

CHAPTER 1

Showing Up for Your Life

A young man had trained nearly a decade in preparation to climb the mountainous region of the Himalayas between India and Tibet. He had imagined what it would feel like to conquer this mountain and reach the highest peak. Before he set out on his journey, he sought the advice of a wise old man who had successfully reached the summit many years before. The young man inquired, “Please, will you share your best piece of advice with me before I embark on this quest? I too want to reach the summit.” The old man replied, “If you truly wish to reach the summit, grab hold of these words and make them your mantra as you climb: if you must—look to your left, look to your right, but never ever look back. . .” “Why?” the young man inquired. “If you look back, you’ll only be reminded of where you’ve been, not where you want to go. It is a certain distraction. You might well lose your footing, slip, and fall. I reached the finest point of the mountain because I never glanced back. I kept my eyes pointed toward the summit all the time, even when my hands and legs were shaking. Eventually, I was graced with the rare pleasure of touching the sky.”

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A WAKE-UP CALL

The *wake-up call to claim joy in life* can be experienced anytime, by anyone. There are moments when God will literally shake the very foundation of our lives to snap us out of complacency. On the last day of the Women Network Leadership Retreat that was the inspiration for this book, at 1:00am in the morning I found myself on a floor of the Four Points Sheraton in San Diego, taking shelter during an earthquake. I woke up out of a deep sleep to the eerie sensation of my bed shaking. I was thousands of miles from home and panic set in when I realized I was in the middle of an earthquake. Thoughts rushed in fast and furious: *What if I never see Sophie and Andreas again? Why have I wasted so much time on nonsense? Why didn't I eat the damn slice of chocolate cake for dinner? What if I never get a chance to help more people? Is it really going to end like this? I haven't seen or done enough yet, God! Please not now! Please!*

Silence...total silence.

The rumbling stopped. My heart continued to race. Right there, on the spot, I made a promise to myself and God.

“From this point forward, I will show up in a bigger, more meaningful way in my life and the lives of others.”

Time stood still as my life flashed before my eyes. Before that moment I was fighting hard in life for things that didn't matter.

Today my battle is lighter, yet no less significant.

The only thing truly worth fighting for is JOY, in all its forms.

JOY WORTH FIGHTING FOR

Your life means something.

What is a life?

I suppose it depends on who you ask.

As far as I've been able to surmise, *a life is a special unit of time given to each of us to do with exactly as we please.* All of life and how you choose to live it, is your choice. The sheer amount of choices we'll make on this journey are staggering, to say the least. From the time you wake up until 10:00 am, you'll easily navigate hundreds of choices without blinking. *Should I sleep in or hit the snooze button one more time? Should I head straight into the kitchen or go pee first? Do toast or Lucky Charms sound better to me?*

To show up for life is a personal choice that follows a declaration: *I'm here! By all means count me in. My life is worth something.*

When I was a kid and got sad about this or that, my grandfather would always chuckle and say, "Get up and fight for your life, little girl!" I had not a clue what he meant or was so insistent about. Nearly 25 years later, his wisdom would come together and make perfect sense to me. In essence, what he was telling me was no matter what happens I must continue showing up in my life.

Showing up in the face of challenge is not always easy to do. Life's force of opposition can feel all-consuming at times, yet it's overcoming the obstacles that reveal what we're truly made of. In order to make a conscious effort to show up in life with two cylinders firing, let alone all of them, is the hardest thing any of us

will ever do, because if you're engaged in your life on this level you're taking risks, falling down, savoring your victories, and likely repeating the cycle again and again—in no particular order.

We find the courage to take that ride as often as necessary because deep down inside our souls we know the truth—if you fail to show up for your life, you've never actually lived in the first place!

TOOLS OF JOY

There is one common denominator shared by all the successful men and women I've crossed paths with, worked with, or shared my life with—quite simply; they show up. Some show up broken, some joyful, others slightly confused, but they show up. When you show up, you've made the conscious decision to move beyond the realm of intention into the reality of your manifested presence. This is the reason we share such a powerful connection with the people who show up in our lives to share in the joys, sorrows, and leftover pizza. Think about the people you adore and hold near and dear to your heart—chances are they're the ones who have been present for you, riding in the passenger seat of your life in one way or another.

Even if we're unaware of them, we do lose opportunities when we fail to show up.

It's probably best that we don't know how many friendships were never made, great love affairs never sparked, or amazing adventures never experienced, all because we didn't show up. Ignorance is truly blissful and very costly. I know in my heart that God did not send anyone here on a mission to fail. Everything we need to succeed and

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be loved is all right here. We will miss parts of it or all of it if we are not in a state of mind to show up and claim it.

Showing up in your own life, the lives of others, and at key events, opens Heaven's gates to bring you:

- ❖ More Love.
- ❖ More Friendships.
- ❖ More Money.
- ❖ More Health and Well-being.
- ❖ More Confidence.
- ❖ More Inspiration.
- ❖ More Fun.
- ❖ More Options.
- ❖ More Happiness and Joy.

One of my greatest pleasures in life is touring the *Grand Parade of Homes* in the Midwest. I started doing it for fun when I was a broke college student barely dreaming of having my own studio apartment one day, let alone a plush lake front villa adorned with real solid gold door knobs. One day while on a tour of a magnificent home in Naperville, IL, I fell away from the crowd to ask the home owner how he managed to find the jewel he lived in. He said, "I bought it for a *one dollar!* This was a cherished friend's house. It was left to me in her will when she passed. All I did was show up and help her out in the garden every summer. I wasn't looking for anything in return. Just dumb luck I guess!"

After witnessing the power of being present in life, I know for a fact it was not dumb luck that landed him in a dream house. It was the natural laws of dynamic energy at work. When we come to the

table of life, plugged in, with good intentions, that exact same energy will always find its way back home. Some people call it karma, I call it *the way life works*.

As far as I'm concerned, the art of *showing up* is the most underutilized tool available in the quest to find all your heart desires. I've been stunned by the number of clients I've met over the years who want *big joy* out of life but won't show up in any shape, form, or fashion to claim it.

A beautiful 44-year-old woman had dreamed of marrying a great guy and moving out west someday. When I asked her how she was meeting potential partners, she said, "I'm not doing much, but I'm hoping he'll show up soon." This woman was very involved in the lives of her nieces and nephews, building a career in sales and marketing, and she was a loyal friend to many, but wasn't showing up in her own life in a big way.

She was convinced the relationship was missing, yet I knew if she started showing up in her own life, she would have a far greater chance to secure the relationship she wanted. As the old saying goes, '*the girl needed to get in circulation.*' There is nothing happening in the waiting rooms of life. You really do need to be in *it* to win *it*. What is it? It, is whatever joy means to you.

HOW YOU SHOW UP MATTERS

I worked with a woman who suffered from extreme social anxiety. Her *win* was finally getting to a place where she felt comfortable enough to walk into a party and enjoy her surroundings. Ultimately, she was overly preoccupied with how people perceived her: *What do they think of me? Do I look as scared as I feel on the inside? What*

will I say if someone approaches me? I told her the same thing I've told countless others: *People are aware of you in their environment, but primarily they are engaged in their own process and focused on their inner workings, the same way as you. Even when another person thinks of you, it's almost always in relation to your influence on or around their lives. Human beings are ridiculously self-centered creatures.* This is good news. Once you really understand this bit of psychology, you can feel free to relax and show up as you are.

How you show up matters as much as why you show up. Just because you're attending a fundraiser your friend begged you to go to, and you could care less about saving the whales, doesn't mean you give yourself permission to disengage from the event and the people in the room. If you are nervous and feel intimidated by your environment, there's no need to give yourself over to this energy. Choose an alternative energy to carry. I recommend the energy of *Love and Service* because these are the highest vibrations or energy. Engrave this truth on our soul. So many folks hear the words Love and Service, and automatically think, "How is this airy, fairy thinking going to help me out in business and life?" It's simple—these vibrations cut through every obstacle you could ever encounter in business and life. If you step into a room with the focused intention to love and serve, you'll immediately take yourself out of self-induced nervousness or tension. Make it about contributing to the experience and not about you. If you do, you'll feel so much better.

A man had just formed a health and wellness start-up company. He was running fairly lean in terms of financing. He decided to invest a substantial amount of money to attend a networking event and reading rally for children. He was touched by the cause and

although his schedule was squeezed tightly, he volunteered to read to the children for a few hours a week. He got to know the literary team and within three months they contracted with his company to provide wellness education for the children and families. Was he looking for this bonanza? Absolutely not! He showed up in love and service and the doors opened. Again, *this is how life works*.

All too often, we are standing in our own way of showing up fully present, ready to learn, and enjoy ourselves. Battling internal insecurities, anxiety, tension, and stress can get in the way—but only if you allow it. The following questions will help you to center your energy and show up fully present for your relationships, life, and key events:

1. How do I want to experience this person or event?
2. How do I want others to experience me?
3. What or who will be better because I made and appearance?

By asking yourself these questions, repeatedly if necessary, you can calm down and powerfully center yourself with the intention of showing up with the highest vibrations of service and love.

SHOW UP FOR YOURSELF FIRST

Why do we stop showing up?

You may find that you've taken a break from showing up or stopped altogether at times in your life. Life-fatigue, upsets, disgust, or a general sense of disenchantment can cause us to disconnect from life, events, ourselves, and other people. When this happens, we settle into a funky place. If we sit in this place too long, life will casually pass us by. It's important to adopt a mindset of genuine

investment in your self-care to prevent extended stays in the emotional pit of life.

It's challenging to show up anywhere, for anything if you are not at your best. Being at your best means you show up to take care of yourself emotionally, physically, and spiritually. How are you showing up for you? Showing up in your own life means doing something that can be very frightening at first, and ultimately rewarding over time—getting to know yourself well enough so that you cultivate a friendship with *you* from the inside out. Most people are more intimately familiar with the characters on their favorite television show than themselves. Are you a true friend to yourself? *A true friend will always show up for a true friend.* Learn to show up for yourself first, and showing up anywhere else is a piece of cake.

In 1996 I had an opportunity to speak at a women's event. I was grateful to have even been considered, yet mentally I was in the dumps, licking my wounds over a relationship that had ended. I was devastated and it seemed like doing something as trite as taking a hot shower took all the effort I could muster. It was the greater part of me—my highest self and trusted friend that convinced me to pack my bags and speak at the event! With a whisper I heard my inner spirit and trusted friend speak, "*What are you going to do when this pain ends and you realize you missed the chance of a lifetime?*" I put a fake smile on my face and made my way to the event. I could have never imagined I would meet two key business contacts there and secure enough work to fill a calendar year.

I learned one of the greatest lessons of all time by cutting through my despair to attend that event. It's easy to show up when you're in a good mood, however, there are vast opportunities

waiting for you during the times you are sitting in the dumps. These opportunities are God's blessed hands reaching for you with a promise that you are loved and cherished and there is much more to come. We must cultivate a friendship with ourselves or we become our own greatest burden.

SUCCESS STRATEGY #1:
GET CONNECTED WITH YOURSELF DEEPLY

I'm convinced that a great many people fall into despair and/or despondency and stop showing up in life due to a poor relationship with their self and the inability to get out of the slump. The connection to our self must be intact before we can show up fully present anywhere.

Staying connected with your self is daily work that really does require focused attention.

One of the best ways to begin to get to know and show up for yourself in meaningful ways is through the use of journaling and mirror work. It can be intimidating at first, especially if you are not deeply connected with yourself. This exercise will connect you with yourself and lay a foundation for the unconditional positive regard and confidence you'll need to show up in your life in bigger ways.

The process is very simple. Each day for the next 30 days take at least 20 minutes to write in your journal about your experiences, who you are, what's going on in your life, and what needs to happen in order for you to show up in a big way in your life. I recommend you start with the following questions:

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1. What are the people, events, things, and activities that bring me heartfelt joy?
2. What have I been pretending NOT to know about myself that is blocking my progress?
3. What drives me nuts in life?
4. What are my deepest wishes, hopes, and fantasies?
5. What scares me about myself?
6. What do I love most about myself?
7. What are my core values- the things that I believe most deeply in life? What do I stand for?
8. What is okay with me in terms of how others treat me?
9. What is not okay for me in terms of how others treat me?
10. What are my accountabilities to myself (what do I owe myself?)?

The more you get to know yourself, the less life will frighten you. We are afraid of the unknown. There are those walking among us who can't reach the peak of high performance because they don't know themselves well enough to show up powerfully in the world.

How well do you know yourself? Are you skimming the surface of you or are you swimming in the deep waters of self?

You won't only be journaling for this reflective exercise. That would be too boring! You'll actually be reading your answers to these questions and what you write in your journal out loud as you look in the mirror. Yes, my friend, *THE MIRROR*. Mirrors are amazing tools that instantly put us in touch with our self in a way that nothing else can. Look at yourself in the mirror. Ask yourself

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questions and answer them in the mirror. Challenge yourself in the mirror. Prepare to be stunned by your results.

Using this method of journaling and mirror work actually forced me into a deeper level of accountability and connection with myself. Indeed, I felt more than odd when I did it the first few times, but then I began to notice the things I told myself I was going to do *while looking in the mirror* were actually getting done in my life. I was moving forward and breaking down old patterns of thinking. I used my journal and mirror time to challenge myself to show up in life in new ways.

They say the eyes are the windows to the soul. This exercise will help you look into your own eyes and touch your soul in a meaningful way.

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Joyism

I learned the art of design psychology backward by figuring out how the elements of design affect us. In design the most powerful element is lighting. It doesn't matter how large or small the space is or where it's located, everything goes back to lighting. Your light within is the most powerful tool you have to work with. Show up and your light will shine for you.

-Jeanette Joy Fisher

***"All great things in life begin with simply showing up
and making the commitment to step into the game."***

-Jason Thelen

~K~

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