



65 Stories of Hope, Passion, and Fulfillment
compiled by Joe Sabah

*Are You Singing the Song
You Came to Sing?*



65 Stories of Hope, Passion, and Fulfillment
compiled by Joe Sabah

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Joe@JoeSabah.com
www.JoeSabah.com

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Project management, and layout and design by

Lissa Ann Forbes
The Elemental Press
PO Box 49
Lafayette, Colorado 80026

Lissa@TheElementalPress.com
www.TheElementalPress.com
www.TheSelfPubCoach.com

Preface

Since 1974 I have been asking the question, "Are you singing the song you came to sing?" I ask this same question of everyone I meet. Sometimes I have to clarify the question with "Are you doing what you really want to be doing? Are you doing what God put you on this earth to do?"

It must have started when I was in the employment agency business in 1971. I asked applicants what type of job they really wanted to do. Their answers confirmed the national statistic that 80% of people are not happy doing what they're doing.

After more than 20 years of asking this question, I sent an e-mail survey to a thousand of my friends to find out if they were singing the songs they came to sing. Sixty-five of them submitted their stories of hope, passion, and fulfillment. Some answered with a resounding "Yes, I am!" Some answered with "I'm at least humming the tune."

Regardless of a person's age or station in life, it's important to constantly re-evaluate and ask this question, "Are you doing what you really love to do? "

My wish is that you enjoy reading these stories, find inspiration and motivation, but more importantly take time to pause and reflect on your own life.

I'd really like to hear from you. Let me know the song you're singing or the one you'd like to sing. Email me at Joe@joesabah.com.

NOTE: in this e-book version, you can click on all the links and visit the websites of the authors, or email them directly.

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Arizona



THE SONG I CAME TO SING

Right out of the gate, professional speaking is public speaking. It is speaking for money. It is a presentation of programs by someone making a career out of being in the speaking business.

“If you would converse with me,” said Voltaire, “first define your terms.” So here are three classical definitions:

The Merriam Webster Unabridged Dictionary reports that a professional manifests fine artistry based on sound knowledge. And a speaker is one who makes public speeches.

According to the Random House Webster’s Dictionary, a professional is one who is in an occupation as a means of livelihood. And a speaker is a person who speaks before an audience as a career.

The authoritative two volume Oxford English Dictionary, *Bring me my magnifying glass, James*, says a professional is one who makes a profession out of any occupation often engaged in by amateurs. And a speaker is one who speaks formally before a number of persons.

In plain words, I say professional speaking is simply the business of speaking for money.

Of course, implied in those words is that you have something to say. Words of wisdom. Concepts a particular audience finds memorable and valuable. And that you are at least a wee bit entertaining. A public speaker has gotta hold the attention of an audience. A touch of humor helps a lot. Good stories well told, stories that are fresh and point-laden. Stories that have not been heard before.

For me, this means stories you have lived yourself. Vignettes from your life. And not stories to read in an anthology in the Readers Digest. These are for amateurs to tell, not for you.

Being a public speaker is a rare privilege. We who make a career out of speaking live life at another dimension, a dimension lesser mortals can only dream of. Four and five star hotels are a daily experience for us.

Dining in the white tablecloth dining room becomes a delicious habit, especially when a client is picking up the check—and paying us a handsome fee for doing our job too.

Naturally, when it is show time we are expected to deliver a sterling performance. To serve the concurrent and often differing desires of the decision maker who hires us, the client who forks over our fee, and the audience before which we have the privilege of standing.

Public speaking is an honorable career. I am proud to be in this business for over 23 years as this is written. It is not easy money, certainly not at the start. It takes resolute commitment to develop your talent.

And it requires strength of character, clear principles and values, too, if you are to be outstanding. It also does not hurt to be able to dash off a piece like this one as fast as your fingers can touch the keys.

Finally, speaking of keys, a career as a public speaker is a key to a wonderful life.

It is the song I came to sing.

Burt Dubin
Personal Achievement Institute
Kingman, AZ
928-753-7546
burt@burtdubin.com
www.SpeakingBizSuccess.com

JOY'S SONG

At the age of 50 I opened my first business, The Golliver Group. Together, my daughter Pam and I did consultations with mid-management women on dressing for success. In addition, we sold a line of jewelry, briefcases, and more for women on the move. I had been in business for five years and was getting very discouraged. I wanted to quit, but my advisory board said I should keep going for two more years. Reluctantly, in 1989, I put in more money, moved the business into new quarters and prepared for a grand opening. That day my husband suffered a heart attack.

Pam and I decided to put the business on hold until we knew more about his condition. In three weeks Bob was doing great and the two of us stopped in to tell Pam the good news, only to find her crying. Douglas, her friend, had just been diagnosed with terminal cancer. The irony of it was that she had just spent two weeks in Florida trying to decide if and how to break up with him. The first thing she said to me was, "I will not leave him now and he is never to know."

Douglas had no family so we moved him into our little condo and she cared for him for the last year that he lived.

Naturally the business was on major pause, but after the funeral, Pam and I looked at each other and knew that God wanted us to learn something from this. We both needed time off. We decided to tell our advisory board we were closing the business. They insisted we take time to sell it, but our answer was no. We needed to take a year off to discover the real purpose in our lives.

For that year I traveled with my husband while he was chairman of the Pacific Coast Gas Association. Every place we went I asked groups of women what was happening in their community that was unique. Could it be duplicated in other

communities? As a result of my questions, I authored *Ignite The Community Spirit: 300 Creative Ideas for Community Involvement*. Bob and I self-published the book and a business I had never thought about was created.

That book took me on a completely new path. I began to “sing the song of service” that led to a second book, a national newsletter, speeches across the United States, and work in Kobe, Japan. Then it became a non-profit agency that I managed for twelve years, loving every minute. However, the non-profit was never strong enough to run without me and eventually I decided to close it.

Just as I was wondering what comes next, my husband was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease. This news has taken me many years to digest. What now and what does this mean for me?

We have moved to a new life in Tucson and I am creating a new song at the age of seventy-three. I will do private coaching and workshops on How to Reinvent Yourself At Any Age. After all, I am my own best example.

So, look out world, here I come . . . again!

Joy Golliver
Ignite The Spirit
Tucson, AZ
206-714-5692
icannews@comcast.net

SPEAKING THE SPEECH

For the second time in a year, I was laid off. I had been an office administrator for two different association management firms. When I was laid off the second time, I didn't know what to do next.

I tried mind mapping. Mind mapping is quite simple. You draw a circle in the center of the paper with one word in the middle of the circle. Then you draw lines from that word representing main ideas or thoughts related to the word. I put my three favorite jobs on the "main branches." On the fourth line (or branch) I put "Family." Then I thought about the things I liked best about each job and put those on lines coming out from each main branch, like the smaller branches on a tree. When I finished, I noticed similarities across jobs: I liked detail, people, and organizing information. For the Family branch, I wrote: children and stay at home. Up to that point I had only worked 9-3pm and wanted to be home for my young daughters.

At the association management firm, we had managed the National Association of Professional Organizers. I told my dad that I was going to be a professional organizer. In typical Dad fashion, he told me I knew nothing about running a business and it wouldn't work. I had nothing to lose, so I tried it. After all, that was what I did, run the office and organize information.

I began my professional organizing business. My first client was a previous boss who had me re-organize a new association's files before his staff even saw them. I loved it. My second client was an advertising agency that taught me how to write a press release. So I wrote one that landed me on the Today Show and subsequently Oprah. My skeptical dad ran out to buy a VCR to videotape me and show his friends.

A few years later someone invited me to a meeting of the National Speakers Association. I distinctly remember getting on stage at Tupperware meetings to teach cold calling to the other dealers. Afterward Carol, the distributor, said to me, “You know how to teach it, but don’t ever tell them you haven’t been doing it for awhile.” I recalled her words: “You know how to teach it,” and I became a speaker.

In 2000, I was asked to write *Organizing For Dummies*® because I was a speaker and had already been on the Today Show and Oprah. I was getting divorced and moving from Chicago to Arizona. Who else could write 400 pages, divorce, and move two daughters across the country all at the same time?

Today I have a well-known book, and I am a certified professional speaker on office organization, time management, home organization, and student organization. I love my work. Some people sing their song. I can’t sing, so I’m speaking my speech.

Eileen Roth

Everything in its Place®

Scottsdale, AZ

(480) 551-3445

speaker@everythinginitsplace.net

www.everythinginitsplace.net

Author of *Organizing For Dummies*®

California



PRECIOUS GIFTS

Oddly enough, each and every challenge in my life has led me to do what I am doing today. I have always loved to connect people, but I was painfully shy.

Growing up in a small town taught me the key fundamentals of being part of a community. I learned to be conscious of others around me in a natural way of life.

When I worked for a Fortune 100 firm, I was taught corporate sales. I couldn't imagine when I got downsized in 1985 that it would be the best thing that could have happened to me because it opened my mind to becoming self-employed.

When I worked in the travel industry, I was forced to develop the discipline it takes to keep a business growing despite it being during the Gulf War era. One of my greatest fears was doing cold calls, but rather than lay off my employees, I bit the bullet and learned to approach calls that produced a 185% business growth over a three-year period.

In 1991 after I sold the travel business, I was at odds about what I would do next. But I was guided by my mentor to develop a business that would help others learn the business acumen that I had taken to so naturally. The idea of public speaking was the furthest thing from my mind, but through the urging of my mentor, I began by speaking at a Lion's club and after sixteen years of speaking in the business community, it is one of the business development skills that I am most passionate about.

It truly amazes me that people would embrace the knowledge that I have gained over the years that I have spent working in various industries.

Today I teach entrepreneurs how to write and get published, how to get out into the business community and speak about their ventures and to use personality recognition

techniques with their prospects so they can shorten the length of their sales cycle. Each of these techniques increases the level of visibility of the entrepreneurs and makes it easier for them to gain new clients with the least amount of effort.

It's hard to imagine, but I am entering my seventeenth year in this business. It has been an evolutionary process for me as well as my business. I continue to learn as much from my clients as I teach them.

Life is what we make it. I encourage others to stay open to the adventure and look at each opportunity being presented as a preciously wrapped gift. We just don't know what's inside until we can open up the possibilities.

Sharyn Abbott

Elite Leads

Walnut Creek, CA

800 549-2823

sharyn@sharynabbott.com

www.sharynabbott.com, www.CreateYours2.com

Author of *Create Your Own Reality: The Ancient Wisdom*

THE SONG I CAME TO SING

The song I came to sing is about teaching. In a way, it's the third song right now, or maybe it's more like the third verse of the same song. Each verse has somehow been about teaching. The first verse was teaching music through the voice of the violin, viola, 'cello, and bass to elementary school children. From 1971 to 1982 it was truly eleven years of joy. This was as long as I was teaching the children and not their parents or other teachers, or expecting an abundance of cash in the process.

The next stanza starting in 1982 was teaching people to organize their paper, time, and space in their home and in their workplace. At the same time, I was part of a larger picture through a professional association of teaching the world that many of us were available to help people be more organized. My contribution of sixteen years of time and talent went into leadership roles in the National Association of Professional Organizers.

And the third verse was a variation of the organizing song, in 1991. It started by teaching people to organize their life, this time through the form of a 16-page tips booklet, *110 Ideas for Organizing Your Business Life*. The words to that tips booklet were so sing-able that over a million copies in four languages and various formats got scattered around the world. People saw the booklet and then wanted to know how they could create one of their own.

Early on after writing the booklet, I started teaching people to transform their own knowledge into their own tips booklet and other formats of information products. Those products could be used by the author and their clients for marketing, motivating, and making money. Now, in 2006, there are thousands of booklet authors worldwide who have

learned to take their expertise and create their own tips booklets, audio products, and other variations of their content as both hard copies and downloadable versions. My song gets sung over the telephone wires presenting teleclasses, in person speaking in front of audiences, on audio CDs, in print, and through the pixels of the Internet.

Each of these melodies found me. The music part found me when I was a child, as did the organizing part. The knowledge was given to me so I could share it, and share it at the most basic level to beginners each and every time. The children at school had never held a violin before. The clients ready to get organized had never before set up a filing system or managed their time. Many of the people who wanted to write booklets thought they did not know how to write so they got a very simple formula to guide them.

I am a teacher by training and nature. The students and the content showed up for me to be the conduit to pass it along. It feels like there may still be one or two more verses to the song I sing, maybe more. They will present themselves when it's time for them to appear.

Paulette Ensign
Tips Products International
San Diego, CA
858-481-0890

Paulette@tipsbooklets.com
www.tipsbooklets.com

Author of *How to Promote Your Business with Booklets*

MY SONG OF LOVE

I sing the Song of Love. It is my answer to Hitler. My parents and I lived through Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass, November 9, 1938—the dress rehearsal for the Holocaust. We then fled to America. I was eleven years old.

I have always felt that I must make my life matter. And I looked for meaning.

In my early twenties, I realized that there was a loving God. We are here to love and serve God, through the love and service of our fellow human beings.

I became a writer. I realized that some day I would have to write the story of Jesus. In my mid-thirties, confronted by my own mortality, I asked myself, “If life were to end right now, what would you regret not having done?” Only one thing—not having written that book. So I set about to write it.

It appeared as, *My Jewish Brother Jesus*, and was republished by iUniverse in 2003, as *A Jewish Novel About Jesus*.

I am a practicing, observant Jew. I wrote the book to provide a better understanding of Jesus, the Jew, and of Judaism from which he emerged. I wrote it to create better understanding between Jews and Christians, so we could live together, respectful of one another, in dignity and peace.

Four more books followed. All may be explored or ordered at www.amazon.com, or www.iUniverse.com They are:

ABRAHAM, THE DREAMER: An Erotic and Sacred Love Story. A biblical novel about Abraham, Sarah and the other woman, Hagar—Abraham, the first biblical patriarch, who gave us the God worshiped by Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

SPARKS OF SPIRIT: How To Find Love and Meaning

in Your Life 24 Hours a Day. An exploration of love and a spiritual outlook on life.

THE MESSIAH OF MIDTOWN PARK, A Contemporary Comedy-Drama (Screenplay) What might happen if the Messiah appeared today?

TO LIFE! TO LOVE! In Poetry and Prose, A Spiritual Memoir is an exhilarating journey through the four seasons of life that speaks to heart, mind, and soul. The first section, Poetry, contains seventy poems. The second section, Prose, contains spiritual articles about timeless, universal issues, and the keynote speech the author delivered when he was invited to return to his hometown, Krefeld, Germany, on the fiftieth anniversary of Kristallnacht, in 1988.

The speech concludes with these words:

“If there is a central truth to be snatched from the flames of Kristallnacht and the Holocaust it is this: that we must always remember our common humanity. In case of conflict, in case we are forced to choose between ideology and our common humanity, we must choose humanity.

Can we build bridges again? Yes. We should, we must. Because, after all is said and done, there is only one answer left: Love and Reconciliation.”

I consider my books my answer to Hitler and the Holocaust. They deal with love and the search for meaning. They are the songs I came to sing.

Rolf Gompertz

Rolf Gompertz Communications

North Hollywood, CA

818-980-3576

rolfgompertz@yahoo.com

www.Amazon.com, www.iUniverse.com

PART OF THE PLAN

I recently launched a window on emerging culture, my blog, www.newparadigmdigest.com, that provides readers with evolutionary news that illuminates consciousness in action. The world is being re-imagined and redesigned by many people and NPD shares their stories. Our mission is to inspire, empower, and connect visionaries. I personally interviewed over 200 people, and many of the interviews will be featured at the site over the coming months and years.

There were catalysts to my current work that included a pinched nerve that put me in so much pain I couldn't sleep for more than an hour a night. I asked my pain why it was there and I heard "I am the pain of the separation of who you are and who you're pretending to be." There was a cluster of personal tragedies around 9-11. My cat died and my mother passed away within days of 9-11 and I again heard a voice that said "go out and do something good for the world." I bought a video camera, took a production class at a local college, and hit the road in my hybrid to conduct the interviews.

But prior to all this, I was living in Nashville for a short time, met singer-songwriter Kim Morrison and together, we wrote a song called *Part of the Plan* on the way to her concert. The song was a way of talking to myself and anyone else who needed encouragement in their life.

Lyrics of *Part of the Plan*

How can you fly
With the past on your wings
Bound by the shackles
that loneliness brings

What's in tomorrow
when you're so down today
your heart turns to stone
while your mind flies away

How can you look
and still fail to see
who is the person
you long to be

what is the reason
you're no longer free
you are the jailer
you hold the key

be here now
you're in command
the secret of life
you hold in your hand

open your heart
and you'll understand
your part of the puzzle
part of the plan

whenever you're down
just count all the ways
that you're really lucky
despite your bad days

remember the people
who inspire you
don't wallow in sorrow
you'll make it through

be here now
you're in command
the secret of life
you hold in your hand

open your heart
and you'll understand
your part of the puzzle
part of the plan

you're part of the puzzle
part of the plan.

Music: Jeff Hutner
Lyric's: Jeff Hutner &
Kim Morrison (on My Space)

Jeff Hutner
New Paradigm Digest
Ojai, CA
805-640-7214
jefhut@gmail.com
www.newparadigmdigest.com

FROM HEAVEN TO EARTH

First stanza

First I looked up at the moon . . .

It all started when I found lumps in my breast at 30. My mother had discovered a lump in her breast and had a mastectomy at 39. At the University of California Medical School at San Francisco, my body was investigated by a dozen physicians-in-waiting, and I was eventually told that my breast was cancer-free.

The lead doctor asked me if I were taking hormones for contraception. When I said yes, he replied that the pills I took probably caused the lumps, or fibroid masses as he called them. He said if I quit taking them the masses would probably go away.

I did, and they did. I had always taken medical authority as the final word. Now I thought again and began learning about my body. Four years later, Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, published LUNACEPTION. It described how a fertile woman could get to know her body so well that she could recognize, ahead of time, when she would be fertile. The key was timing and the moon. It was a simple idea, but one not known to civilized women. It became a liberating exercise, to be part of a cycle of the planet and the moon. I still sell an e-book of LUNACEPTION.

Refrain

My song
And how I came to sing it;
As above, so below.

Second stanza

Then I climbed the hills . . .

Through a fluke, I read in a newspaper about a man who had discovered a very long, ancient, wall in the hills above Berkeley. I wanted to know more. Although it took over a year, I found that man, and met a lot of other earth energy dowsers, spending 25 years since, thrashing about, it seemed, in the poison oak, discovering ancient rocks all over California, learning about the histories they revealed. I learned how to perceive the rocks from a distance, and read their stories as I got close. I also attended the West Coast Dowsing Conference at UC in the hills above Santa Cruz, giving talks there for more than 20 years about those stories and how they have been tested.

Refrain

My song
And how I came to sing it;
As above, so below.

Third stanza

And then I got down on my knees . . .

I found a wonderful shack in an oak woodland. Then I found a new job 50 miles away in Silicon Valley, couldn't handle the desperate commute, and so got a studio there during the week. I really wanted a garden in my new place. A conundrum. I stumbled upon a large native plant botanic garden nearby, and had a series of epiphanies: a) These plants lived there, all on their own; b) I could plant them in my new garden and not worry about them; c) I could count on my home, my planet, and its moon to show me the way.

Eventually, I published 59 issues of a newsletter, *Growing Native*.

Louise Lacey

Writer, Author, Editor/Publisher

Berkeley, CA

510-525-7502

LadyLFAB@earthlink.com

www.lunaception.net, www.growingnative.com

A HARMONY OF LOVE

I came to earth
To sing a song
And as I grew
My voice grew strong.

The melody came
From deep in my heart
But soon I found
I sang only one part

Of a symphony
That God had planned
For me to bring
To our beautiful land

I was but one voice
Until in time
Others joined in
And helped me to rhyme

In harmony
Our song burst forth
From east to west
And south to north

As our masterpiece
Was heard worldwide
Anger ceased
And hatred died

The world lived in harmony
As hearts beat as one
In a rhythm of love
That one voice had begun.

Adria Manary

Magic of Life Enterprises, Inc.

Oceanside, CA

760-940-9404

adriamanary@cox.net

www.mommymagic.com

*Author of Mommy Magic: Inspiring Stories and Creative
Activities to Deepen the Bond with your Child*

A SONG OF RENEWAL

I am singing my song—*I'm getting married*. You see, my song is a wedding song, a song about renewal. The song was tuned up one day in the shower—after returning from two weeks in Hawaii with Tony Robbins where we planned to use our “Night Out” adventure (dropped on another island with nothing but our wits) to get remarried. We decided that since we'd been married in two states, we might as well do all 50 states of our union. With our love for animals, our annual reweddings eventually (after being asked to use our wedding to generate good publicity) ended up being used to promote the work of animal sanctuaries around the country. So each year our renewal is also a renewal for animals that also need love and loyalty.

To spread the words, I am continuously writing letters to the editor, usually about the value of life. Besides our local paper, I've been printed in the *Time*, *Success*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Last August, my wife and I became charter members of the 4 X 20 Renewal for Life Relay team—married 20 times in 20 years in 20 states and having donated 20 gallons of blood to save lives.

My wife and I call marriage “The Ultimate Renewable Resource”—after being married in the world's first nuclear reactor. Giving blood rates pretty high, too. And like a good marriage, it can also save lives.

Of course, the thing that makes any song better, is having the perfect partner.

Tim Martin

1/2 of The New-reweds

Corona, CA

951-272-6344

Whatifl@earthlink.net

MIMI'S SONG

When I was a little girl born in Waverly, Ohio, my nickname was Mimi. I began creating stories before I learned to read. My grandfather typed them up and sent them out and we collected rejection slips which I valued as others value Blue Ribbons because they reminded me I had finished a story and mailed it out. I read every copy we had of *The Book of Knowledge*.

My favorite novels were *Little Women* and *Alice in Wonderland*. But I read every book in my grandfather's library whether or not I could understand them. I fell in love with Shakespeare and read all of his plays. My classmates teased me and called me "Shakey," in honor of my favorite playwright.

I loved movies, especially those with Margaret O'Brien, June Allyson, and all the musicals. Every time my nine sisters and brothers and I watched a movie, I would direct them in performing it over and over. When I was in the sixth grade I wrote a play, *Song of Slop Hallow*, based on our town, and my classmates performed it.

My Grandmother Brown dictated her life story to me while I was in high school. I was Valedictorian at Waverly High. At Ohio University I majored in creative writing and romance languages, was editor of *Sphere*, the literary magazine, and Phi Beta Kappa. I won a Fribourg scholarship to the Sorbonne and a prize from the French government for an autobiographical novel written in French, *Une Annee a Paris*.

For several years I wrote articles for national and international magazines such as *Catholic Digest*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Reader's Digest*, *Look*, and *Mother Earth News*. Then I decided what I really wanted to do was write books and I have been writing books ever since.

When a friend became a nun with Mother Teresa she invited me to watch her take her vows. I became a co-worker of Mother's and worked with Mother Teresa and her Missionaries of Charity in Mexico, California, South Africa, and Calcutta. Mother gave me permission to write about the work and I wrote *Mother Teresa, Called to Love* and *What Mother Teresa Taught Me*.

In 1990, I learned I had a life-threatening brain tumor. I became a Sick and Suffering Co-worker of Mother Teresa. After a ten hour surgery I was well on my way to a complete healing. I continued working with Mother Teresa's Sisters and writing my books.

San Diego Award Committee gave me a certificate of excellence for my book *Mother Teresa, Called to Love* and *Alexandria* (co-author Patricia Walden) tied for first place in Romance Novels. My former husband Lennox Raphael and I won first place for Unpublished Memoirs with *Garden of Hope, Autobiography of a Marriage*. I now have an agent and seven books for sale on Amazon.com and I'm writing full time.

Maryanne Raphael

Writers World

Carlsbad, CA

760-729-2575

maryanneraphael@juno.com

www.authorsden.com/maryanneraphael

FINDING MY VOICE

*At an abortion clinic somewhere in San Diego, my mom lay on a table about to end my life. Raped by my estranged and alcoholic father, she had decided she didn't want any more reminders of a relationship that had brought only abuse and heartache. She had already taken a drug to start the process when she heard a little voice that delivered the message that saved me. Startled but attentive, she scanned the room, but no one was there. Her heart fluttered and every hair on her body tingled with a strange kind of electricity as she heard the words, "It's a boy . . . and his name is Joshua." (Excerpt from *Guided: A Boy's Journey from Nothing to Everything*.)*

She walked out of the clinic in a daze. How could she take the life of a boy who God had already given a name? She knew I was supposed live, and even though she was unsure how she would handle it, she decided to bring me into this world.

My mom thoroughly believes that she heard the voice of God that day. And I believe He has been watching over me ever since. How else could I have survived the life that my mom had in store for me? She did her best, but as a drug addict, she could not support herself, much less a little boy . . . and three other children who depended on her. When I was four, my mom and I went on treasure hunts, but not with pretend pirates, and not for fun. We did it to survive. She called it dumpster diving, and I had no idea that other kids didn't play this great game.

I have lived in tents, hotels, homeless shelters, and a foster home that I ran away from. I have seen things I wish I'd never seen and saved my mother from committing suicide on three different occasions. My brother was in a gang and I was surrounded by drugs, but I knew in my heart that this was not

the life I was meant to live. I was always drawn to caring people and God opened the hearts of many who taught me that I could live a better life. But not until I was adopted at the late age of seventeen, did I understand the love of family and the feeling of security.

Just as my life was spared before I took my first breath, my life was again saved when I was brought into a loving home with two supportive parents and three encouraging siblings. In my previous life I rarely went to school, and when I did, I got in fights and felt like I was in prison. Now I have a 3.5 grade point average. Before, I wasn't sure where I would be sleeping at night. Now I have my own room. Before, the abuse around me made me scared and hungry for love. Now I get hugged every day. But through it all, I felt guided, keeping me from harm and out of trouble. And now, I have found my place—my true voice. I am finally singing the first notes of the song I came here to sing, and helping others to do the same.

Joshua Reando

Oceanside, CA

760-940-9404

Hopemaker1@yahoo.com

Author of *Guided: A Boy's Journey from Nothing to Everything*

MY MUSIC DREAM

Joe Sabah first asked me, “Are YOU Singing the Song You Came to Sing?” in the mid ‘80s. At the time I was struggling to find my niche in the business world to learn how to make a living. The question posed the reality that if you know what your song is, it is up to you to do everything in your power to sing it before you no longer have a chance. I have focused on that ever since.

My song is to experience and share the gift of music. I first realized that this was my “song” at about age six, when I witnessed a group of students practicing for a dance presentation with the song “Let’s Go to the Hop.” I was stunned at the action along with the beat of the music. It is one of my first recollections of the power of music.

I knew this was my song because there were many more revealing experiences confirming to me as I was growing up that I should follow the musical path. The musical theme recurred over and over. These are only a few of them. My father gave me an old tube-style radio that I listened to until I fell asleep while dialing the tuner up and down the frequencies. I would usually always stop on music that would catch my ear and hold me there for a while. My uncle had a jukebox in his basement that we played with when I visited my cousins. I always imagined in my play that I would be performing music to an unseen audience.

When my fourth grade teacher told us that we could join the school band if we had an instrument, I begged my parents for something to play. I was introduced to the trombone at the local music store and began singing my song through the trombone. I was in every school music program I could attend. I went before school, after school, and during the summer. I was in concert band, pep band, marching band, and the jazz

band. Although I had a great deal of fun and enjoyment, I never really got good at the trombone.

I first heard electric guitar music being played on the latest Hi-fi stereos from the windows of homes while walking through my neighborhood. It was a sound that attracted me although I was too young to really understand the impact it would eventually have on my life. When I found the guitar in 1965, the sound of The Ventures was my first real influence. My parents helped me get two of the “Learn to Play Guitar with the Ventures” albums. The lessons were quite effective. I’ve gone on to play many different genres of music. I never stopped and I’m still playing in a surf band in the Bay Area of California.

Mark Scardello
Tabsmark Audio
Petaluma, CA
415-225-1455
markscardello@yahoo.com

BELLY DANCING FOR THE MID-LIFE SOUL

I have been a student and performer of Middle Eastern belly dance for twelve years. I began this dance form at age 52 when a friend of mine told me she was taking an Adult Education class in Middle Eastern belly dancing. Here was an opportunity right in my own community. I was going to live out my adult fantasy—to be a belly dancer! And so I joined the class and have been a student ever since. I am now 69 and have no signs of slowing down.

In 1999, I started to teach a belly dance class to women over the age of 55. And why do I teach this class? Because I love helping women re-discover the magic and mystery of true feminine energy. Something miraculous happens to these women when they belly dance; they begin to emerge like an earth mother, a little girl, a prom queen, and a seductress all in one. I help them realize what I learned 16 years ago—that when we belly dance we get in touch with the profound wisdom and beauty of who we really are—no matter what our age or size of our belly.

I always tell them to love their belly . . . besides it is the only one they have! Eventually the women move toward greater self-acceptance and confidence. They learn to be empathic in response to the energetic music. They learn to lead, to follow, and to let go.

Belly dance is improvisational. There are basic moves to the dance, but once learned the dance becomes a personal expression of the dancer. Characteristic of today's dance are movements of the pelvis and undulations of the body. These movements are not socially taught in our culture. Instead, there are restrictions placed on the movement of certain body parts and how much they may be moved. Belly dance breaks

through those barriers, freeing up the body so women can fully express their feminine self.

Dance is a metaphor for life. In dance, we move through time and space, just as we do while we live out the passage of our lives. The belly dance is truly a unification of body, heart, and mind. It's also fun to get dressed up in a "costume," exercise our hips and our belly, and do this in a non-threatening atmosphere of acceptance of our female sensuality.

And finally, the belly dance helps women to return to where life begins, our primordial womb. What a wonderful way to find the connection between our heart and soul and the expression of our body.

Sandra Schrift
Career Coach to Speakers
San Diego, CA
619-688-9467
sandra@schrift.com
www.schrift.com

THE DAY I FELL IN LOVE—FOREVER

I will never forget the date—September 14, 1978. It was the day I fell in love! Not the dizzy, “I can’t live without you” kind of love, more of a long-lasting relationship that was going to fill my life forever.

Even though I enjoyed my role as a wife and mother, I felt that something was missing in my life. My daughter, Debbie, noticed my restlessness. She brought me the catalogue of classes given at the California State University, Northridge, where she was attending her third year of college. As I studied the various courses, it jumped out at me: “Psychology 101.”

Debbie told me many stories about how much fun she was having at school. She suggested that I apply to become a student and said that it would be fun to go to the same college as Mom. Once I attended the University, she must have changed her mind and called me “Lore” instead of “Mom” on campus.

Me, at the age of 51, sitting in class with those “kids”? I imagined myself sitting in a classroom, nobody talking to me because I was so much older than they were. I was afraid of saying something silly, of not getting good grades or even failing a class and looking ridiculous. But my curiosity and love of learning about people and the world were so strong that I could not give up my ambitious venture into the realm of education.

On the first day of classes, I found my classroom right away. There were only two young students sitting in the room. I had a choice to sit in the back and not be noticed or towards the front where my attention was less likely to wander during the lectures. I made my first courageous decision. I sat in the second row from the front. Not in the middle, but at the desk next to the door just in case I needed a quick escape.

The room started filling up and lo and behold, there were three more ladies in their early forties who looked as befuddled as I felt. We smiled at each other. I became very excited about the chance of going back to school and right away all my fears disappeared.

The spark turned to true love. I continued my formal education until I received my doctorate degree in psychology. I then opened a family clinic. To reinforce my love of learning, taking classes in folk guitar led to my teaching guitar to young children. Then dancing lessons led to many trophies in Competition Ballroom Dancing.

Now, at the age of 81, I am studying to be a coach to women who are facing life transitions.

In other words, I am hooked. My love affair with learning has created a very exciting life for me and the relationship continues to grow.

Lore Stone, PhD
Center for Personal Growth
Los Angeles, CA
310-475-8218
DrLoreStone@tooyoungtobeold.com
www.tooyoungtobeold.com

Colorado



I DON'T SING *MY SONG* ANYMORE

When I started my public speaking career in March of 2006, it was definitely NOT my idea! It's true that I was looking into a number of opportunities that might follow the eventual sale of my windshield repair business. But I was unprepared for the impact a little book entitled "Half Time" would have on my future. The author, Bob Buford, wrote this book in 1994 about his own journey "from success to significance," as he put it. When I got to chapter two, I was thunderstruck! He was describing precisely the same experience that I was going through. And I concluded that this time it would be God's business I would be about, and not my business with Him as a sometimes Helper.

It all made sense! All of my life experiences, certainly an eclectic collection of successes and failures, of "peaks" and "valleys," were now "inventory"!

So I embarked on my current journey.

Within a week of announcing publicly that I was now in God's speaking business, amazing, utterly unexplainable events began happening. Let me relate just one of them to you. There were dozens and they continue to occur nearly on a daily basis.

On March 9th, 2006, just eight days after publicly announcing the birth of my public speaking business, I was having lunch with my son Russ. My cell phone rang. It was George! I hadn't seen or talked with George for years. He was calling me from Denver to ask if I would be interested in speaking to the young people who would be gathered in Denver in April to celebrate Day at the Capitol, sponsored by The Christian Home Educators of Colorado (CHEC). This is the conversation:

"Hello, this is Bob."

“Hi Bob, this is George.”

“Hi, George! What a nice surprise! I haven’t heard from you for years! How are things going?”

“Great! Say, I know you’re busy with other things and I know this is a busy time for your windshield repair business, but I wanted to know if you would like to speak at our CHEC conference in Denver in April. There will be about 500 young people”

“Of course, George! I’d be glad to!”

“Wait! I know you’re busy with your other work and all”

“George, there’s no way you could have known this, but just last week I started a new business, public speaking, and I’ve committed it to Him! And here you are!”

“And here I am!” he laughed.

I am certainly not the first or the only person to have discovered this. It’s just that this is the first time in my life where I have *first* given my business to the Lord and then followed His leading entirely.

And so, I am no longer singing my song—I am singing His!

Bob Adelman
Breaking Glass for Ladypreneurs
Colorado Springs, CO
719-481-3890

bobadelmann@msn.com

www.BobAdelman.com

Author of *Cracking the Goldilocks Code: This Girl Didn’t Just Wander In from the Forest!*

WHEN A TREE FALLS IN THE FOREST

When a tree falls in the forest, is there sound? When I sing and no one hears, is there a song? This is one of those questions that cannot be answered without agreeing on the criteria. What makes a song?

I am a teacher. I teach biology, the science of life, for me, the philosophy of life. Understanding the scope of life and being attuned to the signs of nature reveals my life as part of a magnificent whole. When I see the moon and stars, I feel as large as the universe because I am a part of an immense whole.

I am a teacher. I teach biology. I apply what I teach to personal life. Recently I have condensed an Image course I designed into a presentation, *Steps to a Powerful Self-Concept*. This course helped students broaden their perspective, understand how their self and ideal images were developed, and how they could modify their image to suit their authentic selves. When I entered the world of business folk, I sang the song of developing a powerful self-image but there was no one in the forest.

Since I am a teacher, my personal experience adds to my teaching. I went through a divorce. The teacher in me had to learn why this was happening, what the rules were, what divorcing people “normally” endured, and what steps I could take to get through, recover, and even gain strength from the experience. So I wrote a book, *The Love Cycle*. I developed a presentation, *Recover from Divorce and GROW!* Was there anyone in the forest to hear this mournful song with a happy ending?

Yes, I am a teacher. I have gone through extreme adversity and been blessed by extreme opportunity. My life has been enormously rich and I want to share it. I could tell you stories about losing my home and possessions. Or I could tell

you a story about pioneering opportunities of settling in a third world country immediately after a prolonged civil war. I could tell you a story of a beautiful unaided birth at home. Or I could tell you a tragic story of my son's death. I could tell you a story about racial prejudice and discrimination, but I can also tell you how I feel about being part of the solution to the race problems that riddled the last century. And all of these stories I see through the eyes of a teacher of biology, a teacher of life, a human being with a place in the world. I want to share how I have overcome adversity. There must be people in the forest.

In my new teaching career as speaker, I have seen some people in the forest! I know there are more people hiding in the forest, and some waiting to emerge and tell their own stories as they listen to the lyrics and lilt of my song.

But even if there were no people in the forest now, there would be a song, because I am so alive when I sing. And who knows what or whom it will touch in the future.

Dr. Pam Akiri

Dr. Pam

Aurora, CO

303-873-6988

pakiri@netzero.net

Author of *The Love Cycle*

FANTASTIC! EVERYDAY IS FRIDAY!

We all have challenges in life and some are bigger than others. The key to life is to overcome adversity by tapping the vitality that exists within you. Troubles you encounter in life are out of your control, *but you control your response*. Negative thoughts will send you on a downward spiral into the dark side, draining your energy, and leaving you without hope. To be truly happy in life, it is necessary that you maintain a positive focus both internally and externally.

I know first hand. My wife of 19 years was killed in an auto accident, leaving me to raise our two young kids alone. It was difficult to deal with my grief and help my kids deal with their own. In the process I let substance abuse take me down, further increasing my doubt, fear, loneliness, and hopelessness. One day I woke up to a new reality! I realized all things happen for a reason. I have the power to control my response to the world. I quit drugs and alcohol cold turkey and experienced how my own thoughts could regenerate my hope, belief, faith, energy, and confidence.

To control my internal response to the world, I mastered the art of positive “self talk.” I believe I can do anything I want and it’s true! I look for the good in things and focus on positives. If thoughts circulate in our head long enough, our minds buy into them and we believe them. I chose a phrase to empower me; *FANTASTIC, Everyday is Friday!* I repeat that power phrase six to ten times a day.

Externally, I began to reflect my inner thoughts. I let go of always needing to be right, stopped using swear words, and no longer judge people. These actions lead to the dark side which is negative. I perform random acts of kindness and I treat all others as equals. I express my excitement for life, taking joy in the little things because it harnesses the power

within me. Taking time for myself and meditating have also helped me achieve peace within myself, in my work, and with all those around me.

Now I have the drive to believe in all I do, to overcome fear, to attract only good people or events into my life. I learned to take notice of my emotions; fear, sadness, and anger as this is the first sign of coming to peace with yourself. I contemplate what I want, believing it will eventually manifest itself. And I treat everyday as an adventure no matter how good or bad it is.

You can do this too! It's about getting *excited* everyday at the little things, believing in yourself and in others, having faith, hope, relying on God and the divine universe, using better words from within, being kind to all those around you, smiling, sharing, and speaking the truth. Take every day as a blessing as all things happen for a reason and with time and patience things work out.

Kirk Axelson

FANTASTIC!, Everyday Is FRIDAY!!!®

Westminster, CO

720-837-3290

kirk@FantasticEverydayIsFriday.com

www.FantasticEverydayIsFriday.com

THE SONG I'M SINGING

Thirty-five years ago, as I sang a song I had come to sing, a perfect storm of political, social, and personal circumstances interrupted, and my college teaching career came to an end. Over those next 35 years I hummed a number of tunes but never quite got the words to any of them right. Sometimes I even started singing a bit but seemed off key even to my own ears, but I knew God wanted me to sing.

Seven years ago I found myself in an ICU “cooling down,” as my cardiologist called it while I waited to find out if I needed bypass surgery or a lesser procedure. That night I prayed as I had never prayed before or since. It was not a desperate prayer, it was not a pleading prayer. It was a straight forward simple prayer that said, “I know it’s out of my hands now. Just walk with me.” I felt almost immediately a calmness and a peace I had never felt nor have yet to feel again.

After I recovered, I resumed my searching for a song to sing. But I felt empty and longed to feel that peace and calmness again.

Then last spring, in a seminar on the gospel of Luke , I was handed the sheet music for the song I had heard in the back of my head for most of my life. I decided at 65 to resume my studies, abandoned decades earlier. Only this time my studies in literature would serve as background for studies in sacred scripture.

Thus I am now enrolled full time in a masters program at the Augustine Institute in Denver. Although I have always stayed close to the Catholicism of my upbringing, it has been a kind of base-camp from which I could set out on journeys of exploration. I am learning, however, that I don’t know my base camp very well, or that I had neglected much of its truth and beauty.

If I am not yet fully singing the song I came to sing, I am learning the Word that needs to be sung, and I am beginning to do more than hum. I am finding I have much to learn from many who are younger than I, both fellow students and teachers, and I have much my years have taught me to tell them, students and teachers alike. My studies including learning a new language, Greek, are helping to keep my mind sharper than it might be and my soul more peaceful than it has been.

I feel I have been drawn to this for a larger purpose, one I have yet to fully understand. Whether my studies will lead me back to the classroom as a teacher or back to the keyboard as a writer, or both, is a mystery right now. I only know that the accompaniment I hear in the background is much clearer than it has been for a long, long time.

Bill Brown
3 Bee Press
Littleton, CO
303-932-2907
b.bache.brown@q.com

SONGS OF MY LIFE

We are blessed with music that we sing, music that we dance to, and music that we march to throughout our lives. The words, notes, and rhythms change, each phase of life has its own song, a chant, a simple melody, or a symphony.

My life began as a cowboy, yes, a real cowboy. I was raised on a ranch on the Crow Reservation in Montana. My father was part Indian and I attended tribal school on the reservation. The song I sang told of blue sky days of best friends who were horses. Nights were made of legends told beside the flickering campfire about the times of buffalo hunts, wars fought from the backs of running pinto horses, and tepee villages in the tall cottonwood trees along the river. The songs were accompanied by a drum beat and the cries of the tribal singers who sang and danced in the council circles. It was a song of hard work, long cold nights helping cows with their calves, and horses that did not want to be ridden into the biting winds of a blizzard.

Then I heard a far away trumpet, it played a song of other places. I left the Montana plains and arrived in Europe courtesy of the US Army. After two years of singing and marching to their song, I returned to attend college in Denver. As different as they were, I could not have sung one song without the other. I would never have left the Reservation life if the Army had not called with its bugles and drums. I would never have dared to dream that a breed Indian cowboy with nothing but a hat, a pair of Levi's, and a pair of moccasins (now hidden in the closet) could attend the University of Denver and become a CPA if I had not first learned how great battles are won.

A career in an international CPA firm was elevator music compared to what had gone before, but it was only an interlude to a chorus. Involvement in politics took me to Washington DC. My wall has photos of three presidents. My music was Hail to the Chief, and The Star Spangle Banner heard with trembling lips and moist eyes.

I returned to Colorado and then to the high plains of Wyoming, Montana, and Canada, this time as CFO and COO of a succession of natural resources companies. Now I wear boots on my feet and moccasins on my soul. Traveling out of Denver, my music now is quiet, background to a frantic pace of life but with a return to my roots, if only for a time. Each tune is built on the one before; each small song is only a part of a movement that will become a symphony. I can't sing, the music does not need a voice; it is in our hearts that we hear the music of our own soul.

The conductor stands at the lectern, the orchestra silently waits for the baton tap which will signal the next movement; it has been a wonderful concert so far.

Tory Brown, CPA

Aurora, CO

303-766-1467

ToryDBrown@aol.com

LIFE'S BEEN A JOURNEY

Life's been a journey—that's not over yet
With rhythms that moved me—and so often set
New things in motion—through their lyrical call
Some songs being happy—others melancholy, that's all

From childhood—to this very day
My songs saw me through—there's not much to say
From four cancers to brain injury—the music did range
Yet the deeper soul melody—never did change

“Am I Singing the Song—I came here to sing?”
A friend asked me recently—it had a sting,
as I wondered (though deep down—I already knew)
what on this Earth, *was* I here to do?

Yet as I sat in contemplation
I experienced a brand new sensation
The question was my answer—all that and more,
To not be complacent—stuck on life's floor

When did I know—what I was to sing?
Always—moment to moment, or when I would bring,
Through rhyming encouragement—a look of hope, or “ah ha!”
For someone's self recognition, direction—as they dropped
their jaw

“What is my song?”—I respond to my friend.
To encourage, inspire, and entertain—until my life's end.

Linda Sonnett Carlson

Celestine, LLC

Louisville, CO

(303) 284-0231

Linda@CirclesOfSeven.com

www.CirclesofSeven.com

Author of *Connecting the Creatives of 7 Continents*

BEING ABLE TO DO WHAT YOU LOVE, EVEN AT ZERO PAY

I recently founded a 501(c)(3) educational foundation, the Retirement Investing Institute. We seek to partner with universities and community-based organizations to educate the adult public on investing well. Our key differentiation is that we have, and allow, absolutely no product-sales bias. In fact, our speakers are not allowed to do commercials for themselves or employers.

I have been in the investments world my whole career—always in research and never in sales—and have been pretty successful personally. I spent the past 16 years as a senior analyst with Lipper, the mutual funds tracking organization. In that role and earlier ones, I learned a lot about the inside of the investments industry. Along the way I wrote five books for individual investors. I've been a frequent speaker for chapters of the American Association of Individual Investors (AAII) around the country.

I decided, before I got too old and regretted not doing it, to pursue my first passion, which is helping by teaching. The Institute seeks to extend to the public the type of work that AAII and the Better Investing movement do for their members. There are millions of families who need to become investors and savers, and millions of others who need to become better at it and to learn to sidestep the too-common scams and pitfalls. By doing what I'm now doing, I'm going to chip away at that huge opportunity, one person or one audience at a time. I won't "save the whole world," but the work will be its own reward, and we will make *some* progress.

Donald Cassidy
Retirement Investing Institute
Lakewood, CO
303-988-2296
Don@R-I-I.org
www.R-I-I.org

FREEDOM SINGS

I am Singing the Song I Came to Sing. To me, this means that you know in your heart that you are doing what you were put on this earth to do.

My song is to help military families stay strong and connected with each other when they go through the unique challenges of deployments and assignments. I do all I can to see that our communities don't forget about all the sacrifices the families are making so that we, as Americans, can enjoy the freedoms our forefathers ensured for us.

I knew this was my song because I went into it kicking and screaming! I was sure I wasn't the one for this job. But everything fell into place with timing and contacts. I had dreams of the book I was going to write, and of myself speaking to military folks even before I had made the first step in this direction. I wrote checks that I never would have written in my "past life" to support this vision.

For a number of years, as a professional speaker and trainer, I had known that I enjoyed what I did, but there was "something" missing. I wanted to have more fun and talk about things I loved. So I prayed to find a way to talk about families—even mine—and to really make a difference in the lives of others. While I struggled through this totally new career direction with an audience that I knew nothing about (the military), I finally looked back. What I saw *was* an answer to my prayers. I was talking about families—yes, even mine—and making a huge difference in their lives. *That* was when I knew that *this* was my song and finally . . . I was singing it!

Elaine G. Dumler
Frankly Speaking
Westminster, CO
303-956-0316

Elaine@ElaineDumler.com
www.ImAlreadyHome.com

*Author of I'm Already Home . . . Again—Keeping Your Family
Close While You're on Assignment or Deployment*

THERE'S ONLY ONE THING TO LEAVE BEHIND

He died at almost 91 and left nothing to us, my brother and me. It was unexpected that such a frugal man would leave nothing to his children. Instead, his second wife of only four years was signer on all his accounts and everything went to her. March 2008 marked a turning point for me.

At first I was so angry. I felt betrayed. I wondered if he really understood what he was doing. But only a few weeks after his death it didn't matter any more. I just wanted to be able to be sad that my dad was gone. It was an awakening for this Army brat who was adopted in Germany at two, came to the States at four, and moved nine times by the time she was 14. Was this perceived "betrayal" my father's last gift—a blessing?

Truly on my own now. It's up to me to make my life whatever it will be. I awoke one day thinking, "*The only thing we have to leave behind is a piece of ourselves—the story of who we were and how we lived our lives.*" This was not a new concept to me, but the frame was different.

In 2000, at 45, I struck gold. I found the work that made my heart soar—documenting individual life stories. What could be better than receiving the gift of a bound book with your own stories and pictures to pass on to family and friends.

In 2002, after more than 20 years in the corporate world as an administrative assistant, I was laid off. I rarely looked back. In fact, in jest I would say to folks, "Do you see that huge corporate chip on my shoulder?" Now at five years post-corporate-world, I know I won't return.

The path of entrepreneurship is not an easy one, but the thrill comes at the smallest spark of light. A heartfelt comment after a speaking engagement, "You're a very good speaker. I really enjoyed your talk. You've inspired me to get started

writing those stories.” A student in one of my writing classes, “I’ve attended lots of classes and you’re one of the best instructors I’ve had.” I land a book project that brings a sweet pouch of gold, a potential client’s closing question, “What do I write the check for?” I’m caught off guard. He doesn’t even want to know the total cost of doing such a project!

In a final email from Dad only three weeks before the end, he commented, “Hope you are still doing the work which you like best. With love, Dad.”

I responded, “Things are improving on the biz front; yes, I’m still doing the work I love. Finishing up on a nice project for an aerospace engineer who worked on all the space projects from 1957-1976. I’d love to be able to share it with you. Let me see if I can get you a copy. It might give you some ideas for your own!! <<still dreaming>>” He never saw the book.

I never got my father’s stories, or my mother’s, the way I wanted to. I’ll have to piece together what little I know, but I honor them both every time I speak, every time I teach a class, and all along the way I sing my song and help everyone I meet to hear the melodies and harmonies of their own lives.

Lissa Ann Forbes
The Elemental Press
Lafayette, CO
303-885-0652

Lissa@TheElementalPress.com

www.TheElementalPress.com, www.TheSelfPubCoach.com

Author of *Write from the Inside: Dig for Treasures, Discover Yourself, Leave a Legacy*

A CROW IS JUST A CANARY WITH ATTITUDE

Be still for a moment. Listen in your heart and hear a canary. A high, sweet whistle. A beautiful tune. You wonder if God was saying, “I want to hear music and this is it!”

Now listen again in your heart. Hear a crow. A loud raucous sound. A scream, a yell, and scolding, all mixed together. You wonder if God was saying “I want to hear noise and this is it!”

I am a crow in a world of canaries. I have spent a lot of years being quiet, so people who didn’t want to hear me wouldn’t have to. My family was full of canaries. You went to college, got good jobs, good marriages, good kids.

And there I was. Divorced with one child. Working as an Office Manager in a small company. I soon learned to just stay quiet and do what I was supposed to do. No literal singing, no figurative songs.

Then along came my husband and best friend, Randy. Randy liked crows. He wanted me to speak up, speak out, and be the best me I could be. He raised our daughter, Leanne, from the age of nine as if he had been her daddy from day one. He enrolled me in the Mrs. Colorado pageant at the age of 39! Suddenly, the canaries had a back-up singer. Randy reminded me that God wanted to hear the “noise” of all of the birds, not just the melodic sounds of the songbirds.

We lived in a very small community in western Colorado called Cedaredge. As Leanne grew up, I began to realize that I had a story to tell, a song to sing. I only needed to know how to tell it and who to tell it to.

I drove across the Rocky Mountains and went to my first meeting of the National Speakers Association. I walked into a room full of canaries. They all had their message, *the look*, the right contacts, and beautiful ways of speaking. I was

a large black crow who felt like I stuck out among all of these beautiful birds. The funny thing was, these canaries spread their wings and said “Welcome Crow, we need your new voice.”

When Leanne went off to college, Randy and I moved to Denver, where I started my own training company called Keep Your Staff and work with businesses to retain their most valuable assets—their employees. I caw, I flap, I sing, I laugh. I have my back-up singers—my husband, my daughter, my friends, and my family.

In case you got totally lost in the metaphor, I learned to open up, speak out, and be happy. I am not rich—*yet*, but every day I get up and say “Wahoo, I get to do what makes me happy today!” Can you say that?

Diana Hall

Keep Your Staff

Westminster, CO

303-596-4825

Diana@KeepYourStaff.com

www.KeepYourStaff.com

Author of *Coffee and Other PERCs: How to Keep Your Staff*

SEEING WITH SOUL EYES

I am a writer, singer, teacher, and speaker, and, I'm totally blind. Through my motivational presentations, CD, and book my intent is to bring hope and inspiration to others empowering them to spread their wings and fly.

My journey as a blind woman has been full of challenges. Born ten weeks premature I was placed in an incubator for six weeks where the life-saving oxygen damaged my retinas, resulting in Retinopathy Prematurity. I had partial-sight as a child and could see colors, draw, bike, and chase butterflies. Due to a natural progression of RP, my eyes began to deteriorate, and I became totally blind by age eleven.

My parents had a difficult time accepting my disability. They isolated and excluded me from the normal activities of daily life. Their inability to help me become independent, made me feel like a prisoner. I felt alone and learned I couldn't count on them for anything. They didn't hear, value, or respect me. They closed their eyes to my blindness, hoping I would wake up one day sighted and normal.

Wanting to escape my childhood realities, I immersed myself into playing piano and singing. I have always loved music, and when deciding what to "do" with my life, naturally making music and singing became my focus and passion. I have a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Master of Music degree both in vocal performance as well as a Master of Arts degree in psychology and counseling.

Due to my blindness, my singing career spiraled unexpectedly. First, while singing for a national competition in Portland, Oregon, I was told by the astute judge "How can you have a career in singing when you are blind"? I was disqualified. Then later, I was informed I couldn't obtain a Doctorate degree in voice since: "It would take us too long to

teach you.” and I left the program. Disheartened, I gave up music “forever.”

Four years ago I had a wake up call to follow my vision of telling my story and singing my song. I was at a emotional, spiritual, financial, and creative crossroads. Being out of money, forced to sell my house, facing the death of my mother, undergoing a hysterectomy, and having to have my eyes removed, I became empowered that writing, singing, and speaking my story was my “truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God.”

Through my journey of obstacles, and challenges I have learned that my truth is real, my experiences are valid, and my feelings are genuine. My desire to fly is bigger than my fear of falling. I have choice in how I look at life. I can be paralyzed and victimized by my circumstances or empowered by them. I choose the latter. I believe that vision is internal, not external, and is guided by my heart /soul, not my eyes. In order to be free, to fly, I must “Live my dreams and fly on my wings.”

Gail Hamilton

Wings to Fly

Englewood, CO

720-984-8082

wingstoflynow@comcast.net

www.spreadyourwingstofly.com

EMBRACE EACH DAY

In my opinion, singers like John Denver had more than one song to sing and many different styles. The people they reached are blessed for that. In a similar way, upon my path here, I hope and trust that I can achieve that.

An important spiritual aspect I have discovered is that when I am “on” the path and singing the song I came to sing I feel an inner joy, an inner peace, and a feeling of alignment with those all around. The right people, places and situations pop up, all inspirational.

When I was a teen I dreamed of being married and adopting kids nobody else wanted. Another goal was to be an elementary school teacher. At an early age I learned that if I am not getting to sing the song I thought I wanted to sing it was because God wanted me to sing a different song.

The universe brought these unique and amazing people into my life who noticed that I spoke and interpreted the world differently in the 1970s. Since I was 19 years old people were asking me to speak. At 22 years old I was asked to offer the first public class in community colleges called, “A Course in Miracles.” I was one of the “originators of therapeutic touch and touch for health.” This coordinated with being one of ten women to help open one of the first women’s clinic in the 1970s.

It was fun being invited internationally to meet public figures such as President Bush in the 1980s, Shirley McLaine, John Denver, Rosanne and Tom Arnold. Some of my valuable teachers who assisted me in singing the songs I came to sing were Marilyn Van Derbur, Joe Sabah, Adnan Sarhan, Swami Parmanandji, Yogi Shanti, Coreen and Shanti Toll, Dylan Lauren, and Barbara Overton. It is fun when someone else embraces our song.

At 23 years old, I was offered what many people say they think they want—public notoriety. I promised God that if I was still alive at 50 years old and if He still wanted me to do more on a larger scale, please give me the maturity and the boundaries, and the strength to offer more.

Well, amazingly I have reached 50 years old, with many trials and tribulations, and six death experiences. The universe has stretched to me to sing many more songs than I imagined I could sing. Presently, through the grace of God, I have written 20 books and now six are published. After some book signings in New York, I was offered a cable DCTV show that still airs. The most wonderful part of my life is that I love being a mom, and a partner with Chuck. These are my songs, as I embrace each day with a new awareness: to be the best Mom and partner, hostess to the planet, and that I can be honest with myself along this amazing journey.

Linda Lee Landon

Denver, CO

303-254-9747

LindaLeeLandon@yahoo.com

www.lindaleelandon.com

THE GIFT OF A MENTOR

I am a Practitioner and Instructor of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). Practitioners of TCM are more commonly known as acupuncturists because acupuncture is the most commonly known therapy that we use. At the TCM school I was blessed to meet my mentor, Jim Ramholz, O.M.D. Jim fostered a love in me for pulse diagnosis, the key to determining the cause of disease/symptoms. From there I could never look back! I love feeling patients' pulses, talking with them about their energetic imbalances, using acupuncture needles to create balance, and then re-feeling their pulses to see how the treatment worked. It's beautiful to see people's energy change right before my eyes. I get immediate feedback about how the person is responding to acupuncture.

Unfortunately my beloved mentor passed away suddenly in 2004 leaving an enormous void in the pulse diagnosis training part of TCM. Since I was Jim's protégé and had access to much of his work including many personal communications, I decided that I couldn't let his wonderful pulse diagnosis teaching die with him. So I teach other acupuncturists what Jim taught me along with new developments that I discover as time goes on and I feel more and more pulses. In every class I honor Jim by telling the class about my gratitude toward Jim for discovering in me the love of pulse taking and doing acupuncture to help people get well. Even though, as time goes by, more and more acupuncturists in my classes have no idea who Jim Ramholz was, I still honor him both in the spoken and written word for making me who I am today in my practice of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

My students, who are also practitioners of Chinese Medicine, tell me that they can see my love for my mentor

show through as I teach. I love singing the Pulse Diagnosis and TCM songs!

Martha Lucas, PhD, LAc
Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine Denver
Denver, CO
303-947-6224

DrMLucas@AcupunctureWoman.com

www.AcupunctureWoman.com,

www.CosmeticAcupunctureFacelifts.com

THE WRITING IS ON THE WALL, JUST READ BETWEEN THE LINES

After colorful detours, I am singing the song I came to sing and I'm only getting warmed up!

I inspire people with unusual information; telling them all about themselves, their mate, their date, and even their employees! All this from their handwriting. I speak to groups about this ancient science that has truly stood the test of time and has been around since the early days of Aristotle and now is used as a cutting edge tool in business among other things.

One of the strongest human urges we have is the desire to expand more fully into who we really are. We all have “good and ungood” things in our handwriting. What we write comes from the conscious mind and how we write comes from the subconscious mind.

That is why, when you change your writing (just a little bit) you can change your life. You can change your tune and sing the song you were meant to sing, in your own voice, not someone else's. I use this knowledge to empower people; to help people understand themselves and those around them more intimately and authentically.

How did I get here? I was born into a highly unusual family with a father whom I adored. He was ahead of his time, a real pioneer in metaphysics, healing, spirituality—he was one of the early chiropractors and had an extraordinary gift of healing. My entire childhood was submerged in learning about the many mysteries in life, including holistic health, spirituality and a brief introduction to graphology. An ancient science so uncannily accurate it's often perceived as mystical. I've been featured in cover stories in magazines, I've analyzed the Presidential candidate's handwritings in front of millions of people on TV and radio, had full page articles published about

me in newspapers, I've been interviewed for a high profile murder trial and analyzed John Doe to Jennifer Aniston. I'm the author of the book, *Rate Your Date Before You Mate: 72 Handwriting Analysis Tips* and I offer an online home study course. I'm blessed to have had people sign up from all over the world to learn this unique study.

But it wasn't always that way.

Despite having such an avante garde childhood, I ignored it feeling I should take the "practical path." I got a college degree after changing majors countless times and ended up in corporate America, miserable, and feeling like a caged bird with clipped wings for many unfulfilling years. I wasn't happy, I wasn't singing, and I wasn't having any fun.

Finally one day, I took a leap of faith and started down a different path. I went back to school and studied healing work, became an instructor, went into private practice, and got master certified in graphology.

At last, I feel like I've come home to myself.

Kathi McKnight

Rocky Mountain Graphology Association, LLC

Aurora, CO

303-693-2511

Kathi@KathiMcKnight.com

www.TheHandwritingExpert.com

Author of *Rate Your Date Before You Mate: 72 Handwriting Analysis Tips*

A SONG I'VE COME, ALBEIT CIRCUITOUSLY, TO SING

Yours truly was a religion major as an undergrad, got an M.A. in philosophy (masters thesis on the concept of revelation), an M.A. in English, and a PhD in humanities—dissertation on the Book of Job). Subsequently he taught religion classes at Metro State College, where he was a professor of philosophy. You'd think all that would have provided a clue as to his niche as a speaker, a profession to which he turned during one of his several mid-life crises. But no, he thought you had to fit into one of the categories in the directory of Colorado Speakers Association—now National Speakers Association/Colorado. So he made presentation skills his area of expertise, not without good reason, mind you. His mother had been a speech teacher and he a radio and television announcer. It's not like the guy had to learn from scratch. He knew enough to write a book—*Get In Bed With Your Audience and Satisfy Them EVERY Time*—that serves as a text for all speech communication classes at St. Mary's University of Minnesota. He did have enough sense to grasp that good communication was important to leadership, so he developed a leadership talk that got him some decent gigs. But not enough. And he'd sooner vote for a neo-con than fuss with marketing.

Then lo and behold, he broke with custom and attended a president's gala of the aforementioned organization. As he stood by listening to hotshots lamenting how few, if any, gigs they had that month, a strange woman approached him. Said she, "I just wanted to meet a man who has the balls to wear tennis shoes with a tux."

"I love it when a woman talks about my body parts," replied he. Instant connection; they danced the night away.

And who, pray tell, was the mystery woman? A minister of a unity church. She invited the protagonist of our tale to speak at her church, described to him how much extra money she made moonlighting as a wedding officiant, and oh, we won't go there. It was an epiphany: Our boy, who had served a church while getting that PhD (with which and \$1.75 he can get a small coffee most anywhere) saw his course and embraced it, rarely looking back to reprimand himself for not having seen it sooner (the schmuck!).

Today he doesn't market (that's for heavyweights), doesn't have to keep his material cutting edge (tradition rocks), never has to undergo the special scrutiny his artificial hip provokes at airports, or suck up to a meeting planner. People call him and are grateful if he's available. Lots of free meals at the receptions that often follow the ceremony of which he is the master. And best of all, he gets the gratitude of bride, groom and guests for a job well done—even an occasional gratuity. Sometimes he allows himself a little delusion. When the audience, following his “I now pronounce you man and wife,” bursts into applause, he pretends it's for him.

Dr. Gary Michael

The Talk Doc

Denver, CO

303-355-9926

TalkDoc@ecentral.com

www.drgarymichael.com

SINGING MY SONG: THE EIGHT WORDS THAT WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE

I began singing my song consciously very late in life. At 60 years of age I began presenting to audiences through writing and speaking. I teach a new paradigm of the astounding results of our unconscious use of language. My late emergence to the public wasn't because I was slow but because I needed many years and many unusual experiences in order to find and then learn my song. My story in the briefest version begins in my childhood with a blind father where, in order to communicate with him, I learned to be very sensitive to language and the mental images created by language.

Before I could find my unique message and service to the world, I had to raise two families of children. First, I raised two birth children to young adulthood who gave me the experience of the *unconscious* way of living. Then I adopted two sets of twins as infants and began the parenting journey again. Those twins were my partners in discovering a key to a more conscious way of living. They provided unique experiences that required that I apply what I'd learned with my blind father in a new, and as it turns out, a magical way.

Once we discovered *The Eight Words That Will Change Your Life* we began exploring other ways and applications to use the magic of language. Eventually I was ready to teach the Eight Words to family and friends and then after some help from Joe Sabah, began to speak to larger and larger groups of people.

You can hear *The Eight Words That Will Change Your Life*, free at www.LanguageOfAttraction.com

Joyce Morris
Impact Language
Golden, CO
303-374-1945
joyce@LanguageOfAttraction.com
www.LanguageOfAttraction.com

MY 'SINGING THE SONG' STORY

My 'Song' started in Steubenville, Ohio in 1958. I was hired as a sales representative for Western Southern Life Insurance. After observing me for few weeks my manager, Stanley M. Pearson said "Joe, the Dale Carnegie course is coming to town and I feel you might benefit from it."

I checked out the Dale Carnegie course at the YMCA. Halfway up the stairs to the meeting I heard people talking and laughing and having a good time. I said to myself "You're either an introvert or an extrovert." Turning around and returning home, I labeled myself an introvert.

The following day Mr. Pearson asked me, "How did it go?" I lied saying I got too busy and didn't have time to go.

The next year, I went to the same Dale Carnegie course again. This time I sat in the back of the room clutching my wallet thinking, "people can't change." I went home—again.

Year number three, I found myself once again at the YMCA. This time from the front row I listened to testimonials of many people whose lives had been changed by taking the Dale Carnegie course and living his principles.

When the instructor said, "If you don't get everything you want out of the course you get all your money back and you get to keep the books." *Such a deal*, I thought. I gave them my check for \$120 and never looked back.

That was 1957. Today, in 2008, if I had to come up with \$20,000 to gain the benefit of the Dale Carnegie course I would do it. His teachings have had the most influence on my life followed by my other three "dads."

Dad #1: Dale Carnegie taught me, "don't criticize, condemn, or complain," and "give honest sincere appreciation." This philosophy is a major part of who I am today.

Dad #2: Dr. Norman Vincent Peale taught me “The Power of Positive Thinking.” This has often been a source of comfort in times of challenge, especially after a stroke four years ago.

Dad #3: Cavett Robert taught me, “find something that you enjoy doing so much that you'll gladly do it for nothing ... then get good enough at it that you actually do get paid for it.” Now, for nearly 30 years I've followed Cavett's advice. In addition, I've asked those in my classes, seminars, and books, “Are you singing the song you came to sing?”

Dad #4: Jesus Christ taught me in MT 7:7, “ask and you shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it'll be opened.” As I work to live this philosophy, I teach it to all my students.

These four surrogate dads have given me the education, philosophy of life, and guidance I need daily.

My dad, Moses Sabah and my mom, Anna Sabah came to America from Lebanon in 1928. I was their first child to be born in the USA ... yippee! My dad died when I was about nine. My mom raised me and my four siblings by herself. Both mom and dad have influenced me in a very positive manner.

My song is a tribute to all of these folks who have helped shape my life. In addition, I believe I've been put on this earth to challenge others to not only sing their song, but also to encourage them to at least start humming a tune and singing their songs.

Joe Sabah
Pacesetter Publications
Denver, CO
303-722-7200
Joe@JoeSabah.com
www.JoeSabah.com

MY LIFE IS MY SONG

Are You Singing the Song You Came to Sing? Are You Bringing to Earth All the Joy You Can Bring? These lines from a poem written by Marti Belknap have kept me in touch with my “song.”

Since 1973 my song has been a journey of personal growth. In January that year I first heard Glenn W. Turner speak. His message to me was “you can be, have, and do anything you want.”

Until that time I had never heard those words. I bought into them, hook, line, and sinker. These words started me on the discovery process of who I am.

Today I feel what Glenn W. Turner was really saying that day in 1973 was, “you can be, have, and do anything you want if you are willing to uncover for yourself who you are.”

Over the years a number of others have supported me in unearthing the definition of who I am and what song I am here to sing. Thanks to three brilliant men who are among those mentoring me to where I am today: Brad Blanton, PhD, author and speaker, for his work with Radical Honesty; Thomas Leonard, the father of the coaching profession for all the many distinctions he shared and awareness he made possible for me; Wayne Carpenter, Chairman of Axiometrics for devoting his life to the study of Axiology, the Science of Value.

Who I am is a communicator, relater, and leader. These are skills and talents I have been blessed with and what I am here on this earth to do.

I know I am the only one who can share these talents in the way I do. There are many others who have these same talents and share them in different ways.

Because I'm the only one who can express these talents my way, it is my responsibility to do so.

Sometimes when one hears the word responsibility, it feels heavy, like a burden, something one must do.

That is not how responsibility for sharing my talents feels to me. It is when I am willing to live in this responsibility, and share my talents, that I am singing the song I came to sing—and I am happy!

I express who I am, “sing my song,” through coaching, speaking, and writing.

From time to time I am conveying a different message. Remember at the beginning of this story I mentioned that since 1973 I have been on a personal growth journey? Besides expressing my talents I must always be growing and expanding. That is the reason I will be delivering different topics from time to time. As I master an area of knowledge, a new learning experience will emerge in my life and as part of my growth I will be communicating that new message to others.

Whenever I am not feeling totally alive, I know that something is missing; somewhere I am not expressing my talents.

When I'm feeling good, I'm singing my song!

Judy Sabah, MCC, PMC
Sabah International Inc.
Denver, CO
(303) 777-1765
Judy@JudySabah.com
www.JudySabah.com

BEAT AND PASSION—MY LIFE IN SONG

As Elizabeth's friends will tell you, successful Colorado entrepreneur Elizabeth Suárez loves to “sing life's song.” Everyday, she sings it with passion and *entusiasmo*, even though she doesn't know the words. That's right. And that's how she likes it!

Even as recently as a few years ago, Elizabeth's “life song” was all too routine and recognizable. It was a monotonous, unfulfilling theme with the same words in every stanza, the same beat in every refrain. She knew every crescendo and every repeat. The more she was expected to sing this life's song, the less she felt like singing.

Then, in December 2005, she walked up to the world's illusory conductor, snatched the baton from his hand and took the maestro's podium herself. She opted out of her longtime business and non-challenging marketing-based career of some 15 years, and began to hum the rekindled melody she had been hearing for years in her heart—her real life's passion.

Today Elizabeth Suárez is the owner of Avanza Business, LLC, a communication and information-sharing business committed to providing interactive training, facilitation, and mediation as well as research expertise on the topics of conflict resolution, cultural understanding, and strategy. She works out of her home office which allows her to spend more dedicated, quality time with her most important “clients” her daughter, husband, and mother. She also prefers her new self-managed schedule to ensure she has time to give back to the Denver community, especially to young Latinas “buscando dirección y el amor propio” (searching for direction and self-respect). A Puerto Rican native herself, Elizabeth understands the importance of instilling value and self-worth in our nation's

future Latina leaders, and the imperativeness of teaching them similar “life songs” to the one she now vocalizes.

Does Elizabeth know the words to her new “life anthem”? Does she know in which key it will end? No! But that doesn’t stop her from singing loudly, spiritedly, from the depths of her soul. In fact, her newfound lyrical contentment makes this, her new self-composed vocational symphony, more compelling, and she is perfectly at ease making up her own words and tapping her feet on the pavement—and to her own syncopated beat—on a daily basis.

Expressing her expertise, talents, skills, and passion in one fantastic, “rewritten” career opus is the song Elizabeth was destined to sing—her heart, her friends, her family members, and her more than satisfied clients all confirm that.

Ella Fitzgerald, unarguably the most influential jazz vocalist of the 20th century once said, “The only thing better than singing is more singing.” And, that is exactly what Elizabeth Suárez intends to do.

Bravo! Encore!

Elizabeth Suarez
Avanza Business Group
Castle Rock, CO
720-635-5535
elizabeth@elizabethsuarez.com
www.elizabethsuarez.com

NOW AN INTERNET GRANDMA

My life has been richer, fuller, and more exciting than I ever imagined it could be. During my undergraduate career I agreed with my physics professor to not pursue advanced courses because, after all, I would just be getting married.

I did marry, put my husband through graduate school and raise two children and so much more!

Two accidents, my introduction to Transactional Analysis in 1968 and to Feminism in 1970 led us to create a business and personal partnership that far exceeded my wildest expectations.

My husband, Jonathan B. Weiss, Ph.D. and I and several colleagues started Empowerment Systems in 1972. The others left a few years later and we have been in business together since 1976. I earned my M.A. in Psychology in 1974 and my Ph.D. in Health and Human Services 20 years later. We have been married for over 47 years.

My life work as a psychotherapist, coach, consultant, and writer is based on my unshakeable belief that people are doing the very best they can with the resources they have available to them at any given moment. I am committed to helping people learn to love and appreciate themselves and each other.

As a relationship coach and a writer, I am not afraid to speak difficult truths, and I help my clients discover what is true for them and learn to communicate it to others with compassion, grace, and skill.

My five published books have reached over sixty thousand people and opened many doors. We have taught in ten countries outside the US, and my work has been translated into Spanish, French, German, Portuguese and Mandarin, Russian, and Simple Chinese Characters.

My passion for experiential learning has led me on many strange and wonderful paths. I have been blessed by elephants in India, walked on hot coals, “flown” in a wind tunnel, visited Camelot, flown over the Pyramids, and viewed the temples at Khajurajo.

Each time I considered retiring from my work as a psychotherapist and relationship coach, I discovered that it was difficult to have the kind of meaningful conversations I love and that people pay me for. I enjoy my work too much to stop, although I am working less because my five grandchildren live in two distant cities, and I love to spend time with them too.

Jon and I have been involved in putting my work on the internet because much of it is still valuable and it is a legacy I want to be used. I have three blogs as well as several websites where I publish articles and books.

I love to write, but promoting books in person is a lot of work. I have spent several years learning to write sales letter web sites in order to promote my materials in cyberspace. I love getting orders and emails from the far corners of the globe that let me know my work is still helping others.

Laurie Weiss PhD

Empowerment Systems

Littleton, CO

303-794-5379

LaurieWeiss@EmpowermentSystems.com

www.EmpowermentSystems.com

SPRINGTIME IN THE ROCKIES

When my 23 year marriage came to a sudden end in 1990 and I lost a good job, it seemed like the end. Instead it was a new beginning.

Four wonderful children resulted from the marriage and it would have been better for them if we could have found a way to stay together. But now, 18 years later, they are all out on their own and doing well, despite us!

I still remember coming home, finding the four of them at the dinner table with a note from my wife telling me she had left. It had been a best day ever for me at work; I'd just signed a major account that would result in commissions that would allow my wife to quit her part-time job.

Instead, things just fell apart. I thought things had been going well in our marriage, that's how asleep I was at that time!

Things went from bad to worse as I started drinking again, sank into a deep depression, and lost any chance that may have existed to reconcile the marriage.

The kids left home. As they each finished high school, home had become being bounced back and forth between us. It was difficult for all of us, to say the least.

Today, our four kids have created good lives for themselves. Two are married with kids of their own; all four are leading happy, productive lives. My ex-wife now has a very successful business career and is a terrific mother and grandmother.

I'm now engaged to a wonderful woman I went to high school with who also went through a painful divorce; we

reconnected five years ago and plan to get married sometime this year.

My little book on business startup has been endorsed by one of the leading experts on entrepreneurship in the country, and I do work with business owners who I really enjoy. I'm the immediate past-president of the Denver South Optimists Club and I'm on the board of the Denver Lions Club.

I'm not well yet, but I sure am better!

What made the difference?

First, a moment of clarity when I saw my life had to change. This was a very private experience, but if you're in a difficult spot right now I'd be glad to share more about it with you on the telephone. Call me any time.

Second, I connected with a power greater than myself and came to believe, truly believe, that I was not alone. Since then I've connected again, and again, and again. Writing this now to you is another connection for me. I don't know if reading this helps you, but writing it has certainly helped me!

Finally, a constant thread through all of this has been a smiling, wise little man with a big, big heart, Joe Sabah. If you know Joe, you know exactly what I mean.

Thank you Joe, for helping so many of us to sing!

John S. Wren, MBA+
IDEA Cafe/ Franklin Circles
Denver, CO
303-861-1447
John@JohnWren.com
www.JohnWren.com

SONGS IN THE KEY OF LOVE

The first time I gave a speech, my nerves got the better of me. Through a trickle of tears, I demonstrated how to make flibbers, a talent developed by reading Dr. Seuss. My high school speech class thought the whole thing was quite entertaining. I felt humiliated.

For the next 15 years I avoided public speaking. Then one day in my last semester of graduate school, the professor who chaired the Information Systems Department called.

“Mary, we have an opening for the introductory computer programming class,” he said. “I’d like you to teach it.”

“But I haven’t programmed in years,” I responded.

“I understand that, but you do know COBOL, and you have the right personality for the job.”

Against my better judgment, I acquiesced. When I walked into the classroom for the first time, my heart pounded so hard the students in the front row probably heard it.

To my surprise, I found myself smiling as I drove home after class. That satisfied grin stayed with me through three semesters. Sometimes I daydreamed about teaching a subject I was passionate about—if I could just figure out what that was.

Meanwhile, I pursued a career in high tech. In my spare time I put my creativity to work planning romantic celebrations for my husband, unique events for my friends, and team building activities for my office.

Then one day I got a call from a stranger. He said, “A colleague told me you’re really good at planning special occasions. My anniversary is tomorrow. Can you give me some suggestions?” For twenty minutes, we enhanced his basic plan. I helped him turn a simple dinner date into a memorable romantic adventure. Two days later he called back

to tell me his wife said it was the best day of her life.

The satisfaction I felt from contributing to someone else's "best ever day" was addictive. I'd finally found my passion, my purpose in life. In 1997, I founded Adventures of the Heart to plan creative celebrations for others. This demanded more public speaking.

In 1998, I was asked to speak to the Pikes Peak Romance Writers. In preparing my talk, I noticed there were certain commonalities among the most romantic couples and the way they celebrated. If I could identify and share these elements, people could customize their own adventures. I developed two workshops, a one-day class for singles or couples to honor loved ones—family, friends, and sweethearts—on special occasions, and a weekend class designed as a romantic getaway for couples.

Sometimes public speaking still brings tears to my eyes, but it's no longer from nerves. It's afterward when someone tells me a tender story about their best ever day. It's when a listener has that aha moment and discovers how to give and receive more love. It's when I'm singing the song I came to sing—a love song.

Mary Zalmanek
Adventures of the Heart
Monument, CO
719-481-0270

Mary@AdventuresOfTheHeart.com
www.AdventuresOfTheHeart.com

Author of *The Art of the Spark: 12 Habits to Inspire Romantic Adventures*

Florida



RE-INVENTING MYSELF: THE “WIZ OF BIZ” TO THE “SPUNKY OLD BROAD”

I have come full circle. My new book *How to Be an S.O.B.—A Spunky Old Broad Who Kicks Butt* has been a wild success. It’s about the nine secrets that women need to know to live a life free of regret. I have found that it has struck a very important chord in many women’s lives—after 21 years speaking to businesses and associations on such lofty topics as leadership, customer service, teams, and communication.

I am now speaking to women on things like fitness, both health and financial, and entrepreneurship. In my early life, I was a dancer, actress, and model and grew that into a successful business of career schools, the largest talent agency in the State of Florida, and a convention service company. I ended up with seven offices and 350 people.

I went from that to speaking and consulting with one employee and now everything is done virtually. I am still involved in many things, manufacturing workout clothes for breast cancer survivors, managing our real estate, President of the Internet Association of Information Marketers, but most of all, I am back to having fun and leading women in the greatest discovery of all—themselves.

Dr. Gayle Carson CSP, CMC
Carson Research Center
Miami Beach, FL
305-534-8846
gayle@gaylecarson.com
www.spunkyoldbroad.com

MY SONG

My song. The inescapable lyrics come from the Holy Bible and from all that God puts in front of me each day. From high school I knew about this song, but it didn't fit well into my life because it came with something that I couldn't identify, a seemingly hidden cost. Each time I heard the song I felt an uneasiness, an intimidation of sorts. There seemed to be an accountability. My vision of the words and my understanding of the music were both skewed by the world's song. It was so much louder.

I am sure other folks listen to the world's song and are also vexed by the all consuming whirlpool of mud they seem to be trying to traverse created by that song. Four divorces, three fatherless kids, one violent felony conviction, and a domestic battery among the drugs and booze was the world's song. A sour bag of notes. It had me by the last straw, right where God could talk to me.

A biblical song started to come alive in a place way down deep, a place that only God knew. My part was to give the Creator permission to pump up the volume. God gives us the free will to make decisions; that's why we are not raccoons or birds; our song, our decision.

I sing a different song of salvation daily. I sing it as I write Christian literature, as I work as a mechanic and welder, as I pastor a small church in an assisted living facility, and as I lead men in a Lutheran church.

So what is this song that God gave me?

It is the song of forgiveness and grace. Amazing grace. It is the song of love, *Jesus loves me this I know*. It is the song of peace in me that I can't explain. It's the song I sing as I serve without wanting anything in return. It is the song my children and I sing together since God brought us back

together. But most of all, it is the song that I heard when I realized the pain of love for me as Jesus shed his blood on a tree. My song is the worship of the great I am, His son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Worship—that is my song.

Now I am being called home and I will get to sing my song with the Angels. You should be envious.

Pastor Joe Eagle
West Palm Beach FL
josephqed@aol.com

SINGING AS IF OUR LIVES DEPENDS ON IT— AND IT DOES

I have had the privilege of singing two important songs, and I'm humming a third. The first two songs prepared me to sing number three. This new song will help life on earth survive into the 22nd century.

Song Number One—I worked for ten years, from 1967-1976 in East Asia on one of the most important problems in the Third World, population, and family planning. I helped design educational programs, open clinics, and train fieldworkers in Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia, Thailand, Nepal, Turkey, and the Philippines. I got the job because I showed up in Korea uninvited and pitched in. Uninvited I started singing. I was hired over the years by the Population Council, Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, and several UN Agencies. We had two notable successes, Korea and Taiwan, where we dropped fertility to replacement level in a single generation. But my son, born in Korea, has severe cerebral palsy, so I decided I needed to change careers and to work in the US. While in my doctoral program at the University of Washington I learned to juggle. The stage was set for my second song.

Song Number Two—Within a few years I had written the landmark instructional books and made the basic instructional videos needed for juggling to become a popular recreational activity. I also developed a method for teaching juggling in slow motion using colorful nylon scarves. Since 1976 I've traveled the world teaching juggling to groups of all sizes with scarves, balls, rings, and clubs. My largest class so far was 3,400. I've taught over 1,000,000 kids in over 2,000 schools to juggle and have designed a self-esteem and school-esteem program involving teachers and parents too. The entire school population learns together, and the kids become the

teachers. I've also made more than 200 instructional juggling presentations at conferences for educators and other groups.

Song Number Three—Because of my unique background I've designed a one day program to take climate change messages to elementary schools using an assembly model that involves students and teachers learning together during the day, and brings parents in at night to join the chorus. We leave classroom-based social networking web sites at every school so they can continue this vital program after we've left. Working with my daughter, Dorothy, and her colleagues at Yale, we have tested Climate Change is Elementary™, and will train hundreds of young people to make presentations in schools nationwide. This song is the one I will sing next, loudly and persistently. I expect it will have an impact that will help life as we know it to survive into the 22nd century. Many young people want to join the chorus.

I have known that each of these was my song because at the time each has been my over-riding passion. Now I wake up every morning and go to bed every night with this new song playing in my head.

Dave Finnigan
Climate Change is Elementary
Celebration, FL
770-329-1152
davefinnigan@yahoo.com
www.jugglingforsuccess.org
www.climatechangeiselementary.org

Illinois



Rx HYPNOSIS

While working as a volunteer at a book table at a conference on the paranormal in Fort Collins, Colorado on July 9, 1988, I was holding a book on hypnosis, when a white-haired lady walked up and asked if I were about to buy that book. I indicated that I was, whereupon she took the book from my hands, put it down on the table, picked up a different book and handed it to me, saying, “Don’t buy that one. Buy this one. This one is better—I wrote this one.” Then she asked my name and inscribed the book to me with “*Adventure awaits all who explore the mind.*” And that is how I met Dr. Irene Hickman.

In September 1992 I passed through Kirksville, Missouri and stopped to visit with Irene, who was then 77 years young. She offered to teach me everything about regression hypnotherapy and spirit releasement therapy, if I would promote her trainings and workshops, sell her books, do the bookkeeping, answer phones, write letters, attend conferences and co-present with her. And I could live in her 20-room house during the course of my studies and work. Seven months later I moved on, and her work continues through me. For six months I traveled all over the East and Southeast, trading hypnotherapy for room-and-board. In those six months I stayed in a hotel only three nights.

This work is the most beneficial work for another that I’ve ever done and the most personally rewarding work of my career. I’m often asked if I am tired after doing an emotionally-charged session. The answer is, “Just the opposite! I am energized!!!”

TV Channel 6 in Richmond, Virginia was kind enough to tape a 1½-hour session one afternoon and then edit it down to three minutes for their 6:00PM health news report, and they

included a voice-over by a local doctor. The station didn't want all the phone calls about the session, so they put my name and phone number on-screen long enough for viewers to copy it down. That was worth about 30 phone calls during the next week and a half-dozen sessions, including one with a 16-year-old agoraphobic girl who hadn't been to school for five years. After one session, she was out of her bedroom, out of the house, eating dinner out with her parents, and getting her driver's license!

This is my song, and I'm singing it in Woodstock, Illinois. Thanks, Joe Sabah!

Gus Philpott

Woodstock, IL

847-971-7083

Gus@GusPhilpott.com

www.gusphilpott.com

Indiana



A WRITER'S DREAM SONG

My young friend looked surprised. “You did what?” I smiled.

“I signed up for college. I’m going to get my degree.”

Thankfully, my friend didn’t ask, “What for?” although she certainly did look puzzled. Why would a 60-something widow decide to go back to college? Surely, she wasn’t planning to start a new career.

In fact, I was, and the choice would make my dream come true.

When you have decades of experience, you have many stories to tell, but who do you tell them to? Your children are tired of hearing them and the grandchildren just roll their eyes and grab the controls to Nintendo.

Growing up I read everything that came within reach. Amazing what we can learn from cereal boxes and instruction manuals. As a young wife and mother, I turned to magazines and books for advice, comfort, and escape.

“This year I’m going to write for publication,” I would tell myself when making out New Year’s resolutions. However, there was little time, or money, for classes.

Oh, I did dabble here and there: letters to businesses, newspaper editorial forums, and an occasional stab at a magazine. Later, as it became necessary to help contribute financially to the family, I managed to get jobs that allowed me some writing opportunities. Grants, publicity releases, year-end reports. Eventually, these opened a few other opportunities and I did get a few bylines, with pay, in local newspapers and small publications. But I wanted to be able to call myself an author of a book.

Originally, I wanted to write one of those hot romance novels I devoured in my teens. Later my focus changed to

children's stories, then novels about the tribulations of homemakers. Although there were many times when I felt like a desperate housewife, my life seems tame by today's standard TV fare. Still, there were many rich and enlightening moments to share, in fiction or non-fiction forms, I told myself.

I believe that the deepest of dreams are not wishes, but seeds planted inside our souls. Our mission in life is to cultivate those seeds into fruition. Sure, some seeds take longer to mature than others do, so we must be patient and persistent. We prepare the soil of our dreams by growing in mind, body, and spirit. We pull out and discard the weeds of negativity. We water and feed the dream when we seek out like-minded people and resources. We bring the dream to life when we grab the opportunities that come our way. Moreover, we never give up.

In 1997, I received my Associates Degree in Writing. Four years later, I added "author" to my resume. My book, *Rainbow Remedies for Life's Stormy Times* contains many stories—the songs I have sung throughout life. Happy, sad, funny, and awesome spirit-filled songs. Life is funny that way.

Joanne K. Hill
Moorhill Communications
South Bend, IN
866-289-1539
joanne@rainbowremedies.com
www.rainbowremedies.com

Author of *Rainbow Remedies for Life's Stormy Times*

Massachusetts



SINGING SEVERAL SONGS IN HARMONY

I'm singing some of the songs I came to sing—the world is too fascinating for me to pick one. I feel I've made a difference in the world, both through beginning the Business Ethics Pledge, www.business-ethics-pledge.org, and through seeing some of my ideas on marketing begin to influence the business world.

Some of my dreams have not yet found substance: becoming a syndicated columnist, a radio host who gets paid, and being someone who easily finds paying speaking gigs. However, I've made strides toward all of these. And on a personal level, I feel multiply blessed with a wonderful family, a great place to live, and a steady stream of people who feel my skills are worth paying for, demanding of me work I love to do.

To me, *Singing the Song I Came to Sing* means I am fulfilling my purpose in life.

I know this is my song because I believe the business ethics work I've been doing for three years is at least part of what I was called into this world to do. I feel the local environmental movement I started six years ago is definitely part of what I'm here to do, and that was accomplished. I have, for over 30 years, felt that I am here to help accomplish the higher purpose of improving the world—but the specific shape changes from time to time.

Shel Horowitz
Fugal Marketing
Hadley, MA
413-586-2388

shel@principledprofit.com

www.fugalfun.com, www.principledprofit.com

Missouri



SUCCESS IS FINDING SOMEONE WHO WANTS WHAT YOU'RE SELLING

Our society has missed a couple of points in the processing of information. There are books out on how to manipulate someone, how to confuse the issues, and how to talk around the subject. All of these are designed to “teach someone how to sell.”

I think we are missing the boat. I think what we need to be focused on is how to make something that someone wants to buy. Now that may be a subtle difference for some folks, but it is a significant one for me. It is a rule of economics that if you make a good product and offer that product at a fair price, someone will want to buy it and when they need another they will buy it again. It is also a rule of economics that if you make a bad product or offer that product at an unfair price, you might convince some folks to buy it—once.

This holds true also when you are dealing with people and relationships. I know folks that are like willows in the wind. They are chameleons; they will be whatever the person they are with wants them to be. Change the person they are with and their demeanor, personality, and ethics seem to change to fit that set of circumstances.

The great country western singer George Strait has a song out about “Well, excuse me, but I think you’ve got my chair.” This was his opening line to an unknown young lady. During the song, the relationship develops, and she leaves with him at the end; but the last line of the song is “By the way, that wasn’t my chair after all.”

In most human endeavors we relate like salesmen not craftsman. We try to trick someone else into believing “we” are the kind of person they want. This is a process that can work for a limited period of time—occasionally. But it is one

that will only work for a period of time. Once that period of time has elapsed, be it hours, days, weeks or months, the “buyer” realizes they were sold a bill of goods and the “seller” is frustrated because the “deal” fell through.

I was as guilty of this as anyone else. One day I realized that I could not “sell” me, if I did not know who I was, what I believed in, and what I stood for. Once I figured those things out, once I became honest with myself and those around me, a very interesting thing occurred.

Once I decided to really be myself, someone decided they wanted me, the way I was. Not the way they wanted to make me, not the way they wanted to see me, but the way I was. I stopped trying to “sell” myself and began enjoying being “purchased and appreciated” because the customer (my wife Pam) “bought” exactly what she wanted.

She hasn’t changed me, but she has improved me.

Bob Anderson, PhD

Seymour, MO

417-935-2511

Bob@whatarewefightingfor.com

www.whatarewefightingfor.com

Nevada



I FOUND MY VOICE—FINALLY!

I was born with the outrageous combination of a mediocre voice and a perfect ear. I love to sing, but I'm always the first one to know I missed a note. But, since I found my "real" voice, I don't even sing in the shower anymore!

Twenty years ago, I took a script-writing course at UCLA. I never did anything with it, even though I loved the experience. During the time I took that course, I remember dating a man who introduced me at a party as a writer. It felt amazing.

I didn't write again until 2001. After a near-death experience, I realized just how unhappy I was selling advertising—even though I made a great living. I just didn't enjoy it after 18 years.

I had personally hosted more than 3,000 client lunches and had seen my sales increase by more than 2,000. I felt I could write about the importance of introducing a social aspect into your business relationships in order to build business and make the people with whom you work feel special. The challenge was that I worked long hours, but I tried to write at least a few hours every Sunday.

In November, 2003, I resigned from my job to self-publish my book. It came out in February of 2004. A year later, my dream of selling my work became a reality as I sold it to a publisher and was finally the published author I had dreamed of becoming so many years ago. My clients had nicknamed me "The Queen of the Business Lunch," and it made great promotional copy. In the course of promoting my book, I became a professional speaker and corporate trainer.

My book has been sold in *ten* languages worldwide. It seems I hit a nerve and now everyone wants to know how to do "The Art of the Business Lunch." I've been featured on

www.Forbes.com, in Newsweek Magazine and was recently interviewed on MSNBC-TV. The victories have been outstanding. The milestones I've reached in my new career are incredibly fulfilling. I love to communicate through stories, whether I am at my keyboard or on stage.

I know that I am doing exactly what I was meant to do in this life. I entertain and make people laugh, but I also spread a positive message. I encourage my audiences and readers to make the people with whom they work feel special. I am frustrated by the callousness so many people display today. In my own small way, I am working to change that.

I think it's funny that I found my voice and that it has nothing to do with singing. I absolutely love writing and speaking. I still have goals to reach, including the dream of one day working on a fabulous situation comedy, collaborating with other writers. When I'm at my desk writing or on stage speaking, everything feels right. I know I'm vibrating at a higher frequency and that is how I know I'm on the right path, singing *my* song.

Robin Jay
TwoBirds, Inc.
Henderson, NV
702-460-1420
Robin@RobinJay.com
www.RobinJay.com

SINGING WITH FULL VOICE

*“Life is an adventure for those with the courage to explore.
I am an explorer searching out my path
Let the challenges begin.”*

Emotional Stress: As a child I had a dream of a beautiful happy world. I searched and I searched for my beautiful happy world but could not find it anywhere.

By the age of 45 I was suffering with lots of pain, both physically and emotionally. I started drinking and taking tranquilizers for my emotional and physical pain when a friend asked me to take a Ken Keyes Living Love workshop with her. My first reaction was no way. I felt I was doomed and nobody could help me, but for her sake, I would go just to keep her company. Three days into the workshop I discovered I was there for me, and a way to find my beautiful happy world.

I learned how to stop an argument.

I learned that I am responsible for my own life and I have a choice on how I run my life.

No more blaming or playing the right-wrong game.

My life started to unfold and now I teach what I have learned. Yes, life is great and dreams can come true. I met my husband Hap at the center and he gave me more opportunities to learn to become more loving.

Working with Physical Stress: I sat in the doctor's office as I was given a life sentence of pain and suffering. You have arthritis and fibromyalgia. You also have two herniated discs in your lower back, your cervicals in your neck are badly degenerated, and your hip should be replaced. Here are some pain pills that may help.

I kept praying, please God help me. The Lord works in mysterious ways.

A wellness center opened near where we lived and I started my journey into alternative health.

Being very dyslexic, one of the first techniques was to learn my left from my right so I would not get lost. Simple but effective.

I started to learn the cause of my physical pain. After 20 years of receiving cortisone for the bursitis in my shoulders, and living on codeine for 25 years I found the cause of my bursitis. No more medication.

The cause of my bursitis was simply tight muscles in the upper arm that pulled on the bursa in the shoulder. I had someone to relax the muscle and within ten minutes I could raise my arm and no more pain.

Experience is the best evaluator.

I did not go through a life of emotional and physical pain to play victim. There were lessons I had to learn. My purpose was to find the cause of my physical and emotional pain, which I did, so I can teach others how they to can get free and *live a less stressful and painful life.*

At age 63, Elizabeth received her Ph.D in Psychology.

At age 70, Elizabeth walked a 26.2 marathon without any pain using the Barhydt's Educational Self-Help Techniques.

Elizabeth Barhydt, PhD

Loving Life

Henderson, NV

702-547-4673

feelgood@lovinglife.org

www.lovinglife.org

END OF THE TRAIL

My voice started small. Only child, isolation, parents busy with their lives. Luckily for me they both loved me and told me I could do or be anything I put my mind to. Or if I had a big challenge I would make the best decision possible. What a great gift. Wow! Parents and teachers need to hear this.

Walt Disney lived on my street in Hollywood. Imagine, asking for a million dollars to make cartons of mice? He was bankrupt, living in a garage feeding bread to the mice when he got his idea.

I became a self-starter. When the neighbors saw me coming was I selling Girl Scout Cookies, Readers Digest, Christmas Cards, my Hawaiian Hula stand, or printing my own neighborhood newspaper.

Waking up happened over time. I realized if I didn't toot my own horn, who would? I always gave my own birthday parties, grand and great. Doing the impossible became the norm. I met Ray Bradbury, futurist and writer, when I was 20. Designed his book cover, and found out how he became a futurist. He told me he infiltrated restaurants, "It's where people who don't know each other meet and eat." I used that later when I did marketing for Silicon Valley.

After a great career working for a television network, I got cancer at 30. I used my investigative knowledge and guts and got over cancer. Years later after many friends died of the disease I was compelled to write my story of hope. It won me the Toastmasters Award for Humor. "Real Food for Thought" at www.design4biz.com.

My next wake up call came when I left a sick marriage. Using my sorrow to move me, I wrote: *Dance on by . . . helping others in impossible situations.*

My relative is Jedediah Strong Smith. Explorer, mountain man, and person of courage and integrity. Somehow I feel I inherited his greatness. I hope to do the story of his life in a movie to encourage others, against all odds. Want to help?

This knowledge has spirited me on to a can-do attitude.

My moral of the song: Attitude, Attitude, Attitude.

The fault is not in falling down, it's in lying there.

Chinese Proverb

Suzanne Larson

Designs for Business

Reno, NV

775-771-3783

design4biz@yahoo.com

www.design4biz.com

New York



WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS

I used to be a full-time single mom, then a teacher, then a fundraiser. After a particularly difficult international job, I was bushed. I had a career crisis. On a visit to my dentist, she took one look at me and handed me *The One Minute Millionaire* by Robert Allen and Mark Victor Hansen. She literally said, “Here, take this, you need it.”

I read the book with skepticism and then one night at 3 a.m. I actually had that “aha” moment people talk about and said to myself, “It’s got to be a website which will help bring family and friends together.” So the next day, armed with determination, I started taking courses on the web to learn all I could. I am *not* a techie!

A charitable group I was volunteering for got me started with web help—my technicians were 14 and 15 years old. It was a challenge working with teenagers because their priorities were not at all the same as mine as I learned one afternoon. When they had not met an important deadline I sent off an email asking, “What’s up?” The reply came back, “We are sorry we missed the deadline, but we had to see *Terminator Three*. We highly recommend it.”

When the site proved too difficult a task, a conversation with a young man I had taught in high school led me to a company who had the ability to build the web machine I needed. We were off and running.

Two years later they were bought out by a larger company who refused to give me my intellectual property. I was making some money and I believed in the project enough to take a very deep breath and say, I won’t sue—I’ll rebuild.

The designer of my daughter’s wedding invitations is my design consultant. A woman whom I met at an Orlando conference has been a steadfast, long distance friend and has

spent hours helping me test the recipe input tools. When her mom died, she was able to actually use the site to put down some of her own memories in a family cookbook, which helped her through her grief.

Friends introduced me to a printer, who was so excited about the project. He just grins and grins every time we sit down to have a meeting. We have become fast friends.

My original internet coach ended up at Harvard Divinity School and when I wrote him to proudly say that the site had been up for two days he sat down and spent much time giving me useful input.

People who use the site write me the most beautiful thank you letters and I have made friends with so many people through the internet. I never would have met them otherwise.

I am four years into HeritageCookbook.com and we are beginning to show a monetary profit! The other type of good-feeling profit I have been getting all along. I have been so lucky.

Yes, I'm finally singing the song I came to sing and the adventure continues.

Susan Love

Heritage Cookbook.com

New York, NY

212-877-7501

susan@heritagecookbook.com

www.heritagecookbook.com

TAKE A RISK

I own a publicity firm in New York City. I am a single practitioner and hire freelancers on an as-needed basis. I started my agency over 20 years ago after working as a concierge at a multi-national trading company. I loved my job but wanted to be my own boss.

My father, who has since died and with whom I was very close, pushed me to go into business for myself. He told me I wouldn't starve because he wouldn't let me, and I didn't.

I had to learn the public relations business on my own with no help but my father's who was an entrepreneur himself. It's been rough but I learned by doing and today I am successful and happy.

My father told me the saddest words in the English language are "it might have been." He didn't want me to say them to myself 20 years later and I don't because I know what has been.

I'm proud of myself for what I have accomplished. I love being my own boss. I was offered a chance to give up my business and join a larger, more prestigious publicity firm. After much thought, I turned it down and have never been sorry.

Miriam Silverberg
Miriam Silverberg Associates
New York, NY
212-832-7425
silverbergm@mindspring.com

North Carolina



WHAT SONGS DID YOU SING AS A CHILD?

For me, I remember lullabies my mother sang as she held me in that squeaky antique rocking chair, hymns solemnly sung at my church, camp songs loudly rounded back and forth between groups. It seems such songs tend to stick throughout life especially returning in times of emotional, spiritual need.

Having completed writing my parenting book, *I Love You More than Chocolate!* I decided the next task needed to be a catchy song to entice parents into focusing on loving their children. My goal: to have parents look at their precious child with love and endearing hearts, to realize that kids need nurturing, boundaries while building character, and creating memories to last a lifetime. What better way than through song!

I ask you, “What do you love more than chocolate?”

Some folks at first say, “Not much, you can’t beat chocolate!” I might respond, “Oh, really.” To which they might then stop and think, “Well, maybe my spouse and kids” at which point I usually smile and say, “Bingo, now you’ve got it!”

One May evening after meditating and praying for divine guidance, as I do prior to writing, my fingers began rapidly pounding out “The Chocolate Song” in a generational storytelling format. At the end, the song had a country twang so I began listening intently to country singers trying to figure out whose style closely fit my song-to-be.

For the musical score I sought the talent of a music major at the North Carolina School of the Arts because I had been on the board for 20 plus years. The dean suggested the school’s most promising classical student. Justin Poindexter wrote a vibrant rendition of my words. Combining his talent with his father’s, together, they produced my CD. Currently,

we seek a chocolate producers attention with the jingle before releasing the complete song.

*Some days were good, some days were blue
yet Mama always said . . .
“I Love You More Than Chocolate,” is what she’d
always say
more than rainy afternoons and sunny summer days
and when you’re feeling all alone and things won’t go
your way,
Just know I Love You More than Chocolate
I love you more and more each day!*

What do you love more than chocolate? Perhaps you’ll hear parents and their precious children singing “The Chocolate Song” and smile knowing kids are indeed loved more than chocolate!

Marcia Tabram Philips
Children Heard
Winston Salem, NC
701-258-3877

chbookorder@aol.com

www.children-heard.us

Author of *I Love You More Than Chocolate*

Ohio



MY SONG

Growing up in the 50s and 60s on Chicago's rough south side, I was raised to believe three "facts" of life: (1) girls get married and have babies, so they do *not* need college, (2) learn to type so I could always find work, and (3) find a man who's a good provider. I followed this sage guidance, married at nineteen, had two kids by age twenty-two, and settled into life as a housewife/secretary.

As my 30th birthday approached, I found myself in constant depression and ill health. I had a good job, a nice husband, two nice kids, a nice house, and a nice dog. What more could a woman want? I was miserable. I suffered migraines, colitis, back pain, and other physical ailments. The depression worsened. Soon I was sleeping 18 hours a day to ease my emotional pain.

On a friend's advice, I went to a psychologist and sobbed out my story. She asked me one simple question that changed my life, "What would you be if you could be anything you wanted to be without guilt?" My answer leapt from my mouth, "*An actress!*" Ever since I was a little kid, my idea fun was putting on shows in Susie's garage or Cindy's basement. I'd tell everyone their parts, design the tickets, make the popcorn, and hang the chenille bedspread curtain.

She suggested I audition for a community theater. The play was "Last of The Red Hot Lovers" by Neil Simon, and the role was—ready for this?—Jeanette, the depressed housewife! The day of the opening, I was sick with nervousness, literally hyperventilating into a paper bag before making my terrified entrance.

I felt the fear and did it anyway! I discovered with the added dimension of an audience, I had outstanding natural comic timing and authenticity with drama. The audience loved

me! I went home that night higher than any drug could ever take me. I had found my passion!

Over the next several years I trained with The Second City and appeared in a few more shows. Then one day, I auditioned for a role I knew was perfect for me, and I was *not* cast. Well, when God closes a door, He opens a window. *Not* getting cast was the best thing that ever happened to me. In frustration, I wrote my own show, so I'd never again need someone else to "allow" me to perform. I wrote my One-Woman Comedy Show "The Six Ages of Woman" and performed it for a women's club a month later.

That was 27 years ago. I now perform "The Six Ages of Woman" all over the country for audiences of men and women of all ages. I also went on to establish a professional acting career as a member of the Screen Actors Guild and American Federation of Television & Radio Artists. I was invited to join the International Federation for Professional Speakers and the National Speakers Association with my self-esteem, Life-Balance workshop, Inner Voices/Smart Choices, where I help others recognize and sing their own individual songs.

Mary Faktor

Faktor's Talent Network Inc.

Hudson, OH

888-913-3473

Esteemtalk@aol.com

www.FaktorsTalentNetwork.com

GIVE YOUR BOOK AWAY

Do you use Microsoft Excel? Of course you do—400 million people use Excel. Well, I know so many tricks and tips about Excel that I can show you how to save 100 hours a year in about an hour. Back in 1998, I launched a website and started calling myself MrExcel! Today, we get 12 million pageviews a year, and I have 12 books in print. I am a regular guest on a tech TV show, occasional guest on talk radio, and about 12 times a year, travel to some new city to amaze and entertain people with my Power Excel seminar.

With my last book—I offered to *give* the whole thing away—one chapter per week to anyone who wanted it. This works great. People get 3-7 tips every week, just enough to learn a little bit. In the first year, I have given away 4.5 *million* chapters! If people are patient, they get the entire book for free. A few of those people decide they don't like the book and quit getting the chapters. I would much rather have this happen than to have them buy the book and then give me a 1-star review at Amazon. Instead, people try out the book for free. Some like it enough to buy it right away. Some never buy it, but that's okay because I am selling three times more of this book than the last book. If someone gets all the tips but doesn't buy the book, it is fine. I am gaining positive karma.

Before 1998, I worked in an office for 12 years. People were fired every Friday. You lived in constant fear of being downsized. Leaving there to start this gig was the best thing I ever did. I work in shorts and a t-shirt and do my own thing.

Bill Jelen
MrExcel Consulting
Uniontown, OH
330-715-2875
Pub@MrExcel.com
www.MrExcel.com

A FARM BOY'S SONG . . . AND A SEQUEL

I grew up on a small farm in a small state in the eastern part of the country. In the late 1940s my favorite summer job was to ride a draft horse pulling shocks of hay to the barn for storage to feed cattle the next winter.

When I was eight, Dad bought a tractor. Driving a tractor was more fun than riding a horse, and even at a young age I realized a tractor could do a lot more work in less time than a team of horses.

I joined our local 4-H club, got into the tractor project and by age 15 I had learned so much about tractors and machinery I won the West Virginia 4-H Tractor Operator's Contest. Feeling mighty good about myself, I went on to the Nationals to take on the winners from 18 other states. I would like to tell you I won there, too, but no, I placed 13th. Bummer.

But rather than that being the end of the road, it was more of a beginning because the men in charge of those 4-H tractor contests were agricultural engineers, a profession I had never heard of. They were professors at the land grant universities in their respective states. Now I had a career goal that I could grab on to with a passion.

After graduating from West Virginia University and working ten years, I was invited to join the faculty at The Ohio State University where I've been almost 30 years. As part of my work with tractors and machinery, I am involved with the 4-H tractor project, giving youth today an opportunity to learn about agricultural engineering.

But that's not the end of my song.

In another time and farther west, a boy named Willie was born in 1879 on a cattle ranch. He enjoyed riding horses and at age four he was taught by a ranch employee to twirl a rope and throw a lasso. Nothing unusual about that, but he was

one of the few who liked it so much that he kept at it and grew up to become one of the best rope spinners in the world. That talent got him into some top entertainment venues. He became famous only after he started talking on stage (and later on radio), writing newspaper columns, and acting in movies. You remember him as the person who said, “I never met a man I didn’t like.” Will Rogers.

Why am I telling you about the Oklahoma cowboy, Will Rogers? Twelve years ago at a convention in Florida I met a professional speaker from Oklahoma and the first words out of his mouth were, “You’ve got to be Will Rogers.” He insisted I looked like Will and sounded like him and I should start speaking professionally as “Will Rogers.” Well, today I enjoy being both an agricultural engineer and Will Rogers.

I’m no genius like Will Rogers was, but we both took advantage of our opportunities. Roping got Will on stage, and his natural comedic talent made him a star when he was encouraged to talk during his act. Like Will, I’m just a plain looking fellow with a big nose who speaks with a drawl.

Randall Reeder

Will Rogers Today

Hilliard, OH

614-477-0439

Will@WillRogersToday.com

www.willrogerstoday.com

Oregon



MAKING SUCCESS YOUR DESTINY

From my earliest days I thought about ways to make money. In the second grade I gathered apples and set up a roadside stand with dollar signs dancing in my head. I didn't sell any apples (my mother made sauce out of my stock), but my failure didn't faze me. I found a coupon in a comic book and signed up to sell greeting cards door-to-door. Later I sold TV Guides and finally hit the big time at 12 years of age with a paper route that paid a penny a paper!

I was destined to a life of marketing and sales, which is interesting when you know the whole story. From early childhood I stuttered so badly that understanding me was almost impossible. As a result I was often the brunt of jokes from my peers. To add to my frustration, adults tried to finish my sentences for me. Nevertheless, I determined not to let my handicap stand in the way of my dream—and my dream was to “get rich.”

After high school I got a job selling fire alarms door-to-door. My boss later told me he hired me because of my speech impediment. He said my desire to succeed overrode my handicap. Today, that handicap is basically non-existent. I speak frequently and persuasively to groups of all sizes. I've also realized my childhood dream, owning several companies enjoying multi-million dollars in revenue. The story is not that I stuttered. It is, I stuttered—so what? The fact is, everyone has a “handicap.” Some are visible, but the most debilitating ones are invisible—mental stumbling blocks leading to mediocrity and failure.

One of the greatest hitters in baseball is Mickey Mantle, remembered as a great home run slugger, but he struck out more than 1,750 times! In addition, he walked to first base more than 1,750 times. In other words, there were more than

3,500 times he went to home plate and didn't hit the ball—the equivalent of seven seasons without a base hit!

Here's the lesson: it's not the misses that count, it's the hits.

When I make a mistake I refuse to be discouraged. I purposefully examine it, make adjustments, and get back on track. My mistakes become stepping stones toward my goal. If you want to overcome the invisible handicaps that deter success, you must step in the batter's box and strike out a few times. Never fear failure!

Here's my success plan:

1. Decide what you want to do and carve out a unique niche for yourself.
2. Set short and long-term measurable goals.
3. Write a definitive plan to attain those goals.
4. Work your plan daily.
5. Make adjustments as needed.
6. Practice generosity—if you cannot give away your money, it owns you.
7. Be a mentor to others.

To summarize: Step into the batter's box and swing away! Strike out and refine your approach. Most of all, enjoy the game. Batter up!

Don Loyd, President

Oregon Association of Professional Real Estate Investors

Bend, OR

541-815-4958

Don@AspenTreeHomes.com

www.RealCashFlow.net

Pennsylvania



JUST WHEN I THOUGHT MY LIFE WAS OVER

There I was living in a tiny bedroom in my parent's not-so-large, five room apartment. I had, as they say, "run out of options." My life was out of control, way out. Had it not been for mom and dad's willingness to let me stay with them, I would have been homeless living in Central Park or another one of New York City's fine parks. Years of rampant excess had brought me to my knees.

I would lay awake at night, unable to sleep, pleading with God to help me. I prayed, begged, and bargained for my life to change. I just wanted to get my life back on track for it had been years since I lived anything that resembled a "normal" life.

As they say, "We plan and God laughs." God's plan for me was quite different from mine. God's plan brought me to the detox ward of a local hospital, since He knew where the real problem lay. I remember sitting on the beat-up old couch on the second day, the day when one experiences the physical bottom of the detox, and with my arms reaching out, looking upward saying "Okay God, either take me or help me change." To be quite honest, at that moment, it didn't much matter to me which He chose. That day was many years ago, and my life has never been the same since that moment.

The hand of God reached directly into my life and changed my course from one of self-loathing and imminent death to a life that is beyond my wildest dreams.

I began rebuilding my life, one day at a time, and some years later started writing about the ideas and techniques that were helping me regain what I had lost and more. Little did I know where He was taking me next. From what began as a simple newsletter in 1991, I have since written several books, which have been published in 22 countries and are read

throughout the world. What an awesome feeling and honor it is for me to receive letters from people across the globe whose lives have become better as a result of reading something I wrote and acting on it.

Today I have a wonderful life, complete with a loving and supportive wife and beautiful home, but more importantly, today my life has purpose. Today I realize that the hand of God reached into my life so that I could share my message of hope and possibility to help others. Today I have the privilege of touching the lives of people throughout the world with my books and speaking and I am forever grateful that His will, not mine, was done.

Jim Donovan

Jim Donovan Associates

Upper Black Eddy, PA

jim@jimdonovan.com

www.jimdonovan.com

Author of *Stop Living Paycheck to Paycheck*

Tennessee



MISS ANNIE FANNIE'S HUMDINGER HYMNAL

Arriving on the planet with a full hymnal which included a wide variety of songs, I was willing and able to try many of them. Sometimes I sang loudly, sometimes softly, in chorus, two-part harmony or solo, on key or a bit flat, sing I did. Missed notes and all, it's more a thrill now in my 69th year than ever before.

My first song *Adventure* began at the age of four when I escaped the family home predawn and took my brother's raft for a spin on the pond. Later adventures included traveling in 43 states and Canada and living in 11 states including three years in Alaska, where my son was born. My daughter arrived while I was in Denver. My husband Harry and I were full-time RVers for four years, traveling the country, staying long enough to get to know places we liked.

Adventure included jobs as well. I started playing office as a child and spent most of my work years in office work. This song I sang well, from newspaper typesetter to administrative assistant to office manager. I loved the work and made other people's work easier in the process.

Networking has been one of my favorite songs. It is such a thrill to help connect people to a source or another person who can in some way be helpful or fun. Another version of Networking is Mentoring. People seem drawn to my husband and me who often need help in "figuring out the system," people who may be discouraged and in need of a friend to listen to them and point the way. I like *Paying it Forward* in repayment of the many times others have helped me. We occasionally sing a popular duet, *Nobody Listens to a Word I Say*, but overall it feels so good to help others.

Three times I performed *I'm Getting Married*. The first was a rehearsal; the second gave me two wonderful children;

the third came with new lyrics and a difficult melody, but after several years we re-wrote the tricky parts and will celebrate our 20th anniversary soon.

Many lines of the grand opera *Motherhood* were difficult for me, but my two children have forgiven me and today we have marvelous and close relationships. This leads to one of my favorite songs, *Just Call Me GranAnne!* Nothing prepared me for the joy of being a grandmother. The patience I was missing with my children arrived in the delivery room at the birth of my grandson. What unbridled joy to watch them grow and to offer comfort and fun and a little spoiling.

For fun I've researched 45 family lines in *Genealogy* and become a whiz-bang *Sudoku Addict*.

Other songs I like to sing are *Nearer My God to Thee*, *Bloom Where You're Planted*, *Let's Irritate Our Congressman 'Cause He's Sure As Hell Irritatin' Me*, *Let's Have Some Fun Right Here Right Now* and *Naps R Us*.

Anne Howard Ellis

Crossville, TN

931-788-1788

annellis@citlink.net

Texas



FROM BEING BULLIED TO SINGING MY SONG

My career started out in one direction, then took a dramatic turn to a path where I could help others.

When I began working in the legal field, I had a very bad experience working for a law firm where the boss was a bully. Then I learned from the next workplace, still in the legal field, that bullying runs rampant in the workplace. All this time, I kept thinking that America had such terrible problems. Then I became enlightened about the worldwide plague of workplace bullying. As I began research on this problem, I found a website that intrigued me. The more I looked at it, I became more baffled and perplexed. How could this be—that around the world the experiences were so similar? How could a different cultural setting make this problem and its effects identical?

As I found out from a fellowship to Germany bullying is bullying. And people are people no matter where you go in the world. And what I found is that a brilliant research physician Professor Dr. Heinz Leymann had not only researched this topic and helped victims, he named this plague. He called it mobbing. Based on research that had been used to study animal group behavior, then children's behavior, he found the same phenomenon applied to adults in the workplace.

From my experiences, I've put together a book that I hope will rival the success of Upton's Sinclair's *The Jungle*. My book does not hide anything including workplace rape that happened at the United States Postal Service; rather it exposes hate, abuse, and sexual violence in the workplace—a taboo subject in America's corporate controlled media. And all of it, it seems, is tacitly approved, almost encouraged by management. Bystanders will also do nothing and will even

blame the target for this mistreatment. Call it work-hell, work-rape, mind-rape, or hate-rape, it is real and it ruins lives. The stories from some of the victims make this clear in my book.

As a supplement to my book, my website serves as a beacon for those who do not understand their experience or who are trying to recover. The stories I receive let me know that I can reach out to help others. I can also be a voice for the silenced victims who will never speak again in the earthly life because they committed suicide or died from a heart attack.

If, as the result of my book, I can change the world, fine. If I can change the experience and recovery of just one soul, that is even better.

For me, it's history in the making. This is the song I was meant to sing.

Valerie Brown

Freelance writer

Kyle, TX

512-791-1585

valerie198@yahoo.com

<http://members.authorsguild.net/valbrown>

EXPLORING LIFE

Can you imagine walking into a room and being recognized by a plant? This is something that would astonish many and yet why should it be so amazing? All forms of life have an individual electrical field that surrounds them. Interactions between the living fields of life forms should be occurring all of the time. All that stands in the way of a dedicated individual exploring this dynamic aspect of life, is getting the right equipment and expertise to explore this living interaction.

Equipment for monitoring the living field of a plant requires instruments that are as intricate and complex as those used to monitor electrical activity within the human body. Amplifiers for human heart signals may be adapted to plant physiology, but it is really best to design equipment for plants. How could such a research project be justified? What would be the rewards for such an effort? Questions of this sort led me to conclude that any real progress would have to come from independent research.

In preparation for the journey of a lifetime, I applied myself to the study of electronics, electronic communication systems, and signal acquisition. Later, I studied computer science, cognitive science and neuroscience. Eventually, I had the time and means to explore this phenomenon of communication between living beings with electronic equipment that I designed specifically for the task. Among the many observations that have been made, are two that I feel are new and unique results of my research. First, a dracaena will produce a response to a person walking toward the plant at a distance that seems to vary with a number of variables, the strongest of which is the relative health of the approaching

individual. Second, a dracaena will respond to the application of water, if it is thirsty and until its thirst is satisfied.

It may be difficult for many to imagine that such life energy communication occurs at many distances. However, the gulf between suggestion and reality begins to lessen when one remembers the fantastic results that were obtained by George Washington Carver and in light of the observations and research of Harold Saxton Burr, Robert Becker, and Cleve Backster.

My research into memory formation and phenomenal biocommunication can be found at www.mindjava.com. I write of life exploration in my Arthur Epling Newsletter, found at www.arthurepling.com. Whitepapers, video, and plans for building a basic plant activity detector called the FireFly™ are available at www.bioexperience.com. Building a FireFly™ is a great way to become involved with plant responses to the world around you for less than one hundred dollars. For those interested in an amplifier that can amplify human brain waves, human heart signals, and the signals of plants, the BioPulse™ system is available for about one thousand dollars.

Dr. Gerald A. Epling
Arthur Epling Consulting
Frisco, TX
info@arthurepling.com
www.arthurepling.com, www.bioexperience.com

MELLANIE'S SONG: HEAR YOUR HEART

My song started at age four as I stood beside the pulpit imploring the church congregation to open their hearts and pocketbooks for the little ones in the children's home. Little did I know how that would significantly shape my destiny.

During my corporate years, I continued to evangelize and ask for funds, and that led to creating an early corporate web site, JCPenney.com, heading up Dell's intranet, and advising C-level executives of Cisco's largest customers.

Those were heady times. Who knew that my hyperbusy, road-warrior lifestyle would take such a toll? Fortunately, I recognized my heart attack symptoms in time to head them off, but then I almost died in an emergency heart procedure. I remember lying there on the operating table hearing the doctor frantically shout that I was slipping away, and thinking "I'll do anything if I can just live."

I got that second chance. I now use it to help others hear their hearts so they can avoid what I've been through. Many people, especially women, don't know that they are at risk for the #1 killer, heart disease, and the #3 killer, stroke, which together will take almost half of us.

I soon learned that heart disease is forever, and once you have it you're at risk for more heart problems. Later that same year I had a near stroke due to atrial fibrillation. Often called afib, atrial fibrillation is the most common heart irregular heartbeat and is a leading cause of death and disability from stroke. After several frightening years with this debilitating condition I found a new surgery that cured my afib. But I couldn't stand on the sidelines and watch others suffer, so our non-profit forged ahead with a web site and programs to help those with this life-threatening condition.

I was lucky—hearing my heart saved my life several times. These events, along with my need to make a difference, shaped the song I now sing. *A Woman's Guide to Saving Her Own Life* is my songbook. By sharing my stories and the cures that I've learned, I can help others to hear their hearts and give them the tools to survive and thrive. I intend to live to be 100, and to help others do so as well.

That four-year-old that once pleaded for funds has come full circle; now, half a century later, she pleads for funds to stamp out these silent killers. And she implores you to hear your heart so that you'll be here to take care of others and to sing the song that you were meant to sing.

Hear your heart!

Mellanie True Hills
American Foundation for Women's Health
Decatur, TX
940-466-9898
mhills@stopafib.org
www.MellanieHills.com; www.StopAfib.org

Virginia



DOING THE IMPOSSIBLE

Thinking and writing about my songs means I am taking time to reflect on how very fortunate I am to have found my songs. Because now I am finally singing the songs I came to sing. As my father always said, “The difficult we do immediately. The impossible takes a little longer.” I thought finding my songs would be impossible, but found out differently. And it didn’t happen right away.

As a kid in school, I loved to write non-fiction stories and essays. But then I was heading toward a practical goal, law school. I dropped any idea of writing. However, after teaching law for two years and practicing for nine I knew that law was not my song. How did I know? I hated to get up in the morning and do it. So about 20 years ago, I reached back to my old love, writing. Found some books in the library—horribly out of date and misleading, so I missed my song at first—and then the real key, Writers Market. With these, I found out I could sell non-fiction articles, not just write them!

After success with national magazines, I felt it was awfully lonely just sitting at the computer, so I added speaking and coaching for another song. I know these songs are my own songs because doing the work is totally enjoyable, better than any hobby or recreation. For the speaking and coaching, I love the challenge of selling my programs to those who need them. My father, an electrical engineer, wished all his life for help with his writing, so I do target engineers with my power writing sessions—and managers, technical people, and those who must write grant proposals.

A third song I have discovered as the years have gone past—looking after an invalid husband whom I love dearly. This song feels right because I know I am needed and can gladly give him better care than any nursing home.

For those who haven't yet found their song, I can only wish and hope for them to have the same success as I did. Songs sing out when you and your songs harmonize.

Priscilla Richardson, MA, JD

WriteSpeakforSuccess.com

Cloverdale, VA

540-992-1279

Guru@WriteSpeakforSuccess.com

www.writespeakforsuccess.com

Wisconsin



OPRAH-INSPIRED MOM FINDS BIG DREAM IN EARLY EDUCATION

I was inspired to discover my legacy and sing my song by a series of Oprah Shows when I turned 40 in 2003. In only five years, I have become a successful mommy CEO, author, publisher, and consultant. At every step, Oprah had a show that answered my next burning question and set me on a path that would not only change mine and my family's life but would impact kindergarten and first grade education.

It started with Oprah's Walking Buddy Show in 2003. I called my neighbor and we started walking; her daughters were five and three and my daughters were three and one. She was telling me what her daughter was learning in kindergarten and I was absolutely shocked at how advanced this grade level had become.

So I was looking for a book to help my girls get ready for that first day of school. I couldn't find what I was looking for and was getting frustrated. So when Oprah was advertising for her first Big Dream Contest, I told my neighbor that I wished I had an idea for the contest. She exclaimed, "How about that book you can't find—the one book that helps parents, kids and teachers all get ready for kindergarten?" In that same year, Oprah had shows on successful Mommy CEOs, self-publishing books, and her trip to Africa highlighting the need for books to help kids learn. It was as if she was helping me every step of the way!

Today, *Let's Get Ready For Kindergarten!* and *Let's Get Ready For First Grade!* are award-winning and state-approved books that are inside homes and schools across the nation and are helping the educational process for families. My mantra has become: if two brothers from Ohio can change the face of

aviation then why not one mom from Wisconsin tackling education. If I can sing my song, so can you!

Stacey Kannenberg

Cedar Valley Publishing

Fredonia, WI

920-994-9906

stacey@cedarvalleypublishing.com

www.cedarvalleypublishing.com

OPENING HEARTS WITH GRATITUDE

Eileen Bobdoh and I had a strong mutual desire to do something that would make a difference and be considered a part of helping the world to heal. As newfound friends we asked each other what we could do. She told me how much she liked to do research, and I told her of my desire to write. One thing we knew for sure was that whatever we did we wanted to have fun doing it.

Around that time Sarah Ban Breathnach had appeared on the Oprah Show and made her case for the power of gratitude. At her suggestion we began writing down five things every day that we were grateful for. Initially, we listed the things that everyone gives thanks for, friends, family, weather, a good job, vacations, and relatively good health. Then we began to see how much more we had to be grateful for. For over a year we shared and wrote daily. Our friendship and partnership grew like neither of us had ever experienced before.

As we shared the realization that everything is connected to everything else we decided to write a book. One thing led to another so easily that we made a list and categorized similar items. Now we wanted to make our list more interesting and meaningful. We created a theme for each month. We tied it in with the seasons of the year. We wrote a five line stanza for every day and each day took on new meaning. It felt as if we were doing something important and not only were we having fun, we had discovered the power of gratitude.

Once we made the decision to write a book we found that there was lots more than just writing it and having fun. Among other things it included editing, publishing, printing, having a cover designed, and marketing. We hired a designer, an editor, and a printer. It began to cost money. Sometimes more than we wanted to spend. But we were committed and

little by little our idea had come alive. *Gratitude Works, Open Your Heart to Love*, was finally in print. Our book was real and we felt proud.

While marketing our work and selling books we also gifted books to adults and children around the world through The I AM Foundation. We donated books to a women's prison and now they use it in their recovery work. We created a campaign called "Three for Thirty," to help with donations. *The Gratitude Works Prayer Book* and *The Gratitude Works Journal* have recently been created as e-books. We are listed as gratitude experts on www.selfgrowth.com and are contributing authors in *101 Ways to Improve Your Health*. I am a contributing author in the first book of the just released new series called *Thank God I*. We continue to promote gratitude by writing and speaking and are now developing teleseminars and coaching programs. Gratitude and Healing Resources with a list of various organizations who are also taking part in helping to heal the world can be found on our website, www.gratitudeworks.com.

We are singing a song of gratitude by fulfilling our mission: touching lives with the spirit of gratitude.

Katherine Scherer
K & E Innovations LLP
Greendale, WI
414-421-8130
gratitudeworks4u@aol.com
www.gratitudeworks.com

Co-author with Eileen Bodoh of *Gratitude Works, Open Your Heart to Love*

Canada



ALL THINGS WORK OUT FOR GOOD

I'm writing for my husband who had a stroke in 2001 at the age of 58. He was a Purchasing Manager at that time and a good one at that. He'd been in that professional field since his early 20s for industrial companies.

He cannot type his own story now, having lost the use of his right hand and the processing of words and sentence construction. His speech is difficult and frustrating at times, but in spite of his predicament, he has been taking life in good spirit.

It's always amazing to see his achievements every day. He never stops working. With one hand only working for him, and a slight paralysis of the right upper side and face, he sets up computers and peripherals for my business, he does my accounting on Simply Accounting which I taught him, he puts up closet doors, paints rooms, fixes everything around the home and my office, keeps the yard trimmed, orders, receives and stacks his wood for the wood burning stove which he keeps going throughout the winter—on and on.

Harold is not one for initiating great things and projects in life but he is an even keel doer. I believe his song in life is to bring this aura of calm and peaceful personality to his surrounding world.

Before his stroke, Harold and I played Country Gospel Music quite a bit—rhythm guitar, mandolin, and drum machine. Now, he can only marshall some laborious scratches upward with the help of a custom guitar pic his early physiotherapist concocted for him, that wraps around his lifeless thumb. What we could do before just the two of us now needs to be coupled with an extra rhythm guitar player that we find on location wherever we play and who follows Harold's show of keys which he leads on his eight-string Ovation.

Before the stroke Harold was just as active around the home, and way back when we first got married, both of us were in the boat business for a long time. We were one of the top sailboat dealers in Southern Ontario, Canada.

Now we live in Campbell River, BC right on the Georgia Straight that leads to Alaska from Vancouver/Seattle. The cruise ships pass up and down in front of our panoramic living room window. We take walks by the ocean side, looking at local boats and visitors' yachts and remember the good times we had back in the 70s sailing around Lake Ontario. I now offer business management services to individuals and companies and Harold does some of my accounting which helps me a great deal.

But we enjoy our semi-retirement here in this beautiful West Coast environment and thank the Lord for his strength and goodness, knowing that He works out all things for good.

Diane M. Hoffmann, PhD/Th
Hoffmann-Rondeau Communications Inc.
Campbell River, BC, Canada
250-850-1163
dmh@uniserve.com
www.business-resources-hrc.com

Australia



LIFE IN A BUBBLE

I am singing a solo loud and proud. Eleven years ago I was involved in a chemical accident and have since been fully isolated. My immune system now works incorrectly because of T-cell damage and a missing blood protein. Despite being able to fight off colds etc, my body reacts with severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis aka breathing trouble) to chemicals such as perfumes and fragrances, cleaners, petroleum products, carbon monoxides, medical creams and treatments, paints and strippers, raw woods, formaldehyde, toothpaste, soaps and shampoos. Neither can I go outside. There are fertilizers on surrounding gardens, car fumes, paint or renovation materials, and pesticides.

Instead of sitting around and suffering, I have self-published two books (one my autobiography), had articles published in magazines, and inspired those with life difficulties. I am influencing housebound people to learn new hobbies to enrich their lives, interviewing inspirational Christians for an online newspaper, practicing musical instruments which I can play at a phenomenal level, and ensuring I get as much as I can out of every day. I'd rather work than wait in my room for a cure. It doesn't seem right to put my life on hold for a cure that may never come.

As of late 2007, I have begun to study university online. Writing is a wonderful hobby where I can express myself, but I would also like an online trade I can pursue. With the Internet so accessible now I can earn my degree completely online. Opening my own business is now my focus, while still remembering to enjoy what I have.

Money runs through our fingers quicker than sand; friends, family, God, achievements, talents and knowledge

remain with us forever. I may be stuck in my sterile environment, but my soul is free to soar!

Season BubbleGirl

Adelaide, Australia

bubblegirl@optusnet.com.au

www.bubblegirl.net

Author of *Absolute Individual: Life in a Bubble*

Republic of Panama



TAKING NOTES

I knew my song was writing as soon as I learned my ABCs. My family was large, and talking was fast and furious so the written word for me was magical music. Through my No. 2 pencil I could chisel notes on my Indian Head scratch tablet. Grammar and syntax at first were unimportant because the words were mine as were the creations. From there I moved to poetry then short, short, short stories, mini-journals, diaries, and nonsensical novels. All brief, but inspired by my life experiences.

My first endeavor at the great epic was the history of my father's birthplace, which was small, but alas I was ten and it was the BG era (Before Google), so the work remained largely unfinished. Though the place has since disappeared through nature's re-structuring, it is inscribed in my mind with indelible ink, and lays in wait for a quieter moment when I can focus on it alone.

Five decades later, I am now the head of a tiny publishing company for multilingual children's books. Who would have ever thought that I could move from a scratch tablet to a computer screen, but both are only blank pages to begin with, the stuff of inspiration.

I know that writing is my song because the words come easily. It's a happy tune, and it makes me sing.

Pat Alvarado
Piggy Press Books
Panama, Republic of Panama
011-507-317-9051
Info@piggypress.com
www.piggypress.com

About Joe Sabah



Joe Sabah is a nationally recognized speaker, trainer, consultant, author, and publisher. He is based in Denver, Colorado where he operates a speaking, publishing, consulting business.

As a member of the National Speakers Association, in 1982 Joe served as co-founder and first president of the Colorado Speakers Association (a chapter of the National Speakers Association), now with over 150 members. He is also a member the Small Publishers Association of North America. Joe served as President of the Colorado Independent Publishers Association for 2 1/2 years, increasing its membership from 90 to 310.

Joe served the American Motivational Association as Regional Vice-President in Northern California, Oregon, and Denver, Colorado. His Sales Congresses traditionally exceeded 1,200 seminar attendees. He sponsored and promoted congresses that included: Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, Cavett Robert, Og Mandino, Ira Hayes, Marilyn Van Derbur, and Dr. Morris Massey.

Joe Sabah
303-722-7200

Joe@JoeSabah.com

www.JoeSabah.com

Author of [How to Get on Radio Talk Shows All Across America Without Leaving Your Home or Office](#)

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