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## Confront your fears and listen to your heart to find solutions

By Susan Brooks

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What would you do today if you were brave? These sure are challenging days we are living in. Fear follows us wherever we go. It paralyzes us. It kills our dreams. Others sense it. So, as with any demon we've given our power to, confronting fear head-on is the only way to make it go away.

Take a brief intermission from your never-ending dialogue with fear, and change the channel to a higher frequency. Ask yourself, and being willing to listen to the answer: What you would do today if you were brave? I believe in my heart that if you are truly honest with yourself in this exercise, you will discover ideas and solutions to the challenges you are facing today.

Because we all are standing on sand right now, we get to make new decisions, new choices. Layoffs, financial insecurity and uncertainties are forcing us all to wake up, revisit our history, and to live each day 'at attention.' A realtor friend, out of work for months now, confesses that back in her high school days, she loved writing humorous stories, even fantasized about being a stand-up comic. I know what she would do today if she were brave.



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Then there is Gateway Community College, which hosts a work force transition program to help baby boomers find purpose and priority in the second half of their lives.

After all, it was the boomers who, back in the day, questioned authority and the institutional status quo of marriage, religion, and politics, as well as the role of women and men in relationships and in the workplace. So, it makes perfect sense that this same generation will redefine aging and the whole concept of retirement. The hard part is confronting the fear that keeps us stuck, instead of exploring what we would do if we were really brave. While these boomers focused on “getting a job,” their real dreams were being minimized in their own minds.

A man in his 60's hung his head. Although he was an information technology professional with a large company that is no more, he confessed to going on three interviews with no job offer in sight. Meanwhile, because of his technology skills, he has been creating a Web site that connects social philanthropy with non-profit agencies. Bravery was what he really needed, not a job.

Make no mistake: Being able to pay for food, shelter, gas, and our children's education are real 'matters of consequence.' But maybe, just maybe, identifying



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those ideas that get your juices flowing, those dreams that make you want to reach higher, might just be the ones you need to pursue right now. Federico Fellini, movie maker extraordinary, said: "The only true realist is the visionary." So, what would it take to give yourself permission to explore the possibilities out there in this new day?

Change is happening now. It takes courage...and vision...and commitment to moving forward. Waiting for things to get back to normal just isn't going to work. How much do you believe in yourself? How tough are you? How much do you want out of your one and only life? This is your chance to dream again...to risk again... to begin again.

Courage comes from the French word, "cœur" which means "heart." We're not talking about the brain here, but the heart, the gut, that part of us that is brave and true.

Courage is an emotional commitment based on the core values that are important in our life, the principles we define as right and wrong. Committed action based on these principles is where being brave shines through.



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So, let's get some committed action going. Make your list of ten things you would do today if you were brave...if you listened to your heart, your gut. Then, slowly, read over each one on your list again... and again. Is there anything, anything at all, that you can do right here, right now, to take action on only one thing on your list, just *one* thing.

Choose it, and do it! Make that phone call, research that concept, make that appointment. Move it forward, one step at a time. DO IT ... NOW, knowing that as each one of us takes that first step and moves forward, we really will create the power to turn this moment into a legendary time.

**Susan Brooks, founder of Tempe-based Cookies from Home and Service Enthusiasm speaker, trainer and author, provides keynotes, training and consulting for companies and business professionals. Her customized programs focus on customer service, leadership development, and team building. She can be reached at [susan@serveyouright.net](mailto:susan@serveyouright.net)**

6105 East Osborn Road ~ Scottsdale, Arizona 85251  
480-994-1918 phone ~ 480-994-5966 fax  
e-mail: [Susan@serveyouright.net](mailto:Susan@serveyouright.net)  
[www.ServesYouRight.net](http://www.ServesYouRight.net)

