

Shift...

or Get off the Pot

26 Simple Truths About Getting A Life

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Linda Edgecombe



INSOMNIAC PRESS

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It's Time!

Advance Praise for *Linda's Message!*

“Your speech was dynamic and energizing and even though you were near the end of a busy three days, you got everyone listening and actively involved in what you were saying. It was fantastic and I can't tell you how much we appreciate your helping us finish our WON Conference on such a high note. After hearing you speak it is obvious why you are in such high demand as a keynote speaker. Thanks so much for helping us make our conference a huge success.”

~ McDonald's Restaurants Women Operators Week

“Linda was an overwhelming success for our organization. Everyone had a wonderful time listening to Linda's words—she made us think and renew ourselves—all the while laughing and enjoying every minute of her presentation! Energy, perspective, and fun—those are the resounding feelings that we received from Linda.”

~ Shell Oil

“I get a LOT of newsletters sent to me....and I appreciate them and almost always reply with ‘very nice! Keep up the good work! But please take me off the list.’ Linda....please KEEP me on your list. This is a very kick ass newsletter!”

~ Joe Calloway, professional speaker and business trainer

“Your enthusiastic and enlightening discussion on ‘life perspectives’ helped to set the tone for the entire conference.”

~ National Paperbox Association

Dedication

This book is dedicated to everyone who wants their life back. You already know what needs to be done and just need a good kick in the pants. So let this book serve as your proverbial kick.

Before you start the book

Turn to page 129 and answer the question there. Then come back to this page and proceed.

Looking forward to your emails.

Linda Mae

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Table of Contents

Introduction: <i>Note to Self: Snap Out of It!</i>	15
Section 1: <i>Disconnect to Re-Engage! It's time YOU got to know YOU again.</i>	
Overview: <i>Back away from the cellphone!</i>	19
Simple Shift 1: <i>Pick a Lane: reduce the number of roles you play</i>	21
Simple Shift 2: <i>Stand on Solid Ground: understand and apply your values</i>	30
Simple Shift 3: <i>Survival of the Funniest: the proper care and feeding of your sense of humour</i>	33
Simple Shift 4: <i>Life's Ultimate Goal: aim to be happy</i>	43
Simple Shift 5: <i>Life's Ultimate Skill: shifting perspectives</i>	46
Simple Shift 6: <i>Live the Shape You're In: get comfortable in your own skin</i>	50
Simple Shift 7: <i>Life's Second Ultimate Goal: the fewest regrets possible</i>	62
Simple Shift 8: <i>Allow Less Latitude on Attitude</i>	69
Simple Shift 9: <i>Nix the Negative in Your Life</i>	78
Simple Shift 10: <i>Stress Resilience: how's that working for you?</i>	82
Simple Shift 11: <i>Wearing Your Heart on Your Sleeve is a Good Way to Put Your Foot in Your Mouth</i>	89
Section 2: <i>Are you on the Deferred Life Plan?</i>	
Overview: <i>"Everybody's working for the Weekend"</i>	97
Simple Shift 12: <i>Tips to Re-Energize and Balance Your Life</i>	102

Simple Shift 13: <i>Life is Just a Physics Equation</i> (energy out = energy back)	103
Simple Shift 14: <i>Find Your Own Funny Faster</i>	117
Simple Shift 15: <i>Take Time to Get Quiet with Yourself and Turn Off the Noise</i>	123
Simple Shift 16: <i>Power of Silence</i>	126
Simple Shift 17: <i>Two Hours Can Shift Your Life!</i>	128
Simple Shift 18: <i>People, People, People: it's only about people</i>	133

Section 3: *When was the last time you did something for the first time?*

Overview: How Old are Your Stories?	138
Simple Shift 19: <i>Check your Judgments at the Door</i>	140
Simple Shift 20: <i>Are You New Story Ready?</i>	141
Simple Shift 21: <i>Mountain Theory of Goal Setting</i>	147
Simple Shift 22: <i>Don't Think, Don't Think, Don't Think!</i>	150
Simple Shift 23: <i>Snapshot of Your Life: where does the time go?</i>	151
Simple Shift 24: <i>Personal Accountability Made Easy</i>	153
Simple Shift 25: <i>What Does There Look Like?</i>	155
Simple Shift 26: <i>Final Commitment</i>	157

Introduction

Note to Self: Snap Out of It!

Some phrases take on a life of their own.

They mean so many things on so many levels; they just can't go back into the box after first being uttered. They work too well. In fact, they work so well we just can't stop using them.

These sayings have been around so long, are so entirely commonplace, so overused and misunderstood even, that we barely heed their call anymore. Sure, you can add as many exclamation points and capital letters and as much boldface type as you want, but the message still doesn't get through.

Some phrases deserve a closer look.

“Snap out of it!”

We hear it all the time.

The careworn mother to her petulant teen, “Snap out of it!”

The frazzled coach to his fumbling receiver, “Snap out of it!”

The knowing teacher to her Monday morning homeroom, “Snap out of it!”

The boss to his employee, the employee to the assistant, the assistant to the coworker, the coworker to the coffee boy, the coffee boy to the customer, the driver to the toll booth operator, the customer to the cashier, the husband to the wife, the wife to the husband, “Snap out of it!”

What is *it* exactly?

What is *it* that we need to snap out of? Or where is *it* we

need to snap away from? How is it that we forget what we already know? Is it possible we come into this world with all the information we need to become our best selves, successful and happy? Is it possible that the *it* we're snapping out of is the problem and where we're snapping back *to* is the solution?

Seriously, what would happen if we could unclutter our minds, calm down, and get back to square one? How much could you accomplish without all the mental junk that follows you around from day to day? The negative self-talk, depressing internal dialogue, the fear and the self-loathing and the insecurity and the endless, ceaseless, needless drama?

Aren't you sick of *it*?

Well, then, "Snap out of it!" I'm serious about this. I wrote this book to remind you that you already have all the answers you need to become who you are supposed to be in this lifetime. They're just tucked away somewhere.

Perhaps it's in these "tucked away" places that *it* exists. For most of the population it is a safe yet unsatisfying place to live one's life. We live here in it and go about our daily lives unaware that just beneath the surface of us lies a person who is screaming to come to life, literally shouting, "Snap out of it!"

If only we could hear it.

If only we would listen.

Now, don't get me wrong here: this may sound all hazy and "out there" but it's not. This is simple stuff and that's what this book is about. It's about remembering what you already know; it's about finding *the simple truths about what it takes to get a life and be happy*.

So what are simple truths? Truths are things and states of being, ones that all of us bring into the world that can't be disputed or argued with. The question I want to answer in this

book is: how can you mine the truths that will bring you closer to yourself? The “why you are here” questions. Now, don’t get all soft on me now, because self-awareness has never been this painless.

This book is a pain-free, self-guided tour back to square one. It’s a journey back to the core of you, the place where you can meet yourself, know yourself, love yourself, and get on with the job of learning *the simple truth about what it takes to get a life and be happy*.

Life can be a mystery, but unlike a mystery writer I’m going to let you take a peek at the end here, at the beginning. That’s right; let’s start at the finish and answer the burning question: Are you really *happy*?

Note to Self:

I wrote this book to remind you that you already have all the answers you need to become who you are supposed to be in this lifetime. They’re just tucked away, waiting to be discovered.

Section 1

Disconnect to Re-Engage!
It's time you got to know you again.

Overview: Back away from the cellphone!

OK people, put down your cellphones, PDAs, pocket PCs...whatever! And *focus*. This may sound amusing but I am dead serious here. I don't mean turn them to vibrate, stun, or whatever setting you normally use to appear courteous. I want you to shut them *off*. Off means *off*. But wait, there's more: I want you to keep it off for one full day. Yes indeed, I formally declare the first ever "National Disconnect to Re-engage Day." So how do you know if you need this challenge? Well, if you have checked for messages in the past ten minutes, you need to detox. If you have ever scrolled emails over the dinner table, you need to detox. If you have checked messages and emails while on vacation, right after making love to your partner, while the kids opened their Christmas gifts, or during your weekly visit to church, you need to detox. If you simply own one, you need to detox.

We all need to feel important. We need that "I'm needed" feeling we get when our little personal excitement device vibrates on our hip. I can feel the list of reasons coming up why *you* are different from the other two billion connection crutch addicts, but to tell you the truth, you are not. Now if you are

currently working in an Emergency department, are an “on call” doc or EMT, then you can keep yours on during your day off. For the rest of you who are thinking, “what if... someone really needs me?” tell them they can call you on your land line and if you are not there, *leave a message*.

Now take the free time you will have on this day and go buy yourself a stamp, put pen to paper, and write someone a handwritten letter. You may need a hand massage afterwards to help with the cramps you will experience, but the person you write to will love receiving your letter later in the week.

Here’s the real reason you are going to take on this challenge: I want you to “just notice what you notice” about yourself for one full day. Notice how you love the freedom from the constant connection; notice that you feel out of sorts and seem to fumble around; notice what people actually look like when they talk with you this day; notice what you can read between the lines in conversations with family, friends, and co-workers. Most importantly, notice yourself. Being engaged in something, whether it’s your work, your relationships, or yourself, means having a current, conscious awareness of more than just the obvious. It means giving a damn about what you are doing and consciously making decisions to give it your all. Here’s to shifting towards Re-engagement.

Simple Shift #1

Pick a Lane

Reduce the Number of Roles You Play

Herbert Hoover once said, “About the time we can make ends meet, somebody moves the ends.” What about you? Does it feel like someone is constantly moving the ends on your success? The more roles we take on, the more life becomes like those heat shimmers just in front of us as we drive down the road on a hot summer day. Every time we think we’re getting close and going to drive right through them, they pop up just a little further down the road.

That promotion you were supposed to get last week gets put off until next month. The dishwasher you had on lay-away—and were supposed to collect tomorrow—won’t be yours until a few weeks’ worth of tomorrows because your car got a flat on the way to pick it up. Those last five pounds you want to lose just became those last ten pounds—thanks to the holidays.

Life has a way of moving the finish line for us. The minute we get over one hill there are three more we didn’t know about until we got to the top and looked down. This corner leads to that corner, and that corner leads to the next bend.

Where did the finish line go?

Well, maybe we could run a little faster—and go a little further—if we didn’t bring so much baggage to the starting line. Think about all the roles you play from day to day: provider, homemaker, father, daughter, brother, sister, entertainer, listener, speaker, referee, and judge. No wonder you

can't see the finish line—there are too many people in your way!

In this section I want you to think about all those roles you play and consider whether they are helping you—or hurting you. Ask yourself, “Am I doing the best I can, considering everything that’s going on for me?”

Notice I didn’t say are you the best, I said, are you *doing* the best. Even with that careful caveat, most of us hold our cards close to our chests, because for some reason we think if anyone finds out we really have no idea what we’re doing, we’ll fail for sure.

The truth of the matter is: *none* of us has it together.

Most of us suffer from what I call “imposter syndrome.” We don’t just “fake it ‘til we make it,” we plain old fake it all the time: 24/7/365. In the privacy of your own home, as you reflect on your day-to-day life, can you say on most days that you did the best you could *considering* everything that’s going on for you right now?

Note to Self:

In this section I want you to think about all those roles you play and consider whether they are helping you—or hurting you.

Are you doing the best you can, considering everything that's going on for you?

The part of this equation to focus on is "... *considering* everything that's going on for you." Think about the complexity of what you've got going on right now. Parent, sister, brother, sandwich maker, story teller and homework taskmaster, taxi driver, first aid attendant, cook, grocery shopper, friend, lover, boss, frontline worker, coach, Brownie or Cub Scout leader, church member, and so on.

Most of us pile so much "stuff" on our plates that it has become hard to breathe, let alone take a bite! It would be easy to blame the world at large for our overabundance of duties, but the truth is we have only ourselves to blame. We think that by taking on so much, we're actually contributing to the betterment of whatever we are saying "yes" to. But actually, I believe we pile so much on our plates that the "pile" itself becomes an out.

We set ourselves up for failure because we're taking on many more tasks and then backing out, using the excuse that we are overwhelmed and overworked. And others will wonder how we could possibly do all the stuff we've taken on? But in the meantime, even as we struggle with our sanity, let alone our success, we look "great" to the outside world and come off as such a giving person who's there for everyone.

Everyone, that is, but ourselves.

Let me suggest that it's time to make a few priorities in your life. Ask yourself this question, "What am I doing that truly brings me joy and energy?" That is the "stuff" you should be concentrating on. If you actually enjoy carting the kids around to soccer practice and dance class and spelling

bees, if that gives you some together time and you love the teamwork and camaraderie, more power to you. Load it on!

But if you cringe at planning the office party every year, why would you ever commit to it in the first place? Do you think you'll get fired if you say no? Do you think you're the only one who can do it? Do you think you're the one who does it *best*? Maybe there's someone waiting in the wings just dying to take over for you. Why not give him or her a chance?

Embrace those duties that truly bring you joy and add to your life. Strongly consider letting go of the others. Now, I know if parenting is draining you right now, this is one you can't necessarily let go of, but could you do it slightly differently?

For instance, let's say you're like nearly every other parent out there and you *don't* enjoy ferrying your kids around to fifteen extracurricular activities per week. How can you reduce that number by five activities, or maybe even by half? Can you share transport duties with other parents? Can your child concentrate on a couple of activities she really loves? Try using the "c" word once in awhile and *compromise*—you, your children, your spouse, your co-workers, your neighbours will all be better off when you do "less stuff, more better!"

Note to Self:

It would be easy to blame the world at large for our over-abundance of duties, but the truth is we have only ourselves to blame.



Step 1: Ranking the Roles You Play

They say life is a buffet: a free-for-all that we are encouraged to sample to our heart's content. But what usually happens at a buffet? We stand there like a deer in the headlights, overwhelmed by all the possibilities. Then we shift from "deer in the headlights" to "kid in a candy store," grabbing everything in sight, just to make sure we get it all in. Later, we're in what I call the "antacid phase," looking high and low for the bottle of Tums!

When we say "yes" to everyone else to the point where we have to say "no" to ourselves, there is no antacid strong enough to drown out all the resulting stress and resentment we feel.

To help you take a few of those "junk food" items off your plate of current responsibilities, I'm including this quick exercise to help you prioritize the roles you play—and how they affect you. The following are several roles we take on in our lives, for better or worse. Go through each one and rate whether the role is an energizing or draining one in your life right now. Yes, some will be both energizing and draining, and a few roles you can't get out of, but being aware of the roles and how they affect your energy is a start on the road to a healthier you!

Role	Energizes me	Drains me
Parent	_____	_____
Sibling	_____	_____
Daughter/ Son	_____	_____
Carer	_____	_____

Role	Energizes me	Drains me
Friend	_____	_____
Volunteer	_____	_____
Service club member	_____	_____
Church member	_____	_____
Athlete	_____	_____
Boss	_____	_____
Artist	_____	_____
Crafts- person	_____	_____
Driver	_____	_____
Neighbourhood cook	_____	_____
Business partner	_____	_____
Part-time worker	_____	_____
Student	_____	_____
Babysitter	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____

Note to Self:

Choose three roles on your list that no longer give you joy and plan a guilt-free exit strategy. Trust me, you'll love yourself for it. I know you are not going to stop being a parent or family member—just notice if these roles are energizing or draining you right now.