

# fear. loss

12 SUSAN  
PIVER

“Love is the one  
thing in life you  
just cannot game.”

6

Harness  
(and use)  
your fear.

29

Get physical  
with your  
fear.



# contents

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**6** **CLASSIC VIRTUE**  
Tim O'Reilly

**20** **ARE YOU READY?**  
Srikumar Rao

**29** **A TOUCH OF  
LIGHTNESS**  
Jennifer Louden

**12** **TRUST YOUR PATH**  
Susan Piver

**25** **SEEING IT THROUGH**  
Scott Belsky

**36** **BOUNCE**  
Barry Moltz

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**6**



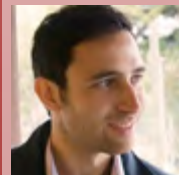
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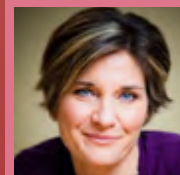
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**29**



**36**



# FEAR.LESS

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**Adversity introduces  
a man to himself.**

Anonymous



# Classic Virtue

“Much of what makes an effective leader is being in tune with yourself.”

Tim O'Reilly

.....

**T**o give you some background, I was a fairly shy kid. In high school I did a bit of acting, but the first time I played a part in “Oedipus Rex,” I remember I almost passed out on stage. I was incredibly nervous about any kind of public speaking at the time. Acting in high school got me over that on a small scale, but later on, when I spoke in front of crowds of 10 or 20,000 people, those earlier fears came back even stronger! I’d spoken in front of 1,000

people before, but 20,000! It brought back that same nervousness about being on the spot in public.

## JUST LIKE THE MOVIES

When I started my career at a consulting business doing technical writing, I had to confront another fear when we had to cold-call strangers





**“It’s not how you feel that matters, even if you’re nervous or shaky, you just have to do it anyway.”**

and solicit our services. What was so helpful to me during that time was the movie “All the President’s Men.” Dustin Hoffman’s character was so scared of making those calls, but he went ahead and made them anyway. I realized during that time that it’s not how you feel that matters, and even if you’re nervous or shaky, you just have to do it anyway. Having that example really helped me. In my own small way, I thought, “Oh my God, I’m going to call some guy who’s never heard of me!” but having

a model that showed me that fear didn’t matter, really helped me just go for it. After a while, you make enough of those calls that you get over the fear. Of course it helped, too, that I was 24 years old and had a new baby, and I had to figure out how to make a living. I didn’t want to work for anybody else, and I had a powerful motivator that led me to say, “OK, I’ve got to make that sale!”

## TRUST YOUR INTERNAL GYROSCOPE

One of my favorite authors in practical spirituality, Lao Tzu, writes in the “Tao Te Ching” a wonderful phrase about the qualities of the wise man. “Sometimes, when the river is muddy, you can do nothing but wait till the stream clears.” So there are times when you have to go and take up arms against a sea of troubles, but there are other times when all you can do is wait. I think you need both of those qualities as a leader. There are times when I’ve kicked myself for not acting decisively enough only to find later on that it was perhaps my intuitive sense holding me back because the timing wasn’t right for something to happen. So sometimes it’s very important to just listen to your intuition and your internal gyroscope. So much of what makes an effective leader (and person) is being in tune with yourself.



## ARISTOTLE AT FULL THROTTLE

In a similar way, we have to get better at being a whole person, even in a business context. To me, that's a very Aristotelian idea. Aristotle defined virtue as habitual control of the appetite by reason. If you think about what I did in the late '70s when I started my tech-writing consulting business, I was practicing virtue. I had fear, but my reason told me I had to overcome it. I formed a new habit where I became comfortable reaching out to complete strangers and talking to them even though I was afraid of the rejection and the possibility of confrontation. If you've ever done cold calls, you get a lot of rejection, and you just have to learn to do it. But that's the classic test of virtue: How do you train yourself? It's the same thing as training yourself physically. You start running, and then you say, "Boy, I'm tired, I want to stop." But the virtue of the runner is that you learn how to push through, and eventually, you get better at it. Then you don't have to stop.

Let's say your tennis serve is bad. You don't overcome your bad serve so much as you develop a good one. So perhaps you can say you're overcoming your fear, but you can also say you're strengthening your courage and mastering who you are. The distinction is important. It's certainly true that I overcame my



**“You have a conversation with your fear and figure out how to harness it into something useful.”**

fear of public speaking and making those calls, but it was also more of a mastering of who I was.

## HORSE WHISPERING

There's a wonderful quote from a psychologist, Irvin Yalom, where he said, "First will what is necessary, and then love what you will." I think that's good advice. Reason is the rider

and emotion is the steed, and you have to know who's in control. You want the rider to be in control, but it's not just about control; it's about listening to the animal. Sometimes, the animal is telling you something you need to know and you need to harness it. Ultimately, you have a conversation with your fear and try to figure out how to harness it into something useful.

## A NOVEL IDEA

One of the most beneficial things I did in learning about myself was reading about a fictional character in a historical novel: Francis Crawford, from Dorothy Dunnett's *The Lymond Chronicles*. He's a complex character not afraid to have people think he's the bad guy, because he sees things that other people don't, and he's willing to act on them. It was very helpful to me at various times in my career to think, "People aren't necessarily going to like what I'm doing here, but I know I'm doing the right thing," and that sort of pushed me through so I could do what I needed to do.

Probably my biggest challenge is that I still sometimes don't want to deal with an uncomfortable personnel situation or give someone charged feedback, and I start to feel those same nerves. I think that's a pattern that I still have some trouble with, and that I've worked on throughout my career because I want to be liked. I want to be seen as a good person,

and being harsh to someone is not something I feel good about. You can get confused about when feedback is constructive and when you're just uncomfortable about creating that negative reaction. But if you master your fear, you'll find the right way to talk to someone in a way that they will hear you.

## THE EPICUREAN CURE FOR 'MORE, MORE, MORE'

We have to get a rational estimation of what we're really afraid of. Take the economy, for example. I was talking with an old friend who told me he lived on \$28,000 last year and was totally happy. The fact is, there are an awful lot of people who stress out about things that don't matter. I'll look at the economy and think to myself, "Gosh, bad things could happen to my company," but then I remind myself that eventually bad things are going to happen to my company and me: I'm going to die. It all comes down to that in the end. So it shifts your perspective, and then you think, "What do I really need to be happy?" So many times we get hung up on stuff that doesn't matter. We're in such a culture of "more, more, more." My response goes back to classical philosophy - what Epicurus said is that what actually makes us happy is moderation, not having too much of anything.





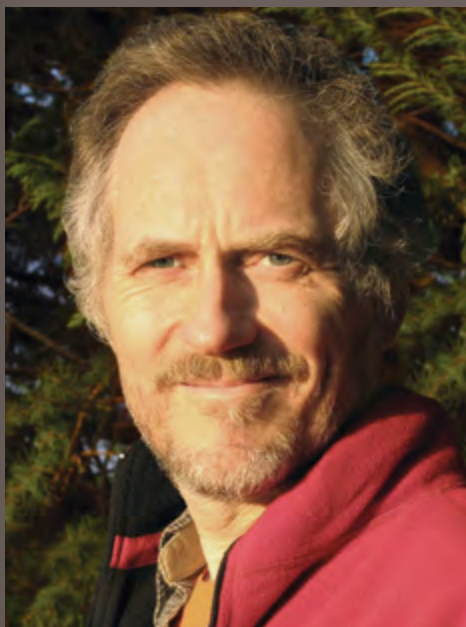
## HOW BEAUTIFUL IS THAT?

I'm now pushing 55, and I believe that I'm going to die in a way I never did when I was 25. It's amazing as you get older how that changes your perspective. When you're young, you have this seemingly endless future ahead of you. At

the point I realized the time ahead is getting shorter, I made better choices about how I spent it. Intellectually, I understood that earlier, but you know it and feel it much more viscerally as you get older. It's something I live with every day, so I'm grateful when I get up and I see something beautiful. Instead of rushing around worrying, I think, "My gosh, how beautiful is that?" I balance out the worry that I won't get things done properly with the knowledge that

no matter how ambitious I am, how much I get done is still small in the grand scheme of things. Karl Jaspers, a great philosopher said, once we understand the limits of our existence and can come to terms with them, then we become happy. We have to accept our reality and let it in.

## BIO:



***Tim O'Reilly** is the founder and CEO of O'Reilly Media, the world's largest computer book publisher and host of technology conferences including Web 2.0 Summit, O'Reilly Open Source Convention and O'Reilly Emerging Technology Conference. Tim's blog, O'Reilly Radar discusses emerging technology trends and serves as a platform for advocacy on important issues to the technical community. In 1992, he published "The Whole Internet User's Guide & Catalog," the first popular book about the Internet, selected by the New York Public Library as one of the most significant books of the 20th century.*

# Trust Your Path

“To be a warrior, you have to have a broken heart.”

Susan Piver

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**Q: Where does fear originate with respect to love – and how do they relate to each other?**

A: Whether it’s relating to love or anything else, fear divides along three lines, but they all have one thing in common: some version of, “I want things to be a particular way. And if they’re not this way, it’s going to be very bad for me.” I think this is at the root of fear. This is completely understandable, of course, because we all want to be healthy, not sick, to find love, not lose it. But for most

people, the fear originates from the more general idea that who they are is not good enough. That’s huge. Everybody feels that way, no matter how accomplished or beautiful they might be. Second, I think people fear that other people are going to find them lacking. Third, we all fear that somehow life is going to hurt us. You can justify these fears in a million different ways, but they’re really not useful. I think it stems from thinking that everything should be okay, that we should be happy, and there should be no pain,



and things should always turn out the way we want them to. Holding on to that belief as our primary belief is only going to lead to pain.

**Q: Love feels more intense than any other attachments - that the things that happen in relationships somehow cause more pain than other losses.**

A: I think it's because love is the thing we want the most. For everybody. It actually is the most valuable thing any person can possess - it's number one - and it's a rare exception for whom that isn't so. It's strange because one of the biggest Buddhist lessons is that life isn't permanent. Things are not permanent. The first Noble Truth is: Life is suffering. When the

**“love is the *one* thing in this life you just cannot game.”**

Buddha said that he didn't just mean life sucks, because then he goes to explain the second Noble Truth: Everything is impermanent. That's why there's suffering. As a practitioner, I can apply this idea to almost every aspect of my life - albeit begrudgingly - to money, to

health, to death even, and say, “Yeah, okay, it's impermanent.” But when it comes to love, I just can't. I find, and I notice I'm not alone in this, that it's almost impossible to apply the teachings on impermanence to your love life.

for refuge, somewhere we can withdraw from the difficulties of life and create some kind of a cocoon. It's funny because love is just the one thing in this life you just cannot game. You can't make it be there when it's not, and you



It's the one thing we all think, “Maybe I can get away with this one being permanent.”

I also notice that when most people say they're looking for love, which the great majority of us do, we don't mean love, really, on closer examination. We mean safety. We're looking

can't make it go away when it is. When we try to, that's when it becomes scary. There's nothing less safe than love. But it's true that we want to anchor it when we find it. I'm not saying we should all become hippies and say, “I love you now, I don't know if I'm going to love you tomorrow.” That is unbelievably





unskillful, unkind, and ridiculous. But thinking that the person that you love is going to or should make you happy and safe, that's what a lot of relationships seem to devolve into. The love part starts out so pure - it's so thoughtless, it's just there, it exists. But then you try to make it a device, and it can't become one - it will never become a device.

**Q: You wrote about this in *The Hard***

**Questions; that love feels safe when you start out, but sometimes you realize that even though you love someone deeply, you just can't create a "life" together.**

A: That was the big epiphany for me when I wrote *The Hard Questions*. I thought, "Ohhhh. This is how you're supposed to think about marriage." I had been in long-term relationships, and in our culture, we think that because we love someone we're supposed to be able to have a life with them... but sometimes those things don't always connect. I think there's a difference between a love affair and a relationship. Of course you want your relationship to be a love affair, and you want your love affair to be a relationship, and God willing, someday every single person on Earth will have one that is both. But I don't think every love affair, is suited to be a relationship, and not every relationship should be expected to be a love affair. It's more complex and interesting than that.

**Q: Is it possible to exist in that sphere of having a love affair that is a relationship?**

A: It is completely possible to exist in both spheres. It is wrought with pain, but what I've learned is that all the other ways are wrought with pain, too. I've been married now for ten years and we have our fights - bad fights - and there's distance and crappy, grumpy days, and all the rest, but there's a deep connection. We're both IN and it's fantastic and we love

each other. Sure, you disappoint each other in conventional, mundane ways all the time, but what's most heartbreaking of all is that the more you love, the more attuned you are to

**“it has to have an end, simply because you're beginning it.”**

your beloved's vulnerability. That necessarily leads to the idea that when you say, "Let's get into this relationship for the long term," it has to have an end, simply because you're beginning it. When you begin this deep thing and say, "Okay, I'm really going to put everything I have into this," for whatever your reasons are, your soul is tuning into the love that's present and the bond that exists, but it's also tuning into the potential end of that bond. That's just how people are. You don't start something without realizing that it has an end, and if you don't realize that, then you're just not thinking through it clearly. But to think about the end with someone that you love like that, that deeply, it's almost too much to bear. Personally, I think that's why most relationships fail. Because when they get deep, you have to look at that, and it's just too painful. It's easier

to say, “You don’t make enough money, or I don’t like your clothes,” or whatever. That’s heavy, I know, but I think it’s the truth.

It’s not something that I’ve figured out yet, it’s just something that I think we have to accept, something that we have to lean into rather than away from. The moments of deepest love or communion for me—and I’m sure I’m not the only one—are accompanied by the recognition of the ephemeral nature of that moment. You can’t hold onto it. You know you can’t hold onto it. It’s excruciating, but at the same time, you don’t want to be a bummer, you want to enjoy the unbelievable thing that’s happening between you and another person. But you can’t choose between those two, or feel them in distinct sequence, like, “I’ll feel this, then I’ll feel that.” They walk through the door holding hands. So ultimately, the whole deal is about compassion -and not because we want to be saints - but because, what else are you going to do with your life? If compassion is

the ability to hold in the same moment love and pain, a simultaneous arising of both emotions, then in a situation with your beloved you’re getting a Ph.D in that. So it has value - that’s a precious commodity. But you have to eat it, you have to taste it. You have to open to it.



**“You can’t hold onto the moment.”**

Then you have this soulful situation in your own heart where you can look at the pain of others and really absorb it but also stabilize

yourself and not get overwhelmed by it. I thought there was something wrong with me initially because as someone who practices compassion, I noticed that the deeper my own spiritual practice gets, the more upset I get and the more I cry about everything. So I thought

I was doing something wrong, because you look at great beings, like His Holiness the Dalai Lama or people who are living embodiments of compassion, and you don’t see them walking around crying all the time - they seem pretty happy. So once I was at a lecture given by my teacher and I asked him this question: “Why does my practice of compassion make me feel worse? I just cry all the time. Is this what’s supposed to happen? Because I don’t see what good it could do.” This was in front of 150 people, and I was actually crying when I asked it, so it was extremely embarrassing. But he

was so sweet, he looked at me and said, “Well, some of the world’s greatest meditators have cried a lot.” That was so fantastic for me to



hear, because it just gave me my self back. I thought, “Okay, I’m part of a lineage of warriors or practitioners who are trying to work with this. Maybe I haven’t perfected it, but I’m part of it.” I was very grateful for that answer.

**Q: Recognizing that it’s a path means almost always being uncomfortable (and that it’s a long journey.)**

A: Yes, that is absolutely so. That is exactly what Shambhala Buddhism is about. The

Shambhala teachings brought here by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche say exactly that - To be a warrior, you have to have a broken heart. It’s required. That has always fascinated me, and when I wrote my book, *Wisdom of a Broken Heart*, it was my attempt to contemplate that. It means that it’s never going to be comfortable, and it’s an utterly groundless, never ending journey. It is utterly groundless. Yet still you go, you open, and you don’t cop out. You stand in this crazy situation to be a benefit to all beings. All beings includes you, so you don’t have to think “Oh, it means everybody but me.” The warrior has to have a broken heart, just to actually take in the truth. Without the heartbreak, you’re still making up stories.

**“To be a warrior, you have to have a broken heart.”**

**Q: Is there a difference between the fear of being alone and the fear of being lonely?**

A: There’s no such thing, in a sense, as not alone. There’s just - how do you take that? Certainly there’s companionship in relationships, and incredible things that make you feel met. That’s what I think makes heartbreak so painful actually, when

you feel that that possibility is there to be met, and then that possibility is gone. That’s the alpha and omega of grief.

**“There’s no such thing as *not* alone.”**

The thing is, is that it’s still gone, even if you’re with that person because the moment is gone. So there’s alone and freaked out and desperate, which we all have moments of, certainly myself included and it’s not a criticism, but then there’s alone and relaxed. But there’s always this sense of loneliness, I think. When people talk about Chögyam Trungpa, whom I never met, they say that while he was the most extraordinary teacher, he was also probably the loneliest person anyone had ever met. But he didn’t walk around saying, “I’m so lonely, I’m crying, etc..” He was connecting constantly with people at profound levels. Another definition he gave of the warrior is someone who has recognized their essential aloneness. You’re on your island, and ships go by, and people come and visit, but you know that’s where you are and you relax in it.

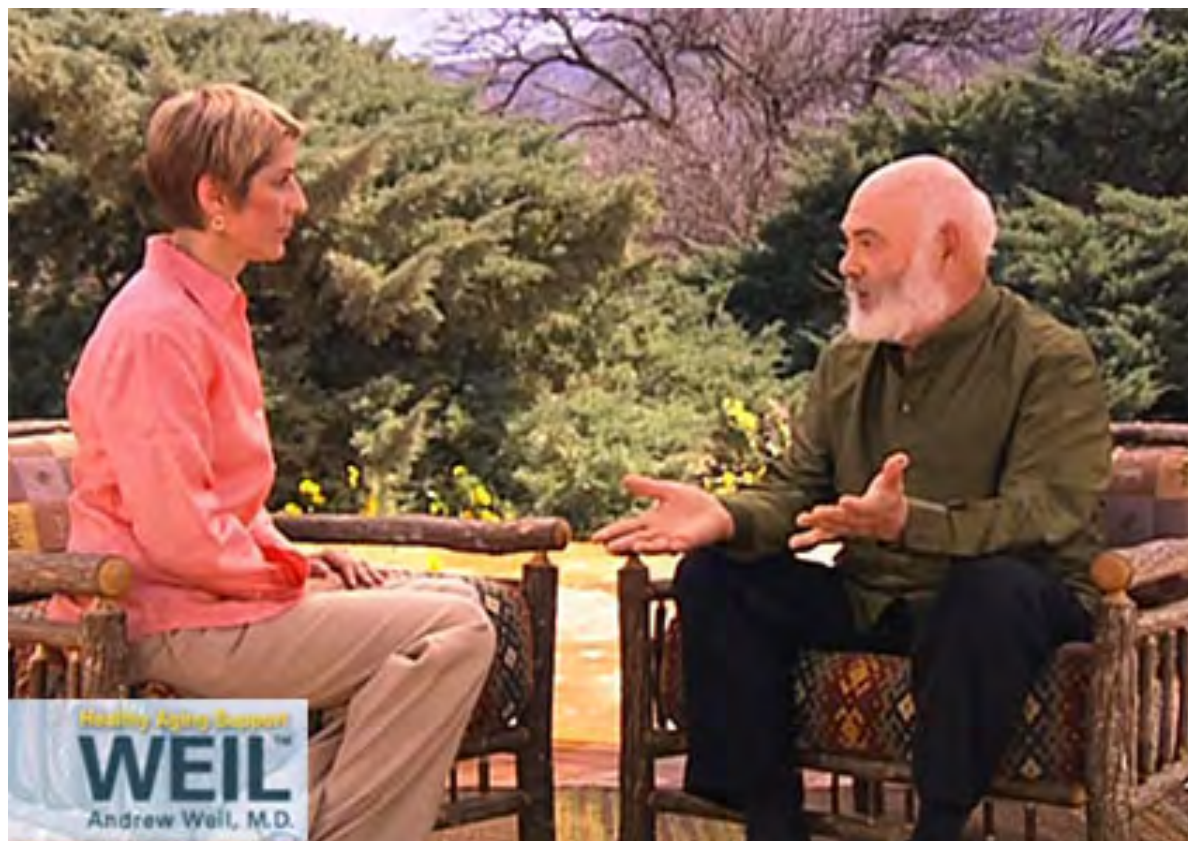
Personally, I don’t know how to do that, and I still hold on to the thought that, “I don’t want to do that.” Many people who fear aloneness



try to counter it with togetherness with other people, which makes sense. But I just happen to go in the opposite direction and take refuge in it - but it's the same principle. My personal preference is to glorify or deify solitude. But for me, it's a neurotic thing, not a particularly soulful thing. I'm a very solitary person. I'm married, I have great friends, but in my heart of hearts, my preference is always to be alone, and I think there are good reasons for it. I'm a contemplative individual—I just incarnated in this particular moment as a contemplative individual—but also I just find it too painful to do the whole getting close, drifting off, getting close, drifting off thing that happens naturally in relationships. So I think of it more of as an avoidance. Karen Horney, the turn-of-the-century German psychoanalyst, brilliantly came up with this three-directional theory that when you're afraid of something there are three ways we can approach what we're afraid of. Some people move against it to fight and dominate what they fear. Some people move towards it, to pacify or make a relationship with it, and some people move away from it. I'm just a moving away sort of gal, I guess. We all do all three, of course, but one is your primary, and it's interesting to think which one you are.

**Q: Although you try to grasp the nature of your pain, a broken heart feels unbearable and irreparable. How do you reconcile painful feelings with making sense of it all?**

A: It's very tricky territory because when you



think, "I'm having these painful feelings, I must find the lesson in it, or it must be happening for a reason," you can fall into dicey magical thinking, like "If I just find the lesson, I'll never have to feel this again." It's very natural to want it to mean something when you're feeling that kind of pain, because nothing this extreme could be devoid of meaning, right? I do believe that's true - it's not devoid of meaning. But you will never find the meaning with your

conventional mind. Ever. This isn't to say that delving in psychologically isn't valuable because it is enormously valuable - but only up to a point. We've all had the experience of reading some incredible theory of why pain hurts and thinking, "Yeah! That's true. That is it." But still, it doesn't do anything to the pain. We live in a mental society that overvalues mental processes and thinks that if you can just comprehend something, then you should

# “The real way to find the wisdom you need is to do the opposite of what you want to do.”

be able to have control. That is ridiculous. The real way to find the wisdom you need is to do the opposite of what you want to do, and what you want to do, quite understandably, is to stop feeling it. But really, the way is to turn toward what you feel. Lean into it. Pema Chödrön said it perfectly. She said my whole book in one sentence! Her pithy instruction to find wisdom is to feel the feeling but drop the story. That's it. Feel it without inflaming it. Usually we can't stop saying things to ourselves about it, but the goal is to just let those things go by and feel. Tune into your body more than your head and feel, feel, feel. I promise that wisdom will arise, and it may or may not be exactly what you thought it should be.

## **Q: Can you talk about the fear and shame associated with heartbreak?**

A: Shame is a hallmark of heartbreak. When you're looking for something that

you can't figure out how to get, whether it's appreciation, self-love, or a sense of worth, the best way to get it is to turn around and give it. This always works. It's like the secret, magic formula. Instead of keeping all your attention on what you deserve, you can start to share your attention between yourself and others, and things will start to loosen up. When you feel fear or shame, every moment is a confirmation or denial of your worth—every phone call, every magazine ad, everything. To ask about others instead, “Can I connect with it in my own heart? Can I feel it?” is an interesting meditation.

This starts you placing the attention repeatedly not on breath or image or sound, but on worth, worthiness, and your own capability of appreciating others. Because what you want is to be appreciated. And so the best way to do that is to start appreciating. Not like a martyr, but you just start to walk into the world of appreciation. Because when you have a broken heart, you feel shunned from that world. But you can step into it through the act of appreciation. You have to turn your attention to softness, noticing the world around you, not with an agenda and not from a psychological point of view.

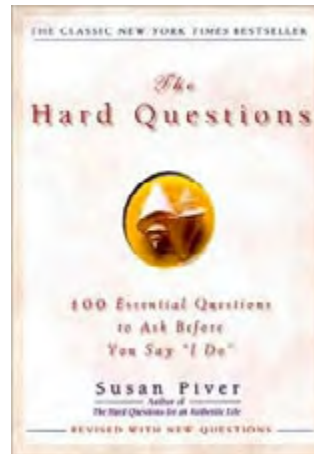
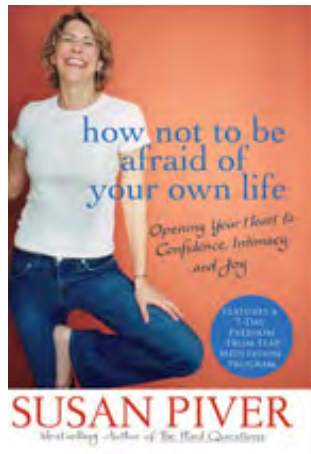
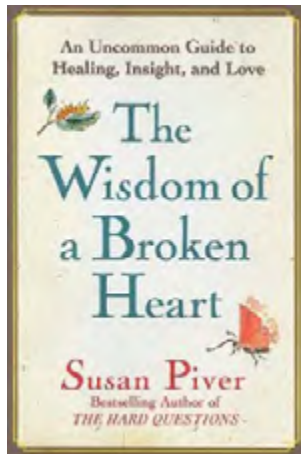
Everything is about where we put your attention. If we keep trying to convince ourselves that we have worth by saying, “I'm pretty,” “I'm a good person,” etc., that will only go so far. But if instead, we turn

our attention to worthiness or softness, it's different—it's not a moralistic way of looking at it. It's expedient, practical and workable.

## **Q: How can you begin to wrangle with the uncertainty that you may go through heartbreak again?**

A: You can't trust that your heart's never going to get broken again. That's where the relationship of heartbreak to warriorship comes in. You can see the challenge of love so clearly. On one hand, you see how deep your longing is for love. On the other, you see how impossible it is to make it safe. Each - the longing for and the fear of - are explosive. So you're holding these two time-bombs and think, “What am I going to do with these things?” If I throw one, I might detonate the other. What next, then? No one can tell you. How you navigate between longing to be loved and knowing it can't be safe, that is your unique path. If your intention is to figure out how to love authentically, courageously, then the “right” result will manifest, whether or not that looks like happily ever after or not. I believe this is how karma works - it begins with the intention. If the intention is good, so will the fruition be. Only we don't have a big enough perspective to see the whole thing since, according to Buddhist thought, it plays out over lifetimes.

Your path is trustworthy. You can trust your path and you can trust your experience. You can trust that there's wisdom at work, whether



conventional happiness results or not. I don't think you can ever trust that someone isn't going to hurt you, but you can definitely trust in your own goodness and in the laws of karma that say if you start with good, you will end with good. You really can. You just might have to wait a few lifetimes to see how it all plays out...

# BIO:



*Susan Piver is the New York Times bestselling **author of nine books**, including *The Hard Questions*, *How Not to Be Afraid of Your Own Life*, *The Wisdom of a Broken Heart*, and *Start Here Now: An Open-Hearted Guide to the Path and Practice of Meditation*. Her newest book is *The Four Noble Truths of Love: Buddhist Wisdom for Modern Relationships*. She is founder of the **Open Heart Project**, the world's largest online-only meditation center and a sought-after speaker and teacher, teaching workshops on mindfulness, innovation, relationships, and creativity. She has been a student of Buddhism since 1995.*



# Are You Ready?

“The more time you spend being afraid, the more you’re deprived of a fulfilling life”

Dr. Srikumar Rao

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## SOMETHING WAS WRONG

Throughout the phases in my life, I was successful in most of the organizations I worked with, but I wasn’t really engaged in what I was doing. It was intellectually challenging, but it didn’t speak to me at a deeper level. I couldn’t articulate it back then, but I

knew something was wrong, even though i couldn’t quite put my finger on it. When I finally tired of corporate politics, I decided to go to the university life, where there was a quest for knowledge. Upon entering the academic world, I found out how dirty university politics is, which depressed me even more. I was discouraged by the conventional view of success in both worlds: you reach the position of CEO or





tenure, you have a lot of money, you're a big manager or renowned professor, etc." Material acquisitions defined success. I struck a low point after a while at the university and said, "If this is all there is, it really isn't worth it."

## PURPOSE AS A PRIVILEGE

Gradually, I came into my present view of success, which is that when you get up in the morning you're really glad to be alive - that

you're so absorbed with what you do you don't know if it's work or play. That what you're doing is not only fulfilling to you, but also brings a tremendous good to a greater community. You have a sense of purpose. "Yes, I'm doing exactly what I was put here to do and what I'm doing is a benefit to a host of people. And it's my privilege to be in such a position where I am of service." If you're in that situation, where you're grateful to be given the opportunity to do what you're doing, then you're a success in terms of who you are as opposed to what you have.

## SEEKING IDEALISM

My entire life, I've read a lot of biographies, and their idealism was uplifting, but then I'd come back to the real world, and the real world sucked. I thought, "If all of this stuff is only useful if you're reading about it but isn't practically applicable, it's not worth much." I knew somehow that ideal was in fact reachable, and I wanted to figure out how to get there outside of my books. So I took a sabbatical.

I came up with the idea for my course, Creativity and Personal Mastery, and did it. It was the first significant time in my life when I did something without asking, "Is there a market for this? Will other people be

interested?" Until that point I was a marketing guy and anytime I came up with a bright idea, that was my immediate question. For the first time, I didn't ask that. I simply said, "This makes me come alive and so I'm going to do it." In fact, my initial hypothesis was that nobody would be interested in it because this was soft stuff, and I wasn't sure that MBAs in business school would resonate with it. But I hesitantly introduced it and all semester long it did well. Then I modified

**“you're so absorbed with what you do you don't know if it's work or play.”**

it for Columbia's Business School and, to my surprise, after a couple semesters it just exploded. Students really enjoyed it and with its success, I recognized that I wasn't alone in asking these fundamentally important questions. A lot of people were desperate to find an opportunity to explore these questions. I quit a secure job to launch out on my own and my steady income just vanished immediately. I was scared, but I trusted that the universe would

provide me exactly what I needed and indeed, that did happen. To be honest, I believed this so utterly that my fear was fleeting. I realized then that your only security is your ability to deliver recognizable value to others.

## COMFORT WITH AMBIGUITY

The more time you spend being afraid, the more you're depriving yourself of the opportunity to live a fulfilling life. When you are concentrating on delivering value, your needs will be taken care of. You don't have to give much thought to it.

The question to ask yourself when facing fear isn't, "Is this good or bad? Right or wrong?" The right question is, "Is the current model I'm using in my life working better for me than an alternative?" If the answer is no, then it's time to move on to a new way to adapt to the circumstances. It takes practice to recognize it immediately and then to act on it. There's no question that there's fear associated with fulfilling your potential. But when you learn to recognize it, you also learn to cope with it, not repress it. One of the hardest things to do is to become comfortable with ambiguity. Doing that is a huge blessing, especially in times like this. You can say, "Okay, this is a transitional phase. All kinds of great things can happen,"



and embrace optimism instead of dysfunction.

## FULFILLMENT IS YOUR BIRTHRIGHT

I knew deep down in that it was possible to live a life of fulfillment when you are not buffeted by sorry and desperation, and all of the things that make life terrible. It's hard to visualize because a lot of people don't believe that there

is such a state and that you can reach it. But it's not a pipe dream. It's not only possible, it's your birthright. If you settle for anything less, if you get up in the morning and you're tense and your whole life is an intense to-do list, then it's pretty sad. It doesn't have to be like that.

When you're looking for the ideal job eventually you say, "Should I do this? Should I do that?" The moment you're asking a question, it doesn't matter which one you take because you know you don't have clarity. Ultimately



you get to the point where, you're doing what you're doing because you can't not do it. You're not asking any questions because you don't need to ask any questions. It's clear. I will do it. Period. If there is something I set off to do and there is an obstruction then my only question is; "Okay, what do I do? Go around it? Over it? Under it?" You may have to make a decision like that, but there's no question whether you should be doing it.

# WE'RE NOT VICTIMS

We aren't victims of unknown forces, although sometimes we feel as if the universe is harsh and dumps everything on us. All that comes our way is means for us to work on ourselves and grow. We always have the strength and

wisdom to deal with the adversity we face, and often it's a delusional adversity. We label it as an obstacle and then experience it as such. What we don't realize is that we can craft a life full of joy for ourselves so that each day can be brimming with fullness. To do that, we need to wake up and create it for ourselves.

# BIO :



*Dr. Srikumar Rao* worked as an executive with Warner Communications, Continental Group, Data Resources and McGraw-Hill before switching to university life as an adjunct professor at London Business School and the Haas School of Business at UC Berkeley. He pioneered the successful course Creativity and Personal Mastery to help people make quantum leaps in professional and personal effectiveness. Dr. Rao's book **"Are You Ready to Succeed: Unconventional Strategies for Achieving Personal Mastery in Business and Life"** is an international bestseller.

# Seeing It Through

“Transparency relieved my anxieties.”

Scott Belsky

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## KEEPING THE SHIP AFLOAT

It’s scary to go out on your own and to take, as Robert Frost says, “The road less traveled,” but the fear from taking a personal risk is even greater when you convince others to join you.

In late 2005, as my tenure in corporate America wound down, I had a wild realization: If the creative world were

more organized, then more great ideas would actually come to fruition. If artists, entrepreneurs, writers and other creatives became better leaders of their ideas, then all of us would ultimately benefit from their accomplishments.

I began to consider how to organize the creative world - and how such a passion could be turned into a business. There were three stages in making this happen. The first was the safest: brainstorming and planning while still fully employed. The second was



**“I found myself waking up in the mornings with gut-wrenching fear...”**





slightly scarier: resigning from my full-time job to do constant research, vet my plan with others and take preliminary steps in development. The third stage - convincing a handful of brave souls to depart their steady careers to join me in the chaotic journey ahead - was the most intense and fearful stage of all.

When someone changes their life to join you in a creative pursuit, they make a tremendous investment in your idea and your capabilities. They bet on you as a person. Luckily for me, my early partners took on my idea as their own and pushed it to a new level. But as we started to work together to make Behance happen, I found myself waking up in the mornings with gut-wrenching fear - a fear of disappointing my team, a fear of making

mistakes that could jeopardize all of our careers.

Like the pressure parents feel to provide for their family, I found myself always scrambling to find contingency plans and side consulting gigs to keep the ship afloat. But my fear was taking its toll. While I should have focused on the primary elements of the business with composure and confidence, I spread our energy too thin. My fear of having poor judgment caused my poor judgment.

# THE CREW COMES TOGETHER

However, a remarkable thing happened as

the team grew together. We started trusting each other and exchanging feedback. I found that full transparency with the team relieved my anxieties. By liberally sharing and discussing the opportunities and challenges, the uncertainty became more manageable. My burdens, it seemed, were a result of isolation.

My fears became a source of new principles that brought our team together. To this day, we share our concerns whenever they crop up. The whole team is made aware of the business' performance and we have become committed collaborators - always open to candid discussion and taming the natural fears of leadership with shared understanding.



BIO

*Scott Belsky believes the greatest breakthroughs across industries are a result of creative people and teams that are especially productive. He wrote a national bestselling book, **Making Ideas Happen: Overcoming the Obstacles between Vision and Reality**, to prove it. Scott founded **Behance**, a company that develops products and services that boost productivity in the creative community and organizes inventive individuals. He is a speaker and leader in the technology and creative communities.*

# A Touch Of Lightness

*“We get to decide that fear isn’t running the show.”*

**Jen Louden**

I just grappled with fear today and yesterday, so it is very fresh. This past weekend, my sweetheart and I went away, and we had the most wonderful time. I live in Washington, near Seattle, and it’s dark and gloomy in the wintertime, so we went to the other side of the Cascades and hiked where it was sunny, and it put us in a really good mood. It was lovely. Then Monday morning rolls around and we wake up and I start thinking about everything I need to be doing and everyone I haven’t

spoken to. I haven’t written thank you notes, I didn’t write a blog post and suddenly, I’m gripped by anxiety and wild thinking, “If I’m not doing this, somehow I’m not safe.” It’s so intense and sometimes it really feels like someone’s out to get me in those moments.

What can make it better at times is when my sweetheart is with me and is loving, but also firm. He does a great job of modeling what I try to do for myself and what I teach people to do. How can you have both incredible



compassion for the parts of you that are sure the world's going to end, and at the same time be firm and not let those emotions steal the show? I did not want my anxiety to steal my last day of vacation! Many times I've looked back at periods of my life and thought, "My gosh, everything was so much better than I thought." But I was so lost in fear then that I didn't realize it. I wouldn't change anything about those periods except that I could be more able to let go of that inner conversation about there being something more I should be doing.

**“We all come upon a time in our lives where we lose a lot and suffer deeply.”**

Many of us have learned to be hyper-alert to our environment and the people surrounding us, learned how to take the “room temperature” so to speak: “Is everything okay? Is everybody happy? Does everybody have what they need? They do? Okay, now I can relax.” And I learned this as a kid who had a good childhood! That is something that requires, first and foremost, awareness. Awareness, awareness, awareness. It

also requires compassion and active re-framing, using all kinds of different skills to discern, “Well, is it really my business if everybody else is happy?” It's absolutely a training we have to go through, and we now know enough about neurobiology to know we can actually train our brains and create new neural pathways.

## LOOKING FOR DELIGHT

When we look back at the last century, we will have decided that the most momentous thing was when the East and the West met. I think as we continue to see the rise of yoga, meditation, mindfulness, martial arts and the disciplines that really help us become aware, we'll realize that these are the essential tools that will help us and keep up dealing properly with fear.

In my youth I thought, as many of us do, that I was fearless. I see now that I just didn't really realize what could happen. We all come upon a time in our lives where we lose a lot and suffer deeply. During those times, one of which included my Dad being ill for two years and then dying, my now ex-husband having cancer, and my friend dying at the same time, I didn't realize that although I thought I was still the same person doing the same things, I actually lost my confidence and became incredibly afraid of everything. There were periods of time when a good day for me



was just taking a shower. Certainly after my father died, I was really depressed. After my divorce as well, but that didn't seem to last for an incredibly long time. I remember training myself to look for the good, for delight in my days, and I definitely dug myself out both times with a daily yoga practice. Yoga with a lot of Pranayama shifted things for me because I couldn't meditate at all. I've since learned from a study that mindful meditation isn't always



the best choice when you're depressed. But support definitely helped me. I formed a group that I've been part of for many years that we call the Brain Trust. It's a group of other like-minded people who do business in this weird internet space that we do nowadays, and being with them was very helpful to me in finding a grounding moment by moment. Also, my lifelong struggle with my practice is to have it and then lose it, and I think part of the reason is not having a good Sangha, a group to practice with. It makes a huge difference in my life.

**“We have a myth that grief just disappears. It doesn't. It just changes...”**

I was also scared that I had nothing left to say creatively, and I think most people reading this understand, that that's how we identify, you know? We self-identify as creative people, and as long as we're creating, everything's okay. When I felt like I couldn't create in the same way or at the same level anymore, that's what paralyzed me. But interestingly enough, I didn't realize I was afraid until my sweetheart told me. We were in a new relationship at

that point and I said something to which he simply replied, “I just think you're really, really afraid.” I thought it was so telling that I didn't even recognize it as fear initially.

But quite frankly, here it is again, three years after that period I'm still recovering and repairing. I think we have a myth that grief just disappears. It doesn't. It just changes, and it changes you. There are times where grief will overtake me at the oddest times - grief for my marriage, for not being with my daughter full-time, for my dad being gone. I think learning to open to that, which I couldn't do when I was younger, has been probably a big part of it changing for the better. But I get tired of it too. Today, for example, I resent the feeling and I just want it to go away, and sometimes I exhaust myself by wanting things to be different than they are.

## THE ART OF THE START

When we begin to create, it's interesting to note what has become lodged in our psyche. A lot of times, I'll ask myself what will happen if I start. What am I going to feel in



my body if I start? And sometimes my mood is just absolute terror: My heart is beating fast, my breathing is heavy, my eyes narrow, I'm leaning forward, crossing my legs, and on and on. So then I get curious about this and think, “Okay, what's the smallest thing that I can do right now that doesn't totally freak me out?” We all think things like, “My writing sucks, it's horrible, I'll never write anything again! It's so dull and pedestrian, and it's all been said before.” It took me many, many years to understand and learn this about my

own writing process - that it does go through a bad stage. It's slow and stupid and I feel dull. But I just have to get through that stage because I know eventually I'll make it better.

Any information you can learn about your creative process is gold. Because then you can begin to catch yourself. "Oh yeah, this is the stage where I always tell myself I can't write. This is the stage I tell myself I'm never going to get funding for my project and no one's ever going to say yes to me." Then, slowly, you can start to intervene in different places. Maybe



just at the level of the body, just stretch your chest open a little or open your eyes wide.

## BRING IN THE LIGHT

If you're really dealing with chronic anxiety, one of the things I recommend is to find a really good naturopath, because much of our anxiety has a physical base. It's often overlooked that



we're not looking at the most basic causes of why we're fearful or anxious, especially women. Sometimes I work with people, and think, "Oh my God! What are you eating? You cannot drink Diet Coke!" What I notice in myself during periods of anxiety is that there are a few tools that I use right away. One is simply to acknowledge that I'm feeling a certain way. It's so subtle and ingrained in most of us to push away that which is ugly or unpleasant, and therefore increase the anxiety by passing judgment on ourselves, saying, "Oh,



no, I'm not supposed to be anxious." Yesterday is a great example of this for me – "Here I am on vacation, it's a beautiful day! So why am I feeling anxious? There's no reason for me to be anxious." Then, just from body chemistry, I immediately begin to feel more anxious. So I try to say, "Yes, here are some parts of me that are feeling really anxious and I'm having this terrible feeling that I forgot something or that things aren't contained right now." Then I start to think, "Well, what would it

**“Here I am on vacation, it's a beautiful day! So why am I feeling anxious?.”**

look like to take care of things? What are the facts here?" For me, a lot of times that entails journaling of some kind. It might be as simple as a brain dump, where I just pour out all the things that I think can go wrong, that I think I've forgotten, that I think need to be taken care of right this very minute. It's relieving, because we can't hold more than seven pieces of information in our head at one time.

That technique that works really depending

on what type of learner and processor you are. For me, just listing it on paper shows me that there's really not much worth worrying about. But there's also a physical component that's even more useful than being mindful, and it's the thing that we forget and resist the most: to move our energy. To just get up and walk around the room or start doing something to let that energy move. I'll walk around and screw my face up or do some yoga lion faces, and then perhaps I might jump on my mini-trampoline for a few minutes or make some noises. I just let that energy move and not hold onto it. Usually we trap it, but every time I move around, I rediscover the benefits.

Sometimes I distract myself, of course. I go inside and I eat crackers. Or I check email again. You take whatever your poison is. Maybe you get on the phone with your mother who you know will have you exhausted by the time you're done. That's a cycle we can spend years in. The only way out is compassion.

If we continue to beat ourselves up for what we're doing, it persists. Only when we bring awareness and compassion can we work through it. So bring a lightness to it. Think, "Oh my gosh, I'm doing it again. I made it all the way down the stairs of my office, across the deck, into the kitchen, and I'm eating crackers and I'm not even tasting them. Again. Isn't that amazing. God, Jen, you're incredible."

That's something I try to do in my life, to get some distance from self-identification with

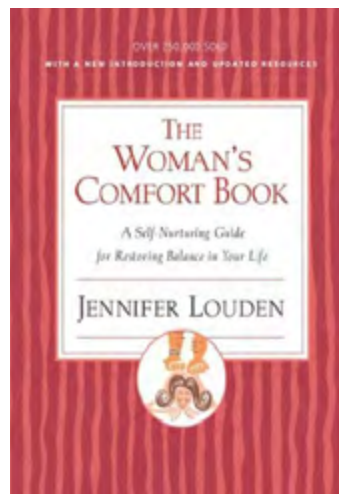
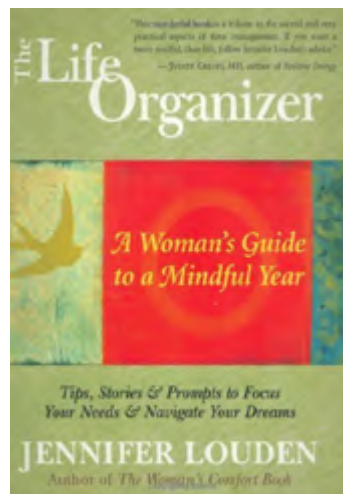
a negative idea: That is you. That isn't you. That's just part of you. Yes, it gets to be loved and treated with kindness, but it doesn't get to run the show. I think we have the idea that feeling or accepting our feelings means that



fear gets to run the show. We have to get some fire in there and remember that there's an adult here that gets to decide. WE get to decide that fear is not running the show.

We have to start being aware that the voice is there and that that voice changes. I've worked with these parts of myself for about 25 years now. And they're still here - they're different, but they're here. So one of the things I've learned to teach people is to be aware of that those voices are always a part of you, they're





not going away, and if you decide it's your job to make those voices go away, you're actually just creating more resistance. The other thing is to be aware that they change. One of the things I'm really curious about recently is: which of those voices are a part of me that I get to make friends with and which voices come from the outside world that I actually need to fight? Because I've thought for a good number of years that, "It's all part of me and sure, some parts don't get to run the show but I'm going to love them anyway." But I've started to wonder if there are parts that came in from who knows what—culture, a crappy teacher, the unlived parts of my parents, etc, but sometimes it feels like that inner saboteur is really out to get me.

## BIO:



**Jen Louden** is a personal growth pioneer who helped launch the concept of self-care with her first bestseller, *The Woman's Comfort Book*. She's written seven books on well-being and whole living, including *The Woman's Retreat Book* and *The Life Organizer*, with over a million copies of her books in print. Her most recent book is, ***Why Bother? Discover the Desire for What's Next***. Jen has written a national magazine column for a Martha Stewart magazine, appeared on Oprah and hundreds of TV, radio shows and podcasts, and is a sought-after teacher and speaker.

# Bounce

“Sometimes, failure just stinks.”

Barry Moltz

**Q: Can you talk about your fearful experiences running a small business, both failures and successes?**

A: I don't think that you overcome fear per se. In our society, a lot of people believe that you shouldn't have any fear or that you should forget fear, but fear is very natural. Sometimes fear can motivate you to do great things. One of my mentors said that when he went through bayonet training in the Korean War, he “learned that there are only two types of people: the quick and the dead.” So fear

got him moving. I tell people that they should be afraid, and then do it anyway. You have to figure out how to deal with your fear and get through it. I love the expression, “You can't make those butterflies in your stomach go away. You have to teach them to fly in formation.”

I'll give you some examples of my techniques for that. I don't like to fly. I've always feared turbulence. But I'm a motivational speaker, and until I become famous enough where people come to see me, every week I've got to be on a plane. The truth is,





only about four flights out of a hundred have bad turbulence, but I still have to deal with it. So what I've done is created a special "Turbulent Tunes" play list on my iPhone of upbeat music that puts me someplace else if turbulence hits. It works pretty well for me.

I also fear going on stage as a speaker - a lot of people have that fear. I practice my speeches, but I still always have to go up right after the hosts have said these amazing things about me, and I start to wrestle with my nerves. So I always start with the same introduction, no matter what speech I'm making. It goes like this: "I've had three businesses over the last 20 years. The first business went out of business. The second business, I was kicked out of business by my two partners right before my first son was born. And the third business, which I actually started two weeks after my first son was born, fortunately I was able to sell that business and was able to pay back the bank the millions I owed them - and my wife tells me I got her back at the same time." This allows the audience and I to get comfortable with each other. People think, "Okay, I guess he's like me. He's had ups and downs."

**Q: What about the fear of failure as an entrepreneur, and how you can learn to bounce back from failure?**

A: Fear of failure is a challenge because it goes along with a lot of shame. I tell people, "You're going to fail, so you've got to give up the

shame." I'm a big believer that failure doesn't always teach you something. Sure it does sometimes, but sometimes failure just stinks. I don't like when people say, "We need to have failure in our lives because we can learn so

success and we're going to have failure. We should cheer our success, and believe it or not, a lot of us don't pause to do that. Then we should mourn our failures. I like to feel real sorry for myself - to cheer the darkness - but I try to



much from it." I'd much rather learn from my success than my failure. Failure is only valuable when viewed as part of an entire business cycle or life cycle, even if you can't learn anything. We have to realize that we're going to have

make sure the pity party only lasts for 24 hours and I say, "All right, it's going to last for today. I'm going to go to bed, I'm going to dream about it, and when I get up in the morning, I'm going to give it up and I'm going to go on to





something else.” It’s important to let go so you can give yourself another chance at success. You can also save that failure to share later on when you’re successful and talk about how you came back. We love the great comeback, right?

**Q: Resiliency seems to be the key – how to bounce back. Is that quality teachable?**

A: I don’t actually like to use the phrase

“bounce back.” I believe that we do bounce, but we don’t always don’t bounce back to the same spot. In other words, life is like an irregularly-shaped ball of rubber bands. You have to be resilient, you have to be able to stretch, and it’s all in layers. Sometimes when we bounce, we don’t end up in the same place as we started, and that can be a good thing. It’s like tacking for a sailboat when you go across a windy lake. You have to go in a zigzag manner just to go in an overall straight line. That’s much more like what bouncing really is like. I think resilience is something you have to learn. For the first 10 years of my career, I never failed, so I didn’t need resilience. Once I did fail, that first fall was really, really hard. But after you come back once, you’re able to bounce. You have another failure and just realize good times don’t last forever, but bad

**“You can work so hard that you almost die in order to succeed.”**

times don’t either. I tell people to keep a kudos file of positive memories or trophies on their desk. These are external reminders of course, but when things get bad, reading nice things

written about you or awards you’ve won assures you that you won’t always be in this position.

**Q: You’ve said before, “Success can seem like a near-death experience.” Can you explain that statement?**

A: I believe a lot of times when you have your own business, you’re trading your soul for it. You can work so hard that you almost die in order to succeed. I wrote that specifically when I was selling my last business. Before we were actually able to sell it, the deal was called off multiple times. It seemed like a

**“only when you bounce the first time do you learn how resilient you really are.”**

near-death experience because there were a lot of incredible highs but a lot of low times where I just felt like I was going to die and wanted to stop the world and get off. Somehow we ended up selling to the same buyers in a different format, but it was very stressful. Now that I help people sell their businesses,



I see that this actually happens quite a lot.

**Q: Was your first business where you developed the attitude of looking at failure as part of a larger business cycle?**

A: That first failure hit me really hard because I realized I can fail just like everybody else. I joked that when I wrote about my business life, I'd call the book "The Worst They Can Do is Eat You: Surviving Your Business During Hard Times." That eventually became a book I wrote called "Crazy." I think only when you bounce the first time do you learn how resilient you really are. One of my karate teachers said to me, "Stand like a mountain. You are more powerful than you think." Inside the reservoir of our souls is a lot of resiliency.

**“You’ve got to strive for minimal achievement.”**

Once we're able to tap into that power, we can do it again and again and again. Each time, it gets easier because we've done it before.

**Q: How do you tap into that reservoir when sometimes you can feel the power, but can't access it?**



A: I always tell people, “You’ve got to strive for minimal achievement”, not maximum achievement. That means you have to focus on small steps. If you’re in a place of failure,

**“ Action-thinking will move you out of the mindset of failure.”**

your first small step should be moving out of that place to a place where you feel good about yourself. Perhaps you decide that you need to go volunteer someplace where you can help

someone, even if you don’t get paid. Or you try to figure out how you can get someone to pay you to go do something.” Action-thinking will move you out of the mindset of failure.

There’s a Zen saying, “Start from where you are.” People always want to start from someplace else or say “I wish that that didn’t happen to me” But wishing doesn’t work. You’re here now. What can you do with the tools, money and skills you have right now? If your business just failed, you’ve got to find some new work, right? Start talking to people that know about work that you can do. Then you start having conversations with people and going where people who have problems and the money to pay you to solve it. You have to stop thinking about the past and move forward. Letting go is hard because in our society we’re taught that we have to figure

out why we failed. Sometimes, though, the lesson in failure isn’t learned from the actual failure, but where you move afterward.

**Q: What advice can you give to someone looking to create an opportunity for themselves right now?**

I’d first ask them if they were done mourning previous failure and willing to give up the shame. Then they should ask themselves, “What’s the next place I want to bounce to? What do I want to go and make happen? What is the first thing that I can do - the smallest step I can take to move myself?”

If you’re uncomfortable with chaos, it will be hard to be an entrepreneur. You have to accept change and that no two days are going to be alike. That’s part of the fun of it too - that I don’t know what’s going to happen today. There is no path. So many people try to learn the five steps to success in business, thinking they’ll then have it made. But there aren’t five steps to success. You can learn from great schools

**“ Love everyone, trust a few, and paddle your own canoe.”**



and great people who have gone before you, but then you have to blaze your own trail.

One of my favorite quotes is, “Love everyone, trust a few, and paddle your own canoe.” Remember that business is about who you’re

doing business with, not what you’re doing it with. Find a group of people that you want to work with, and work with those people. It doesn’t really matter what you’re doing. People want to work with people that they know, care about, and love. “Paddle your own canoe,”

gives you responsibility for your own success. No one else out there is going to care as much as you are. Lastly, no matter what business you’re in, you have to understand cash flow.

## BIO:



***Barry Moltz** is a small business expert, getting owners to grow by unlocking their forgotten potential. With decades of entrepreneurial experience in his own business ventures and consulting, Barry’s formula to go from stuck to unstuck receives high praise from clients and audiences alike. Barry is the author of **six books** including, “How to Get Unstuck” “Small Business Hacks: 100 Shortcuts to Success” “Bounce: Failure, Resilience, and Confidence to Achieve Your Next Great Success” and more. Barry is a nationally recognized speaker, member of the Entrepreneurial Hall of Fame, and hosts his own weekly radio program for 10 years: The Small Business Radio Show on AM820.*

**If you never change your  
mind, why have one?**

Edward De Bono