

## COACHING

### **Are You Living YOUR Life, or Everyone Else's?**

by Carol Hartman, M.B.A., M.A. and Susan Rothman, M.S.W.

The terrorist activity last fall rudely awakened many people to their own fragile mortality. Many have taken this wake up call as an opportunity to seriously examine their lives. Many have been startled to realize that they weren't living *their* lives but everyone else's. Somewhere, somehow they had become caught up in schedules, goals, values, and priorities that really weren't their own. They realized that they felt disconnected from their true selves. Even Oprah Winfrey admitted that she had lost sight of her priorities announcing on a pre-Thanksgiving Oprah Show that she was declining all outside requests - everything beyond her TV show and Magazine – for the next year. The reason why? So that she can refocus on what truly matters to her and what actually brings her happiness.

The provocative question is this: how did we get so off track? Most likely it's that we don't take the time to truly know ourselves or to follow our own inner wisdom. In her latest book, *Inner Peace for Busy People*, Joan Borysenko, Ph.D., a leading experts on stress and the mind/body connection, writes:

*"We really have to ask ourselves why we've allowed 'busyness' to become a badge of honor and a jaw-clenching form of competition in our society. Slaves to phones, beepers, e-mails, faxes, piles of snail mail, congested traffic, and pushy telemarketers who call during dinner, we are also trying to balance the demands of family and career. As a result, we often feel squeezed out of our own lives and what matters most to us or is truly important to us. The paradox of this century is that we Americans are wealthier than ever before, yet we're more stressed, depressed, anxious, and overwhelmed than at any time our history. We have very little peace of mind."*

In her book, *I Will Not Die An Unlived Life*, Dawna Markova, Ph.D., urges us to *slow down* and take time to discover who we truly are and what stirs our passion. Without this step, how can we possibly know how to live life fully and "on purpose?"

Carving out the time to reconnect with ourselves is often not easy for those of us with busy, complicated lives. This often means disengaging from activities that don't serve us, and saying "no, thank you" to new requests. Sometimes the process is a bit uncomfortable. Oftentimes others don't understand, especially if how we are changing impacts them. Although a challenge at first, the impact on others in the long run will likely be positive, as our investment in ourselves and our own fulfillment allows us to shine our light more brightly into the lives of others. Obtaining the support of a life coach can be quite helpful in clarifying values, anchoring the commitment, and sustaining motivation congruent with true priorities. Surrounding ourselves with like-minded friends can be a Godsend.



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## Rediscovering the Real YOU

Want to reconnect with your authentic self? Here are some steps to help you begin your rediscovery process:

1. Block off time to spend alone.
2. Recall your dreams and aspirations. Which have you honored, which ones have you put aside?
3. Explore your own deeply held values. Determine how well you are honoring each of these values?
4. Make a commitment to yourself for the year 2002 to align your life with *your* deeply held values and dreams.
5. What can you let go of to create space in your life for what is most important.

You have only one life to live. Make it count! Make it your own!

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