

Day 1:

Grow a large vision!

(Keep it front and center)

Let's talk about the mind.

Why? Because it takes more than skills to advance to a title, a larger organization, or a life you've been dreaming for... it takes an aware mindset!

This series was developed to get your mind into the right frame to tackle the big, hairy, scary and wonderful goals you have planned for yourself.

After all, you were created to do great things!

You really, really don't need to settle... you need to conquer the doubts, fears and discouragement that is holding you back.

The spirit of an entrepreneur begins with the habits in his/her mind. Sooooo, that means, my goal is far more ambitious than just showing you how to build a successful company. I want to help you create a fulfilling, happy and successful *life*. An extraordinary life on *your* terms!

I hope this Ignite Series will burst forward a new and bolder you. I hope every day over the course of this week you will learn more, become more, and do more.

For this is the time, to reach your goals... right now! This can be the moment you choose to DO more, BE more, and HAVE more. As you put these emails into action (one every day for a week), my hope is that you will IGNITE your mind and life in ways you never thought possible!

In preparing you mentally to start your own business, or improve the one you currently own, it is necessary for you to start with a clear vision. Goals are destinations that every decision we make throughout the day, steers us closer towards, or further away from.

Step 1 is creating your life goals.

When I almost died from a pulmonary embolism in December 2010, my life forever changed. Not only in ways you might expect, like a loss of half my lung or my fear of not seeing my babies grow up, but also in ways one wouldn't likely expect. In the months following my hospital stay, I did some major self reflection. I had a lot of time alone and was able to look around and take inventory. Wait, what?! I didn't even *see* myself in my own life. Sure, I was "mom" and "wife" and "sister" and "daughter". I wore all the necessary hats of "cook" and "nurse" and "bookkeeper" and "house cleaner". But where was *I*? Where was the girl who liked to travel, who played the flute, who had always been an independent entrepreneur at her very *core*? Where was she?

So for four months I took stock of my life. I laid out ALL my life goals. Sure, I knew they would change with time, and that was okay, but I took the time to really think about *my* life.... for no one, but *me*. More importantly, I gave myself a little love and permission, to dream the big dreams I had all but long since forgotten. You can see the 14 areas of my life that I evaluate annually in "My Personal Long Term Goal Sheet" in the Free Resource Library at <http://entrepreneurgirl.net/resource-library>.

There are many other goal sheets in the Resource Library, including the one I use with my personal clients entitled "First Week Power Steps". Use all of them to crystalize who you are, what you want, and how to break the big picture goals down into bite size pieces (1, 5, and 10 year goal plans).

So once you have your goals set, and you have a large vision for yourself, it is important for you to keep it front and center. Studies tell us, that we move

towards what we consistently see and think about. What are you spending your hours thinking about? What do you surround yourself with and see everyday? Is it positive, encouraging, and representing your dreams?

Step 2 is to keep something in front of you, something symbolic, that reminds you what you are striving for and believing will happen in your life.

- This is why I commit to writing yearly detailed goals and hanging them on a cork board in front of my desk.
- This is why I have a vision board of income sources I hope to acquire one day soon.
- This is why I place pictures that remind me of my goals and have quotes that encourage and motivate me in my daily spaces.

Every time I see these things, I am moving towards my goal. I am reminded what I am dreaming about. I am keeping positive actions in front of me, and not listening to any negative voices.

Maybe you have the faith, the talent, and the determination to reach your highest potential, but because you are not keeping the right things in front of you, you are struggling...?

Perhaps, if you placed visuals all over your house, your focus will be laser focused and your spirit will be encouraged :)

My story:



I have a brick.

It's no ordinary brick.... it's a Kokomo, Indiana brick. I know that doesn't mean anything to you, but it means the world to me. Why? Why would I have a single brick on my end table? After all, that's a weird thing to do, and a weird place to house a brick. Yet to me, it's the perfect place...

I walk by that table every-single-day.

People constantly ask me, "What is that brick for?"

I say, "It is for the brick warehouse in Kokomo that I am buying"

"You bought a warehouse?", they ask surprised.

"Not yet,...but soon."

You see, I don't even have the money for that warehouse... yet.

I don't even have the full idea of what I'm going to do with it, if I'm completely honest... but, I'm believing in my ability to figure it all out and make it the next great idea of my company.

And since I am believing for that warehouse, I am keeping my goal front and center. I see the brick, and I think of the warehouse, and then I think of the steps I need to take to get the warehouse, and those thoughts are with me as I make all the hundreds of decisions I will make throughout the day. See? And when the day comes that I finally buy my warehouse, that brick will earn a prominent spot in the entranceway of *my* building.

And that is just how it is... with no vision, you will get stuck.

With no vision, you will listen to all the negative.

Sometimes your family and friends will not understand. They may not be your biggest cheerleaders, and that's okay. Maybe they simply can't imagine your desires for a warehouse, for quitting your job, or for not wanting that whole 9:00-5:00 thing anymore. Maybe their experience has been living paycheck to paycheck and those things seems ridiculous to them. So just expect to hit opposition and steel yourself to not be swayed. People may not encourage you, and they may even *discourage* you. Unfortunately, there are such people that are even well intended, will try and talk you out of your dreams. Take care to protect your goals.

Another thing, don't be depressed if you have not yet arrived or gotten as far as you hoped. Be thankful that you are on your way and taking action. If this Ignite series is your first step towards freedom, well done! You are on your way!

There will be times when it looks like your goals will not come to pass; when you feel discouraged and are tempted to give up. This is why it is important to have your vision symbolically in front of you. Your visual that you can look at

and feel excited about daily! These times when it seems as if your dreams are not coming to pass and taking way too long, don't give up. Restore your vision with the picture and quotes that you strategically placed in front of you.

Truth is, my first year went by, then the second, and now the third. It would be easy to lose my passion and think it will never happen. Because the truth is, I'm still not impacting the world like I want to be... but, every time I walk past my vision board, brick, or any other number of things I've set out and about, a seed is planted in my heart.

I've now had clients in six different countries, my YouTube channel is watched in over 20 countries, and I sell and buy products from all over the world. It has taken years to move toward my international dream, and most likely years more before I get to where I want to end up.

Yet, this doesn't discourage me. In fact, I feel more alive than ever! It is nearly impossible to stay "in a rut" or "settle for less", when you are making progress towards a big goal of yours!

Now, I'm not talking about dreaming small. Trust me, you won't be shaking your fist at the universe by dreaming big. In fact, just the opposite is true. When you believe for big things, a crazy thing starts to happen, big things start happening. You set a new standard for yourself, something on the inside is saying, "I'm going to do that one day!".

I know some goals seem unlikely, but don't ever say that they are impossible. The problem is that you are being limited by your own imagination or your own self defeating talk.

I have accomplished things that I once thought impossible.

Me? With over a million views on my YouTube channel, yeah right.

I thought my dad would be my only viewer.

Me? With my own online business? Suuuure.

These are all thoughts that I once had, and yet, here I am doing those things.

Now, not only can I imagine achieving some big, bad, hairy goals of my own... I can imagine you fulfilling your dreams, too.

If your first inclination is to think you are limited by your talent, resources, environment, education, or nationality... well, then join my club. Too many times we get in a rut and stop believing for anything bigger. We wrongly assume we have reached our limit and stop stretching ourself and our faith. We need to make a decision that we are capable, even if we have to fake it before we make it. We must make the decision for ourselves that we aren't going to live an average or mediocre life. We must have the strength of a warrior.

If you can see it, then you can do it.

You can achieve something significant, something meaningful, something that makes you smile!

Think BIG, really, really BIG!

You. Got. This.

I'm rooting for you!!

Hugs,

Tracy

Day 2:  
Invent Yourself Over and Over Again

“The day finally presented itself, when the risk to remain in my current rut, grew more painful than the risk it would take to change.”

-Tracy Smith

What if I told you, with a little bit of effort, you could live an extraordinary life? A life that included your dreams, that made you feel alive and passionate?

If you've been on my website, [www.entrepreneurgirl.net](http://www.entrepreneurgirl.net) or my YouTube channel [EntrepreneurGirl](#), you know my motto is 'Build business. Love your life. Balance both.' These days, there is a lot of talk about whether or not you can “have it all”. It's not really about having it *all*, it's about having what matters most to *you*. You need to dial up the sound of your own voice so you can hear your authentic dreams and develop them into a reality.

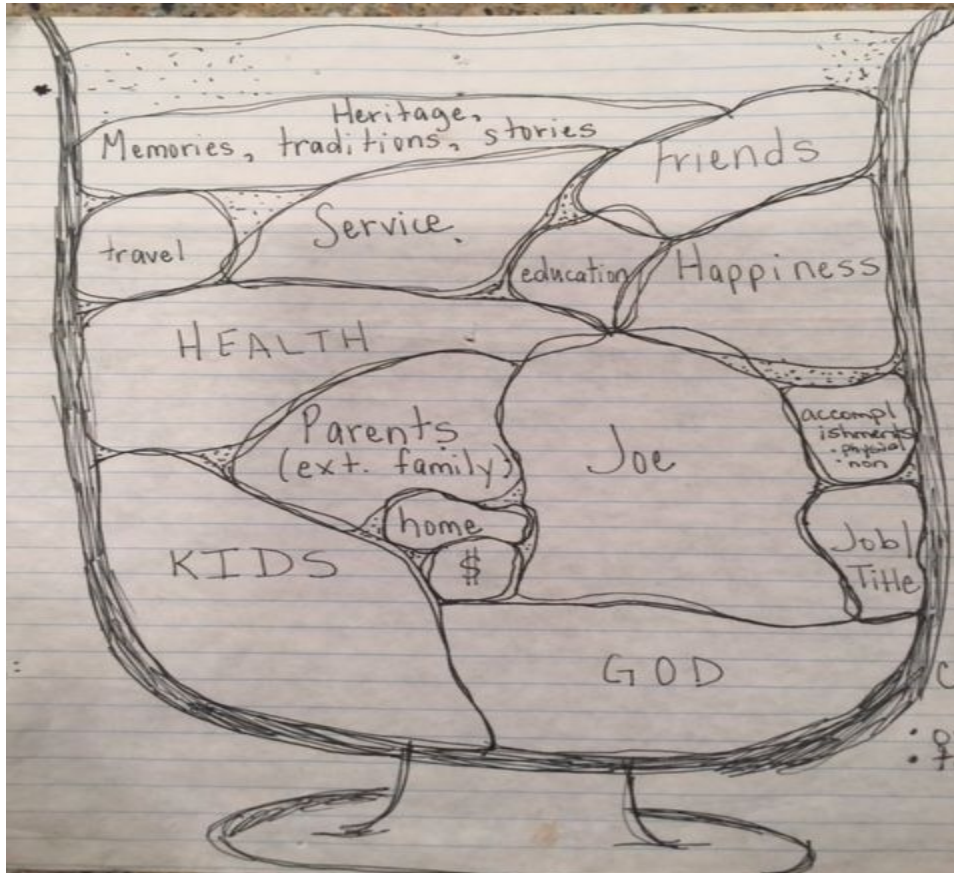
As I have often heard, “Life is not about finding yourself, it's about creating yourself.”

I really, really believe this to be true!

Happiness doesn't come from success... it IS success. Entrepreneurs have a unique spirit. We want to take control of our life.

When my life hit a very rough time with serious health issues, I was forced into a position to really define who I was and what I wanted. As I sat in ICU with the reality of my possible death swirling around me, and the reality that I wasn't the person that I wanted to be... and it might be too late now to do anything about it... I sat with a pen and paper and thought about the important things to me. Here is what I wrote:





- Who am I? What do I stand for? What do I enjoy (where hours can pass by and it felt like seconds)? What impact can I have on others?
- Basing my goals off of those answers, I made pictures of BIG rocks reflecting what was most important and SMALLER rocks representing the less important things.
- I created a schedule and a budget around my goals I listed out. If you are not spending some amount of time in your day on getting closer to your goals, then you won't accomplish them. If it's not on the schedule, if it's not on the daily to-do list, then it simply won't happen. You can find budgets and schedules sheets at <http://entrepreneurgirl.net/resource-library>

Sometimes, we are just beginning and we have to start at the beginning and invent ourselves. Sometimes, we take a wrong turn and need to *reinvent* ourselves.

Sometimes, other people try to squeeze us into their molds, and we need to step out and stick up for our invented selves.

But in any situation, invention takes boldness. You have to run your race, the way you want to run it. You can't be insecure or worry about what everyone thinks. You can't keep everyone happy. If you change with every criticism and opinion, you will find yourself looking like other people, acting like other people, and living other people's dreams.

Every day you should search your heart, listen to that voice deep down, and focus on your goals. When you know who you are... who you *really* are... then you are truly free.

Studies tell us that one of the biggest human regrets, is not being true to oneself. Are you not being who you are meant to be, because you are afraid you will disappoint someone, or someone will laugh at you? You have to know who you are... and you have to be true to yourself once you know.

I spent the first years of my young adult life picking up the roles that I felt I was "supposed to" pick up: wife, mother, daughter, sister, friend, cook, housekeeper, and on and on. Somewhere along the way, I lost myself. Fortunately, I got a second chance. In that ICU bed, I realized that I didn't even see ME in my own life... and some of the negative emotions that I had been feeling, was due in part, because I had been fighting against myself. I was wanting to be myself and serve my purpose, and yet, I felt that was selfish or self serving. So I continued to always be kind, respectful, and pleasing to other people. I thought that made me a good person...but, I am already a good person. I don't need to give up my calling to be "good". I was given a purpose on this Earth, one that can't be done quite the way I will do it, and I could use that purpose to serve others and fulfill myself.

Now, I don't look to the left or to the right. I don't worry about what my competitors are doing, or what my critics have to say. I run my race. I invent myself every single day. I fight for myself, my goals, my dreams, and my vision. I look straight ahead and take the next step.

I know this isn't easy. It was hard for me, too. When I started Entrepreneur Girl, I had a soft underbelly. I started a Youtube channel originally to let others (even just one person) know that there were other options to the 9-5 work routine. I wanted them to know that they really could stay home with their babies, or elderly parents. My goal was to impact lives, and it was FREE advice, so imagine my surprise and hurt when the feedback wasn't always favorable. It hurt... a lot. But you know what happens when you have critics? You are forced to define who you are and what you stand for. Daily, I was subjected to the opinions of the masses on the World Wide Web, and through that fire, my beliefs and what I stood for were sharpened. I gained confidence. I knew my heart was in the right place. I believed in my mission. And from that point on, I never looked back.

If we are to fulfill our destinies, we have to be strong. We have to know that our purpose is what we are created for, and that our happiness is directly linked to our progress towards that goal.

You may lose friends through the process. They don't understand why you won't take their advice. They may think you are making a big mistake. They may resent your success. Unfortunately this happens, but you will see new opportunities and new relationships. Most likely new people that will support you for who you are, and what you want to become. Favor in your life will increase as you listen to your heart, and invent yourself as many times as it takes to be true to your purpose. If you do it any other way, you will be confused, you will be frustrated, and you will be miserable.

Going for your dreams is hard enough, and then when life throws you curveballs it gets even harder... and then if people around you aren't onboard, it can seem downright impossible.

Everyone has an opinion. If you try to keep every person happy, the only person that won't be happy, will be you. Don't get me wrong, it's fine to listen

to advice and receive opinions and feedback, but be secure enough in yourself and your path, that you are not easily swayed off of the direction you were meant to travel. Be brave enough to say, “hey thanks, I will consider that”, but then dismiss it if it doesn’t seem right after thinking it over. You should never feel guilty for being yourself and for pursuing your best.

As I already shared with you, there was a period in my life that I wasn't being who I wanted to be. I knew I could do better. I knew I could be more. I decided to write on paper who I wanted to be, who did I want to be around, where did I want to live, and what did I want my life to look like? I strived to create that version of myself. Tracy 2.0 :)

I made adjustments when things didn't work. I added things as I got new ideas. Bam! Tracy 3.0!

Every day, every month, always striving to be better and reach higher. Giving myself permission to grow and change and not be limited by negative self taught or opinions of others.

Be true to who you are suppose to be.

Run your race. Run with purpose.

Take control of your happiness.

Hang with those that lift you up.

Be secure enough in who you are that you don't live to please people.

Invent yourself as many times as you have to.

Go get ‘em,

Tracy

Day 3:  
The New Positive You

Growing up my family was squarely middle class. I had to pay for my own clothes. I had to work Saturdays in my dad's doughnut business at a young age. I worked jobs that I was less than proud of, and hated feverently. I was pregnant at an early age. I got a degree in education and then homeschooled my kids (at a time when homeschooling wasn't well known or well liked). Instead of teaching in the public school, I went back to school for my business degree and started my own company. Instead of working for the corporate world, I stayed home with my babies and worked online. Even the number of kids I have (eight) and pets we have (also, eight), isn't "ordinary". My path to where I am now is uniquely mine, for better or for worse, and that's okay. Yours probably hasn't been a straight line either. Regardless of the inequalities of our world, or our gender, or our financial position... we can never let that stop us. I always had the belief that I could do anything, regardless of any of those things. Many people would say that this large optimism would set me up for failure, but I have found the opposite to be true. My belief in my own success, actually allowed me to develop my own image, without fear of failure or worrying about others opinions. I learned that success is not just for an elite few, or someone else, it's for you and me, too! So focus on amping up your self confidence so you can have the perseverance to create the life you deserve. You need grit. You need to conquer your toughest critic- the voice in your head.

Our expectations set the limits of our lives.

If you expect little, you get little.

If you expect much, you get much.... or at least, much more than if you expected little :)

Have the attitude that things are going to get better! Declare that something amazing is going to happen to you today! Be watching for it to happen.

Almost every day, my five year old runs through the house and into my bedroom to wake me up. His first question, and with such ridiculous excitement, "what are we doing today????!!!!!!". He is expecting something wonderful to happen to him each and every day. *I want to set my tone like that, to walk around my home and office thinking, "I can't wait to see what great thing is going to happen to me today!"*.

Expect to get that break you've been waiting on.

Expect to meet the right person to network your business to the next level.

Expect your dreams to come to be accomplished.

Expect to win.

If you want a log cabin on a thousand acres in the Colorado mountains, believe that you can obtain that one day. Don't settle for a tent... on five acres in the foothills... push for the dream... expect it, even.

Listen, it's easy to anticipate the worst. Many people spend their days saying, "I already failed at this once, so I will do bad this time, too." They are already expecting to fail before they ever start. They have had such a negative mindset for so long, they don't even realize it. They assume the worst and usually get it.

When I had that pulmonary embolism, I thought, "Man, this is bad!". Then, two years later when I was diagnosed with thyroid cancer, I thought, "Holy cow, I can't believe this is happening to me!". After my thyroid surgery, I went to be close to my parents. I had recently purchased a 100 year old Indiana farmhouse. I wanted to recover and lick my wounds a little bit. But you won't believe what happened while I was there...

A historic flash flood hit my house (never before seen in history of this small town).... no, I'm not kidding.

I went to bed on a cool spring evening and I awoke to freakin' ten feet of water in my basement (and rising), no heat, and oh, and did I mention it was *snowing*. Seriously?!?! Is this the Apocalypse?



I can laugh at the absurdity of it now, but then it felt like a giant kick in the gut. And I was tired of being kicked. Five years, of one- after- another terrible gut kicks. So, I understand that it can be easy to believe for bad, to think that around every new corner something bad will be lurking. Good things only happen to other people, not us, right?

Wrong. Great things are in our future, too. At my very lowest moment after that flood, I became very angry. I had an evening where I just laid on the couch staring at the ceiling; too mad to even cry. Shaking my fist at my own

misfortune, I was finally fed up and ready to fight back. Figuring if I was 'going down', then I was going down fighting. I started expecting, no demanding, my life to turn around. My past disappointments and unfair situations would no longer keep me in that negative mind frame. I would no longer be happy with barely surviving my day, I wanted to be in love with my day. I wanted to take control of my life, and I did!

You. Can. Too.

You want your whole life to change? Well, this right now... it's that moment.

Let go of every mistake and every failure. Only greatness follows you now.

You don't want to expect too much? Don't want to be disappointed when it doesn't happen? Is that the way you've been thinking...? Stop it! That's no way to live. If your goal didn't happen today, go into tomorrow knowing that you're one day closer to seeing your dream.

As most successful entrepreneurs will attest, in order to win you must grasp the concept of expecting good things. You can't be neutral. You can't be afraid to give your all to the biggest, baddest, goals you can think of... you have to give it *more* than your all... you have to view it like it's the *only* choice, and your whole life depends on it! You have to aggressively expect (and fight for) good things.

Do you know what's waiting for you on the other side of your strength?

Enthusiasm.

Passion.

Fun.

Confidence.

Power.

Exploration.



Empowerment.

Change.

Love.

You don't have to stay in your rut. You don't have to settle. Let it rip!

And while you are fighting your butt off, remember to guard your happiness.

Studies tell us that it is harder for the mind to process a negative thought than a positive one. As a result, you will remember negative events more than positive events. I have found this to be true in my own personal experience with my YouTube channel. I might have a hundred praising comments, and one scathing one, but do you know which one I can recite months later? Do you know which one I dwell on, and talk about most?

Remember that happy time when you and your best friend shared that special weekend? Or the family 'inside' stories that everyone laughs about for hours during Thanksgiving dinner? Just remembering that moment makes you grin and feel happy.

Don't dwell on negative thoughts and memories. Your past doesn't define who you are *now*. Thinking through bad experiences, doesn't make them any less bad, it just makes our current moment sad. Guard your mind and choose the happy thought.

Know that you have to be proactive. Know that when those bad thoughts creep in to make you negative, that you will have to fight back to remain positive. You will have to remember that you stand for more than just that time you were fired or dumped... that you are also successful and loveable... you must remember to tell yourself what you did right, too.

Listen, as long as you are reliving your hurts over and over again, they will never heal. Like picking at a scab, they just keep bleeding, and they never

grow new skin. Even if there was only one good thing to have ever happened to you, that's the one thing you should think about. Your past does not define your future, no matter how awful it was. Learn from your mistakes and move on.

Problem is, people forget about their victories. They forget all the accomplishments they've had and battles they've won. We don't want to appear conceited, so in an attempt to remain humble, we shrug off all the times we conquered. Yet, we keep front and center, all the losses, playing them over and over again to ourselves. If you forget what you should be remembering, and remember what you should be forgetting, you will continuously think, "I don't have a chance!"

However, if you train your mind to focus on all the times you succeeded, you will think "I can do this! I've done this many times before. I will do what I must do and come out greater on the other side. Sure it might be hard, but I've handled hard before!"

You. Can. Do. More. Than. You. Think. You. Can..... Go do it!

Draw a line in the sand and say, "That's it!!! I'm done with low expectations. I'm not settling for my low expectations anymore. I expect good things to happen, better than I've ever dreamed. I expect success!"

Every day we get to choose our attitude. We get a say in whether we have a positive (believing we can accomplish our goals) or negative (focusing on problems and what didn't work out) attitude. These are the choices we all make. A good choice does not automatically come, you will most likely have to choose it and fight for it. But knowing how a negative attitude will limit your life and leave you discouraged, you opt to believe that something better is coming in your future. Just having the right mental state will position you far away from defeat.

Through my health crisis, I learned that good and bad are always happening at the same time. It's not "as soon as this is over, it will be good" or "things are going so well right now, I hope nothing messes it up." Life is messy. Something will mess it up. Every day both good and bad are walking parallel to you, holding your hand. Whichever way you turn your head, is what you will notice. Did you see that young man pay for that elderly woman's lunch? Did you notice that six people smiled warmly at you, and two held open the door, and one even stopped you to compliment your children? Probably not... because you were too focused on the coffee you spilled on your shirt, and on the fact that traffic is bad today. You had your head turned the wrong way.

I had cancer. Cancer! If I choose, my head could have been permanently angled that direction. I knew I needed to be careful of this slippery slope I was now on. I wish I could say I was successful every day at being positive, but of course, I wasn't. I fought for it every-single-day. Over time I was successful, not only at controlling my thoughts, but controlling my circumstances as well. Entrepreneur Girl was birthed out of those cancer ashes, and I have done more than I ever thought possible.

If your dream is taking longer than you thought, don't be discouraged. It took me four years to navigate my own jungle

We have to get out of this always negative, always depressed, poor-me mentality. Write a list of ten things that you are thankful for and read that list at the start of every day. All day long think about that list, reprogram your mind, and break those old negative thoughts. Then get to a place you can dream. Want to have a big house? Drive through the fanciest neighborhood you can find and dream and plan. Get out of your negative environment and into a place of victory. Go to a life changing conference filled with energy, read a motivational book in a beautiful park, start a small group mastermind that build up one another and dare each other to speak their crazy big goals on a weekly basis. Get use to saying and believing that your health, business, marriage, and finances are about to take a unbelievably big turn. Literally

bounce at the idea of where your life is heading. See it in your mind. Believe in it. Don't accept anything else.

I'm not ashamed to tell you my latest secret. I've been driving around North Carolina off and on for the last year. What am I looking for? The perfect town to live in. A town my husband says he won't move to. I want a log cabin on a very big hill, probably one that I can't afford. I want a dream view that I haven't found yet. Even though all this is true, I search anyway. Every trip I take up north, I detour through North Carolina in search of my perfect place. The one I know is coming. Maybe not this year, maybe not next year, heck maybe not even the year after that.... but one year, I will sit on that porch, looking at that view and I will smile the largest smile and my heart will be filled with joy and pride. One year that will be mine. I don't know how and I don't know when, but I *know*!

I've had bad breaks, but I know it only takes one good break to make up for all of the bad combined. One twenty-four hour period can change everything. One new job offer, meeting your soulmate at the Starbucks, launching an idea that was successful.... It just takes one thing. One day. Today could be that day.

Friend, you have to envision it *first*. Then work towards it. Believe in the next step and don't worry yourself with all the negatives. You will never fly like a bird, if you believe you are rat.

There's a reason that dream was placed in your heart. You're supposed to carry it out for a reason. So take your desires and dare to dream a little bigger. Dare to venture a little further than you've gone before. Be bold! Make a difference with your life and fulfill your God given destiny.

You'll never get beyond the barriers in your mind. If you think you can't, then you won't. If you are defeated in your mind then you can't be successful in your physical. It's just that simple.

But that's wrong thinking! It doesn't have to be that way. Maybe something negative happened to you. Maybe someone spoke negativity over you. Let me help you break that.... I'm just like you. I've had bad things, really bad things, happen to me, and I am here. I am successful. I am happy. You can be too! Those things don't define you. Get mad! Get really, really angry and stop taking this Bologna. Don't do this anymore! Not for one single day more. You are better than this, you can break this cycle, you can start fresh right now. Right this second as you read this things can change. Start now!

You have wallowed where you are long enough. It's time to move on. We are going to let go of the past and and believe for bigger things in the future. You can't keep going in circles, doing the same thing year after year, it's time for something new and exciting!

You can't live in a perpetual pity party and then wonder why things aren't improving in your life. If you are thinking small, believing small, and expecting small, then only small things will happen to you. It's your own thinking that's keeping you in defeat. You must think BIG!

You are strong enough to set a new standard.

I got your back,

Tracy

Day 4:  
Let Go of the Past

In front of my computer in my office, attached to a cork board, is a picture of me at the age of four. I am standing in front of my family in a bright red cowgirl outfit.

Everyone else is dressed in normal clothes, so I have no idea what would possess me to be wearing that to my grandmothers house?!? But I keep that picture there to remind myself of the child I use to be. What do I see in that child's face? What would I tell her she is capable of? Would I ever tell her she wasn't good enough, or smart enough, or pretty enough?



Looking at this picture, I get sentimental. To think of all the mean things I have said to her between then and now. Looking at my old self, I don't see a bunch

of flaws. I see a smiley, bouncy little girl filled with love, curiosity, courage, humor, excitement, and a stubborn independence (hence, the outfit). That's who I am at the core. All these labels, and layers of defensiveness and self doubt have been added throughout the years. Many of them unwarranted and untrue.

I'm going to guess that the same holds true for you. Dig out an old picture of yourself and tell me what you see. I'm going to bet that you've forgotten some of your most amazing, authentic attributes. Go find them again!

Our past can house many important lessons and many abusing obstacles. Whichever one we choose to have our head turned towards, will define our future. Don't get me wrong, I want to look at the bad events and see if there is anything to learn there, but I won't keep my eyes there very long. I'm not interested in focusing on my faults. I know they are there. I know that mistakes are the only way that an extraordinary life is made real. The point is, when trouble comes your way, don't flinch. Dig deep. Remember who you were when you were little and keep your head turned towards the good things you've done.

In today's society, we love to make excuses. No one wants to admit that something is their fault and swim against the current to change it. And I don't mean to minimize a bad experience. There are experiences that no one deserves to walk through...

But if you want your life to be victorious, you can not use past emotional pain as an excuse to make bad decisions today. You can't rationalize your negativity, unforgiveness, bad attitude, and depression because life was messy for you. Life *is* messy! Yet, you can't keep feeling sorry for yourself, being the victim, and dwelling on what should have been.

I know this is tough love, and I don't mean to be harsh. I care for you and your future, which is why I must tell you that there is more for you than this negativity. You can be better than this. Feel better than this.

So what do you do?

Many people want to find out what the successful have in common. I wanted to know! So I researched and researched. Do you think it's professional background and success? Nope. What about geography? Not that either. Has to be income bracket or age, right? No and no. I know! Single or married, children or no children (or 8 children!)? Still no.

So what do successful people have in common then?

1. A willingness to learn.
2. A positive outlook.
3. A bias toward action.
4. An ability to make midcourse corrections.
5. Stick-with-it-ness.

It's the outcome of attitudes and actions. So don't you dare assume, that you can't have what the person next to you has, because you are in a different place or had a different past. Your unique past has made you strong. Now is the time to apply it to your future.

I've often wondered if in America, our biggest disadvantage is all of our advantages. With all the luxury, will we be robbed of learning to lean on our own capabilities. In the land of 'everyone gets a ribbon' are we being deprived of our own hunger? I question my parenting in finding the balance between doting too much and not having my children struggle enough to get stronger and learn to do for themselves. I've been on both extremes with my own kids. Yet I know that pushing through setbacks is a necessary evil in this world, from relationships to entrepreneurs to parenting. I need to teach my children



to not be so fragile that they crack and quit at the first sign of trouble. Quitting because it is hard is not an option if you want to succeed.

Letting go of our past, is not the same as forgetting. I am allowing myself to take the lessons I learned forward into my future, and leaving behind all the junk. I really don't want to be loaded down with junk in my new, adventurous life. I am stronger from my battle scars. I know more, I've seen more, and I am now strong enough to do more. I'm not as fragile as I once was, in fact, I am at my strongest. I know there will be more battles in my future, and I will learn some hard lessons that I will add to my future knowledge base, and I will be all the stronger for it!

Sooner or later we all have to let go of our past...

And even though letting go can be incredibly difficult, it is necessary to stop replaying your past over and over again in your mind. When we desperately attempt to hold onto things that were once familiar to us, it limits our capability to experience happiness and enjoy our present life. Continuous change is what life's about. No matter how hard we try to keep things as they are, they will sooner or later change anyway, whether we like it or not. The good news is that as soon as we stop attempting to control everything, we open ourselves up to new possibilities and let happiness and joy in.

Love ya,  
Tracy

Day 5:  
Finding Strength Through Trials

There are many studies showing that enthusiastic people get better breaks, are promoted more often, enjoy higher incomes, and live healthier lives.

Easier said than done, right?

Too many people have lost their enthusiasm. I feel like they started out being excited about their futures, but somewhere along the way, life beat it out of them. If you've seen my intro video on [entrepreneurgirl.net](http://entrepreneurgirl.net) you will see exactly what I mean. Maybe the relationship didn't work, they ended up in a job they hate, or health issues popped up. Somewhere along the way, life got messy as it usually does and took the wind out of their sails. They stopped believing in themselves, and their dreams, and their ability to ever make them a reality anyway.

I don't know about you, but I don't want to just survive my days. I want to love my days!

But how are we supposed to do that?

You may have had some setbacks. So have I. You know my story, or if not, you can find it on <http://entrepreneurgirl.net/about>. Life has dealt me some serious blows which really changed my perspective. The trials had clarified a few things in my head...things that needed clarified. I felt alive, *really* alive.

So my question is: are you *really* alive? Are you passionate, or are you stuck in a rut? You're not created to simply endure your life, letting the pressures of life weigh you down. You are created for more than just going through the motions.

The day you quit being excited about your life, is the day you quit living. You don't want to merely exist, do you?

Why does it take some catastrophic trial for us to be grateful and excited to merely be alive?

We let things become ordinary. We forget their importance. We take them for granted. Just today, I was snappy at the noise volume in my home. If only I could have five quiet minutes! Kids running around, teenagers talking loudly, so many people, the house just seemed to hum and vibrate. One day the house will be quiet, too quiet, and I will be sad. I want to remember how lucky I am in this crazy moment right now and not be wishing for another moment. Spouses the same... remember how excited you were about your wedding day? The new house you bought, and move in day, yay! Now, ten years later you see it as a to do list, you forgot how lucky you are to own it. You have forgotten to be thankful. To be happy for it. Only when a trial arrives in your life, do you see it with new eyes. The routine, has become... well, routine. You let it become ordinary. It doesn't excite you anymore.

What if... you looked at your kids and said, "Wow, I made *that?!?*". You looked at your spouse and said, "You have been sooooo good to me throughout the years!". You pulled up to your house and thought, "I'm so fortunate to have this little piece of paradise to come home to every day".

Do you have people to love? Can you walk? Do you feel safe and fed and sheltered? Don't take that for granted, friend. Count them everyday, not just when things are bad. Don't let the amazement stop.

If you aren't happy where you are, you won't get where you want to be.

Maybe you're facing big challenges and you could easily give up or grow discouraged. Your dreams seem a million miles away. Listen, you may in between victories right now. Your passion may have become passionate-less.

The good news is that trials let us see the reality that we have long since forgotten. The miracles that now seem ordinary. Trials bless us, train us, grow us, teach us, and strengthen us. It's only after a trial that we realize this, of course, but it's the truth. I would not be who I am today or where I am today without the hardships that I have faced. Perhaps I would have been content to stay where I was? Perhaps I would have grumbled my way through life, not realizing what I had or could have had? But the strength I found during my trial changed everything..... *Everything.*



I have eight kids. It's the most selfless thing I've ever faced. Every day my hours are filled with sacrifice and serving others. I know it sounds awful, but some days I just flat out don't want to do it. I want to call a timeout. I would envy all the other mom's who were going to the gym or the spa, and having "me" time. I was lucky if I got to go to the bathroom alone. What I wouldn't do to be in their shoes. But, of course, all that changed when I landed in the ICU

wondering if I would live or die. Boy, how my tune changed! For the longest time, I was acutely aware of how lucky I was to be the receiver of every single sticky kiss. But eventually, several years after my trial, I found the same attitude of ungratefulness threatening to take over. I want to wear a smile on my face while doing *another* sink full of dishes, but honestly, it's hard to muster sometimes. I have to remind myself how it felt to be at death door. I have to remember what all I have to be grateful for and carry that strength with me throughout the day.

The trials I have suffered through helped define who I was and what I stood for. Through fire, it sharpened my goals and priorities. It defined my life.

In order to be passionate you have to have a meaningful reason to get out of bed each morning. I had that finally. I knew my mission. Hard times had gifted that to me. I'm not merely alive, I'm really alive!

I know many people that stop caring. They don't care about their appearance anymore. They no longer strive towards any particular goals. They are okay with sweatpants, unbrushed hair, and a nasty attitude. Sorry, but I am not going down like that. If I die young, or mess up royally.... it's still never, ever going to be like that. I want to die while rock climbing or on some amazing safari somewhere... not on my couch with a bag of potato chips strewn about and no gumption. I can't control some things, trials are going to come and they are big and scary, but I can control some things.... and one of those things is that if I'm going down, it's gonna be on my terms, and it's going to have a wow factor. I'm not going to stop living at eighty, just because I'm eighty. I'm not going to stop being attractive just because I'm a mom. I'm not going to stop living for my life goals, just because I'm not sure how to get there. I'm just **not!**

I'm not settling.

I'm not finished yet.

There are more victories in my future.

I will have a flourishing, not fizzling, finish.

I'm going to do my part and shake off the self pity, and shake off the bad times...

What I thought would harm me, sometimes brings me out better than I was before. What looks like a setback can be the setup for something BIG about to happen. Don't give up just because something happened to you.

Look, I know that everyone has obstacles, and mine are small compared to what others have endured. As I hear your stories, I marvel at the human spirit; that when knocked down, it finds its best self. The difficulties we face make us sad and angry, but they also make us determined and fearless. Having nothing to lose, we are able to strive for things that we would have never attempted without those experiences. I know that my struggles, forced me to take a step back, inhale deeply, and re-evaluate why I was doing what, and who I was as a person. How ironic that my problems would become my passions, and my obstacles would become my biggest assets... enabling me with power, direction, and clarity to take back the freedom of my life, and re-navigate it to where I want it to be. I thank God every-single-day for His direction, for my being alive, and for the opportunity to share everything with you!

Your life is not over because of your situation. Life didn't turn out the way you hoped, I get it. You've had terrible disappointments, I hear ya! But now it's time to stop sitting on the sideline. Find the strength to get your fire back. Tell your heart to dream again, to love again, to laugh again, and to believe again.

Too many people worry about how qualified they are (or aren't). They never begin a path because they have self doubts. They second guess their circumstances and knowledge; believing that they are never quite good enough for the next step. Not realizing that it IS the STEPS as you go through them, that qualify YOU. It the actual the *doing* that teaches you and gives you the knowledge needed. The irony is that you must push through the fear of your inadequacy in order to adequately become successful!

Now is your time. Go get it! Don't settle for where you are or what has happened.

You *can* overcome your obstacles.

You *can* set a new standard.

You *can* reach your goals.

Once you realize you can survive a very difficult circumstance, you realize how powerful you truly are!

I'm rooting for you,

Tracy

Day 6:  
Commit to Excellence and Growth

I'm sad that many, if not most, people seem to settle for so little, seem to do as little as they can to get by, and seem to not take pride in who they are as people. If someone is watching, they will do well. If a promotion is at stake, they put in large effort for a couple of weeks and then stop. And if no one is paying attention, they cut corners and take the easy way out.

I agree that some days are lazy days.... I simply need a down day. But if I'm not careful, I can be pulled into this same mentality. Showing up for work in my pjs day after day (I work from home after all), pausing my work day to watch Oprah, or not giving a client my absolute best, just simply can't be tolerated. Why? Because I don't want to be mediocre. I want to be excellent! In order to be excellent, I need to give my best whether anyone is watching or not. I need to be self motivated to go the extra mile and to do more than I have to do. I don't want people to see me as a sloppy, lazy, complaining, corner cutter. And besides, staying in that role really isn't fun anyway. It may be "easier for a few days", but ultimately I would feel icky and sluggish. I'd rather be busy and living up to my highest potential!

I want to honor my family, my God, and myself by being on time, being productive, and looking good each day. I want my attitude to be positive so I can lift others. I want to be willing to do more than is required so that people learn to trust me with their needs.

You should be so full of excellence, that other people want what you have.

Excellence is rewarded!

We are in a very competitive environment now. With the advances of technology and world wide marketplace, we are competing with people all



over the globe. If we are not growing our skills, then we are falling behind. We should be constantly analyzing ourselves and our performance to see what we can do to improve. If I do this, I will be more effective, more skilled, and have a much greater impact.

Whether you have much or little, take good care of it. Even if your car is on its last breath, wash it and wax it. Show pride in yourself and your belongings.

When we wanted to buy acreage and build a new house, we had to sell everything we owned (our old house, our boat, an extra car) to have the money to put down. We would be so tight on money for a long while, that we would need to build the garage first and convert it to living space until we could build the main house. But because we had to sell everything, we wouldn't have a place to stay during the building process. My father-in-law was nice enough to loan us his small motorhome. I hated that motorhome....even though I was grateful for a place to stay... I still hated it. I was pregnant and large, and the space was so small only one person could walk down the aisle at a time. The property was wild still, complete with snakes and a dirt (no grass). The dirt from the outside kept coming into the motor home. Just when I got it cleaned, the door would open and someone would bring in more dirt. Looking back, it's almost laughable, but at the time it was pretty frustrating. Especially, having one child living in there with us and another about to be born any time. Yet, I cleaned that tiny broken motor home (that I hated) several times a day. I took pride in what little I had, believing that I would be blessed with more and more. I kept my standards high for my home, my car, my clothes, my work, and my life to the best that I could. Whether I had much or little didn't matter, I kept on doing what I needed to do. Now, that very same wild property has sod and a white fence and a pond... it's beautiful and peaceful and hopefully, snake free. The motorhome was replaced by living in the garage we built, and then that was replaced a few years later by a 6000 square foot house. Every inch of the way, I believed for more and committed myself to take care of whatever I was fortunate enough

to possess. I could have chosen to complain about my circumstances, to say “it's just going to get dirty again, so why should I care?”, but I didn't.

Another example was when I bought a bank owned property in one of the hardest hit areas by the recession. The reason it was bank owned was because the previous owners were shipped off to prison for drugs... if that tells you anything. This wasn't the best neighborhood or the best street, they had fallen on hard times. House after house was unkempt. Trash in the high grass of the yards. Broken down cars stacked like children's toys in the back yards. Graffiti drawn out in the alleyway.

I decided to fix up my new purchase to the best of my ability. I didn't have a lot of time (I would have to work on it each time I came to Indiana from Florida) and I didn't have a lot of cash to invest into it (after all there was a recession, so there would be lots of elbow grease and garage sale furniture finds). As I worked on the house it started to stand out from the other houses on the street. It may not have been much, but it was painted, mowed, and loved... and it stood out from the crowd as the jewel on the street, versus the old drug house it use to be. People were starting to talk and wonder about the new owners. We made friends. We set an example, that the rest of the street slowly started to follow. My favorite moment was when I took leftover house paint and walked into the alley to paint the ugly graffiti off a neighboring abandoned garage door. I didn't want to look at it anymore and my guess was that no one else liked looking at it either. As I was painting, the next door neighbor that I hadn't met before walked over.



“What are you doing?”, he asked.

“Painting this graffiti off, finally”, I answered.

“Why, it's not even your yard?”, he seemed perplexed.

“Well, because it look bad and makes our neighborhood look bad. Besides I hate looking at it, don't you?”, I questioned.

Long pause.

Then he answered slowly, “Yes. (pause) Yes, I do hate looking at it. I've just never seen anyone care about it. Tell you what, since you are painting the graffiti, I will clear out all the overgrown weeds in the alley.”

I looked at the weeds, taller than me by a few inches, and just as ugly as the graffiti.... “That would be really awesome! Look at us working together to fix things up!” I smiled and shook his hand.

That neighbor and I ended up exchanging phone numbers and pledging to keep an eye on each other's properties. I noticed that he started cleaning up his own yard and the lot next to his. And just like that, a positive vibe started and grew in our neighborhood. First on our street, then out a street or two, then spreading throughout the neighborhood. And it all started with some extra paint and just about ten minutes of time to paint over some graffiti.

You can be a positive example to others, or negative.

You can model attention to detail, or sloppiness.

Your can live a disciplined life, or an undisciplined one.

I want to go places higher than I ever dreamed of, so I've got to do my part to stir up the excellence within me. I can't make excuses, or blame my past, or settle for the rut that I am in... and trust me, I want to sometimes... I must move forward and do better. Take this challenge with me!

I want to strive to be a person of excellence and go the extra mile to do what's right, and even though I fail many times over again, I get back up and try again. I don't want to do what's right only because someone is watching me, or

making me. I want to do what's right because it makes me feel better, and be a better person, and encourage others to be better, too.

I don't drop the clothes on the rack at Old Navy and pretend I didn't see them fall, even though I'd like to. I walk that box of cereal I decided against, across Publix and put it back in its right spot, even though my head screams to put it down by the Pepsi and call it a day. If I see trash on the floor, I pick it up, even if that floor doesn't belong to me.

I want to be better than that, I know I can be better, so now I make it a conscious effort. I want to do the small things well, so I'm favored with the big things.

Don't do it for other people, be excellent for yourself. But realize that people watch even when you don't think they are. They will look to see how you handle situations, they may even promote you, befriend you, or bless you in some way... all because of what they saw in you.

Even if everyone else is late, cutting corners, and not caring, you should make the choice to commit to excellence. Stand out in the crowd! Distinguish yourself! Improve yourself over and over again.

You have to take responsibility for your own growth, it's not automatic. Are you reading books? Do you have mentors? Are you watching videos? Listening to educational audio books instead of the radio on your commutes? Going to seminars? What steps are you taking? How are you investing in yourself?

When you stop learning, you stop growing.

Do something intentional every single day to improve yourself. Don't settle...ever. You are better than that. You have too much in you to stay stuck where you are. Your destiny is waaaaay too great! There are new levels in your future. Things have now shifted in your favor! You are serious about

fulfilling your dreams! Every day you will spend learning, growing, improving, and preparing for the future you want.

Find someone that is where you want to be. Study them. Learn how to do what they do. Move upward, no matter the speed. Let them speak into you, learn from their mistakes, ask how they got where they are. Lay the foundation of a good education, good work habits, and a good attitude. Surround yourself with good people. Learn about who you are, what you are good at, and what makes you happy. Come up with your personal growth plan, something you can stick to, something concrete.

The next time you feel you are in the midst of life's challenges, when life is hard, instead of getting discouraged and developing a bad attitude, believe that something good is going to happen, because you are loved, deserving, special, caring, and favored. Expect it. Look for it every day. When you have an attitude of faith, and believe that good is showing up for you, it actually *does* show up for you. Your belief will turn your situation around. Keep on believing, expecting, declaring . You may not be able to see right now, but you must boldly claim that it's coming and you can feel it. Don't get discouraged. Don't give up. Keep having faith. It may take awhile, but it's coming. When you really believe that this favor on your life actually exist, and when you really start to see it actually happen in real life results, and you know that it available to you... you become confident. You can dare to be bold.

Do you feel that you don't really have what it takes to do what you are doing, and one day soon everyone is going to figure it out? That's okay! Everyone feels like that... not just you! When you push your limits, and get outside of your knowledge base and comfort zone, there's going to be a fear of not being able to pull this thing off. It's okay to feel fear and self doubt... just push through anyway!!

I know you can do it,  
Tracy

## Day 7: Serve Others

We've had a week together now and I have enjoyed my moment to speak into your life. I'm trusting that some of these words will Ignite Your Mind and also a spark in your spirit. The mental game of business and living a life well lived, is said to be 80% in our minds. Our belief in ourselves and our perspective and outlook, all shape who we are as people and where we are headed. Good news is that our thought life can be trained! We can improve by implementing just these seven traits I've sent to you this week. I hope you will pause over each one long enough to implement into your life before moving onto the next trait.

If you want to live a blessed and happy life, the key is to serve others. When you live this way, you help friends, volunteer in your community, take care of loved ones, and any of the hundreds of ways to be of help to others.

It's not something you are forced to do, it's who you are. You have an attitude of giving. You are not focused on yourself, but on others. As much as we have talked about defining your goals, going for it, and not letting anyone pull you down... the real arrival point is when you have done that and now can give back. Help lift people up in order for them to reach their goals, their dreams, and sort out their problems. You have to get your mind off of yourself. Don't get me wrong, I want to achieve every single life vision I have myself, but then I want to turn around and use the money I've made, the titles I've earned, and the knowledge I've accumulated to bless others. People have helped me along the way and now I can 'pay it forward' finally... and nothing... *nothing*... quite compares to *that*!!

One time, my dad was very ill and I was flying to Indiana to be with him and my family. My mind was in a million places. I was sad and anxious and not really in the mood to talk. My flight was delayed for three hours due to bad weather and my heart sank. I really, really want to get to my dad as soon as

possible. Defeated, I plopped myself down in the crowded waiting area and began to pull out my laptop to get some work done at least. A conversation started between myself and a couple sitting beside me. It started innocent enough: the weather, the delay, where they were from.... and at many points in the conversation I felt like looking down and declaring myself “busy”, and therefore able to avoid the chatty conversation that I just didn't feel up to having today. But then I reminded myself that this lady beside me, so eager to talk, could be meeting me for a reason. Perhaps, I needed to meet *her* today. Maybe there was an assignment here somewhere that I would miss. With an inward sigh I put my work away and turned towards the lady, letting her talk as long as she wanted. I tried hard to put forth a listening ear and a gentle smile. An hour later, she was in tears and hugging me. I had heard her life story and more importantly how she was in a job she hated. One way or another, through her life she had shut the door on her dream job of doing voice overs. She had felt that God had placed the gift and desire to do commercial voiceovers in her heart over 20 years ago, and she really wished she had given it a solid go. Out of all the people in the airport she may have bumped into that day and shared her story with (and I say this with goosebumps on my arms) she chose me. Me! The person who just so happens to have a whole company based around building a business around your dreams. I coach people on this very topic. I create business plans on this topic! Who better to talk to her and cheer her on? Tell me this isn't Karma :)

For the next hour, I encouraged her and laid out a solid plan that she could start the second her plane landed. “Thank you! Thank you!”, she said over and over again. But it was I that was thankful to her. I felt like a million dollars! Sure my stress over my dad was still there, but I was going to be upset about that no matter what. I could be upset and tired *and* helping someone, or just be upset and tired and not helping someone. The choice was mine. It was a big reminder that we all have opportunities, appointments, and people that cross our path for a reason. How could I possibly explain away the fact that there just happened to be a three hour delay, at the exact moment a lady needed a three hour pep talk, over the exact thing I specialize in? Coincidence? No way!

Be a big enough person to do something small for someone, even if you are not required, even if somebody else can do it, and even if you don't feel like doing it. Someone needs you. Someone needs what you have. Someone needs your smile, your hug, and your gifts. They need YOU.

When you serve others, there will be a satisfaction that money can't buy. You get so much more than you give. You feel joy, strength, peace, and love. Your problems somehow grow smaller and your life somehow grows bigger, and you are better off for it. The funny thing is that it seems counterintuitive. You think you want to spend the day on the couch marathon watching House Hunters. The last thing you think you want to do is help repair the garage of a neighbor you barely know. Yet, when you get there and are doing it, the very last place you'd be is anywhere else. That's the secret. That's the hidden treasure that most people never find. But you can! You can always be on the lookout for a person in need, for the opportunity to make a difference.





The fastest way out of a pit, is to do something for someone. Mow a lawn after work. Volunteer at the soup kitchen. Help the co-worker move out of her house. Sure you're tired. You would think working extra would make you exhausted. But it doesn't. You're refreshed, energized even!

When people come to me and they are worn out, tired, and at a crossroads, I always advise them to do two things 1) go on a road trip 2) serve someone. You have a new perspective on your life most times when you do just those two simple things. A new appreciation. A new zest. Sometimes you just need to step away from your own box for awhile.

Try it and see what I mean. Make this your lifestyle, not something you do 'every once in awhile'. It doesn't have to be a big deal, do something small

continuously. Smile at the crabby cashier. Hug the stranger you just met at the convenient store. Tell someone they look pretty. Send your friend a text saying you believe in them and love them. Make people smile.

The more you are willing to be humble and serve others, the higher you will go. People will like you. They will believe in you. They will feel your heart. But more than that, you will believe in yourself and what you stand for.

I have eight kids. I'm busy. I have to fight being too busy, too caught up in my own life to miss opportunities to help others. I have to work at it, just like you will. I've heard it said that life is divided into three phases: learn (school), earn (climbing the work ladder), and then return (giving back to others)...but, I don't want to chop of my life into sections like that... I want to *always be learning, always climbing, and always giving back.*

Glad to be living this life beside you,  
Tracy