



# MAKE A SPLASH!

*It's Time to Take Action on Your Life*

REGINA CAREY, M.ED.

# **Make a Splash! It's Time to Take Action on Your Life**

*by*  
Regina Carey, M.Ed.

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## **Review of *Make a Splash!* from Sari Solden, MS**

*Regina Carey's new book, Make a Splash!, does just that! This book is encouraging and energetic just like Regina herself. The author's knowledge and wealth of experience with real life clients is abundantly clear.*

*Make a Splash! will be tremendously helpful for anyone who may have some fear about taking steps forward or even knowing which steps to take, but especially so for those with ADHD, learning differences, or anxiety. The book is graphically pleasing and engaging, very well organized, structured, and practical while at the same time inspiring!*

*I especially love the author's concept in each chapter of steps that are called "pebbles, stones, or boulders". Readers are able to choose what steps they feel ready to take on rather than just being told what to do in a way that might otherwise overwhelm them. Instead, Make a Splash!, gives the reader a sense that they can choose the right action to reflect where they are in their own journey.*

*With Regina Carey's positive warm voice coming through on each page, reading her book is like having a great coach to guide you right at your fingertips!.*

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## About the Author



Regina Carey, the founder of Carey On, practices as an Empowerment Consultant, Strength-Based Life Coach, and Passion Instigator.

Regina has coached individuals with invisible disabilities both nationally and internationally. Her work has included attention deficits, learning disabilities, behavioral disorders, cognitive impairments, and more severe mental handicaps. As a consultant, speaker, and coach, she empowers individuals to recognize their vision for a more authentic life.

The goal of her work is to educate and empower those who are stuck, struggling, and ready for positive change. Regina customizes her approach to meet the needs of each unique situation. Her methods focus on MOVING FORWARD, using positive feedback, and embracing all that comes with that journey.

Since 2015, Regina has facilitated De-“Fine” Yourself® Women’s Groups. These groups are designed to empower women’s language, posture, self-esteem, and presence in the world. The outcomes are inspiring and powerful, and graduates leave with strategies to keep their dreams and intentions alive.



**A note from the author:**

I wrote this book because I want to help others find their voices. Each of us deserves to be heard, to share our ideas, to influence the world, to make a difference. There are so many ways to MAKE A SPLASH! Let's be bold and make it a big one!

# Prologue

The one time I distinctly remember my Dad taking and holding my hand was when he walked me into my new school. I was ten-years-old and terrified to start school in a new town. This is a vivid memory of feeling safe and protected.

We had just moved from a beautiful, sprawling farm to a quiet suburban street with sidewalks and neighbors. I would miss the smell of fresh sheets off the clothesline, playing outside from sun up to sundown, but mostly, I would miss the peace. On the farm, there was no one but family around us. And family loved no matter what.

**“Pork chops and applesauce.”**

That’s what they used to whisper in my ear during middle school. I was overweight. I had been overweight since I was in first grade. Spending most of my younger years wanting to die was a horrible way to live, but I had no idea how to cope.

I cried all the time. No one could protect me or make the pain go away. Nor could have anyone convinced me that one day I’d be working as an Empowerment Coach. I wouldn’t believe them that I would one day teach others how to stand up for themselves and make a splash in the world.

The ability to overcome what holds us back comes as a result of finding our voice and deciding to take action. My coaching practice and passion instigation has developed over a long journey lasting more than 30 years. It’s time for me to speak up. Now is the time for me to help people access what they already know and need to hear again. Let’s get started!

## How to Use This Book

The best way to use this book is to start with what you need. Each chapter addresses a common barrier preventing us from using our voices and living our most amazing lives. After the short, inspirational readings in each chapter, there are options for taking action. You can choose specific, weighted actions (pebbles, stones, or boulders) to make a small ripple, a bigger splash, or a giant kerplunk, depending on where you are on *your* journey.

Have fun with it. Give the strategies a go. Reread sections for clarity and motivation. Most importantly, share your learning with others. Sharing and inspiring others is a powerful way to make these lessons a part of your wonderful life! This book is to be treated as a living, breathing resource that you can use over and over again!

## Words to Live By

When we make changes in our lives, it often means becoming a part of some new community – work, faith, family, or interest group, and that requires learning the language. There are many words I use in this book, and they may mean something different depending on who is reading it. Here are a few brief descriptions of my use of the vocabulary throughout the book:

**Gratitude** – to be thankful. You may be asked to practice this. It means I am encouraging you to think it, speak it, and live it. It is about choosing gratitude over your frustrations and fears when you least want to. Eventually, you will begin to hear gratitude from others.

**Believe** – to know (with or without evidence). I encourage you to believe in yourself, your talents, your skills, your knowledge, and your worthiness. You must believe you are capable and change is possible in order to move forward. There is definitely a factor of trust wrapped up into this word.

**Presence** – to be in the moment. This requires you to wiggle your toes and be HERE. NOW. There is no thinking about what has already happened. There is no thinking about what might happen. No. We don't look over our shoulders or imagine the outcome. Stay here. Be present.

**Intention** – to plan. This is what you plan to do. With intention, we drive the process of change. Intention keeps us anchored to our goal. Intending is a positive practice meant to fuel our growth.

**Dissonance** – to clash. This creates unrest. And that is good. It seems bad, but we need this to make change. What we *think* we know and what we are working toward may sometimes disagree. Addressing and dealing with this unrest helps pave the way to harmony.

**Strength** – to surge. This can be a body, mind or spirit kind of strength. I often encourage you to make it a strong day – whatever that means for YOU. It may mean you faced the depression, got out of bed, and made it to work. It may mean you completed a long list of tasks. Or that you ate well and drank lots of water. Or it may mean that you made it through a difficult meeting. Strength may mean that you were compassionate with yourself or someone you love. It is unmeasurable, so no comparing with others!

**Tribe** - a group of people around whom you feel strong, happy, and confident. These are people who encourage, support, and cheer you on. After spending time with them, you feel happier, healthier, and more of who you are. They "get" you.

# Chapter 1: Anxiety - Unwelcomed Worry

**Take Away: Anxiety is normal at low levels. It is a method of motivation, excitement, and anticipation for something wonderful! Ride it out. If it begins to derail your progress, then it has become an “issue” to be addressed. When you feel anxiety, take a deep breath and tell yourself how EXCITED you are for this amazing opportunity. See what shifts.**

## Reframing Dread

*Are you dreading the day before it even begins?*

Dread is defined as *terror or apprehension about something in the future: to be reluctant to do, meet, or experience* (Dictionary.com). It is certainly an emotion with which everyone is familiar. We may feel dread because of our patterns, the “been there, done that” mentality associated with an unpleasant first experience. We may dread because of fear of the unknown – not knowing what to expect, how to behave, or what to say in a new situation. No matter the specifics, dread feels uncomfortable. There is not one positive sensation that accompanies this emotion. Now, what would happen if we neutralized DREAD with POSSIBILITY?

Instead, ask the question, “What if...”

**“What if I walked in with my head held high and a smile on my face?”**

**“What if I see someone I know who can sit with me and help calm my anxiety?”**

**“What if everything goes exactly the way I want it to go?”**

**“What if?”**

Make a game of asking “what if” possibilities in a positive light. See what happens to the uncomfortable sensations in your body. See what happens to the headache, the nausea, and the terrified look on your face.

Do you know what will happen? Those feelings will begin to weaken and the corners of your mouth may contort into a smirk – the one that assures you that everything is going to be okay. You have exactly what you need TODAY to deal with your situation – this situation called LIFE!

You have more power than that which is unknown. Anything is possible today! What if you have the best day of your life? You may spend the day, instead, in amazement!

## **Are You Worried?**

*You are an amazing human being! Instead of putting energy into worrying, put it toward something that helps you move forward!*

Everyone worries. Some allow worry to sneak in and out of their minds without paying much attention, while others let it consume them. What do we worry about? Money, sickness, our children, friends, something we said, something we didn't say, what other people think, and the list goes on. Worry wastes time. It requires energy and evokes fear while thinking about something we DON'T want to happen.

Focus instead on what you want, what you envision for your day, and how you desire personal, professional and loving relationships to develop in your life. By focusing on what you WANT instead of what you FEAR, you are sending out a more powerful signal to the Universe that this is what you desire. You bring what you want to you like a magnet. Recognize the worry, shift it into a positive light and watch what happens!

Think about what you WANT instead of what you don't! Before you know it, the sun will rise on tomorrow and you will begin to notice peace, harmony, health, love and abundance waiting right outside your door!

## **No Playing the Outcome!**

*Remember, most of the things we worry about never come true!  
We don't know what we don't know.*

You don't get to play the outcome – no guessing what the client is going to say; no pretending that you already know what the boss is going to talk to you about; or even what your significant other is thinking. You don't know. It's not fair to you or the other person to let your imagination go WILD!

When we start to play out our stories, the Gremlin brain takes over. It tells us that we are about to make a big mistake. We better run or get ready to fight,

because we're not strong enough, smart enough or good enough. It leads us to develop an outrageous ending - one that crushes our spirits, leaves us penniless, and possibly ruins our lives. Forever. This is untrue. And we must stop that train the minute it leaves the station.

Instead, let go of the outcome and focus on the wonderful POSSIBILITIES! Stay positive! Set the best of intentions! Keep your head up and your eyes forward! It may be the BEST ending yet!

## **REMINDERS**

See ABUNDANCE! You have enough time, money, ideas, love, support, and opportunities - to name a few - and trust that you always will. Remind yourself of this daily; believe it and know it!

Get INSPIRED! What can you do today to enhance your living? Play your favorite music? Listen to a podcast? Doodle? Go on a short nature walk? How will you inspire that brain of yours? Let your ideas flow!

Bring ACCEPTANCE! Of people, of experiences, of obstacles, of LIFE! Much happens in our day that we don't expect or anticipate. When we embrace it and use it to grow, it works in our best interest. It is a conscious choice to accept what comes our way. Open arms!

Practice FLEXIBILITY! To be flexible in the way we approach problems, the way we stretch our understanding, and the way we bring creative ideas to the table is a powerful method for growth. It demonstrates the wisdom of a teacher and curiosity of a student.

Release ONE THING! What are you holding onto? That one thing occupying your thoughts and waking you up at night? Let it go, and decide to move forward. You are smart enough, strong enough, kind enough and deserving enough without it!

## **TAKE ACTION ON ANXIETY**

### **Pebble**

- Recognize when anxiety hits and maintain awareness.
- Determine how anxiety is physically affecting you and place your hand on that area of your body.
- Send love and compassion to the part of your body that is feeling the stress; breathe deeply until the physical sensation dissipates.

### **Stone**

- Share your feelings of anxiety with a trusted friend.
- Move your body through exercise, dance, yoga, or other physical movements that help alleviate your feelings of anxiety.
- Do something that brings you joy (read, play, spend time with animals, etc.). Sometimes focusing on cultivating joy helps us let go of unnecessary anxiety.

### **Boulder**

- Journal through the emotion and determine actions that will help you get through it.
- Develop a lifestyle change (eating/drinking/morning routine) to diminish symptoms of anxiety and commit to the change.
- Make an appointment with your doctor/therapist to evaluate the severity of your anxiety.



## Chapter 2: Stress - What is Important?

**Take Away: Factors of stress increase as we age. What's important is how we DECREASE our stress. What natural strategies are you using to diminish stress before it becomes harmful? That's the key. Acknowledge the stress and then do something about it.**

### Armor Up!

*Our lives do not get easier; we get better at standing strong against the waves!*

Stress is easy to find all year long; we don't even have to look for it. Stress is great at wreaking havoc on our bodies - headaches, back pain, tension, and high blood pressure. Stress begins with our thoughts! Start your day with thinking better thoughts - thoughts that position you to have a successful, powerful, and satisfying day.

Remember your vision! Remember your goals! Each day is a new opportunity to start over, re-energize, and make a difference! Grab your umbrella, your courage, your stamina, your work ethic, your passion for life, and ARMOR UP! When stress seems to be coming your way, let it bounce off your armor and let it go! You've got this!

### Body Beholden

*Our bodies are magical! We must be grateful for them each and every day!*

Have you thanked your body today? For its perseverance, its stamina, its support of your lifestyle and those demands over the years? Our bodies are a gift - one of the greatest gifts we've been given - and we must appreciate and respect them each and every day. We have only this one body - whether it's got all working parts or not - it's ours. The scratches and scars, wiggles and jiggles, aches and pains, lines and markings are all a part of our life story.

Take a minute to think about the activities from just this past week - did you lift a box, hug your children, make a meal, ride your bike, play with the dog, or work in the garden? Thank your body for sticking with you - for its movement, for its strength, for its amazing ability to carry you through your day even when

your brain is not cooperating. Celebrate from head to toe! That body works hard for you, and your gratefulness will help keep it going!

## **A Laughing Matter**

*When's the last time you laughed – really laughed? You're overdue!*

It is so important to keep a sense of humor about you. Whether it's standing in line at the grocery store, driving in rush hour traffic, or going on vacation with your family... It's important to laugh - or to at least recognize that we have little control over many of our day to day life experiences. That is a good thing.

We must smile once in awhile to remind ourselves that we are learning as we grow. There comes a time when the smile holds with it a dozen memories of a time like this before - one in which we behaved badly, acted rudely, was the person on the other side of the experience, or just plain didn't know what to do.

Now we know or remember what we said we would do "next time," and perhaps that is to simply laugh and be grateful that we remembered to do so. Let others see your joy. Teach them to do the same in both good and bad situations. Model a colorful spirit made up of childhood and maturity, of patience and exuberance, of knowing. Remember to keep a sense of humor about you. It can be as simple as a smirk. It's a major defense during the minor troubles of life!

## **REMINDERS**

Harvest SERENITY! Create pockets of time to be peaceful, to catch your breath, and to gather your calm. The lower your stress hormones, the more effective you will be in all areas of your life. It can begin with one deep breath.

RESPECT the dissonance. When you sense it, stop to embrace it. Then do something about it. Exercise. Journal. Brainstorm. Ignoring it is disrespectful and ends badly. Do something.

Bring CALM! Our gentle response is more likely to actualize if we focus on our breathing. Reacting requires fast, shallow breaths; slow, deep breathing keeps us mindful that we are in control of our emotions. Move through the chaos calmly, and the outcomes will be more rewarding.

Practice INTENTION! Focusing on what we INTEND for our lives is a much more powerful way to manifest abundance than focusing on what we don't want. Think forward, upward, and strong! Remember that our thoughts drive our outcomes.

Release BREATH - the one you're holding. We need that valuable oxygen to flow all through our bodies, especially our brains, to keep us thinking the smartest thoughts. Practice a few deep breaths to find the sensation of regaining that golden O2!

## **TAKE ACTION ON STRESS**

### **Pebble**

- Determine how to know you're under stress. What happens to your body?
- Once you know what stress looks like "on" you, pick a happy activity. Color. Doodle. Dance. Walk. Choose something as a "go-to" activity when you experience stress.
- Make strategies for dealing with your stress VISIBLE. Print them out and hang them on the refrigerator door or bathroom mirror - you must be able to see them as daily reminders of STRESS RELIEF.

### **Stone**

- Adjust your daily routine to include stress reduction times (morning/noon/evening).
- Add exercise to your daily schedule to help you keep stress at low levels.
- Release activities that drain energy and make you vulnerable to stress.

### **Boulder**

- Hire a personal trainer to work with you on balance, endurance, and stamina.
- See a general practitioner yearly to check blood work and other vitals to ensure good health and to identify any adverse effects of stress at work or at home.
- Make an appointment with a recommended therapist who can help you address stress-inducing activities, people, and/or environments.

## Chapter 3: Fear - Entering the World

**Take Away: What are you afraid of? If we go back to the Fight or Flight scenario, it boils down to either not winning (failing) or dying. Imagine failing. What would you do? Learn? Improve? Change? Is the fear deadly? Are you being chased by a bear or being asked to give a presentation? Is this a life or death event? If not, you will be BETTER on the other side. Do the thing that you believe you cannot do.**

### **Please Stand Up!**

*Stand up to barriers in your way! Give yourself credit for being smart and creative!*

Monsters are real because we create them. These fear-based creations get in our way EVERY DAY! Each of us has carefully designed the features of our creatures – what they say; how they look; and when they attack. We can decide to sit still and take it. Or we can stand up.

When we decide to stand, we begin to tear down the bulk of our monster's intimidating power. Making them smaller improves our confidence. With one decision, one strategy, one act, we can snuff them out. How will you minimize your MONSTERS today? Grrrrrr!

### **Who Do You Think You Are?**

*Are you afraid of the failures or the successes? Either way, you'll learn something new!*

Who we think we are (and how others see us) stems directly from what we tell ourselves. You have a voice! You have ideas to share! You want to be heard! At least you think you do, until your monster attacks and tells you that you are NOT good enough. What can you do? Succumb to this mindset?

Absolutely NOT! Correct your thoughts. Tell yourself the TRUTH – you are smart, talented, prepared, and courageous! Remember that you do the work you do for a reason. Quiet that monster and get to gettin'! Time is a gift you've been given today. Go use your voice!

## **Make Your Mark!**

*Instead of doing everything at once, take one powerful step forward!*

Thoughts can bounce around inside our heads all day long. Great ideas, smart questions, innovative methods...never shared, initiated or developed. Why? We forget. We diminish the power of our own thoughts. We tell ourselves that our ideas are not good enough to be shared. False!

Grab that pen! Open that computer! Start that voice memo! Whatever tool you prefer, go to it today and start the process. We all have a story. Our tribe is waiting. The only requirement to take things from intentional to actual is a small step forward. If we want to make an impact, we must do something. Thoughts are powerful, feelings are magical, and ACTIONS make it real. The greatest ideas are wasted if they are never acted upon. Make your mark!

## **Seize the Opportunity**

*We all know the saying, you must do the thing you fear the most, right?  
The time is now!*

Ask yourself "What am I afraid of?" "What's holding me back?"

Are you looking at a transition in your life – perhaps from a distance – and saying, "Should I?" "Could I?"

Opportunities come and go in our lives every day. If we are happy and fulfilled where we are, with who we are, and we are moving in a healthy direction, we will most certainly appreciate an opportunity, but pay little attention to it.

But WAIT!

What happens when we start to pay attention to those opportunities?

Somehow, we wake with a new pair of eyes, a new set of ears...we seem to be seeing and hearing things in our lives differently. This is a sign that the winds are a-changin'. Are we ready for something new? Are we in need of learning? Stretching? Growing?

Yes, sometimes there will be the monster who sits on your shoulder and tells you,

"It can't be done."

"You won't be good at that."

"You shouldn't change anything."

"You do not have what it takes!"

BLAH! Ignore that monster. Shut that thing down as soon as he pops into your thinking. You may say, "But WAIT! That's my conscience, right?"

Here's the thing: your conscience asks questions. It supports you by asking good questions, like:

- *How does this make you feel?*
- *What are your thoughts about this?*
- *What are the pros?*
- *What are the cons?*
- *Are you smiling when you think about this opportunity?*
- *Do you see yourself in this new place?*

Trust your conscience and quiet your monster. Remember to face your fears. Watch and listen so you are fully aware of the new opportunities on the horizon. Go do the thing you think you can't do.

## **REMINDERS**

See OPENINGS! Timing + awareness + courage = a chance to jump in at the gap! Forcing your way into a space (personally or professionally) rarely ends with the desired results. Know when the time is right for you to share your voice.

Choose LIGHT-HEARTEDNESS! Forget about the pressures associated with being an adult if only for a minute. Breathe in some fresh outdoor air. Revel in a child's laughter. Stop to take in the world around you. This choice recaptures our innocence and wonder!

Free yourself from ISOLATION! Get out of your office, your home, your car, your head - and say hello to someone. Connect with other people! It's healthy

and important and inspiring! You are an incredible human being - share yourself!

Bring ENDURANCE! It takes a lot of energy to make a difference. This ability to keep moving forward, to protect ourselves from toxicity, to bounce back from pitfalls, and arm ourselves with a positive mindset is the sign of a Warrior! It helps when we surround ourselves with other Warriors!

Release CONTROL! (If only for today.) Embrace all that comes your way. Be open to a suggestion; accept help when it's offered; feel an emotion when it surfaces. When we soften, our minds and bodies can work more cooperatively.

## **TAKE ACTION ON FEAR**

### **Pebble**

- Make a list of small successes. What have you overcome?
- Ask yourself, "Is this fear saving my life?" Are you running away from a bear? If not, you may be able to stay put and face it.
- Be observant. When do you experience fear of something? Make a note of it.

### **Stone**

- Share your fears with friends or loved ones.
- Determine if fears are PREVENTING forward movement in your life. If so, in what areas?
- Watch [Amy Cuddy's Ted Talk](#) about power.

### **Boulder**

- Begin Power Posing.
- Make a list of 5 fears. Choose the least severe. Face it.
- Create a binder with MONTHLY tabs. Begin to face a fear each month. Take a picture and document each month's accomplishment! Share with someone you love!

# Chapter 4: Demands - The Weight of the World

**Take Away: When we say “yes,” we move a piece of our lives into the DEMANDS jar. When we say yes to one thing, we say no to something else. To experience balance in our lives, when we say yes, it must count for something. Our yes should be meaningful and IMPROVE our lives. If our yeses create turmoil, take away from the things and people who mean the most to us, or create conflict, then we need to reexamine how we respond to those requests.**

## Decisions, Decisions!

*Trust yourself to make the best decision with what you know today.*

Decision-making. We do it every day – all day long – sometimes moving along feeling good about what we decided and other times second-guessing ourselves. “Why did I DO that?” “What was I thinking?!”

Remember this – we make decisions based on what we know at the time – all our prior learning up to this day – in this moment. We must trust our decisions and enjoy the sense of calm after making them. We may even decide to table the decision and make it at a later date - that is STILL a decision!

So whether it’s “What cheese do I pair with this wine?” or “Should I buy a new car?” practicing decision-making helps us feel a bit more in control of our lives. There are good reasons for the choices we make. It’s time to start discovering the peacefulness that comes with making decisions about our work and our life.

## What Hurts?

*If it doesn’t kill you, it’ll make you stronger...*

Not one of my favorite sayings, because we typically hear it when we’re least likely to believe it. When we are recovered, feeling stronger, and back to our “normal” selves, then we can say this phrase with confidence.



Respecting our pain, physical or emotional, means taking time for it. Stretching, resting, seeing a doctor, booking a therapy appointment, journaling, talking with our partner, exploring our feelings – it all takes attention and time. Respect that process.

Pain is one really obvious way our bodies speak to us. Listen. Do the work. Pain is temporary only when you face it head on. It begs us to pay attention, not to ignore. It also reminds us that we are ALIVE!

## **Keep Your Head Held High**

*"When you realize how perfect everything is, you will tilt your head back and laugh at the sky." ~ Buddha*

Do you ever feel like you're living life with your head down? Everyone experiences those times in life when we are working so hard, feeling so tired, and believing that nothing is going just as we intended. It's that unpleasant feeling of being "defeated."

Today, recognize your strengths and the things that are GOOD in your life! It might be your job, your smile, your style of parenting, or the way you interact with people throughout your day. You may have a special way with animals or a wonderful ability to make people feel good about themselves, or a great sense of humor, keeping everyone in good cheer.

You are a leader in your own right, and many things in your life are perfect TODAY. You are strong in many ways. You must remember those things about yourself and avoid getting lost in the day-to-day grind.

Lift your head up, smile at people you pass on the street, and spend more time doing things you're really good at. Living with your head up helps you see all the wonderful possibilities in front of you!

## **REMINDERS**

Respect the processing gap - that space between a question asked and your response. Give yourself the chance to stop and think about your answer. "Good question - I will have your answer by (fill in the reasonable future)."

Get **BALANCED!** Take a look at what fuels you and what drains you. Instead of giving a bit of yourself to everything; choose to feed your strengths and maintain your energy! Recognize the "holes" in the fuel tank and fill them, instead, with things you love!

Choose **WHAT YOU WANT!** Imagine holding a rope and pulling yourself closer to the peak. Avoiding what you don't want is like staying in place to build a fort, one heavy brick at a time. Intend the best for yourself! This choice helps us embrace what comes our way!

Bring **YOUR INSTINCTS!** That inner voice that guides us, warns us, and moves us to action is vital to our success. Trust your gut! Allow those instincts to have a voice, and, little by little, we begin to believe in our decisions with unstoppable conviction!

Release **TIME!** Let go of time wrapped around work, meetings, and appointments. Free up one hour today to do something for yourself! Refuel by doing an activity you enjoy. It's an investment that will forever provide the best returns!

## **TAKE ACTION ON DEMANDS**

### **Pebble**

- Get familiar with your system. Are you using a planner? Your phone? How do you keep track of your time?
- Once you determine a system that works for you, plan out one week - morning until bedtime - and see where your time goes.
- Color code categories of demands - personal/professional/self-care/ etc.

### **Stone**

- Look for gaps. Where are you **WASTING** time? Can you fill those blocks of time with productive work?
- Determine if you need support. A sitter? A personal shopper? An assistant? If so, investigate the costs of that support.
- Track your time and expenditures for one week to determine what you are doing and how you are spending your money.

# Boulder

- Hire something done - the yard, the cleaning, the child care, the finances. What is your time worth? Make the decision to GET SUPPORT!
- See a general practitioner yearly to check blood work and other vitals to ensure good health (and no adverse effects from stress at work or at home).
- Make an appointment with a recommended therapist who can help you address stress-inducing activities, people, and/or environments.

## Chapter 5: Overwhelm - Deadlines & Due Dates

**Take Away: We use the word “overwhelm” a lot. It’s about too much of something. We can be overwhelmed by kindness and other good things; however, this is, unfortunately, the exception. When we notice the sensation of overwhelm, we must STOP and do something about it. Prolonged overwhelm causes physical and emotional manifestations of illness. We become inflamed and unable to meet even the most mundane of responsibilities. Let’s not allow it to get to that point. Start by not telling people you’re overwhelmed.**

### It’s Time!

*Old beliefs about ourselves can be as bad as sitting in a poopy diaper!*

What do you believe about yourself? Do you believe you are smart? Funny? Easy-going? Hard-working? Handsome? Understanding? Strong? Beliefs about ourselves develop over the course of our lifetime. They form as a result of our parents, families, friends, teachers, coaches, and self-awareness.

Old beliefs are OLD because they were formed a long time ago. Unfortunately, they are usually the ones that are most damaging. These beliefs often tell us we’re not good enough, tall enough, smart enough, cute enough, thin enough, or fast enough to get what we want out of life. Holes in those “old beliefs,” like old shoes, create problems. Holes in our shoes allow the water to seep in, the pebbles to roll around, and the cold air to rush inside – *like old beliefs* – making our life miserable, wet, uncomfortable and frozen. It’s time for some new shoes!

At anytime we can form new beliefs about ourselves. Ones with a can-do focus and ones that we have discovered as a result of our successes! If you need help, ask a friend, a colleague or a child to share with you something *they believe* to be true about you – who you are, what you can do, or how you make others feel. It’s a great way to break in a new pair of shoes! Having a more accurate and positive view of ourselves will help us not to become overwhelmed when life comes roaring at us. Having a strong foundation will help us handle the stressors of life without losing control.

## Inner Power!

*Get still and quiet so you may better attend to your own powerful wisdom.*

Do you ever feel like the activity or task you are engaging in is going nowhere? Does your brain hit a big orange construction barrel and slow to snail speed? Do your insides feel like they are screaming to get out? THAT is powerful! THAT is your inner energy talking to you - attempting to SHIFT you into something that will benefit both your mind and body. Begin to listen to your inner power.

If you need to quiet yourself, then find a peaceful space. If you need to move, go outside or work around the house. Feel like you need happiness? Play with your children or animals. Looking for inspiration? Listen to music or go see a live performance.

To fuel yourself, activate your brain, and embrace your entire life experience, you must follow what your heart knows to be right. Today, trust that knowing. See what happens. How did your day unfold when you followed YOUR instincts - no one else's - simply YOUR OWN? Listen well.

## What Are You Bringing?

*Our talents are meant to be shared with the world! Are you doing that?*

Do we ever really know what we bring to the table? Are we aware of our gifts, and more importantly, are we sharing them with the world? As the meeting progresses, the party unfolds, the relationship develops, we have opportunities to draw on our strengths. Trust that the courage is in you - recognize and cultivate it - as you move forward.

The reality is we grow every day we live. Our current talents strengthen. We may be the one who lightens the mood. We may be the one who asks the great questions. We may be the one who truly listens. These less obvious talents may be overlooked or undervalued by our own brains.

Lift the lid and look at what's hiding in the shadows. Those are exactly the gifts that require attention. Shine them up and put them out there! The world **needs** you!

## Hurdles

*If we are to reach our end goal, we must focus on the No-Matter-What thinking instead of worrying about the What-If!*

What do you think when faced with an obstacle? How do you behave when met with one? When do you open yourself to the learning experience? Do you? Obstacles are initially quite frustrating, maddening, even spirit-crushing...but only until we can see with different lenses.

Have you lost your job? Has your car broken down? Did you have to go to the doctor unexpectedly? Was the line so long at the post office that you were not able to mail that package you worked so hard to prepare? Whether large or small, we encounter obstacles every day. STAY ENCOURAGED! Look for the OPPORTUNITY!

Perk up and lean in!

Ask yourself, "What can I be grateful for right now? In this moment?" Your eyes may be open to many opportunities for gratefulness you would not have noticed through anger, sadness, pain, frustration, impatience or envy. Those emotions tend to fog our vision to the point of blindness.

Sing a song, recite a poem, wiggle your toes, or count to 100 by 4's. Challenge yourself and do whatever it takes to keep yourself encouraged. A positive attitude and a bit of humor will help keep your eyes open to something wonderful tied up in that experience.

## REMINDERS

RESPECT your space. Create one space in the office or at home that is sacred. It remains clear and open - no clutter or piles. Easy on the eyes and good for the spirit!

ASK for clarity! How many times are you 100% sure of what someone else is trying to communicate? We might be nodding, but only partially certain of

what is being said. Have the courage to request clarification - improving your successful outcome in doing so!

Get MOVING! Walk down the street for 5 minutes then come back! Our bodies are meant for motion! You will feel, think and look better! Get off your butt and get on your strut!

Create PEACE in your day. Instead of filling every moment with more, schedule time to breathe, rest, listen and be quiet. There are noticeable differences in the way the body feels when we are peaceful. Stop doing and start stopping.

Release PERFECTION! Let's gauge our work with a new measuring stick. Perfection is relative, and we must remember that. Instead, how about living to FEEL perfect - absolute and complete? That is a more attainable goal and ultimately better for us!

## **TAKE ACTION ON OVERWHELM**

### **Pebble:**

- Be aware of when overwhelm is happening.
- Make a list of 3 things you can do during overwhelm (move, drink water, deep breathing, for example).
- Check your belief system - what do you believe is true about your work? Your skills? The timeline?

### **Stone:**

- Act on the list of strategies (completed from above).
- Break down the task into smaller actions (3-5 that you can do today).
- Ask someone for support (a friend, a colleague, a supervisor).

### **Boulder:**

- If a pattern of overwhelm is occurring, seek counseling.
- Set false deadlines to complete parts of projects sooner than expected.
- Hire it done!

# Chapter 6: Disappointment - Learning to Fail

**Take Away: Failure happens. It's supposed to. Sunrise. Sunset. Learn how to do something in response to failure. Immediately. Failure that sits, ferments. Ruminating thoughts ensue. It spirals from there. Fast action is key!**

## Triumphant Leader!

*Adversity can be a great lesson in how to improve our strategies for next time!*

We've all faced tough times – in relationships, at work, financially, spiritually, or physically – when we felt like we could not handle another minute of the situation. If you are reading this, not only did you survive it, you most likely made it better! You learned that you are smarter, stronger, and more resourceful than you first imagined.

Take pride in your accomplishments, especially the ones that meant facing your own fears to learn more about what you're made of. Remember to acknowledge your triumphs over adversity. Like a strong wind, it tears away from us all but the things that cannot be torn, and we are able to see ourselves as we really are. Stand tall!

## The Dance

*"Becoming and being are the yin and yang of our lives. One inner one outer. Today, we value becoming to the exclusion of being; we applaud human becomings. The secret is balance." ~ Unknown*

The seasons can act as representations of our emotional responses to life. Spring arrives, and the birds begin to sing again, the daffodils push up from the ground, and the once-brown grass shakes off its coat and turns a lovely green. Just in time for the last winter blast of snow. Then summer pushes its way in quickly, and we rest. We blink, and before we know it, school is starting, and everyone is buying fall sweaters and pumpkin-flavored coffee.

It's a life of beginnings and endings; of happiness and sadness; of confidence and fear; of beauty and disgust; of reminders. We are reminded of how the yin and yang of life is exactly what keeps us going – forces us up on our toes each



day – stimulates our brains to ask “What’s Next?” It’s the beautiful dance that beckons us to move and revel in the blessings of our lives. Remember that everything enters and exits, including our emotions. Disappointments don’t last forever - they fade like the seasons and leave us stronger to enjoy the next phase of our lives.

## **The Other Side of the Hill**

*Keep your eyes up, your shoulders back, and your movement ever forward!*

The next goal. The new challenge. The fresh idea. These opportunities come as a result of raising our eyes. Exhaustion. Frustration. Pain. Discouragement. These are examples of life's realities that force our eyes down. We hang our heads and disengage from the electricity of living our best life.

Know the triggers. Recognize emotions that derail the forward movement. Use strategies to rise above the bottom-feeding behaviors. It's easy to pull back, stay quiet, and apologize for being who we are. We need to remember that when we experience backsliding, it's most likely because we are forgetting to spend time in our strengths, with our tribe, and in our best time of day.

Decide right now to raise those eyes! See what's in front of you! Gather the necessary tools for the journey and start moving forward. The other side of the hill is so close! Get determined!

## **Spark!**

*Play big or go home – TODAY is what you’ve been gifted!*

Good music. Hot coffee. The first day of the week. The last day of the week. What does it take for you to get excited about a day? An opportunity? A new phase in life?

Our passion fuels our excitement for living! It's that spark that brings a smile to our faces, and the yearning that keeps us moving forward because nothing can stop us from making great things happen!

We sometimes fill up with life's disappointments and unforeseen obstacles, causing passion to fizzle and quiet itself. Release the burdens and rekindle the fire! It's time to start poking the sleeping lion. Let's hear that ROAR!

## REMINDERS

Make PROMISES! Especially to yourself. Having integrity with yourself makes it easier to have it with others, in the work you do, and in the world. Powerful. It's time to make good on them!

See GROWTH! Notice that the work you are doing is blossoming in all areas of your life! Celebrate the power of your reach and acknowledge success, especially the small wins! Those power your motivation!

Choose PATIENCE! (In particular, with OURSELVES) Go beyond tolerating the "unwelcome," and begin to embrace it. This is a skill we can develop. This choice prepares us to practice the same acceptance with others in our lives!

Notice DESIRE! That jump in your stomach. The twinkle that sparks when an idea is mentioned - something that has been calling you. If you feel it, sense it, embrace it, you can act on it! Isn't it time?

Release EXPECTATIONS - the ones we believe others have for us. We work hard. We have accomplished much. Move forward knowing that the best outcomes are the ones we set for ourselves (no one else)!

## TAKE ACTION ON DISAPPOINTMENT

### Pebble

- Identify what you were asked to do. Be clear about the expectations. Then write out how you determined the "failure."
- Write down what went well.
- Prioritize the reasons for the unmet expectations.

### Stone

- Talk with a mentor. Has this person experienced failure in the same way?

- If this failure affected your career, it is important to face it head on - have the conversation, write the apology, make it right, offer to do it again.
- Decide to let it go.

## **Boulder**

- Take strides to improve an area where you witness a pattern of mistakes. Learn new strategies to accomplish the work with a higher degree of success.
- Read about failing and practice acceptance and love for yourself, no matter the fail.
- Begin journaling about your day to reflect on the successes, the lessons and the gratitude for all the many gifts.

# Chapter 7: Scattered - Many Hats

**Take Away: We often feel scattered when we have too many demands without clear priorities. Allowing ourselves to become scattered causes us to be unorganized, lack focus, and ultimately, hinders our productivity. Get your thoughts out of your head and onto paper to help you see what you must do. Organize, categorize, and strategize how you will accomplish the tasks. One thing at a time. Remember, you cannot do everything at once.**

## Are You Tuned In?

*How easy it is to become numb to our own beautiful lives! SNAP out of it!*

Most of us work on auto-pilot at some point during the day. Whether we drive mindlessly into the office or eat a meal without recognizing what we're putting into our mouths, life experiences are diminished when we stop paying attention.

Remind yourself throughout the day to open your eyes to your surroundings. Set a phone alarm to ask yourself if you are paying attention. Put a note on your computer screen to find something unique in the world today. These are simple ways to enhance your life moment to moment.

When we're tuned in, we are that much more prepared for the many opportunities that come our way! Adjust your "Awareness Antennae!"

## Are You a Renewable Resource?

*Are you bored? Agitated? Unimpressed? Then it's time to DO SOMETHING about it!*

Every day we CHOOSE our path, what we pay attention to, what we put energy into, and how we use our talents. Are you choosing things that energize you? Find something to put your energy toward that renews your spirit, makes you smile, and reminds you of what you love!

Tap into the “who I am” part of you instead of the “what I do” part and see how much energy you save. Don’t define yourself entirely by the work you do. Focus on what fulfills you, what encourages you to pursue your purpose, and what inspires you. For extroverts, energy often comes from being surrounded by people you love, while introverts cherish their quiet time alone. Whatever your preference, pursue it! Make time for you!

## **Hurry Up and Slow Down!**

*“Never be in a hurry; do everything quietly and in a calm spirit. Do not lose your inner peace for anything whatsoever, even if your whole world seems upset.” ~ St Francis de Sales*

Are you someone who is always rushing around? Hurrying from one thing to the next? Whether it be out of necessity or as a result of poor time management, it’s uncomfortable. We can fool ourselves into thinking that flying out the door and driving 20 miles over the speed limit is beneficial – we arrive on time, we wake ourselves up, we think better under pressure. In reality, it’s a lifestyle that can result in exhaustion, frustration, and a visit to the emergency room if we’re constantly driving like crazy people.

Take these words of St. Francis to heart – do everything quietly and in a calm spirit. Recognize when you are revving up for another hurried moment and stop yourself. Take one big deep breath and quiet your mind, body, and spirit.

Remember to slow down when you start to rush through your day. Think about how you might have hurried through your childhood – wishing you could stay up later; hoping that you could drive the family car all alone, and wanting so badly to eat whatever you were craving. Wouldn’t you give anything to take a nap, let someone else drive you around, or have Mom make your favorite meal? You can choose how you respond to the strains on your life. Choose your pace and your response. Slow and steady works best.

## **REMINDERS**

Be **PURPOSEFUL!** Make your ideas, decisions, conversations and movements mean something. Avoid forgetting, regretting, dismissing or injuring due to lack of purpose. Think about what you do today!

Notice GRIT! What have you done this week that required stick-to-it-ness, courage or resolve? Celebrate your awesomeness and know that you have exactly what it takes to get the job done! Way to finish strong!

Choose ROUTINE! We are creatures of habit, and when we begin to recognize and embrace our behaviors as a part of who we are, we relax into them. Trust your routines and stick to them; they provide comfort in chaos. This choice replenishes our peace of mind.

Practice CONCENTRATING! With so many distractions, we may forget how to really concentrate on a task. Some of us require background noise. Some of us need absolute silence. Determine what works for you and do it. Putting the phone AWAY may be the first step!

Release AUTO-PILOT! Pay attention to life today. Take an alternative driving route. Get coffee from a new shop. Bring a floral arrangement to a friend. Do anything out of the ordinary and wake your brain up! Shake off the numbness - time to LIVE!

## **TAKE ACTION ON SCATTERED**

### **Pebble**

- Set simple reminders on your phone. (Breathe. Eat. Leave for work. Smile.)
- Practice following those reminders for a day.
- Make a list of 3 no-excuse goals to accomplish for the day.

### **Stone**

- Find a fidget - something to hold onto or wear that will keep you focused during a meeting, phone conversation, or activity that is of high importance.
- Set a reminder telling you to FOCUS during your most "scattered" time of day.
- Create a playlist to use for concentrating when you have to get something done.

### **Boulder**

- Enlist the help of a friend to sit with you in a space when you need to accomplish something important.

- Make use of a new system and commit to using it for one month to test outcomes.
- Work with a professional coach or organizer to help hold your goals and provide some additional accountability.

## Chapter 8: Procrastination - Motivational Barriers

**Take Away: Procrastination is a learned behavior. Lazy people do not accuse themselves of procrastination; busy people do. It's recognizable. It's also fixable. Reasons? The task is either too BIG, too UNCLEAR, or there is a gap in MOTIVATION. Determine the issue, and, before you know it, the task is DONE.**

### Thief!

*Procrastination is like a thief in the night – it steals the time we imagine we have.*

Can something be stolen from you if you believe you never owned it? Time is one of those things that we considered "borrowed." Putting something off is common sense when there are more IMPORTANT tasks to accomplish.

One time, I drove by an auction – the homeowners had boxes and personal items strewn all over the front lawn. It was obvious they were hoping to sell these belongings. It looked like every project that has ever been started – empty photo albums, partially-stained dressers, old lighting, cans of paint, childhood dollhouses, decades worth of clothing, broken bikes, and lots of boxes filled to the top with various kitchen and bath items.

I thought about my piles on the dining room table. I thought about the pool table full of boxes from the recent basement flood. I thought about the baby book now that my "baby" is off to college. That yard full of someone's life made me stop. TIME. It is valuable and it is fleeting.

It's time to take back what is rightfully yours – TIME! Complete one task you've been putting off – however small. Starting small sets the stage and provides that sensation of success! Take back one afternoon of your life. Spend 30 minutes to avoid spending 3 hours. You can do it! One task. Go get it! Get to it! Whatever it takes – do it and stand tall! You can prevent a thief from taking any more of your precious life!



## **Be the One!**

*We are most powerful when we share our strength with others!*

We are here on this Earth for a reason. We have gifts, skills, and talents that are in us. Our families, teachers and professional environments can either foster those talents or suppress them. If you have been encouraged by others to draw on your gifts, then it's time for you to be the one to help someone else do the same.

Be the one who asks the good questions.

Be the one who challenges old school thinking.

Be the one who supports a colleague in creative efforts.

Be the one who finds a way to bring another person into the spotlight.

Be the one who sees potential in a colleague and offers a new opportunity.

Be the one.

You have a responsibility to help another human being shine and draw on gifts that are waiting to be unleashed! When we step up to help others, we can move out of our own heads, move away from being stuck, and create a momentum that brings success and motivation into our lives.

## **Move It!**

*Let's not sit back and let life happen to us; let's happen to life!*

Determination. We summon determination on a daily basis to do any number of things - get out of bed, make it to the gym, start a big project, learn a new program. If we avoid these tasks, eventually, something will grab our attention due to urgency. Maybe our job is on the line, we are gaining weight, the project benchmarks are overdue, or everyone is using the program leaving us in the dust.

Inactivity leads to obstacles the size of mountains.

Time to MOVE IT! Give yourself a kick in the butt to get to the things on the MUST list. The "To-Do" list will forever live and breathe; it's the "Musts" that require our attention today.

What's your mountain? From where can you draw your strength to get it done? Now is the time! Move that rock!

## **REMINDERS**

Are you directing your energy toward projects and people who matter? If we deplete our high premium fuel on less important areas, we are wasting time and potential. Determine what's meaningful today and rev up for a more effective use of your time, energy and talents!

Choose to ACT! Move on that ONE thing that is still undone. First, write it down on paper. If it's a big thing, break it into 3 smaller actions. This is doable! This is movement! This is intention! This choice will result in success and motivation!

Free yourself from "SHOULDs"! Saying you "should" do this or that increases stress and anxiety. Think about where it's coming from. What's important to you NOW? Do that.

Trust the CONFUSION. When we feel confused, it could mean our values and beliefs are out of alignment with our current situation. Get back to what is true for you. When we follow our truth, we make better decisions and live happier lives!

Release EXCUSES! There will always be stuff to do - stuff that gets in the way of our REAL work. What will we decide to do today so we can let go of the excuses we use to explain away our procrastination. Get to it!

## **TAKE ACTION ON PROCRASTINATION**

### **Pebble**

- Write out the tasks that keep getting put off.
- Ask yourself, "Is it too big? Am I unclear? Or is this a motivational issue?" ANSWER for each task.
- Cross off the ONE task that is not important right now (in the next 24 hours).

## Stone

- Determine what draws attention away from completing the task.
- Challenge yourself to avoid the distraction for one hour while you work on the task.
- Break the hour down into three, 15-minute work sessions - each one followed by a 5-minute break; OR, try working for 45 minutes with a 15-minute break five times a day.

## Boulder

- When creating a to-do list, write down the amount of time you believe it will take to accomplish the task. Crosscheck once completed to see how close you came. Evaluate this for future tasks.
- Color code areas of life (work, health, finance, home, etc.) to help identify high priority versus "would be nice" to complete tasks.
- Break down the task by putting the "END RESULT" at the bottom and work up:
  - Clean closet - this is moved to the BOTTOM of the list because it's the end goal.
  - Get 3 boxes, a marker, a timer, and packaging tape.
  - Mark each box (Donate, Throw Out, Package Up).
  - Set timer for 15 minutes and start on the top shelf of closet.
  - Take a 5-minute break when timer goes off and reset for 15 minutes.
  - Work from top to bottom and left to right.
  - Package up items in appropriate boxes.
  - Only keep items in closet that have purpose in your life (things you use).
  - Wipe down doors and handles with soapy cloth.
  - Smile!
  - CLEAN CLOSET!

# Chapter 9: Distraction - Priority Overload

**Take Away: Distractions are all around us. Finding something else to do? Easy! Recognize when you are allowing distracted behavior to stop you from getting things done. Self-checks work! Pick an action to redirect yourself.**

## Halt

*"We can never obtain peace in the outer world until we make peace with ourselves." ~ Dalai Lama*

There are things that happen in our day that are completely out of our control. Most times, we recognize that and move on. There are other things that eat away at us each and every day. Most times, we recognize that changes must be made to get past those irritations. And THEN, there are things that seem random – upsetting us one day and not fazing us the next. That is when we ask ourselves, "What's WRONG with me?!"

Growing up, my mother always taught me that if something was really bothering me that I should determine if I was feeling hungry, angry, lonely, or tired. If so, I should HALT! And do something about it.

When our body, mind, or spirit are deprived of a basic need, like FOOD, PEACE, HUMAN CONNECTION or SLEEP, we are more likely to see it manifest in ways that are unpleasant – frustration, tense muscles, crying, upset stomach, impatience, foggy thinking, or lack of energy and drive. When you experience these conditions, HALT – ask yourself with that acronym, "Am I hungry, angry, lonely, or tired?" If you say yes to anyone of these, stop what you're doing and take care of yourself! Fill that basic need.

## Anticipation Desperation...

*"Hope to enjoy is more enjoyed than hope enjoyed!" ~ Dr. Raj Raghunathan*

There are very few things left in life that create the wonderful sensation of ANTICIPATION – the NCAA Tournament, waiting to know the sex of the baby until the birth, and maybe the first bite of a home-cooked meal. We have

access to answers with the touch of a button, information coming at us 24/7, and no signs of any of that slowing down.

Part of the joy of anticipation is in the WAITING...the untouched, quiet moments – through observing, holding our breath, widening our eyes, or closing them to remove one more distraction while enhancing other senses.

Anticipation is a dance that we rarely take part in because we are always on to the next thing. Waiting has become an inconvenience. And so, we must wait. Practice waiting. Avoid pulling out the phone. Breathe. Watch. Think. Dream. We may find that it helps create a more brilliant life – one filled with lovely surprises, mischievous grins, and glorious delights in the simplest of things.

## **Do You Have Mush Brain?!**

*Playful nonsense can be a wonderful way to get clear!*

We all have moments of mush brain – a word escapes us; we forget why we entered a room, or it takes three times longer to construct an email. If ever there was a time to embrace these experiences, it's now! Instead of fighting it, let's laugh at ourselves and use this opportunity to play.

How have you been silly lately? Have you done anything fun? Dancing? Tried a new recipe? Stood on your head? If we allow ourselves to play, wonderful outcomes happen for our brains! Give it a whirl this week and dedicate time to revel in nonsense. It may very well spark your next best idea!

## **Freedom Through Forgiveness**

*Forgiving others helps us release our tight grip on life. Forgiving ourselves gets us unstuck.*

When we think about saying, "I'm sorry" to someone we hurt, bumped into accidentally, interrupted in conversation, or forgot to call back when we answered another call, it doesn't seem like a big deal. Of course, we would say we're sorry. It somehow immediately excuses the little behaviors that might portray us as rude. No one wants that.

However, how many times do we criticize ourselves for the little things? Forgetting something, tripping over the dog, mismatching our socks, losing the cell phone, or arriving to an appointment late. Are you carrying a lot of self-guilt and criticism with you today? These are the things we hold in our minds that distract us throughout the day. The negative self-talk grabs hold of the productive thoughts inside our head and holds them hostage. Please forgive yourself. Just like the person you hurt or bump into, or forget to call says, "I forgive you. It's okay," you can do the same for yourself.

"I forgive myself. I'm a good person." Let go of the frustrations you carry about yourself – if just for today. Say out loud, "I release myself of any guilt today!" Take a deep breath and blow it out. If you want to get creative, use a balloon! Blow it up with all your critical words and thoughts, seal it and then POP it! Forgiving yourself might be the best thing you've done all day!

## **REMINDERS**

When are you at your BEST? Morning? Afternoon? Evening? Know when you are the most you, and trust THAT you. If you know you are most productive in the morning, do your work then, not late at night. Avoid listening to the one who is the opposite. Attend to the lists, reminders, and goals created by the determined YOU!

Free yourself from URGENCY! When in constant motion, a distraction labeled URGENT can spiral you off in the opposite direction. Stop moving. Take a breath. Make a plan. Delegate tasks. Solve the issue. Now YOU are in control, not the problem!

Notice SILENCE! Sit in that moment without turning on music, making a phone call or adding more to the conversation. It's a chance to take a breath, linger in thought, and practice gratitude. Shhhhh.

Practice REFLECTING! Busy. Always busy. We move from one thing to the next in the name of efficiency. It might behoove us to give ourselves time during the day to stop and reflect on what just happened, what went well, and what we can improve upon next time. Think of it as an investment in your future!

Release YESTERDAY! It's gone. Looking over your shoulder with regret diminishes the experiences of today. Live now. Enjoy now. Embrace now. It's the best!

## **TAKE ACTION ON DISTRACTION**

### **Pebble**

- Set a reminder on your phone during your most difficult time of day. - "What are you attending to?" Set to go off DAILY.
- Use a stress ball or other fidget to increase focus.
- Move! Spend 10 minutes walking, dancing or running to help redirect your energy and mindfulness.

### **Stone**

- Install blocking apps to prevent you from social media access during work hours.
- Turn off notifications to reduce the temptation to check your phone.
- Set a timer for 10 minutes to start. If you can stay focused for 10 minutes, increase the timer to 20, etc. Take small breaks in between working sessions.

### **Boulder**

- Practice peaceful waiting (at the grocery, the post office, in traffic).
- Identify a tantalizing reward for yourself upon completion of a big goal.
- Forgive yourself or someone else so you can move forward.

# Chapter 10: Hopelessness - Forgetting Personal Greatness

**Take Away: As long as you're breathing, there is a reason to have hope. Period. It is when we feed on our feelings of despair that we find ourselves in a pit of hopelessness. Find the glimmer of light, hold on to it and feed it. Soon you will have a roaring fire. Remember how amazing you are!**

## **Attitude is Optional!**

*We know life is going well when we can recognize how many options we truly have in front of us!*

OPTIONS! We have them! Whether you believe it or not, you always have options. It's the gift of living in a FREE country. The boundless options you have is made obvious simply by turning on the TV. There is constant evidence that other people in this world do not share our freedoms, nor are they provided with options for a better life. We must not take these options for granted.

If you are waking each day to a job that you dread; if you are in a relationship that is unhealthy for you; if you leave your therapy session feeling worse than you did upon arrival, perhaps it is time to LOOK at your options.

We all deserve to be happy and fulfilled in our life journey. We all deserve the BEST life has to offer. Take a moment to explore areas of your life this week that need OPTION-ization! Talk with your friends and family for suggestions. Write out your ideas on a HUGE piece of paper. List out pros and cons of your situation – the one causing you stress. Make it visual and you will more clearly see why you must choose another option. Think of it as OPTing in on your new and improved life!

Remember to look at all your options and surround yourself with loving support while doing so. Perhaps with all those people lifting you UP above the fog, you'll gain a new perspective on the scenery of your life!



## **"Shame on You!"**

*When we carry shame, we miss out on life. We must remember that we are loveable and capable!*

We've all heard that awful phrase at least once in our lifetime. It sucks the "light" out of us - that flicker of hope and potential that we hold inside. Wanting to be seen as smart and funny and worthy becomes more daunting when we believe we are flawed.

Shame is associated with a painful experience - and we all have to face it at some point. How about TODAY?

Recognize shame when it surfaces. Physical signs usually accompany it, like anxiety, stomach aches, or headaches. Pause and breathe. Share your pain with a trusted friend or partner - connection creates empathy. Practice self-compassion. Do something that brings you joy and engage fully, reminding yourself that you are worthy because you are alive!

## **Hope for Today**

*We can know. We can believe. But when we have hope, we have everything!*

We are information seekers - we like to discover new information! If we don't know something, we "Google" it; if we need to find where we're going, we use the "Maps" application on our phones. Ask any question and we can find the answer!

But what about finding quick access to support for our well-being? Our emotions? The part of our existence that longs for human connection? A touch? Some encouragement? A listening ear? That may leave us feeling rather hopeless.

When you lose hope for things in your life - relationships, career, finances, love - sometimes it takes looking into the face of a child, a puppy, a sprouting plant - something YOUNG, NEW, CURIOUS, and STARTING OUT on this journey of life. They exude hope for tomorrow. They are examples of love. They are hope.

Today, use your imagination; dream a better day; laugh at something silly, and believe in the magic that will happen when you discover something NEW about yourself.

## **REMINDERS**

Be POSITIVE! Stay focused on the POSSibilities; keep your POSture upright; and know that you POSsess everything it takes to succeed!

Make CHANGE! Do one thing today that is outside your normal routine. Wear something colorful! Take down all the post-its cluttering your desk! Make a phone call to someone you haven't seen in awhile! Shake it up to help shake YOU up!

See the POSSIBILITIES! Too many people point out the problems, the obstacles and the reasons NOT to do something. Do the opposite, and find a way!

Free yourself from DOUBT! Remember your aspirations (which also means to draw in a breath). Think of it like this; you would never doubt your breathing - you count on it. Now count on yourself!

Release NEGATIVITY! Embrace the great parts of your life today! It's too easy to rattle off what we don't want - there is plenty of that. When in doubt, simply ask yourself, "What do I want?" Be ready for the wonderful response, because there is plenty of that, too!

## **TAKE ACTION ON HOPELESSNESS**

### **Pebble**

- Ask yourself, "What went well today?" or "What did I do that worked?"
- Take three deep breaths. IN for 4 counts; HOLD for 4 counts; RELEASE for 8 counts. Repeat three times.
- Do something you enjoy - dance, bake, sing, workout, prepare a meal, visit with your friends, spend time with your pets, etc.

### **Stone**

- Evaluate the day - start to finish - and determine what was accomplished.

- Determine your BEST time of day and begin working on important tasks during that time. Your productivity and sense of accomplishment will skyrocket!
- Get into nature - be by something green, a body of water, or forest critters.

## **Boulder**

- Determine if the sensation of hopelessness is professional or personal.
- Connect with one person who will listen to you talk about the situation.
- Ask yourself, "Is this a pattern or did I have a bad day?" Use a journal to work through feelings of hopelessness, and remember, *"On particularly rough days when I'm sure I can't possibly endure, I like to remind myself that my track record for getting through bad days so far is 100% and that's pretty good."* ~ Author Unknown

# EPILOGUE

Instead of Anxiety, practice Gratitude

Instead of Stress, engage in Mindful Practice

Instead of Fear, focus on Power and Presence

Instead of dreading Demands, attack One Thing at a time

Instead of Overwhelm, stick to Priorities

Instead of Disappointment, learn to Fail Better

Instead of Scattered, use Centered Cues

Instead of Procrastination, take One Step toward a goal

Instead of Distraction, take a Tech Timeout

Instead of Hopelessness, visualize your Perfect Day

*Believe in yourself today.*

*Believe in your talents, your quirks, your skills.*

*Believe that you can do it!*

*Believe that even if you fail, you will learn something.*

*Believe that you can, you will, and you know!*