/we magazine for women

A New Reality on Luxury Brands

Feng Shui at Work

Don’t Let Love Hijack Your Work

Cover Story: This Diva can Handle Any Wall She’s Up Against!

SCOTLAND ~ Land of the BRAVE

Wealth Business Relationships Lifestyle Technology Health
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we'll get the word out to the neighbors

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The Wonder of Fall

Fall is my favorite time of year. I love the rich bold colors, the changing of leaves and the crispness in the air. So many things happen during the Fall Season. We start planning for our holidays, we spend more time with family and friends and when the weather changes we can cozy up to a fire with those we love.

**Fall is a time for celebrating women.** For instance September 21-23 is International Women’s eCommerce Days, Sept. 22 is Women Business Owners Day and many women left their mark on the world as they made history. **Notable women of October** include: Sarah E. Goode becomes the first African-American woman to receive a patent, for a bed that folded up into a cabinet. Goode, who owned a furniture store in Chicago, intended the bed to be used in apartments (1885), Anna Rosenberg became the first woman to receive the Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award given by the United States (1945) and Capt. Linda Bray lead American Troops into combat (1989). **In November we recognize** Elizabeth I on her becoming Queen of England (1558), Susan B. Anthony who registered to vote in Rochester, New York (1872), Freda du Faur who climbed Mount Cook in New Zealand in a record 6 hours. She was the first woman to scale the peak, and she did it wearing a skirt (1910), Mother Teresa founded Mission of Charity, Calcutta (1950) and Grace Murray Hopper A Pioneer Computer Scientist was one of the first programmers of the Harvard Mark I computer, and she developed the first compiler for a computer programming language (1952). **In December the National Organization for Women ~ NOW was founded (1966), Wilma P. Mankiller was sworn in as tribal chief of the Cherokee nation, the first woman to hold this post (1985) and Mary Robinson was elected as president of the Republic of Ireland (1990). These are just a few of the many exceptional things women have accomplished in the Fall months throughout history.


In addition to all these inspiring women, the articles submitted by our editorial team and other women writers include:

- **Scotland ~ Land of the Brave**
- **A New Reality on Luxury Brands**
- **Feng Shui at Work**
- **Celebrating our Authentic Bodies**
- **Whisky, the Water of Life**
- **And The Gals Guide to Gadgets and Goodies**

This issue is jam-packed with inspiration information, and ideas to help you succeed in business and life. Be sure to read all these articles as well as our regular features. By the way, if you are so inclined, I’d love to hear your thoughts. Feel free to drop me a line (heidi@wemagazineforwomen.com) and let my team and I know how we are doing and more importantly how we can make WE Magazine **THE WORLDS BEST MAGAZINE for WOMEN.**

And be sure to check out the Women’s Gift-Giving Guide (http://tinyurl.com/WEGifts) for an opportunity to get your business in front of our readers.

May the **WONDER of FALL** fill your home and heart with love, peace and prosperity as we begin our season of celebrations!

Heidi
Heidi Richards Mooney ~ Publisher & Editor-in-Chief
Meet the Women behind WE Magazine

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WE magazine for women
A New Reality for Luxury Brands

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Facing Your Fears With Curiosity and Trust

Make Sure You are the Winner at Your Next Job
Interview: The Salary Negotiation Dance

Public Service Announcement - Twitter is Addicting! - A 12 Step Plan to Manage Your Time and Effectiveness on Twitter
Making Money on the Net - Fact or Fiction?
Did you know that in 2008 the number of millionaire households in the U.S. jumped to **9.9 million**? That puts YOUR chances of becoming a millionaire at around 1 in 30.

AND According to an Am-Ex survey about half the millionaires in the US are small business owners. Growing a business is easier than you may think. If you’d like to be on your way to be the next small business millionaire, check out:

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*We have an ECONOMIC STIMULUS INCENTIVE when you do!*
Solving the Small Business Owner’s Retirement Dilemma

There’s a fatal flaw in the retirement of many small business owners: After pouring a lifetime of sweat, time and capital into building the business, their rough-sketch strategy is to sell out someday for a ton of money… then settle back and enjoy a financially secure retirement. Many business owners are so sure this will happen that they don’t bother to make any other retirement plans.

Who is this person who, at just the right moment, is going to show up with cash in hand to buy the company… and pay a fair price? For thousands of small business owners each year, no one steps forward. Perhaps the business is too specialized or is tied too closely to the owner’s unique personality and skills. Or perhaps possible buyers equate retirement sale with distress sale and make only low-ball offers. Whatever the reason, many owners find that their company has suddenly become a white elephant that nobody wants.

One Possible Solution

Groom your own replacement, someone who will buy your company when you’re ready to retire. Maybe this person is a current co-owner (but be careful if he or she is about the same age as you, who will be counting on retiring around the same time.) Or it could be a son or daughter active in the business, or a younger key employee.

Business Owners Who Successfully Groom Their Own Replacements

Leave Nothing to Chance

They realize that there is no room for error at the point of retirement. Here are some examples of steps they might take:

~ They are cautious. They make sure their heir apparent is the right person in terms of temperament, personality, competence and personal goals.

~ They set up a probation period so they can terminate the relationship if they find this person simply will not work out. During that period, they keep everything informal, strictly verbal. At the same time, even when they go to a formal agreement, they make sure it contains a termination provision.

~ They fashion golden handcuffs and incentives to ensure that their replacement stays until the baton is passed. An ambitious successor needs and deserves gradually increasing authority and benefits. Options include deferred compensation or the opportunity to acquire partial ownership prior to their retirement. This provides both parties with something to win by sticking to the agreement… and something to lose if it falls apart.

~ They put it in writing, along with the help of their attorney—locking in who does and gets what, and spelling out all details and caveats, including how to establish the final valuation of the business. This formal buy/sell agreement protects everybody.

~ They build in a funding mechanism. This is crucial. No matter how good the terms of the buy/sell agreement, it will be worthless if the money is not there when needed to carry out the plan. Under one option, the successor may be able to purchase the company from ongoing profits. Other options include setting up a sinking fund or allowing the successor to simply borrow the money. These options may work but they leave much to chance. Instead, consider a funding vehicle that protects your family in the event of your disability or premature death, such as life and disability income insurance.*

~ They have a back-up plan. As a business owner, you know that very few things go exactly as planned. What if your business hits tough times or your successor dies, becomes disabled, or—all too common—leaves because of a personality conflict? Or what if there simply is no heir apparent waiting in the wings? Sometimes, it’s simply best to dismantle the business.

Whether or not you have a possible successor for your company, you should begin mapping out your retirement strategy today. Your insurance professional or your independent professional advisors can help you develop this kind of business strategy.

This educational third-party article is being provided as a courtesy by Suzannah L. Richards, CLTC. For additional information on the topic(s) discussed, please contact Suzannah L. Richards, CLTC at 954-895-8980 or srichards@ft.newyorklife.com.

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Feng Shui at Work

By Michelle Luongo

Feng Shui is an ancient Chinese art and practice based on the study of the dynamic flow of energy in our environment and how it affects us as human beings. For hundreds of years, the Chinese have used Feng Shui to create more balance and harmony to their lives. Everything about Feng Shui is designed to maximize the flow of “chi”, or energy through yourself and the environment. The benefits of this in the office are obvious. The Five Elements are omnipresent throughout the practice: Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water. The very name “Feng Shui” means “Wind and Water”.

For years, researchers have been providing insight on how various work environments can have an impact on employee morale. Feng Shui offers several benefits for the office environment, whether you have the big corner office; work out of your home or in a cubicle setting. It’s based on the principle that through specific positioning of elements and by altering or manipulating your surroundings you can attract or unlock positive energy. By following some basic principles, you may improve your productivity and career prospects as well as enhance your success, creativity, and wealth.

Feng Shui begins with clearing the clutter. A cluttered office indicates a cluttered mind, as well as a reflection of a clogged intestinal system, so those weeks-old piles in your in-box will make you feel overwhelmed and unable to get out from the mountain of work. To our subconscious mind, clutter triggers images of stagnation, stuck energy and places where life doesn’t move. This usually represents the things we are resisting and where we don’t want to put our attention. Clutter is also items in your space, which are no longer necessary. Stacks of old newspapers, books & magazines you’ve already read, periodicals that you haven’t had time to read & probably never will.

Put it away, find a home for it, make decisions about it, and address it! Once you move that dead energy, you will be surprised how things move in your life!

Everything that comes into your workspace enters through your front door, bringing with it positive and negative energy. In Feng Shui, the front entrance is called the “Mouth of Chi”. This opening might be the front door of the store where you work, the door to your office, or the opening to your cubicle. It is through the Mouth of Chi that good fortune, blessings, and opportunities come to you. What other people see when they enter your space is a reflection of who you are. The image you project and the impression others have of your space affects the energy coming into your space, whether that impression is favorable or unfavorable. Keep the doorway free and clear of clutter. Leave some open spaces. Cramming too much furniture or accessories into your workspace can lead to a feeling of being overwhelmed and tense. Assess what you need and get rid of everything else.
By far, the greatest priority is to be able to see the entrance to your area from your desk. Having the ability to identify anyone behind you is a basic human desire. At work, your desk is as important as your bed is at home. Place your desk so that you can see the door with your back against a wall, the “power position”. This will prevent surprises, thus reducing tension and allowing you to concentrate more fully. If you work in a cubicle setting, or if your desk must face away from the door, place a mirror in front of your desk so you can see a reflection of the door. Now that you’ve eliminated the clutter and created your “power” position, add decorations to attract positive chi. With the five elements in mind, invite soothing colors into your office that complements the area and your personal style.

Adding color is the primary way you can improve your environment, especially when you’re facing space limitations. To create a soothing workplace, bring in soft blues, natural greens and powerful purple. These are good color choices, promoting mental strength and health.

Sitting under fluorescent lights is a challenge for any office and you should try to eliminate any glare shining on your face. You can replace the fluorescent tubes with full-spectrum bulbs that offer a healthier, warmer light.

If this is not possible, bring in floor or desk lamps, which can offer soothing relief for your eyes and eliminate fatigue.

Bring in plants to enhance natural energy and creativity. Any sharp corners, especially those facing you, should be covered with decorative photos or green, leafy plants. To increase a flowing energy and stimulate prosperity, set up a mini waterfall or fountain. By and large, turning a stagnant office space into a flourishing environment can help increase your concentration, influence business dealings and awaken dormant vibrant energy.

Use your imagination. If you’re going to spend the majority of your day at work, you can at least make it more enjoyable.

Michelle Luongo, is a Certified Feng Shui Practitioner & founder of Balanced Living, Inc., her consulting firm located in South Florida. She is recognized for blending real-life situations with Feng Shui knowledge while offering real solutions on a wide range of projects from residential properties to mid-sized businesses. michelle@balancedlivinginc.com  www.balancedlivinginc.com
Confucius could have had a flourishing business by following his own advice. Not only can preparation lead to success, but it also can help you do so without spending a lot of money. After all, with careful planning, you can achieve sizzling sales without the need for expensive advertising or marketing promotions.

Be smarter than the competition

In today’s ever-changing business climate, just keeping up with the competition isn’t enough. You have to outthink, outsmart and outdo them. How? By getting to know what they do and how they do it.

Find out your competition’s strengths and weaknesses and what products and services they offer. If the shop down the road sells gift baskets, offer more choices than they do—or better products. If the competition opens at 9 a.m. and closes at 5 p.m., consider opening earlier or closing later.

Look for ways to make it easier for customers to do business with you. The slightest increase in customer convenience will yield larger and even more frequent purchases. Plus, providing the products and services they want will keep them coming back.

Reward repeat customers

Design a customer-appreciation program to recognize customers who repeatedly purchase from you or who refer others to your business. Send them thank-you notes or small bouquets. Thank them in your company newsletter. Pick up the phone to thank them, then offer a special discount for their loyalty during your conversation.

One day a long-time customer came into my shop, Eden Florist & Gift Baskets, to purchase flowers. When I thanked him for doing business with us, he said, “I buy so many flowers here, I should get frequent-flower miles.”

He was right! In fact, soon after his visit, I began creating a computer-generated Frequent flower petals card for that very purpose. The card rewarded customers with a free bouquet after they purchased 12 $25-minimum-price floral arrangements.

If this idea won’t work for your shop, create an offer that will. For example, rather than a minimum purchase price for arrangements, offer a program where the customer earns credit for every stem he or she purchases. Then, give a free stem when customers reach a specific goal, such as 10 or 12 stems.

The card-punch program has been one of the single-most successful marketing efforts used at Eden Florist. The first year alone, the program accounted for more than a 15-percent increase in regular customers’ purchases. Not only that, but new customers have indicated that they appreciate it also.

To more easily track customer purchases, our computer records each transaction. Thus, if a customer orders by phone, we still can track the number of purchases. When that person reaches 12, the employee taking the order asks the customer to whom they’d like to send their “free” bouquet. It’s not unusual for customers to send the arrangement to themselves.

If they choose this option, don’t forget to enclose a card thanking them for their business. Customers who appreciate your gesture are likely to recommend your business to family, friends and business associates.

Practice ‘rainmaking’

Rainmakers are people who connect other people through referrals, whether it is friend-to-friend or business-to-business. Referrals are the easiest and least expensive way to make your business grow. Start by instilling a referral mindset into your friends and customers. People don’t necessarily know you want more business unless you tell them. And even though your friends may buy from you, they may not think to tell their friends and family.

Though one of my greatest sources of referrals today is my friends, that wasn’t always the case. In the past, I had one or two friends who constantly sent business my way. However, the majority of my close acquaintances did not. One day, I mentioned this to a friend. Her reply, “I didn’t know you wanted more business.” She is now one of my best references.

Some people are hesitant to ask friends for referrals. Why? If you believe in your product and have a passion for your business, it’s a simple request. After all, friends want friends to succeed. And, if they know they have contributed to your success, it makes them feel good about themselves.

If you feel uncomfortable about tooting your own horn, consider the idea from the perspective of finding a great restaurant. After having a wonderful meal, most people are eager to share the experience by telling their family and friends about it. Flowers and food are both emotional purchases—purchases generally made with the heart, not the brain. When you want to eat out, you go to one of your favorite spots, or you try a new place that offers your favorite dish. The same applies to flowers. People go where they know they can find the flowers they want or people who understand their needs.

Based on emotion alone, referring your shop will be easy for your friends and family. And, when the referrals come in, don’t forget to thank the friends and family who made the suggestions. Send them notes and flowers. Make sure your thank-yous reflect your appreciation for the extra business. An added bonus to this technique is that you’ll surprise people when you thank them, putting
Follow-up and follow-through

One of the surest ways to keep customers is to follow up after a purchase. Follow-up accomplishes two important things: It helps you find out whether the customer was satisfied, and it gives you the opportunity to build a positive relationship with that person.

Happy customers may tell as many as three people about their positive experience at your business. This may not seem like it can have much of an impact. But when you compare it to the number of people who will hear about a customer’s unhappy experience—typically estimated as eight to 10—then the number of those passing on their positive experience becomes that much more important.

Besides, if you don’t follow up with a customer, you may never even know he or she had a negative experience. Those people will simply take their business elsewhere. Taking the time to inquire about a purchase after the fact shows your customers you care about their business. It also helps build a lasting relationship with your customers. Not only that, but when you resolve a complaint favorably, you’re likely to increase the chance that the customer will refer you to others.

If your shop is too busy to follow up with every customer after the sale—especially after holidays—then at least do some random sampling of your customers. Although a random sample may be less accurate, it will nevertheless provide you with an idea of how a portion of your customers views your business.

To make the task easier, call two or three recipients and two or three senders each day. You’ll impress the recipients, who will want to do business with you, and both the sender and the recipient will know you care. In fact, on more than one occasion when an employee at Eden Florist has called a sender or recipient, that person has ordered an arrangement during the thank-you phone call. So your efforts definitely will pay off.

And don’t forget to follow through on anything you promise you’ll do for a customer. Make it a habit to deliver. When you do, your customers will trust and respect you. And your sales will sizzle!

©Heidi Richards Mooney - is a Professional Speaker, Business Coach and the Author of 7 books including: “Rose Marketing on a Daisy Budget ~ How to Grow Your Business Without Spending a Fortune.” She is also the Publisher of WE Magazine for Women. Stop by http:/www.speakingwithspirit.com to get a FREE copy of Chapter One of her latest book: Quirky Marketing.

Heidi’s 10 tips for sizzling sales

1) Market to former customers. It costs less than marketing to new customers. Make them an offer they can’t refuse, such as $10 or a % off their next purchase.

2) Join associations, professional organizations, and civic and charitable clubs. Get involved and become a leader. You’ll make great contacts that can lead to future business. Also, thank new members who join your organization by offering them a coupon or sending them a postcard for a discount or free bouquet.

3) Reward repeat customers. Offer a frequent-purchase card to track their spending.

4) Use coupons to enhance your sales.

5) Follow the rule of three: *Forget cold calls. Make three warm calls a day to prospects who others have referred to you. *Collect at least three business cards a day.  *Send at least three notes each day to people thanking them for their business or something they did to help your business grow. I use SendOutCards for my follow up strategy. You can test drive it for free at http://www.sendoutcards.com/heidi TODAY!

7) Send press releases prior to having an event or a contest or write articles for publications in the your industry.

8) Create and send a newsletter or e-zine to your customers to keep your business at the top of their minds. Include tips positive news events, specials, discounts and coupons.

9) Give stellar service with a 100-percent, no-questions-asked, money-back guarantee. It will give your customers a sense of ease in doing business with you as you build their trust.

10) Partner with other companies to promote your business, such as local newspapers and hospitals.
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The gorgeous young man on my right could tap dance a dreadlocked symphony in his sleep. The tattooed guy to my left sang opera underneath his breath. My parents taught me to give silent compliments to everyone including myself, so luckily I knew no jealousy. But there we were – the most prolific, audacious, and magnificent of Manhattan artists all vying for one job: to make music out of trash cans, make history in live theater, and claim a spot on stage in *STOMP*.

I was feeling rather exposed, as only an auditioning performer can, being expected to be brilliant on command. My compliment mechanism kicked into overdrive as one by one we were directed to take center stage and improvise music using only our hands and feet while Luke Creswell, *STOMP*'s creator, took notes in the empty audience. “Wow, that Japanese girl sure can solo!” “Sweet, did he just do a standing back flip?” “Great...I guess it’s my turn after Ringo Starr, here...” The jazz musician panted, the African dancer paced, and I did what any starving artist in an overly tense situation would do: pulled up my sports socks, stepped center stage, and screwed up.

I was not the best dancer at the audition. I was not the best percussionist. I was not the best at anything at all - except being myself. In fact, I was the only one who could possibly do it. And with that heavy responsibility upon my shoulders - that if I did not express myself fully in this very vulnerable moment, a unique creative opportunity would be lost forever - I got down to what was real and gave the only thing that anyone really has to give: the authentic me.

Six hundred of Manhattan’s finest artists attended *STOMP* auditions in March 2002.

Three women were hired.

If you had told me when I was four, hosting tea parties with my stuffed animals, that at twenty six I would be rolling out of bed and into the back of a limo to do morning radio appearances, I would have dropped my lump of sugar. If you had suggested to this Midwestern firefly catcher that someday she would be signing autographs in a different time zone every week, she would have absent-mindedly set the glowing captives free. Never in a million childhood imaginations could I have daydreamed a life so fulfilling, a career so rewarding, a fantasy so real as touring the nation in *STOMP*. And a year and a half later, as I stand center stage soloing music using only my hands and feet this time in front of 2,000 people, I am reminded of why I am on this stage at all. It is not to “act” and “perform” - words implying falsity or illusion. No, if these 2,000 fans wanted façade they would be zoning out on reruns in their living rooms. Instead, they have chosen the red velvet seat of live theatre and are opening up to experience me, asking me to affect them, inviting me to change their lives. The audience gives me their attention and in return, I give them the only gift anyone really has to give, the only thing anyone is really interested in receiving, the only reason to live and breathe at all: the truth... myself... what is real.

Every night the challenge to become a better performer is the challenge to become a better human being, through knowing myself more deeply and expressing myself more fully. 2,000 watching eyes keep a girl honest.

Now to live on the road, sacrifices must be made. You have a mailbox, I have a laptop computer. You have a blender, I have a laptop computer. You have family and friends, I have a laptop computer. Yes, the road is a grueling place exposing loneliness, addiction and all the most attractive human qualities. So when I arrived on tour in January 2003, Little Miss Sunshine claiming to eat only raw, uncooked fruits and vegetables, my new cast mates smiled with a knowing look in their eyes - they’d seen spouses and the devout sink quicker. Placing their bets, they welcomed the new girl aboard.

I remember early in my touring career playing Danville, Kentucky. You know you are off the grid when Verizon doesn’t get reception.

By Tonya Kay
Or when there is no local dial up number. Or when the only grocer within walking distance is Super-Walmart (which surprisingly did offer a small organic produce section down the aisle from the car batteries and next to the disposable diapers, I believe).

Disheartened and famished, I opted instead to wait for catering at sound check, only to be thwarted yet again by parmesan on the iceberg salad and, well...let’s just say fruit isn’t “what’s for dinner” in Danville. I remember some of my early hotel rooms having refrigerators...some not. And fondly, I remember my new cast mates lovingly calling me “rabbit.” It is a way of reaching out, this friendly teasing, but somehow it just leaves one feeling different, which is probably the main obstacle to maintaining a raw food diet - feeling socially isolated when in your heart of hearts you believe you are normal.

But any goal worth striving toward is as difficult or as effortless as we perceive it to be. Embracing the dramatic adjustments to my routine, instead of cursing them, has rewarded me three fold with health, education and experience. I learned quickly that even the smallest cities have a co-op or health food store, and there is no cab ride too expensive that is not worth the organic persimmons eagerly awaiting my arrival into town. I learned also that nice hotels will gladly deliver a refrigerator and a handsome bellhop to your door upon request. And I learned that Mexican joints and fine dining restaurants are a raw foodist’s greatest allies when eating out with friends. Guacamole or a chef’s surprise salad consistently exceed my expectations, and more importantly, remind me that I am not a victim of raw food, hiding in some hotel room, peering through a peek hole at the world’s social web. Rather, I am in the center spinning, spinning, spinning patterns of friendship and connection.

Which brings me to my absolute favorite part of touring as a raw foodist - yes, friendship and connection. The STOMP company I travel with is nineteen individuals strong - all exceptionally extraordinary people, to say the least. Out on the road, sometimes all we’ve got is each other - we celebrate birthdays together, mourn deaths together, create art together. And because I view the raw food diet as an ever evolving personal experiment that this scientist would abandon completely if unsatisfactory results came back from the lab, I acknowledge that my cast mates may be getting the precise results they desire from their chosen lifestyles and therefore I have nothing but respect for their personal paths. Yes, I adore my brother and sister STOMPers and all of our glorious diversity, yet there are times when I need the support of a fellow raw fooder. I need to discuss the femininity of the pomegranate or the neutrality of dino kale. I need somebody to suck on a coconut with me. And it is precisely at these times, with the aid of my faithful laptop computer, that this traveler has reached out and discovered a monumental truth about America’s raw food movement: we are everywhere! From potlucks in Central Park to festivals in Oregon, from Karyn’s Fresh Corner in Chicago to Rawsome Café in Phoenix, from the Favor family in Austin to a treasured cyber pal in San Francisco, I am fortunate to report firsthand that our community is vast and rapidly growing. We are the artists, the musicians, the healers, the parents. We are the innovators, the educators, the leaders, the dreamers. We are role models in society, we are muses for growth, and we are the emerging counterculture of the 21st century.

So unto all my STOMPer friends I say, “you gotta know when to fold ‘em,” for the bet has been won and even improved upon. Not only am I traveling full-time and enjoying an unstoppable social life as a raw foodist, but I am doing it all while maintaining the intensely physical lifestyle of a professional athlete. The cast mates who once called me “rabbit” are now complimenting my “solid” figure and inexhaustible energy. And this time it is I giving the silent, knowing smile...

I eat raw food not to transcend the human experience, not to cheat death, defy aging, or attain some enlightened spiritual state. I eat raw food because it brings me joy right now. And it is precisely by getting back to what’s real and living in the moment that I effortlessly become the giving performer, the thriving athlete, the authentic human being it is natural for me to be. If I am blessed enough to live a century, seeing only one hundred autumns, feeling only one hundred springs, then I refuse for even one day to delay life’s pleasures.


Did you know.....

Cloud Computing Cloud computing is Internet (“cloud”) based development and use of computer technology (“computing”). It is a style of computing in which resources are provided “as a service” over the Internet to users who need not have knowledge of, expertise in, or control over the technology infrastructure (“in the cloud”) that supports them. (source Wikipedia). Cloud computing has also been described as “on-demand computing.”
In this article, I want to cover a topic that I’ve wanted to speak to for a long time - plastic surgery. I must confess that this is an area I gave little attention to in the past as I have been in my ‘prime’ for a good number of years being young with good skin and a curvaceous body. However, I have just turned 38 and with the increase of years have also come some things I hate to admit have shocked me to the core. These include:

*Weight gain that appears to take place just by LOOKING at fattening foods (I swear it’s true!)
*Gray hairs - at first manageable - all I had to do was use my trusty eyebrow tweezers and problem solved. Now, however, I risk going bald if I were to continue this practise.
*Breasts that have started to mimic the shape of pancakes and have definitely taken a downward turn (you know what I mean)
*Lines around my eyes and the skin surrounding my eyes staying in one place once I apply make-up for longer than I would like. It’s like watching a snail slowly migrate back into its shell once the cover-up is blended in.
*And horror of horrors - chin hairs! No, I’m not kidding...and not the blond wispy things no one notices - these little buggers are thick and black and forward to more gray hair, my body shape changing, and those lovely hairs on my chinny-chin-chin, but I’m going to sit there trying to wipe the look of horror off of my face as I do my best to impart an attitude of empowerment and acceptance regardless of what choices women make in their lives.

I was at my local library recently and glanced along the shelves and found a new book out by Joan Rivers, the Queen of plastic surgery, which is a “guidebook” to getting plastic surgery. It was titled, “Men are Stupid and they Like Big Boobs”. She is 75 years old and has had so much plastic surgery that she looks somewhat cartoon-like and anything but natural. She doesn’t even look like a younger version of herself - she looks strange and almost doll-like and scarily unreal. Anyway, the book was co-written with some top cosmetic surgeons and boasts all of the “wonderful” advances available to women who want to change the way they look through plastic surgery. I particularly loved the part where she’s talking about one procedure and under “risks” she casually writes, “death”. Then without missing a beat, she’s onto describing the next “wonderful” procedure!

I don’t know about you, but I think DEATH is a pretty big risk! It reminds me of the author who died a few years ago from liposuction - yikes. I don’t want to come off as being all fanatical and judgmental, because I truly believe that women are in charge of their bodies and it’s not my place to tell someone what to do with her body.

However, I do believe that the current obsession we have with looking younger (one writer calls the times we are living in, “age deceleration” - i.e., “forty is the new thirty” and so on) is a recent and ultimately, dangerous focus. Never before in human history have people been so terrified of getting old. It’s also true that we have never had such a long lifespan so perhaps this is a contributing factor as well.

My grandparents never considered plastic surgery and my 86-year-old grandmother is completely perplexed by this newfound obsession younger generations have with looking young for as long as they possibly can. I think that there are many factors at play here; most notably, the fear of death.

I know I’m terrified of dying and getting old. But I’m working through it. I want to be courageous enough to face getting older head-on without going under the knife or injecting poisonous substances in my body to appear younger. Honestly, I’m not looking forward to more gray hair, my body shape changing, and those lovely hairs on my chinny-chin-chin, but I’m going to do my best to ‘go natural’ and grow old gracefully. I am more than my body and so are you. Let’s all remember that.

Become a Pink Warrior!

Proceeds go to Susan G. Komen for the Cure

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Forget saving money. You don’t get wealthy by putting your money away in a bank account, nor do you become poor just because you bought yourself an extra latte. You get rich by making money . . . and America’s leading money-making expert Loral Langemeier can show you how. A timely book with a counterintuitive message, *Put More Cash in Your Pocket* helps you create your own “lemonade stand” by getting paid for the things you already do. By following Loral’s simple and straightforward approach, you’ll put more cash—as much as $1,000 a month—in your pocket in no time.

In *Me, the Crazy Woman and Breast Cancer*, Stacy Shelton had to face every woman’s worst nightmare when she was diagnosed, not once, but twice, with breast cancer. To make matters worse, a new presence, which she dubbed “Crazy Woman,” took up residence in her brain, wreaking havoc and forcing her to face her own mortality. *Me, the Crazy Woman and Breast Cancer*, is a hauntingly moving memoir that will leave you knowing all life’s lessons are to be cherished. More so, it provides a roadmap to solace, both for those who are afflicted with a life-threatening disease and those who love them.

With innovative techniques derived from proven corporate performance tools, *Success Mapping* will help everyone, from students to CEOs, plan for lasting and meaningful success. Filled with inspiring anecdotes and focused on actual achievement, *Success Mapping* cuts through doubt and confusion with simple yet rigorous actions. *Success Mapping* describes how to identify the eight success blockers that are keeping you from achieving all you can. *Success Mapping* ensures that you take the necessary steps to create your own life strategy and follow it through to success. No more excuses. Believe in yourself and get started. *Success Mapping* will guide you, step by step!

She arrives in New York speaking no English, with only a dollar in her pocket. With the help of a Good Samaritan, she travels by bus to California, hoping to connect with an acquaintance from home. Yet when she mistakenly disembarks in San Francisco instead of Sacramento, she finds herself penniless and alone. What unfolds is a miraculous story of survival, as Svetlana encounters kind strangers and struggles to cobble together a meager existence. Through it all, when her nerve threatens to fail her, she returns to memories of her grandmother White Pearl, whose parents immigrated to Russia from Korea.
Stylize Your Wardrobe – 5 Ways to Make the Most of What You Already Own

By Kim Kristofferson-Magnusson

if you’re anything like Lovergirl, you have a closet jam-packed with clothes of all shapes and sizes, and NOTHING to wear! The very best example of this is jeans. Twenty-five pairs and none that look “perfect” – a panoramic view of your closet includes “Jeans-From-High-School”, your “Skinny/Normal/Fat Jeans”, and Maternity Jeans…you get the picture. Here’s Lovergirl’s top five suggestions to make the clothes you feel and look GREAT in come to the forefront of the jumble you call your wardrobe.

#1 – TRY EVERYTHING ON…EVERY SINGLE THING! ~ Be vicious. Take every single thing out of your closet and put it on. Look at it in the mirror, and give your honest, unbiased opinion. If it doesn’t fit, pitch it. I don’t care if you are losing weight…by the time you get into it again, it will be out of style, and you will want something new anyway. This could hurt a little, but be brave. Think of it as a psychological exercise in self-actualization… “I will never again fit into these jeans, and that is OK with me”. Say it until you believe it. This is the hardest step, and you will feel much better when it’s over.

#2 – IF YOU HAVEN’T WORN IT FOR A YEAR, GET RID OF IT! ~ Say goodbye and good riddance to some of those shopping mistakes...like the bright yellow peasant blouse you bought when you were in the “cowgirl” stage, and when you bought into the “leggings” trend…bad decisions, but hey, you’re human! If you think it still has some life in it, like a long skirt you could shorten to the oh-so-current mid-length, attempt to alter it…you have nothing to lose. Try donating all usable items in good condition to your local women’s shelter.

#3 – CREATE A SMALL SECTION OF “SPECIALS” ~ The sexy dress you wore the night you got engaged (hey, it worked, didn’t it!)…the fantastic stilettos you bought on the whirlwind NYC shopping trip (you can’t walk in them, but, oh man, they look so hot!)…the rhinestone belt from Vegas (it’s been around the block too, ok?!). You are allowed to keep these, and add items to this “special” section of your closet which you deem “worthy” (the first jeans you were able to zip up post-pregnancy do NOT count). To quote a fashion icon, Cynthia Rowley – “A person’s closet is like a scrapbook. When you take something out of it, you think about all the good times wearing that item” (as quoted in InStyle, March 2005).

#4- MAKE A DETAILED LIST OF “REPLACEMENTS” ~ You count four white t-shirts, and they all have stains? Pitch every single one (no, you are not allowed to keep them for pj’s) and spend the $15 on a brand-new one. Make sure it fits you perfectly, and you will wear it under everything, dress or casual. Do you have twelve pairs of black pants, and still not the “perfect”, 365 days a year style? Get rid of all of them (painful, I know…be brave). If you can’t bear to give away perfectly good (if only slightly “last year”) styles, sell them online and use the proceeds to buy THE perfect pair, even if it sets you back a few hun’. Ditto for all your denims. These are the basics that will make all your funky jackets and camis, which are so “NOW”, look so “RIGHT”. This is the FUN part, so get goin’, girl...GO SHOPPING!

#5 – PUT THE “WINNERS” BACK INTO YOUR CLOSET AND EVALUATE! ~ Now, what you have left, after reliving your glory days, intermittent crying jags and laughing fits, and some tough soul-searching, is the ‘Best of the Best’ – the epitome of the Fashion Called You! This will become the basis for your “signature” style…pieces that make you feel great, pretty, sexy, smart…who knew fashion could be such a pick-me-up. If there’s not much left, you know what to do (Can you say...“Little Brown Bag”!) Each season, use your “pin money” (aka your secret stash) to pick up some inexpensive pieces in the latest and greatest colors and styles to round out and extend the life of your basics. Voila…you finally have SOMETHING to wear!

Kim Kristofferson-Magnusson is the founder and President of Lovergirl Promotions. Initially conceived as a fashion design firm, Lovergirl now encompasses wardrobe management, fashion and style consulting, in addition to the sales and marketing of the popular Lovergirl T-shirts (available at online at http://www.lovergirlpromotions.com or http://www.lifeloveluxury.com). Her goal is to elevate the self-image of every client by making them look and feel fantastic about themselves. Visit our blog “Lovergirl: Your Fashion and Style Guru” @ http://lovergirlpromotions.blogspot.com/ to get the answers to Messenger. Check out SignInAndWIN.ca to learn more!
The Gals Guide to Gadgets & Goodies

Check out the Tiny SPY Camcorder Clock with built-in 4GB memory and rechargeable battery! You can use and place it anywhere.

Here's a bathroom scale like none other: the Withings Connected Body Scale measures your weight, fat mass, and lean mass, and then sends that data via Wi-Fi (802.11 b/g) to your own personalized area of the company's website. Using its Wifi connection, the scale records all your measures and sends it to your iphone. Then you can download the Withings iPhone app and you'll be able to take a look at all that info, including the lean mass and fat mass curves, even when you're not near the actual scale. Available on Amazon.com

A Lot to Say has worked hard to make their tees the ultimate in environmental apparel. And now they can very proudly claim that they are more progressive, more green, more environmentally respectful than any other t-shirt out here. Every A Lot To Say tee is now made entirely of RECYCLED BOTTLES. $38.99 (long sleeved top) and 35.99 (tank)

Have a Kindle? Then why not do your part for Breast Cancer Awareness and get yourself a M-Edge Breast Cancer Awareness Jacket. 10% of the proceeds will be donated to The Breast Cancer Research Foundation. Specifically designed for the 2nd generation Kindle, the M-Edge comes in pink with a grey interior. It will firmly hold your Kindle in place while allowing access to both ports and buttons. The M-Edge Breast Cancer Awareness Jacket retails for $44.99 at Amazon.
Yogurt, Lemon, and Herb Dip

By Chez Pim

A weekend of grazing on rich food and richer wine had us all craving very simple food when we got home. We went to the garden and picked some fresh vegetables to fill the fridge. When we got home, Julie, Alain Passard’s sous chef, whipped up a quick and delicious yogurt dip for the fresh radishes and baby carrots that we just pulled from the ground. It was so simple and so wonderful with everything from the sweet carrots to even the zingy radishes. The secret was a tiny pinch of Madras curry powder, just enough to be interesting but not to be overwhelming.

1 cup plain yogurt
A squeeze of lemon
A pinch of salt
1 teaspoon honey
1 teaspoon lemon zest
A pinch of madras curry powder
Chopped fennel fond (the green dill-like bits from the top of a fennel bulb)

In a small bowl, stir all the ingredients together well. Taste. It’s difficult to give specific amounts for the ingredients here because they can vary so much. Depending on the yogurt you use, or how sour the lemon, or how spicy the curry powder, you have to add a bit more or less. Just use your judgment. It’s hardly rocket science. If the consistency is a bit thick—because you use strained Greek yogurt for example—then you can just thin it out a tiny bit with milk.

First published June 2008 at www.divinecaroline.com

Honey Almond Scrub

This Honey Almond Scrub has a refreshing peppermint touch that will exfoliate the skin and make it soft and smooth.

3 Tablespoons Almond meal (sometimes called Almond flour)

2 Tablespoons Jojoba oil

3 Tablespoons Honey

3-4 drops of peppermint essential oil

Directions: Pour Almond meal and Jojoba oil into a small glass bowl or jar. Stir well. Mix in the Honey and Peppermint essential oil. Stir mixture until completely mixed together. Before applying, cleanse the skin. Apply to moistened face. If necessary mix a few drops of water into palm of hand with the scrub (don’t add the water to the mixture in the bowl). Scrub gently avoiding the area around the eyes. Remove with a warm washcloth. Splash warm water onto face to remove excess scrub. Use once a week.
Planning for the Inevitable ~ An Unpleasant Yet Necessary Task

By Heidi Richards Mooney

"Time is a sort of river of passing events, and strong is its current; no sooner is a thing brought to sight than it is swept by and another takes its place, and this too will be swept away.” ~ Marcus Aurelius

It’s a fact of life that the older we get the more funerals we seem to attend. Sometimes they are friends of friends, family of friends and worse our own family members. As an observer I tend to notice little things, and one of the things I have noticed is how well prepared some people are for the inevitable and others are not. In this article I address the issues you or your family will face when death knocks on your door, and how a Written Contingency Plan can help avoid conflict and the feeling of ‘what do I do first?’ for the ones left behind.

There’s an old saying that there are only two sure things in life “death and taxes.” And most of us feel as though we have no control over either. Actually we have some control over both. When it comes to taxes, the more you make the more you are likely to owe – unless you know how to utilize your earnings to make more money or pay less. But what about death? Whether it’s yours or a loved one’s demise would you know what to do first or where to begin? Would you know who to contact and inform of the death? Or where important documents were?

And wouldn’t it be better to make it easy for your family should you go first? After all, there may be people you wish to have contacted – you may want to choose who will deliver your eulogy and what music you wish to represent your life. That is why it is important to do the paperwork. Just like a will, a living will and other important legal documents, the Written Contingency Plan can help avoid conflict and the feeling of “what do I do first?” for the ones left behind.

In early 2005, Liz Camp a Certified Financial Advisor spoke at a meeting of the American Business Women’s Association and talked about this very subject. She shared her ten tips to contingency planning with the group based upon her own experiences when her father Steve Died. She told the group that although she and her family weren’t ready for his death, he was. He had planned his own funeral right down to whom to invite and who he wanted to deliver his eulogy.

Here are some of the items you should consider in your Written Contingency Plan:

1. Make a list of friends and family to notify – include contact information.
2. Make a list of assets and liabilities – such as mortgages, credit cards, property owned, etc.
3. Make a list of your insurance policies including the benefits amounts, and name and contact info of the agent. You can use the Easy-find Documents locator to make your lists. Send an email to heidi@wecal.org and I will send you this chart.
4. In addition to having one in your safety deposit box and with your lawyer, give a copy of your wills to a trusted family member.
5. Document who your attorney is, who has power of attorney and a health care surrogate in the event that someone needs to make life-death decisions on your behalf and invoke your wishes per your Living Will.
6. Document tax returns and where they can be located.
7. Write your own lifetime resume – something which may come in handy during the funeral services, for the obituary, etc.
8. Make a list of the contents of your safe deposit box and include where to find the key. You may also want to put another name on your safe-deposit box otherwise it could be a hassle to quickly get to the contents.
9. Include your memorial wishes. This included how you wish to be buried (cremation, what to be buried in, etc.) What music do you wish to be played, do you have a favorite poem? What clothing do you want to be buried in? When my mother died, she wanted to be buried in a favorite fur coat and a baseball cap a dear friend had given her. We tried to honor those wishes, however when going through her personal effects, could not find the coat. The hat bearing the word “bitch” was easily found as she kept it on her nightstand. My brother and I felt terrible about not being able to honor her wishes completely especially when we finally found the coat two weeks later.
10. Make a list of charitable donations and where you would like any monies to go should people wish to contribute in your memory.

Death is very sad and difficult for those left behind. When the inevitable happens, will you be prepared?

©Heidi Richards Mooney - is a Professional Speaker, Business Coach and the Author of 7 books including: “Rose Marketing on a Daisy Budget ~ How to Grow Your Business Without Spending a Fortune.” She is also the Publisher of WE Magazine for Women. Stop by http://www.speakingwithspirit.com to get a FREE copy of Chapter One of her latest book: Quirky Marketing.
Taking a Skin Care Company Green

The Science of Developing Green Products

By Christine Cowheard

You would have to be residing in a black hole the last couple years to not be aware of the rapid expansion of the “green” movement. The use of the green word in conjunction with skin care indicates that strategic choices have been made involving the use of natural ingredients, as well as ethical decisions on sources and sustainability of those natural ingredients. Every skin care brand now has to pay attention to green issues when developing new products or reformulating old ones. There is, however, a big difference between green products from department and drugstore brands, and those that come out of the professional market.

In the 1980s, on the cusp of the cosmeceuticals revolution, professional products were typically from Europe. Some of these brands did have natural botanical compositions, of course, as a number of countries in Europe have always been way ahead in the concept of natural. The word “natural” was prevalent—as opposed to the word “green”. In the late 80s and early 90s, the introduction of alpha-hydroxy acids to the professional market helped spur a revolution of science-based, performance-oriented skin care. (It also became known as cosmeceutical skin care). It was no longer enough to have simple creams with a plant extract or two. The new wave of skin-changing ingredients, such as glycolic acid, lactic acid, epidermal growth factor, natural brighteners like kojic and licorice root, became the tools of a group of very savvy and revolutionary-minded professionals.

These original skin professionals (mostly women) were able to take these new ingredients and build brands to more fully address conditions in the skin. In other words, they were the forerunners of the cosmeceutical revolution. And it completely altered the direction of skin care.

As research progressed in this early phase, new arsenals of ingredients became available to blend naturally derived actives with therapeutics to improve the mechanisms in the skin that regulate function. Botanicals, fruit acids and new fruit enzymes, purified plant chemicals, biotech derived (EGF and hyaluronic acid); lab-naturals (L-ascorbic) and marine derived ingredients were all utilized by this small early group of brands. It is a very fine line that allows a brand to formulate as naturally as possible without sacrificing performance or innovation.

While the above was going on in professional skin care, new mass-market brands emerged with marketing messages that implied that nothing is really capable of changing the skin so it should just smell and feel nice (the opposite of professional skin care philosophy). The department stores’ premium brands carried on oblivious to the natural/therapeutic/cosmeceutical revolution through the 90s and into the new millennium. They still introduced simple moisture creams wrapped in high-priced marketing. This changed in the last few years, however. Some brands have taken on the guise of scientific-sounding products and thereby obscure the lines between professional and mass-market skin care.

The term natural evolved into the term green in the last few years. The concept around the word green has expanded to include far more than just using botanical ingredients. Much of what is seen in the marketplace in relation to organic and green is merely marketing and branding spin to associate a product with a trendy premise.

For the serious product developer, the following are some issues that must be considered in the development of new green products:

- Deciding which botanicals to select with quality standardized levels of the key actives from a vast multitude of botanicals that are now available
- Will the botanicals pass all regulations, including safety and allergens, to be accepted globally?
- What lab-derived therapeutic ingredients will formulate well with the natural-derived ingredients?
- Is all the proper paperwork in place from the supplier of the ingredient for global regulations?
- Is the plant supply source sustainable—meaning it’s not in danger of suddenly being in short supply? Realistically, the resources of organic, wild crafted and botanically sourced actives need time to build as demand increases, or else costs will become out of synch with acceptable price points for the finished products.
- Are there any issues concerning the ethics of cultivation? Be sure that no one is exploited in the production of an ingredient—no child labor, etc.
• What certifications if any are desired for the brand? The organics and ecologically sound certification industry as a whole has not given totally clear classifications as of yet.
• Beyond the product composition, what about the manufacturing facility? Does it give off carbon-emissions? Does it have a recycle plan that is realistic and not just green marketing hype? Does the electrical provider have a strategy for the future on reducing emissions?

The art of developing serious skin care, whether it is green or cosmeceutical or a synergistic blend of both, has evolved over the last 20 years into a sophisticated and complex formulating science. The next two decades will bring equal innovation and exciting futuristic ingredient development. But it’s clear that a central and core piece of all product development in the future will be the green movement concepts.

Christine Cowheard is a European-trained esthetician and founder of A Natural Difference, an innovative skin care company that for almost 20 years has been in the forefront of the skin care revolution of Chiral-correct products, glycolic peels, spintrap systems, organic Pumpkin series and oxygen treatments. Joining science with nature, she employs the most advanced principles of science with all natural ingredients to create the most effective skin products available. A Natural Difference’ products are sold worldwide in leading cosmetic studios and spas. Please go to www.anaturaldifference.com or call 1-888-568-3150.
Scotland: the Homecoming for the soul!

By Linda Pereira

O my luve’s like a red, red rose, 
That’s newly sprung in June, 
My luve’s like the melodie 
That’s sweetly play’d in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonie lass, 
So deep in luve am I, 
And I will luve thee still, my dear, 
Till a’ the seas gang dry.

From ‘A Red, Red Rose’ - Robert Burns (1794)

Until the age of 12 my summers were all spent in Scotland. The thought of leaving my friend in London and travelling to a wet misty, chilly nights destination for ten days with my parents were not exactly a teenager’s dream vacation, and both my sister and I protested vehemently for months prior to departure – which made my parents life a joy. But they knew something that most teenagers forget from year to year....as we set out on our journey with nothing but complaints and moans, half-way along the route we would quiet down and in the quiet, the memories of the previous summer would begin to unfold and we would start to unwrap them as you unwrap an unexpected present. We would suddenly recall castles and hills, and aromas and music and dancing and endless mysteries to solve and warm welcoming faces with year-long stories to tell and by the time we arrived...Scotland was of course the only place we wanted to be.

Because in fact Scotland is everything you imagine – whisky, golf, romance of the clans and a wealth of castles and historic sites...and the Highlands area is one of the last wildernesses in Europe. Scotland is truly one of the most beautiful places on earth and any description I might make here will not do it justice – it is a place that must be savored and felt...
And this year Scotland is celebrating the Homecoming! This is Scotland’s first ever Homecoming year which has been created and timed to mark the 250th anniversary of Scotland’s national poet, the international cultural icon, Robert Burns. From Burns Night to St Andrew’s Day, a country-wide program of exciting events and activities will celebrate some of Scotland’s great contributions to the world: Burns himself, Whisky, Golf, Great Scottish Minds & Innovations and our rich culture and heritage which lives on at home and through our global family.

The Scots are fabulous people. They have been referred to as “a nation of settlers with attitude”. And they certainly have plenty of attitude. They are an immensely proud people, and with reason to be, fiercely independent, generous to a fault and they will tell you what they think – whether you like it or not!

Scotland is a land of contrasts from its historic natural landmarks like Loch Ness and Neolithic Orkney to its unique blend of traditional and modern culture. It is a diverse and extraordinary country, with a rich and fascinating history. The country has nearly 800 islands, only 300 of which are inhabited, and these islands are home to some of the most beautiful landscape in the world. Scotland boasts vibrant and exciting cities to visit and breathtaking lochs, mountains and coastlines. Every inch of this land is steeped in culture and history, something that the Scots are immensely proud of. Scotland has produced some of the world’s best writers, painters, sculptors, poets and musicians, and continues to do so. These great talents can often be seen at Scotland’s many festivals, most notably the Edinburgh International Festival.

Scotland is also very romantic Scotland. I don’t know whether it is the mists or the stories of star-crossed lovers or the haunted castles on every hilltop made famous by many thousands of young lovers, writers, painters and travelers who, for centuries, have recognized and relished the beauty, magic, mystery and altogether special tranquility of the Scottish landscape but there is a unique and imaginative sense of place that is conjured up for everyone of all ages.

When Madonna chose Skibo Castle, Dornoch in the Scottish Highlands to be the setting for her marriage to Guy Ritchie in December 2000, the world’s media sat up and took notice. Apart from the bride and groom, the glamour of the occasion was also due to the arrival of many celebrity guests flying in from Hollywood, including Sting, Gwyneth Paltrow and Rupert Everett. However it was the grandeur of the historic cathedral and castle, against a backdrop of forested mountains, rivers and lochs with perhaps the wintry frost in the air all adding to the magical and romantic atmosphere. Since then many hundreds of young couples have decided to come to Scotland from all over the world dreaming of the perfect wedding.
An unspoilt environment, natural ingredients and world-class producers all contribute to Scotland’s vibrant, exciting and surprising food and drink scene. You cannot leave without trying the delicious smoked salmon, buttery shortbread, tender Aberdeen Angus beef...

And as for drink? You can’t visit Scotland and not sample a dram or two of pure Scotch whiskey!

**Linda’s top “Must see and do”**

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<th><strong>Top daytime must-do’s</strong></th>
<th><strong>Top nighttime must-do’s</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Take our Scotch Whisky Trail itinerary and sample the best of Scotland’s whiskies.</td>
<td>Do the Edinburgh Literary Pub tour (<a href="http://www.edinburghliterarypubtour.co.uk/">www.edinburghliterarypubtour.co.uk/</a>) and discover Scotland’s literary heroes.</td>
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<td>Visit the Glasgow School of Art, designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh.</td>
<td>Find your next favorite band at King Tuts Wah Wah Hut.</td>
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<td>Visit Musselburgh Links (<a href="http://www.musselburgholdlinks.co.uk/">www.musselburgholdlinks.co.uk/</a>) - the world’s oldest golf playing course.</td>
<td>Take a spooky Ghost Tour - if you dare!</td>
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<td>Take a ferry out to St Kilda, the magnificent World Heritage Site.</td>
<td>Sleep in a converted first-class train - it’s just one of our unusual places to stay.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take a unique and fast-paced tour with Trike Tours Scotland</td>
<td>Or... live like royalty for a night - stay at a castle</td>
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Linda’s top 5 “must visit places”

Loch Lomond

You take the high road, we’ll take the low road. long been Glasgow’s rural retreat. Grand mountains, and the venerable Loch itself – Scotland’s western shore is especially popular in summer.

Western Highlands

A sinuous shore where sea and land intertwine. Pristine beaches, rocky bays, overlooked by high mountains and heather-clad moors. Legendary castles like Eilean Donan. Endless space and views to die for. Ben Nevis, Glen Coe, Torridon, tiny Plockton and many more. Pick anywhere beyond Fort William – if the skies are clear, you can’t go wrong.

Southern Islands

Clear waters lap against cliffs and beaches in the Inner Hebrides: the beautiful islands of Mull, Coll, Tiree, Islay, Jura and bonny Skye. Some are remote, most are a ferry-ride from Oban – all part of the fun. And the weather is often better than on the mainland – hence another local name: the Summer Isles.

St Andrews

A neat and prosperous town with medieval streets, a ruined cathedral and an ancient university on a scenic stretch of coast and an easy strike from Edinburgh. Oh yes, and it’s the place where golf was invented.

The Borders

Frequently skipped on tourist itineraries, so good reason to include it on yours. The lovely River Tweed, the remote Galloway Hills, the historic abbeys of Kelso, Jedburgh and Melrose. Sir Walter Scott and Robbie Burns loved this part of southern Scotland. You will too
Aquavit. Eau de vie. Every country has its own special distilled spirit that they refer to as the water of life. But one of the spirits with the most interesting history and complex flavours must surely be usisge beatha. Never heard of it? But what if I tell you that the Gaelic usisge is pronounced “ooshka” and that over time was anglicized to… whisky.

Scottish malt whisky is one of the world’s most complex spirits - and it has a long and colourful history to match. Although the exact origins of whisky are vague, there are records of distillation in Scotland that date back to the fifteenth century. In the early days, the production of whisky was linked to monastic orders, with the monks distilling the spirit for medicinal purposes. This medicinal usage is still very much in evidence in the sixteenth century when the Guild of Barber Surgeons was granted the exclusive distilling rights in Edinburgh.

In the middle of the seventeenth century the first tax was levied on whisky – and, unsurprisingly, this encouraged illegal distillation. Soon, ten times as much spirit was being produced by illegal distillers than by licensed distilleries. By 1777, eight licensed distilleries were contributing taxes while nearly 400 unregistered stills were said to be contributing only to the personal gains of the freebooters who ran them. The remote glens and beautiful vales of the rugged Scottish Highlands provided, for several centuries, a convenient place to hide illicit stills from English tax collectors.

It was only in the 1820’s that the Duke of Gordon proposed in the House of Lords that the Government should make it profitable to produce whisky legally. In 1823 the Excise Act was passed, which sanctioned the distilling of whisky in return for a license fee of $10 and a set payment per gallon of proof spirit. This notable piece of legislation laid the foundations for the whisky industry as we know it today and is also called the “Wash Act”, some say because Britain was awash in newly legalized whisky shortly afterwards!

Two further notable developments assured whisky a permanent place at the bar. The first was the introduction in 1831 of the Coffey still which could operate continuously (rather than in batches only) and which increased the smoothness and drinkability of the spirit. The second was a perfect illustration of one man’s meat being another man’s poison. By the 1880s the vineyards of France had been devastated by the phylloxera plague, and within a few years wine and brandy had virtually disappeared from cellars everywhere. The Scots were quick to take advantage of the calamity, and by the time the French industry recovered, whisky had taken the place of brandy as the spirit of choice at many tables.

Making whisky is deceptively simple. You take barley, add water, malt it, ferment it, distil it, age it and drink it. But each one of these apparently simple steps adds another dimension of flavour, making the end product exceptionally nuanced and complex. First, the barley grains or seeds are steeped in water until they germinate or sprout. The first variable that can affect the flavour of the end product is the water that is used. Some say that the best is spring water that rises from granite and flows through peat – in any event, every whisky distillery has a source of spring water and all are subtly different.

Once the barley has sprouted, it is spread on the floor of a malting house where it continues to develop over the next week or two. During this period the grains are turned over regularly using a “paddle” to allow air to get at them and encourage even development. The starch in the barley turns to sugar and at a certain stage the germination is stopped by heating the barley in an oven or kiln. Traditionally the heat source for this oven was burning peat, and it was from here that malt whisk acquired its peaty, smoky taste.

Once the malted barley is dry, it is milled or crushed to produce a floury substance known as “grist”. This starchy grist is mixed with hot water to create a mash and placed in a large metal vessel or container called a mash tun, where enzymes convert the starch to sugar. The resulting liquid, now known as wort, is then drawn off and transferred to large wooden washbacks (wooden pails) where yeast is added to start the fermentation process to turn the sugar in the wort to alcohol. The solution bubbles and foams furiously before gradually slowing down as the sugar is converted over a period of two to four days. But the resulting product is still quite weak with an alcohol content of no more than about 8-9%.
The next step is to distil this down to the required alcohol content, traditionally in copper pot stills which have a distinctive, swan-neck shape. The character of the final product is influenced by the shape of the stills and the length of the neck. Conventionally there are two stills involved in this process: the wash still for the first distillation, and the spirit still for the second. The first output of the second distillation is too strong, while the last part is too weak, so only the so-called middle cut is used in whisky. This is poured into wooden barrels maturation. These oak barrels have often been previously used in the production of American Bourbon whiskey, but sherry, rum and port casks are also used. Each of these imparts its own, unique characteristics into the final product.

The casks are then moved to a bonded warehouse where, by law, Scotch whisky must remain for at least three years but in practice it is usually much more than this. During this period about 2% is lost through evaporation each year so that about 25% of the contents of a barrel stored for 12 years will be lost to the “angel’s share”. This along with the cost of storing the product for so long all adds to the cost.

Although much is made of the difference in quality between single malt and blended whiskies, the difference between them is not necessarily an indicator of quality.

A single malt Scotch whisky (like The Glenlivet, Glenfiddich and Laphroaig) is distilled in pot stills using only barley and water at a single distillery. Blended Scotch whisky (like Johnnie Walker, J&B and Chivas Regal) is a blend of single malt whisky with one or more grain whiskies (whisky produced from barley and the whole grains of other cereal(s)). Blending is done to ensure consistency, but the process remains essentially the same. So, if all the components in a blend are made with equal care, a preference either way is a matter of taste rather than in indication of being in the know!

The correct way to taste whisky so as to maximize the sensory experience is to taste it in a tulip-shaped glass rather than a tumbler, as this focuses the aromas. After examining the colour and nosing the spirit, a little water should be added (anything from a few drops to an equal volume to the whisky) – but no ice and definitely no club soda! After the whisky and water is swirled around the glass, take a mouthful and hold the whisky in your mouth for long as you need in order to become aware of all the different flavours before swallowing.

Unlike many other distilled spirits, whisky comes in an astonishing spectrum of colours, intensities and flavours. To do a tasting encompassing whiskies from around the various whisky regions of Scotland is to experience the essence of each area in a glass: the sweet floral whiskies of Speyside; the peaty and almost medicinal Islay whiskies; or the smokiness of some Highland whiskies. There truly is a whisky for every occasion and every palate.

Jeanne Horak-Druiff lives in London but her heart and her palate remain resolutely South African. Although she works in the legal field to fund her expensive travel habit, her true passion is for food, wine and writing. She maintains a food blog at www.cooksister.com and has been interviewed by the Wall Street Journal Europe and the BBC. She also contributed to the Digital Dish, a collection of food writing from the Web. When she grows up she wants to live in Plettenberg Bay and lead culinary tours of the Garden Route!
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Whether you are travelling for business, for culture or as a reward, she will be there from beginning to end. She will help you implement your vision, design your event, take care of your guests, welcome you at the airport, take you to breath-taking places, make you look good in your bosses eyes... and wave you goodbye at the airport... all within your budget and always with a smile.

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The global economic downturn has forced a paradigm shift on luxury brand marketers, who are for the first time being forced to re-think their traditional approach and are exploring tactics more akin to packaged goods marketing.

The definition of luxury is radically changing. Words telegraphing this shift include: EXPERIENCE, VALUE, BESPOKE, HERITAGE, STORY, DISCRETE, BUZZ-GENERATING, DISCOVERY, ADVENTURE, SOCIALLY-CONSCIOUS, POLITICALLY RESPONSIBLE, SELF-ENRICHING, CONNECTING, FAMILY-ORIENTED, INNER-DIRECTED, SIMPLICITY, THE LITTLE THINGS. CUSTOMER IN CHARGE.

True luxury will continue to be:

- Distinguished by its inherent value, or by what Stanley Marcus called, “the impact of the hand” (the best the mind of man can imagine and the hand of man create).
- More than ever great experiences rate high on the value scale: rare experiences, sensually orchestrated, producing memories so precious they are actually luxury products. These include ‘time out’ vacations, exotic travel, sensual comforts, etc.
- Educated consumers will even put a premium on things or experiences that cost little or nothing but provide immense satisfaction: good water, knowing how to tie a bow tie, dry firewood, a hot bath, first press olive oil, fresh caught fish, a smile, beautiful wrapping paper, elegant packaging, staying in shape, afternoon tea, museum visits, time alone or with family and friends. Did I say, time, the ultimate luxury, alongside health.

Focus on the Best Customer

Every smart luxury brand is obsessed with their best customers and is focusing marketing efforts on “surprising and delighting” them. The ‘best customer’ spends more, is more loyal, refers more, if asked and rewarded, is willing to partner, wants favored brands to succeed, forgives more readily (if mistakes are corrected), offers stronger word of mouth, is not PRICE but VALUE sensitive, is more economical to keep than to find and becomes more profitable over time.

These best customers are now: more curious about the best of the best and want brands to articulate why their products and services are worth the price; while demanding high-touch, sophistication, intimacy, and intelligent ‘courting’.

More demanding than ever, they view wealth as something to be enjoyed rather than displayed; are highly cynical about advertising and demands a personalized approach; desires connoisseurship while searching for the unique and memorable, wants to tell the story of a great experience, relies on friends’ recommendations, social networks and buzz instead of traditional advertising.

What Smart Luxury Brands Do

Marketing is increasingly seen as the president’s job not just the marketing department’s. Luxury marketing, once seen as great product, great location and major investment in advertising, is increasingly following a packaged goods model. Advertising spends are being cut and the investment targeted to niche publications - Departures, Elite Traveler, The Robb Report, Modern Luxury.

Marketing is considered as an investment by the smartest brands. Those that continue to spend enjoy a significant competitive advantage. Luxury Marketing Council research shows that those that do invest are putting their marketing dollars toward: improving customer service, heightening the quality of interaction with best customers, investing in third-party- testimonial generating public relations, engaging people/employees/sales folks “on the line,” making direct customer contact as strategic partners, genuinely soliciting their insights from the customer and marketplace and sharing insights with people/employees/sales associate in ways once deemed ‘for top management only.’

While challenges remain, the prospect for a bright new world of luxury brand success is peaking through the clouds.

Greg Furman is the Founder and Chairman of the Luxury Marketing Council. You can find out more at www.LuxuryCouncil.com
Jennifer Storm was born and raised near Allentown, PA and attended Northampton High School. She graduated from Pennsylvania State University with a Bachelor of Science in Rehabilitation Services and a Master’s Degree in Organizational Management from The University of Phoenix.

In August 2002, Ms. Storm joined Victim Witness Assistance Program as the organization’s second Executive Director. Before joining VWAP, Ms. Storm was the first full time director of the Statewide Pennsylvania Rights Coalition, a non-profit coalition dedicated to securing and defending fully inclusive civil rights for LGBT people in Pennsylvania. During her tenure at Pennsylvania Rights Coalition, Ms. Storm worked diligently on obtaining inclusive hate crime legislation.

In 2002, the Pennsylvania legislature passed one of the most inclusive hate crime statutes in the country. Governor Edward G. Rendell appointed Ms. Storm as a commissioner to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. She was later appointed to the Homeland Security, Law Enforcement and Justice Systems Advisory committees where she also serves on the Terrorism Prevention and Local Law Enforcement Subcommittee.

Jennifer Storm

Ms. Storm is active in many local committees and on boards such as: The Greater Harrisburg Foundation EGAL Board, Dauphin County Domestic Violence Taskforce, Joint Investigative Taskforce, Dauphin County Elder Abuse Taskforce, Northern Dauphin Human Services Advisory Panel and Criminal Justice Advisory Board of Dauphin County.

Ms. Storm has a unique story that she uses in the promotion of her non-profit organization and has recently chronicled in her memoirs. Jennifer Storm’s first memoir, Blackout Girl, tells the haunting story of her downward spiral into addiction that began when she was raped at twelve-years-old. She remained on a dangerous, self-destructive path for ten dark years, until one day she awoke in the hospital after attempting to commit suicide and realized she needed help.

Now, Leave the Light On offers a deeper look into Jennifer’s inspiring story of survival and transformation. With fearless honesty, she chronicles her journey as she embarked upon a new life in recovery, finally facing her traumatic past, her buried emotions, and the long-hidden truth about her sexuality. Jennifer holds nothing back in this courageous memoir.

Ms. Storm has marketed herself and her organization in a highly effective manner. When she came on board as executive director of Victim/Witness Assistance program the organization did not have a uniform marketing plan. Ms. Storm completely reinvented the agency’s image by creating a brand identity and unique marketing campaign for our agency. In there 21 years as a non-profit agency they have never had any uniformity within the agency; brochures were a kaleidoscope of different formats, colors and themes. You would have never known that each of them came from the same organization. There were no professional materials to give to prospective donors or clients detailing their services, history or mission nor did they have a webpage. Jennifer applied for and received a highly competitive Organizational Capacity Building Grant from The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency to fund this agency overhaul and contracted with The Bravo Group, a local public relations firm. The purpose was to create a more professional image for the agency and to create more awareness of the services they offer.

Jennifer Storm is the ultimate survivor turned thriver. Ms. Storm speaks specifically about why as survivors, it is so important to take the next step into advocacy for victims’ rights. As a child and teen survivor of sexual assault Ms. Storm talks about her personal struggles and how she made the decision one day to end her silence and use her voice to help others. She uses her personal story to relate to and offer assistance and advocacy to others. Her media appearances are vast, and include frequent appearances on all major networks including, ABC, FOX, NBC, NPR, CBS and PBS as the county spokesperson for victims rights. She had done over 500 media & radio interviews, both taped and live, in the past five years. She has appeared on local and national talk shows including The Harrisburg View and WITF’s prime time public affairs show SMARTTALK, Dr. Drew Live, Recovery Coast to Coast and many more. In 2002, Ms Storm also publicly debated Oliver North live on his syndicated talk show Common Sense with Oliver North. She has been profiled or appeared in the following publications; Curve Magazine, The Advocate, Time Magazine, Rolling Stone, WE Magazine for Women, Women Magazine and many more.

For more information visit www.victimwitness.org
Established in 2004, Mary’s Place Pediatric Rehab has become one of the premiere therapy facilities offering speech, language, and occupational therapy services in Southern New Jersey. Dedicated, involved parents, along with the highly skilled team at Mary’s Place, work together to provide the best experience and outcome for each child.

Many children need additional help to allow them to reach their maximum potential. Speech deficits, language delays and inadequate self help skills can impact a child’s everyday life. It’s frustrating to both the child and their entire family when these types of problems interfere with daily routines. More importantly, these problems can have significant future implications in a child’s ability to succeed academically, emotionally, and socially.

Mary’s Place helps children to lead better lives. Speech therapy assists in gaining and/or improving their ability to functionally communicate with those around them. Occupational therapy works to help children learn to function successfully and fully participate at home, school, and play. As these skills begin to emerge the child begins to flourish. Families see a reduction in the stresses that they face at home due to their child’s needs. The child is happier as they become less frustrated and learn to accomplish the things that they want.

Mary’s Place helps to create a better home environment for the entire family by helping each child reach their maximum potential in a caring, safe, results-oriented environment.

Mary’s Place accepts most health insurance plans and has also created discounted plans for families paying for services outside of insurance. Additionally, Mary’s Place has contracts with school districts where a therapist treats at the school site or students individually receive services at the office.

Montague is one of the owners of Mary’s Place as well as Mom to its namesake, Mary. As President, she oversees all of the operations of the company. After 6 years of taking her own child to different facilities for various therapies, she felt that the current offering that existed was missing something. That something was what Montague set out to achieve when, along with her husband, she opened Mary’s Place Pediatric Rehab. Although she had never worked in the medical field before, she was able to draw from her professional experience in public relations and marketing along with her personal experiences raising a child with special needs. Armed with the mission statement, “To help children reach their maximum potential in a friendly, caring, family-oriented environment,” Montague has developed Mary’s Place into a successful small business that has been in operation for the past 5 years. They currently employ 8 full-time and 5 part-time staff members and have plans to add more full time staff in the fall and early 2010. The company has continued to grow and thrive under her leadership and guidance.

Montague has extensive experience in the special needs community, including state agencies and programs, doctors, nursing, durable medical equipment and therapy. She is a graduate of Hunter College in New York City. Prior to having Mary, she worked for AAA Central-West Jersey as a Public/Legislative Affairs Assistant and at Cathy Saypol Public Relations in NYC.

She was rewarded for her hard work when she was voted one of the Top Ten Women in Business 2006 by South Jersey Magazine. Since then, the Mary’s Place name has become synonymous with quality therapy care in South Jersey.

In response to frequent inquiries from families in the community Tara and Mary’s Place, along with 2 other local businesses, co-sponsored an informational conference for parents of children with special needs – Take Control: Invest in Your Child, April 2009. This was a full day event which consisted of a series of presentations and discussions regarding the behavioral challenges of children with special needs, therapy services, financial planning, Individualized Educational Plans and autism awareness. A second parent conference, Take Control: Building the Skills for a Successful Tomorrow is scheduled for October 22, 2009 and a professional series conference is being planned for spring 2010.

Read more of her story here: http://bit.ly/4trrB1

For more information visit www.marysplacerehab.com
Beth Shaw is the founder of the largest Yoga School in North America, published author and entrepreneur. Last year her company and she gave over $100,000 to charities – in Animal rescue, advocacy and support.

Born and raised in New York City, I never planned on becoming a yoga instructor. However, in my last year of study at Long Island University, I had a psychic flash during a yoga pose. The message was that I was destined to be in the health and fitness industry, and that I would be exceedingly successful. “I was doing a standing forward fold in the stretch room of the local health club, and this message came to me in a bright white light... like the sky parted and I received this incredible insight. It was a life-changing moment,” Shaw recalls.

After graduating with a marketing degree from Long Island University, I headed west and began studying yoga and earning certifications in fitness and yoga therapy. In 1993, I began teaching yoga and quickly discovered that traditional yoga teaching methods didn’t meet the needs of a fitness club clientele. I created what would be the first “yoga center within a health club” in the South Bay, and it was a raging success.

After I decided I wanted to share her passion for yoga with the masses, I produced my own local cable show “YogaFit” which won the South Bay Producers Guild Award for Programming Excellence in 1995 and went on to air in New York and other key markets. Because I needed close-fitting yoga clothes in vibrant colors for television, I had the YogaFit “proud warrior” logo put on sweatshirts and body suits. The clothing line was so popular that Yoga Journal Magazine featured the apparel in 1994, and I began selling separates by hawking them from my car after teaching nearly 20 classes in Los Angeles — nearly 20 classes per week.

I was not an instant business success, by any means. “I’ve been fired from every job I’ve ever had where I worked for other people—so I probably don’t do well working for anybody else. Counting jobs in college, I’ve been fired from five large, successful firms.” And I’m not afraid of making mistakes either. “On a consistent basis, I do believe that success is making more good decisions than bad ones at the end of the week. I’m an effective multi-tasker too, and a background in marketing certainly does not hurt!”

The extensive line of YogaFit merchandise now includes yoga apparel, DVDs, CDs, MP3 downloads, books, and accessories. “What started initially as an inspirational thought in my head has steadily grown into a $5 million industry and I think that a lot of that is being at the right place at the right time—but recognizing that it is the right time, and doing something about that.” Soon after, YogaFit incorporated, and Shaw produced her first teacher training in Fargo, North Dakota, with 26 fitness instructors from four different YMCA’s. YogaFit’s super popular Training Program was born—and it’s presently the biggest yoga school in the country. Specifically designed for presentation in health clubs, fitness facilities or other group exercise locations, the company and training programs have expanded over the years, and now feature internationally renowned programs for training fitness professionals in the YogaFit style. YogaFit has Teacher Trainings Level One, Two, Three, Four and Five in addition to class specialties such as YogaFit Seniors and Prenatal Yoga.

Today, YogaFit is designed to improve the health, performance and mental acuity of athletes or individuals interested in improving their fitness. Based on the ancient fitness science of Hatha yoga, it blends balance, strength, flexibility and power in a fitness format. YogaFit overcomes the mystery of yoga by delivering a practical, user-friendly style, which is accessible, understandable, and doable by individuals at all levels of fitness. “Business without a greater purpose—a purpose without profit—has no point,” Shaw says. And she means it.

Taught by YogaFit-trained staff with in-depth experience and skills in both yoga and fitness, the YogaFit method is the only nationally recognized continuing education partner for the American Council of Exercise, and has been a member of the International Health and Racquet Sports Club Association (IHRSA) since 1997. Team YogaFit currently has 50 national trainers. They also produce nine annual Mind-Body Conferences nationwide and trained over 70,000 teachers.

Read more of her story here: http://bit.ly/3iO8xt

For more information visit www.yogafit.com
“There have been great societies that did not use the wheel, but there have been no societies that did not tell stories.” —Ursula K. LeGuin

“Please tell me a story!” For most parents, those words conjure up memories of vacations, campfires, and bedtimes. But children aren’t the only ones who clamor for stories. Seniors listen to their radio dramas. Commuters enjoy books-on-tape. Teens have iPods. We all find life just a little bit sweeter when we can escape into another world for a few minutes or a few hours, defeating foes and writing wrongs, rescuing innocents and vanquishing armies, all while dancing along the yellow brick road in our minds.

Having enjoyed fanciful stories throughout her life, Candyce Kanuchok was dismayed to find that many of her peers had missed a vast number of these delicious tales during their younger years. In an attempt to stop the further loss of these enchanting legends, an idea (a very tiny one at first) sprouted in her mind. Finding fertile ground there to grow and develop, that idea blossomed into an audio book publishing company dedicated to preserving yesterday’s stories for today’s listeners. Thus, Kalliope Audiobooks began.

Starting her first company at fifty-eight with no previous retail business experience may not be a normal thing to do, but Candyce has never been one to excel at normal. Instead, she spent thirty years raising her employees before giving birth to Kalliope Audiobooks LLC. Together with her three daughters, Hannah (accountant/CFO), Esther (graphic design), and Leah (administrative assistant), and two of her sons, Adam (computer specialist/CIO) and Jesse (production manager), they form the backbone of this unusual publishing company. Their mission is simple. Their focus is sharp. Their enthusiasm is contagious. As innovators defying traditional book publishing trends, they seek out neglected stories from the past to recycle into today’s jewels of distinction.

Restoring these classic treasures languishing on dusty library shelves claims the heart of this for-profit publishing house. With an online presence and a growing list of audio book offerings, each product proclaims “excellence!” Featuring time-tested gems from our literary past, narrated by carefully selected international voice talents, and enhanced with mellifluous sound design and music, these books are definitely gift quality. As if that weren’t enough, the book-like CD case and slip cover display custom artwork commissioned exclusively for each audio book. Definitely eye-catching! While many of their selections will delight young listeners, they also offer fiction for adults such as Lad: a Dog by Albert Payson Terhune (an inspiration to nobility for us all) and Hospital Sketches, by Louisa May Alcott, which gives us a peek into her world as a Civil War army nurse.

While Kalliope Audiobooks is a brand new company (not yet two years old), the founder’s experience is impressive. Beginning as an architect in the 1970’s and infusing that functional/artistic basis with the skills developed through two decades as an elementary and high school educator, Candyce has learned the importance of choosing stories that are beautiful and intriguing, but also powerful and relevant. Updating these classic stories for current listening ease, these books in public domain (books written prior to 1923) are edited for potentially offensive language and repackaged in beautiful new finery.

In addition to gallantly saving old stories and bravely building new companies, Candyce’s other passion is “mothering” young mothers. Drawing on her thirty years of experience as a mom, she has graciously mentored more than 500 ladies in her ten years as a M.O.P.S. (Mothers of Pre-Schoolers) Mentor. As a firm believer in honing management skills in every environment available, she shares creative ways she’s found to motivate and encourage each individual, whether child or employee. Using her own seven (now grown) children as a laboratory and testing ground, she’s mastered the art of diffusing squabbles, encouraging camaraderie, and producing positive group dynamics. With humorous examples and heart wrenching anecdotes, she shares her stories with women’s groups throughout the Midwest and she receives many a smile, hug, and heart-felt “Thank you!” in reply.

Read more of her story here: http://bit.ly/c92Pg

For more information visit www.kalliope-audiobooks.com
Christina Domecq

Family tragedy – the death of her mother - at a young age instilled in Christina Domecq the drive to pursue life 100% each and every day. Today Christina is co-founder and CEO of SpinVox and creator of the global Voice-to-Content category recognized as a $10 billion market. Her moment of professional inspiration happened in 2003, when she received 14 voicemails in one morning and asked: “Why can’t I get my voicemails as text?”. With characteristic tenaciousness and a passionate belief in the concept, Christina raised in excess of $200m to create and launch this new category of messaging.

Christina, 32, has driven SpinVox, recognized as the world’s largest privately-held speech technology company, to more than twentyfold growth in the last year – delivering voice-to-content services across five continents. A service that works on any network or handset anywhere in the world, SpinVox delivers and automatically converts any voice message to text to any screen (e.g. mobile phone, PDA, PC, TV), with services developed to appeal to consumers, businesses, carriers, media and Internet-based companies.

Christina’s business savvy and understanding of the voice-to-content market resulted in the launch of the world’s first Voicemail-to-Text service – and the only voice-to-content service available in English, French, Spanish, German, Italian and Portuguese.

To help build and expand this new category of communications Christina and her business partner Daniel Doulton have worked tirelessly to educate, inspire and enable further innovations in the speech-to-text category – traveling the globe for speaking engagements, partner development, board meetings and high-touch customer events. As a result Christina is on the road at least 260 days a year.

Long committed to bringing together business innovation and social responsibility, Christina has been instrumental in building SpinVox as a company with a conscience – leading with an innovative marketing approach that strives first to be a good corporate citizen and supporter of local and global community involvement. Through the years SpinVox has supported innumerable individual and global initiatives such as the MTV Staying Alive campaign for safe sex and HIV-AIDS awareness, a father/son South Pole Expedition team climbing to raise monies for Leukemia research, providing Beijing Olympics athlete Anna Hemming a voice blogging platform outside of China Internet restrictions to keep supporters updated, and ultramarathoner Charlie Engle a mobile blog for staying connected to home base and receiving words of encouragement from supporters while he was running across America, to name just a few.

Also, focused on creating a positive local impact. SpinVox UK headquarters is based in a former Brewery in a quiet town 30 miles to the west of London and has rapidly become one of the town’s biggest employers. Many of those who are employed there choose to walk or cycle to work – a routine actively encouraged by Christina - and for those living further away flexible working and telecommuting further reduces the company’s carbon footprint.

Recognizing continued innovation is the key to business evolution and future success in 2008 Christina diversified SpinVox into the multi-billion dollar Unified Communications (UC) market, partnering with industry heavyweights Avaya and IBM. And, in February 2009, the company opened up access to its innovative speech platform to the developer community to help speed time-to-market of mobile speech applications that have seen exponential global demand growth in the last six months and are predicted to be the key market driver for new mobile applications for handsets such as Android-and iPhone based platforms and as new VoIP services such as Google Voice roll out worldwide. And furthering the company global telecom partner reach, in June 2009 Christina signed a landmark deal with Telefonica International to bring SpinVox to 12 countries in Latin and South America – a deal some have estimated as worth $100 million.

SpinVox is sold through global carrier, VoIP and unified communications partners, and resellers such as uReach and SkyDeck. And because interest in the company in the UK has grown exponentially without a telecom partner, the company recently made available free voicemail-to-email accounts to anyone in the UK through the end of the year – recognizing in today’s credit crunch many people want to take advantage of the convenient SpinVox messaging service but perhaps just aren’t able to afford it.

Read more of her story here: http://bit.ly/KUZlw

For more information visit www.SpinVox.com and www.SpinVoxAdventurers.com
After leaving the corporate world behind, Estancia Tierra Santa owner Karen Vandergrift created a new life as an innkeeper and organic rancher in the South American country of Uruguay.

Karen discovered Uruguay in 2002 while on a trip to Buenos Aires, Argentina. Crossing the Rio de la Plata by boat, Karen visited neighboring Carmel, Uruguay, and befriended a professional beekeeper with ties to local farmers. He offered to show her a nearby property for sale and within weeks Karen had purchased Estancia Tierra Santa, a 100-acre ranch with a rich history—it had once belonged to Jesuit missionaries under the Spanish Crown. The original house, built in 1830, was in ruins when Karen arrived, but the “bones” of the building suggested great promise.

Karen had never set out to be a hotel owner. Her intention was to have a retreat for herself, family and friends, in the natural, unspoiled countryside. He offered to show her a nearby property for sale and within weeks Karen had purchased Estancia Tierra Santa, a 100-acre ranch with a rich history—it had once belonged to Jesuit missionaries under the Spanish Crown. The original house, built in 1830, was in ruins when Karen arrived, but the “bones” of the building suggested great promise.

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Given her background in both the high-end hotel and textiles industries, she brought that know-how to the creation of Estancia Tierra Santa as a luxury guest ranch and inn. As she remodeled the suites, she decorated them with the most discerning of guests in mind: antique furnishings, oriental rugs, fresh flowers from the gardens, marble bathrooms, and in-room, wood-burning fireplaces are just some of the features guests enjoy.

Karen opened the Estancia to guests in 2007. The ranch is both a luxurious getaway and an environmentally-sustainable agricultural business: alfalfa and oats grown on the property not only feed the ranch’s many horses, cattle, sheep and chickens, but are also sold to neighboring farms.

Marketing efforts at Estancia Tierra Santa go far beyond the local sales of wool, meat, grains and honey. In 2009, the estancia was invited to join the prestigious web-based luxury hotel marketing company, The Kiwi Collection. Inclusion in the group is by invitation only, ensuring that the quality of information disseminated is unbiased and accurate. It is a distinction afforded to only few very luxury hotels which offer the best accommodations and customer service in the hospitality industry.

Customer service is a much misunderstood and over-used term in hotels and has come to mean nothing more than greeting a guest by his or her name. While Karen believes that the basic tenets of hospitality can be learned—proper service during dining, attention to detail in cleanliness and room amenities, etc. — it is only through a passionate desire to please guests that a hotel professional succeeds.

For more information visit WWW.ESTANCIA TIERRASANTA.COM

Read more of her story here: http://bit.ly/1X0j9L
FORMER HIGH LEVEL BUSINESS EXECUTIVE & CHAMPION SURFER RIDES THE MOST SIGNIFICANT WAVES OF HER LIFE

“There are no limitations, unless you make them. In our business and personal lives we all are faced with challenges, choices and change. So regardless of our situation, each of us has the ability to reshape and control our own destiny”.

This is the philosophy of Holly Richardson, a super achiever who has embraced change throughout her entire life with a great deal of “Personal Courage”. Who would have known that at 16 she would become the East Coast Surfing Champion for Women and create a long term identity as a Leader and Life Pioneer. Determined to make a difference in life’s uncharted waters, Holly opened her own real estate office at 19, and then embarked on corporate America joining Citicorp/ Citibank. Thirteen years, nine promotions later she was running 19 banks and reported to the CEO. Then changing professions to Olsten Staffing Services, a temporary recruiting firm responsible for managing 9 branch offices. On to the private sector with JMFamily Enterprises, Holly was only the second woman Vice President in the company. Responsible for Strategic Planning, Organizational Development and Marketing, her boss described her as a race horse pulling a milk wagon. Given her skills, abilities and results, this was a compliment and analogy in one.

But in 2000, Holly’s whole world changed as she faced one of the toughest waves of her life.....Multiple Sclerosis. M.S. is a chronic disabling disease that attacks the central nervous system and the progress, severity and symptoms cannot be predicted. So at the prime of her life, Holly left the career she loved. She said, “You have to consider every day as a new opportunity, regardless of the roadblocks. Even though one may be diagnosed with a disabling disease, the key is to never, ever give up”.

Richardson has been on the Board of Trustees for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society-So. Fla. since 2000 and has helped to build support and awareness as an MS Advocate nationally. She is also a founding board member for Deliver the Dream, a not for profit retreat program that helps children, families and individuals faced with a serious disease. As a previous board chair, Holly’s heart and commitment to help others has been demonstrated by supporting numerous charity events that turn the Deliver the Dream vision into reality.

As a member of the “International Who’s Who of Professionals”, Holly uses her life experiences to speak locally and is featured in the book “Power and Wisdom: The New Path for Women” by Dr. P. Marotta. In 2008 Holly received the “Humanitarian of the Year Award” which has become her most important personal achievement. She is in the process of completing her first business book for women called “Making Waves in Corporate America” along with a pending autobiography. She said “This will bring me to completion, as I believe Success over time leads to Significance and Substance that can only be found in the heart”.

“Giving Back” through Community Involvement

The most wonderful taste of life is discovering the meaning of service and community involvement. Haven’t you ever wondered why all the hours you put into building your own success may leave you empty at times? That is because we all develop a deeper need to reach a point beyond our own personal success, and that comes with achieving significance and substance in our lives which sometimes means doing work that we are “called to do”, rather than work we may want to do”.

I have found great joy giving back and helping others in our community both as a business coach and as a “personal soul” who seeks to helps others. Being on the Board of Trustees for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society in South Florida is one way I have been able to be a voice for those who can’t and those who won’t. And I believe were no coincidences when I became a founding Board Member for Deliver the Dream, a not for profit that helps seriously ill children, individuals and families with all types of diseases. Coincidentally, this took place one year before I was even diagnosed with M.S.

Giving back in your community through service takes that “willingness of heart” to help others see the light shine through as it has done for you. And when your attitude creates your latitude, then you can finally deliver that “Powerful Purpose” you were always set out to do.

Read more of her story here: http://bit.ly/2ooNEr
Marketing 2 Women

How to Captivate the Woman’s Market to Increase your Bottom line!

For more information or to place your order - http://www.wecai.org/marketing2women.htm
Debbie Quintana is a Wonder-Woman who knows she’s not a super-hero at all. She wants to be a visible example to women: that they, not some super-improved version of themselves, can live their passions, fully, generously - and profitably.

39 years old divorced and remarried; a mother, stepmother, and grandmother, Debbie holds down a full-time job at Cisco Systems, and she is an entrepreneur who’s living her passions. She is the founder/owner of two companies and two associations that express and promote the natural empowerment of women - even when they turn a profit.

Quintana is President and CEO of Gourmet Gifts & The Spirit of Wellness, companies that create unique, individualized gift baskets for both corporate and personal clients. She founded Gourmet Gifts eight years ago with her mother, turning an adored hobby (she began making gift baskets with her Mom when she was thirteen) into a profession. From Gourmet Gifts, sprang Spirit of Wellness, whose gift baskets are focused on self-care. Her customers range from large corporations who want to acknowledge events and employees, to individuals who are expressing sympathy, or celebrating joy among friends and family. Her own comfort-level in both corporate and personal environments is evident in her clientele.

The baskets her companies create are personalized, truly unique, and clearly made with female attention.

The spirit of fun and collaboration, rather than competition, drives Debbie. In 2007, she founded the Women’s Networking Alliance to support and empower women entrepreneurs. WNA is now an independent entity and is going national in 2010. In April, she founded The Gift Basket Association to encourage support and collaborate amongst other gift basket professionals and in September she released a new magazine: Trends & Tips.

Her commitment to community is powerfully present in every one of her businesses. WNA does a minimum of one major partnership with a charitable organization annually. In 2008 it was Career Closet, the acclaimed organization helping low-income women dress for and land well-paying jobs. WNA collected six SUVs-full of clothes, shoes, purses, belts; discounts for haircuts, etc. This year they are partnering with Girls For Change, providing coaches, and a directory of services for the teenage girls who will make a difference in their communities. Gourmet Gifts has a generous monthly budget devoted entirely to charitable donations. Spirit of Wellness, in keeping with its name, gives 5 – 15% of all profits to groups like the American Heart Association and the Susan Komen Foundation. And at GBA, Debbie makes Peter Shankman’s weekly charitable donations email available to all its members, encouraging the entire gift basket business community to funnel their resources to those who need them.

By definition, marketing involves reaching out to others - clearly a no-brainer for Debbie Quintana. It’s why she’s in business. As a national company, Gourmet Gifts uses every online avenue available as a marketing platform, including all social networking sites.

Each of her company’s websites is properly optimized for ease and effectiveness of use, and has a well-rounded Internet presence, including: blogging to provide information and training for her clients and fellow entrepreneurs; presenting mini-gift-basket classes on YouTube; and using blog talk-radio, where she interviews guests with unique perspectives on her industry. Her marketing strategy is about creating relationships by providing useful tools and information, using the Worldwide Web and locally, through networking.

Besides her businesses and full-time job (which she’s had for 10 years, and has a passionate commitment to), it is essential to Debbie that she truly enjoys, and is present for, her husband, her son, and herself. So, she makes sure her life is balanced, never losing the priority of family, intimate relationships and self-care. How does she do that?

She manages her time really effectively and efficiently, and, she has a great business model.

It’s simple and very feminine: Hire and work with people she can truly trust and collaborate with. Like herself, her colleagues at Gourmet Gifts wear many hats and are able to interchange them on the fly. This creates a team engaged in a common goal, in an environment that is ‘structured, but not overly so.’ So it feels more like a family than a company.

Read more of her story here: http://bit.ly/2JxkFm

For more information visit www.thebestgourmetgifts.com
Theresa Earnheart is shifting gears in the male dominated world of motorsports!

The “Other” Theresa Earnheart goes full throttle to fill a substantial void in motorsports. Her new company, Track Chic, [www.trackchic.com], is the only online/offline social phenomenon for 240+ million female motorsport fans worldwide sharing a passion for Speed, Style and Sisterhood.

One in three women in the U. S. are avid race fans. Earnheart recognized that these brand-loyal, decision-making females have been underserved by the racing circuits and represented a missed opportunity to influence women’s $7 trillion of consumer purchases.

Track Chic’s celebration of the sport’s female fans constitutes an unprecedented trend and true power shift in motorsports marketing. Earnheart is the first to bring together and give voice to all the mothers, wives, sisters, daughters and faithful fans trackside every weekend, win or lose, rain or shine, supporting the sport and the people they love.

Created by women for women, Track Chic combines the passion of motorsports with the frivolity of Red Hat Ladies(r) into the Divine Secret that best-selling author Rebecca Wells and women today call “Ya-Ya-Sisterhood”.

Track Chic isn’t circuit specific or driver specific and leads the way for women with racing information, fun social events, trackside retailainment, membership conventions, and of course, fashion

Track Chic’s Boutique of Sassy & Classy fashions are designed to be worn to the race track on Saturday, to church on Sunday and to the office on Monday.

Track Chic isn’t pink. It doesn’t shout. It doesn’t condescend. Track Chic treats women, long neglected in the motorsport industry, as the intelligent race savvy individuals they are.

Each month Track Chic showcases the women in the industry and features a special “Woman behind the Wheels” on the website, www.trackchic.com. Honorees have included racing icon Lyn St. James; Dr. Diandra Leslie Pelecky, Professor of Physics and author of the “Science of NASCAR, How to make Steel + Rubber + Gas = Speed”, award winning actress and former SCCA competitor and team owner, Marsha Mason; Sarah Fisher, Team Owner and IndyCar Record Holder; and Jamie Little, downhill mountain bike competitor and ESPN’s Pit Reporter for NASCAR.

Charity work and “giving back” is also very important to Track Chic. Track Chic actively encourages members to get involved on a local level and help make a difference where it matters most. Everything sold online in Track Chic’s Boutique supports causes most important to women, including children, women’s health, education, job training and support for our military families struggling with the emotional and physical wounds of war.

Sometimes it’s the smallest things that make the biggest difference, like Track Chic’s Chic Stitchin’ Socials where members gather to stitch handmade quilts or teddy bears for their local children’s hospital or for the children visiting Victory Junction Gang Camp, an affiliate of Paul Newman’s Hole in the Wall Gang Camp for seriously ill children founded by NASCAR’s legendary racing family, Kyle and Pattie Petty.

Track Chic supports social responsibility and partners with designers and vendors who share Track Chic’s commitment to women’s causes. One example is Track Chic’s line of skin care products, “The Body Shop”, a unique line of 100% pure, petroleum and paraben-free skin care products produced by award winning actress and former SCCA (Sports Car Club of America) competitor and team owner, Marsha Mason. In the spirit of Sisterhood, contributions from Track Chic’s Body Shop purchases go to educating others on the dangers of harmful petro-chemicals found in today’s products, and the importance of carefully reading product labels and making informed decisions.

Track Chic serves as an effective platform to educate women on important causes, such as “Green Initiatives”, and also jumpstarts awareness campaigns and fundraising efforts for large charities including hosting “Tailgate Parties for Pink”, a creative initiative to raise funds and early-detection awareness in the ongoing fight against cancer.

For more information visit www.trackchic.com

Read more of her story here: http://bit.ly/13XJmW
Six years ago, Heather Ledeboer’s world changed when she became a mom. Though she thoroughly enjoyed teaching California school children, she really wanted to be able to stay home with her baby. Growing up in a log cabin in the woods of Washington, complete with CB radio, outhouse, and generator, Heather knew a bit about being resourceful and creative. Combining her new love for technology and conveniences, Heather began with a simple plan: e-baying two baby products with the goal of earning $200 a month to help her family. The plan worked, and Heather was finding more and more unique products that she wanted to help moms get. Her plan transitioned over time to creating an online store. Mom 4 Life was born. No longer was she just helping her family, but she was helping scores of others by providing a marketplace for the products of creative mom inventors.

Mom4Life, currently retailing over 900 mom invented products geared towards maternity, nursing, babies, and toddlers, is now located in North Idaho, with a warehouse to hold their inventory. Top-notch customer service, free shipping, price-matching, and a free gift with purchase, are some of the things Heather attributes to building a solid base of loyal customers, employees, and vendors. Heather utilizes some traditional forms of advertising, such as magazine ads, and some more modern forms, such as the increasingly popular product reviews by mom bloggers and responding to Peter Shankman’s HARO queries. However, she still believes that the best advertising is the referral of a happy customer. In that end, customer service is top priority at Mom4Life. Angela Gifford, Mom4Life Customer Service Assistant, says that one of the best things about working with Heather is that she empowers her to do what it takes to make customers happy. She says, “We have turned some very unhappy customers into some of our most loyal customers by going above and beyond to resolve their problems. It is some of the best ‘advertising’ dollars ever spent.”

As an online retailer, Heather realizes the magnitude of her “community” and the unlimited possibilities of helping other moms. Partnering with No Mother Left Behind, to provide gently used baby slings to moms who can’t afford them and creating special discounts and promotions just for military families, are just a couple of ways she has decided to help. 10% of Mom4Life’s profits are donated to Open Arms Pregnancy Crisis Center (local to Heather) and Real Choices Clinic to help moms in crisis. Nancy Tefft, director of Open Arms, says, “Although I’ve only known Heather a few years, in every encounter I have been impressed by her concern for moms and families. She has assisted Open Arms Pregnancy Center in a variety of ways, from donating supplies and finances to serving as a keynote speaker at an event for moms and dads. Heather is a marvelous professional, a great mom, and a woman of great strength.”

In 2008, that strength was tested when tragedy hit the Ledeboer family in the most ironic form. Heather’s son, Sawyer (her third child), was stillborn at 37 weeks of pregnancy. It would have been hard enough for anyone, but imagine being completely surrounded by baby gear and customers with new babies. In the midst of heartbeat that would have crumbled the strongest of women, Heather turned to her faith. The Mom4Life blog expanded from a place to advertise products and share expert advice to a place where she could share her heart, her pain, and her healing. Customers and readers became cheerleaders and prayer partners. Her loss became a platform to help moms experiencing losses of their own, and an online baby boutique became a place where moms like to “virtually” hang out with Heather.

Heather’s gentle spirit is felt by all who interact with her. Mom4Life employee, Sarah DeBusk, remembers that at the time Sawyer died, she too was going through some really tough things. “So many people,” says Sarah, “Would not have been willing to deal with someone else’s problems when going through her kind of pain. But Heather would just sit and listen, offering help and support.”

Whether it is training employees, suggesting revisions to products moms are designing, or negotiating pricing with a vendor, Heather’s end goal is always to do what is best for everyone involved.

Read more of her story here:  

For more information visit  
www.Mom4Life.com
Three years ago, Jamie Inman learned she had breast cancer for the second time, and for the second time her life was spared because of early detection. Even though she lost both breasts and endured 18 months of hell, she emerged healthier in body and spirit, and now she gladly devotes herself to the fight against breast cancer. Initially Jamie posted her story on breast cancer websites and people contacted her for information and support as they faced various stages of treatment. Her surgeon began referring patients to her for assistance in the daunting process of choosing surgical options.

Then in December 2007 one of these “survivor sisters” introduced her to the Plexus Pink Breast Chek™ Kit, an FDA-registered, Class II medical device designed to help women do monthly breast self-exams. Jamie immediately joined Plexus Pink, a multi-level marketing company that promotes breast health through a simple, five-step program of prevention and early detection. This program includes instruction in prevention practices such as daily breast massage with botanical cream (Dr. Spencer’s Breast Cream), weekly lymph drainage, and monthly self-exams with the Breast Chek™ Kit.

With these products added to her arsenal, Jamie formed Stay In The Pink in 2008 and began hosting Pink Parties, where friends gathered in a festive atmosphere to learn about breast cancer awareness and see her products demonstrated. Jamie believes so strongly in the importance of monthly self-exams, and the value of the Breast Chek™ Kit, that she always tells customers that she would buy back a kit rather than have it gather dust like so many exercise machines.

Stay In The Pink quickly expanded to include health fairs, trade shows and civic organizations. Head Start, which is a pre-school program for low-income families, invited her to teach Breast Cancer 101 classes to multi-lingual parents’ groups. Jamie spoke in English while aids translated into Spanish and Vietnamese. Lively interactions ensued while the parents perched comically on miniature chairs with their knees up to their chins. Emphasizing the importance of early detection, and demonstrating the advantage of doing monthly self-exams with the Breast Chek™ Kits, Jamie then donated dozens to the parents. “I knew these women had limited funds, and I just couldn’t show them this marvelous device that could save their lives, and then send them away empty handed.”

She donated several more to missions in Africa. At a site in Kenya, where the Breast Chek™ Kit was the most advanced screening device they had, the team saw about 300 women each day. Nursing students were taught what to look for with the Breast Chek™ Kits. One worker said, “We found some real goombas and were able to get help for the ladies with these growths.”

As for her business plan, Jamie’s vision has never changed: “My mission is to give women (and men!) an advantage in the fight against breast cancer by educating, equipping, and encouraging.” Sales of the Breast Chek™ Kit and the Breast Cream are concrete measures of the success of the mission, and developing a team of Ambassadors will spread the message faster. Striving to balance her desire to help everyone she encounters with the practical requirement for the business to be in the black, Jamie has begun to concentrate her efforts on creating a respected presence on the internet through social media networking, where she interacts daily with people struggling with breast cancer, and advances her message of prevention and early detection.

“Profiting from breast cancer is a dicey ethical dilemma,” says Jamie. Most recently she is developing reciprocal product promotion with other breast cancer groups. Her website expands weekly with new research updates, blog posts, unique retail items, and an upcoming interactive Pink Café.

Stay In The Pink was born of Jamie’s commitment to make a difference through education, resources, breast health products, and practical support. Because of her profession as a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, plus her own journey down the lonely road of breast cancer, Jamie is passionate about bridging the gap between excellent care of patients’ bodies and excellent emotional care for their hearts and minds. She believes that the doctors cannot do it all, and patients cannot do without both: Stay In The Pink exists to be that bridge.

For more information visit www.stayinthepink.com
Michelle Soudry, founder of The Gab Group PR and Marketing, started her boutique publicity business in her garage four years ago at age 26. She started the agency 3 months after the birth of her daughter Gabrielle as a necessity for her and her family. “After I became pregnant the salary I was making at my previous employer just couldn’t even cover the costs of childcare for me to go into work” “I really had no other choice but to think of something that would work with my new responsibilities as a working mother and family breadwinner.”

Her story is a totally can-do story that can inspire other women and mother’s out there who feel trapped, and her story involved tremendous sacrifice both as a mom and a working professional.

Soudry is a true Alpha Mom- and a clear example of the shift in motherhood these days. More and more studies indicate that women have hit the workforce in greater numbers than ever before and women are trumping men as the breadwinners of the family.

When Soudry moved to Boca she knew nothing about the area and worked her way up in three years time (what is now seven years time) to where the firm is now regarded as the most highly sought after brand specialists and special event planners extraordinaire.

When she set out to create The Gab Group she didn’t quite have it all figured out, creating an agency hybrid that hadn’t existed before without any business partner in the field that could help or offer expert advice. A publicist by trade, she cleverly named the firm “The Gab Group” as a double entendre for new daughter Gabrielle and having always had possessed ‘the gift of Gab’.

“Soudry’s secret to success I the workplace was her undeniable talent to turn even the most humbug item into a hot necessity for both consumer and the media. She’s known to have a ‘midas touch’ when it comes to marketing and brand positioning and her creative strategies have yielded dollars of success for her followers and clients.

But besides just dishing advice, Soudry herself delves in as a creator and product developer too. Soudry is the creator of the $17,000 Diamond Pacifier which she gifted to Brad and Angelina Jolie and was inspired by Donald Trump. Her client at the time, was a simple pacifier company called It’s My Binky – the product was a $5.99 pacifier that moms could personalize with their child’s name on it to avoid toddlers sharing binkies at play dates.

She knew the client had big goals and aspirations for national recognition and was figuring a way to get them there. When talking to producers at The View, they revealed that Donald and Melanie Trump would be making guest appearances for a baby segment.

Michelle wanted to send through a big package of binkies to the show for on-air feature but stopped herself when she realized that Donald Trump wouldn’t really have any need for a $5.99 pacifier. She began to think of what she could do that would stir some attention.

“Donald Trump loves everything dipped in gold,” said Soudry/ “I couldn’t think of a more appropriate gift then to create a gold dipped pacifier to present him with on behalf of the pacifier company.” The reality was that the creation of the gold dipped pacifier (first real size diamond pacifier in the world – there is currently a miniature one hanging on display at the Smithsonian that was created in the 1970’s by a famous artist known for creating a gold Monopoly set) took months as Soudry wasn’t happy with the first prototype so the next biggest celebrities to be pregnant were Brad and Angelina Jolie.

And so, Soudry earned her own special moment in celebrity and media history by gifting baby Shiloh with the first baby to ever have received a $17,000 diamond pacifier.

Uniqueness is the drive that sets Soudry apart from her peers. A sheer desire to make an impression and set a path that others were too afraid to take or just didn’t think of is what she’s known for.

Read more of her story here:  

For more information visit  
www.thegabgroup.com
Jann Robinson is a dynamo entrepreneur with a big smile and an even bigger laugh. She is also a widow with six children. Jann and her late husband, Dave, started Backstage Catering Company in Birmingha, AL in 1995. At that time they had no children, Dave a contractor, and Jann a homemaker. But their shared love of food and preparing it just right won out. “Food was our shared passion. We enjoyed every aspect of it, and doing it together,” exclaimed Jann.

Although it wasn’t the proverbial piece of cake, Backstage was a hit early on. They specialized in catering to entertainers who visited the South, serving their own style of Southern Hospitality.

Customer service is standard for Backstage. It is the desire to offer exceptional customer service, which lead to the growing Thanksgiving Dinner catering of the Robinsons. Since 1997, had Dave offered Fried Turkeys, with his own special recipe in their home town. In 2000, many customers at their new restaurant asked about the possibilities of a catered meal with his famous Fried Turkey. Several customers were Baby Boomers caring for mom or dad, who had always hosted the family and prepared the holiday feast, but now had little time to prepare a holiday meal. Some were newly-weds or new moms desiring to “host” the family, but little knowledge of holiday meal planning. Dave and Jann prepared a menu of holiday favorites; ready for the oven, to welcome guests with the scents of the season as they entered the home. Helping their customers enjoy the holiday without the work, brought delight to the Robinsons. A great new business and many referrals were the result of offering customer service.

In 2005, Dave became ill. After trial and error diagnoses and treatments, doctors finally found the problem: Lymphoma. The prognosis was grim. One of Dave’s last wishes was for Jann to be financially secure, and although Backstage was doing well, Dave was concerned about whether Jann, who was then pregnant with child number six, could keep up the pace without his help, and still raise their beautiful children in the way they had planned. He smiled and said, “I’m proud of you, and you know just what to do.”

So, at age 32, Jann Robinson became the sole owner of Backstage Catering and the mother of six, ages 12 to “on the way”. Central to Jann’s every decision was the need to provide for her family. Once the baby arrived, she hit the ground, caring for the six, and networking in order to keep her business before the community.

True to her passion, and the heart of her late husband, Jann has continued, despite her daily challenges to Pay It Forward. Dave was always supportive of Jann’s community involvement; he saw that it brought joy to her heart. Dave, the designated babysitter, also saw it as the family’s way of giving back to the community which was supportive of their business. Jann speaks to students about their least favorite foods, cooking, and careers in the food industry. In 2009, Jann began to host a weekly radio show, BodyLove, a radio drama and talk show which speaks to health issues, and encourages healthy lifestyles, including one’s diet and meal planning. Jann’s greatest delight comes when she speaks to an audience on diet, lifestyle changes, and the challenges of proper menu planning for optimal health. Although they ate well, Jann learned what foods were important to sustain Dave’s health and vitality while receiving his chemotherapy treatments. Jann shares how simple changes in their diet gave him strength, and also helped keep her maintain great health while pregnant with Ephraim. The audiences marvel at her strength and her waistline as the mother of six.

Jann has found that her business success is, “in the doing.” Jann believes that what you do daily in your business builds the rewards of client loyalty, respect of the competition, and TOMA (top-of-mind awareness) for your business’ growth. Daily, Jann uses social networking tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and Linked in, to keep Backstage on the minds of potential customers. Jann says, “It’s not if they’ll need catering, but when, and I want to be the first name on their lips.” Networking events and sitters for the children are also a part of Jann’s weekly agenda. Chamber events, and association meetings round out Jann’s plan for marketing Backstage Catering Company in her community. Jann attends at least five events monthly, arriving early, when the news media and others are present for guest interviews and photo ops. Jann is always ready to smile.

Read more of her story here: http://bit.ly/wP9Hn

For more information visit www.backstagecateringcompany.com
Tara Reed is creating her future, her way, one brush stroke at a time. She also enjoys inspiring other artists to do the same.

A licensed artist since 2004, Tara creates art collections that manufacturers license to put on products you can find in stores. Her art can be found on everything from dishes to coasters to rugs, quilting fabric, rubber stamps and much, much more. Since licensing involves working with manufacturers, it is sometimes hard to tell the end-consumer where they can find products featuring her art. Her products have been found in retail chains such as Bed, Bath & Beyond, Hobby Lobby, Michael’s, and Fred Meyer, as well as a myriad of independent retailers across the U.S. and around the world.

Her company, Tara Reed Designs, Inc. strives to work with clients to create a winning combination of art and design so their products sell at the retail level. The company tagline for manufacturers: The art you need. The service you deserve. Tara Reed has proven she can deliver on both and has seen a growth in her business each year, in spite of the overall economy.

In 2008 Tara Reed added an educational piece to her business – it is housed at ArtLicensingInfo.com and uses the power and reach of the internet to fill a gap in the industry.

“When I started in the business, it was hard to learn how it worked. The information and education was hard to find and financially out of reach for many.” Reed explains. She enjoys writing, teaching and coaching other artists to help them decide if licensing is a good fit and about how to succeed if they like the business model.

“The added bonus has been creating a sense of community and networking with other artists in and out of the art licensing industry. I have forged friendships I don’t believe I would have otherwise. Using Twitter, Facebook and other social media outlets artists feel more connected and less isolated in our studios.” Reed continues.

Adding an online element to her business involved learning many new skills. From web design to search engine optimization, newsletter lists and social media. “It’s all about providing timely information in an efficient fashion and responding to issues as they arise.” Reed explains. “Much like responding to art requests on the licensing side of things.” What seemed to be two separate skills sets are now overlapping and working to the benefit of Reed’s art and teaching. Tara Reed Designs is taking skills and strategies from internet marketing and implementing them with her art. Licensing art, like most businesses, is very competitive. Half the battle is to keep your name, art and availability in front of your customers. We combine traditional mailings with a newly implemented email newsletter to keep everyone up to date on new art, new deals and new cross-marketing opportunities.

“My customers appreciate the fact that not only am I an artist, but I’m a business person. I understand the need for communication, follow-through and working together. I am constantly striving to use technology to help further and enhance the personal relationships I have with my clients.”

Giving back is also an important part of Reed’s mission. 5% of profits from the online teaching site goes to The Books For Kids Foundation. Their mission is to promote literacy among all children, with special emphasis on disadvantaged children and youth by donating books, creating children’s libraries in under served locations, and participating in reading initiatives with community based organizations.

As well as cash donations, Reed donates art supplies to underprivileged children in her community. She also donates products featuring her art to school and charitable fundraising auctions. “Working in a business where my customers are all over the country, it is nice to connect more personally on a local level as well.”

But how did Tara Reed get to this place? Deciding to start her own business while in her mid-30’s.

In 2004, she reached a fork in the road: after 13 years of marriage, 10 of them spent as a stay-at-home mother of one, Tara’s marriage was over. With the decision to divorce, she not only needed to pick up the pieces of her life emotionally and make sure her son, then 10, transitioned through the split, but she needed to make some tough decisions about what she wanted to do.

Read more of her story here: http://bit.ly/3yfKUv

For more information visit www.TaraReedDesigns.com

WE magazine for women 50
Darcie Harris is a business consultant, mentor, coach, champion, and advocate for female business owners and executives. As CEO and founder of EWF International™, an Oklahoma City-based company offering peer advisory groups, coaching and consulting for female business owners and executives, Darcie has helped countless women realize their professional dreams. She finds the fulfillment of her own dreams by encouraging women to think big, pursue their passions and achieve their personal best.

An accomplished speaker, consultant, facilitator and trainer, Darcie thrives on helping women grow and challenging them to achieve their personal and professional goals. In particular, she enjoys teaching leadership skills to women at all stages in their careers, giving them the encouragement, confidence, and inspiration to grow.

As a believer in the mantra, “Do what you love and love what you do,” Darcie has incorporated her love of horses and her experience as an equestrian into her leadership training through a talk encouraging women to embrace their power and use it for the greater good. She weaves her love of movies into a leadership course, using movie clips to demonstrate the qualities of women in leadership roles.

Prior to launching EWF International, Darcie managed a 24 hour a day crisis helpline with a staff of five and 250 volunteers. Under her leadership these volunteers faced the darkest days in Oklahoma history on April 19, 1995. Darcie managed the agency crisis response to community needs following the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building providing support and counseling to countless Oklahomans devastated by the tragedy.

Her previous roles in sales, marketing and management, combined with her love of learning, give Darcie a breadth of experience in entrepreneurship, strategic planning, project management, organizational structure and people-centered management.

Darcie is a respected media resource on women’s leadership and entrepreneurship and a regular editorial columnist for The Journal Record newspaper, the Executive Women’s Journal (published by EWF International), and is widely published on the Internet. She is certified in Conceptual Foundations of Organizational Lifecycles through the Adizes Graduate School for Organizational Transformation.

Darcie’s passion for people and creating a sense of community makes her work a labor of love. She describes her work with women as the most rewarding of her career. She loves to read, walk her dogs, attend yoga classes and especially loves to cook for friends and family, finding every excuse to gather people around a feast.

About EWF:

EWF International™ creates peer advisory forums of up to twelve women in non-competing businesses with diverse backgrounds, skills and strengths. Forum membership is by invitation and membership is renewed annually. More than 80% of the members renew for the next year.

During monthly meetings, participants bring their most important business issues to the group for discussion and feedback. On a rotating basis the members bring their most important business issues to the group for discussion and feedback. This is the place members take off their marketing smiles and tell the truth about the challenges they face.

Strict confidentiality assures that every member can be completely honest, knowing what is said in the meeting stays in the meeting.

As a structured process, each Forum is organized and led by a professional facilitator who understands the role of business owner, CEO or executive. EWF members learn from one another’s real-life challenges, not from theoretical business presentations. They love having access to the pool of experience, wisdom and talents of their peers to help them grow their businesses. Ask the current members and they’ll say they learn from one another’s real-life challenges, not from theoretical business presentations. They love having access to the pool of experience, wisdom and talents of their peers to help them grow their businesses.

Read more of her story here: http://bit.ly/1zoVnM

For more information visit www.ewinternational.com, www.darcieharris.com

WE magazine for women
Women Welcome Women World Wide – your Passport to the World!

“Being a member of 5W is almost as important as having a passport, when a woman wants to travel!” So says one globe-trotting member of Women Welcome Women World Wide (5W).

This unique international friendship and travel network for women has around 2500 members in over 80 countries around the world and celebrates its 25th Anniversary this year! 5W is based on the simple concept of encouraging ordinary women to forge friendships with other members around the world, providing the opportunity to travel and visit one another in their own homes. Imagine having friends in countries you have only ever dreamed of visiting and then actually staying in the homes of your new friends, experiencing their cultures and lifestyles. This is just one of the opportunities made possible through membership of 5W.

“If you’re wondering how you might be able to travel less like a tourist, more like a member of the global village and return home with a journal packed full of musings about new friendships made, stories and experiences, together with a deeper understanding of the countries you’ve journeyed through, then 5W is for you”, explains one member.

For members who choose not to travel, 5W still offers the life expanding experience of friendship through letters and emails, made even more special when a new-found friend comes to visit your part of the world. In the words of a 5W member from the USA, “It is such a pleasure opening my mailbox and finding letters from around the world.”

Once you become a member, the choice is yours – you can make new friends in foreign lands or just around the corner, travel to far-flung places or enjoy having guests in your own home. The confidence of knowing that, no matter which country you are visiting, there will be a friendly 5W face to welcome you and make your stay a truly unforgettable experience is just priceless!

To discover more about ‘the 5W experience’, visit our website at www.womenwelcomewomen.org.uk where you can also download an application form to apply for membership. Alternatively, you can contact the 5W Head Office at 88 Easton Street, High Wycombe, Bucks HP11 1LT, UK, tel: +44 (0)1494 465441
Don’t Let LOVE Highjack Your Work

By Dr. LeslieBeth (LB) Wish, Ed.D, MSS, MA

It should be a terrific experience to be in love—with the right person, that is. But a happy relationship takes two, and if your love life problems are spilling over into your work life, then you might be with the wrong guy or you’re handling your issues in ineffective ways. In my research about the love problems of today’s competent women, I’ve discovered these top warning signs that the mismanagement of your love problems is affecting your work. Of course, even in the best of relationships, our reactions to difficulties can spill over into our work week (or months!). Some life events such as divorce or loss of a loved one can intensify feelings over time in all of us. I’ve included the top solutions, but you’ll probably tailor them to fit you and your situation. The overall goals are to recognize that your emotions have highjacked your life and to do something to take back some reasonable control. Remember, experiencing sadness, loss, hurt or anger are normal human reactions. Unpleasant, yes. But blocking them out can result in unexpected eruptions, and giving in to them can derail your work effectiveness.

Top Warning Signs and Solutions for Love Highjacking Your Work Life

You spend a lot of time crying.

Solution: Crying is actually a good thing. Tears of emotional pain have a different chemical composition than tears of joy. Tears from pain, sadness or fear contain toxins. Crying is your body’s natural cleansing process to rid you of these harmful elements. No wonder people tend to feel better after a short cry. So, get preventive. During rough times, take a cry-break in the morning and afternoon. Go to the rest room or your car, close the door to your office or find a spot in the nearby park. It doesn’t matter where you go, but get to that place and have a cry. You only need a few minutes to rid yourself of the toxins.

You spend a lot of time writing or checking your e-mails or text messages. Or, you have frequent private conversations with your partner. You just can’t seem to go very long without talking to each other to “clear things up.” Soon, you lose your ability to concentrate at work.

Solution: Love spats spill over into work in waves. Things are calm for a while, but, then, BOOM!—a wave of regret or anguish hits you by surprise. Unfortunately, unfinished business gnaws at us the most. We think, oh, if only I had said this—or not done that. No matter how much we focus on work, that compulsion to finish it or get it right pops up.

It especially likes to scream for attention exactly when you are about to do something at work that you don’t like or have difficulty accomplishing. ~ Try these tricks. Take a break AFTER you’ve tackled the most difficult or unpleasant task. You’ll feel more competent when you’ve overcome the obstacle and will increase your ability to face your private issues. Then, you can go into the bathroom for a cry. Or, take about a ten to fifteen minute break to jot down your thoughts in a journal that you keep in your drawer or handbag—INSTEAD of communicating with your partner. Unless there is an absolute need for a decision, tell your partner that you cannot discuss your problems until after work. Do NOT check your emails or phone for messages. Make a To Do List for the Morning and another one for the afternoon. Do the most urgent and/or most difficult ones first. Then, take a mini-break to stretch, breathe, go for a quick walk, and jot down notes to yourself or whatever else works to clear your mind and soul. Finally, build in a system of rewards for each time you’ve been successful at completing work tasks and staying off the urge to communicate with your partner. For example, one woman in my study “rewarded” herself by allowing fifteen minutes to explore cruises on line. Eventually, you will find that you’ll become more productive at work.

You tell too many colleagues at work about your problem. Soon, you feel extremely isolated and stressed.

Solution: A general guide about work friendships often states “Friendly to all, friends to none.” Be very careful about disclosing troubling aspects about your personal life. Today’s colleague can be tomorrow’s boss. But telling no one can make you feel brittle, fragile and lonely. Some solutions that have worked for many of the women in my study include: Permit yourself to call one personal friend once or twice a week for a few minutes to get a pep talk or discuss your thoughts. Or, jot down your thoughts in your journal. If you are coming in to work with the red eyes from crying, fight the urge to “tell all.” One woman said she was getting allergy-tested and was having bad reactions. Of course, if you are very savvy and have located that one colleague whom you can really trust, then save your time with them for after work hours. Grab a cup of coffee or tea—no alcohol because it’s a depressant.

You come in late to work.

Solution: It’s never a good idea to come into work late. If you are doing this repeatedly, it’s likely that for some time you have not been sleeping well at night or that you are discussing your love problems with your partner in the “before work hours.”
Do NOT have pre-work conversations. These conversations tend to be so intense that they impede your performance. If your partner calls, tell him or her that you cannot talk now. If your sleep problems continue, consult your physician. Do NOT start taking a soup of over the counter drugs.

**You take too much time off because of your problems.**

**Solution:** Love problems love time and space—and they’ll take up as much as you give them. If you can’t contain them with the kinds of solutions that I’ve discussed above, then you might want to consider therapy. Finding a good therapist takes time. You just can’t pick one out of the phone book. If you know about therapists whom your friends like and use, you can call that therapist. However, therapy requires that you feel a good connection with the therapist, and whom your friends like could differ from your choice. Go to professional websites such as [www.nasw.org](http://www.nasw.org) (National Association of Social Workers) or [www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org) (American Psychological Association) and go to the find/locate a therapist in your area who specializes in relationships. You might have to try out a few before you find a good fit. But don’t give up—you’re worth it!

**You are getting sick frequently.**

**Solution:** Depression, loss and stress can seriously compromise your immune system. Get proactive. Wash your hands frequently. Eat vegetables and protein. Most importantly, get into a fitness regime. If you aren’t good at self-discipline, form a walking or work out group with friends or colleagues. Or, join a club and hire a fitness trainer twice a week. If you think you can’t afford clubs and trainers, check out the cost of your local YMCA. If you still think you can’t afford fitness, keep a Spending Log over the next few weeks. Jot down EVERYTHING—coffee, magazines, new nail polish, box of cookies. Well, you get the point. You’d be amazed at how much these items add up. Perhaps you can squeeze in the cost of fitness if you stop spending money in other areas.

**Hope this list is helpful.**

Check out my website, [www.lovevictory.com](http://www.lovevictory.com) and follow the love adventures of my cartoon character Almost Smart Cookie. And if you want to be part of my research, take my online survey. On my website, click in the Research box at the top on the right. If you’d like free feedback about your survey results, at the end of the survey, provide your name, e-mail and phone number AND add the word WE so that I know you found me through this article. Thank you!
Most parents want the best for their children and sacrifice a great deal to achieve this. In the book, “Talent is Overrated,” author Geoff Colvin argues against the idea that displays of exceptional talent among humans are based on genetics. Instead he believes you can train your child to be a prodigy. Of course, that involves a huge amount of commitment on your part. (Think of Earl and Tiger Woods.) Few have the time or drive to push for the relentless practice that would produce the next violin virtuoso or top-seeded tennis player.

However there are still skills to impart at a young age. Colvin suggests that business acumen or musical expertise be developed early. I would like to add on to these areas and say that teaching children organization skills will serve them well for all of their lives. Even if they do not aspire to become Fortune 500 CEOs or sports stars, there will always be schedules to keep, documents to find, and projects to manage.

Organizing skills rarely come naturally. Parents usually need to teach them. Yet many times the things you want to correct in your children may be a reflection of your own habits. When discussing what a mess your child’s desk is, take a look at your own at work. When becoming upset about a missed assignment date, think about your own deadlines. If you, as the adult, do not consistently exhibit good time management skills, how could you expect children and teens to have them? Who would they learn from if not you? Yet even if you are a great organizer, there is no guarantee that this will automatically make your children the same way.

Every age needs:

♦ Supplies close at hand
♦ Space to put things
♦ Systems, to manage daily activities
♦ Weekly maintenance

I am not saying that you need to be relentless in pushing organization of the playroom, but this is a great opportunity to start early. Involve your children in how things are set up and then in keeping them maintained that way.

Childhood Years:

- Have enough shelves and containers.
- Put a picture on the container for quick sorting.
- Create simple box schedules. Use pictures on the chart for chores and events.
- Plan the night before. Clothes can be put out for school the next day.

Teen Years:

- Guide them in setting up a process for dealing with their own basic files.
- Give them a say in how and where their things are located.
- Be sure they write down homework assignments and chores.
- Help them maintain a printed or electronic schedule.

Your part is two-fold:

1. You have to model organized behavior.
2. You have to be consistent in your expectations.

The busier your family is, the more need for organization. Do your children a favor and help them get a head start in their careers and their lives, regardless of what paths they take. If you do not feel that you have the skills to do this, or that you are not being a good example of this, take a break and seek time management training for yourself. Not only will it help you, but it will lead to a more relaxed and successful family lifestyle.

Denise Landers is the author of Destination: Organization, A Week by Week Journey and the owner of Key Organization Systems, Inc. (www.keyorganization.com). Based in Houston, she is a national speaker, trainer, consultant and coach providing conference sessions, corporate training, and individual assistance to improve daily work flow and time management skills.
I really need to get the Women’s Writing and Publishing Audio Program to help me finish my book!

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Facing Your Fears With Curiosity and Trust

By Shann Vander Leek

For years my friend Jennifer “Jen Moonbear” has been sharing snippets of magical stories about her Shaman teachings and the sweat lodge ceremonies she is passionate about. This summer I was invited to join her and experience my first sweat lodge healing and the alchemy of a lodge pouring ceremony. A new dance chief would be pouring her first lodge and Jennifer was assembling an intimate group to honor her first official ceremony.

Before participating I did a little bit of homework including, fasting for the day, drinking lots of water and preparing my mind and body for a new adventure. Beyond that, I agreed to show up with out any expectations. The encounter rocked my world.

Part of the Shamanic teaching suggests participants keep the experience to themselves for at least 7 days before sharing with others from the outside world. I feel compelled to share the rich metaphor of this transformative experience while the dewy innocence of the experience puddles in my soul.

The magic began at another worldly space in the county in the late afternoon. The land was beautiful. A spacious meadow surrounded by Jack Pines. The songs of Wood Thrushes, drumming and Coyotes comprised the background music of the gathering.

Our temporary community was made up of 7 people. From my perspective, I met and became friends with 5 strangers, reconnected with 1 acquaintance and cemented the bond of friendship with 1 close friend. In the first couple of hours we set up camp, explored the land, got to know each other and made time for quiet contemplation.

The ritual of setting the fire was beautiful and included our entire group. The fire tenders, dance chief and lodge participants all added stones, kindling, paper and logs to the structure. Each stone representing a wish or a intention for the ceremony. After setting the fire we sat in the forest and talked about what we could expect and had all of our questions answered. We learned how our bodies might react to the heat and what to do if we had trouble breathing or needed to get out the lodge.

After a couple of hours the fire was ready and we were prepared to enter the sweat lodge. I entered last with the intention of being close to the door. Never one to be in love with small spaces and extraordinary heat, I needed to know I could escape quickly if I freaked out and needed to escape.

The ceremony began with several hot stones brought forth by fire tenders for placement in the lodge. Red hot stones heated up the small space very quickly. Then it was lights out. The door was closed up tight and the space became pitch black, and extremely hot. For a few minutes I thought everything was going to be fine. No problems here - then the terror set in.

Pure unbridled terror of being in the dark, in the heat, in a confined space. Surely I would die.

What was I doing here? Thankfully something Jennifer shared during preparation helped me calm down and allow the experience to unfold, without bolting out the door. I welcomed the heat into my bones, I welcomed the healing. I repeated this mantra over and over throughout the experience to stay safe and centered.

Allowing the heat to penetrate my bones in combination with deep pranayama breathing made for a beautiful and cleansing experience. I had survived round one. Thankfully the hot stones need to be replaced in rounds to keep generating heat and steam inside the lodge. This means the lodge door is opened three times before the ceremony concludes. When the door opens the lodge is flooded with fresh air and some light, making the next round a little easier for this neophyte to experience.

When the 4th round was finished I lingered with no plan to leave the lodge in a hurry. I was content hanging out and letting the experience settle in before any sort of community reentry.

Upon coming out of the lodge I was invited to lay down on a big blanket in the meadow and settle in. The coolness of the meadow air was delightful. The sky was well after sunset brilliant and the stars were so bright and close It felt as if I could reach up and touch the big dipper. This was bliss.

The healing power of a sweat is powerful. Although I didn’t attend with an outcome or expectation in mind, I came away from the experience with more love, light and trust than I could have imagined. My fear of the unknown was met head-on with curiosity, wonder and trust.

What I learned from this rich encounter:

* Face your fears and they will become your allies.

* Remain curious and overcome any obstacle.

* Trust your loved ones and remain open to new experience.

* Enter gently without expectation and enjoy the unfolding.

I am grateful for this healing experience and walk a little lighter after shedding the rust that had settled into my bones. It was a blessing to be in the moment of a sublime other worldly experience.

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Awareness . Action. Transformation
Make Sure You Are The Winner at Your Next Job Interview: The Salary Negotiation Dance

By Carole Martin

One step forward; one step back; step together, and back again.

To perform the job interview salary negotiation dance steps, you must have a good sense of balance. Knowing your value and your worth will help you feel more confident about staying in step during the salary negotiation process. The employer takes the lead and you follow, staying with the rhythm. You move together through the interview process; aware of the other, taking care not to step on one another. The salary negotiation dance is never confrontational or harsh, but smooth and in harmony.

It Begins

It is not uncommon for the first step to begin on the phone. The interviewer asks for your salary requirement, or what salary you are currently making.

You take a step back and try to postpone this discussion until you have more information.

“Could you tell me the range budgeted for this position?” Or, “What salary would you typically pay someone with my background and experience?”

Postponing the salary discussion is the best step for you, at least until you have the information needed. By doing research ahead of time, you will feel confident knowing your worth. (http://salary.monster.com). There is a point during the interview when the range, or your expectations, will be revealed, but it is better to wait for the interviewer to lead and give out the information first.

The Offer

If the interviewing employer determines that you are right for the job, they will take the lead and make an offer. It is now your turn to move the salary negotiation dance to the next stage.

But, first you must evaluate the package. Take into consideration the -

Base rate (always the top priority) – timing of annual job reviews Alternative compensation – bonus, commission, stock options, profit sharing Benefits – premiums for insurance, paid time off, matching, working conditions Other perks – car, education reimbursement, job training, laptop computer

Basic calculations will tell you how closely the offer meets your needs, values and worth.

The Salary Negotiation Tango

You call the hiring manager and tell her how delighted you are to receive the job offer, however, you have some questions and concerns. Scripting your dialog ahead of time will give you confidence to be succinct regarding what you want.

“Based on my eight years experience in this industry, my MBA degree, and my proven ability to raise funds, and build teams, I feel that the base rate offered is low. Is there any flexibility here?” you ask.

In stride with you, the hiring manager asks what you have in mind. And, because you have done the pre-work, and know your value and worth, you are able to sell yourself based on what you will bring to the company.

Hold your position - count to 10. Silence is a strong tool in salary negotiation. She waits through the silence and then tells you she will get back to you. She is in sync with your movements – she wants you in this position. You’ve presented your case well.

The Final Steps

Whether you are negotiating for more money, or for some other perks: benefits, a bonus or commission, more stock options, training or education - the rules remain the same. Let the interviewing employer lead and you follow, maintaining your own sense of balance.

By preparing and researching ahead of time, you can feel more empowered in the salary negotiation process of a job interview – as a partner in a dance – moving with the flow. The rhythm of the negotiation should be smooth, moving toward the final step – acceptance of the position and agreement – a win/win situation for all.

By Carole Martin

Carole Martin is a celebrated author, trainer, and mentor. Carole can give you interviewing tips like no one else can. Have Carole coach you live at her Speed Interview Event. www.interviewfitnesstraining.com/speed.htm
How To Balance A Family, Your Job, And Your Stresses

By Stanley Popovich

In can be difficult for adults to have to take care of their families and manage their careers. This can cause a lot of stress and anxiety. As a result, here are a few steps in how to do take care of your family and your career without getting stressed.

Try to set goals for yourself when you manage your family or career. When you go to work each day, try to set some goals for you to accomplish. For instance, let’s say your goal for today is to finish the report that your boss wants. At the end of the day, you will feel better about yourself knowing that you were able to finish that report. When you accomplish these smaller goals, you will feel happier, more confident, and less stressed.

Delegate part of your responsibilities. When taking care of the family, get your spouse to help out. If your kids are older, get them to assist you. If you are at work, only take on what you can handle. Don’t try to do everything all at once. Learn to delegate and work with other people.

If you try to do everything, you will get stressed and anxious. A person can only do so much in a given day. Do not be a hero. Learn to manage your responsibilities. If you feel like your doing too much, then take a break and evaluate your situation.

Try to do things in terms of their importance. Let’s say that you have to clean the living room, go to the supermarket, and wash the dishes. Go to the supermarket since this is the most important thing that needs done. Do the other two tasks later on. Determine what needs done right now and do those particular tasks in order of importance.

Managing your family and career does not have to very stressful. Learn to budget your time and manage your tasks. Eventually, you will be able to balance your career and family. If you still have trouble, then talk to a professional who can give you additional advice.

Stanley Popovich is the author of “A Layman’s Guide to Managing Fear Using Psychology, Christianity and Non Resistant Methods” - an easy to read book that presents a general overview of techniques that are effective in managing persistent fears and anxieties. For additional information go to: http://www.managingfear.com/
Here is a sampling of the things covered by 16 Media, Marketing and PR Pros:

How Blogging Can Help You Get Media Attention

How to be a Media Magnet

How to create web-optimized media releases

Developing your Media Platform

Getting on Internet Talk Radio

The Inside Scoop of Getting Inside a Major Magazine

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“I just got my registration materials for the event. WOW! The PDF workbook alone is worth the price of admission. It’s beautiful in presentation and chock full of information and resources, as well as being an easy-to-read and follow guide to the presenters and their presentations. The five pages of resource links at the end are a wonderful completion to a great package. Thank you Heidi and All involved.

Sheila Finkelstein, Pictures to Ponder

Purchase the recordings at:
http://www.womensmediasummit.com/audio-recordings-on-sale-now/
Public Service Announcement – Twitter is Addicting!
A 12 Step Plan to Manage Your Time and Effectiveness on Twitter

By Heidi Richards Mooney

If you have spent any time on Twitter recently you know how addictive it can be. Because its free and the very nature of Twitter provides instant gratification, Twitter can downright disrupt any plans you have to get REAL WORK done. Or not.

In fact, if you get really involved in conversations or reading what others are posting, searching for new people to follow or finding new apps you know that the time seems to fly by. May be why they use the little birdie as their logo???) *SMILE

I know I have. I go on Twitter to post one or two things, maybe reply to people who have sent me a DM (Direct Message) or see what the top ten topics of the day are. And then it happens! I get all caught up in the moments (or hours) and pretty soon its time to get dressed or put my jammies on or eat dinner (or breakfast) and viola’. Ten hours later….. Well maybe not ten hours, but more than one.

This has been happening all too frequently lately and I knew that I had to do something about it. I must say here that I absolutely love Twitter and have received MANY benefits since really diving into the conversations and becoming familiar with the terrain. But (and this is a BIG BUT), sometimes I spend so much time on Twitter that I don’t finish the things I need to do for me and once or twice for clients. I can use the excuse that I am learning, which is true. And yet, it has been interfering with other important things in my life. So I decided to come up with a system to help me manage my Twitter time online.

So I came up with a twelve step program for maximizing my time both on Twitter and when I’m not. Each step has the 140 characters or less (BOLD) lead in and then the explanation following.

Step 1 ~ Know what you can and cannot change on Twitter.

You can change your posts (before you post) and even trash them when you don’t like them. But you cannot change what others say about you. You can, however CONTROL what they say, by being considerate, kind and brief. That’s why 140 characters work so well. People have to be really succinct in their posts and replies. I think Twitter has made me a better writer. You can read My Twitter Story here: http://speakingwithspirit.com/the-twitter-phenomenon/

Step 2 ~ Manage your twinterruptions. Interruptions include things that come into your inbox related to Twitter and not.

Did you just read a great article about how someone has used Twitter to gain new clients, find new followers or some other tips that could help YOU too? Instead of reading it right then and there, put the email into a folder or somewhere in your email management system to refer to later at a scheduled time.

Step 3 ~ Make Twitter Time Your Time. Create a schedule and stick with it.

We all have 24 hours in a day and hopefully sleep for a few of those. We need to schedule our Twitter time just as we schedule our work and play time. Even if Twitter is part of your work day, you will find yourself being much more effective when you put Twitter time on your schedule.

Step 4 ~ Get up and move around. That’s right! Get out of your seat before you tweet!

This allows ideas to germinate and form that you can then share with your followers or implement once you do get on Twitter. The other thing it does is gives you more energy and focus so you don’t have distractions from the “outside world.”

Step 5 ~ If you have notifications on auto pilot (such as Tweetdeck) dramatically reduce the notifications you receive.

Or turn them off all together. There is a time and place to review your notifications and it’s probably not when you are having lunch with one of your best clients.

Step 6 ~ Focus on the things you really NEED or WANT to know about.

If you are following hundreds or thousands of people who don’t offer value or help you expand your mind and resources, you can do a couple of things. You can unfollow them (which will cut down on the type of conversations you would rather have in your spare time) or use a system like TweetDeck which allows you to multiple topics and people at one time.
Step 7 ~ Make a List before you login to Twitter for the day.

Write down or at least think about what you want to accomplish before you login to Twitter. This will help you focus better and spend more quality time online. I write a daily list of articles to posts, people I want to connect with and topics I’d like to learn more about and share with my followers. This is also a great way to increase your followers because they become familiar with what you are all about and look forward to what you say. I have a folder in my outlook where I save everything I want to share on Twitter. Its also a great way to build content to share.

Step 8 ~ Use #Hashtags to easily locate topics you are interested in following.

An easy way to follow your favorite hashtags is to go to search.twitter.com, and enter your tag into the search box.

Step 9 ~ Set the Alarm when you Twitter.

Because of Twitter’s addictive nature, if you set the alarm and decide how much time you want to spend on Twitter you are more likely to pay attention when it goes off. Unless you do what I do and Ignore it!

Step 10 ~ As with any 12 step program, we need “sponsors” others we look up to that are achieving what we want to achieve.

Help others help themselves. My philosophy is to live, learn and pass it on.

Step 11 ~ Stick with your plan. If you know what you want to get out of Twitter, it is much easier to do this.

It’s also easier said than done. We are human and we love conversing with others. But if you want to really make Twitter work for you, don’t allow your involvement to stray from your bigger goals.

Step 12 ~ Share these 12 Steps to Managing Twitter Addiction with others.

When you find a good resource and share it with your followers you become a hero – or at least quotable (retweeted). So pls RT!

Is it time to find a Twitter Anonymous Meeting?

BTW, if you are interested in learning how to set up your Twitter Profile and some of the great tools found on Twitter, drop me a line. You an join me live for my Twitter Tuesday Tutorials every Wednesday!

http://www.speakingwithspirit.com/images/heidistwitterpage.jpg

©Heidi Richards Mooney - is a Professional Speaker, Business Coach and the Author of 7 books including: “Rose Marketing on a Daisy Budget ~ How to Grow Your Business Without Spending a Fortune.” She is also the Publisher of WE Magazine for Women. Stop by http://www.speakingwithspirit.com to get a FREE copy of Chapter One of her latest book: Quirky Marketing.
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XTRANORMAL ~ has tools for creating animations, and created a commercial for my business. Pretty simple, really, at least for talking heads. In addition to its text-to-speech capability (which leads to really flat delivery) you can also have your characters walk from point to point on the "set", and there are a number of canned gestures and facial expressions. All of which are pretty easy to control. http://xtranormal.com

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Making Money on the Net
– Fact or Fiction?

By Tracy Repchuk

Making money on the internet is what many people are chasing right now, and who can blame them. But along with the many brilliant people out there that are truly internet marketers (and I consider myself one of them), we can spot a fake a mile away, cringe when we see innocent people jumping on programs we know won’t deliver, and can see why so many fall prey to their brilliant – yet corrupt – marketing.

Now before I get into things you should look for before purchasing internet promises, let me give you a few lines from my bio so that you can clearly see I’m not someone who doesn’t know what she’s talking about. I have been an entrepreneur for 23 years, won 2007 new internet marketing success of the year, 2008 Stevie Award Finalist for Mentor of the Year, 2009 Feminine Leader for Amazing Woman’s Day, and 2009 Top 10 Women in the World for Internet Marketing. In addition, I speak around the world on internet marketing – from UK, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Canada, USA, and all points in between. Did I also mention that I am the bestselling author of the reference guide for internet marketing called “31 Days to Millionaire Marketing Miracles”?

The above are really the type of credentials you are looking for when you select the program you want to get involved with, or mentor you want to work with. In addition to those, here are some guidelines for safe selection and separating fact from internet fiction.

1. Did the email arrive unsolicited? If so, don’t go and look. Real internet marketers do not spam.

2. Before buying – Google the person’s name or product name. A few seconds can save you thousands of dollars.

3. Do they have their picture on their website? If the person isn’t willing to stand in front of their product or services, that is an alarm.

4. Is it a lot of trendy talk, and powerful words, but you still don’t really know what you are getting? Then don’t get it.

5. Do they have testimonials, full name and city at the least. John C. Toronto, Canada is no good. John Charles, Toronto, Canada – better. Video is best, but granted is difficult to get. Even better, is the testimonial posted on a third party site which verifies, such as Amazon or eBay.

6. Do they promise you big, easy money? They can’t. Nobody can promise that. They can say they did it, and in testimonials others can say how well it worked for them, but comments such as IMAGINE making $5000 a month on autopilot? Yes, that would be great. They are getting your agreement. It’s easy to do with statements such as that. WHAT IF you could tap into the billion dollar industry and make thousands over night? Watch for these esoteric words that paint pictures with your imagination.

7. Do they say you won’t need to do anything to make it happen? You Don’t Need… to be an internet expert, to have any prior experience, to spend a lot of time, to spend a lot of money… These are things that would be great if they were true, and since most people are looking for the easy, fast and no hassle way, it works.

Think about a diet. How many times have you picked up a magazine at the check out that says “Lose 7 pounds in 7 days”, “Amazing Oprah diet”, “I lost 38 pounds in under 2 months” just to see they lived on grape fruit. Or watched the infomercials entice you into buying that pulsing machine that will give you rock hard abs by plugging it in and watching TV still. In the back of our mind we know it won’t work. There is no magic pill for diets, or making money. I made 6 figures in 5 months in internet marketing, but it wasn’t without a lot of work.

8. Sites that give you tons of stuff, niche sites, ebooks, resell rights, master resell rights, over $3500 worth of stuff for only $97. These are great deals, but unless you are a master at getting leads, and driving traffic, this will be useless to you. These are great for you if you have a list already, and are looking for additional products to sell them, but otherwise, will sit on your hard drive collecting electronic dust.

9. Bottom line – if it seems to good to be true – 99.9% of the time – it probably is.
Okay, so how do you select a mentor or product?

1. Follow the above, and if it passes, try it – but now is the time to look at the guarantee. What do they promise? Don’t look for the moon here, just look for a solid guarantee that if you do it, it will work.

2. If you can use paypal to buy it, this is good. Paypal protects you from fraud, and for membership type sites with recurring monthly payments, you have the power to cancel yourself. Credit card payments are a hassle, and take months to work with.

3. For high end mentor purchases – either know someone who has used them, or buy them from a reputable seminar. Attending seminars where speakers are on stage educating and presenting their expertise for continued education, is a great way to see if you are compatible with that person, and would enjoy working with them. In addition, seminar hosts usually screen their speakers to ensure their reputation is worthy of attaching their name too. Or, did you read about them in a magazine, such as this. Editors or magazines will only print people they are satisfied will deliver and have a good reputation. After all, their magazine’s reputation is at stake.

4. Make sure the mentor that is presenting, is the person you will get. Not from a team or person they have trained. You want the person you see on stage, or on the site, that made the money themselves. Or at least if you are going this route, it has better be a price far less than if you got the actual expert. This is also a time to look at how much time you will get in the program with them, either in a group or one on one environment. Most programs are group based, or they would cost out of range for most people. Just make sure it won’t end before you’re possibly done, and if it does, what happens then.

5. Last but not least, make sure it is what you need, right now. Whether that is product, or mentor. If you are just starting, you don’t need a traffic specialist, you need to get your landing page, product and sales page in place. If you decide to be an affiliate, you need a specialist in fast, good leads to get you started. If you like to shop, then eBay may be a route for you, and you should seek out a product or mentor that helps you here. Know where you are, and start there.

The internet, is really like the wild, wild west of a new frontier where pioneers venture in search of the freedom lifestyle. The good news is, when you select the right mentor, or approach the industry in the right way, then you will make it. If you understand that it’s not an overnight answer, and that you are building a business, then you will persevere. If you realize that your passion can be your purpose, and that the next steps you take to making money on the internet, can be a brand new start for you, and you can finally do what you want – you will have the motivation you need to make your dreams a reality, complete with the promises of automated income and recurring riches for life.

So if you have been considering internet marketing as a revenue stream, or method of enhancing your marketing for offline services, then I recommend you go for it, and travel safely as a pioneer into the landscape that will forever change you.

Tracy Repchuk named Top 10 woman in the world for internet marketing by the Legendary Marketers series is also the bestselling author of 31 Days to Millionaire Marketing Miracles; Quantum Leap Thinking and down to earth internet marketing mastery combine to turn your passion into profits. Get your copy today - http://www.millionairemarketingmiracles.com
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