

# Inner Peace

Janice Lynne Lundy

**F**or many years, I was a Franklin Planner sort of gal. I felt certain that if I could just be more organized, I'd feel less overwhelmed. If my daily activities were neatly arranged, color coded, and notated in the right spot on the right page, I'd feel more balanced and sane. True, my dedication to a time management plan over the years did provide some of what I longed for – balance in a fairly chaotic life – but only in pocket-sized portions. Pockets of relief they were; spaces where I could temporarily let go of the daily grind. The planner helped me find those pockets and I did make good use of them.

I had a problem though. Despite the fact that I had found moments of relief, once they were over I was thrown back into the ring of managing my busy life. Having relaxed a bit, I would reengage the juggling act with the fortitude of a circus performer who is expected to give the audience her very best, show after show. I began to notice that my own juggling act was becoming more and more tenuous, stress-filled, and even exhausting. Becoming more organized just wasn't cutting it anymore. Pockets of relief were not sufficient to ease my daily angst.

What I longed for, more than anything else (something I'd hoped a personal organizing system might provide), was a long-lasting sense of personal peace. I wanted to experience harmony in my daily life, no matter what. Despite the chaos of any moment, I wanted to be unflappable. I desired peace to flow through my days and nights like a river effortlessly drifts to the sea.

I don't remember exactly how or when this awareness happened, but one day I awoke to the realization that the inner harmony I longed for was not something to be sought and found. Nor was it something that could be planned or time-managed. Personal harmony was a state of mind, firmly rooted in specific values and lifestyle choices that supported those values. Harmony was a choice. Personal peace was a choice. But how was I to begin to make mine?

## Assess the Angst

Any of us can begin creating greater harmony in our lives by paying close attention to what our body is trying to tell us in any given situation, honor that revelation and then make choices that foster our well-being. We do this by actually listening to our body through the vehicle of our senses. We pay attention to what we are seeing and hearing. We note our body's response, then log it in. We ask ourselves, *Is this experience creating feelings of peace and well-being in me, or is it causing me stress, worry or fear?*

## Ditch the Dissonance

Once we identify our reactions toward specific situations and people, we can reflect upon these

reactions by asking ourselves, *What was it about the experience that caused me such discomfort?* We can also reflect upon how our ongoing participation in (or being exposed to) this situation may be causing us personal stress and disharmony.

Here's an example from my own archives. For many years I spent my first hour upon waking with the morning news. I felt I needed the news to energize me, to stay in touch with what was happening in the world. In time, I began to notice that this routine was having a depressive effect upon me. I experienced it most acutely during the coverage of the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995. I recall how anguished I was over the horror of this event, and how I sat hour after hour for nearly three days, frozen on my living room sofa. I couldn't seem to break away from the painful images. They pulled me into their clutches like a magnet.

Thankfully, I made the connection, realizing that these less-than-wonderful feelings diminished the quality of my day. I wanted to start my day in a more positive way and to feel better throughout, so one cool autumn morning I decided to ditch the dissonance. I turned off the morning news and never looked back. It was one of the best, most life-giving choices I've ever made. Each of us can take control of our lives in the same way by determining what elements keep our inner peace at bay, then eliminating the habits themselves. When we do so, situation by situation, choice by choice, harmony begins to cultivate in our hearts.

## Foster the Fullness

Personal harmony comes to fruition when we substitute the dissonance with daily practices that inspire and delight – practices that enhance our wholeness as women. In my case, an early morning routine began to include listening to music, reading or a taking a brisk walk. I noticed how much better I felt and how much less stressed I felt throughout the day when engaged in these kinds of activities. I began to incorporate more and more activities throughout my day that supported my growth as a peace-filled woman. Any of us can do the same.

As before, we can ask ourselves, *What feelings come up in me when I am having this experience?* We note what people and situations thrill our senses, relax our body, calm our mind, make our heart sing, or our spirit dance. Then, very simply, we give ourselves more of those.

Inner harmony is a matter of choice and it's one I am glad to be making for myself. I still use a planner, but I'm relaxed about its use. I no longer rely on it to tell me where I need to go or what I should be doing. I leave that job to my heart. Its inner compass knows better than any time management system what will lead me to places of peace.



Janice Lynne Lundy is an inspirational speaker, author and interfaith spiritual director. Her new book, *Your Truest Self: Embracing the Woman You Are Meant to Be*, is available in bookstores beginning October 1, at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) or [awakenedliving.com](http://awakenedliving.com). Contact her at [Jan@awakenedliving.com](mailto:Jan@awakenedliving.com).

## From the Editor:

### Do you have an exit strategy?

It seems there are warehouses of books that teach us how to start a business, but what do you do when you want to sell your business? How do you plan for this all-important business decision?

A recent study published by the Center for Women's Business Research addresses this important factor in business ownership. The report, "Exiting Your Business: Serendipity or Strategy," examines steps women should take and missteps to avoid when preparing both professionally and personally for exiting their businesses.

Their research points out that most women (and men) business owners do not have any exit strategy. And when times get hard, "those without a plan in place were more likely to close their business or settle for less than optimum returns."

When you don't have a plan, you can't act quickly when the market changes or when an unexpected life circumstance causes you to have to transition out of business ownership. Take this sage advice from women who've been there:

- Run your business every day as if it's for sale.
- Be aware of your goals and parameters – know what you will accept in a sale and what's not OK.
- Don't let the word get out prematurely to your employees and others that you are considering a sale; often the sales process can take a long time and until all details are worked out, it's best to not worry your employees. When ready to sell, be very decisive.
- Find a buyer who shares your vision and approach and put the conditions of the sale in the sales documents. Get buyers' promises during the courtship in writing.
- Take care of yourself. Develop an investment and insurance portfolio separate from the business that will be there no matter what.

As of 2005, there were an estimated 10.1 million majority-owned, privately-held, women-owned firms in the United States., employing 18.2 million people and generating \$2.32 trillion in sales. Women-owned businesses account for 28 percent of all businesses in the United States and represent about 775,000 new startups per year and account for 55 percent of new startups, according to the Center for Women's Business Research.

Women-owned businesses are more than a trend. They're an ever-present reality in today's business world. Be prepared both in the beginning and in the end of your business's life cycle.

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## Performance Enhancement Solutions

### Lonely at the Top?

By Kathy Hyink, LMSW, ACSW



People in positions of authority often experience "leadership stress" that leaves them feeling isolated and alone. If you are a supervisor, company owner, executive or entrepreneur, you may know this all too well.

When high achievers like these feel the weight of the world on their shoulders, it often affects their job performance. They come to my office to get things back on track. Many are amazed by the quickness at which they find relief.

You enjoy greater clarity of thought, access to strengths, improved decision making and better concentration. Anxiety and depression melt away. You are energized with a new perspective, ready to move forward with enthusiasm. You have peace of mind and peaceful sleep.

As a leader, you are expected to exhibit cool, calm competence, while keeping personal feelings private, i.e. wearing your game face. To combat stress, you may exercise, manage your time well, and try to balance personal and company needs. But demands can overwhelm, leaving you with sleeplessness, irritability, low energy, anxiety, digestive concerns, physical ailments, or relationship problems. What if you find these symptoms affecting your job?

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*Kathy Hyink, LMSW ACSW is founder of Performance Enhancement Solutions, Inc. located a mile east of US 131 at Post Drive. Call (616) 365-6555. Visit [www.KathyHyink.com](http://www.KathyHyink.com)*

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