

The Seven Secrets to Building a Great Life

Are you where you were a year ago?

And the year before?

And the year before that?

Here's how to Change:

Sarah rushed in late, again and waved away my suggestion that she pick up a tea before we settled in.

“I just can’t seem to get anywhere. That client called again and just like last time they started in on....”

I kind of tuned her out here. I’ve heard this story before. I love Sarah, don’t get me wrong, but I’m tired of hearing the same problems over and over. For years. Every suggestion I made resulted in Sarah saying, “That makes sense, but I can’t do it this week, I’m swamped/I’m broke/my clients won’t go for it/ I need money now.”

I tuned back in time to hear, “What do you think I should do?”

I should probably give you a little back ground. I was just like Sarah 5 years ago. I had a service business, Crystal Clear Bookkeeping. I was in the same rut trying to wrangle clients, putting out fires, and wanting to do so much more. She and I and a few others used to swap these stories.

I realized after several years, that I didn’t want to live like that anymore. I saw other people moving on and I wanted to be like them. I wanted to do great things with my life.

I knew the answer for her, but she wasn’t able to hear it until she was ready. That’s because the answer isn’t one thing, it’s a journey; one that takes time; and growth; and courage, lots of courage.

It's a journey that took me years as I read the books, took courses, surrounded myself with like minded people, pushed my limits and made progress. Sometimes I failed. Two steps forward and one step back. The important thing was that I kept moving forward. It's not easy and it's not fast but, if I can, you can do it too.

You are going to have to make some really big breakthroughs

1. Courage. I've done some pretty courageous things so when a friend told me I was hesitating to take a big step because I lacked courage, I didn't believe her at first. Once I did, I was able to apply what I learned and took some pretty big steps. Johnny B Truant says there is no such thing as failure, only quitting. It takes courage to keep going in the face of what looks like failure. It takes courage to go through the dips that are inevitable in any new ventures.

2a. Asking. If your venture can only be as big as you, it will not be big enough. You need help to turn it into something really big. Delegation comes under this umbrella. If other people aren't able to do things as well as you, that's a training issue.

2b. Receiving. I'm still working on this, it's big for me. Others make the choice about giving and my only job, then is to receive. Once I realize that, the world expands again for me. It's in progress.

Take care of yourself. Feed your mind and body with the best. Sleep, move, laugh, learn.

During the safety demo on airplanes, they tell you to put your own oxygen mask on first before you help anyone else. If you pass out, you can't help anyone else.

Doctors tell you to make time for looking after yourself or make time to be ill.

I am a mother of four, I own businesses and I volunteer in my community. Every time I thought about making the effort to do more, to do better and to take on challenges, I got tired. I was exhausted just thinking about it. I recognized that if I didn't build my reserves personally, I wouldn't be able to do anything else or help anyone else.

I don't always get it right – I got pneumonia 2 years ago. That just underscored for me how important it is to look after myself and to build a business that can manage if I need to step away. I am healthy and strong. I get enough sleep, I eat well, I move and I enjoy life.

What I learned Being strong and healthy is the first requirement for building a great life.

Meet people who do amazing things. Go to world-class events. It takes courage to approach strangers and walk into amazing events, but, oh it is worth it.

I went to TEDGlobal in 2009. This is a first class event, full of the most amazing people in the world and the coolest thing is that I fit in there. I belonged. I met C-level people and their eyes didn't glaze over as I talked about my 2 person shop. They offered advice and we talked about team building and the challenges of managing people remotely. We talked about life.

What I learned Seeing what others can do and sometimes against incredible odds and realizing they are just like us, underscores the responsibility we have to be our best.

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?' Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

—Marianne Williamson

Surround yourself with people who can and will help you. We used to be limited to our geographical community, now we can find people all over the world just like us.

I engaged in an online community, Triiibes, started by Seth Godin. In the lead up to launching Tribes, Seth started an online community. The price of admission was to buy his book before it went on sale. The bonus was that he put all our pictures on the inside front cover and he sent all of us a second copy of the book.

The guy's a brilliant marketer and a really nice guy. I went so far as to go to New York for the launch of Linchpin. We had a Triiibes meetup, Seth took the lot of us to supper and we went to hear him speak. People on the internet are real.

There is magic in belonging to a community of like-minded people who care. I have friends all over the world and we continue to connect every week.

What I learned Being connected around the world opens up a world of possibility.

Meet regularly with a mastermind. That can start in many different ways.

Out of that meetup in NYC, we made a business book club. We meet virtually every Friday afternoon. That sounds so innocuous, even boring. But that book club has become a mastermind as we support and push each other to do things we would never have dared on our own. Everything that follows here would not have happened without that support. One of us sold up and moved across the country, another quit a job to follow a dream and another went back to school. These are scary things to do and can't be done alone.

The bonus is that because we meet virtually, we have been able to have some of the authors join us. Dan Pink, Mitch Joel, Seth Godin and Jonathon Fields have all generously shared their thoughts with us.

What I learned It is so much easier to dare when surrounded with amazing people who care.

Commit and do the work. If you are having a problem committing, figure out why.

I put my head down and built my business. It didn't work. For lots of reasons, but ultimately it came down to my heart wasn't in it.

Building a business requires focus and attention. I was doing it so I would have a business in place so that I could go and do the things I wanted to do like TEDx, opening a HUB and putting on events. I had to let go of the comfort of a business and step into who I am and what I want to do.

What I learned “Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness concerning all acts of initiative and creation.” –WH Murray

Sometimes you have to jump even when you don't feel ready. Every successful person has a story about how they had an opportunity dropped into their lap and they chose to jump even though they felt very unprepared. They tell of the fear they had and the gratitude they feel for jumping even though they were afraid.

I seized an opportunity that came my way even though I was totally unprepared. I still feel like a bit of a fraud around this, but I did it anyway. I wrote and published a book. I'm not a writer, I work with numbers.

I had to let go of a lot of things like 'beliefs' and control and worrying what people would think. It helped that I was working in a field about which I know nothing. It made it easier for me to let go. The whole time I figured someone was going to say, "Wait a minute, this isn't a real book. We're not going to publish this and sell it. Nice try, though." That didn't happen. I have a published book on Amazon and a pile of copies on my desk.

Friends from Triiibes were instrumental in making it happen. A small publishing group took a chance on me. We're still learning and trying and having fun.

I still feel like a fraud and I can't call myself an author without saying 'sort of' in my mind. I'm working on it.

What I learned Feeling like a fraud comes with the territory of doing bold things – get over it.

It's easier not to do it. But then you wouldn't have done it. The choice is yours. If you come at it from the place of 'how' rather than 'should I?' you will be spending your time figuring out how to make it happen and it will happen.

I decided to make a trip. I did a whirlwind tour of Europe for a week on my way to Doha, Qatar for the TEDxSummit.

I went to London, Amsterdam and Prague meeting Triibesters and visiting HUBs and talking about my book and how to build a community around it. The opportunity is there. I just have to make it happen. Building these kinds of things means talking to people one on one; it takes time.

Then I spent a week with the TED team and 650 TEDx organizers from around the world. Another wild time meeting people from all over the world with the most interesting lives. I came back hungry for more diversity in my life.

I learned that organizing TEDx events is not what I want to do. Odd, because I love organizing events, but I would rather support others in organizing their events. So that's what I'm doing.

I got a business loan to make the trip and I spent a month preparing for it. Anyone can do that.

What I learned Doing it or not doing it is a choice.

The more you dare, the easier it gets. People seem to build immunity to the fear.

Exercise this muscle by jumping into the abyss in little ways first.

A group of us decided to open a HUB in our rural community. This is a social enterprise, meaning the main aim of the venture is to provide a service to our community. Unlike most business, that have the aim to make money. This is new territory for me, and I'm learning to navigate it. This is a passion project. I will gain from it, but not profit.

This is pure community building, collaboration and social entrepreneurship. It will take all the skill I have and I have to develop a whole lot more for this to work. When it does, it will change the way people look at economic development in rural communities.

What I learned Leaping into the unknown is scary, exhilarating, empowering and overwhelming.

I felt like I was talking to Sarah from a great distance. Increasingly, I felt like we weren't speaking the same language. I wanted to help her, but I didn't know how. It took me years and some life changing experiences and the support of some amazing people to get here. What can I say to her to help her see what I see and think about her business the way I do.

I realized this wouldn't be solved with one conversation, but I could bring her along for the ride as I continued on my journey and she would benefit from watching.

That was a year ago.

She has had her own amazing adventures and we have very different conversations these days full of travel (because we both love it) and courage (because we will always need it) and the satisfaction of knowing we are following our hearts. We have so much more to learn and we are excited.

Sarah isn't a real person. She's a compilation of a lot of people. Everything I said about myself is true and I'm only saying it as inspiration for you. I want you to come into your own person – own who you are - and be able to look back at the end of 2013 with a big wide grin on your face having a hard time believing you just did all that.

It's not more information you need; it's courage, and the ability to ask and receive. You need to make this journey one step at a time.

Ask yourself where you want to be in a year. What you will do to get yourself there?

Let's recap the seven lessons:

- Being strong and healthy is your first and most basic requirement.
- Seeing what others do, sometimes against incredible odds, and realizing they are just like you, underscores the responsibility we all have to be our best.
- Being connected around the world opens up a world of possibility and helps us get past our problems because they seem insignificant in comparison.
- “Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness concerning all acts of initiative and creation.” –WH Murray
- Feeling like a fraud comes with the territory of doing bold things – get over it.
- Doing it or not doing it is your choice.
- Leaping into the unknown is scary, exhilarating, empowering and overwhelming.

The only way you can do it is to surround yourself with people who inspire you, support you and push you. Look all over the world for them, because the world is your back yard. Use technology to connect.

You can follow along as I continue my journey:

<http://youreffortlessbusiness.com/>

<http://crystalclearmoneymanagement.com/>

<http://thehubannapolisvalley.ca/>

The Good Life <http://crystalclarion.wordpress.com/> this is my personal blog about homesteading and permaculture on our Town property.

You'll see how things unfold throughout 2013. Hopefully you will be inspired to make your own interesting journey in life.

If you want, I can help. I am working on some bold and interesting projects. Join a small group of people and come on along for the ride. You'll see behind the curtain as I take on the world and we'll help you get where you want to go, too.

I am inviting a small group to work closely with me. You can get details at YourEffortlessBusiness.com *1 year to Your Effortless Business* tab.

If I can help, get in touch. FrancesSchagen@gmail.com