



# *Live the Life of Your Dreams* *33 Tips for Inspired Living*

## **Note to Reader**

Dear Friends,

You know that lingering feeling that beckons you to take care of yourself? At moments, it is stronger than others. Many times, the inspiration is missing, the self-empowerment is lacking, and the general prioritization of self-care has been trumped by a myriad of other daily responsibilities.

The intention of this book is to place power in your hands and to act as an instrument of inspiration and hope. *Live the Life of Your Dreams: 33 Tips to Inspire Your Life* is a book that can be carried anywhere; placed in your purse or on your nightstand, ready to provide a nudge of inspiration whenever you need it. Indeed, a guide to help you channel positivity and integrate healthy living tips at a moment's notice.

To best interact with this book and benefit from the message, you may want to read a page or a section and place the book down. Your reactions to a passage will guide the speed with which you absorb the content. The book can and should be used as a reference guide for inspiration.

©Live the Life of Your Dreams: 33 Tips for Inspired Living by Laura Ponticello

I have surveyed women from all over the country to uncover what inspires them in their daily lives, knowing that knowledge has the power to blossom, transform and grow. I found that women feel most inspired when they are empowered. As a result, I started to teach women how to harness their personal power and create the destiny they have dreamed.

With my personal mantra: *fear can't hold you back in life*, I share success secrets in *Live the Life of Your Dreams: 33 Tips to Inspire Your Life*. This book is a collection of healing graces, healthy practices, and inspirational words to help each of us achieve our amazing potential.

## Chapter 1: Think Big, Dream Big

*We have more in common than our differences.*

“And the day came where the risk it took to remain tight in the bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.” - Anais Nin

“I will grow. I will become something new and grand, but no grander than I now am. Just as the sky will be different in a few hours, its present perfection and completeness is not deficient, so am I presently perfect and not deficient because I will be different tomorrow.” - Wayne Dyer

My given last name, Ponticello means “Little Bridge” in Italian. I was born into a loving family. We had rosary beads and religious statues on dresser tables. We held mindful prayer sessions and engaged in various Catholic rites of passage - first communion, confession, confirmation, and marriage. I attended a Jesuit college where priests taught me to serve others and that what we give away will be returned to us.

As a career woman and high achiever, I was determined to make a difference in the world. I had accomplished many things in life: I was married, living in a house with a white picket fence and reached a level of success. I earned an annual salary of \$100,000, set up a 401k plan and saved

money. I chose to prioritize work and the busyness of life, rather than consistent self-care and contemplative practices.

I was a TYPE A individual who thrived from work. My days off were filled with grocery shopping, cooking, chores and social commitments. The thought of self-care seemed like a great concept, however not at the top on my list. When my first marriage ended, I knew instinctively that the road to the other side was not going to be easy. I was in my twenties when I got married and guilt kept me in the marriage. As I peeled back the layers of my own heart, I had to get real with myself. My journey began to teach me to stand on my own.

My ten household items arrived from my previous house -carelessly thrown into a cardboard box - and I felt the sting and an empty space of personal loss. The desire to move forward to achieve a healthy lifestyle was wrestling inside of me and I began to journal everything my heart had concealed for so long. I wrote down one thing that gave me happiness and which made me grateful for each day. I surrounded myself with living things such as indoor blooming plants and a dog, because they were symbols of creation.

The profound day of transformation arrived for me and was a life changing moment. Gray clouds covered the sky and the lake was a muddy blue green color with a certain magical mist hanging in the air. Rain started to pelt down. I was in my vegetable garden when a feeling of conviction came over me.

### **Planting New Blossoms**

I kept all my legal divorce documents in a box. The flower on the front reminded me of my ability to blossom again and overcome this difficult time. I placed the box with my legal documents next to my garden, and buried the documents in mother earth. Then, I sprinkled the packet of Zinnia seeds over the dirt and the documents. In that moment, I asked God to help me create a beautiful garden from where happiness could manifest in my life.

Days later, I stood inside a tall field of zinnias and after that experience, everything changed. I was empowered.

## **Inspired Idea for Daily Life**

### **Tip #1 Bloom where you are planted.**

Sprinkle some form of zinnia seeds in your life. Plant new beginnings for yourself and grow and blossom. As a young girl, grandmother Nana Rose said to me, "without the rain the flowers can't grow." Every experience serves as a foundation for you to grow and blossom.

## **Women Share Words of Wisdom**

Over the course of the next seven years, I remarried and traveled to world locations where my life experiences broadened my understanding of various cultures and world religions. As I traveled to these locales, I realized that women have more in common than their differences. Most importantly, I encountered women who inspired me with their own wisdom.

My travels took me to Mumbai, India, San Miguel and Mexico City in Mexico, Jaffa and Jerusalem in Israel, Lake Tahoe, and recently the Berkshires every trip was a conduit to my personal growth and transformation.

As I stood hand in hand with a Christian, a Muslim, and a Hindu woman at the largest Pagoda in East Asia, I recognized that as women, we converse in a common language, even though we speak different dialects. As mothers, we want the best for our children. As women entrepreneurs, we want to create something and help support our families - one woman I met supported her entire family after her father died. At age fourteen, she was able to support her family with creating artisan crafts.

As women constantly in flux, we want and need the time to ourselves - quiet moments where we can catch our breath.

At times, we are all things to all people at once, and neglect ourselves. This experience of coming together with women from diverse cultures showed me that the concept of self-care is important, that empowerment has the potential to bridge cultural gaps and unite, not divide us.

I began speaking to groups of women in small, and then larger forums, about what inspired them in their daily lives. I told my story of sprinkling the zinnia seeds over the legal documents and how in that moment I let go of limited beliefs. In my presentations to women, I showed pictures of me at the Wishing Bridge in Jaffa, Israel holding my zodiac sign of Aquarius, and requesting God to use me as an instrument to heal others.

Women shared that inspired living includes: still practices such as meditation, yoga, journaling, breathing movements, and prayers. Physical exercise and movement in motion helped women in business feel grounded in the day. Rituals and gathering circles provided forums for self-expression. Art and creative activities cultivate an expansion of self. Empowered living means taking time for one self.

### **Still Practices Inspire Wisdom**

Thru my own experience, I found that when I am quite, inner internal wisdom pours forth. During meditation, I gain clarity. Connection with my breath during yoga invigorates me. Healthy eating makes me feel alive. Positive affirmations reemphasize that I am worthy of love. Walks in nature or gardening outside serve as a palate for harmony and peace.

Soon, the walking steps of my day became a practice of purposeful living and being present in the moment. Gratitude is attitude, I would tell myself. The still practices brought joy and helped me to unearth my inner voice. As the days passed, I shed the limited beliefs of "I cannot" to "I can if it's in alignment with my true self". Life became a series of walking miracles unfolding in front of my eyes. My power to manifest my future began when I realized that I blossomed in new situations. I gave myself permission to dream big dreams. I came to understand that what we put in our mind, we become. What we believe about ourselves can become our reality.

## Inspired Ideas for Daily Life

### **Tip #2 Concentrate on your breath.**

Inhale to the count of three. Place your hand on your abdomen, and exhale. Repeat, inhale to three, and exhale to count of three. Do this for five minutes. As you breathe in, tell yourself, I release fear and stress. As you breathe out, say to yourself: I welcome joy.

### **Tip #3 Seek refuge in nature.**

My dog, Bunny is a bundle of energy. She is a great reason for me to experience new terrain, parks, trails and the refuge in my own green grass. As I walk Bunny, I acquire a sense of hearing sounds differently in nature. Each step I took with Bunny, I said out loud, "thank you for this walking miracle, I give gratitude for today."

### **The Butterfly breaks free**

A butterfly begins in a cocoon state and eventually grows into something beautiful. This period of metamorphosis is easily compared to our own personal growth – it is gradual, and each stage provides nourishment. Shedding our shell and rebuilding ourselves takes time. Butterfly caterpillars spin thread from their mouths that they use to bind together for shelter, their cocoon. During this time, the caterpillar changes into a butterfly. When we turn inward to nourish ourselves, we are allowing our own cocoon to build the capacity for finding inner strength. Then we can sense and feel our wings, our beauty, and our inner power. We blossom.

Our transformation can be compared to the butterfly.

## About the Author



Laura Ponticello is an author, motivational speaker, thought leader, and professional coach for writers, entrepreneurs, business leaders, and high-powered executives. She engages both individuals and large groups to lead discussions and answer questions that foster success on both a personal and professional level.

She is owner and founder of [Laura's Booklist: Books for Women](#), an online community devoted to building connections through the power of story. In this role, she has inspired thousands of readers, and has sponsored philanthropic events that raise money for important causes like breast cancer awareness.

After spending several years as a high-powered human resources executive in the international business arena, Laura uncovered her true talent and purpose: to inspire and motivate audiences towards personal transformation. After her own powerful transformational experience, Laura left the corporate world to launch her own business, and now serves as a motivational speaker and writer on the topics of personal/professional development, and women in leadership. Laura has contributed her wisdom as a spiritual blogger, Finger Lakes columnist, and as the publicist for Amy Dickinson, nationally syndicated advice columnist of Ask Amy, Amy Dickinson. For a complete list of clients, please visit [www.laurasbooklist.com](http://www.laurasbooklist.com)

Laura graduated Magna Cum Laude with dual bachelor's degrees in Anthropology and Sociology from Canisius College in 1991. She has been recognized by Six Sigma, and has been featured in national publications. She was also a Woman of the Week on the renowned website for women entrepreneurs, womenties.com.

