

pathway to possibility

creating success on your terms

a collection of insights from eight
professionals with real-life experiences



Pathway to Possibility: Creating Success on Your Terms

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Introduction

Welcome to ***Pathway to Possibility: Creating Success on Your Terms***. This 40-day program is designed to support you in creating the success you want through consistent focus, gratitude and affirmations. We all define our success in different ways. It could be a career we love, the ability to spend more time with our family and friends, a healthy body, a thriving business, a new relationship or financial security. The point is creating the success you want on your terms is possible.

Pathway to Possibility is a compilation of mindful and meaningful tips, stories and exercises that can be used to enhance every part of your life. It is set up in five different sections to take into account the different ways our goals become a reality - Mindset, Feelings & Emotion, Vision, Spoken Word and Action.

How to use Pathway to Possibility: Creating Success on Your Terms

By following ***Pathway to Possibility*** you are investing in yourself and your goals. You are setting an intention and putting action behind it so that intention can become reality. Studies have shown that you attract what you focus on. Whether you attract something you want or something you don't is up to you. Take a few moments now to think about what it is that attracted you to this guide and what you would like to accomplish by working through the 40-day program. There is a worksheet on page 6 to capture your goals, gratitudes and affirmations. You can print this worksheet to have a copy for each of the 40 days.

To get the maximum benefit from this program:

- Write your intention for doing this work over the next 40 days and why it is important to you in the space below.
- Set aside 10 – 20 minutes a day, preferably in the morning, to read that day's passage, create your goals, and write down at least three things you are grateful for.
- Write out your affirmations and say them throughout the day.
- Practice the tools outlined in this guide daily.

My intention for doing this work over the next 40 days: _____

This intention is important to me because: _____

Success Doesn't Happen By Accident

There is a saying “if you fail to plan, you plan to fail”. The key to creating anything new in our lives is to consciously do it by scheduling the activity into our day, and then, following through on it, consistently.

About the Authors

The professionals who created this program have come together to share meaningful tips, stories and exercises that have not only helped them in successfully achieving their goals, but also have supported the many men and women they work with in achieving theirs as well. It is their wish that this program will assist you on your personal journey.

“Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative and creation, there is one elementary truth the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents, meetings and material assistance which no man could have dreamed would have come his way. Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Begin it now.”

~ Goethe

TODAY'S GOALS

Success doesn't happen by accident.

Take a few moments and write down your goals for today. Notice whether or not the list contains items that you've been putting off, and take action on those first.

THINGS FOR WHICH I'M GRATEFUL

Be thankful for what you have; you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough. ~Oprah Winfrey

Write down at least 3 things you are grateful for in your life.

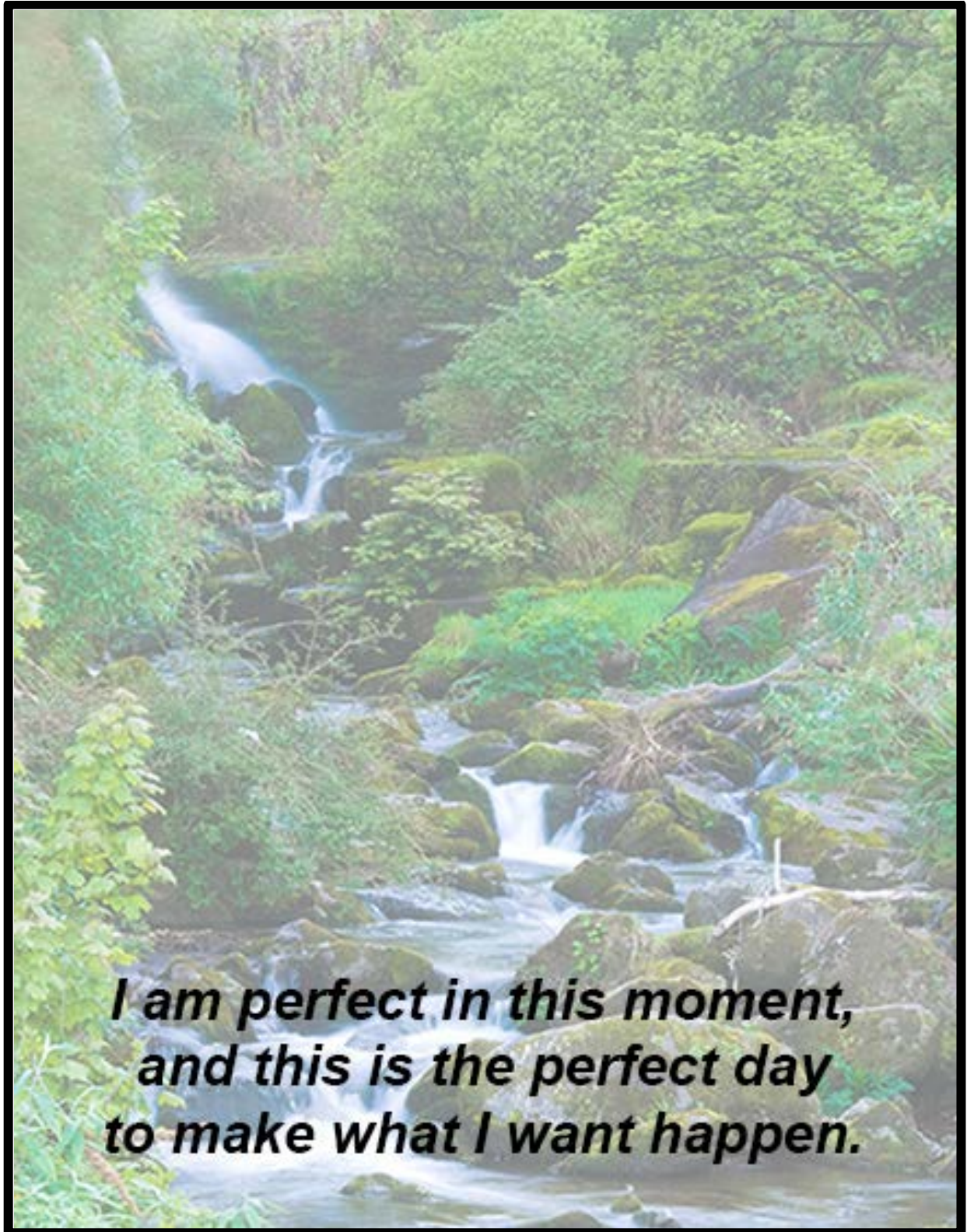
AFFIRMATIONS

Your words create your world.

Write down your affirmations for the day. They can include the one on today's page as well as your own. Affirmations set in motion what you want for your life, so repeat them often throughout your day.

"Thoughts become things... choose the good ones!" – Mike Dooley

Mindset



***I am perfect in this moment,
and this is the perfect day
to make what I want happen.***

What Are You THINKING?

By Bobbi Dearth Anderson

What ARE you thinking? I had no idea what my thoughts did to me. Not a clue! Until I started my journey, a journey that has paved the way to a life that I did not even dream about before, because I had no idea it existed!

About thirteen years ago my mind was set. I did not have a mindset. My mind was set. On what, you ask? Well, I had the perfect life from the external view, (which was also the view I had). But apparently I was in the 'lights on, nobody's home' mode, because little did I realize that my spouse was NOT happy and had not been happy for years!

But you see, my mind was set on staying married, no matter what. Once I said "I do", I did, and there were no exceptions to the rules for my marriage. Splitting up, divorce, separation – those were words other people used. Not ME!

SO, much to my surprise, when my husband walked in the house one night after returning from work to announce, "I have never really loved you, and I think I want a divorce"... well, that was not part of my mindset! Alrighty then. The mindset gets its feathers ruffled!

I was not only shocked, but my mind was extremely confused. Because if you remember, I said before that divorce was not an option for me. I guess you can tell by now that during that time of my life, it was all about my way of thinking. That is the way my mind was set!

So, we can fast forward a decade and begin to talk about mindset as one word, not two!

WE are what we think. Back when I felt as though I was on top of the world, I was only floating on the surface! Little did I know that if I shut my eyes to the material things – the surface fluff of life – I could begin to become acquainted with the beautiful, caring, loving, JOYFUL woman that lived deep inside. She was there, just not being acknowledged by me at all.

My discovery of self and what my thoughts did to me has been one of complete engagement. This new found self has allowed me to share so many gifts that I did not realize were even there deep inside of this amazing God-made human that I am!

Sound sort of deep and full of inspiration? It is. That is what our lives are supposed to be: full of inspiration to change and become the gift that the present moment provides us.

Today's Affirmation: "I always, and in all ways, acknowledge the goodness that lives in me!"

Hope And Faith

By Jodi Flynn

There can be dark days in the middle of the summer; when your blood runs cold despite the heat pouring from the sun. It's the fear that does this to us. The fear of failure, the fear of missing a payment, the fear of having to admit that we don't have it all together; this fear is paralyzing and can make us feel wiped out two hours after waking in the morning. It's not just fear; it's despair. Despair is the loss of hope.

Many people have a hard time completely distinguishing the two. Despair is pretty clear, but there is a common misconception that to be hopeful is a sort of desperate state of being when you don't know an outcome. How silly. No one knows the outcome of anything other than, life leads to death, which leads to life. People who say they don't need to hope because they know for certain what to expect are deluding themselves. To hope is to remain open to the possibility that, no matter what things look like now, things can always turn out fine. Better than fine, miracles can happen. Is that foolishness? I would say it's one of the most brilliant tools we have for living an amazing life.

When you can remain hopeful, even under the worst of circumstances, you can remain in action. Read above, fear and despair will drain you, overwhelm you and can render you immobile. With hope, you are always moving towards that positive outcome; so your energy, and your chin, stay up. When you have hope, you don't give up; you keep striving, and you do whatever you can to turn the tide. I would call that strength, perseverance, and brilliance. Now who is foolish?

Let me clear another misconception. Hope is not sitting on your duff doing nothing, yearning for your circumstances to change. THAT is overwhelm and desperation. That is a lack of hope and a lack of faith. When you feel hope and faith, you feel a momentum; you are energized and you are inspired. It's true, hope can be a fragile thing; our negative thought patterns can ambush us and cause us to waiver. But you can always get hope back. You just have to believe that things can change. And that, my dear, is a choice.

I am asked often, "but how do I believe?" You are not a puppet on a string. Stop relating to yourself that way. You do not need a string to be pulled to raise your arm. You are a powerful being and your power lies in your ability to choose. Just as easily as you chose fear and despair, you can choose hope and faith. Stop looking at your immediate circumstances and take a longer view. Where could you be if given some time? Choose.

Today's Affirmation: "I am the Master of my destiny."

When Will You Begin?

By Kim Pisolkar

I read this somewhere: “Starts follow the calendar; beginnings follow timing of the mind and heart”. We are so driven by the calendar and events. Think about how many times you have said, “When X, I will...”

- “When Monday comes, I will call potential clients/start eating better/exercise/spend more time with my kids.”
- “When things quite down at work, I will...”
- “When the holidays are over, I will eat better/exercise/look for a new job.”
- “When the beginning of the week/month/year is here, I will...”

It’s almost like we can only act when the calendar tells us we can; as if something magical occurs on Mondays, 1st’s, and next week, and if we just wait until then, all will be well. But in reality, all will not be well. It’s putting off what we know is important – what we know we need to do now to help us move farther toward our personal or professional goals.

We can begin any time. Consider this: “*NOW*” is “*WON*” *spelled backwards*. Do you want to win?

Doing things now is a mindset. It is following the timing of the mind and heart versus the calendar. You are not just starting something that is arbitrary. You are beginning a healthy lifestyle, a more connected family, a more profitable business, or more satisfying career. Treating your desires as something that can wait until Monday, next week, next year is like saying they are not important.

Oftentimes, beginning something new requires letting go of something else, which can be uncomfortable, even when the something new is much wanted, like a healthier lifestyle, a growing business, or new career. Everyday we have the ability to create what we want for our lives. We just need to stop putting it off until it seems easier or more convenient.

If you are prone to putting things off, (it’s okay, most of us are!), write NOW on a piece of paper and keep it next to your desk, computer, or bathroom mirror – wherever you will see it regularly.

When you find yourself saying, “I’ll do this Monday/next week/after the holidays/etc.”, ask yourself the following:

1. How important is this to me and my goals?
2. How will doing this now move me closer to reaching my goals?
3. What are the effects of not doing this now?
4. What is stopping me from doing this now?
5. What structure or support can I put in place to help me move forward?

Doing it NOW is a lot like working out. You need to do it repeatedly to build new muscle. Build this muscle a little bit every day.

Today’s Affirmation: “I already have all that I need to accomplish my goals now.”

Making Friends With The Green Monster

By Leann Steidinger

Jealousy is a green monster.

I struggled with it as a kid and made my younger sister's life miserable. She was three years younger than me, and I wasn't willing to share attention and toys. As I grew older, it seemed that other people had more opportunities than me, were smarter than me, prettier than me and more fun than me. I wasn't good enough to have the luck and success that seemed to come easily and effortlessly to them.

As a single mom, I wrestle with the green monster in new ways. I watch my friends do things while their husbands watch the kids; they have the support that I long for. The freedom to go run, take long bike rides, get up early to swim. I have a hard time just trying to mow the lawn with a two-year-old tagging along behind me! It feels lonely, and I envy them because they are in such great shape. They don't even know how blessed they are.

One Saturday when I was feeling very alone, tired and sorry for myself as my son and I planted flowers, I got a Facebook message from an old high school friend. She is a mother who seems to have it all – married with two children. She wrote me about how much she had been struggling. She wanted to end her life. At the time, she was in a much worse place than I was.

While my heart hurt for her, the situation opened my eyes. It made me grateful for the strength that God has given me to get through the sleepless nights by myself with an infant...the lonely afternoons while he napped and I just wanted to go for a run...the times I found myself longing for the fun adult trips that my friends had gone on. And I realized that the way I see things is all my choice.

My son is my responsibility, but I wouldn't want it any other way. I love taking him with me on bike rides, watching him as he delights in watering – and over-watering – the flowers we planted together. I learn from him every day.

I've learned that the key to overcoming my jealousy is to find balance between being a mother and being me. Instead of wasting my energy feeling sorry for myself or wishing for something, I create opportunities to go for a two hour bike ride, or spend time with friends by asking for help. I treasure the time that I spend with my son and am grateful for where I'm at, which has given me a very beautiful, close bond with him.

Today's Affirmation: "I am perfect in this moment, and this is the perfect day to make what I want happen."

Change Your Story To Change Your Mind

By Lisa Kaplin

My training is as a psychologist first and a life coach second. Much of psychology focuses on the discussion of feelings. Feelings are important, and we should recognize and discuss them. However, underlying our feelings are our thoughts or belief systems. If we want to feel better, we need to start here. Your thoughts can truly make or break your day, your mood, and how you move forward in your life. Change your mind to change your world.

When I work with clients, I help them recognize the stories that they have often adopted since childhood and that now play a role in their adult lives. Often these stories and thoughts are negative, such as, “I’m not as smart as others.” Or, “The Smith family has bad luck.” The problem with these stories or mindsets is that they affect our feelings, and therefore, our behavior. It’s important to learn how to change these belief systems into positive, realistic ones. It’s time to change your mind!

So, how do we do that? Essentially, we need to develop a story muscle. Think of what you need to do if you want to develop your bicep muscle. You would learn some exercises, and then you would need to do them consistently for weeks in order to develop your bicep muscle. The same goes for your story muscle. Rewrite your story and then start training! Tell yourself the new story every day by either writing and/or saying it. Don’t give up. Time and practice will give you your new, strong story muscle.

Here’s my own example: I used to say that eating healthy is boring and no fun. So, I made sure that I either ate boring, healthy food, or really unhealthy food. I saw no grey area in this little story of mine. One day I knew it was time to change that story, and I changed it to “Healthy eating is delicious and feels good.” I kept saying it, and I continued to look for and make healthy, but tasty food. Eventually, seeking healthy food with flavor became easier for me.

You can rewrite any story in your life. It can be about relationships, health, parenting, learning, etc. Look for the negative mindsets, and you will find the negative stories. Start changing those stories and start enjoying good feelings and healthier, happier behaviors. Change your mind to change your life, and start right this minute.

Today’s Affirmation: “My story is filled with hope, perseverance, and happiness.”

Riches And Wealth.

By Liselle Hill

I have spent half my life in Africa and the other half in America. On one continent I know a lot of people with very little money who ooze oodles of happiness. On the other there is a lot less poverty, but it seems to me not an incremental increase in joy. The funny thing is even people who are financially well off usually don't think of themselves as being rich... Maybe their needs are bigger, or maybe they are exposed to more wants. Whatever the cause, we all know money can't buy happiness. It really is all relative.

This was vividly illustrated to me during a stay in Zambia. Passing through any region it is customary to stop and pay your respects to the tribal leader, which included a visit to the "palace" to introduce ourselves and declare our intentions. Suffice it to say without even having access to running water and electricity, the palace was a structure that in America would at a stretch be classified as a fixer-upper. And yet everyone there expressed feeling blessed, shared freely, laughed from the gut and soul. Joy, joy, joy everywhere. On the flip side, we've all been around people who have financial blessings up the wazoo and still only seem to be able to bitch and moan.

So what's the correlation between money and joy? From my observations, I believe it's all about the mindset. The differentiation lies in being a master of your money, while not being a slave to it. Use money as a tool to buy experiences and objects that bring you joy. Never, ever believe that doing anything that goes against your grain is worth any amount of money. I get so much joy from that over-priced shot of espresso; it's happiness, indulgence and peace-in-a-cup to me, surely worth every cent. I have experienced being very poor in a well-paying job that more than paid the bills, but also zapped my soul.

So when was I truly the richest? The bank account is only one measure, but my plan is to stay cognizant of the whole picture. A busy, productive day is income generating, but not taking the time for soul pursuit is a decline in net worth. Time and money invested in you is a smart business decision to make. You are your business; you are its biggest asset. You are worthy and deserving of great care. So treat yourself wisely, kindly; choose happiness, choose joy and you will attract money-rich opportunities that satisfy on every level.

Think carefully: what will it take for you to live more than just a life of wealth, and instead a life of riches. And now that financial prosperity is here – yours – how do you want to flesh out your vision? Use your imagination to take you from just wealthy to truly rich. You got the money piece down, but what do you truly want more than money? What do you want with a desire that is even stronger than the desire for money? What are you not willing to live without? Ask for that too; believe in that too. Follow this work with the big picture in mind, and then you will have robust abundance and prosperity. And if you don't have all the money that is coming your way just yet, when it does arrive it can be the cherry on top! Joy as a currency is so much more precious than the dollar.

Today's Affirmation: "I am rich in both money and joy, I live a life that makes me happy on every level."

Shift Your Mindset And You Are Sure To Succeed

By Lorna Poole

My biggest fear was public speaking; I would vomit, cry, procrastinate and stop eating for the whole duration I would need to practice a speech, and I would need a number of weeks to pull myself together to get my mindset good for standing in front of an audience. I joined Toastmasters in 2011, determined to conquer my fear. I have crashed my car, and other strange events have occurred during the weeks building up to the day I would need to speak. This very fear had painfully crippled every area of my life. I was shy, backwards and fearful of criticism, and it ruled my life. If you told me I was useless and worthless, then guess what? I believed you 'til the day I turned my life around, and so can you.

I made a choice that my life was going to be different. After several weeks of tears enough was enough, and I was determine to find the answers. I started to work on my mindset; it was not the act of speaking that was really causing my downfall, it was the pre-dominate thought and over-active imagination that was really preventing me from speaking. Once I started to work on this, my confidence suddenly just grew and grew. The feedback I would receive was amazing. Great content, Lorna; I loved your delivery. You are inspiring, and you will make a difference in other peoples' lives. Wow... that is amazing, I would think to myself. Once I shifted my mindset I started to make a difference in the world and how I saw myself. Everything started to change for me; life started to support me.

Four main areas of your mindset to be mindful of:

Core Beliefs: What do you believe about yourself and the world you live in? As you grow and evolve old beliefs will keep showing up, but as you get stronger and stronger they get less and less important. They are just patterns and old tapes that in time will dissipate as you encounter new beliefs and a new way of seeing the world.

Positive Thinking: I have learned to discipline negativity. Yes, thinking positive is great, but you must do more than this. You must develop the internal and external skills to handle all life challenges and see all negative events as a positive. Take the meaning from the event and discard the negative part that did not serve you. Usually a negative event is a lesson to learn or an opportunity to grow and evolve. Always think positive and remember to make all decision from a place of joy. The world is always here to support and serve you.

Visualize: See yourself succeeding. I found visualization to be the most difficult in the beginning, but in time visualization got easier. You must have the ability to see past your current circumstances. The stronger that image is, the closer you are to receiving the result you have always wanted. This is your strongest asset. See it, believe it, feel it and know it.

Grow you: I always keep this thought in the back of mind. If I continue to grow who I am and what I am about by learning the skills and forever working on my mindset, then I will certainty achieve. This has been my truth. You will succeed only to the extent that you grow. So grow, grow, and grow, you.

Today's Affirmation: *"Everything is possible when I see it that way."*

Is The Mindset Trap Sucking Your Time?

By Natasha Lindor

“Once your mindset changes, everything on the outside will change along with it.”

— Steve Maraboli, *Life, the Truth, and Being Free*

How many times do you think to yourself -- “I’m so busy!”, or “I never have time for anything I want to do.”? Maybe that thought, or some variation of it, crossed your mind several times today. And, it’s no wonder many of us have that kind of thinking...we live in a society that emphasizes activity and doing.

I invite you to ask yourself, “How busy am I *really*?” Are you unconsciously keeping yourself busy by thinking about how busy you are?

In our workhorse-driven society, many of us find it hard to really break away from work. I spent over 15 years in the corporate world putting in long hours, earning a promotion every 18 to 24 months. I thought about work all the time – even when I was away from work. It felt like I was working all the time since I was accessible 24/7 via email, mobile, text and instant messenger.

As I learned about the power of mindset, the connection between my mindset and my experiences became clearer. By reaffirming my thoughts of how busy I was, I was stuck in the Mindset Trap! I was keeping myself trapped in being busy. I was, in effect, creating this reality for myself.

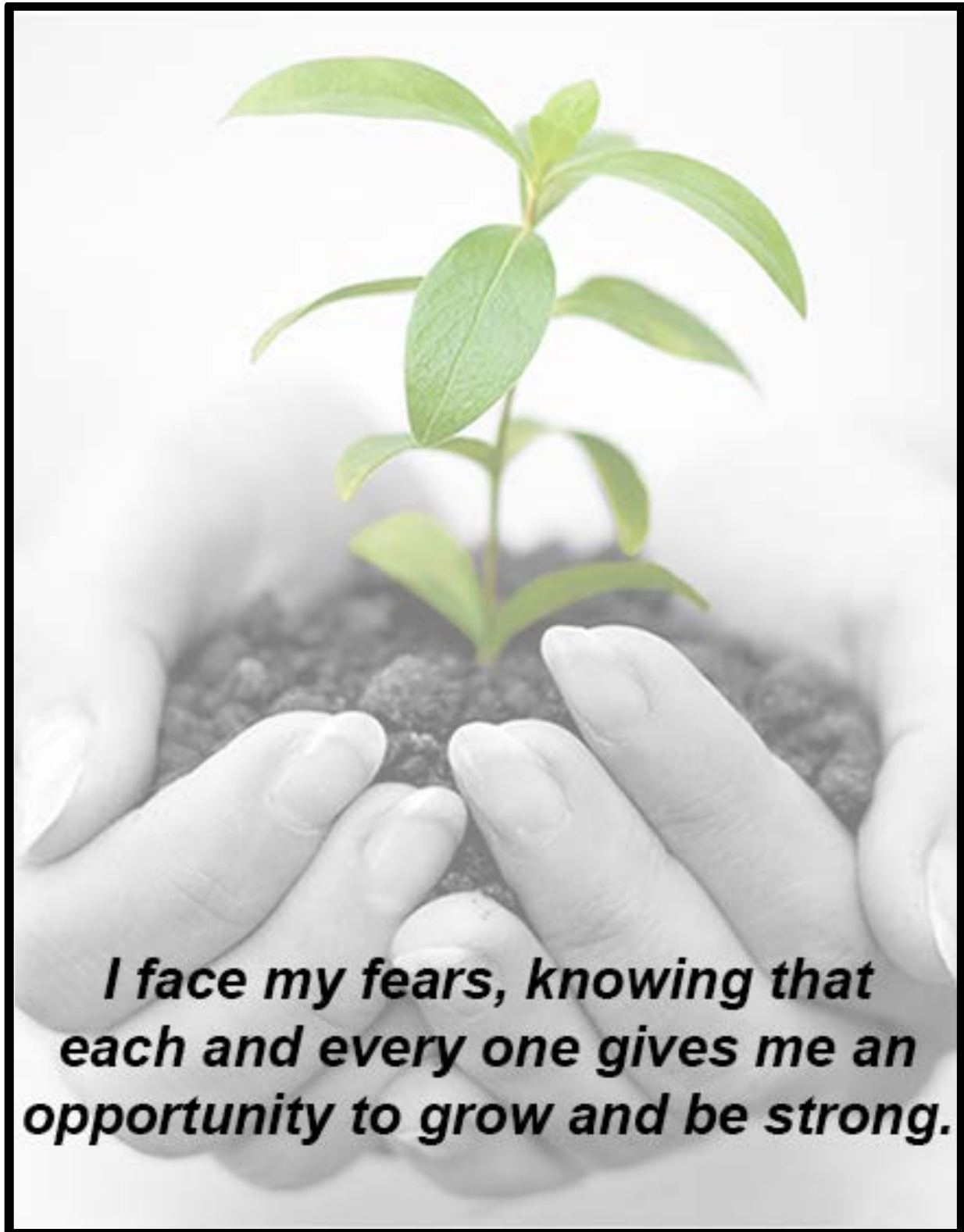
Your thoughts help to create your beliefs. If you think that you’re busy getting ahead in your career, (regardless of whether your career is at an office or CEO of the household), and that’s what you must do to be successful, then you’ll create the belief of “staying busy is the path to getting ahead and being successful”. And once you have that belief, you’ll attract experiences into your life that validate this belief. So in this example, you attract multiple events to add to your calendar, or the most time-intensive projects. All these experiences will make you feel successful and help you get ahead. They will ALSO keep you busy, thereby affirming the belief that “staying busy is the path to getting ahead and being successful”.

If you’re busier than you’d like to be, I invite you to take the first step and explore a few questions to bring you closer to a more productive, balanced, soul-satisfying lifestyle:

- What are some empowering thoughts that support a happier, more productive, balanced me?
- How does the new balanced, productive, successful me think?
- What will I choose to believe in order to be less busy and live more?
- What beliefs do soul-satisfied people with balanced lifestyles hold to be true?
- What is my most powerful, new balanced lifestyle belief?

Today’s Affirmation: “I now have more than enough time and energy for everything I want to do. All is well.”

Feeling



I face my fears, knowing that each and every one gives me an opportunity to grow and be strong.

Shhhh...What Are You Feeling?

By Bobbi Dearth Anderson

“How are you doing today?” The most likely answer given to that question is “Fine”. True or not, we all walk around convincing ourselves and others that we are fine.

Definition of fine is *superior quality, excellent, consisting of minute particles, very thin or slender, keen or sharp.*

Hmmmm, which one are you when you say you are “Fine”? Some days it is probably super or excellent, but what about the days when it really means “I feel like I am pulverized into minute particles.”? Or, “I feel very thin, slender – not existing very large today.” Other days, “I feel keen or sharp enough to get the job done today.”

So this was a way to get you thinking about how you really feel each day. Our minds have a clever way of telling us everything is ‘fine’ when there may actually be some feelings we need to tend to. Acknowledging the way we feel is a very therapeutic way of becoming engaged in the quality of life you lead.

How many times have you heard, “If this condition had been caught sooner, then the outcome could have been different.”? It is about being reflective – beginning a routine of tuning in to what you are feeling, and recognizing whether or not it is different than what you felt before. It is about allowing yourself the privilege to understand what you actually feel and what you choose to ignore.

Before you get up each morning, decide at that point of the day what you want your day to look like. It is all about setting intention. Our mind and body will work together if we give it some ‘sacred’ time to meld together. Not work as two separate beings. We are one being. Sometimes getting the mind, heart and body to work together can be a challenge because of all the outside influences we have.

Begin to become aware of the mindless talk you have in your mind. Give yourself the gift of acknowledging when you begin to feel a difference in your body. Ask yourself questions in an endearing way. Don’t be constantly critical and hard on yourself. Start to listen to how you speak to yourself. Would you talk to your child or spouse or friend in that way? I love the saying “If you treated your friends like you treat yourself, you would not have any friends!” Interesting thought, right?

How do you treat yourself? You have feelings, too! Start realizing what it would feel like to really be a friend to YOU! It is a great gift, one that not many of us have received.

Today’s Affirmation: “I consistently am aware of how I feel and acknowledge it is ok to feel that way!”

Use Your Breath

By Jodi Flynn

Take a deep breath, fill your lungs with air, and feel the expansion of your chest. When you expel your breath, allow your muscles to relax. Take your shoulders down from around your ears. Unclench your jaw. Maybe roll your head around. Do it again, and feel the difference. You've just unwound yourself from the havoc your thoughts were creating in your body. When we fend off unpleasant thoughts – especially those around bills, debt, and lack of savings – our body naturally gears itself for a fight and our mind is hyper-sensitive to ALL the things in our environment that cause us stress. We focus on them; we obsess over them. How can we possibly be happy with so many things going wrong?

The problem is you've got negative sunglasses on. They are the darkest kind of sunglasses – they might as well be blinders. You are viewing the world through a lens of lack, threats and obstacles. Take them off! You deserve better. You are better. When you wear these sunglasses you can't see all the opportunities that are passing you by. You don't see people smiling at you, and reaching out their hands to help you and offer you support. When you look in the mirror, you see a misshaped version of yourself.

Take the sunglasses off by taking DEEP, SLOW breaths. Concentrating on our breath brings our full attention into the REALITY of the present moment. A moment ago our thoughts were cooking up all sorts of unpleasant outcomes; outcomes that are *not real*. They have not happened, it's not reality, and so it was merely our imagination. And what did our body do? That which has the mind's attention IS REAL to the mind, and the body reacts appropriately. Let go of the fantasy, and bring your attention to what is actually happening in this moment by taking those deep breaths. Everything is going to be fine. You are safe.

Now use that imagination to create something splendid for yourself. Imagine you've got more money than you know what to do with. What are you purchasing? What bills have been completely paid off? How are you spending your time? Think about all the details in your life, and allow the emotions to wash over you. Focus on love and joy and gratitude. How thankful are you that everything is working out so well? Let it roll off of you in waves. You are a generator for love, joy and gratitude. And you know what? That's the magnet that will draw what you want towards you.

It's the law of the universe. Happy business owners attract happy clients. Why? Because happy people want to do business with happy people. Positive people want to spend time with positive people. Misery loves company. Birds of a feather flock together. If you don't like what's showing up in your life, then you've got to change the frequency. To do that, take deep breaths, imagine the life you want in detail, and exude feelings of love, joy and gratitude. Now you've got the secret formula; don't let it go to waste.

Today's Affirmation: "Money always comes to me easily and effortlessly."

Building Up Or Breaking Down?

By Kim Pisolkar

“People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” Maya Angelou

I heard this story once: A press reporter was interviewing two former presidents. After the interviews, she was reflecting on the stories she would write. What she noticed was one president made her realize how important he was, while the other made her realize how important she was.

There are many situations when we want to make sure the other person knows how fabulous we are – when we are speaking with a potential client about our products and services; when we are sitting across from a hiring manager for the job we really want; when we are asking that attractive person out on a date, and so forth. It is a delicate dance between us and the other person. We want to be viewed as smart, talented, attractive or likeable, but we want to do it in a way where the other person also feels like they are fabulous and valued.

Ask yourself: How do others feel after meeting me, interacting with me? Did I leave that person feeling uplifted and positive? There is no neutral. You can either build people up, or tear them down. It’s up to you to decide which it will be. What we say and do in each interaction determines whether the other person feels built up, or torn down.

There are many ways to uplift others, to build them up and let them know how important they are to you:

- Show your appreciation with a “thank you”;
- Focus on peoples’ strengths and give a compliment;
- Say “I love you”;
- Offer praise and encouragement;
- Be respectful – give them your full attention, and really listen what they are saying;
- Do something because it is the right thing to do, not because you’ll get credit or acknowledgement for it;
- Keep the conversation positive – ditch the bad mouthing, negativity, pessimism, and focus solely on the positive;
- Ask questions – people love to talk about themselves;
- Smile – it is free, and you can give one to anyone at anytime.

What is one thing you will do today to show someone how you feel about them?

What we can do to uplift others can also be used to uplift ourselves. What is one thing you will do to show yourself how fabulous you are?

Today’s Affirmation: “I am surrounded by people who are positive, and I am uplifting all the people in my life.”

Guilt-Free And Loving Me!

By Leann Steidinger

Motherhood changes us forever. We are not only physically different after delivering a child into the world, but also emotionally. Think about that first moment, when mothers set eyes on their babies. That sweet, unconditional love at first sight. That mother-lion protectiveness that is instilled in us.

And then there's mom-guilt. For some of us it sets in even during pregnancy, like when we don't have the perfect pregnancy diet. And it continues; we can berate ourselves for using formula, for being unable to soothe colic, for going back to work and dropping off the baby at daycare.

Guilt is the flipside of human love and protectiveness. But unlike a lioness who knows only to care for and protect her cubs, we human mothers can allow the mom-guilt to consume our whole being without even realizing it.

As our children grow, we feel bad for having a desire to get out of the house after long days of cleaning up messes, soothing tears, and cooking and cleaning. We let guilt sway our decisions between going out with some girlfriends for a relaxing dinner and staying home because our children have been at school or daycare all day and haven't seen much of us. We let it stop us from pursuing our passions and being the women that we are.

How do we deal with guilt? I think it will always be there, but we need to have a balance – know where our boundaries are. For me, I don't have the choice to stay at home, so my son goes to daycare. That means that my life revolves around work and being a mom. I thoroughly enjoy spending time with my son, and sometimes it feels like there's never enough of it. At the same time, if I don't spend time on me, I start to fall out of balance. I need to exercise. I need to have a social life. I require at least a little time during the day for myself. Knowing these boundaries has helped me make decisions when I ask myself questions like, "Should I get a babysitter?", or "Should I train for that half-marathon?"

How can we be different? By creating a list of negotiables (I mow the lawn or get someone else to do it), and non-negotiables (sleep and at least 30 minutes of exercise three times a week). With these boundaries and expectations in place, you can be prepared when that guilt hits you in the face.

Today's Affirmation: "I have my priorities in order, and no matter what happens I choose to be happy."

Using Your Feelings To Grow

By Lisa Kaplin

Here's the thing about feelings: they can either make your day or ruin it. Here's the other thing about feelings: you can choose how you feel. It's not always easy to do, but if we take a long hard look at what we are feeling and why, we can make changes to our thinking, and therefore, change our feelings. To change your feelings you need to change the way you are looking at events in your life. When you do this, joy and happiness are yours for the taking.

On the other hand, it's really important to use our feelings to gauge what is going on internally. Feelings are our red flags that something is bothering us, and we really need to understand what that might be. Don't ignore your feelings, but don't allow yourself to be carried away by them either. Feelings and emotions help us grieve, love, change and understand. Use them to grow.

Many of us were taught as children to stifle our feelings and thus, ignore them. As adults we can turn that around by sitting quietly, breathing deeply and allowing feelings to move through us as we investigate why they are present. Strong feelings are due to our core values being tested. Gain control over your emotions so that your behavioral reaction is appropriate and helpful. Then, use that emotion to connect with your values, and make sure you are where you want to be and doing things that feel right to you.

When you experience a strong emotion, stop, sit down for a few minutes and really do some soul searching. Why are you feeling this way? What triggered your emotion, and are you looking at the situation in a way that is healthy and beneficial to you? Are you defensive, angry, hurt, scared? Own the feeling – don't fight it; then, use the feeling to learn more about yourself and to make changes to your thoughts and beliefs.

Always remember that how you feel is entirely up to you, but it takes practice to change the patterns that you've developed over your life. Many of us are used to trigger responses such as anger or unhappiness, but we can learn to change these if we work on recognizing that we have control over how we look at any situation. To feel good you need to learn to think positively and realistically. Feeling good is well within your reach. Do the work to get there and your life will change in ways that you never thought possible.

Today's Affirmation: "I have complete control over my feelings and I feel wonderful."

Fear Has No Power

By Liselle Hill

In my life the most debilitating of all emotions I have ever felt has been fear. Over the course of the years I've dealt with it in a pretty typical human-like way. The Ostrich-Syndrome. You probably all know what an ostrich does when feeling threatened. He sticks his head under the sand, and when he no longer can see the situation, he is convinced the danger has ceased to exist. This worked for me...for a while. Only problem is, the universe is pretty insistent, and we're all here to learn and grow. And life is experiential. We don't learn from our lessons unless we allow ourselves to experience them. It's hard to experience and grow when your head is buried. So the situations just get bigger and scarier until there was no way they can be ignored. Yup, sorry guys, I think I may have single-handedly brought about a recession and the collapse of the housing industry. It's been hard to ignore that sucker.

Fear of being destitute; fear of not being able to support myself, my family. Fear of failure became an overwhelming possibility; one that I could no longer ignore, and so I had to feel. I couldn't suppress the fear – couldn't bottle it up, and I was as sure as that ostrich that I was going to be eaten alive. And here I am. Still breathing, still (mostly) sane, and stronger, braver, better for it. That's the thing: without allowing ourselves to feel, emotion backs up inside us, becoming like an abscess that eats away at our souls. We're human; we're meant to feel the whole spectrum of emotion. We don't just get to cherry pick. Like we're in charge of the orders for our life! Yup, I think I'll take a full order of joy, but don't put any fear in there; I'll just push it to the side anyway. Ha-ha, time for that girl to learn a lesson!

Bear with me, here's the point: your biggest fears have no power. One can stand tall, secure in the absolute truth, with the inner knowing that everything that is happening is part of the Divine plan. This "crisis", in whatever shape it takes for your life, has been perfectly designed so that you can feel. Experiencing these feelings are the way to live a full life. So feel it; cry when you want to. The ugly, snotty, behind-closed-doors cry. It's okay, you don't have to be brave. Or maybe for you it's that anger – the one you were told isn't feminine or pretty. Time to hit the punching bag! Or depression – are you in need of a whole pot of tea and a self-care day? Or embarrassment – time to call a friend and turn the story into an epic comedy! Allow the emotion to pass through you. And then, when it clears, in its wake it leaves behind beautiful, peaceful space. And in that space you will find the voice of your intuition, your spirit, your guide. You couldn't hear it when you were all wrapped up in trying to suppress the name of protection. The walls are down. You've been stripped of your ego, you're a little raw and finally ready for guidance.

Some experiences are hugely devastating, and one cry is not going to cut it. Like any wound, it may take a while to heal. When life brings you to your knees remember to lean in. The more you embrace the emotion, the less it will dominate your existence; the easier it flows through. And once passed, it leaves you forever changed. Wiser, moved, touched, trusting and still alive. Beautifully, perfectly human.

Today's Affirmation: "I face my fears, knowing that each and every one gives me an opportunity to grow and be strong."

Emotions My Faithful Inner Guide

By Lorna Poole

The most powerful inner guide you will ever own is your ability to interrupt your own feelings and emotions. Make them your servant, your best friend, as they are so in tune with ‘who you are’ and they are always warning and guiding you to where you need to be.

It is healthy to feel fear, sadness, pain and grief, as well as joy, pleasure and fun. Fear warns us of upcoming danger, sadness reminds us to rejuvenate, pain warns us before we get hurt, and grief reminds us to mourn a loss. But typically in our modern world we don’t give time or respect to our emotions, and we tend to ignore the obvious warning signs faithfully supporting our every need. It is from the ignorance of our precious guide that chaos occurs in our life and continual pain prevails, leading to disastrous consequences and painful circumstances.

Bottled up emotions and painful stories rule our world when we ignore our own warning signs. I remember a time that a friend of mine shared a story with me about breaking up with her boyfriend. She knew in her heart and soul he was not for her, and so she told him. He ignored her, so she told him again. Once again, he did not want to hear her wishes, so he ignored her and they continued to date. Then, she fell pregnant, and because she was pregnant, they got married.

Five years passed and they tried to make a real go of it. Everybody thought she had the perfect relationship except her. Inside she was crying, crying to escape. Shortly after getting married everything fell apart. It wasn’t working, and both parties filed for divorce. Now, she listens to her heart, and so does he. He says, “If only I had listened to the warning signs we both received early in our relationship, then I wouldn’t be standing here with a broken heart, broken family and an empty wallet. The warning signs were there all along, and my body kept telling me to listen, but I just wanted to ignore them. My emotions knew the answer when I was second-guessing my actions. The signals were everywhere.”

If you take the time to communicate with your emotions, then you’ll find they have an array of messages and information guiding you to a place of love, joy and happiness.

In our relationships emotions can become heightened and exhausting. Like a tornado, they can wipe us out and destroy the potential of a budding romance or the foundation of a long-term partnership.

Ask yourself:

- Do I take the time to stop and listen to the messages my body and mind give me?
- What am I ignoring inside of me for my emotions to become so angry and upset?
- What are they telling me?

Listen carefully to the answers your inner guide is giving you. These answers can come in the form of feelings or coincidences – or you might just know. When we stop to look beyond the surface problem the emotion or feeling reveals the true answer to our upset and discomfort. Welcome your emotions gladly; after all, they are your best friend, and they are there to guide you divinely.

Today’s Affirmation: “I always listen carefully to my inner guide; it is my best servant and always knows what is best for me.”

Are You Feelin' It?

Natasha Lindor

“The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart”

— Helen Keller

In today's go-go society we're often caught up in what we think about things vs. how we feel about things. Ignoring your feelings can actually do you quite a disservice, especially when it comes to refining your vision for what you want in life and making it a reality.

As you think about your vision for your ideal life, do you really feel good about it? Does it appeal to you on an emotional level? Or do you feel “fine”, neutral or negative about it? Do you feel some hesitation or resistance?

Oftentimes, something will feel a little bit off when you visualize your vision. If this happens to you, not to worry. If it's a very vague feeling of unease, just keep working with the same vision on a daily basis for several more days. Allow your mind to expand and play with the vision a little more each time. Give yourself permission to make adjustments accordingly – it's your vision for your ideal life, after all.

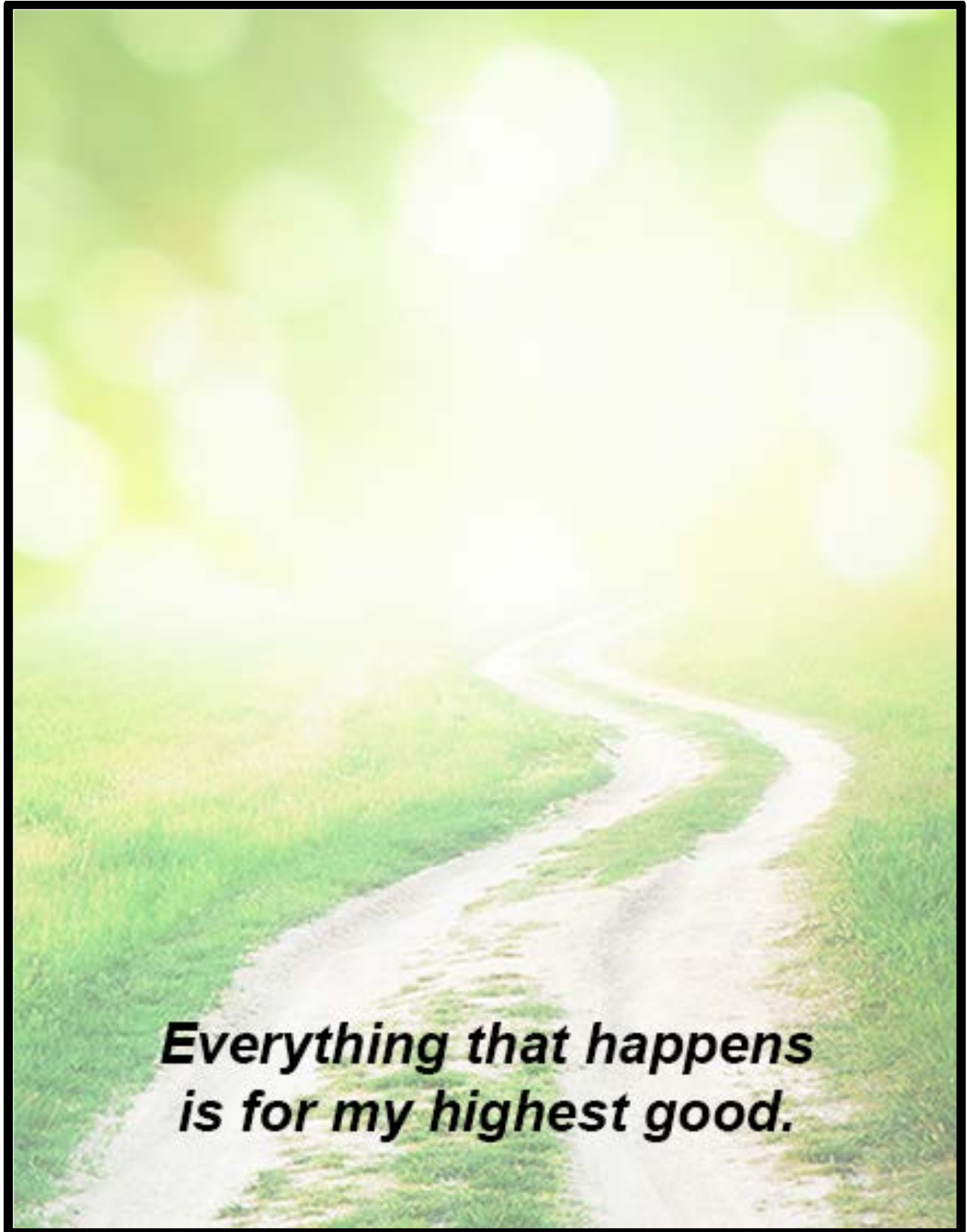
If, on the other hand, you find yourself feeling stuck, try asking yourself the following questions:

- What new feelings and emotions will energize me to live a balanced, soul-satisfying life?
- How does it feel to be successful in my career AND live a soul-satisfying, balanced life?
- What is my most powerful and supportive soul-satisfied feeling?

When you connect heartfelt emotions to your vision, you'll find yourself operating on a whole new level. The feelings that your vision awakens in you will help you power through the stressful or difficult times. It also makes your experience of realizing a more purposeful, less busy life much more fun and effortless.

Today's Affirmation: “I feel my feelings. I am free from my feelings managing me. My feelings help me be me. My feelings are always positive. I am safe, balanced and excited about all that I feel and experience.”

Vision



How Are Your Parts Working Together?

By Bobbi Dearth Anderson

Oftentimes we discover that we just feel crappy. You know, pretty bad. You suddenly realize that you have started to accept feeling sort of sickly as your normal. I want you to remember a time when you really felt great. It may very well be right now. But if it is not, then I want you to read this and really digest the suggestions in this piece. Give yourself the gift of discovering what the heck is going on in your body.

We have many different parts of ourselves that impress demands on us each day.

The child in us is always, I mean ALWAYS, looking for attention. That is the part of you that when things don't go your way, you pout a little. Now I don't necessarily mean outwardly pout...but there is a 'part' of you that is really pouting about not getting your way. That is your childish self!

Then there is the warrior in us. This is the part of our self that no matter what is on our 'to-do list', it will get done. Whatever task you are determined to accomplish, no matter how big or small, the warrior in you will keep on keeping on until it gets done!

We all have many different personalities living in us. Most definitely the dominant ones are who we are on the outside...but we have them all in there!

That being said, I hope this exercise will make more sense to you! I use it with my clients all of the time. Do you ever say: "Well, there is a part of me that really wants to do this, but there is another part of me that feels like it just may not be the right thing to do!"?

Bingo...that is what I am talking about. Our different parts are constantly in conversation inside of us, whether we are aware of it or not.

So, what do your parts discuss? Are you aware of the conversation?, OR do you let your mind wander all by itself, having conversations with your subconscious that you are totally unaware of?

This can be some powerful work to tune into. When you start to feel like you're not congruent with what life is offering you, stop and have a conversation with that part of you that is not feeling so great.

You will be surprised by what you will 'hear'!

Today's Affirmation: "I consistently feel congruent and in touch with all of me – speaking to all of my parts."

Imagination

By Jodi Flynn

Within us is the ability to create any story. Our imaginations are so powerful that they shape how we experience the world. Do you live in a wonderful world of possibilities, or is struggle and adversity the name of the game? It's how you utilize your imagination that determines the story you are living out. Are you anxious? Your imagination has cooked up a wonderful drama for you to live out. Are you eager and excited? Yup, again, it was your imagination at play. We dismiss our imagination as a toy to play with. You can certainly play with it, but it is no simple toy. It is real and powerful and determines how you feel about the life you are currently living.

When you awake in the morning, start by giving thanks for all that you have. Don't overlook the basics. There are those without shelter, food or medical care in the world. If you have these things, then there is much to be grateful for. Let your mind wander to the people, living or dead, who have loved and supported you. Feel the emotion in your body as you think of them and give thanks. Consider all the opportunities you have had. Let them play in your mind and let gratitude sink in. The things that make you smile – think of better times – and gladly looking forward, allow these thoughts to start your day.

Think of the day ahead. You may start to feel stress and want to pull the blankets back over your head. Don't resist it; it's just a sensation. The sooner you accept it, the sooner it will pass you by. Now, imagine yourself being the star of your day. You are energetic, having great conversations, talking to everyone with ease and checking off your to-do's one by one. There is nothing you can't handle when you deal with everything one at a time. Imagine that people are asking for your advice because they value your opinion. More people are offering to pick you up a coffee, run that errand for you, and take that dreaded task off your hands. What do you want? Use your imagination and BE SPECIFIC. The more you use your imagination, and imagine your life exactly how you want it, the more your life starts to take the shape of what you are asking for.

Have things not been going your way recently? Can't win for losing? One step forward, two steps back? I'm not a mind reader but my guess is you worry too much. You think of the worst so you can plan for it. That's you using that powerful imagination of yours. But instead of using it to create the life you want, you've been using it to create the life you don't want. Keep your mind focused on solutions, desired future outcomes, and what you are grateful for, and witness a complete turnaround. You'll soon be repeating to yourself, "Everything always goes my way." You'll unconsciously utter, "Wow, perfect timing." In amazement you'll share, "How did you know that's exactly what I wanted?"

Your world is of your creation. You get to decide how this story plays out. What is the script you are writing?

Today's Affirmation: "Everything that happens is for my highest good."

What Will You Imagine Today?

By Kim Pisolkar

“Imagination is everything. It is the preview of life’s coming attractions.” ~ Albert Einstein

When I was a child I always dreamed I would be famous. It is not really clear why I was famous. I just was. I imagined myself as a rock star singing to crowds of people, as a dancer on the stage, and building a sanctuary for all the stray animals. As of now, none of those have come true. Instead, I grew up.

Children are full of imagination. Anything is possible. They are astronauts and actresses, famous ballerinas. They have fancy red cars, unlimited amounts of money to buy everything they want, and cars that become airplanes or boats to dodge the traffic and rain. There is no worry about how all these things will happen, only the childlike faith that it will come true. And then, children become adults and things change. We become stuck in our day-to-day grind. We stop imagining the endless possibilities. We put limits on what we can accomplish and on ourselves. We put limits on others as well.

We stop imagining because we get caught up in whether or not it is possible – caught up in the "how". We question, “How will I do that?”, “How realistic is it?”, “How will I afford it?”, and so on. If, for a moment, you could assume that the “how” will be answered – that you don’t have to worry about it – what would you do? What would you have? Who would you be?

What if you had childlike faith that what you wanted was not only possible, but also probable? What would you do if you knew you could not fail?

- Identify what it is you want and write it down.
- Why is it important to you?
- What does it look like?
- What is different in your life when you have it?
- How do you feel when you have it?

Spend a few minutes every day anchoring yourself to the vision of what you want – what it looks like, how it feels, what is happening in your life. You should be able to see it with total clarity so that it feels like it is actually happening.

See yourself holding the money: How much is it? What are you doing with it?

See yourself dating a new partner: What are you doing together?

Envision yourself in that new job: What are you doing? What is your commute like?

See your healthier body: What does your body look like? What are you doing?

Whenever you fall into that, "Is this possible/worth it?", or “How will I do this?” place, imagine what you want until the goose bumps send shivers through your body and you believe.

What will you imagine today?

Today’s Affirmation: “My life has infinite possibilities and all are within my reach.”

Creating Community

By Leann Steidinger

What if everyone in the world got along? What if we were all healthy and took great care of ourselves? What if we all helped each other? This may sound virtually impossible when you hear about all the bombings, school shootings and injustices that are going on in the world. Personally, I feel that a lot of the problems in our world stem from people feeling disconnected and as if they are facing the world alone.

The statistics of the number of people that feel lonely are staggering. The feeling of being alone causes people to reach for food for comfort, to watch television shows to escape from life. These same shows promote violence, which breeds violent thoughts to self and to others. I have found some of the most peaceful, serene places to be small rural communities. I've experienced this growing up in the Midwest as well as my travels abroad to places like New Zealand, Italy and Thailand.

We laugh and scoff at small towns where everyone is in each other's business. At the same time, the people in these same small towns are usually the first to take a meal to a family with a new baby, offer help in a crisis and lend a hand in need. That support and connection is crucial to all of us.

Today's society is probably more connected than ever before – virtually through Facebook, Twitter and other social media. Yet we are more disconnected and lonely than we've ever been. That's a problem because it has serious side effects.

Personally, I have found that I long for a neighborhood where everyone knows each other and looks out for each other. That sense of community and belonging has been lost and is very rare. So I've intentionally built my network and cultivated friendships and working relationships where there are common interests. For example, moms that like to run and are also health conscious, fellow entrepreneurs and people that make me laugh and bring fun wherever they go. The more time we spend together, the more we can provide each other much-needed support and encouragement.

It's easy to get caught up in our own little world and all the activities that we need to do. It's important to focus on having specific friendships and communities that can support us and our families. Even more importantly, by giving and helping others, we can grow even deeper bonds.

I know that I can't solve all of this lonely world's problems. But I do know that I can do my part by building my own small communities, in my backyard, my workplace, city and family.

Today's Affirmation: "I am surrounded by the love and laughter of friends and family."

The Vision Of A Life Well Lived

By Lisa Kaplin

Do you ever sit down and picture in your mind exactly how you want in life? Not a daydream, but a clear image of something that matters greatly to you. Envisioning is such an important part of emotional growth. If we don't envision things changing and improving, it's unlikely that they ever will. So, it's time to paint a visual picture in your mind of exactly what you want your future to be.

Sit down in a comfortable spot, put on soft, relaxing music and start to build a dream in your mind. Visualize every aspect of your life and exactly how you want it to develop. What do you want your immediate surroundings to look like? Think of each area in your living space and picture exactly what you want for each area. Use all of your senses to make your visualization complete. Make your vision as clear as possible and go back to it as frequently as you can.

How about your relationships? You can visualize those as well. Picture the type of relationships you want to have and with whom. Picture them exactly as you want them, and don't judge yourself while you do it. Only by visualizing happy, kind, and fulfilling relationships will we start to live them. If you have never had good relationships, then ask others, read books, and start to imagine the people you want in your life. Visualizing healthy relationships leads to attracting exactly those types of people to you.

You can use visualization for work, relaxation, and any area of your life. It's powerful work that will lead you to places that you never thought you'd be. Isn't that what a vision is: the best you can possibly imagine? For a few years in my life I was struggling with feeling useless and unfulfilled, and I had a hard time imagining anything else. Then, one day I just decided it was time to change; so I stepped out of my comfort box and into the vision of the life that I'd always dreamed of. You can do it, too. Picture it, work towards it, and you can have a life that is filled with happiness and fulfillment.

Don't limit your life due to a lack of beautiful dreams and visions. Start right now: picture how truly wonderful your life can be, and then go make it happen. Picture it, plan it and live it. Trust that you are capable of anything you set your mind to. If your vision is negative, your life will be, too. Regardless of what has happened in your past, or challenges that you currently face, you can have a beautiful life – but you have to picture it.

A great way to bring your vision to reality is to make a vision board. You can use pictures from magazines or images from your computer. One of my clients who was in the process of going through a painful divorce made a vision board of a small home of her dreams. A year later she closed on a home that looked just like the one on her vision board! It's possible. Anything is possible!

Today's Affirmation: "I create joy, happiness, and success."

Affirmations With Ease

By Liselle Hill

Our strongest allies in retraining our brain to live a life beyond imagination are our affirmations. They become part of our handy dandy toolkit – our very own power statements. Personalized and to the point, loaded with emotion, created with imagination and spoken with passion and heart. We write them, practice them and most importantly, we believe them. We also at times use them as fodder against those sneaky little voices of skepticism and doubt. Cannon fodder, soldiers in affirmation form. Sent out in a war against the enemy, those pesky inner voices looking to derail our progress. Problem is, we've declared war, and like in any war when the battle lines are drawn, the enemy starts digging in, mounting the defensive, calling for re-enforcements.

For me, it seemed like the harder I tried, the more threatened those old thought patterns felt – the more distant and unrealistic my imagination seemed. “Hell no, who do you think you are? What makes you believe you're worthy of abundance and success?” Ingrained thoughts, all neatly wrapped up with the promise to paralyze and stop me from believing that the vision I imagined could be mine.

Well duh; it took a while, but I got it. In using my affirmations as weapons I had militarized the opposition. Instead of a whisper, they were now launching a full out counter attack! This tactic wasn't going to work. Be resourceful – time to slip in through the back door. I want that dream and I want it so badly. Inadvertently I had loaded affirmations meant to be love-filled with desperation and angst. Not the kind of energy with which to attract. I knew this; control issues anyone? Time to...let go.

Re-energize those affirmations with the peaceful surety of knowing more than I can ever wish for or imagine is on its way. And those pesky thoughts? They can't fight if I choose not to do battle. Instead of forcing them down I say, “Welcome, come on board...I hear ya, point taken, thanks for the warning, but we got this handled! We got the universe on our side”.

Let's examine the fuel behind your messages. How about trying on affirmations with ease, with the utmost trust and pure intentions? Read those affirmations, write them, practice and believe, and be okay even if they seem a little out there. A little unrealistic based on the way you have seen yourself so far, right? The truth is, you still don't know your full potential. In order to see yourself for who you really are, you are going to have to let go of who you believe you are. Anyway, this is not really about you. It's about the universe working through you. We are all perfectly imperfect, and therefore, just right for the job.

From this day on declare your brain the United Nations, neutral territory, the Switzerland of your world. No more wars to wage. It's only some differences of opinion you need to sort through; some minds in need of re-education and enlightenment. So, wear out the soundtrack of those affirmations, rewrite the script and keep at it. The opposing forces will soon be on your side, sneakily retrained, quietly, peacefully lead over to the other side; the side where your full potential lives. The side that – up until now – you've only visited in your imagination.

Today's Affirmation: “My life flows with ease; I effortlessly create a loving environment where all, including me, thrive.”

The Power Of The Imagination And How It Created The Relationship I Always Wanted

By Lorna Poole

Do you want to be confident, happy and influential? Do you believe in yourself? Some of you reading this passage will say no; some of you will say yes. But what is the picture you paint in your head when you think of yourself whole heartily? One of the beginning stages of creating outer success in your life is to develop the ability to see a positive image of yourself and others; and one of the beginning stages of creating a positive rewarding relationship is to visualize what that looks like for you.

Take out a piece of paper today and place that piece of paper on your lap. Take about five minutes and do this daily: Visualize your ideal self in your ideal relationship and write down the results you get. What did you see? Was your view of self, and was your relationship positive or negative? Did you feel awkward and uncomfortable? Were you fumbling? Or did you feel a sense of confidence and empowerment being loved and kissed by a man you so dearly adore?

Now, after writing the results from your first attempt, try this exercise again, but this time predict the results you want to see. Picture the results in the absolute ideal. Add the senses. What did you see? What were the smells? What were the compliments and the jokes being shared? Who were you with? What did you feel?

If you initially struggle to see your mental picture, write it out as many times as necessary. In time, the mental picture will become clear in your imagination. The more vivid the picture, the quicker the image will become true for you. Visualize this same ideal picture for 40 days, and in time you will begin to see positive results.

When I wanted to attract the love of my life into my life, I did this very exercise. I wrote down my values and the qualities I wanted in my relationship based on what was important to me, and I added two extra bonus. My first bonus was that he would occasionally bring me flowers. I remember visualizing myself in the kitchen giving my partner a kiss as he handed me flowers. Wow, to my surprise, my partner now gives me flowers! I never communicated this to anyone, so how did he know? It happened because of the power of my very own imagination.

The second bonus I added to my list was that my partner would treat me like a princess. I wrote this for one reason and one reason *only*: before I met my dream partner I attracted men who had treated me badly – very badly. So it was special to me that I would be treated well. My partner today treats me like a princess; he cares for me, loves me and adores me. I get looked after as though no other woman exists in the world. I know I am adored and cared for deep within his heart.

Visualize today the love you want for tomorrow and let's see it materialize for you. If you follow these steps, I am sure you will be as successful as I was. What are you waiting for, go do it! Start today.

Today's Affirmation: "I easily and effortlessly visualize for myself my ideal life and relationship. Everything is working out perfectly. All is well, I am safe."

The Art Of Seeing What's Invisible To Others

By Natasha Lindor

“Vision without a task is only a dream. A task without a vision is but drudgery. But vision with a task is a dream fulfilled.” - Anonymous

Do you ever find yourself so caught up with stress and overwhelm that your life feels hellacious? If so, there's a pretty good chance you might be lacking a vision. Creating a vision for yourself is actually one of the best stress management tools out there because it gives you a sense of purpose and direction. It is based on your values and what's most important to you. It connects you to what **you** really want.

Having a vision to which you can connect when you're feeling stressed and overwhelmed reminds you of why you're doing what you're doing. It motivates you to persevere. Having a vision can release the very best in you because it gives you something to strive towards.

There are multiple ways to work on your vision. You can do something visual like a vision board, or you can simply write down your vision for yourself. The power of visioning is amazing -- this is the exact same technology I not only used to transition into my dream career, find the love of my life and live my ideal lifestyle, but it is also responsible for accelerating my clients' results. One of my clients, who was working through transitioning careers, did this exercise, focusing on what she wanted in her life in the next year. She envisioned big dreams for herself – things that she thought would be impossible for her given her current life, money, time and energy situation. She wrote those dreams down anyway, getting as specific as she could, and now she finds herself living the vision she wrote down for herself.

Here are few questions to get you started on your vision:

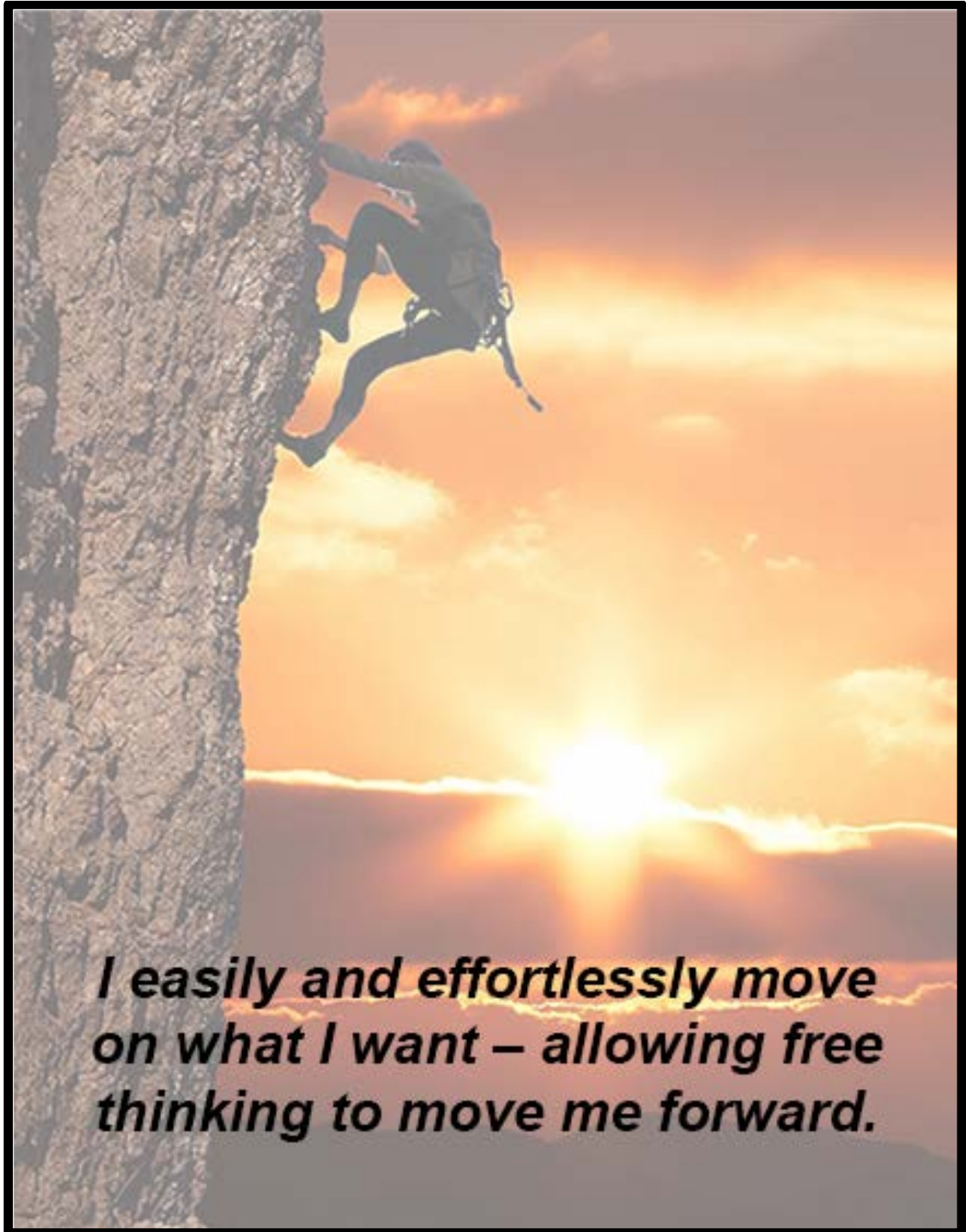
- What do I most want out of my life? Relationships? Career? Family?
- What do my finances look like? How much am I making? What do I do with my money?
- How is my health? What kinds of foods am I eating? What do I do for exercise?
- What difference am I making in the world?
- What kind of work am I doing? Why am I doing it?
- Why do I want this vision for my life?
- What does my social life look like? What do I do for fun?
- What does my spiritual connection look like?
- Where do I travel? What kind of adventures do I have in my life?

When you're answering these questions and writing out your vision, I invite you to write it in positive, present tense statements (i.e. **I am living** in a beautiful beachside condo with the love of my life).

Once you're done with your vision statement, put it where you can see it all the time, like on your bathroom mirror. Re-read your vision statement once or twice per day, imagining it as though it is already real. See yourself there. This process takes only a minute or two for each vision statement...maybe even 30 seconds once you've gotten into the rhythm of it.

Today's Affirmation: “I now see my ideal life clearly and know something wonderful is happening today.”

Action



***I easily and effortlessly move
on what I want – allowing free
thinking to move me forward.***

Look At Me – Can You Do This?

By Bobbi Dearth Anderson

It was a beautiful day, visiting my son and his family at his backyard pool. The children were jumping in and climbing out of the pool time after time after time after time.

It was time to take a break from the pool. How do you accomplish that? My daughter-in-law is genius. She starts to take out the Icee Pops, and the kids get out of the pool for the cool afternoon treat.

This is where the amazing vision comes. I was sitting there watching the children enjoy their afternoon treat. Their noses were pink from the exposure to the sun, and their wet messy hair was of no concern to them!

I noticed that my three-year-old grandson had dropped a substantial piece of his Icee Pop on the concrete patio deck. Here is where my epiphany came. He literally bent deliberately at his waist, put his mouth around that piece of the Icee Pop and picked it up off the concrete. Yep, he literally bent in half. Think about that movement!

The point of this story is that he did not think about the movement at all. He knew he dropped a piece of something he was enjoying very much, and he wanted it back. So the logical thing for him to do was to bend over and pick it up. His hands were busy holding on to the part of the pop he still had not eaten. So the ‘logical’ thing to him was to bend on over (in half) and pick it up with his mouth!

I was in awe when I saw the flexibility of this little man. It really mirrored how being instantaneously flexible can really get you exactly what you want, when you want it the most. I promise you he did not put much thought into what he did. He just knew what he wanted and did what needed to be done in order to get it!

How many times have you known exactly what you wanted, but instead of going out and getting it you analyzed what you need to do to get it so much that you become paralyzed? An action that may be attainable if you just do it can turn into a real burden if you put too much analytical thought into it.

Begin to live like a child. Allow your mind the flexibility to randomly try things that you may otherwise put way too much thought into.

Make sense? It will if you begin to practice it. Start small. Become aware of the times when you start thinking too much. Allow action to happen without too much thinking. Don’t let your mind write a story that inhibits you. Just DO IT!

Today’s Affirmation: “I easily and effortlessly move on what I want – allowing free thinking to move me forward.”

Be Child-like

By Jodi Flynn

Your body aches. How is it you got this old? You feel heavy getting out of bed in the morning. You're already thinking about that thing that thing you're going to have to deal with today. It brings you down, makes you feel tense and you're mentally fighting it off already. There's no time: no time to work out, prepare healthy meals, and spend time with your friends, spouse or children; no time to run all your errands, check off all the to-do's and you already want to get back into bed. But you trod on to the shower and hit the coffee maker.

When did life get like this? There was a time you bound out of bed, ready for the day. You slept like a baby and woke rested and excited to see what today would bring. Every day was different and upsets and disappointments were fleeting events swallowed up by the next great thing just on the horizon. Now you're trapped in the movie Ground Hog Day, and rarely is there something on the horizon pulling you like a magnet. When did life get like this? It got like this when you decided you had it figured out.

If you want your energy and youth back, then you have to take on the characteristics of a young child. You have to let go of the hurts and disappointments – be quick to forgive. You have to focus on what is good, new, interesting and humorous, and dismiss or recreate that which is dull, repetitive, and used up. When children must do their chores, they turn it into a game – once they get over the initial resistance. When forced to sit through boring events, they are scanning their environment curiously until something grabs their attention. Nothing holds them down for long. Their old toys are recreated and repurposed for new games and imaginative play.

This is how you get your energy back. Constantly recreate and repurpose everyone and everything in your life. As soon as you know someone well, tell yourself you're only a quarter of the way there and seek to find out something completely new about that person. If there is an obligation in your life you dread, then try being curious about the task. What higher purpose does it serve? A knight must overcome many obstacles before he ultimately confronts and slays the dragon. What can you learn about yourself and other people as you bring your imagination into play?

It's so easy to get sucked into the drama and burdens of our lives, but we must realize it is our selves who created it this way. We either actively or passively selected the people, jobs, and activities that make up our day. The good news is you are still the creator; nothing is set in stone. Use your curiosity and imagination to recreate and repurpose those things that don't quite fit YOU. If that doesn't work, then start taking things out and adding back in – like playing with Legos. If you are thinking, "it's not that easy; you are trivializing the serious things going on in my life", then know I have the utmost respect for all the decisions you've made along the way. They seemed good and right at the time you made them. But now it's time to realize there are other options. You are far more powerful than you are giving yourself credit for. You don't deserve to live a burdened life; you are meant to live a joyful, exuberant existence. What are you going to do about it?

Today's Affirmation: "Wonderful things happen to me every day."

Action Cures Fear

By Kim Pisolkar

Behind your greatest fear, lies your greatest gift. ~ Mike Dooley

Fear is that little voice in us that says, “No don’t do it!”. It is the feeling in our gut when we think about doing something new or uncomfortable, when we are “putting ourselves out there”.

Whether it is because we are an entrepreneur selling a product or service, a professional changing careers or a single guy asking the pretty girl he met for a date, all of these entail that we put ourselves out there and that can be a little scary. We feel vulnerable. We have all the “what if’s” running through our mind.

What if they say NO?

What if I don’t get hired?

What if she already has a boyfriend?

What if I fail?

We get so caught up in the “what if’s” that we talk ourselves out of the game by doing nothing. If the “what if’s” don’t get us, our excuses do. We insist, “*I do not know how*”, or “*I don’t have time*”, and we put it off until later. We forget what it is we wanted. We forget why it was important. Instead we play small and accept that what we want is not all that important. Sure we can make excuses or rationalize; these are really just fear in disguise. You can have reasons or you can have results, and in order to get the *results* you desire it will require that you *cure* fear.

The way you cure fear is by taking action. On the flip side, not taking action strengthens the grip fear has on you, leaving you paralyzed by indecision, second-guessing and shrinking your confidence. The thing is, we don’t know the outcomes of our actions in advance anyway, so fear is a useless emotion standing between us and what we want.

When you find yourself lost in the ‘what if’s’, or making excuses for why you are not doing something, take these steps to conquer it:

- 1) **Identify the cause:** ask yourself, “What is it I am afraid of?”
- 2) **Acknowledge** that it is uncomfortable.
- 3) **Choose** to not let fear stand in the way of your success.
- 4) **Take action:** ask yourself, “What is ONE small step I can take right now?”, and do it!

Action cures fear. When you are in action, you don’t have time to think about the “what if’s”, make excuses, or second-guess yourself. The more you do it, the less scary it becomes.

What small action can you take today that will move you closer to your goal?

Today’s Affirmation: “Every day, in every way, I am moving closer towards my goal.”

Letting Go Of The Leash

By Leann Steidinger

As I put a collar and leash on my dog to take her outside, my mom pats her on the head and says, “I hope you never, ever get loose – you’re so special.” My dog is notorious for running away when she gets loose.

Something in my mom’s words made me sad. Never getting loose means never having freedom. I take my dog out to the wooded trails from time to time and let her go. I can’t count the number of times I’ve lost her and spent hours searching for her...yet she always comes back. Each time, when it takes a while to find her and I’m frustrated, I vow to never take her again. Yet there’s something inside me that wants that freedom for her. That freedom that I had to fight for.

That same principle of “If I tie you up you won’t get lost or hurt” was applied to me when I was growing up. I hold nothing against my parents because they protected me out of love – and they did the best they could. But sometimes, fearful acts of love can unintentionally hurt a child. Because I was so sheltered, I was extremely shy and had low self-confidence. Socially, I was awkward and hated being the nice, quiet, shy girl. There was a “being” inside of me screaming to get out. An event or common part of life that might be something small to someone else was a huge accomplishment for me: going to college, moving out, dating, speaking up for myself at work, asserting my needs in relationships.

I eventually found that the more I pushed myself out of my comfort zone, the less fearful I became. In fact, I started to look for adventure and discomfort – traveling overseas by myself, bungee jumping, starting my own business.

Keeping ourselves and our kids on a leash seems safe, but it does more harm than good. When you’re restrained, the longing for freedom becomes such a big desire that when you do break free, you run with abandon and without thought.

With such recklessness, you might just run into an oncoming car because you didn’t know that cars could hurt. Because of my naiveté and inexperience, when I tripped and fell, I landed hard. What might have been mere scrapes and bruises were broken bones and emotional scars that took a long time to heal.

I try to remember the lessons I have learned now that I am a parent. While I have the same protective urge that every mother has to shield my son, I know that he needs to explore – and sometimes get hurt – in order to thrive.

Today’s Affirmation: “I choose to be my best self and to let other people be their best selves.”

The Fantastic Challenge Of Fear

By Lisa Kaplin

A few years ago I wanted to add affirmations into my life. I started repeating affirmations to myself, yet I really didn't feel too differently, and eventually I stopped the practice. This year I learned more about the law of attraction, affirmations and the behaviors that go with living your dreams, and I realized that I had missed out on an important part of the affirmation process: action.

We do need to visualize what we want. We need to change our mindset and monitor our feelings, but we also have to move. We need a plan of action, and then we need to act on that plan. Our actions motivate even more dreams and mindset shifts. So what's the best way to put action into your life? Do something that scares you, or something that you've always talked about doing but you've never actually done.

For years I talked about either writing a book, an article or a blog. I just kept talking about it and thinking about how great it would be to put some of my thoughts onto paper. Finally, one day I stopped talking and I just wrote a blog and immediately sent it to my local online paper. I was terrified that no one would read it or like it, but I did it anyway. Turns out many people connected with my words, and I became a blogger just like that.

What have you been putting off? What scares you? How can you motivate yourself to try it? Can you ask someone to push you or to do it with you? Can you start small? Action will increase your courage, and then you will do more and with more conviction.

What's one small step you can take right now? Picture it, and then go do it. Most likely the things that scare you won't ever materialize, and if they do, then you can handle it. If no one had liked my blog, so what? The world wouldn't have ended, and life would have moved on. The only real way that you can fail is by not trying.

Put some action steps into your calendar right now, and see how wonderful you feel as you start to put some motion into the things that you want in your life. If you want a relationship, get an online dating profile. If you want a new job, go online and look for one. Tell all of your friends and family that you are looking for a new job and don't give up – one will turn up. If you want to improve your relationships, do something different; change it up, and watch things improve.

Take a deep breath and leap! Trust me, you'll be just fine. The worst-case scenario is never that bad, but the benefits of taking the risk will be profound. Do something every day that gets you closer to your goal. Take a walk, move and do it right this minute. Action leads to more action, so get moving!

Today's Affirmation: "I step into my fears with hope and courage."

The Life You Want Takes Action

By Liselle Hill

Love, Imagine, Believe, Trust: some of my favorite words. What makes them special? Definitely the feeling they evoke, but more importantly, the potential they hold. Their potential becomes real when you see them for what they are: verbs. Action words. We tend to bandy these words around like they have mythical power. If we can just imagine it, and then believe – trust the universe – we will have what we desire: love, happiness, peace and more verbs. So, I'm not an English major, and I am not trying to teach a language lesson, I'm just making a point. We will have none of these things unless we get up off the sofa and make them happen!

Ever heard the proverb, “The road to hell is paved with good intentions”? Or its alternate form, “Hell is full of good meaning, but heaven is full of good works”? I know for me I used to start the day with all kinds of plans, a long to-do list and a sincere intent to get things done. Then reality happened, and before I knew it the day was over and there was a glaring mismatch between intention and the action I had actually taken. It's in this “day in and day out” pattern that a life can stay in limbo, and before we know it, it will pass us by.

What separates those who experience a life with love, imagination, belief and trust from those who are still just waiting for those qualities to magically appear? In my experience, just one thing: taking action. Imagination takes a date with yourself, time to explore and the space to allow your mind to wander. Actually doing the work to figure out what would float your boat. Belief takes an ongoing practice that honors a power higher than yourself. A bond that stands the test of time constraints; the loud and busy world that always seems to have a crisis that you best see to first. Trust is where that belief becomes tangible. It is honored in every decision and choice you make. It is the daily outward manifestation of your beliefs. And then there's love, the misunderstood love; love that isn't always easy, simple or painless. Love truly shines when put to the test – when you put action to the job of loving. When your words of love and acts of love are in sync.

There are only two types of actions: effective and the other kind – the type of action that is taken in the name of busyness. Life becomes really focused when you learn to separate the two. What do you do every day because you believe you “should”? How different would today be if you replaced one – just one – of those “should's” with a purposeful action that fuels your imagination, that fosters your beliefs; an action grounded in trust and based in love? One action that you take just because it makes you happy?

So, sometimes the dishes stay in the sink, or the dirty clothes on the floor, but you get to curl up with a book, finger-paint with your child or just daydream. And when you do, you become more imaginative, peaceful, loving. More the person you truly are and not what you believe society says you are, or should be.

Today, I challenge you to take action. Do something effective that takes you an inch closer to your special word – and world. Add to all the unconscious, undirected actions you take daily just one small little act of purposeful intention. Do that, and soon you will be imagining, trusting, believing and loving. That being said, what will you DO differently today?

Today's Affirmation: “I take decisive, targeted action and follow through on my intention in ways that lead me to my goals.”

Embracing The Feeling Of Being Uncomfortable In Times Of Action

By Lorna Poole

Thoughts create feelings, feelings create action, and action creates results. Are you an action person or a non-action person? In order to make deep, long lasting changes in our lives we must begin by taking positive action towards change. This can be uncomfortable, but great change actually occurs when you feel uncomfortable. Today, a lot of self-help books and gurus talk about the power of positivity. It is true that positivity holds much power, but it's really in the state of being uncomfortable that change occurs. From time to time I've been far from feeling positive, especially in the face of new challenges that I do not want to confront.

On the road to success feelings of loneliness, fear, anxiety and mild depression can be a taste of the unpleasant feelings you will experience. I have noticed on my own path of personal growth that this is not a subject widely spoken about. A normal part of change is *Action*, which equals facing the very core of who you are – the very thread that is stopping you from achieving the results you want to achieve. It is time to embrace the experience of being uncomfortable, because it is within this uncomfortable state that great achievement and long lasting changes occur.

Your confidence will grow to match your new demands. You will move into a space of really believing and trusting in yourself and what is good for you. We will start to become stronger in trusting our own gut and following your heart fully. This in turn fills our soul and creates long lasting happiness. By facing what makes us uncomfortable, we start to move to a place of joy, and it is within our confidence in ourselves and trusting life that we create and live a more joyful and fulfilled life. Before you know it, you are confidently living your life fully on purpose, enjoying every moment life has to offer.

I ask you to remember that it is normal to experience the feeling of being uncomfortable when you take action. It is a good thing though, and the fastest way to long lasting changes and a happier life. The feeling of being uncomfortable is only short-term and once achieved, the feeling of accomplishment will follow long-term. We all love to feel important, valued and noticed. Taking action and facing the areas of your life that you have been avoiding so strongly in the past does something for the soul and the mind. Remember to embrace the state of being uncomfortable when you're about to take action. It is only change, change for the good, change for the better.

Today's Affirmation: "I love the feeling of being uncomfortable because it means I am making powerful changes in my life for the better. All is well and I am safe."

See It. Live It.

By Natasha Lindor

“Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes the time. Vision with action can change the world.” - Joel A. Barker

Actions speak louder than words (or a collage of visuals). Now that you have a vision for what you want, you can start making it a reality by staying in action. Because your vision is based on your values and what you want, you know you’ll get the highest level of soul-satisfaction.

Regardless of whether your soul-satisfying life includes a better relationship with your spouse, a new job, a fabulous home, starting a family or anything in between, you can start living your dream today by taking small actions. When you have a clear vision and stay in action, there’s no stopping you in achieving your dreams.

Because knowing where to start can sometimes feel overwhelming or confusing, here are a few questions to guide you through creating small actions steps to start living your ideal lifestyle now.

- What favorite behaviors move me toward a more balanced, soul-satisfying lifestyle?
- What new habits can I form to support the balanced, soul-satisfied me?
- What new behaviors do I have to have in order to be balanced and soul-satisfied?
- What are my most balanced and soul-satisfied behaviors?
- How can I best setup my environment to support my lifestyle?
- What in my environment is making it hard to work less and live more (i.e. people, relationships, clutter, etc.)?

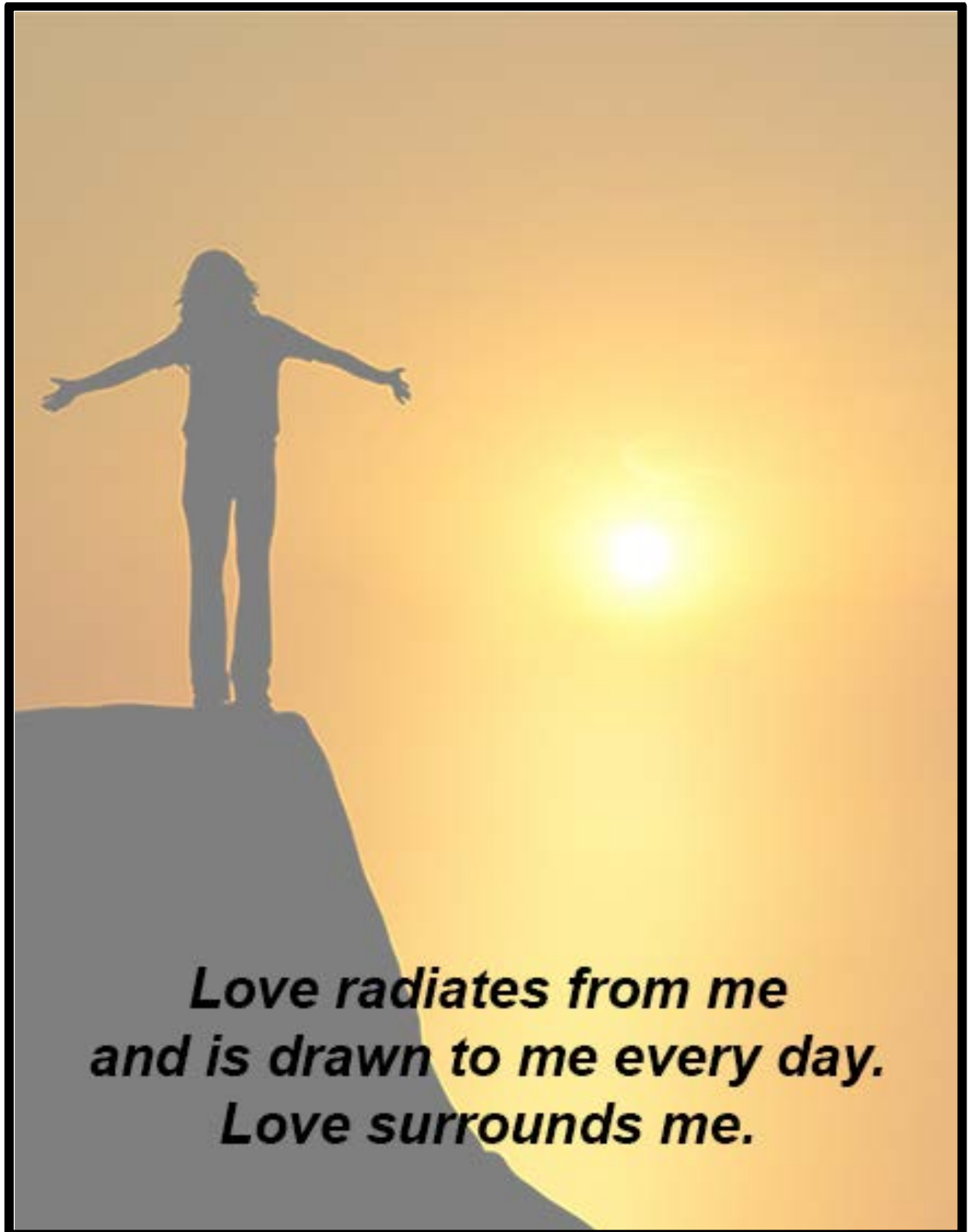
To jumpstart your progress, take a look at your answers and create action steps for what you can do today to move in the direction of your dream soul-satisfying life. Even starting with one action step toward a new behavior, habit or environmental change will make a huge difference.

“You are what you do, not what you say you’ll do.”

— C.G. Jung

Today’s Affirmation: “I am now living my happily ever after.”

Spoken Word



Thanks For Saying That!

By Bobbi Dearth Anderson

How powerful are the words you speak? Really give that some thought. Do you allow what someone says impact your day? If so, why would you not think that same impact is accomplished via the words you speak? Is it true that we don't always mean what we say? Then why do we say it?

Hairdresser David Wagner (author of *Life as a Daymaker*) learned the impact of the spoken word from a customer who came to him regularly every month. One day this customer phoned David in between her regular visits and asked if he could style her hair for an important event that evening. David fit her into his schedule and gave her his usual loving attention. He talked with her, laughed with her, touched her kindly and told her how beautiful she looked. After her session, she smiled and thanked him.

You can imagine David's shock when a few days later he received a handwritten letter from the woman explaining that the important event she wanted to look good for that evening was her own funeral. She had planned to commit suicide later that day. When she spent time with David, however, the kindness he showed her influenced her to change her mind. She decided that life was worth living and she could go on!

So David – thanks for saying what you said! We just don't know how our words impact others. Always speaking impeccably can determine the way we guide our lives. Articulate what you are really feeling, where your values really are. Oftentimes agreeing with someone else is just the easiest way to live; it's not worth the effort to express what we really feel. But finding the words to say what we really feel in a **kind, loving way** can certainly change the course of your life and consequently the lives of others, too!

Learning to speak in a way that is congruent with your values (your true core values) will begin to change your life in a BIG way. Speak of prosperity and abundance in your life so you can feel that it is relative to your core values. Speak about the relationships in your life in the way that you want them to be. Don't continue to interpret what is happening externally – begin to acknowledge and change what the internal dialogue is.

Before saying something, think about what it would feel like to 'hear' what you are about to say. Often times we say things we do not really mean – but once spoken, it is very difficult to take back.

Today's Affirmation: "I am consistently impeccable with my words"

Creation

By Jodi Flynn

Heaven is at your fingertips. You are a breath away from bliss. With each beat of your heart all your troubles melt away and joy begins to grow in the space left behind. Everything you ever dreamed of is on its way; all you have to do is believe it is possible. You know you are capable of having the most amazing life. How do you want to be living? It's yours! What kind of house do you want to live in? What kind of car do you want to drive? It's yours! Everything you've ever wanted is on its way. Embrace it and live as if it will arrive any moment.

Now, set the table for the figurative company who is about to arrive. Make this book your daily habit. Write your goals, your affirmations and what you are grateful for. Take a walk and repeat your affirmations. Repeat your affirmations whenever you are engaged in mindless activity. Let go of worry and take those deep breaths. Allow and look for opportunities everywhere. Set the table.

What I'm asking of you is simple, but it's not easy. It takes conscious effort. You have to do "the work", especially when you don't want to. It must become a habit. You are overcoming old patterns that bring you down and no longer work for you. How long have you been invested in that old pattern? Right. It's going to take time to break out of it. It takes daily practice to lay a new foundation for the life you are about to live. Do you brush your teeth once a week? No. You do it twice a day for oral health. For financial health you give time every day to reading this book, filling out the worksheet and writing your affirmations. Don't slack on yourself. You are worth it. This world needs you to come out of misery. We need you to be thriving.

There are gifts you are unaware of that were granted to you. There are people who will only be able to hear a message coming from you. You are precious, you are loved, and you are so wanted. Everything else is an illusion; do not be fooled by it. It's all part of the game that was created to entertain you while you visited this world. You just forgot that you set the game to "very difficult" because you didn't want it to be too easy. Now you're at the level where you are taking a lot of hits, but you are learning new skills and techniques to master this game. You are the hero in this story, and every hero goes through trials and moments of doubt. You are on the cusp of great insights and wisdom.

The world you live in is a reflection of the thoughts, beliefs and stories playing out in your head. It is all of your creation – what you "say" about what you are seeing. Finally, and this is important: your words must be a reflection of the life you are creating. We often use words to convey our opinion of what we are experiencing now. What you are experiencing now is a step on the road to the prosperous life ahead. Do not say, "I don't have the money." Delete! Instead say, "I choose to spend my money on other things right now." Your words powerfully create your reality. What are your words creating for you right now?

Today's Affirmation: "I am always in the right place at the right time."

Power Of The Spoken Word

By Kim Pisolkar

“You are hung by the words of your tongue”. ~ Francis Martin

I was having that argument with myself; you know, the one where we tell ourselves our goals are not possible. While working on my business plan I caught myself getting into a little overwhelm about all the things “I had to do”, and I found myself wondering how I was going to possibly achieve that BIG goal I came up earlier in the year. Fortunately, that only lasted a hot minute because I quickly changed the conversation in my head.

We excitedly come up with our goals – whether it be about making a certain salary, creating revenue, getting fit, buying a new home or finding a new relationship, but for some reason we are not accomplishing them. Take a look at what you want to accomplish:

- How did you initially feel when you thought of or wrote down your goal?
- How do you feel when you look at it now?
- What is happening as a result of how you feel about it?
- How satisfied are you with the results?

If you are scared, don't believe it's possible, or even that it's just something you wrote down, then these beliefs will come out in your daily activities and how you execute them. These thoughts and beliefs translate into words, which have power and energy, but some lack energy and are disempowering.

Consider these two phrases: *choosing* to act versus *having* to act. Theoretically, both produce the same result: the action gets accomplished. But beyond semantics, there is an emotional distinction. When you *have* to act, it implies a low level of motivation and is frequently accompanied by negative feelings like fear, anxiety or resentment. The phrase "have to" implies you would rather not be doing it. On the flip side, when you *choose* to act, you are in control and feel a sense of freedom. You are choosing out of confidence rather than obligation. So, when you find yourself saying or thinking, “I have to”, take a moment and ask yourself, what would it take for me to say, “I choose to”?

Take a look at your goals and strategies and notice the energy you have around them.

- Do you notice “excitement”, “nervousness”, or “dread”?
- What ones feel like a “have to”?
- What would it take to turn those into a “choose to”?

If you can't turn something into a “choose to”, then look at whether you can drop it or delegate it to someone else. Carrying around something that you “have to” do will just weigh you down, causing you to procrastinate and not take action.

Today's Affirmation: “I easily and effortlessly make powerful choices that lead me to my goals”

Love Is All You Need

By Leann Steidinger

In high school I remember my health teacher telling us that our homework assignment was to go home and tell our parents that we loved them. This was uncomfortable for me because while I felt secure in the love of my family, communicating emotions wasn't something that we did. It showed undesirable weakness and vulnerability.

When I completed the assignment and spoke to my dad, his response was, "I love you too." I knew he was telling the truth, but the way he said it was uncomfortable – it was almost as if he was forced to respond. The memory stuck with me and I pondered why it was so hard for us to say what we felt.

A couple years later, when I moved in with my first college roommates, I was overwhelmed by the warmth and ease with which the girls hugged me and said, "I love you." It felt awesome and began to melt away some of the discomfort of saying those words. Since then, life experiences have shown me how to open up and communicate my feelings.

There have been times when I courageously made myself vulnerable – like telling people that I loved them and being burned as a result – but even with these experiences there was no turning back. There's a freedom in saying what you're thinking and feeling out loud instead of holding it inside. You get to experience it.

Becoming a mother is one of the best things that has happened to me. A mother's love is unconditional, and I feel it growing stronger in me every day. I freely tell my son that I love him, and I love that he is very affectionate with me. I wouldn't trade his hugs and kisses for anything!

When we communicate our love for each other, it makes it easier to have difficult conversations. While having a honest discussion with someone with no emotional filter or restraint is actually quite difficult, at least we don't have to wonder what the other person is thinking. When emotion – and especially love – is not communicated, it's easy for the other person to make inaccurate assumptions. For example, my friend was having a heated argument with her husband about finances. While deep down they know they love each other, they had been together for a long time and allowed their world to revolve around kids, soccer games and school events. Thus, they had lost some of that initial spark and saying 'I love you' was very rare. These words were still needed in their relationship, especially when my friend began to interpret her husband's anger and frustration as a sign that he didn't love her anymore.

It's harder to communicate in a productive way when love is not expressed. Even though you know logically that you are loved, there's always a part of you that feels like you will lose it or have to prove yourself to gain it.

Why do we allow fear to stop us from communicating our love? There's a vulnerability there that's not comfortable for most people. But when we allow ourselves to express it, we get to feel even more love.

Today's Affirmation: "Love radiates from me and is drawn to me every day. Love surrounds me."

Speaking With Love

By Lisa Kaplin

Recently I decided to really listen to the words that I was saying to myself. I did this because I kept hearing my clients say terrible things to and about themselves. I was sure that I wasn't doing the same thing. Ha! It turns out I had very few kind words to say to myself. Here's the problem: words hurt. They hurt a lot. I'd take sticks and stones any day over a harsh or criticizing word. I've been the one saying the nasty words to myself, and as soon as I changed that, I changed my life in so many ways.

Why do we do this? I think many of us have adopted the negative words of those around us and have turned them into our own story. Yet here's the thing: they are just that – a story. Maybe it's time to start speaking a new story to yourself and others, a story that is filled with kindness, love and optimism. When we criticize ourselves, it's because we are hurting inside and are lashing out to ease the pain that we are feeling. When we feel good about ourselves, we tend to be less judgmental, kinder and more willing to forgive.

When we start to choose our words with care and kindness, we start to change our relationships with others and ourselves. People are attracted to us, they want to talk to us, love us, work with us and spend time with us. We feel better about ourselves and the way we interact with others. We lose that feeling of guilt and unhappiness when we say something cruel and then regret it. Start to notice the things that you say to yourself, the negative tape that runs through your mind. Isn't it time to change that useless, unhelpful tape in your head?

So, how do we do this? We pause before we speak, we think about what our words will mean to others and then we respond with care and thoughtfulness. Practice this with those you love first because those are the people we tend to use the harshest words with. Work on managing your frustrations so that your words don't reflect disdain or disappointment to others. Your spoken word is often all that people will see of you, so speak wisely, confidently and kindly. Do the same thing when you are speaking to – and about – yourself.

We feel the best in our lives when we get along well with others and treat ourselves with care. Using your words to improve the lives of those around you will make you a happier, healthier, more vibrant person. Think about how wonderful you feel when people say kind, caring words to you. Think about how wonderful you feel when you are kind to yourself. Use your words to change your thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Words are powerful, so why not use them to make you and those around you feel better?

Today's Affirmation: "I am wonderful exactly as I am."

Living Into Today

By Liselle Hill

My Oupa (grandpa) was a man of few words, but many sayings. He'd dole them out freely, and as a kid I knew them all *BY* heart. But I never really took them *TO* heart. Older as I am, and wiser as I try to be, two of his favorites have become part of how I live my daily life. His spoken words have become my mantras.

“Never jog backwards.” What the heck? Try it though and see; you get nowhere quickly, it's uncomfortable and just plain stupid. What he taught me was that you can't live life looking over your shoulder. So much of life is wasted in regret and guilt. We carry it with us, wrap ourselves up in it, use it as an armor against the world. It becomes a hard, brittle shell that keeps us separated from the world. When the thoughts we entertain today are built on the experiences of years past, we live our lives stuck in reverse. We go through life experiencing every day through the eyes of that younger, less wise, emotionally stunted version of ourselves. And that person is stuck in an experience they handled in a way that still brings them shame. There's no joy in that!

All that regret and guilt can ever do – at best – is serve as a reminder that things need to change. So if you must, serve it up one last time, indulge, wallow and then let it go. Acceptance is freeing; you did what you did because of where you were. Today, you're more evolved on the path of being your true you. Now you know more, and therefore, you will always do things differently. We've all been there; we've all done our version of that. Thank the universe for your personalized lesson. It came in the form of that exact situation so you could grow. You heard it, you learned it, but you no longer need to pay for it. No more jogging backwards. You're unburdened, free to sprint ahead!

My second favorite oupa-ism is **“Don't borrow sorrow from tomorrow”**. He used to dish that one out when I got a case of the Sunday-night blues. I loved my time with him and hated to see the weekend coming to an end. The anticipation of leaving would cloud our last few hours together. “Don't borrow sorrow from tomorrow” was his way of saying: “Wake up girlie, you're so busy fixating on what's around the corner that you're missing out on what's under your nose.” This too is a simple idea, but profound.

How often does one get hung up on what imagined catastrophe tomorrow may bring? It's all up in our minds; we're thinking if we can just know what it is, then we can single-handedly control and manipulate it to resemble what we want it to be. Presumptuous! Our minds race ahead, imagining the very worst, living in that awful, self-created space. You're missing out on a perfect moment that has been gifted to you. And how well has that worked thus far? We pay for it in precious energy that robs from us this day, and zaps the life force from our futures.

This very second becomes the next minute that eventually is your history. The only way to breed cause for future regret is to not use now wisely. So go forth, stay with every moment and make it count. You matter. Thank you for being.

So today, when you choose which words to speak, choose wisely, because what you say becomes how you live.

Today's Affirmation: “I live into every second, letting go of yesterday and trusting that tomorrow is in the Hand's of the Divine.”

Communicating Your Needs

By Lorna Poole

For years I never communicated my needs to my partner in my relationships. Fear of anger, judgment and severe criticism dictated my life and my actions. As a child, I grew up in an environment where I was constantly judged and criticized and always feared making my parents angry. As an adult, the same fears did not serve me in my relationships with others. Just like a five-year-old child I would go hide in the corner until the tension passed. On some brave occasions I would angrily fight back. Though, for the strength it took to stand up for myself, the effort made little difference in my relationships. Until the day I learned the skills to communicate my needs successfully to others.

How Do We Communicate Our Needs?

Step 1

First, you must consider the outcome you hope to achieve from a conversation that benefits everyone while communicating your needs. It is important to remember that we are the only thinkers in our mind, and it is *not* our duty to control the minds of others. In understanding this, we can become very skilled at reaching the outcome we truly desire. As we grow more confident in communicating our needs effectively, we will enhance our relationships for the long term. This takes practice, and most importantly, it must come from a place of love and not from a place of manipulation and control.

Step 2

Communicate by using these 3 basic phrases:

- “When you... (State the behavior that is affecting your need to communicate the challenge).”
- “I feel... (What is the negative feeling you are getting as a result of the challenge?).”
- “I want... (What would be the most desired outcome you wish to accomplish?).”

“How does this work?” you might ask. Well, let me give you an example.

“*When you criticize me in front of our friends, I feel like you are putting me down and that you are communicating to others that I am unimportant to you. I want you to speak to me like I matter and I am important to you when we are in the company of our friends.*”

By using these phrases you are creating clear communication and gaining respect. Chances are that in most healthy relationships our partner, like you, have fallen into his default tendencies and is actually unaware that his actions are hurting you. By expressing your needs from a loving place, you are communicating to your partner that you love and respect yourself, you love and respect him and you love and respect your relationship. Therefore, you are setting yourself up to have a strong, sustainable and rewarding relationship. If your partner is unresponsive and disrespectful in your attempts to communicate your needs, then you must take a deeper look into what you want from your relationship with him and act accordingly.

Today’s Affirmation: “I easily and effortlessly communicate my needs to others.”

If You Don't Want It, Don't Say It

By Natasha Lindor

“When you say something or sing something enough times, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. It's almost like casting spells. I don't mean necessarily in the flighty, 'I'm going to go buy a cloak with a hood now' way.”

-- Feist

Did you know that whatever you communicate into the world is locking you into experiencing more of the same? If you're talking about all the great things you want, then it can work to your advantage. If you're complaining about all the things you don't want, then it can work against you.

Let's look at the example of being busy: When someone asks you how you've been doing, how do you respond? “Busy!” “Crazy busy!” “Good, but busy!” Ultimately, you're reinforcing being busy.

I often have conversations with people who will go into long explanations of what they're experiencing in life and why they don't like it. They don't realize that what they're doing is the exact approach to locking them into experiencing more of the same. They're imagining their past and present as they talk (or write about it in social media, emails, etc.), and they're feeling strong feelings (like anger, disgust, hate, etc.) as they do so.

If you want to create something different for yourself than what you're getting, then do NOT keep vocalizing and reliving what you don't want to attract. Here are two methods for focusing yourself on what you want:

Method #1: Publicly share your vision. Instead of reviewing, rehashing and dwelling on what you don't want, focus on the vision of what you do want. If you feel the need to post something online, post about the action steps you're taking to make your dreams and desires a reality. Infuse some emotions into communicating about what you most want to experience in life. This way, you don't fall into the trap of reinforcing what you're already getting.

Another bonus of publicly sharing what you want is that it helps you connect to others in a deeper way. You might find that your vision turns other people on as well, and they'll offer their help in making it a reality. That help wouldn't have come to you otherwise.

Method #2: Ignore what's not working for you. If you don't like what you're already getting, then the best thing you can do is to ignore it. Turn your back on it. Stop dwelling on it. Only pay the minimal amount of attention to it that is truly essential. Turn the bulk of your attention (and emotion) to the new vision you've created. Spend more time living in the new reality you're creating instead of the old one you want to get rid of. You'll see your vision materialize into a physical form a whole lot faster this way.

Today's Affirmation: “I now choose all of my communications carefully. I speak my vision into reality. All is well.”

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