

**Life Coaching 101**  
**or**  
**How to Take Control of Your Life**



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# Introduction

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In my coaching practice I work with women who are struggling to regain the passion and power in their lives. Somewhere along the way they let it slip away while they cared for everybody else: children, spouses, partners, parents, co-workers, friends, pets everybody but themselves. There are many tools that a life coach uses to help a person reconnect to the songs of the soul but there are ten that I call Jan's top ten tips.

In no particular order they are, as follows:

- #1. Know what it is you want, have clear goals.
- #2 Know that you do not know some things and ask for help
- #3 Be kind to yourself.
- #4 Acknowledge the wins: big or small they all count
- #5 Do not say I can, say I will: there is a difference
- #6 Fail forward, learn the lesson, move on
- #7 Have an objective accountability partner on your side
- #8 Take baby steps, change will not happen over night
- #9 Fear is going to show up, acknowledge it and move on... and finally,
- #10 this is a process, it will be hard, it will be challenging, some things will be uncomfortable to look at but if you don't, if you step away and let fear take over, you will never fulfill your legacy.

## **Living la vida fearless, Jan**

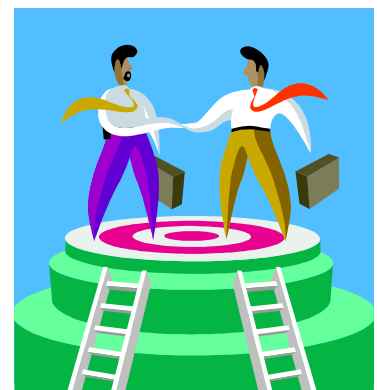
<http://www.tobeyourbest.net>

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coming soon:

<http://victim-to-victor.com>

<http://thatsnotcool.ca>



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## **Tip #1 : Know what it is you want: be very clear on your goals**

I have worked with hundreds of people and had thousands of conversations with people who want to find a way to “be happy.” When I ask “what do you really want in your life?” many people reply “ I just want to be happy.”

I always find that to be pretty vague and so the question turns into “ OK so what does happy look like to you?”

That’s usually where the pause starts, the silence happens, the voice goes quiet and the reply is usually something like, “well I don’t know. I’ve never really thought about it.”

That’s the problem right there.

Can you imagine going on a trip to somewhere you’ve never been, to meet somebody you’ve never met, at a place you’ve never seen, and doing it all without some kind of guidance: a map, a compass, a phone, a GPS, the north star? How would you even know where you were going, or if you had even arrived at the right place at the end of it all?



From my perspective that’s what “ I don’t know” is when I ask somebody what happy would look like. Every person has a different idea of what would make them

happy: that's the cool thing about being human. We all have different experiences and different reactions to what makes us feel joyful and fulfilled and they're all fine. The problem is, if you don't know what that is anymore, how will you know how to bring it into your life?

One exercise I use when helping somebody recreate their personal empowerment and take control of their life is to suggest they spend some time thinking about what they loved to do as a child. If that's too hard we go to one time in one day where they felt completely at peace: to a time when all was right with the world.

One person I worked with was not able to recall many happy moments in her early years but she did notice that her memories of being outside and around animals made her feel good. Working from that place of joy, honoring the feeling in her heart, we dug a little deeper to uncover the creation of the connection to her joy. She loved being around animals, they made her feel good, she felt needed and felt acknowledged by the wagging of a tail or the purring of a kitty cat. The smile on her face when she spoke of these moments told me so much about her which she found difficult to put into words. This was a happy time and there was a way to re-create this for her.

This woman had decided she needed a career change, a complete shift, in order to accommodate her new family and stay current in the fragile economy. She wanted a job, a career, that would make her feel fulfilled, make her feel happy, make her feel like she was making a difference.

In one of our coaching sessions I gave her some homework: research jobs that would put her around animals all day and then explore the choices available. Zoo keeper, dog walker, pet store clerk, dog sitter, vet, vet technician, groomer..the

choices were many and she had never realized the options available to her. I am happy to say that it has been almost a year now since we started working together and she now owns her own pet grooming business out of her house!

She's going to be very successful and here's why. She loves her job, she loves doing what she's doing, it fulfills her soul and her bank account.

**Tip #: know what it is you want, be very clear on your vision.**



## **Tip #2 : Know that you do not know some things and ask for help**

The definition of insanity according to Albert Einstein, “doing the same things over and over and expecting a different result.”

Have you ever tried to do something and realized that it’s just not working? What happens when you find yourself in that position? Are you the kind of person who tries to do things on your own because you know nobody else is going to help you anyway so why bother asking? Are you the kind of person who just gives up after a while and never tries again? Are you the kind of person who has a million ideas, all of them good, that are sitting inside your head waiting to be put into action but you’re just waiting for the perfect moment?

When I was staying home to care for my children I made a choice to do so. I loved being with them and they loved having me around: it was a wonderful time in my life and I was so happy that I had the opportunity to do what I wanted to do. Kids will be kids and oddly enough they will grow up and want to do things on their own or with their school mates or the neighbourhood kids, anybody but mom.

Recognizing that this time had come in our relationship I decided that it was time to shift into another career. Serendipity offered me an open door and I took it, literally, into my next job as a relocation consultant. I got to help newcomers to our city assimilate to their new area. We found them housing, placed the children in schools, assisted the “trailing spouse” with social venues and groups to join, read leases, drove around a lot and had a lot of fun.

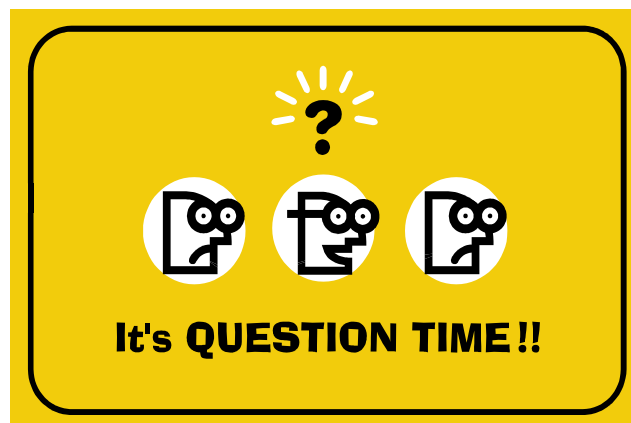
When I was first approached about working for the company and realized the

scope of what I'd be doing I balked at the idea. "Me? I don't know anything about relocation. I don't know anything about how to find a house or place children in schools." "But" replied the owner "you do know the area inside out. You do know how to make people feel comfortable. Just remember when you have somebody with you from out of town, you're already much more knowledgeable than they about the areas. You can do this I believe in you."

That was all I needed to hear, she was right, I did know the area really well, I loved the city, I loved to meet people, the hours worked really well for our schedule and well, it was a new beginning for me in a whole new direction. The company was quite successful for many years and I eventually became a partner in it. If you'd told me that a few years ago I would have just laughed it off but, I knew what I didn't know, I asked questions, I learned, I studied and I continued to learn.

If I'd held onto the perspective that I was not capable of taking on that job, if I'd held onto the perspective that I just didn't know how to do it and left it there I'd have missed out on so many wonderful opportunities.

**Tip #2 Know that you don't know something and ask for help.**



## Tip #3 : Be kind to yourSELF

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This is a pet peeve of mine.

I grew up in a time when, from the culture I was raised in, women in particular were not to be noticed, men too, but mostly women. That whole rule of “children were meant to be seen and not heard” was one that played a big role in much of my extended family and my church as well. Having also been exposed to sexual abuse as a child my big learning became “you don’t count, you are not worthy, you don’t matter.” Yikes! Carry that around as a belief for a few years and eventually you hold it as your truth, well at least I did.

When opportunities arose for me to choose to be kind to myself, and they happened often, or to turn my back on the opportunity I did what every normal rejected kid would do: I’d take the hard road, the road not so kind, the road of hard knocks if you will. Kindness: not for me thanks I don’t deserve it. There were many people in my life who were offering I was just not willing to open my heart to receive.

As an advocate now for personal empowerment I hear many people say the same things that I used to say. The key word here is “used to.” So many people have come to believe that they didn’t matter to the people around them that they eventually stopped asking for kindness. I have worked with many women who have had abusive backgrounds and the result, always, is that they believe they do not deserve to be treated well. That truth sits at the very core of who they are and is carried with them unless and until they have a chance to take on another perspective. That’s the work we do together: is it true that you don’t deserve this or is it your truth? There’s a big difference !

Once a person begins to see that they do deserve to be treated well and that this must begin within themselves the magic starts. It's difficult, but not impossible to learn how to be kind to yourSELF after so many years of thinking it was not deserved. If you want others to treat you well you have to do the same thing. Like attracts like, it's the law of attraction in action.

A very simple thing to do for yourself, just to be kind to you, is to allow yourself to be imperfect, to let people see you, flaws and all, in all your perfect imperfection. Don't worry about what anybody else thinks about who you are or what you do: stop "shoulding" on yourSELF. I guarantee you if you drop the idea that you "should do" something just because it's an expectation, you'll experience a whole new way of being, a kinder gentler way toward a path of compassion for yourSELF.

### **Tip #3 Be kind to yourSELF**



## **Tip #4 : Acknowledge the wins, big or small, they all count**

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Have you ever started to do something so special, so important, so exciting that you just could not wait to get started? You know the thing that gets your juices flowing, bubbling up inside like a corked bottle of champagne just waiting to burst open. For some people it might be learning how to paint, surf, play an instrument, plant a garden, learn to drive, dance, rock climb: whatever it is the spark has been lit and you're ready to go.

A few years ago I decided to challenge myself physically by signing up for a 60km walk to support breast cancer. I went to the orientation meeting with a team of women: six of us would walk together. The meeting was in February the walk was in September so we had lots of time to train right? That's almost 8 months of training and, let me tell you, the coaches that they hired to support us were magnificent at keeping us motivated.

We had schedules to follow and meetings to go to if we wanted more support. I had my outfit picked out to start training, 'cause you have to have an outfit, and the best of intentions. Week one was great, I followed the schedule and was really excited to be doing this challenge. If you've ever lived in Ontario in February you'll know what I'm talking about when I say the weather was, well a little cold. Frozen toes, frozen hands, frozen feet and ten kilometres of walking did not warm me up. By the end of that first week I was ready to quit, what the heck was I thinking? What made me think I could train for such a long walk?" You're not athletic. That's ridiculous, stay in where it's warm Jan":all these thoughts were running through my head when week two came around and it was time to start training, yet again. I had lots of time to train what harm would it do if I missed a week?

Lucky for me those coaches were superb at their job and so, when I gave them excuses about not needing to train in the cold, they offered me many choices, perspectives and reasons to persist. I really had no good reason not to go out in the cold, except that I didn't want to, and so I donned my winteriest clothes and ventured out. I'm so glad I did because, as each month passed and we got closer to the date, my body became accustomed to twenty and thirty kilometre walks.

The day of the walk arrived and our team set out for the adventure of a lifetime. Six of us started, six of us finished. One of our team had been diagnosed with bone cancer just a few months prior so we were honoured that she was able to make the walk. She could not walk it all but she started and finished with us and met us at each stop. We called her our lighthouse and we were so grateful for her support. Crossing that victory line, the last mile or so of the walk, is a heady event. It's red carpet and cheering crowds and tears and cameras and applause and absolute euphoria at having completed something so exceptional. Our team of non-athletes, yes we were all called that during our younger years, danced across the finish line in the top 20% of finishers.

Here's what I learned from that 60km walk. It was all about the baby steps, each one building on the next one, until we finished a full 60km. Step by step by step: sometimes falling, getting back up, set backs like pulled muscles and sprained ankles, falling again and getting back up again. If I'd given up after that first week, if I'd not been supported by the knowledge that this was baby steps, I'd never have done what I set out to do.

Why did I choose this event to learn this lesson? This was the year I turned 50 and my personal challenge was to complete something really out of character for me and this was it. It was all about baby steps and as long as I held onto the vision I

was able to start back up again when the going got tough.

**Tip #4 Acknowledge the wins, big or small, they all count.**



## **Tip #5 : Do Not Say I Can, Say I Will: there is a difference**

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Have you ever met a person who was so driven, so committed, so honouring of their dreams and goals that you just marvelled at their tenacity? Have you ever thought “Well I’d like to do that too but I don’t have the time, money, knowledge...”

That “but” is a big obstacle for many people.

Here’s something to think about the next time you find yourself presented with an opportunity.

The next time you have a chance to take a step toward the fulfillment of a goal but feel blocked for some reason try this exercise.

Imagine that you are standing at a beach, the water is softly shifting toward, and away, from the shore, it’s peaceful and calm, the sun is shining and you are alone on the beach. You have a vision of your goal, a dream that you know will make you the best person you can be. Now, hold onto that vision and imagine taking a stick and drawing a very distinctive line in the sand. Picture you on one side of the line wishing your dream would come true and, on the other side of that line visualize the fulfillment of that dream.

On one side is “I can commit to this dream” and on the other is “I will commit to this dream.” When you’re ready, take a deep breath and step over that line in the sand to the place of “I will” and commit to your dream. Notice the shift in your energy, notice if anything has changed about your belief in your dream. That’s the

power of “I will” instead of “I can.”

Anybody can do anything but not everybody will, that’s what creates change and shift and that’s the way to overcome those big, and small, obstacles that come your way.

I’ve done this exercise many times with people whom I’ve coached and, let me tell you, it’s very powerful and effective. To quote a very furry and wise character: “do or do not, there is no try.”

I worked with a very intuitive and brilliant man for a few months who was continuing his search for personal empowerment in his career. He loved his work but had the feeling that there was still something lacking. He felt “sorrow in his soul” and a “longing for a legacy” in his lifework but he was not sure what that looked like. We worked together for a few months which eventually led him to the realization that a return to school was in order. He was worried about the costs involved and the time commitment that would most certainly take him away from his family at times. The indecision was causing paralysis which is what brought him to coaching.

We drew the line in the sand, on one side was him as he was now; perfectly perfect and, on the other side was his future self with his schooling behind him. That exercise was a tough one for him and he understood the meaning of shifting the geography from “I can” to “I will.” As he made the leap, and it was his choice to do so, I could hear the emotion in his voice. This was a huge decision for him but, once he went from “well I could do this or I could do that” to “I will do this” everything changed and he signed up for school the very next day.

**Tip # 5 Commit to " I will" not "I can" there is a difference.**



## **Tip #6 : Fail or Fail Forward, it is your choice**

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Everybody, yes everybody, at some point in their life, will make a mistake, a huge mistake! It's inevitable if you live long enough that something will go terribly wrong, you won't know how to do something, you'll think something should be done one way when it should have been done another. That's life and there's nothing you can do about it. What you can do something about is how you choose to react to the lesson you are being offered.

Have you ever tried something really difficult in your life knowing full well you didn't know how to proceed? What happened?

- Did you make mistakes?
- Did it stop you from digging deeper to a better sense of understanding?
- Did you berate yourself: call yourself stupid or incompetent?

I have heard so many people say that to me when we've talked about something they've really wanted to do but have made the choice to step away from the dream. " I can't do that I just don't know how" is a common response when I ask people what it would be like to follow their dream...I think that's just tragic, I truly do. The idea that somebody would not fulfill their dreams because they believe they are not knowledgeable enough is an all too common story.

It takes courage to face your fear of appearing vulnerable, and moving forward anyway. Nobody said it would be easy to do and the truth is most people just give up.

Thankfully not everybody gives up, some people know that it is their legacy in life to honour the truth, despite all the obstacles and to speak it, live it and share it despite the reactions of others. People like Mary Kay Ash, Oprah, Thomas Edison and Mother Teresa have often noted that life is full of mistakes and it's a choice to allow yourself to be stopped by them or to fail forward, to take the lesson and move from there toward the dream.

***For every failure, there's an alternative course of action. You just have to find it. When you come to a roadblock, take a detour.***

~ Mary Kay Ash

***I don't believe in failure, it's not failure if you enjoyed the process.***

~ Oprah Winfrey

***I have not failed I have found 10,000 ways that do not work.***

~ Thomas J Edison

***Keep in mind that our community is not composed of those who are already saints, but of those who are trying to become saints. Therefore let us be extremely patient with each other's faults and failures.***

~ Mother Teresa

**Tip # 6 Fail or Fail forward: it's a choice**



## **Tip # 7 : Have an objective accountability partner on your side**

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Have you ever had an idea about wanting to do something and then shared the idea with a friend, family member or co-worker? Were you glad that you shared this dream because you were supported or did you regret saying anything at all?



A classic example of this is making New Year's resolutions. Does this sound familiar?

"This year I am going to go on a diet and lose weight."

If you should be managing your weight to maintain a healthy and balanced lifestyle then this is a great goal to fulfill. You take a lot of steps to create a healthier you including joining a gym, buying the proper work out equipment, sharing your goals with a friend/partner in anticipation and ensuring your diet includes healthy meals. For the entire month of January you stay true to your goal without faltering: you work out despite the fatigue, you eat salads even if you don't feel satisfied and you smile when your friend/partner notices you've shed a few pounds. You're on the way to fulfilling that goal and that feels very good.

Strangely enough, by mid-February or so, you don't feel so motivated and you skip a class or two. Your diet begins to include foods that make you feel better, at least for the moment, but aren't so good for you. You share this with your friend/partner who, instead of supporting you through this slump, says something like " I knew you'd fail, you never stick to anything."

I met a woman who had decided she wanted to write a book. It was a life long passion but she had been told so often that she was not a writer she eventually began to believe that to be true.

While she shared her story with me her voice was full of emotion, tears were clearly visible as her eyes welled up and she held her hands tightly in front of her as if afraid to reach for the pen and paper in front of her.

“What would be different in your life if you were a writer?” I asked.

“I’d finally be doing something I love to do but I can’t do that, everybody knows I’m not a writer.”

I began, with her permission, to do a coaching exercise with her using different perspectives including imagining herself as a writer, as a person who never wrote, as a person who was a famous writer, as a person who wrote for fun and as a person who wrote for profit. We explored all the perspectives, trying each one on and noticing how they felt.

At the end of this exercise she realized that she liked the perspective of being a person who wrote for fun: she had held the belief that, in order to be called a writer, she had to create a best seller. Once she gave herself permission to be a writer just for fun she noticed a huge shift. She quickly reached for the pen and paper in front of her and wrote “I am a writer” and you know what? She was, indeed, a writer.

Working with an accountability partner is an effective method to realizing your goals. Somebody who is objective, who doesn't care what you've done in the past, whose only desire is to see you succeed at your goal is an empowering partner to have in your corner.

**Tip #7 Have an objective accountability partner**



## **Tip #8 : Change will happen but it won't happen overnight**

Baby steps, change will not happen overnight. You have a dream and you want it to happen right now! In tip # 6 I talked a little bit about baby steps. In this section I explore this concept at a deeper level.

The only constant in life is change: it's true, it's inevitable and it's going to happen no matter what.



I am the mother of two pretty amazing kids. They're adults now but I still recall very clearly their first steps.

They didn't start walking at the same age and they didn't progress at the same level. I had no expectation about when they "should" be walking and enjoyed the transition very much. I marvelled at how my babies were changing as their world began to expand.

Can you imagine somebody getting angry at a baby as it struggles to take it's first steps? Imagine how different that baby would feel if, instead of feeling loved and supported, it felt fear when learning to walk? That poor child would probably never walk or would be fearful or perhaps very delayed at learning a basic activity.

Change is inevitable but it's not easy.

I recently had a conversation with someone who was absolutely convinced that a change needed to happen in their life. There was no way they could go on living the way they were living: money was always scarce, illness loomed due to the stress, relationships were lacking passion and integrity. This person was ready for massive change: well that was what they believed until the time came to commit to the change.

We visualized the line in the sand, remember tip #5?, the step was taken, the line was crossed, a commitment to "I will" had been struck.

Sadly, when the time came to stand true to the vision, the change was too drastic. People had noticed and commented on the shift in behaviour and this person caved under the pressure of the comments. I'm not sure, but I am hopeful, that this person recognized their personal strength and tries again, with one baby step after another, to fulfill their dream.

**Tip #8 Change is inevitable;  
taking baby steps ensures  
forward movement**



## **Tip #9 Fear: False Expectations Appearing Real**

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The more I connect with people the more I notice the hold that fear has on so many of them. We weren't born fearful: what changed to allow fear to become such an acceptable element of our everyday lives?

All you have to do is pick up a newspaper and read it, watch tv or listen to the radio to be convinced there is much to fear.: 9/11 terrorists, illegal immigration, corrupt politician, vicious sexual predators on the loose, the economy, our health, the food we eat, climate change: it's a wonder we manage to get out of bed at all with this much fear mongering.

Fear can take on many forms including a fear of failure (that's a big one) and the fear of success (yup it's true.)

I worked with a woman recently who shared her life dream with me. This was a very tired, defeated, exhausted woman sharing her vision, I could see it in her body language, in her speech, in her eyes. She wanted to travel around the world and I noticed as she shared her dream with me her voice changed, her breathing changed and her entire essence felt lighter.

Troubles she had a few and one of the biggest was that she felt trapped in an unhappy relationship which created a lot of financial scarcity beliefs. She was afraid to make any decisions toward fulfilling her dream because she felt she would be letting people down if she did.

Her belief was that, while unhappy in her marriage, she should stay and keep trying to make it work. This belief was passed onto her from her family of origin and from her religious upbringing and was deeply rooted. Counseling had not worked, therapy had not helped but still she continued to try and please a person who did not care about her. Her biggest fear was leaving this relationship and being on her own so that's what we looked at together.



F. E.A.R. False expectations appearing real. The process in facing your fears is a long one, it's difficult and emotionally exhausting at times. I believe that's why most people choose to stay fearful and play small: it's just too much work.

For this woman, challenging her personal beliefs -is it really true that you will be struck dead if you leave- created an entirely new path of clarity. She had to fall pretty far before she decided she was worth fighting for but she did it. She did remove herself from the marriage eventually and some of her family chose to shun her but she realized that these had been toxic relationships for her anyway.

With her new found freedom she now had every opportunity to travel and, because she was a massage therapist, she could take her work with her anywhere in the world. She felt so much healthier, happier and at peace with her self and her decisions. I can't wait to see where she travels to next.

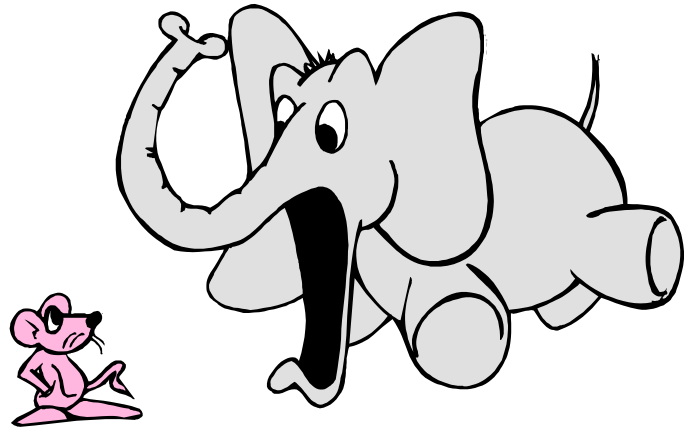
Most fears are made up and what a tragedy that we would choose the "what if" perspective of fear instead of the "what if" perspective of fearless.

Here's how I handle fear personally. When I am presented with an opportunity to do something completely out of my comfort zone I check with my body before I say anything. If I feel a knot in the pit of my stomach, if my gut reaction is to say "no way" and, if after I've assessed the danger factor, there's no reason not to do this but fear, I am compelled to follow through. I've played guitar in front of strangers, sang in public, climbed to heights that made my head hurt, challenged myself physically and emotionally and so much more.

I've always been grateful that my choice was to "face the fear and do it anyway."

When you want to do something that fills you with fear try this exercise. Notice how you are feeling, be really present with your body, acknowledge the fear and then forge ahead.

**Tip #9 Face the Fear and do it anyway.**



## **Tip #10 : Change/Shift/Flow, This is going to be hard**

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This shift, this change in your life, from who you were to who you are now, will be hard, it will be challenging and you will probably feel uncomfortable at times.

Have you ever been to Niagara Falls and marveled at the incredible power, the force of the rushing water as it makes it's way over the falls and into Lake Ontario?

Can you imagine if that rushing water, at some point, just stopped completely?

There would be nothing to see, no Maid of the Mist to ride, no hydro for the people in the area, no great feats of tightrope walking over the falls: none of it would be possible if not for that rushing water staying on course despite any obstacles in the way.

Once the decision is made to start on a path of personal empowerment a person experiences many changes, hits obstacles and shifts directions just like the rushing water at Niagara Falls. The Niagara river starts as a small trickle somewhere, gathers momentum, diverts around huge obstacles and continues to grow in strength to become one of the 7 wonders of the world.

You are like that too, as you flow through, around, over, under or in between the obstacles in your life. You may have to even portage out of the water at times as



your charge toward your dreams. As you create your own fulfilling wonder in the world acknowledge the obstacles, find a new way of doing what your heart craves and continue with the flow of perseverance and power.

I am continually amazed at the power of the human spirit and the will of some people to fulfill their dreams, despite all the odds.

A Canadian hero of mine is Terry Fox who is probably known around the world for his courageous battle with cancer as he ran across Canada on his



Marathon of Hope. Terry first dipped his prosthetic leg into the chilly waters of the Atlantic Ocean in St. John's, Newfoundland in 1980 almost alone save for his small group of drivers and family support. Terry averaged 42 km per day running in the rain, in the snow, the cold, the heat and through terrain that would stop many.

He intended on finishing on the west coast of Canada and all money he raised would go to support cancer research. The start date was April 12, 1980 and Terry was devoted to his dream. Sadly Terry was eventually forced to give up his run due to the lung cancer that was ravaging his body. By this time Terry had amassed a great following and people were more than willing to support him in his efforts. This little guy from BC who had a dream that many said was crazy was responsible for raising ten million dollars for cancer research that year alone.

In his honour the family continues to host annual Terry Fox runs across Canada in early September, which to date have raised in excess of 500 million dollars, and

this year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that first run.

Despite all the odds Terry persevered holding true to his vision, overcoming the obstacles, one hoppy jump at a time until he could do no more. Now that's a first class hero! The world is full of millions of people like Terry Fox: people who choose to acknowledge the obstacles and continue running toward their goal.

**Tip #10 Any obstacle can be overcome if you believe it to be the truth.**



## Summary of Top 10 Tips

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Here's a brief summary, once again, of the top ten tips:

- #1 Be clear on your goals
- #2 Know that you don't know everything and ask for help
- #3 Be kind to yourSELF
- #4 Acknowledge the wins: big or small they all count
- #5 Do not say I can, say I will: there is a big difference
- #6 Fail forward
- #7 Have an objective accountability partner to report to
- #8 Take baby steps: change will not happen over night
- #9 Fear is going to show up: face the fear and do it anyway
- #10 Change/shift/flow: this is going to be hard.

I hope you find these tips useful. I hope you are able to commit to " I will" to see the unfolding of your dreams. Life is a journey and the path will not always be straight, level or easy to travel. I've written this book because I meet so many people who tell me they have a dream but don't know how to start or where to begin. I wrote this book for all you dreamers and visionaries and healers so that you can take this wisdom, put it into action and then go out and share your brilliance with the world.

**They're waiting for you!**

## About the Author

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Why I chose to listen to my heart: I share this with you in the hope that if you see yourself somewhere on these pages you will realize that, despite your background, you are inspiring, powerful and wise, and the world needs YOU.

One of four children, the eldest of three girls in my family, I took on the role of protector and advocate early on in life. As a young child I was exposed to sexual abuse. I thought it was only me in the whole wide world to whom this was happening and so I did not share my shame. The emotional toll on a child exposed to abuse is a heavy one and the reactions will manifest in one way or another. For me personally the challenge became trying not to share the secret while still trying to fit into a social group during my teenage years. It did not go so well and I was mostly unhappy during those oh so important years.

I was lucky, and am grateful, to have been connected to a young man back then who became my husband. Thirty five years later we remain devoted to each other and our children. The birth of my own children brought on the realization and along with that, the trauma, that I had been abused and so I worked on change and acceptance. It took me a long time but I knew I was not going to continue to feel powerless and in victim mode and there was no way my children were going



to be exposed to my reaction to the abuse just because I did not know any better.

I have always loved being a mom and so the work I took on had to suit my ability to be available for the kids. Luckily for me I was offered a position as a consultant in a niche relocation company . I stayed at this business for many years, helping people acclimatize to a new way of life in a new city. At the age of 40 it all came to an abrupt halt when I was diagnosed with Parkinsons disease. Always the advocate I worked with another woman with PD to create workshops, conferences and seminars about Parkinsons.

It was at one of these conferences, 6 years into the diagnosis that I met the person who would, once again, create a shift in my life. Dr. Stewart, a neurologist, agreed to see me for a second opinion, yes it took that long. After learning that the diagnosis was made in error and I had been taking medications for PD for six years for something I did not have, my family and I realized there was now a reason to change gears again. I volunteered for a year at a shelter for women and children and worked with a master life coach. I realized I was still stuck in my choices about moving forward and working with my coach, allowed me to see a new perspective beyond victim again.

I loved the work so much I enrolled in coaching school. During this time I was also hired to work as an adjudicator in a government employment program which is another element of the advocacy work I do. Pulling all of the elements together with advocating for other people and putting them into my coaching business creates the perfect blend of passions for me. There are too many people in the world, and you might be one of them, who are living a life full of pain. I see so many people who believe they are victims of their circumstance and that's not true. This book will help you to see, and experience, the shift in your life from

victim to victor! Take your life from painFULL to powerFULL.

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