



# 32 Days of UPleveling your Mind & UPLifting your Heart

*Extraordinary Life Lessons  
From Ordinary Situations*  
Volume 1



**Christine Hassler, M.A.**  
*Author - Speaker - Life Coach*  
[www.ChristineHassler.com](http://www.ChristineHassler.com)



## Author Background:



**Christine Hassler** supports individuals in discovering the answers to the questions: “Who Am I, What do I want, and How do I get it?” She is a **Life Coach** with a counseling emphasis specializing in relationships, career, finance, self-identity, personal and spiritual growth. Her expertise is overcoming “Expectation Hangovers®” - a phenomenon she identified and trademarked – and teaching how to use them for personal transformation.

Christine has authored two books: *Twenty-Something, Twenty-Everything* and *The Twenty-Something Manifesto*. As a professional speaker and facilitator, Christine leads seminars and workshops to audiences around the country. She is passionate about inspiring miracles, which are changes in perception, and using everything in her life for her UPliftment and learning.

Christine loves yoga, chocolate, 80s music, Texas and anything that is the color purple. You can read more about Christine [here](#).

Contact:

[www.christinehassler.com](http://www.christinehassler.com)

[Christine@christinehassler.com](mailto:Christine@christinehassler.com)

<http://www.facebook.com/twentyomethingtwentyeverything>

Twitter: @christinhassler

## CONTENTS

Introduction .....	4
Thank You Harley .....	6
Feeling Funky? .....	7
Good Mornings .....	8
Decide Versus Choose .....	9
When Life Dishes Out Disappointment .....	10
Wear Your Good Underwear .....	11
Yes! AND... ..	13
Are You Headed Toward or Away From? .....	14
Broken Glass .....	16
How Is Your Customer Service? .....	17
Golden Rule .....	18
Obligation is the Worse from of Motivation .....	19
Glory Days .....	20
What Kind of Shape Are You In? .....	22
One Of The Biggest Misunderstanding About Personal Growth .....	24
Don't Go to a Chinese Restaurant for Nachos .....	27
Are You Living Inside-Out? .....	29
Say Please and Thank You .....	30
Lessons From The Men's Room .....	31
How Do You Handle Inconvenience? .....	32
Are You Getting Nailed? .....	33
Discussing Failures over Coffee .....	34
Is Your To-Do List Doing You In? .....	35
Be a Compliment Columbo! .....	37
What Are You Going To Bed With? .....	39
Life Labyrinth .....	40
The End of Suffering .....	42
Are You Strategic or Authentic When You Communicate? .....	43
What If? .....	45
Who's Making Your Taco? .....	47
How I Altered My Brain .....	48
Are You Wasting Your Most Valuable Resource? .....	50

## Introduction

*Dear Reader,*

Thank you! I'm so glad that you've made the choice to open this book because I know it means that you are someone who BELIEVES that you can create miracles, which are changes in perception, in your life. You know that you have the power to find more gratitude, joy and abundance, and that is incredibly empowering! I'm beyond excited to share this 32-day collection of stories and lessons with you. My intention is for it to be a catalyst for a daily UPlleveling of your mind and UPliftment of your heart.

*What inspired this book?*

This book is a collection of the weekly UPdates that I have been writing over the past six years for my newsletter list. When I began my newsletters in 2005, I had about 30 subscribers that I would send an email to. Over the years the list has grown just as I have. My writing transformed from writing a newsletter once a month to feeding my readers each week with an easy to digest UPdate that offers insight, information or inspiration. Each of these UPdates were inspired by people, situations or “aha” moments in my life that taught me (or reminded me of) valuable life lessons.

I've always loved learning. You see, I was a total nerd growing up. I loved school more than I loved weekends. I was the girl who went for extra credit even when I had all A's. School came easier to me than my social life did. Thankfully I've outgrown my awkward years, but I've never outgrown my passion for learning. I am an eternal student of life. We think we are here for some external purpose or thing, but the truth is we are all really here to learn, and then use what we learn to forgive, grow and deepen in our loving. Life becomes a LOT more fun if we use everything, and I mean EVERYTHING, for our upliftment, growth and learning.

I love extracting extraordinary life lessons from ordinary situations. Few things are more exciting to me than having an “aha” moment myself or teeing one up for someone else. Deepening in my awareness of my authentic Self, my connection to Spirit and my relationships with others are my passions. Miracles are every day experiences for me. And like most people who are passionate about learning, I LOVE to teach- and by that I mean share with you what I am learning.

*What's my intention in sharing this book with you?*

My intention is to inspire you to create a daily practice of seeing the extraordinary in the ordinary and to fall in love with being a student of life. I understand that sometimes the ordinary can seem boring or “not enough,” but that just means you need to ULevel the way you’re seeing it. Things that feel so disappointing in the moment often yield the greatest transformation. I hope that some of these stories remind you of what you already know deep inside your soul: that everything in your life is working out exactly as it is supposed to, and all you need to do is see it through a more compassionate lens. I know that life can be challenging, and in those moments our tender hearts feel sadness, doubt or fear. My hope is that there are stories in this book that UPlift your heart with a message that touches you just when you need it most. Finally, my intention in teaching these life lessons I’ve learned is so that you become such an enthusiastic student of life that you are inspired to pay forward what you’re learning to other students in your life.

*What is the best way to get the most UPliftment and ULeveling from this book?*

There is no right or wrong way to read this book, just like there is no “right” or “wrong” in life – there only is what is. You get to choose what is best for you. My recommendation is to read one UDate each day for 32 days in a row. Why 32 days? It takes approximately that long for a new habit to form. Shifting the way you perceive the world and react to life events takes practice. You do not have to read the UDates in order; you can glance at the Table of Contents and pick one that resonates with you (which would be a fun for your intuition!). If you too have an inner nerd and want to go for the extra credit, keep a journal and write your “aha” from each UDate and how you will implement it into your life. Awareness is the first step to growth, and practice is what helps what we know become what we do.

Know that each UDate was written with tremendous love and appreciation for being able to share it with you . . .

May Harley Davidson inspire you to take a walk on the wild side.  
May taco’s remind you to be selective about where you’re going for advice.  
May glory days remind you of the glory within you.  
May broken glass encourage you to not make mountains out of molehills.  
May you find ways to put your “what if?” questions to rest.  
May you be inspired to start living inside-out.

And may you be blessed and bless others  
with your own extraordinary life lessons.

With love, *Christie*

## Thank You Harley

Thank you Harley. . .

Davidson that is. My friend James invited me for a drive up the beautiful Pacific Coast Highway on his Harley Davidson. Before we got on the bike, he said to me, “Christine, my motto in life is either Hell Yes! or Hell No! - so what’s it going to be?” “Hell Yes!” I replied with enthusiasm and eagerness to live life on the wilder side (but also resting in the knowledge that James was a safe driver with over two decades of riding experience). The last time I was on a motorcycle was six years earlier and I was terrified. This time I noticed that I was not fearful at all; life experiences have given me the opportunity to exercise my faith muscle. I have learned that fear is a feeling triggered by a collection of thoughts about the future that interrupts our enjoyment of the moment - and often just the experience of living.

As we began our cruise up the coast, I checked myself into the present moment of LIFE by tuning into the sensory experience I was having. I felt the wind on my face and the hum of Harley beneath me, listened to the sound of the bike as it shifted gears, tasted the fresh ocean air and took in the magnificent sights around me. The more I attuned to the present moment of what I was experiencing, the more fun I had and the safer I felt. I noticed that if a feeling of fear arose, I would be cheating my senses from the sights, sounds and sensations that were available to me. My time with Harley Davidson also gave me the opportunity to practice trust and surrender as a passenger on the back of the bike with no control. So thank you, Harley (and James), for taking me for a ride on the wilder side of life and showing me how absolutely invigorating it is to say “Hell Yes” to a little adventure.

My invitation to you is to do something on the wilder side of life to tickle your senses (within reason that is)! Life is full of opportunities to live a little bolder, bigger and more fully engaged. All it requires is being open to saying YES. Are you here to play it safe all of the time or are you willing to take a walk on the wild side?

*“Live in the sunshine, swim the sea,  
drink the wild air...” - Ralph Waldo Emerson*

*“Tell me, what is it you plan to do with  
your one wild and precious life?” - Mary Oliver*

## Feeling Funky?

Ever have a day when you just feel like you are in a funk and you don't know why? I suspect the answer to that question is a "yes" for most of us. In fact it was my "yes" to this question that inspired this update. At first I wanted to blame it on the gloomy weather but I knew that wasn't it. There are plenty of days when the weather is dreary and I'm not.

Usually the first thing we want to do when we are feeling funky is get out of it! We try blaming it on something inconsequential like the weather. We try distracting ourselves. We look around for anything or anyone to defunk us. We spend our energy looking for a way out of the funk rather than going into it to discover what message of the funk is. So today I encouraged myself to go into my funk. After some self-inquiry and journaling, I realized that there was something that was bothering me that I had been ignoring to the point that I was not really even aware of the fact that it was there. Luckily the funk came to get my attention! As soon as I addressed the issue, low and behold, the funk lifted - even though the fog outside did not.

When you feel off or down for seemingly no reason, my hunch is that there is a reason you do not want to see, acknowledge or address. My message to you today is to listen to the message that is bringing on the funk. You can do this by asking yourself questions such as, "Is there a way I am not taking care of my own needs? Am I out of integrity with myself or another in some way? Is there unfinished business or an incomplete conversation lingering about? Have I been in my head a lot and perhaps ignoring my feelings? Am I overly focused on another or an external situation?" You can go into the inquiry of the funk by just allowing yourself to free form write or talk aloud.

Support your defunking by taking an inward or outward action to demonstrate to the funk that the message was received. Then change your state. The best way to do that is to change your physiology. Get up and go for a walk, stretch, sit up straight, and for the best defunking activity, dance to give up the funk!

*"People are anxious to improve their circumstances,  
but are unwilling to improve themselves;  
they therefore remain bound." - James Allen*

## Good Mornings

Good Morning - or is it?

You've heard that breakfast is the most important meal of the day but do you know what is the most significant moment of your day? The beginning! Each morning greets you with another chance to approach your life with more love, joy and appreciation than you did the day before. Are you missing this opportunity to set your tone for the day? Do you jump out of bed at the first sound of your alarm and immediately dive into a mindless routine before rushing out of the house? Or perhaps you like to press snooze multiple times, delaying the inevitable, and then lazily making your way to a cup of coffee? Think about your morning routine and consider how it may be impacting the rest of your day. If you are not doing things in the morning that are mindful and nourishing, chances are the rest of your day will follow suit.

Instead of just going through the motions each morning, I invite you to create a ritual that supports your entire day. What can you do that brings you more into the feeling that you would like to create throughout your day? I awake each day to the chime of my Zen alarm clock which is far more pleasant sounding than an alarm buzzer or cell phone ring. I do not press snooze because after reading several sleep studies, I learned that snoozing actually makes us more tired. After stretching a bit, I place both feet on the floor and before leaping out of bed I take a moment to get grounded and to connect to my body. Then I head to my altar and meditate for a minimum of 15 minutes which I complete with some uplifting music. Next it's on to either a cup of tea or a workout, depending on the day. When I do not participate in my morning ritual, I always notice the difference. I do not feel as peaceful or present on the days when I sacrifice ritual for routine.

So "get up on the right side of bed" by creating a morning ritual for yourself. Instead of speeding up, slow down to start your day. Just five minutes of listening to a favorite song, writing in a journal, breathing or taking a quick step outside makes a difference. Even if it means getting up a little earlier to engage in your ritual, it is totally worth it!

Fondly,  
Christine

*"When you arise in the morning, think of what a precious privilege it is to be alive - to breathe, to think, to enjoy, to love." -Marcus Aurelius*

## Decide Versus Choose

Have you noticed how challenging it can sometimes be to make a decision? Often making the decision is harder than dealing with the consequences from making the decision. A reason that we may struggle with decisions is because some part of us thinks if we decide one thing, we are going to lose or miss out on something else. To support you in feeling some freedom around decision-making, I want to share with you a distinction between the words CHOICE and DECISION.

Notice how you feel inside when you think you have to decide something. Does it feel different from how you feel when you get to choose something? Many of us experience a lot more angst and inner conflict when we use the word decision. Why is that? Well, look at the root word of decision: DECIDE. It contains the Latin root of “cide” which means to “cut down or kill.” Think of other words that contain cide: suicide, genocide, homicide, pesticide, etc. Why is this syntax distinction relevant? Because the words we think and say have a lot of meaning to us, especially on the unconscious level - which is very significant!

When we feel that we have to decide something, some of the anxiety that comes forward has to do with the feeling that we are cutting or killing off something, therein creating more internal conflict. We often buy into the limiting belief that if we decide one thing, we will lose something else instead of seeing the bigger picture of how much we can actually gain from committing to a choice.

One way to work with this distinction is to use the words CHOOSE and CHOICE instead of decide and decision. Say “I CHOOSE” and immediately feel a sense of freedom. And as you are choosing, relax in the Knowing that there is no such thing as a wrong choice, there is only the choice we make.

Happy Choosing!

*To choose is also to begin.  
-Starhawk (Dreaming the Dark)*

*To decide to be at the level of choice,  
is to take responsibility for your life and  
to be in control of your life. -Arbie M. Dale*

## When Life Dishes Out Disappointment

I recently gathered with three of my best, most amazing girlfriends for a dinner meeting to discuss a project we're collaborating on. Soon we realized there was a fifth guest at our table: disappointment. Our business agenda was scrapped as we realized our plates were already full of something else. We spent the evening navigating through our disappointment and I walked away so grateful for friends with the awareness, willingness, compassion and courage to deal with what was on our menu for the evening. I want to share about how we supported each other just in case you are dealing with disappointment or perhaps know someone who could use a little support with his/hers.

The first thing we did was just listen. We allowed each other to express our feelings about what had happened and we met each other where we were at. No advice, no fixing, no "trying to see the silver lining," just listening. The next thing was asking whoever was expressing what kind of support she needed. This is empowering for the person who is experiencing the disappointment because it anchors them into their own ability to take care of themselves. Then we gave that support! It included a lot of acknowledgment and the type of reassurance that she asked for. Next, brainstorm possible next steps or examine available choices without any pressure or "shoulding." And finally, lots of encouragement to move into accepting WHAT IS – which is one of the hardest life lessons for all of us!

As the recipient of this process, I felt a big layer of the disappointment lift by the end of the evening. And as the witness/supporter of another's disappointment, I was once again reminded of how alike and very, very human we all are. We all face disappointment and to put it bluntly, it sucks. We want immediate relief and solutions as soon as possible but that is not always a possibility. But it is possible to consume disappointment in a healthier way that supports you in moving through it, rather than sitting in it. And of course within every disappointment, there is a lesson and a blessing. It just may not be revealed immediately..."Oh no, more disappointment?!?! No, just another opportunity to practice faith and patience.

Today I invite you to UPDATE your life tool box with this step-by-step plan when disappointment disrupts your plans. Because we can't always get what we want, but we ALWAYS get what we need (eventually).

Fondly,  
Christine

*"The size of your success is measured by the strength of your desire; the size of your dream; and how you handle disappointment along the way." -Robert Kiyosaki quotes*

*"Disappointment to a noble soul is what cold water is to burning metal; it strengthens, tempers, intensifies, but never destroys it." -Eliza Tabor*

## Wear Your Good Underwear

I've always been a saver. Each year at Halloween growing up, I'd hit as many houses as I could to fill my pumpkin to the point where the princess, bride, witch or ballerina that I was dressed up as could barely lift it. Unlike most kids who dove into their candy immediately, I would organize my sugary stash by type and then put it away in a special kitchen cupboard. And my stash would remain there until the next Halloween. On the rare occasions I did dive into my candy, I would never eat my favorites like Butterfingers or Snickers because I wanted to save them. So I'd take a mediocre piece of candy instead like a Tootsie Roll, delaying my gratification of what I really wanted.

I grew out of my trick-or-treat days but the part of me that delayed gratification for someday instead of now grew with me. Sometimes that part was useful because it kept me from indulging in a lot of instant gratification behaviors like over-spending, over-drinking, over-eating, etc. Yet as I was looking around my house one day, I noticed the saver kept me from enjoying some nice things like a special bottle of wine I received as a gift over nine years ago, a beautiful dress with the tags still on it, gift certificates to a Spa, a unique chocolate bar, and beautiful lingerie that is tucked in the back of a drawer. I was buying into the misunderstanding that I needed a good reason to justify enjoying all these things. Then I finally realized, "Wait a second, these things are all here for me to experience and enjoy right NOW, what am I waiting for?!?!"

This is a metaphor for how we do not gift ourselves with experiencing all the good that is available to us right now because we are waiting for a someday. We live too much in "when, then" and delay our gratification. When I lose five pounds, then I'll feel confident. When I get the job I want, then I'll feel successful. When I meet my soulmate, then I'll feel loved. And so on. "When, then" thinking keeps the sweetness we desire in life tucked away in the future, just like my Halloween candy was tucked away in the cupboard. We put all the things we are craving in the distance; however, in reality all those things are available in the present.

What on earth are you saving all the love and happiness and abundance that are currently inside of you for? Perhaps you are saving up your soulmate and depriving yourself of all the delicious feelings that come with being in love until he or she gets here. Maybe you are not relishing in feeling successful until you get a certain job. Or you are waiting to feel confident until you reach a certain size.

If you find yourself living with many “when, then’s,” you are forgetting that you are 100% worthy and capable of experiencing the feeling states you desire today. You are stuck in old patterns of limitations and lack. You are buying into the belief that your internal experience is created by external events rather than stepping into the expanded and empowering awareness that you create your inner experience. You are denying yourself the instant gratification of the present moment! It is like wearing old, raggedy underwear when you have a sexy new pair in your drawer!

Think about all the things you would like to experience in your life. Consider how you think you will feel when you experience those things. Here is the key: If you can imagine how you will feel when you get the “then,” when do you think you can generate those feelings? You guessed it: right now! There is no reason to wait for what ever it is you are waiting for. You do not need justifications or outcomes to be happy so quit depriving yourself!

Stop saving up all your love for someone in the future. Love now. There is no reason to feel like you are in lack until more arrives. Claim abundance now. What’s the point to delaying gratification until something you want happens? Be happy now.

And if there are things in your life you are not enjoying today because you think you will enjoy them more someday in the future, set your saver free and indulge yourself!! Let it be a metaphorical cosmic message that you are ready to enjoy the delicious feelings you are craving NOW. Take yourself out in the outfit that is collecting dust in your closet. Plan the trip you’ve been waiting to take. Crack open that special bottle of wine on your shelf. And wear your good underwear! Stop waiting for something or someone else. Make TODAY your special occasion.

## Yes! AND...

A few months ago I enrolled in Improv classes because I love to laugh and I thought it would be an interesting challenge for me. Little did I know how the principles we have been learning in class translate so beautifully to life. The first rule in Improv is “yes, and...” You accept whatever you are given in a scene without judgment and then build on it. If your scene partner gives you the role of being a gorilla who has just escaped captivity, you are the most liberated gorilla in the world. If the audience calls out for you to be terrified of your own shadow you take that level of paranoia to a ten. On stage, when you don't say yes to what has been presented, the scene has nowhere to go and usually ends pitifully which is never funny. So anything that gets thrown at you, the answer is always “YES, I accept this AND will embrace it with everything I have.”

This rule often pushes me out of my comfort zone (yes, I've been a gorilla... twice) but the more I say yes and just go for it, the easier it gets. That is true on and off the stage. In life, resistance just makes things more difficult. Saying no and judging what comes our way is actually harder than simply accepting and making the best out of it. Consider all the ways you are saying no in your life by judging what is as not what you want. By not coming into acceptance with what is, be it a situation, our feelings, our job, relationships, bank account and so on, there is nowhere to go but deeper into resistance.

On the stage of your life, I invite you to UPdate your response to “YES, AND...!” I am fairly certain that not only will you experience greater ease in your life, you actually will surprise yourself with what you are able to create. Imagine if starting today you could move into total acceptance of everything that is happening free and clear of judgment. Imagine if you could build upon what is and create something incredible! It is possible. Just Say Yes and perhaps most importantly, have a sense of humor about everything.

Fondly,  
Christine

*“As I say yes to life, life says yes to me!” -Louise Hay*

*“Saying yes means getting up and acting on your belief that you can create meaning and purpose in whatever life hands you.” -Susan Jeffers*

*“When we learn to say a deep, passionate yes to the things that really matter, then peace begins to settle onto our lives like golden sunlight sifting to a forest floor.” -Thomas Kinkade*

## Are You Headed Toward or Away From?

If you have a goal or something you want to create more of in your life yet you are having trouble making it a reality, you are probably getting a bit frustrated. You may be asking yourself what you are doing wrong or judging yourself for not being able to create the results in your life that you want. If you want to feel more freedom and less frustration, ease up on yourself because being hard on yourself is certainly not helping. In fact, the way you are motivating yourself could be the major obstacle between where you are now and where you would like to be.

Whenever we have a goal in sight, it requires motivation to give us the momentum to reach it. We can use motivation to move us either toward what we want or away from what we don't want. Keep in mind that the direction we are looking when motivating ourselves directly impacts the results we create and the ease in which we create them. So consider whether you are relying more on TOWARD or AWAY FROM motivation to move you closer to your goals.

What do I mean by this? TOWARD motivation moves us in a direction toward more of what we desire while AWAY FROM motivation is an attempt to get us away from circumstances/feelings that are causing discomfort. Let's consider some examples. Say you are motivated to leave a job because you are tired of feeling bored, stressed or underpaid. Or perhaps you began exercising because you hate the way you look and feel. Those goals are both based heavily on away from motivation because you are focusing on what you don't like in an effort to create change. When the majority of your attention and awareness is on what you don't like, it is harder to sustain your momentum and inspiration. The energy of away from motivation feels like pushing and usually comes with a lot of "have-to's" or "should's". It also tends to involve a lot of complaining and negative self-talk you may try to disguise as "tough love" but all you are really doing is being tough on yourself.

On the other hand, toward motivation feels empowering. You are looking toward more of the love, health, abundance and joy you are committed to creating in life. Using the same examples from above, you would chose to look toward another form of employment to experience more passion, freedom and abundance. Or you join a gym because you want to feel invigorated, strong and healthy. Notice the difference?

The energy of toward motivation feels like something is pulling us closer to what we want and comes with more “choose to’s” and “want to’s”. Toward motivation keeps us looking at all the wonderful things ahead while away motivation keeps us looking behind us at things we want to be different. Which view sounds better to you? Energetically think of away from motivation as being physically pushed whereas toward motivation feels like someone extending a hand to pull you forward. Which feels better?

Most desires and goals will come with a little bit of both toward and away from motivation; however, one or the other will usually be in the lead. I encourage you to focus on thoughts, choices and behaviors that move you **TOWARD** what you want rather than **AWAY** from what you don’t want. Stop looking over your shoulder. Instead, look in the direction of your dreams and you will discover greater clarity, confidence and discernment. And rest assured that you **ALREADY** have everything you need inside of you. All the love, joy, abundance and success you desire is much closer than you think.

## Broken Glass

The other day I had a bit of an accident in the kitchen. After roasting some veggies, I put the Pyrex pan in the sink to wash it. The moment the water hit the pan, it shattered into what seemed like a million pieces. Once I recovered from my initial startle, I armed myself with a pair of rubber gloves and began picking out the broken glass, but this only resulted in making things worse. As soon as I touched a piece of glass it would continue to break into smaller and smaller pieces until almost the entire pan had gone down into my garbage disposal. Now I am not a plumber, but I was pretty sure this was not a good situation.

Why am I sharing this story with you? Well first to remind you of a chemistry lesson that large and fast temperature changes create stress in solids. Or in other words, cold water plus hot glass equals a big mess. But the primary reason I'm updating you with my kitchen escapade is because the old cliché "don't make a mountain out of a molehill," became particularly relevant.

As I realized there was a ton of glass in my disposal that I could not fish out despite my best efforts (I even stuck my dust buster down there!), I began being really harsh on myself. I asked myself how I could be so dumb, got angry at myself for creating a mess, and judged myself as careless. Since it was Memorial Day, I could not get a hold of a plumber and went into negative future fantasy about how much the repair was going to cost, how long it was going to take to get fixed and how much damage I had done. Eventually I coached myself to a place of acceptance and self-forgiveness but only after spending a large chunk of the day shattering my own peace of mind as I worried about this mistake.

Consider how often something happens in your life that you blow out of proportion in your mind. Perhaps it's an innocent mistake you made or possibly a mistake someone else made that is disturbing your peace. Or maybe there is some "unknown" in your future that you are worrying or obsessing negatively about. We often make big deals out of things that we do not really even know are big deals yet. If you are making any mountains out of molehills, I encourage you to stop the unnecessary dramatization. Life gives us plenty of mountains to climb; there is no need to create ones that are not there.

Oh and by the way, I found a super nice plumber that came to my house the next day and cleaned out my disposal for twenty bucks. Yup, just twenty bucks. A happy ending and a good example of a molehill that did not have to turn into a mountain.

*"Between stimulus and response there is a space.  
In that space is our power to choose our response.  
In our response lies our growth and our freedom."- Victor Frankl*  
*"Turn your melodrama into a mellow drama." - Ram Dass*

## How Is Your Customer Service?

*“Here is a simple but powerful rule – always give people more than what they expect to get.” – Nelson Boswell*

This week I designated a day to catch up on my errands and my to-do list, which involved interacting with various businesses. I was aware of how pleasurable my interaction with each business was based on the level of customer service I received. On several occasions I encountered unhelpful, unfriendly or apathetic individuals and I could not wait until the interaction was over so I could either hang up or leave the store.

On the other hand, I had two extremely pleasant experiences of customer service where I got more than I expected to get. I had to return something at Nordstrom and was struck by their “no questions asked” return policy and the level of friendly attention I received in the store. At Whole Foods I was looking for something specific and asked a gentleman who was busy stocking shelves where I could find it, and he immediately stopped what he was doing and walked me over the item I was looking for. Then with a smile, asked if there was anything else he could do for me. I felt incredibly satisfied and attended to as a customer. The high level of attention, ease and friendliness that these two stores consistently provide makes me a loyal customer who always looks forward to shopping with each company. That is the power of customer service.

Today, I invite you to imagine that you are a “business” and evaluate your level of customer service. How do you treat the people you interact with? Are you consistent? Are you attentive? Are you friendly even when you don’t necessarily feel like being so? Are you generous? Are people loyal to you?

Consider what kind of experience you create each and every time you interact with someone. Challenge yourself to UPllevel your customer service so that each person you encounter feels UPlifted by your presence. Set the intention to be consistent, generous, reliable and friendly with everyone you come in contact with. Open yourself up to being a person who other people want to be around and you’ll discover that being around yourself is a lot more enjoyable.

Fondly,  
Christine

*“There are no traffic jams along the extra mile.” – Roger Staubach*

## Golden Rule

It's time to cut yourself some slack. Most of us are experts at being hard on ourselves and novices at being easy on ourselves. Listen to your self-talk. How many times per day do you tell yourself something to the tune of: "I'm not good enough, I am not deserving, something is wrong with me, I should have done or been more, better or different"? And is telling yourself these things bringing more joy, fulfillment, success and peace into your life? I suspect not.

If you talked to your friends the way you talk to yourself and had the expectations of them you have of yourself, how many friends would you have? Today, let's update the old "Golden Rule" to: "do onto yourself what you do to others and do not do onto yourself what you would not do to others."

It's time to mute the voice of your inner critic because the more airtime you give it, the more you start to believe all of the lies you are telling yourself. Here is the truth: You are perfect, whole and complete just as you are. You have never done anything wrong and have always done the best you could. There is nothing bad, broken or undeserving about you. What other people think of you is none of your business. It is your human right (and purpose!) to express and share all your fabulous qualities!

It's time to befriend yourself by choosing UPlifting self-talk. My prescription to support you in doing this is to incorporate these two very simple daily practices:

1. Read the passage by Marianne Williamson that I have shared below out loud while looking at yourself in the mirror. Trust me, it's powerful.
2. Every morning when you wake up or are on your way to work, listen to the song I'm Amazing and believe the lyrics as you sing along.

Today, declare yourself an expert at self-acceptance and apply the Golden Rule onto yourself!

*"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?"*

*Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do.*

*We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us.*

*It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone.*

*And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.*

*As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others." - Marianne Williamson*

## Obligation is the Worst Form of Motivation

Are you “shoulding” all over yourself? Do many of the sentences that make up your inner dialogue or conversations begin with the words, “I should?” If so, you may find yourself exhausted, depleted, confused, angry/irritable, depressed or all of the above! Why? Because obligation is the WORST form of motivation. Doing something for the primary reason of thinking you should keeps you from doing (and knowing) the things you really want to do.

Think of it this way: if you are doing something because you feel obligated by someone or something to do it, the motivation is coming from outside of you. You are not inspired; you are shoulding on yourself! Inspiration is the kind of internal and self-directed motivation that creates fulfilling and on-course results in our lives. It's true that obligation can indeed get us to take action, but there is rarely any joy or creativity in moving from obligation. Moreover, any results you produce from shoulding all over yourself are usually not lasting.

For example, let's say you start working out more and eating better because you think you “should.” You may be motivated for a week, a month, maybe even a few months but then you may be right back into old habits. In order to adopt a healthy lifestyle, the motivation has to come from a true place of willingness and choice - not just for the results you want but for what it takes to get there.

Let's take another example of doing something for someone else to avoid upsetting them in some way. Immediately you may feel relieved that you avoided confrontation or pleased someone else, but down the road you may realize that you forgot to check in with the needs of one very important person: YOU.

Today create Upliftment in your own life by saying no to using obligation as motivation. There is really no such thing that you “should” do, so stop shoulding on yourself. Replace the “have to's” in your life with “want to's.” Rather than thinking and speaking in “I should's,” use “I choose” and you will notice that inspiration is a much better type of motivation!

*“Your only obligation in any lifetime is to be true to yourself.” - Richard Bach*

*“Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma - which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of other's opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary.” - Steve Jobs*

## Glory Days

I was home in Dallas celebrating my mom's birthday and had a wonderful opportunity to let go of some old stories. Thanks to Facebook, I reconnected with a high school classmate and met him out for dinner to catch up on the past 16 years. While we were talking, I was sharing about how challenging high school was for me because I had been teased so much in middle school and carried those hurts and insecurities with me. I was a self-proclaimed nerd and invested 100% of myself into being an A+ student, as being smart became my identity (even though what I really wanted was to be popular and have friends). It was so fascinating to share this with my friend and then hear the way he had seen me. He actually did like me and admitted that even though a lot of my peers noticed I was a bit "uptight," he thought I was an interesting person whom he always wanted to get to know better (and even wanted to ask to prom!). I was just so focused on protecting myself that I could not see how others saw me.

But isn't that usually the case? Something happens in life and we form a story about ourselves based upon it. We carry around this old story of who we think we are that becomes our identity and, thus, the lens we look through. And even though it is not true, we continue to retell it to ourselves and engage in self-talk, choices and behaviors that reinforce the story we've become attached to. And then we continue to attract experiences that fit into the story because that is what we are telling ourselves! Perhaps it's time to drop the story and see the TRUTH.

I had a very unique way in which I was able to drop my high school story. You see my friend just happens to be a teacher at our old high school and had keys to the building. So after dinner, I was able to go back to my old stopping grounds in Plano, TX and revisit the halls and classrooms that held my old story and let it go. It was so liberating to walk the halls and reminisce in a way that was no longer tainted with negative self-judgments. I experienced such compassion for myself and for the way I kept myself separate in the past. And I was able to see all the lessons from my high school as necessary curriculum for my LIFE school.

Today I encourage you to UPdate any stories that you are holding onto from your past that do not serve you anymore. Middle school and high school are good places to look, as we all experience some defining moments during these times

that impact our self-perception. What stories are you still telling yourself that do not serve you? What are you holding onto that is weighing you down? How can you have compassion for what you went through yesterday, but no longer use it to define who you are TODAY?

I also invite you to take a little stroll down memory lane to your glory days. Perhaps it's driving by your old high school, going through old yearbooks, or reconnecting with an old friend that connects you back to your glory days. Celebrate your past, honor the memories, let go of self-limiting stories and allow yourself to feel glorious about who you are today.

Fondly,  
Christine

*“We cannot change the past, but we can change our attitude toward it. Uproot guilt and plant forgiveness. Tear out arrogance and seed humility. Exchange love for hate—thereby, making the present comfortable and the future promising.” - Maya Angelou*

*“There are things that we never want to let go of, people we never want to leave behind. But keep in mind that letting go isn't the end of the world, it's the beginning of a new life.” - Anon*

## What Kind of Shape Are You In?

*“Within each of us, nature has provided all the pieces necessary to achieve exceptional health and wellness, then left it up to us to put them all together.” -Diane McLaren*

Summer inspires many of us to get our physical bodies in better shape and perhaps do a little detoxing from unhealthy foods and substances. But to truly feel good and not just look good, we need to get our mind, emotional body and spirit in tip-top shape as well.

Think about how your relationships, behaviors and thoughts influence the quality of your life. Relationships can consume a great deal of our time, emotions and energy. Behaviors create results and consequences. And thoughts are the soundtrack of our daily experience. If there is toxicity or negativity in any of these areas, what happens? We feel upset, frustrated, stressed and so on. And I know you know that consuming these feelings on a regular basis is not good for your overall health!

Today my invitation is to identify a toxic relationship in your life, behavior you engage in, and thought you think on a regular basis. By toxic I mean it is negatively influencing the quality of your life in some way. And now get ready for some detoxing!

Let's start with a relationship that is depleting you – and I am not only talking about romantic relationships. You may physically be in a relationship with someone that you know is toxic OR you may be still attached to someone you are not in an active relationship with by stalking that person on Facebook, continuing to talk about him/her with your friends and/or obsessing about that person on a regular basis. To detox you have two choices: disconnect or disengage. Disconnecting means cutting all ties to the relationship. We end it by initiating a break-up, stopping communication, defriending on Facebook and bringing that relationship to completion. Often times we try to draw out relationships we know are toxic using the excuse of needing closure or not wanting to upset anyone. But prolonging the end of a relationship that you know is unhealthy is like ripping a band-aid off slowly...it prolongs the pain! Granted, not all relationships can be brought to an end, especially with colleagues or family members. That is when we have the choice to disengage from internal and external actions that perpetuate the toxicity of the relationship. Setting boundaries, speaking our truth and limiting contact with someone are all examples of disengaging.

Next turn your attention to a particular behavior that you know is creating undesirable results in your life. Perhaps it is over-eating, going to bed too late, gossiping or driving too fast. Understand that repetitive behaviors create neural pathways in our brain that create the experience of feeling like something is a habit- and we all know habits can be challenging to break. But here is the good news: we are extremely capable of forming new habits! To detox a behavior that is not creating the kind of results you want in life, commit to engaging in a more supportive behavior every day for 40 days in a row so that it becomes a habit. And voila! New neural pathways in your brain will be formed making it easier to engage in a healthier behavior.

Finally, bring your awareness to a particular toxic thought such as a negative judgment about yourself/others, an irrational fear, or a what-if. To detox that thought, go on a thought diet by decreasing the charge of the thought. Let's use a popular toxic thought that I often see in my coaching practice: "I am not good enough." That is a heavy thought loaded with judgment calories! A healthier serving of thought could be: "I am doing the best I can," or "I am not better or worse than anyone else." When reframing your thoughts it is important to consume ones that are still believable but feel better.

As you shape up for summer by detoxing relationships, behaviors and thoughts, it is natural to experience some withdrawal symptoms and maybe even "fall off the wagon." The important thing is that you quickly recognize the toxicity and realign to healthier choices. I assure you that cleaning up your relationships, behaviors and thoughts yield more substantial benefits than looking good in a swimsuit. Believe me, no one has ever found peace, fulfillment or lasting happiness from having six-pack abs.

To Your Health,  
Christine

## One Of The Biggest Misunderstandings About Personal Growth

*“The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, expecting different results.” – Albert Einstein*

*“Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have those because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.” – Aristotle*

*“There are things that we never want to let go of, people we never want to leave behind. But keep in mind that letting go isn't the end of the world, it's the beginning of a new life.” – Anon*

*“New habits make new horizons. Silently and imperceptibly you are forming habits which will ultimately determine the degree of your happiness and success. Closely guard the quality of your thoughts, that they may lead to right habits and thence to right living. Recognize and use such supreme qualities as courage, faith, humility, loyalty, temperance, and integrity.” – Grenville Kleiser*

*“I'm a big believer in growth. Life is not about achievement, it's about learning and growth, and developing qualities like compassion, patience, perseverance, love, and joy.” – Jack Canfield*

Today I want to talk about a very subtle but extremely important distinction to make for anyone who is on a personal growth path. I have noticed a trend of a misunderstanding in the self-improvement field that I observe many of my clients and readers buying into. My invitation to you is to get brutally honest with yourself about what is truly motivating your desire to work on yourself.

So here is the basic misunderstanding: “If I work on myself, I will get more of what I want in my life.” Now you may be wondering why in the world that would not be true, especially since you probably understand that our external world is a reflection

of our internal reality. Yet this direct correlation that many of us make between self-work and results is creating unconscious roadblocks of attachment. I said this was subtle...hang with me.

In my work as a coach and spiritual counselor, most people come to me because they want something in their life to be more, better or different. Most clients do not begin working with me because they feel totally happy and fulfilled already. Often it takes a rattling catalytic event or reaching a level of unbearable discontent to stimulate us to reach out for help. We look around for help because we are not taught the principles of spirituality, emotional development and healing in school. Wouldn't it be nice if classes that taught us about ourselves appeared next to algebra and economics on our school syllabus? Since they don't, we are conditioned from a young age to be achievement and outcome based. Therefore, when we finally do get around to putting understanding and healing ourselves on our curriculum, we often attach an objective to it because we are so used to being goal-oriented. We begin working on ourselves so that we can get the health, job, relationship, etc. that we desire.

It is totally natural to have your initial spark to embark on a personal growth path be a desire for something more, better or different (especially if you are experiencing pain of any kind). And sometimes we use, or perhaps even need, some kind of external end goal to motivate us to go through the pain. Your Higher Self knows that certain things or the lack of certain things have to be put in your path so that you begin to wake up. But the point of personal growth is not to get something in return for all our work. We may know this yet have trouble releasing the idea that all of our hard work will "pay off" in the form of having what we want. Sooner or later in our evolutionary process, we realize it is not the having of things that fulfills our soul.

Let's look at a common example. Say you working on yourself because you want to find your "soulmate." You understand that we attract people that are at our level of vibration and awareness, so you are trying to sort out all of your issues so you can find "the one." I acknowledge that level of ownership and agree that we are better partners for others and tend to attract better partners for ourselves when we do our work first. However, when the driving reason for doing the work is so that we can get the result we think will make us feel better, our ego is still in the driver's seat. Confusion then sets in because we begin to measure our progress by whether or not the goal we set is manifesting. And when it doesn't, we believe

that there is even more we have to work on; we never reach a point of peace until the goal is met. This is why attaching goals to your sacred spiritual work can be dangerous and can blind you to the progress you are actually making.

Let me clarify that manifesting things in physical world reality that we desire may be a wonderful result of our work. My encouragement to you is to let go of allowing it to be the primary purpose or reason to do your work. Stop letting someone or something else motivate you to show up for yourself. Shift to a more authentic place and clean up your intentions. If you resonated with the example above of seeking a soulmate, consider totally letting go of any attachment to ever being in partnership and make your relationship with yourself so incredibly juicy and fulfilling that it doesn't feel like anything is missing!

A goal or desire is a great reason to get your growth groove on but don't let it be the reason you keep going. Surrender is a major component of growth. When you are attached to a specific outcome, it is more likely that your mind will continue to lead. And when your mind leads, you will be more likely to evaluate your progress via your life checklist rather than truly enjoying the life lessons you are learning. As you detach from results, you can hear the whispers of your Soul and your true heart's desire . . . which is often different from what you think you want.

As you mature in your work and grow in your consciousness, make experiencing increased levels of peace, love, joy, oneness and acceptance a higher priority than any other external goal. Life is not about checking things off a list, it is a continual series of lessons and opportunities to be more Loving each day. Your life lessons are not graded by the results you create in life, but rather how you live your life. Allow how you feel to be your report card. Show up for yourself and surrender the rest to God.

Fondly,  
Christine

*"Have patience with everything that remains unsolved in your heart. Try to love the questions themselves, like locked rooms and like books written in a foreign language. Do not now look for the answers. They cannot now be given to you because you could not live them. It is a question of experiencing everything. At present you need to live the question. Perhaps you will gradually, without even noticing it, find yourself experiencing the answer, some distant day." – Rainer Maria Rilke*

*"Of all the things that can have an effect on your future, I believe personal growth is the greatest. We can talk about sales growth, profit growth, asset growth, but all of this probably will not happen without personal growth." – Jim Rohn*

## Don't Go To A Chinese Restaurant For Nachos

*"Happiness equals reality minus expectations." Tom Magliozzi*

I have a question for you: if you were craving nachos, would you go to a Chinese restaurant? My guess is that your answer is no because you know that in a Chinese restaurant, they don't serve nachos. In fact, they would probably not even have the ingredients to make them even if you asked. If you really wanted nachos, you would go somewhere where they serve them to ensure that you could get what you were craving, right?

Now think about where you go when you are craving support, encouragement, guidance, unbiased advice, loving feedback or acknowledgment. Do you go to people who are consistently able to dish out what you are hungry for? Or do you find yourself going to people who do not have what you need on their menu so you find yourself consistently discouraged and disappointed?

Most of the time, we know what we are craving when we reach out to someone else. It is useful to be honest with ourselves about whether or not that person will be able to satiate us. If someone in your life has consistently reacted and responded to you in a way that has not satiated your needs, chances are they do not have the ingredients to do so. Continuing to go to that person hoping that someday what you are hungry for appears on their menu is like continuing to walk into a Chinese restaurant when you want nachos. You may get fed, but not with what you truly wanted to eat.

If you want to be validated and acknowledged, do not go to someone who traditionally dishes out criticism. If you are craving to be listened to, do not go to someone who loves to serve up advice. If you are hungry for some positivity and upliftment, do not bother reaching out to someone who tends to see the glass half empty. This can be especially challenging when you really want a significant person in your life like a parent or romantic partner to be able to give you what you desire from them. However, sometimes they just don't have the ingredients to do so. It does not make them wrong; it just makes them who they are so enjoy what they do have to offer you. Our relationships with others improve when we just accept what someone can and cannot dish out.

It is an act of self-love to be responsible and honest about how we get our needs met rather than expecting them to be met. There are MANY people in your life who are totally capable of dishing out the support, encouragement, guidance, unbiased advice, loving feedback or acknowledgment that you are craving. But in order to consume it, you have to stop going to the people who do not have it on their menu.

Fondly,  
Christine

*“Don’t let the noise of other’s opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition.” – Steve Jobs*



## Are You Living Inside-Out?

*“The remarkable thing we have is a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past. We cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude.” – Charles Swindoll*

During the height of my quarterlife crisis I would begin many of my sessions with my coach feeling either depressed, anxious, or an uncomfortable combination of both. I blamed my state of discontent on the fact that things in my life just were not going the way I wanted them to. My coach would say to me, “You’ve gotta live ‘in out’ and not ‘out in’!!” This was a critical lesson for me since I really bought into the misunderstanding that in order to feel better, things in my external world had to be better.

Most of us rely too much on what is happening or not happening in our lives to determine what kind of mood we’re in. It’s as if the circumstances of life become the conductor of our thoughts, feelings and behaviors. And once we’ve boarded this “out in” train, we enter into a cycle of looking for something outside of us to ease the uneasiness inside. But often that uneasiness inside is simply a reaction to the opinion we are forming about the outside world. Rather than trying to change what is happening (which is often impossible), do some work inside and change your perception.

So, consider what you are currently allowing to determine your mood. Are you more orientated to an “out in” way of feeling? If so, I encourage you to turn yourself inside out and take your mood back into your own hands. Doesn’t it feel good to know you don’t have to wait for someone or something else to do it for you? You are capable of determining your own inner experience no matter what is going on outside of you.

I understand that at times this feels especially challenging. Life is not stingy with opportunities to learn how to be more content within ourselves no matter what; however, life is also very generous when we are less stingy with ourselves. It’s time to gift yourself with those great feelings that you may be projecting onto something outside of you.

Fondly,  
Christine

*“What you focus on expands, and when you focus on the goodness in your life, you create more of it. Opportunities, relationships, even money flowed my way when I learned to be grateful no matter what happened in my life.” – Oprah*  
*“The appearance of things change according to the emotions and thus we see magic and beauty in them, while the magic and beauty are really in ourselves.” – Kahlil Gibran*

## Say Please and Thank You

Please and thank you. Words you say habitually every day without too much thought. But have you ever considered that these simple words could be a prayer? We all have times in our life when we get so busy that we forget to take time to tune in and connect to God (or our Higher Self, the Universe, Lord, Spirit, the Light; continue to insert whatever word resonates with you). Or perhaps when we do take the time to stop and pray, it sounds more like a drive-thru order than a prayer: “God, I’ll take one raise, a large relief from all my anxiety and super-size me the relationship of my dreams.” We hope that our order from God be waiting for pick-up at the next window. And if it’s not, we begin to lose faith and conclude God must not be listening.

Today I encourage you to put aside the rushed, outcome attached, fully loaded drive-thru style of prayer and offer you a simpler way to connect to a Higher Source. Each morning, I invite you to set aside some quiet time to sit in connection and receptivity. Let your prayer simply be, “Please.” Trust that God knows exactly what you need for your Highest Good. The intention of your prayer to surrender and connect with God is more important than the words you say. And each evening, let your prayer simply be, “Thank you.” Then sit in gratitude and appreciation. Allow your intention to be basking in all of your blessings, even the ones that currently feel more like lessons than blessings.

The more I grow in my own spirituality, the more I learn that prayer is not about asking for what we want but rather a quiet time to be in conversation with God. And often that conversation does not require many words. We can always express our desires and request help for getting through our challenges; and then relax in the knowing that whatever is for our highest good is happening. That is faith.

So remember to say your “please’s” and “thank you’s” everyday. There are no unanswered prayers; sometimes we just do not get the answer we want. Faith is being grateful for whatever answer we receive.

Please. Thank you.

Fondly,  
Christine

*“God speaks in the silence of the heart.  
Listening is the beginning of prayer.”  
- Mother Teresa*

*“Prayer requires more of the heart  
than of the tongue.” - Adam Clarke*

*“Sometimes I thank God for unanswered prayers  
Remember when you’re talkin’ to the man upstairs  
That just because he doesn’t answer doesn’t  
mean he don’t care. Some of God’s greatest gifts are  
unanswered prayers” - Garth Brooks*

## Lessons From The Men's Room

*Who cares if you're enlightened forever?  
Can you just get it in this moment, now? -Byron Katie*

Last week I completed a very long cycle of travel –I slept in my own bed a total of only seven nights over the past month. I started to get a little loopy as my mind was juggling what felt like a million different things. On one of the last mornings I was gone, I worked out in a public gym and made a stop in the bathroom. As I walked out, I literally walked into a man who said, “Do you know you just used the men’s locker room?” Obviously not! With an “oops” expression on my face I laughed it off, relieved that I was a guest and would not have to go back. A few hours later I delivered my generational diversity speech to a professional organization. After the program, I excused myself to the ladies room. While washing my hands, a man who had been in the audience walked in and with a perplexed look on his face said, “Oh is this the ladies room?” As I glanced at the urinals I realized that it was indeed NOT the ladies room. Somehow I completely missed the MEN sign on the door twice in a span of five hours and unconsciously proceeded to use the men’s restroom as if I belonged there. I was in my head thinking about where I needed to be next and consequently not paying much (or really any) attention to where I was in the moment. Upon my second men’s room encounter, I heard the wake-up call and was grateful that all my spaciness resulted in was a dash of harmless embarrassment rather than something worse.

Today I invite you to UPdate the attention you give to what seems routine. How mindless are you when engaging in the “mindless” activities in life? Consider how much you do not see or experience in your day-to-day because you are in your head or daydreaming off into outer space. To me, the biggest, most consistent sacrifices and missed opportunities for upliftment are in the present moment. Plus, our odds of ending up in precarious and perhaps even dangerous situations when we are not paying attention go up! So stop missing out and set the intention to be fully, completely present with whatever you are doing. And next time you use a public bathroom, check the sign.

Fondly,  
Christine

*“Mindless habitual behavior is the  
enemy of innovation.” - Rosabeth Moss Kanter*

## How Do You Handle Inconvenience?

“Acceptance is not submission; it is acknowledgement of the facts of a situation. Then deciding what you’re going to do about it.” -Kathleen Casey Theisen

This past weekend was referred to as “Carmageddon” in Los Angeles since a large stretch of a major freeway was closed for two days. For months we all drove by signs that read “405 will be closed July 16 & 17th, EXPECT BIG DELAYS.” Carmageddon was the talk of the town and everyone was arranging plans to accommodate for the massive gridlock we were expecting. Most people either left the city or just decided to stay home.

When the weekend finally was upon us, we were all shocked when there was absolutely no traffic at all. In fact, I do not think the streets have been that clear and free flowing in LA for decades. The talk shifted to how amazing Carmageddon was. This amazing-ness was possible because no one was out there trying to fight the reality of the freeway closure. By collectively moving into the energy of preparation and acceptance, something that could have been awful actually became quite enjoyable.

The lesson in this for me was a reminder about how to deal with things we foresee as inconveniences in life. When we look ahead with dread and anxious anticipation, it makes an already undesirable situation even worse. When we see ourselves as victims of our circumstances, we are blind to the choices we actually do have. What we can do instead is approach any upcoming roadblock with preparation and then move into acceptance.

Consider something in your life that you are not looking forward to. Instead of going into overwhelm, what are the action steps you can take to prepare? Instead of resisting or complaining, how does it feel to simply accept what you believe is ahead of you? Notice that as you do this, the “upset” around the expected inconvenience or undesirable situation begins to fade.

Life isn’t always convenient. There will roadblocks, speedbumps, detours and closures along the way. The more you prepare yourself by asking yourself, “What can I do?” versus “Why is this happening?” the smoother your road will be. The more you go with the flow by moving into acceptance, the more things in your life will flow. And be open to the possibility of being pleasantly surprised along the way. Most of the time, the things we dread are never as bad as we have imagined them to be.

Fondly,  
Christine

*“You have to accept whatever comes and the only important thing is that you meet it with courage and with the best that you have to give.” – Eleanor Roosevelt*

## Are You Getting Nailed?

*Now that I have your attention...what are you ignoring?*

I have been trying to ignore the tire pressure warning light in my car for about three weeks (Dad, I know you taught me better than that!). I kept putting air in the tires but the light wasn't going off because I was only temporarily and superficially treating the issue. Today I finally took my car into the dealer and found out there was a nail in my tire that was creating a slow leak. My car was still drivable but the leak was creating damage over time and ultimately not safe. I needed to go to a tire shop and get it repaired. Inconvenient, but at least the problem would be solved.

I love how the Universe gives me situations that become great analogies for my UPdates! Consider the "nails" you're ignoring which are creating slow leaks in your life. What are you avoiding dealing with that is draining your energy? What have you been brushing under the rug while going about your life that may be creating damage over time?

Today I encourage you to pull the nails out of your tires! Instead of avoiding, excusing or procrastinating, take the time and find the tools you need to repair what's not working. Sure, it may be inconvenient and somewhat difficult, but consider it an investment in your personal sense of safety.

Fondly,  
Christine

*"Should you find yourself in a chronically leaking boat, energy devoted to changing vessels is likely to be more productive than energy devoted to patching leaks." -Warren Buffett.*

*"At your own home, you can ignore little problems like a leaky faucet or dripping pipes. But a person paying rent expects that to be taken care of." -Debbie Norton.*

*"You can avoid reality, but you cannot avoid the consequences of avoiding reality." -Ayn Rand*

## Discussing Failures over Coffee

Recently I met a new acquaintance for coffee, introduced through a mutual connection who thought we could both benefit from knowing and networking with each other. What I thought would be a professional meeting became a get together between kindred spirits and the beginning of a lasting friendship.

After getting our coffee we began talking about ourselves, but instead of rattling off our bios and describing what we do, we spoke more candidly about the twists and turns in our lives that have shaped who we are. She shared about being laid off from a job that ended a 17 year career path, going through a divorce and other life changing challenges. And as I shared about my own expectation hangovers, relationships that ended abruptly and past struggles with confusion, depression and hopelessness, a bond began to form.

Then she said the most insightful thing: "I love speaking about my failures because they always connect me to people. My failures humanize me." In that moment I was experiencing the truth of that statement. By opening up to each other and sharing authentically about our "human-ness," there was instant intimacy. It also reminded me that most of the emails I receive and the clients that come to me for coaching are drawn to me because they relate to my failures - not because of any of my accomplishments or training.

My encouragement today is to be UPlifted by your failures. Bring them into the light instead of keeping them in the dark because of shame or judgment. Failures are our greatest learning opportunities as long as we are willing to learn from them versus using them as something to beat ourselves up with. When you speak more openly about your mistakes and how they have affected you, it supports you in letting go of any shame you may be feeling. Today and each day, change the way you see failure because truly all of your mistakes are masterpieces.

Fondly,  
Christine

*"My imperfections and failures are as much a blessing from God as my successes and my talents and I lay them both at his feet."*

*-Mahatma Gandhi*

## Is Your To-Do List Doing You In?

*If you are feeling overwhelmed by everything you have to get done, it is time for a to-do list do over!*

*“You can tell the size of your faith by looking at the size of your worry list. The longer your list, the smaller your God. – Author Unknown*

Have you thought about all the things you have to get done in the day before you even brush your teeth? Is your mind so distracted by thoughts of the future that you do things like wash your hair with bath gel by mistake? Are you stressed out before you even have your first sip of coffee?

I get it. Your to-do list feels overwhelming. You have a lot on your plate. But here is the thing; your entire to-do list is not entirely up to you. I understand that you think it is, but it's not.

Today I am sharing how I have stopped being overwhelmed by my to-do list by simply replacing the word “my” with “our.” You see, I was one of those people who woke up with a to-do list in my head. My mind had already run a marathon through the list of tasks, errands, anticipated conversations, appointments and deadlines before I even began my morning workout. Sometimes I would write it all down and get great satisfaction from drawing a line through each completed action. But usually I just kept a running to-do list in my head that maintained an unhealthy, yet familiar, stress level. I needed a to-do list makeover.

It dawned on me that the main reason I felt overwhelmed by my to-do list was because I kept calling it mine! Now each morning when I sit down at my desk, I light a candle, turn on my fountain, read my mission statement, say a prayer, and then make OUR to-do list. On a sheet of paper, I write the date and divide the paper into two columns. On the top of the left hand column I write “me” and list all the things I intend to accomplish that day. I keep it limited to only the things I know I have the capacity to complete. For example, if I am working on a project that will take several days to finish I write, “Work for a minimum of 30 minutes on \_\_\_\_\_.”

Now here is where the “our” part comes in. On the top of the right column I write “God” and list all the things I would like Spirit/God/The Universe's help and support with. For instance, if calling my insurance company is on my

side of the list, I will ask God for a very friendly and helpful customer service representative. I will ask for a traffic free drive to an appointment, increased levels of clarity for an anticipated conversation, extra energy if I did not sleep well, or help with focus on completing a particular task. Or if I am feeling a bit disconnected, I will request a way to reconnect back to Love and be of greater service. And sometimes I will put things on the list just for fun and upliftment such as receiving an unexpected pleasant surprise. The great thing about giving God a to-do list is that He never feels overwhelmed!

Consider that the reason your to-do list feels overwhelming is because you are buying into the misunderstanding that it is all up to you. My encouragement to you today is to ask for support. What can you delegate to a Higher Power? How can you ask for help and added blessings that will make your day less stressful? I believe there is limitless seen and unseen support all around us. We just forget to ask. So ask your angels for help; they love assignments! And then let it go. If everything happens you requested, great. If it does not, trust that whatever is in your Highest Good is happening.

When I first began to make our daily to-do list, my side was a lot longer. Now, however, I surrender much more to God. I've realized that God is far better at getting things done than I am and I am better at both doing and being when I ask for Grace. My prediction is that as you share your to-do list with a Higher Power, you too will feel more productive and peaceful.

Fondly,  
Christine

*“Besides the noble art of getting things done, there is the noble art of leaving things undone. The wisdom of life consists in the elimination of non-essentials.” -Lyn Yutang*

## Be a Compliment Columbo!

*“Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.”- Leo F. Buscaglia*

One of my favorite things to do out in the world is be what I call a “Compliment Columbo.” What’s that? Columbo was a TV show I liked about a do-gooder detective named, you guessed it, Columbo, who was always on the hunt for clues that led to the truth. My invitation to you is to become a detective who searches for opportunities to give unsuspecting people genuine and personalized compliments. In doing so, you contribute to UPlifting someone’s day by reminding them of the truth of who they are.

The reason I love doing this is because most people walk around disconnected from others while listening to stress producing, limiting self-talk. Be on the lookout for these people. Here are some clues: they are looking down and avoiding eye contact, they have their head buried in their phone, they have a furrowed brow, they are moving super fast (and they are not exercising), or they just look like they are having a bad day. When you deliver the compliment, add a bit of personal touch so the recipient really connects to what you are saying. For example, when I see a woman in a beautiful dress I say something like, “You look absolutely amazing in that dress” as opposed to, “That’s a great dress.”

It’s so fun to surprise someone by interrupting their negative self-talk with words of affirmation and acknowledgment! You realize the healing power of giving people genuine compliments as you see the smiles rush to their faces. And don’t limit your compliments to people who seem like they could use it. Whenever you see something that strikes you in a positive way, instead of just thinking it, share it with the person! Go out of your way to pay someone a compliment to experience the pay off of appreciation.

Also, being a compliment Columbo is one of the best ways I know to deal with comparison and jealousy. The instant we go into envy, we are in a state of depreciation. Paying someone a genuine compliment immediately shifts our energy toward one of appreciation. And the more we are in that energy, the more we recognize our unique own beauty, worth and gifts. So the next time you find

yourself comparing yourself to someone, compliment them instead, because really it's just criminal to believe anyone one is better or worse than you.

Another thing that tends to happen when you are on the hunt for compliments is that you may start to receive more of them. So when you do, I encourage you – in fact I beg of you – receive them! No deflecting or denying! Smile, say “thank you,” and take it in. Please do not negate it in anyway or immediately reciprocate. Give others the opportunity to play detective and deliver compliments that clue you in to the truth of who you are.

Fondly,  
Christine



## What Are You Going To Bed With?

*"A well-spent day brings happy sleep" – Leonardo da Vinci*

Do you have a hard time falling asleep? Are you sleep deprived? After a night of sleep do you still wake up feeling tired? If your answer is yes to any of these questions, a change in your evening routine is a must!

What do you do right before you go to bed? Does it involve any of these things: checking your phone, emailing, playing on the internet, working on your computer or watching television? Exposing ourselves to any of these devices stimulates our brain during a time when our mind needs to be winding down so we can rest. With increased stimulation and exposure to the electromagnetic waves our gadgets emit, it is harder for our body to enter the deep sleep that is the most nourishing and reinvigorating.

I know many of you sleep with your phone next to your bed and I'm highly encouraging you to keep it in a separate room. It, along with your computer and TV, are unwelcome visitors in your bedroom. Not only is it bad feng shui, it's bad for your health!

And if you do avoid the electronics, many of you are drifting off with worrisome visions dancing in your head. Or you are taking judgments of yourself or others with you to bed. Or perhaps negative emotions like sadness, anger, or fear are keeping you awake at night. You don't have to sleep with any of these things either! If you are anxious or experiencing emotion, use a tool called "Free Form Writing." Grab some blank paper and just begin mind-dumping. Make sure to write from a stream-of-consciousness; don't worry about making sense or being able to read your handwriting. Keep writing until you experience a shift in state and feel more peaceful. Rip up the paper or burn it when you are done. And if your mind is full of criticism of yourself and/or others, make sure to engage in forgiveness before you hit the hay. You don't want those judgments lurking around when you are trying to rest.

Today I encourage you to UPdate your nightly routine so that you have at least one hour before you drift off to sleep to rid yourself of all of these rest risk factors. Listen to music, read a calming book, take a bath, journal, and do anything that feels soothing to you. Your sleep should take up a third of your day and is a KEY factor for waking up to a productive day and a healthy you. Don't go another night without some good sleep!

Sweet Dreams,  
Christine

*"Don't fight with the pillow, but lay down  
your head And kick every worriment  
out of the bed." –Edmund Vance Cook*

*"A ruffled mind makes a restless pillow." –Charlotte Brontë*

## Life Labyrinth

Last week I had the opportunity to walk a Labyrinth with a large group of people and it was such an exquisite experience so of course I want to share it with you! What is a labyrinth, you ask? Well, Labyrinths are a kind of archetypal design that have been in existence for hundreds of years as part of mystical and religious traditions and cultures throughout the world. A Labyrinth is an ancient symbol that relates to wholeness. It combines the imagery of the circle and the spiral into a meandering but purposeful path and represents a journey to our own center and back again out into the world. Labyrinths have long been used as meditation and prayer tools. A Labyrinth has only one path; it is unicursal. The way in is the way out. There are no blind alleys. The path leads you on a circuitous path to the center and out again.

At its most basic level, the Labyrinth offers a rich metaphor for how we embark on the journey of life. We step onto a path having some sense of where we think we are headed, but as we walk forward, we come upon unexpected twists and turns that lead us in a direction we may not have expected. One of our greatest challenges is trusting the path and continuing to put one foot in front of the other despite how lost we may feel.

Another interesting thing for me to observe was how walking on the labyrinth with others was different from walking it alone (which I had done several times before). I watched myself allowing others people's speed to impact my own – feeling pressured to keep up with those in front of me, speed up if I felt someone behind me or annoyed by being slowed down by someone in front of me. When I was able to see that I always had the choice to go at my own pace, step aside and let someone pass or pass someone else, it became a metaphor for the freedom we have in every relationship and situation of being able to choose how we engage. And those moments where there was such a traffic jam that passing wasn't an option became a metaphor for how sometimes in life the best (and possibly only) choice we have is to simply accept exactly where we are. And in that acceptance comes the choice for how we want to accept it: with frustration, fear and resignation OR with peace, patience and faith.

Today I invite you to consider how you are walking on your life labyrinth. Are you trusting your path even if you cannot see exactly where it is headed?

Are you rushing yourself, pressuring yourself to get somewhere? Are you stepping aside or stepping forward in self-honoring ways? Are you reacting and responding to the “traffic jams” in your life with judgment or acceptance? I also encourage you to google labyrinths in your area and walk one for yourself so you can actually experience this amazing metaphor for how you walk through life.

Fondly,  
Christine

*“Your life is a sacred journey. And it is about change, growth, discovery, movement, transformation, continuously expanding your vision of what is possible, stretching your soul, learning to see clearly and deeply, listening to your intuition, taking courageous challenges at every step along the way. You are on the path... exactly where you are meant to be right now... And from here, you can only go forward, shaping your life story into a magnificent tale of triumph, of healing of courage, of beauty, of wisdom, of power, of dignity, and of love.”* Caroline Adams

## The End of Suffering

*“Life is suffering. Attachment is the source of suffering.  
The end of attachment will bring the end of suffering.” -Buddha*

I love this wisdom from Buddha because it reminds me that I am usually the source of my suffering. My thoughts and judgments about how I wish a situation were different generally cause far more angst than the actual situation. We create attachment whenever we become invested in a desired outcome, plan or opinion. It is the opposite of acceptance and surrender. The more we practice non-attachment, move into acceptance of what is and surrender to what the Universe has planned for us, the less we suffer. Simple, yet challenging.

Think about something you are struggling with and just for a moment let go of your attachment to the outcome you either desire or are hoping to achieve. Stretch yourself into seeing from the perspective that you influence your life, but cannot control it. Surrender to what is happening rather than clinging to your attachments. Then, notice that your degree of suffering will begin to decrease.

I'm not saying there is anything wrong with having intentions and desires; we are human and we want what we want. It is our attachment to our desires, opinions and plans that invites suffering because we tend to make ourselves or someone else wrong when we don't get what we want. The more we hold on to the way we think things should be, the more we are stuck in suffering and are less likely to draw in something new that could potentially ease our suffering.

Today I encourage you to take inventory of what you are attached to. Consider what you are doing in your life because you are wishing for a specific outcome, and think about all of the thought patterns you keep repeating around a situation, circumstance or person you wish was different. Channel your Inner Buddha and enjoy the equanimity that comes from detaching from how you think life should be and embracing the life that is waiting for you.

*“Feelings are much like waves, we can't stop them from coming  
but we can choose which one to surf.” - Jonatan Mårtensson*

## Are You Strategic or Authentic When You Communicate?

*“Good communication does not mean that you have to speak in perfectly formed sentences and paragraphs. It isn’t about slickness. Simple and clear go a long way.” -John Kotter*

A theme in many of my sessions this week with clients was a desire to talk about a conversation they were anticipating having and get advice on what to say. After they told me the story behind the anticipated conversation, went through all the things they thought they should say and all their concerns about how the other person would react, I asked: “What do you just want to say?” That was an easy question for each of them to answer. The words flowed and the angst was gone. My next response: “How about if you just say exactly what you just said?” Then all of a sudden the concerns returned along with all of the reasons why they couldn’t just say what they wanted to say. What the other person would think, say or do once again became more important than their own truth.

Can you relate? Do you often plan out conversations in your head before you have them? Do you go to multiple people for advice on what to say? Do you “backpedal” in your communication meaning you think first about the end result you want and then script a conversation to create that result? Are you being strategic in your conversations more than you are being present and authentic?

Of course it’s natural to want to prepare ourselves for a conversation with someone, especially if it is about something of great value to us or feels like a confrontation of some kind. However, we often become so attached to what the other person will think, say or do that we become overly analytical and strategic rather than clear and honest.

Strategic communication is like playing chess. Rather than just speaking from our heart, we over-think all our moves and try to anticipate the other person’s next move. But have you ever watched people playing chess? Do they appear joyful, expressed or connected? Or do they look very serious and in their head? If you are communicating strategically rather than authentically, you are going to experience more restriction in your ability to express yourself. The person you are communicating with is not your opponent. He or she is just another player in the game of life who is also yearning to connect with people more authentically.

My encouragement is to set the intention to be authentic and truthful in your communication. The place you are coming from when you speak is just as important (if not more than) as what you say. If you are coming from a place of attachment to the outcome of the conversation or to what they other person will think, it impacts your ability to truly speak your truth. And if you are communicating from this place, are you creating the results in your life that are in alignment with who you truly are? For instance, I see a tendency in many of my clients to be overly analytical in communication related to dating. They try to strategically come up with the “right” things to say to get the other person to like them; they start playing a game rather than playing all out as themselves. And then a relationship is built on games rather than truth.

Get out of the game of strategizing and into the game of life by speaking your truth! Don't make communication a chess game.

Fondly,  
Christine

*“People have important things to communicate. Speaking from your heart allows the emotionally difficult, the ordinary, and the wonderful things in our lives to be communicated and received.” -David McArthur*

*“The human being was designed to be a creative person, a communicating person.” -Robert H. Schuller*

## What If?

*Life is an unanswered question, but let's still believe in the dignity and importance of the question. -Tennessee Williams*

What if? This question evokes a feeling of either wonderful possibility or dreadful panic. For many, it's the latter. What if questions usually pop-up when we are navigating our way through unknown territory. When worrying about a situation or facing anxiety about something in the future, the incessant what if questioning begins: "What if X happens? What if X doesn't happen? What if I do X? What if I can't do X? What if he/she does X? What if he/she doesn't?" And on and on and on.

One of my most utilized coaching techniques is what I call "answering the what ifs." When I hear my clients ask a what if question, I interrupt them and request that they answer it. This usually surprises them, because they were really engaged in a fretting flow of unanswered questioning. My encouragement to you today is to practice this coaching technique of answering your what ifs. Otherwise they will continue to loop around in your mind and create stress. Your mind does not like unanswered questions. And since most of us are not like Buddha sitting on the mountain totally present and unattached to anything our mind creates, it is useful to understand what our mind wants and give it what it wants!

Imagine a three-year old child tugging on his mom's shirt and saying repeatedly, "Mom, mom, mom, mom!" in an attempt to get her attention. What happens the more she tries to ignore him? The tugging gets harder and the "mom-ing" gets louder. But as soon as she addresses the child, the tugging and calling out quickly stops. And usually all the child wanted in the first place was attention and acknowledgment.

This is what your what ifs need: to be acknowledged and addressed. So go ahead and answer your what ifs each time they come up. Talk them out, even go to worst-case scenario because you'll realize that you can always talk yourself through a possible solution. And guess what? You are making it all up anyway! Remember that worry is our imagination used poorly. So after you talk out the worst situation that could happen, you might as well talk out your best-case scenario too. And you will soon discover that stopping and answering your what ifs one by one (because

what if thinking is contagious) will soothe that mind of yours that is working so hard to manage all of your question marks. Once you become aware that you can harness the power of your mind to solve any imagined situation, you will have more peace of mind.

And what if you don't answer your what ifs? I'll let you answer that...

Fondly,  
Christine

*Believe it is possible to solve your problem.  
Tremendous things happen to the believer.  
So believe the answer will come.  
It will. - Norman Vincent Peale*



## Who's Making Your Taco

This week during a coffee meeting while I was in Austin, a friend stopped by on his way back from Whole Foods carrying an extremely large and decadent piece of chocolate cake and something unidentifiable in a to-go box. I jokingly asked if it was a salad to balance out the brick of sugar he was about to eat. "No," he replied, "It's tacos and I had to wait forever for them." My curiosity was peeked; why the long wait for tacos? He explained to me that there was one girl and one twenty something guy working the taco counter and he chose to wait until the guy taco barista was up before he ordered. More curiosity- I had to know why! "Well," he said, "I figure the person making the taco is more likely to make it the way they'd want to eat it. From the girl, I'd get a neat and tidy taco with lots of lettuce. But if the guy makes it, he'll make it like a guy and shove in as much meat and cheese as he can possibly fit and THAT'S the kind of taco I want to eat."

Okay, now is your curiosity peeked? Why am I UPdating you about taco's? Well because this short story is a great metaphor for the most satisfying way to "order up" advice. I invite you to consider whose "counter" you are stepping up to the next time you are seeking feedback. Is that person living the kind of life you want to live? Have they had the kind of experiences that would qualify for first-hand advice in your situation? Are they like-minded in their values and priorities in life?

Just because we share DNA or a long history with someone, or they play some kind of authority figure in our life, does not necessarily qualify them to dish out the advice we are really out to consume. Because we all can be overly influenced by other people's opinions, when seeking out advice we are best served by individuals who have the experience, values and results that are most in alignment with what we want to create. So the next time you find yourself craving some guidance, satiate yourself by going only to those who make the kind of taco you'd want to eat.

Fondly,  
Christine

*"If I wanted to become a failure, I would seek advice from men who have never succeeded. If I wanted to succeed in all things, I would look around me for those who are succeeding, and do as they have done." - Joseph Marshall Wade*

*"As you embark out into the unknown on the Journey of your Dreams, choose wisely your traveling mates. Your team and who you surround yourself with is one of the most important decisions you can make and a great influence on whether you will complete the journey successfully." - Mastin Kipp*

## How I Altered My Brain

*“The state of your life is nothing more than a reflection of your state of mind.” Wayne Dyer*

Your mind. It is one of your most valuable resources...depending on how you use it. Ever notice that sometimes you are using your mind for evil rather than good by repeatedly thinking negative, limiting or untrue thoughts?

Something that has significantly helped me and my clients shift our thinking patterns has been learning about how our brains work. Your brain is not a static, unalterable organ. It is possible to change the physiology of your brain, which in turn alters your thoughts. You have experienced altering your brain chemistry many times such as when you suddenly think you're a great singer after having a few cocktails. Or when you enjoy a positive attitude from the high you experience after an endorphin-releasing workout.

So how do we change our brain in a way that creates more life enhancing, affirming thoughts? Let's start with a little very basic science (disclaimer: obviously I am not a scientist or doctor, but this has been explained to me by both a scientist and a doctor). Repetitive thoughts form these things in our brain called neural nets, which are clusters of chemically connected or functionally associated neurons. What that means is if you think the same thought or type of thought over and over again, it forms a physical cluster of neurons in your brain. Over time, these neural nets create grooves in your brain that your thoughts gravitate toward. For instance, if you repeatedly think along the lines of, “I am not good enough,” you create a neural net around that limiting belief/thought. Once that neural net is formed, it becomes easier and easier (even habitual) to think in the direction of “I'm not good enough.”

This will make more sense if I give you a metaphor. Visualize a house in the middle of a really overgrown field. See yourself in a truck that is a football field's distance from the house and your job is to drive the truck to the house. On your first trip, it's going to be a bumpy ride as you have to get through all the weeds, bushes and rocks. You are holding onto the steering wheel pretty tightly and are extremely focused on your destination. Now, imagine that you drive the same truck down the same path day after day after day. Over time, the wheels would

create a path in the field and eventually, the truck will just naturally gravitate down the road you carved. It would not require much steering or effort at all.

But say you want to create a different route to the house. The first time you steered the truck off course, it would once again be a bumpy ride. You'd have to steer with focus again to get the truck from going down the easier, well-carved path you previously created. But if you drove the truck down the new path day after day, a new road would form that eventually would feel as natural as the first road you carved.

Your brain is like the field and your thoughts are like the truck. If you want to change the direction your thoughts naturally gravitate toward, you are going to have to consciously steer them off their habitual course and create a new neural pathway in your brain. Let's go back to our earlier example of the neural net created by the thought "I am not good enough." If you want to create a new pathway in your brain, when you notice yourself thinking that limiting thought, IMMEDIATELY redirect your thoughts in a new direction. Over time as you choose new life enhancing and affirming thoughts, you will create new pathways and neural nets in your brain that you will more naturally gravitate towards. Thinking the thoughts you want to think will become easier as you change the physiology of your brain.

We take our bodies to the gym to alter our physique. Why don't we give our brains a workout to alter our state of mind? If you want to change your life, you MUST change your thoughts. And do so with loving discipline. Remember, your thoughts about what is happening in your life have a far greater impact on your well being than what is actually happening. Use your mind for good not evil!

Fondly,  
Christine

*"If you don't like something change it; if you can't change it —  
change the way you think about it." Mary Engelbreit*

## Are You Wasting Your Most Valuable Resource?

“Life is like a combination lock; your goal is to find the right numbers, in the right order, so you can have anything you want.” – Brian Tracy

This past weekend I had the pleasure of hearing Brian Tracy, one of the top success and achievement experts in the world, speak. He said something that hit me like a ton a bricks: the majority of us are only using about 10% of our potential. 10%?!?!? From my point of view that number is WAAAAAY too low. Why are we operating at such a mediocre level?

As human beings we have infinite potential; it is our greatest natural resource. But it is an **UNDERTAPPED** resource. We get so caught up in the day-to-day of life and sit idly by as possibility passes over us. We waste time on mindless activities like tweeting, sitting in traffic, gossip and to-do lists that really aren't doing much of anything. We fill our time with “fillers” rather than things that are truly fulfilling. We complain about our outer circumstances because we forget that we have the power and ability to change our inner experience at any moment.

Understand that potential is not so much about how much you are doing, but rather what you are doing and the way you are **BEING** while doing whatever you're doing. We all have an equal amount of potential; what sets us apart is how we use it. And we can **ALL** do better than 10%!

Are you ready to up your number? I hope so, because you have a lot to contribute to this world and you are not going to get it done if you're only playing at 10%. How can you optimize your potential? It's easy but it requires commitment on your part. Challenge yourself. Do something every day that pushes you out of your comfort zone. Commit to learning something new. Develop skills that do not come naturally to you. Shift your energy to a more positive vibration. Intentionally connect with people. Direct your thoughts and behaviors in ways that makes you feel good.

And here is one very simple thing you can begin right now to tap into your potential: smile and think a positive thought. Feel the difference? You're already up to at least 20%!

Let's do this together. I am committing to checking in with myself everyday and I invite you to join me. Visit my [facebook fan page](#) (don't forget to "like" it), and share your potential percentage and what you are doing to up your number. For instance, "I am at 13% potential and I am committing to signing up for a dance class to learn something new!"

If we truly value and tap into our infinite potential, we will approach life with greater levels of passion and purpose. It is time to stop being average. Let's be extraordinary.

Fondly,  
Christine

