

Living the Dream

One coach's stories and tips on how to live a fulfilling, creative life.

Written by author and personal coach Sophronia Scott

Volume 1, Number 7  
June 2003

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This is a free newsletter for people who are committed to living and working every moment with joy and creativity. If you enjoy Living the Dream, then share the good energy! Please pass it on to your family and friends. Inspire others as you're inspired and we will all grow together.

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1. Welcome
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Hello all! It's been a cold and rainy spring here on the East coast, but I've been encouraged by all the flowers which, despite the inclement weather, are blooming beautifully just as they are meant to do. If they can grow and be productive in less than ideal circumstances, then we can all follow their excellent example and do the same.

I want to thank everyone who attended my first speaking engagement last month for making it a monster success. Nearly 100 women (and one guy!) showed up for my address to members of New York Women in Communications on the topic, "How to Get Back in Flow: Succeed More by Struggling Less". I had a great time and I loved meeting so many talented women. I've been asked by those who missed out if they could get the

material as well, so I am making it the topic of this newsletter.

By the way, I had an interesting encounter with one of the attendees after the event. A young woman came up to me and made reference to my having graduated from Harvard and going on to work for two of the most popular magazines in the country. Then she asked, "How can you talk about struggle when everything has come so easily for you?" I smiled. If we had spent the night talking about my struggles, we would never have gotten around to talking about not struggling!

This past weekend I attended my 15th college reunion and found myself thinking again about what the young woman had asked. My classmates have done amazing things. They've started businesses, they've been elected to office, starred in movies and TV shows, covered the biggest stories of our time in print and on television, written books, screenplays and Broadway shows. I could see how someone would say, "Well, of course they did, they went to Harvard!"

That's only a small part of the picture. This weekend as I listened to the stories of my classmates, I learned of setbacks that would have caused anyone to quit in frustration. My classmates lost businesses (and millions of dollars) when the internet bubble burst, they saw their families suffer the pangs of divorce or, due to infertility, had problems bringing children into the world. We spent a morning mourning the loss of 14 of our classmates whose lives ended all too soon. But from the depths of disappointment and grief, my classmates persisted--creating new businesses, re-marrying and creating new families, having children through adoption or, after years of trying, finally conceiving.

I have always felt that, with the right support, anyone can do what they want. Last weekend I realized that my classmates are the truest expression of that belief. More than once, someone said to me this weekend that I looked happy--and indeed one of my classmates said, "I have always known Sophronia to be happy." Well, that may be true, but it could seem that way to him because, as I recently told a friend, I am always happy in the company of my classmates. Now I

understand why: in their collective presence I find inspiration, hope, support, love, ideas, community, joy and acceptance. I am blessed to be among them. And I will always pass on to you what I learn from them because these lessons are for everyone--they're not exclusive to those who went to Harvard.

Best wishes,

Sophronia

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## 2. Quote of Note

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"Luck is the residue of design." --Branch Rickey

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## 3. Feature Article: Designing Your Success

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Ever have those times when it seems working hard doesn't work? You feel like you're paddling against the current and getting nowhere. Frustration usually follows and you push harder and still feel stuck. When you're caught up in such a cycle and meeting with such resistance, you are out of flow. Here's how to break that cycle.

It's been my experience that the easiest way to get back in flow is to design supportive environments for yourself. Environments are everything that surrounds you: people, possessions, your thoughts, the room you're in now. Whenever you place yourself in an environment, you get something out of it, positive or negative. Usually we don't pay attention to how our surroundings affect us.

We also fall into thinking that we don't have a choice about our environments. But if you do pay attention, you can set up an environment to generate positive things for you. You can craft environments to craft you and the results will be automatic. You will move from relying on pushing, will power and trying too

hard to feeling naturally guided, supported and pulled toward what you want.

Here's an example. I used to be about 25 lbs. heavier than I am now. When I made the decision to lose weight, I didn't go on a diet. Instead--and I didn't know then that this was what I was doing--I changed my environment.

I told my husband what I wanted to do and he fully supported me. We changed a few items on our grocery list--no more hot dogs and tater tots! I took up a new sport--cycling. I started walking to work, about two miles, everyday with a friend. Know what I did then? I forgot all about losing weight! I didn't have to think about it because I had designed my environment so it would happen automatically--and it did. Even better, these changes have helped me to maintain the weight loss for over five years.

With some awareness and creativity, you too can design environments to bring less struggle to your life. There are seven kinds you can work on. They are:

SELF: I talk a lot about taking good care of yourself but there's good reason for it: you can become your own biggest obstacle if you have to fight through feelings of unwellness on a regular basis. What do we say about gifted athletes such as Michelle Kwan, Tiger Woods or Kobe Bryant? They make it look easy, right? That effortlessness only comes from putting in the time it takes to hone their craft--and caring for their physical well-being. Actually, effortlessness is the wrong word because in fact there is effort put forth--but they don't struggle!

Fortunately, we don't have to spend the same time that they do to maintain our bodies. A daily walk will do--cutting some caffeine and sugar, adding a few servings of fruits and vegetables to the diet. Stretch in the mornings. Give yourself this little bit of attention and see how much more willing and able you'll feel to take on the world.

PHYSICAL: I recently heard of a guy who walks around his home and picks up items and asks, "Do I love you?" If the answer is no, he tosses the book, knick-knack,

trophy or whatever the thing is in the garbage. Look around you. Does every aspect of your home and office support and inspire you? Do the colors on the walls energize or drain you? Are your closets well-organized or so stuffed that you feel depressed every time you open the door? Do you really love those knick-knacks on your shelves or do you resent having to dust them each week? You deserve to live and work in spaces that are beautiful and allow you to think clearly. If you're not there, make the changes necessary to make those spaces what you need them to be.

MEMETIC: Are you aware of how ideas or information get into your head? Most people aren't and yet we soak up both constantly--and it affects us. Think about it--how do you feel after watching the local news? Or seeing a slasher film? Or playing a violent video game? Maybe none of it bothers you and that's okay. Or do these things make you feel tired, anxious, disturbed or restless?

Once you figure out what feels bad and what feels good, take control and fill yourself with ideas (also known as memes) and information that boost you. Is it from reading certain books or magazines? Listening to great music? Shutting off the television? You don't have to close yourself off from what's going on in the world, but you can limit your exposure to hype, especially if it makes you feel fearful for the future.

RELATIONSHIPS: This is where you get to look at everyone in your life and ask, "Do I love you?" We often allow people into our lives without thinking about why they are there. Who gives you energy? Who takes it away? Limit your exposure to the energy vampires. For those who support you, strengthen those relationships by:

- Enjoying and appreciating your differences.
- Fully communicating your needs, so others can help fulfill them.
- Needing nothing from the other person--be complete within yourself!
- Granting forgiveness in advance--be compassionate.
- Communicating problems instantly, else you risk future resentment.

--Knowing why you are in the relationship--remember proximity doesn't mean a person has to be in your life.

--Having and honoring agreements.

--Allowing others to give to you.

--Showing appreciation and gratitude.

NATURE: This one is pretty straightforward--putting yourself in the way of encountering and appreciating the outside world. When you appreciate the world around you, you get a feeling of lightness and gratitude. I get this from walking in Central Park. It puts me in tune with the changing seasons and the sense of the earth as a living, breathing thing. Go watch the sun set. Stay up for the next lunar eclipse. Find some way of feeling connected to nature and you'll find it that much easier to accept the changes of your life.

NETWORK: We all network, but how well does it work for you? Here's a new way to think about how you connect with people. When you meet someone, what's usually going through your head? "How can this person give me something?" Right? But it's a good chance that the person won't have what you need right then and there. You exchange cards and then, most likely, the person forgets about you.

Next time, do this: instead think "What kind of relationship can I develop with this person? What does this person need and how can I provide it?" For instance, if the person is an editor, he or she might be in need of story ideas. If the person is a publicist, he might be interested in the contacts you have. If you don't have what they need, e-mail them after your meeting and let them know that you were happy to make the acquaintance--and that you'll be thinking about how to help them get what they're looking for. And stay in touch! A short e-mail message now and then keeps your name fresh in their minds. When the time comes that they do come across that thing you need, you'll be the first person they think of. And when you have to call, it will be a lot easier to pick up the phone if you're not making a cold call.

INTANGIBLE: This environment is about the aspects that make up your personality--values, energy, feelings. We

don't pay enough attention to them because they're things we can't quite put a finger on. But all three are important because when all are considered and honored they help develop your confidence and self-esteem. I've mentioned values before. They are the behaviors that you are naturally drawn to. To support your values, make sure you're working on projects that express your values. Be around people who share those same values.

To boost your energy, keep energy-giving food in your home. Get enough sleep, exercise, and avoid the energy vampires!

For your feelings, this is about respecting your intuition, about making sure you can fully express what's inside of you. Pay attention to your gut and act on what it tells you. You can't go wrong when you listen to what the deepest part of you is saying.

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#### 4. Getting Started

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You can work on all seven environments at once or choose one or two. But here's a suggestion to get the ball rolling--think about this: what one thing could you start or stop doing to create a positive chain of events in your life? Is it cleaning out that closet or going outside for lunch daily? Is it calling a friend or writing in a journal? Now, what kind of environment do you need to create to make that one thing easier to do? Make regular lunch dates for yourself? Put all your pals on speed dial? Keep journals by your bed, at work and in your car?

Have fun with this. Get others involved in creating your environments and connect with their environments as well. Stop feeling as though everything is on you. Design your environments properly and you will have the support to float you, to put you completely in flow.

Enjoy!

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5. Coaching Offer  
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If you need help or more ideas on what kind of changes you can make, contact me for a FREE 30-minute sample session. I don't believe anyone should have to struggle and I want for you to truly know that you are not alone in your endeavors. E-mail me at [CoachSoph@CreativeCoachingPlans.com](mailto:CoachSoph@CreativeCoachingPlans.com) to set up an appointment. Until then, be well and be creative!

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