

**Living Your Glorious Life  
Program**

**Monthly Mentor #5**

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Feel free to share this Monthly Mentor one time by mail, electronically or in person with anyone you think could use it. Better yet, give me their e-mail addresses and what you'd like in a note, and I'll send it to them. But don't sell it.

To guard participants' privacy, all names have been changed; occupations, biographical information and the locales have at times been changed. Sometimes, participants portrayed in this book are composites of those who took part in actual coaching sessions and some coaching sessions are composites.

This workbook contains exercises to help you on your journey. Many people put their Monthly Mentors into 3-ring binders. Carry it with you and make it a faithful companion: highlight important sections, mark it, flag it, and write your ideas and the actions you want to try.

The strategies, techniques and tips in the *Living Your Glorious Life* Program are offered as guidelines only. Each person is unique. Each situation is unique. What works in one situation may or may not work in another. The direction chosen by one person in one situation may be completely opposite from the direction selected by another person in what seems like the same situation.

These approaches work. If at first you don't succeed, call and we can develop new plans. Use good judgment and uncommon sense about what will work for you and what sequence of steps to follow, depending on the feedback you get at each step. Remember how you learned to walk – step-by-step, going one way and then the other, forward and back, sometimes falling but always adjusting to feedback.

**Give this program as a gift to help friends, family, partners and employees get unstuck and build rich, full, glorious lives.**

**Schedule an appointment for individualized coaching, advising and consulting.** To get help using these ideas, plans and tools more effectively, and to deal with difficulties before they become obstacles, contact me at 877-8BULLIES (877-828-5543). I'll call you personally to set up your first session as soon as possible.

If you decide you no longer want to receive the monthly program, simply send a fax or e-mail and you won't be charged again.

On this journey together, please send your stories, ideas, questions or suggestions.

**“The hardest challenge is to be yourself in a world where everyone is trying to make you be someone else.”** e.e. cummings

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### **Why the *Living Your Glorious Life* Program is Important to You**

Many people have not been prepared to face what life throws at them. Most of us have not been taught with insight and wisdom. We’ve been taught *wrongly* that:

- It’s OK to trudge through dull, desperate or meaningless lives – lives not worthy of our best.
- The world is too big and harsh for us – we won’t make it.
- We are helpless victims of our genetics, upbringing and fate.
- We cannot choose our attitudes, beliefs, moods, emotions, rules and roles.
- All great, heroic action is useless and actually motivated by mean, selfish reasons.

We have been taught coping strategies that are not effective in the real world.

**“Listen, are you breathing just a little, and calling it a life?”** **Mary Oliver**

In contrast, I have seen a tactical approach that can turn life into a joy, worthy of our best - a glorious, rich, full life. This monthly mentor will give you case studies, thought provoking mindsets, tips, techniques, tools and exercises to help you overcome your hesitations, destructive attitudes and outdated strategies. Some case studies may be about situations that are different from yours, but you may be surprised to see how useful the ideas and tools are for the issues you’re dealing with.

If you want to have the richest, fullest, most glorious life you can, you will have to live with courage – minute-to-minute, day-by-day heroism. I don’t mean heroism on the battlefields of war. I certainly don’t mean celebrity. I mean the heroism it takes to live wonderfully in the day-to-day battlegrounds of love and marriage; of job and career; of doing your best for your children, family, friends and yourself.

### **Special Bonus Offer for Members in the *Living Your Glorious Life* Program**

Sign up a friend and get a month of free membership after their third month. Simply have them give me your name when they sign up.

## Everyday Heroes – Love, Work, Running Away - Toward Your Own Life

Here are some examples of everyday heroes who have chosen to make their lives wonderful: rich, full, and glorious.

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Tom still loves Nancy – even after 14 years, living from paycheck to paycheck and from family crisis to family crisis. But they haven't allowed crises to develop between them, and they didn't let family crises drive a wedge between them.

Nancy is a clean freak. She cleans three times a day: in the morning before the three kids go to school and she and Tom go to work, when she comes home from work after the kids have made an afternoon mess, and before they go to bed. She'll get people up and out of the house early so she has time to clean before work and she'll stay up late to clean, no matter how tired she is. Then there's the washing and ironing so that everyone sparkles all day - no going out looking rumbled or dirty for her family.

Tom is much more casual than Nancy. He thinks all the cleaning is a royal pain. What should Tom do?

Tom could tell Nancy she's nuts and he's not doing it; he could get angry because it takes too much of their precious time; he could bitch at her until she stops or he could haul her to a therapist to straighten her out. He could make it a major issue in their lives – much more important than their love and all the children.

But Tom has chosen a different path. He's seen how important cleaning is to Nancy: she gets really upset if it's not done. Years ago, he decided to help and also to plan logistics around the time the cleaning takes. He said, "I might as well pitch in because then we can get to the fun stuff sooner." He noticed, over the years, that Nancy did not add more jobs to her list when he started helping and that she became willing to put off cleaning sometimes - when there are very important things crying for attention.

Tom sacrificed some of his tastes and preferences, gave up some of his precious time and put off some of his own pleasures, like golf, TV or snoozing, in order to help Nancy do something he thought was dumb but that he knew was "core" to her. But even more, Tom has good grace and cheer while he's helping. Nancy appreciates his gift.

Tom said, "Nancy is worth that sacrifice. She makes our home wonderful, she makes our family life exciting and she brings a sense of grace, style and beauty into our lives. Cleaning is only a small part of that. It takes a lot on her part and I appreciate it."

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They've made a wonderful choice for them. Tom loves Nancy. Nancy loves Tom. Tom is an everyday hero – sucking it up when he'd rather not, giving of himself for something greater than his tastes and pleasures: his wife and children and making their home a joyous place to be.

Don't trivialize the heroism by trying to psychoanalyze how Nancy got that way or why Tom would put up with it. Neither of them feels like pawns being moved by their pasts. It's a waste of time to wallow in the past, trying to figure out what went wrong so they could fix it. The past

is not an excuse for their behavior now. Their “excuse” is that they want to do things the way they do and they live together joyously.

Don’t explain away Tom’s heroism by saying he’s only doing it for the lowest motives: sex, money, to cultivate an image of being a good person so he can get into heaven, or his parents messed him up by making him a martyr. Tom doesn’t think he’s doing anything special; he just does it. And he’s very clear: Nancy and their life together is worth it.

I think he’s built great character – and that’s gotten him through every other challenge that has come along. All with a smile, a laugh and gusto for life!

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### **Many people have asked me to define “everyday heroes.”**

I can tell you that I certainly don’t mean celebrities. Celebrities are not heroes; they’re just celebrities. I admire the talents and skills of some and think many are just trash – even if they’re rich trash.

I’m also not pointing at heroes on the battlefield. There are many heroes there, whether it’s in the middle of a shooting war, going into a blazing World Trade Center, fighting a local fire, arresting a crazed person with a gun or jumping into a river to save someone from drowning. These are heroic acts. But I’m pointing at something else that’s crucial but usually overlooked by our popular culture.

I can’t define “everyday heroes.” Sorry if that’s what you think you need. “Everyday heroes” can’t be defined. Much like the words “love” and “God” and “character” can’t be defined. If you try, you simply pile one abstraction on top of the other in a great pile of abstractions, a steaming pile of words. Like the famous aphorism says, “The Tao that can be spoken is not the Tao.” Don’t approach everyday heroism that way.

However, I can point to everyday heroes. Keep looking until you can recognize them. Just like, depending on where you grew up, you struggled over creatures the grown-ups called robins and ducks, or pigeons and sparrows, or eagles and hawks until you recognized “birds” ... long before you could use a dictionary. And your struggle with ostriches and bats was also useful because you probed the limits of your categories of what’s the same and what’s different.

It’s not that children are too dumb to use a dictionary. It’s simply that we learn the most difficult concepts by experiencing and seeing situations over and over until our unconscious abstracts something real and tangible that we can model in our behavior.

Don’t convert this into an intellectual, academic exercise. If you think you know “everyday heroes” when you can define it, you’re simply fooling yourself. Don’t get stuck looking at the finger I’m pointing with. Look where I’m pointing. And knowing about everyday heroes is a long way from being one, so that you’re a model for those around you.

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I was brutal to our children: I made them wash and dry the dishes by hand. My excuse was that we didn't have a dishwasher. Often, they moaned and grumbled throughout the whole chore – it was definitely cruel and unusual punishment. But sometimes, sometimes, when they thought I wasn't looking, they had a great time doing the dishes. They would race to see if the washing and rinsing crew could work faster than the drying and putting away crew. And they didn't drop any more dishes when they were racing.

In those moments, the light sparkled on the dishes, in their eyes and on their tongues. It was great fun in those electric moments. And then, it took only a moment to get the whole job done. Kids, fully present in the moment.

In those moments they did something heroic. They chose to do what they had decided to do, with grace and joy and laughter and song. They threw themselves 110% into a seemingly mundane task. Those were glorious moments.

And, of course, the lesson was, if they could find joy cleaning the dishes in those moments, why not in every moment? Think a moment. Why not?

Your answer tells you about the limitations of your creativity in the world. In those moments, when the kids were passionately alive and enjoying themselves, they still knew that most of the time they'd rather not be doing the dishes. But they didn't need to be miserable in order to remind themselves. They could be joyous and still know I was brutal and they were being treated with unusual cruelty. And their scars have slowly faded over the years – especially as they have had their own children.

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More important than defining and analyzing everyday heroism, is asking yourself what you'd have to become and do to be recognized as one. And what would your children, friends and loved ones have to become and do in order to recognize and respond appropriately to one.

Everyday heroes are people who do the daily things in life with joy, passion and grace. They take on the heavy burdens of life and aren't bowed down or rendered surly and bitter. They take responsibility for their attitudes, beliefs and moods. They overcome inertia, laziness, comfort, riches, greed, temptation, hardship and obstacles to cultivate themselves, their environment and the people in it – in the original depth of the word “cultivate,” meaning to bring out the best in a garden or a farm or a person.

Everyday heroes sacrifice the least of them – their tastes, styles, preferences and pleasures – for the best of them and for a greater good that's worth the sacrifice. They change the diapers at 2 A.M. with good grace. They sacrifice those less important things in order to create the unique ways they choose to live, no matter what statistics say is “normal” or safe or self-actualizing, or whatever reasons popular society gives to say that some other path is “Right.”

They are joyous in living for what is most valuable in their lives. They are not necessarily – or even usually – sweet and nice and goodie-two-shoes. Often, they're the opposite. They're simply human heroes. They are the glue that holds together the center of any society.

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Here's one of my heroes – and I don't even remember his name. I saw the interviews about three years ago, so some of the minor details are fuzzy – but the important truth is crystal clear.

Imagine this: an 11 year-old boy in Florida in the bus terminal with his mother and 13 year-old sister, about to board a bus for New York. His mother is a drug addict and hooker. She's had a series of men moving through her life; fathering children, living off her meager earnings, beating her and the children, drinking, sharing drugs and moving on. The sister is beginning to hook also. They're going to New York because the mother has heard that there are more drugs and easier money for prostitutes there ... the Promised Land.

The boy begs them not to go but the mother says they have to: it's the only way they can survive another year. What can the boy do?

In this case, the boy turned around and walked away. The mother and the sister got on the bus and left. The boy lived by himself for two years: sleeping in abandoned cars and on the streets, stealing food and money. Eventually, he was picked up and juvenile authorities realized they had a stray on their hands. He was placed and forced to go to school. He didn't care about school; in two years he barely learned to read. In and out of violence and minor crime, he did some juvenile time and was forced to do some time at a neighborhood athletic association.

A part-time director saw something unusual in the boy. The director said that he saw more than athletic ability; he saw intelligence and determination. He offered the boy an opportunity: come live with his family, obey family rules and work his tail off for as many years as it took to get good enough grades to play high school football. The part-time director and full-time high school football coach would see that the boy got a shot at playing for his football team.

The boy accepted. Imagine what this took. Imagine the frustration of being a 15 year-old, only now learning reading, writing, arithmetic, politeness, civility, honor, integrity; learning to think and express himself; learning to control and discipline himself; avoiding easy trouble with former acquaintances. The boy finally made it. He got good grades, played football and graduated.

The high school coach arranged with a friend, who coached at a small college in Pennsylvania, to give the boy a special, in-depth interview. The college coach recognized character when he saw it. The boy went to college.

The interview I saw was when the boy was going into his senior year of college. He was hoping to play in the NFL. He was bright, articulate and straightforward. He realized that he probably didn't have a chance at making the NFL: he was 5 ft., 7 inches, 200 pounds and that's probably not big enough. "No matter," he said, "I'm a B+ student, I'll have a degree I've earned, I'll get a job and I'll make a life. I have monetary debts that I can pay and some debts that can never be repaid except by living well and looking for other kids who have what it takes." And you can see and hear his excitement and vitality and determination. Imagine that.

They're all everyday heroes here: The high school coach, his family, the other teachers, the people in the system who approved the opportunity despite the rules, the college coach and especially the young man – who walked away from his mother and sister, lived on the streets for two years and still had something special that could be recognized and that could respond to the opportunity inherent in the daily grind of learning to read, write, compute, think, express himself, and control and discipline himself for a long road ahead.

Did he ever see his mother and sister again? Yes, he found them. He said, "They were wretched and used up. They only wanted money for more drugs and booze. I had to walk away again."

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I'm not saying that since these are heroic people, you should imitate their actions because they are the right actions. That's nonsense. Don't try to make a generalization about what's the right action everyone should do in every circumstance. If you're quick to say that the social services system should have done this or the young man should have done that, you've just taken a Rorschach test that tells us about you; not about him, and certainly not about what will work most of the time.

There are no right actions to be memorized and repeated every time. Their actions were appropriate for these people in these contexts. Their actions came out of their great character and fed back to create even greater character.

The important thing is, that boy saw a rotten and inevitable future going to New York. He couldn't cure his mother or sister by being perfect, praying for them or by turning them in to social services. He couldn't save himself if he went to New York. It was what it was. So he struck out on his own – certainly without a guarantee of success. He kept some spark alive so he could be recognized and could respond appropriately to a difficult opportunity when he saw it.

When you take charge of yourself, when you become the hero of your life, I can guarantee one thing: you won't have any problems. Oh, you will still have all the stuff of life to deal with but it won't be a problem anymore. Become the hero of your life or waste this golden opportunity.

**Don't treat your preferences and fears as if they are your identity. They're just like clothes or costumes. Change them when you want.**

### *Ideas-Plans for Action*

Who have been models or heroes in your life – what characteristics and qualities did your spirit respond to?

What did you do to implant these in your life?

What qualities and characteristics would help you now? If you don't have any heroes or models, that might be a good place to start.

When have you run away from your life?

What are you running away from now?

What is the best of you that you are sacrificing for the least of you?

How glorious could your life be if you lived the best of you ... everyday?

What could you be doing?

**“Nothing can be created without the sacrifice of something very important, usually one's own being. Every vocation implies the supreme sacrifice of the (ego) self.” Mircea Eliade**

**“To have no heroes is to have no aspiration, to live on the momentum of the past, to be thrown back upon routine, sensuality, and the narrow self.” Charles Horton Cooley**

***A Difficult but Rewarding Exercise for You and Your Family and Friends.***

Each person's task, every day, is to come home bearing the great gift of a "wow." That's an observation, a story an example, something you read or saw, even something you made up, so that the other people say, "wow," get excited and their spirits rise. Not a "wow" that discourages and depresses. There's more than enough of that everywhere else.

Make your home a special place full of "wows." If you haven't seen any recently, put on your "wow" glasses and start looking for them. That will help you balance all the rest you see and hear that's trashy, dumb, depressing, meaningless, trivial or boring.

Children can do this. In fact, they usually do it naturally until they're taught not to disturb adults with their excitement. After doing this exercise a while, you can start to help them improve their taste in "wows" and in how to tell the story in a way that builds up the "wow" in someone else. If you can't, then you need to learn also.

What's a "wow?" Come on. Haven't you been bowled over by a sunrise or sunset lately? The smell after an afternoon sun shower. A brilliant idea that makes sense out of something that's been puzzling you. Suddenly beholding overwhelming beauty or feeling love; gratitude to be alive and hear birds.

We recently saw eight black eagles on a cottonwood tree right near the traffic off a major Denver street – blown away! We had to make a U-turn, drive back and park in order to watch them for a while. We were late ... but we have our priorities clear.

Turn aside and Behold. Turn aside from your daily grind. Turn aside to see, hear, smell, taste and feel intensely. Turn aside and look deeply at people you live with; see each for the truly marvelous sight they are.

If you have no other place to begin, start with your senses. Bake bread or fabulous chocolate chip cookies, or buy the best, imported chocolate. Close your eyes, breathe deeply and taste. Drive away from a city on a clear night and look at heaven. Go to an airport and really look at a jumbo jet taking off – amazing, awesome. Get a good sound system, put on great music that lifts your soul and turn off the lights. Go dance to Irish music. Go dance.

Be in awe at the miracle that so many people get home unscathed during rush hour when we are so humanly vulnerable and distracted during the drive.

Don't let the "wow" part of you atrophy. Cultivate "wows."

**"The grandest of heroic deeds are those which are performed within four walls and in domestic privacy."     Jean Paul Richter**

**"To the illuminated mind the whole world burns and sparkles with light."     Emerson**

## Teens Manipulate Parents – Guilt and Fear

Tammy was clear; all her problems were her father's fault. Tammy was 17, hurt and angry – life wasn't working the way she wanted, the way it was supposed to. No one was making her happy. Tammy's mother had died when she was 13 and now her father had just remarried. It was obvious to Tammy that she was not going to get what she wanted ... and just at a crucial time for her. She had started sleeping with her boyfriend a year ago, started smoking a lot of dope and let her grades fall. Bad grades had meant that she was just beginning her junior year in high school even though she was 17. But none of that had stopped her father from going ahead with his life.

It was so hard for Tammy to get up and get to school. Why should she? She didn't much care about those things.

Tammy kept telling her father, Sam, that if he let her alone she'd be fine. But Sam was afraid. He worried that this might be a last chance to rescue her before she did things that would be permanent. Sam also felt guilty. Tammy said he hadn't been around as much as she needed.

Sam knew how hard life had been for him. He had started working when he was 12 to get himself out of poverty. He didn't see that same drive in Tammy and he worried. She seemed to be strong only when trying to get something from him. Or she seemed to be clever only when she pitted Sam and his new wife against each other. Sam was torn between wanting to give her everything and being angry that she wouldn't work for herself.

What had he done wrong? Maybe he had worked too hard to provide the things he never had? Maybe he hadn't paid enough attention to her? Maybe he hadn't given her what she needed and that had turned her against him? Maybe he hadn't been there enough for her when his wife, her mother, had died?

In his heart, Sam thought that he hadn't been as strict with her as she needed and that was the problem. But everyone said that the problem was that he hadn't given her what she needed.

Now, whenever he tried to get her out of bed to go to school or to keep her in the house when he thought she was going out to smoke dope or to get her to stop staying out until the early morning with her boyfriend, Tammy would throw a fit. She screamed at him that her problems were his fault – he should have done better for her and, recently, he certainly should not have married someone else. Her therapist agreed with her. Her therapist said that Sam was making Tammy's life much more difficult than she could deal with. If only he gave her more freedom and hadn't gotten involved with someone, the therapist said, Tammy would have had a chance. Guilt drove Sam to keep wrestling with his dilemma.

Sam freed himself from the grips of his guilt when the police woke him up at 3 am. Tammy and her boyfriend and a group of other kids had been busted: drinking, driving and smoking dope. Although he was still scared of the path Tammy seemed to be sliding down, and his initial thought was that it was his fault, he was even more angry at Tammy: She was 17, damn it, and he was just tired of being her baby sitter and watchdog. Something in Sam snapped.

That morning, Sam realized that although he hoped for the best for Tammy, he couldn't protect her from herself. Unless he locked her up 24 hours a day, she could do dumb and dangerous things in the middle of the day if she wanted. As much as he was still afraid that she'd do something stupid and the price would be too high, he couldn't protect her from herself. Also, he didn't want to be her jailor.

Sam snapped the old link to his being a doting father of infant Tammy, the old link to his guilt at disappointing his baby girl, the old link to seeing her as a weak, fragile child. He felt released. Now he had to make a plan for how to act.

When he saw Tammy, she was in tears – afraid, hurt and angry. “It wasn’t my fault,” she whined, “we were just having a good time and the cops were bullies. Mostly it was your fault. You never paid enough attention to me before. I was just acting out because you brought another woman into our life and now you’re happy and paying less attention to me. I’m not happy and it’s just not fair that you won’t make me happy.”

Sam had been prepared. He waited until Tammy ran out of energy and breath. Then he told her that she had gotten the whole thing wrong. He asked her to get up and walk to the other side of the room so she could see both of them a little differently. He said that he wanted her to look at them from this different place. He wanted her to see how he’d been released from her.

Sam told her that he was not responsible for making her happy. He told her that he was weaning her and himself; he was emancipating both of them. Yes, he would do what he could to help her with these charges; he’d provide her with food and clothes and a good home; with therapy and special schools; with clear limits and safety at home. He’d love her and pray for her.

But he wouldn’t rescue her any more. Maybe he could give her sage advice, but, ultimately, it was her decision about what to do. He was now, finally, clear – her reasons had become excuses and they didn’t matter to him anymore. Only results mattered.

He told her that he was also upset that his wife, her mother, had died. But there it was. Tammy wasn’t the first or last person to have a parent die before they wanted. She’d have to get tough enough to survive and make a life for herself.

She was responsible for her happiness; he was not. The chain to his old self had been broken. He would provide the basics and she could live with him as long as she followed “house rules.” His guilt were gone. She was 100% responsible. She was a young adult and obviously made her own decisions – for better or worse.

Sam pointed out that Tammy had been acting this way even before her mother died and before his new wife had moved in with them. His new wife was a good person who cared about Tammy. She’d put up with a lot of hostility and very bitchy behavior from Tammy. That would have to stop. Tammy would have to grow up and be polite and civil. His new wife had never tried to replace Tammy’s mother, was not trying to rule Tammy. Everything she’d asked Tammy for was in the category of “good housemates.”

From this new perspective, he could see himself as having tried his best, as good or bad as he was able. He could still see himself as continuing to try his best. He now Tammy her as totally in charge of what she was doing; as an adult making choices in her life, for better or for worse.

Sam, asked her to look at herself carefully from over there; to see the wonderful and strong person she truly was and that he saw under her skin struggling to get out. He reminded her of the many things she had been able to do all through her life, despite the odds: How strong she really was. He told her that when he looked at her now, he saw a strong, alive and vital person.

She was now stuck because whenever she whined and complained to or about him, he was laughing inside, because he could see that strong, stubborn one of her laughing also. And covering up because she didn’t want to have to make tough decisions and do hard work. He understood: It was always easier to have someone prepare your bottle, warm it up and feed you

while they rocked and sang to you. He'd be glad to comfort her sometimes, but even so – he was seeing that other one of her underneath.

Sam told her that he was going to say something very difficult for her to really hear but that it was very important. He said that a lot of people, including her therapist had told him that the most important thing for him as a parent was that he not disappoint Tammy – especially after her mother died. He had tried never to disappoint her and had always felt terrible when he had. That was why he had always relented after he had come down on her.

But from where he stood now, he felt very differently. She had to know that when he saw how wonderful she really was, he was disappointed in her. She could be doing so much better and making herself feel so much better. She was an adult and could do what she wanted in life. Despite his best efforts to help her, she could squander her life away. He'd always love her but he'd be disappointed and he wouldn't continue rescuing her. It didn't matter if her therapist agreed with her. This was the new reality in which she'd have to succeed.

Then he said, "I don't want you to think how wonderful your life will be if you lived in this way of looking at us. I'm not going to think of it either." And then he casually stepped back and left the room, even though he wanted to see if she stayed here, at least for a while.

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Of course, there were moments when Sam went back to being guilt ridden and tried to give Tammy enough to make her happy. It was especially hard when his heart was breaking. But over time, his heart shifted as he could see how this new way of seeing and acting gave Tammy a better chance to become the person he hoped she would.

Of course that wasn't the end of Tammy's problems. It took her time to test her father's new way of looking and to see that she couldn't pull him back into the old ways of manipulating him. It took her a year to get away from the jerks she had been hanging out with. It took her time to adjust to having few friends for a while. It took her time to start getting back on track – to begin to work harder. Mostly, it took her time to accept that even though she was on a better track – life wasn't always smooth and easy. She would still have to get strong enough to go through her own ups and downs.

Tammy said that one of the keys in her shifting was that behind her bravado and anger at the injustice she felt when she got arrested, she was scared stiff – and she saw that Sam wasn't going to make everything alright for her.

Sam and Tammy had originally been standing in a place that was bad for Tammy. In that old place, they'd both thought that Tammy's problem was with the family system that hadn't taken care of her just right. Over there, the problem was with a family system that had disappointed Tammy when her mother died. Over there, the problem was a father who'd become happy again and then made her adjust to another person in her life when she didn't want to. Over there, the problem was never in Tammy: It was always with the outside world that didn't please her.

When parents have all the responsibility, children will inevitably be encouraged to blame other people for their problems. Naturally, every baby is going to try to make the parents take on the full time job of not disappointing them. Most teenagers will try to perpetuate that lie for as long

as they can by manipulating their parents to give them what they want by whatever means parents can be manipulated. Sam was most easily moved by fear that if he didn't do the right thing, he would drive Tammy down a path with very bad consequences and by guilt that he had not done "right" for her.

If teens are allowed to throw the whole responsibility for their happiness on others, they won't learn that they're responsible for the effort to make their lives work the way they want. They're responsible for being happy and for living joyously.

If you think that you need more information to decide what's true – did Sam fail Tammy by not considering her wishes or needs enough – then you've missed the point. If you think you need more information to decide how likely Tammy is to get herself beaten, raped, overdosed or kidnapped and killed, then you've missed the point.

The point is that, in the middle of your fear and guilt, you won't be able to make a skillful decision. In order to make a skillful decision:

- Go over to where you're not responsible and you're not guilty.
- Go over to where you can see that 17 year-olds will make their own decisions.

Over here, it's possible for parents to think strategically and plan skillfully; to take into account what you can give, what lessons you think the young adult will learn from you and what lessons they seem to want the world to teach them the hard way.

Over here, Tammy can see that normal life had happened to her. Yes, her mother had died; yes, hadn't gotten what she wanted to comfort her; and, yes, she had disappointed Sam. But even more, she had disappointed herself. She can see that she had given in to her natural laziness and selfishness, to wanting the world to give her everything she wanted without her having to expend much effort. That was hard for her to accept.

Here's a moment of choice for Tammy: stay here, face the world as it is, fight to make something wonderful from her givens. Or go back to the original place where she can feel sorry for herself and settle for laziness, selfishness, weakness and manipulating Sam to get what she wants, a place where she can try to remain infantile.

But every time she saw a certain look in Sam's eyes and an expression he had, she knew he was looking at her from that new place; seeing how strong and how wonderful she could be. And, almost against her will, she felt pulled over there also. She liked how it felt there – even though she still had to be strong enough to face difficult things from over there.

Be prepared like Sam was – when young adults get themselves into serious trouble, they will often say that it's your fault: They would be better off now if you had only done your job better. That's a difficult moment of choice for you: hold your ground or give in and rush for a pacifier.

Maybe the toughest thing is not to burst out laughing at them, as you give the responsibility back to them instead of relieving them of the burden. Tell them that no matter what you did, you

could never straighten them out; back then they'd never listen to you, they wouldn't take your advice, they wouldn't let you teach them elementary skills. And there's nothing holding them back now at age 17 or 22 or 25 or 30, from learning what they now wish they had learned when they were 16 and it was easier.

When they're in a real mess and they say it's your fault, even though your heart is full of fear and breaking for them, you're going to ask them to do only one thing: Give their best effort, no matter what, and make better choices, no matter how difficult.

**Teenagers worth their salt will try to make their problems become your problems.  
Your task is not to take the rattlesnake they're trying to give you.  
That's the best way you can encourage them to deal with their own problems.**

### **Ideas-Plans for Action**

How can people most easily get you to relieve them of their responsibilities – which of your hopes, fears, guilts, beliefs, attitudes or styles are most easily exploited?

How does that keep them immature and lazy?

How do you get people to do your dirty work?

How does that weaken you in other situations?

What do you know you really need to start doing for yourself?

**“The world owes you absolutely nothing. Anything you want, you have to go out and get or create.”** William Boast

## “If only ...” – Regrets, Complaints and Excuses

Marty was 29, single and stuck in a mediocre job at a large corporation. He couldn't afford what he wanted – a high-end tablet, computer, entertainment system, car, clothes and fancy places to impress girls. In high school, he had played and partied but had not prepared. As soon as he could, he had moved away from his parents' home to live by himself. He hadn't wanted to sacrifice his fun to work in high school, to go to college or to live with his folks while he went to a vocational school. Now he didn't have any particular skills and he had a job to match.

He said he was willing to work hard now, if they treated him right, but since he was at the bottom of the pole, he didn't have much control about what happened. If he got a lousy boss, he was pretty much stuck. Who would listen to his complaints, since there were so many other people who would be willing to do his job? If his company decided to outsource his department, there was nothing he could do to stop them.

Marty said over and over, “If only my parents had made me work harder, if only I had better guidance counselors, if only my parent were rich enough to pull strings, if only the company would pay me to learn a skill, if only I had a mentor at the company, if only I had enough money to start my own company, if only ... Then I could have gone to college, then I could have a good job and the stuff that I want, then I'd be working for a good boss, then I could own my own company and come and go when I wanted.”

But what was stopping Marty now?

Marty was dead set against going to night school. He didn't want to live with other people to make ends meet. Taking out a big loan wasn't a good idea. He'd be trapped for years trying to pay it off. The army had gotten too dangerous and he was getting too old and out of shape. He didn't trust those vocational schools he saw advertised on late-night TV; they always tried to rip you off and they really couldn't guarantee you'd get the kind of job you deserved.

Marty knew that he wasn't getting a fair chance. Society owed him more than he'd been given.

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Marty was definitely stuck. As much as his complaints about his parents, his school and his company might have had some kernel of truth, Marty had avoided facing the hard truth that he'd rather whine, complain, make excuses and hope that someone would make it better for him so he wouldn't have to do the hard work it would take to get himself out of a hole: Just like he hadn't done the hard work in high school to avoid getting into the hole. Of course, Marty's friends sat around like he did, agreeing that life was so unfair. Marty was stuck because he kept his butt stuck to the couch and his tongue stuck in complaining mode.

Marty had put himself at the bottom of the pole when it hadn't taken much vision for him to see what life was like at the bottom. He could see his parents' life at the bottom of the pole. They'd tried to get Marty to work in school or to learn a trade. But there was a crucial difference between Marty and his father.

His father had told him what life was like but hadn't complained about it. His father was a new immigrant without a skill. He had a family to support so he had to work at what he could. That

was OK with his mother and father because they enjoyed what they had and they had bigger dreams for their children. They wanted their children to do better so they could enjoy life.

Marty simply wanted pleasure to come to him. He didn't want to work for it. He insisted that the world should make things easy for him. Hard work shouldn't be necessary. If the world cheated him, he wasn't responsible for the poverty of his life. The world was to blame.

Marty was miserable in many ways. Marty's life was impoverished and barren and that didn't have anything to do with his income. Marty's mind and spirit were impoverished and barren. He hadn't made the effort to bring any riches into his life.

Marty had a very hard time accepting that the world was different for him than he wished. For him, the way the world was, was that he was going to have to work extra hard to get himself out of the hole he was in. Although a few people seemed to have it easy, he wouldn't.

What tipped the scales for Marty was seeing his old self as extremely immature; indulging in wishful, magical thinking; spurred by laziness and self-indulgence; waiting for the world to give him candy and toys for free. He had wanted something for nothing.

When he finally saw that he'd probably end up with a loser job and loser friends, who also immature, selfish and self-indulgent, with loser girl friends or none at all – because who else would want to wait on a grown child – he was galvanized to action.

It didn't matter what excuses he had or if it was the world's fault, he was the one who would be suffering in that poverty of mind and spirit. But he wanted better. He wanted a good woman and good friends. He wanted adult friends he could count on. He realized that in order to attract them, he'd have to become one himself.

His maturation required him to grow up, strengthen his will and determination, and put out great effort: To stop being lazy and to start working; to stop being narcissistic and to start paying attention to what the world was telling him to do in order to get what he wanted; to stop wasting his life complaints, excuses and regrets, and to start living with passion and joy.

### **Ideas-Plans for Action**

Where in your life do you make excuses instead of doing you best?

With whom is whining, complaining and making excuses most easy – and how can you change that?

**“It had long since come to my attention that people of accomplishment rarely sat back and let things happen to them. They went out and happened to things.” Elinor Smith**

## Effective Coaching and Consulting

Here's a comment from a person who got individualized coaching which working her way through the Living Your Glorious Life Personal System. As usual, the name of the person, living in Denver, has been withheld.

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"While I was carrying out the action plan we created based on the LYGL system, I decided to go back to the beginning of the books and CD set to make sure I hadn't missed anything. It was a revelation. I had learned so much the first time through, that I saw much more this time and was able to develop a more effective plan.

Your coaching kept me on track. Now, I see why I used to be so hurt by bullies at work, but I don't anymore. Now, I can plan much more effective strategies. I've given up trying to be accepted by jerks I don't even like or respect. I've also given up trying to be liked by everybody. Now I seek out only good, quality people as friends and allies. They have really helped me become successful.

Even though I had been using the program to focus on bullies at work, the biggest revelation was that I'd been letting my husband bullying me for the whole 16 years we've been married. I had actually thought of running away while I was walking down the aisle and many times since. But I never could put my finger on exactly why I was feeling that way. I had minimized what he was doing. He could always make me feel that things were my fault. Also, he could talk me into doing what he wanted.

If I had read the bullies program 17 years ago; I wouldn't have wasted so much of my life."

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As you can see, the self-help exercises and coaching that are part of the system were critical for this person. As much as written information is helpful and important, using the exercises for yourself and getting my feedback are critical for opening up new awareness, new "ah-has" and for making plans you can carry out successfully.

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**The rest of the components of the LYGL Personal System, if purchased separately, cost \$124.85, plus shipping:**

1. “Bullies Below the Radar: How to Wise Up, Stand Up and Stay Up,” Softcover, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition – \$19.95, plus shipping
2. How to Stop Bullies in Their Tracks,” Softcover – \$19.95, plus shipping
3. Parenting Bully-Proof Kids,” Softcover – \$9.95, plus shipping
4. How to Stop Bullies in Their Tracks” and Parenting Bully-Proof Kids,” CD set – \$75.00, plus shipping

**Price for purchasing the rest of the system as a unit is \$99.00, plus shipping**

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