Creative Juice

A Dozen Key Lessons for Creative Dreamers

by

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Lesson One: The Hallmarks of Genius

Recently, I had the great fortune to spend the day at the Vermont recording studio of a jazz musician named Chuck Eller. Chuck recorded my new Discover Your Soul Purpose meditation CD, and offered to provide some background piano music as well.

From the beginning, I knew the meditations needed some kind of scoring, but exactly what and how eluded me. There are no entries in the phone book for "Composer - Mystical, Healing, Background Stuff". Furthermore, I had no idea how I was going to 'direct' such a musician. ("More ... creative. No! More ... uh ... uh ... inspiring?") The whole thing was loose enough to be almost frightening.

Meanwhile, the clock was ticking and the meter was running.

Enter Chuck. From the moment he sat down to play, things rolled magically. I'd say, "OK, Chuck, in this part they have to be in a wildflower field." He'd think for a minute, and then just start playing the most quintessential wildflower music you've ever heard. Then I'd say,

"Now this part is warmer -- like The Waltons." And suddenly we'd be rocking on the front porch with John-boy and Grandpa. Chuck was able to play these musical inserts totally spontaneously (nothing was composed in advance.) And he ended at just the right spot almost every single time, without even knowing how long the music should be. He did this a remarkable 23 times!

The best part was listening to Chuck fool around on the piano between each recording we made, as he probed around for good musical ideas. We began to fade into the background as he went deeper and deeper into his creative trance. Almost sheepishly, he finally looked up and said, "You know, I could just do this all day."

Working with Chuck got me thinking about how accessible his 'creative channel' was for him -- and how many people we call geniuses share this trait, along with some other distinct qualities. Just for fun, I thought I'd catalog some of those characteristics that belong to geniuses … qualities many of us share in varying degrees. (By the way, these hallmarks can apply to geniuses across the board in business, science, etc.. I'm simply using artistic geniuses here to illustrate my points.)

1. **The Creative Channel is on all the time**. They simply have to tune in, and boom – they're off in that wonderful, rich creative place where inspiration lives.

2. **They feel things deeply … and need to express** it. I notice this particularly around my friends who are actors … their emotions run so freely and powerfully, that they feel everything twice as intensely. Furthermore, they let you know it.

3. **They have natural empathy**. Geniuses tend to know how you'd feel at any given moment, so they have a need to give away their feelings. An interviewer once asked Broadway composer Steven Sondheim if he could write a song about anything, and he replied, no – but that he *could* write about any*one*, as long as he knew who the character is.

4. **They find beauty in unlikely places the rest of us miss**. I'm thinking of the 19th century French artists Toulouse-Lautrec and Monet who found enduring beauty in common haystacks and down at the heels prostitutes. True geniuses love the bittersweet, the forgotten, the simple.

5. **They're not afraid to cry.** The creative genius knows that tears are the juice of life, whether they are tears of happiness, despair or simply deep relating.

6. **They're different and often pay a price for it**. Creative geniuses often have childhoods marked with ridicule or isolation. And those tough times can continue right on through adulthood, though modern times have made such non-conformity more acceptable. I'm thinking of people like Oscar Wilde, Frida Khalo, Orson Welles, Michael Jackson, Robert Mapplethorpe, and Andy Warhol.

7. **They are brave.** Many a genius is trained by social ostracism to be brave and strong in standing up for their work. They know their work is valid despite what the crowd says, and they stick by it steadfastly. And public opinions can sway, often long after the artist's death. Think of Vincent Van Gogh, who only sold two paintings in his entire lifetime.

8. **They are prolific.** Typically, creative geniuses are always creating. It's simply what they do. Cole Porter, for instance, wrote more than 800 songs. And he wrote them wherever he went: on luxury cruise decks, or weekend jaunts to the country. Porter, who was notoriously stoic, said he finished one of his songs while waiting for rescue, after his legs had been crushed by a horse.

9. **They simply can't do a half-baked job.** Look at all the geniuses of the world, like Michelangelo, who literally changed the world because they refused to

settle for less. In fact, Michelangelo was famous for literally eating and sleeping with his work, yet never being completely satisfied. About his work in the Sistine Chapel, he said; "I am no painter!"

10. **They love their work deeply.** For this example, I turn to my own father, John Falter, who was an artist. A friend asked once what he'd do if he could do absolutely anything in the world. He replied, "I'd go up to my studio and paint." For some artists, this love is the big one. Michelangelo, who never married, said: "I already have a wife who is too much for me; one who keeps me unceasingly struggling on. It is my art, and my works are my children."

Lesson Two: How Sex and Creativity Connect

This summer while working on various performance projects, I got some interesting new insights into the creative process. Specifically, I learned that it really is all about sex. It's like Deepak Chopra said in a lecture I attended years ago: "Creativity is ultimately sexual … I'm sorry – but it is!"

I couldn't agree more. I'd always had this sense that self-expression, passion and the stirrings of your soul were intertwined. But it wasn't until I spent a few months involved in Chicago, a show that was all about the bump and grind, that I really began to see the deep connection.

When I am performing or writing, and things are really going well, I find myself slipping into a wonderful, surging sea of release. The pure stream of expression coming out of me is so unscripted, free and authentic, that I could stay right there for hours, doing only that. I feel brilliant and strong, and wonderfully alive – as if I'm just exactly what I should be.

And, of course, the same is true about sex. Communication happens at high, peak levels. It's all perfectly sacred and profound, yet – at the same time -- the most normal thing in the world. I am happy and complete.

Here are some interesting parallels I've found between sex and creativity:

1. **It's all about surrender.** The more you can get out of your head, and simply let go, the further into your process you will go. And the grander the result will be.

2. **The real communication is entirely beyond words.** When an actor gets up to deliver a monologue, or a poet composes a sonnet, the words take you only half the way there. The rest happens between the lines, in the emotional truth with which it's delivered. Same with sex. And without that emotional truth… well, it's all a lot of hooey.

3. **The spiritual usually comes into play.** My belief is that all of this gets handed to us on that big Universal platter. And your choice is to accept or decline. So truly authentic creative or sexual endeavors can't help having a mystical or divine underlayer.

4. **You can't do it unless you really, truly want to.** OK, sure. You can fake your way into bed with a relative stranger, or stumble along writing a book you don't care about. But you're not going to sustain it. The sex will be cheap and easy; the manuscript will sputter and die. Why? Because you don't really, truly want to be there.

5. **Both require bravery.** Deep connections make us passionate lovers, and fearless communicators. We act from our most vulnerable spot; the little piece of ourselves that's most hidden and protected, yet full of the greatest power and truth.

6. **Lust makes you stupid. But love makes you wise.** I saw this little quote on a therapist's bulletin board, and it is so very true. When it comes to creating, the lust for glory and fame makes us do silly, inauthentic things we later regret. It's the same with lust for inappropriate people. On the other hand, when we get it right – boy, is it right! Authentic relationships and creative endeavors are fine, powerful teachers who leave us much wiser, and much stronger.

7. **You're not going to be satisfied until it's over.** Not pursuing that book, or business, or creative project that keeps bugging you is like walking away from sex mid-act. Beginning may be awkward; you may feel shy and vulnerable. But once you get going, the passion to continue takes hold and you simply cannot stop until you are complete. (On the other hand, you can walk away easily from half-baked acts of love or creative projects. That's how you know when it's the real thing.)

8. **The more you give, the more you get.** You're not going to have a knock-out painting exhibition if you hold back with the brush. Nor are you going to get

Lover of the Year if you lay back and simply wait to receive. Both require energy and the desire to give.

9. **Both make you feel much more alive.** Enough said.

10. **At their best, both are all wrapped up with love.** Both sex and creating require the generous, uninhibited sharing of your heart. And the more you can open your heart and let the floodgates open on your soul, the more profound will be your experience. And your impact.

Lesson Three: How (and Why) to Be Patient

Today's essay is all about waiting patiently. Before you roll your eyes, stifle a yawn, and keep on scrolling, hear me out … for there really is a marvelous benefit to all that patience.

Namely, you get to live your dream.

We all know that dreams take time to develop and fulfill. You may find yourself waiting for years for something that may or may not ever even happen. That's just the way it is when it comes to dream pursuit … and it isn't always easy.

Perhaps you recently flung yourself down on your bed, sobbing, because the fortieth rejection of your novel arrived. Or you might have decided to live on your credit card for six months while you try to get a break as an actor, and now creditors are calling. You could even be the person who just can't stay awake long enough at night to get your new business plan written … so you're convinced your dream just plain won't ever happen.

Yet, I am here to say it will. AS LONG AS you are supremely patient, and remember these few basic truths about successful dream pursuit.

1. **You must grow into your dream**. Believe it or not, just because you have the dream and are busily pursuing it, doesn't mean you're capable of living it yet. That only happens when you've become comfy enough with your personal power to fully inhabit your dream, and do what it requires.

   The sometimes slow process of fulfilling your dream actually trains you to do hard things, like handle rejection, take risks, become more intimate

with others, and use your full creative powers. Meanwhile, the Universe will kindly protect you from receiving all that good stuff until you are ready.

2. **Stop being patient and have fun, instead.** This is the only real reason there is to pursue your dream. Because the work feels guided, somehow, and personally validating; because it feels as if this is what you were born to do. And so, such work becomes one of the most fun and compelling things in your life.

   Concentrate on doing what your gut tells you to do, and dig into the process with relish. That takes your mind off the calendar, and then your work no longer feels so pressured.

3. **Drop your expectations.** Life is only really fulfilling when we let it surprise us. And dreams can do so wonderfully well. Yet, in order to be surprised, you have to let go of the clenched urge to know just how things are going to turn out. You have to give up control; you cannot, nor will you ever, be able to predict results. Heavy expectations usually leave you disappointed, not to mention creatively constipated.

4. **Keep the faith … and stay open.** And yet … sometimes bad results happen. Still, those can take you in unexpected directions that yield even greater rewards. Remember the story of Michelangelo's first job as an architect, on the façade of San Lorenzo (he got fired!) This brief setback actually led him to an entirely new career designing St. Peter's in Rome, and the Medici chapel, two of the greatest artistic achievements of that period.

5. **Don't treat your emotions as facts.** On a cold day in February five years ago, I lay on my bed, sobbing, convinced I would never publish my self-help book, reach my readers, or find my way out of an ill-suited temp job that I hated. I soggily asked my husband if I should just chuck it all, and go back to work doing this very thing I hated fulltime. Fortunately for me, he told me to stop being hysterical and keep plugging away on my dream.

   Five years later, I really am living my dream full time, simply because I didn't treat my momentary upset as factual proof that my dream was kaput. Remember – emotions are emotions; only facts are facts.

6. **Don't compare your progress with anyone else's**. Your dream is not a test of your self-worth. Instead, it is the playground of your soul, as well as your spiritual mission in life. So treat it as such, and stop playing the big shame tape every time someone else you know accomplishes more than you do.

In fact, another person's achievements have nothing to do with your path, your dream, and your karmic lessons in life. Assuming that they mean anything is simply a trick of your mind. So stop comparing, and get back to work.

7. **Remember how little you know.** I contend that our dreams are here for us to seize in small, digestible chunks. If we could really see the larger picture, and know where we'd be in five, ten or twenty years, we'd become overwhelmed instantly. So take what information you do get, and humbly stay your course. Just because it seems like nothing's ever going to happen DOES NOT MEAN that nothing ever will. It just means that today, that's how things look.

   In other words, remember … you haven't got a clue how this dream thing will turn out, and you can take all kinds of comfort in that, especially if you're busy having fun!

Lesson Four: How to Manage Rejection

Every summer I indulge a particular passion of mine: appearing in a musical with our local community theater group. There is an entire pack of us women-over-forty-who-must-act (we call ourselves the 'elder-babes',) and these shows are one of the high points of our year. This season's production is going to be no exception: we are doing "Chicago".

Now let me just say … I'm no dancer. Despite years of dance training in my youth, I tend to get up there and go left when everyone else is going right. No problem, I naively figured. I'd been taking jazz dance classes for an entire year, so how tough was this going to be? I blithely pulled on the fishnets and trotted off to the dance auditions.

Four hours later, I crawled home, assuming the worst. The routines had gone on for hours, every one of them mind-numbingly complex. Somehow, an entire legion of great dancers materialized out of nowhere, and whipped through each combination flawlessly. Meanwhile, I hid at the back behind my friend Leslie, a former Broadway hoofer, and tried feebly to follow along.

Call backs were the following weekend, and the ensuing week was pure, unadulterated hell. I violated every last rule I've spent all these years preaching about: I assumed I wouldn't be cast and whined ceaselessly to my husband about it. Then I angrily decided I would rise up and quit the audition process then and there. (After all, if I couldn't dance, what use could I possibly be to this

@*%&$(%! show?) Eventually, I calmed down a bit, but only because my thirteen year old daughter told me to get a grip.

I was, in fact, wrestling in the trenches with that old, familiar beast, Rejection. And at this point, Rejection was definitely winning. Its dark little mutterings were on pretty much 24/7, and it did its best to whip me down to the emotional size I was back at about … oh, maybe age twelve.

I was called back for one of the few non-dance roles in the show, and found myself fumbling through these auditions, too. I couldn't hit the very low notes the song required; my acting seemed lifeless and forced to me. I went home with tears in my eyes, convinced that this would be the first summer I wouldn't make it on stage.

The Rejection demons really moved in for the kill at that point. For the next two days, I dissolved into tears at the drop of the hat. I kept imagining all the great times the cast would be having without me. I buried myself deeper and deeper in self-pity. It was as if I couldn't turn off the ceaseless drone of my damning mind, no matter what I did. Finally, in a single moment of clarity, I turned to self-help.

I did the emotional freedom technique, which combines eye movements, and tapping on certain key meridian points in the body with affirming thoughts and sentences. I'd known of the technique, but had never done it before; still the time for it was obviously right. As I did the eft process, I felt a curious calm descend over me. "This is … weird," I told myself as I tapped below my eye, and on my chin. How could a little tapping undo an entire lifetime of vulnerability, humiliation, shame, and deep inner torment!?

When I completed the entire process twice, I became aware that I was suddenly 'okay' with the entire audition situation. It just plain seemed okay if I didn't get cast. I started thinking about selling tickets each night with Bonnie, our fun ticket chair, or maybe just sitting in the audience for a change. I started imagining a summer where I had plenty of time to laze around with the kids, or go on long boat rides with my husband. I started remembering how relaxed summer could actually be.

When I woke up the next day, the mood miraculously continued. Now it occurred to me that there might actually be some small non-dance roles in the show that I could take. And that I could do this and STILL have a relaxing, nurturing summer AND even be in the show with the other elder-babes. It struck me that I didn't have to be the star to have a valid experience with my beloved theater family. All I had to be was there, one way or another.

Like all stories of inner torment, this one had its lessons, too. I got to get over myself with eft, which is now my new favorite tool for such. And I got to remember why I really love my little theater company – not because of the big

moments in front of the audience (though those aren't bad either), but because of the whole theater company experience.

By the way, I just found out I did get a part … in the dance corps! Not only must the Gods be crazy, they clearly have a sense of humor, too.

TRY THIS: HANDS-ON EFT

Want to experience the power of the emotional freedom techniques for yourself? A fellow named Gary Craig, who put this technology together, has an excellent, resource-crammed site, with lots of free articles and reasonably-priced trainings, videos, etc.
http://www.emofree.com/

There is an even more concise, easy to work with technique, which is similar to EFT, called BSFF (Be Set Free Fast) at Joan Sotkin's Prosperity Place website. I've tried both, and I like this one just a little bit better. Joan's website also has a free sample to try from her home page at
http://www.prosperityplace.com

Lesson Five: A Great Way to Cut Expenses

One of the biggest challenges creative dreamers face when it's time to make their dream their livelihood is regulating cash flow. Typically we have lots of new business expenses, without enough income to meet them. One easy solution is to spend less – something many of us in the US, at least, find hard to do. And yet, it must be done. If that's you, read on; I think I've stumbled upon a great solution.

Recently, I decided to tighten my belt and start spending carefully for a change. Which for a relaxed, what-the-heck spender like myself was the equivalent to going into the desert for 40 days and 40 nights. In the past, such measures always dissolved in a puddle of good intentions. Even though I knew this was important and good to do… I just couldn't stick with the program. But this time, I've found a trick that works.

The first month, I simply tracked my expenses on two file cards in my wallet (one for business, one for personal.) Then last month, I paid my regular bills by check as usual. I also determined just how much cash I needed to live on

each week, based on my previous tracking, and withdrew such from the bank on an appointed, regular day: Wednesday. I also parked my credit card and my debit card in my desk drawer, so they'd be out of circulation. Then I carefully monitored as I spent.

As the month wore on, the cash ebbed and flowed. Some weeks I spent less than my weekly sum; some weeks I spent more. And now, at month's end, I found I actually kept to my budget quite well – and can donate the rest towards savings and my business.

The reason this works, I think, is because parking the plastic and paying cash is radical. Initially, I was pretty sure it wouldn't work. ("What about emergencies? What about last minute things for the kids? What about … impulse buys??") But I was so sick of financial ambiguity and sloppy spending that I did it anyway. And I was amazed.

The physical act of paying cash really does govern what you spend. When you have to pay $120 for groceries, you start thinking about whether you really need that extra large bag of premium potato chips, or the case of designer water. When you have to pay cash for the dentist (two fillings: $220) it occurs to you that you can actually shop for a dentist. Paying cash has a wonderful way of keeping you honest. And it makes you super conscious of details which previously might have left you cold. Last month I found myself not buying things which in the past had been bought without a second thought. This was power saving!

Paying cash is a great way to save money, which helps you meet financial goals like paying down a big credit card balance, or establishing a six month emergency savings fund to help you leave your non-dream day job. (Both steps I recommend taking in my new book, *Living Your Joy*.) At month's end I feel empowered, and gung-ho for another month of cash-only adventures.

One final note: my 9 and 13 year old children who've traditionally hit me for snacks, toys, and endless pairs of skin tight jeans (yes, I am the 'soft' parent) have stopped expecting handouts. And I'm proud to say, they've started working on their own ways to earn and save money. So there is a marvelous trickle down effect.

All this financial freedom takes is some commitment on your part, and the willingness to try doing things differently – as an experiment, or even a game. Try it, and you may find your dream gets funded a lot more quickly and easily.

PS. Don't forget: unless you finance your dream adequately, you can't reach the people you're here to reach. That's the power of your financial decisions.

Lesson Six: Avoid Creative Anorexia

Do you really believe you can have what you want? Or do you tend to operate with your feet in two camps -- one that says, 'I'm going out there and pursue my dream' and another that says, 'I'll also hedge my bets by doing something I don't love that much, just in case the dream thing doesn't work out.' This is what Persephone Zill, a coach I've worked with, would call "indirectness" and I'm here to say that it doesn't work.

I've spent a lot of time in life hedging my bets under the mistaken illusion that this is mature, business-like behavior. The real irony is that seldom have these supposedly businesslike ideas ever produced income or other results that I thought for sure they would.

The urge to hedge your bets often runs contrary to everything your gut instincts scream at you to do. For instance, say you want to be a teacher. Your instinct says 'Quit the job! Go get licensed! Be a teacher kids never forget!" Meanwhile, you hedge your bets by dedicating most of your energy to work that doesn't feed your soul, and taking a course here and there that never really moves you any closer to the dream. You justify your lack of action by insisting you can't afford to quit or alter your job, or deciding you don't want to change your lifestyle and live on a teacher's salary.

And yet ... what do you want?

Do you want the excuses, or do you want the results? Do you want a life that's halfway, but never all the way, to the dream? For a lot of us, the excuses, and the half-baked life are all we think we deserve.

We don't focus on getting what we want because somewhere along the way, we decided we don't deserve that much happiness and fulfillment. I trace my own inclination to think that way back to a pivotal lunch with my mother back in my senior year in high school, when she asked me what I wanted to do with my life. As I was about to answer, 'Be a singer or a writer,' she pointed a finger at me and announced triumphantly, 'Communications! You're going to be GREAT in communications!" Whereupon I promptly burst into tears, and went on to spend 18 years in advertising, 'communicating' and hating myself all the while.

Seeds get planted that should not have been allowed to grow; ideas get listened to that should have been ignored. We cast about looking for anyone else but ourselves to give us direction -- and yet, WE are the only ones who can give us the permission to really, truly, honestly create what we want in life.

We can do what we want, but only if we are brave enough to seize the initiative -- even if it means not listening to Mom and going it alone. The urge not to provide ourselves with what we need in life is a sort of creative anorexia,

deprivation that is all about a distorted picture of who we are and what we deserve. The real irony is that seldom do the contingency plans and hedged bets work out. During my entire career in advertising I never made half the salary that my other, more eager co-workers made. The simple fact was that I didn't want to be there, nor should I have been. Consequently, I couldn't produce the results that were expected of me.

Perhaps the road to what you want won't be fast, easy or lined with gold, but it will be one hundred percent honest. And that provides riches you can't even begin to count. So get out there, make a transitional plan you can stick to, and begin to do what you want. I'm here to say that you do, indeed, deserve it.

TRY THIS: What do you think you deserve?

To learn more about how much (or how little) you think you deserve, here are a few questions to answer. (Scoring is at the bottom of this section.)

1. When offered a sumptuous dessert after a great meal in your honor, you
   a) insist you're full, even if you're not. (All the while watching everyone else eat it, wishing you'd said yes.)
   b) sit in tortured indecision about the dessert, until you finally pass it up because that's what everyone else is doing. (Later, you think about it with a pang.)
   c) decide the diet can go just this once – and dig in, gratefully, knowing you can work off the calories with extra exercise tomorrow.
   d) automatically decide that since you never eat dessert (even though you love it), you'll miss this one, too.

2. You tend to earn
   a) just enough money to eke out a living, though you do rack up regular credit card debt
   b) more money than you need … but you spend more than you should, so you end up with little at month's end
   c) adequate money for your needs, savings, investments, etc.
   d) less than you'd like, but not dramatically so. At least some savings programs, etc. are in place

3. When it comes to finishing your creative projects, you tend to

a) work on them endlessly without the satisfaction of completion. (Darn things are never quite good enough.)
b) throw away or drop most every project you start. (Whom are you kidding, anyway?)
c) push through to the bitter end, even when the going is tough. You've even mustered up the courage to submit some of your work to professional venues.
d) always back off near the end, leaving the work hanging, unfinished. But you WILL get to it someday. Hopefully.

4. Your friends tend to be
   a) few and far between. (Nobody really understands you.)
   b) a competitive bunch with whom you're afraid to share your most vulnerable feelings, dreams, etc. (You'd never ask them for support!)
   c) honest-to-God allies full of support for your creative dreams and projects. You feel blessed.
   d) divided between those who are critical and those who are soundly in your corner. Sometimes it seems the nay-sayers win out.

5. When it comes to your dreams in life, your spouse or partner is usually
   a) annoyed most of the time, so you don't mention them much
   b) closed-mouth, but not vocally protesting all the time, either
   c) squarely in your corner, taking actions that actively support your dream
   d) worried you're going to 'take the leap' and change your life so radically they can't keep up or adjust. But you haven't really talked about it with them in earnest.

6. Your day job or main source of income is
   a) best described as toxic … and there appears to be no way out
   b) barely tolerable, but at least provides some pretty good money
   c) a workable fit for your dreams right now, though it may change in the future
   d) something you really have to change, but not until you're ready – which isn't quite yet

Scoring:
If you answered mostly a) or b), you're probably putting up with a whole lot of 'tolerations' as the late coaching guru Thomas Leonard put it. Perhaps it's time to redesign your life to really put some commitment into living your dream.

If you answered mostly c) you've already decided you deserve a lot – and have set up your life accordingly. Good for you!

If you answered mostly d), you're on your way to a sense of deserving more, but still need to work on it.

Wherever you fall on the spectrum, believe it when we tell you …. You ARE worth it!

Lesson Seven: Sure-Fire Creativity Inducers

Occasionally the creative soul feels a bit stiff and scratchy. You know the signs: you can't remember the last time you slipped into a good creative trance. You're feeling like you're nowhere on your creative project. Somehow you find yourself so muddled in the day to day living of life, you simply haven't got time for the fun stuff.

That's when it's time for radical action … specifically, a few sure-fire creativity inducers. These are my own tips on different joyful acts you can take that will restart your engines and get you rolling once again. Mind you, not everyone will cotton to all of them. That's fine. The goal is for you to find the ones you resonate with, so you can pull them out whenever needed. I've dabbled in all of these and have found each one rich in its own right.

African Drumming

OK, I know … you're not the "drumming type." Neither was I – until I tried it. This is just about one of the most fun things you can do with your clothes on, because the rhythm just begins to pour through you. (Even if you have no drumming experience. I promise!) Drumming studios have drums, teach you how, and help you find other drummers to practice with in drumming circles. Great for relieving tension, and just plain having fun! This one's especially great if you sit at a computer all day long, and feel pretty much welded to it at the end of the day. You have to do this work 'live', so you're out there, pounding away, in the real world, not the virtual one.

You can find a group or a teacher at a great British website, African-Drumbeat that lists such for UK, USA, Canada and Australia. Go to http://www.african-drumbeat.co.uk/us-teach.htm

Dance

In the last six months I've gotten seriously back into dance for exercise – and I find it really gets all my creative juices flowing. I love jazz, rhythm tap, tango, tribal, and just about anything that gets you to improvise a little. Heck, if you get into the African drumming above, you may even want to visit a few African dance classes. They're great! (And wonderful for your lower back!)

Here are some links I like:

http://www.fcbd.com/ is the home of **Fat Chance Belly Dance** in California. Their video is terrific, and the also sell scarves, finger cymbals, etc., to complete the experience.

Tango is dance that's all about seduction, flirtation and great stuff like that. (Check out the independent film, Strictly Ballroom, for some great Latin-inspired dance scenes that will get you going.) I found numerous sites dedicated to tango in different parts of the country just running a Google search on "tango instruction". Finally, while I haven't tried out these videos, I'm intrigued by Christy Lane's videos at http://www.christylane.com/videos.htm that teach everything from 70's dance (remember '**the bump'**?) to African and swing.

My own tried and true dance solution is to put on a compilation CD of great music and cut loose in the living room. (I add a rebounder or mini trampoline that I jump on part of the time just to get me really moving and exuding.) Your children will laugh at you, but so what … you'll be more creative for it! (If they're old enough, get THEM to make the compilation CD, and they may not laugh quite as much.)

Visual Art

World of Watercolor is a jam packed on-line magazine that guides you towards all kinds of watercolor resources. I really like this medium in particular because it's loose, and spontaneous – you don't have to even know how to draw to create great effects. (Sometimes it's better if you don't!) Go to http://worldofwatercolor.com/features.htm

You might also check in with your local art school to see if they have a **Croakie class.** This is quick sketches you do with a charcoal pencil, usually of a live nude model who changes position every five minutes. So you don't' have time to focus on your bad drawing – but instead, can learn how to get the picture with the big strokes. Great for loosening up perfectionist instincts.

Another intriguing option is Japanese or Chinese brush painting, which just focuses on creating a Zen-like relationship with the black ink, the white paper and the form you wish to illustrate. There's an interesting book at amazon.com about this: **Chinese Brush Painting Step by Step: Step by Step** by Kwan Jung.

Performing

Nothing beats **open-mike night at the stand-up comedy clubs** for putting you straight out on the creative edge. You either kill or are killed, to put it in trade lingo. An open mike nights are your opportunity to test ideas, try out new stuff, and give yourself a mental goose. Remember – just getting up there is triumph enough! (If you don't know where to go, start with 'Comedy Clubs' in the Yellow pages.)

I also like **community theater** and **choral singing** for getting you off the couch and out into the creative realm. (This is also far less intimidating for many of us, than standing up alone and trying to entertain an audience.) You can find choruses in just about any church, and in most communities. Best of all – you don't have to be a terrific singer, but just a willing one. This is a great tool for those who tend to be shy or isolated. As for community theater, simply take care that you don't find yourself committing too many hours to a production, or you'll lose valuable time on your dream (unless it happens to BE performing in community theater!) At any rate, it's an excellent confidence booster and helps you learn to overcome many fears.

Meditation

Now this is one of those things you simply have to commit to, regularly, in order to see a net effect. Meditation is fantastically grounding and opens us up to receive much good information about our dream … if we allow ourselves to do it often enough. The press of life is often so great that 'just sitting there, doing nothing' seems laughably self-indulgent … and unnecessary! In fact, this could be the most important 20 minutes of your day, if you'd just commit to it. No special technique is needed. Here are some helpful Do's and Don'ts:

TRY THIS: The Do's and Don't of Meditation

The Do's …

Do check in regularly with God, or whom ever you recognize that great big Source to be.

Do allow yourself enough time to get still and relaxed.

Do let the answering machine pick up.

Do notify others around you that you need some quiet time

Do sit on a pillow or cushion if you're seated on the floor that's high enough to let your knees naturally slope towards the floor; this supports you back.

Do keep a sweater or shawl nearby in case you get cold.

Do take everything off your lap.

Do keep a notebook, pen, tape recorder, or an instant messager nearby if you want to make a few notes or do some automatic writing.

Do allow your body to move or sway if you so desire.

Do be patient and allow your practice to improve over time.

Do fully extinguish all flames and burning embers when you are finished meditating.

Do remember to say thanks.

and the Don'ts….

Don't worry about the chatter in your head; it will come and go. Instead focus on relaxing enough to keep emptying out your thoughts.

Don't decide that you 'just can't meditate' or that you'll never get it right. Meditation is a 'practice', meaning this activity is only practiced at and never perfected.

Don't play a radio, television, or music anywhere near by (the only exception are guided meditation tapes.) Turn it all off.

Don't wear a watch.

Don't wear constricting clothes, or unfasten them while you meditate.

Don't expect to solve any particular problems; instead stay open to the possibility that you'll get your answers when the time is right.

Don't have alcohol or caffeine within four hours of meditating.

Don't leave nearby windows open if candles, herbs, incense, or anything is burning. (I personally witnessed an altar go up in flames during a yoga class,

due to a breeze fanning incense embers.) In fact, avoid open flames, especially if you have a tendency to nod off while meditating.

You can use meditation to tap deep wellsprings of information you have that you may not even know about. For instance, meditation can help you learn more about what I call your Soul Purpose in life. You can learn more about this program at www.howmuchjoy.com/soulpurpose.html.

Lesson Eight: Take Your Dream to Lunch

What did you have for lunch today?

Was it a container of yogurt and half the contents of your 'in' box? Maybe you took in a meeting and skipped lunch altogether, until you lifted your head at 3:30 and ran downstairs for a candy bar and an apple (your nod to nutrition.) Or was lunch yet another escape from a job you hate with some fellow disgruntled employees? If so, was vitriol served alongside the hamburgers?

On the other hand, maybe you used your lunch hour to chip away at your dreams. I've recently taken the somewhat dangerous position that one of the best times of day to do the work of your dreams is during your lunch hour. While the concept may seem radical – What? Do my painting/practicing/blue sky brainstorming right here... at my DESK? You godda be CRAZY! – there is a certain logic to it.

Look at it this way. If you are like some people who read this newsletter, you work all day and then come home too tired at night to really put that much energy into your dream. Or perhaps you get up at the crack of dawn, all set to write or compose or paint, and suddenly a child appears in the doorway, wanting an especially early story read to them. On the other hand, lunch hour is technically your time, and its purpose is to stop, take a break, and refresh your spirit. What better way than to spend your lunch hour than on the work of your soul?

Now you may be involved in something like tap dancing or chain-saw sculpting that could be a tad disruptive at work. No problem. Find a nearby place to do your work. Major cities have rehearsal and even art studios to rent by the hour. Suburbs have church and temple halls you can usually borrow if they're unused. The key here is to be resourceful and use your imagination. Let your mind wander to the place or the means to do what you've got to do. A friend of mine used to use an unused furniture store room at his company to

practice tai chi every hour at lunch. Or use the lunch hour to do the quiet work of your dream -- the planning, the research, the marketing, etc.

On the other hand, it may just be plain hard to create in your fluorescent office environment with phones ringing and interruptions galore. You may be afraid to close your door while you work, or you may not even have a door. That's when it pays to walk over to the public library, a friend's office conference room, a park or nearby office lobby with a public space in it -- or anywhere where you can reasonably sit and do your work for a while.

I discovered this option when I worked in Times Square and began to hang around in the Starbucks on Eighth Avenue and 43rd Street. A remarkable number of people from my office drifted in there at lunch hour, and there we'd sit, steadfastly ignoring each other, each of us bent over pieces of writing, or business plans, or sketches we were working on. The remarkable thing was that even though this was 'work', its very essence was as refreshing as taking a long, cool walk. Inevitably, I'd come back to work with renewed vigor, ready to face the day.

So what about lunch?

Bring it. That's the only way this particular plan works, because you have to watch the clock when you do this midday work-fest. An hour goes by fast when you're deep in your dream, so you don't want any of it chewed up by waiting in line for a tunafish sandwich. Better to get yourself some sort of lunch box, stock it, and stow it in the company fridge each day. (Enough companies have microwaves that you might even score a hot lunch this way.) Then eat it as your desk before or after you tackle your dream.

At any rate, do remember: it's your lunch hour. You earned it, and you get to use it. Don't ever let anyone persuade you otherwise. Furthermore, you'll be more productive the rest of the day by properly taking care of yourself in the first place. Finally, if the concept of using any lunch hours at all for your dream seems impossible, then you are probably working too hard. That's when it's time to reevaluate your job -- not your dream.

You may even find that once you begin to have your dream for lunch on a regular basis, other assorted dreamers may seek you out and offer support and encouragement. You might even want to start an unofficial group, like a Lunchtime Joy Group, meeting every few weeks to check in on each other's progress and offer encouragement.

Take your dream to lunch and see what happens. If nothing else, balance may miraculously return to your life.

Lesson Nine: Just Ask

Recently, I had a fantastic crisis. It was fantastic because not only did disaster NOT strike, but it reminded me of a truth as old as the hills: when all seems lost, just ask.

Currently, I am in the throws of doing lots of radio interviews to promote the new Ballantine edition of my book. And the worst thing that can possibly happen to an author (and a publicist) happened. I forgot an interview. It was just one of those mornings when I had a houseful of guests. In fact, I was busy serving blueberry pancakes when it struck me that something was wrong ... something was very wrong. Just like Miss Clavel in Madeline, I ran fast and faster, trying to figure out the disaster. When I reached my upstairs office, I fumbled through my file and saw that I'd been scheduled for an interview on a Colorado radio station at 9:05 AM, and it was not 10:05 AM! I could feel the bottom of my stomach drop out.

How was I going to face Joanne, my beloved, trusted publicist who had worked so hard to schedule the interview? And how was I going to face the folks at Ballantine who were counting on me to show up and do my part? I just stood there, doing my best to curse quietly so the children, and houseguests, wouldn't hear me.

For a good twenty minutes, I hung around my office avoiding calling Joanne. Blueberry pancakes and my houseguests were totally forgotten. Instead, my mind was full of excuses, which The Big G kept patiently answering. The conversation went like this:

ME: It was only 7AM on the West Coast. I can't call NOW.

THE BIG G: Joanne would be at work already, as she has to be on East Coast time often to do her job

ME: I've already blown it, right? So why bother calling anyone?

THE BIG G: You never know, Suzanne.

ME: I just can't tell her... I can't. She'll kill me.

THE BIG G: Joanne will not kill you. She'll help you.

ME: But remember the other time -- when the station gave my publicist the wrong time? Remember how mad the DJ was when I got him on the phone? This guy will yell at me!

THE BIG G: Everyone's different, dear.

Finally, I called. Joanne was not mad and certainly did not try to leap through the phone and kill me. In fact, she was the essence of grace under

pressure and said, quite sanely, "The host is a really nice guy. Call him up. He'll probably put you on."

So I girded my loins again, dialed, and explained to the man why I was an hour and twenty minutes late. "Can you hold on?" he asked, and two minutes later I was doing the interview, marveling at the fact that all I had to do was ask.

So often we assume we 'know' how it's all going to turn out. We're completely certain of future results, and base our information on previous circumstances that have little to do with the here and now. I'm here to say that we don't necessarily know a thing -- all we can do is ask and try, ask and try, no matter how scary it seems. Otherwise, the only certainty is that we've once again caved into our fear and stayed stuck, instead of moving forward.

Or, as the sign my friend Ellen Nalle used to have above her desk said, "Just Ask".

After my interview, I called Joanne back and told her how it all turned out. "This is so great!" I gushed, "I can write about it in the Joy Letter." "Fine," Joanne replied. "But don't miss anymore interviews, okay? Even for your newsletter.

Lesson Ten: What Skiing Can Teach You about Your Dreams

Lately, I've been thinking a lot about skiing, and how it relates to life. You tend to get pretty philosophical after you've found yourself seated not once but a dozen times while trying to learn how to ski moguls, which are bumps in the snow that form after lots of skiers before you carve turns in a nice, snowy hill. Like life, one must learn to negotiate the bumps, so one must learn to ski moguls.

Lesson #1: You can't improve without landing on your can from time to time.

So why, at age 43, am I even trying to ski bumps when the rest of my middle-aged lady friends are happy on the lovely, flat, groomed trails with nary a flake out of place? Because I can no longer ski with my children or my husband, and so am being forced to improve.

Lesson #2: Learn the hard stuff while you're still young.

I learned how to ski thirteen years ago when I married a skier. My ability level rose to intermediate, and stayed parked there for the last eleven years. It

always seemed too hard and too scary to ski the advanced 'black diamond' trails, with their steep embankments and their unexpected outcroppings of bumps. Navigating the moguls in particular seemed impossible to me. Yet, ironically enough, this is what my husband and my eleven-year-old daughter love to ski the most.

Lesson #3: Whatever your resist in life will eventually come to haunt you.

To remedy my problem, I decided to face it head on. I invited my daughter to go up to the mountain with me on a Saturday, and teach me how to get down the stuff she loves, and she graciously agreed. We got off the chair lift, and she led me to her favorite field of moguls, a trail innocently enough called MacKenzie. "Just ski it," she advised, and set off to prove her point, zipping this way and that through the first patch of moguls, three-footers that defied any kind of skiing logic I could come up with. I had no idea how I was going to 'just ski it.'

That's when the words of my friend Christine, a former ski instructor, came back to me: "Don't look at the trail below you. Just figure out where you're going to turn first. Then look for your next turn, and your next. Pretty soon you'll be down it."

Historically, I'd always stood at the top of a hard trail, nursed a good five to ten minutes of panic, then made a decision I couldn't ski the thing, and promptly slid my way down to the bottom, mostly on my butt. Or I defiantly took my skis off and walked down along the edge. Or I harangued my husband for a good few minutes. Never, once, had I just calmly tried it.

"Let's go, Mom!" called Teal, waiting patiently. So I set off, looking for the spot for each turn I could make. I turned once and my skis, quite improbably went up over a mogul, down it, and around the next one. I turned again, and set my sites on the next turn. Again and again, I kept finding the next turn -- and suddenly it dawned on me. Not only was I skiing the dreaded moguls, it was exactly like pursuing your dreams.

We want to stand at the top of our particular challenge, and scope out exactly how we're going to make it work. But we can't really know that until we're deep in the middle of the work. The greater the challenge, the more you must rely on your gut wisdom to carry you through, telling you where to turn and what to do next. You cannot stand at the top of the run and figure it all out in advance. Life simply doesn't work that way.

Lesson #4: Trust yourself -- <u>especially</u> on the scary stuff.

I found my way down MacKenzie that morning with surprising ease. I fell a few times but somehow the automatic Voice of Resounding Shame didn't

resound quite as loudly. And I learned another amazing thing: if you're skiing under control, when you fall on a steep slope, you can pop right back up again. In the past, when I'd skied the Beginner and Intermediate terrain, getting up again was hell. I'd have to take off a ski, get on my hands and knees, and struggle upright again. But here, the angle of the mountain, or possibly my adrenaline, literally pushed me right back to my feet.

Again, my mind went to life parallels, and I thought of the way we respond when we're deep in pursuit of our dreams. The stronger our commitment, the faster we get right back to work after we hit a snag. We simply want to feel that magical flow again.

Lesson #5: The steeper the challenge, the faster you get back on your feet.

Whether you ski or not, challenges most certainly await in some corner of your life. I invite you to ski straight into them, and just keep looking for where to turn next. If you keep your course steady and methodical, and you don't start racing out of control, even your falls will provide moments of quiet strength.

Happy trails.

Lesson Eleven: How to Make a Comeback

One month ago, a wildfire tore through 500 acres of field and forest at the edge of our small town on Lake Champlain. A spark from a passing Amtrak train ignited grass, dry from a three-week drought. In the twelve hours that followed, volunteer firemen and just about any other able body who saw the smoke and showed up fought back thirty foot walls of flames, carrying metal tanks of anti-inflammitant on their backs. Two neighboring farms were spared, though in some places the fire moved right up within a few feet of farmhouses and barns.

In the end, all that was left behind was scorched earth, and stands of dead trees and bushes. The normally verdant spring landscape, one of wildflower meadows, soaring blackbirds, and purple mountains in the distance, looked like a war zone. As far as the wildlife was concerned, it probably was one.

Yet, amazingly enough, this story does not end badly. One week after the fire, I forced myself to ride my bike past the scene of the fire -- a place I'd been avoiding because it had looked so very bleak and lifeless. Yet, I was amazed to see green, admittedly small bits of it, but signs of life nonetheless. The fields were already making a comeback.

In the last month, I've ridden my bike past those fields repeatedly, and watched as they have returned, quickly moving from a sea of black with sprigs of green to lush fields in full summer bloom. Here and there, burned, dead brush sticks up, a reminder, like nothing more than scars on a child's knee. There are dead trees around the edges of the forest, but the remaining core of the woods is still in full-leaf, deep and green. And slowly, over time, new trees will grow, and sprigs of new brush and shrubbery will begin covering the skeletons left behind. The comeback of this acreage is nothing less than miraculous; it teaches us a lesson about ourselves.

How often have you suffered through a devastation, convinced that some significant part of your life was now over and you would never, ever be healed. And then, through the miracle of time, you did heal. Things slowly began to go right again; wounds were licked. Life began chugging along again in third gear. And over time, the remaining bumps and scars became part of your lore -- the essential truths that define who you are.

The wildfire left behind a legacy of the day everything stopped, and most of the adults and half the teenagers went off to fight it. It left behind not only dead wood, but a story sure to be told to children, summer people, and anyone else listening, ten, twenty or forty years from now. Just as fire clears a field, making it fertile and rich for new growth, crisis gives us a measure of our character. The reason the story of the wildfire will be told is not only because of its inherent drama, but because growth happened -- for the fields and the people who tend them. The town pulled together and put out the fire, saving farms, livestock, wildlife. This is not the first crisis our town has weathered, but as with all of them, it has been left richer for the experience.

Think of this the next time your dream lets you down (and it will, sooner or later, for dreams usually do as they unfold.) Remember that this, too, is part of your cycle of growth. Just as a field reseeds itself and gives way to the grasses of summer once again, so can you. If nothing else, the crisis has left you stronger, more capable of knowing just what you can do, ready for tremendous growth.

Lesson Twelve: Protecting Your Dream at Dysfunctional Family Get-Togethers

If you are someone who cringes at the thought of big family get-togethers, this essay is for you. Not all of us are blessed with families of origin that really honor our unique creative gifts … some are even downright hostile about them. We

may love these folks in a visceral way, even when they kick sand on their dreams, and if that's the case, we need support.

You know what I mean if you've ever been mercilessly teased over turkey for that thing you do that nobody else in the family can relate to. Or if you get questions like "Are you STILL just writing?" The problem is that many of us grew up with unique gifts, all the while surrounded by people who were either jealous of them, didn't understand them, or were threatened by them. We may still even have Mom or Dad's speech in our heads, decrying our decision to become an artist, a coach, or an entrepreneur. ("Think of your FUTURE! You're throwing away a perfectly good career!") We may be afraid our dreams will die if we expose them to a family we still care very much about.

If that's the case, take heart. Your holiday visit doesn't have to be a slash and burn party at your expense; in fact, you can even use it to feed your dreams. (Think of it as a growth experience.) While I'm no therapist, I have given the matter a fair amount of thought. Here are some key points I've uncovered, that should help you stay cool, and keep your dream strong and healthy,

1. **Remember that you're not here to live up to anyone else's expectations.** In fact, you're really just here to live your own unique purpose in life (see "Discover Your Soul Purpose" under 'Joy Sendings' below.) You were given your own, particular set of gifts for a reason that is much bigger than any family could ever be.

2. **Hold your work as sacred.** That means don't share it with just any Tom, Dick or Harry until it's the right time. If you're working on a book, and you haven't shown it to anyone else yet, why mention it to a sibling or parent who's likely to be jealous or cruel? Protect that work like the tenderest baby, and DO NOT bring it out into the world until it is developed enough to make the passage safely. This is your responsibility as creator.

3. **Interpret criticism, jealousy, and sarcasm as a good sign**. It could be that your dream is taking you out into the world a bit more, so you're likely to be seen by limiting figures from your past as arrogant, self-involved, or pushy. Students who recently completed our Coming Out of Hiding class report that those who liked keeping them small in the past don't have much patience with their bigger, truer selves…. And that's great! It means progress is being made.

4. **Don't gossip about the others.** In fact, while you're at it, rise above all snipes, jabs, and other acts of pettiness. Don't let yourself slip into an argument or

snit that will drain the life, energy and happiness right out of the festivities. Honestly – it's not worth it. Furthermore, you have to save your energy for your dream, remember? That way you can return home renewed and ready to work, instead of feeling run over by a truck.

5. **Try a little empathy.** Ideally, one should be able to regard the dysfunctional relatives with compassion. Often these are people without a dream whose lives are small enough, and sad enough, that they actually get pleasure attempting to bring people down to their level. They actually deserve a fair amount of pity – but not too much, mind you.

6. **Assume a happy mask of detachment**, just the way you would if you were a seasoned customer service rep who's used to difficult clients. That's the best defense when the vipers are at it, because though it's tough to do, it really leaves you feeling clean and whole on the drive home.

7. **Stop hoping for acceptance.** You'll probably be disappointed. Short of catastrophic illness, a death in the family, big-time counseling, or a major disaster, little can change deep-seated, dysfunctional family patterns. In fact, you and your dream may never be accepted by certain family members; they just haven't got the mental space to embrace it. AND THAT IS NO REFLECTION ON YOU … it's simply an annoying reality that must be dealt with, like death, taxes and other human inconveniences. Remember, you're still right where you should be … even without their approval.

8. **Don't be smug.** You don't have to be. You've got your path and your dream; you can actually see and live the possibilities of the live you've always wanted. Others may not be able to share that vision

9. **Go have a good primal scream**. Or better yet, go see an art exhibit, or a movie, or take a hike, or have a latte … alone. Create a little time for you to just enjoy your own company and gather your wits again. Journaling is a nice addition to the process – you can even use the time to chip away at your dream. If others wonder where you're off to, just tell them you 'have to take care of something.' And you do… you have to take care of yourself.

10. **Remember to breathe.** If you find yourself in a tense conversation, stop for a moment before getting plugged in and responding … and just breathe. You will automatically be able to get your grounding back, and remember good

things, like the fact that you're an independent spirit with an important dream.

11. **Find an ally**. Not to bitch and moan about the others, but simply to shore up your sagging spirit. This may be someone in your family, an old buddy from high school who still lives near home, or a good friend you can sneak off and call. It helps to have one friendly voice amidst the fray.

12. **Limit your visit.** Need I say more? And while you're at it, bring along this list. It may just come in handy.

TRY THIS: The True Supporter Litmus Test

Want to get clear on who supports your dream, and who doesn't? Try this little quiz. Think of a specific person, then answer the question with them in mind. Answers at the bottom may shed some insight.

1. Do they ask about your dream only when they've truly run out of all other possible conversation topics?

2. Do they tend to burst into their story/experience/wisdom/advice the minute you reply … instead of really listening? (In other words, is he or she incapable of keeping the conversation on anyone but himself.)

3. Do they say things about your dream like "Are you sure that's a good idea?" or "I'd be careful if I were you," or even "You've got to be kidding!" … even though they know nothing about the work your dream involves?

4. Are they visibly uncomfortable when you discuss your dream?

5. Do they make sarcastic jokes about your dream, and your ability to accomplish it?

6. Do they get a glazed look of boredom on their face when you bring it up?

7. Do they always forget about this important part of your life?

8. Do you know for a fact they've gossiped about you behind your back?

9. Do they tend to correct you – even in public situations?

10. Do they send sweet messages with undercutting barbs imbedded in them?

11. Are you afraid to mention such behaviors make you uncomfortable?

12. Do you find yourself unwilling to discuss your dream with them, because you know they just won't get it?

13. Do they tend to doubt you and your abilities?

If your replies tend to be more 'yes' than 'no', better find a new source for dream support, and keep this relationship focused on other things. If you answered most of the questions no, send this person a big, fat holiday gift from the heart and give them your copious thanks!

TRY THIS, TOO: Finding the Ideal Dream Supporter

The perfect person (or people) to support your dream doesn't have to be a blood relative, or even your spouse. Where they figure into your life isn't insignificant; it's how they do that counts! Make it someone who really is your personal ally, and has the following characteristics:

- A good listener
- Someone who genuinely cares about you and your path in life
- A good communicator who will tell you what they think, even when it's a different opinion than yours
- A fair-minded person with a strong sense of right
- A gentle critic
- Someone who is not likely to be jealous or intimidated
- A thoughtful soul who takes their time to form an opinion
- Someone who believes that you can achieve what you want – simply because you're you
- Someone who refuses to give up on you dream … even when you're teetering in that direction

Many of these essays originally appeared in The Joy Letter, a free, bi-weekly ezine by Suzanne Falter-Barns that gives you practical tips and tools for living your dream. Register at http://www.howmuchjoy.comjoyletter.html and receive a free copy of my report, 30 Guaranteed Time Savers when you do… our thank you to you!