

FEARLESS

**“IT’S IN MY DNA TO JUST
KEEP PLUGGING AWAY.”**

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**“MY JOURNEY HASN’T BEEN
WARM OR FUZZY OR NEAT.”**

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FEAR.LESS

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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

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“ Full effort is full victory.”

Mahatma Gandhi

“ I’m very intuitive. For me it’s okay to make decisions based on what I feel is right. ”

LIBERATION NATION

PAM SLIM

Ishita: Can you tell us about your career path and work experience that ultimately led you to what you’re doing now, coaching people to begin their own businesses and become entrepreneurs.

Pam: I’ve actually always loved to work, and I started at age 12, scooping ice cream at an ice cream parlor.



I've enjoyed the nonprofit path, which I pursued when I got out of school and then slowly worked my way into the corporate world, where I did training and development - the more human side of business. I also volunteered as Executive director for ten years for a Capoeira school, teaching classes and then starting a youth program. So for ten years I had a really busy schedule, where I worked full time during the day and then went straight to the school to teach. On the weekends I trained with or taught to youth in San Francisco. At the same time, toward the end of my tenure, we merged and another company acquired ours. It was then, once my immediate management team left, that I noticed

how drastically different of a company it felt like. It felt like it happened over night that the team I worked with, who were all great, was the reason the work was so engaging



and that's why we learned a lot. It was amazing to experience that how much I enjoyed my work turned out to be because of the people I enjoyed it with. That it wasn't where I worked or what I did

necessarily, but whom I worked with that made the difference.

At around the same time I turned 30, I got pneumonia- my body was shut-

ting down and telling me it was time to take a rest. The convergence of the merger and busy schedule gave me a sign that I really needed to do something different. So I quit. I didn't have a plan. I had

no idea at the time that I would end up working for myself. I just thought I'd take some time off and then look for a job and go on with my career. After working for my old manager for a few months, I just realized that I really wanted to work for myself. I'll never forget the moment when I actually felt that I could do that. I got my business license and my business name and thought about how I'd design my ultimate business, what would it be. I named the company Ganas, which in Spanish means the intense desire to do something. All of a sudden I got this shock through my body when I realized that I could actually do that. I wanted to live in San Francisco, drink lattes on my deck, travel a lot, work with interesting

people doing cool projects, take time off for vacations and continue my service to the community. As soon as I started working independently, I had a weird moment where I never thought I had it in me to be an entrepreneur, but saw that I'd already been doing it for 15 years running the non-profit, even as a volunteer. It turned out to be exactly the right training grounds for entrepreneurship.

I wouldn't necessarily recommend people in the same situation to do exactly what I did, so I have to say, "Do as I say, but not as I do," but actually the way it fits in with my work is that I know myself pretty well. So I didn't worry about getting work because I've been working since I was 12, I love

to work, and I have a rich network to draw from. I knew that if I needed to make something happen, I could and I never doubted my ability to gener-

ate income. For many people, that's a strong fear which is totally justifiable, if they don't have those same kinds of feelings about themselves,

if they don't understand what their strengths are, if they don't have a network that will be willing to take them in - a lot of it depends on who the per-



son is. I'm very intuitive and for me it was okay to make decisions based on what I felt was right. I believe and trust and act on hunches in business and in my personal life. And I felt strongly that I needed to quit and was willing to take that risk. So the easiest way to describe it for me was that I just knew. I knew I'd be able to make something happen and I felt like there were strong signals pushing me to make the decision, so I did. I saved up for a few months, definitely not the formally recommended amount, but it was enough that I knew I'd be okay for a little while.

I: Have you always had a sense of self, this way of looking at your opportunities in your life?

P: I know many people who struggle with the issue of what it is they should do in their career, what should they do with their life? I've been really passionate about what I've been doing for most of my life and after going through a stage of teenage rebellion with drugs and not being a good student, I became an exchange student in Switzerland my senior year of high school, which was a huge eye and perspective opener for me about everything. I had to adjust to a totally new reality. It gave me a lot of confidence at sixteen, an age when it was formidable to see my own ability to shape my experience and realizing that there were so many opportunities and so many things to explore. And it led me to

this life of following my interests like Capoeira, it was also a time to be so engaged with something that was deeply interesting to me while I was working everyday. I always trained and grew in my practice of the art and developed myself personally - it was inspiring and challenging and working with many people as an instructor and mentor helped me learn so much. I called it "A small contact life," with a double entendre, because martial arts is full contact -anything goes, no holds barred, be prepared for any situation, train in many different styles, but full contact -all your neurons are firing. Everything is on. You're very awake and alive. Many people can relate to that if they're stuck in a situation not know-

ing what they want. If you can just begin to follow the vein of something that is deeply interesting lights up your neurons, that is really the way to that creative, intuitive part of yourself that tells you what it is that you're going to do next.

For me, despite occasional shifts and transitions around my understanding of what the next body of work is, I've always been fundamentally driven and profoundly interested in the theme of liberation. Like liberating yourself from any kind of oppression, be that self-imposed, with thoughts and feeling trapped, or on a larger scale of liberated from economic limitations. Some of this goes back to the work I did in Latin America look-

ing at systemic issues like poverty, when people are able to make change to actually shift some existing structures and overcome them. Mental shifts happen when people do that, and when I worked with kids in San Francisco, it amazed me how they would shift when they realized they actually had more options than they thought. They began to get a sense of their own power. That's just intoxicating to me. That is just highly exciting. So the nature of most of the work I've done in my life relates to that - to tapping people into understanding that they do, they really can create that feeling of freedom, that it's a transformation within them. So while my work takes different forms, it generally goes

back to that theme.

I: I've never heard anyone talk about making your neurons fire.

P: That's the key. When you focus on the question "What is that work I should do?" or "What is my career path?" or "What business should I start?" it often leads to a huge pile of complex memories from what you think you should do, what people told you should do, or what the market says is hot. All of these factors influence you. We're obsessed by looking outside of ourselves for the answer, even to the right guy or girl or someone else to light you up, inspire you and give you meaning. We're all searching for the right answers and sometimes it

feels like it's wrapped up in someone or something else that can make you feel good, feel joy. But it's not an external search. It's an internal search. It's the search for that fulfilled part of you that feels deeply. So when people feel super stuck, I often tell them to go to Sedona, AZ or Maine. Go to someplace where you can wander in nature and feel the energy and beauty of the earth - feel the present moment and how wonderful it is to be alive. To go to that deep place or go somewhere that really inspires you is imperative because then you can really feel you, without all the external factors. I remember one of my clients felt frustrated and I said, "OK, tell me what you love. Tell me what you love to do." She said,

"I love musicals." I said, "All right. Get a babysitter. Take a sick day from work and go into the city and go watch a musical."

So she did and when she reported back it was like she was an entirely different person, "Oh my god! It was the theatre and it was so fantastic!" The veil was lifted and it put her in a zone of feeling highly alive with a sense of heightened awareness. That to me is the root of beginning to feel that way about our work too, like the veil is lifted and all of a sudden you can hear at a different frequency, a full body feeling that is really alive and joyful. Whether it's a musical or being at a beautiful place or listening to spoken word or whatever, it just has to

make you feel excited. It doesn't matter what it is. The more you follow that and get into that zone, that tends to change your awareness and you realize things you naturally do love.

I: Maybe it's not quieting the noise in our heads as much as it is replacing it with the sounds of things we love.

P: Yes, that's exactly it and for a lot of people what happens in a corporate environment is that you squash those voices in order to survive. It's understandable because there are so many things in an environment like that which are just not natural or healthy for humans - going to one place, sitting for hours,



never resting or looking outside, not really seeing natural light, it's a strong image of how many of us are "supposed" to work. Corporate life is a lot of things that just don't make sense. Like tons of effort, physical exhaustion, and neglecting family and friends for things you know aren't that important or may shift quickly down the road. So just to be able to make it

through the day people just have to squash the voice that says, "This is crazy, that I have to live like this. Is it just me?" The terrifying thing is that that voice stays squashed even when you're not at work. So to wake up that voice again, to thaw out your soul, you basically need to relearn and re-engage with those things that actually speak to the deeper parts of you. There are themes of love and joy and connection with what is real and in your soul, that's really what's going to wake you up. It's not easy, and it can be very painful to realize the disconnect between what you're feeling, what you really want to do and how you've created your life.

I've been in the workforce

for thirty-seven years, in the corporate world and in the non-profit world, and I also worked in a start-up environment, which gave me a sense of a relaxed environment. But I had never worked for myself before. The thing was, the work I did with Capoeira - writing grants, marketing and teaching students - I did those things for years but never realized those were the skills an entrepreneur needed. I didn't realize I was doing it and because I was a volunteer it didn't seem real, but since then I've learned that it's actually quite common - that people don't account for their skills because they haven't gotten paid for them.

I: I like how you focus on your personal theme of liberation instead of what your “body of work” will be.

P: It's asking always the question “What's the work I want to do in the world?” We have a limited time on earth. When you think of what you're spending time on, what makes you feel proud, who you want to help, it shifts your perspective a lot. I ask myself this all the time and it always comes back to something related to liberation and transformation. Transforming careers, transforming individuals, transforming kids in dangerous environments to feeling strong, people who could make their own way. As Jim Collins says, there are a few circles that make

up your sweet spot: what you're good at, what people will pay you to do, what your passions are, and then what you're genetically encoded to do. All I really care about in my own path and in my work with others is that they're feeling meaning in what they're doing; however they get to that place. The key is: Do you feel joy in your work and in your life? That is it.

I: Then a larger question enters our minds: “Can I turn this into a career?”

P: I used to tease my clients when I independently consulted inside corporations for ten years, saying, “Any time you bring together more than one person in a company, you have a dysfunctional

organization.” So the market for my work as a management consultant who specialized in communication, was endless. People find endless value in that. That said, there are choices you make in terms of how commerce flows and how value is equated. What is the way you can set up a business model that will fund your ideal life situation? And it's different for different people. Some people find the match, like my dad. My dad is a photographer, he's been one for almost 50 years and he is as deeply passionate today at 75 about photography as he was when he started. He was blessed to stay with something he loved for many years, and it was also something he found he could get paid for. For some artists or photog-

raphers, they find that much, that the market is willing to pay for their art. For others, they may find other ways to feel good and do other activities to fund their ability to do what they want, no strings attached - to create just for art's sake.

Much of the work I did as a volunteer with Capoeira was a conscious decision to not take money for it because it made me feel very free, where I just did whatever I wanted. I created programs, put on performances and did anything I wanted because no one told me I couldn't. And I know it's hard, but you can find ways if you really want. Look at people who are interested in working with lower income population, addressing real,

societal issues. You can say, "There's no way you could get paid to do that!" But there are ways. When you start to look at the different ways you can put together a business model - work with people and collaboratively, get funding from a group in order to work with those who can't afford it, create a social-business to generate revenue in order for you to do what you want. People get caught up in the old school mentality of "Artists never make any money" or "Nobody can make money working with the poor or abused" but it's not true. It's just not true. It's true if you look on the classic job boards but it's not at all true if you're open-minded and using the tools we have online now, with social networks and so-

cial entrepreneurs. There are many ways to ethically make money doing what you love. But there's a choice here: Not everyone wants to directly make money from what they love. And that's ok.

I: Maybe it's also not about trying to find everything from one thing. One career. One job.

P: What we're looking for is The Career. Capital T, capital C. And then we're looking for The Mate. Capital T, capital M, the perfect person. And then the perfect home. And it just goes on and on about what it is that's supposed to create order in order to have joy and meaning. I don't believe it though. Take my dad as an example, who has a

thing, more of a vocation deeply aligned to who he is that gives him great joy and meaning. But that said, he's also a great environmentalist and social activist, and I remember ever since I was born he was always involved in community projects, and so he uses his camera to take pictures of things that give him meaning - social change and the environment, in addition to his photographs that simply give him pleasure. It's the way he utilizes his photography. I often bring things back to romantic life because there are so many correlations, but it's like looking for that one person to make you whole, instead of just getting to a place where you're fundamentally happy about yourself and you wake up not thinking

and dreading your work, not thinking of anyone else, but when you're just feeling good within your own body. That's often when we do attract someone highly complimentary to ourselves anyway, but it's not that the person completes you or makes you feel whole, because you were whole before. You really were and you really are.

It's the same with work. You're already (and can be) a happy, healthy, joyful person and work at something that adds flavor to your life with an income stream! But a lot of this is having that awareness. My husband is Navajo and in his tradition they call it the "beauty way" and "walking beauty," all times being aware that beauty is in front of

you, behind you, above you, you're always walking in beauty. Everything else can change but for us humans, that connection, that aliveness in the present moment is really all we have. Businesses fail, people get fired, spouses leave, there's a lot of things externally that if you don't have a fundamental sense of just being human, can crush you. When you do have all the right things - the right house and spouse and job and all of a sudden something shifts - your entire world and being can be destroyed. God knows, we've all been through times like that and it can be extremely challenging. But there's always the seed, my mother in law calls it the sacred fire inside, and that's who you really

are. That is what will help you go through those times and can lessen the anxiety of coming up with things that give you meaning. Sometimes it's like a deep mythological quest, where as humans we look for meaning and significance and relevance in the world. That's how we're wired and it's a noble urge. But the search isn't the thing that will give you joy. Your connection with yourself is what makes you feel joy.

I: It's more about relieving the anxiety of trying to control everything and understanding that you can only really control how you feel.

P: I just wrote a post on this which struck quite a nerve in a lot of people. It

was called "The Grace in Falling Apart" and it was when external circumstances which are quite traumatizing, like getting a breast cancer diagnosis or a spouse leaving, this external shot can leave you with no energy or momentum and there's no way to really know what's next. So you get in a funk with a lot of anxiety and sadness and it feels really awful and you just want to snap out of it and get back to the way you were. The term I use is the "meantime" and it's between when everything is good and then imagining when it will be good again.

Most people want to fight against it and stop feeling bad, which is actually a deep part of the creative process, but it's

so painful and you don't know what's next and truly you are brought to your knees with something very difficult to deal with. That's when you talk with yourself and try to understand who you are and how you want to reconstruct things in a way that's meaningful for you. One of my clients says his moment of "revelation" was when he had a mine blow up next to him in Iraq. It was a huge thing for him, understandably, but what happened to him as a result of that was that it just immediately shifted his feelings about the work he wanted to be doing. When he came back to the States and got out of the service, that experience gave him anxiety and was horrible absolutely, but how he interpreted that was that

it really brought him back to himself. He got a great deal of clarity on how he wanted to operate.

As a culture, we do not appreciate the “mean-time. I call it “wandering in the desert” too, where you’re just not quite sure what’s going on and you don’t have a lot of patience or tolerance for it, but it’s there. Many spouses or parents don’t have patience with it, certainly, when their kids or husbands are looking for direction, searching for what makes their neurons fire. The way through it is to actually just sink into that feeling and notice what the root of the sadness and anxiety and fear is. Fear is a wonderfully protective force, a strong part of how we can feel safe and whole. So when

we’re not afraid of our own fear, that’s when it starts to talk to us.

I: I always talk about Pema Chodron, who talks exactly about going to the places that scare you. From your own experience, is there a better first step to take?

P: You have to practice feeling your feelings, which is easier said than done. But when you feel anxiety come up in a moments, we want to run away or eat Ben and Jerry’s or go on twitter to avoid the feeling. What we need to do is sit down, plant our feet firmly, and let the feelings wash over us, stop shoving the emotions down and stop thinking that we’ll be lying in the fetal posi-

tion if we allow ourselves to feel the fear. We may feel total discomfort and want to throw up, but you’re allowing the feeling to come in and then release. All the emotion wants is to be heard. The next stage is asking “why” when you feel panicked like “I’m going to live in a van my entire life” “I’ll never get any clients” Ask, “Why?” then answer it. “I don’t know if I’m good at what I do. I have no idea about marketing and I’m totally confused. I can’t even articulate what it is I want to sell, so how is anyone going to buy it?” Once you narrow down the generalized fears into specific place you can get resources or support or information to address specific issues, it’s less overwhelming. If you feel “I’m afraid my spouse is

going to leave me” and you go into the house with that frame of mind, then ask yourself why that scares you. If your answer is “I don’t know if I’d feel good about myself if somebody isn’t around,” that’s a great place to start to do some work on yourself. Or you get to a place where you love yourself and you’re not relying on that person to give you love. When you start to work on things, that’s often when you feel better, because you’re making something happen, even something small. It’s the equivalent of crossing the street in a dark, unknown city where you have a weird feeling. You go somewhere with light, you cross the street, you’re still in that vicinity, but you take a step in order to be more safe-

physically and emotionally.

I: It's the difference between fear being the driver and fear being a signal to listen to. As a signal, it's useful. As a driver, it's disaster.

P: I think where fear often becomes a driver, and this relates to the work I do, is when we feel that we'll deeply disappoint those around us and the voices of everyone else are amplifying that fear. It may not even really be that dangerous and you might not even believe it, but it's the voices around us that ingrain it into us. When you really get down to it, you might not believe that the sky is falling and the entire economy is permanently going to be screwed and

they're never going to be any jobs anymore. But when you are so plugged into other voices and the global hum of fear, which is amplified by the news, all we feel is fear. The fear isn't even really yours, but it's leading you. At other times, fear can really allow you to tune into your inner voice. When you look at life you can choose fear or you can choose love. And there's moments that are highly uncomfortable and scary. But when I tune into feeling loved and sending love, those fears can really shift. I've been in some crazy situations by myself traveling in Latin America, where there were situations of danger, and I shifted to a mode of feeling like things were good and not everyone, even the scary ones were hold-

ing a knife to me. And the energy just shifts, you know? It can shift how people react in a situation. I'm not advocating not getting out of harm's way, but in less extreme situations, sometimes it can really be enough to just make a choice. Given our limited time on earth, you can ask "Am I going to be glad to have done this or not, despite the fear?" When you look at it like that, it can help push you into an area that can feel scary.

I: Your attitude is so much about focusing on possibility, that it feels like you operate from a space of intuition, not fear.

P: It's interesting to live in a place I love so much, like Sedona, AZ. It defi-

nately puts me in a zone of feeling in touch with beauty and love. Of course I experience moments of intense fear, and the work that I do often revolves around fear - to really be able to deal with self-doubt, panic about future, I need to stay grounded myself. When I choose to totally get overwhelmed by fear, that's when I feel completely off track, not myself. It happens. My husband's construction business was hit really hard these last few years and we've had huge challenges that way. Some moments you just can't help but have anxiety and fear. But sitting with the emotion and then making a choice about getting through it, that for me is about getting back to my natural place of balance.

That's why I've chosen this work and that's the real value I provide to my clients is to be an anchor that way, where they feel safe to express their fears.

Personally, I do my best work when I'm anchored in joy. Sometimes self-

help makes you feel bad about feeling pain or fear. But I acknowledge how important fear and pain are and that there's nothing wrong if you feel them. There's a sacredness in fear that you don't need to run from. And you don't need to be feel-

ing happy every moment of everyday, that's just not possible. Even within feeling sadness or anger or fear, you can still feel a seed of your own sacredness. That's the difference. The strong sense of self you've cultivated that no matter what, everything

is okay. It's a practice, even though you're going through the middle of something, swirling around, sometimes knowing that it will be okay is all you need.



PAM

Pamela Slim is a seasoned business coach, author and professional speaker who helps frustrated employees in corporate jobs break out and start their own businesses. Her blog, *Escape from Cubicle Nation*, is one of the top career and marketing blogs on the web. A former corporate manager and entrepreneur herself for more than a decade, she deeply understands the concerns faced by first-time entrepreneurs. Her experience teaching martial arts for 10 years to thousands of students has helped her clients deal with fear head-on. Her book *Escape from Cubicle Nation: From Corporate Prisoner to Thriving Entrepreneur* was named Best Small Business/Entrepreneur Book of 2009 by 800CEORead.



“Analysis is no substitute for my gut instinct...”

FEAR IS NOT IN STYLE

TRICIA AND TERRY JONES

Ishita: Have you encountered fears as fashion magazine publishers, particularly in the early days when i-D was still evolving?

Tricia: Honestly, no. Any success that has come our way has happened completely organically and by sheer luck. i-D was Terry's baby from the beginning, and we started it in our house just as a small stapled together packet. We had no idea what we were getting ourselves into - we just wanted to put out something into the world that we loved, was innovative, and

gave us a voice. When you start something in a small way like that, there's not really a large fear of failure attached to it. It was just an idea that we wanted to make happen. I also came from a generation that was under much less pressure than today's generation. If you asked me when I was a teenager what I really wanted, I would have just said a really happy family.

Terry: I didn't initially have any fears at the beginning because it was just an idea I wanted to make happen. I don't fear competition, but I find it can be relentlessly tiring.

I: Have your fears changed significantly over the years from the beginning to now, after the success of i-D?

Tricia: Yes. Now, I've learned that ideas always end up coming, and not to worry about it so much, and that it's far better to just go with the flow; although I do prefer to have sufficient time to develop ideas properly.

Terry: I've learned that the adrenaline created in certain fearful situations can help focus the brain, and that analysis is no substitute for my gut instinct. It's also always better to initiate than imitate.

I: What lessons have you learned from the fearful experiences in your lives?

Tricia: A great lesson has been not to worry so much. To try to go with the flow, to learn to be



flexible. My father had an expression that he always said helped him get through the war in Bomber Command: "Prepare for the worst, hope for the best and take what comes." It's something that I use in my own life quite a lot. I look at the worst that can happen, and if I can survive that, I can survive anything and hope for the best. Often of course, our worst fears don't actually even end up happening. Things come up in life that we cannot control, and trying to control them produces more stress. Worrying won't help anything, but only limits one's ability to deal with things if and when they do happen. I've had many instances when just staying calm helped me figure out a solution than did worry-



ing all night. You should stay as positive as you can and don't look for the negative in situations and people.

I try not to be too fearful of a person and to trust that things will somehow work out. Above all, I feel grateful for the many amazing things that I do have in my own life and what I've already achieved. I try to maintain a healthy perspective through gratitude, and acknowledging that I am fortunate compared to so many other people. If I'm to be really honest, and this is always hard to talk about, I think a big turning point for me was feeling a belief in God. Not particularly denominational, not signed up to any specific religion, but my own personal belief



that we are not alone. If I had to choose one thing that helps me with fear, it would be that.

Terry: I've learned to avoid being fearful by thinking as positively as

possible in every situation and by having a positive life partner.

I: What's a personal quality that's gotten you to where you are now?

Tricia: Perhaps a mixture of enthusiasm and a level of tenacity has gotten me to the position now, where I'm happy with the quality of work we produce and I enjoy the people around me. We've always worked hard to remain true to ourselves and our vision of what is important in the world, and in doing so, we've been successful.

Terry: I'm a good picker and I married a very good partner! I'm also a lateral thinker, possibly too lateral for some. Quite a few people might say I've helped to start their careers by encouraging them to succeed by rais-

ing their expectations, but in the process some would also say I was a hard task master. I also won't attempt something I don't think I can do.

I: Tell us a story of overcoming fear in your life.

Terry: I try to look at fearful situations rationally. Some years ago I was travelling on a photogra-

phy shoot with a young photographer who was terrified of flying. I sat with him and talked him through it, so that by the third flight in a three-seater Cessna, I had him

sitting next to the pilot photographing elephants as we landed on a remote dirt strip in Namibia!



TRICIA & TERRY

Terry Jones is the editor-in-chief and publisher of the fashion magazine **i-D**. Dedicated to fashion, music, art, and youth culture, i-D was first published in 1980 as a hand-stapled fanzine, and later evolved into a glossy known for its street style and original photography. As art director for Vogue from 1972-77, directing covers of Vanity Fair and Vogue, Terry's known as one of the most innovative creative directors of his generation. In 1968 he married Tricia Jones, who became editor of special projects for i-D. She edited **Soul i-D**, a visual anthology of ideas and images featuring personal insights from the most creative names in fashion, music, art, and design. On its side, "i-D" is a winking smiley, and most issues feature a winking cover model.

“It takes a lot of perseverance and fortitude to go through struggles.”

TUNE INTO YOUR SOUL

NILES GOLDSTEIN

Ishita: When I read your book *The Challenge of the Soul*, it struck me when you said, “It’s a fierce battle between who we are and who we want to be and how we face up to that truth.” What has your journey looked like to “face up to that truth?”

Niles: I came to that conclusion reluctantly, actually. I say in the introduction that Hobbes is famous for saying that the human condition is nasty, brutish and short. The Romantic in me has always fought that, but the older I get and the more I see what the journey has been like for me and how it’s not been warm and fuzzy or neat and clean, but rather murky and difficult



and often very challenging, I think he was really on to something. I think a lot of the great mystics and religious writers and philosophers have observed something that becomes more and more evident as we get older that life is a very impermanent and frequently confrontational. What I was trying to capture in the book is that more often than not, that battle, that fight, those challenges, occur within us rather than external to us.

I: The road is long and hard and remaining open to the other aspects of life can be difficult at times.

N: I think you're right. Before anything there has to be an acknowledgement of the reality of the situ-

ation, an acknowledgment that not everything is wine and roses, and in fact the wine and roses moments are interwoven with moments of some very dark nights. In Buddhism they talk about becoming awake and in Jewish mysticism, there's a Hebrew word that means arousal or awakening, and it just means as we become more in tune with ourselves and ultimately transcendent we become awakened.

Once you connect to the reality of the human condition, how we essentially make it through life at home, without falling into despair, I think it really just boils down to something they use in the Catholic religion, which is having hope. Having hope that whatever dark



nights we're going to experience are going to ultimately be balanced with wonderful experiences as well, that whatever nights we encounter, our valleys we have to walk through will also be balanced with peaks.

So the first part is having hope, I think. The second is having courage because it takes courage to have hope, especially when you've woken up. A lot of people lack that and it's something you can cultivate. I talk about this a lot in the book - that I don't think you're necessarily born with courage, I think it's something you can really work to cultivate, whether or not you're a martial artist or a rabbi. Courage is something you can develop over time but it's really

hard to do. Some of the most courageous people I know are also some of the most hopeful people I know. Not always, but more often than not. I think they go hand in hand. Without one or both of those qualities, it'd be hard not to collapse into despair. Otherwise we fall into a state of passivity and as the saying goes, "lead lives of quiet desperation."

I: How can one cultivate courage? Did you cultivate parts of it through martial arts and your rabbinical studies?

N: Yes, some of it is finding the right discipline or system, whether it's spiritual or something else. Connected to that is finding the right teacher or guide to help you along

the way. Often that entails community because it's very hard to go this road by yourself, which is one of my critiques of some of the tendencies in the New Age movement. I don't think you can sit on a beach chair and read a self-help book on the weekend and cultivate the kind of capacities we're talking about. I think it takes a lot of work and a lot of support and a lot of guidance. It also takes a lot of perseverance and fortitude, so when you have challenging experiences and go through periods of struggle, it's important to sit with those experiences that teach us to ply forward and move past them. You can only do that if you have some degree of strength, and if you don't have that

strength, that's when your teacher or guide or support comes into play to give you a hand or basically push you ahead. If you lack the courage yourself, they can serve as a catalyst. I've accepted that even rituals can serve that role, sometimes you don't even need human guides, sometimes inanimate objects like rituals from Buddhist or martial arts traditions can often be catalysts to help us.

I: Where is the line is between cultivating inner strength and relying on support from others?

N: My short answer is, I don't know. It's murky, not black and white. I certainly think you need a balance because the inhibition of our souls

is something that never ends. We always need support systems, unless we become enlightened like Moses or Buddha or Mohammad. Most of us mortals are always going to need support, but I also think it's a fine line between having a support system and having a crutch. If we use a crutch all our lives and all we do is limp along through life, that's not good either. I don't know where the line is, but everyone does have their own line and has to find out for him or herself where that point of balance is, where that fulcrum between being self reliant, which is something I value very highly and being willing to surrender a part of ourselves through an act of humanity with the recognition that you can't go it

alone.

The human condition is one of radical uncertainty and ambiguity and once we've woken up to that reality, there are three basic ways I've been able to figure out how to respond. They correspond to where we are in our lives and what kind of people we've become, and I've found I'm in the middle of the road. The first step is resignation. We resign ourselves to the fact that this is life and there's really nothing we can do about it and we trudge on not really happy about it but at least willing to not fall prey to despair. That's an important first step. The next step, which is probably where I am right now, and it's a hard step to reach I think, even the

point of resignation is hard to be honest. But acceptance is beyond resignation. You're not reluctantly resigning yourself to that reality but you're accepting that it's neither good nor bad, it just is. Acceptance is a more evolved level of responding to life's radical ambiguity, but it's not positive or negative, it just is. As people say, "It is what it is!"

The next level, and I'm not there yet, but it's what I'm striving for and this is where the great mystics-men and women over the centuries - have set a very high bar for us. And that level is the level of embrace. The highest level of responding to this reality of radical uncertainty is being able to embrace it. It's not

rooted in reluctance like it is in resignation, and it's not rooted in "it is what it is" like acceptance, but it's rooted in this kind of loving, almost joyful, embrace. Like a gift from God. Not something to fear, but rather something to treat like it's been given to us to make us stronger and better people. I'm not there yet, and few people attain it in the course of their lives, but some people do.

I: Why do you think you're not there yet?

N: Well, I feel I'm awake enough to not live in a state of denial and to understand life's fragility and impermanence, but I'm not yet at the level of courage or strength or enlightenment to be able to lovingly embrace it.

I've accepted it, but as a necessary component of being human, not with a smile on my face. Why is that the case? I just don't think I'm spiritually mature enough, yet. I think I'm in mid life, mid career. I have a lot of living and growing to do. So I just think I have a lot more work to do on myself before I reach that point. I don't want to die. I don't like the fact that I don't know exactly what is in store for me in the weeks and months and years ahead. That doesn't make me happy, especially because part of me is a bit of a control freak. So that's the gist of it, just more work to do, I guess.

I: I hear you. I try to control most aspects of my life, to points of real frustration and anguish

at times.

N: For many people, myself included, letting go of control is one of the hardest things in the world to do. I've worked very hard to do that in my personal and professional and spiritual life. It takes a certain amount of faith to leap into the unknown. It takes courage because there's no guarantee that when we leap we won't be injured or wounded as a result. But that's ok. I'm at a point where it's ok to be wounded. Most of us know that the strongest type of skin tissue that we have is scar tissue, so there's nothing wrong with being injured or wounded in the course of our lives. I think it only makes us stronger, but giving up control is rooted in this idea of self

surrender, this idea of humility, and many of us are just not humble enough to put it in the context of being with others, whether it's a dojo floor or an academic context, it's very difficult for a lot of modern or post modern men and women to realize how little we know and to sit down and shut up and listen to the wisdom of others. It makes us feel weak. The paradox, of course, is that ultimately it's more a mark of strength than weakness to have open minds and open hearts and open souls. It's the people who are too afraid to open up that are the people who are weaker. I see it in my martial arts training that the strongest people I run into are more often than not, some of the most humble people..

The etymology of the word "humility" as I understand it, is that there's a connection between humility and the word "hubris," that layer of soul on the forest floor. So it's not humiliation, which is a bad thing. Humility, I think, is simply laying ourselves low, like the hubris on the forest floor. It's why Muslims bow down and prostrate themselves in prayer. It's why Jews used to do that and many of us still do during certain times of the year. It's why people from other religious traditions bow down. When I learned Karate I bowed for my instructors and I bow whenever I enter the dojo. That idea of laying ourselves low, physically, has a metaphysical component to it. It's a really powerful one that is often

overlooked.

I think we can ritualize a belief into a concrete behavior and have it sink in in really powerful ways and so the concept of laying ourselves low really is important when we talk about God because if we believe in a transcendent God, a God who is beyond our comprehension, to me it makes it a lot easier to accept the fact that we don't know about God or life in its totality. We can't ever really know about God or life in its totality because how can a finite mind comprehend that which is infinite. It's Philosophy or Logic 101. So I think humility, humus, laying ourselves low on a metaphorical level is really powerful. As someone who has spent a lot of time walking and hik-

ing and spending a lot of time outdoors, someone who has walked over lots of humus.

I: You write, “There’s nothing so whole as a heart that has been broken” and being wounded is something we all have to go through. Does it ever cross your mind that perhaps we’d learn better through less pain, not more?

N: It does. And I think it's context specific. It depends on the person you're dealing with and their psychological makeup and where they are in their lives and what they're open to. For me I've found that it's necessary to go through pain. I'm a former army chaplain, so I'll use the

analogy of boot camp. In any military all over the world, whether you're in Japan or India or the United States, you go, your head's shaved, everybody looks the same, acts the same, the whole idea of boot camp is to break you down. And by breaking you down, the idea is to ultimately build you up, make you stronger. So I think in my experience, unless you're just a naturally born with this deep compassion with other people, I think most of us have to have an experience that really shatters us or breaks us before we can become really more open to the suffering of others.

I: And there's still no guarantee, even after you've built yourself up, that pain or grief won't

come again. It's sounds morbid and uncomfortable, but being vulnerable and open at the same time is what it's about, I think.

N: Yes, people can fall in love repeatedly and have their hearts broken repeatedly. Having the experience, while valuable, is also very painful and I also agree that there's no guarantee that that experience won't be a lifelong one and it's not always related to love, it can be related to different experiences rather than significant others or family members. But the more of those experiences we have, I think the better able we're to handle them. We gain more arrows that quiver, in terms of becoming spiritual warriors. It gives us more

ammunition with which to do battle against forces that would otherwise paralyze us or make us fall into a state of despair. So, I don't know that I'd ever want to reach a point where I become numb to the world around me and the pain of human experience. But you're right, it's not fun and life isn't just about fun. Life is about lots of things and I would not equate joy with fun. Joy is something deep and profound. Fun is pickup basketball and drinking games. So, there's a big difference. When mystics talk about achieving an ecstatic experience with the divine while still being human, they didn't talk about it as something fun. They talked about it as something that took them out of places of security



and stability but moved them into a type of consciousness. None of them would talk about it as fun. In fact, it's often talked about it as something very scary, but also essential for human transformation.

There's a great twentieth century rabbi, Abraham Joshua Heschel, who talks about the end of radical amazement, which means that we need to look at life like children, find experiences and stuff and events and life in a

state of radical amazement. When we wake up in the morning there's no guarantee we'll wake up the next day. So if we treat every breath as something like a gift of grace or every encounter with another person as

something positive and we can learn from it as something that's radically amazing, that's what it means to be open and receptive. Being closed-minded is one of the most dangerous things out there. I think, and I hope, that the warrior is always open, the warrior is always ready, always prepared. You're always prepared for every situation, even situations that are completely unpredictable, which happens more often than not. Being prepared is really critical. In my experience, the best things in my life have come completely out of the blue, and I think a lot of people would say the same thing. I think it's also because I was able to accept them. In my twenties, when something wonderful came my way,

I swatted it away, let it go. I learned from my mistakes, so I grew up a bit, but when I was younger, I wasn't prepared. Some really great things presented themselves and I wasn't ready for them and they just kind of passed me by, and I'm talking about experiences with other people, experiences I could have chosen to do but chose not to, either because I was afraid or because I thought I wanted something else and then regretted not having done it. So being prepared, being ready, takes time. It's a learning process.

I: Have you come to terms with those situations in your heart?

N: It's a constant challenge. I have moments

of yearning or longing or regret for what might have been in certain areas of my life. But as Robert Frost says, "way leads on to way." I've made certain choices in the context of my journey through the dark forest and for the most part I'm pretty happy with where I am, even though there's a long road ahead of me, blocks of more forks and twists and turns. We can't do everything, we can't be everything and we can't have everything. Or have everyone. You have to make certain choices, and that's another mark of maturity. I think one of the colossal mistakes of modernity is thinking about freedom, thinking that freedom is simply having the ability to choose between multiple options, like go-

ing into a drug store and being presented with a couple of dozens of flavors of toothpaste. And that's freedom, you get to choose all these different varieties of toothpaste. I think that's an extremely superficial way of thinking about freedom. Based on the great thinkers that I've studied from different faith traditions and also different philosophical traditions, freedom is not about the ability to choose between multiple options. Real freedom, true liberation, is about bringing our rules, our souls, into alignment with the rule of God. Judaism says that. Islam says that, and Christianity says that. It's a completely different way of thinking about freedom. It's not about doing what we want when we want, that's

what most people think freedom is. These guys say just the opposite; that freedom is about refraining from doing certain things, and surrendering what we want to do in order to follow that which we should do. For example, pursuing social justice in my tradition in a fractured world, that's

freedom. When we run away from these obligations, then we're not free at all.

I: You describe things honestly, I think. Do you have compassion for yourself?

N: Well, to have compassion for others, we have

to start with ourselves, put on your own oxygen mask, so to speak. So we have to love and protect ourselves first. It's not about self-loathing. That's where we get into pathology. The tricky part is being able to experience self-love without having it mutate into a kind of self-absorption

or self-deification. First it becomes narcissism, which is way too prevalent in today's society, but in religious language, it becomes idolatry. We end up worshipping ourselves rather than worshipping or viewing that which we ought to, which is not ourselves, but that which transcends ourselves.



NILES

NILES GOLDSTEIN is the founding rabbi of The New Shul in Manhattan, where he served as its spiritual leader from 1999 to 2010. He is the award-winning author and editor of nine books, including *Gonzo Judaism: A Bold Path for Renewing an Ancient Faith*, **God at the Edge: Searching for the Divine in Uncomfortable and Unexpected Places** and **The Challenge of the Soul: A Guide for the Spiritual Warrior**. Rabbi Goldstein lectures widely throughout North America and abroad on topics including spirituality, leadership, community, and new models for Post-modern religious life. He's written for and appeared in many national publications, including *Newsweek*, *Time*, *The New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and appears regularly on television and radio. Goldstein holds a black belt in karate.

“There’s no such thing as a fearless person. We only differ in the degree to which we can function while scared.”

VENTURE INTO IT

GUY KAWASAKI

LUNCH MONEY

Growing up in Kalihi Valley, Hawaii, I was scared all the time. My elementary school was close to a public housing project, so I lived in fear of getting jumped for money. Later, while catching a bus home from high school on the other side of town, I was mugged twice. To this day, I remember their faces. If I ever see them again, I’m getting my 25 cents back.



GETTING OVER VERTIGO

I have Ménière's disease which can cause unpredictable, uncontrollable vertigo, so my fear is having an episode in the middle of a speech or on an airplane going to or from a speech. Still, no one has died from Ménière's, so it's not the worst disease to have. My greatest personal fear is that I may have a stroke or get into an accident and live in a paralyzed or vegetative state and become a burden to my family.

I once got professional psychological help about my fear of Ménière's. Basically, I was told two things: first, stop "testing"

to see if you're getting vertigo. If it happens, it happens. Second, visualize the worst case like you get vertigo on a plane or in a speech, you fall on the floor, and you start throwing up. Then ask yourself, "What's the worst thing about this?" It will be uncomfortable and embarrassing, but life will go on. A few hundred people will see this happen, but it won't be the end of the world.

GRINDING IT OUT

It's not certain that I have conquered these fears. I do think about them constantly, but they don't paralyze me. I just keep grinding it out every day-hoping to make a little bit

of progress, make a great speech, and take one airplane flight at a time. It's in my DNA to just keep plugging away.

One of the hardest things I ever had to do was to quit law school. In that case, quitting school was conquering a fear, not succumbing to it. Maybe it's an Asian thing to fear quitting, but that was pretty difficult for me at first.

TWO KINDS OF ENTREPRENEURS

Fear is a good thing for entrepreneurs on several levels. First, if your would-be competitors are afraid, they might not enter the market. That's good.

Second, a fear of failure drives you to keep trying. There are only two kinds of entrepreneurs: those that are afraid of failing and those that are lying. There's no such thing as a fearless person. We only differ in the degree to which we can function while scared and the degree to which we can hide our fears from others.

I never talk to entrepreneurs about overcoming their fears because it takes too much energy - not so much about telling them how to conquer their fears but to get them to admit that they're afraid of anything. After all, I'm a venture capitalist, not their mother.

REPETITION REPETITION REPET-

Over the years, my fears have progressed from the fear of getting hijacked for lunch money, to the fear of Steve Jobs, to fear of speaking, to fear of Mènière's, to fear of poor health. I do have one more fear: that I'll take a slapshot from the blue line, the puck bounces

off the winger's legs, she takes the puck down the ice, and scores on my goalie. It's not entirely clear what this says about me.

My greatest professional fear is introducing a new product or service that absolutely fails. And believe me, this fear has actually happened a few times in my life—and probably will con-

tinue to happen.

The passage of time renders many fears irrelevant. That's different than "conquering" them, though. Repetition fixes many fears. I used to be terrified of public speaking, but just giving a lot of speeches has made me more comfortable with it, and I seem to have conquered that.

GET ME TO LACROSSE

I have four kids. When the kids outnumber the adults, you don't really have time to be fretting about yourself in a narcissistic way. They don't care if you're fearful about something - they need to get to hockey and lacrosse practice.



GUY

Guy Kawasaki is a founding partner and entrepreneur-in-residence at Garage Technology Ventures, a seed-stage venture capital fund. He is also the co-founder of Alltop.com, an online magazine rack of popular topics on the web like leadership and entrepreneurship. Previously, he was an Apple Fellow at Apple Computer, Inc. Guy is the author of nine books including **Reality Check**, **The Art of the Start**, Rules for Revolutionaries, How to Drive Your Competition Crazy, Selling the Dream, and The Macintosh Way.

“ Truth has no special time of it’s own. Its hour is now--always.”

Albert Schweitzer