



wake up INSPIRED

Fuel Healthier Success
and Love the Life
You're Meant to Lead

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New Story Press

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*Client examples in this book were inspired by real life experiences.
Names and details have been changed to honor their privacy.*

**I shut my eyes
in order to see.**

-Paul Gauguin

**Do not fear
mistakes...
There are none.**

- Miles Davis

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WELCOME

I admire you.

Simply by picking up this book you are demonstrating an awareness and curiosity about taking your life to the next level of fulfillment and prosperity in tune with your true self. And, most likely, you have a willingness to actually go for it.

If you're feeling confused and don't really have a sense of the life you *do* want to create- relax and congratulations. Ironically, that can be a great place from which to start. The good news is that you are awake and open. If you do have a clear mission and want support in bringing that to life- congratulations again. You are also in the right place. This work will take you deeper, help you birth your vision, and create lasting success aligned with the real you.

My passion to equip people to wake up inspired is fueled by experience with hundreds of clients since 1996, decades of study with leading experts, and gratitude for how blessed I feel about my own life today. More and more people are asking, "How do I combine spiritual growth and real world achievement?" They want pragmatic *how-to* support, not just parables. Unfortunately, this is not really taught in school, on the job or hardly anywhere else. This book offers a roadmap and tools to begin that journey. What you hold in your hands was born out of a more comprehensive Wake Up Inspired program that's been road-tested in workshops and private coaching sessions through the years. With my clients, it's fascinating to keep learning more about what actually works in real lives over time. My hope is that this book will serve as a launch pad for reinventing your life, or be just enough for the rejuvenation boost you desire for now.

Dear reader, I wish to acknowledge your courage, self-compassion and motivation in choosing to embark on this path. I promise you that if you read this book, explore the tools, and make new choices integrating these principles into your life, you'll discover the gift of admiring yourself. People will wonder what that sparkle behind your eyes is all about. You'll smile and feel grateful for the adventure your life has become.

Let's begin.

CHAPTER ONE

Waking Up to a New Story

*And the day came when the risk to remain tight in the bud
was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.*

- Anais Nin

Why Wake Up Inspired? A Revolution Brewing

I want to ask you something and tell you something.

The question is: *What are you living for?* If an observer watching your daily behavior were asked this question, what would he or she surmise?

And here's what I want to tell you: You were not born to settle. The purpose of your life was never supposed to be about getting all the to-do lists done or clinging to security. Your life was never meant to become a waiting room, either. You know, waiting for a prince or a pension to come? You're not supposed to feel stuck or restless. It is your destiny to enjoy a healthy body and spirit, to realize who you truly are and share your gifts in the world. The joyful life within your heart's desires is longing for you, wishing you'd listen more to its call.

There's no denying an epidemic of American female achievers feeling disenchanting or called toward a higher purpose (or both). I believe this healthy restlessness is part of a revolution brewing among awakening women. I don't mean any kind of hostile revolt, but a need to revolutionize how we pursue ambition and achievement. It's about enthusiastically taking a stand for healthier, smarter, more joyful success, for ourselves and for a sisterhood of conscious women.

Has it hit *you* yet? Do you love your life, or are you beginning to join the chorus of "*Is this all there is?*" on Monday mornings? You may hear that small, persistent voice from within that yearns for something deeper. It reminds you that you're meant to enjoy this ride and maybe even make a difference along the way. Rest assured, you are not alone in seeking authentic meaning and aliveness. Today, there is a distinct groundswell of people craving *soul satisfaction* in life and livelihood. Many reach a reflection and redirection juncture in their thirties and forties. Boomers hitting their fifties and sixties are seeking new ways to create that next phase of engaging in life rather than defaulting into outdated customs of retirement. Twenty-something's are proactively interested in designing a balanced life that works and not waiting until midlife to ask the weighty "Why am I here?" questions. I believe that our so-called midlife crisis is evolving into a more optimistic series of life renewal passages.

I don't know if there is any age rule. You just feel ready and ripe for something more...something else. Women seem to arrive at this phase of thoughtful redesign earlier than men. Who knows exactly why. Perhaps it's all that time waiting in lines for ladies' rooms—forcing us to stop and take a good look at our life satisfaction.

For me, I reached a certain plateau while climbing the ladder of achievement and acquisition. My life appeared to be a smash success, at least from the outside looking in. I then began asking, "Now what?" Or more poignantly, "SO what?" Do you feel that strain in your life? Perhaps you feel unsure, torn between the desire to explore higher dreams and the urge to stay with sensible and secure routes. I knew I had to grab the next rung with more enthusiasm or dare a leap of faith into the unknown. But man, did I hang on in that bewildered discomfort for a long time.

I ended up grabbing a 3-month sabbatical that gave way to a deep performance review of how I was leading my life. I entered the stage of asking “*Is this what I really want? What am I meant to do with this lifetime? Is how I’m navigating smart and leading to joy, or am I heading toward a crash and burn?*” a bit ahead of schedule, in my early thirties.

To fast forward the story, I pried my white-knuckled fingers off that six-figure career ladder and reinvented my life. I’ve gone through phases of intense spiritual growth, immersion in holistic health, and slowing down. I’ve also resumed some speed, channeling my achievement energy into a thriving coaching practice as well as writing, teaching and speaking. This second act has a very different vibe. It’s more like a calling than a career. It’s what I’ve come to call a Joyful Mission. I am earning less money but enjoying a much richer life. It’s hard to believe it’s been almost ten years.

Especially because I love my life today, it breaks my heart to see so many of my “sisters” still feeling stuck, longing for more vitality and sense of purpose. I understand these women often feel they don’t have enough time to get a haircut, never mind living up to their true destiny! I want to whisper, “Hey, it doesn’t have to be that way.”

Why Wake Up Inspired...Now?

This momentum toward craving higher fulfillment is particularly true among a group I call SAMMIES- Seeking Aliveness and Meaning, Mostly In Executive Suits. For years, I’ve noticed more and more achievers that are becoming seekers, predominantly among women. They are morphing into a hybrid of Seeker-Achievers.

Typically, they come from a white-collar, profit-priority, go-getting milieu. Now, they are increasingly intrigued with holistic health, inner wisdom, and contributing to something bigger than their CEO’s (or their own) next bonus. A new fascination with spirituality has moved beyond the earthy, sandal-clad stereotype to more professionally seasoned women with stylish heels and ambitious agendas.

I’m not the only one noticing these seismic shifts in our culture. Major media cover stories have spotlighted women who opt out of high profile, high pay careers for full time motherhood. Yet it soon became clear that “Family” isn’t the only F word that deserves attention. Women crave more *fulfillment*, whether they have children or not. *Fast Company* magazine has reported that women aren’t dropping out of business so much as creating their own version, starting new businesses at three times the rate of men. *Wall Street Journal* writer Sue Shellenbarger was so deluged with emails after writing one column on these issues that she was compelled to write the book *The Breaking Point: How Female Midlife Crisis is Transforming Today’s Women*. The midlife crisis cliché has been about 40-ish men, red sports cars, trophy mistresses and hair plugs. New studies reveal that more women than men now experience a challenging midlife transition. This transition can either lead to despair or to the most amazing, rewarding time ever.

One conclusive theme emerges in reviewing recent studies and women’s stories. It’s not that women aren’t powerful or talented enough to make it in the top rungs. Rather, many are *choosing* not to pursue lifestyles they view as hazardous to one’s psychological, physical, spiritual and ethical health. Who wants to keep pushing to break through a glass ceiling if this leads to more stress and a shattered spirit? We are at the threshold of redefining success and

reclaiming joy. I think professional women will and must lead this movement. This is great news for alert women willing to embrace change.

What about men? you might ask. I love men. I admire and adore working with my male clients. When there's a preponderance of women gathered, I'm inclined to declare that we need some testosterone to balance things out for more well-rounded perspectives. As a 40-something female with a white collar background, I am inherently more prepared to relate to similar women. Also, conscious professional women seem to be the most likely catalysts for a movement that says, "Hey, wait a minute. Are we really connected to our true selves, promoting the higher good?" (Of course their starter questions sound more like, "Yikes, can I keep juggling and struggling like this?!") It's our *feminine energy* (in both men and women) that urges us to slow down and tune in to more substance.

Why Wake Up Inspired...As Women?

There's a resurgence of feminine energy percolating with this desire to take a stand for healthier, more meaningful success. In the early nineties a number of best-selling books argued that the growing influence of women, especially in business, could help create a more humane and nurturing American culture. Since then, we certainly have more evidence to suggest that women should naturally feel, think and lead differently. You've probably seen the medical research revealing that the female brain is literally wired differently, and that we use both sides of our brains more holistically than men. Unfortunately, many clients and colleagues echo the refrain that pressure to be like a man in order to succeed "has gotten worse" in ten years, not better.

Whatever your admiration or resistance to the term *feminism*, let's agree to the benefits of reviving the power and pride of feminine energy. It's clear that the values and cultural undertow of professional life have many of us swimming against the current of our true nature. It's exhausting. Many women don't even know why they're feeling "out of sync," or realize that there are millions of other women out there feeling the very same way. How can we make it easier to *just love being a girl?*

This revolution that I speak of is a movement towards becoming whole and experiencing a harmony between who you are deep inside, and how you function in the outer world. "Life, liberty and pursuit of happiness" has a renewed echo in our hearts as we begin the 21st century. In the 19th and 20th century, the first feminist initiatives were about "Life" -- I exist. I have a say in the world. I count and get a vote. "Liberty" then overlaps nicely with the push for the freedom to work outside of the home and equal opportunity for financial independence. We have come a long way, baby, and owe much gratitude to our fore-sisters.

Nonetheless, it's not turning out how we dreamed once upon a time, is it? Now, we have a grand opportunity to revamp "The Pursuit of Happiness." Let's pray we are wiser about what "happiness" entails and realize that she who dies with the most toys is probably spending too much time on eBay.

I'm also hopeful that more women will be inspired to nourish and support each other (rather than augment the unfortunate, power-hungry stereotypes that glorify survival of the self-promoting fittest). Part of the new wave of feminism should include breaking a code of

pretense, being more honest with each other about how we actually feel, and supporting each other with genuine empathy.

We are still letting masculine dominance run the world. How well is that working? There is a profound need to awaken the nourishing qualities in all of us. There's more buzz around the divine feminine in spiritual circles. The planet needs our compassion and our fierce strength, like that mother bear energy, protecting her cubs. We need more feminine power actively engaged in the world to end violence and to feed the hungry. Feminine energy inspires us to include, revive and collaborate more than renounce, dominate and slaughter. Modern spiritual rebel-rouser, Marianne Williamson, has said that it is the *adult female* of a group who leads the way towards conscious change that can heal and protect the long-term survival of that species. Of course, we still want to celebrate all of the magnificent qualities of men, while bringing more women to the table. We need to encourage more feminine potency expressing itself in both genders, for the higher good of all people.

If we join our amazing hearts, brains and hands more, we can stir up a revolution. Imagine channeling our ambition into creative ways of inspiring ourselves and others. We can make a difference by infusing the best of feminine spirit into our lives, businesses and world leadership.

If all of this feels daunting, please exhale and relax. I can appreciate how you might be thinking, "I don't want to join a revolution or change the world...I just want to get a grip on creating a more rewarding life." Rest assured that this book is not a manifesto for a new feminist movement, an overhaul of the business world, or irate activism to save the planet. My calling is focused on equipping individuals like you to create more fulfilling, prosperous lives and careers. You can also trust that all of this change begins with making more breathing room and calm in your life, not with pushing and working harder. I do hope that -- one person or small group at a time-- this work will contribute to a larger movement, helping people to wake up to who they truly are and choose to contribute positive energy in newly conscious ways. Why not go for a trickle down theory of inspiration? Are you in?

*When sleeping women wake,
mountains move.*

- Chinese Proverb

Why Wake Up Inspired... as Human Beings?

What does it mean to wake up inspired, to live an inspired life? How do we fuel our inspired missions, creating inspired work, inspired relationships, inspired leadership, inspired businesses, inspired communities and inspired legacies? I have been blessed to realize that having an inspired life – allowing my true spirit to motivate every choice – is like the difference between struggling and climbing for things in life and letting the “lift” of your higher energy power your trip.

In the dictionary under “inspired” we find *aroused, animated...imbued with the spirit to do a certain thing, by or as by divine influence*. An archaic use of inspire is *to infuse breath and life*. It's interesting to see how this is distinct from “aspire” which means *to be eagerly desirous, especially for something of great value*. Inspired Living is infused with a different motivation, e.g. to contribute, rather than primarily to gain or stockpile. It informs how we show up in the world, how we treat ourselves and our neighbors down the block and across the human race.

Ironically, with all of our accumulation of technology and worldly advancement, we are experiencing a poverty of inspiration. We are not feeding our spirits enough. Lack of inspiration is expensive. Consider the ultimate cost of millions of uninspired workers who have lost that lovin' feeling. Notice the deficit of inspired or inspiring leaders, resulting in missed opportunities for a more robust economy and nourished environment. Lack of inspiration is a threat to our well-being, from personal health to the health of our global relationships. When we are not feeling inspired, we are operating from inertia, fear or feeling overwhelmed. What the world needs now is... inspiration.

Trends all around us are amplifying our inner desire for more wholeness and truth. Personal growth and spirituality books are best sellers across the country. Medical schools are espousing eastern philosophies that say thoughts, emotions and spirituality are vital components of health care and well being. This stuff isn't just for New Agers anymore, folks. Wake up and smell the herb tea. We are also witnessing a dismantling of institutions and assumptions that shakes our core. Shall we rewind and review? Consider September 11, corporate corruption, political scandals, biased media, pedophilia and cover ups in the Catholic Church, and trials that test our faith in the American justice system. Add to that Iraq, mind-blowing natural disasters, watching our retirement savings wither, and seeing our friends go unemployed.

As miserable as it all sounds, we can still find the gift here. Something is telling us to be more aware, less complacent. Underneath the headlines, there's an invitation to remember who we are as souls and to revere, care for and lift up each other. The human spirit is feisty. Notice how wake up calls prompt you and the people around you to re-evaluate priorities and seek more deeply chosen lives. We have a dramatic opportunity to collectively create a more accepting, fulfilling, harmonious world. You and I say we want peace (and other good things for ourselves and the planet), but may feel baffled as to how to actually influence something that vast. I now believe in the song lyrics, “Let there be peace on earth *and let it begin with me*” with every cell of my being. If each of us embarks on this inspired path earnestly, it changes everything – how you see yourself and everyone else you encounter, what matters and what is unnecessary drama. I am humbled at the peace I feel in my own life and fascinated with amazing possibilities for our brighter future.

It's Time for a New Story

What kind of world could we develop if more of us really did wake up inspired and fell asleep grateful? It is time for a provocative conversation that goes beyond "success" and beyond "balance." Transcending both of these, we can find the rewarding mission each of us is destined to lead. It is time for a series of shifts, from autopilot achievement and consumption to conscious choices, from overload to wholeness, from vague restlessness to enthusiastically living on purpose.

It is time to wake up and claim who you are meant to become.

So, how does one get started? First, stop rushing. Time flies whether we're having fun or not. Hit the pause button. Stop long enough to take a good look at your life. Notice the choices that have landed you in your current situation and your current state of being-- mind, body and spirit.

Once upon a time, I refused to slow down. (I could have been a poster girl for *Women Who Work Too Much and the Companies that Love Them*.) My body got my attention with some health challenges that encouraged me to examine my choices. Soon after taking the leap of quitting my job (yet busy again with a new consulting gig), my brother-in-law, uncle and mother were all rushed to the hospital within a span of a few days. I recall shuffling through my fifth airport in 48 hours like a zombie, not able to stifle tears, trying to reach my mother in time to say goodbye. My mother died and of course, the loss was devastating. Yet, somewhere in the fog of grief, there was that beacon, reminding me that I could no longer afford to wait to follow my heart and start living *my life*.

My husband Kelly and I took a trip to Florida shortly after my mother's death. I quietly strolled the beach and noticed how many "old people" seemed to be too ill or frail to really enjoy these so-called golden years. It prompted me to think that our cultural agreement of working our brains out for decades with a tilt-o-whirl lifestyle and then retiring to some sunny playground in our late 60's was just *backasswards*.

I wondered too if my mother had really experienced enough joy in her life. I wanted to have her back, to argue over losing each other at the shopping mall, to giggle over her accidentally saying "discharge" instead of "discard" while playing cards, and maybe to ask her what she would have done differently with her life. I couldn't bring my mother back, but I could certainly resurrect passion, purpose and joy in my own life, and maybe even in other people's lives somehow. I was only 34 and I didn't want to plan for enjoying life more thirty years later.

Please don't wait for a crisis to be your wake up call. Life is short and precious. You have the power within you now to create the life you deserve. Where you go from here is another grand choice. Just asking yourself "Is this how I really want to live?" (rather than sleep-walking through the status quo) is a significant step toward shaping an inspired life for yourself. Remember you are not alone. Also keep in mind that you never know what your life might look like a few years or even months from now. *Your joy is waiting around the corner.*

Is the life I'm living the life that wants to live in me?

- Parker Palmer

Why Don't We Live More Inspired Lives?

Why on earth do we linger in lifestyles and careers that don't fortify and delight us? Often we need a catalyst for change, like the death of a loved one or being reorganized out of a career path. Without intense wake up calls, we can be like frogs slowly boiled to death, not realizing the water temperature is gradually increasing. We go along with the schedule, pay the mortgage and answer emails while calendar pages fly and our souls wither a tiny bit each day. We also tell ourselves convincing stories about not having enough time, money or courage.

There are legitimate obstacles from outside sources. Nonetheless, we trip ourselves up with our own beliefs that block inspiration and prosperity. In my Wake Up Inspired workshops I often ask, "What's getting in the way of living a life you would love?" The underlying reasons include old wounds, patterns from one's family of origin, fears about security, leaving known routines for the riskier unknown, lack of encouragement, vagueness and inertia.

There are worthwhile tools for dealing with resistance and taming our self-sabotage. However, the most expedient way is often to leapfrog over these obstacles with passion and faith. All of the structures for focus, prioritization and action follow-through will grind and squeak without the lubrication of your passion and faith. Passion and faith combine in a recipe for inspiration. You can choose to create a new story.

The following chart is another look at the shift toward the new story of Inspired Success. The left side of the chart represents some ways we have tried to create success. Let's call this the "old story" that clearly doesn't lead to joy. The right side represents an inspired path that many people are finding to be a more authentic choice. Each side may be exaggerated a bit to show contrast, yet this doesn't stray too far from reality. Scan and see for yourself what new choices are calling to you.

"Old Story" Success Track	Inspired Success, A New Story
"Accommodating Overachiever" Nose-to-grindstone workhorse, striving to get ahead.	"Seeker-Achiever" Intentional, values and purpose-driven, on a Joyful Mission.
Busy, busy, busy. Often running on autopilot, feeling overwhelmed.	May be busy, yet well-paced. Conscious, tuning-in to assess her course often enough.
Sacrificing personal well-being for work, family, doing for others.	Personal health, well-being are highly valued and life habits walk the talk.
Aspires to make more money.	Inspired to make a difference.
"Never enough" inner driver pushes her to be overly responsible. People pleasing and perfectionism may kick in.	Aligned, appropriate responsibility. More inner-directed. A balanced sense of "enough" while still honoring values of excellence.
Driven by proving herself and getting ahead.	Guided by her higher power to joyfully serve.
Slave to her to-do list, starting to feel trapped.	Master of conscious choices, feeling on path.
Squeezes in salon visits as a treat when she's exhausted. Thinks about going to personal growth workshop, doesn't sign up or follow through.	Practices proactive wellness and positive success-fueling habits. Has a personal & professional coach, massage therapist, regular exercise regime, et al.
Knows Chardonnays and the Wall Street Journal.	Also knows Chakras and Yoga Journal.
Post it note on computer says, "Just Do it" (with Do it ALL implied).	Post it note reads, "BREATHE."
Executes a logical strategic plan.	Incorporates intuition and metaphysical principles into how she navigates through life and work.
Climbing to the top of the ladder for financial wealth, power and acclaim.	Dancing with her destiny, fueling truly prosperous, rewarding work and life.
Exercises at the gym for the sake of stamina, peak performance.	Exercises for the sake of wellness and optimal energy flow. Overlaps with her spiritual growth.
Trying to juggle it all.	Assessing choices and building her dream team of support.
Loves shoes.	Loves shoes. ☺

OK, so now you see (at the end of the chart) that I'm asserting that we can be on a quest for higher consciousness and a great shoe sale in the same lifetime. Also, I'm not telling you to quit your job and go meditate on a mountain in order to wake up inspired. The key is to bring inspiration *to* your life and work, often with healthier habits and a deeper connection to your inner guidance. Apply the concepts throughout the rest of the book to your career, relationships and other aspects of life. That's how you'll get to enjoy having both a healthy, joyful spirit and your ambitious achievement as well.

Take a moment to ask yourself what resonates with you from the chart. What might be the key ingredients of your "old story" and "new story" shifts?

Where There's Inspiration, There's a Way...

Curious to read more and explore your personal exercises on a new Inspired Life Fitness Trail? Gain tools to apply right away, including how to:

- Understand why "life balance is not a math problem" and what really does work.
- Effectively blend mind-body-spirit vitality with external achievement.
- Clear obstacles to your growth, with new ways to tap into your inner wisdom and other sources of positive energy.
- Prevent feeling overwhelmed and set yourself up to thrive.
- Identify your real heart's desires with clearer values, purpose and vision. Learn smart ways to keep dancing with your destiny.

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Wake Up Inspired:
Fuel Healthier Success and Love the Life You're Meant to Lead

**This is a book about changing your life.
And, you could change the life of another woman on the other side of the world.**

While you are waking up to your inspired life, I would also like to encourage you to support life-changing opportunities for our global sisters. A portion of the proceeds of this book will be donated to Women for Women International (or other organizations inspiring and equipping women to create better lives).

About Women for Women International:

Women for Women International helps women in war-torn regions rebuild their lives by providing financial and emotional support, job skills training, rights awareness and leadership education and access to business skills, capital and markets. Through the program, women become confident, independent and productive as they embrace the importance of their roles in rebuilding their families, their communities and ultimately, their nations.

For more information or to sponsor a woman, please visit
<http://www.WomenforWomen.org>

About the Author



Selected as one of 50 top coaches in America, master certified coach, author and speaker Marian Baker has coached and led workshops with hundreds of clients from corporate, small business, non-profit and personal growth communities since 1996. Clients value her holistic approach, blending mind-body-spirit principles with pragmatic tools and concrete actions.

Marian is profiled (alongside best selling authors like Ken Blanchard) in the book, *The Art and Practice of Leadership Coaching; 50 Top Coaches Reveal Their Secrets*. Through her *Wake Up Inspired* book, groups and speaking, Marian is expanding her outreach in order to encourage and equip growth-seeking achievers to create the soul-fulfilling missions they are destined to enjoy.

Called "The Queen of Powerful Questions" by a leader of Coaches Training Institute, Marian has been quoted and featured in major media such as Health magazine and The Chicago Tribune. She has also been selected as an expert for Fitness Magazine's *You Can Do It* program. Marian is co-author of the *Awakening Corporate Soul: High Performance, High Fulfillment* workbook.

Once upon a time, Marian's life appeared to be a smash success from the outside looking in. However, she gradually began asking, "Is this all there is?" and craving more meaningful fulfillment. Today, she's waking up inspired, humbled at the joy she feels in her own life, and delighted to help others fuel their own unique success stories. Marian loves this work, admires her clients, and will become your devoted champion. She falls asleep grateful each night with her husband and cats in Chicago.

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