



Welcome!

Welcome to Inspire Empire and congratulations for being here! You are well on your way to getting out of your rut and on a path to a life with new and exciting personal accomplishments in it.

Our quarterly newsletter is jam packed with interesting articles, exercises, words of wisdom and advice to help you fit in the focus, action and progress you need to achieve your life goals.

Edgar Magnin once said “You are the one who can stretch your own horizon” and I definitely am excited that you have made that decision with your own life.

We are always looking for additional knowledge on what you find effective in getting your inspirational momentum going again. So please let us know what inspires you. We would love to hear your story.

Enjoy!

Truly,

Marla Majewski
Founder, Inspire Empire

Who the hell am I and what have I done with myself?

A 37-year-old woman sits cradling her knees on the bathroom floor. Overwhelmed with emotion, she is crying softly, trying to get herself together before one of her kids notices her tears. She thought today would be like yesterday and if she could she would have predicted it would be like tomorrow. Life was happening, but it wasn't happening. Mundane day-to-day tasks and the routine of the routine would have been in the plans for this week and last, next week and last month. What was it about today, she thought, that sparked such a fury of emotion? What “clicked on” inside her that had previously lain dormant for years (has it been years already?) without awakening her senses?

On the surface, her life seems normal. There is no news reporter interviewing her hardship, for her life is not newsworthy. She has a roof over her head and clothes on her body. She had time today to have a shower and drink a cup of coffee. She even made it to work on time. She becomes suddenly aware of her revelation. It is the first time she looks at her reflection in the mirror and realizes she does not

know the person staring back at her. “Who the hell am I...” she asks, “...and what have I done with myself?”

She immediately feels guilty for not feeling grateful for her abundance – she has her health, her children, a spouse, a home and a career. However, it doesn't explain the feeling of emptiness - of something missing. With sudden clarity, she feels unhappy - not with her life, but rather herself in her life. Where is the girl she used to know? Where is that fireball - the one with personal goals and dreams on the forefront of her life? She used to move forward with clarity and conviction. She used to have focus on where she was going and how she could get there. Why she was not connected to the most dynamic person in her life, she no longer knew. She could barely remember being her.

She sits on the cold tile reflecting on her life... she let her personal ambitions and priorities go. In fact, she realizes that she hasn't thought about herself in a really long time. Did she really know going in that she would inadvertently sell her soul in exchange for her life today?

She stands and again looks in the mirror. Her reflection confirms it. She has become the sacrificial lamb.

What Sparked It All

When I was a young girl my mother asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. The first time she asked me I remember thinking of so many possibilities. My young mind had not yet been jaded by life's limitations and fears. The world was beckoning – it was in my hands. I truly believed I only needed to decide and it would be so. Full of inspiration, I was the best example of the awe and wonder of a young girl's mind. I was an unstoppable, invincible, anything-was-possible little girl.

Fast forward thirty years - a husband and a child later - faced with the same question, I lurched to an abrupt stop. My brain was suddenly diluted, murky - filled not with thoughts of all the possibilities that lay before me but with feelings of fear, limitation, questions of worthiness. My overwhelming sense of responsibilities plagued me with paralysis. I instantly felt guilty of the late nights, time away, sacrifices I would have to make – even though my original question had not yet been answered. My mind was consumed by noise and I stopped to wonder, when did I lose my way? At what point in my life did I change from the invincible, do-anything little girl to the indecisive, afraid-of-failure woman? When did I start to feel unsure and insignificant?

As I began to observe my own life, I started to realize that I had somehow diminished my view of what I was capable of. I no longer felt like I was ready to take on the world. My “most likely to succeed” image in school was replaced by a less ambitious, more unsure person.

I did not recognize myself in the mirror. Where was that girl? Where did she go? How did I lose her? It was such a gradual process that I did not notice I was losing my identity. All of the qualities that I was so proud of and had worked so hard to attain had somehow disappeared.

I was in the trenches. Between raising a family, working full time as a Strategic Initiatives Manager for a national telecom company, trying to stay active and keep a social life, I had pushed my goals so far down my list of priorities that I was living “the daily routine” and nothing more. My life certainly was not as exciting as I thought it would be, being at the prime age for doing great things. I was in an inspirational rut. I had lost my will to do more. Be more. I wasn't making a difference in the world.



So I had another baby and quit the corporate scene. Leaving my job seemed to be the right thing to do at the time but I wasn't happy. I was depressed, popping Halloween chocolate bars like valium every time my daughter wasn't looking. It was truly a scene from Bridget Jones' Diary, plus kids and five loads of laundry.

Like so many women, I struggled with being “just a mom.” By putting a bullet in my professional career, I felt like a part of my identity died along with it. I did not feel wholly identified as a “happy homemaker.”

Something was missing in my life. I envied those women who enjoyed every second, every moment being at home with their kids, with little desire to do or be anything else. However, for me, I needed to be more than a mother. My identity depended on it.

It was then that I panicked. Was I destined to lead a life of mediocrity? Was it “in the cards” to have an average life, with average children and an average marriage? I thought about that for a minute and tried to envision the scene of such a life. I didn't want to wake up after sending my youngest child to college and think “who the hell am I and what have I done with myself? Where is the Marla that everyone used to know – the one full of spunk, piss and vinegar, ambition and drive? What have I done with the past 20 years of my life?”

I gasped at the realization that I was already saying that! I didn't need 20 years to feel like I had already lost my motivation to pursue my life goals. I suddenly recognized that I needed a constant level of inspiration to keep my goals and dreams alive. So much of my life was now based on the needs of others – children, husband, ailing parents – that there was always a constant challenge to keep personal goals at the forefront.

So without anything better to do - just after my second child was born, we had just moved to Connecticut from Canada, my husband was starting a new job and we were living in temporary housing - I started a research project to understand inspirational levels in women.

Through my research, I discovered that women want and need to be more than they are. We are all just

drowning in nurture overload. We are so busy taking care of other people in our lives that we do not see the importance and the priority of taking care of ourselves. Misguided into believing that everyone else should come first we miss the key ingredient of how to keep our lives functioning smoothly.

Based on an Inspire Empire survey, only 19% of women put themselves first. In fact, almost a third of respondents put themselves fifth, sixth, seventh, even eighth on their list of priorities. However, we fail to recognize that if we are not happy, if we are struggling, everything else falls apart. We lose ourselves. We do not follow our passions. We wake up in a shell of a body we do not like, in a mindset we do not recognize and in a circle of friends who do not support our soul. Unfortunately, many women are in a rut and surrounded by other women in the same situation. You can bet Betty Friedan would surely classify this as an epidemic in North America.

Can you imagine the impact if women started to consciously focus on finding the girl they used to know? The impact on her family, community, even the world would be substantial. Women are here to do great things. Over and above the important role of mother, wife, employee, community member, volunteer, friend and daughter - every woman has the ingredients inside her today to create the future she once dreamt of.

We all deserve to move to a place where we feel capable, productive and able to have something of our own - outside of our husbands, children, co-workers, boss, parents and other family members - that comes to fruition. I believe every

woman needs something that she cannot wait to work on, create, innovate or move forward. At the end of the day, it will be her remedy for insanity, her vitamin for mental health and her potion for reaching her full potential.

In a nutshell, Inspire Empire was developed to help women like you find your lost inspiration and utilize your new motivation to truly reach the goals and dreams you set out for yourself.

Where to Start

Start the journey of self discovery to find the girl you used to know. Use this website to learn how to regain your inspiration amidst the chaos of raising children, having financial obligations, a career, etc.

Identifying where you lost your little girl is the first step (see the flashback exercise in this newsletter). Understanding where to find her is the next. You will begin to gain clarity on the personal goals and dreams you once had or you have never had time to consider. In future newsletters, you will learn how to build your own Inspire Empire, reconnect with your old self and utilize practical tools to get out of your rut.

Get motivated again and see firsthand the benefits of having inspiration in your life. Some of you may ask “why bother changing something that ‘ain’t broke’?” Naomi Judd has a great saying that change really means C-H-A-N-G-E, Choose-Having-A-New-Growth-Experience. Why settle? Plan to do great things so you have no regrets when you look back on your life.

Wanted: Insight and Opinion

Our inspire research think tank provides us with a wealth of information regarding where women are today in terms of juggling a multi faceted lifestyle. We are always looking for new members to join our research panel. If you are interested, sign up as one of our newest research respondents. We look forward to your feedback.

Start or Join an Inspire Circle

All women require meaningful, positive connections to excel and a group dedicated to helping you keep your own goals and dreams alive is as relevant for you as air and water.

Please feel free to join or start an Inspire Circle group of your own. If you would like to be placed in an inspire circle please contact us at inspired@InspireEmpire.com and we will happily arrange a local or virtual group on your behalf.

Take the Oath

My only ask of you, as you participate on InspireEmpire.com, is that you be willing to take one piece of information you learn from this site and share it - so others can “begin” like you will. If you see a woman who needs advice, a cheerleader, a believer of her skills, take a personal oath to take the time. Being a woman is a powerful sisterhood and with its powers comes responsibilities to help other

women. Share your knowledge and others will thrive alongside you.

What You Need

I strongly recommend that you start a journal - it could be a binder filled with blank pages, a diary or even a notepad or a handful of scrap paper. It will be useful to keep the exercises on this website together so you can refer back to it, see the progress that you make and use it as a source of inspiration in the future.

Then, if you redo any of the exercises in the future, you can take note of your growth and development by comparing new entries with previous answers. I have a small binder of exercises that I completed when I was thirteen years old from the book *Creative Visualization* by Shakti Gawain. Reading my responses to the exercises now I am so incredibly amazed at the growth and development I have experienced over the course of my life.

Flashback Exercise: The Girl You Are

I believe every child is born with inspiration as an inherent quality and, if nurtured, bears the fruit of confidence, ambition, motivation and perseverance. In the perfect environment, a child would have the ability to maintain inspirational momentum throughout their lifetime. Inspiration would never leave them.

Unfortunately, life is not flawless. We do not live in a bubble. The human factor of our parents or those around us creates imperfections in our life. Less than perfect decisions or actions we took during our early years leave regrets, negative situations or fissures in our foundation.

For many of us, at some point in our life something happens where we change our perception of what we are capable of. Subtle favoritism of siblings, low expectations, relentless teasing or regular criticism – all of these experiences slowly chip away at our innocence and endearing qualities. Other times it is something horrific and unimaginable – abuse, neglect, abandonment - and has the ability to rip away our inspiration in an instant.

Think back to the early years of your life. On a piece of paper write down all of the vivid memories you have of your childhood. Do you feel like you generally had a happy, stable childhood? Were your early years troubled or difficult? Do any significant events stand out for you that may have caused some disruption to your childhood (i.e. think of key events such as a divorce, family move, etc. or smaller experiences such as someone making fun of you for sucking your thumb, or being deliberately left out with friends or siblings, etc.)?

Afterwards, write a “+” or a “-” beside each memory, whether the experience was an overall positive or negative one. Did any of these memories change your perception on anything? For example, did it strengthen your relationship, make you feel secure, make you afraid of something, make you experience disappointment, etc.). If so, write

down key messages, perceptions, beliefs that stem from any of the above memories.

With a different colored pen, write down the people involved in that memory. Now briefly describe your relationship present day with each person. Is this person still a part of your life? Is it a strong or strained relationship today? Do they know your personal goals and dreams? Are they supportive or critical of them?

Inspired Organization

Make a vow this month to avoid buying something “because it is on sale”. Before you purchase anything spontaneously, ask yourself the following questions:

Was I looking for this item before I saw it on the sales rack or shelf?

Do I have one of these already?

Do I need another one?

Will I use this immediately or within the next 60 or 90 days?

Do I have someone specifically in mind for this item?

Will I give it to them within the next 60 or 90 days?

Unless it is a true necessity or on your list of things to get, avoid spending money on “clutter” items – thoughtless purchases that take up space and wastes mental energy trying to figure out what to do with it, where to store it and eventually how to get rid of it.

Mom's Inspirational Tip of the Month

What example are you setting for your children? Do your actions create a positive or negative influence in your young child's life and would you be satisfied with your children's choices if they were behaving or heading down the same path you are?

You are the single, most powerful influence in your child's life. We can get caught up in the day to day and not realize that our children are learning from us how to behave in similar situations now and in their adult life. What messages do you want to send to your children? Are you an example of what to be or what not to be?

Contact Us

We are always interested in hearing from you. If you would like to share your comments, provide your story how you are putting personal priority back into your life, please email Inspired@InspireEmpire.com.

Next Time...

Along with a notebook or journal, for the next newsletter you will need a box – it could be a shoe box, hat box, cereal box, small trunk – anything you choose. We will use your box to build your very own Inspire Empire and help you create the life – with your personal goals and dreams included – you have always wanted, but never had time to fit it in.

See you next time!

With love,

Marla Majewski
Founder, Inspire Empire

