

JoAnn Corley



The Force Within

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JoAnn Corley

*“Whether I fail or succeed shall be no man's doing
but my own. I am the force.”*

— Elaine Maxwell

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Preface

This short, simple handbook is inspired from one single event. I was asked to contribute to a blog series entitled The Leading Ladies Series initiated by a dear HR colleague Janine Truitt who I met through social media.

As with many writing assignments, I was down to the deadline and had not written even a draft. It's in those moments I have no choice but to let go and rely on the universe to serve it up.

The timing of this situation was perfect as I'd been studying and building awareness around my need to work from a more inspired, heartfelt (vs. logical), spiritual place. At the moment I had to write the piece, my logic side was spent and tired. I had to surrender to the other sources. Good for me and for you.

The piece was written (which is the introduction), Janine was pleased and from that I was inspired to continue the themes now contained in this book.

This handbook is an introduction to a synthesis of a variety of disciplines I've been a student of for many years. They've substantially influenced my work, but I've never formally written about it. They are all centered on approaching and experiencing life holistically.

My Holistic Philosophy

I believe that in order to maximize our life experience and existence, we need to be growing and developing in this way. I see holistic as these four areas: emotionally, spiritually, physically, and mentally.

I recently went through a company rebranding to reflect this synthesis. It's now called The Human Sphere™. It better reflects the holistic approach to the work I do in talent management with individuals and companies.

Now more than ever I think this approach to our work and personal lives is essential and I've seen the corporate landscape evolving in this direction as well.

With the emergence of wellness programs, emotional intelligence work, mindfulness and yoga classes offered on site, increased call for creative and innovative thinking and values based leadership, it's clear that functioning holistically is increasing in its importance and it's also clear many companies are seeing the financial benefits to acknowledging and valuing the full humanness of their employees.

I'm excited about this work-social evolution and my participation in and contribution to it. I consider this simple, short handbook my written entre' into this emerging space.

The Power of the Force

This simple handbook lays the foundation for living from and leading from the inside-out. It's for individual contributors and corporate leaders.

Make no mistake about it; anything that is accomplished personally and professionally, individually and with a group requires a force of some kind. It is my firm belief that seeing and understanding this is essential to getting more of the outcomes we want in all area of our lives.

It's also necessary if companies want to be and stay competitive. In my view force equals profits **and the source of profits begins with the force of each individual employee.**

So many leaders have limited knowledge if any of how to access or leverage this force. In fact I've witnessed many who squander, sabotage, and suppress this force, which contributes to the very problems they wish they did not have.

Yep this force has a lot of power – the power to make or break a company, to make or break a life, a family, a community.

The best news ever is the force is with you – more specifically the force is within you - what will you do with it?



“I was born with music inside me. Music was one of my parts. Like my ribs, my kidneys, my liver, my heart. Like my blood. It was a force already within me when I arrived on the scene. It was necessity for me – like food or water.”

-Ray Charles

Introduction

The Force Within

I remember during my childhood becoming aware of a powerful force within me - let's call it energy. This energy would surge up in me in undeniable ways in which it was hard to control - it would drive me, compel me to say or do something!

As I matured and became involved in personal development I came to see that force as my authentic personal power. That surge of energy I came to see as my spirit, my voice demanding to burst out onto the stage of life and from an early age that's exactly what it did!

That inner force continued to compel me to initiate first, act when others wouldn't or hesitated...and there I was - out in front.

That resulted in not only being compelled to lead from the inside-out but being appointed or asked to lead. I learned that once you're out there, folks just keep asking you to stay there.

I remember I was teaching swimming (had my own classes) at the age of 14, writing very opinionated letters

to the congregation as one of the youngest ministry leaders in my church at the age of 15. It was clear early - leading wasn't what I did, it was who I was.

I soon learned through college and into my early working years that leading, that is the willingness to initiate and put myself out there would serve me well and I must say was a lot of fun! It was easier to build relationships, get cool assignments, and stay employed. Certainly, there were periodic employment gaps, but luckily not for very long.

When I finally launched my own company in 1998, acquiring clients like many companies was a challenge, but in retrospect not nearly as hard as it would have been had I not been an "out in front" kind of person during my career.

All along, every step of the way - that force - that surge of energy was ever present, unwilling to be denied. The force continually pushed me to be out in front. My force was voiced through the behavior of leadership.

Oh yes there were times I tried to suppress it. Sometimes it was just darn annoying. I wanted it to be quiet - to allow me some rest. But it wouldn't!

There were also times it didn't match what was going on around me. When expressed I appeared odd or going

against the grain and even invited ridicule causing much heartache. And yet, it was ever relenting. I could only hold it in, modify it's authenticity, ignore it for logical reasons for only so long. It would have none of it!

To this day it keeps asking to be acknowledged and expressed. The result of which has been service in ministry, coaching, speaking, writing and other roles.

What I've finally learned and come to peace with is to let my inner force be the leader. I am surrendered to let that inner force and voice lead me so that I can lead others; to let it speak as loud and unique as it needs to for my full purpose to be holistically and completely expressed.

Ever heard of the quote, "Don't die with your music still inside you"? It's like that - don't continue to exist with your voice not heard. It was given to you for a reason!

I remember seeing the singer Pink interviewed. Here's a quote I'll never forget. She said, "I don't let anyone speak for me, I have too much to say."

Imagine for a moment if our many heroes and heroines, inventors and thought leaders allowed their force and voice to be modified or suppressed...where would we and our society as a whole be? Consider: Gandhi, Rosa Parks, Gloria Steinem, Joan of Arc, Madam Currie,

Thomas Edison, Harriett Tubman, Elizabeth Stanton, Shirley Chisholm, Steve Jobs, Abraham Lincoln, Nelson Mandela, my mom Marquerite Robinson, just to name a few.

Though this list includes both men and women, how are women fairing in the expression of their unique voices? Well, according to her latest best seller, Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg expressed from her perspective, women are still tempering, modifying, undermining and even discounting their voices.

This suggests that in every era there has and will be (particularly for women) a fight to express their authentic voice. Maybe that reflects a DNA conditioning of sorts as women and/or a continued socialization of voice modification or suppression.

I wonder for women is it harder or easier now than our mothers and sisters before us? I don't know - perhaps just different. No matter - our success and happiness is dependent on our collective social growth in this area. Honoring *all* voices is a continuing 21st century human imperative worldwide.

Ultimately it begins with the Individual – for each individual to **know, acknowledge, respect and allow the inner force to become the outer voice** and to not expect it to be like anyone else's; to protect it rather

than compare it to others or temper it to be acceptable to fit in, instead to champion it and allow it's full authenticity to be present and fully expressed, so that it can continually reverberate throughout the precious, short time you'll be here on earth.

“There is vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening, that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique.”

-Martha Graham

Let The Force Guide You

In the years I spent career coaching, helping people connect with and create satisfying careers, I discovered a recurring theme in how numerous people made decisions regarding jobs and careers.

Many choices were made based on logic, what seemed right by other's opinions and standards and with very little or any self knowledge as to what would be best or right for them.

I'm certainly not going to suggest that logic or the input of others are irrelevant and don't need to be engaged and considered. However, I believe and have experienced with myself and others that to hit the "bullseye" of career satisfaction, something much more relevant needs to be used as a *key indicator* and decision-making guide and that is your inner force and voice.

Your inner voice and force work in tandem to help you make choices that match or resonate with your authentic self. Not utilizing them can lead you to make decisions separate from the "true you" and as you engage in work, disconnected from that true you, you will not experience the level of joy, satisfaction and happiness you otherwise would and could.

How To Work With The Force & The Voice

Let's start with the force.

The force is easily recognizable once you tune in and acknowledge it. I say that because first you have to believe it exists before you are willing to tune in. You won't recognize, let alone value it until you do. Do you believe there is a force within you – a energy or spirit of who you are?

So, taking into account that you believe a force exists within, an easy way to get in tune with it is by using simple exercises of attraction. **Your force is activated and recognized by experiences of attraction.**

By consistently doing these types of exercises, you'll begin to develop a keen awareness of its presence, how it's activated and the level of intensity at which it operates. Have you ever heard of the phrase, "He is a force to be reckoned with?"

Additionally, regular practice will help you gain a level of trust in its value and accuracy. Experiencing it in the "little things" will build your confidence when you need to rely on it for the big things.

First consider these definitions of attraction:

: the action or power of drawing forth a response

: an attractive quality

: a force acting mutually between particles of matter, tending to draw them together, and resisting their separation

: attractive quality; magnetic charm

: a person or thing that draws, attracts, allures, or entices

: a characteristic or quality that provides pleasure; attractive feature

I've underlined some key words: a force acting, power, drawing forth, draw together, quality, magnetic, provides pleasure.

Notice that pleasure is a part of this list. So we can conclude that force and pleasure are partners in many ways.

As we contemplate the above, let's consider these human truths:

- We all enjoy the things we are most naturally attracted to.

- We are usually drawn to things that provide pleasure and resist the things that don't.
- We as humans naturally move towards pleasure/gain and move away from or resist pain.

To emphasize the partnership of force and pleasure, I'd like for you to search your memory bank and recall an experience in which you engaged in something that gave you great pleasure. Now consider the prelude to the experience. Think of the attraction or force surrounding it before you engaged in it.

Here's an example. Of all the sports I experienced growing up, I was most attracted to volleyball. I loved it! I enjoyed the particular challenges of it and so would play it every chance I got during my high school years at the local Y.M.C.A.

Subsequently, I became so good at it that I ended up playing it in college as a walk-on. I was even moved to varsity my mid-freshman season and became captain of the team my junior year. When I think of volleyball, I think fun, joy, and pleasure!

Looking back, responding to my attraction to volleyball resulted in becoming a successful college athlete. Is it

possible then that, regarding a career, the elements of work we are most attracted to will produce for us the *greatest success*?

I say, “Yes!” There are certain types of jobs that will be more naturally a **better fit** than others. Those also will generate the most satisfaction or pleasure. When working as a recruiter, I would regularly ask myself, “Who would be the best fit for this job and company.”

That “naturally” part is best identified and sourced from the force and the voice in each of us. Please note - it is usually **not** *best identified* through logic!

More specifically, the force I speak of is an *energy response* that comes from the mid-region of your body or your abdomen; an experience many of us have been trained to ignore.

Here’s an example. As an owner/operator of my own business I have a variety of functions. When faced with an accounting activity or creating the next inspiring blog post my attraction energy reads pretty clear. When I consider accounting, my energy goes down and I feel resistance. When I think of writing an inspiring post my energy goes up and I begin to feel happy and motivated.

Though this all sounds simple or perhaps even obvious to some, don’t let the simplicity minimize its profound

importance! Tuning in, knowing, having a keen awareness and respect for that energy or force demonstrated in that simple exercise, is at the heart of building a satisfying, happy life. *It is the source and compass of one's true self.*

For many people their logic and the voice and force of others have dictated their decision-making and sabotaged their skill potential and professional happiness because they were not aware of or learned to leverage their own inner force and voice. So everything external that was louder and stronger had the greater influence.

To grow and function as a happy adult and make choices that lead to high levels of life and work satisfaction, YOUR force and voice must be your main influence.

So What Is The Voice?

I see the voice in two ways. The first is expressed as intuition and the second is expressed as personal characteristics.

First, let's look at the voice expressed through intuition. Intuition can be described as an inner knowing where immediate proof is not present. One might say, "I just know it, even though right now I can't tell you how I know – I just do." The knowing seems even right or accurate though you're not able to explained why. Some people describe it as a hunch or gut feeling.

When you consider the intuition description, notice that it involves energy of some kind and usually from one of two places or both. Your lower abdomen, literally your gut or your mind where it's recognized as your "inner voice." Some people call it the "voice in my head."

The second way the voice is experienced is through the *form of expression* the force takes and here is where it gets practical – the force on the inside turns into something recognizable on the outside; usually in the form of a behavior, skill, or way of thinking.

Giving Voice To Your Force

“Enthusiasm is the energy and force that builds literal momentum of the human soul and mind.”

– Bryant McGill

The easiest way to begin to give voice to your force is by identifying characteristics that best represent it. To follow is an exercise to help you do that. By the way, this list is the one I give to my coaching clients when helping them identify how they would describe themselves in an interview...see the connection?

Consider the group of words listed below. Circle or check the words that you are **most attracted to**. Important to note: as you're doing this exercise do it **quietly and slowly** so that you can recognize the level or intensity of the energy response and attraction coming from the area of your heart and/or abdomen.

This is not about what you “think” you are...but what **words generate energy – what words you are attracted to**.

It may take a few minutes for the energy response to become stronger than your thinking mind. Relax, let go and allow it. Do not rush through it – give it time. Let the energy lead.

There are 2 sets of words. One is considered a stand alone list, the other is called a comparative cluster. In a

cluster - certain words will stand out over others. There is no right or wrong in how you use each set. The words are just presented in different ways.

Additionally this list is certainly not all-inclusive. So if you see a word and another word is suggested to you in your mind, write it down. The word you are hearing is what the other voice is suggesting that resonates with you or is more meaningful to you. Consider it ***your*** language from your voice.

Exercise #1 – Single List Words

Aggressive

Assertive

Pro-active

Ambitious

Analytical

Reasoning

Problem Solving

Articulate

Cheerful

Competent

Congenial

Conscientious

Cooperative

Courageous

Courteous/Respectful

Decisive

Dependable

Diplomatic

Mediator

Discreet

Efficient

Emotionally Stable

Enterprising – showing imagination, initiative and readiness to undertake a venture, implies some risk

Enthusiastic

Inspiring

Nurturing

Excited / High-energy

Zealous

Honest

Humorous

Imaginative

Creative

Independent

Industrious

Self-starter

Enterprising

Intuitive

Judicious

Wise/fair/make sound judgments

Leadership Ability

Loyal

Observant

Open-minded

Orderly

Overcomer

Passionate

Pathfinder

Perceptive

Insightful

Pioneering Spirit

Resilient

Resourceful

Watchful

Patient

Skill-builder

Straightforward

Direct

Frank

Studious

Exercise #2: Word Cluster

(Mark and make notes where needed)

active dynamic patient adaptable economical perceptive
adventurous effective persistent aggressive efficient
personable alert energetic persuasive ambitious
enterprising precise analytical exceptional productive
articulate experienced proficient artistic fair rational
assertive farsighted realistic attentive firm reasonable
aware flexible reflective bold forceful reliable bread-
minded foresighted resourceful businesslike idealistic
responsible calm imaginative responsive capable
independent self-confident careful individualistic self-
reliant challenging industrious sensitive clear-thinking
innovative serious competent insightful sincere
competitive instrumental sophisticated confident
inventive systematic conscientious logical tactful
consistent loyal tenacious contributor mature thorough
cooperative methodical thoughtful creative meticulous
tolerant decisive natural trusting deliberate objective
understanding dependable open-minded versatile
determined optimistic vigorous diplomatic organized
disciplined original

Now that you've completed this exercise, review the results. You may recognize that in many respects this is how you, your force that is, presents itself or expresses itself to the outer world. **Or, how your force is voiced.**

By the way, as you were going through these exercises you may have heard your other voice (the voice in your head) saying, "Yes, that's me."

These particular characteristics become the foundation for what professional skills you are likely to be attracted to and develop. For example, one of my nephews would for sure choose the word systematic. He is very attracted to and gets great pleasure from projects that require him to put things into systems or require organizing.

Here's a key finding: Many people do not experience career or job planning from this perspective. In fact they jump far beyond this to other elements that may not compliment their force and voice (e.g. job description, what other people have told them they might be good at or should want because it's safe or will make a lot of money).

Now with regards to making money, I'm all about maximizing earning potential. However, I know people and have heard plenty of stories where a career was chosen with money as the main priority *without*

consideration of or blatant disregard for their force and voice.

The result?...some have chosen to leave that profession because their “life force” was being snuffed out. The choice was not the best match – in fact in some cases, it was the extreme opposite of their force characteristics - descriptors.

Please be aware that choosing a job or career that requires the extreme opposite characteristics and then persisting in them over a period of time can have adverse consequences – to the point of mental, emotional or physical illness. That’s why learning, recognizing, honoring and trusting your force and voice is so important.

We are the creative force of our life, and through our own decisions rather than our conditions, if we carefully learn to do certain things, we can accomplish those goals.
- Stephen Covey

The Force Within To A Profession Without

As we continue to look at the characteristic or descriptors for our voice, we can begin to see how this sets the stage for the next element of career planning or job choices. They are expressed or manifested through the framework of a job type, scope or description.

Here are some samples...

force to create = artist, builder

force to express = writer, singer, speaker, dancer

force to nurture = mom, care giver, nurse, early childhood teacher

force to be industrious = entrepreneur, building an enterprise

force to be thorough = editor, detective, investigator

force to be observant = scientist

force to be diplomatic = mediator, diplomat

force to be analytical = analyst

So, how would you summarize this information for yourself right now?

Here's a few of mine...

My force descriptors:

expression, assertive, passionate, insightful, inspiring,
industrious, pioneering

Those translate into... inspirational speaker, forming my own company where I create my own body of work; to reach and teach clients to help them get more of the outcomes they want.

What about you? Create a brief summary here....

My Force & Voice Summary

We are the miracle of force and matter making itself over into imagination and will. Incredible. The Life Force experimenting with forms. You for one. Me for another. The Universe has shouted itself alive. We are one of the shouts.
-Ray Bradbury

Where Are You Now?

I know many people from a variety of job types; ages and stages in life will be reading this book. With that said, keep in mind the following:

___ If this information is new to you, you are not alone. Commit to fully understanding it; practice often to build awareness of the force/energy inside you.

___ It's never too late to make a change.

___ Your force will grow and evolve and with that, so will your voice descriptors and forms of expression.

___ We go through stages of adult development, so the ways in which we've chosen to manifest our force, we may outgrow. Don't be surprised when what was a fit – fits no longer. Our force may ask us to express itself in new and different ways. That might mean transitioning into different job types or into a completely new profession.

___ If you're a parent, please nurture the force and the authentic voice of your children.

___ It may take time and work to uncover elements of your force that may have been suppressed or even snuffed out due to intense and sustained unsupportive forces. So, be patient with yourself – continue the work, stay the course.

___ Uncovering your force and voice is one of the most important life undertakings you'll engage in to honor your existence and your soul. Remember, human history would not be the same if you did not exist. **You** are here for a reason. Your force and voice are the clues and the fuel to bring that reason into reality in very practical ways. Honor it and don't let anyone stop you!

___ If you've ever considered engaging a career coach, you may want to – to help facilitate a career review through the lens of this information.

___ If you are a leader or manager within a company, consider the force and voice of your team members. How is it being expressed? How can it be channeled for better results?

___ There are assessments that can accelerate your self-knowledge and help with better job choices or what we call "best fit" choices. If you'd like to learn more, feel free to contact me: www.thehumansphere.com for more information.

___ And finally, there are many people who are in great need of this information, consider sharing this book with others.

To a rich and satisfying life!

JoAnn

About The Author

JoAnn Corley is the Founder, CEO of The Human Sphere™, a consultancy that helps companies increase profits through holistic talent management.

Professional Highlights

- Seasoned HR, training & development professional, speaker, coach
- Authored management book: The 1% Edge - Power Strategies to Increase Your Management Effectiveness
- Authored time management productivity book: Organizational Strategies for the Overwhelmed: how to manage your time, space, and priorities to work smart, get results, and be happy
- Spoken through-out North America, in every major city in the U.S. and every state
- Conducted thousands of training seminars and workshops over the past 15 years; considered a master trainer
- Regularly featured in on-line media and radio

People have said about JoAnn that she is an emerging voice in the business marketplace...a catalyst for innovative thinking...passionate for bringing theory into reality in the laboratory of real life!

JoAnn Corley is an experienced human resource professional and a dynamic, inspiring speaker-trainer, author & coach. She has a contagious passion and energy for the topics she teaches and has shared that passion with thousands through-out North America specializing in seminars on Effective Management and Leadership, Time & Organizational Management, Personal Empowerment, Emotional Intelligence, Creative and Innovative Thinking, Team Productivity & Collaboration.

She is author of the book, *Organizational Strategies for the Overwhelmed, How to Manage Your Time, Space, & Priorities to Work Smart, Get Results, & Be Happy, Wisdom@Work* and *The 1% Edge – Power Strategies to Increase Your Management Effectiveness*. She is also contributing author to the book, *Ordinary Women, Extraordinary Success*, a collaborative effort with some of the top female motivational speakers in North American and hailed by Jack Canfield of Chicken Soup for the Soul fame as a must read.

JoAnn also has a unique passion for the connection of technology to enhancing the quality of both one's personal and professional life. She sees herself as a "non-techie tech" who loves to learn about what's next. That interest lead to the development of her mobile learning-training app - *The 1% Edge Portable Coach* (available on all smart phone platforms) and the mobile

learning offering for managers, Management-in-Minutes™.

Ms. Corley utilizes her 20+ years of business experience, expertise in the knowledge of work functions and thousands of hours of human behavior coaching to consult in areas such as organizational design, creative and innovative thinking, management development, and adaptive leadership strategies.

She is known by her clients as insightful, passionate and an acute strategic thinker as she assists them in reaching their targeted outcomes.

JoAnn founded her human resource-organizational development firm in 1998 which has provided services to a variety of industries such as; accounting & finance, engineering, government, staffing, risk management, not-for-profits, and sales to name a few.

Variety also describes the type of coaching and consulting clients Ms. Corley has helped over the years, which have included governmental leaders, scientists, engineers, phds, executives, finance and accounting consultants, mid-level managers and small business owners.

She attended Concordia College, Moorhead, MN, and Eastern Illinois University. Prior to launching her

consulting practice, she spent several years as the International Benefits Manager for a not-for-profit, then moved on to become a Senior Recruiter for the Richard Michael Group, a boutique, INC 500 Chicago recruiting firm. She has participated in such professional organizations as ASTD, SHRM, and AWBA.

Here's a partial list of companies whose employees have experienced JoAnn's dynamic workshops: The City of Chicago, Microsoft, Conference Board - Toronto, Randstad Corporation, 3M Corporation, Trump Enterprises, Lockheed Martin, Rayovac Corporation, University of Central Texas, the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, Johns Hopkins, the U.S. Army, Fort Hood, TX, U.S. Marshals Service, The University of Iowa, The City of Kissimmee, Florida, The University of Texas, McAllen, ESPN, Northrup Grumman, Duke University, The Chicago White Sox, NALCO, NASA, Bridgestone Americas and many more.



Contact Information for JoAnn's books, digital products, audios, speaking engagements, or consulting offerings:

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