

FEAR PRESS

A black and white portrait of Steve Pressfield, an older man with a serious expression, looking slightly off-camera. He has short, graying hair and is wearing a dark shirt. The background is dark and out of focus.

**“I THINK WE’RE ALL
TERRIFIED TO BE WHAT
WE’RE MEANT TO BE.”**

**05 STEVE
22 PRESSFIELD**

**“I WENT THROUGH A LOT OF STRUGGLE THAT HELPED
ME FIGURE OUT WHAT MATTERED TO ME.”**

**29 “NO LIFE IS IMMUNE FROM
THE UPS AND DOWNS...”**

CONTENTS

5

THE WAR OF ART

Steve Pressfield

17

REALITY GAVE OUT ON ME

Pema Chodron

22

THE ART OF SUCCESS

Jen Bekman

29

THE DETERMINED STREAK

Lynda Resnick

FEAR.LESS

Founder & Publisher: Ishita Gupta and Clay Hebert

Executive Editor: Matt Atkinson

Copy Editors: Katie Byrne, Emil Lamprecht, Ben Currie, Pooja Lohana

Design: Jason Ramirez and Michael Reyes

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Generous thanks to our contributors, each of whom took the time to share their story with our readers with honesty, willingness, and wisdom.

COPYRIGHT

You're given the unlimited right to print and distribute this magazine. We encourage you to share it. You may not alter it in any way though and you may not charge for it or for any of the content. The copyright in this work belongs to the publishers, who are solely responsible for the content. All images used with permission. For comments, email: ishita@ishitagupta.com.

To subscribe to Fear.less for free, sign up at www.fearlessmagazine.org.

“ Many men go fishing all of their lives without knowing that it is not fish they are after.”

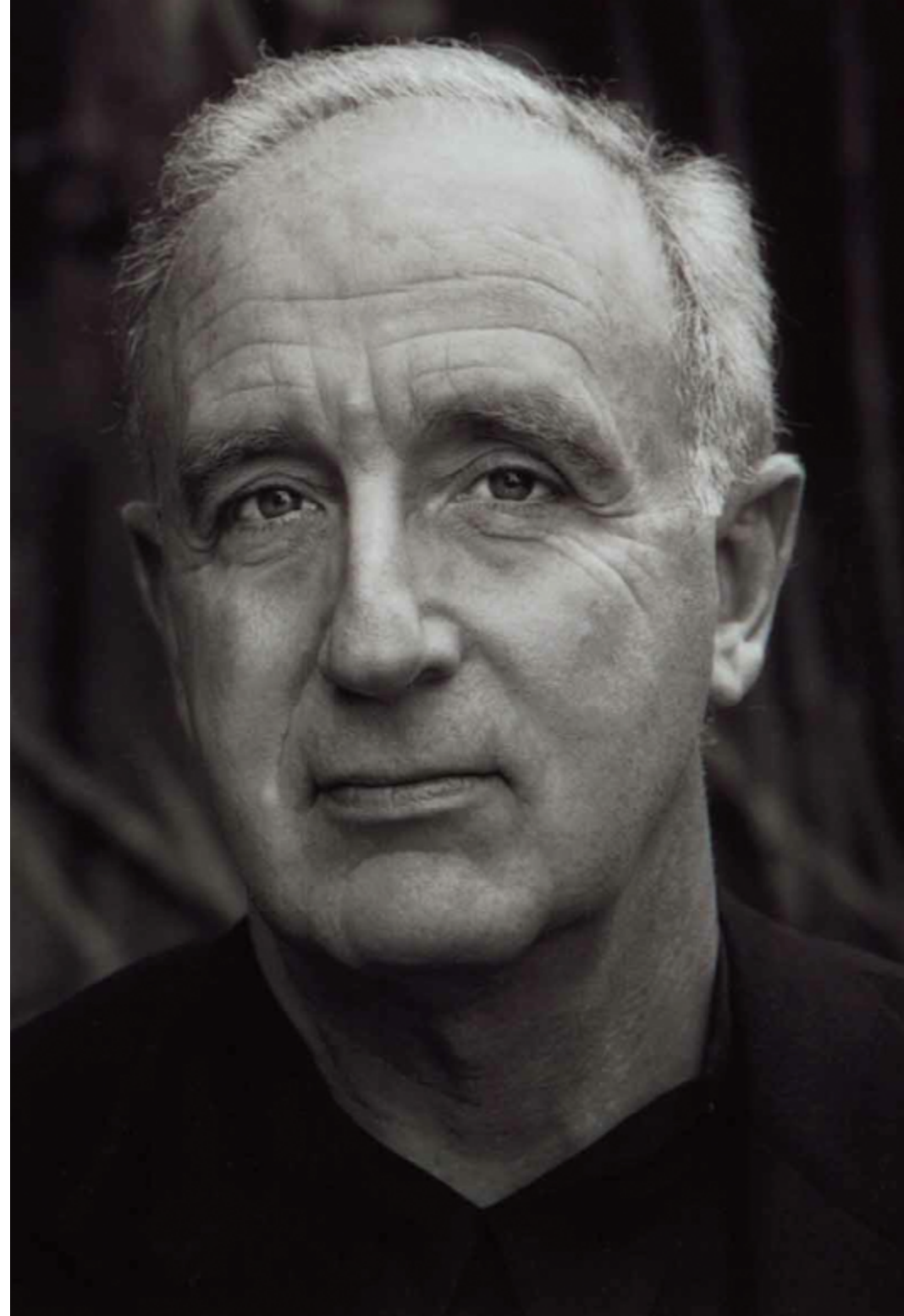
Henry David Thoreau

“ My experience as a writer was far more about overcoming my fear than it was about the craft of writing. ”

THE WAR OF ART

AN INTERVIEW WITH
STEVEN PRESSFIELD

I: In *The War of Art*, you talk about the force of Resistance based on your own experience as a writer, writing screenplays and novels. You noticed that while you struggled with Resistance, many of





your friends did as well. Was that the inspiration for the book?

S: I've been thinking about this because I've actually started to plot out *The War of Art 2*. I thought about the first novel I tried to write when I was a 24-year-old married guy in New York City. I quit my advertising job and just plunged

full-time into this writing thing and totally cracked out about 99.9% of the way through it, but then I just choked. Fear seized me and I quit. My marriage broke up, my writing stopped, and on and on, and lots of terrible stuff happened.

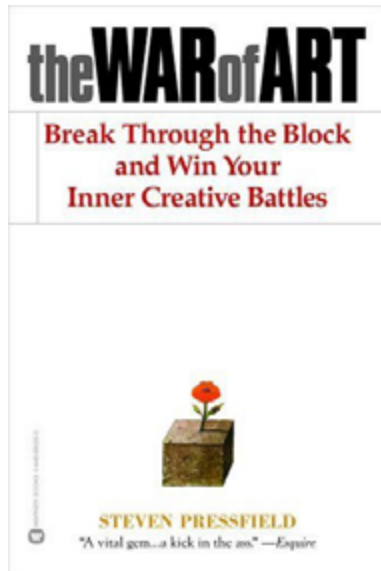
At the time, the insidious part of the fear was that I didn't even realize

it was fear. My resistance, or whatever you'd like to call it, gave me so many bullshit reasons in my head why I shouldn't finish the novel, and it actually convinced me. Perhaps on a deeper level I felt it, but on the surface I was so full of excuses, rationalizations and blaming other people or influences that I didn't see my own fear. Finally, over the years of trying to redeem myself from that failure, which was not only a failure for me, but for my wife and family because I blew everything up and hurt everybody around me, I realized what that force was. It became clear to me that fear, or Resistance, was the dominant thing in my life.

So now, 20 or 25 years later, as I evolved a way

to deal with it, I thought, "I've got to get this down for other people," because I hadn't read it anywhere else or heard anybody talking about this force. Books about writing that I'd seen were about the craft of writing, not about how freaking scary it is just to sit down and face the typewriter. That's why I started it. Because my experience as a writer was far more about overcoming fear than it was, or is, about any of the craft or anything else. The craft of writing is pretty easy. It's the overcoming of the fear that's the hard part.

I: Why do you think that is? Why does it scare us so much? I spoke to an advertising executive sometime last year for the magazine and he



said, “**The biggest fear I have is the blank canvas.**”

S: You know, I think there are two things, and we’ll do the easy one first. There’s a term in mountain climbing called “Exposure.” A climber is exposed when there’s a big drop underneath him, and he’s not exposed when there’s a ledge underneath him. So you

could be five feet from the summit of Mount Everest, but if there’s a ledge under you, you’re not exposed. But if you’re 20 feet off the ground and there’s a straight drop underneath you, then you’re exposed - and being exposed is when you really need to be a great mountain climber.

So, I think one of the fears is just falling off the side of the mountain, which is a pretty valid fear because it’s no fun to crash and burn. But I don’t think that’s the big fear. The big fear is more of succeeding than of failing. I’m not sure why that’s so terrifying, but it is. It’s like that famous cartoon from the New Yorker where a perplexed-looking person is standing in front of two closed doors. One door

“**I THINK WE’RE TERRIFIED, TO BE WHAT WE’RE MEANT TO BE. BECAUSE THEN ALL THE RESPONSIBILITY LAYS ON US AND WE CAN’T HIDE BEHIND ANYTHING.**”

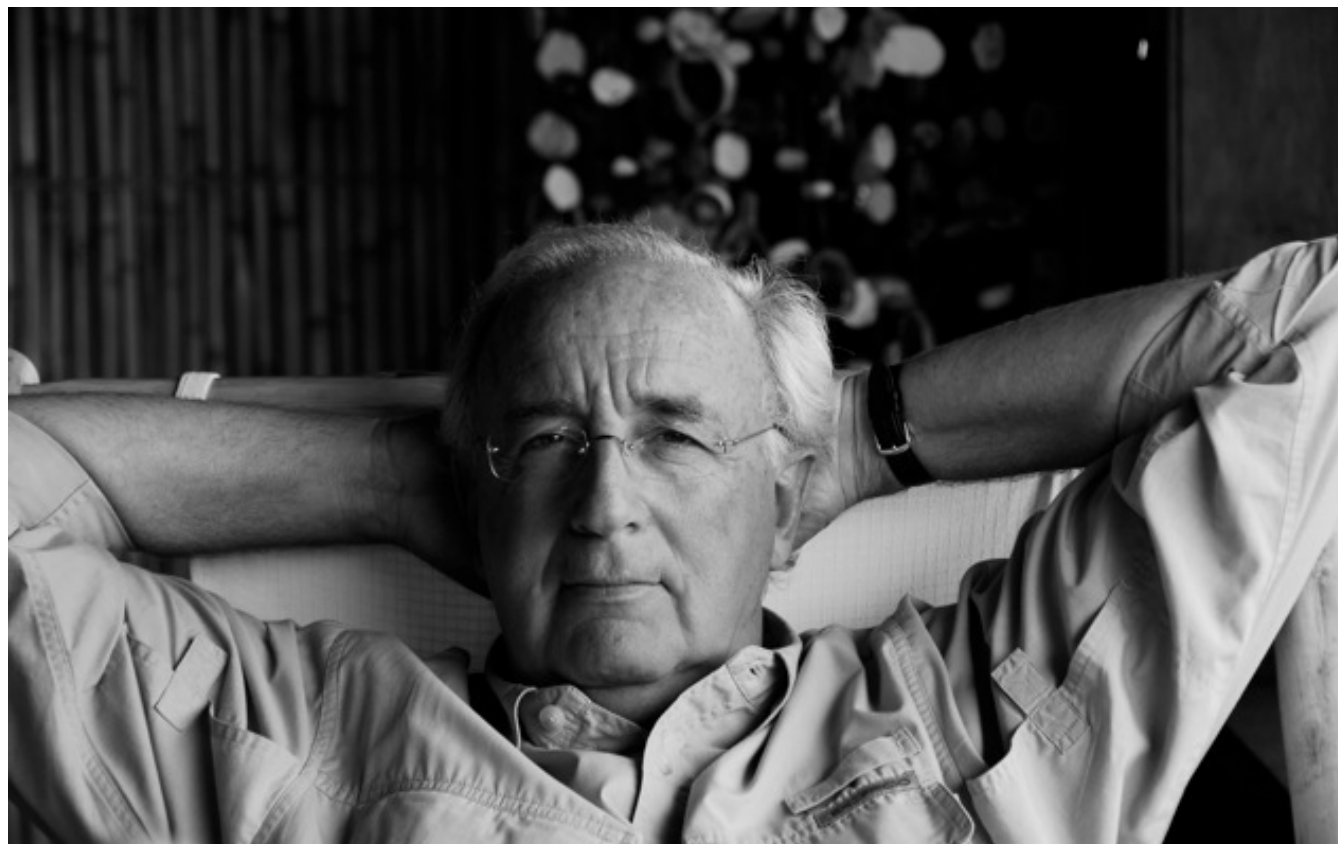
says “Heaven” and the other says “Books about heaven.” It’s so much easier to read the books about heaven because you know, if I open that door and go to heaven, holy cow. I think we’re all terrified of that, to be what we’re meant to be. Because then all the responsibility lays on us and we can’t hide behind anything. Certainly the

people that I admire are those who’ve picked the door that says Heaven and are not afraid, or if they are afraid, they’ve overcome that fear and aren’t afraid to be everything they can be and not hold back anything.

I: What do you think it is about the people who choose that door? Do you think we can all

manifest that quality and be that person for ourselves?

S: I have a theory, which could be wrong, that doing the fearless thing is what creates charisma and that you can tell a successful person by someone who does what scares them. Bob Dylan comes to mind. Here's a guy who's really been himself, totally, and there's that indescribable charisma. I have another friend, who's maybe ten years older than me who's a mentor. He's gay and when I first knew him and worked for him in the late sixties, he was the most unapologetically himself of anybody that I've ever known and it was tremendously inspirational to be around him because to be an open homosexual



in those days was a big deal. He just said, "This is who I am. I don't give a shit what any of you think." And he did exactly what he wanted to do and he was fantastic about it, in business and in every other way. So I

think that somehow fearlessness creates charisma.

I: You're right. We spend so much time worrying if people will approve of what we're doing, but how often do we check in with ourselves and

make sure we're being who we are? We don't do that enough.

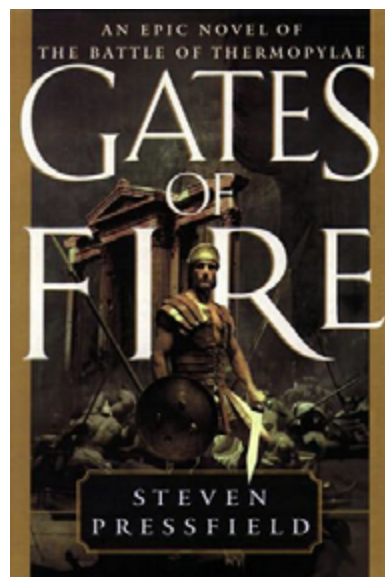
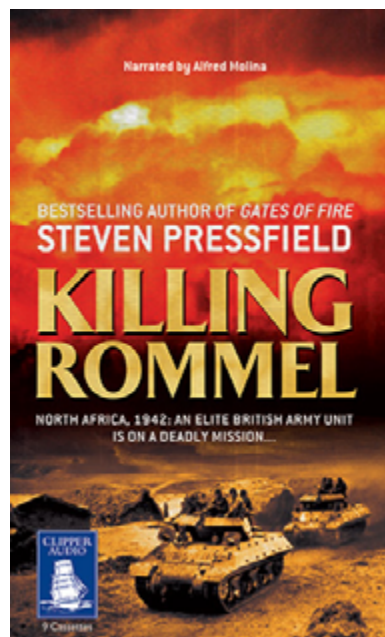
S: No, we certainly don't. Most people are paralyzed by that and even those of us that are aware of it, it's still an incredible

effort to be able to do it. I can tell you that I'm working on it all the time.

I: It's a discipline and a learning that being comfortable in your own skin just might reduce fear.

S: I think it is, and I'm not sure why the terror is as great as it is. You'd think it would be easy to be yourself or do what you love or say what you believe, but it's not. We get worried about rejection and then our censor doesn't let us go beyond it. That's why it's necessary to have a model, because it inspires you to that same level and helps you when you're around it.

I: Do you think fear of success is greater than the fear of failure?



S: I do and I can't really explain it. It's interesting from a writer's point of view, because a lot of times we don't even know what we really think. Part of the exercise of writing for me is that I discover in the act of it who I am and what I think. It's like what comes out on the page, that must be me. In other words, fear arises when we're on the brink of taking some action because in some way we know it will reveal ourselves to the world, and that's frightening.

We're totally exposed and the crazy part of it is that that's when we're at our best, when we're most in touch with our own power. And you look back at that page, at something you did that you didn't know was in you and say,

“PART OF THE EXERCISE OF WRITING FOR ME IS THAT I DISCOVER IN THE ACT OF IT WHO I AM AND WHAT I THINK.”

“Wow, that's better than I thought I could be!” It seems like the antidote for me is a relentless, professional discipline - continuing to push myself and demystify the fear as much as possible so I'm

not facing the dragon everyday but just getting up to work.

I: Does that tangibly mean you write every day toward a goal?

S: I do. It's real writing, whatever I'm working on at the time. I just finished a wonderful book by a man named Nick Murray, called *The Game of Numbers*. Murray's profession is coaching financial advisors. He sent me the book because he said *The War of Art* inspired him to write it. In that business apparently, if you're a financial advisor and you're trying to get clients, you have to cold call people for sales, which is completely terrifying and the Resistance comes up a lot. I could never cold call anyone.

I: It's like having your heart pulled out of your chest.

S: I can't imagine how people do it; it would be really hard for me. But it's

and he tells you exactly how you should measure it. You don't measure it on whether they say yes, you simply measure it on "Did I do it" and you keep your score in a great pro-

day." You have to detach yourself from expectation and results.

I: Expectations introduces fear into the equation.

“THE ANTIDOTE FOR ME IS A RELENTLESS, PROFESSIONAL DISCIPLINE - CONTINUING TO MAKE IT HAPPEN, TO PUSH MYSELF IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY AND DEMYSTIFY THE FEAR AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.”

a classic case of resistance to exposure and Nick has a wonderful way of getting people to have a positive attitude toward it. What he says is, you have to say to yourself twenty times a day, "I'm going to cold call or cold approach somebody"

fessional way. From the point of view of a writer it's "I'm going to sit down here today and I'm going to work for four hours and I don't care what happens. I don't care how good it is or bad it is. I'm going to do that today and tomorrow and the next

S: It's like what a coach would say to you if you were trying to win the hundred-yard dash, "You just gotta get out there and run each day. Go to the gym, run, do what you have to do, don't worry about the outcome. If you do, then you'll

freeze. You'll be afraid of failure." If you just concentrate on the act itself, on the process, that is a great professional way to demystify fear.

I: I've tried that and I find it teaches me about what I can and can't do and where my limits are.

S: I remember one of the first things I learned writing my first book, *The Legend of Bagger Vance*, was that you can write a character that's more intelligent than you are. So what we think are our limits are really an illusion because the place we're coming from is much deeper than that. Once we let it out, it can really surprise us. You write something and think, "Wow, did I do that?"

Where did that come from?"

I: I wish I could say that right now! I've been struggling with a piece and putting it off, and realizing that not doing it is more annoying than just getting on with it.

S: I know exactly what you mean - when the pain of not doing it is



stronger than the pain of simply doing it. It's definitely true in my experience. I was just watching a tribute to director Mike Nichols last night, and I realized that when you're an actor doing a difficult scene when you have to cry or get emotional, that's absolutely terrifying. Actors like Dustin Hoffman and Meryl Streep kept saying "We love you" to Mike because as a director he gave them a safe space where they could let it all hang out even with the camera rolling and everyone looking at them. Somehow, he made them feel that nobody was going to judge them and that they could really go for it.

I think that we need to do that for ourselves. We need to become our own

“YOU CAN WRITE A CHARACTER THAT'S MORE INTELLIGENT THAN YOU ARE. SO WHAT WE THINK ARE OUR LIMITS ARE REALLY AN ILLUSION BECAUSE THE PLACE WE'RE COMING FROM IS MUCH DEEPER THAN THAT.”

Mike Nichols and give ourselves a safe space to just try and let it rip.

I: Usually our censor is the one calling the shots.

S: Exactly. That son of a bitch.

I: We need to find a way to vanquish it before we get pulled into his energy.

S: We're talking about it right now. If I was there with you right now, I'd do what Colette's original manager/agent/boy-friend did to her - lock her in her room and not let her come out until she produced three pages of writing. He wouldn't even feed her until she wrote.

I: That is hardcore.

“WE JUST HAVE TO PLUG OUR EARS TO IT HOWEVER WE CAN DO AND KEEP GOING FORWARD, KEEP MOVING THOSE OARS.”

S: But that's what it takes sometimes. We have to do it to ourselves. Let's just get in a room and do

it. It's easy to say but hard to do.

I: It's like the story of Odysseus, who, when he heard the sirens on the ship, told his crew to strap him down to make it through that part of the voyage without succumbing to the sirens or their song. We have to be that ruthless with ourselves.

S: He also told his sailors who were rowing past the sirens to stopper their ears with wax so they couldn't hear their song. Otherwise, they would have crashed into the rocks. We have to do that too. That's the Resistance song, the fear that's out there, we just have to plug our ears to it however we can do and keep going forward, keep moving those oars.

I: Do you do that with yourself, have discipline everyday?

S: I do, I try to make it a habit. I make it a job and just make sure I always get in there and do it. Each day that accrues helps. It never gets any easier, but it does help! If I miss a day, I give myself a break, and I'll take even weeks off at a time sometimes. But if I can get a rhythm where I'm going five or six days a week, that's really good. Today is Sunday and I'll be working a bit today too, just to keep the rhythm going.

I: I feel much better if I'm consistent, even if that means doing some things over the weekend.

S: I'm with you. I think

weekends can be a good time to get stuff done.

I: What if your discipline or the way you work doesn't jive with your surrounding environment, or the people in it? You have a section in *The War of Art* about this - that just because you seem crazy in your environment, doesn't mean you are.

S: It's really true, Ishita, particularly in relationships. That's where it shows up because people do think you're crazy when you're working hard. I tried recently in fact, to change the way I work to accommodate another person and it doesn't work for me at all. I can adjust slightly but I just have to accept that I'm kind of a crazy

guy, and I think anyone who's driven to create, that's just the name of the game. If you're married to Kobe Bryant, you have

real problem. That's why marriages break up. That's why people have a hard time. Maybe the best type of marriage is two people

I can forgive and understand someone who I'm with who's also doing that, like "Go for it, I'm glad to see it." But that's

“ IF YOU'RE MARRIED TO KOBE BRYANT, YOU HAVE TO KNOW THAT HE'S GOING TO BE SHOOTING BASKETS, HE'S GOING TO BE TRAINING, HE'S GOING TO BE PRACTICING. IF YOU MARRY HIM, YOU'VE GOT TO ACCEPT IT OR IT CAN BE A REAL PROBLEM. ”

to know that he's going to be shooting baskets, he's going to be training, and he's going to be practicing. If you marry him, that's him and you've got to accept it or it can be a

who are equally crazy and can understand each other.

From my point of view, since I'm so steeped in my particular way of living,

not too common, I think. I guess some people can produce and still lead semi-normal lives, but just from a personal view, I don't think I'm one of them.

I: What's the first thing you do if you sit down to write and the Resistance rears its head?

S: Firstly, just sitting down is a big help. You've already got something going.

Secondly, I've been writing a screenplay with a friend, Randy Wallace, who wrote *Braveheart*. He has this method called "little successes" where as soon as he gets up in the morning, even before he starts to write, he tries to do a few little things including going to the gym or even taking a shower. These small things count as a little success and he tries to get some momentum going in terms of doing things he doesn't necessarily want to do. So by the time he sits down

after he comes back from the gym (the gym is a great example because almost everyone feels resistance to it), he's got some momentum.

“ANYWAY YOU CAN CHEAT IS GOOD. YOU'RE JUST TRYING TO FAKE YOURSELF OUT, GET OUT OF YOUR HEAD AND INTO WHAT YOU'RE DOING, AND HOPE YOU'LL GET TRACTION AT SOME POINT.”

Another thing I do when I start writing is to start with an easy task, like research or noting things down from pages I've dog-eared in books. It's

like entering a cold swimming pool, and it gets words on a page - what you're looking for is just to get into the flow a bit for the blank pages to

come. Anyway you can cheat is good. You're just trying to fake yourself out, get out of your head and into what you're doing, and hope you'll get

traction at some point. At some point, maybe an hour or 45 minutes into it, I'll say, "OK, now it's really time to start," and I'll just plunge into it. For me, it's a very workmanlike, lunch-pail process. Just keep going forward, and hopefully at some point a little magic will kick in. If you can get a flow going, ride that for all it's worth.

For me, it's like I'm looking for my real voice. And in order to get to that voice I have to go through a few layers of bullshit and censorship and a lot of chatter chatter chatter, but at some point everything quiets down. That's the place I'm trying to get to.

I: What do you do when you're stuck, either with writing or in life?

S: That's a tough one. To be perfectly candid I just had that experience recently, when I fell badly ill. The only thing I can say is that you have no choice but to just keep going forward. Just keep doing

what you're trying to do; otherwise, you're going to die. That's it. For me, in my twenties, when I ran away from the first book I wrote, I had such a hard time in real life when the bottom dropped out from

under me. For a few years, it was so bad that when I think about it now, I'm not sure I could face it again. So, the pain of that is a lot worse than the pain of keeping going. But it is very hard, there's

no doubt about that, and if it were easy everybody would do it. I'm not sure that's a real answer, Ishita.

I: That's exactly what I hoped for.



STEVE

Steven Pressfield is a popular American novelist and author of screenplays, historical fiction and nonfiction. Pressfield's most notable nonfiction, called the ultimate creator's handbook, is the **War of Art** where he introduces Resistance, a powerful roadblock to creativity that writers and creatives must fight off. Pressfield has also authored "Do The Work" "Turning Pro," "Nobody Wants to Read Your Shit" and "The Legend of Bagger Vance", which became a popular feature film.

“ The only time we ever know what’s really going on is when the rug’s been pulled out and we can’t find anywhere to land... ”

REALITY GAVE OUT ON ME

PEMA CHODRON

When things fall apart and we’re on the verge of we know not what, the test for each of us is to stay on that brink and not concretize. The spiritual journey is not about heaven and finally getting to a place that’s really swell. In fact, that way of looking at things is what keeps us miserable. Thinking that we can find



some lasting pleasure and avoid pain is a hopeless cycle that goes round and round endlessly, and causes us to suffer greatly. The very first noble truth the Buddha points out is that suffering is inevitable for human beings as long as we believe that things last—that they can be counted on to satisfy our hunger for security. From this point of view, the only time we ever know what's really going on is when the rug's been pulled out and we can't find anywhere to land. We use these situations either to wake ourselves up or to put ourselves to sleep. Right now—in the very instant of groundlessness—is the seed of discovering our goodness.

Things falling apart is a



“WE TRY TO DO WHAT WE THINK IS GOING TO HELP. WE NEVER KNOW IF WE’RE GOING TO FALL FLAT OR SIT UP TALL.”

kind of testing and also a kind of healing. We think that the point is to pass the test or to overcome the problem, but the truth is that things don't really get solved. They come together and they fall apart. Then they come together again and fall apart again. It's just like that. The healing comes from letting there be room for all of this to happen: room for grief, for relief, for misery, for joy.

When we think that something's going to bring us pleasure, we don't know what's really going to happen. When we think something is going to give us misery, we don't know. Letting there be room for not knowing is the most important thing of all. We try to do what we think is going to



help. But we don't know. We never know if we're going to fall flat or sit up tall. When there's a big disappointment, we don't know if that's the end of the story. It may just be the beginning of a great adventure.

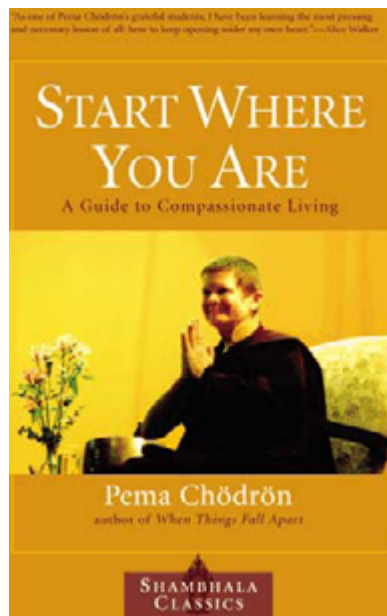
I read somewhere about a family who had only one son. They were very poor. This son was extremely precious to them, and the only thing that mattered to his family was that he bring them some financial support and prestige. Then he was thrown from a horse and crippled. It seemed like the end of their lives. Two weeks after that, the army came into the village and took away all the healthy, strong men to fight in the war, and this young man was allowed to stay be-

“ I REMEMBER SO VIVIDLY A DAY IN EARLY SPRING WHEN MY WHOLE REALITY GAVE OUT ON ME. ”

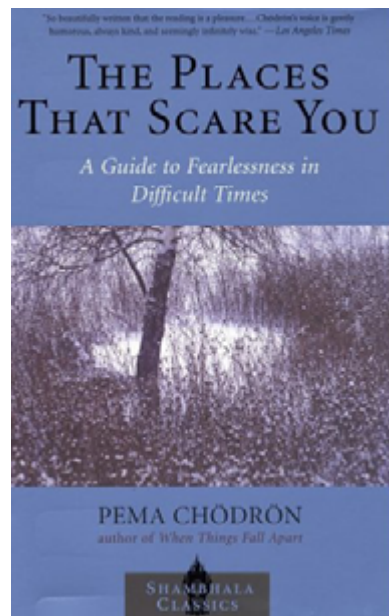
hind and take care of his family.

Life is like that. We don't know anything. We call something bad; we call it good. But really we just don't know.

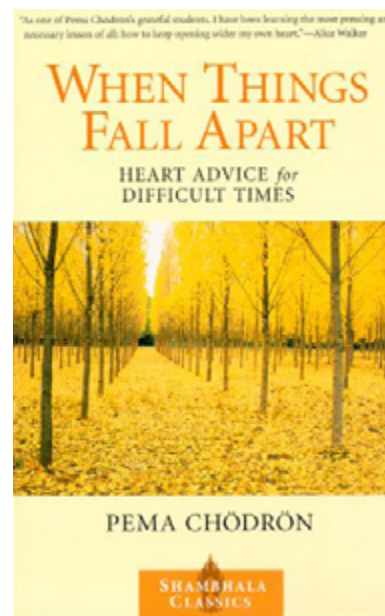
I remember so vividly a



day in early spring when my whole reality gave out on me. Although it was before I had heard any Buddhist teaching, it was what some would call a genuine spiritual experience. It happened when my husband told me he was having an affair. We lived in northern New Mexico. I was standing in front of our adobe house



drinking a cup of tea. I head the car drive up and the door bang shut. Then he walked around the corner, and without warning he told me that he was having an affair and he wanted a divorce. I remember the sky and how huge it was. I remember the sound of the river and the steam rising up from my tea. There



was no time, no thought, there was nothing—just the light and a profound, limitless stillness. Then I regrouped and picked up a stone and threw it at him.

When anyone asks me how I got involved in Buddhism, I always say it was because I was so angry with my husband.

The truth is that he saved my life. When that marriage fell apart, I tried hard—very, very hard—to go back to some kind of comfort, some kind of security, some kind of familiar resting place. Fortunately for me, I could never pull it off. Instinctively I know that annihilation of my old dependent, clinging self was the only way to go.

Life is a good teacher and a good friend. Things are always in transition, if we could only realize it. Nothing ever sums itself up in the way that we like to dream about. The off-center, in-between state is an ideal situation, a situation in which we don't get caught and we can open our hearts and minds beyond limit. It's a very tender, nonaggres-

sive, open-ended state of affairs.

To stay with that shakiness—to stay with a broken heart, with a rumbling stomach, with the feeling of hopelessness and wanting to get revenge—that is the path of true awakening. Sticking with that uncertainty, getting the knack of relaxing in the midst

of chaos, learning not to panic—this is the spiritual path. Getting the knack of catching ourselves, of gently and compassionately catching ourselves is that path of the warrior. We catch ourselves one zillion times as once again, whether we like it or not, we harden into resentment, bitterness, righteous indignation—harden in any way, even

into a sense of relief, a sense of inspiration.

Everyday we could think about the aggression in the world, in New York, Los Angeles, Halifax, Taiwan, Beirut, Kuwait, Somalia, Iraq, everywhere. All over the world, everybody always strikes out at the enemy, and the pain escalates forever. Every day we could reflect on

this and ask ourselves, “Am I going to add to the aggression in the world?” Every day, at the moment when things get to the edge, we can just ask ourselves, “Am I going to practice peace, or am I going to war?”

Excerpt from “When Things Fall Apart” by Pema Chodron, published in 2000 by Shambhala.



PEMA

Pema Chödrön is an American Buddhist nun and leading teacher on meditation and its application to everyday life. She is widely known for her charming and down-to-earth interpretation of Tibetan Buddhism and is the author of *No Time to Lose*, *Getting Unstuck*, ***When Things Fall Apart***, *Start Where You Are*, *The Places That Scare You*, and *The Wisdom of No Escape*.

“ Art is an incredibly valuable thing, not as an investment but as something that enriches life in ways you can understand right away. ”

THE ART OF SUCCESS

JEN BEKMAN

THE NEW ME

Opening the gallery was a pretty spontaneous action for me. It was amazing to discover that I was good at something new in my early thirties, and I really had



nothing to lose. I had been working in the interactive business for a long time and when the bubble burst in 2002, I felt a little like I'd gone through the zenith of my career; that because I was so focused on the future I wasn't enjoying where I was, which was actually very abstract -working at Netscape and Disney putting together presentations for things that never ended up happening.

So, opening the gallery was more of an obligation for me to just go for it because there weren't dire consequences if I didn't succeed. I didn't have a lot of dependencies, kids or a partner who would be impacted, and that opened me up to taking a lot more risks. And even if I didn't succeed, I felt like I



could redirect myself and do something new. I went through a period of feeling totally washed up in the corporate world, and to have an opportunity to reinvent myself really changed my life. It gave me a detachment that I'd never had before and I felt like I could be who I really was. My identity wasn't so tied up with what I was doing, but in my ability to do things - to be more capable of changing.

Initially, it was just sheer stubbornness - I felt like this was how things should be and there was a direct impact to be made on people by revealing art in this way. But it was a new life that even my parents disapproved of initially in some ways, and I knew that if I



gave up on the gallery I'd never hear the end of it from them!

A CHANGE IN TRAJECTORY

Since then, I've had a whole different trajectory, a difficult path, but a privileged one. Initially, I didn't have any funding or resources, and I learned a lot running the gallery very leanly. Financially it has always been a bit difficult and at one point I was behind a few months on the rent at the gallery. When I had almost nothing at all and was living off credit cards, I had to pare down my needs to, "Do I have a roof over my head? Am I going to eat tonight?" I began looking at it like a privilege in the context of my frugality and became

much more fearless. I realized that I still had a lot even though I was living off of my credit cards, and I was incredibly grateful during that time and even now. I had incredible friends helping me, and I'm not very spiritual, but it feels like a privilege to be able to give my energy to what I think of as a greater good. For me that good centers around the experience of supporting artists. So, I began to look, not at how much money I was spending, but what was I spending it on- something valuable or something fruitless? In my life, art is an incredibly valuable thing, not as an investment but as something that enriches life in ways you can understand right away, perhaps also in ways you can't understand at all until you ac-



tually have it in your life. It's something that can ground you with yourself and with the world.

Another element was that as an entrepreneur you need cashflow, which I didn't have. So in the beginning I was forced to do things for years and years that I wasn't good at, and I think I realized that as the business grew and became more successful

I'd have more opportunities to focus on things that I was good at and which excited me, not on bookkeeping. So I saw there was room to grow, which kept me moving forward.

SOLIDATIRY IN UNCERTAINTY

With the gallery, I had to create a dialogue where I

addressed people's fears on a daily basis. They would perceive me as being totally confident, but I'm really not. I understand why someone doesn't want to make a \$4,000 mistake with a piece of art and more than that, people bring a lot of baggage when they go to a gallery or a museum, in terms of what they should or shouldn't know. In me directly ad-

mitting that I'm scared and uncertain, people realize that their own apprehensions are normal. It helps people feel more confident making decisions about liking and rejecting art, which is important because taste is informed more strongly by rejecting things than it is by accepting them. I feel like I'm constantly scared or hesitant and just push myself forward. I'm not afraid to admit that I'm not always sure, and to have an audience who I can be cordial and direct about it with is really great for me. When I first opened, I naturally gravitated toward photography because painting really intimidated me. I was more scared of making mistakes in that realm because I'm intimidated when I look at a painting



and realize that I don't know art history. That fear was much more present with painting than it was with photography because to me, photography is such a quintessentially contemporary medium that we all have fluency with it.

THE 20x200 STORY

I don't accept things the way they are and I'm always trying to root out assumptions I'm making. One of my biggest frustrations in dealing with art is that when I started,

there were a lot of people who understood the gallery system as the only way it could be done. It wasn't questioned. When I told people that I wanted to sell really great quality prints at a reasonable price, people said, "You can't sell a print for \$20, there's just no way." The artists thought I was crazy. The printers thought I was crazy. Nobody believed it would work. But it was important enough to me to make it work, and now it's growing and really resonating with people. I realized that people didn't buy things in galleries because they didn't understand the value of it. So I thought that giving people even once experience of art and pricing low would be the gateway drug into the art world -

that once they tried it at a lower price, they'd want the good stuff.

People need something good in their lives right now, so it's nice to be able to offer that to them for \$20. I really do want to transform people's relationships with art. A lot of artists that we've worked with had never earned money from their art before 20x200. The first time we had a party for it I had both artists and collectors tell me that it changed their lives, and there's nothing more gratifying than that. I think I have a different playbook than some other people, because at one point when I was struggling financially a good friend of mine said, "You're going to have to come up with some different criteria

“ONE OF MY BIGGEST FRUSTRATIONS IN DEALING WITH ART IS THAT WHEN I STARTED, THERE WERE A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO UNDERSTOOD THE GALLERY SYSTEM AS THE ONLY WAY.”

fast, beyond money, in order to make it through this,” and he told me that I successfully opened the gallery and had done things that no one else had done, with a level of risk pretty inconceivable to most people, and that meant a lot to me.

LIVE WITH ART, IT'S GOOD FOR YOU

Since I've opened the gallery my motto is “Live with art, it's good for you.” It's a deep part of me. I'm concerned about that perception of my sincerity because being successful in the art business has a stigma of impropriety about it. Part of being a “starving

artist” is about struggling. I've seen the way that being successful can challenge an artist who's been struggling. I've always believed in marketing because I feel it's a way that you reach people with your art. You want to market yourself, but you don't want to come across as so slick that people question your authenticity. That's why I'm always talking about how something makes me feel. I'm interested in how living with a piece of art can transform your relationship with other artists, and how it makes going to the museum or gallery a different experience. In this way, the management of the gallery itself becomes an art form instead of a slick business.

Even with all the posi-

tive feedback I get about the gallery, it's the criticism that lands the most sorely, that sticks with me. I went through a lot of struggle that helped me figure out my values and what mattered to me, and what success meant to me, and that's ultimately what kept me going. I spoke to someone new in our office just the other day, and anyone new who starts working with us becomes quickly overwhelmed with everything there is to do, which in a large part is my fault because I have so many ideas which seem smart at the time but which are hard to execute. So I said to her, “You know, the one thing you have to remember is that it's going to be really easy to end every day worrying about what you didn't get done.

But unless you make a concerted effort to reflect upon what you did get done, there's absolutely no need to feel like a failure." That's a perspective that was a direct result of my friends challenging me, that the only concept of success is if you have money in your pocket

right now. So despite the struggles it's been a much happier road and I'm a happier person doing what I believe in. There are so many mistakes I've made, some I'll probably make today, and you really can't avoid that. In life there are a million decisions and things to

think about, and you can't always be right. But this goes back to the central question of fear, I ask myself what's the worst that could happen? Because why shouldn't you ask someone for something or why shouldn't you do something? What's the worst that could happen?

I look back on the times that I've done that and I can't believe I've had the nerve to do it! But I also think about all the times I've been rejected, and I just don't really even think about it anymore because it's all about whatever keeps you moving.



JEN

Jen Bekman is the owner of Jen Bekman Gallery, exhibiting the work of emerging artists in photography and mixed media. Jen Bekman Projects, Inc. evolved from the gallery and is a unique organization encompassing an array of projects including **20 x 200**, which sells quality prints and photos at affordable prices. She is the founder of Hey, Hot Shot!, an international photo competition, and has been featured in *The New York Times*, *Harper's*, *Art in America*, *Foam*, *Businessweek*, *Dwell*, and *Le Monde*.

“ Tomorrow morning when you wake up, unless you’re living under some horrible circumstances, choose bliss. ”

THE DETERMINED STREAK

AN INTERVIEW WITH
LYNDA RESNICK

I: You’ve had the entrepreneur streak since you were a teenager. Do you think your personality made you a good fit for business and is that what you always wanted to do?



L: I started embracing my natural skills at a very young age, because I was trained in art and accepted into art school, but couldn't go because my father didn't want to send me - he thought I never committed to anything! I went to community college for a year but was bored out of my mind so decided to quit and go to work developing ads for little stores, which is how I started in the advertising world. I took some classes at the newspaper to learn how to type, to size a photograph and how to do all of these old-fashioned things that you don't have to do anymore, but I already had the ability to illustrate and to write.

Then I went to a very progressive public school in



Philadelphia that taught creative writing and I had my studio there. I had talents, but I knew I wasn't going to become a fine artist through art school training because,

really, I don't think I had the burning desire to do so in the first place. If I did, I know I would have found a way to do it - waitressed, worked nights, whatever I could

to further that fine arts career. Instead I funneled my creative thought and spirit and my talent into commercial art. I taught myself and don't feel that I suffered from the lack of



an education because I educated myself throughout my entire life - it's all about lifelong learning and self-teaching. Where did I get the nerve to do such a thing though, I have no idea. I've asked myself the same question so many times. I don't think it ever crossed my mind that I might not be successful until I got older and I

learned what the pitfalls were - that's when I started to fear things.

I: You raised your family at the exact same time you launched your career in advertising. Can you describe how you started your agency and balanced raising your children?

L: Initially, I was alone

at the agency, with no employees. I had two children in rapid succession and by the time I was 22, I was done having my kids. I was working out of my house and then hired a full-time secretary and some art directors that would come and go on a freelance basis, but I was doing it all from inside my own home. My kids would be outside knocking on the door and finally my doctor told me to get out of my house to continue my work. He said, "Get the hell out of there. It's worse for you to be home but not home than it is for you to be away and then come home at a reasonable hour and be with the children." So I moved to a small office and my business grew until I had thirteen employees in my early twenties.

I: Since you just mentioned it, did you develop boundaries as an entrepreneur while raising your family? I've heard two viewpoints: One says that balance is something an entrepreneur shouldn't even consider, while the other says that maintaining clear "self-time" boundaries are vital.

L: Well, it depends on where you are in your life cycle. When you make the choice to raise your family and you have some energy to do it, you really have no ability to balance your life. It's ridiculous to think you can. I didn't, and I had to raise two children, one of whom had special needs. It was exhausting, and to be honest, my first marriage sort of fell apart. Being a

single mother to a child with challenges, with thirteen employees and a ton of responsibility - it was very tough. I often feel that I missed a lot with my children and that's why I bug my grandchildren now until they push me away. I feel sorry that I didn't get to do a lot of mom stuff with my children because I worked so hard when I was young. What I did forsake entirely was a social life, which is very different now, but until I reached my fifties I just didn't have time. We were building businesses and traveling, and any spare moment we had we spent with the children. Now, Stewart and I have been married 37 years, and I think the secret to that success is working together because I don't think, even as in love as

we are and as close our relationship is, that his ego would have allowed me to have a business separate from him. It worked out well because I was very interested in doing the things that he wanted to do and so we built our little empire together. But that's not actionable by most people, so I understand how hard it can really be.

One thing I always took time for was exercise and eating properly. I realized that if I perished, who was going to hold up the house of cards that was my life? So healthy living and eating and exercise and stress management is imperative, and I found the time for those things. Even if there was a child crawling all over me as I was doing yoga poses,



The Antioxidant Superpower.

The power of pomegranate juice:


©2007 POM Wonderful LLC. All rights reserved. POM Wonderful and "The antioxidant power of pomegranate juice" are trademarks of POM Wonderful LLC.

I found time to do it because you're a resource for your family; if you start to fall apart, you can't help them.

L: Was there a particular time in your life where you felt more pressure than any other time?

L: I don't live with fear, but I have fearful moments, just like anybody does. I try to embrace it, but I think my forties were more stressful than any other time in my life because I was separated from my family. I was living with Stewart in Philadelphia, my children had just gone away to college and my mother and father were back in Los Angeles. We were isolated, running a big business that in the beginning seemed like a stretch for



us. It sounds funny to even say that now, but back then it was such a hard and fearful time. In the '80s and '90s there was a recession, which we saw coming, and even though I changed business models, we still had to fight for everything we had. It was very hard. Even though Stewart and I were working together, it wasn't all singing and dancing. We fought constantly about work and business issues, and it was particularly hard for me to handle. I think forties are typically hard for men and women, quite frankly. By the time I reached my fifties I was a lot happier.

L: It's pretty brave to work with the man you're married to, given the ups and downs of

not only a business, but a marriage as well.

L: It was courageous, but it was necessary for

“ I’VE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO BREAK MY STRIDE IN THE MIDDLE OF MY DAY TO GO OUT TO LUNCH. ”

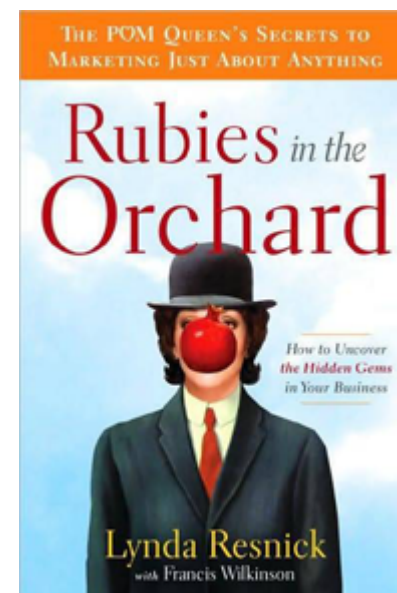
me. There was no way I couldn’t work, and I didn’t even understand what it meant not to. I’d break out in a cold sweat just thinking about even

going out to lunch with girlfriends, like “Oh my God, how can I waste that much time?” Even to this day, every meeting we have is during lunch. I’ve never been able to break my stride in the middle of my day to go out to lunch because I never wanted to go back to work. I didn’t even have windows in my office so that I wouldn’t become too distracted. It was that level of intensity and momentum.

I: Talk about the value of the risks you’ve taken in your journey.

L: If you are unwilling to take risks in life, you will not succeed and you will not realize your full potential. You may be happy or safe, but both risk and failure are im-

portant to success. Failure is absolutely critical because you don’t really learn through your successes; When things go brilliantly, you’re never really quite sure why. But when you fail, I assure you, you know why and that’s where the lessons come from, and those lessons are important to growth. I’ve been given all these accolades for the ventures I’ve created, but let me tell you something: there were a lot of things that happened at the same time that made those successes happen. The history of the world is full of stories of failures. And some of the things that I thought were successes, like the Franklin Mint, were not really good business models at all. The Franklin Mint was a fad, a twenty-year fad,



but a fad nonetheless. We made a lot of money, had 2500 employees and 400 different artists around the world working with us, and it was exciting, but it wasn’t sustainable because people stopped collecting. When the Internet became powerful in the late nineties, people had a variety of other activities to capture their attention. By 1999



it was all over, and the failure was not realizing that it wasn't a sustainable business. My own, personal failure was that we had 2500 employees, which ultimately went down to about 15 people or so. I left at age 50, a full ten years before we sold the business, but I never looked back because I had to come home finally; I had a grandchild and family I wanted to be

with. But even though it looked like a huge success, the business slowly faded away. It's only now that I realize you owe it to your employees to create a sustainable business.

I: Do you ever feel there's an endless quest for growth at the expense of other values? As though inherent in growth is also insatiability?



L: You know, this very issue is the core of what's wrong with our society. When growth became the king on Wall Street and you were only as good as your quarterly earnings, people stopped running their businesses for the long term and eventually the human psyche on Wall Street became a disaster. But remember, also, that the Coors Brewing Company opened its

doors at the beginning of the Long Depression of the 1800's. And IBM was started decades later. UPS started during the panic of 1907. Hewlett Packard started in the Great Depression and Allstate Insurance, in 1931, during the height of the Depression. The Super 8 hotel chains started during the oil crisis of the seventies. So this is a time for great innovation, when young

people who can't find a job will become entrepreneurs because they're not burdened with debt or a ton of employees. There is opportunity amidst the madness.

L: What has been one of the most frightening things you've done in business or in life?

L: What comes to mind is when I was on television as a child and I forgot my lines. As a kid I was on TV two days a week from the age of four to nine. When I was six, I forgot my lines and started crying on TV. I worked in front of a live studio audience and didn't realize how huge the stage was because I was so small, but the environment was daunting to me as a child. Even though I continued to

work after that, that fear has always stayed with me.

Then, when I started speaking publicly speaking thirty years ago as the face of our company, Teleflora, I had to travel around the world with this tremendous fear of going on stage. It was so bad that for many years I couldn't even go into a theatre and watch a play because I would actually get sick. To go into a similar setting again gave me a type of posttraumatic stress syndrome. Then one day a friend, Rod Steiner, told me, "I threw up every night before I did 'Picnic' because I was so terrified." Can you believe that? Famous actor, Academy awards, everything. I asked, "What did you do with it?" He said,

"I used it. That's what you have to do. Learn to use the fear to give you power." So I would study my speeches six ways till Sunday. I would write

“ I HAD TO TRAVEL AROUND THE WORLD WITH THIS TREMENDOUS FEAR OF GOING ON STAGE. ”

them myself so I always knew every word. I was prepared. I still feel the butterflies to this day, but they're more welcome now.

L: Do you think that the way you handle fear, and perhaps the fears themselves, have changed over time?

L: Yes. My goals have changed because I now spend this part of my life giving back, and I think we could all do a little more of that. But I'm not plagued by fear every day. When you get to your sixties, it's like "Bring it on" you know? Been there done that. What are you going to do to me at this point? If you don't get over it by my age, you'll have a very sad old age. I have a strong spirituality and a lot of faith and I pray every day of my life. I pray to be more open, to give back for the good things that have happened in my life. I don't know how people handle

things without faith. Not religion necessarily, but I think faith is important. Tomorrow morning when you wake up, unless you're living under some horrible circumstances, choose bliss. The people

who'll read this magazine are fortunate, and they may have hardships in their lives because no life is immune from the ups and downs, but when you wake up tomorrow, choose bliss. We have the

choice. And really, the important thing is not what happens to us, but how we end up dealing with the things that come our way.



LYNDA

Lynda Resnick is an American entrepreneur and businesswoman who currently owns the POM Wonderful and FIJI Water brands, the Teleflora floral wire service company, large industrial citrus and nut farms, and other businesses. Lynda began her career at the age of nineteen, when she founded a full-service advertising agency. Successfully running this business so early in her career enabled her to gain invaluable and practical marketing experience, which, coupled with her entrepreneurial instincts, has been the hallmark of her 40-year career. She is the author of *Rubies in the Orchard: The POM Queen's Secrets to Just About Anything*.

“ I have learned over the years that when one’s mind is made up, this diminishes fear; knowing what must be done does away with fear.”

Rosa Parks