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BEYOND THE BOX

LEAN OUT,
BREAK FREE,
RISE UP!

Chapter 12

“What Would You Do If You Knew You Couldn’t Fail?”

Many years ago, I had an important dream. In it, I was on a tightrope high above the ground, wearing a business suit, carrying a briefcase, and wearing high heel shoes. I looked like a buttoned up corporate type. This couldn’t be farther from how I normally appear in waking life. Let’s just say the traditional female corporate suit has never found a place in my closet, and I gave up wearing anything higher than 1½ in. heels years ago. I’ve never owned a briefcase unless you count the case I carry my computer in. But nevertheless, there I was in the dream, all decked out like a foreigner.

As the dream unfolds, I’m watching myself from an enlightened observer’s viewpoint, making my way along the tightrope, every muscle tensed. My concentration is like a laser beam, every step placed with precision. Falling would bring certain death. There is no room for failure. There is also no net.

At least not one I can see. But just beneath the tightrope, out of my view, for as far as the eye can see, are angel wings. The wings are so close they almost brush up against the tightrope. But I’m blinded by my fear of falling so I cannot see them.

My own observer voice in the dream whispers, *"Look how hard she's working to keep from falling. What a pity she doesn't know she's safe. Someone should tell her."*

I wake up and realize the dream’s message: *"No matter how complicated and difficult the dances on the tightrope may appear, remember Love is always present. You cannot fall. Rest in this Love."*

The woman in the dream couldn't see and didn't know that a force greater than she had her back. She didn't know and couldn't see because she didn't trust that anyone or anything could ever have her back. She was so busy proving to herself and others that she was independent and capable and needed no one, that when Love was present, she missed it.

Oh, how I recognized this woman as myself! There I was, on the tightrope, proving to my mother that I didn't need someone to take care of me. I was all buttoned up and in control and I would show her and everyone that I could take care of myself. What I failed to see was the price I was paying for this "*I don't need anybody, I can take care of myself*" attitude.

What did it cost me? The dream showed me the price of not trusting or allowing Love. There were the angel wings just below my feet. Love was right there, always present, always with me. And I couldn't let it in. I still grieve for that woman I used to be. How closed and fearful she was! But I'll tell you this: I'm also proud of her because she woke up. She went through the pain of facing herself and her greatest fears and she broke through into joy, freedom and aliveness. She did the necessary inner work that allowed her to break through and finally come home to her Self. She came home to her authentic Self, the one in her who was never lost, the one in her who always knew who she was and why she was here. That's the woman who is writing this book, now, after all these years and all this pain. And I love her!

The power of this dream was realizing that the "I" I call "me", is not separate from this Love. This great, universal Love is always present. Love is who we are.

If anyone reading this can relate, please don't spend your life believing that you can't trust or allow love in your life. I'm here to tell you this is a mistake in your thinking. It's simply not true. I'm here to take you by the shoulders and gently

shake you awake and urge you to come to home yourself. Let's find the path together.

I had an artist friend draw a picture of the dream so I could hold on to the image. I still keep it in my bedroom where I see it every day. It's a great reminder of this one eternal truth: Love Is.

How quickly this awareness gets lost as we take up the trek on the tightrope! We work so hard to keep from falling.

"Leap and the net will appear."

Julia Cameron, The Artist's Way

What if you couldn't fail? What if that tightrope on which you're walking so carefully is only an inch above the ground? Or what if there really is a power greater than you that has your back if you trust and allow it?

What if the way life works is declaring an intention without any evidence that you can do it, and then leaping and the path becomes apparent? What have you got to lose, except your illusion of being safe and secure and perhaps a warm seat on the bench?

Like most humans, you most likely want to see the net before you leap. But what if the path ahead doesn't show itself until you've demonstrated a commitment and willingness to go for it, be uncomfortable, be inconvenienced, and like the Nike ad says, "Just do it"!

Let's face it: if the pull of your history is stronger than your commitment to manifest a different future, you'll stay where you are. If you're telling yourself you want a different result and it's not happening, look to see if what you're committed to is being right about the story and keeping that bench warm.

Human beings are master storytellers. Life happens and we make up a story about it. It is our human nature to interpret life's events every moment. We're such masters at bringing meaning to each moment we don't even know we're doing it. The process is transparent to us. We do it instantaneously. Thus, we forget that we're the ones who are making up what the story means! We then proceed to live our lives as if our stories are the truth! We collapse what happens in our lives into the stories we tell ourselves about what happens.

This process is akin to baking a cake. You fold all the ingredients into the mix until you can no longer distinguish the flour from the sugar from the butter, from the eggs. Put it in the oven and bake it for 20-30 years or more (how long have you've been polishing up your story?) and the cake becomes an impenetrable rock. That's how our stories become our truths. Repeated long enough and often enough, we lose sight of the facts and are left with our perceptions, masquerading as facts.

Human beings are hard wired to make up meaning about everything in life. We rarely, if ever, view life's events as neutral events, which is what they actually are. If we're meaning-manufacturing machines, what's the alternative? If our nature is to interpret and fabricate meaning about everything, how do we *not* make up things? How can we know the truth?

Here's the bad news: You're always going to make up a story about what happens. That's the way it is with us humans.

Here's the good news: You can make up anything you want. So why not make up a story that empowers you to go forward? As the storyteller, you're the one who chooses the plot, the characters, the subplots, the action, etc. You can make it up however you want.

You might resist this idea ... but try this on for size. The truth is whatever you say it

is. You're the one who invests your energy in being right about whatever you think is true. Why not be right about a choice that drives your life forward? Yes, you might fail. But life doesn't come with a money-back guarantee. You get a ticket to ride. That's it. People fall and skin their knees or even their hearts.

Not to be crass, but so what? Sometimes our biggest challenges are also our biggest teachers. Don't be afraid to learn. The only failure is to live your life in such a way that when you reach the end, you look back and are filled with regrets about never having gone for it.

I have leapt with no net in sight more times than I can count. Sometimes I've stuck the landing like an Olympic gymnast. Other times, I've barely made the net. Still other times, I've missed the net on the first pass, hit the ground and bounced back up making the net on the second pass and still have the bruises to show for it! But I wouldn't trade those bruises for a tidy life lived on the sidelines.

What would you do if you knew you couldn't fail? Would you rather stay safe or risk being free? The choice is yours. Ask yourself, "Is my life how I want it to be?" If your answer is "Yes, I don't want to change a thing", bravo to you, and enjoy the ride. But if you've come to a place in the road and the path you're on is a dead end, if you feel you've outgrown your stories and they now only constrain you, it's time to explode those old stories, bring them to an end, and write a new one that opens the door to freedom. Time to prepare for the brave new life that awaits!

An Assignment

Write down all the stories you're ready to conclude. Put them in a fireproof bowl and set them on fire or put them through the shredder. Be prepared for your ego to jump up and down, wave its arms and warn you against doing this. The ego's job is to keep these stories alive and installed on the hard drive of your life. Release them and you're robbing the ego of one of its major duties. You'll have to figure out

some other job for it like, chopping wood, carrying water and making sure all the socks come out of the dryer.

After you've released the stories that have defined you and your box, leaned out, broken free and risen up, here's the next leap: Leap, because you must. Leap, because it's who you are and it's why you came to the planet. Leap, because it's what the world needs.

In leaping you need to pull out all the stops, throw off the shackles, align with your higher self, attune with your true nature, and say "yes". It will have you step off the cliff before you can see the net and create whatever is needed to get you to the other side. Maybe you'll end up inventing a whole new technology for how human beings can get from here to there.

Leaping Assignment – The 100 Day Challenge

What would you do if you knew you couldn't fail? Want to find out?

Imagine giving yourself 100 days to manifest an important goal in your life. If your goal is too big to be achieved in 100 days, begin by taking on the first big chunk.

One hundred days of concentrated focus on an area of your life you want to improve is a powerful and effective way to bring about lasting change.

"The journey of 1000 miles begins with a single step."

Lao Tzu

How many single steps can you take in 100 days? What areas of your life are up for review?

Pick a focus for the next 100 days. You can start today. Select one (or more) area(s) to concentrate on for the next 100 days but keep it simple. You'll be amazed at your ability to get things done when you concentrate your energy by zeroing in on what's most important.

Remember to make S.M.A.R.T. goals: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely. How many and by when? Here are examples of the kinds of goals

you might set:

Health - If you're facing current health challenges, how will you care for yourself? Who can you ask for support? Lose how many pounds in 100 days? Exercise how many times per week? Clean up your diet? (Ex. cut out dairy, wheat, sugar, meat), Stop smoking? Reduce or eliminate your "adult beverage" intake? Spend time in the outdoors appreciating Mother Nature at least once a week?

Finances - Is it time to get your financial act together? Do a realistic inventory of inflows and outflows. Do you live within your means? If not, set up a budget and follow it. Structure helps. Trim the fat from the outflow (do you need all those premium channels?) Dine out less. Pay down, or if you can, pay off credit card debt. How will you bring the outflow into alignment with the inflow? How can you increase the inflow? Change careers? Negotiate for a raise in your current job?

Career Development - Are you unemployed? Underemployed? Do you need to downsize your business? Consider the following suggestions:

Update your resume and send out how many/day? Schedule how many job interviews per week? How can you make yourself indispensable at your present job? How can you add value to your company or organization? What skills need to be updated or developed?

Relationships - With job insecurity so prevalent, it's easy to lose sight of our needs for relatedness. Yet without the important people in our lives, nothing else matters. Who's most important in your life? How much time do you spend with them or communicate with them? It might be time to schedule a visit back home, spend quality time with Mom and Dad. Plan a family reunion and take the lead in organizing it. Commit to spending quality time each week with your spouse and children.

Community - Life works better when we focus beyond our personal needs. Where, how and with whom can you make a difference in your community? What volunteer opportunities call to you? How many hours per week can you devote to contributing and with whom?

Recreation - All work and no play makes Jack and Jill dull robots. Make time for fun! Focus is important and hard work is necessary, now more than ever. But we

also need time to relax and enjoy the ride; otherwise, you might get to your goal and be too worn out to appreciate what you accomplished.

What activities will you schedule for a "time out for play"? Will you take a weekend trip? Go camping with the family? Attend a silent retreat or workshop? Go to a movie and out to dinner with friends? Take a salsa class?

Personal Growth - Are you a life-long learner? Self-development is as important as everything else on this list. How will you open yourself to new learning? Attend a seminar? Take a painting class? Join a book club?

The Inner Life - All that activity in the outer world needs to be balanced by spending time in the inner realm. How will you create inner and outer balance? Cultivate a meditation practice and commit to spending time in meditation each day? Attend the church of your choice each week? Practice yoga? Attend a silent retreat? Write in your journal?

What will you commit to for the next 100 days that will help you get unstuck and moving forward?

Four Tips to Help You Stay On Track

- 1) **Get a buddy** - you don't have to be the lone ranger. Synergy is a powerful dynamic. You're in this together. Schedule check-in times to be accountable to each other.
- 2) **Work with a coach** a coach is trained to help you identify and get past the obstacles that pop up along the way and will hold you accountable. If it's not in your budget, all the more reason to have a good buddy system in place.
- 3) **Keep a journal** - the journey of going for your goals is as important as reaching them. The process is where the learning is. Record your thoughts, feelings, and experiences along the way. Look back in 100 days and see how far you've come.
- 4) **Enjoy the ride** - it need not be the arduous trek up the Himalayas. It's the journey of your life unfolding day by day for 100 days at a time. Have fun!

Take stock of where you are at the end of that time and give yourself a reward when you finish. You made it through another 100 days of living! Isn't that reason enough to pop the bubbly?

Here's the thing, you will live your life for the next 100 days anyway. Why not be up to something that wouldn't happen by default? Why not live those 100 days as if they were the last 100 days of your life? Who knows? You might even be up for another 100 days after that!

To learn more about Dr. Judith Rich or to work with her, [visit her website](#).

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