with your breath, you can transform and release anxious energy that might otherwise get out of control.

Of course, there are much more exciting emotions, like jealousy. Now that's a fun experience, don't you think? What kinds of crazy things do we do out of jealousy? One time, many years ago, after leaving my boyfriend "for the last time," I called him three days in a row and a woman—our mutual best friend—answered the phone and said he was in the shower. I became so jealous that I could think of nothing else for a week. I was consumed by the images my imagination conjured up and my thoughts of what they must be doing together. I had no reason to be jealous. After all, I had left him. I had moved out, and I was happy about doing so, but there I was wanting to lash out because I felt uncomfortable.

When was the last time an emotion had control of you? How long did it drag you around? It can seem like the emotion is in control of you. It just takes over as if it were in charge and not you. And then there is internal commentary that comes right along with the emotion. We get so wrapped up in it that we begin to think we are the emotion. We say, "I am angry! I am depressed."

Emotions come and go many times each day. Like a fart or a burp, they just want to come up and out. But because we are uncomfortable, we try to suppress, judge them, or wrap them in stories. This causes the emotion too to stagnate in the body. They become trapped in our shoulders, neck, hips, jaw, stomach, heart, etc., causing everything from TMJ and headaches to indigestion, sciatica, and high blood pressure.

Emotions just happen. They come up out of the depths of our unconscious, and they just want to be free to flow like the water flowing in a river. If the water gets trapped in an eddy, it will eventually become stagnant and putrid. A similar thing happens in our bodies.

So how do you let emotions flow and move through you? You can start by just observing them. But how do you do that if they have control of you the way my jealousy had control of me?

Emotions are “feelings”; they feel a certain way in your body. Each emotion has its own unique way of obstructing the smooth flow of energy in your body. What happens to your body and your energy when you’re afraid? Think of a time when you were really sad, or disappointed, or angry. What happened in your body to your energy? Often, your head gets hot when you are angry; we even have a saying for this: “He’s a hot head.” Did you ever shiver with cold when you were frightened? This is another example of how you can recognize an emotion through your body.

But you do not have to resign yourself to being tossed about by your emotions. Bring awareness to where your body feels tense. Allow yourself to witness the feeling without resistance if you can. Notice the pull to identify with the emotion, saying, “I am angry.” Anger can be uncomfortable to witness, but it is more uncomfortable to hold in your body. Be gentle; give your emotions space. Stay focused on allowing emotions flow in your body. Feel the stillness and peacefulness in the mind that is produced. Yoga, qigong, and other movement therapies use movement, the breath, and awareness to open areas of the body, thus creating flow and space. Meditation quiets the reactivity of the mind, allowing you to dwell peacefully within your body. When you think about or analyze your emotions, you drive yourself further away from your physical experience and create a situation that is more complicated than it needs to be.

The process of developing this quiet mind and relaxed body is not complicated. You can start small and let it grow. Studies show that one minute of meditation each day can make significant changes in the brain’s ability to focus. Take just one intentional deep breath when you get up in the morning. When that becomes a habit, add one intentional breath before your first meal. That one intentional breath will open your awareness to the moment so you can be present to enjoy your meal. When you are ready, extend the length of time you spend intentionally watching your breath. Don’t force it. Eventually you will naturally want to stay longer.

Eat the cookie, if you want—or even the whole box! But if you do, I hope you can stay in the moment and really enjoy it. *Om nom nom . . .*

## Kim Root

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**Kim Root** has been a yoga and movement instructor and healer for the past forty years. Her experience comes from self-taught practices she learned to help her manage her own anxiety and emotional sensitivity, as well as more than twenty years of teaching yoga and Asian healing techniques. She is the owner of “The Rooted Center,” a yoga and healing center in operation since 2002. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Kim’s classes and trainings are now thriving online where everyone can join, regardless of location.

When Kim was in her early twenties, many of her friends wanted her to teach them to dance the way she danced. As she tried to show them, she finally realized she could teach them to “dance the way THEY danced.” Building on this, Kim now helps her clients to discover a life of freedom and acceptance through movement and conscious choice. Contact Kim to find out more or to book a complementary call with her.

[therootedcenter.com](http://therootedcenter.com)

# Hiding in Plain Sight

*Patsy Sanders*

People make an assessment about you in the first five seconds they meet you, and 50 percent of that is based on how you are dressed, according to Harvard Business School.

## **Fair or Not, Appearances Matter**

If you walk into a fine restaurant and the staff is not clean and professionally dressed, your expectation of the food and service will be lowered. If you meet someone and are not attracted to them, you might not make much of an effort to get to know them. It may have nothing to do with how pretty or handsome they are, but something makes them either attractive or unattractive to you.

## **Don't Leave Money on the Table**

In business, your appearance can have a huge impact on your bottom line. You are not only judged on competence, intelligence, and the value you provide, but on the way you are dressed. In a competitive world you can either win or lose the edge with your personal presentation. To gain the advantage, you must understand branding, especially when you ARE your brand!

A recent statistic says professionals who work with an image stylist make an estimated 20 percent more in income per year than their competition. This is because their image is aligned with their brand, which supports the “know, like, and trust” factor. I cannot emphasize enough that what you wear matters. If you are not dressing to attract your ideal client, you are missing out. Do you want to give up 20 percent of your annual income? I doubt it.

How you dress in a professional setting should be congruent with your brand. If you are a personal trainer, there is nothing unprofessional about

showing up in workout clothes. If you are a banker, a tidy suit or skirt and blouse are the standard. But no matter what your professional attire is, you should still look good and be “*attract-ive*.”

The point is, in business, if you are not making the right first impression, you are leaving money on the table.

## **People Aren’t Attracted to You unless You Are “Attract-ive”**

What does *attractive* really mean? You don’t have to be beautiful—or even fashionable. Attractiveness is how you present yourself overall. Your style is a head-to-toe look that communicates a lot about you. It helps reveal your personality, character traits, values, even your ethics. It reflects how you feel about yourself, what you are offering, and what you want to attract. It is not a name brand, a size, or a price tag. It is not what the fashion industry says style is.

Style is more than wearing nice clothes. It is wearing clothes that make you feel confident, are comfortable, and reveal a bit about who you are; they are an artistic expression of who you are. Your appearance should draw people in; it is a bridge to connection—which really does happen in the first five seconds people see you.

## **Times Change**

It used to be that investing in a good logo and tagline were the keys to making your business successful. Now it is a trusted face that is most impactful.

Nike didn’t put a face to their brand until 1984 with Michael Jordan, which helped them become the market leader they are today. Nike pays him more than 100 million dollars per year because they recognize the value of his image. Of course the value and quality of their products matter, but the “know, like, and trust” factor helps them stay on top.

## **You Are Your Brand**

Whether you are employed or you own the company, you are your own spokesperson. You are your brand, and what you wear really does matter.

I've experienced this in my own life, both personally and professionally. That's why I'm so passionate about what I do.

After moving to a new town, I struggled to attract new clients and make new friends. I felt invisible. An amazing image stylist gave me a transformation that changed my life. It helped me be seen as my fiery, sassy self, and people started connecting with me like never before. I got more compliments than ever—not just on my clothes, but on ME! People told me I looked “beautiful” and “radiant.” Clients finally started seeking me out, and my business took off.

I realized that I had been hiding in plain sight for the past forty years! I had been color-typed decades ago, but it really didn't capture who I was. I looked OK, but I still blended in. This stylist used a different system, which highlighted the more subtle aspects of my personality, as well as my features, hair, and skin tone. It made me more “*attract-ive*.”

## **The Discovery of the Four Elements**

Color is a silent influencer, but there is much more to styling than that. There are physical features, character traits, and energetic qualities, as well as physical traits to consider. The four color palettes—Air, Fire, Water, and Earth—each include their own textures, shapes, fabrics, and energetic qualities for harmonic alignment.

Joseph Itten, a Swiss artist and teacher, was the first to identify the energetics and harmonics of color. He gave his students an assignment to paint a harmonic picture. He discovered that what was harmonic to one person was not necessarily harmonic to all. After repeating the assignment class after class, he saw four basic color palettes emerging.

Not only that, but he realized there were physical and personality traits common to the artists within each group. The four elements of the Element Color Typing system are based on his Harmonics of Color discovery.

## **Dressing in Harmonic Alignment**

When we get dressed, we want to be harmonically aligned with the clothes we wear. Think of your clothes like the frame of a painting; they are supposed to highlight you as the masterpiece, not distract from this. Just as you would never put the Mona Lisa in a lime green frame, you don't want to wear clothing that draws more attention than the person wearing them—YOU. Knowing your best colors, textures, and fabrics will cause people to look at YOU first, then your outfit.

That's why it is so important to have a color palette that works for you. When you get it right, your skin will glow, your eyes will sparkle, and YOU will be the center of attention. Not only that, but you will have a wardrobe that is much easier to mix and match. Dressing in the right Element is about dressing to be who you were born to be, not who the world says you should be. In your Element, even people who have known you for a long time will notice that you look amazing; they just won't know why, or exactly what you're doing differently. They'll just know they are more attracted to you.

## **Three Universal Tips Anyone Can Use to Look Their Best**

When you don't yet know your Element, here are three universal tips you can use right now to look your best.

- 1 ***Universal Colors:*** Only about 20 percent of the population can wear black well. It makes the other 80 percent look invisible, washed out, or downright scary. Instead, think of eggplant as your new black. Eggplant is a power color that everyone looks good in. Teal is another great color for everyone. It's dynamic and will help you be remembered. If it is important to be powerful and approachable, wear eggplant. If it is important to be attractive and memorable, wear teal.
- 2 ***What You See First:*** Look in a full-length mirror. Do you see you or your outfit first? You want people to see you first, not be distracted by your

clothes. When in doubt, go with solid, medium color tones. Accessorize with jewelry, a scarf, or a jacket to look more professional.

- 3 *From the Shoulders Up:*** The eye naturally goes from the top down. The first thing people look at is your hair. A current hairstyle and fresh cut show you care about yourself. It is hard for your client to assume you'll care about them if you are not showing that you care about yourself and your own appearance. For the ladies, either too much makeup or no makeup at all can be off-putting. A little mascara and lip color will help you look fresh and get noticed. Gentleman, some careful grooming of facial hair, including ears, nose, and eyebrows will go a long way.

## **Don't Hide in Plain Sight**

If you don't make a good first impression, people will move on. They will, on a subconscious level, if not consciously, doubt your judgment. This will most likely affect your bottom line. Ultimately, if you can't make yourself look good, people are not going to trust that you will make them "look good."

People aren't attracted to you unless you are *attract-ive*. Embracing your essence is an exhilarating way for you to gain an advantage in a competitive world.

Be seen. Be heard. Be paid!

## Patsy Sanders

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For more than forty years, **Patsy Sanders**, master hairstylist and image coach—and part of the award-winning RUSK International Hair Design team—has been giving people the best hairstyles of their lives. Just doing hair wasn't enough, though. Patsy wanted to make people look as good from the shoulders down as she did from the shoulders up. In 1981 she became a Seasonal Image consultant and added color typing services to her successful hair salon business.

After struggling to restart her business after moving to a new area, a chance encounter changed her life. A woman suggested that maybe what she was wearing was keeping people away. A new stylist retyped her using the Element Color Typing system. She was shocked by the results. She was getting compliments left and right, and people were finally seeking her out to work with her.

Since then, she bought and expanded the company that typed her and now offers services focused on helping professionals look their very best, so they stand out, attract, and get paid in a competitive world.

[embracingyouressence.com](http://embracingyouressence.com)

# Misery or Success Are Both Waiting for You—Which Will You Choose?

*Harriett Watson*

“Misery is waiting for you, but you don’t have to meet it.” My grandma used to say that. She was talking to an adult in the house at the time. I was only about five or six years old, so I said, “What does that mean?” She explained that grown-ups sometimes wonder what’s the matter with them because they feel sad or unhappy most of the time, yet nothing bad is really going on. They have a job, a place to live, food to eat, and people that care about them, but they still feel unhappy. They are choosing to meet up with misery in their life.

So, I asked, what can they do? She said that there is something they want to do or have, and they are not putting in the time and energy that it takes to get it. They just want it to happen; but they don’t want to do the work to get it. If they did, they would not be so sad because they would know they were working to get what they want, and they would understand that they had to wait for it, because it wouldn’t happen overnight.

“Do you understand?” my grandma asked me. I remember saying, “Yes, because they don’t feel like waiting. I don’t feel like waiting when Mommy tells me to wait, but I wait anyway.”

As I grew older, my grandmother spoke about taking responsibility for my actions because, at the end of the day, I am responsible for my decisions. She said I might want to blame someone else for my mistakes, but she warned me not to do it. “You want to learn and grow from mistakes; it can make you a stronger person.” I wanted to believe her.

I have learned through many years of experience in the helping professions that misery really is waiting for us all, and here is why. We all want something better or something more, but If we plan for a better life and it doesn't seem to be working out, then misery can take over in the form of feelings. And since we are adults now, we don't just get grandma's child version—we get the long adult list:

- Anger
- Resentment
- Inadequacy
- Frustration
- Irritability
- Blame
- Unhappiness

There are many more feelings that can surface. Add two more of your own so you can get the impact for you or someone you know. Only you know deep down inside what you are really feeling, and only you can do something about it. You just need a plan to get you out of going nowhere mode.

## **Patience**

The feelings that come with wanting “it” now (instant gratification) and not getting what you “think you should have” touch the very fabric of your being and are stumbling blocks that get in the way of achieving your goals in life, whether in relationships, business, health, or finances.

Did you ever wonder what is happening when you want more but it seems like you are getting less? Eventually misery can set in, according to clients I have worked with. That doesn't have to happen if you understand some of the fundamentals that are necessary for success. One is patience, and it plays a major role in achieving success in the areas of your life that are dear to you. Know this: success is not instant. Patience is one of the things that puts your feet on

the path that gets you where you want to go. But patience is just one valuable lesson; you might say it's a necessary evil, since it's nobody's best virtue.

Think for a minute. How many times do you wait for something or someone—the bank, grocery store, doctor's office, the kids to finish something, or that raise you were promised? This kind of waiting isn't going to accomplish a major “dream” or goal that you had in mind, and it doesn't even pay you any money. Now think about some of the “random” stuff you do, and wait for. What if you put that kind of “waiting energy” into your own goals for success? Then you will feel better about the wait, like someone really is paying you money, so to speak.

We all are programmed to wait for certain things and do it almost naturally, without complaining (although we may be complaining on the inside). But you often fail to use patience for yourself when it comes to your life situations and the potential achievement of your goals. Just think, if you have patience with yourself, there is no telling what you might achieve.

It is time for you to get paid—and not just in money but in better health, meaningful relationships, and thriving businesses. You will have a new attitude, feel empowered, and have better focus, only this time your patience will ultimately “pay you back” with success, unlike the routine “waits” you are so accustomed too.

## **Clarity**

Without clarity of purpose, there will be no significant movement down the path. You must be specific about the outcome you envision. You then will gain clarity of purpose for definitive action, and your path will not end up in the deep blue ocean. For example: You are an experienced accountant, but you changed the company you work for, and they require training for you in the company's protocols, mission statement, core values, etc. In other words, you need clarity about what is expected, and only then can you do a good job and get your “brownie points.” Clarity is the foundation, and then you start building. As you get clearer, you get closer to success.

## **Consistency**

Consistency is a necessary tool and is used throughout our lives, only now you will use it to achieve your specific goals. Make a list of what you are consistent in doing, things that have nothing to do with your dreams of success. This will tell you something about yourself. I know one thing you will identify about consistency, and that is this: you are consistent quite a bit, but you've never thought about it being a tool to use for your own success. Who is supposed to be more consistent than you about your goals, aspirations, dreams, and successes? See, you already know.

Here are some other things you can do now:

- Write down a goal you gave up on and how you felt.
- Write down one goal you are trying to achieve in order to take a new direction with it. How do you plan to get there?
- Think: When was the last time you got picked out of a long line to come to the front? No, instead you waited your turn. But you are in charge of putting yourself first in line for your own success.

I've had parents complain that their children are disrespectful, and this is hurtful to them, but they forgot to water the plants, so to speak. They say, "They get what they want, but they act so ungrateful." These parents were not consistent with their positive parenting skills. But all is not lost. There is a remedy to get them back on track.

Did you ever say, "I could have had the job, the business, more money, and better health or relationships"? Many of us say this quite a bit. Patience, clarity, and consistency are your friends—at no cost to you. So you don't love your job because you had to start at the bottom and you had excellent qualifications, and your boss had less. You eventually leave because you were not moving up through the ranks fast enough. Later you find out your old boss left and the company was looking for someone with your qualifications. You may have said to yourself, "If only I had waited . . ." In your new business, pa-

tience, clarity, and consistency will allow you to work with employees who will require your guidance and support. We just want to be successful and enjoy the fruits of our labor. But as I always say, “Money may not be everything, but it’s right up there with air.” So work to keep your feet on the path.

It’s easy to say, “Get some patience, be responsible, get clarity, be confident, and be consistent.” Let me tell you, impatient people get out of the line in the supermarket and can get out of line with their lives, too, but when you take responsibility for your actions and decisions, you stay firmly on the path to success. You will gain clarity of purpose for definitive action., your confidence will expand, and so will your trust in your ability to get things done. You will realize that consistency of action will get you all the way down the path, as opposed to stopping in the middle, doubting yourself, giving up, and lying down because you are tired. The fundamental qualities mentioned can and will lead to success.

I’ve helped thousands of clients sort out what they want and need, and I’ve given them a remedy that works every time. With the right coach, you too will be able to meet up with success and kick misery out of your way!

## Harriett Watson

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**Harriett Watson** is an author, personal development coach, and a Licensed Mental Health Counselor in the states of Florida and Maryland. She wrote a foundation book on success, but it's about getting a baby to sleep through the night: *Good Night, Baby, Good Night*. She helps her clients find success in the areas of life that are important to them. She acts as a guide to help her clients sort out how success is achieved. Visit Harriett's website to sign up for a free consultation.

[madayoschild.com](http://madayoschild.com)

# Workplace Stress Is Hurting Us

*Adam Weber*

*Your thoughts are racing. Your heart is pumping. You have a headache, your stomach hurts. Maybe you have the shakes. Stress is churning. Your body is tense, and you do not know what to do about it.*

*What you do know is that this is hurting you, your health, your career, and your life.*

Stress in the workplace has increased at record levels. Many workers report experiencing work-related stress at their jobs, and this compromises their performance and their health. Job stress has led to poor health and in some cases even injury.

Our stress levels vary, and much is influenced by our profession. Some of us are at a higher risk than others. Those in low skilled jobs are at the greater risk.

Mental and behavioral health requests have jumped 100 percent since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to research from TouchCare. The pandemic hit the Gen Z generation particularly hard; during this period, they increased their use of mental healthcare benefits by 300 percent, according to one study.

Many employees turned to their benefits options to pursue mental and behavioral healthcare for the first time ever in 2020.

You already know that pretty much everyone has been stressed by the pandemic—you, your co-workers, and if you are a supervisor, your employees. But it is worse than you think. Many people hide it, even though they need help.

The stress is real, yet many employees want to pretend it is not.

Why?

One reason is the complex relationship people have with work-related stress.

You might have a solid mental and behavioral benefits plan. But it is always helpful to work directly with your employees to make sure it hits the mark.

One of the first things you as an employer can do is to change the narrative and perspective on work-related stress.

“Communicate with employees to find out what they feel they need. Every company is different, and forward-thinking companies recognize that encouraging open communication about stress at work helps build a stronger organization by making it a place where employees want to stay and advance,” says Kevin Harrington, CEO of Joblist.

“Employees report higher productivity and higher job satisfaction when their overall stress levels are low,” says Harrington. “By creating an environment that encourages employees to be open about work-related stress, there’s an opportunity to benefit from a more productive workforce and lower turnover rates.”

While your HR department can take the lead on this issue, it is important that everybody plays a role. Your company might provide wellness days off, counseling, and other resources your employees can use to deal with stress.

If you do not have benefits or resources, is it time to get some?

Consider hosting a series of informational sessions on the mental health benefits you offer related to stress. Steer employees toward healthy outlets such as meditation. Even better, schedule those kinds of activities on-site or virtually to reach as many employees as possible.

## **Create a Stress Blueprint**

Many employees feel stressed because they face more and different problems every day. The line between work and life has been blurred and has gotten worse since COVID-19.

Many people try to solve problems without a strategy. They hope for the best, which leads to stress and only makes things worse. Instead, you need a strategy.

Here is a quick approach to problem-solving:

- Define the problem. No matter how small or large, name it.
- Brainstorm potential solutions. Throw in easy fixes, major overhauls, and out-of-the-box ideas.
- Rank the solutions. Consider what is most feasible considering time, resources, practicality, and alignment with personal and corporate goals.
- Develop an action plan. Set deadlines, define tasks, and anticipate outcomes.
- Test the solution. Regularly check that the plan is working so there's time to step back, adjust or try another solution.

When you do this, family, friends, and co-workers are going to be asking you what you did, what you took because that stressed look on your face is gone; you are a lot calmer. The journey that you are about to embark on will change your life for the better. It will strengthen your ability to address your stress, perform at a higher level in your work, and realize more profit.

A blueprint is defined as a design plan. A stress blueprint is defined as a design plan that will help you to address your stress.

Do you want a blueprint to address your stress in just minutes a day without medicine?

Do you wish that there was something that you could do about it, something easy and quick, something that works?

I am here to tell you that there is something that you can do, and it is not difficult. In fact, it is easy. Yes, you read that right—easy.

## **Meditation, Not Medication**

Our lives have become saturated with stress, and the modern workplace is the source of one of the greatest stress tsunamis that we have ever seen.

So, what is the proper way to address this workplace stress?

For too many the solution is to take a pill, a toxic and potentially dangerous way to address stress. But there is a safe, nontoxic, and highly effective alternative. Every day, I work with people to help them address their stress utilizing my proprietary meditation technique.

Once upon a time people thought that you needed to be from the Far East, spiritual, or religious to meditate. Others associated meditation with the crunchy granola hippie types. But nothing could be further from the truth.

*Pat, a once struggling human resource manager and parent wakes up and meditates for twenty minutes and is excited to tackle the day.*

*Starr, who meditates daily, fulfilled a lifelong dream by opening her own real estate business and spends afternoons with her kids without stress weighing on her.*

*Mindy, a young stay-at-home mom who spends her days with her kids in the Albuquerque sunshine, meditates every day.*

Meditation is an alternative to taking medicine for stress.

I ask you to leave your preconceived notions about meditation behind. Please leave your negative biases about meditation behind. Leave it all behind—because meditation is a game changer.

Meditation can be utilized to address your stress. If nothing else, whether you are meditating for three minutes, twenty minutes, or longer, meditation will help you address your stress. Meditation can help you to improve your health, both physical and mental. In a nutshell, meditation helps you feel better. This has been noted in multiple medical studies.

I am not telling you to take all your prescriptions and toss them in the garbage. I am simply asking you to try a different way, a way in which you address your stress with meditation, not medicine.

Meditation has become more popular than ever and has helped many to stop using certain medications. With the rise of more holistic and integrated medical approaches, more and more physicians are trying meditation, and it

is becoming more accepted by the medical community as not all doctors are believers in the one size fits all, take a pill approach for addressing stress.

So, what are you waiting for? What do you have to lose by trying meditation and developing a simple and easy approach to stress reduction without any woo-woo or spirituality?

It might just prove to be one of the best health-related decisions you and your company has ever made.

## Adam Weber

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**Adam Weber** is a “NO BS, commonsense” speaker, author, and corporate consultant that helps companies, large and small, increase their profits and eliminate stress in the workplace. He is the owner of the highly successful companies, Weber Real Estate Advisors and Weber Advisory Group. Adam has dedicated his life to helping others learn to meditate so that they can reduce their stress without medications. Adam is a bestselling author and an in-demand speaker, trainer, and coach. To learn more about Adam and his Meditation Not Medicine programs, visit his website or email him directly at [adam@meditationnotmedicine.com](mailto:adam@meditationnotmedicine.com).

[meditationnotmedicine.com](http://meditationnotmedicine.com)

# Your Life Sucks Because You Suck

*Larry Winget*

Something in your life sucks. I know it does. It does for you just like it does for me, just like it does for everyone else. Maybe it's your weight, your finances, your relationships, or your business. Everyone has something, and no one is exempt. Anyone who claims differently is either completely lacking in self-awareness or just flat-out lying.

And almost everyone is looking for a way to fix whatever it is that sucks. But before they fix it, they need to blame someone for the suckage. It's probably the government's fault. I'm the middle child. It is the fault of society. COVID did it. My husband is a jerk. My wife badgers me. It's my boss' fault! Things cost too much—that's why I'm broke! I could go on and on here and get really specific about all of the things we as a society love to blame, but that would just end up stepping on your fragile little toes of self-pity and put you in a position where you could blame me, and I won't give you that satisfaction. Instead, let's just move past all of the excuses (you like to call them reasons) and get straight to the point:

- If your life sucks, it's because you suck.
- If your business sucks, it's because as a businessperson, you suck.
- If your sales suck, it's because as a salesperson, you suck.
- If your customer service sucks, it's because you deliver sucky customer service.

I first wrote and copyrighted those words over twenty years ago, and nothing has changed since then to make me think differently about people or their

problems. The only thing that has changed is our tolerance for the suckage and the lack of accountability and responsibility that surrounds it.

The reason your “whatever” sucks is because you suck at doing what it takes for it not to be that way. If you want it to stop sucking, then you have to stop doing that. Simple as that. Lesson over. Nice talking to you. Buh-bye!

Wait! Was that not clear? Seemed pretty clear to me. I have been doing this for over thirty years, and all of my advice on business and life and parenting and money for all of that time has been based on the oldest joke in the world: A man goes to the doctor and says, “Doctor, it hurts when I do this.” And the doctor says, “Then don’t do that.” Boom!

That’s it, folks. When what you are doing is hurting you, stop doing it. So simple. No coaching required. No book or audio program or long-term contract. When you know what’s hurting you, stop doing it.

The problem is that most people aren’t willing to admit that what’s hurting them is actually the culprit. That’s where the blame part rears its ugly head. Instead of blaming your boss for being a jerk, just admit that you aren’t doing what you are being paid to do. And it’s not that things cost too much—it’s that you spend your money on stupid stuff. Or maybe it’s because you aren’t willing to work hard enough to earn more. The truth is that in every situation the thing that causes the suckage has at its root one thing: you!

Damn. Sad news, isn’t it? Understanding this fact and accepting it is step one in moving to resolution. This is the toughest part of fixing anything that’s going wrong in your life. But until you are willing to admit that you have the power to fix it, you will continue to abdicate responsibility and blame, and you will experience the pain of whatever it is in your life that sucks.

Now that you know that you are the problem and have the power to fix it, you have to go about fixing it. You do that by stopping what causes the pain. That might mean you have to completely remove yourself from the painful situation. You might need to get a divorce. Or quit your job. Or dump that friend who drags you down. Or give up eating like a pig. Or stop spending more than you earn. Or downsize your lifestyle to fit your income. Whatever

is causing the problem, quit it and do something different. But understand that doing something different means you will have to sacrifice what you have been doing. You can't keep doing what you've been doing and expect to get different results. Surely, by this point in life, that can't come as a surprising bit of news to you.

Chances are high that you already know exactly what you should do but just haven't had the guts to take action. If that's the case, knowledge of what to do is not the problem, is it? The problem is you don't have the guts. The reason you don't have the guts is that even though it sucks, it doesn't suck badly enough to make you change your situation or your behavior. If it hurts enough, you will do anything to change. Think about that for a minute and do a little self-assessment. Are you stuck in the suck because it only sucks enough for you to complain but not enough for you to change? Then enjoy the suck, because you are stuck until it gets worse! But if it hurts enough, look at your own knowledge about what you can do next. My bet is that you already know plenty enough to get started all on your own. If not, read some books. Someone else has been in your situation, and they have written a book on exactly what you could do to make things better. Read the books and still can't make it work? Then find an expert who can help you. The good news in every situation is that there is always someone who can help you. Hire an expert who has had success in dealing with your issue to guide you out of your mess.

Next, get off your ass and go to work. You don't think your way to a better life; you work your way to a better life. You don't just change your mindset like the motivational mindset bozos are telling you need to do; you change your actions! Action trumps mindset every single time. Action trumps attitude every single time. Action trumps everything! Mindset relies on you, obviously, to be of the right mindset to do the work. I don't care what your mindset, your attitude, or your mood is. I only care what your actions are. Get off your ass and get busy. Right action eventually brings about the right mindset, mood, or attitude. Or maybe it doesn't. Who cares? The important thing is that stuff

is getting done. “But what if I take action and do the wrong thing?” That could happen for sure. But you will find out a lot quicker by taking action than by thinking about it. Actions create results. Results are consequences. Consequences drive behavior. If you do something and get a lousy result, then change what you are doing. If you do something and get a good result, then keep doing it. Duh! Simple logic again! “Thanks, Doc, you were right! If it hurts when I do that, stop doing it.”

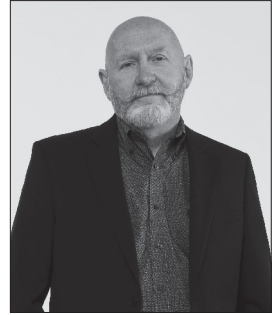
But keep after it, no matter what. The truth is that none of this stuff, whether it’s my stuff or anyone else’s stuff, works every single time. That doesn’t mean that the stuff is bad or you shouldn’t do it; it just means that it didn’t work this time, at this moment, in this situation. It might work tomorrow, though, so try it tomorrow. Good ideas, based on solid principles that are proven to work, do work eventually. So stick with it.

Don’t go back. If something sucks, going back to it simply because it’s the path of least resistance is not the answer. The old advice to “never burn your bridges because you don’t know when you will need to cross them again” is not always the advice you need to follow. It has its place, but depending on what is causing you the hurt, returning to it just because it’s hard to avoid it is not a good choice.

It’s true that your life sucks because you suck. It’s also true that something is always going to suck. But it is just as true that the same thing doesn’t have to suck over and over and over again. You can learn from the pain. You can choose to take action so the next time it sucks, it will be a completely new area of suckage. And what will you do? Hopefully, you will remember the oldest joke in the world and remind yourself, “Stop doing that!”

## Larry Winget

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**Larry Winget** is the trademarked Pitbull of Personal Development® and is a bestselling author, television personality, social commentator and internationally acclaimed speaker. He is a member of the Speaker Hall of Fame and has spoken to over 400 of the Fortune 500 companies. Larry was recently named one of the Top 50 Keynote Speakers in the World. He has hosted his own television series on A&E, was featured in two CNBC specials, had his own PBS special, and appears regularly on FOX News, FOX Business, and other national news networks. He has written six *New York Times/Wall Street Journal* bestsellers that have been translated into over twenty languages including *Shut Up, Stop Whining & Get a Life; You're Broke Because You Want to Be; It's Called Work for a Reason; People Are Idiots and I Can Prove It; Your Kids Are Your Own Fault; Grow a Pair*; and his latest, *What's Wrong with Damn Near Everything*. Larry also coaches and consults with businesses and entrepreneurs to improve their results and increase their sales. Larry lives in Phoenix, Arizona, with his wife, Rose Mary, and his bulldogs, Leon and Reba.

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# You Think You Know What Will Happen, But You Do Not!

*Julie Zolfo*

What is the one single thing we all have in common? We all are faced with choices every day—over 35,000, according to researchers at Cornell University—of which 226 are about food! Some are really easy; some are really tough.

If there is freedom of choice—why do so many of us feel trapped, stuck, and definitely not free in our lives?

Often the pressures of the outside world influence our choices so greatly that we can lose track of what really works best for our own life. Instead, we make choices by seeking love and approval from our family, financial recognition from our employer, or popularity from our friends on social media—or worse, by settling for the logical and risk-adverse alternative.

Let me ask you, have your past choices brought you closer to or further away from a life that truly works for you? Really think about this question.

There is a noticeable distinction between a life that you are currently living, working on, or moving toward creating or dreaming of and living a life that works best for you. If all your past decisions about your career, your relationships, your business, your health, and your money were focused on getting things right or being logical have not created a life that works for all areas of your life, it's insane to keep continue making decisions the same way.

If you are like most of my clients, when it comes to making new choices, you feel:

**STUCK!** You believe you're in the wrong job, the wrong relationship, the wrong diet plan, the wrong salary, or the wrong life! You have a desire to make changes, but you face so many decisions that you feel paralyzed struggling with making the next right and rational choice.

**FRUSTRATED!** The choices you have made for your career were based on someone else's opinions and society's expectation of what a good career, and this is what led you to making choices you are not happy with. Or perhaps as a business owner or solopreneur, you branched out from the normal and tried a new way, but you did not get the outcome you wanted on the first try. Now what?

**OVERWHELMED!** If only there was a way for you to magically know which choices are the best ones for your relationship challenges, health concerns, or money worries . . . then you could finally begin moving forward in your life, but only if you were guaranteed no disappointment, regret, heartache, guilt, or loss.

**MISUNDERSTOOD!** Despite repeated attempts to clearly communicate your wishes, requests, or feeling, you are left with a deep sense of disconnection, impatience, hurt, anger, or even resentment. This stirs up a sense of hopelessness, helplessness, loneliness, or resignation.

In my twenty-five years as a professional in the human development profession, I have observed that when a client continues to experience being stuck, frustrated, and overwhelmed, when they feel misunderstood on the job, in their relationships, and when they have health concerns or money woes, it often stems from one thing: the need to feel certain before making a decision. Most people want to feel comfortable when they make choices; however, decisions made from a framework of certainty, comfort, and unwavering conviction often fail to produce results that create a different life that truly works for them.

When people continue to experience pain, suffering, frustration, and failure to make their lives really work, it is a strong indicator they are settling for meeting their needs in a low-quality way. Here are five ways you may be making choices that keep you operating at fraction of what is possible for your life:

1. **If/Then Logic.** When you look around the world, you'll notice a lot of IF/THEN logic: If I do this, then "A" will happen; if I try this, then "B"

will happen. This is a self-fulfilling prophecy. How sad that we live in a world where we've already decided our fate in advance before it happens! Kind of takes the FUN out of life, doesn't it?

Unfortunately, IF/THEN statements feed into a steady, bland diet of reasoning and logic that is fueled only by past experiences and proven consequences. What if you exchanged your flavorless diet of sense and sensibility and allowed yourself to indulge on succulent, sweet untested ideas and savory, spicy uncharted actions? How could this experiential culinary combination expand your appetite beyond what you know you know? I can assure, you most definitely would enthusiastically choose to feast on more unexpected answers, unpredicted results, and unforeseen outcomes far beyond your dried-up and expired IF/THEN thinking.

**2. Being Right.** Being right or needing to have the right answer for every situation is helpful when you are right every single time—and how often is that? Here is the thing: you can be right AND still be disappointed and unhappy. Furthermore, the certainty that you are wrong is just as much a part of the certainty of being right. It is important to note that people who bring the same right answer to every situation often miss out on other possible right answers.

So, let me ask you this. What would you do right now, without hesitation, if being right wasn't a factor in your decision-making process? What other factors could you leverage instead?

Here are five alternative viewpoints to consider that can help you make feel-good choices, anytime, every time, regardless of the final outcome.

1. No one starts off being an expert, so allow yourself to be a beginner.
2. Don't expect anyone to truly know you, understand you, or appreciate you—you are the only one that can.

3. Move beyond fear and take a leap of faith.
4. Move beyond mistakes and grow from every opportunity.
5. Move beyond being perfect and just make progress.

**3. Already Listening.** Do you have an “already” listening impediment? You know, that listening that silently says, “I have tried it all,” “I know what’s best,” “You don’t know what you’re talking about,” “Nobody can handle this better than me,” “I know what I’m doing,” or “That won’t work.” Maybe that listening is not so silent, and it continues to stop you from being open to something you do not even know that you do not know, causing you to miss out on the biggest breakthrough in your career, relationship, health, or finances.

How’s that approach working for you? If you are finding yourself creating more conflicts and tension in your conversation at the office and at home, what I am about to share will change your life—and the lives of those you engage with daily—for the better. Ready?

Here we go . . . I want you to make eye contact, smile slightly, and ask this winning golden-buzzer question: *“Can you tell me more about “x” so I can fully understand you (or your request/complaint/problem) more clearly and completely?”*

Asking this one question—in the spirit of genuine interest—immediately creates a space of safety and connection. As a result, there is an immediate deepening of trust, which can improve relationships at home, raise morale in the workspace, and increase profits in the marketplace. Win-win all around!

**4. Blind Spots.** Because it is nearly impossible to see ourselves in action as we are speaking and behaving at work, at home, or at play, all of us have blind spots—aspects of ourselves we are not fully conscious of but the rest of the world can see. Blind spots, for the most part, are not negative or weakness. What makes blind spots troubling is when we do not know

what we do not know about ourselves. That can cause us to become defensive with others who are wanting to help us grow, or we might limit ourselves without even knowing, all because we do not know what we do not know that is hidden from our awareness.

How can you overcome your blind spots? With a simple THANK YOU to that person who cared enough about you to tell you the truth. We all have one or two (or more) unattractive or damaging behaviors we can't see. It's critical to have people in your life you can trust, can listen to their feedback, and then make the appropriate adjustments without justification, excuses, or defensiveness. Just say THANK YOU!

**5. Need for Certainty.** We are wired to be safe and feel secure; therefore, we avoid the new or the strange that raises our fears around what we have not tried or experiences we don't know anything about. All new experiences evoke some level of fear and discomfort, so we avoid and go back to what we are certain and comfortable with. The truth is that certainty and comfort put you at a disadvantage, for they are the destroyers of curiosity and courage, the two things needed to help you explore, experience, and expand beyond what you don't know you don't know yet!

So, now that you know that you really don't know what will happen in life, and even if you still believed you did know, you now know there is no real benefit to that safe and narrow approach. Starting today and every day moving forward, what are you willing to do differently to experience every part of life, without an attachment to the result?

## Julie Zolfo

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“Unconventional” has become synonymous with **Julie Zolfo** and her work. In establishing her own coaching business in 2011, Julie consciously leveraged travel and the great outdoors as her go-to vehicle to support her clients—single professional women who are burned out, bored, and uninspired—and help them create and sustain life-altering changes in their careers, relationships, health, and finances. Intuitively, Julie combined her twenty-plus years of human performance and talent development expertise from well-known employers such as Turner Broadcasting, Citibank, Honeywell, PIER 39, and Deloitte with her certifications from the Institute of Professional Coaching, Robbins Madanes Training, and Janet Attwood’s Passion Test and Self Love Master Trainer Trainings and her passion for experimental travel to create an unrivaled coaching approach that creates breakthrough results.

Today, Julie masterfully navigates her clients using the exact decision-making formula she created for herself in 2010 when her own life needed a breakthrough and transformation from living in the numb zone to experiencing the passion-filled byways and highways of a fulfilled and purposeful life. Today, Julie is based in the majestic and magical mountain town Bend, Oregon, where she enjoys hiking, kayaking, and family time while offering outdoor coaching, workshops, and Elite VIP to her clients from around the globe. If you are finally ready to move beyond what is not working and really want to reimagine what is more possible for your career, your business and personal life, visit Julie’s website to book a BIG LEAP call with her.

[juliezolfo.com](http://juliezolfo.com)





# NEED A BOOST?

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