

PRAISE FOR BEING FABULOUS IN YOUR LIFE

No more missed opportunities! Shed your psychological straightjacket and become your Fabulous You. The authors' sharing of their "in the trenches" personal experiences with holding themselves back was very relatable. "If we can do it, you can do it" wasn't just some motivational pitch, but a strong foundation from which to rebuild my true sense of self. The questions and exercises at the end of each chapter opened the Pandora's Box of my unconscious, filled with contaminated beliefs of myself and the world. Do the exercises, open that box, and liberate yourself to be truly YOU.

Kelly Cline, PsyD ~ *Consciousness Coach, San Diego, CA*

If anyone ever asks me if I know a good counselor I say, "YES!" Judith and Jim. Reading *Being Fabulous in Your Life* by Judith and Jim is like going to a personal counselor with each of the 33 chapters being a different session presenting compelling questions to face regarding aspects of life. I loved that each chapter ends with a time of "reflection" and there are questions to sit with and honestly answer.

Mary Williams ~ *Calgary, Canada*

Finally! Authors who give you a clear idea in the Table of Contents of what you'll get in each chapter. This way I can prioritize what I want to read first. Wonderful to be guided to what I am looking for in my journey of Being Fabulous. In this case, I got what I wanted—clear and precise places to drive into. I can honestly say I already feel more letting my old worn-out story go. Bravo, Jim and Judith. Now to refer your book to those I know who need what you share.

Wendy Lucas ~ *Realtor, Va. Beach, VA*

From shrinking violet to expansive Giant Sequoia—this is the journey that master coaches Judith & Jim guide you through. The exercises are an insightful and powerful exploration of learned beliefs that sabotage our ability to fully live true to ourselves. Until we realize the extent of this programming, we aren't really living. The authors present the many detrimental effects of this programming on various aspects of our lives.

You will see yourself in their examples, but you will also be given the path through to the other side—to your Free and Fabulous Self.

Roshanda Wright ~ *New York, NY*

After reading *Being Fabulous in Your Life* by PhDs Judith Sherven and Jim Sniechowski, I came away with a strong feeling that it is extremely timely, and a must read for anyone wishing to improve their quality of life. One of the things that stood out to me was how personal it felt. Somehow, they knew me, and truly cared. It was like having a private session with them.

The topics are far-reaching but easy to understand. I was certainly challenged to examine hidden parts of myself, and how my life has gone thus far. I can't recommend this powerful book too highly.

Terry Lawrence ~ *MA, Musician and Educator, Oceanside, CA*

This is a terrific book, guided by the authors' caring study of what it takes to live a truly fabulous life, including their marriage. There is life-changing value in every chapter.

Joy Cho ~ *Seattle, WA*

It's a great workbook to use to take the necessary steps "to thine own self be true".

Evelyn M. Lawrence ~ *Post Falls, Idaho*

The first chapter is so compelling. I immediately read it again and now the challenges in my life have already taken on new meaning.

Disha Sashdeva ~ *Santa Monica, CA*

Trust me that I'm speaking from experience when I suggest that you cannot afford to miss out on Judith and Jim's *Being Fabulous in Your Life* teachings. In other words: read, digest, and apply these pivotal lessons for your own sake and for those you care about at work and at home, in your relationships and business.

Tom Albertsson ~ *Philosopher, Reykjavik, Iceland*

It is a rare and precious treat to meet and learn from world-class teachers, trainers, and coaches whose lessons are so important and

profound that their impact stays with you for life. Drs. Judith and Jim, whom I first met more than 10 years ago, belong to that select group. To feel free to be fabulous you, in your own right, please allow their latest book to move you to do so.

Anton van der Valk ~ *Leadership Trainer, Rotterdam, the Netherlands*

WOW! What an eye opener. I have read far too many self-help books and attended far too many related seminars and never seemed able to get off the hamster wheel of "why the hell do I keep imploding?" Until NOW. This book, graciously free of psychobabble and every chapter filled with actionable ideas has me pointed in the right direction - looking toward a real present aiming at a fabulous future...as the rock lyric goes, "blinded by the light." And the light is me. Who knew? Thank you, Judith and Jim for your razor sharp, gentle and loving insight and wisdom and this book.

Anthony Vallarta ~ *Houston, TX*

This fabulous book says it all about how early messages consciously and unconsciously have stifled us from being our very best. It took me years to see and let go of my father's messages that I could never be a writer or a doctor. Recognizing these holdbacks freed me to achieve what I really wanted, to get my PhD and to be a best-selling writer. A must-read for everyone.

Signe A. Dayhoff, PhD ~ *Placitas, New Mexico.*

Author of best seller *Diagonally-Parked in a Parallel Universe*

I couldn't believe how I kept going around in circles, trying essentially to be my parents, and live their unhappy lives as if that was all there was. That wasn't me but I was afraid and didn't dare to do anything different ... until I discovered this book. What an eye-opener! Thank you for my new life.

Bob Nelson ~ *Huntington Beach, California*

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LEAVING HOME TRILOGY**

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<https://judithandjim.com/>

Being
FABULOUS
in
Your Life

33 Ways to Leave Your
Old Stories Behind and
Create a New Life

Judith Sherven, PhD

Jim Sniechowski, PhD

Being Fabulous in Your Life: 33 Ways to Leave Your Old Stories Behind and Create a New Life

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DEDICATED TO

Every person who has ever struggled
against the internal bondage of
unconscious holdbacks, forbiddances, and
the fear of truly leaving home.

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~ Chapter I ~

Why We Focus on Overcoming the Fear of Being Fabulous

It was March 7, 1987 when we met on a blind date at a casual fish restaurant in Venice, California. We'd been introduced by an acquaintance we'd each met separately through an organization that held discussion meetings in people's homes. Jim, age 45, was in the middle of his second divorce and at age 43 Judith had never yet married.

We start with these less-than-ideal specifics to dissuade you from any fantasy you may have about what's required in order to Be Fabulous In Your Own Life.

The manager of the restaurant where we met had taken us to a table with 4 chairs set against a wall—a 4 top. We still smile when we remember that Judith immediately sat on one side next to the wall, while Jim sat on the opposite side by the aisle. And neither of us moved in order to sit across from one another. Our differences were in evidence right from the first moment.

Now, what we did have in common included professional acting careers earlier in our lives.

Judith grew up in Los Angeles, and started acting at fourteen, ultimately doing nearly 100 television commercials and having roles in shows like *Ozzie and Harriet*, *Star Trek*, *Wild Wild West*, *My Three Sons*, *I Dream of Jeanie* and many others. Jim had lead and co-starring roles in over 85 stage plays in regional

theaters around the country, including Nick in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf*, The Gentleman Caller in *Glass Menagerie*, and Edmund in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. When he later went to Los Angeles, he was cast in multiple episodes of *The Rockford Files*, *St. Elsewhere*, *Quincy*, and others.

As we soon discovered in conversation that first night, we had both left acting even though we had each been earning very good money and neither of us had had other specific work desires in mind. We would later realize that we both had suffered from The Fear of Being Fabulous, and a successful career in acting wasn't allowed given where we'd each come from.

Judith eventually went on to earn a PhD in Clinical Psychology and had a full-time private practice when we met on that blind date. Jim was working at a Municipal Bond Investment Bank in Century City (Los Angeles) and would later earn his own PhD in Clinical Psychology after we were married.

After that first dinner, one date became two. And two became three. And by the fourth date we were pretty much a solid couple.

Then in April, 1988, we married, writing our own vows and designing our entire wedding, including having our officiant face away from the guests so we could face all of the friends and family we had invited to witness our marriage ceremony.

And not only has our love grown and deepened to this very day, but our marriage saw the start of a business partnership that's gone on to change the lives of thousands of people.

Along with the many and varied issues we've encountered with our clients, we've continued to work on our own issues. So our greatest clients have been ourselves and each other.

With our psychology backgrounds, we've continually looked at choices we made individually and then together, over and over again recognizing the ongoing theme of what we call The Fear of Being Fabulous. And more often than not, we've seen some form of that fear in the lives of the vast majority of clients

we've worked with over the years. These fears emerged as what we call "holdbacks" and "allegiances" due to loyalties to the cultural and familial bonds that hold people back, usually unconsciously, functioning like a psychological straitjacket.

As a result, as the married psychology team known as Judith & Jim, the focus of our work has been to help people Overcome the Fear of Being Fabulous.

In more recent years, we've worked together as an executive coaching team, working with C-suite executives, founders of successful start-ups, as well as all levels of leaders in a variety of major tech corporations in the United States and internationally. We routinely hear how our unique, in-depth approach quickly and robustly improves our clients' leadership and relationship strengths and abilities.

Because we're dedicated to helping you overcome your fear of being fabulous, we put this book together to introduce you to the challenges of living a fabulous life that so many people face every day. To that end, throughout this book we'll be diving into a wide variety of issues all related to the Fear of Being Fabulous and how you can overcome that all too common fear.

In 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, while we continued our executive coaching, we began developing our 4-hour, Learning and Development audio/workbook program *Being Fabulous In Business* (<http://BeingFabulousInBusiness.com>) to help counteract so many people's feelings of the Imposter Syndrome, repetitive negative head talk, and difficulty receiving praise and compliments. We are delighted that it expands the impact of our coaching messages through its use by a variety of companies and individuals.

And now a final note, before you dive into *Being Fabulous In Your Life*. It's important that you know that neither of our mothers or fathers went to college. Indeed, neither of our fathers even graduated from high school. While our mothers graduated high school, neither of them was employed while we were growing up.

Neither of our fathers had careers. They worked to support their families and found little satisfaction in their day-to-day employment.

And yet here we are, both holding PhDs, writing books, and working as an Executive Coaching team with clients in Silicon Valley, New York City, Brooklyn, Arizona, New Jersey, Utah, Texas, Seattle, London, and Vancouver.

We've come a long way from our own early roots, and our initial Fears of Being Fabulous as you'll discover in the chapters ahead. So, if we can do it, we know you can too.

We now welcome you to the 33 ways to leave your old stories behind and help you continually grow into ***Being Fabulous in Your Life!***



~ Chapter 2 ~

What is the Fear of Being Fabulous?

The Fear of Being Fabulous – what does that actually mean? Whenever we talk about it, people usually get it right away. They blush, they laugh, they giggle. They know.

But to define it simply, it's any way you hold yourself back from being more fully present in your excellence, in any part of your life.

It's playing down your accomplishments. It's batting away compliments. It's not going after a promotion. Not asking that great person out for a date. Not keeping yourself healthy and fit. It's not living the fullness that you actually are.

Missed Opportunities

Throughout this book you'll read how the fear of being fabulous can lead to saying no to opportunities in life, as it did in our lives, in the lives of those we've worked with, and so potentially in your life too.

About 30 years ago, a computer engineer at a start-up company where we had a tiny spot on their website approached us about joining together to create a dating site. We were doing lots of work with singles back then and it was understandable that he would ask us. And we didn't even discuss it. We just said "NO".

Why?

Because neither one of us had come from business families and so it just seemed like a bad bet and a lot of work for probably nothing.

Yes, that's what we thought at the time, in about 1991.

Now sites like Match.com didn't start until 1995, so who knows what might have happened if we'd just said "yes". We could have been leaders in the field, actually opening the way to follow-up sites like Match.com.

And as you know, much earlier in our lives, long before we knew each other, we both walked away from seriously successful acting careers. In fact in 1967, Judith earned over \$50,000.00 after her agents took their percentage. That's worth about \$375,000.00 in today's money. And yet she walked away.

Why would we both abandon serious success and serious money? Logically it doesn't make sense.

Yet when your internal identity, your unconscious identity, is not organized and in line with the success you're having, then you have to walk away from that success in order to remain congruent with that deeper identity. And that's the basis of the Fear of Being Fabulous.

Here's another example: A client we were working with recently had graduated from one of the most prestigious universities in the United States and had other exceptional academic success. He used his intelligence to string together a list of jobs where his brilliance helped bail out someone else's bad choices or lesser skill. But he had never allowed himself to shine in his own right and reap business and financial success of his own making. Digging into what it was that had caused his fear of being fabulous was our primary aim during our coaching sessions with him.

So we ask you, what do you notice in your own life where you're not yet allowing yourself to truly shine? For example, where are you reluctant to say yes, instead of no? Do you dodge compliments, avoid asking for a promotion when it's long overdue, wear a drab even dowdy outfit when you attend an

important meeting, or fail to speak up at meetings where your influence could be important?

We could go on and on with examples, but we trust you get the drift.

Living Your Full Potential

In writing home to parents about their very bright but bored youngster, many a school teacher has said that the child is “not living up to their potential”. And that can still apply to you when you’re an adult, because another way of describing The Fear of Being Fabulous is not *allowing* yourself to live up to your full potential.

Here are a few clues indicating that your fear of being fabulous is at work. Have you experienced any of these?

You palm-off your success to just “being lucky at the time”. And yes, a form of luck can play a part in helping you be in the right place at the right time. But if you don’t have the talent and the brain power to land the job, it’s not going to happen. So accept the win. Accept that you are indeed fabulous.

Another common example is believing that if *you* can do something, then anyone can do it. But the fact is, no they can’t! This is how you hide from yourself how uniquely talented you really are and avoid owning your own right to be fabulous.

And some people *consciously* hide their potential. They fear the results that might eventuate if they allow themselves to stand apart from the crowd. For instance, they gain weight and so dress down, hiding their good looks. Often people lack the confidence to competently address other people being attracted to them. Or they don’t feel they can say no when approached by someone whose attentions they don’t want. So they hide instead of growing their self-awareness and expanding their ability to live their fullest authentic life.

Other people hide out behind alcohol and drug abuse, catering to their anxieties instead of learning about the cause and establishing greater confidence and a fuller life. This was certainly

the case for many of the celebrities who have died from suicide or what has been called “an accidental overdose”. They couldn’t fully live their fabulous lives, own their extraordinary talents and the real love that the public gave them.

Holdbacks

The number one cause for what we refer to as “holdbacks,” like those we’ve just described, is early family conditioning. Early in life, the young child’s brain cannot defend against messaging that isn’t a fit for who they are, who they *actually* are.

You see brain development is an ongoing reality for many years of a young person’s life. It’s understood that the young person’s brain can’t actually evaluate what’s going on around them until they’re between ages of 7 to around 11. Up until then, how they are being raised and what they’re being trained to believe, goes in as valid and real and gets stuck in what is known as the unconscious.

So think about what happens when a young child, say age 5, begins to display musical talent, or an interest in science, or is a whiz-bang swimmer, and Mom or Dad or a grandparent or some other caretaker from their own limited background, says something like: “Don’t let your friends know you like to play the trumpet, they’ll laugh at you.” Or “Science is stupid, you’ll never make a living at it, get over it.” Or “When you’re at the pool, don’t let the other kids see how good you are at swimming because they might try to hold you down and you could drown.”

And yes, people do actually say things like that to children all the time. It comes from their own fears and the ways they were taught to think about excellence and standing apart when they were children. And sadly, they’ve never outgrown those fears. It can also come from their fear that they’ll lose their child to a larger life than they’ve ever had. And it’s all unconscious.

The unconscious plays a very large role in The Fear of Being Fabulous and that’s something that we’ll be diving into in many of the chapters ahead.

Reflections

Before continuing, we invite you to think about some of the ways you might have been holding yourself back from a larger more fulfilled life. Holding yourself back from owning who you really are. Holding yourself back from achieving the successes you dream of and deserve.

We've had to do it. And we continue to examine what we do in life and why we do the things we do, because it can be a life-long process. As a result, we've come a long way from our own initial Fears of Being Fabulous, many of which we'll be sharing with you in future chapters.



~ Chapter 3 ~

Jim's Personal Fear of Being Fabulous

In October, 2016, Jim had a stroke that mainly impacted the muscles in his mouth. And so for some time, it was very difficult for him to speak. But as the muscles got stronger and stronger his speech slowly improved to the point where he can now speak relatively clearly and succinctly.

So in this chapter, we wanted to openly demonstrate the fear of being fabulous first-hand. Here we have the case study of Jim having trouble overcoming his fear of being fabulous and owning how terrific it is that he's speaking as well as he does after his stroke.

Courageously, in those early post-stroke days, Jim continued working with Judith doing their joint executive coaching and recording podcasts. In other words, he continued making his living professionally, by speaking. However, Jim found it very difficult to understand what a fabulous achievement continuing to do that work was.

Your Inner Critic

The fear of being fabulous generally begins in the unconscious where it resides and comes up unannounced to punch you in your confidence.

But in Jim's case, with regard to his stroke, it was not entirely in his unconscious. It was and to a degree still is, a conscious thing. He is consciously aware that he had a stroke and that it's had an adverse effect on his speech because his mouth has

difficulty forming the shapes necessary to speak clearly. So he tends to cut off the ends of words when he's not concentrating on speaking as clearly as possible.

What *was unconscious* however, was his inner critic.

Along with working to overcome his speech impediments, Jim was determined to persevere with his coaching, and in addition, doing the podcasts. This was because of his strong desire and commitment to continue working with Judith to share their knowledge about the fear of being fabulous that they'd developed over so many years. And of course, how to overcome it and leave it behind.

Even so, Jim still had difficulty acknowledging how fabulous this commitment and determination was while continuing to work on improving his speech.

We see this over and over with people who are doing very well in their professional career at a variety of tech companies that we work with around the world. And what we continually see are people comparing themselves to some idea of perfection that they're holding in their imagination. As a result, they downplay how well they're really doing in their everyday life. And that's what Jim was doing by not acknowledging how fabulous he was in his everyday life after his stroke.

So we invite you to take a look at your life—a deeply honest look.

Are there ways you are doing quite well in terms of your social life, your professional life, your physical health, friendships, your marriage, whatever it might be? And yet that voice in your head niggles at you about how you could do it better, especially compared to ... whatever the comparison might be.

It's that little voice—your inner critic—that wants to keep downplaying how fabulous you really are. And as we've said, that little voice is coming from your unconscious fear of being fabulous.

As you journey through the forthcoming chapters you'll discover more and more ways why and how this inner critic can adversely affect your life, and what you can do to turn this around.

Back to Jim's Stroke and His Fear ...

Another of the effects of Jim's stroke was a difficulty in breathing smoothly. Sure he was able to breathe, but not smoothly. So his voice rested in the back of his mouth instead of in his diaphragm like it used to. As a result, he continually felt as if he was straining to speak – because he was. Speaking was hard. He found it difficult to get a flow of words out on one breath. Sometimes it sounded like the end of words were abrupt and cut off, and not smooth and relaxed.

Unfortunately, Jim was deeply focused on what was *not* going right. And so it was difficult for him to see all that *was* going so beautifully for him, given how hard the stroke had hit him in the mouth.

Overall, he was doing remarkably well. People who'd never heard him speak before would say: "I would never have known. I just thought that was how you typically spoke". But Jim's unconscious fear of being fabulous was unable to accept that.

But why? After all, Jim knew a great deal about the fear of being fabulous and yet there he was personally experiencing that fear, there and then.

Indeed it was impossible for him to take-in how fabulous he was because of what was going on physiologically inside his head. It was so bizarre. It was nothing like he'd ever experienced before in his life. For a lifetime he'd had his familiar voice and his familiar mouth and his familiar diction and speech. Then suddenly, all of that went away. One moment it was there and the next moment it was gone.

On a conscious level he was well aware of these changes. But on an unconscious level, his inner critic wouldn't let him accept that this new Jim was even more fabulous than the old Jim.

More fabulous because it was initially so hard for him to speak. But he did, and continues to do so and his speech continues to get better and better. Nevertheless, his unconscious inner critic just kept on comparing how the old Jim spoke, as opposed to the fabulous determination, commitment, and courage of the new Jim.

Are You Downplaying Your Achievements?

Think about how your unconscious inner critic might be getting you to downplay what you've accomplished in your life; just as Jim downplayed the on-going improvements in his speech and his determination to continue his executive coaching work with Judith.

How are you downplaying things that you do well; things that you've overcome in your life that you tend to dismiss? You might say: "Oh, I just make light of it" Or you just laugh it off. But why do you do that?

Here's a clue. What would you need to change about your own self-image if you owned how fabulous you are for overcoming whatever kinds of obstacles, whatever kinds of holdbacks you have struggled with?

Reflections

We invite you to take a look at Jim's stroke as an example of what Jim has done. He's openly put his situation forward. He's made it clear to you and our clients what happened. He's been as visible as he can be with his struggle.

And so we ask, whenever you're facing a struggle, how could you be more open and available to the people around you – to the people you work with; to your life-partner; to the people you date; and the people you're friends with?

How could you take more pride in what you've accomplished, and in the challenges you've overcome in your life? How could you give yourself more credit than you might currently be doing, for the life you've led, or are leading?

That's the challenge we present to you now. That's the homework assignment that we're giving you to help you move past *your* fear of being fabulous. And we assure you, when you take it seriously, you can definitely overcome your own fear of being fabulous.



~ Chapter 4 ~

Signs and Signals of The Fear of Being Fabulous

We have a question for you. Do you ever feel that you could be living a much larger life, a much more fulfilling life, but something, something deep down, keeps holding you back? If you can relate to that feeling on any level, or in any situation, then you could be experiencing the fear of being fabulous.

You'll recall that in Chapter 2 we said when we talk about The Fear of Being Fabulous, most people get it right away. They laugh, blush, sigh, and so forth. But in this chapter, we want to dive a lot deeper to make it crystal clear what we mean.

So we invite you to develop your awareness, your inner Geiger counter if you like, for the signs and signals that can warn you about your own potential fears of being fabulous.

Common Signs and Signals

If you ever suffer from the Imposter Syndrome, you're probably suffering from a fear of being fabulous. And by the Imposter Syndrome we mean that no matter how successful you are in your work, no matter what others tell you about your competence, you don't totally believe it. Instead, you feel like you're an imposter pretending to be important in your work, pretending to be a leader, pretending to be socially influential.

And you believe this internal put-down instead of the facts of your success and believing what others tell you about your success. You choose to believe that you don't really deserve the promotion and the raise you recently got. You choose to wonder why those new friends are asking you over once again, instead of accepting that they might really like you and enjoy being in your company.

Other indications that the fear of being fabulous is robbing you of your rightful life is when you believe you have to always be humble and modest and never toot your own horn. You're too self-conscious and/or embarrassed to ever tell others about your successes, whether at work or in your personal life.

This can often happen if, when you were growing up, you were taught that you should never be seen as arrogant, inflated, cocky, or above-it-all. And maybe you were taught that you'd appear conceited or stand-offish if you believed in your own excellence. So instead, you learned to shy away from it. So you might have hidden your good grades, avoided speaking up in class, and even refrained from going after a place in the drama club, or local sporting team, for fear that might make you seem like a show-off.

Maybe you refrain from speaking up at business meetings for fear you'll be seen as a bossy imposing know-it-all. Now that might sound extreme, but we've worked with far too many people who told us they were fearful of how others would see them if they were outspoken. And so they buried their ideas only to later feel hurt and angry when someone else, who spoke up about the same thing got the credit and glory when our client had the idea first.

This goes hand-in-hand with the difficulty many people have when it comes to asking for a promotion or a raise. "Who do you think you are?" may have been a frequent refrain in their early life, in their family of origin, in their culture or religion, when they were too young to realize they were being influenced in the wrong direction.

Are you ever reluctant to ask for help, imagining others will think you're weak, needy, or even possibly desperate? Maybe you believe you won't be considered successful if you have to get help. And yet, how do truly successful people actually make new connections, learn new techniques, master expanded skills in order to continually expand their lives?

Yes, by asking for help.

Another very common sign that people have a fear of being fabulous is when they have difficulty accepting praise and compliments. If you typically laugh-it-off when others acknowledge your excellence, that's evidence that you are definitely cringing behind the fear of being fabulous.

How do you feel internally whenever you dare to dream big about your career, your future, your social life? If you sluff it off thinking "that's for other people" then you can't own your own desire, your own ambition. And that's yet another sure sign that the fear of being fabulous is controlling your life.

Other specific signs and signals are:

- ❖ Procrastination
- ❖ Boredom
- ❖ Perfectionism
- ❖ Depression
- ❖ Worrying about what others think of you
- ❖ Anxiety
- ❖ Drug and/or Alcohol Abuse
- ❖ Laziness
- ❖ Being Obsessive Compulsive

There are many, many more, but we're sure you're getting the idea.

Another Perspective

Here's another way to look at this issue. Do you cater to old values you learned in childhood? Perhaps you feel you can't

disappoint your parents and/or siblings or even your grandparents. So you keep on keeping on in *their* old ways. But you don't let yourself recognize what it's costing you.

If you worry that if you change you'll upset and disappoint your parents and/or siblings or anyone, then your life doesn't belong to you. It belongs to them.

As you journey through the following pages, you'll continue to discover many ways that you, just like so many other people, could be being held-back from a much larger, happier, and more successful life due to your fear of being fabulous.

We discussed how the fear of being fabulous played out in the life of super star Whitney Houston in our book *What Really Killed Whitney Houston? How Unconscious Loyalty Destroyed One Of The Greatest Talents Of All Time – And Why It Could Be Happening To You*. So that might be your next book after this one.

Reflections

Take some time now to sit quietly and review your life – the things that have gone well and the things that were a disappointment.

- ❖ What were the differences between the two? Why do you think that was the case?
- ❖ Go through this chapter again, and make a note of any time one of the examples we provided appeared in your life. How did you approach those circumstances in your life?
- ❖ Why do you think you acted the way you did? Dig deep. Search for deep-seated reasons.
- ❖ How might you respond differently now?
- ❖ AND, what are the things you now want to change in your life?



~ Chapter 5 ~

The Power of the Unconscious

What is buried deep in your unconscious? *Really buried and deep.*

What do you think could be buried in your unconscious that's holding you back, keeping you stuck, making your life less fulfilling, even *far* less fulfilling than it could be?

Now you may be thinking OK here comes the psycho-babble. I'm going to stop reading here and move on to the next chapter.

BUT WAIT!

What if that's your unconscious, your inner critic, saying those things to you, making sure you *don't* change? Making sure that you never let go of the things that are holding you back? What if that's your fear of being fabulous yelling at you to be loyal and well behaved?

If we now have your attention—even just a little bit—***BRAVO!***

The Unconscious Mind

In this chapter, we invite you to take an inventory of what might be holding you back, something that you're not even aware of, that's causing you to struggle with a fear of being fabulous.

Now many people associate the “unconscious” with forbidden feelings. Perhaps sexual, perhaps rageful, or anything else that's considered forbidden.

But we prefer to look at what went into your mind that leads to your fears of being fabulous *before* you were old enough to evaluate what is actually true for you – who you really are – and what is actually *not* true for you.

It's the power of the unconscious that can be controlling you without your awareness or understanding.

But first, we want to provide you with two ways of understanding the Unconscious Mind.

One way is to picture—in your imagination—an iceberg. The part you can see, the part that sticks up above the water, is a very small part, only about 10 percent of the total iceberg. That 10 percent represents your conscious mind. It's your conscious mind that's paying attention to what you're now reading.

Then just below the surface is what we call the Subconscious Mind. This is only about 15 percent of the total iceberg. You're not consciously aware of what's there. But if we ask you what you ate for breakfast, or what you're working on at work, or what day of the week you do your laundry, you'll be able to come up with that information right away. That kind of information is stored in your Subconscious Mind.

But the very largest part of the iceberg, waaaay down below the surface, is your Unconscious Mind, making up approximately 75% of the entire iceberg—75% of your psyche.

While your unconscious is taking care of everything from your heart beating to your hair growing, here we are only concerned with the effects of what entered your unconscious when you were a young person—before the age of about 7. And how all of that influenced how you've thought about yourself and your life ever since.

The second way we'd like you to understand the power of the unconscious has to do with the ways in which that buried mental training, before the age of about 7, can limit how you think about yourself and what's possible for you.

Developmental psychologists understand that a child's brain is not developed enough to provide logical or operational

thought until about the ages of 7 to 11. And even though the human brain continues to develop until the late 20s, it's after that 7 to 11 age that, for the first time, the child's brain can begin to evaluate, judge, compare, and work things out internally.

So take a moment and think about it. Up until you were between the ages of 7 and 11 you weren't able, that is your brain wasn't able, to evaluate what you were being taught, what you were experiencing, and who you were being told you were.

As a result, prior to that 7 to 11 age many of what we refer to as "Unconscious Loyalties" and "Prohibitions" were being formed in your unconscious mind, week after week, month after month, year after year. And your brain could do nothing to evaluate or even reject those unconscious loyalties and prohibitions when that might have been appropriate for who you really are.

Unconscious Loyalties

In future chapters we'll talk more about recognizing, and when necessary, weeding out unconscious prohibitions that prevent you from living a much larger life. But for the moment, we encourage you to pay attention to how unconscious loyalties could have been and are probably still operating in your life.

To do that we recommend you create a check list of areas in your life where you currently feel stuck and frustrated.

In order to gain more clarity, and open up your awareness of how unconscious elements are playing out in your life, start with your earliest memories. These might be memories about family, friends, school, your neighborhood, religious teachings, and so on.

It might start out something like Judith's memories:

- ❖ I can't remember hardly anything about my life until 5th grade when I was ten.

- ❖ I didn't have any friends except the girls next door and across the street. They were just handy – not kids I'd consciously chosen to be friends with.
- ❖ I felt like an outcast in Junior High even though my home room elected me to Student Government in 7th grade.

On the other hand, your list of memories might be more like Jim's:

- ❖ I felt like I never fit in with the other kids in my neighborhood and never had good friends until college.
- ❖ By seven years old, I'd become depressed and withdrawn, no doubt trying to escape from the hollow world I was born into.
- ❖ By high school, I was such a misfit that I spent most of my class time staring out the window.

Obviously, your list will have many more than just three items on it.

Reflections

Keep tracking your own history by continuing to add relevant childhood memories to your list.

And any time these days that you feel stuck, frustrated, or depressed, add those feelings to your check list and see if there's any link to similar emotions that you felt as a young person.

It's important to look for the similar recurring patterns in your life. And also, make sure you notice when some areas of your life were somehow frustrated and maybe even blinded by false beliefs.

Continually reflect on how you feel emotionally while doing these exercises, continually digging deeper into what might be holding you back in your *unconscious mind*.



~ Chapter 6 ~

Understanding the Terms We Use

It's important that you understand the specific terms we use to describe how The Fear of Being Fabulous is created, how it's maintained, and what's involved in order for you to actually *Overcome* The Fear Of Being Fabulous.

This isn't some kind of psycho-jargon. Nor is it any kind of insider clap-trap.

Our specific terms emerged through the process of describing, working with clients, and writing about The Fear of Being Fabulous, and continually exploring our own being fabulous fears.

So as you read through this chapter, we urge you to compare your own experiences with what we'll be talking about and the real-life examples that we'll give you.

Important Terms

Here are a number of important terms we use to describe how people unconsciously develop the fear of being fabulous and what's involved in overcoming those fears.

Fabulous

We'll start with the term "fabulous", because by fabulous we don't mean becoming a billionaire, or building the Taj Mahal, or climbing the tallest mountains on the planet. What we *do* mean is being free to express your greatest gifts, your finest skills, fully

receiving praise and acknowledgement so you can live at the maximum level you desire, both emotionally and physically.

As an example, Tom Brady, the all-time amazing Tampa Bay and previously Patriots' quarterback, is truly *fabulous* at what he does. He knows it. And he lives it every day including how he works out and what he eats even in the off-season.

Holdbacks

However, most people suffer from what we call Holdbacks. And holdbacks are things like fears, self-doubts, beliefs, and loyalties that prohibit you from functioning at your highest level.

Any time you feel shy, fearful, out of place, or inadequate you're no doubt experiencing a holdback. Indeed a holdback can be anything that puts the breaks on your willingness to step further into your life, whether in your work, socially, or personally.

For example, Whitney Houston suffered from deep internal holdbacks that deprived her of the freedom to fully embrace the success she achieved as the world's most awarded female singer of all time. This led to years of self-destructive drug use and other behaviors that led to her untimely death when she was only 48.

Allegiances or Unconscious Loyalties

Holdbacks are most often the result of what we refer to as Allegiances. Now allegiances can be experienced at an unconscious level, as well as consciously, and they relate to the loyalties you have in relation to the way you were raised as a child.

In Whitney Houston's case, we know from researching her life for *What Really Killed Whitney Houston*, that she remained in allegiance to how she was raised throughout her short life.

As you might recall, Whitney died from what was considered to be an accidental overdose and drowning. Her allegiances were to her family, primarily her mother. She employed family members who never provided the professional skills needed for their jobs, yet that kept her loyal to her family

rather than to her career. In the end, she had stayed her mother's "little girl." never able to own her magnificence.

Now it's important to know that while some allegiances work *against you*, other allegiances can work *for you*.

Take the case of professional parents who encourage their child to continue on to higher education and they act as role models for the larger professional life their adult-child can enjoy. And that's terrific — a real asset.

But what we look for when we talk about the *fear* of being fabulous are the allegiances that are holding people back.

Forbiddances

Another term we use that fits here is Forbiddances. Forbiddances are unconscious as well as conscious beliefs that something is not allowed.

For example, Judith didn't get married until she was 44. And while her parents had overtly preached that she should marry, when she announced her engagement to Jim, as well as on several other occasions, it was clear from her parents' behavior that they had actually wanted her to remain their loyal single daughter.

So in her unconscious, Judith actually felt *forbidden* to get married. And it was only after she was beyond frustrated with being single, seemingly forever, and then finally meeting Jim, that she could break away from that internalized forbiddance of marriage.

And marry they did in 1988, and have been happily living and working together ever since.

The Love Grip and Loyalties

Judith's story brings to mind another term we frequently use — The Love Grip.

You see, when each of us was a little person, way too little to be able to discriminate or judge how other people treated us, we felt love for the people who took care of us. After all, our

survival depended on them. And for most people, those caretakers are usually parents and sometimes older siblings.

Now you'll recall from the previous chapter that the human brain isn't actually capable of evaluating and making distinctions about how we're being treated until somewhere around the ages of 7 to 11.

So during earlier years we develop many beliefs about how we're supposed to be, who we are, and what we're meant to do in life based on how we're treated and what we're taught very early in life. Those beliefs go unexamined. Yet they're beliefs that can contaminate how we allow ourselves to live in later life. And when those beliefs result in a form of loyalty or allegiance to our caregiver or caregivers, those beliefs end up embedded in our unconscious. And then if those loyalties get in the way of you living a more expansive life, we refer to that kind of loyalty as The Love Grip.

Truths

Now our concern about a lot of self-help and therapeutic orientations is that they don't go deep enough to help people get at what's really causing their pain and frustrations. And we do mean DEEP, right into the unconscious mind.

So it's important to understand that when we were little, every one of us took in a lot of so-called "truths". This happened when our brains were too undeveloped to be able to evaluate whether what was being taught to us was actually a correct fit for who we were.

For instance, what did you learn about money before the age of 10? Not necessarily what you were told, but what you learned based on how your family lived—how your family related to money.

Some people grow up poor, and right from the start they learn that money is scarce. It's hard to make money. And it's even more difficult to save money.

Many people who grow up in that type of environment, even when they get special opportunities later in life, can't adjust and reconfigure their self-definition. They just can't see themselves as someone who now has money, as someone who is gifted and deserves professional and financial abundance.

Why?

Because their unconscious mind is so deeply embedded with the limiting beliefs about money they grew up with. And those embedded beliefs run the show. So unless they work to change those limiting beliefs, they'll be doomed to never make good money, or ever save money. So they actually end up poor, repeating how they grew up.

Another common example is when someone is the first person in their family to go to college. They often experience what has been called "breakaway guilt", even when their family is overtly supportive of their achievement.

Referred to as "next-gens," they feel split between two worlds. One world is their powerful unconscious allegiance to their family of origin in which neither parent, nor any other relative ever went to college. In their other world, their *conscious* mind is committed to bettering themselves, which often, in turn, can cascade down by improving their parents lives later as well. Nevertheless, understandably next-gens struggle. And the college drop-out rate is far greater for those students than it is for students who were raised by college educated parents.

How do you relate to this next type of challenge? The challenge where what you consciously want is more success in the world than how you were raised? Think about it.

Perhaps you had parents who fought and struggled when you were young, eventually getting divorced. And now you want a much better relationship than that. But do you keep meeting people who aren't appropriate for what you want? That's the result of Unconscious Allegiance to what your parents instilled in you very early on.

Leaving Home

We talk a lot about Leaving Home. Indeed Jim even wrote a series of autobiographical novels under the title of the *Leaving Home Trilogy*. And by Leaving Home we don't mean you have to move across country or never speak to your parents again. That's not the point.

What we're underscoring with the term Leaving Home is the need to move away from the beliefs that you grew up with that no longer serve you. To move away from loyalties that hold you back from your rightful life. And yes, in some cases, it does mean you have to distance yourself from relatives who continually make demands that require you to abandon the life you're building for yourself.

Certainly with the situation of people who are the first of their family to go to college, it's important to have permission to "leave home" and set out on a new lifestyle, a lifestyle that's different to anyone else in the family. Because far too often, if you can't leave home and give yourself the freedom to have your own rightful life, you start recreating your history in lots of negatively unconscious ways.

Over and over you might find yourself working for people who remind you of an abusive parent or grandparent, no matter how much you consciously try to find a positive work environment.

Or if you have trouble with money, think about how money was handled in your family. One person we know can easily make money, but just like her mother, she spends, spends, spends and never can save.

As you explore the coming chapters, we trust that having been introduced to some of the common terms that relate to The Fear of Being Fabulous, you'll get a better awareness and understanding of any fears of being fabulous that you might have tucked away in your unconscious.

Reflections

Before moving on to the next chapter, we suggest you take some time-out when you won't be disturbed. And then go back through the various terms we use and their explanations and examples above. As you do, think about how each term relates to your current life. It might be in a positive way, or a way that's not as positive as you'd like.

Perhaps you'll want to take some notes about your life as it is now, and also the future life you'd like to lead as you reflect on each term. This will help you dig deeper into the material we'll be providing in future chapters.



~ Chapter 7 ~

Our Own Holdbacks—Part I~

Judith's Fear Of Being Fabulous

Our expertise in helping people overcome the fear of being fabulous didn't just come from working with clients in our private practice over many years and now coaching tech industry executives. It started with our own personal challenges.

So first, we want to help you understand a bit more about Judith's background, and the associated holdbacks that led to her inability to hold on to success in her early years. Then in the next chapter, Jim will share some of his stories about his family background and his holdbacks.

After reading this book, we trust that when you reflect back on your own family history, you'll be better able to understand why you do the things you do and where long-held, but often limiting beliefs, have come from. We're trusting our background stories will help you pin down some elements in your own earlier life that are still affecting you today.

Our Discovery of The Fear of Being Fabulous

We both came from "nowhere."

You'll recall that neither of our fathers had even graduated from high school, both becoming worker-bees. And neither of our mothers worked outside the house. So we both came from upper-lower class homes where money was limited.

With serious psychological limitations surrounding each of our families and therefore each of us; our growing up years were strained and disadvantaged. And yet we'd both achieved real success as professional actors, long before meeting each other. Yet we both walked away from that success.

So by sharing our stories with you in more detail, we trust you'll understand how our family backgrounds provided the unconscious influences that plagued our early adult lives. *Unconscious* influences that resulted in both of us quitting our very successful acting careers. Due to our unconscious allegiances, born of our family backgrounds, we couldn't continue to own and grow the success we'd achieved. We even had to make up stories that allowed us to quit.

Why?

We started exploring this topic when we were first dating and discovered that we'd both actually abandoned our acting careers. After many intense and dedicated conversations, we arrived at the understanding that both of us had suffered from unconscious forces that we decided to call The Fear of Being Fabulous.

Now it's true that our specific stories might not apply to you. But we're sure that you'll have your own stories in some areas of your life that have led you to abandon success, no matter how great or potentially great that success was.

Perhaps you've abandoned something that was deeply meaningful to you. Maybe you abandoned a serious relationship because your family didn't or wouldn't approve. Or it could even have been a serious desire that you abandoned in order to stay true to a deeper *unconscious* commitment to your *unconscious loyalties*.

So we're sharing our stories, not only to help you as you journey through the following chapters, but also to demonstrate why we have such a deep commitment to helping you Overcome the Fear of Being Fabulous, so you can gain your internal

permission to live your fullest, most successful life — the life *you consciously* want.

Judith's Holdbacks, as told by Judith

“Surviving in a World of Mad Misbegotten Misfits”

Little did my parents know when they met in the recreational ping pong room at a trailer park in Inglewood, California that both of their mothers were traumatized by this material world and rarely associated with anyone outside their immediate families. Instead, both of my grandmothers, independent of one another, routinely sought comfort and salvation by going to evangelical Christian tent meetings where they would go up to the altar to be “saved”, over and over again. But that never truly satisfied their hunger for safety and salvation from what they called “this corrupt and heathen world”.

My mother, Helen, was at the trailer park with her parents and two sisters while they looked for a place to rent, having just arrived in Los Angeles from Des Moines, Iowa where my grandfather had worked as an overnight security guard.

And my grandmother, who was always ambitious in her way, ran their home as a boarding house. It was located in the fancy section of the city, which they could not otherwise afford. This meant that my mother had to attend the area's Beverly Hills-type-High School often without lunch money and always dressed in her older sisters' hand-me-downs.

My father, Ralph, was at the trailer park with his two brothers on their way back to Minnesota after their band, The Sherven Brothers' Rodeoliers, had played in several Gene Autrey movies.

Despite acclaim for their music and film roles, they were prohibited from performing in clubs or theaters in Los Angeles (or anywhere in California) because they belonged to the musicians' union of Minnesota, rather than the union in California. So they

felt forced to abandon their dream of growing a successful musical career.

Helen and Ralph married two years later, 1939, in Las Vegas. It was a simple courtroom ceremony as they had no money beyond the meager income my father earned as a sales rep for Ben-Hur spices.

Ralph's father died in 1919 due to the flu pandemic coupled with pernicious anemia. And so Ralph's mother had to work three jobs to support five children. So my father dropped out of school in the 11th grade to help out. Consequently, my father had no interest in having children. But my mother persuaded him otherwise, and four years into their marriage I was born.

My mother lived a life of anxiety. And certainly during her pregnancy there was ample reason for heightened anxiety beyond the reality of growing a new life in her womb. Frightful WWII news headlines were coupled with the breadlines that my mother regularly had to stand in to get her rationed food stuffs.

Six weeks after I arrived my father, who was a conscientious war objector on religious grounds, had to report for alternative service in a firefighting unit of like-minded men in the mountains above Fresno, California. With only minimal visits home to see his new family, my father would be away for the next two years leaving my mother to survive, accompanied by her loneliness, depression, grief, and ever-present anxiety and the task of caring for a new born baby.

For nine months in the womb I was surrounded by and connected to the anxious nervous system of my mother. Then when the hour of my birth arrived, the charge nurse kicked my father out of the delivery room even when he pleaded to stay explaining that he'd birthed many a farm animal in his youth.

After a traditional father-forbidden, hospital dictated, and drug-infused birth, I was brought home three days later to a grief-filled environment as my parents prepared for my father to leave for camp.

My limited ability to bond and attach played out in my relationships at school. I never connected with any of my teachers. In fact, my 4th grade teacher held her wedding during the school year and invited all of her students to attend. I was the only one who didn't go. I felt that I didn't belong there.

And while I got along with all my elementary school classmates, I was never close with any of them. Instead, I played with the neighbor girls in the summer and on weekends, simply because they lived next door and across the street and we were all the same age.

But since I never felt any meaningful attachment, we never became actual friends. Consequently, I never cared what we did. If they suggested hop scotch, roller skating, Chinese checkers, or the card game Canasta, I'd go along with it just to go along.

This absence of desire, played out in my relationship with academic excellence. While I had the brains and got good grades, it all happened by rote. I was raised to be a dutiful girl, so I didn't rebel against school, even though I found it incredibly boring. I simply did what I was told and did it very well because I could.

In fact, all through junior high I was on the Honor Roll every semester, which I took for granted rather than understanding that I actually excelled. Consequently, I never even considered attending college except as a way to meet an eligible husband.

When a child is uncared for beyond the material requirements of food, safety, and bodily comfort, the unconscious lesson is that life is merely about coping and getting by. And that was certainly true for me.

I have almost no memory of my early years and only began to retain glimpses of my childhood experiences around the age of nine when I began to wear what was then called a "training bra." Yes, I developed very early.

And by twelve, I looked eighteen and won a beauty contest. That's when my conscious life actually began. And that's when I started modeling at the Del Mar Beach Club in Santa Monica,

California earning \$5 for each Sunday night fashion show which took place in the Club's family dining room.

That led to getting an agent and my first television commercial when I was 14, followed by my first acting job on the "Ozzie and Harriet" television show. My career continued to grow such that I earned over \$10,000 every year of high school and was able to put myself through UCLA, paid for living in a sorority house, and bought my own cars.

After UCLA, I went to New York where I continued working, making over \$50,000 net in 1967. And then I quit acting and modeling and moved back to Los Angeles.

Why?

What I told myself was that I needed to get married. That was what my conscious mind told me. That was what I'd been raised to do. I'd been raised to get married.

Only later in discussion with Jim, what I discovered was my own version of The Fear of Being Fabulous. I was making far more money than my father had ever made as a sales person. My mother had never worked. And my unconscious allegiance to them and their lifestyle caused me to feel that getting married was what I needed to do in life, rather than advance my career acting and modeling.

Growing up in my family there was never any mention of "career" or "ambition." Those things were totally unheard of. So I'd never viewed my acting as a career. In fact, when one of my agents in New York asked if he could manage my acting career, I never even discussed what he had in mind. I simply said "No, I need to return to Los Angeles and get married."

Reflections

Now that you have a solid glimpse into Judith's background and how the fear of being fabulous played out in her early years, we invite you to think deeply about your own family history. And as you do, see if there are any similar events that might have

influenced the life you chose to lead and the choices you've made over the years.



~ Chapter 8 ~

Our Own Holdbacks—Part 2 ~

Jim's Fear of Being Fabulous

As you're starting to discover, we've certainly had to overcome the soul-draining undercurrents of the fear of being fabulous in many areas of our own lives.

After all, most people suffer from a variety of holdbacks, failing over and over to live up to their full potential. They're afraid to be all that they were meant to be. And they know it. It doesn't matter whether the fear of being fabulous is affecting your work life, your family life, or your love life. Indeed it could be showing up in any area of your life, even in your hobbies or pleasure activities.

So pause for a moment and think about any frustrations, disappointments, procrastinations, or maybe anxieties that you're living with at this time. Then in a minute, see if you recognize any of those similar emotions you're aware of, coming through in Jim's story.

When we ask clients for examples of holdbacks in their life, we hear about how people are afraid to ask for promotions, reluctant to speak up at meetings for fear they'll be seen as arrogant, or aggressive. Or they might be shy about asking someone for a date, or even asking someone out for a coffee. The examples are endless, but the results are the same. People are held

back from living their fullest most fabulous lives by internal forces beyond their conscious control.

So again, see what comes to mind from your own early experiences where you might have thought you had to hold yourself back to keep yourself in check, playing down your own excellence, your own desires. As you're coming to recognize, "holdbacks" are the name that we use to describe acting in those limiting ways.

These holdbacks are most often unconscious, until you become awakened to how they're interfering with your larger more satisfying life.

And that's what we're dedicated to helping you discover.

So now it's time to learn about some of Jim's background and the early roots of his fear of being fabulous that led to a variety of his holdbacks.

Jim's Holdbacks, as told by Jim

"Surrounded by the Factories of Detroit"

I come from a Polish, Catholic upper lower-class factory working family in inner city Detroit. All of the men in my family were factory workers going off each morning to Ford, Chrysler, Dodge, Chevrolet, and other similar factories.

The women were housewives who kept the houses and even the streets clean. They volunteered at the local Catholic church and whenever needed, they made the lunches and desserts for the bridal showers, wedding parties, funerals, and of course the fund raisers for the church.

My schooling, at our local parish elementary school, was at the hands of old country Polish Catholic nuns who never hesitated to smack our knuckles with their wooden rulers or humiliate us in other ways in front of our classmates. After nine years, K-8, I had learned the bare minimum in order to pass.

So I was really surprised when my father insisted that I take a test in order to apply for entrance into the University of Detroit

College Prep High School. It was a Jesuit taught private school that catered to the sons of the auto industry executives.

I didn't even know what a Jesuit high school was but I took the exam and I passed. I got in to the top third of my freshman class. While I clearly had the brains, I had nothing in common with the wealthy upper class boys who dominated everyday life in that school. In fact once I got home each day, I changed my clothes, went to a local hamburger joint, The Circle, and hung out with my local street gang, The Royal Lancers.

The truth of the matter is I didn't really know what I was doing at that private high school other than taking tests and passing them. I also didn't actually know why I was in a gang, other than trying to belong – belong somewhere. But I didn't truly belong there either.

One example of how the fear of being fabulous showed up during those early years was when I was a Junior. Our English class was given the assignment of finding a picture in a newspaper or magazine and then writing a one-page description of it.

I hadn't done the exercise and it was due right after lunch. So during lunch hour, I rushed into the library and found a picture of a pair of eyes in a magazine. For some reason, the word "somber" came to mind. I didn't know what somber meant. So I looked it up, and it seemed to apply. I dashed off a one page description and then turned it in. At least I got my homework in on time.

Several days later, the teacher, a Jesuit priest, came in to the class with a black loose-leaf binder in his hands. He announced that this was the binder into which the best writing samples from his teaching career were placed. He then announced that out of all the students in his class, mine was the only essay he'd chosen to put in his binder.

Now you might think I would have been thrilled. "Yowza! Hey, this might mean something!" But no.

Instead, my private response was a version of The Fear of Being Fabulous.

My mind chatter went something like this: “What an idiot he is. Boy, did I ever con him! I just got something done so I didn’t get punished. But it meant nothing to me. And this fool bought it! I must be a really good con man.”

What I was unable to do was see myself as anything other than where I’d come from. And my family roots would never ever have tolerated, much less valued, anything that you didn’t work your tail off for.

I’d been conditioned to believe that it was only hard work that brought good results. It wasn’t even just work, but *hard work* that was important. And since I hadn’t put any effort at all into my class paper, it must have been meaningless. That was why I thought that the priest must be a fool for thinking it was any good.

It took many years to get in touch with the fact that I not only have a talent for writing, I actually have a *gift* for writing. It’s something that’s a deep part of me. And now I’ve published the three books in my autobiographical fiction series, *Leaving Home Trilogy*.

The first book is *Worship of Hollow Gods*, and the second is *An Ambition to Belong*. They have been best sellers on Amazon and get fantastic reviews and I am very proud to recommend them to you if you enjoy great fiction. The third book in the trilogy, *When Angels Die*, has also been highly praised.

You can check the books out at the end of this book and on my website: www.JamesSniechowski.com

Another aspect of my childhood that I want to share with you is the psychological force-field that was created by my family environment, which you can learn more about in vivid detail in *Worship of Hollow Gods*. Despite the book being largely fiction, the family description and my fears and alienation are most definitely accurate.

Perhaps you can relate to growing up in a family where you didn't fit-in. Yet you had to fit-in somehow in order to get along – in order to survive. That's how it was for me.

My mother had nine siblings and my dad had five. And nearly all of them were married and lived nearby. They constituted the culture and atmosphere of my childhood, and in turn my childhood conditioning. Yet I was very different. I didn't belong.

I was and still am a dreamer, a wonderer, an ideas-person. Even as a small child, I wondered how worms knew to come out on our front lawn when it rained. As I lay on my belly looking into a mirror representing an ice pond under the Christmas tree in our living room that had baby Jesus and Mary and Joseph placed next to it, I wondered what caused their images to reflect.

Today I wonder how trees feel having to stand in one place all their lives, how earthquakes recover from the earth's elements crashing into each other, and how the planet can withstand so many humans living here and not caring about it.

My imaginative nature wasn't a good fit for where I came from. So I had to adjust and then I had to find my *real* self, little by little, as I grew into an adult, and especially after I met Judith and we began to explore our lives together.

Reflections

Hopefully the examples in this and the previous chapter will help you understand a little more about what we mean by The Fear of Being Fabulous and how it blocks people from living fully.

Going forward we'll help you identify, in a variety of ways, the causes behind The Fear of Being Fabulous and provide examples of how those fears can hold you back in ways that are so subtle and taken for granted that they seem like the nature of reality.

Meanwhile, just as you did after reading Judith's story, we invite you now to reflect on Jim's story. See if there are any similar events that might have influenced the life you "chose" to lead and the choices you've made over the years. And when we say "similar events" they might not be similar in context, such as growing up in a Polish family, or being a sought-after actress, but similar from the point of view of how family culture and conditioning has influenced your actions and beliefs.



~ Chapter 9 ~

Where in Life is Your Unconscious Holding You Back?

Let's start with three big questions for you!
First: Where in your life are you STUCK?
Second: When does your FEAR or ANXIETY or DOUBT show up and hold you back?
And Third: Where in your life do you feel SUCCESSFUL?

Unconscious Allegiances and Forbiddances

In this chapter we're following up on the topics we call Unconscious Allegiances and Forbiddances. We want to help you examine the difference between those areas in your life where you're doing really well—maybe even amazingly well—and those areas where you feel like the mysteries of the universe have got you trapped and you can't get out.

After reading the next chapter (Chapter 10) on "Unconscious Contamination", you'll get a deeper understanding that there are some areas of your life that can feel awesome and free. Yet there can also be areas where your holdbacks are painfully evident. And, of course, the frustration is just as evident.

But first, in this chapter we'll be guiding you through the process of charting your Unconscious Allegiances and resulting Forbiddances so you can begin to get a handle on how to break through to new freedoms of being who you really are, on your own terms.

As you continue to read through this chapter, bring to mind how the following issues were talked about and handled by your family of origin – the people who influenced you when you were young.

Money

What attitude did your family, or the people you grew up with, have towards money; saving money; spending money; the lack of money? How did they feel about these money-related issues? How did they speak about them?

And today, how is *your* relationship with money similar or different from what you were surrounded by early in your life, when you were growing up?

Relationships

How about relationships? What was your parents' relationship like? How did they relate to their own families of origin? How did your parents, or whoever raised you, expect you to relate to them? And what did they expect from you about getting married? Did they expect you to produce grand-children for them?

And how are your relationships currently coming along with your parents, if they're still alive? And what about your relationships with your other relatives – what are they like?

Now think about the people in your own immediate family if you are with a partner and if you have children?

How would you rate your relationships with your friends? Which relationships, if any, work really well? And which relationships expose difficulties that you inherited from the way you were influenced, growing up?

Continue to compare the life you have today with the attitudes of the people with whom you grew up.

Leaving Home

Thinking now about "Leaving Home". And you'll recall that when we talk about Leaving Home, we're not talking about

you physically leaving the family household. We're talking about being mentally and emotionally free to live the life *you* want to live, no matter where you physically reside.

So what were you told about leaving home and what were your family's expectations of you?

Was your freedom to develop your own way of life encouraged, or forbidden – either overtly or covertly?

Were you expected to take care of others over your own desires and ambitions, or not?

When you look at your life today, would you say you've been held back by fears of living your life as you'd really like to? Or do you see yourself as having a robustly expansive and successful life out in the world?

Obviously, there are many categories here that we could explore with you. So we encourage you to take an inventory of life issues that are important to you. Categorize those issues where you have maximum freedom and success, and those where you know you are frustrated and feel held back.

Your Success in the World

Now, we have one more very important category to explore with you at this time. It's actually a sub-category of Leaving Home. We'd like you to think about your freedom to be *successful* in the world – whatever successful means to you.

How close are you to reaching your success goals in the world – say in your profession?

Are you satisfied with where you are now? Or are you frustrated and feeling held back?

Regarding your success goals, what do you believe is holding you back, if anything?

What patterns can you see that are involved in your feelings of being held back?

How do you feel about being ambitious? What attitude did your family have about people who are ambitious?

To what degree is it okay for you to stand apart from others in your success?

To what extent do you embrace your freedom to become successful in any area of your life – way beyond the successes of your parents and other family members?

Finally, for any area of your life that feels less than fulfilling, what do you *believe* about yourself in that area that might be holding you back?

Reflections

If you can't answer these questions in a deep, enlightening way right now, that's okay.

Just read through this chapter as many times as you need to let the questions penetrate more deeply.

And in future chapters, we'll look at these issues in a number of different ways to help you resolve any concerns you might have.

Meanwhile one last question.

Did the questions in this chapter help you get a little clearer – even just a little bit – about yourself, your holdbacks, and maybe even provide insights into your potential breakthroughs?

If so, terrific!

If not, keep journeying through the following pages.



~ Chapter 10 ~

Unconscious Contamination

Have you ever thought about how areas of your life can actually be “contaminated”? How your life might have been polluted by associations in your early life?

As we dig into this topic as it applies to your life, your much larger life and your current fears of being fabulous, we invite you to give some serious consideration to how early childhood upbringing can influence how people think about any issues, including sensitive issues such as race, religion, and other cultures.

Think about how children learn to make fun of other children, especially children who are different. Think about how they can bully and badger them at school, in the neighborhood, at the local park. They weren't born bullying. They learned it as they were growing up. And so they think it's okay.

Why?

Because those behaviors are the results of unconscious contamination.

What is Unconscious Contamination?

We've all been brainwashed when we were too young to disagree or fight for a better way of thinking and/or feeling about things. In fact, we were often way too young to understand that there might be a better way to think.

And so as the term brainwashing implies, we were unconsciously being influenced to believe and think about things

in a certain way, from a certain viewpoint—either positive or negative. This is what we mean when we talk about unconscious contamination.

We came to this perspective, about contamination, when we went to France and Italy on our honeymoon in 1988. Being there prompted us to share our initial experiences of Europe when we were each in our 20s. Of course back in our 20s, we were not with each other. We didn't meet until we were in our 40s.

Curiously, during those initial European travels in our 20s, we'd both enjoyed free and easy-going feelings compared to those when we were back home in the United States. In the US we still lived in the cities in which we'd grown up. The cities where we'd been influenced/contaminated.

In discussing this extraordinary time of open exploration during our initial European adventures, we realized that the reason we were so carefree was that the concept, beliefs, and experience of Europe was totally "uncontaminated".

The fact was that not one of our respective parents or other family members had ever been outside the United States, and so had never said anything about what it was like to travel in other countries. The result was that our experiences in Europe were each completely uncontaminated. Or to put it another way, we were free from family-based negative biases in how we approached and experienced ourselves, as adults, as individuals, when we first visited a variety of countries in Europe.

We had no unconscious pre-conceived ideas about other nationalities, about their cultures, their foods, their behaviors. So we were wide open to whatever adventures occurred and we each had a uniquely rare and marvelous time.

Then when we returned to the United States, and remember this was back in our 20s, we were each shocked by how stifled and closed-in we felt. We didn't have a name for it back then—but everything back in the States was "contaminated" by how we'd been raised. Everything was contaminated by how we'd put our lives into grooves that thwarted more exploratory behaviors.

So now we ask you: What's the first thing that comes to mind in your life that has been contaminated by how you were taught to think about it?

It could be how you think about yourself, your work or career, money, your car, physical fitness, travel, friends, having children, entertaining, anything.

For example, Jim's relationship with food is seriously influenced, in other words contaminated, by his childhood working class Polish diet. Mostly it consisted of white food. Pierogi, noodles, bread, cake, and the like. Vegetables and even fruits were rare. They were not what Jim's parents were used to, so not what the family ate.

Food still remains contaminated for Jim to this very day. If it weren't for Judith making salads and steaming veggies, Jim would probably only eat vegetables when he put tomatoes and pickles on his hamburgers.

And fruit? Well, there are strawberries in one of Jim's preferred ice cream flavors. But his favorite? You guessed it. Vanilla. It's white, just like what was served in his family home.

Unconscious Contamination Contaminates Your Values

Let's look at this issue of contamination even more deeply.

When your reality, your abilities, your desires have been influenced/contaminated by negative, doubt-making inputs from your parents or other people who influenced your life especially before the age of seven, then *your very own value* has been contaminated. And this happened at an unconscious level. So you carry around and are influenced by that contamination at an *unconscious* level. In other words, you don't *consciously* realize what is happening. You don't consciously realize where these ideas or thoughts or beliefs are coming from. They're just there.

For instance, many children who get a bright adventuresome idea and speak about it, are met with something

like: “Who do you think you are Miss Smarty Pants?” or “People like us don’t do things like that Young Man. Know your place.”

Take a minute and think about what happened when you brought home your report cards. Did you hide them or make up lies in order to not receive criticism or even a beating if you didn’t get straight As?

Or if you had all As but one B, did one or both of your parents harp on the “B” like it was a national disgrace and never congratulate you on all the great As? That’s what happens in many homes even today.

Or did your parents blow it off when they saw your Cs and Bs, giving you the feeling that they believed you couldn’t do any better than that so why bother to help you be a better student?

You’ll recall the story we shared with you in Chapter 8 about Jim attending a private Jesuit high school. And when his English teacher publicly called out a story he’d written about the word “somber” as being exceptional, he couldn’t believe he deserved it. Instead he thought the teacher was just an idiot, and so he was no one to be respected or believed.

And why did Jim have that reaction?

Because as a child and during his formative years, that’s what he was brainwashed into believing about his abilities.

So now, think about it, what kinds of contamination are you still living with today? Take a deeply thoughtful look at this.

What types of judgments and limitations do you still impose on yourself that came from how you were raised?

Let’s take the issue of exercise

When Judith was a young girl her dad spoke to her about riding her bicycle only as exercise. “Hey Judi, he’d say” (because she was Judi until age 30). “Why don’t you go outside and ride your bicycle and get some exercise.”

There was never the association of riding a bicycle for fun and feeling free. And yet when Judith sees people out riding their

bicycles on a sunny afternoon, they always look like they're having fun. But throughout her life, whenever Judith thinks about riding a bicycle herself, it only ever looked like work and just a form of boring exercise.

How about the notion of work?

So many people comment with awe, on how we can coach 8 or 9 hours a day and never get tired. Part of it is that we don't think of it as "work." We experience coaching as helping people overcome their fear of being fabulous, in whatever ways they may need.

Since this is something we have a long-lasting passion for, how can it be boring or tiresome? And most important, our coaching was never contaminated by how our parents talked about work. They had no idea about making their living by helping people develop themselves and their careers and so never influenced/contaminated the way we thought about this type of work.

Then there's love and relationships

What did you absorb about relationships from the way your parents related to each other? Did they fight a lot? Were they shut down and never talked about anything serious? Did they get divorced? Or were they playful, enjoying life for the most part, predominately loving and happy most of the time?

Remember, you were absorbing whatever it was like, just like a sponge, before you could even begin to understand how it was affecting your ideas about dating, relationships, and marriage. How do you see those early experiences still contaminating how you behave in your relationships, and what you expect from others today?

Reflections

So now, whenever you feel stuck in some way, in some area of your life, take a few moments to look back on your early years

and see if there's some kind of contamination going on today that's blocking you from a more spontaneous, more confident response.

We're hoping that this chapter will influence you in a positive manner and allow you to have a more confident, more assertive response going forward.

And yes, remember there can also be positive contamination, giving you better underpinnings moving forward in your life. So watch for that too.

Now that you have an overall idea of what unconscious contamination is all about, we invite you to go through the chapter again. This time stop and give some thought to various aspects of your life.

1. Think about any areas in your life where you might be stuck, or where things are not as successful as you'd like them to be, or had hoped they would be.
2. To do this, go through the various areas in your life one-by-one. You might even like to give yourself a score from 1 through 10 of how unsatisfied, satisfied, or even happy you are with the different areas in your life. And no matter what number you rate each area, see if there are parallels between your current beliefs in these areas and any childhood influences, or contaminations, that might have come from those you grew up with.
3. Here are some of the most significant areas to consider:
 - ❖ **Relationships**—family, friends, love, work colleagues, nature;
 - ❖ **Work/Career**;
 - ❖ **Health** so diet and exercise; regular medical and dental care;
 - ❖ **Your Surrounding Environment**—where you live, the location, how you've decorated it, etc;

- ❖ **Knowledge and Education**—originally, and now ongoing;
- ❖ **Travel and Entertainment**—generous with yourself or frugal;
- ❖ **Your Financial Situation**—adequate savings and investments or not. Why in either case?
- ❖ **Your Spiritual Self**—this may be about religion, or it can be about being spiritual and not at all religious, or being totally skeptical about this area of life;
- ❖ **Your Self-Identity**—how do you see yourself—your life purpose, your dreams, how you express yourself, the jokes you tell, your attitudes about life and other people, any cultural influences, and so on—positive and negative?

The idea behind this exercise is not to necessarily make any great changes to your life at this stage, but to bring to your *conscious* mind any of those *unconscious* contaminations that you've been living with.



~ Chapter 11 ~

Are You Allowed to Outshine Your Parents and Siblings?

Many people are held back by worrying that if they succeed in achieving their own desires and ambitions, they'll feel guilty.

But guilty of what?

Guilty of outdoing their parents, or their siblings, their cousins, their friends. Guilty for outshining everyone else in their family. Guilty for going after things their family may not approve of. *Guilty! Guilty! Guilty!*

What about you?

What are some of the things you've felt guilty about achieving? Is there anything you feel guilty about right now?

Perhaps you feel guilty about moving away from your family's long-time city or town? Or guilty about dating or marrying outside your family's race, religion, or any other approved-of category? Or guilty about making more money than anyone else in your family ever even thought about? Or maybe you feel guilty about succeeding in a career your family thinks is corrupt, or even evil?

There are, of course, plenty of other categories of guilt that we keep discovering our clients are living with.

But for the purpose of keeping this chapter manageable, our question for you is: Are you allowed to outshine your parents and/or your siblings?

The Forbiddance of Leaving Home

In this chapter, we're going to navigate through delicate and often uncharted territory. The forbiddance of actually leaving home in order to attain the life you want to live.

And as we explained in Chapter 6, leaving home is not necessarily about packing up and moving out of your family home. Alternatively, you might have physically lived away from your family home for years. Either way this issue applies because this is about the reality of "leaving home" emotionally and living a life that's separate and unique from how you were raised, and how your family thinks you should live, no matter where you physically reside.

Many people we've worked with over the years have felt guilty for outshining their parents, especially when one or both parents had never gone to college or had a seriously successful career. Their mothers may have never earned a pay check. Perhaps like Jim's parents, they struggled to cover the cost of special schooling for their children.

Sometimes the issue has been a sibling who was born with a mental or physical limitation, or both. Or perhaps you're far more intelligent than any of your cousins. Or your athletic skills allowed you to get a college scholarship when your siblings had to work every summer.

As we've demonstrated, guilt can come in many forms. And when you allow it to dominate your feelings and your thinking, you're allowing it to deprive you of your internal permission to live your life on your own terms. And when that happens, then you'll have to struggle with some form of the fear of being fabulous.

Obligations Born of Guilt

Another element of the guilt issue can arise if you feel you must take financial care of your parents or siblings. In other words, rather than being able to invest in your own future, you feel you must send your money to others in your family who've not been able to achieve the success you enjoy.

While we understand that sometimes this is a very real need, we also know that very often guilt is playing a major role in the feeling that triggers obligation when parental or sibling need isn't actually the issue.

While it's wonderful if you can share your abundance in ways that can please everyone involved, here we're addressing the issue of guilt. Because when guilt is in charge of how you live your life, then it'll get in the way of a robustly abundant life.

Guilt is like an emotional cancer that can eat away at your impulse to *Overcome* the Fear of Being Fabulous. And overcoming any fears of being fabulous is what we hope you want for yourself.

So please take inventory right now.

Perhaps you're financially free and clear and don't feel that you owe anyone anything. You're comfortable taking care of yourself and your future. And if that's genuinely the case that's wonderful.

But what about these situations?

When the check comes for lunch with a friend or colleague or relative, do you make sure to split it, or do you reach for it a lot of the time and pick up the tab for everyone?

When driving to a business meeting some distance away, or a vacation, and you're being accompanied by a friend, relative, or several other people; who pays for the gas? The parking? The valet tip?

Or do you avoid these types of situations altogether, fearful of how to handle the financial issues without seeming tight fisted, or overly responsible, or maybe even a show off?

These are seemingly minor challenges in life. But how you respond to them can help you come to terms with how well you're living in your own success without feeling guilty or needing to deny your own excellence and ambition.

By the way, do any other tricky situations come to mind where you notice you're struggling with how to handle your abundance?

Maybe you refrain from hiring someone to clean where you live, for fear you'll be seen by your friends as lazy or pretentious. Or you'll feel guilty for making so much more money than the cleaning person.

Maybe you hesitate to have others over for dinner for fear you'll make them uncomfortable by being in your lovely, well decorated space.

Maybe when you eat out with colleagues or family members, you refrain from ordering what you really want because it's really expensive. Instead you choose a basic hamburger or some other lower cost item, concerned that you'll be seen as showing off if you go with what you really want.

Okay—I hope we've made our point.

Now it's up to you to keep an eye on your judgments, on your assumptions, and on your concerns about others; rather than taking care of yourself, your desires, and your future.

And we want to be absolutely clear; there are definitely situations where it's important to be sensitive to the needs of others. And we congratulate you when you can be a provider who helps out in those *legitimate* situations. We do that too. But that's not what we're referring to here.

Our concern in this chapter is if you hold yourself back because you're putting other people's feelings ahead of your own well-being, when there's no legitimate reason to do that other than erroneously feeling guilty. We clearly demonstrate how this trait adversely affected the life and death of superstar, Whitney Houston, in our book *What Really Killed Whitney Houston*.

Reflections

Instead of attempting to think of an *event* or *situation* when you felt guilty, it's sometimes easier to start with the emotion itself and work back from there because guilt is such a powerful, yet negative emotion.

So think about any time in your life when you felt guilty about doing something. And use all the examples we've given you above to help trigger your exploration. Now if you get a flood of ideas be sure to write them down because it's important that you focus on one situation at a time.

As you reflect on each one of those feelings of guilt, think back to the reason *why* you might have felt guilty. Initially, you might come up with a number of superficial possibilities coming out of your conscious mind. But continue to dig down deeper and deeper and see if any of those guilty feelings stem from some aspect of how you were "conditioned" as a child or young person growing up. Do any of those guilty feelings stem from an unconscious guilt you might be harboring for attempting to "leave home"

Finally, as you work through any feelings of guilt, experienced now or in the past, notice how you had to hold yourself back, in any way no matter how seemingly irrelevant it might be.



~ Chapter 12 ~

There is No Such Thing as Failure

Here's a big alert for you. Perhaps even a giant wake-up call.
There is no such thing as failure!

Yes, that's right. There is no such thing as failure.

Why?

Because you are always succeeding – always. The question is – at what?

The focus of this chapter promises you a new type of liberation. So we hope you're ready to dig into this provocative guarantee because you'll be surprised at what you discover.

Failure versus Success

To start, bring to mind an area in your life where you're not living up to your goals, or your dreams, or your ambitions. It might be in your career, your love life, physical fitness, spirituality, you name it.

Now when you think about an area in your life where you could be self-critical, or perhaps even condemning, what do you think might happen if you look at it differently? What happens when you look at what you're actually succeeding at?

Fairly recently, Judith realized that she wasn't carrying out her personal commitment to exercise for 15–20 minutes a day, even though that was what she consciously claimed she wanted to do.

Yet on reflection, Judith was actually succeeding at repeating how her mother lived in her older years. Judith's mother became chunky and, to the best of Judith's knowledge, never exercised at all.

By contrast, her father kept himself slim and in great shape right up until he died at 90. He exercised every day. Even when it rained he would run around the house and do push-ups in the kitchen before he had breakfast.

And Jim has an example with poor performance in school.

When he was growing up, his factory working father would exclaim how he, Jim's father, was the only genius in the family. That clearly meant Jim wasn't supposed to compete or even think about being super smart.

Yet when it was time for Jim to take an entrance exam for admission to a private Jesuit high school, he scored high enough to start school in the top third of his class. But, four years later, he graduated second to last.

So our question to you is: By the time Jim graduated, was he succeeding or not?

Oh yes, he was most definitely succeeding. He was succeeding at making sure his father was indeed the only genius in the house.

A Few More Examples

Let's take a look at a few other examples to make sure you really understand this important concept. Well actually, it's not just a concept. It's a fact.

A few years ago, one of our Asian clients was terrified of talking with her manager about a promotion. Yet she knew she deserved it. When we suggested that she should ask her manager what he thought about putting her forward for the next level, she said "Oh I couldn't do that. It would be aggressive."

Yes, in the Asian culture in which she'd been raised, it would indeed be considered too aggressive. And therefore, she

was being successful in not speaking up. Successful in staying true to her culture of origin.

But, instead, she followed our advice. She chose to transfer her cultural loyalty to her new life in the United States and speak to her manager.

And when she did, she was amazed when her manager said, “I’m so glad you brought this up. I’ve been thinking about how well you’ve been doing. Your promotion has just been slipping through the cracks. I’m so sorry. OK, for sure I’ll get your promotion package ready as soon as possible.”

She told us about her success through tears of joy. But first she’d had to accept her initial success at being loyal to Asian values, rather than taking care of herself in the American work culture.

Another client, a man, was reluctant to use his leadership authority more fully for fear he would be overly aggressive and actually come across as abusive.

Why?

Because that’s how he’d experienced his father when his dad used his parental authority with him and his sister. So while we might say he was failing at fulfilling his leadership role, what he was actually doing was being successful at avoiding being like his father.

It’s all about perspective!

Here’s another example out of thousands we’ve seen over our more than 30 years of working in this area. A woman who attended a men’s conference where we were speaking and running a workshop on relationships, complained that she could never meet the sort of man she really connected with.

There she sat in her dress, hose, and heels, lovely jewelry, and a very special hair-do. So Judith asked if she always dressed like that when meeting men.

“Oh yes,” she said. “This is what my father told me men expect.”

Yet when Judith asked what kinds of things she liked to do, she readily said, “Hiking, surfing, soft ball, that kind of thing.”

“Aha!” Judith replied with a wry smile. “Notice, when you dress like this, you are actually guilty of false advertising. And yet you wonder why you’re attracting the wrong types of men.”

We showed her how by failing at meeting appropriate men, she was actually succeeding at being loyal to her father’s beliefs and advice.

At the next year’s conference she showed up in jeans, checked long sleeve shirt with hiking boots. Her husband was dressed in a similar style. And she was also pushing a baby carriage.

Excitedly, she told us: “Once I started showing up as I really am, like you told me, look who I found on a hike with the Sierra Club.” She was so happy and proud—and we were also deeply happy and proud for her.

A Question for You

So our question to you is: What is an area in your life where you feel held back, frustrated, or annoyed with yourself? And how are you actually succeeding by keeping to that lack of maximum achievement?

Also, how do you feel about this realization that rather than failing, you are actually succeeding—yes succeeding at being true to an unconscious loyalty, an unconscious allegiance you might have?

Remember, we’re talking about all of this in the context of *Overcoming* the Fear of Being Fabulous.

So in your own personal example, how could you live more optimally if you weren’t unconsciously committed to succeeding at a more primitive level of your unconscious?

Writing this chapter was a real wakeup call for Judith, with regard to realizing that by not fulfilling her daily exercise commitment, she was succeeding in an *unconscious* allegiance to

her mother, rather than the lifestyle she *consciously* wanted for herself.

And writing his autobiographical novels, his *Leaving Home Trilogy*, Jim realized that they were not only a commitment to expose primitive elements of his environment growing up; but even more deeply, a commitment to rearrange his understanding of being human on this planet, with or without religious beliefs.

The *Leaving Home Trilogy* titles are *Worship Of Hollow Gods*, *An Ambition to Belong*, and *When Angels Die* and are based on Jim's years, growing up in inner city, working class, Polish Catholic Detroit. And as you can no doubt tell by the titles, they all relate to Overcoming The Fear of Being Fabulous.

There's a deep significance in the reality that there's no such thing as failure; that you're always succeeding –but at what?

That significant reality is that if you feel like a failure, you're reinforcing that you're not being successful. When in fact, you are. Yes! You actually are successful. The only question is, as you now know –at what?

And once you've brought that success out of your *unconscious mind* and up into your *conscious awareness*, you have a choice to make. You can then choose to continue to be a success at something you don't want to achieve. Alternatively, you can choose to change what you're doing and be a success in the area you *consciously* do want to achieve.

So once you pin down the unconscious roots of what's holding you back in any area of your life, pay attention to whatever shifts in your priorities, as you move forward.

For Judith, working on the various chapters in this book have created a new window of conscious awareness about her daily exercise and wanting to eat less so she can be in even greater alignment with her *conscious* adult values, rather than her *unconscious* daughterly loyalty to her mom.

And in fact, she's now several pounds lighter than when we began this project.

Reflections

And now, here are several questions for you to reflect on.

- ❖ How are you succeeding in an *unconscious* pattern of an unconscious allegiance to something or someone from your past?
- ❖ What would your *conscious* adult mind prefer instead?
- ❖ How do you now feel, knowing that you are never failing; knowing that you are always succeeding – the question is at what?

Answering these questions will help you to Overcome the Fear of Being Fabulous!



~ Chapter 13 ~

Being Nice versus Honest

How often do you feel you have to be nice rather than honest?

So often people short-change the other person and themselves by reducing their feedback to only nice, whether at work or in their personal lives. So they have to be nice when they could provide valuable communication if they were simply and respectfully honest.

Why would you avoid telling the truth, in favor of being nice?

Most people say it's because they're afraid of hurting someone's feelings.

But think about it this way. As the Dean of Judith's graduate school once said: "Nice folks leave a wake of destruction in their path." And this chapter unpacks that bit of true wisdom.

We'll also take apart the old adage that, "It's better to be nice than to be honest."

And what we want you to consider is that telling your truth, in other words "being honest," can be the kindest thing you can provide for someone. Particularly if that person has asked for your opinion.

Your Honest Opinion Matters

So back to that piece of wisdom, "Nice folks leave a wake of destruction in their path."

Why do you think that is?

After all, every time someone opts for being nice rather than honest they are short-changing the other person, allowing them to continue on as they are. In other words, the other person is not receiving a constructive critique, be that in the workplace or socially. They're not getting genuine input on how they might behave differently at work, in marriage, when dating, or even with things as mundane as getting honest feedback on their new article of clothing or a new lamp.

And even worse, when it comes to how they are treated, they'll put up with being treated disrespectfully, or even verbally and/or physically abused, all in the name of "being nice" and not wanting to hurt the other person's feelings.

Think about it. When someone is the object of domestic violence, it's highly unlikely that they were physically abused on the first date.

But if someone is feeling insecure about who they are and the value they actually bring to the relationship, then it's easy to put up with rude, uncaring behavior. It's easy to write it off as "oh he's just insecure" or "she's just trying to act tough" and then cop-out on drawing a boundary and stopping the bad behavior.

Instead, they just go along, to get along. *And* they inadvertently give permission for the mistreatment to escalate. And no, we are not "blaming the victim." We *are* addressing one of the realities of always being "nice."

Now it's true that's at the extreme. So let's now look at some much simpler examples.

Say when a friend asks for your honest opinion about the email they're planning to send requesting a job interview. Or they ask what you think about their new haircut. Or they want your opinion on a new person they're dating that you met last night. Or your opinion on anything at all.

And in each of those examples there's room to be helpful, or you can cop-out and be nice. If you're nice you'll short-change your friend. If you're honest, you'll say what you actually believe. So your feedback about the employment email might include a

critique about incorrect punctuation and the suggestion that they expand on the reason they're seeking a new job.

With regard to the new haircut, to be kind and honest you may need to say that you find the bangs ill-suited to the person's face. And unless they're in love with the haircut themselves, you'll suggest they let the bangs grow out and that they go to a different hair stylist next time.

And if asked about the new person your friend is dating, by all means say that you really enjoyed the person, if it's true. And you can certainly include all the reasons why. *But* only if that's the truth.

If you have reservations, then think about it. Is it kind or right to sugar coat it and just be nice? We don't think so. And it doesn't help your friend at all.

Honesty Helps You Grow Too

So if telling people the truth is an underdeveloped character muscle of yours, make a vow that you'll no longer cheat your friends and others by not being honest. And most importantly, you'll stop cheating yourself by not being honest.

Yes, we're talking about you growing your character to include a larger sense of honesty and sincere helpfulness to others. Think how this will add to your sense of self. Your sense of being mature and grown-up.

Now, if you're feeling uncertain about what we're suggesting, and this might be the case if you were raised to believe the old saying: "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all"; then you'll need to move gradually toward a new understanding of what it costs others and yourself when you're only nice. Because often, only being nice means not telling the truth.

By being honest and telling the truth, you might be looking at breaking an old and deep allegiance to where you came from.

An allegiance to your family ties. It might also require you to re-arrange how you see yourself in relationships and in the world.

Now we know this is a lot to change all of a sudden. So it's important to understand that as you commit to owning more of who you really are, there will be hesitations, slip-backs, self-doubt—you name it.

And that's to be expected, because you're now consciously deciding to break away from what you've been raised to believe. You'll now have to determine your own values and your own ways of being in the world, on your own terms.

Being more truly who you are will create a more substantial *you* out in the world. So you can expect people to react a bit differently to who you're allowing yourself to be.

Reflections

If you haven't yet watched our free 3-minute video "You Are A Miracle," this is a perfect time to do that, because it'll reinforce the need to be more fully and honestly *you*.

Because you are indeed a miracle!

Just go to

www.OvercomingTheFearOfBeingFabulous.com/miracle

It's our way of helping you confirm that who you are, who you *truly* are, is very much worth bringing forward into the world as fully as you can.



~ Chapter 14 ~

How Well Do You Manage Up and Influence Others?

We want to help you learn to better manage your manager.

If you report to someone in your work then it's important that you don't allow yourself to just be obedient. In order to grow in your work-life self-appraisal, we want to help you learn to better manage your manager—but, of course, in an appropriate and professional manner.

It's important for your growing self-assessment that you feel comfortable influencing others. This could be influencing others in your relationship with your child's teacher, or with your neighbor, or your friendship circle, or, as we've suggested, even with your boss.

Managing up is not being sycophantic or sucking-up. Managing up and influencing others is an important element in your commitment to living a full and expanded lifestyle.

It's true that some people are horrified by the idea of managing their boss. Or maybe even their boss's boss.

But think about it. If you can't influence, you can't express your excellence and impress.

And what's the point of being in relationships at work if you can't express your expertise and make an impact? In fact, as we see it, the inability to achieve an impact is the number one reason people leave their jobs and look for work elsewhere.

Highlight Your Skills and Experience

Yes, this chapter is about empowering you to influence various people in your everyday life. Even if it's not relevant for you to manage up in the workplace, influencing others is certainly an aspect of living your life to the fullest.

And when you suffer from The Fear of Being Fabulous, you're prone to undermining your own influence.

Now you may already be saying to yourself: "Who do I think I am to be telling my boss how they might do something differently?"

And yet think about it. If your boss, your manager, isn't in the habit of giving you feedback that can help you grow your career, what are you going to do to help them understand your experience?

Helping your manager see you in a more expanded light might take the form of volunteering to participate in an upcoming presentation and, in that way, giving your manager several reasons why you'd be perfect for that particular assignment related to that particular project.

Maybe you need to ask outright for feedback on how you're coming along on a specific task. Just ask your manager to give you some tips on how you can improve in your professional development.

Maybe you need to ask your child's teacher for more difficult assignments that challenge your child so that boredom won't set in. Or you need to speak with a neighbor about their tree roots coming up in your driveway, but you've been reluctant to rock the boat.

Any time you shy away from using your influence, make sure to alert yourself that this is another symptom of The Fear of Being Fabulous—which is another way of saying that you're actually afraid to be fully YOU.

Whatever it is, notice how you feel about yourself when you become far more active in managing up with those leaders and

other people around you. Notice how you feel about yourself influencing anyone else where you need to speak up more powerfully.

Changing Your Life for the Better

It's more than likely that initially your inner critic, that little voice in the back of your head, will call you out when you follow our suggestions. It might threaten that you'll be an "intrusive know it all". And so perhaps you're afraid that you'll be seen as bossy or butting in where you don't belong. But if it's your life, or the life of your family, then you do belong there. You do have a right to say something.

After all, that little voice, your inner critic, is just the fear of being fabulous yammering at you. And now, we're simply inviting you to take your rightful place in your life.

We're inviting you to use your own intelligence and your own needs as concrete requests that can change your life and the lives of people in your life, in your family, and those you work with—all for the better.

Think about meetings you've had with your manager, your employer, your child's home room teacher. Most people just leave these meetings open ended. Then they're disappointed when their needs haven't been discussed, much less taken care of.

But what if you managed-up by sending your own Agenda in advance? You can then list your most important topics with the first one at the top. Then include a sentence or two about why it's important and what you're hoping for as the outcome.

We can already hear you thinking, "Oh no, I can't do that. It would make me look bossy, like I'm pushing my manager (or the other person) around."

Yep, that's your unconscious allegiance claiming its right to keep you being a well behaved and obedient child. Your unconscious allegiance, through your inner critic, is not allowing you to take charge of your life. In our main example, it's your

work life, to make sure you get what you need to achieve the very highest level you're capable of achieving.

Our Recommendation

Here's a spicy topic to amplify what we mean by managing up. Just ask your boss what's necessary for you to be considered for a promotion. Again, we expect that you might gasp: "Oh no, how can I possibly be so self-centered and aggressive as to bring up my own promotion?"

But if you don't, who will?

Because we know all too well that many managers are far too busy to keep your promotion on the front burner of their minds. And we also know that some managers truly believe that if you don't have the confidence to bring up the topic yourself, well, then you don't actually deserve to be put forward for a promotion.

Here's what we recommend.

Make sure you've been in your current role long enough to realistically be talking with your manager about the next level of your career. Then when you bring up the topic, don't ask immediately when can you expect a promotion. That can sound grabby and entitled.

Instead, manage your manager by asking their thoughts on when you'll be ready to be put forward. Ask what criteria are important that you've not yet fulfilled. Make sure you ask for prescriptive, concrete, specific examples that you can implement in the next few months.

And depending on your workplace, you may want to ask for a copy of the promotion package if they have one, so you can fill it out yourself. Then give your manager a copy so they're well aware of how you see your own career advancement. That's a form of leadership in itself.

You can apply this same type of strategy in relation to your Homeowners Association President; your child's school

Principal; how you function with your medical doctor around your personal health issues; and any other situation where you might ordinarily hang back, or be passively obedient.

As you overcome the fear of being fabulous, you take on responsibility for yourself rather than playing an outmoded role that may have worked in your family of origin when you were growing up, but it's been holding you back in your own everyday adult life.

Managing up and influencing others applies to any situation where you might have automatically assumed a passive and subservient role. But now, we trust that you realize there's no real reason to do that. You now realize that you need to take charge of situations that you can influence for your own benefit.

So rather than hanging back, being obedient, and then suffering for it later, grab on to your rightful life and manage up whenever it's right for you to do so.

Reflections

- ❖ Reflect on a time in your life, or the times in your life, when you've missed out on an opportunity because you didn't speak up for yourself. If there are a number of occasions, you might want to make a list of them. Because not managing up, or speaking up for yourself, is yet another example of not Leaving Home.
- ❖ Then taking the examples one at a time, think about what might have happened in the short-medium term if you had spoken up.
- ❖ Now think back through your life and see if you can work out why you've been reluctant to speak up for yourself. As you'd be aware by now, this will probably be associated with some form of unconscious allegiance, or unconscious loyalty that you still have to someone who was influential in your life as a child, or when you were growing up.

- ❖ Now think of some times when you did manage up, powerfully speaking up for yourself. After you'd done that, how did you feel?
- ❖ Finally, take a couple of the more significant examples of not speaking up that you thought of above, and really dig down and compare the difference between the possible long-term outcomes for you if you had spoken up versus what resulted instead. Which life would you prefer?

Remember, we're always cheering you on in the background!



~ Chapter 15 ~
The Importance Of Leaving Home
At Any Age

So You Think You've Already Left Home ...
But have you REALLY??

Most people move out of their parents' home to start their own lives, whether it's when they go to college, get their first job, get married, or move in with roommates at some other point. But all too often, for most people it's merely a physical leaving home, not one that liberates their identity – liberates the inner workings of the individual.

That's one of the reasons Jim decided to write the *Leaving Home Trilogy*.

We've both struggled with self-discovery and personal liberation. So the whole issue of leaving home psychologically is near and dear to us both. It's the only way to truly Overcome The Fear of Being Fabulous.

Writing the *Leaving Home Trilogy* certainly added to Jim's own freedom to be fabulous. By writing about many issues that people often find off-limits or even spiritually offensive, Jim found it was a major act of internally leaving home.

So to add some clarity, depth, and understanding to the important concept of leaving home, this chapter will be a little

different. In this chapter, Judith briefly interviews Jim about the need for us all to “Leave Home, no matter your age”, which is the logline for his trilogy of novels. This way you’ll get a first-hand glimpse into how the family, culture, and environment in which Jim grew up influenced his life and how writing his novels has helped him continue even more deeply to leave home.

The Interview

Judith: Please explain why leaving home at any age is so important. You made it the underlying theme of your trilogy of autobiographical novels—*Worship Of Hollow Gods*, *An Ambition To Belong*, and *When Angels Die*.

Jim: As I’ve matured in my life, both in relationships and in work, it’s been so obvious to me that unless I increasingly left behind how I was raised, I couldn’t move out into a larger, more robust, more expressive, more successful version of myself. I needed to leave behind how I was raised so that I could see who I really am, and increasingly take my rightful place in life.

Judith: Perhaps you could describe how you see “leaving home” in a little more detail, especially as it applies to your novels.

Jim: For the first few years of life, we all grow up without the ability to question how we’re being raised.

In my case, the Polish culture, Catholic religion, factory working adult males, and the stay at home *matkas*—that’s “mothers” in Polish—were all normal to me. That was my entire world as far as I understood it.

The family never left the neighborhood. We never traveled even within Detroit. Sure my dad went to the factory, but I never saw any area outside Mercier Street and the local church, until I was about 9 or 10. And even then, it was only to go to the movie theater downtown, which was not only a huge treat, but also a little frightening.

Judith: And it's important to explain that, as you're aware, the human brain isn't sufficiently developed to be able to evaluate what's going on until about age 7 on up until about age 11. In other words, the brain continues to grow during that time, gradually allowing for an increasing ability to question and evaluate what's going on around you.

But during those first seven or more years your brain, anyone's brain, can't do any of that. Actually, all too often individuals never even begin to utilize that questioning function. Instead, they simply spend their entire life staying true to what was learned in their very early years.

Jim: Exactly. So I framed my first novel, *Worship Of Hollow Gods*, through the lenses and budding brain function of 9-year-old Jim. It's only then that he begins to evaluate his life and his family. It's then that he exposes, bit-by-bit, the hollow gods he's been raised to believe in.

Judith: So what were the key challenges you had to face writing about your own family members? I know you changed most people's names, except for your own. But what else, inside of you, happened as you dug more deeply into those hollow gods you had been raised with?

Jim: Well it certainly caused me to reflect more deeply about the pain, anxiety, fears, and sorrows that my parents, and also all my aunts and uncles, experienced on a daily basis. We were what was known as a tight-knit family. Living in the same neighborhood and seeing each other at church every Sunday, we'd get together most every week. One of my mother's brothers and his wife and kids even lived right next door to us.

Judith: Sounds like there was very little privacy, much less freedom to chart your own path as you were growing up.

Jim: You're so right! As I demonstrated in my second book, *An Ambition To Belong*, I had very little sense of where I really

belonged. I knew I didn't fit into my family. In fact it all felt very claustrophobic.

And that's true for so many kids, especially those who are really bright and energetic. And neither the street gang I joined, nor the private high school that I went to, offered any kind of fit for me. So I really did struggle to belong.

In the novel, I bring a fascinating closure to this issue. But it still haunts me how so many kids are actually lost growing up — feeling as if they don't belong anywhere at all.

Judith: Yes, indeed! Now, a pivotal question. Why do you love writing fiction?

Jim: Judith, you and I have written eight non-fiction books on a variety of topics including a progressive wedding book and an examination of "What Really Killed Whitney Houston", that exposed *her* fear of being fabulous. But nothing so far has allowed my imagination and my philosophical frame of mind to find a broad field of play like fiction.

Judith: I've never heard you say that before. But I get it. Now in writing these novels, how have you run into your own fear of being fabulous?

Jim: Actually in some ways, it's been just the opposite. For example I've been rewarded for what a truly good writer I am with a variety of awards and reviews.

However, you'll recall my experience in the 11th grade when a Jesuit priest who taught English singled out my writing for special acclaim. But rather than being able to take it in, I decided he was a jerk, a fool, and didn't have a clue about writing. This was because what I'd written had been dashed off during the lunch break instead of me having put in the hard work my familial past had embedded in my unconscious as the only key to success. So to now recognize and be recognized by book reviewers and others for my excellent writing is actually quite a thrill.

Judith: So in light of how you've experienced and come to terms with your fears of being fabulous, what advice do you have for our reader.

Jim: Ah yes! For several decades I put off writing fiction, and I regret waiting for so long.

So whatever you've been putting off, just do it now!

Don't waste another day or even another hour worrying about the outcome, hesitating because you're imagining what others might think, concerned about whether the outcome will be good enough. Who cares!

The only way to find out how it will go is to do it. And do it NOW.

And that includes going back to school, changing careers, getting healthy, abandoning unhealthy relationships, traveling, doing anything creative.

Do it NOW!

Judith as you know, a previous client who gave us permission to share her story, told us how she left three unhealthy relationships. And despite leaving school in 9th grade, was able to get special admission to college as a 1st year undergraduate student at the age of 40. She then went on to complete five university degrees and became an award-winning author. How's that for inspiration!

So whatever you want in life, just do it, and do it NOW.

Judith: I would like to honor you, my dear husband for continually moving past your fear of being fabulous. It's been my deep and sincere pleasure to interview you for this very special chapter and to continue to work with you in our executive coaching, especially after your mouth muscles—your speaking muscles—were damaged during the blessedly mild stroke you suffered in 2016.

Reflections

- ❖ Now that you have a better understanding of what leaving home emotionally is all about, we invite you to spend some time reflecting on Jim's story. Think about how he was emotionally locked into the culture and environment in which he was raised, to the point where he felt he just didn't belong. Can you relate to anything like that?
- ❖ And if you don't already have a Bucket List of all you want to experience before you leave this physical plane, write one up now. They can be lots of fun to put together. Then set up a time frame for working on each item.
- ❖ If you have any hesitation in doing any of the things on your list, write out why you think that might be. And keep digging to see if your hesitation has anything to do with your fear of being fabulous — your fear of leaving home. In other words, is there any possible connection between your hesitancy and the culture and environment in which you grew up?



~ Chapter 16 ~

How Well Do You Receive Compliments and Praise?

Do you totally dismiss any kind of compliments someone makes about you? Do you hide behind false humility, worried that others might think you're conceited or grand-standing if you accept the compliment and simply say "Thank you"?

Learning what that says about your relationship with yourself, *and* discovering how to say "Thank You" is a gift.

After all, being unable to accept praise from others is a bit like living in a psychological desert. This is because the human need for recognition is nearly as important to being robustly alive as is breathing in oxygen. Yet how many people do you know who exude a solid sense of self-confidence by taking in praise with poise and grace?

Living Comfortably with Your True Value

Unfortunately, far too often people have been raised in environments that contaminated the process of receiving praise by being taught that they needed to be modest, to never get a swelled head, to never appear arrogant or superior, or to even play themselves down.

Whether this was the by-product of religion, culture, or family fears, it amounts to the same thing. They can't comfortably live inside their own true value.

Think about it. What were you taught about being humble, deflecting praise, never appearing arrogant or puffed up? And how might this have even prevented you from asking for a raise, a promotion, or requesting to meet someone attractive your married friend was talking with at a conference or party?

Yes it's true, your personal sense of value has to be consistent with the compliment coming to you. If you think your new haircut is a disaster, then when people tell you they really like it, you'll indeed have trouble saying thank you.

But what about when you've been given a promotion at work and your colleagues congratulate you saying things like, "Bravo! You've deserved this for months." "You are so good at what you do, it's a pleasure working with you." "Be sure to drop by my office after work tonight, everyone's coming to a special Happy Hour I've arranged to celebrate you."

How well do you take in and own that kind of celebration of *YOU*?

The problem is if you don't believe you deserve the accolades or the celebrations, you end up persuading yourself that you're just suffering from The Imposter Syndrome, as it's often referred to today. And indeed you are suffering.

But it's a self-imposed suffering. Because the external validation of your value from others is far more reliable than your internal voice, your inner critic, that prefers to put you down.

Now for you to gain access to a more robust sense of self, you'll have to psychologically leave home—something we've spoken about in earlier chapters. In other words, you'll have to leave the belief system you learned growing up that has kept you from owning your own mastery, your own excellence, your own likeability.

Once again, by leaving home we don't mean that you stop talking with your family. That's not the point. What we mean is that you have to come to your own sense of self-value, on your own terms.

Humility

Take the much maligned word “humility” for instance. For all too many people, humility is an idea that can get in the way of receiving the true value that is delivered in praise or compliments. Yet some business authorities say that humility is a key component of outstanding leadership.

Here’s our definition of humility.

Humility is not the false suppression of your gifts. True humility is the full expression of your gifts as a way of honoring their Source, whatever you believe Source to be—God, the Universe, or whatever your larger expression of reality might be.

And with true humility, you must honor that Source. And when you honor that Source and give yourself the freedom to express who you really are ... that’s what we mean by being **FABULOUS**.

Reflections

We encourage you to notice over the next several days, while this topic is fresh in your mind, what happens when you give compliments to someone in your personal life or praise someone at work acknowledging that they are really good at what they do. You might even tell a stranger on the street that you really like their jacket. Notice how these people respond.

Do any of these people thank you and express some form of appreciation that you’ve acknowledged them? If so, notice if their appreciation makes you also feel good—so completing the circle.

Alternately, do they reject your praise? Maybe they giggle, maybe they shrug their shoulders, maybe they tell you: “This old jacket ha ha ha”. In some way they deflect away from your compliment or praise. How did that make you feel? Take note of the difference.

And now, going forward in your life, stay as conscious as you can to consciously, actively, and graciously accept praise and

compliments you receive. This'll help you live with the confidence of being more fabulous in your life.



~ Chapter 17 ~

How Much Do You Allow Yourself to Want?

Do you struggle with depression, anxiety, or some other form of self-doubt?

It's our personal and professional experience that most people do—at least from time to time, if not most of the time. Certainly we've both felt the drag of depression, the annoyance of anxiety, the uncertainty of just living from day-to-day on this planet.

Not only do those feelings undermine your self-confidence, they seriously limit the things you allow yourself to “want” in your life.

As you know, many, many years ago, before we'd ever met each other, we were both successful, professional actors. Yet neither of us could allow ourselves to want anything more than the daily work that came our way. Neither of us grew up in homes where ideas like “ambition” or “career” were mentioned. In fact, neither of us ever heard those ideas talked about by our parents or other relatives. As a result, we both eventually walked away from our professional acting work.

So in this chapter, our intention is to inspire you to want more for yourself. To free up your self-image and your self-talk, to dream bigger, to imagine a larger role in your life, to want more.

The Environment in which **YOU** were Raised

Perhaps you've never even thought about what you want from your life, and for your life. After all, some people are blessed by being raised by parents who are involved in pursuing their ambitions. They grow up hearing about achievement, whether it's:

- ❖ in business
- ❖ entertainment
- ❖ medicine
- ❖ the arts
- ❖ education
- ❖ technology
- ❖ you name it

Some people grow up being exposed to all that's possible, both in self-expression and in financial abundance. Consequently, they're raised to be able to desire large, fulfilling professional and personal lives.

So what about you?

How has the financial and work life environment in which you were raised influenced how you live and work today? And it's not just your financial and work-life desires we want to address.

What were relationships like in the home you grew up in? These include the relationships of your immediate caretakers, their friends, all of your relatives. What did you learn about wanting those special dreams and being available for strong, loving, enjoyable, and fun relationships?

And then there's health and fitness, recreation, vacations, and play. Any area of your life can be stunted, unconsciously, by how you were raised and what you took in as being "normal."

So as you continue reading, what comes to mind where you feel some form of lack in your life; some frustration, some anxiety, or depression? It can be about anything. Anything you've not

been allowed to fully *want* in your life. The important thing is to begin to notice these wants and desires.

It's now time to bring any *unconscious* constraints up into your *conscious* awareness so that you can then work on changing them. As soon as you *consciously* notice any sense of lack or frustration, then you're on solid footing to begin wrestling with what's been holding you back from wanting more and going after it.

To put it another way, what's created your fear of being fabulous in these areas of your life?

As you discovered in previous chapters, we often use the term The Love Grip to describe how your love for the people who raised you can hold you in unconscious bondage to their ways and their desires for you.

And all too often, when you can truly define your desires on your own terms, the desires that *they* had/have for you are NOT what *you* want for yourself.

Another way to look at examining what has held you back from wanting more, is to look closely at what you believe you would lose if you were to want more than your parents ever had. Or to want things that are different from anything they could relate to.

What are YOUR Wants?

Bring to mind something you could *want* if you were completely free to go after it. This might be something that would take your life far away from what your parents could understand or approve of. Perhaps you currently live in London, and your secret lifelong dream is to learn Spanish, move to Costa Rica, open your own hotel, and cater to large international weddings.

We know that example will only fit a tiny group of people – and that's the point.

Often what any individual may deeply want is particularly unique. And therefore not easily understood by others, much less

members of their family of origin. The key point is – they want it. And yet their self-doubt hampers their ability to go after it.

So please remember that your life belongs to you – to only you.

Yes, your parents brought you onto the planet. And they gave you what they had to give, for which you may be grateful – or not depending on their ability to love and support who you truly are.

And now, your life is yours. Your desires are yours. Your dreams are yours. That is, unless you give away that authority over your life.

And that's the key take-away from this chapter. No one else has authority over your life, *unless you give it to them*.

Reflections

We now invite you to consider some actions and questions.

- ❖ Write a list of all the material things you've wanted in your life, but were *afraid* to go after.
- ❖ Knowing what you now know, what do you think the source of that fear might have been?
- ❖ What about achievements? List all the things you've wanted to do, be that in your working life, your relationships, travel, sports, any sort of dream or ambition at all.
- ❖ If there are any of those things that you have yet to fulfil, why is that?
- ❖ Overall, how can you best magnify your excellence?
- ❖ How can you consciously follow your greatest dreams, no matter what your inner critic says to you?
- ❖ How much can you *allow* yourself to WANT for yourself, for the rest of your life?

Do keep in mind that as you focus on answering these questions, we emphasize that it doesn't matter what anyone else thinks.

**Your life belongs to you.
What you want for your life, belongs to you!**



~ Chapter 18 ~

Do You Suffer from The Imposter Syndrome?

Some of the people we coach, many of whom work in the tech industry and are leaders in their own right, tell us they feel like imposters. They know it's strange and they acknowledge that there's no real legitimate reason for it. But they still feel like they can't quite own the success they've achieved.

Those feelings might be easier to understand if they never went to college, or didn't graduate, and now they're managing people who have PhDs in Computer Science or Data Analysis. But most of the time, people who struggle with what is called the Imposter Syndrome do so, no matter the level of their education, their professional experience, or even their age. They simply can't stand solidly within their very real accomplishments and feel like rightful owners of all they've achieved.

And so in this chapter we're exploring The Imposter Syndrome, that Harvard Business Review defines as:

A collection of feelings of inadequacy that persist despite evident success. 'Imposters' suffer from chronic self-doubt and a sense of intellectual fraudulence that override any feelings of success or external proof of their competence.

Now that definition applies mostly to the workplace. But what about your personal life?

Do you feel like you “lucked out” in being able to snag the person you married? Perhaps you feel like you constantly need to prove you deserve to be within your friendship circle, with thoughts like “I don’t belong here with these people. How did I get here?”

So, you feel fearful that one day, some fateful day in the future, they’ll find you out and you’ll be excluded.

A really good volley ball player here in California told us he felt like an imposter when people praised him because he’d never taken lessons, and it was just Sunday beach volley ball – and besides, it just came naturally to him.

Your True Sense of Self

Our intention here is to guide you toward a more sincere and integrated sense of self, no matter what you’ve achieved, no matter how you got there, and no matter what your situation might be. And at a minimum, we hope you can claim your rightful ownership of all that you are, especially all that you have accomplished.

Now you might not use the term “Imposter Syndrome”. You may never have heard the term. BUT you may still feel like you are in some way being pretentious, whether in work, your social life, your finances, physical appearance, or anything else. And that feeling of “posturing”, in whatever form, is in essence The Imposter Syndrome no matter what you call it.

So let’s now use a very common non-work example of intentionally being an imposter.

As you’re no doubt aware, people commonly lie on dating sites about everything from their age to their height. But are you aware that between 18–35 percent of both women and men who lie are married and say they’re single?

Think about it. These people are unable to live within their own actual reality, even when they know they’ll be found out – like with their age or height if a relationship goes beyond texting,

emails, or phone calls. These people believe they have to falsify their essential biographies in order to be appealing.

Take a look at this example.

Years ago we had a client who was a successful professional attorney. Yet he believed he had to provide quite an extraordinary impression of himself in order to attract the type of woman he desired.

So before his dates he would rent a Rolls Royce, or a Bentley, or a Ferrari. He'd then take his dates to dinner at exclusive and extremely expensive restaurants to expand on his image as wealthy and therefore highly appealing as a husband.

Later, this backfired because his wife saw no reason to help with their finances—no need to contribute any of her income to their joint economy. During their one and only counseling session with us before she filed for divorce, she told him, “I married you in large part because you appeared to be very wealthy and so I could depend on you to support me. I enjoy using my money on designer shoes and handbags and I’m not about to change.”

But back to the workplace.

We’ve seen many executives who feel like they “gamed” their way to the top. They play-down their education and their career achievements. This can start by never mentioning where they did their graduate work. It could be Harvard Business School, MIT, Stanford, London School Of Business, or Oxford University in England but they avoid ever bringing it up.

What are we seeing in all these people who aren’t able to be the fabulous people they actually are?

Yes! They actually are terrific, outstanding, and exemplary; but they can’t own, accept, and be that outstanding person within their own honest and truthful reality.

Think about all of the famous celebrities who’ve consciously or accidentally killed themselves. It’s the same thing. They couldn’t own and live within their magnificent and outstanding reality—separate and apart from everyone else.

Holdbacks Leading to the Imposter Syndrome

So, if you ever find yourself feeling like who you are isn't good enough, or who you actually are needs to be kept hidden from others; or if you can't fully own who you are and what you've accomplished; or if you ever feel like an imposter; we urge you to look back into your early family programming. Look back and see where you might have picked up what we call "holdbacks".

You'll recall that in Chapter 6 we defined a holdback as: ...

Things like fears, self-doubts, beliefs, and loyalties that prohibit you from functioning at your highest level. Any time you feel shy, fearful, out of place, or inadequate you're no doubt experiencing a holdback. Indeed a holdback can be anything that puts the breaks on your willingness to step further into your life, whether in your work, socially, or personally.

See if any of these next events trigger any of your past memories of family programming that might be causing a deep-seated, unconscious, holdback in your life.

- ❖ Did anyone in your family regularly embellish their income, social status, or other accomplishments like golf scores, time spent at the gym? Or did they even lie about meeting important people?
- ❖ Or perhaps they went out of their way to play-down the significance of their skills or accomplishments. Judith's grandfather is a great example of this.

He built one-of-a-kind designer homes in Palm Springs, California in the 1950's. Yet he talked about it as if it was just a hobby. Consequently, the family has no idea where he got the financing, or how he met the top grade designers that he worked with. Certainly he and Judith's grandmother didn't live like they had money. Nor did

they ever talk about what prompted Grandfather to become a builder. This valuable family history was completely lost, forever.

- ❖ And now back to you, when you came home with terrific grades, a starring role in the school play, voted a team leader in football, basketball, or any other sport, were you instructed to not talk about it with your cousins or the neighbors? By keeping your achievements to yourself, it was thought that you'd be protecting them from feeling jealous or inferior.

Our objective here is for you to dismantle anything and everything that blocks your full ownership of who you really are so you can truly Overcome the Fear of Being Fabulous!

Reflections

Think about the various areas of your life one-by-one — your work life, your relationships, your social life, your community life, your recreational life, and so on. And as you do, we invite you to answer the following questions.

- ❖ Do you ever, or have you ever, downplayed the truth of who you are and your true achievements?

OR

- ❖ Do you ever, or have you ever overplayed or exaggerated the truth of who you are and your true achievements?

And there might have been different times, related to different situations, when you've done both — exaggerated the truth, and other times when you've downplayed the truth.

- ❖ So for each separate occasion, think about why you might have done those things instead of being honest about your true self. Perhaps it was to impress someone special. Or, alternatively, you didn't want to sound pretentious.

- ❖ Now that you are working on achieving that level of conscious clarity, it's time to do the hard work. And so for each example, take some time to dig past that superficial, conscious reason and reflect deeply on the environment in which you grew up. Are there family examples or conversations that might have led to you becoming unable to live your life, always being open and honest about who you really are and your achievements?

It's when you bring holdbacks out of your *unconscious* and up into your *conscious awareness* that true change can happen.

So we invite you to really dig into this issue because we know there's plenty of pay dirt waiting for you when you unravel anything that causes you to feel as if you're an imposter.



~ Chapter 19 ~

Do You “Deserve” It?

Think of all the super-stars who, in effect, killed themselves one way or another at the height of their career. Names like Elvis, Michael Jackson, Amy Winehouse, Janis Joplin, Kurt Cobain, Anthony Bourdain, Ernest Hemingway, Whitney Houston, Marilyn Monroe, and the list goes on and on.

It didn't matter whether it might have even been an “accidental overdose” or described as an accidental noose around the neck, either way they couldn't live within the glory and wealth they had earned.

So what about you?

Do you feel you deserve the success you've achieved? Do you deserve the house or condo you own? Or the acclaim or the stature the world keeps granting to you? Or do you feel self-conscious, guilty, or worried about what others think?

This chapter is really a continuation of the previous chapter on The Imposter Syndrome, but we want to narrow the perspective. We want to investigate more specifically whether or not you feel you *deserve* to have a terrific life and actually be the fabulous person you are.

Standing-Out from the Crowd

In doing the research for our book *What Really Killed Whitney Houston*, we watched numerous online videos of Whitney — many of which were taken at awards events. And it was painful to see how she could NOT receive. She could not take in the honors that

were rightfully given to her. She could not receive the praise and the love.

Sure she was physically able to hold the statue or trophy. But due to her demeanor, it was clear that she was unable to emotionally and psychologically accept the awards and the praise and the love—to take it all in and own it.

So again, what about you?

How do you feel when your boss gives you a bonus, or a promotion? Or when you land a juicy contract? Or if you win a big dance contest? Or you’re the best dressed person at a party? Or you have the best body at the beach or pool side? How do you feel when your excellence shines?

Is it truly, comfortably pleasure-filled for you to stand out on your own terms—separate from everyone else?

Our objective here is to help you answer that question with a resounding Yes!

We invite you to take a closer look at your *internal* self-image. Your ability to really own your appearance, your body, your job or career, your home, lifestyle, friends, recreation, wealth, etc.

Take note of any areas where you feel hesitant, self-conscious, insecure, anxious, needy, defensive, less-than, or any feeling that interferes with your ability to truly accept and live within your own life. Note any feeling that interferes with your ability to truly accept the real person you are and that you *deserve* to be.

The Meaning of “Deserve”

Now we need to define what we mean by “deserve” in case you think there’s wiggle-room to let yourself off the hook.

We’re referring to any area of your life where you have qualified for something—like a new job, or successful career, or winning some type of competition, or even receiving a compliment. Or put another way, where you *deserve* some kind

of acknowledgement or reward because of your actions, abilities, qualities, or a situation you have contributed to.

We're not referring to you being pretentious or conceited – not at all.

You'll recall that we mentioned many super-stars at the beginning of the chapter who left this life through some form of intentional or unintentional self-inflicted harm at the height of their success. And of course, on the other hand there are, and have been many others, whose lives are a living testament to fully enjoying and deserving their success – whether in entertainment, sports, literature, you name it.

So what allows for the difference? What is the difference between those who are able to accept their rightful success, and those who can't?

From our personal and professional experience, the core issue is all about “deserving.” So take a minute to examine your own self-talk about deserving. Do you find yourself privately saying things like:

- ❖ Someday they're going to find me out.
- ❖ I just got lucky. I don't really belong here.
- ❖ Who do I think I am, living the big life?
- ❖ I didn't even go to college or graduate. This is all a big joke.
- ❖ I can't wait to have a drink or take my anxiety meds because the pressure to perform is killing me.

You may have another mantra that speaks to the feeling of not deserving something. And whatever that mantra or situation might be, here is our central question to you.

What are you being loyal to, rather than your actual real-life value and success?

What identity do you prefer, rather than the one you've actually achieved?

What is the identity that makes you feel chronically undeserving?

For example, Whitney Houston claimed in one of her Bobby Brown television appearances that “I just want to be ghetto”. Yet by that time her career had already taken her into the status of being a mega-wealthy superstar. At that time she was beloved by people of all races, all nationalities, from all around the world.

Throughout her career her deep insecurities drove her to massive self-destructive behaviors and eventually to her death.

Reflections

Having been asked to reflect on the experience of the Imposter Syndrome in the last chapter, this more specific area of “deserving” is so important that we invite you to review this chapter, and do so very slowly. As you do, see if you recognize any areas in your life where you do, or even have in the past, felt un-deserving.

Are there any areas today that may be blocking you from owning, expressing, or enjoying a fabulous life, in whatever ways you want and *deserve*?

If you have any issues or areas of your life in which you feel as if you don’t really deserve the success you’ve achieved, or the success you still want to achieve, it’s time to work out why that’s the case.

As we suggested in the previous chapter, notice your conscious-level answers. Then dig deeply into the unconscious material that’s come up for you, especially if there was any childhood programming that might be at the heart of any of your undeserving feelings.



~ Chapter 20 ~

Is Your Sense of Self Internal or External?

How much do you focus on what other people think of you?

To what degree are you influenced by the opinions of others, whether it's about work, health, politics, music, the latest film, or where to go on your next vacation, rather than trusting and owning your own perspective?

In this chapter we invite you to examine, for yourself, the difference between what's known as an Internal Locus of Control versus an External Locus of Control.

In other words, where do you look to determine your value and what you value? By that we mean where do you look to determine if the things you say, the way you act, the clothes you wear, and the dreams you have are appropriate, or not? Do you look out there, in other people's opinions, style, or habits – which is an *external locus of control*? Or do you trust what is coming from inside yourself – in other words, from an *internal locus of control*?

Whose Opinions Matter the Most?

So back to the question we just raised. How do you determine your value and the things you value? From the perspective we're addressing here, how much do you care about what other people think of you?

In this chapter, we're looking at how much you base your self-value, the value of your thoughts and your opinions, on how other people react to you, or how you *perceive* they're reacting to you.

On the flip side, an internal locus of control always refers to how much you count on yourself and your own opinion in valuing your achievements and your identity.

You see, it's very difficult to overcome the fear of being fabulous if you're always concerned about what others think of you. When that's the case, you'll be worried that if you develop greater self-confidence, other people will think you're arrogant, self-centered, or full of yourself. And that worry will stop you valuing your identity.

On the other hand, when you rely on your own opinion of yourself without ignoring how others react to you, then you're increasingly looking to your own internal locus of control to guide how you live your own life.

Let's assume you're going to give a presentation at work next week. Imagine it in your own mind.

First of all, how do you think about what you're going to wear? Are you worried about what others might think if you wear your favorite sweater that's become a little baggie? Might they think you're being sloppy and unprofessional? Or do you feel solid that your delivery will be polished and well grounded, and people will either ignore your sweater or think it's just like you to not take your appearance too seriously? Or you simply don't care what they think about your sweater, you like it and it works, and that's that?

With regard to the presentation itself, how much of your attention is focused on impressing everyone, catering to the presentation style your manager enjoys? Or is your attention focused on the type of presentation that you believe will provide the clearest evidence for your point of view? Are you catering to others? Or are you staying true to your own assessment of what's needed?

Either way it is essential that you remain within the bounds of professional conduct, which could of course mean that your baggie sweater is not appropriate for that particular presentation. But the main point is that that is a decision that you have made for yourself, based on the outcome you want your talk to achieve.

We don't want you stuck in an external locus of control guiding your choices, yammering at you that you dare not stand out for fear of upsetting others. It's ultimately about the outcome you desire, not the opinion of others.

So pay attention to when you find yourself thinking anything like: "If I do that, they'll think I'm too bold." "If I break up with the person I'm seeing, my friends will think I'm a loser." "If I ask for a promotion, my boss will ignore me." "If I go to Paris instead of the family holiday dinner, everyone will hate me." "If I drop out of the after-work rugby game, they'll think I hate them." Or anything like that.

When you have an internal voice that yammers at you like that, you can be sure that you're being guided by an external locus of control, and it's inhibiting how you can be alive in your own life.

For example, all too often our clients tell us in the first few sessions that they "know" others think they're off track, ill-prepared for a specific project, not a good speaker, and so on. So they rarely speak up at team meetings and suffer from the desire to be promoted while not having the confidence to demonstrate that they have what it takes to get there.

With our help, they learn to change from being worried about what others think, to being focused on their own determination, so they can assert their excellence in their own way.

Your Life Belongs to YOU

So now, going forward in your life pay attention to where you give your focus about your own value, your own lifestyle, and your own decisions.

Of course there's nothing wrong with seeking the opinions and advice of others. Indeed that can be a very important practice, especially when it comes to major decisions. But then after you've weighed all that's been said, the final decision must be yours if you're going to overcome the fear of being fabulous, because it's essential that you learn to believe in yourself.

And if you're already firmly rooted in your own value on your own terms — Bravo! You're living within your own internal locus of control.

But if pretty regularly you look outside yourself to see how others are responding to you, or how you *imagine* they're responding, and you're in the habit of changing your behavior to better fit with who they are, and what they think, then we urge you to reconsider.

Yes we're aware, acutely aware, that you may have learned this external locus of control behavior in childhood, molding yourself to fit in with the emotional culture of your family. And we deeply respect that you may have even been punished for trying to be a free spirit, attempting to launch yourself and your own ideas into the world, in school or with your friends. But as an adult, your life now belongs to you.

As we've said, with an external locus of control you are always emotionally under the thumb of other people, cut off from your ability to fully express who you are. And this can warp and distract from how you behave in your romantic relationship, your friendships, your work life, and your career. However, we trust that you can now see how when you take back ownership of your value on your own terms, you become increasingly free to be all that you are.

In other words, you gain the *freedom* to be *fabulous*. And that is our wish for you.

Reflections

We acknowledge that many of the activities we design for you here are very similar. But the key throughout this entire book is to encourage you to get into the habit of looking at your life, and the things you do, and why you do them, from many different perspectives.

And so having been introduced to the difference between an internal locus of control and an external locus of control, we invite you to reflect on the following questions.

- ❖ Generally speaking, do you look to the opinions of others in determining what to do, or instead trust what *you* think is most appropriate for *you*?
- ❖ Are you ever concerned about what other people think of you?
- ❖ If what other people think of you is a concern, why do you think you have those concerns? And as always, first come up with some easy superficial answers from your conscious mind. But then spend some time and do some digging below the surface for some deep-seated answers hidden at an *unconscious level*.
- ❖ If you normally look to others for their opinions, are there ever times when you just go with your own ideas?
- ❖ If there are occasions when you sometimes look to the views of others when making a decision, and sometimes you go with your own gut response, what is the difference for you in deciding which way to go?

As you move forward in your day-to-day life, again we strongly encourage you to be on the alert as to whether the things you do and the decisions you make are mostly influenced by the opinions of others. And if you find that they are, we suggest that

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you come back and review this chapter and especially these Reflections questions.



~ Chapter 21 ~

Regret

You may have heard the expression: “You’ll regret what you haven’t done, not what you’ve actually done.” So what comes to your mind when you think about regret? Chances are good that it’s not about things you’ve done, but things you didn’t allow yourself to do.

That’s why in this chapter we’re digging into the things you might have desired and now regret not doing.

What’s Stopping You?

All too often we’ve seen that regrets can still shadow people’s careers and personal lives.

Sometimes it’s a position they turned down because it was just a small company. Then soon thereafter the company went gang-busters. They had a sense that it could happen, but they didn’t want to take the risk. Or it might have been a role on a specific team that could have led to a much larger role if only they’d had the courage to take the risk of asking for more.

Usually the choices to not take these roles resulted from a concern for security, safety, or staying in the tried and true lane.

We both still wonder if earlier in our lives and long before we’d met, what if we hadn’t walked away from our successful professional acting careers. A departure that we now know was due to our own fears of being fabulous.

So here’s a question for you.

What might you be considering right now, but for some reason you find yourself holding back?

Perhaps it's a physical fitness commitment that would help you feel and look better and better? Or it might be a serious involvement in an appropriate dating site that would expand your social connections and maybe lead to the love of your life?

Or you might be reluctant to tell your parents that you're going to Kenya, Miami, Paris, New York City, or anywhere except visiting them when you don't want to. And you're avoiding telling them, for fear of disappointing them and even hurting their feelings.

Have you ever been afraid you might not have the required experience or education for a job that would have been a better fit for who you really are? So you refrained from even launching into a serious job search. And there was no way to know what the education or experience requirements actually were because you never even checked it out.

Maybe it's buying the car, the house or condo, the boat, whatever it might be that would stretch your identity, and also bring you deep pleasure. It can be anything that you will eventually regret not doing.

Could it be that your fear of being fabulous has a hold on your soul and is crippling your personal right and privilege to choose more of what you want in life?

What Would Your Life Be Like?

So take a minute now to think about what you're wanting most but haven't acted on? Whatever it is, how would your life, your very identity, change if you stopped creating regret, and acted to move your life forward in more courageous ways?

What are you telling yourself right now? Remember most regret comes from what you didn't do, not what you did do.

If you haven't seen the film *The Bucket List* we highly recommend it. As Wikipedia describes it, *The Bucket List* is a 2007

American buddy comedy-drama film starring Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman. The main plot follows two terminally ill men on their road trip with a wish list of things to do before they “kick the bucket”.

Often bucket lists include places to go and things to do—like jumping out of an airplane or climbing a special mountain. But what if yours involves things you want to accomplish that are more personally inspiring to you, like:

- ❖ Helping to clean up local beaches, riverbanks, and other public areas.
- ❖ Creating local vegetable gardens, animal sanctuaries, volunteering at a local school.
- ❖ Being part of a political action team.

Think how these kinds of things can put your values and your actions together to create greater fulfillment and aliveness in your life, as well as the lives of others?

And you might meet new like-minded friends, even a new romantic partner.

The point is to expand your life and how you live each day so regret is NOT on your calendar.

Reflections

Here are some fun and easy action steps:

- ❖ Create a Bucket List of all the things you want to do before you can no longer do them. And beside each item add the following:
- ❖ Detail all the specifics. You might have initially written on your Bucket List that you want a specific car. Do you want a brand new one or a specific year? What color? Anything about the interior that is important to you?

- ❖ Determine if you need to do any preparation, or gain any extra skills or education, before you can achieve each item.
- ❖ Finally, go through each item and explain to yourself why you want it on your list. And then, make your plans to do each one.



~ Chapter 22 ~

Revisiting The Love Grip

You'll recall that the term "The Love Grip" is part of the language we developed to discuss various elements of The Fear Of Being Fabulous. And so in this chapter we're going to dig more deeply into The Love Grip—how it's created, and why it's so often difficult to leave behind.

In fact, when people understand that they're caught in The Love Grip and that's what has been holding them back, they're shocked to hear themselves say something like, "Oh I can't leave it behind. It's part of who I am and who I've always been."

Yes it's true; the Love Grip can feel so much a part of you that it's difficult to release it—very difficult for some people. Because it's a set pattern of behaviors and feelings that were developed when you were very young. And also because it resides in your unconscious.

How the Love Grip Works in Your Life

We've been exploring and working with people about issues that relate to The Love Grip for over 30 years. And we know that it can touch right into the depths of what's been holding you back in any area of your life. Indeed, The Love Grip can and does hold people back at every stage of their careers, even with top executives.

So here's a simple way to think about The Love Grip.

Think about when you were in the womb and then when you were born; and then on through to when you were around 7 to 11 years of age. During these pivotally important developmental times, what was your family's emotional atmosphere like?

As we briefly explained in Chapter 6, during that time between birth and the ages of 7 to 11, a child's brain hasn't developed enough to allow for any type of analysis or reasoning about what's going on in their world. Everything is taken-in as the unquestioned and unquestionable nature of reality. It's taken-in as family, as love, and what it means to belong, no matter how dysfunctional and abusive your family may, or may not, have actually been.

You see it's only between the ages of 7 to 11—the period known as The Age of Reason—that the human brain has grown sufficiently to allow for the possibility of analyzing and assessing what's going on around them and how they're being treated.

So think about it. The individual has all those prior unquestioned years of experience with their family that they came to know as “the truth”. And they're unable to question it, unless they get into therapy or work with a program like you are doing right now, by working through this book.

So this is why we hear, over and over again from clients, how they can't ask their managers for a well-deserved promotion, a new role in the business, or for much needed additional assistance in order to meet an important deadline.

And why can't they speak up?

Some people say: “Because that would seem too pushy or aggressive.” Others think it would make them look “needy.” And yet others are worried it will make them appear “overly ambitious.”

They might struggle to speak up at team meetings, although they've earned a Senior Director title, or even Vice President. We've worked with them all.

And the bottom line is that these kinds of *holdbacks* are almost always the result of their unconscious Love Grip at work. The emotional attachment to their childhood programming is ruling their life—even today. And it can apply to lots of situations where the objective is to stand one's ground and yet you find yourself caving in, going along, or just being nice.

Perhaps in your personal life it shows up when you want to tell your parents you're not coming home for the holidays, or you want to tell your neighbor to stop putting their trash into your bin, or you want to tell the person you're dating or married to that you want a more equal relationship in whatever form that might take. And even though you need to speak up in all those situations—you don't.

So what is it that causes such a strong internal pull that stops you from going after what you want, deserve, or even need?

Mining Your Memory

Here's our first question for you.

What were the messages or role models in your early family life that could have influenced you to develop such serious holdbacks?

After all, when you were a tiny-one you certainly cried-out or yelled when you were hungry, or needed your diaper changed.

But now, as an adult, what memories come to mind between birth and ages 7 to 11 related to when and how you might have had to learn to hold-back on your important desires and needs?

This is why we call the source of the problem The Love Grip.

It's that deep unconscious tie to how you were raised and the people who raised you that was all known as love. And now it's that "love" that has a grip on you—an unconscious grip.

Take a moment now and think about an area of your current adult life that you wish was different. As you think about it, how are you feeling? What is the emotion attached to your feelings around this issue?

Is it pain, upset, or disappointment that could be about anything from your romantic life or the lack of it, your work life, friendships, financial issues, health, physical appearance, you name it?

And as you think about it now, again notice how you're feeling. Are you, anxious? Angry? Sad? Frustrated? Bewildered? Lost? Or maybe even disgusted or fed up with life. If you're feeling any of those things, that's good.

Because we hope your frustration or unhappiness will motivate you to now go on an even deeper journey with us. Yes we're inviting you to take a memory-visit back to your early growing up years.

Now if you're listening to the audio-book version and you're driving or riding a bike or motorcycle, or doing anything where getting distracted could be dangerous, please stop listening until you're safely on solid ground.

Otherwise—ready? Good!

So here's what we ask you to do.

Take yourself back in your imagination to the family environment you grew up in, say before the age of 10. What was it like then? Can you see it in your mind's eye? Can you hear what's going on? Can you feel it? If you're having trouble don't worry. You can revisit this experience any time you want.

Meanwhile, we hope you've at least felt a sense of what it was like back then. And if so, begin to feel what you did to manage and maneuver that atmosphere in order to stay as safe as possible. What we're hoping you can begin to sense is how the family atmosphere held you and had a grip on who you were allowed to be.

Were you punished for speaking up or disagreeing with someone? Were you spanked for having your own opinion, contrary to the opinions of the adults around you? Were you sent to your room if you didn't finish your dinner, even if you weren't hungry or you didn't like something? And what about anything

else punitive that occurred perhaps even in the name of loving you.

Even if you took the rebellious route. Keep in mind that the power-base still didn't belong to you. All the power was held by one or more of the adults in your home. Even though you might have been attempting to navigate against them or around them, they still held the power.

Mostly when we ask people about those family situations, the answer will be some form of: "But I loved them."

And yes, most people feel some kind of love for the people who raised them. Then in their adult lives, they unconsciously still find themselves playing "the good boy" or "the sweet girl" and they can't break out of the manner in which they coped with "loving their family".

Then later in life, they're mystified as to why they're blocked from the kind of success they see others having. No matter what the area of their life is, their disappointment exists. And even when their adult selves create true success, their inner child tears it down with ideas about being an imposter, a fake, or a phony!

From the way we look at it, psychologically and emotionally, they're locked into what we call The Love Grip, with the deep unconscious love of a child controlling how they now behave in adulthood.

Unless they've been in good quality therapy, most people never allow themselves to analyze and question who they learned to be when they were growing up. And until you release yourself from the unconscious power of The Love Grip, you'll continue to feel mystified by obstacles and frustrations that make no logical sense.

Reflections

Take some private time to investigate even more of your past.

- ❖ Reflect on any memories you have of your feelings from childhood. What specifically are they? You might like to write them down so you can return to them later.
- ❖ Are those childhood feelings still affecting you now? If so, in what way – again, be specific.
- ❖ Now write down any and all loyalties to the people in your life as you were growing up.
- ❖ And what prohibitions or restrictions were imposed upon you as a child?
- ❖ Do you now have any taken-for-granted beliefs that you can trace back to your childhood?
- ❖ Now go back to each of those questions and examine where you see their after-effects showing up, today, in your adult life, holding you back, or consistently taking you in the wrong directions.
- ❖ We also suggest that you review this chapter whenever possible.



~ Chapter 23 ~

Your Life Before Reason and Analysis

Lots of people talk about the unconscious, we certainly do. After all our commitment to helping you Overcome The Fear of Being Fabulous is rooted in awakening you to the powerful childhood roots that can hold you back in life.

You'll recall that in Chapter 5—The Power of the Unconscious, we introduced you to the unconscious mind and what the unconscious mind is all about. We explained how as a young child the information that gets embedded in your unconscious can influence your entire life. That is, unless you choose to change those unconscious beliefs.

So in this chapter we're exploring the unconscious again from a slightly different standpoint. We're addressing the things that influenced you before your brain was capable of reason and analysis. Because only with the capability to reason, analyze, and question can you truly own your own life, on your own terms.

As you now know, the pivotal age in question is around seven years. However it can even go up to the age of eleven and beyond, depending on the restrictions of culture, religion, family norms, etc. that's surrounding you and your brain's development.

It's during that time, around 7 to 11, that for the first time a child's brain is finally able to enter a developmental phase known as the Age of Reason. At that time there's sufficient neurological growth in the temporal and frontal lobes of the brain to allow for the expanded cognitive capacities required to reason, question,

and analyze reality. Prior to the Age of Reason we can only accept the life we find ourselves in, as appropriate and unquestionable.

It's only during that advanced developmental period that it can then be said that the individual is capable of being conscious and in command of their own mind. But that's only if the family and culture they grow up in allows them to question and analyze what they've been taught.

How Your Unconscious Mind is Influenced

The easiest way to think about your unconscious mind is to realize that everything that happened to you, from the time you were conceived until your mind achieved the ability to reason, was taken into your unconscious mind as "truth".

Your mind was not yet conscious, not yet able to decipher whether the things you were told and what you experienced were valid, relevant, or accurately reflected who you are.

So then as you continue along in your life, all too often your decisions about who you are, and what you're allowed to do and be, are being governed by all that early unquestioned programming.

You'll recall when Judith's 4th grade teacher got married and invited everyone in the class to attend the wedding, Judith was the only one that didn't go.

Why?

Because her parents didn't believe in church and she had not yet questioned what it meant to be in a church for a wedding. She assumed it was wrong, so she didn't go.

And growing up in the rough streets of lower-class factory workers in inner-city Detroit, it was no surprise that Jim's father had been a member of the "Pop Bottle Gang" (they fought with broken pop bottles).

What might have been a surprise, if not for his unconscious roots, was that Jim joined The Royal Lancers street gang when he was about 13. It was there that he felt like a misfit trying to belong.

But in many ways he was merely mirroring what he knew his father had done.

As Jim has often said, he had no business being in a gang. He would have been a better fit in a writing workshop, dance class, or theater group. But these would have been unheard of in Jim's family.

Is It Time to Change?

As you know, we're focused on helping you overcome the fear of being fabulous. And by fabulous we mean your ability to live your most expanded, self-styled excellence—on your own terms.

We're not suggesting you need to stop speaking to your parents if they're still alive. We are however suggesting you may need to evaluate or re-evaluate the values and life-style norms you inherited in those first seven years of your life.

So take a moment and think about some belief or behavior that you're still maintaining, that goes back to your very young—pre-aged seven reality.

For instance, one of Judith's beliefs is what we call PPS—"Pig Pen Sherven". This stems from Judith learning at a very early age from her depression-era mother that you should never waste food. So whenever there's a bit of something left over, Judith will eat that to make sure it's not wasted.

And Jim's example is a pretty funny one and it's resulted in him hating haircuts, to this very day.

Why?

As best as he can tell, it's because his hair was curly. And when his mother started cutting his hair she'd leave it nice and long on top so she could leave what were known as sausage curls sitting on the top of his head. Jim thinks she started this when he was about two or three and he hated it.

And you can see those pretty little sausage curls sitting neatly on the top of Little Jim's head in the photo on Jim's website at <https://jamessniechowski.com/james-story/>

Now since neither of the examples we've given are getting in the way of our professional success, or our friendships, or our marriage, we're not likely to give up PPS or hating haircuts. But for anything from your past that's holding you back, this is an opportunity to evaluate whether it belongs in your life to stay.

For instance, if you were raised to be humble and unassuming, and it's holding you back from being more assertive in your career goals, we encourage you to reconsider whether the commonly held, yet erroneous, ideas about "humility" belong in your life.

In Chapter 16, we presented our definition of humility that we'd like to repeat. We call it True Humility.

True humility is not the commonly held belief that you should suppress your gifts. Quite the contrary. Sincere true humility is the full expression of your gifts to *Honor Their Source*. That's Source with a capital S—whether you think of Source as God, The Big U, or All That Is.

If you're hiding your gifts, don't you think that Source will be pretty annoyed? After all, Source gave you all that you are, to use in the world. So why are you hiding what Source has given you?

Reflections

Think about the family culture you grew up in. Especially what you remember about it before you were around seven years of age.

1. Bring to mind the attitudes your parents and their relatives held about the following issues.
 - ❖ worldly success
 - ❖ money

BEING FABULOUS IN YOUR LIFE

- ❖ politics
 - ❖ speaking up and being a leader
 - ❖ travel and other cultures
 - ❖ romantic relationships
 - ❖ sex
 - ❖ and any other areas of life that matter to you
2. Now consider in what areas you've been able to analyze and question those beliefs in order to arrive at your own points of view today. How are your current-day beliefs different from those your parents held when you were a very young child?
 3. And what areas are your current-day beliefs the same as those of your parents?
 4. In those areas where your current-day beliefs are the same as your parents, do those beliefs accurately reflect who you truly are today? Before you answer, dig deeply and consider all you've discovered so far in this book.
 5. If any of those beliefs don't reflect who you truly are today, what, if any, changes do you intend to make?



~ Chapter 24 ~

Speaking-Up in Your Own Defense

When you eat out, do you feel comfortable returning dishes or drinks that weren't prepared like you ordered? Do you even dare do it?

We've talked with so many people who told us they were horrified at the thought of sending back a well done hamburger when they ordered rare, or limp bacon when they ordered super crispy, or a malt that's delivered ahead of your meal when you specified that you wanted it with your meal and not before.

Even when we point out that they're paying for something they specified to be made a certain way, they shake their head and are clearly unable to be in charge of themselves in this regard.

No surprise when we ask how they were raised around this issue, every one of them has said some version of "my parents would never do it" or "I don't know people who do that sort of thing."

Some people have told us they've never returned anything to a store. Whether it was a shirt they didn't really like once they got it home or a watermelon that was super mushy once they cut it open.

One woman even told us she'd never returned an expensive raincoat after the color ran in the first rain. It was a red raincoat and the color ran onto her white sweater underneath.

Why would people not do such an easy thing as to file their complaint with their waiter and have their food order made right.

Or return an item that the store will readily issue a refund or make good-on in some other way?

You guessed it. That's how they were raised.

How Were You Raised Regarding Speaking-Up?

So how were you raised to think about this issue of speaking-up in your own defense? And for now, we're only looking at issues related to eating out and buying things in stores or online.

In this chapter we don't intend to even touch on the muddy waters of speaking-up in your defense in the work place regarding a conflict of ideas or feeling mistreated somehow by your workmate, or your spouse, a date, or a friend.

So back to eating out—especially if you're spending a bunch of money, and/or purchasing expensive things in stores, or online. What beliefs were you told as you were growing up? And/or what did you see your family do, or not do, around these issues?

Judith's dad provided a mixed message.

If for some reason he didn't like something we gave him as a gift—like shirts, socks, ties, jackets, and so forth—he'd put them away in the back corner of his closet and eventually give them to Goodwill or some other charity. But never would he take anything back to either get a refund or exchange them for things he liked, which we wish he'd done.

On the other hand, Judith remembers being impressed when she was about 13 and the family went to an Italian place for spaghetti and the garlic toast arrived cold. Her dad respectfully requested that the waiter replace it with hot garlic toast.

The waiter apologized and replaced it without any fuss. Not only that, but the family all received ice cream on the house as an apology from the Manager.

And we've had that same experience several times when we've returned things in restaurants that were improperly prepared. And yes, free dessert was provided to both of us as an apology.

When we've asked people why they don't speak-up in restaurants or return things, all too often they say something like "I don't want to make a fuss." Or "It's not really a big deal, I can live with it."

Why Speaking-Up Is Important

You know, every so often we hear from clients a kind of bemusement about others getting ahead in the world when they are still struggling to know what they want to do with their own career. And to some large degree, it boils down to the freedom to take yourself seriously. The freedom of knowing you have great value, and are aiming toward the top.

The underlying problem is that when people refrain from speaking-up about an issue that's not as they ordered, or expected, they're reinforcing that *they* don't really matter in the equation. They're reinforcing that the other person, whether it's the wait-staff person, or the store or online retailer, are the only ones that count because they're getting treated as having the most importance. They are de-valuing themselves when they accept less than optimal results from eating out or buying something. After all, they're the person paying the bill.

Can you see, and feel, how this undermines your self-respect and your value in the world? We're hoping you can feel it—at least a little bit.

As you're aware from past chapters, neither of us knew how to take our acting work seriously enough to drive it to the top, to see ourselves having long-term careers as actors. Instead we both made good money, and we continually worked, just going from one job to another.

But neither of us had any role models in our families or friendship circles for building a true career. In fact, the word “career” was foreign to both of us. So it was pretty easy to walk away from our acting *jobs* and move on to some other *job*.

Why is this relevant to our Speaking-Up topic?

Because back then neither of us would have returned an over-cooked hamburger, and consequently we didn’t know how to speak-up for ourselves with our acting agents either.

Although, it’s not that we didn’t know how, as much as we didn’t think that we *should* speak-up. And so we didn’t. So just because we’re talking about speaking-up for yourself in a café or returning something to the store, that’s obviously not the limit of the issue.

The issue is really all about speaking-up for yourself in all areas of your life—in your work life, your career, in your dating or marriage, in your friendships, and with family members.

You’ve no doubt heard it said in other ways, but if you can’t stand up for yourself, what makes you think others will treat you properly, kindly, and with full value?

So if you’re in the habit of returning anything you’re not happy with, whether in a restaurant, a store, or online—bravo! We salute you and we salute your self-respect that guides your actions.

But if this is uncharted territory for you, remember that your job on this planet is to be as fully **YOU** as you can be. And that means speaking-up for yourself, in a respectful manner—in every situation where you matter.

Reflections

- ❖ An easy question for you. Do you speak-up if things are not to your liking—whatever those things, situations, or issues might be?

- ❖ But do you *always* speak-up? Some people have no problem returning cold garlic toast in a restaurant. But when it comes to their inter-personal relationships, they're far more hesitant to say anything. So again, do you *always* speak-up? If not, why not?
- ❖ If you never, or rarely, speak-up if things are not to your liking, why do you think that's the case? Can you link those actions back to any childhood programming?
- ❖ Is that a habit you'd like to change? Whatever your answer is, think deeply as to why you feel that way?

And with that, we send our support and our encouragement.



~ Chapter 25 ~

Gratitude

How do you experience gratitude? You may be asking yourself what does gratitude have to do with Overcoming The Fear of Being Fabulous? You might even think you have lots of frustrations so what's there to be grateful for?

But that may be one of the issues that keeps holding you back.

You may be so focused on what you don't have that you forget to pay attention to all that you do have.

Perhaps you've heard the phrase "like attracts like". And it's true. Whether it's in friendships, romantic relationships, career opportunities, or anything else. Like does indeed attract like.

So here we're going to explore the power of gratitude to help you Overcome The Fear of Being Fabulous.

First ~ Own How Remarkable You Really Are

What we've seen with so many corporate leaders we've worked with is their difficulty with owning, truly owning, and being grateful for, all of their gifts and accomplishments. You'll recall that we spoke about this in Chapter 17 on The Imposter Syndrome. But here are a couple of extra examples from a different perspective.

A senior tech engineering manager was fixated on being “only self-taught.” He’d taught himself to code when he was 10 and never went to college. He told us he was chronically intimidated by colleagues who held degrees, especially PhDs, from prestigious institutions like Harvard, Stanford, or IIT – the Indian Institutes of Technology in India.

We had to help him own, really own how remarkable his self-taught engineering skills were and that he’d risen in the ranks to be a senior leader in the company without any advanced education. We had to help him truly own that remarkable achievement.

Then there was a woman born in China, who came to the United States for college; served an internship between junior and senior year at a major tech company; and the company snapped her up with a contract to start work as soon as she graduated. Yet four years and two promotions later, she still found it difficult to speak up at meetings. She continually told herself that she lacked a broad-base of knowledge, having only ever worked for that one company.

Do you see the pattern?

We had to help her understand how her very particular background and experiences gave great value to her voice and her point of view. And by not owning her true value, she was cheating the company, and herself, by staying silent at meetings.

Countless people who’ve manifested success with multiple promotions, handsome incomes, and what any outsider would say is impressive success, find themselves undermined by self-doubt and negative thinking. That then obliterates the power of their true competencies, the power of their actual advantages, and their real success in the world.

Second ~ Be Grateful for How Remarkable You Really Are

Often we have to help our clients claim, and live within, their very real successes. And then be grateful every day for the advantages those successes bring to their careers, their relationships, and their lives.

So we ask you – what are the top five blessings of your life today? And we'll start you off with only five, just to make it easy for you.

1. Health-Wise

How are you blessed health-wise?

Even if you struggle with one or more health-issues, what about the healthy aspects of your life, such as your teeth, your vision, your hearing, your ability to walk, your ability to talk, and so forth.

2. Relationships

How are you blessed in relationships?

Think about all of your friends, any siblings, or other relatives that you may be close to. How about people where you work, or volunteer for, and those in your neighborhood who clearly like you and with whom you spend time? And if you're in a committed romantic relationship, think of all the ways your life is enhanced by being with that person. And think about how that person cares for you.

3. Work-Life

How are you blessed in your work-life?

Take stock of all the ways your work enhances your life. Of course there's your income, health insurance if it's covered, and what about self-expression, respect from colleagues, fun and productive team or company events, ongoing learning, and on and on.

Please don't take any of those things for granted.

4. Finances

And the same thing for your finances—your savings, investments, and all other valuables you’ve accumulated in your life—jewelry, cars, art work, expensive hobbies, you name it.

5. Ways You’re Uniquely You

And for the fifth area of gratitude; what are three key ways you are unique? Three elements of your being you that truly bless your life and others who know you?

For instance, Jim is deeply grateful to be blessed by being an excellent and gifted writer. And he has no problem urging you to read his award-winning autobiographical novels in his *Leaving Home Trilogy*.

And Judith is grateful to be blessed with very good conversational skills. These skills are not just in social situations. In our executive coaching she can be humorous, deeply serious, and sensitively spiritual. She knows she’s available across the board so her coaching work, with Jim, gives her great joy and long-term rewards in many areas of her life.

It’s so important to feel the gratitude, feel the fullness, feel your ownership of who you really are. Yes, who you really are.

But do you have challenges in your life? Of course you do. You live on planet Earth AND you are human.

But that’s no reason to bring yourself down with fears and dread that’ll stop you in your tracks.

Remember who you are. Who you *really are*. Stay focused on what you desire, what you want more of, what you want to achieve. And go for it.

Sustain your confidence and your intentions by remembering all that you have to be grateful for.

Reflection

Take some time when you won’t be disturbed and write or type up all the blessings you have to be grateful for in each of the

five categories that we've just been through. And make these open lists that can be added to at any time.

1. **Health-Wise** ~ How are you blessed health-wise?
2. **Relationships** ~ How are you blessed in relationships?
3. **Work-Life** ~ How are you blessed in your work-life?
4. **Finances** ~ How are you blessed in relation to your finances?
5. **Ways You're Uniquely You** ~ What are at least three of the blessings you've been given that make you, you?

Now to help you gain traction in moving forward in your life in whatever ways you desire, take a minimum of 5 minutes each day to be grateful. You might choose to write or speak out loud any new blessings that have come your way, or review the existing list you've written. Know that at any time in your life when things are not going as well as they could be, you can always come back and review this list as a reminder of all the blessings you *do* enjoy and for which you can be grateful.



~ Chapter 26 ~

How Well Do You Handle Disappointment?

How well do you handle disappointment? It's certainly a fact—there'll always be disappointment in life. But the most important question is: How do you respond when you experience those shocks, hurts, and sometimes soul-draining and devastating events?

Do you collapse, feel like a victim, and decide it's too much to bear? Or do you let yourself experience the frustration, the pain, and acknowledge that it's real without covering it over with false humor or developing a stiff upper lip? And then you proceed to live your life and all that's required by the issue that disappoints you, and not be done-in by the pain in your life?

Life's Disappointments

Why is it important to think about disappointment?

Because how you respond to being disappointed is either a recipe for gratitude and a life well-lived, or a deeply contaminated recipe for bitterness and the chronic experience of defeat—no matter what the actual realities of your current life are.

So take a moment to answer these questions:

- ❖ How do you respond when you're not invited to a friend's get-together and you don't know why?

- ❖ What do you feel when you get a ticket for parking illegally or for overtime on the meter?
- ❖ When you've put a great deal of effort into a project, and your manager tells you it doesn't live up to their expectations, how do you feel?
- ❖ And what if you buy a new car, a car you've been wanting for quite some time, and in the very first week someone runs a red light and crashes into you? You're okay other than some whiplash, but your car will never be the same. No matter what sort of magic the car restoration people are able to muster, it will never again bring the joy of that pristine perfection that you've desired for years.

The reason we're asking you such a broad sweep of questions, from parking tickets to serious damage to your dream car, is that most people never analyze how they respond to loss and therefore the inevitable disappointments in life.

A Strong Sense of Self

The issue of feeling fabulous in who you are versus wallowing in disappointment and defeat significantly effects how you respond to disappointment.

Why?

Because when your "identity center" is contaminated by self-doubt, insecurity, fear of loss, and negative judgments about your *value*, then life's disappointments feel like just more aggravation or even disaster and personal defeat.

But when you're in command of your value and how you're truly fabulous as you really are, then disappointments land on a solid core of your identity. And by having a solid identity, painful events in life will become more or less normal and to some degree are expected. But they're not devastating and you don't feel like a victim or hopeless.

Yes, you'll naturally feel disappointed at not receiving an invitation to your friend's get-together. But you're not a victim.

So you can either decide that the event wasn't meant to include you, or you can call your friend to find out the reason you weren't invited — because it could be as simple as an email that got lost in tech-gremlin land.

And when you get a parking ticket, of course you're annoyed. But you take responsibility for not reading the parking sign, or mis-reading it, or deciding to take your chances anyway, for whatever reason. And you pay the fine and then forget about it.

Similarly, when a project you've put a great deal into doesn't play out the way you imagined, you must honor the disappointment. Sure it feels crummy, maybe even lousy. But you don't take it as a measure of your personal worth. The project is not you. Nor is the outcome a reflection of your value. You know that you gave it your best, and that's all you can do.

And when your brand-new dream car gets bashed in by a reckless, perhaps even drunk driver, of course you feel the pain of loss, the shock, and the horror of it all. But then after a while you remind yourself that you could have been killed, or crippled, or maimed in some terrible way. And you weren't.

So you honor your grief at losing the perfection of your new car and then go forward reminding yourself daily of how grateful you are to be alive and whole.

Now we want to be absolutely clear that what we've just outlined are only examples. They're meant to be descriptive and not the only way a mature adult responds in these types of situations.

They're intended to paint a picture of potential responses that make it clear that when you have a strong sense of self, you don't have to be done-in by life's disappointments. You're still in possession of your own deep personal value. Then life isn't dependent solely on positive events and outcomes. And you need

not take it personally when you have to face less than optimal events and results.

The ability to remain in a relatively steady state indicates that your identity is grounded in the reality of being who you are. Who you really are – *fabulously, uniquely you*.

But if you're done-in by disappointment or loss, then please make sure to do the inner work of more fully owning who you are. You CAN change your life by changing your inner identity.

This isn't just theory. We've both done it and we've helped thousands of people change their lives by claiming their rightful identity. And you can do it too.

You'll be glad you did.

Reflections

Take a minute to review your relationship with disappointment.

- ❖ Are you able to remain in a relatively steady state, firm in your awareness and acceptance of the realities, including disappointments, that we all face here on planet Earth?
- ❖ Or are you thrown into emotional meltdown when things don't go well?
- ❖ Whichever form of relationship you have with disappointment, why do you think you've developed this approach?
- ❖ Is it something you'd ever want to change? If so/or if not, why?



~ Chapter 27 ~

Do You Rely On Luck Or Fate?

Do you rely on luck or fate?
So often people say their success is just a matter of luck; while others will say it's just fate.

They'll normally say it in response to a compliment, or the successful outcome of a job interview, or perhaps a first date—it was just a matter of luck; or it was fate!

Why would people hand off these important issues and positive results to “luck” or “fate” rather than to their own decisions, their own behavior, their own intelligence, their own excellence?

Accepting or Deflecting a Compliment?

Think about when you compliment someone, whether it's about a promotion, a new job, getting engaged, winning a contest, you name it; and their response is something like “Oh, I was just lucky.” Or: “Yes, I'm lucky that fate chose to shine on me.” Anything that bats away responsibility for the success they've achieved.

This isn't just about *receiving* a compliment. It's about *owning* responsibility for your choices, your actions, and your success in whatever ways it manifests in your life.

As we've said many times before, in many different ways—how can you feel rightfully *fabulous*, if you're not owning who you actually are?

Yet as we know all too well, most people are reluctant to own their excellence. Too often they've been told when they were growing up to play themselves down, don't stand out, don't be arrogant, be careful you might get a big head. And that's so damaging to self-confidence, self-expression, and true self-acceptance.

Choose to be Fabulous in Your Own Way

We often think about a woman we met many years ago at a fund raiser. She was one of the sponsors. And she was enormously attractive.

Not because fate had blessed her with excellent features. Actually, not at all. Her facial features were not symmetrical; her eyes were quite small; her ears were quite large; and her nose was quite crooked. Yet she was strikingly attractive.

Why?

Because she'd taken the time to design her appearance to set herself apart from any other woman in the room.

- ❖ Her white hair was cut in a short, powerful frame for her face.
- ❖ She wore make-up that modestly enhanced her presence.
- ❖ Her earrings were bold unique works of art.
- ❖ And her comfortable gray silk pants and long top provided the canvas for a long string of hand-crafted beads that complimented her earrings.

She was indeed a real living, breathing, work of art.

So when we complimented her saying, "What an extraordinary looking woman you are." She smiled graciously and said, "Thank you so much."

She could have decided that her fate or bad luck was to be a homely person and she'd be best off playing down her appearance and trying to fade into the background. But that kind

of choice has nothing to do with fate, and everything to do with the fear of being fabulous.

This woman had chosen to be **Fabulous** in her own way. And fabulous she was!

Think about all of the professional athletes who get signed to spectacular contracts and then tell newscasters and journalists that they feel very “lucky”. They take no responsibility for creating a long trajectory of success and being a role model for kids, who can learn from them that it takes dedication and hard work—not luck.

Children and teens need to know that it’s taking ownership over their skills and their intelligent commitment to develop themselves, that can pay off later in life. And it’s important that our youth see adult role models managing their success appropriately so that they’re still successful and financially abundant long after they’ve retired from their professional lives. And this applies no matter what professional field they’re involved in—be it sports, business, entertainment, you name it.

If you’re a parent, an aunt or uncle, a good friend, or in any form of relationship with young people, make sure you help those youngsters own their intelligence, their talent, and their gifts, and not write them off as the result of luck or fate. They need to know it’s wonderful to be who they are. It’s wonderful to be all that they are.

So we ask you to take a simple yet immensely powerful step. That step is to take ownership of all that you are. Take ownership of the life you’ve created. And especially take ownership of all of the successes you’ve achieved.

And as the owner of your life, what can you now more fully take responsibility for? What steps can you take that move you closer to being all that you are? **Fully fabulous YOU.**

Yes! We’re committed to helping you live your rightful life so that you’re no longer at the mercy of luck or fate.

Reflections

- ❖ Do you normally accept a compliment with a gracious “Thank You”? Or do you usually deflect the compliment in some way?
- ❖ Whichever answer applies to you, why do you act that way?
- ❖ Now dig even deeper. Were you taught, in some way, to act that way when you were growing up? Be specific in what you come up with.
- ❖ Moving forward, how will you act in the future, and why?

Remember, don’t hold back on being you. Make the most of every day so you can be your fullest most fabulous self.



~ Chapter 28 ~

Limit Perfection or It Will Kill You

How often do you hear yourself or someone else say something like “I need to get it perfect” or “I can’t submit this—report, presentation deck, book report, budget, you name it—until it’s perfect?”

We’ve seen over and over how the drive for perfection blocks people from real-life success at work, in their careers, and in their social life. Insisting on perfection leaves little or no room for experimentation, thinking outside the box, being flexible or creative.

We came across a quote from 3M executive Terry Ceulemans a few years ago and it’s important to share it with you:

Today, 3M employees are given permission to pursue their own ideas—and to fail at them, as long as they learn something in the process. ... Failure leads to learning, and learning leads to success, that’s the way we look at things here¹.

And we certainly exercised the lack of perfection in some of our podcast episodes. For example, in 2016 when Jim suffered the blessedly mild stroke that affected his speech, it was his commitment to doing our podcasts that was part of his recovery. Yes, he was practicing the lack of perfection.

¹ <https://www.aem.org/news/giving-employees-permission-to-fail-is-a-formula-for-innovation-at-3m>

By contrast, Judith remembers an intern she supervised back when she ran what is still called The Saturday Center in Santa Monica, California. The intern was beside himself with anxiety and self-doubt because he couldn't get his desk cleared off at home. He always had more to do than he had time for.

And the reason for his anxiety was because he thought everything should be perfect.

So Judith assured him that, contrary to his own beliefs, he *was* being successful. She explained that he had great ambition and was willing to take on a lot. And that the perfection he sought was an impossible ideal that could do him in if he held on to the expectation of getting it all done *perfectly*.

Interestingly, while Jim was able to exercise a lack of perfection when it came to recording our podcast episodes, he certainly had to wrestle with his need for perfection when it came to writing the *Leaving Home Trilogy*.

But as Judith reminded him: "It's always a challenge to accept that the first draft is not going to be nearly good enough." And while Jim knows this to be true, his ego and his fantasy imaginings want every word he writes to come out perfectly.

Ah yes. That's the creative voice wanting to do it once and be done with it. But writing is a lot more like sports and even acting. You do your best on the first play, or the first take of a scene in a movie. And then the athletics' coach or movie director says, "Do it again." "Again." "Again." And each time, the person gets better and better and gains greater authority over their skill-set. Each time they improve their delivery.

So just as Jim has had to learn with his writing, if perfection is your goal, you'll be disappointed if not heart-broken every time.

Perfection in a Relationship

Let's talk a bit about how expecting perfection in a relationship can be the kiss-of-death. Death to any real romance and real-life love that might actually be possible.

If a perfect match was possible, neither person would learn anything about themselves and/or about the other person. And then, what we refer to as the blessings of a “romantic soul-school” would be impossible.

There’s a very wise and well-meant reason that traditional marriage vows include “for better or worse” and “til death do we part.”

Both phrases make it clear that perfection for the people and/or the relationship is impossible. And with age, new challenges will emerge.

We call marriage, and any committed romantic relationship, a “soul school” because the lack of perfection for each partner, and therefore the relationship, is guaranteed, and that’s a good thing because you can then grow together as you continue to evolve through each new soul-school challenge.

As many people have learned in our “soul-school” program, *Opening to Love 365 Days A Year*, when you understand your relationship from that “soul-school” point of view you can continually commit to one another, and to the relationship. And you both continually grow.

Remember, seeking perfection is the opposite of being truly alive, truly creative, and so truly loving. And it can wreck your career aspirations and your ability to work with others.

Perfection at Work

Many years ago, we coached an engineer who was furious at his teammates for not working up to his standards. He wanted them all to be carbon-copies of himself.

He was indeed extremely smart. But his angry frustrated perfectionistic demands on his team-mates almost got him fired.

We helped him grasp that not everyone was just like him and that he needed to re-arrange his priorities. Once he was able to accept that fact, he was able to settle down and work

cooperatively with his teammates without imposing his ideas of perfection onto them.

Rather than perfection, a better code for optimal living is: *Be All That You Can Be—In The Moment!*

Reflections

- ❖ Are there areas in your life where you feel like you require perfection? If so, what areas are they and why is perfection so important to you?
- ❖ Have there ever been times when you've engaged in those activities in a less than perfect manner? What was the outcome? How did you feel about yourself?
- ❖ If perfection is still a challenge in any area of your life, is that need for perfection rooted in any of those early events, or atmospheres with family or friends?
- ❖ As you seek a source, or a reason, for any need for perfection that you may have, as we always say in one way or another, take yourself back to the earliest years you can remember. Then gradually move forward through your childhood and teenage years and see if you find any answers there.



~ Chapter 29 ~

Do You Own Your Success?

How often do you shrug off your success? Perhaps you get a new job, one that's really terrific; or you receive an important promotion; or you've been asked to host an important fund raising event; or anything else that prompts others to congratulate you. And they do. But you laugh it off, saying something like, "Oh it was nothing." "No big deal." "All in a day's work."

And you respond that way because you can't truly own your own success and rightfully receive and take-in how people want to praise you, and congratulate you.

Those are similar examples to ones we've covered in several previous chapters. That's because the situations where people hold back from owning their own success are so common. So that's why we want to take this opportunity to address holdbacks from yet another angle.

Examples of Not Owning Success

Jim has to be more aware of, and wrestle with, how he tends to downplay the success he's experienced with his first two novels. For instance his second book, *An Ambition To Belong*, was a Winner in one of the categories of the Book Excellence Awards. And his first book, *Worship Of Hollow Gods*, was a Finalist. Judges commented on his "brilliant use of language." And both books are Best Sellers in their particular categories on Amazon.

So when we examined the top three reasons he holds back on owning that kind of success with his autobiographically-oriented novels, here's what he said:

- ❖ "I've never liked to do what's required in order to market my work";
- ❖ "I'm concerned about disappointment if anticipated future success falls short"; and
- ❖ "I distract myself from focusing on getting word out there about my books with other seemingly more important projects."

As you read through Jim's open admissions, what comes to mind for you when you minimize your own successes?

Maybe nothing comes up that's exactly like Jim, but please do yourself a favor and bring into your conscious awareness an area of your success that makes you uncomfortable.

Here are three more real-life examples:

- ❖ A coaching client of ours recently confessed how uncomfortable she is that she's able to send her daughter to a private school. She and her husband and everyone in both of their families attended public schools. But now, due to the careers she and her husband enjoy, they can afford a very special private school that's perfect for the needs of their daughter.

She told us she feels guilty, self-conscious, and concerned that other people, especially those in her family, will judge her as elitist, ladder climbing, and disloyal to her family of origin.

This is very sad because we know she and her husband worked very hard in school, college, and graduate school (where they met) to gain access to their professionally satisfying and top paying jobs. And yet the fear of being

fabulous is pounding on our client's self-confidence and self-ownership.

- ❖ Another client founded an unusual company in an unusual niche. And as the CEO, he has spearheaded remarkable success, earning extraordinary financial rewards for the company and personally receiving wide public acclaim.

Yet this man is filled with family-bred beliefs about modesty, humility, and concern that if he believes in his success too strongly, that will be what will bring the company down.

When we investigated where these beliefs came from, it was easy for him to recite the many ways his parents preached to him and his older brother that success had to be guarded very carefully. He believed it was dangerous to even slightly feel confident, especially in front of others. Hence, the fear of being fabulous had very early roots.

- ❖ Our third example is with an acquaintance in our neighborhood. During an afternoon walk he revealed that he was worried about how people were going to respond to his planned house re-model. He shared that he'd been in the house for nearly 30 years. As a gift to his wife, he wanted to expand the front porch; have the front garden area professionally landscaped; and have the same company upgrade his driveway and walkway with pavers.

He told us, with considerable embarrassment, "I'm concerned that everyone who lives around here is going to think I'm showing off, upgrading the exterior like that.

They'll know we're not re-doing the interior. You know how nosy neighbors are."

So rather than remaining in allegiance to his wife and her happiness, this man was caught up in the fear of being fabulous as he *imagined* what his neighbors would think.

Now It's Your Turn

So now back to you.

What areas of success in your life come to mind as you think about your own excellence and what makes you stand out?

Be honest with yourself. No one is reading your mind. No one is listening in as you whisper to yourself. You're the only one that matters, so please be honest.

Here are a number of areas that many people take for granted. Yet they could well be areas of your unique excellence or success that you need to own and overtly live as the truly fabulous person you are:

- ❖ good looks
- ❖ thick hair
- ❖ appropriate body weight
- ❖ being in good physical shape
- ❖ stylish fashion sense
- ❖ having a good job
- ❖ winning awards
- ❖ making good money
- ❖ owning your own car, house, boat, vacation home, etc.
- ❖ athletic
- ❖ adventuresome
- ❖ good traveler
- ❖ several good friends
- ❖ creative

- ❖ inventive
- ❖ a good cook
- ❖ a good writer
- ❖ loved by your family, spouse, children and so on

That list could go on and on. It could include medical procedures you've had that are cutting edge; the awesome mini-factory you created in your garage; the number of people who come to you for advice; and so forth.

The important point we hope you'll take away from this chapter is to:

Own YOUR SUCCESS!

Own YOUR EXCELLENCE!

Own ALL THAT YOU ARE!

Now we don't mean that in any phony-humble way.

And in saying that we'd like to remind you of Jim's definition of "humility" that you read in Chapter 23—Your Life Before Reason and Analysis, because it may help you more fully embrace your singular uniqueness and express it more fully into the world.

Humility is not the false suppression of your gifts. True humility is the full expression of your gifts as your way of honoring their Source—whatever you believe Source to be.

In other words, however you were gifted with your various attributes, if you do not use them, or do not express them fully in the world, you're dishonoring the fact that you were born with them. Another way to say it is that it's your spiritual obligation to honor the Source that graced you with all that you are.

And so we urge you to live as a conscious tribute to however you were created and now express yourself as the one-of-a-kind miracle that you are.

Reflections

You'll recall that in the Reflections section back in Chapter 13—Being Nice versus Honest, we invited you to watch our 3-minute video "You Are A Miracle". As this book is now nearing a close, we invite you to watch the video one more time as a reminder of the awesome miracle that you truly are. Just go to:

www.OvercomingTheFearOfBeingFabulous.com/miracle

You might like to download the video so that anytime you're in doubt about your miraculous uniqueness, you can take a few minutes to watch the video again.

And with that, we remind you to ask yourself, often ...

Am I owning my success?



~ Chapter 30 ~

Decision Fatigue

Decisions! Decisions! Decisions! Maybe you're an up-and-coming leader in your field, or the owner of a new company, or you're just starting your career, or perhaps you're starting a new marriage, having a baby, getting your first pet, or maybe you've decided to remodel your home. Whatever you're doing in your life, we're sure you've already run into, or soon will run into, what's often called "Decision Fatigue" or "Decision Overwhelm."

And accompanying this will no doubt be a serious case of Negative Head Talk. This is when your inner chatter puts you down, questions your intelligence, your planning, your leadership, your goals, almost everything.

So what causes "Decision Fatigue"?

Decision Fatigue ~ What it Looks Like and Why

Often it shows up when people are psychologically ill-prepared for the responsibilities and challenges they face. They have difficulty being able to trust themselves to rise to the challenge and learn as they go.

Instead, all too often they attempt to make-up for their lack of confidence and preparation by taking on far too much, far too fast. And inevitably, they become overwhelmed and stressed

nervous wrecks. They talk about feeling like their brain is fried, or all they want to do is sleep.

Decision fatigue, when looked at carefully, is almost always the result of an underlying fear of being fabulous.

So rather than growing their leadership skills, their competence scrambles hoping to appear confident and productive. They race to get on top of issues they're not actually qualified to tackle. And all too often they end up creating a hamster-wheel pattern of decision-making that actually limits the success they aspire to.

Yes, there is a solution. But it's not in artificially reducing the decisions you make on a daily, even hourly basis. It's actually a matter of leaving behind the false identity that's been triggering you to feel inadequate, pressured, and constantly fatigued by what seems like endless decisions.

Now here's the heart of the issue.

As we say, you have to "leave home — no matter your age." And in this case, you have to leave behind that part of your identity, probably going all the way back to childhood, when you took on all kinds of responsibilities that were beyond your age and experience. Responsibilities that were beyond your status of being a child or a teen-ager. Responsibilities that compelled you to try to fix everything from parental problems, raising your siblings, and maybe even working to fix the lack of financial security for the family you were growing up in.

So now, as an adult, you've grown to being really good at solving problems.

But here's the real issue, you've also probably created an overdeveloped "problem-identifying-radar." You're constantly circling the wagons watching for whatever has to be fixed, whatever might be in trouble.

When that's the case in business, you're likely to enter the field of management and become what's known as a micro-manager. That results in you driving everyone you manage a bit

nuts with your incessant reviews, critiques, and changes. Or as a parent you become a helicopter mom or dad overseeing everything your kids do — all the time.

And then, do you suffer from decision fatigue?

You bet you do!

Because you end up feeling like you're responsible for everything. You can never relax. You're never off duty.

So you need to leave home — leave all that childhood/teen-age programing behind you.

Decision Fatigue ~ A Solution

So here's the critical question: What's involved in you leaving home in order to reframe the things you *genuinely* need to over-see and be responsible for?

In large part, it requires you to re-define your identity so that who you know yourself to be now, is no longer framed in terms of early family needs, or the specific needs of your growing-up-self. You no longer need to be in charge of *everything*. You no longer need to fix *everything*.

And what does that look like?

As a manager, it means learning to delegate a lot more to your team members or other employees in your company. And we mean **A LOT MORE!**

No doubt there are more and more things that other people can do than you've currently allowed yourself to imagine.

So get started now.

What are the first two to three things that come to mind that you can off-load to others? And now make a commitment that you will do it no later than next week.

As a parent, it means drawing back from the idea that your children can't get along without your continual planning, oversight, and involvement. In fact, they need to grow without you being so involved. That may come as a blow to your ego, but

their job is to grow and your hovering prevents them from growing *on their terms*.

So now, here's your challenge.

Any time you feel decision fatigue, take a pause and reflect on what you've authorized yourself to be in charge of that is, in reality, not rightfully yours at all.

At first this will be difficult because you're having to break a lifelong habit. But we assure you, that you and everyone else will benefit from your reduced challenges and responsibilities.

Reflections

- ❖ Since you're reading a book like this, we're sure that at some time in your life you'll have suffered from Decision Fatigue. So look back in your life and see if you can remember times when you went into *overwhelm* as it's more commonly called.
- ❖ Look back at the various examples we gave in this chapter such as micro-managing, being a helicopter parent, or getting your personal life in order. Being a little more specific this time, what were you expecting of yourself that sent you into overwhelm?
- ❖ Can you recognize any pattern, so not specifics but *patterns of behavior* between the things you do as an adult that puts you into overwhelm, or decision fatigue, and things you felt compelled to do as a young person growing up?
- ❖ Next time you experience decision fatigue, how can you adjust your identity in order to off-load some of your responsibilities and gain more space for other people's involvement. Or how can you create a change in your expectations in order to deal with it more self-caringly?



~ Chapter 3 I ~

Owning Your Impact

Every day you impact the people around you. These people include your work colleagues, your family members, friends, neighbors, clerks at the grocery store, even the people you pass when you're out taking a walk.

Sometimes your impact is positive. It's experienced by others as uplifting, maybe even a blessing. And no doubt, once in a while or maybe even more often than that, you're experienced as a downer, someone depressed and needy. Or in your work life, perhaps you're seen as intrusive, meddling, and hovering.

Whether you're with friends, colleagues, or family, is your impact positive? Are you a positive addition to the lives of others? Or, on the contrary, do you think you might come across as caught up in being anxious, needy, or "me, me, me?"

Cause of Negative Impacts

Before we delve more deeply into your impact on others, here's a crucial question: What were the key elements of your growing up environment that contributed to how you developed your personality and the way you now come across to others?

Yes, some of it is genetic. But researchers now believe that only about 20-50% of our personalities are genetically based. The rest is developed within the environment we grow up in. So the risk that you might have a negative impact on others is typically the result of how you were raised and the role models you grew up with.

That's why we say, you have to "leave home—no matter your age."

That one statement, when you really take it in, can change your life like nothing else. Because you can only have the kind of impact you truly want to have when you're in full ownership of who you truly are, rather than unconsciously reiterating how you learned to cope with life when, where, and how you were raised.

Here's an example you may not spend much time thinking about. It's the recidivism rate for repeat offenders after they've been released from prison the first time.

As documented in Wikipedia:

According to the National Institute of Justice, almost 44 percent of those recently released return before the end of their first year out. About 68 percent of 405,000 prisoners released in 30 states in 2005 were arrested for a new crime within three years of their release from prison. And 77 percent were arrested again within five years. And by year nine, that number reached 83 percent.

Why?

Ideally, wouldn't you think that once imprisoned and having served their sentence, the offender would do everything possible to develop a new lifestyle and stay out of prison?

Sure, ideally.

But that denies the impact of their original developmental environment. So we have to look at the impact of a troubled home life and a violent neighborhood as a major factor in fostering problem behavior in school, on the streets, and ultimately illegal, violent, anti-social acting-out, leading to imprisonment, initially and repeatedly.

This CAN be turned around. But leaving home psychologically, emotionally, and physically is necessary in order to develop a new way of life.

Have You Left Home Yet?

Now we've just outlined the most extreme form of negative impact, with illegal destructive behavior.

But the question remains. What kind of impact do YOU allow yourself to own and have?

We've worked with a wide variety of people who've worked their way up to Vice President, Sr. Vice President, C-suite roles, and Founders of enormously successful companies, all of whom have a major influence in a variety of segments of the business world. However, it's been difficult for many of them to own their success and their impact—positive or negative. And that's why they chose to work with us to navigate their own leaving home, in order to break free of the old restraints on their identities.

Reflection

So now:

- ❖ How well do you own your professional impact—the impact you make in your professional life—both positive and negative?
- ❖ How well do you take responsibility for the impact you make on family and friends—both positive and negative?
- ❖ What do you need to bring to consciousness in order to more fully take ownership of both your positive impact and your negative impact?
- ❖ And in what ways do you still need to leave home, in order to rid yourself of restraints on who you can be in the world?



~ Chapter 32 ~

Is It Time to Upgrade Your Relationship with Criticism?

When someone criticizes you, whether it's to your face, or behind your back and you hear about it through the grapevine, how do you respond?

Do you cling to it, using it as proof that you're just not good enough? Or do you consider the source, evaluate what's being said, and then decide whether the comment has merit, or not?

And if there is some merit in the comment, are you able to take in the information and then use it as a learning experience? Are you able to use it to help yourself grow? Or do you have a knee-jerk reaction and toss it out as irrelevant?

Criticism can either be a curse or a blessing depending on how you experience it and use it.

Critical Feedback ~ Constructive Criticism

We're tackling the topic of criticism because we've seen so many people abuse themselves when they receive critical feedback, even when it's well-intended professional input from their manager or other work colleagues. Rather than evaluate the purpose and content of what's actually been said and perhaps integrate the feedback into their professional development for their growth and advancement, too many people use criticism as condemnation, rather than an invitation to grow. People have told us they have felt hammered, beaten down, rejected, even when they knew the input was well intended.

In our executive coaching, we stress that without feedback of a critical nature there's little impulse to grow and change. And so we prefer to call this sort of feedback critique, to avoid the negative association with the term criticism.

Everyone needs input from others to provide new perspectives on who they are, how they can grow, and who they can become.

We often deliver a Speaking Workshop to business leaders, on which we based our power-packed little book *25 Power Speaking Tips* ~ <https://tinyurl.com/spkrspkr>.

And an important element of that workshop and indeed the learning process, is the feedback the participants give to each other. And yes, it's often critical—but always well intended *constructive criticism*.

We've often heard comments such as: "You kept looking at the ground, not at us." "It was hard to hear some of what you said because your voice kept trailing off at the end of sentences." "You wobbled around and rocked back and forth rather than holding steady on your feet. I actually worried that you might fall over."

How can someone learn unless they get this kind of direct, specific, and yes often critical feedback?

In fact, some people we coach complain that they don't receive enough helpful criticism/critique from their managers to help them grow professionally—to help them know where they stand.

Your Decision

The key issue here, especially in the context of Overcoming the Fear of Being Fabulous, is that it's up to you to decide whether any criticism you receive is meant to help you, or hurt you.

And if the criticism wounds and hurts you, pay attention. Is it coming from someone who has ill intent, and is therefore not trustworthy? If so, it must then be ignored.

Or might the other person have your best interests at heart, but their values and perspective do not match yours, and therefore their input isn't necessarily anything you need to take seriously?

Now, when you find yourself feeling “tweaked” or in any way “put down” by someone’s comment, the injury is not actually coming from the other person, even if they do have ill intent. The real injury is caused by your vulnerability – your lack of internal confidence and strength. In other words, your Fear of Being Fabulous.

You’ll recall that in Chapter 12, you discovered that there is no such thing as failure. You’re always succeeding, the question is, at what?

So what are you succeeding at when you allow yourself to feel impaled by someone else’s point of view or opinion of you? That is THE question!

Reflections

Think back on times when someone has said something to you, or about you, that really hurt you. How did you respond to those hurt feelings?

- ❖ Make a list of some of those times when you felt hurt by someone’s comments to you, or about you.
- ❖ Choose one of those examples and focus deeply on your reaction to those comments. Did you become defensive and argue back? Or did you go off and decide that you’d have nothing more to do with that person? Or did you quietly reflect on the merits of the situation?
- ❖ If you became defensive, or you decided to have nothing more to do with the person, how did each of those scenarios play out?
- ❖ Thinking of all you’ve learned by reading this book, did those hurtful comments trigger any hurtful memories

from years gone by? Keep digging and see what you come up with.

- ❖ If you quietly reflected on the situation, what did you discover? What were you able to do to benefit yourself?
- ❖ If someone says something that hurts you in the future, how will you handle the situation?
- ❖ You may want to repeat these questions with the other examples you initially noted at the beginning of this Reflection Activity.



~ Chapter 33 ~

What About Your Sphere of Influence?

Have you ever thought about having a “sphere of influence?” Or does the thought of acknowledging your influence stir up some feelings of guilt and make you get ready to apologize for not “remembering your proper place”?

The Thought of Influencing

Think about it.

How often are children told some version of: “Who do you think you are?” “Know your place.” “People like us don’t do that.”

There are a gazillion other ways that children are taught their “place” that slaps down their self-confidence and awareness of having a positive impact in the world.

In some cultures, children are taught they need to say “no” at least three times to any sweet treat a friend or relative might offer them. All the time they’re hoping they’ll be made the offer one more time because on the fourth offer their parents have dictated that they can finally say “yes.”

In other cultures, they’re taught that upon meeting someone, it’s important to bow lower than the other person. By doing this, they’re placing the other person at a higher level than they are. And in so doing they’re showing that with the lower bow they’re grateful to be involved in the interaction.

When you remain loyal to any of these kinds of early limiting, actually squashing, messages and instructions, you remain unconsciously in an allegiance to the culture and family that you came from. Rather than being able to own your own life, you remain stuck in an unconscious holdback.

Becoming More Influential

So instead, let's look at your ability to open yourself to being influential. If you were raised to hold back and play yourself down, you'll have to consciously acknowledge, develop, and expand your ability and perhaps even power to influence.

But first, it's important to understand what the word influence is referring to. Let's look at some definitions of influence.

The online dictionary describes influence as: "The capacity to have an effect on the character, development, or behavior of someone or something, or the effect itself."

Webster's offers a slightly different definition but still in the same ballpark: "The power or capacity of causing an effect in indirect or intangible ways: sway."

So now it's time to take a little inventory.

How do you respond to the following statements? And as you read through the following statements, we invite you to closely monitor your thoughts, as well as your emotional responses.

- ❖ I prefer to join in rather than stand apart.
- ❖ I make a point of keeping my point of view (POV) on most things private rather than speaking up, especially if I'm in disagreement with others.
- ❖ I'm loyal to my family's beliefs, my manager's POV at work, and enjoy fitting in with my friends.

- ❖ I value my life experiences and frequently find myself offering advice or some kind of differing POV with friends and/or workplace colleagues.
- ❖ I actually enjoy a good give and take with people who hold different points of view, making it clear how I see the issues, and sometimes being influenced by their differing perspectives.
- ❖ Sometimes I care so passionately about an issue that I consciously intend to influence others to help them see it the way I do, often helping to change their mind. I do sometimes see myself as an influencer.

Now, how did you feel about those six statements?

Are you comfortable being a joiner, making sure you fit-in, even if it means keeping your POV to yourself?

Or do you now want to change that and become more influential?

Or are you already identified as an Influencer?

Whichever it may be, we want you to consider more consciously how you want to responsibly use your influence in the workplace, in any group or association you may belong to, and, of course, in your personal relationships.

Because the fact is, no matter whether you actively work to fit-in, or intentionally and purposefully work to influence others, you are always influencing people one way or the other.

But how you use that influence is entirely up to you.

And of course, we hope you'll choose to be more fabulous in your life by being more of an active Influencer!

Reflections

- ❖ Before reading this chapter, would you have considered yourself an influencer, or not?
- ❖ Have those views now changed? If so, in what way?

- ❖ If the thought of being an influencer made you feel at all uncomfortable, where do you think that discomfort came from? And what could you do to change that?
- ❖ What are some areas in your life about which you're very passionate? This might have been to do with education, your neighborhood, family, or how things operate at your place of work, or even issues like politics and climate change.
- ❖ Do you ever talk to others about any of those issues? If yes, why? If no, why not?
- ❖ If you're not already an influencer, would you like to be? If yes, why? If no, why not?
- ❖ What steps can you take today to be even more influential than you already are?



~ Chapter 34 ~

Never Stop Growing

So many people believe that everything will simply unfold after they graduate from college, get married, have kids, or when they retire.

Many people turn up their noses at personal growth, career coaching, marital counseling, and so forth. They tend to believe it's only weak or disturbed people who need professional help to facilitate and augment their lives, their careers, their marriages, their parenting skills

But since you're reading this book, we know that doesn't apply to you.

So congratulations! You're among the tribe of wise and open individuals who want the most from life — the very most.

And that means, you never stop growing.

Your Vision for Your Future

No matter what age you are or stage of career/family life, we encourage you to chart out your vision of what you'd still like to accomplish by further developing yourself. And if you want to have a larger impact on the world, what is your Mission Statement for that impact?

Your Vision Statement is not the same thing as a Bucket List, where you include all the fun things you want to do and explore before you leave the planet.

Your Vision Statement is a statement of how you plan to grow in order to experience more of yourself as you go forward. For instance, what kinds of activities are you going to challenge yourself to get involved with?

- ❖ Perhaps you'll write a book, begin giving workshops or lectures, or you'll travel to out of the way places that'll challenge your comfort zone.
- ❖ Maybe you'll get involved in neighborhood projects that help with climate change, diversity and inclusion, and/or fund-raising for your local schools.
- ❖ Maybe you'll create a self-improvement/longevity program for yourself and any family and friends who want to join you in daily exercise, weight loss, and healthy eating, with the intention to live until you're at least 100 and beyond.

Those are just a few ideas to help you imagine what could be appropriately added to your Vision Statement.

And, as we said, if what you're going to do will have an impact on your neighborhood, a segment of the population, or the world at large, then make sure to also develop a Mission Statement. A Mission Statement is important for all community-type projects because what you'll be doing will be "mission driven."

It's never too late to grow and to develop who you are.

But Has the Imposter Syndrome Reappeared?

Does the thought of any of those broader visions of your potential future trigger self-doubt or perhaps even emphasize that the niggling Imposter Syndrome is still lurking at the back of your mind? If so, then make sure you decide to grow out of it and get

rid of it so you can open yourself to a much larger life than you've been living.

When you commit yourself to never stop growing, then innumerable possibilities start to enter your imagination, and unexpected opportunities reveal themselves that you might have otherwise ignored.

So starting today, make a point of noticing small, medium, or even large opportunities that you would usually disregard or automatically say "no" to. Opportunities that could change your life in a positive manner if instead, you said "yes."

And, *what if* you started making "Yes" a habitual part of your identity?

Yes, what if ... ?

Reflections

We'd like to start this section with some guidelines that might assist you in developing your Vision Statement.

- ❖ But first, we invite you to review Chapter 17—Do You Suffer From The Imposter Syndrome? And if you need help in overcoming any sense of the Imposter Syndrome or other feelings of self-doubt that have held you back, make sure to check out some of our other resources that you'll find following the last chapter.
- ❖ Now begin by brainstorming a rough list of all the important things you'd still like to accomplish that will add to your personal development. These might be related to your career, home life, community life, or any other significant areas of your life.

Of course, it's possible that you've been living with one very specific burning desire. And if so, then the brainstormed list might not be necessary.

- ❖ Take a serious look at your list and delete anything that's not actually attainable and realistic. For instance, it

would not be realistic to envision being a 6'7" basketball player if you're only 5'7," no matter how passionate you might be about achieving that vision.

- ❖ Go through your list and prioritize the items you've written down.
- ❖ Include in your statement how you'll know when you've achieved each item. And include what you'll have to do to realistically achieve your vision.
- ❖ For your Mission Statement, this will be a short statement probably coming from your heart, based on your values and what you most want to contribute to bettering life on the planet.
- ❖ You may want to review your Vision Statement (and Mission Statement) from time to time to make sure you're on track, firing up motivational energy to keep you going.

Note: A version of this article was originally published as a LinkedIn Influencer article in July, 2021.



~ Chapter 35 ~

Congratulations!

Alright! You've now discovered 33 methods for Overcoming the Fear of Being Fabulous. And hopefully you've already made some significant changes based on what you've read and integrated into your deeper understanding of who you are and how you've developed during your lifetime.

Yet no doubt some of your old issues are still haunting your days and nights and still contaminating how you feel about yourself and how you live your life.

After all, you live on this planet where people are largely undeveloped and pretty much living and working by getting-by. That's why we say Congratulations!

You've read through this book, and you've taken in some new ways of understanding yourself, and you're beginning to integrate a variety of changes you can make to help you fulfill your full potential.

Yes, each of the 33 undeniable, tried-and-true facts about who you are and how your identity can be initially undermined and then consciously transformed will continue to serve as a guide for ongoing change and personal development. Development on your terms, as you enjoy more and more, *Being Fabulous in Your Life!*

We know that the more you reflect on the topics in this book, you'll discover how unconsciously ingrained beliefs and loyalties like holdbacks, allegiances, forbiddances, and the deep family ties of the love grip can undermine your deep identity and adversely affect your life in so many ways.

But now, the more you challenge yourself to expand, the more your life can belong to **YOU** *and* who you *really truly are*.

Opening Up

Perhaps you're already enjoying a growing sense that there's more to your life than you've ever dared imagine or could believe in.

Or perhaps, with all the discoveries you've made about yourself throughout this book, it's time to take a look at how you've changed already.

How have you begun to take more risks, or to challenge yourself more? What are the next challenges you're aware of, where you can express yourself more fully? In what ways are you already feeling different about yourself?

Maybe you find yourself wanting a closer bond with your spouse or partner, or even a close friend. Now that you're conscious about letting go of your holdbacks and so can be more fully present, how can you make that special bond even more intimate, more trusting, and more enjoyable?

As many people have learned from our year-long, daily email "soul-school" relationship program, *Opening to Love 365 Days A Year*, love and intimacy can definitely grow in wonderful and even unexpected ways once you open up and are more fully present with that very special person in your life.

Now You Can Influence Others

With your new self-awareness, and growing confidence, you can enjoy the reality that it's quite normal to talk with work colleagues, friends, and your mate or date(s) about things like the Imposter Syndrome and erroneously thinking you have to be perfect. Perhaps you'll find yourself helping others Overcome their Fear of Being Fabulous.

You know this territory now.

So it's time to open up about it and share how it's changed the way you approach your work, your talents, your relationships, and indeed all areas of your life.

As you continually choose to be more fabulous in your life, you can also become an active influencer, helping others normalize the deep fears of true success that plague most people everywhere.

The point here is that by advancing in your own life, on your own terms, you actually become a leader. You become someone who is safe for people to talk with about their fear of being fabulous, their holdbacks, their love grips, and their short-circuiting beliefs.

These fears keep people, in every walk of life, held back. And it costs them the joy of full self-expression, and deep success in whatever ways are meaningful to them.

Think about how much people hold themselves back every day, as individuals, in the workplace, and in relationships. Think about how children are taught to behave that limit how they see themselves and how they hold back from their own full and vitally creative self-expression. And think about how you might now be able to help them understand what's going on in their lives—especially at an unconscious level.

The time has come to fully *be* who you are. Who you *really* are, because you are truly a one-of-a-kind miracle.

Yes, you are!

Chapter 35 ~ Congratulations

And so in closing, to make sure you really understand the miracle that you are, once again we invite you to watch our 3-minute, video, "You Are A Miracle."

Because it's All in the Connection!

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Judith & Jim". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

PS: To continue exploring who you can actually become and how you can be more available for love and joy and success in the world on your terms, make sure to check out our programs and other books described in the following pages.

*Discover Why
You Are
A Miracle*



Download your FREE 3-minute video
celebrating *this*
Undeniable Truth that
You Are a Miracle
Just Click Here Now

<https://overcomingthefearofbeingfabulous.com/miracle/>

A Request with Thanks

Thank you so much for reading this book.

We trust you enjoyed it and would like to help us spread this very important message.

If so, please tell your friends and mailing list about the book and post a note on your blogs and all your social media feeds.

And we would really appreciate it if you would put a brief review up on the book's Amazon page. That would be wonderful.

Just go to Amazon and search in books for

Being Fabulous in Your Life

**Judith & Jim's Online Programs
To Expand Your Life**



So often in the business world what most often goes unexamined are the internal “gremlins,” the unconscious holdbacks that undermine your ability to meet your highest potential – for yourself and for the company.

But now, to give you a solid jump-up on all of this, Judith & Jim created their 4-hour Audio Program with online workbook and enhanced transcripts, BEING FABULOUS IN BUSINESS.

This program is based on Judith & Jim’s experience as respected and sought after executive coaches for numerous tech companies including LinkedIn, Unity Technologies, and Blackbird Interactive.

You’ll stop doubting yourself as you increasingly trust yourself in ways you’ve never known before!

www.BeingFabulousInBusiness.com



Overcoming the Fear of Being Fabulous ~ The Workshop

A vision of what is possible—calling to you from deep within
your heart, mind, and soul.

This break-through audio program features 12 hours of original
content. Lay open the root of what's been holding you back, and
ensure it will never happen again.

Available in either mobile friendly Audio, or CD format, this 12-
part suite of guided explorations takes you beyond your current
understanding of yourself.

<http://OvercomingTheFearOfBeingFabulous.com>



Opening to Love ~ 365 Days a Year

There's so much more to real-life love and enjoying real romance EVERY DAY! *And so it's time to start Opening to Love ~ 365 Days a Year*

Let Judith & Jim send you, or that special someone, an inspirational and insightful heart-felt real-life love message straight to your in-box for the next 365 days.

These daily messages address some of the most significant aspects of marriage and dating — such as conflict, romance, trust, commitment, self-respect, curiosity, celebration, frustration, and sexuality, and so much more.

www.opening365.life

Smart Dating For Success Every Time



If you're tired of the traditional dating process, this program is what you've been looking for. And Judith & Jim do guarantee that you can make every date a success—truly!

By owning who you truly are, you can make every date a success, and stop wasting your time and/or money pretending you're something you are not. Find out how ...

<http://JudithandJim.com/smartdating>

Change Your Life Collection



**For The Fabulous Life
You've Always Wanted**

Want to expand your life from a variety of angles?

Then you'll be interested in Judith & Jim's 6-part Change Your Life Meditation Collection, with the following titles:

- * Embracing Intimacy;**
- * Mothering the Girl Within;**
- * Fathering the Boy Within;**
- * Womanhood: Power and Identity;**
- * You Are the Healer: A Journey to Your Heart;**
- * Practical Spirituality: The Healing Power of Relationships**

Each personal-process guided meditation is one hour long.

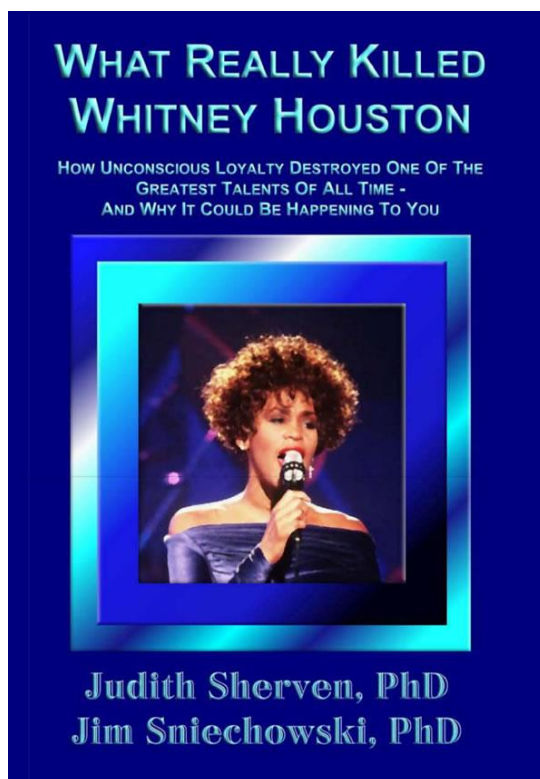
<http://JudithandJim.com/changeyourlife>

Books by Judith & Jim

All these books are available on Amazon

What Really Killed Whitney Houston:

**How Unconscious Loyalty Destroyed One of the
Greatest Talents of All Time - And Why It Could Be
Happening to You**

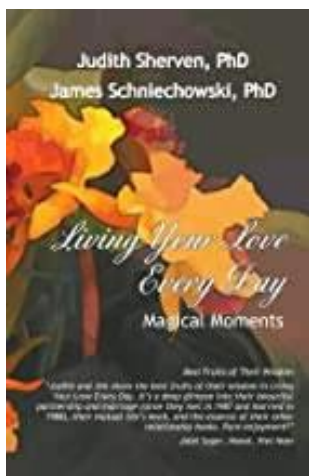


Carefully researched, Judith & Jim's book demonstrates how Whitney suffered from a deep Fear of Being Fabulous and how it took her down and ultimately killed her.

This book demonstrates how "allegiances" and "forbiddances" work along with the "love grip" to unconsciously hold people back from what they consciously want.

Available at Amazon in Audio, Kindle, and Paperback

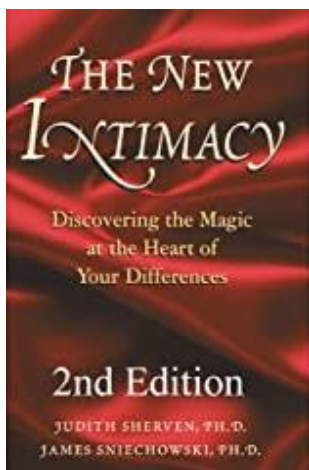
<https://tinyurl.com/y2mysexe>



Living Your Love Everyday

Whether you're married or dating, there's so much more to enjoy in the little moments. In *Living Your Love Every Day* J & J share short stories from their marriage to highlight what it means to keep romance alive and make love out of bed! They share the kinds of little and larger moments that fuel the pleasure of daily romance so you can be inspired to create this kind of daily romance in your own life!

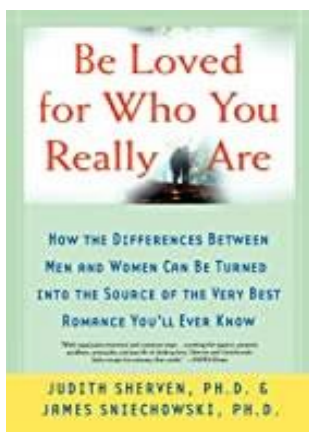
<https://tinyurl.com/magicallyuvmoments>



The New Intimacy

Judith & Jim's first book, and a breakthrough Los Angeles Times bestseller. J & J show you how it's only through respect and value for the differences between two people that a deep, long-lasting, truly romantic and intimate relationship is possible. Filled with real-life stories and examples, J & J provide a road-map for enjoying and growing from the differences every couple experiences.

<https://tinyurl.com/TNIJayEss>



Be Loved for Who You Really Are

Judith & Jim provide a new approach to understanding and embracing the four passages that love requires in any intimate relationship. They show you how letting love lead is essential to embracing the love-work that deep intimacy requires, keeping passion and real romance alive for a lifetime.

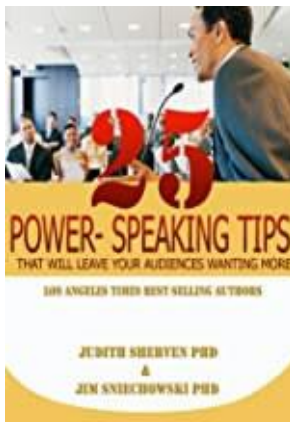
<http://tinyurl.com/dlmfc>



The Smart Couple's Guide To The Wedding Of Your Dreams

Finally—a wedding book for the adult couple! *The Smart Couple's Guide* is the #1 book the bride and groom need to create their wedding on their own terms, so that it expresses their unique relationship AND sets the foundation for their marriage-to-come.

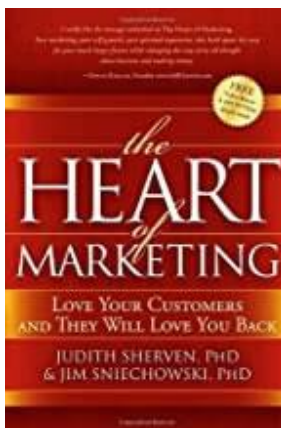
<http://www.tinyurl.com/c8sd8>



25 Power Speaking Tips

Based on years of training LinkedIn leaders, these 25 easy-to-practice tips for public speaking will easily boost your self-confidence AND effectiveness in connecting with your audience. J & J share the cornerstone elements of speaking success in this short collection of essentials.

<https://tinyurl.com/spkrspkr>

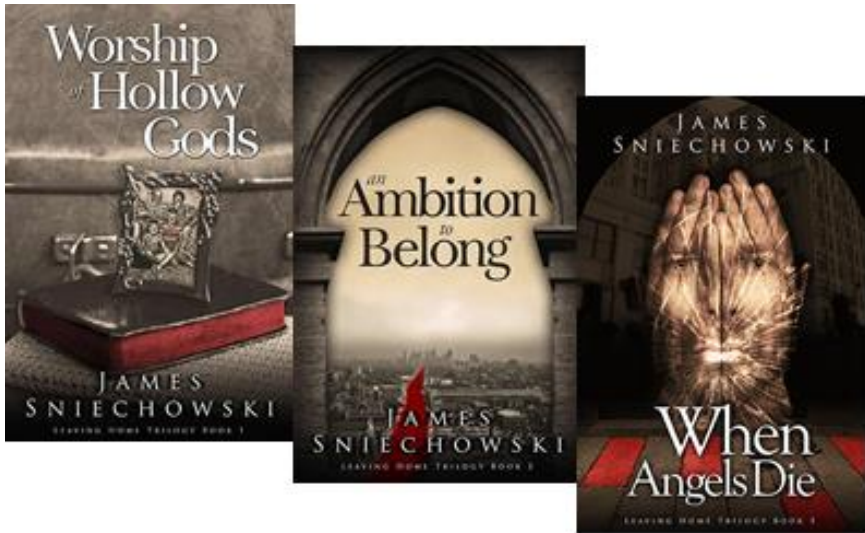


The Heart Of Marketing

This is a book about you, the soft sell marketer—your desire, as a service provider or care-giver to market and sell your products and services without compromising your personal/professional values. Putting your heart into marketing, selling becomes spiritual service.

<https://tinyurl.com/softsoftlove>

Jim's award-winning autobiographical novels ~ his Leaving Home Trilogy



Worship Of Hollow Gods ~ Book 1

An Ambition To Belong ~ Book 2

When Angels Die ~ Book 3

James Sniechowski's autobiographical novels take the reader through the key character's leaving home journey, starting when the boy of nine struggles with the hollow gods of his inner-city-Detroit Polish Catholic family, and ending with a deep soul-filled process that the adult professional actor goes through to finally set himself free to live life on his own terms.

<https://jameessniechowski.com/>

About Judith & Jim

Judith Sherven, PhD
James Sniechowski, PhD



Best-selling authors of 8 books, married psychology team Judith & Jim, (Judith Sherven, PhD and Jim Sniechowski, PhD) have more than 70 years combined experience helping people break through their personal barriers to liberation and success in various areas of life including professional success as well as love and real romance.

But prior to their extraordinary success, each of them made their living as professional actors earlier in their lives. Jim starred or co-starred in over 85 Equity League theater productions and appeared in numerous television shows including "Rockford Files," "Quincy," and "St. Elsewhere." Judith appeared in dozens of television shows including "Star Trek" - Original Season, "Wild Wild West" and "I Dream Of Jeanie" as well as doing over 80 national TV commercials. And yet, they both - long before ever meeting - walked away from potential stardom.

Today they are the Los Angeles Times best-selling authors of eight books including *What Really Killed Whitney Houston*, with Jim also the author of his Leaving Home Trilogy prize-winning novels *Worship Of Hollow Gods* and *An Ambition To Belong*, and *When Angels Die*.

Judith & Jim have been an executive coaching team for a variety of tech leaders at companies around the world including LinkedIn, Unity Technologies, Blackbird Interactive and a variety of other companies which includes a variety of start-ups and individuals. They are also the hosts of their popular corporate 4-hour Learning & Development audio program “Being Fabulous In Business.” <http://BeingFabulousInBusiness.com>

When they were involved in internet marketing, they produced and hosted four extremely successful conferences they called “Bridging Heart and Marketing” which even attracted international attendees. And as guest experts they have appeared on over 3000 television and radio shows including Oprah, The View, 48 Hours, MSNBC, CNN, and Canada AM.

In 2019 Judith & Jim decided to deliver their message to a broader audience so they produced their podcast, delivering weekly “bite-sized” pieces devoted to helping audience members move past often unconscious internal barriers in their life. In other words, helping them to Overcome the Fear of Being Fabulous. However, by the end of 2020, largely due to the challenges of Covid-19, they ended producing the podcast series, yet they have already attracted over 5000 downloads.

Judith & Jim’s next goal is to have one or more of their film scripts successfully produced and released in theaters and streaming online.



Acknowledgements

First, we want to acknowledge the re-wording, editing, and refining talents of our colleague Kashonia Carnegie, PhD, who took the original scripts for our podcasts and turned each one into a chapter for this book. Kashonia is a professional writer in her own right and author of the award-winning Conscious Change Series of Books –

www.ConsciousChangeToday.com

Second, we deeply acknowledge each and every person we've worked with over the past nearly 35 years, whether in relationship work or executive coaching. We've enjoyed their generosity of self-revelation as well as the many ways they've added to our understanding of the deep fears people live with – fears, no matter the form, of being all that they can be.

Third, we acknowledge you, dear reader, whether you're actually reading this or listening to the audio-book version, for your willingness to open yourself to a larger way of looking at who you can be. For that, we admire your courage and your desire, your determination and willingness. Bravo!



To Contact Judith & Jim

Whether you want to invite Judith & Jim to:

- ❖ participate in your podcast;
- ❖ appear as guests on your radio show;
- ❖ be interviewed for an article or book you're writing;
- ❖ involve them in your expert-interview series;
- ❖ Or anything else like that...

Please send an Email to: Judith@judithandjim.com

Judith is our Admin and will respond to you as soon as she can.

ALSO - please put in the Subject Line:
"Because of BFIYL ~ an invitation for J&J"



