

More Books by Peggy Lee Hanson

amazon.com/author/peggyleehanson

My Life Adventure Series:

fiftysomething: The Unknown, Dreams & Paths

Thrown Into Transition: Now What Do I Do

The Acceptance Factor: To Serenity and Beyond

Courage Under Siege Anthology Series:

Adversity to Victory

Bewilderment to Enlightenment

Uncertainty to Clarity

Duress to Success

Flight to Light

Hurt to Healing

Trauma to Transformation

Turmoil to Tranquility

The Gratitude Book Project Series:

Celebrating 365 Days of Gratitude (7 editions)

Best of Pets

A Celebration of Personal Heroes

Celebrating Moms & Motherhood

My Favorite Christmas Memory

My Favorite Summertime Memory

The Community Book Project Series:

20/20 Vision

Success Is Yours

A Gift of Gratitude

Pawsome Friends

Independence

Being The One Series:

How to Lead Boldly & Live Your Vision

Contributing Authors

(listed in alphabetical order by surname)

Trisha Apoua Ivy

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/trisha-ivy>

Kathleen Hendrickson, M.A.

<https://www.intuitivekathleenjoy.com>

Ann McLaughlin-Delisca

www.linkedin.com/in/annmclaughlin1

Sue Tabaka-Kritzeck

<https://linktr.ee/suetk>

Turmoil to Tranquility

Volume VIII

Courage

Under

Siege

PeggyLee Hanson

with

Kathleen Hendrickson, M.A.

Trisha Apoua Ivy

Ann McLaughlin

Sue Tabaka-Kritzeck

Stories of courageous women who experienced
uneasiness and disquiet in their lives, and then found
peace.

Foreword by Susan Winner



COURAGEOUS WOMEN PUBLICATIONS™

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Copyright © 2025, PeggyLee Hanson (the collection)

Copyright © 2025. Each chapter work belongs to its respective author or artist

Cover credit, PeggyLee Hanson

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced mechanically, electronically, or by any other means, including photocopying, without written permission of the publisher. It is illegal to copy this book, post it to a website, or distribute it by any other means without permission from the publisher.

PeggyLee Hanson
Personal Transition Guidance, LLC
11220 W. Burleigh St., Suite 100
833-779-7483
PeggyLee@CourageousWomenPublications.biz
www.CourageousWomenPublications.com

ASIN:

Limits of Liability and Disclaimer of Warranty

The author and publisher shall not be liable for your misuse of this material. This book is strictly for informational and educational purposes.

Warning–Disclaimer

This content contains sensitive themes that may be distressing or triggering for some individuals. The purpose of this book is to educate and entertain. The author and/or publisher do not guarantee that anyone following these techniques, suggestions, tips, ideas, or strategies will become successful. The author and/or publisher shall have neither liability nor responsibility to anyone with respect to any loss or damage caused or alleged to be caused, directly or indirectly, by the information contained in this book.

*To every courageous heart,
may your journey
lead you to peace.*

for your eyes only

Table of Contents

Foreword.....	7
Susan Winner	
Editor's Preface	15
PeggyLee Hanson	
Mission Possible: A Journey to Unlock My Closed Heart	25
Kathleen Hendrickson	
Caregiving Through Crisis	45
Trisha Apoua Ivy	
Discovering Peace in Numbers	63
Ann McLaughlin-Delisca	
Courage to Begin Again.....	79
Ann McLaughlin-Delisca	
Tenacity	97
Sue Tabaka-Kritzeck	
Acknowledgments	112
About PeggyLee Hanson	114
About the Publisher.....	116

Foreword

Susan Winner

“Change is the only constant in life.”

~ Heraclitus

I met PeggyLee Hanson in 2014, when she first started her business. She was an up-and-coming writer. PeggyLee applied to be one of the Women’s Prosperity Network Chapter Leaders. Her vision matched ours, so it was easy to say, “Yes, yes, yes” to the application. PeggyLee also enrolled in one of our coaching programs with Tasha Chen, which, as PeggyLee puts it, was the start of her publishing career.

Through the years, I watched—and experienced—PeggyLee and how she grew with her keen ability, insight, and compassion in handling the very many authors. I was lucky to be one of them. In Volume 5, *Courage Under Siege: Flight to Light*, I told the stories of my dad, mom, and son who had been diagnosed with cancer at age three— “It’s All About Perspective and Choices.”

I used the exact quote in my chapter. I believe there are always two ways to see anything. For instance, I consider myself a gift to my parents. You see, my father was a functioning alcoholic, and my mother was a hard worker, holding down multiple jobs at once. I was their firstborn, followed by three siblings, two girls and a boy—but not necessarily in that order.

Chaos seemed to be the rule in this house. These were the days I decided to train myself to find calm within the storm, and to teach my siblings to do the same. From a young age, I learned that perspective and choice could shape our lives far better than circumstances ever would.

Eventually, my father left his family for a fresh start. He had all he could take. My mother tried to make ends meet by washing laundry, oftentimes for the rich in the neighborhood. Yet, she had a good job outside of the home as a secretary on Wall Street. She would tell us, “As long as you can type, you’ll always be able to take care of yourself.” But I never felt drawn to the 9–5 lifestyle. I found that I thrived on being an “intrapreneur,” innovating and creating within organizations.

When my young son was diagnosed with cancer, the prognosis was not good. I worked at a brokerage firm and was discriminated against

for a promotion because I was a woman. I could have seen myself as the victim, but I didn't. I worked up the courage and went to Human Resources, where they found me a terrific job at the firm.

Then the economic downturn happened, and I had the opportunity to save someone else's job by volunteering for a layoff. This action let me be with my son. I was grateful. It was the best time of my life. And my son beat the odds and lived longer than expected.

It wasn't easy to tell these heart-wrenching times of my life, but PeggyLee got me through it with her warmth and quiet understanding. And that is how she shows up for her authors in this series and every other book she has published.

What makes PeggyLee the expert? She has:

- walked the publishing path and cleared it for others
- brought heart-centered leadership to a head-heavy industry
- built a proven system that simplifies overwhelm
- merged business acumen with creative intuition
- created an ecosystem—not just a service.

PeggyLee has not only accomplished these feats, but she has also brought new writers to authorship, and impressive authorship, who are now bestselling and award-winning writers.

She has a remarkable ability to get to the core of what someone's trying to say. Writers often come to PeggyLee unsure of how to express their experiences, but she listens deeply—past the surface words—and helps them find the message that's been waiting to emerge. PeggyLee guides them to write from truth, not performance, and in doing so, their voice finally rings clear and authentic.

When her authors feel stuck, she doesn't push; she simplifies the process. When you feel lost, PeggyLee breaks it down with steps that make sense. When you lose motivation, she helps you to remember your "why."

When you read this book, you will find stories that will tap your emotions, make you feel better about yourself, and let you know you are not alone in this world; someone has walked in your shoes. In today's world, you need to know that you can make a difference—even if it is to one person.

You will read about Trisha's experience caring for her recently ex-husband until his death.

You will see how numerology fits into Ann's life, and how she had the courage to begin again.

You will hear how Kathleen works through her family heritage that guides her path.

And you will read how Sue's tenacity saves her life in every situation.

These are the real stories of women who faced chaos in their lives, who chose to be better, feel better, and heal better. I stand with them. I am them.

You'll meet honest, raw voices through personal stories of hardship and hope, showing that your pain—however tangled—is witnessed. When you open these pages, you'll feel a gentle whisper that your story matters, too—because others have lived through the dark and come out into light, through turmoil and find tranquility, their words make space for you to breathe.

You'll discover that healing doesn't always come in loud proclamations—it often comes in quiet moments of recognition, a chapter that says: "I see you. I held that fear. And you are still here."

You'll walk away with more than inspiration; you'll carry soft courage, a small spark of possibility that your past can become someone's

hope, and your life is a bridge to someone else's healing.

I am blessed to be part of the *Courage Under Siege* family. And I am also grateful and honored to be tapped on the shoulder to write this foreword.

Thank you, PeggyLee, for your kindness, thoughtfulness, and immense compassion for these authors. You are an inspiration for us all.

* * * *



Susan Winner

BeRealGetReal.com/6point

BeRealGetReal.com/

Susan@BeRealGetReal.com

Susan Winner (a/k/a Susan Wiener), affectionately called The Luminary, is a transformational coach, author, and speaker devoted to helping solopreneur women 50+ know who they truly are at their core so that they can design lives filled with purpose, peace, and fulfillment. She creates safe, sacred spaces where women can be real, get real, and achieve real success.

With intuitive insight and practical tools, she helps clients shift perspective and clear blocks to move forward with confidence. Her own journey, shaped by early experiences in a chaotic, addiction-impacted home, taught her that perspective and choice are everything. That foundational belief guides her work today.

With Susan, transformation becomes not just possible, but inevitable.

Make powerful choices for yourself every day with Susan's Six-Point Journaling sheets.

for your eyes only

Editor's Preface

PeggyLee Hanson

There is a moment, somewhere between the breaking and the rebuilding, when a woman realizes she is still standing. Not untouched. Not unchanged. But standing—with a different kind of strength than she walked in with.

This volume is built from those moments.

As you open these pages, you're stepping into the intimate, unvarnished inner worlds of women who have lived through separation, loss, trauma, self-doubt, reinvention, and the quiet, steady awakening of their own peace. They come from different places, hold different histories, and navigate profoundly different challenges—yet each one has done the brave work of turning toward her own truth instead of away from it.

What you'll feel in this book is not performative resilience.

It's lived resilience.

Hard-won resilience.

Resilience borne from surrender, acceptance, courage, and the relentless choice to rise anyway.

As you read each author's words, keep in mind that you are hearing their voice in the written format. The grammar, punctuation, and the way each one speaks their words are like poetry—it's personal, poignant, and sometimes, painful.

The Long Road Home to the Self

In *Mission Possible: A Journey to Unlock My Closed Heart*, Dr. Kathleen Hendrickson invites you into the earliest memories that shaped her sense of belonging—and the lifelong quest to understand why she felt set apart. What begins as a story of childhood disconnection becomes a profound exploration of ancestral healing, metaphysical awareness, and spiritual purpose. Through her communion with her father across the veil, her study of Human Design and Gene Keys, and the quiet moments of reckoning within her own body, she reveals how attachment wounds can become portals to wisdom. Her journey is not linear; it weaves through grief, awakening, guidance, insight, and a growing ability to trust love itself. Kathleen's chapter reminds us that inner peace often begins by listening to what the soul has been whispering all along.

Love, Loss, and the Courage to Care Again

Few journeys test the human heart like caregiving—especially when caring for someone who has also caused deep pain. In *Caregiving Through Crisis*, Trisha Apoua Ivy offers a raw, deeply human account of the months she spent caring for her newly ex-husband after a life-threatening medical emergency. Her story reveals the impossible blend of roles she carried: ex-wife, co-parent, medical advocate, emotional anchor, and witness to the end of a life she once built her own around.

Her honesty is unflinching—she names the fatigue, the anticipatory grief, the frustration, the fear of what her children might face, and the constant navigation of boundaries with family members who meant well but did not understand the weight on her shoulders. She also names the compassion that guided her choices, even when those choices hurt. And in the last hours of Wolf’s life, as she played his favorite music and sat beside him until the sun rose, she shows us what it means to honor someone not because the past was perfect, but because love—in all its complicated forms—still matters.

Trisha's chapter is a meditation on compassion as courage, grief as devotion, and boundaries as an act of love—for others and for oneself.

Finding Peace in What Has Always Been Steady

For Ann McLaughlin-Delisca, numbers were more than math—they were safety. In *Discovering Peace in Numbers*, she takes you from childhood memories of counting aloud at the dinner table to the boardrooms, budgets, and daily decisions that shaped her financial wisdom. Her voice is warm, witty, reflective, and deeply grounded in the truth that numbers don't lie; they simply tell the story we are often afraid to read.

Her journey reminds us how the smallest habits—tiny expenses, ignored health numbers, unexamined relationships—add up to the life we're living. And she makes the case that clarity is compassion: when we understand our numbers, whether financial or physical or relational, we reclaim power we didn't realize we'd given away. From humorous moments (like assuming "I-95" was the speed limit and learning otherwise via flashing lights) to life-changing realizations about boundaries, burnout, financial awareness, and health, Ann

shows us that peace often begins with paying attention.

Numbers become teachers. Anchors. Stepping stones. And, in Ann's world, they become a surprisingly tender form of self-care.

When the Sun Stops Rising—and Starts Again

Ann continues her offering with *The Courage to Begin Again*, moving from numbers to narrative, from logic to faith. This chapter is a masterclass in the quiet bravery required to rebuild your identity after a career collapse, a health crisis, or a series of closed doors that shake your confidence. Through her story, you'll see a woman face rejection after rejection, lose sight of her own sunrise, and eventually rediscover that the light had never left—she had only stopped turning toward it.

Her transformation grows from three sacred resources: words, energy, and time. She reveals how the words she spoke over herself once held her back—and how reshaping that inner language opened new paths. She reflects on how energy is influenced by the people and environments we allow into our space. And she names time as the most sacred currency we have—the one that reveals a woman's

boundaries, values, and priorities more honestly than anything she says out loud.

Ann's chapter is a love letter to the woman who wants to rise again but fears she's waited too long. She proves that rebirth begins not with force, but with intention.

The Slow, Steady, Sovereign Rise of Tenacity

Finally, in *Tenacity*, Sue Tabaka-Kritzeck brings a clarion call to every woman who has ever felt stuck, unsure, or overwhelmed by expectation. Sue doesn't glamourize resilience—she traces it from childhood lessons, early decisions shaped by fear, inherited responsibilities, and the deeply human habit of pleasing others at the expense of oneself.

She shows us that tenacity is not loud. It is not flashy. It is not a performance.

Tenacity is a daily decision.

A muscle.

A mindset.

A choice to keep moving, even when uncertainty whispers “what if?”

As a lifelong educator, speaker, and leader, Sue shines a light on the invisible labor women

carry. She names the toll of expectations, the danger of ignoring stress, and the transformative power of choosing authenticity over obligation. Through her mother's example—a woman widowed at forty with eight children—Sue reveals how ordinary people become extraordinary simply by refusing to give up.

Most importantly, she reminds us that tenacity is not superhuman; it is profoundly human. It is something every woman carries, often quietly, often unknowingly, until life asks her to use it.

Sue gives readers permission to rest, reflect, rise slowly, and trust that strength grows in the very places we once felt weakest.

Together, Their Stories Create a Tapestry of Peace

Though each writer walks her own path, this volume carries a shared message:

Peace is not found—it is cultivated.

Often in the dark.

Often in the ache.

Often in the moments when life unravels—and we must decide whether to cling to the old story or step bravely into a new one.

You will meet women who returned to their ancestral lines for healing.

Women who held the hands of those they once loved as they took their final breath.

Women who recalibrated their lives through clarity and curiosity.

Women who rose after professional heartbreak.

Women who learned to speak truth instead of fear.

Women who found their voice, their compass, their center, and ultimately—their tranquility.

This is what courage looks like.

This is what transformation feels like.

This is what happens when women refuse to let turmoil be their final chapter.

As you turn the page, may you find a piece of your own story here—in their questions, their breakthroughs, their softness, their strength.

May their words whisper to the parts of you still healing.

May their journeys remind you that peace is not passive; it is intentional, sacred work.

And may this book be a companion for your own unfolding.

With heart, reverence, and deep respect,

~ Peggylee

for your eyes only

THE STORIES

for your eyes only

Mission Possible: A Journey to Unlock My Closed Heart

Kathleen Hendrickson

*“There is more wisdom in your body than in
your deepest philosophy.”*

~ Friedrich Nietzsche

The television series Mission Impossible opened with Ethan Hunt answering a pay phone. A mission is given, should he choose to accept. As he accepts, the message self-destructs.

These stories amuse me as I recall my lifelong search to feel truly loved, to be seen. Over the years, I have realized and grown into my own metaphysical abilities. I’ve come to understand that we have pre-conception awareness of the incarnation we opted to accept. We are given glimpses of the journey that leaves our memory with only hints during time and experience.

As a girl, I held a deep sense of not belonging. A feeling of being out of place—a foreigner in my family and among friends. Only with years of

psychological training and spiritual exploration have I come to understand that my conception, birth trauma, and another trauma as an infant resulted in my nervous system responding to protect me from reliving the traumatic feelings of separation. We now understand that infants prior to age five are not yet cognitively aware. Their world is sensory and lacks the cognitive ability to make sense of their experiences.

A deeply significant experience occurs as the mother holds her child after birth. There is an exchange of neurochemicals that bonds mother and child.

At that time, there was no understanding of Attachment Disorder—the infant’s withdrawal from the sensory input of painful experiences. We now appreciate the sympathetic nervous system that is triggered as a life-saving act.

In *Communication Beyond the Veil*, my chapter of **Courage Under Siege, Volume. III: Uncertainty to Clarity**, I explored our innate ability to communicate with those who have passed. A gift that became my path to opening to healing the deep sense of lack and non-attachment. That my family was a solid base for me was a beautiful gift, despite my feeling of not truly being grounded and belonging.

I sat at my laptop at Rogers Memorial Library in Southampton, NY, and opened to listen to my inner world. I felt Dad's presence. Dad, Jim McGill, survived WWII. He spoke, as I wrote his words in my digital journal:

“Loving girl who kept me focused on surviving the ravages of the war, you carried my desire for a better life for each of us in our sweet family. When trials surfaced, I was thankful for the bounty of my family. You know I was not a religious man, yet took comfort in our religious community—caring, happy folks who were willing to lend an ear to my lengthy discourses on only God knew what.

“You were an independent child who would draw only so close and then pull back, either physically or with your words. It was as if you were here to be singular, to stand alone as needed. I see that I was correct in that thought.

“What you are seeking in others are remnants of your shadow. I see your yearning for perfected love in the face of challenges—to see God unconditionally. Your desire is beautiful to behold. I remain with you in the times ahead as you refine and act upon your understanding. You know, you are never alone. You are One with all Consciousness.

“Together, we will harvest this aspect in your DNA for transmutation.”

And I then responded:

“Dad, I experience with calm understanding and intend to go forth, thankful for your presence within me. This brings me deep and subtle joy. Namaste.”

In a later visitation, Dad spoke to me again:

“You are healing me through our conversations, as you have recorded them. That you understand me helps me appreciate the value of my life and work. Thank you, my loving child.”

Moving into the present time, my work as an intuitive and metaphysical psychotherapist includes a focus on ancestral healing of trauma—a clue to my mission.

My Mission

“Our wound is not a defect but a doorway.

~Attributed to Carl Jung
and his psychological theories

I think of my life journey as a thousand-piece puzzle. Yet I don't have an image to consult, only an etheric road map. Signs and markers of my

mission appear over the years. Each is an insight that validates my path. As I fit those pieces together, I find myself coming into quiet; noticing the characteristics of each piece—the shape and color as my eyes imagine a photo on a box. It is a lovely and relaxing form of being present. There can be an exhilaration as the pieces fit.

Key lifetime decisions I've made are significant signposts along the way, often in the depths of my struggles. What may have been viewed as rash decisions or non-conformity were those that unconsciously guided me: My heart-opening quest to find my ability to attach and trust love continued.

A long gratitude list of pivotal moments and people allow me to acknowledge the importance each had in my journey. I can sense and communicate with them as I honor them. These insights arise when I am relaxed and open to stored trauma within my body's sympathetic nervous system.

As a young child, I knelt beside my bed to pray. Or at times I sat inside my closet, nestled away, seeking without knowing what it was I was searching for. Our Methodist minister approached me in early adolescence, asking if I would like to become a member. He was an

important guide, perhaps more accurately an angel, who recognized my innate spiritual inclination. Later in my teens, another minister guided me to join the state youth fellowship in a leadership capacity—moments in these two relationships were acts of love and serendipity, lessons in trust, and a step toward trusting attachment.

A favorite memory—at age four, I would go into a small filbert orchard on our property. I took my favorite doll to play with, love, and nurture. A sense of peace and safety comforted me. Looking back, I was seeking a sense of bonding.

At age ten, we lived four houses away from our grandparents. Mom volunteered me to go to their home to weed one of the flowerbeds. I was angry—it felt like a command rather than being helpful to my grandparents. A feeling of being unseen by her seethed within. This remains a powerful memory. Another seed to bring awareness to my yet unrealized innate independence, instrumental to the mission. Mom had her own path that would have created our distance.

As I weeded, I made a bargain with God. “When I grow up, I promise to have children and be a better mother.” In truth, Mom was a great mother; it was the events in my infancy that

were a part of my purpose and reason for this lifetime. I'm sure she also missed our failure to bond.

I was only one of the actors on this stage. How were my brothers feeling about their lives, I wondered?

As a teen, I lived in a small town, Stayton, Oregon. Farming and forestry were the primary sources of employment. At fourteen, my first job was picking green pole beans. At fifteen, I would work at the local canning company.

It was a messy job. Dressed in jeans and a long-sleeved shirt and a bandana to cover our hair, my friend Joan and I set out in the early morning with the dew still heavy on the vines. We each had a 5-gallon plastic bucket to collect the beans. When each bucket was full, they were taken to the end of our row and weighed. A ticket was punched that showed the poundage. At the end of the day, we took our tickets to the owner to receive credit toward our pay later in the week.

To my total amazement, a hired hand would weigh the beans. Early in the season, as I came toward the weigh station, my eyes caught the striking blue eyes of Richard. He was two years my senior. The physical/spiritual experience is

one I have never forgotten: a definite sign along my roadmap and mission.

We married five years later, while we were students at Oregon State University. Signs continued to appear. My independence came to life as I chose to change church communities to Catholicism. He joined me as I went to meet the priest in Corvallis and enroll in training to convert. We stood at a crosswalk light when I heard my own voice ask, “Are you sure you want to do this, and to become a mother, or perhaps become a nun?” As the light turned green, I answered: “I commit to marriage and motherhood.”

Years later, I honor this life-changing sign and decision. Many more roadmaps appeared over time. I naturally trusted them.

The Metaphysical Realm – My Purpose

Opening to a doorway to happiness and a change of paths.

Twenty years after that moment, meeting the priest, I was guided to face the difficult task of leaving the marriage. Praying and immersing myself in the works of Carl Jung, Simone Weil,

and Teilhard de Chardin, I prepared to change course as necessary. Spiritual guidance saw me through a difficult journey. It would be for the best of our dear nuclear family.

Over the span of several years, my educational background in counseling and psychotherapy has been helpful. What were considered alternative therapies at the time included Aura-Soma color therapy, essential oils, Barbara Brennan's work, EFT, and more. Human Design and Gene Keys remain particularly suited to my abilities and gifts. Training with Thomas Hübl became the synthesizer.

Ra Uru Hu, through spiritual transmission, developed Human Design, synthesizing Chinese I-Ching, astrology, Hindu-Brahmin Chakras, the Tree of Life, and quantum mechanics. Gene Keys, developed through a transmission received by Richard Rudd, followed Ra's work. Both systems remain loved and actively followed today. Our higher purpose, our road map, is written inside our DNA.

As the planet moves through its cycles, we are influenced in our ongoing experiences. Human Design's app makes it easy to consult the astrological influences at any given time. The six lines of the I Ching create variation in how we may respond to the energetic field at any given

time. As I edit my writing on this day, I have three additional supportive influences in my field that are helpful as I write and edit.

My purpose is Sacrifice gene key 19.1. Line 1.

- The Shadow: a challenge of co-dependence was richly ingrained in my childhood experiences. I unconsciously managed my childhood by being well-behaved, essentially not rocking the boat and keeping the peace—yet another of my mission keys.
- The Gift: curiosity and discovering healthy emotional independence.
- The Purpose: creativity in service to others and the greater good for all. I have a natural sensitivity to the shifts and transformations in my environment and our society.

Co-dependence was not unusual for many women of my generation and those before us. As I reflect on the early 1970s, I participated in forming a local chapter of the National Organization for Women. My role was establishing guidelines and leading a consciousness-raising discussion group. Together, we shared our call to raise awareness about how we could expand our ways of expressing and acting to encourage self-

expression and contributions to our families and community.

Lessons in Loving

We carry our ancestors in our DNA – clues to our soul's journey.

There is one consciousness of which we are each a part. Our actions do impact ourselves and others. While I was affected by non-attachment with my mother, my father was on active duty in World War II when I was born. My mother and older brother had their own experiences with bonding and living in the time of upheaval, fear, and concerns for safety.

Mother was lovingly driven to research our family genealogy. Her church offered a study group that included doing research at the Mormon Library in Salt Lake City, Utah. In time, I became intrigued and drawn to her data and stories.

As my life experience continues, I see that we are participants in a much greater reality than I could foresee. In time, Rev. Cuthbert Juettner, a beloved Buddhist monk, briefly entered my life. It was he who taught me that not all conceived beings are meant to incarnate fully. Cuthbert

lovingly performed *mizuko kuyo*, the rite of cleansing and clearing. I experience peace as he prayed for the soul of Luke Richard, my stillborn son. My veil of sorrow began to lift.

I attended twice-weekly meditations for the few months I knew Cuthbert. He shared that he could see beings around me when I was meditating—a gratefully appreciated clue for me. A few months later, Cuthbert shared that he would be leaving—passing. Indeed, he was struck by a truck while commuting on his bike to teach at the local community college. His visions validated my intuitive journey. He, another angel, assisting me in my mission.

In writing *Secrets Unveiled*, a chapter for **Courage Under Siege, Volume VI, Trauma to Transformation**, I traced the known pattern of women ancestors who lost at least one child during or just after birth. There were losses of infants in each of my grandparents' families and two aunts.

One beloved great-grandmother, my maternal grandfather's mother, Agnes Sophia, bore three of six children who didn't survive early childhood. She herself passed at age 34.

Agnes Sophia spoke to me as I prayed in gratitude for her endurance, love, and faith in the family's pioneering of the Pacific Northwest.

“Dearest, I am honored by your ancestral healing work. Each era brings new pioneers. New challenges. The threads of family lineage preserve both the higher actions and the errant acts. Your ability to recognize and heal the weaker patterns carried in DNA is pivotal to ushering in the promised “new age”—higher states of being and caring for one another. A promise strived for eons.”¹

Thomas Hübl has been a strong call to action in recent years—trainings involved attuning my intuitive connection to ancestors and the living. I observe and recognize that our individual DNA arises in its own unique expression in each of our parents, my siblings, sons, and grandchildren.

Positive changes in me ripple forward and backward in my family and loved ones. Equally, my spiritual growth and interactions contribute to consciousness in all interactions.

We each, in our individuality, participate in bringing peace and understanding. No one is exempt from having a role. What may appear to be a negative contribution may, in fact, be an

agitator pushing the movement forward, or a lesson for the larger whole. Each role contributes to the whole of humanity.

Surrender – a Paradox

True Mastery can be gained by letting things go their own way. It cannot be gained by interfering.

~ Stephen Mitchell²

I often whisper to myself—*surrender*. Entrance to higher states of consciousness occurs when relaxing into the higher-dimensional energetic field. Scientifically, we now have expanded knowledge of quantum mechanics. Whether referring to super consciousness, collective consciousness, or God, to me they are all One.

Our bodies are vehicles by which we navigate these higher states of being. The paradigm I have been drawn to share is explained in Richard Rudd's *Seven Sacred Seals, Portals to Grace*. His practice derives from the Corpus Christi Mystery School and draws upon a revelation by St. John the Divine. Archangels, Christian saints, and Buddhist Bodhisattvas are expressed in the various seals.

Imagine a triangle with three segments. At the base is Seal 1, the Physical body. Above it is Seal 2, the Astral/emotional body. Seal 3, the Mental body. Next, imagine a descending triangle from above and moving into the lower triangle, Seal 4, the Causal body, Seal 5, the Buddhic body, and Seal 6, the Atmic body. As these two triangles completely merge, they form a 6-pointed star. The seventh seal overlapping in the core area is the Monadic plane. It opens our energetic access to higher states of consciousness.

The practice begins by opening to the 7th seal, followed by Seal 1 upward, ending back at the 7th. As the progression moves, perhaps over a week or longer, our body responds by allowing awareness of memories and insights held within it. We carry trauma in various seals. Referring to attachment disorders and early trauma, these are held strongly in the physical body since the emotional and mental development has not awakened.

Much beloved by many, Carl Jung, a mystic and psychiatrist, envisioned what he called individuation. The monadic plane is the correlate.

Attunement

As living vibrational beings, our countenance and way of being in each carry resonance into the field of consciousness. You may notice another's vibe when you meet them. When bringing awareness to an interaction, notice your vibe, as well as whether you attune to the other or may criticize or dislike what you experience. Negative responses in conversations skew the energy fields to a lower level of vibration. Attunement combines and elevates the higher frequency. Keep in mind that this resonance is a part of the field of consciousness.

It can be fun to note at the checkout line at the market. How do you perceive and sense the clerk? If you respond with gratitude and courtesy, you draw a very different response than if you were critical or distant.

What matters is that we are engaging in feedback loops all the time. Bringing awareness to interactions and other physical responses is informative—emails, phone conversations, and passing on others' openness to the quantum field. Our bodies respond internally to the energy. Physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being are essential. Thomas Hübl trains organizations and individuals worldwide.³ There are currently organizations in many of the war-torn nations. His trainings,

books, and service are a powerful positive influence in our current era of change.

A Path to Wholeness

What may feel like a solo journey is filled with ancestral wisdom, spiritual support, and encouragement. Angels, mentors, and teachers have steered you along your path. Strangers often play a role in how they respond to you.

Bring Awareness to Your Whole Body

Pause for as long as you need to quiet your body. Breathe into your body and listen to how your body is communicating with you. With each calming breath, notice and allow insight to arise. Simply observe as you practice this awareness. The body responds as it softens. You are opening to self-integration—embodiment.

Explore bringing awareness to your metaphysical gifts. We are all individuals in our abilities to open to this life and our bodies' healing etheric energies. Feeling safe and comfortable in accessing your gifts is crucial for allowing them to flourish and be beneficial to others.

Food for Thought

1. RECALL and allow memories to resurface—times when you made pivotal decisions: the setting, was the decision spontaneous or pondered? How did your action serve you and others? Did it bring a life change?
2. Make note of the meaning behind your experiences.
3. Reflect on your more memorable signposts - you are living your life mission.
4. Challenges are tools to help bring clarity to your mission.
5. Hold the intention to attune in your conversations, bringing awareness of the natural flow of communication. Let go of needing to reach a goal—simply allow higher consciousness to unfold.
6. Find humor in life lessons. Perhaps you missed earlier clues, and this is a step in your growth.
7. Notice and find comfort and glee in serendipitous events – part of your road map and your rewards.

As you cultivate your inner peace, release any negativity, judgment of others, and anger from past events. Many experience a physical softening. In a 360-degree perspective of your life, keep in mind that your journey is a part of

the greater whole. Everyone has their role—some far more challenging than others.

As you experience changes, note that your DNA is adjusting. Physical wellness may improve, sensitivity may expand, and inner peace may be felt. This route not only leads to empowerment but also incorporates healing within consciousness. Energy is recursive, meaning it changes the past and impacts the future. There is an uncoiling of negative patterns.

May your life journey and mission bring you peace and joy.

Endnotes

¹ Peggy Lee Hanson, *Courage Under Siege, Hurt to Healing Vol VI*, 2020. Amazon.com

² (Tao Te Ching, A New English Version, with Forward and Notes, New York: Harper Perennial, 1988. P48)

³ Thomas Hübl, *attuned, Practicing Interdependence to Heal Our Trauma – and Our World*, Sounds True, Boulder, CO, 2023.

* * * *



Kathleen Hendrickson, M.A.

Healing Psychotherapy & Metaphysical Service

kathleen@intuitivekathleenjoy.com

<https://www.intuitivekathleenjoy.com>

<https://linkedin.com/in/intuitivekathleenjoy>

Kathleen Hendrickson's mission is to assist others along their path to individuation, a path to inner peace and well-being. Key to her practice are intuitive skills of attunement and embodiment. Together, she and you become attuned to explore your higher vibrational field. The work is always respectful and honors you. Your relationships become more authentic and satisfying. Her clients include entrepreneurs and leaders. With attunement, the clarity of your mission can be significant. You may bring positive attunement to those with whom you interact. Sessions are virtual.

Caregiving Through Crisis

Trisha Apoua Ivy

“Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars.”

~ Kahlil Gibran

Prologue

When the divorce was settled, I thought the hardest part of this story was behind me. Divorce is its own kind of death, and in a way, I had already been grieving the loss of Wolf for years. The hurt, the broken trust, the slow crumbling of a life we had built over nearly twenty-five years had already left its mark. I wanted to believe that once the papers were signed, I could finally breathe again—that I could begin healing, rebuilding, and finding myself.

But life rarely follows the timelines we imagine. Just as I stepped out of one storm, another

loomed. The day after Wolf signed the papers, he experienced a life-threatening medical emergency, and I made a decision to take on a role I had just removed myself from: caregiver. The irony wasn't lost on me. After everything we had been through, after fighting so hard to free myself from the shadows of alcoholism and trauma, I was being called back into his life in a way that felt both surreal and inevitable.

This time, it was more than basic caregiving. We needed a medical power of attorney. We were revisiting end-of-life decisions. I was being thrust into a position of responsibility for someone who had once caused me so much pain. The timing felt cruel. I hadn't even had the chance to process the end of our marriage, and now I was faced with the reality of losing him entirely. The word that kept coming forward was disbelief. I couldn't believe this was happening. And yet, despite my frustration, sorrow, and exhaustion, something inside me knew this was what I needed to do. Not only for him, but for the children we shared, for the twenty-five years of history, and perhaps for myself.

What followed was a season of blurred roles and heavy emotions. One moment, I was the ex-wife, trying to rebuild my own life. The next, I was the medical decision-maker, arranging

appointments, talking with doctors, and explaining updates to family. I was learning to balance compassion with boundaries, trying to show up without losing myself. It was a confusing, painful time, but it also became the ground on which I began to understand courage differently.

I never believed divorce would be the end of our connection. We were still parents. We were still friends. I had been trying to preserve that so we could be good co-parents and not let hate or anger define what was left of our family. But that last year was hard, full of trials and tribulations I couldn't have foreseen. Caring for Wolf after the marriage ended wasn't about undoing the past or rewriting what had happened. It was about answering the call that was in front of me, one day at a time, and trying to hold my own heart steady while doing it.

The Call Back In

The day after he signed the papers, I picked up the phone to call Wolf. I wasn't calling to check up on details or to take charge. I just wanted him to know that we loved him, that we cared, and that I wanted to help him take better care of himself. I asked him to please do his part so I could do mine, because we wanted him to be okay.

What I got back was not what I expected. Wolf was in the emergency room. Doctors had found two large blood clots in his lungs. The words felt heavy in the air, impossible to hold. My heart sank, but I forced myself to stay steady. I spoke with the medical team, asked questions, and made sure I understood what they were telling me. Then I went back to him with the calmest voice I could manage. I told him it was going to be okay, that the doctors were preparing a procedure to remove the clots, and that he would make it through.

Our oldest son went to be with him. I stayed on the phone, reminding Wolf he wasn't alone, reminding him that when he came home, we would be there to help him get strong again. What I didn't say out loud was the part that hit me hardest: for the first time, I realized he could die. The clots were big, and the risk was real.

He made it through the procedure. He stayed in the hospital for a couple of days and then came home. But that moment, that call, became the beginning of everything that followed. It was the first time I knew the road ahead would test me in ways I had never faced before.

Old Wounds, New Responsibilities

Caring for someone you love is hard. Caring for someone who has broken your heart is something else entirely. Each doctor's visit, each phone call with medical staff, each decision about Wolf's care opened old wounds. I had to remind myself daily that this wasn't about the past, it was about the present moment. Compassion didn't erase the damage done, but it gave me the strength to keep showing up.

When he came home, it didn't feel like recovery. Wolf was adjusting to new medications, going through test after test because no one knew what had caused the clots. Everyone was worried about him, and I was, too. At the same time, it was hard watching him seem to slip further away. Some days it felt like he wasn't trying to help himself, and that hurt. I had to remind myself constantly that he was also very sick, that his body was carrying more than I could see.

I worked hard to keep my frustration in check. I leaned on compassion because that was what Wolf needed most. But I also reminded myself of my own limits. I had to keep space for my healing, for my strength, for the boundaries that kept me from losing myself in his illness.

Still, fear lingered. There were times he looked so weak that I worried he might die in the house. If he had stayed in his room too long, I sometimes kept the kids from checking on him, afraid of what they might find. That fear carried us all the way to the night before Thanksgiving, when I took him back to the emergency room.

He was diagnosed with another serious infection and admitted immediately. The next day, I urged him to put a medical power of attorney in place. Wolf told me I already knew what he wanted, but I reminded him that I wasn't his wife anymore, and doctors didn't have to listen to me. Together, we made sure it was handled. And through every step, I kept our children informed. It mattered to me that they trusted that I was making decisions with all of us in mind. But even with everyone included, the weight of it still landed on me in ways I wasn't prepared for.

The Toll on Me

The most significant toll of caregiving wasn't the errands, appointments, or late nights. It was about taking care of myself so I could show up for him in the best way possible. I was constantly checking in with myself—am I eating, sleeping, staying grounded—because if I crumbled, everything around me would, too.

At the same time, I felt an obligation to keep so many people informed. I wanted to honor the importance of making decisions as a family, so I cast the net wide. More voices meant more feelings, more opinions, and sometimes it left me questioning the choices moving forward. It was draining to carry the weight of those updates on top of the actual caregiving.

Over time, I learned small ways of coping. There were moments when I chose silence. I realized I didn't have to answer everyone right away. I began to consider what updates were truly necessary and which details could remain private. I should have set firmer boundaries sooner, but even small shifts helped me feel steadier inside.

I'm grateful for the moments when Wolf was conscious and we could confirm his intent and wishes. Those conversations mattered. Even with that reassurance, making the calls was still painful. There is a kind of heartbreak in being the one to choose compassion, to let go when the fight is over, and to carry that responsibility without knowing how to release the weight that feels like blame.

Through all of it, I tried to show up with love, to protect our children from the hardest parts, and

to protect myself enough to keep going. That balance was the real toll of caregiving.

Caregivers often forget themselves in the process. I learned that checking in with my own body was an act of love, too.

Grieving Before the End

Anticipatory grief became my constant companion. I realized I had been mourning Wolf long before he passed. I had been mourning the years we had lost to addiction and anger, the pieces of our lives that would never be put back together. I hurt for him, knowing he was scared. I hurt for our children. I hurt watching someone I once loved fade away.

Every week brought new complications. I watched the doctors struggle to figure out how to treat him, saw the level of complexity grow with every test, every new consent form, every discussion about a DNR. Wolf fought through it all, but each fight took something from him.

Three separate times, the doctors told me they had reached their limits and that comfort measures might be next. The first time he was awake, we were trying one last procedure that almost didn't happen because of complications. I had the first tough conversation with our

children, explaining that we might be moving into a different kind of care. Within a week, the discussion about comfort measures came up twice more. I felt like life was squeezing my heart in a relentless yo-yo of hope and despair.

The second time, he was unconscious, and I was left making decisions on my own, questioning if I was doing the right thing. Then he rallied one last time. I was grateful he was awake to be part of the conversation, but it tore me apart to hear Wolf saying goodbye for what we both knew was the last time.

I tried to keep things honest with our kids to prepare them for the worst, even though I hated the honesty of it. It was hard, but it was what they needed. It was exactly what we all needed.

Sometimes, we start grieving long before goodbye. That doesn't mean we've given up. It means our hearts already know what our minds can't accept yet.

Navigating Boundaries

One of the most brutal battles wasn't with him, but with others. I did my best to include family and friends in Wolf's care. I shared updates, explained procedures, and made an effort to keep everyone connected. But when the hard

decisions came, some felt more entitled to a say. They questioned whether I should agree to another surgery or how I could be sure of what he wanted. They asked if he still had a chance. Every question seemed to challenge my judgment at a time when I was already stretched thin.

At the very end, the weight of those decisions became even heavier. Wolf was clear about what he wanted in his final hours. At first, he said he only wanted me there and not the children. I think he was scared to say goodbye and wanted to protect them. I told him I understood, but I also urged him to let us call the children. When we called, they said they wanted to come. He then agreed. I'm grateful we were all there together, but even writing this now tears my heart apart.

Some people were hurt that I didn't tell them sooner, that they didn't get a chance to say goodbye. I understand their pain, but those moments weren't about anyone else. Each second belonged to Wolf and to what he asked of me.

I called people after he passed. While it still weighs on me that others felt left out, I know I made the right choice. Our children understood and were part of the choices we made together.

Navigating boundaries in those moments is just part of caregiving. But it is also part of honoring his dignity, our family, and my own ability to stand firm when it counted most. Boundaries aren't walls. They are the space that lets love breathe.

Compassion as Courage

In the chaos of decisions and family expectations, I learned that courage doesn't always roar, it often whispers through compassion.

I didn't feel anger would be easier. That isn't who I am. Even in the most difficult moments, I didn't think about walking away. My instinct was to care. When I looked at him, I saw the man I loved, the father of my children, the friend who still existed beneath the pain. That part of me has always chosen compassion.

During this season, though, I began to learn something new. Compassion isn't only about the person you're caring for. It also has to include yourself. It means protecting your own heart, holding your own boundaries, and allowing yourself to heal even while you're giving.

I started taking small steps toward that, pausing before answering every call or text, allowing

myself moments of quiet when I didn't have to update anyone. Letting myself cry in private without rushing to fix everything, reminding myself that my worth wasn't only in what I could give. These small things helped me hold on to myself.

Choosing compassion for Wolf never meant forgetting. It meant seeing the whole of our story and deciding that love, in whatever form remained, mattered more than resentment. Choosing compassion for myself meant giving myself permission to let go of guilt, to rest, to accept help when it was offered, and to trust that showing up didn't have to cost me everything.

That lesson—that compassion can include me, too—became one of the few steady things I could hold onto when everything else felt like it was slipping away.

The Final Goodbye

When the end came, it wasn't dramatic. There were no movie moments, no last speeches. Just the slow unwinding of Wolf's body and the quiet understanding that our chapter was closing. After the kids finally went home, I stayed. I had been there at the start of our life together, and in a way, I was grateful to be there at the end. We had started this life together, and we ended

it together, too. I wanted him to know he wasn't alone.

That night, I thought of all the evenings when Wolf would stay up late, playing his music into the early hours. The sound would drift through the house like an outward sign of what he couldn't say. In those final hours, I decided to give that back to him. I played all his favorite songs, one after another. We listened to them through the night, just as he had done so many times before. The music filled the room, soft and steady, as if it were holding us both.

As the sun began to rise, Wolf stayed with me, breathing slower and slower, and then he was gone. He took his final breaths with the morning light coming through the window, and then the music ended. It's still unfair. There are still days when it feels impossible to accept. But I know I did my best. I know I showed up. And I hope our children know that too.

Being there at the end was both heartbreaking and a kind of peace. It was the closing of our life together and the quiet promise that, even after everything, Wolf wasn't alone.

Epilogue

Looking back, I see caregiving as one of the hardest sieges of my life. It tested every part of me: my body, my spirit, my boundaries, my compassion. And yet, it also revealed my strength. I was able to honor a man who had been my partner for twenty-five years. The ink on our divorce papers had barely dried before I was grieving like a widow, before I had even learned how to be divorced.

I was able to fight for Wolf's dignity when he couldn't. I was able to support my children through the loss of their father. And I was able to keep showing up with compassion, even after a year of anger, heartbreak, and disappointment.

I know I am stronger today than I was before, but I'm still learning to extend myself the same grace I give to others. One of the most profound lessons I've carried forward is that not everyone deserves a front-row seat in my life. It takes courage to put boundaries in place, especially when expectations are being thrust upon you from every direction. In some families and cultures, boundaries are rarely discussed, and taking a step back to reassess what truly serves you can feel strange, even selfish. I've learned that it is not selfish—it is necessary. It's about

protecting your heart so you can continue giving from a place of love rather than depletion.

I hope that through all of this, my children know how deeply I loved their father. I hope they know how hard I tried, not only to make our marriage work, but also to be a good parent to them. And ultimately, I hope they see that despite all the challenging moments, we both love them and support them through anything. They were at the center of every decision I made. Even when it tore me apart, I wanted them to be prepared, to be included, and to feel secure in the midst of so much uncertainty.

What helped me keep going was having incredible family and friends surrounding me, but even that support could become overwhelming at times. I learned that it's okay to be still and to feel every feeling—good, bad, hard, and easy. Letting yourself sit with the whole range of emotions builds resilience and awareness. It's part of caring for your own mental health and well-being. You don't have to push everything down to be strong. Sometimes strength looks like a quiet moment, a deep breath, or a single tear before you step back into the room.

If you are in the midst of caregiving, grief, or heartbreak, know this: your courage is not

measured by the loudness of your fight, but by the persistence of your love. Each choice to show up, to breathe, to keep going—that is courage. You don't have to have the perfect words or the perfect plan. You don't have to be everything to everyone. It's enough to show up as yourself, with an open heart, and to take care of yourself while you take care of someone else. That, too, is an act of love.

This chapter of my life reminded me that compassion is not weakness. It is strength. And even in the darkest times, it is possible to choose compassion for others and for yourself. It is possible to walk through pain without losing your humanity. It is possible to create small boundaries that protect your soul while you care for someone else's body. It is possible to make mistakes, learn from them, and keep going.

Just as the sun sets each day, a new day brings a chance to keep trying and to do the best we can. I often think of that last night—music playing, the room dark, the sun rising as Wolf took his final breaths. In that moment, as unfair as it all felt, there was also a quiet truth: even in the darkest night, light will come again. Our stars cannot shine without the dark. That is the lesson I carry forward, and the encouragement I offer to anyone walking through their own siege.

You are stronger than you know. You can love without losing yourself. And when the sun rises again, you will rise, too.

* * * *

for your eyes only



Trisha Apoua Ivy

trisha.ivy@tautua-consulting.com

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/trisha-ivy>

<https://www.instagram.com/heartwork.soulhealing>

<https://myheartwork.substack.com>

Trisha Apoua Ivy is a retired U.S. Air Force leader, ICF-certified holistic coach, and consultant whose work centers on resilience, leadership, and healing. After navigating years of personal and professional “sieges”—including caregiving through crisis—she found power in her voice and now helps others embrace their own stories. Her upcoming memoir, *Healing for the Soul: Rising from Duty to Destiny*, continues her journey of transformation. She believes our stories matter—good, bad, indifferent—because they remind us that we only have one life to live, and the courage to live it fully is within us all.

Discovering Peace in Numbers

Ann McLaughlin-Delisca

“Peace begins when we stop fighting the numbers and start learning from them.”

~ Ann McLaughlin-Delisca

I like to imagine that my first words weren't “Mommy” or “Daddy,” but numbers—soft rhythms of “one, two, three, four” whispered between spoonfuls as my mom turned mealtime into a counting game.

My dad taught my siblings and me how to play chess, proudly calling it “brain training,” though we all suspected he just wanted a house full of opponents he could beat. Between chess matches, spelling drills, and surprise brain games, he slipped in like pop quizzes; our minds stayed busy.

Chess, especially, taught me that every piece has a purpose and every move carries a consequence—lessons I learned the hard way

each time my dad captured my queen with a wicked laugh that only he found entertaining.

In school, math was always my favorite subject—it simply made sense. I still remember counting to one hundred before I could even spell my last name, MCLAUGHLIN, which felt like a victory in itself.

Not long after, I memorized my multiplication tables and even discovered shortcuts to make them easier to memorize. When multiplying by eleven, for example, you could add the digits and place the sum in the middle: 11×11 becomes 121, and 11×12 becomes 132. Finding little patterns like that made learning feel like play.

Even fractions clicked once I imagined them as pizza slices. Numbers weren't just logical—they were creative, consistent, and full of personality.

In a world where English essays could be interpreted a dozen different ways, math felt like peace. Once I found the answer, my mind could finally relax.

Numbers didn't argue, judge, or require perfect wording. They simply asked for the right process. They offered clarity when everything else felt subjective.

Over time, I realized what I loved most about numbers wasn't just accuracy—it was stability. That early comfort shaped the way I approached finances, decision-making, routines, and eventually, my pursuit of balance in every area of life.

Every Number Tells A Story

Numbers are everywhere—woven into the rhythm of our days and the heartbeat of our lives. They measure our time, mark our milestones, and quietly teach us balance and purpose.

When I first moved from Jamaica to the United States, life taught me an unforgettable lesson—and it happened on the highway of all places. I had just passed my driver's test and was feeling *very* confident until I saw a big sign that read **I-95**.

Naturally, I assumed that meant the speed limit. So there I was, happily cruising at ninety-five miles per hour, wondering why everyone else was driving like they had all day.

A few moments later, flashing blue lights appeared behind me, delivering my first official American math lesson. The officer politely informed me that the speed limit was actually

seventy, then handed me a \$175 citation—also known as a ticket—and added two points to my driver’s license, a penalty that might raise my insurance and definitely raised my stress level.

That day taught me a simple truth: numbers carry consequences, especially when you misinterpret them with confidence.

But that wasn’t the end of the math. By the time I got home, my blood pressure numbers were rising faster than my car had. I reached for comfort food, only to end up counting calories in regret. Later, I walked laps with friends, tracking my steps to make up for it. I ended the night watching a basketball game, where, of course, the scoreboard decided my mood. Spoiler: my team lost. Clearly, the numbers were not on my side that day.

As chaotic as it was, that single day reminded me of something profound: numbers are everywhere, and each one tells a story. A warning. A lesson. A gentle nudge. Sometimes they guide us; sometimes they humble us; and sometimes—like on that highway—they ask us to slow down, literally and figuratively.

Numbers That Shape Your Financial Story

Numbers touch every part of our lives, and nowhere is this more evident than in our finances. They shape how we save, spend, and plan for the future. Every paycheck, bill, credit score, and savings balance tells a story—not just of math, but of mindset, habits, and goals. When we understand what our numbers are saying, we gain the power to shape our financial story with intention.

My own financial journey began in childhood with my father's simple rule: *work hard and save your money*. As I grew, I wanted more than the basics—I wanted mastery. I leaned into my natural strength with numbers, deepening my financial knowledge through education, experience, and curiosity.

One of the biggest financial lessons I ever learned wasn't about income—it was about expenses. I once believed multiple streams of income were the key to wealth, but I overlooked the quieter truth: what you keep matters more than what you make.

Understanding my expenses—really understanding them—became the turning point. It was the moment I discovered not just control, but peace.

There was a season when I was convinced my money was disappearing like socks in a dryer. My income was steady, even growing, yet every month ended in the same confusion and anxiety.

I worked multiple jobs trying to fill a financial sinkhole, only to realize the real issue wasn't how much I earned—it was how much slipped through the cracks.

One Saturday morning, hot chocolate in hand and one dramatic tear falling (stress or steam, still unclear), I opened my banking app and met the truth: not one big expense, but a thousand tiny ones.

Forgotten subscriptions, delivery fees, “I deserve this” treats, late fees, convenience purchases—small numbers adding up like dust in the corners of my financial life.

It wasn't mystery.

It was math.

And it was time to pay attention.

I printed statements, highlighted categories, totaled the “little things,” and faced the numbers I'd been avoiding. And unexpectedly, I felt something I hadn't felt in years: peace.

Peace in knowing the truth instead of fearing it.
Peace in clarity instead of guessing.
Peace in finally directing my money instead of watching it disappear.

I made simple changes—canceled subscriptions, packed lunch, set bill reminders, created a modest fun budget, added a savings goal, and even designed a few money challenges. And the most surprising part? How much money I “found” without earning a dollar more.

That clarity changed everything. It taught me that real wealth isn't about income—it's about awareness.

Knowing your numbers isn't restrictive; it's freeing. It's empowering. It's the difference between surviving your finances and stewarding them with confidence.

I still pursued multiple streams of income, but I also became an “expense warrior”—shifting my lifestyle, spending habits, and mindset in pursuit of abundance. Over time, that passion became purpose.

I began helping young people and women build confidence with numbers and financial literacy. Whether in a classroom or across a desk, my mission remains the same: Numbers aren't

something to fear—they are tools that bring clarity, direction, and peace when we learn how to read them.

Numbers That Nurture Your Health Journey

Just as numbers shape our financial story, they also reveal the truth about our health. The same principles that guide us in budgeting—awareness, consistency, and intention—also show up in our steps, heartbeats, and daily habits.

When we learn to understand these numbers, we're not just tracking progress; we're discovering balance, clarity, and the quiet peace that comes from caring for ourselves well.

Our health journey speaks through calories, steps, heart rate, and blood pressure, each one a silent reflection of how we honor our bodies. I've always believed that health is the greatest form of wealth.

Every January, my resolutions looked the same: make more money and lose weight. Many of us have been there. But real wellness isn't built on quick fixes or wishful thinking. It's built on paying attention to the numbers that truly

matter—weight, calories, BMI, blood pressure, cholesterol, sleep, and movement.

As life unfolded, I faced my own challenges with weight and nutrition, often fueled by long work hours, stress, and a lack of self-care. I tried more than ten diets, hired multiple personal trainers, and signed up for gym memberships I barely used.

My wallet got lighter while the scale got heavier. The numbers were moving in the wrong direction—just like that unforgettable day when I misunderstood the speed limit, got a ticket, and comfort-ate half my feelings afterward.

I still remember my 30th birthday like it was yesterday. My friends took me out to dinner, and I celebrated with the full enthusiasm of someone who *meant* to start eating healthy “next week.” I wasn’t shy about ordering—appetizer, entrée, dessert, and a “why not?” extra slice of cake. Two days later was Thanksgiving, and let’s just say the celebration continued. It was a season of joy—and extra servings.

But a few weeks later, something shifted.

I didn’t feel well—physically or mentally. My energy was low, my clothes were tight, and I

realized my body was trying to get my attention. I knew it was time to start my health journey, but instead of launching into a drastic diet or intense program, I started small.

I began with what I had been avoiding for years: ***CALORIES***.

Not with restriction or guilt, but with awareness and intention.

For most of my adult life, I treated calories like a bad ex-boyfriend—refusing to look at them, refusing to understand them, and hoping ignorance would somehow protect me from the truth. At the grocery store, I avoided nutrition labels like they were spoilers from a TV show I hadn't watched yet. At restaurants, I convinced myself that “what you don't know can't hurt you,” even though it absolutely could.

And the gym?

Let's just say I was committed to doing the bare minimum. I walked at the slowest incline, ignored the miles because I didn't want to be discouraged, and celebrated when I broke a light sweat.

But when my health wake-up call came, something inside me softened. I didn't feel

shame—I felt curiosity. I started tracking what I ate, not to punish myself, but to understand myself. And the truth was eye-opening.

That “innocent” muffin? Nearly 500 calories.
The creamy pasta dish I loved? Over 1,200.
My birthday slice of cake? Well, let’s just say it had its own zip code.

But the biggest surprise wasn’t what I was eating—it was how little I was moving.

I realized my daily calorie intake was overflowing, but my calorie output was barely a trickle. I wasn’t broken. I wasn’t weak. I was simply unaware.

Once I started honoring my numbers, beginning with something as small as calories, they started giving something back: clarity, balance, and a quiet sense of peace.

Numbers that Unite Us

Numbers shape how we live, grow, and connect. These “social numbers” remind us that relationships create abundance—and peace comes from the people we choose to walk with.

Clarifying my circle became essential. The *Four Circles of Support* taught me that relationships

thrive when people are in the right place.¹ Each connection fits into one of four spaces: Intimacy, Friendship, Participation, or Exchange.

When I first began teaching college students, I entered the classroom with equal parts excitement and caution. On the first day of class, I reviewed the syllabus, expectations, communication protocols, and—most importantly—professional boundaries. I took this part seriously.

Too many educators had made headlines for inappropriate relationships, and I wanted my students to understand clearly: as an instructor, I am part of their *Circle of Support*, not their social circle.

But boundaries are only effective when both sides understand them.

A few weeks into the semester, one student began crossing boundaries. First, he addressed me by my first name—something strictly against policy. Then he sent a Facebook request to my work email, followed by an invitation to a “business meeting” after 9 p.m.

This wasn’t a misunderstanding—it was an inappropriate blur of roles, expectations, and

intentions. The situation felt chaotic, and I knew I needed to act quickly.

I spoke with the student privately, explaining the policies and the importance of maintaining professionalism. When the behavior continued, I escalated the issue to leadership and requested his removal from my course.

It was not easy, but it was necessary.

The leadership team fully supported me, and the student was reassigned. Looking back, I am grateful I acted immediately. A single boundary violation can threaten an educator's job, reputation, and, in some cases, even their freedom if accusations arise. By protecting myself, I also protected the integrity of the educational environment.

But here is where the story turns toward *growth*.

Five years later, that same student graduated and eventually became a member of the Chamber of Commerce. We reconnected professionally—this time with maturity and mutual respect. We even had a healthy conversation about the incident. Our relationship naturally shifted into a Circle of

Participation, where we collaborated on service projects as peers, not professor and student.

It taught me something powerful about *social numbers*:

We all navigate different relational circles—support, participation, friendship, mentorship—and peace comes from knowing which circle someone belongs in.

Final Insights

Across my finances, health, and relationships, I learned that peace often hides in the numbers I once avoided. When I finally paid attention, those numbers revealed where I was aligned, where I needed to grow, and where intention was calling me.

Financially, clarity became freedom. Understanding where my money truly went—especially my expenses—replaced guesswork with control. Peace came from choosing a simpler, more intentional lifestyle. With awareness, I lowered stress, reduced spending, and created space for the life I actually wanted.

My health journey shifted just as deeply. I made one promise: honor the numbers, and they will honor me. Small, steady changes—moving more, eating with purpose, and listening to my

body—began transforming everything. The numbers changed not only on the scale, but in my energy, mood, and confidence. I felt lighter long before I looked lighter.

Socially, my greatest peace came from building relationships rooted in trust, respect, and intention. I nurtured connections that uplifted and challenged me, while serving my community through youth empowerment, women's leadership, and financial education.

Boundaries became my guide—coordinates that helped me move through relationships with clarity and grace. And when people grew alongside those boundaries, some relationships evolved into healthier circles, filled with order rather than chaos.

In every area of life, understanding my numbers helped me reclaim calm and direction. They stopped overwhelming me and started guiding me toward wiser choices, deeper confidence, and a life that feels grounded and whole.

That is what peace through numbers looks like.

In the end, the numbers didn't just add up—they lifted me up, teaching me to live with purpose, clarity, and grace.

Endnotes

¹ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/in-your-corner/202504/want-better-relationships-start-with-the-circles-of-support>

* * * *

Editor's Note: The next story is by Ann McLaughlin-Delisca as well. Her contact info and bio will follow that chapter.

Courage to Begin Again

Ann McLaughlin-Delisca

“Every restart writes a stronger story.”

~ Ann McLaughlin-Delisca

There was once a woman who loved the sunrise. Every morning, she stood on her balcony, reading her devotional with hot jasmine tea, and she whispered a quiet prayer for clarity. It reminded her that no matter what yesterday held, the light always returned.

Then life shifted. Another corporate opportunity collapsed, another rejection email, another closed door. Her confidence cracked, friendships faded, and even her faith dimmed. Without realizing it, she stopped watching the sun.

Months passed in shadow. Her days were filled with resumes, interviews, and disappointments. She felt tired in places sleep couldn't reach. One morning, she woke early after yet another, “We've chosen another candidate.” Something

pulled her to the window. She opened the curtains out of habit more than hope.

There it was—the horizon glowing softly, offering a light she hadn't seen for months.

In that moment, she realized the sunrise had never stopped coming. She had just stopped showing up.

She whispered, “It’s not too late.”

Not too late to pivot.

Not too late to heal.

Not too late to begin again.

That morning became her turning point. She stopped chasing roles that drained her spirit and started pursuing work aligned with her gifts. Rejection became redirection. And every sunrise after that reminded her: when one door closes, God opens the blinds—letting light in first, so you can see where to step next.

That woman was me.

For years, I chased the dream of a “good job,” climbing the proverbial ladder and believing fulfillment waited at the top. But when I finally reached it, my body broke before my ambition

did. I became physically drained, mentally overwhelmed, and emotionally fractured.

Leaving that job wasn't a bold decision—it was a breaking point. And what followed was even harder—interviewing for roles I had mastered for years, only to hear silence or rejection. It was frightening to feel capable yet unseen, experienced yet overlooked. I questioned everything—my skills, my purpose, even my identity.

So I leaned on faith and family, unsure of what the next chapter held, but certain I couldn't keep repeating the same story. And in that raw, vulnerable space, I discovered something life-changing: beginning again isn't powered by titles or achievements. It's fueled by three things—our words, our energy, and our time.

I realized my words had shaped the way I spoke about myself, my confidence, my limitations, and even my possibilities. My energy poured into everything except what restored or inspired me. And my time—the most precious resource I had—was being spent chasing goals that didn't nourish my soul.

When I began to honor these three, everything shifted:

- My words became intentional.

- My energy became sacred.
- My time became purposeful.

That's when the renewal began.
That's when the healing started.
That's when I found the courage to truly begin again.

Words

As the years passed, I learned that words are never just words—they carry power. They hold energy, shape identity, and influence the direction of our lives. John 1:1 tells us, “*In the beginning was the Word,*”¹ and Genesis 1:3 reminds us that God spoke light into existence.² Creation began with speech, and in many ways, so do we. Our words build, break, and resurrect. Writing this chapter is my way of honoring that creative force.

I was in my early twenties when life handed me a lesson I wasn't prepared to receive. As a newly minted MBA graduate who had also completed my company's emerging-leaders management program, I truly believed I was standing at the threshold of my next chapter.

I worked as a Senior Financial Analyst while completing my degree program. I was named Employee of the Month twice, was a dependable

team player, and worked diligently to meet both my personal and professional goals within the company. I had done everything “right,” and I truly believed I was next in line for a promotion or new opportunity within the organization.

When one of the supervisors resigned unexpectedly, the role opened up—and I thought this was finally my moment. But the opportunity passed right over me. Quietly. Cleanly. Despite my networking, leading team projects, and meeting every requirement for the position, I wasn’t selected. I didn’t even receive the courtesy of an explanation.

I stayed in my role and reminded myself to be patient. *Two more years*, I whispered, *just two*. When another supervisor position finally became available, I applied with renewed hope—only to be told I didn’t get it because I was “overqualified.” Too much for one season, not enough for the next. I didn’t know whether to laugh, cry, or question the ground beneath my feet. And that’s when the first crack of doubt formed.

A whisper I had never heard before began repeating itself inside me:

- “Maybe I’m not ready.”
- “Maybe I don’t belong.”

- “I need to be more—more skilled, more qualified, more everything.”

This was the beginning of my imposter syndrome—not born from failure, but from sheer confusion. How could I be both too qualified and not qualified enough? Those contradictions—and the stories I began telling myself—became a loop I couldn’t escape. They seeped into my confidence, rewrote my sense of worth, and changed how I entered every room. I shrank quietly, convinced I needed permission to grow.

But then came the voice that steadied me—my mentor. She listened, truly listened, and gently said, “Before you count yourself out, learn the role. Understand it. And place yourself in the rooms where the work is being done.” Her words weren’t poetic, but they rose through me like a sunrise.

So I volunteered for special projects and began working alongside the Corporate Controller—shadowing, assisting, observing. No title. No promises. Just humility, curiosity, and a willingness to keep showing up, even when self-doubt trailed behind me like a quiet shadow.

For six months, I showed up—not seeking recognition but seeking clarity. Not chasing a

title but rebuilding my confidence. And when the role opened again, something unexpected happened. I didn't receive the supervisor position I had once pinned my hopes on.

I was offered the manager position—the very role I had once convinced myself I wasn't good enough for.

In that moment, a truth settled over me: The job had never been out of reach—it was my own words that kept me from reaching for it.

Energy

After learning how words could heal or harm, I began to notice another invisible force shaping my life—**energy**. The kind we don't see, but feel. The kind that shifts, transfers, and transforms depending on what and whom we allow into our space.

One day, a memory from my high school physics class resurfaced—a true *eureka* moment. Energy, we learned, is the capacity to do work. It cannot be created or destroyed; it can only be transformed. What I didn't realize back then was that the same law applies to us. Our experiences, our environments, and the people around us don't disappear—they transform us,

shaping how we think, feel, and show up in the world.

Then I reflected on my first managerial opportunity and realized how much precious energy I had wasted worrying about *why* I wasn't chosen. The work environment had become toxic—promotions were often based on tenure rather than qualifications or leadership ability. I felt physically sick, emotionally drained, and mentally exhausted from trying to make sense of decisions that had nothing to do with my worth.

What ultimately helped me regain my strength was stepping outside of work and nurturing the parts of myself I had neglected. I leaned into my faith and my friendships. I started saying yes to things that filled me rather than depleted me: monthly dinners with friends, Sunday church, playing piano at a local coffee shop, and even trying miniature golf during the summer just to feel light again.

These activities didn't change my job, but they changed *me*. They gave me room to breathe, to reconnect with joy, and to reclaim energy I had unknowingly surrendered to worry and comparison.

As I continued volunteering on special projects, I noticed something shifting—I was contributing with less fear and more groundedness. Over the next six months, my energy rebuilt itself quietly, steadily, and honestly. I stopped performing for approval and started working for clarity. I stopped chasing a title and began building real competence and confidence.

With that renewal came courage—the courage to begin again and reapply. But this time, I approached it not with desperation or disappointment, but with a renewed spirit, presence, and energy.

And this time, I didn't receive the supervisor role I once longed for. I received the manager position—the very role I had once convinced myself I wasn't ready for.

In that moment, everything became clear. The chaos of uncertainty dissolved into a newfound peace. The job had never been out of reach—my energy simply hadn't aligned with it yet.

I realized that I had created my own anxiety by doubting my readiness. When I finally became balanced, grounded, and confident, the opportunity rose to meet me. My energy shifted—and the role shifted with it.

Time

As I learned to protect my energy, another truth began to surface—**time**. If energy is how we move through life, then time is the space that gives that movement meaning. Managing energy taught me how to live in rhythm; understanding time taught me how to live with purpose.

Time is the only resource that can't be renewed or replaced. We all receive the same twenty-four hours each day, yet how we spend them defines the quality of our lives. Words, once spoken, can't be unsaid—but they can be redeemed. Energy, once drained, can be renewed. Money can be earned, invested, or multiplied. But time—once gone—is gone.

For years, I said yes to everything—family responsibilities, volunteer commitments, community events, anyone who needed help. If someone called, I showed up. If someone asked, I delivered. My calendar was full, but my spirit was running on empty.

I kept convincing myself that serving others was noble, yet I ignored the quiet truth: I had no time left to care for my own holistic health. My sleep suffered, my emotions felt heavy, and my body kept whispering what I refused to hear.

It wasn't until I found myself exhausted on a Sunday afternoon—too drained to enjoy time with the same family I was trying so hard to support during holidays, emergencies and endless phone calls —that I finally paused.

I realized that overcommitting wasn't love; it was avoidance. It was the fear of disappointing others disguised as generosity. And it was costing me my well-being.

I began to intentionally explore **the Four Quadrants of Time Management** as taught by Franklin Covey.³

- **Quadrant I** (Urgent and Important) represents necessity—the crises, emergencies, and deadlines that once consumed my life. I often took on too much, believing that if something needed to be done right, I had to do it myself. That belief fueled exhaustion and burnout.
- **Quadrant II** (Not Urgent but Important) is where real effectiveness lives—proactive work, meaningful goals, creativity, learning, and renewal. It's the quadrant I needed to commit to with intention.
- **Quadrant III** (Urgent but Not Important) captured distractions—interruptions, meetings, and other

people's problems that drained my focus and energy. I spent years overthinking and trying to fix situations that were never mine to solve.

- **Quadrant IV** (Not Urgent and Not Important) reflects time wasted—endless scrolling, trivial work, and avoidance disguised as rest.

Through reflection, I realized the real secret of time lies in Quadrant II—the space reserved for proactive, meaningful work: creative thinking, planning, self-care, and the activities that keep us aligned with purpose rather than pressure. In that space, I recognized that strong boundaries aren't barriers—they're bridges.

Every “no” I spoke allowed me to reclaim time for rest, nourishment, and renewal. Also, I discovered that you cannot pour into others from an empty vessel. When I began investing in my holistic health—mind, body, and spirit—I became more present, more grounded, and more available in ways that actually mattered.

Season of Becoming

One of my favorite books, *The Four Agreements* by Don Miguel Ruiz,⁴ left a lasting impact on me. The first agreement—**Be Impeccable with Your Word**—struck the deepest. To be

impeccable with my words is to speak from truth, not fear. My words shape my reality, guide my energy, and align me with purpose.

When I choose them carefully, I choose clarity, healing, and the freedom to become who God created me to be. That realization pushed me to journal more intentionally and evaluate how I communicate, respond, and lead—transforming self-care into purposeful growth.

I will never forget my first real managerial opportunity—the one where I thought I was overqualified, yet didn't recognize how much my own confidence and words were holding me back. Even though I had the qualifications, I doubted myself so deeply that, in some strange way, the universe—and the company—reflected that doubt back to me. It was a powerful turning point.

From that experience, I learned several lessons about words:

- First, words can build walls or build wings. For years, my internal dialogue convinced me I wasn't enough, and I lived within the limits of the story I told myself.
- Second, self-doubt is loud, but truth is steady. Once I replaced "I don't belong

here” with “I’m capable and willing to learn,” everything began to shift.

- Third, my words shaped my posture. When I spoke from fear, I shrank. When I spoke from courage, I rose.
- Fourth, the right mentor can help rewrite your professional script. Her belief in me challenged the narrative I had created about myself.
- Finally, preparation meets opportunity in the space created by belief. Volunteering didn’t just strengthen my résumé—it strengthened my confidence and prepared me for the role I would eventually earn.

When it came to energy, I poured nearly all of mine into work, constantly trying to recover from what was draining me. But nothing truly changes until you give meaning to what matters. Once I found the courage to reevaluate how I was using my energy, everything became more intentional.

I learned that energy can either amplify or undermine your abilities. Skills matter, but the confidence behind them matters just as much. My internal tone becomes my external presence—people, including my former company, can sense what you believe about yourself long before you speak.

Energy expands when you enter a room with intention rather than fear. Volunteering for that role wasn't about visibility; it was about aligning with the person I was becoming. And as my words shifted, my energy shifted with them. The moment I stopped saying, "I don't belong," I began to show up as someone who clearly did.

With renewed energy came a clearer understanding of how I was spending my time. I learned to choose effectiveness over exhaustion and purpose over pressure. When I stopped overcommitting, I didn't lose anything important—I simply gained myself back. I began shaping a life rooted in creativity, balance, wisdom, and faith. And in that shift, I found the courage to begin again—this time with clarity, peace, and intention.

This is my season of becoming—where purpose meets peace. Choosing intentional words, protecting my energy, and honoring my time reshaped everything. As I aligned with purpose, new paths opened with quiet clarity.

Today, God has positioned me in a university role that nourishes me, expands my businesses and brand, and guided me to co-author *Embrace Your Fruit: Overcoming to Becoming*, a work that shares stories of healing and hope. Yet I know my journey is far from complete.

Each day, I choose to turn chaos into clarity by aligning my words, energy, and time with purpose. I rise to serve, to lead, and to cultivate a life marked by abundance, growth, and meaningful impact.

Final Reflection

To my 25-year-old self—bold, driven, and certain she knew it all. She was still learning that movement isn't always progress, noise isn't clarity, and success without balance costs too much.

If I could sit with her now, I'd tell her this:

- Your words hold power.
- Your energy is precious.
- Your time is sacred.

I'd thank her for her courage to keep learning and for never giving up hope. Purpose isn't found—it's built, choice by choice, moment by moment. As long as we're granted one more day, it's worth beginning again. Starting over is strength, not setback.

I'm older, wiser, and grounded in truth. My younger self would be proud of how far I've come; my future self will look back with gratitude—for the courage it took to begin again, and again.

To every reader walking this path, I leave you with this declaration:

*When Words, Energy, and Time align,
renewal begins. Every restart writes a
stronger story.*

Endnotes

¹The Holy Bible, New International Version. (2011). Zondervan.

² Ibid.

³ <https://www.franklincovey.com/courses/the-7-habits/habit-3/>

⁴ Ruiz, D. M. (1997). *The Four Agreements: A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom*. Amber-Allen Publishing.

* * * *



Ann McLaughlin-Delisca

www.linkedin.com/in/annmclaughlin1

Ann McLaughlin-Delisca is an author, financial professional, and coach who helps people transform numbers into clarity and their words, time, and energy into habits that create purpose. With expertise in finance, business, and personal growth, she empowers others to build confidence and live with intention. She is the author of *Embrace Your Fruit: Overcoming to Becoming* and a contributing author in *Courage Under Siege: Flight to Light (Vol. 5)*. Grounded in faith and service, Ann finds joy in nature, community impact, and connecting with purpose-driven people.

Tenacity

Sue Tabaka-Kritzeck

*“The most difficult thing is the decision to act;
the rest is merely tenacity.”*

~ Amelia Earhart

Finding the me I was “meant to be” has not been an easy trip. First, I was never really told or taught what I might need in my future life, so my baggage has been filled with a plethora of useless “stuff.” Second, growing up in a large family taught me much about strength and stubbornness, but not as much about the cooperation I would need to be successful in my future. (I always gave in!) And third, though there were people in my past who told me about my worthiness and value in this world, it was too easy to disregard that wisdom when I was uncertain about the next decision I would have to make.

Should I move? Should I accept this teaching position? Should I date this man? Should I get married? Should I have children? Should I retire even though I’m too young to do so? Should we

move thousands of miles away from family? You get the picture, right?

Uncertainty was the standard for every one of those questions. Fear. Doubt. And always, the what if...? What if this doesn't work out? What if I make the wrong decision? What if?

It's called the journey of a lifetime for a very good reason. It is a journey. However, it is a journey without a map. Or a list of instructions. And if you've never made a wrong turn while trying to follow directions, even while using a GPS, then you may not understand the principle of making mistakes and learning from them. Allowing oneself to ruminate about a mistake is a waste of time. Did you survive? Was it unfixable? Turning down the wrong street isn't the end of the world if you take the time to appreciate the adventure it might bring. Taking the wrong job doesn't have to be a lifelong prison sentence if you can decide what you don't want to do for the rest of your life and act to change the situation.

There's a key to all of this. And the key is not allowing yourself to be stuck, but rather, to be tenacious. To be strong in your resolve to change. To be determined that even when something isn't going right, you have a choice to change. And being resilient. Getting up each day

with a mindset that tells you and the rest of the world, “I CAN DO THIS!” Once you realize the alternative is to stay stuck and unmovable, your choice is to become TENACIOUS.

Not for the Glory

Everyone has a certain amount of tenacity within them that can be used to their advantage. We’ve all heard stories about people being able to lift a car to save someone pinned beneath. Stories of survival from historical events have intrigued us for generations. Those ancestors who may have traveled for months in ships with cramped quarters, dealing with hunger and sickness, birthing babies in unhygienic conditions, surviving abuse, and more, help us to understand that our lives are good now by comparison. Earthquakes, hurricanes, blizzards, and tornadoes all have birthed miraculous stories of survival. We’ve also seen atrocities such as the holocaust or death camps in world history, wars, segregation, unjust practices, and more.

Those stories reside outside most of us. For some, they are personal and show a history of tenacity and survival.

So, why does this even matter to us? And especially now? And if our lives are good, if we

have food, clothing, shelter, and health, then why do we need to even think about what isn't in our day-to-day lives? Why should we even worry about what isn't right in front of us?

It's easy to see the big issues, the big events one may have survived. For some people, displaying strength, determination, and resilience has become a daily habit, while others may feel desolate and think of giving up. For a minute, think about the many people who give their lives to their passions—doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals, police, firefighters, teachers, and others. How many times do we hear about doctors and nurses who are criticized for not saving a life? For only doing it because of the money? What about police or firefighters who make a split-second decision that leads to a tragedy? Or those who suffer long-lasting consequences of doing their job because of their passion, such as the firefighters from the tragedy of the Twin Towers collapse. And teachers who face criticism for what they do, as well as what they don't do.

We don't often hear stories about the people who have made it their life's passion to do good. We hear about the rogue doctor, the rogue teacher, the rogue policeperson. We sometimes forget about the real people who are fighting more for us than they otherwise would. And

sometimes, they, themselves, forget to remember why they chose their profession in the first place. These are some of the many people who have chosen to make a difference in the lives of others. And these are the people who sometimes forget to take care of themselves first.

Why Tenacity Is Vital to Our Health

As I began to work with this whole concept of being tenacious, I realized it's about our personal development rather than anything relating to a skill. I had been a student of mindfulness for years, and while I had received much benefit from what I had learned, I discovered I wasn't really practicing what I had learned. I could certainly tell others how to fix the things they might think were broken within them, while I was still struggling. Attending workshops where I walked on burning coals and sat in sweat lodges moved me, and yet I was still struggling to exercise my own strength and determination. I understood resilience because I could wake up each morning and do what I thought I should be doing. But something was missing. My actions were robotic; they weren't really moving me forward to do what I felt called to do.

I saw it as the habit of expectations. I “have to” do this because I’m the wife, I’m the mother, I’m the manager, and so on. Truly making a difference seemed to be a whole different scenario. Following my sense of duty was detrimental to my health and presumed remaining life. Stress tends to arise without warning. It’s like that volcano that must erupt because it’s built up so much pressure under the earth’s surface. Sometimes it’s little things like a headache or an upset stomach; sometimes it becomes more serious, like insomnia or an ulcer. The human body feels the anxiety and the pain that we try to hide. And until we determine the cause, we only relieve symptoms. And those symptoms reappear, maybe becoming such a part of our lives that we have forgotten what it was like before they surfaced.

And soon we begin to wonder, “Is this all there is to my life?” Do we believe that it’s all just a part of the aging process? Yes, we had different worries when we were younger, but we survived them. Now we’re on to the next stage. Yet many of us know people in their nineties who are thriving and living life with a great mindset, accepting their place in our world, loving us, and guiding us. How have they answered that question about the implied futility of life?

I believe they found wisdom in knowing they were meant to be where they are. They have lived their lives with integrity and hope, and they wake up each day happy for another opportunity to make a difference. Whether they can verbalize this or not, it's how they live each day.

Exercise Strength, Determination & Resilience

For those who choose to change when faced with what has become painful or stagnant, exercise is the way to go. As we age, our bodies change. Our mindset should change as well. For some, change is scary; it's uncertain. That's where we have a choice. We are presented with opportunities constantly. Those who choose to embrace opportunities seem to find that their skillset changes. They become more open to learning about themselves, and as a result, learn more about how to enhance their lives. Their positive mindset works in their favor.

Physical exercise is a method used to maintain physical fitness. However, if the only exercise one does is physical, you may be shortchanging yourself. I consider my insides—my brain and all major organs and muscles—as working muscles. And with that, I have come to understand that exercising my courage and

confidence daily is just as important as exercising my physical body. Combining physical and mental exercise is one way I keep my brain and my body active.

I read both fiction and nonfiction. I engage my imagination by reading fiction and allowing myself to imagine different worlds. I read nonfiction to learn more about the past and the present—what has happened over the course of time and how it relates to my current life. I read self-help books and sometimes think about what changes I could make, while at other times I simply read to find out what others are thinking. Listening to the daily news is also an important part of my ritual. I choose not to avoid what is going on in the world, but rather to embrace what I hear and form my own opinions. I enjoy talking about current events with those who are open to thoughtful, non-violent discussions.

My opinions and beliefs are not always accepted, and yet, agreeing to disagree is an integral part of understanding and accepting others. It's an exercise in being human, and as Michelle Obama said, "There's power in allowing yourself to be known and heard, in owning your unique story, in using your authentic voice. And there's grace in being willing to know and hear others."

The more we truly know what makes us who we are, the more we can accept others for who they are. This tenet is one of the great things about exercising tenacity. It takes strength, determination, and resilience to be authentic. I'd rather know the real person I'm speaking with than someone who is only trying to flatter or impress me by saying what they think I want to hear. Sometimes, this is a lonely and divisive road, but it is an authentic one—one I know I can feel and understand.

My Mission & Vision for the World

I have made my vision and mission my current life's work because I understand I can show others this path—this journey of tenacity and authenticity. I know that when my life comes to an end, I will have done my part for humanity. I believe it all started when I was growing up, and I saw my mother, Virginia, taking care of so many other people, even though she already had more than enough work to do. She was a woman who knew she could do great things, although she did not aspire to greatness. It was innate. She did what she did because she didn't see any other way to live. She was determined and resilient, and she displayed more strength than she believed she had. She became a widow at age forty with eight children to raise. She was a woman of faith and determination. I really

didn't think about using the word tenacious to describe her until after she died at age ninety-five. Because of my mother's actions, I am growing into the person I was always meant to be. I not only idolize her and her life, but I also aspire to be like her and to live my life as tenaciously as I can. It's my goal to show others that, by exercising their mindset and will, they too can be authentic and embrace their own worth and value.

You Don't Have to Be Superwoman to Be Tenacious

By now, you might be wondering whether I'm Superwoman or delusional, thinking I can save the world by understanding and implementing TENACITY into your own mind and daily actions.

ANNOUNCEMENT: I'm neither.

Living my life the way I want hasn't come easily. There have always been expectations. Expectations because I'm a woman, because I'm a daughter, because I'm a wife, because I'm a mother, or because I'm a friend, and so on. And for more years than I'd like to admit, I had fallen victim to those expectations. After a while, those expectations and the actions that followed became my habits. Those habits came at a cost—

the cost of some frustration, resentment, and even anger—at not being able to serve myself, to love myself enough to be authentic and live my purpose.

Anyone who has worked to eliminate a bad habit will understand it's a challenge. Adding good habits seems much easier and more beneficial because it creates more positive results. Attempting to eradicate those habits that produce miserable or desperate situations is like climbing up the highest mountain where you can see the summit. Still, you aren't sure you can make it. I'm still climbing that mountain myself. I believe I'll be climbing it until I reach the peak. And when I feel as if I can't go on, I allow myself to take a break. I let myself rest and look at how far I have already come, knowing that each step along the way has moved me closer to the best version of me I know. It takes a concentrated effort to reflect on the me I was in the past and the me I am now. I'm still in the same concrete form, and yet, I am so different inside. So different in my consciousness and so different in my energy.

There are many wise women who have gone before me. I wouldn't be where I am without their love and wisdom beside me. Some of them I know intimately, and they know me—my mother, sister, aunts, cousins, friends. Others

don't know me personally; however, the words they spoke were meant to be delivered to me when I needed to hear them. I believe that women such as Amelia Earhart, Eleanor Roosevelt, Michele Obama, and many others, understood that what they were feeling—and urged to speak to those words—had been meant for the millions who would hear them, read them, or quote them to honor the heartfelt wisdom of strength, determination, and resilience. In other words—TENACITY!

I have a deep affection for words and love reading, writing, and speaking them. The word tenacious has become one I feel called to use more often lately as I have witnessed and acknowledged others who display strength, determination, and resilience. This became true during the pandemic, which began in 2019 and lasted until 2023 (for some, it continues). The start of *Tenacious Teachers* came when I saw teachers clamoring to find ways to do their jobs online, facing criticisms from parents and community members who didn't have childcare or couldn't afford to stay home with their children.

It was during that time that I witnessed a wide range of emotions from teachers across the nation. And while I knew that teachers know their curriculum and how to teach, I also knew

that they were being asked to change their strategies on a dime and engage students who were no longer physically in a classroom. Hard enough when dealing with a few disengaged teenagers, but imagine younger students—first graders—who have the attention span of seconds rather than minutes.

It became a mission—a vision—to not only remind teachers of their inherent value but also to give them tools to remind them to take care of themselves. The “oxygen mask theory” tells us to put our own oxygen mask on first, then help others.

Since then, my vision has evolved. It’s not just teachers who need to be reminded of their worth and value in our society (though they will always hold a special place in my heart and mind). I believe that our society, our current culture, serves as a reminder to all of us that we are stronger than we realize, and that when we demonstrate our determination to keep moving forward in our beliefs, it builds resilience that makes us unstoppable. It makes us **TENACIOUS**. Our tenacity will see us through and keep us at our best always.

When we all realize our inherent value is simply being here, it makes the world a better place. To share that thought with others who need to hear

it is our gift to the world. My words of advice: Be strong. Be determined. Be resilient. And allow your authenticity to flourish.

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”

~ Eleanor Roosevelt

* * * *

for your eyes only



Sue Tabaka-Kritzeck
suetkbiz@gmail.com
320-309-5511
<https://linktr.ee/suetk>

Sue Tabaka-Kritzeck (Sue TK) is a powerhouse Confidence Trainer, electrifying speaker, and bold author known as the Tenacious Talent—a woman devoted to helping people stop hiding and start shining. After 34 years as an educator, she now awakens adults to their brilliance and Fascinating individuality. A certified **How to Fascinate®** trainer, she leads others to own what makes them unforgettable. Creator of **Your Fascination Factor, Tenacious Teachers, and Tenacity**, and a two-time Courageous Women Publications author, Sue is the fierce cheerleader who reminds you: your tenacity is your superpower. She knows how to keep your fire, force, and Fascination intact.

Acknowledgments

I want to take this opportunity to thank several people who have helped make this book a reality.

To the authors collectively. Without you saying yes to this project, this book would never have happened. Your strength, courageous hearts—and your grace—display an honor only second to none.

To Ann. We have been together for many years now. I have seen your writing grow. You know who you are.

To Sue. My dear Soul Sister. You rise to each occasion, and indeed, did not disappoint this time.

To Trisha. This is our first time working together. You shared with your beautiful and caring heart. I can hardly wait until your whole book is published.

To Kathleen. Dear One. I have loved every chapter you've contributed. You show a depth that inspires us all to reach with dignity and grace.

And to Susan. I've been part of your professional life at WPN for over a decade. The wisdom, compassion, and generosity you give each of us are remarkable.

And finally, I would like to thank you, the reader. Having you here, reading our words, wraps us in a warm blanket and soothes our souls on a cold winter's night. We write because of you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Much love,

~ Peggylee

About PeggyLee Hanson



PeggyLee Hanson

PeggyLee@PeggyLeeHanson.com

<https://www.PeggyLeeHanson.com>

<https://BookWithPeggyLee.com>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/peggyleehanson/>

<https://amazon.com/author/peggyleehanson>

<https://essenceofbeing.com/clapreview>

(EOB Conscious Leadership Academy)

Award-winning and multi-time international Bestseller, Publisher, and Speaker, **PeggyLee Hanson**, known as “Your Divinely Sent Book Whisperer,” is a book-writing and publishing expert who shows individuals how to write a book easily, effortlessly, and efficiently using templates and guides.

With 30+ years of experience, certifications in business ghostwriting and coaching, and a commitment to leadership, PeggyLee has guided hundreds of hesitant and experienced writers. These writers have fulfilled the dreams and nudges of sharing their expertise through writing a book.

Her first international speaking engagement shared the how-to's, which initiated the following quip from Paul Dunn, Social Entrepreneur & 3x TEDx Speaker: "PeggyLee took an impossible speaking environment, turned it around, leaving a very satisfied audience."

PeggyLee encourages her audiences called to share their brilliance, message, or story, because "Someone is waiting to hear what you have to say. Don't make them wait any longer."

About the Publisher

Courageous Women Publications™

The one-stop shop for all your writing and publishing needs, where we make it easy for your “tell-all” easy to tell all.

*Open up to the world,
and the world opens up to you.*

Courageous Women Publications™

A subsidiary of

Personal Transition Guidance, LLC

11220 W. Burleigh St., Suite 100

Waukesha, WI 53222

833-779-7483

PeggyLee@CourageousWomenPublications.biz

<https://CourageousWomenPublications.com>

If you would like to contribute to the next edition of Courage Under Siege or publish your own book, please connect with us. We would be honored to help get your words of wisdom and expertise out and into the world.

for your eyes only