

ELIZABETH HAMILTON'S

Best
EVER
You™
FOURTH QUARTER ISSUE



Recognizing Sean Kanan

Your Success Can Be Automatic

How to Listen to
Your Inner Wisdom

Are Your Genes Causing
Your Weight Gain?

Stop Being a Prisoner
of Your Own Beliefs

Bring Peace to Their World

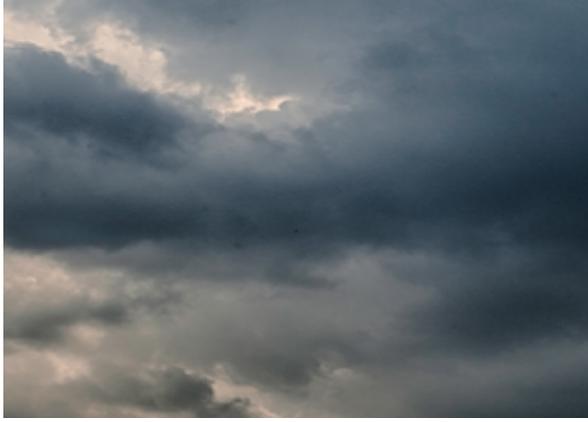


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besteveryou.com

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Five Steps You Can Take To Improve Your Health

I love helping people make changes in their lives that have meaningful, lasting results. In my own life, several people along the way have helped me make changes too. We all help each other.

One topic that we chat a lot about is health. I think we all want to know how we can be our healthiest and, if we've gotten into a no-so-healthy state, how to regain our health.

Over the years of owning Best Ever You, I've held fitness challenges, talked about sugar detoxes, and shown our readers healthy moves we can all make to help us be our best. I have participated in these activities myself.

Here are five steps and exercises I have created to help us all be our healthiest best.

1. Try to eliminate drinking soda and diet soda.

I know that sounds harsh and you may be asking "Why?" When I work with clients with the Best Ever You: Healthier You Program, it isn't uncommon for a new client to say they are drinking anywhere from 1 to 10 sodas (diet or regular) in a day. It could be from habit, convenience, taste, caffeine, etc...Whatever the case, it is something I ask clients to refrain from drinking, if possible, at least during the first 6 weeks of working with the client. Reach for the water instead of the soda.

Here is an exercise: Try to stop drinking diet and regular soda for 6 weeks of your life. In a journal or on a piece of paper write down anything you drink other than water. For 6 weeks. Try to be mindful and wean yourself away

from it. Some people can just stop; others need time. (Please note that some people do report headaches or other health issues from this process, so please pay attention to yourself closely, and consider consulting your doctor.) Also, if possible, write down where you drank the item along with the time. This exercise is designed to try to help you become aware of what you are drinking and is one of the first steps we can take to help our health. Just detoxing, drinking water only for a period of time can help your body and help you become aware. I've seen clients lose 20 pounds by just removing soda and diet soda from their lives.

Advanced exercise: What else are you drinking? Are you consuming alcohol, caffeinated coffee, tea, fruit juices, energy drinks, etc.? Now, I'm not trying to eliminate all the fun from life. What I am referring to is awareness and am speaking to someone perhaps just beginning a journey of a life change or weight loss of 30 or more pounds. It is important to take an overall look at what you are eating and drinking, and perhaps consider a detox. It helps to see what the overall picture looks like, and can help you gradually reduce your intake; or remove the offending substance all together.

2. Raise your awareness levels.

Are you aware of what you are eating? I know that sounds strange. You must be aware, right? After all, you are the one eating it. I hear you. I'm asking you this on a deeper level. Are you eating processed foods? Are you aware of the salt and sugar content of

these products? Are you eating clean, unprocessed foods? Do you understand why this is important? Are you in a rush and going through the drive-through for convenience? What is the impact of the food you eat? How much are you eating? Do you know how much you should eat and what you could eat for optimal health?

Here is an exercise: In a journal, for one week of your life, write down each thing you eat or drink. Please also include any smoking, drinking alcohol, drugs and prescription or over the counter drugs. What does your week look like?

3. Keep an eye on time. Slow yourself down.

How much time do you really have in a day? Of the time in your day, how often are you in motion from routine, and how often are you aware and being mindful of yourself? Are you paying attention to yourself? Several clients I have worked with over the years say they spend a lot of time in their cars driving. This means being away from home and thrown into "convenience mode." I also have worked with some very rushed moms and dads, including my own family. As parents of four boys, my husband and I fully understand the crazy morning factor or night-time sports family. When the kids were younger, after everyone was packed and out the door, there was five minutes left for us to shower, get dressed and eat properly – let alone take a moment to actually breathe. We are always rushing. When kids play sports, we parents can be in the

car driving instead of making dinner, not having proper time for homework, sleep, etc... I get it.

Here is an exercise: In a journal, for one month of your life, write down each time you feel rushed, or are late, or feel tired, exhausted or are sick. Also write down your bedtime and the time you get up in the morning, including any unexpected periods where you are awake at night or can't get to sleep. Take a step back at the end of the month and with thought and consideration, look at your time. Now look for what I call "wobble room." Can you back up your late-night-owl self and get up earlier in the morning to create some time for yourself? Are you sleeping too much? Can you create periods of time during the day for yourself? What did your month look like?

How can you create a healthier lifestyle? Because of time created, could you now pack a lunch rather than feeling rushed and out to eat? Could you create some time for exercise? Sleep? By looking closely at our time, we can create space for ourselves.

4. Do you have snack-times?

I think kids are onto something with snack-times. Schools basically require snack-times. Why do you suppose that is, and when did we all grow out of snack-time? Now, because we are adults and in control of the purchasing and ourselves, it begs the questions about how often we are snacking and what we are snacking on. :) As the primary cook in the house, sometimes I feel like I've eaten the dinner while cooking it – "snacking." So yes, we may eat breakfast, lunch and dinner and YES! – snack :) Some really great snacks are carrots, cucumbers, peppers, pickles, maybe a yogurt, etc...Notice the snacks don't include candy, soda, chips, etc...(I know...remember I am the chocolate chip cookie queen...)

Here is an exercise: Look at your day and mindfully schedule in 3 snack times. Choose 3 healthy snacks that are not processed foods. So raw veggies, etc...During your snack time, also drink 6-8 ounces of water.

5. Do you have a nap-time?

Kids are onto something with naps, too. Now, before you go snoozing at your desk or drooling on it if you fall into a deep sleep, allow me to clarify. This is really about sleep, but also about relaxing. It sort of goes back up to step #3. I'm not positive everyone has a workplace that allows nap-times. I remember being in the office, and at around 3pm, I wanted to curl up like a cat and nap, and instead, I'd reach for a caffeinated this or that or even something sugary for the boost to get to the 5 or 6 pm mark. This is a clue, and sign to pay attention to. Create that time for yourself. Perhaps practice meditation, or just be quiet for 20 minutes. Maybe turn that lull into a writing moment for yourself. If you need a nap, and say you are home and relaxed on the couch, take one! You know your Kindergarten self. Did you fight naps then?

Here is an exercise: Take a day out of your life and slow down to a crawl. Maybe even pretend you are in sick mode only you are actually not. Try to do pretty much nothing but relax, eat snacks, drink water, eat healthy, etc...Don't even work out. Don't clean the house. Don't make lists of things you need to do. Don't read an already written out list. Be mindful of health, but don't throw your energy into too much. Catch up on sleep, catch up on movies or TV. What was this day like? You get the picture. On the next day, when you return to your normal activities, note the differences in the way you feel. Is there a better blend of relaxation you can implement in your life?

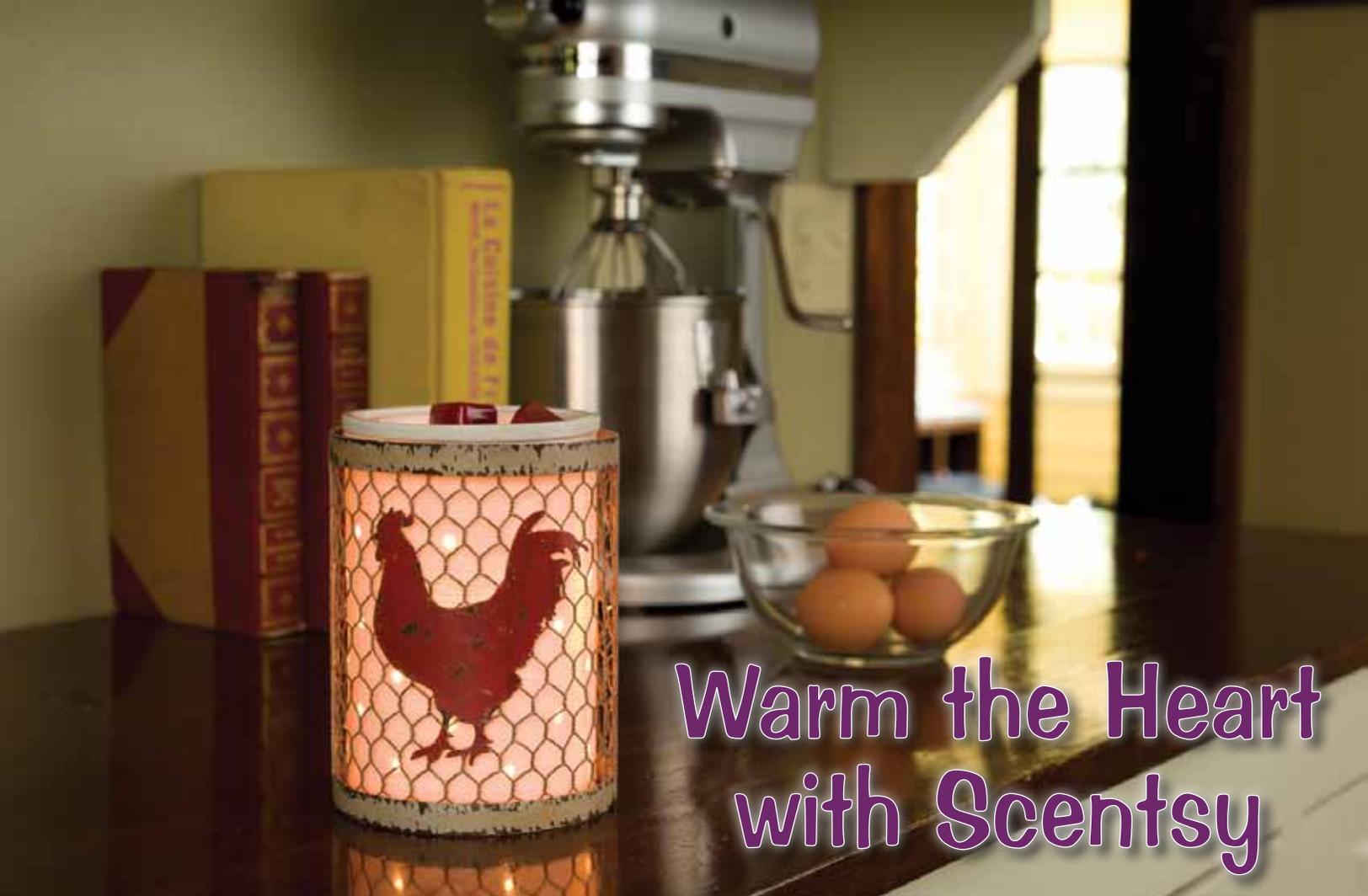
These certainly aren't the only five things in the world you can do to be your healthiest best. I'd love to hear more from you about what you do in your life to be healthy. By sharing your tips, you may help change someone's life. You just never know...



Hay House author, Elizabeth Hamilton-Guarino, founder and CEO of the Best Ever You Network, understands firsthand the challenges life can bring and has worked with thousands across the globe to illuminate their light within and help them live their best life. She has a degree in communications and broadcasting; is a life coach, food-allergy expert and anaphylaxis survivor; and is the host of The Best Ever You Show, which has over one million downloads. Elizabeth took a huge leap of faith in 2009 to leave a seventeen year career in the financial services industry to start The Best Ever You Network and become a talk show host and author. Elizabeth is the author of Percolate - Let Your Best Self Filter Through (Spring 2014, Hay House). Elizabeth lives in Maine with her husband Peter, their four boys, four cats and massive Labradoodle.

ELIZABETH'S AUDIO VERSION:
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Ch-ch-ch-changes ...

I always struggle with a topic for my editor letter. No idea why, just feels like I need to come up with something profound and deep and....well...just something with a little punch. And I certainly don't want you folks bored! But this time, well – this time – I have lots to share!

With the help of our erstwhile cheerleader and coach extraordinaire, Elizabeth Hamilton-Guarino, I am finally on track in getting my health back in order. In the last 2 months, we have cut out most sugar, all caffeine, all white flour; all SODAS (THAT was a biggie!) reduced sodium, and eliminated all fast food. In fact, I have eaten almost the same thing every single day. One might find that boring, but I am rewarded when I step on the scale. We are now down 18 pounds. It's slow going, but by golly, it's finally happening.

Why now? I have done this over and over and over again – I start Weight Watchers or the equivalent, and within two weeks, I'm done. In fact, many times, I gain weight when I go to Weight Watchers. The one thing that is different is daily accountability and a partner to bounce off of, but also being responsible for myself and being tuned in and aware. And there's one more thing I've learned. Mindset. Very, very important. You see, the day Elizabeth emailed me about doing this with me, I had just returned from my yearly physical. My weight was at the highest it had ever been (nope – not gonna share!) My cholesterol, while being managed with meds, was STILL elevated. My sugars had me literally ONE point away from being diabetic. My blood pressure, again with meds, was finally acceptable – up till that physical, my blood pressure could run as high as 162 over 114. Yeah, I know...not cool. Last week, I was 112 over 68. Much, much better!

Her email was kismet, some higher power nudged her at the exact right moment, when my brain was finally ready to accept that it was literally do or die.

This is going to be a long, long process. In fact, I will disclose I have 100 more pounds to lose. I will get there. I won't be perfect, but I am doing better at this than ever before. And this has just been the beginning of changes. Other important changes are forthcoming in an effort to make my life a life by design not default. I don't want to be in what I call a "knee-jerk" mode any more. That means adding the word "no" to my vocabulary. That's a tough one – I help anyone who needs help at any time. And that makes for a day of interruptions, regardless of how willing I am to help.

If you've found yourself saying "why can't I?" don't despair. It seems the right time and right mindset is the weapons of mass destruction (mass referring to personal mass of course). "Why can't I lose weight?" Or "why can't I say 'no' when someone is interrupting the flow of my work?" Or "why can't I change the course of my career?"

Elizabeth says, "It's when we begin to take full responsibility and our light driven self takes over and our behaviors and actions come from our light and heart, versus paying attention to the little critter on our shoulders. He's a bit devilish and dark, perhaps even our child version of us. To get him to quiet down, we must feed our soul and take care of our entire being and really pay attention to where we place our energy. This also includes going back to your core and figuring out what you love to do. It's seldom just all about food. We are much more complex people."

Liz Foley, Editor-in-Chief



Your Success Can Be Automatic

By Leo Costa and Joe Breen, C.F.T.

You have heard the saying too much of a good thing is bad. In our society we tend to over-think things and make them complex. In fitness, when you are starting out, it can be daunting. There are so many machines, exercise stations, and workout books and methods to choose from. What works - and what doesn't. Don't be alarmed at this, everyone goes through this in the beginning, including us, as well. The last 35 years however, and results with thousands of clients from around the world, have taught me that simplicity always works. One of the goals in a fitness program is to find a balance where your success and results can be automatic. It's like turning the key in your car and starting your engine.

Let me explain. Every exercise, and every program, to some extent works. The trick is to find out what works for you on a consistent basis. How do you do that? You need an approach that allows you to narrow things down to the exercises, sets, reps, amount of cardio, and nutritional ratios your body needs. You need an exercise routine that factors in the three elements which are critical to success: weight training, cardio, and nutrition. How do you find that?

The first step is to take a mental inventory of the areas of your body that need the most

work. Unlike in sports-specific training, where you are training for general fitness, you can train your body in whatever order you need to reach your goal. For instance, if you feel your arms are a weak body part, you can target them first in your workout, and work legs or back later. Also, if you want to warm up and do half of your cardio first before weight training, you have that flexibility. Your needs will vary according to your goals. What we offer is several training phases that will help you to find your perfect workout plan. The way to find out if an approach will work for you is to give an order of exercises, cardio, and a diet plan 21 days. This will give you time to see whether your body is responding to your plan. During this time, you will want to keep a journal, and do weights and measures once a week. If the inches are coming off in the right spots, and you are adding inches in the right spots, you will know that things are working.

We suggest you try to switch things up every 21 days to keep your body from hitting a plateau. We also take into account that gyms are busy and your favorite exercise machine may not be available, so can switch things up if you need to. The point is to keep moving. As

far as diet goes, there are two approaches to choose from. One is a low-fat, high-carb diet which operates on a glucose metabolism. With this approach, you will use carbs as your main fuel. The other approach is a high-fat, low-carb diet. With this approach you will use fat as your main energy source. We suggest you try both to see which will work best for you. Like your workouts, sometimes it is best to switch these up every so often to get the benefits of both.

With cardio, we suggest you do 30 minutes of cardio, three times a week. You can do this before or after the workout. Or, if you feel up to it, you can do 15 minutes before and 15 minutes after your training. It all depends on how you respond and what works best for you. When you use the tools we provide in "Automatic Fitness" over time you will find that you will create an automatic road map which will lead to success. We also show you how to zero in on areas you want to focus in on in our isolation phases. I don't want to overwhelm you here, but rather start to create your roadmap to success.

For more information on our programs go to www.automaticfitnessplus.com. Good luck on your journey and stay focused.

Joe Breen, is a personal trainer, award winning bodybuilder who has helped people from all walks of life to achieve their goals. He started out as an overweight child, and turned the knowledge he gained while getting in shape and competing in bodybuilding into a career in fitness and educating others. Joe writes for the Las Vegas Informer a weekly online publication and has also written for the fitness magazine On Fitness. Currently Joe is working with celebrity personal trainer Leo Costa in the launch of "Automatic Fitness" a groundbreaking book designed to get anyone in the best shape of their lives in 60 days or less, as well as an opportunity to help trainer's to take Mr. Costa's unique results driven style of training and fitness and help them open their own personal training studios. His website is www.automaticfitnessplus.com

Leo Costa Jr. has been a highly successful personal trainer for 30 years. He has written and published four exercise-training manuals: Titan Training, The Bulgarian Burst, Big Beyond Belief and Serious Growth. He majored in exercise physiology, nutrition and business at Cal Poly Pomona and then studied exercise and diet with top sports specialists and nutritionists in Eastern Europe. Leo won the NABBA Heavyweight Division "Mr. U.S.A." title and competed for the prestigious "Mr. World" title.

Why the Law of Attraction Isn't Working For You

I am the first one to agree your thoughts create your feelings, which then create your actions, which subsequently build the reality of your life. To that end, your thoughts can and do create your world.

But what happens when the “Law of Attraction” doesn't seem to be working for you? What happens when you feel like you are doing all the right things, but you end up with all the wrong results. What then?

It deeply saddens me to see anyone beat themselves up for supposedly doing the ‘Law of Attraction’ wrong. Precisely when the person feels most down about a circumstance in life, the bulldozer of despair dumps a double dose of self-incriminating negativity.

“Why isn't the law of attraction working for ME?”

Consider that you are not doing anything wrong at all. Consider that the equation is wrong. $2 + 3$ will never equal 4, no matter how much you visualize and wish it to be true.

Could it be where the law of attraction ends is where a little common sense needs to begin?

Would you think for one moment Rosa Parks needed to contemplate what the universe was trying to teach her to accept as she walked to the back of the bus because she was black, day in and day out, every day of her life? Would you for one second think that a Jewish victim at Auschwitz needed to contemplate what s/he was doing to attract being rolled into the incinerator to be burned alive? Do you really believe the victims who had their limbs blown off in the Boston Marathon Bombing subconsciously put out a frequency with THAT on their Law of Attraction menu? Of course not!

The missing ingredient is this – good and evil exists, and each person has free will to bring one or the other into the physical world we each live within. Good produces more good, and bad produces more bad. We are each planting seeds first in the garden of our own life, which then scatters more of the same into the lives of others around us.

Each thing in and of itself may not be good, but together, they can produce good.

I recently discussed this notion with Cheryl Maloney on Empower Radio. Consider the thought of eating tablespoons of salt, a cup of sugar or raw eggs individually. Pucker up! It does not sound very good to me! Why? Because on their own, they're not. But, stir them all together with some flour, put the mixture in the oven, and viola', you have angel food cake. Angel food cake is very good.

My point is this, certain things on their own are not always good, and never will be good. No amount of visualization is going to change that. What you can change is seeing beyond the bad event. Extrapolate the bad into the potential good result; which is wrapped with the new element of thought, action, belief, person, place or thing.

Life is not the all about “me” show, it's the all about “we” show.

Consider your unfair boss is not the universe or God telling you to reflect and work through a possible childhood issue with an authority figure. Consider your boss needs to learn a lesson about being a fair boss, and you need to step out in courage to bring this to light, and in doing so you will have saved hundreds of other workers unjust treatment.

When the “I” becomes a “we” focus, even illness is transformed into wellness.

So next time you want to beat yourself up for not doing the law of attraction “correctly” to grab hold of the perfect life you have visualized in your on-demand dream board, consider this: You didn't do anything wrong. In fact, you may be doing something very right.



Deb Scott, BA, CPC is a four-time award winning author of “The Sky is Green and The Grass is Blue” and a top rated Best Podcaster winner of “The Best People We Know Show” on blog talk radio, stitcher and player FM with over 1 million global listeners. Deb spent twenty years as a cardiovascular surgical specialist, winning numerous awards for outstanding sales and leadership skills. In her personal life, Deb battled sexual abuse, others' alcoholism, dysfunctional relationships, depression, was the sole caregiver to both her parents who fought cancer to their death, and even experienced financial devastation. Today, Deb helps people turn things around in their business, or the business of living, with the discovery of the amazing you.

Would You Open Your Door to a Fellow Human Being?

A door didn't open for Glenda Moore, whose two young children were swept away by floodwaters from hurricane Sandy, after she sought shelter at a stranger's house, but was refused help. Police found the bodies of her two young children, Connor, 4, and Brandon, 2, about a quarter of a mile from where she lost her grip. Moore managed to free the boys from their car seats and clung to a tree for hours as she tried to shelter them in the midst of the strong winds and rain. Then she made her way to a nearby house and pleaded to be let inside with the kids, but the occupant refused to let them in, according to her account to police, reports CNN.

Moore was attempting to drive her children to a relative's home in Brooklyn after their home became flooded and lost power during the surge of the storm. However, her Ford Explorer stalled in rising water, according to a police report, NBC News noted. In desperation, Moore went to the back of the house and tried to break in but was unable to do so and the floodwaters took her children away. The house's alleged occupant told CNN he didn't see a woman but a man outside his house and that the man didn't ask to be let in but instead asked him to come outside to help.

This is a familiar story, "There's no room at the inn." What is this tragedy to teach us? As uncomfortable as it is to acknowledge this - we all have the capacity to allow fear to take over

our better judgment and close our doors to one another. For most of us it's unfathomable to turn away a mother with two children in need and the image leaves us nauseated at the helplessness we feel. We are asking ourselves, what can we do to ensure these two children did not lose their lives in vain, to learn some lesson in their memory, to make the world a better place because of their sacrifice?

Today, we ask you, Would You Open Your Door to a Fellow Human Being?

Loss and tragedy reminds us if we are aware that we are connected, regardless of geography - as humans.

Are we helping each other as best we can?

How can those of us from afar help?

Are we all doing enough?

How does life continue on when you know there are others suffering?

Many watched the morning news shows being held from New York City, and many scratched their heads at the joyful programming mixed in with the tragic Sandy aftermath reporting. It was hard from afar to understand how part of New York City seems to be functioning just fine and in other parts, people are being found under rubble, or kids are being found not far from where they were swept away from their mom in Staten Island.

As we write this, in areas hardest hit, millions are still without power, homes are gone, homes are flooded, damaged and there is loss of life.

We have heat. We have power. Katie wasn't even in the hurricane, she is in Washington State. Elizabeth is in Maine which wasn't in the eye, but on the outskirts of it and there was plenty of rain and wind. Yet, many have a profound response to what has happened and it is impossible to ignore the images on the TV from Hurricane Sandy or the tremendous amount of social media surrounding it.

To those who survived, many of whom we see crying on TV, the words "You'll be ok" might not be so easily comprehended. Can a person whose house has been destroyed really be ok? When will they be ok? How do you know they will be ok?

Is Glenda Moore ever really going to be okay?

On TV and from relatives, Elizabeth heard words like "I can't believe this really happened." In fact, her husband is stunned as his entire childhood was spent on the Jersey Shore in many of these areas. He felt like crying. People on TV were crying. Elizabeth opened up a photo album to look at many good times her family has shared on the Jersey Shore.

The Moments Matter.

Many, I'm sure, felt like sticking their heads in the high sand banks and really saying three wishes to wish this had not happened; and yet, somehow, tragedy brings opportunities to come together, sharing compassionately.

We have a choice of how we act now. Do we dwell on the pain, what is gone, what is lost and or do we take the energy from loss and make a positive difference? Imagine if everyone reading this made it a point to get to know the neighbors on all four sides? What if we all dedicated the lives of these children to building more supportive community groups designed to help during crises? What if we focused on creating positive change as a result of the many lessons learned from Hurricane Sandy? We can bury our heads in the sand or acknowledge we can always do better. We can decide, and start today, to build communities where there is always room at the inn and doors always open!

We can't bring Connor and Brandon back, but we can all open our doors and hearts to the Glendas in our own communities.

**With Thoughts, Prayers and Love,
Elizabeth and Katie**

This article originally appeared on BestMillionPeople.com and received over 6,200 views.

Elizabeth Hamilton-Guarino, Hay House Author and Founder and CEO of The Best Ever You Network, understands first-hand the challenges life can bring and has worked with thousands across the globe to illuminate their light within and help them live their best life. Elizabeth and her husband and four boys live in Maine. She has a degree in Communications and Broadcasting, is a Life Coach, food allergy expert and survivor, and is the host of The Best Ever You Show.

Dr. Katie Eastman, founder and CEO of Children's Palliative Care Community is a key figure in the lives of those struggling to understand death, the process of dying and how it informs living. An advocate in the field of hospice and palliative care for over 25 years, Katie is a transition coach, consultant and writer supporting others in living today better than yesterday. Katie holds a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology and a Masters in Social Work with a Health Care specialization. Katie lives with her husband and daughter in Washington.



Whose Voice is Running in your Head?

We all have them;

those voices in our head that cause fear and doubt and undermine our lives. Often, they are the voices of people we trusted and felt safe around, but that betrayed that security; and in the process, created a life-long internal battle for our self-esteem. It could be the voice of a parent, a love interest, or even a teacher or boss whose opinion you valued, and now their words hang over your heart. “Don’t eat that or you’ll get fat.” “Don’t bother trying that, you’re not capable.”

I know those voices all too well. Several years ago, after going through a difficult divorce, I lost my job of 12 years, and found myself raising three small children with no money. For months I paid my bills with credit cards and when those ran out, I applied for welfare. As I struggled through a downward spiral, voices from my past played like a broken record telling me that I wasn’t good enough, smart enough, or pretty enough. That was until my best friend Lori called and told me she had stage four colon cancer.

I realized at that moment life was too short to listen to any voice other than mine. I decided that whatever was playing in my head, and no matter who said it, it was time to erase the tape and live my beauty! When I did, my life changed dramatically.

So how do you erase and reprogram your inner dialogue...?

Identify the negative and re-program the dialogue.

Write down all the negative inner dialogue that runs through your mind. For each bit, answer this question: What was the true intent behind the statement - meaning, who made it and why? Here’s a story to help you get the gist of what I want you to do...

I was working with a client shortly after her husband left her. After weeks of self-esteem coaching, she wanted to go shopping to create a new look that matched her new life. As a celebrity stylist and life coach, it’s always fun to help women bring their inner beauty to life through a look that matches who they are. After trying on several flattering outfits, however, she looked dejected and stared at the dressing-room floor.

“I have to tell you something,” she said. I braced myself because, by now, I’ve learned that clients who are making bold changes also confront even bigger fears. “I think my stomach looks terrible in all these clothes.”

“What?” I gasped. “You look incredible! You have a great body. Where is this coming from? What is the voice in your head saying exactly?”

“It’s my ex’s voice,” she confessed. “He told me that I was getting fat, and he didn’t want to have sex with me anymore.”

“What was his genuine intention behind that statement?” I asked.

“To hurt me, I guess.”

“So, it wasn’t true, right? He only said it to upset you. Do you see the difference?”

She nodded, and relief washed over her face. The inner voice that had damaged her so deeply wasn’t true, and now she saw it for what it was; a lie.

She stood up straighter and smiled, and I knew she was on her way to becoming a free woman.

Now it’s your turn to do this exercise so that you can finally be free of any shaming voices that hold you back. And even if the original intention was positive—as a way to protect you, for instance—the result may still be the same. This exercise enables you to acknowledge this dialogue for what it truly is and no longer allow it to control you.

Be Your
Best Self

- Elizabeth Hamilton-Guarino
www.besteveryou.com

Transforming Vision to Your Unique Pot of Gold

Over time, we recognize that we each possess uniquely creative ideas. It is our duty to pursue these because we only have one life to live. The sad part is, many times it is the highly creative that are ridiculed for their uniqueness causing them to keep their ideas hidden. We all suffer from not experiencing what might have been.

It is the brave few who are willing to announce to the world their thoughts as well as pursue their dreams. These are the people who find their unique pot of gold. "Gold" in this sense does not necessarily mean monetary reward. It also refers to happiness found in achieving what was originally thought to be a foolish waste of time or by becoming a leader in your field by building communities. Whatever brings you happiness is your pot of gold.

There is a common theme among the successful. No matter the dire circumstances originally faced, or the difficult learning curve, they never wavered from their vision, or the belief that one day they would become successful. The idea of never giving up, and possessing the mental attitude of persisting each and every day pushed these folks to the next level and the next.

What is your secret dream? Promise yourself to take quiet time each week to contemplate what it is you ultimately would like to accomplish. Capture your thought, and place it as a header on a document. Underneath your header, list all of the learning required to attain this dream and prioritize as to importance, time and money. Begin with the easiest first in order to find continued motivation to pursue the next step.

Also in your quiet time, list milestones to be attained that will eventually land you at your distant vision. These are the activities to pursue each and every day coupled with your dedication to learning.

Self-improvement is at the core of success. And coupled with self-improvement is the element of mind-shift. Many times we are hampered by negative thoughts of others that, unfortunately, we begin to incorporate as our own. In my experience, a major breakthrough came about by taking steps for implementing a mind-shift from negative to positive thinking.

The way in which you make the mind-shift is to record any negative thought you may have. Upon capturing it, turn it into a positive. As you routinely do this, you will notice a decline each day in negative thought and will become accustomed to thinking positively. The significance is, once positive thought becomes routine, you will begin to see a much improved turn of events.

When it is clear that a positive shift is taking place, document the improved events. You will begin to see the frequency of opportunity increasing. And the degree to which these opportunities are beneficial will increase as well. This is where you are now in control and are able to choose which of these will suit your purpose best.

At times it may seem that you are headed in many different directions but eventually the dots will begin to connect. Your audience will grow more quickly, and they will begin to find you. This is the defining moment of impending success. It is also the defining magical moment of having built your

personal brand well, and will have perfected your branding. The consistency and dedication you put into the beginning of your business, continued with unwavering pursuit, will lead you to your personal pot of gold.

The added common element for success among entrepreneurs and Olympians alike, and who I have had the pleasure of interviewing for my new book, *INSPIRED Business*, is that of community service, of striving to help others. My mantra has become, as we each implement this into our vision, we may bring about positive social change.

The tagline for the book is, "Believe, Become, Empower." Following these ideas will lead you to the Smooth Sale!

Elinor Stutz is the CEO of Smooth Sale, an inspirational speaker, an author and trainer. Her International Best-Selling book, "Nice Girls DO Get the Sale: Relationship Building That Gets Results" published by Sourcebooks was featured in TIME Magazine, translated into multiple languages and sells worldwide. Years of community service work teaching groups of job seekers how to land the job they desire led Elinor to writing her second book, "HIRED! How to Use Sales Techniques to Sell Yourself on Interviews." Revealing all she learned through the years and on the stretcher that fateful night, comes her third book, *INSPIRED Business ~ A New Vision for Building Business and Communities*. Audiences call Elinor's talks as both inspirational and motivational, and claim that through her insights they more readily found success. Visit <http://www.smoothsale.net> for more information.

If you're like others, there's a decent chance you have several unfinished projects around the house and at work. It can get pretty frustrating to look around you and notice all the unfinished tasks you have.

Sure, when you first started them, your interest level and passion for the project was high. But for some unidentifiable reason, you have a habit of leaving the tasks you start unfinished.

Would you like to change that usual outcome?

Follow these tips to finish the projects you've started:



1 Give some thought to why you haven't finished specific projects. An important aspect of personal growth is to determine why we do what we do. This is especially true regarding behaviors we'd like to change.

For example, perhaps you never finished cleaning out the garage because you'd be so tired after working on it all day on a Saturday, you wouldn't have the energy to do anything fun for the rest of the weekend.

2 If you're unable to figure out why you didn't finish a project, it's okay. It's best to avoid spending a lot of time trying to figure out the "why." If the reason escapes you, then just move forward and get started again.

3 Make a list of your unfinished projects. If this task seems daunting, just record the projects you care about finishing.

4 Decide which project you want to finish first. Circle it on your list. If you have a large number of projects listed, you may want to place marks by the top 3 you want to finish soon.

Prioritizing helps you quickly carry your momentum from one completed project to the next.

5 Focus on completing one unfinished project at a time. Allowing yourself to forget about the other projects, at least while you finish the current project, is probably your best chance of eventually clearing out all the projects on your list.

6 Avoid getting overwhelmed. When you feel overwhelmed by everything you have to do, you tend to avoid doing any of the projects. When you focus on completing one project at a time, you'll likely avoid those feelings.

When feelings of stress start creeping up regarding all the projects you "need" to do, say to yourself something like, "I'm making progress because I'm working on project X now and it will soon be done. When it's done, I'll move on to the next one."



7 Give yourself permission to ditch projects you no longer care about. As time passes, our interests change. Changing our minds is something we all do.

For example, maybe you used to be interested in gardening. You have pots, mulch, or seeds you never planted. For the last year or so, you've figured out you'd rather be playing golf if the weather's nice. Abandon this task and give away the supplies.

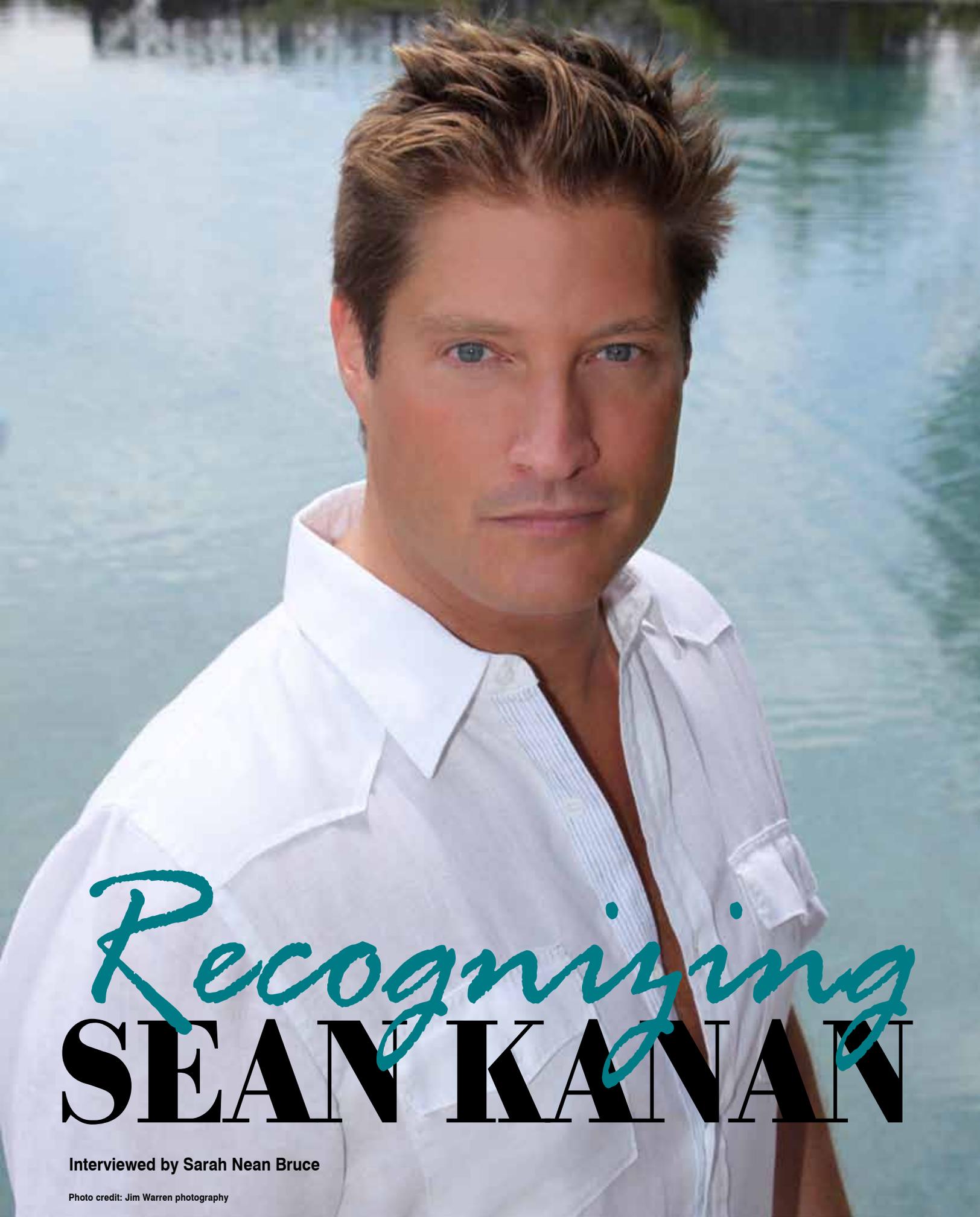
If you no longer wish to do a particular task, it's okay to rid yourself of the unfinished project. Your mind will be less cluttered and you'll feel free of the unfinished project that was bringing you down.

8 When will you work on the project? When something is important enough, you'll find the time to finish it. If you think another 2 or 3 hours is all a project needs, it's possible you can complete it on a Saturday morning or Sunday afternoon.

If the project requires a longer amount of time, consider your current schedule and how you could fit in 1 or 2 hours to work on the project twice a week.

You can finish what you've started if you put these steps into action. Learn to live an unfettered life by keeping only the projects you want and then finishing them!

Known as America's Divine Guidance Coach™, Eva Gregory is a master coach, Law of Attraction expert, speaker and author. As host of her own radio shows, she has interviewed some of the most influential thought leaders today. She has had the honor of sharing the virtual stage as a featured speaker with other experts like Mark Victor Hansen, Cynthia Kersey, John Assaraf, and Jack Canfield among others. Her newest book, Life Lessons for Mastering the Law of Attraction, co-authored with Jack Canfield, can be found in bookstores everywhere. Since 1999, Eva has followed inner guidance along with her Spirit-Enriched Business System™ to create a multiple 6-figure business. Her passion is teaching spiritual entrepreneurs how to tap into their own inner guidance and merge it with the practical steps to create healthy, sustainable businesses from a place of purpose, passion and prosperity. More information can be found at: Website: www.EvaGregory.com Facebook: www.facebook.com/evagregoryfan Google+: <http://gplus.to/evagregory> Twitter: www.twitter.com/EvaGregory LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/coacheva YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/evagregory



Recognizing
SEAN KANAN

Interviewed by Sarah Nean Bruce

Photo credit: Jim Warren photography

With on-screen leading-man features and an off-screen charm that gets many women to swoon, I have seen people say to themselves, and then ask others: "Wow, he is so familiar! Who is that guy?"

Yes, he is very recognizable, but his name is not yet on the tip of their tongues.

This is enhanced by the fact that he is sociable and approachable. Yet there is an air of Hollywood Aristocracy and European Style to him (although it's not snobbery, nor is it "Hey, I am a Big-Shot, so back off").

On the one side, he can be the Modern Gentleman: wining, and dining, and entertaining us in his home or in the finest restaurant. On the other side, he could turn all Bruce Lee right in front of us to kick someone's butt if they dared trying to mug us in a dark alley. But on both sides, he's got our back.

Wikipedia lists him as: "an American actor, best known for his portrayals of A.J. Quartermaine on General Hospital, Deacon Sharpe on The Bold and the Beautiful and The Young and the Restless, and Mike Barnes in The Karate Kid, Part III." Wikipedia goes on to document his early career: "Kanan received his big break working for Academy Award-winning director John Avildsen in the 1989 film The Karate Kid, Part III. The following year, he starred on the Fox television series The Outsiders. In 1993, Kanan joined the ABC soap opera General Hospital as A.J. Quartermaine and was nominated for an award in the "Outstanding Newcomer" category by Soap Opera Digest. He left the series in 1997." – http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sean_Kanan

To me this sounds too distilled, too vague, and extremely publicity BIO-esque to truly describe this multi-hyphenate, charismatic, and sometimes hot-blooded and capricious, individual.

I have known him for over a decade, but I interviewed him anonymously so I wouldn't define him in the context of this knowing him first-hand

professionally in show business, or give my opinion-editorial of him by how we have interacted socially over the years. Rather this was an experiment as to what else we could glean from Sean under this covert "interview" arrangement. I was pleasantly surprised when I received the answers back to my clandestine questioning (via our mutual best friend, and my partner in crime on this small fun charade).

This is Sean Kanan: Actor; Author; Radio Talk-show Host; Indie Film Producer; Standup Comic; Martial Artist; Devoted Husband/Father of Five; and a person who I have witnessed exuding serious intensity and commitment about balancing his long-running Hollywood career (going on 25 years) with his family and home-life. Now here's the "Unknown Interviewer" version of Sean.

ME: If your life were a Movie Logline, what would that be? (e.g., SEAN KANAN: is dramatic comedy about a guy, who wasn't a bully in real life but played one in a hugely successful film, who gets even bigger breaks when he channels his inner modern gentleman into his life, his work, his books and his ever-evolving blended family.)

SEAN KANAN: "In a world gone mad, one man stands alone..."

The logline you guys came up with is pretty darn good.

I suppose it would go something like this: "A small town boy with a gleam in his eye and a dream in his heart heads to Tinseltown. After making every mistake in the book he finds success, happiness and the love of his life."

ME: Most of us have seen your Bio and Résumé and Wikipedia, but in your own words, can you tell us about your work?

(By the way, your logline sounds much more entertaining, compelling, and heartfelt)

SK: I have always tried to defy how others define me.

I honestly believe that as an actor like any artist I must force myself to take chances and exist outside my comfort zone, I have always tried to challenge myself with the roles I take. I have continued to produce and write and have now branched out into radio with my wife, Michele. (Most of my work is listed on IMDB www.imdb.com/name/nm0437088/)



ME: How has your background in the martial arts influenced you – psychologically and spiritually?

SK: I have studied martial arts in one form or another since I was thirteen years old. The training has taught me discipline, inner strength and humility. It has afforded me a sense of confidence and a healthy respect for my surroundings.



ME: Can you quickly walk us through a day of being a Soap Star and Modern Brady Bunch dad?

SK: My days vary greatly. If I am working at the studio I generally get up at six and drive to work. We rehearse; begin taping at 8:30AM and go sometimes until 8PM. It depends how many scenes I have and where they are in the day. Usually I go home and learn my lines for the next day.

If I am not working, then I usually go to the gym and or train with my MMA coach.

Michele and I have recently become partners in an exciting skin care company called Skin2skin care. We are both Senior VP's in the company as well as the brand ambassador's. This keeps us extremely busy. The products are nothing short of amazing. Check out the website at www.skin2skincare.com

Since we have five kids between us there are always school events and things to do with the gang.

ME: With all this busy-ness, what do you do to relax and decompress?

SK: I like to go hiking. I also am woefully addicted to several games on my iPad. I also have an infrared sauna, which has become my man cave, albeit a hot one.

Michele and I work very hard and we play hard as well. We love to travel and try to get away together as frequently as possible while balancing being with our kids.

ME: What are your top 3 tips, hints, advice for people becoming their "BEST EVER YOU?"

SK: Know your truth; and never compromise it.

Shun entitled behavior and always bring value to every relationship.

Push beyond your comfort zone, and remember that the steel of our character is forged in the fire of adversity.



ME: You've played many characters on film, on TV, and you've done standup comedy, too? Would friends (or family) consider you funny, or romantic, or serious, or practical?

SK: My friends and family would hopefully consider me to be kind, funny, romantic and irreverent. They would also say I am difficult, moody and volatile.

ME: How did you move beyond "Sean Kanan, the bully Mike Barnes in Karate Kid III" to "Sean Kanan, the Modern Gentleman, World Traveler and Family Man?"

SK: Mike Barnes was a role I played. I have never been a bully and have tried to evolve steadily as a man every day. My "wanderlust" has brought me to many exotic and interesting locales.

I have been exposed to so many "teachers"; all of whom have brought me to this moment. Probably the greatest teachers of all are my kids. Each one of them provides life lessons.

ME: You've done so many interesting and varying things in your life and work... what do you still want (or need) to do with the next 40 or 50 years of your life?

SK: Obviously, I want my kids to grow up happy, healthy, well-adjusted and self-actualized.

I want to continue to get better and more challenging work opportunities.

I will direct at some point.

I also want to continue traveling planet number three with my wife and kids.

ME: Any last thoughts or parting words of wisdom on you becoming the BEST EVER YOU?

SK: Each day presents a new opportunity to share your truth with the world.

Never forgo any kindness you can offer another.

Fight like hell for what you love and for that which you believe but always be open and flexible to the never-ending possibility of change.

Sarah Nean Bruce is a devoted wordsmith, an aficionado of immortals {vampires~witches~faeries}, a believer in quantum concepts {theoretical, entangled, probable}, an erstwhile poet in exile, an habitual haikuist, a teller of tall tales, an oxford comma lover, and a collaborative storyteller living in urbia and working around the world via this incredible, indelible place called the Internet. When she's not telling stories, she's creating, making & editing film, video & digital (web-mobile) medias. And when she's not doing that, she's staying up late to write her next creative poetic piece. sarahneanbruce.ME • twitter.com/sarahneanbruce • www.facebook.com/sarahneanbruce ONLINE



The Mask You Live In

The New Hollywood Women's Goal Group Inc. was one of many organizations that helped support Jennifer Siebel Newsom in her grassroots efforts to get her (award-winning) documentary *Miss Representation* off the ground. We are proud to further support this amazing woman who is continuing to bring forth conversation and action to better our world. Here is what she is up to now and we feel it will be just as successful, and perhaps even more relevant and powerful.

The *Mask You Live In* is a new documentary film by Jennifer Siebel Newsom. It asks: As a society, how are we failing our boys? As a sister, niece, someday to be a mother, and a girlfriend, I find this topic incredibly important. If we are going to focus on inequality with women then it is equally important to question why it exists in the first place and what both sexes can

do together to heal wounds that lead to violence and suppression.

Here are some interesting facts: compared to girls, research shows that boys in the U.S. are more likely to be diagnosed with a behavior disorder, prescribed stimulant medications, fail out of school, binge drink, commit a violent crime, and/or take their own lives.

Our society's failure to recognize and care for the social and emotional well-being of our boys contributes to a nation of young men who navigate adversity and conflict with an incomplete emotional skill set. Whether boys (and later men) have chosen to resist or conform to this masculine norm, there is loneliness, anxiety, and pain.

The *Mask You Live In* documentary will examine how gender stereotypes are interconnected with race, class, and circumstance, and

how kids are further influenced by the education system, sports culture, and mass media—video games and pornography in particular. The film also highlights the importance of placing emphasis on the social and emotional needs of boys through healthy family communication, alternative teaching strategies, conscious media consumption, positive role modeling and innovative mentorship programs.

Fortunately they surpassed their original funding goal in 14 days, so their current target is gaining 2,500 backers – in order to build a strong base of support for the film moving forward.

Please watch and forward this video campaign that is not just a documentary film but a movement to help heal our nation: www.kickstarter.com/projects/jensiebelnewsom/the-mask-you-live-in www.missrepresentation.org

"The New Hollywood" Women's Goal Group Inc., is a philanthropic women's goal group that strives to provide a safe environment where members are accepted as they are and encouraged to fulfill their potential to achieve personal and professional goals all the while giving back to their communities. We focus on goal setting, support, education and charity. www.thenewhollywood.org @TNH_tweets



How to be Productive in the Age of Distraction

Remember the days when it was possible to leave work at the office? When you could conduct a meeting and expect everyone's attention on you, not their tablets? When leisurely reading the paper over a cup of coffee was part of your pre-commute routine? Well, times have changed! In fact, your typical day probably starts not by clicking on the coffee pot, but by checking your smartphone for new messages, sifting through work emails and viewing social notifications – all before you're even out of bed!

With gadgets attached to our hips, we live in an age where constant and instant communication is not only a choice, it's expected, and it can cause

distractions that are detrimental to our productivity on the job. While it may seem as though being über connected is the ultimate multi-tasker's dream, constant connectivity makes it difficult to put the distractions aside and focus on the present.

All too often we become overwhelmed with the number of tasks at hand and begin to multi-task without a focus or awareness of our priorities. Imagine you've just walked into the office with the intent of polishing off the final touches for tomorrow's big presentation. You sit at your desk, but instead refining your work, you're bombarded with distractions. First, your cell phone beeps a new message, then the alarm rings for a meeting, in the middle of the meeting you receive an urgent call, while on the call you're corresponding with clients via email – and despite all this, thoughts of the big presentation are still clouding the back of your mind. With all these distractions, wasted time and half completed tasks, what have you really accomplished? Probably not a lot – other than cultivating more stress and chaos!

Learning how to focus your efforts will allow you to provide exclusive attention to the present

and save you from wasting time and energy on distractive behaviors that stunt business growth.

What is focus and how you achieve it?

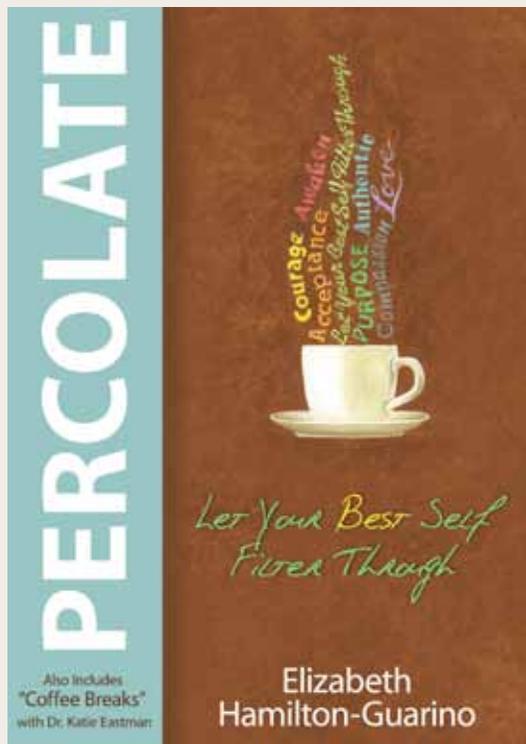
We all know how multi-tasking makes us feel – stressed and scatter-brained. Focus is exactly the opposite. Focus is one of those great opportunities in which we feel aware, aligned and connected. It happens when our energetic system is fully engaged, our mental energy is alert and creative, and our emotional condition has an even temperament.

To find your focus, sit for a moment and give some attention to feeling the sensation of your sit-bones on your chair. Gently straighten your spine so you're sitting up straight. Feel the breath go in and out of your nostrils. Take note of the sounds surrounding you – all the sounds. This is called awareness. With awareness you are able to concentrate on what you need to focus on. Next time you're feeling like you're spread too thin or trying to accomplish too many tasks at once, reconnect with your awareness through your breath and focus on the present.

Master Energy Coach Sheevaun Moran is the founder and creator of the Energetic Solutions, Inc. ® Success System. She is devoted to teaching the world's entrepreneurs and leaders deep Universal Energetic Principles through practical step-by-step "How-To's" to fulfill their legacy or dream. She is the founder of the "I Am Success Now" events that teaches attendees how to have lasting success from the inside out. She has been a keynote speaker at events worldwide and is author of four highly regarded books, including *Learn to Meditate in 2 Minutes*. Recently, Sheevaun was named an Award Winner in the Female Entrepreneur of the Year – Business Services category in the 9th annual Stevie® Awards for Women in Business. Samples of Sheevaun's work are available at www.sheevaunmoran.com. • www.facebook.com/SheevaunMoran • twitter.com/sheevaun • www.youtube.com/user/EnergeticSolutions

PERCOLATE –

Let Your Best Self Filter Through



“If Betty White, Erma Bombeck and Marianne Williamson had a sister, it’d most definitely be Elizabeth Hamilton-Guarino. Simply put – Percolate flows and you’ll love the feeling of expansion that you’ll get from reading it!”

– Pina De Rosa, Mindset Effectiveness Expert

Do you have a voice inside you saying that you want something different? Do you feel like you’re searching for something better, even if you don’t know exactly what it is?

When you hear words like consciousness, purpose, light, and awaken, do you wonder how they apply to your life?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, have no fear—Percolate is here to help!

Percolate helps readers discover The Percolate Process™, a nine-point process that implements lasting change in our lives.

The Percolate Process allows us to never ever give up and to discover the power we have individually and collectively in order to bring about positive lasting change within ourselves ... and what we percolate into the world. Percolate helps us discover our greater role in the world and also shows, in real time and story, the incredible power we have when we work together.

Grab a cup of joe, put your feet up, allow the steam to rise, and let your heart’s desire surface. Ah, can you taste the magic as you bring the authentic best you to the world?

Percolate is available where books are sold. For more information visit:

PercolateBook.com

Savings Stalled?



Small Steps Today to Build Security for Tomorrow

Are you among the millions of Americans who have struggled to rebuild your savings since the recession? If so, there are simple, time-tested strategies you can use to spend less and save more.

A new survey by CNN Money found that many Americans are not saving enough for retirement or emergencies. Only half of respondents reported good saving habits, including having a spending and/or saving plan in place.

"We know from other research that if one does not have adequate emergency savings, it's much more difficult for people to save for other purposes, either a home or retirement," said Stephen Brobeck, executive director of the Consumer Federation of America, which conducted the survey along with the American Savings Education Council.

So how can you start building (or rebuilding) a nest egg? Start by following these steps:

- **Get Clear on the exact amount of your net income and current expenses, including the inevitable unexpected expenses such as auto and home repairs.** With this information, you can begin to design a solid spending plan that makes sense based on current realities. Look at your income and expenses line by line. Where can you make adjustments? There

are many software programs for doing this, but even listing your expenses and income on a legal pad works.

- **Plug Money Leaks** – Many people consider only large expenditures, such as refinancing a home, when looking to save money, but finding small areas where you can save is just as important. These are usually areas of spending that are almost unconscious: the latte on the way to work each day, the extra \$15 per month on cable channels you don't watch, the additional money spent on "name brand" groceries. The first step to plugging these leaks is to identify them. Note each small spending habit and add up its annual cost. Next, ask yourself, "Do these small expenditures really make a difference to me? Do they really add to the quality of my life? Or are they just habits that could be eliminated or changed?"

- **The 10/10/10 Financial Formula** – To build true financial security, consistent saving is critical. I recommend the time-tested "10/10/10 Savings Formula". It may seem like a stretch at first, but work towards setting aside 10% of your income for short-term needs, 10% for mid-term needs and potential emergencies, and 10% for

long-term retirement planning. This will put you in control of your money and finances.

- **Look beyond Traditional Saving and Investing Methods** – Many people do not realize there are proven and time-tested ways to grow a substantial nest egg without the risk or volatility of stocks, mutual funds, real estate, and other investments. One asset class has increased in value during every period of economic boom and bust for more than a century: dividend-paying whole life insurance. A dividend-paying whole life policy grows by a guaranteed and pre-set amount every year. These policies also provide peace of mind for retirement planning, because you can know the minimum guaranteed value of the policy on the day you plan to tap into it...and at every point along the way. In addition, riders can be added onto the policy that make the cash value grow significantly faster than a traditionally designed whole life policy.

Whatever your financial circumstances, you can take steps today – even if they're just small steps – to move toward your financial goals. As soon as you take positive action, you will reap the reward of more peace of mind.

As a consultant to financial advisors, Pamela Yellen investigated more than 450 savings and retirement planning strategies seeking an alternative to the risk and volatility of stocks and other investments. Her research led her to a time-tested, predictable method of growing and protecting savings now used by more than 500,000 Americans. Pamela's book, *BANK ON YOURSELF: The Life-Changing Secret to Growing and Protecting Your Financial Future*, is a New York Times Bestseller. She has been featured on ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN, FOX, NPR and in The Huffington Post, Fortune Small Business and hundreds of other publications. Learn more at www.BankOnYourself.com.



Stop Being a Prisoner of Your Own Beliefs

Nobody knows where thoughts come from, but all of us have thousands every day. If you begin to observe these thoughts you will see that most of them are judgments of yourself, a situation, or others. The problem is that if you don't observe them, but instead are identified with them – you automatically believe that they are true – each one arouses a stressful sensation or emotion in you. For example, if you believe the thought, “My partner doesn't love me,” instantly you might become angry or sad. Or if you think, “I won't have enough money for my old age,” immediately your brain releases neuropeptides that tell your body you are unsafe. Becoming the prisoner of your beliefs about yourself, others, or the situation is the source of all emotional suffering.

Of course many situations are difficult, for example when you are ill. But what often brings the greatest suffering is not the illness itself; it is the stories you tell yourself about being ill. Stop those stories and while your body may be unwell, your emotional self will be healthy. Sometimes there can even be a space in you that despite, physical suffering can be loving and joyful. This is true freedom.

When it comes to freeing ourselves from the prison of our own thinking, the hardest beliefs of all to set aside are those that we have internalized as children. Maybe you interpreted your parent's behaviors to mean that you weren't lovable, or that you were too much, or not enough. For the rest of your life, subconsciously, you will anticipate that if you are truly authentic, you will be rejected.

As a child, we each learned to protect ourselves from the fear of judgment or loss of connection by becoming a pleaser, by withdrawing into our own imaginary world, or by rebelling. These primitive psychological defenses protected us when we were vulnerable children, but if we still employ them as adults; they cut us off from our best self and limit our capacity for intimacy in our lives. They doom us to the very suffering they were originally meant to prevent.

The reason so many people are stuck emotionally – though very few of us will con-

sciously acknowledge our stuckness – is that whenever we feel any threatening feeling such as aloneness or powerlessness, rather than facing such feelings consciously, we flee them – as we did as children – into our basic psychological defenses. But where, specifically, do we go? Into thinking! It is the stories we tell ourselves as we flee a conscious relationship with our fears which, in turn, generate stressful emotions such as anger or self-pity. These emotions, as miserable as they are, are easier for most people to be with than the deeper fears.

Habitually running from threatening feelings into reactive thinking generates a self-limiting emotional cycle that is a form of addiction as powerful as that which is caused by any drug. Indeed, mind-made suffering is what causes people to turn to alcohol and drugs in the first place.

The good news is that we have a profound power in us that we can use to set ourselves free at any moment in our lives when we begin to use it. It is the power of present-moment awareness which allows us to recognize our beliefs, instead of identifying with them. It gives us the ability to feel our feelings, but not become confused that what we feel is who we are.

The first step to using the power of awareness is experiencing what it feels like to be in your body in the present moment when you



are not being emotionally aroused by your thoughts. This is a highly alive state in which the mind is simultaneously focused and spacious and the body is at once ready and relaxed. Athletes, poets, dancers, know this as the state of flow. We have all touched it in one way or another, perhaps in love-making, or swooping down a ski slope. It is the state that can arise in meditation when, instead of holding onto thoughts or being captured by feelings, you let them pass through like clouds in the sky.

In all contemplative and spiritual traditions the basic practice is to directly experience the contrast between how you feel when you are captured by your thinking and how you are in yourself when you are simply present. For example, right now take five slow breaths. As you inhale, focus precisely on the sensation of the air flowing through your nostrils and imagine that every cell in your body is filling with new aliveness. Then, as you exhale imagine your whole being expanding outward as if your body were

as large as the universe – a limitless vastness. As you cultivate this practice of being simultaneously focused and spacious, your thinking will momentarily recede and you will become a little calmer.

Repeating these five conscious breaths 50 times a day will take only a few minutes all together, but over time this simple practice will utterly transform your life. You will begin to have the choice between whether to be captured by your thinking and collapse into the emotions your thoughts arouse in you, or you can let yourself begin anew in each moment. In this way you stop being the victim of what you are telling yourself and learn to flow with life.

The most important moment in your life is right Now. You can stay in the habit of believing your thoughts or use the power of your awareness to step back from these thoughts, inhabit your body, and rest into the present moment. I call this coming home to the beginning of yourself. With consistent practice you

will be able to recognize the instant your thinking mind leads you out of the Now because your body will tell you; the moment you are identified with your stories emotional turmoil instantly starts.

Enduring change does not happen without deep work. Learn to return your attention to the present moment and you will set yourself free. Through this work I have seen men and women become willing to be vulnerable instead of disguising their fears, thereby gaining the respect and trust of their spouses, friends, and co-workers. I have seen marriages healed and stalled careers flourish. Women who have never felt safe to express themselves fully, end abusive relationships and build dynamic lives. You will stop being hijacked by financial worries and no longer need to fill yourself from the outside through compulsive consumerism. Life becomes much simpler and happier. Nothing restores your sense of gratitude more than to learn how to free yourself from your own mind-made misery.

Richard Moss is the Maestro of “Deep Work.” He teaches people how to delve deeply into their inner core so they can achieve a life of “Radical Aliveness, Unconditional Love, and Real Inner Peace”. For 37 years, this globally renowned physician-turned-master healer, international bestselling Hay House author, and workshop leader has been guiding people on profound journeys of self-inquiry and self-discovery that have transformed their relationship with themselves, with their loved ones and with the world. Moss’ work, outlined in two of his bestselling books *Inside-Out Healing* and *Mandala of Being*, is centered in helping people achieve present moment awareness—and to clear away the beliefs, habits and thinking patterns that prevent them from living in a hyper-alive, joyful and loving state of being nearly all of the time. For more information and to learn about Richard’s 10-day November 8-17 Radical Aliveness retreat in Ojai, CA and his 4-day Deep Work Intensive in Golden CO, Jan. 23-26, please visit www.richardmoss.com.



Make the Years after 50 the Best and Most Enriching of Your Life

Are you as tired as we are over all of the bluff and bluster from leaders of both political parties and from many of our institutions and businesses regarding the limits they'd like to see imposed on the lives of old "GenXers," "Boomers" and "Elders"? If so, there are a number of things those of us 'who weren't born yesterday' can do to change all of that, resulting in happier, healthier and more satisfying lives.

Here are ten of them:

1. Take Greater Responsibility For Your Own Life

While some in our world today seem intent on marginalizing those of us who are 50 and older, the truth is these people often lack life experience and, unfortunately, many do not have a good grip on historical perspective and the truth about the contributions elders have always made to the world. So one sure way to live a happier, healthier and more rewarding life after 50 is to get involved and take greater responsibility for political decisions others are making that impact our lives. Speak out about the level of integrity - or lack thereof - being practiced by many of our institutions and businesses. Pay attention to the way you contribute each day to those who make up your world.

2. Live For Today and Not Tomorrow

Take a lesson from the lyrics of the Broadway musical, *Annie* - "Tomorrow, Tomorrow...You're always a day away." Remember instead that today is a gift that you can use in any way you chose. Be engaged, or be disinterested. Be awake and aware, or be on automatic pilot. Every one of your thoughts, words and interactions with others can be an opportunity to share what you know, learn, support, encourage and celebrate; or it can be an opportunity missed and spent waiting for some tomorrow that will, in the end, be the result of the choices you make today.

3. Poke A Pin Into the Illusion of The Myth of Youth, and Start Celebrating The Truth About Aging

Most of us who weren't born yesterday know that we live in a world that is youth obsessed and age adverse. Many find ourselves having to deal with high levels of disregard and dishonor that is as unacceptable as it is unconscionable. We also have to deal with a lot of negative implications and allegations about aging that simply aren't true. We are not over the hill, and we are certainly not out of luck. Many of the greatest accomplishments in the lives of some of the most revered figures in history did not occur until they were in their 50's, 60's, and even 90's. So live with passion, and be proud that you are living this long.

4. Breathe A Lot Deeper and More Often

It's been said that breath is an essential key to a healthier life and it's true. Think about those moments when you are relaxed and enjoying whatever you are doing. Notice how easily and naturally your breath flows. By comparison reflect on those moments when you are tense, worried, troubled or frightened. Notice how we often literally hold our breath in these moments. So if you want a more rewarding, energized and satisfying life, remember to breathe deeply, slowly and a lot more often. Yoga, good exercise, laughter, singing, walking in nature, meditation – all are terrific ways to celebrate and benefit from the breath of life.

5. Squeeze The Juice From The Fruit of The Past & Turn It Into The Gold of Today and Tomorrow

Those of us who weren't born yesterday have a lot of memories and experiences. Some involve things we call good and valuable, others are things we'd just as soon forget – especially those less than pleasant experiences we've had and some of mistakes we've made. No matter which category we assign our memories and experiences to, however, they all contain a great deal of value. If we are willing to take a little time to review them, process the nugget of wisdom



they contain, and apply this wisdom to what we are doing today-- and will do tomorrow--we can dramatically improve the quality of our lives and our health.

6. Replace Limiting Beliefs with Positive and Constructive Ones

Let's face it! A lot of us are living our lives today based on beliefs we learned a long time ago from others – parents, siblings and friends, teachers, coaches, religious leaders, etc. While some of these beliefs were necessary and even valuable at the time we learned them, there are others that are limited and flawed and based on disappointing beliefs our teachers and mentors may have had. So one way to lead a happier, healthier and unlimited life, is to take some time to review the beliefs you are holding and put down those that are limited and no longer apply – the “I can't's; I don't know how to; I'm not good at that; and the I'm not supposed to's”. So instead of holding on to limiting beliefs, be curious about your life and watch what happens.

7. Practice The Gift That Keeps On Giving

It is said that one of the greatest gifts of all is the gift of forgiveness. To be forgiven for the stumbles and bumbles we've made, and to forgive others for whatever they have done while learning how to live in this complex world, is one of the most valuable and beneficial things any of us can do. For the truth is, when we hold onto either guilt (for things we've done) or resentment (over things we believe others have done) the only person we are ultimately hurting is ourselves. A closed heart and all of the detrimental side effects and limitations a closed heart brings is not the path you want to take. Instead practice greater forgiveness and live a life of greater meaning, purpose and joy.

8. Live No Faster Than Feeling Can Follow

We live in a world where thinking, analyzing, rationalizing and worrying often overwhelm our feelings. Feelings, in fact, have become the red-headed stepchild of contemporary society, often spoken of in derogatory terms, as if they were a weakness, instead of one of the most essential tools we have to live healthier, more engaged and aligned lives. So the advice here is to move past the impatience and misconceptions of these times and, instead, pay close attention to how you feel – physically and emotionally. Pay attention to the guidance your feelings give you and, above all, stop overriding them. They are your allies, so listen to and follow their wisdom.

9. Master the Three Great Illusions

In our world where the gods of Science and Technology are worshipped so ardently, many of us live a good portion of our lives under the illusion that we can control things – our physical environment, our careers, our financial well being and, in some instances, even the primary people who make up our worlds. Closely allied with this illusion of control are two others – the illusions of security and safety. Clinging tenaciously to these three great illusions does not contribute to the quality of our lives. As Helen Keller once said, “Security is mostly a superstition. It does not occur in nature. Life is either a daring adventure or nothing.”

10. Remember That it is Never Too Late (or too soon) to Live Your Dreams

Of all of the illusions that can limit our health and well-being as we age is the one that claims that it is too late to live our dreams. It is perhaps the most debilitating and also the most untrue. The truth is that no matter how old one is, it is never too late or too soon to live the dream that each of us has come here to live and so--rather than listen to the naysayers and to those who cling so tenaciously only to the known, the practical and the realistic--take the time to get back in touch with that dream that lives in your heart. Then, take whatever steps are suggested by that 'still small voice within' and begin to express more of it in your life.

George and Sedena Cappannelli are co-authors of *Do Not Go Quietly, A Guide to Living Consciously and Aging Wisely For People Who Weren't Born Yesterday* (Hay House, 2013). They are also co-founders of AgeNation, a digital media company dedicated to informing, inspiring and engaging Boomers and Elders on the challenges and opportunities in a world in which 50% of our population will be over 50 for the first time in history. They are experts on individual, organizational and society change and they have been assisting and inspiring hundreds of the premier organizations in the private, public and non-profit sectors as well as thousands of leaders and people in the general public to accomplish their objectives for more than 25 years. Their other books include: *Say Yes to Change*, and *Authenticity*. For more information visit: www.donotgoquietlythebook.com and www.agenation.com

LIFE IN THE FAST FOOD LANE



When you are on the go, it can be easy to opt for foods that are fast and convenient to eat. For you, this might mean stopping in at the nearest fast food chain and grabbing the #1 combo with a large sugar filled drink. Although eating fast food is ok once in awhile, getting into the habit of it can be detrimental to not only your waistline but also your overall health and well-being. Fast foods are usually loaded with calories, sodium, un-healthy fats, and lack the nutrients that your body needs for the day! We are more and more used to living in a world of instant satisfaction...we have instant text messaging, instant music, and entertainment, all what we want... when we want it. And then we have instant food... fast food. Most choices offered at fast food outlets rely on quick, and less healthy preparation methods such as deep-frying, and plenty of preservatives to get your order to you as quickly as possible.

But I want to treat myself. I worked hard today, I deserve it!

You did work hard and you do deserve the best! Therefore you deserve to fuel your body with nutrients that will help your body feel its best. A lot of the time fast food options don't leave us feeling energized and satisfied. With fast food, the key is treating yourself to it once in awhile, and not making it into a daily habit.

Can I eat healthy and still eat at my favorite fast-food joint?

There are usually healthy options available at most fast food chains. Here are some key points to look for when choosing a healthier option. Be aware of toppings! The more the toppings the more unhealthy fats and sodium you might be adding. Opting for vinaigrette.....and ketchup and mustard instead of mayo will help you reduce the amount of sodium and less healthy fat in your meal.

Remember, the more veggies the better!

- Choose foods that are steamed, broiled or grilled over fried, such as grilled chicken rather than crispy or fried.
- Ask for condiments to be served on the side so you can add as much or as little as you'd like.
- Portion control is key: try not to cave into the super-sized meals as they usually contain enough calories and fat to meet your needs for the entire day or more! Opt for the kids pack size or small size.
- Choose water or low-fat milk over sodas and milkshakes.
- Choose a salad or soup instead of fries as a side, that way you can fuel your body with nutrients and the energy it needs.
- Most fast food chains have nutrition facts either at the joint or online, check these out before and see what your best option might be.

Remember, to eat healthy doesn't mean you have to deprive yourself of the good stuff. While your friends are chowing down on triple burgers and fries, you can join in and choose an option from the healthy options menu. Even small changes like opting for a side salad instead of fries or a grilled chicken burger instead of a triple cheeseburger add up in a positive way! Choosing healthier alternatives still allows you to eat on the go, but gives your body some of the nutrients and energy you need for your busy day. Next time you are in line for fast food notice the healthy options menu and challenge yourself to pick one option from there.

CHALLENGE:

Next time you are in a fast food line, pick at least one healthier option!

From Antarctica to Space

We all dream of becoming astronauts when we grow up, but how many of us can say that we fulfilled that dream? Well, Jessica Meir can. Meir, a 35-year old scientist from Maine, has recently been selected as one of eight people to be trained as an astronaut. Meir said that she has been dreaming of becoming an astronaut since she was five but it “always seemed so far off.” Meir said she even has a distinct memory of drawing a picture of an astronaut when asked what she wanted to do in first grade. And, with support from her friends and family, she never stopped dreaming since. “It’s amazing to have proof that dreams come true,” she said.

Going into space may seem like a challenge, but with a master’s degree in Space Studies from the International Space University in France, she is clearly no stranger to challenges. She has simultaneously pursued her dream in space travel along with her love of biology. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Anesthesia at Harvard Medical School; Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, and postdoctoral research in Comparative Physiology at the University of British Columbia. She has been everywhere from Antarctica to study penguins to the Himalayas to study bar-headed geese. In fact, she said that she has done so much that her parents are “used to (her) doing different and dangerous things.” As intense as this may sound to some people, Meir assured us that she is “the most fulfilled and content” by mentally and physically demanding tasks.

It is only natural then that Meir’s focus of animal biology is the study of their adaptations to difficult environments. For example, when Meir was in Antarctica, her team tried to see how Emperor Penguins can do taxing tasks such as holding their breath underwater for 27 minutes. When asked more about the penguins, she said that they’re “curious animals.” At three feet tall, and about 20-25 kilograms,

she said they were very loud but approachable. The penguins would even come over and peck at somebody’s boot if one of them stayed still. Emperor penguins aren’t the only animal Meir has a special connection with, though.

While studying bar-headed geese, Meir became “mother” to several. According to Meir, these geese ‘imprint’ on the first figure they come in contact with and assume them to be their ‘parent.’ When she became the ‘parent’, she said they followed her everywhere, napped on her,



and even cried when she left at night. The purpose of the experiment was to see how these animals can migrate from India to Mongolia by flying over the Himalayas. This is an especially formidable task, as flying requires 10 - 20 times as much energy and oxygen when flying over the Himalayas, as oxygen is notoriously scarce. One of her favorite experiments, she said, began with her riding away on her scooter and seeing how each one would react. According to Meir, the ‘imprinting’ instinct is so strong that they would fly to catch up with her. While riding along, their wing flap would touch her face, and she felt so glad to be so close to nature.

So how do these types of animals survive in such extreme conditions? Meir said that although there’s still work to be done, she thinks some animals go through physiological adaptations during times of need. The bar-headed goose, for example, manages to get the same amount of oxygen to all tissues when soaring over the Himalayas, due to a change in the lungs. Meir also said that the more scientists learn, the more they might be able to apply what they’ve learned to humans: “By learning by what mechanisms animals do this, the better chance we have of applying those mechanisms to humans.”

However, Meir soon has to leave her life of geese and penguins behind her. The two and a half year-long astronaut training program began August 12th 2013, and she has had two months to wrap everything up. Of course, all this moving can be stressful, but Meir is assured that it will be worth it. “I’m going to be doing things I would pay money to do” she said enthusiastically. The program will consist of everything from space walks, to private flying lessons, to Russian classes. Meir told us it was because of the danger and heightened knowledge, astronauts today “can’t be experienced in one thing - they have to be experienced in all things.”

Want to become an astronaut like Meir? Well, you’ll need education, motivation, a fit body, and a lot of luck. Every four years, NASA opens applications for the public. Over 6,100 people applied this time which was the second-highest number of applications they have ever received. From there, you go through 3 different stages of interviews, references or intense physicals. But, as Meir put it: “It’s pretty exciting to get a call from NASA on your cell phone.”

Be sure to listen to Jessica’s interview on Best Ever You Radio at www.blogtalkradio.com/besteveryou/2013/07/18/go-to-space-with-jessica-meir-1.

Alexandra Neudek is a seventeen year old senior at Falmouth High School in Maine, and is an advisor for The Best Ever You Network. Alexandra is responsible for Best Ever You Tumblr activities and is a blogger for the site. She has been acting in theatre since she was five, and has appeared in countless productions, including Stephen Sondheim’s *Dramafest* and a commercial for The University of Southern Maine. Alexandra is a graduate of Carnegie Mellon’s Pre-College program in Acting, as well as William and Mary’s Pre-Collegiate Program in Early American Studies. She is an avid debater with over 100 points from the National Forensic League. Her debate achievements include multiple first place trophies (Bates, Bangor, Erskine, etc), and qualifying as an alternate for the national tournament this year. Alexandra is also the recipient of other honors, such as the Excellence in Civics Award from Falmouth High School, being a finalist in the Merriconeag Poetry Contest, and a membership to The National Honors Society. Alexandra also writes for SexEtc run by Rutgers University and is currently organizing a 5k walk/run to benefit the organization “Suicide Awareness Voices of Education.” In her (sparse) free time, she enjoys reading about history, politics, and economics.

I Believe . . .



in GIRL POWER

Growing up as a teenager in today's media driven society can get a little crazy sometimes. Our cell phones are attached to us 24/7, and social media applications such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc... alert us that someone has tagged us, messaged us or there is new drama. When I think of the social media applications we teens use, I think of it as our own TV News Network. Who needs CNN or FOX when we can see it almost as fast as the stations do? As I travel giving my "Girl Talks" I am finding more and more that young girls spend way more time than necessary worrying about what everyone thinks about them. Rumors, gossip and drama spread like a bad disease causing girls to second guess themselves or better yet, they are afraid to be themselves because they are being judged under the microscope of social media.

When we are little we don't think about how mean other girls can be. Everyone is our friend and we just want to play imaginary games and eat ice cream together. Fifth grade comes around and we are given a dose of bad tasting medicine and realize girls are mean. Instead of being judged whether

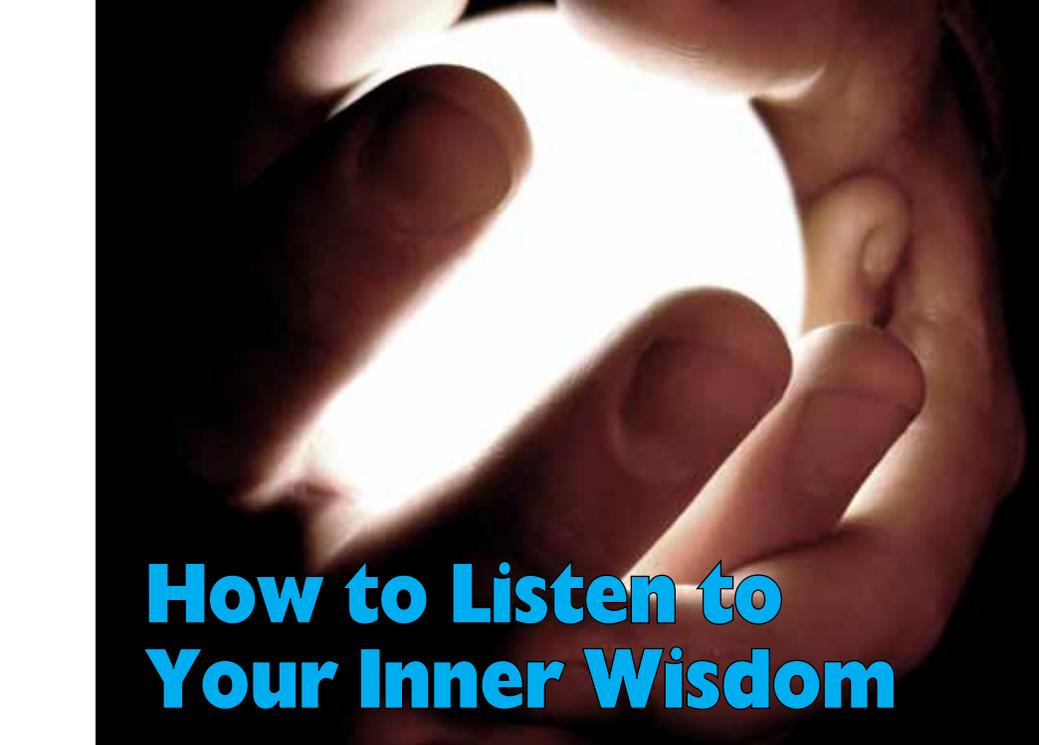
we can play nice together we are now being judged by what we wear, how much money we have, who has the best figure and who's popular. Not meeting the criteria immediately puts you in a "grouping" whether you like it or not which continues throughout your school years.... UNLESS.... you believe in yourself, know your selfworth, and are confident to ignore the haters and rock who you are and what you stand for. I like to call it having "Girl Power."

Finding your "Girl Power" is easier said than done. Parents can tell you how wonderful you are your entire life and you can still feel inadequate. Getting bullied takes you down a notch and many times girls never get back up. I've always been the type of girl who wants to fit in and wants to be liked, but not at all costs. I found my "sparkle" in middle school and at the time it was cheerleading. I was very small and therefore was a great flyer. This boosted my self confidence and I was surrounded by others who shared the same hobby, which gave me friendships that remain today. My high school years were no longer filled with cheerleading, I found theater and choir to be what made me "sparkle."

Again, being a part of a team and working together for the same cause enabled me to find great friends who shared my morals and values. My film and modeling career was my true love, but I only chose to share that with my closest friends. Once again, girls are mean and I found myself not wanting to share something that I was so proud of for fear I would be judged. That is so wrong and as soon as I figured that out I felt home free. Worrying about what others think keeps us from expressing who we are and what we are passionate about.

As long as I am making good choices and have positive morals and values, I can take my "Girl Power" and my "Sparkle" and make a difference by being just me – the best that I can be. No one is allowed to judge me except me – I believe having confidence has given me the opportunity to see my "girl power" and rock my "sparkle." My goal through Girls Above Society and the reason I created this organization is to help empower young girls to believe...in themselves...and be the best that they can be...not what society says they should be. So, go on and get some "Girl Power" of your own.

Lauren Galley is an 18-year old teen mentor, author, speaker and President of Girls Above Society, a non-profit organization, dedicated to empowering tween and teen girls to be confident and make positive choices as they face the tough pressures of today's media driven society. Lauren's signature "Girl Talk" program addresses issues relating to pressures affecting young girls who are bombarded by a new wave of negative values and standards. As Lauren travels throughout the U.S. speaking to schools and organizations she instills peer to peer motivation, leaving girls with a dose of "Girl Power" and an "I Can" attitude. Lauren's book "Steps to Success: An Empowerment Guide" is available on Amazon.



How to Listen to Your Inner Wisdom

I had a situation a few days ago with an acquaintance that was being very generous and going out of the way to support me. Or so it seemed on the surface—and it may indeed have been the truth. However, something in my gut kept telling me that this person, while indeed being generous and loving, had some ulterior motives, and I felt uncomfortable.

But even though my gut was sending warning signals, my head was telling me that I was being paranoid and simply couldn't accept the good coming my way. Let's call that feeling in my gut the inner child or my intuition, and let's call my head my adult who attempts to shut out what she really feels in order to make nice so you won't be mad at her.

I kept arguing with my gut, trying to pray and affirm away the persistent feelings of discomfort because, after all, this person was only trying to be helpful—and wasn't I constantly affirming my prosperity and my good? Well, here it was, so what was I whining about? And wasn't I supposed to be "spiritual" and take the high road even though I was uncomfortable? Something must be wrong with my consciousness if I can't rise above that, right?

I was in such a state of confusion, until I finally remembered that I had access to that which was clarity and truth, if only I could get out of my own way. I became willing to put aside all of my opinions and judgments about myself and the other person. I became willing to re-

lease the resistance to what I was feeling and I surrendered to the silence and stillness deep within my soul.

Aaaah, blessed rest from the chatterbox of my mind, attempting to figure out what was beyond the scope of my human understanding. As soon as I surrendered, the perfect solution was revealed. Do you know what it was?

It was to listen to myself.

I didn't have to rationalize my gut feeling away. I didn't have to make it right or wrong. I was being directed to listen and obey no matter how silly my discomfort seemed. I asked myself the following question: If I had a child that was uncomfortable around someone, would I tell her she was being "silly and ungrateful," or would I listen to her, make her feel safe and heard, and then take appropriate action?

We love our children so much and we would listen to them if they shared with us that they were uncomfortable in certain situations. We wouldn't make them be with people whom they felt uncomfortable around. So why is it so difficult to honor our own inner children?

Why does there have to be a specific reason why you feel the way you feel? If we listened to our intuition, hunches and gut feelings more often, we would probably find ourselves living much freer, happier and joyful lives.

There's something so empowering about honoring yourself, which is not the usual characteristic of someone who has experienced

addiction, dependence or abuse. We are too accustomed to questioning ourselves, doubting ourselves and waiting for others to tell us what to think, how to think, and if what we're thinking is right or wrong.

There is an inner compass within your own being that is always prompting and guiding you. However, if you're not tapped in to that inner wisdom, you often can't differentiate between your distorted fears and paranoia and what is real.

Here are a few tips to tune you in to your intuition.

1. Write out your confusion and concerns. Don't edit anything. Just write; get it out of your head and onto the paper.
2. Go within and say this simple prayer: "Spirit, I am willing to put aside all of my fears, opinions and judgments. I put aside everything I think I know and everything I think I don't know so I can access an open mind and a true experience."
3. Put your hands on your gut, or wherever you're feeling the anxiety and confusion in your body, and silently ask your inner child, "What are you trying to tell me? What do you need?"
4. Take several deep breaths and go into the silence for five to ten minutes. When your mind starts to argue, just bring your attention back to your breath.
5. Affirm out loud: "I know that infinite wisdom, the divine intelligence of the Universe, is right where I am and is guiding me right now to divine right action."
6. Take a deep breath and let go. Don't make any decisions until you feel safe and at peace.

We always want to move forward from love versus confusion and fear.

It is from this place of honoring yourself that you are also honoring anyone else involved. There is only a win-win for all concerned in the great scheme of things. Nobody loses. Speak your truth, honor your inner promptings and all will be well.

Ester Nicholson, renowned vocalist for Bette Midler and Rod Stewart, former addict, teacher, speaker and author uses her own astonishing story as the core of her powerful book: *Soul Recovery - 12 Keys to Healing Addiction....and 12 Steps for the Rest of Us—A Path to Wholeness, Serenity and Success* (Hay House/Agape Media). *Soul Recovery*, the process that Nicholson developed to heal herself of cocaine addiction – unifying the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous with spiritual principles and practices – has guided thousands to their recovery and highest potential. The book includes a forward by Rev. Michael Bernard Beckwith. For more information, please visit: www.soulrecovery.org

By Dr. David Fraser



Have You Put Yourself in Your Vision?

Have you put yourself in your vision?

Before we can create something in reality, we must create it in our mind. So developing a personal vision is a vital step in achieving something that didn't exist before.

How clear and detailed does our vision need to be? Clear and detailed enough that if it showed up, we'd recognize it. Without that clarity, it won't have the necessary guiding effect on our actions. Without that clarity, we won't notice the relevant opportunities that come our way; we won't see that they fit; in fact, we won't see them at all.

That's all very important.

But here's the key...

We need to place ourselves in our vision. We need to see where we fit in the end result, and in turn, the journey to get there. Otherwise we won't truly step into the dream. We won't connect it with our life. And we won't take the actions we need to take to make the vision a reality.

It feels safer to see a future state that doesn't include our role in it. But then we disconnect ourselves from the journey to get there. And so we don't take the right actions. And our vision doesn't become a reality.

It takes courage to see yourself in your vision, taking the lead you know you can take.

But that's what you need to do (if you want to change anything).

Vision comes before purpose in theory but because the whole process is iterative, that's a bit of a pedantic distinction. Having a vision is important because it opens us up to noticing opportunities that will help us move toward where we want to go. Before we can create something in reality, we have to create it in our heads first. Why is that? Well, I think it's like this: Our brains are primarily pattern recognizers. They draw our conscious attention to external sensory input that matches in some way with patterns we already have inside. So, if we want to notice those pieces passing by in the external world that relate to what we want, then we want to set up the necessary internal patterns first. We do that by developing a vision.

We need include ourselves in our vision for it to be fully effective. If we create a vision of some improved external state of our organization or the world at large, then, sure, we'll recognize steps along the way of that development when they happen in the external world, and we'll be a well-informed spectator, but our

connection with and involvement in the development won't be there, because we haven't set ourselves up to recognize parts of the pattern that have something to do with us.

Holding a vision that doesn't include ourselves is a mistake to which we are liable to be particularly prone the more ambitious the vision is. If we set out some change in the world that we know is possible, that we can play a part in leading even, one way of keeping ourselves safe (apparently) is not to write ourselves into the vision. The problem then is that we won't recognize the opportunities that come our way to play our part in achieving the vision. We haven't set up our internal patterns correctly. We've programmed ourselves to be observant spectators rather than effective contributors. Active participation is liable, therefore, to pass us by, as will remunerative reward for contributing.

Writing ourselves into our vision makes the difference between being a spectator in the stand at the games and being actively involved on the field below. On some issues, we might be quite happy to be in the stands, but if we want to play our full role in the world, we need to pick our event and write ourselves into the story.

David Fraser, PhD, is a leading authority on relationship skills in professional and personal life and author of the well-regarded and award-winning book *Relationship Mastery: A Business Professional's Guide*. David has a track record of pioneering new approaches. He has delivered major projects for government and private sector clients in challenging situations and set up a number of entrepreneurial ventures. He is a qualified commercial mediator and a NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) Trainer and has studied with leading proponents of these disciplines. David applies his unusual blend of expertise to supporting disparate groups working together in complex circumstances. He also runs workshop and coaching programs on personal mastery and relationship skills for both organizations and individuals, focusing on the potential to leverage results. The effects are profound—quite simply life-changing for the individuals and their organizations. David also finds the approach set out in his book to be extremely helpful in the home and family environment. Visit www.drdaavidfraser.com for more information.

Give the People What They Want! Secrets to Growing an Online Business

Starting an online business can give you a growing income stream, financial freedom for your family, and open up opportunities to pursue the things in life that spark your passion. But there's still no substitute for this age-old truth: to be successful in any business, you have to give people something they want to buy.

As someone who specializes in helping people turn their dreams into profitable online businesses, I have seen this principle work time and time again. And I have seen the opposite too. One of my first big product launches was selling a home study course that gave people everything they needed, but nothing they wanted. It was a flop that barely made us enough money to cover our costs.

On the other hand, the best ideas – the ones that really give people what they want – often involve very little investment on the front end. A great example is a brilliant idea pioneered by my students and friends, Jen and Xan Spencer who live near Raleigh, N.C.



A few years ago, Xan was working a full-time job when he and Jen got an idea for a business teaching people to how tie elaborate hair bows for their little girls. They know that parents love to dress up their little girls, and that it would appeal to moms of little kids everywhere.

They started working on the idea in December, and by March they had a website up and running. Just like any successful business, it took some work at the start. Xan would get home from his job at 8 p.m., and they would often stay up until 3 a.m. working on their plan. It took them a couple of months to launch their product because they had to find someone who was experienced in making hair bows. Not being very technically inclined, they also farmed out the work of creating their website, an easy matter that's common for people starting their own businesses online.

By March their business was up and running, selling a DVD and digital manual on how to tie hair bows for

\$27. Since their cost to produce their product was under \$5, the cost of shipping, they cleared \$22 on each sale.

The first month, they made \$5,000. By May they had made over \$8,000. But in September, their sales really took off, netting over \$16,700. And their sales have consistently stayed above \$10,000 per month ever since.

With their new income stream, Xan was able to quit his job at the end of August. He and Jen took a three-month road-trip vacation, driving all over the country. Along the way they continued to work a little bit each day on their business. They would make videos as they traveled and each night post them from the hotel where they were staying. And soon they were plotting their next venture: tutus!

"We thought, we are doing really well with the hair bow so let's stick with the same kind of customer," Jen says. "Tutus are huge right now, so we thought if they bought the hair bows, we could up-sell them the tutus."

One of the first things they did was buy the domain name misstutu.com. Now Jen makes videos showing moms how to make tutus. They started that business in April, and in the following two months they had \$19,000 in sales.

"We know what we are doing, so it comes faster," Jen says. "We just keep learning and growing and adding new things."

Now Xan, whose passion is acting, is creating another info product that will teach people both acting skills and the business side of the entertainment business. They are also working on a hair bows 2.0 product.

One thing that's really cool about the whole process was what Jen and Xan learned: their first online business took a couple of months to get up and rolling, but now the process is much quicker. They did their research and had a keen sense that moms wanted to learn how to tie hair bows, and were fortunate that their first online business was a success.

A lot of times, the first try doesn't work, and people just give up. Other people are so afraid of failing that they never try. I tell them, just plan on your first one or two tries failing, because that way you learn the process. And once you learn the process, you can start creating new online products quickly.

"When you fail, it is not like a traditional business," Xan says. "You are talking about a few hundred bucks to get your website up and running. We outsourced most of the work because we are not technical people. We found a team in India we still use to this day which is very reliable."

Their first year in business, Jen and Xan made \$93,672, and that was only for March through December. In the first seven months of 2010, they made \$105,436.56!

For Xan, the decision to overcome fear of failure to start his online business came down to "The Dickens Process" taught by Tony Robbins.

"I just kind of imagined what my life would be like if I kept going down the same path," he says. "I would be mediocre and I wouldn't be living up to my full potential, and I would never be as happy as I am now."

DOES YOUR ONLINE BUSINESS IDEA PASS THE DOOR-TO-DOOR SELLING TEST?

An online business is a business. It's not a business-in-a-box. If you can't sell the product, door-to-door, you will not be able to sell it online. The difference between an online business and a brick & mortar business is that the internet makes your business market the world instead of just your neighborhood.

- **FIND A MARKET:** Xan and Jen figured that people are crazy about their kids and want to dress up their little girls. They were able to create a product that the market desires from scratch, working from home in their spare time, and then get it out to the market using the steps I outline in my lessons.
- **ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT IT?** Online business audiences must be grown. If you're not passionate about what you're going to sell, forget about it. You will need to endorse, talk about and 'sell' your product to everyone with your social media identity. So ignore business-in-a-box type online opportunities and find something you're truly passionate about.
- **DOES IT PROVIDE R&R?** I'm not just talking about rest and relaxation, like Xan and Jen's three-month road trip. Sure, that's at the top of the list for most people wanting their own online business. R&R also stands for "renewable response." Ask yourself, "Will new customers naturally flow to my business as it grows?" This is clearly illustrated in Jen's and Xan's experience: As long as people are having babies, they will be looking for cute ways to adorn them!

His advice for anyone thinking of starting a business online: "Just make it happen – you are talking about financially a few hundred dollars and a little bit of time on the front end. We worked hard for about three months and now we spend 20 or 30 minutes a day."

The key to success, for the Spencer's and for everyone else I coach, is finding a product that gives consumers what they want.

"In the beginning, people would ask me what I did, and I was so embarrassed...can I make this cool?" Xan recalls. "I would say: 'I sell info products.' 'Oh, what kind?' 'OK, hair bows.'"

"Nowadays people ask me and I just tell them. It actually encourages a lot of people, so I am not afraid to say I made my success with hair bows."

Online marketing expert Russell Brunson started his company DotComSecrets.com in 2004 when he was a student at Boise State University. Within a year of graduating, he had made his first million. Known for teaching budding entrepreneurs to turn their hobbies and passions into online income, Russell, 33, also helps small business owners of all kinds to increase profits through Web marketing. Learn more at www.DotComSecrets.com.



Getting in Shape

Sure, some of us dream of being first over the line, arms held high, name bellowing from a bullhorn for all to hear. It's the day and the dream we've worked to attain, we remember, as we stand humped over, ice water trickling from head to very weary toes. The 5AM runs paid off, and we have a trophy or a medal to prove it.

What you might not see, however, is the vile enemy standing ready and hopeful to keep your future accomplishments at bay. A silent, unseen condition known as Osteoporosis, the plan is to mark the end of your running career quietly by targeting and weakening your bones.

Osteoporosis is a condition we hope will never affect our lifestyles. A silent bone disease that could potentially worsen over time, osteoporosis may cause bone loss and contribute to mineral density. Worse, we may not even realize what is happening in our bodies because weakening bones are not something we can "feel."

Because the symptoms of osteoporosis may not be visible before a fracture occurs, you may not even know you have the disease until a bone breaks or test results indicate low-bone mineral density. What's more, a person who has had a broken bone due to osteoporosis is at risk for having another. Protect yourself by using precautions and tracking how your osteoporosis is treated in order to help protect against fractures.

Osteoporosis – not just for women anymore.

Studies indicate that 90% of Americans have or will complain about lower back pain at some point in their lives. In fact, back pain is

the second most common health problem after the 'common cold.' And while most people associate lower back pain with joint, ligament and muscle problems, low back pain also may be a sign of low bone density.

Studies show a link between low bone density and lower back pain, so men should be concerned about bone density and take proactive measures as soon as possible as well. Why? Because studies have shown a link between low bone density and lower back pain in men between the ages of 35 and 45. In addition, studies have found that athletes with low bone density are more likely to suffer from injury than those with good bones.

Most men do not believe they are at risk for osteoporosis; the truth, however, is that one in five men will experience a bone fracture after the age of fifty due to osteoporosis. Being proactive about your bone density will not only relieve some of your lower back pain, but may even prevent a serious bone injury from occurring in the future.

If the degree of bone loss declines to the point of fracture, the relationship between low back pain and low bone density can quickly escalate. In healthy adults, a compression fracture in the lower back is most likely the result of a trauma, fall, or other serious injury. But for men and women with osteoporosis, something as simple as a strong cough or sneeze while tying shoelaces can result in sudden and severe back pain. For both men and women, there are two things that can improve bone density: exercise and better nutrition.

Exercise can be very beneficial for people with lower back pain because flexibility can be improved, as can muscle strength. Exercise can also help build bone density (i.e., resistance exercises). "Plank exercises" are great to help bone density in the lower back, as well as back and core strength.

The best exercises for bone growth are strength-training exercises. These can be low or high impact, and may target a specific group of muscles, in static or repetitive movements. Isometrics, a specialized form of strength training, also benefits bones. Isometrics involve standing (or sitting) in one spot, and again, concentrating on specific muscles. One of the major perks of isometrics is they can be performed almost anywhere and require no equipment or gym membership. Minimal isometrics can even be done at work or in your car. My Visibly Fit™ Babyboomer features a range of strength-training exercises that promote bone health.

While any exercise is better than none, several have little effect on bone growth. Walking is one example (because the legs absorb most of the impact), but walking is helpful for one's hips. Swimming, of course, has even less impact on bones than walking. Strength-training exercises, combined with proper nutrition and supplementation with essential bone building nutrients, play a role in stimulating bone electricity that may help bone grow. Although there is still much to discover, what we do know can influence how young people maintain strong, healthy bones and how those with bone problems can harness bone growth.

WENDIE PETT is a nationally renowned fitness expert and coach, mother, TV host, speaker, author and creator of the Visibly Fit™ exercise program. Wendie's Visibly Fit™ instructional DVDs teach wellness maximization through the balance of mind, body, and spirit while using one's body as a gym (and saving hundreds in membership fees). To learn more, visit www.wendiepett.com, www.wakeupwithwendiepett.com, and www.facebook.com/visiblyfit

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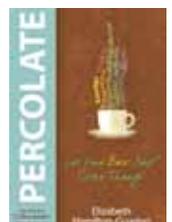
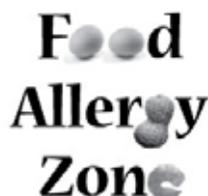
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Drop That Sugar!

Ten Surprising Foods to Leave Off Your Grocery List

When you think of addiction, various illegal and harmful substances probably spring to mind...but not sugar. Yes, you know that candy, cookies, soda, and your other favorite sweet treats aren't the healthiest options—and sure, you may feel the urge to satisfy a craving once in a while—but there's no way that sugar can totally hijack your life...right? Wrong. Believe it or not, sugar is highly addictive and acts on the pleasure center of the brain just like alcohol and heroin. In other words, the more you eat, the more you want. Combine sugar's addictive nature with its omnipresence in our sweets-and-carbs-loving society, and you have a recipe for a health disaster.

Today, the average American consumes more than 130 pounds of sugar each year, which your body isn't designed to handle. As a result, our country is plagued with high rates of obesity, diabetes, chronic fatigue, high cholesterol, metabolic syndrome, and much more—a very high price to pay for the sake of habit, preference, and convenience.

One of the first steps in decreasing your reliance on sugar is making smarter choices regarding the food you buy and eat. Unless you grow your own vegetables and raise your own livestock, the grocery store is where you make primary food decisions for you and your family. Though most people recognize the junk-food quality of obvious high-sugar foods like candy and ice cream, many unhealthy items are available in the stores that you

may erroneously think of as healthier alternatives. Also, remember that sugar doesn't come only from sweet foods, but from anything containing corn syrup, for example, or from carbohydrates.

Here are ten foods that aren't as healthy as you may have thought:

- **DIET SODA.** Diet sodas are sugar-free and calorie-free, so they must be a healthier alternative to sugared, "original" soft drinks, right? Wrong. Diet drinks are artificially sweetened with aspartame (NutraSweet), a chemical that causes brain damage and increases appetite. The type of caramel coloring used in many diet sodas is a carcinogen, and the phosphoric acid in sodas leeches calcium out of your bones, contributing to osteoporosis. Yikes!

Stay away from sodas of all types, both sugared and zero-calorie. If you like the fizz of soda, drink mineral water instead. You can flavor it with fresh lemon and lime. To gradually wean yourself off of sweetened drinks, try adding stevia powder instead of sugar or chemical sweeteners to your beverages. Stevia is a natural, plant-based sweetener that has virtually no calories and doesn't carry the health risks that artificial sweeteners do. Over time you can gradually decrease the amount of stevia powder that you put in your drinks.

- **FROZEN ENTRÉES.** Because today's brands of health-conscious entrées are low in fat and calories, many dieters believe that they're making a smart decision by eating these handy products. A quick look at the ingredients list shows that this isn't the case. For example, a glazed chicken entrée from the most popular line of "healthy" frozen foods contains high-fructose corn syrup, several preservatives, salt, artificial caramel color, partially hydrogenated oil (trans fats), sugar, and maltodextrin (more sugar). None of those things are going to win a healthy ingredient contest anytime soon!

Frozen dinners don't really save much time—it doesn't take long to chop up some organic chicken and vegetables and make a stir-fry with fresh ingredients that you can control. Taking a few minutes to throw together a homemade meal like this ensures that you eat healthy ingredients and avoid dangerous chemicals.

- **BACON.** Sorry, bacon lovers. Though a high-protein breakfast is desirable, you can find much healthier protein sources than bacon. Conventional bacon is made from feedlot hogs and is usually loaded with nitrites and other preservatives, sugars, artificial smoke flavoring, chemical coloring, and MSG. Ounce for ounce, bacon is mostly fat and chemicals. Did your appetite survive that description?

If you really love bacon, find a local farmer who can sell you bacon that's made without harmful chemicals from animals that are raised on good food without hormones.

- **CANNED SOUPS.** A piping hot bowl of chicken soup or chili sounds like a healthy meal. Even though meat and vegetables are the primary ingredients, canned soup typically contains feedlot meat, too much salt, genetically modified ingredients, high-fructose corn syrup, MSG, and preservatives.

If you don't want to make your own soup, look for brands that are made from organic ingredients, without chemical additives, and that are canned in BPA-free containers.

- **GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS.** In the 1990s, food manufacturers began using plants that had gone through a process of genetic engineering—inserting genes from other plants, animals, or bacteria to alter the crop's genome. Foods that have been genetically modified—often referred to as GM foods or GMOs (genetically modified organisms)—have caused concern among

some members of the scientific community for possible human and environmental health risks, such as infertility, organ damage, and immune system problems.

No one knows for certain what harm these products will end up causing to people's bodies and the environment as we move into the future. My guess is that certain modifications are probably harmless, but some of them are certainly not. Unfortunately, only time will tell. In the meantime, I advise you to stay away from genetically engineered food products whenever possible. By law, food labeled "100 percent organic" can't contain genetically modified ingredients, so look for that label when shopping. Better yet, find a local farmer who raises nonmodified crops.

- **MICROWAVE POPCORN.** You may consider popcorn to be a low-calorie, high-fiber snack, but microwave popcorn isn't a healthy choice. When microwaved, popcorn bags leak perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and other plastic residues into your food. PFOA has been linked to infertility, thyroid disease, and a host of other endocrine disorders.

Aside from the packaging, commercial microwave popcorn typically contains harmful trans fats, preservatives, artificial colors, sugar, chemical sweeteners, and other "flavor enhancers" like MSG. Read the ingredients once and you'll never touch a bag again. To avoid dangerous chemicals, pop your own non-GMO corn at home with an air popper. If you like, add organic butter and sea salt.

- **FRUIT JUICE AND JUICE DRINKS.** Even though fruit juice is loaded with vitamins and antioxidants, even 100 percent juice contains too much sugar to be a good choice for those who are trying to limit their sugar intake. Excess fructose (fruit sugar) causes body fat accumulation, increased appetite, liver disease, and elevated cholesterol and triglycerides. And be careful: Juice cocktails and juice boxes for kids are often only 10 percent fruit juice, with the rest of the ingredients being high-fructose corn syrup and other sweeteners, artificial colors, and preservatives.

An 8-ounce glass of orange juice has approximately 25 grams of sugar. Keep this in mind when portioning your beverages. If you choose to drink fruit juice occasionally, make sure you drink 100 percent juice (with no additives) and limit yourself to a 4-ounce serving.



- **RICE CAKES.** Any all-carbohydrate snack—especially if it's made of processed enriched grains—causes an insulin spike followed by a blood sugar crash several hours later. Rice cakes, granola bars, and other all-carb snacks aren't good choices for sugar addicts, because the lack of protein keeps them on the blood sugar roller coaster and stimulates cravings.

Half a rice cake (whole grain, not enriched) topped with almond butter or organic cheese adds fat and protein to mitigate the insulin response and keep your blood sugar levels more stable.

- **PROTEIN BARS.** Most of the protein bars found on the shelves of grocery stores and health food stores are laden with sugars, syrups, preservatives, and fractional oils (oils that are processed to become more saturated than they are naturally).

These products are basically candy bars with added protein. Fortunately, not all protein snack bars are loaded with chemicals. Visit www.BeatingSugarAddiction.com for current recommendations for healthy, all-natural snack bars.

- **PEANUT BUTTER.** Though natural peanut butter is a good source of healthy fats and protein, industrial peanut butter (including commercial brands like Skippy and Jif) is made with hydrogenated oils (trans fats) to keep the oil from separating to the top of the jar. Industrial brands also add sugar and sometimes other additives like preservatives and flavorings.

Stick with organic, natural peanut butter. The ingredients should have no more than two items: peanuts and (maybe) salt. Refrigerate natural peanut butter after opening and stirring.

When you come across any of these foods in the grocery store, keep walking! You can't eat what you don't have. And remember to make small, sustainable changes instead of trying to overhaul your eating habits overnight. The good news is, a basic knowledge of good nutrition and where to find it can have a huge impact on your well-being and health, now and in the future.

Dan DeFigio is the author of *Beating Sugar Addiction For Dummies*®.

Dreaming Heaven: Who Am I Really and the Power of Forgiveness

In the beginning, there was the Light. The Light came from the Source; the Great Mystery; Creator; God – all terms for the World behind the world; the Reality behind our reality; the Sun behind the sun. It seems that if we sit with any great aspect of life long enough, we come to a place with more questions than answers. Even science, with all its facts and figures, is only a snapshot of information, an interpretation of Reality and Truth. Creation is simply too vast, too multidimensional, and too ever-changing to be defined by any definition or way of existing. Our attachment to the need to know how life is and who we are has driven us through time. We humans find a sense of safety and confidence in the belief that we “know.” We have been on a great journey of learning by experience, education, definition, projection, and reasoning. We use these tools to take in all that goes on within and around us, and we process our journey into a story of life that works for us.

We create identities and roles to which we give all our attention and in which we put all of our faith. My incarnations in this life have been as a rancher, commodities trader, musician, father, husband, son, addict, recovered person, teacher, CEO, and on and on. They were all roles I played in my story of life – some great; and some not so great. As I have evolved in my life, I have come to realize that who I am really is the one who has lived through all of these phases and stages. I am the one born into the form of being human, and I am the one who has learned and grown, experienced, and taken on the beliefs that defined my perspectives and identities.

None of my beliefs or identities was actually “me”; they were what I believed about who I was. They were aspects of my life’s evolution and experience. I am that Light – that consciousness – that

came into this world in the form of a baby boy. From that time on, I have lived this journey one day, one choice, and one experience at a time. To return to me – the Light, the Spirit - and to be free to live my life without all the attachments I had accumulated in my first 40 years of life, I had to find a way to let go of my belief in what I “knew.” I had to find a way to put the past behind me, rather than live with it wrapped around me like a well-worn security blanket. I had come to confuse “comfortable” with “familiar.” I found refuge in the predictability of the familiar, mistaking it for comfort. The unknown of a bigger, more open life, was unfamiliar.

I had been taught that I should appreciate material things and not expect anything beyond my basic comforts and needs. If I wanted something more than the cultural norms, it meant I was ungrateful or selfish.

I lived within these rules until something snapped, and I saw myself as a programmed character that had lost an authentic connection to my Self! I was not happy or content. I would not buy into the official story that something was wrong with me because life wasn’t good enough for me. I had a choice: to either live by medicating my discomfort with food, drugs, money, gambling, sex, excessive working out, diet fads, religion, on and on (all of those options our culture offers up as solutions to our feelings of disconnection) or I could find the way back to me - to who I truly am. In looking for answers, I learned some basic tenets to healing and reconnecting to my Heart and Spirit. I learned that I had to develop a practice of forgiveness. First, I had to forgive myself for all the ways I had sold myself out. I had put my faith in a great matrix of beliefs and stories about life that, as a child, I had no idea might

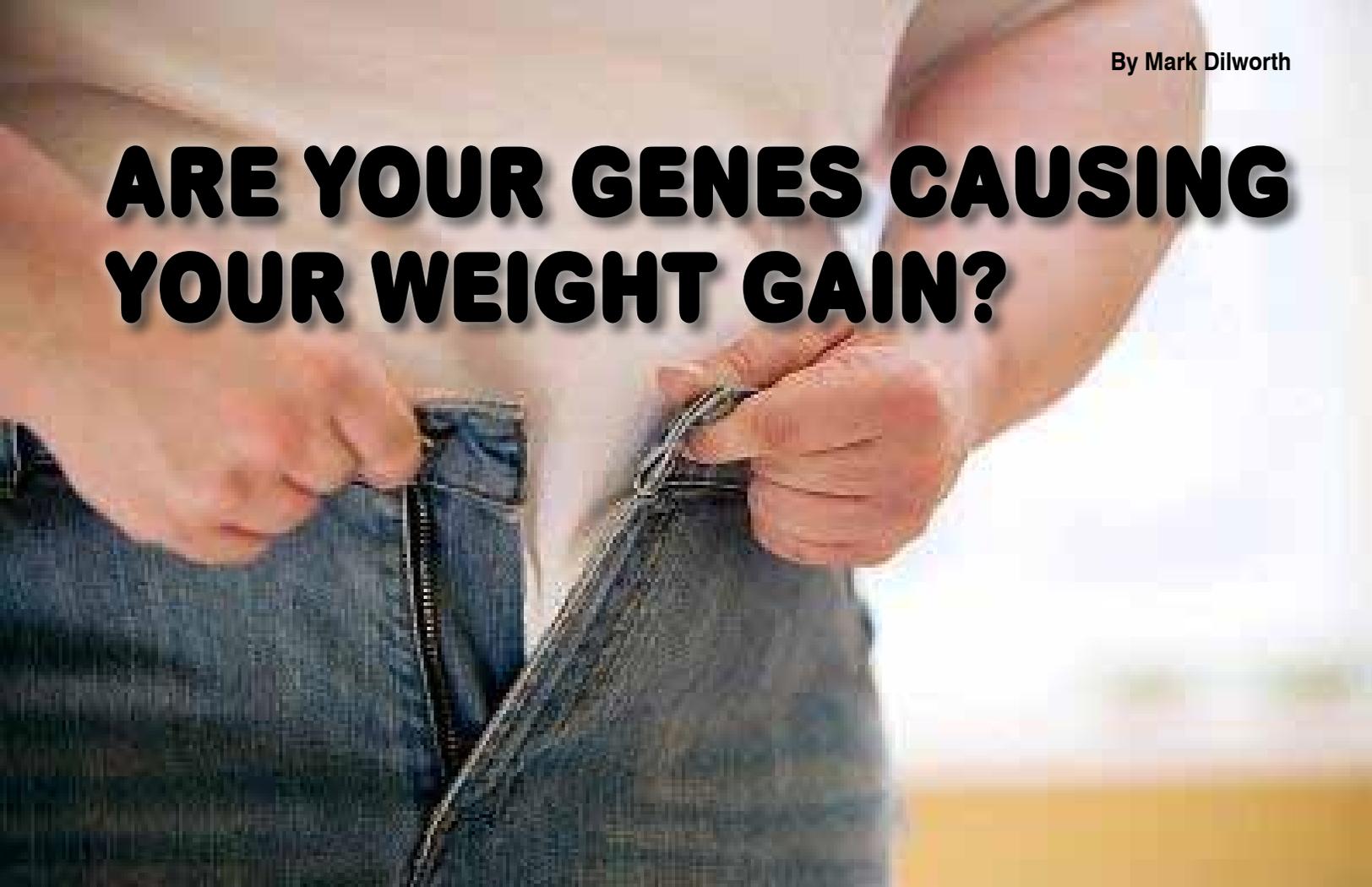
not be true for me as a unique human being. My truth is mine; it is not necessarily something that fits into a blanket belief system. In forgiving and learning to release my attachment to the judgments that were interwoven throughout my beliefs, identities, and experiences, I began clearing my mind’s view of life and myself. Forgiveness was the key to cleaning my perceptions and uncovering my reality. In many cases, I simply had to forgive others for not living up to my expectations. That was a big one. People are who they are and do what they do, not because of me, but by their own free will. I have no right to demand that others fit into the role I might want to cast them into.

The other side of forgiveness is to free myself from the energetic connection to the objects of my judgments. When we project judgment, we attach ourselves to the objects of our judgment. When I looked at it that way, I realized I didn’t want any connection to those things. I began the practice of not indulging in the beliefs that held my judgments in place. This is a practice. It takes time to undo our attachments, but we can do it because we are the ones who created them.

By taking responsibility and shifting our attention away from the loop of thoughts that support the judgments, we shift our attention to thoughts of Light, freedom, running water. . . whatever works for you. By taking 100 percent responsibility for our life (owning our part in all of it), we can re-create what we have created – our relationships to our Self and the world around us. That’s a key to *Dreaming Heaven*: the power of personal responsibility and the practices of freeing our Self through forgiveness for the sake of living our authenticity. Blessings!

Lee McCormick is the co-author of *Dreaming Heaven: the Beginning is Near (Hay House)*, the powerful journeybook, DVD and meditation enabling you to walk in the footsteps of Lee and his fellow guides. They take you on a journey to your authentic self by following the pathways of the great mystery school at Teotihuacan, Mexico; first created by the Toltec masters thousands of years ago. Lee is the founder of The Integrative Life Center in Nashville, The Ranch Recovery Center in Tennessee, and The Canyon Treatment Center in Malibu, California. As a creative force in the mental health and recovery scene for more than 15 years, he is also the executive producer and has a leading role in the documentary *Dreaming Heaven*. Lee has led many journeys to Teotihuacan, that astonishing place of power, and he has developed a far-reaching relationship with the mystery of the shamanic world that is present there. For more information, go to www.dreamingheaven.net or www.spiritrecovery.com.

ARE YOUR GENES CAUSING YOUR WEIGHT GAIN?



While it's true that we inherit certain body types, don't blame genetics if you're overweight or obese. If your jeans don't fit anymore, don't blame your genes. Ultimately, your body weight will depend on how much you eat and how much you exercise, not your genetics. Hard, smart exercise and a good meal plan can overcome genetics.

If you consistently eat more calories than you burn, you will consistently gain weight and add on body fat, no matter what your genetics may be. If you are active and exercise regularly (especially strength training), it will help you burn more calories. It will also keep your metabolism "humming along." Part of being active is to walk as much as you can every day.

You need to know how many calories you need each day to reach your fat burning goals. Use your basal metabolic rate,

your activity level and your goals to set your daily calorie intake. You must maintain a caloric deficit on most days in order to lose weight and burn fat. If you exercise regularly, it will be easier for you to achieve your caloric deficit.

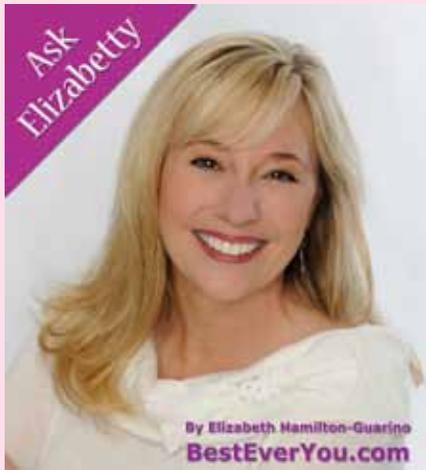
Having said that, you must eat enough or your body will shift into starvation mode and begin to store fat. For example, if you eat 1,000 calories a day for too long (like 1-2 weeks), your body will shift to starvation mode...1,000 calories a day is not enough food to even support your basal metabolic rate.

A caloric deficit of 300-500 calories for 5-6 days in a week will help you burn fat. You can take 1-2 days of the week and be in caloric surplus of 300-500 calories, and still be okay for the week.

It also matters what you eat. Eating whole, natural food is not the same

as eating processed foods and sugary foods, which promote belly fat. All calories are not equal. Start a healthy meal plan filled with whole, natural foods. Fruits, vegetables, lean meats, nuts and low-fat dairy products fit the bill. Severely limit sugars, fast foods, processed foods and foods in a box or bag.

Keep a food journal. Research has proven that you will have a better chance of succeeding with your meal plan and fat loss if you keep a food journal. By logging your actual food choices, you are holding yourself accountable throughout the day. You will also plan your meals better. It will also help protect you from binge eating and emotional eating if you write down why you eat what you eat. Do the things necessary to change your body composition. You don't need to strictly count calories but you need a good idea of how much to eat.



About Ask Elizabethetty

Welcome to Ask Elizabethetty! This is a new, probably humorous and definitely real, advice column, where Best Ever You Founder and CEO, Elizabeth Hamilton-Guarino and special contributing guests will answer your questions.

Ask Away :) Expect humor.
Expect Serious.

Just keep in mind, while you are reading or listening, that Elizabeth was nicknamed "Elizabethetty" by Dr. Katie Eastman. While writing and working on Percolate (Hay House, 4/14/14) together, Katie discovered Elizabeth's love for Betty White and Erma Bombeck and the sense of humor needed for a mom of four boys and wife of over 15 years! And now, "Elizabethetty" hopes to bring that laughter to you. Oh yes, and expect to see Katie in here too. :) No shoe shopping or advice column adventure is complete without her...

Remember #WWBWD –
When you have a question,
Elizabeth often asks,
"What Would Betty White Do?"
(There's a little Betty White in all of us.)

Love,
Elizabethetty & friends

Do These Jeans Make My Butt Look Fat?

Welcome to Ask Elizabethetty! I've definitely gone back and forth over which question to answer first. There have been some doozies submitted! Thank you.

I think I'll take a try answering what could be the most famous question of them all, "Do these jeans make my butt look fat?"

Now, as I answer this, keep in mind that, so far, nine people sent in this question. Yes. Nine. I put up the new section on the website, give a spot to submit a question, and well, you all are messin' with me. I love it. Thank you for the pictures too!

So here goes.

No. Yes. No. Yes. No. Yes. No. Yes. Yes.

Ok, I'm done, right?

Oh, all right...

Here's a tip: Deep down, if you have to ask someone that question, you already know the answer. You really do. When you ask someone the question, "Do these jeans make my butt look fat?" or for that matter, insert and ask about any clothing in that question, it's a "validate me" scenario. It could even place the answer (I made up that word.) in a tough spot. (Hint to men reading: run, lie or sidetrack when asked or understand you are going to be late for whatever you are getting ready for or try the "let's go shopping" (for bigger jeans only she doesn't know it) for a way out.

My husband, for example, of, by the way, over 15 years, knows this one question when it hits him like a freight train. He now basically just hands me the credit card to go buy bigger jeans. It's all good. Honestly, I usually end up buying shoes instead. Anyway, yesterday as we were walking through the grocery store and I was telling him I was going to write this blog, we stumbled into this card.

We giggled. It was a sign. He then shared his new goal, which is "to fit into my pants." Sick, twisted and hilarious all in one tiny sentence and a good goal I might add because I am at the gym daily.

Now shifting gears to the person who sent in this photo.



Seriously? Whatsupwiththat? You took the buying bigger jeans to the new extreme. So no, those don't make your rear look fat, in fact I feel mildly like I want to feed you. Oh wait, honey, I can tell that baggy rear end anywhere! Dear sweet husband of 15 years, we need to buy you some smaller pants or maybe you CAN actually borrow some of mine. I do remember a year ago when we took you out to buy bigger pants, but the gym time has changed us both!

Love is love. Does it really matter if your rear end looks big at this moment in time in those jeans? Does it matter if it looks too small in those jeans? Find the humor.

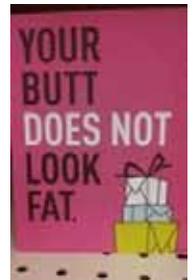
I can remember one very fine moment of this 15 year marriage, where I was so super excited, a few months after having a baby that my jeans fit. Seriously, I hollered into the other room for my husband to come rushing to discover with me that my jeans now fit. Woo-hoo!!! Right??? He came into the bathroom and looked at me in the mirror and said, "Honey, those are my jeans!" We laughed so hard and then he felt bad because he was wearing pregnant jeans.

Love is love. Be easy on yourself and each other.

Above all, if you hear, "Does this dress make me look fat?" Well, I'd suggest a hug, followed by another hug, followed by a few more. Someone is feeling insecure, heavy, not so great and so forth and it's your clue and call for love.

Ease up on yourself. Love each other.

Love yourself. Be Your Best Ever You.



(Oh and a special loving shout out to my husband, who put on his biggest, baggiest jeans and participated in letting me snap that photo of him. We did exaggerate a bit to illustrate the point, but I am scared as now he is running around the house in the tightest of Speedos asking me to re-take his photo. Ok, he's not really doing that either and he wants me to note that he doesn't own one either... just to be clear :-)

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