



Finding the Courage to Go for Your Dreams!

by
Ferne Cherne

When you reach one of those critical points in your life and you want to take the alternative route but staying stalled in the traffic jam on the freeway of life is easier, how do you garner the courage to make that choice of strength?

When we think of courage, most of us envision some Rambo figure charging through the jungle with no fear or caution. The American fantasy. We know we can't approach the Rambo level. But courage is being brave enough to do what you feel is right. It is having the strength to do what you feel is right despite fear, anxiety, moments of indecision, worry, weakness in the knees and problems in the stomach. Courage does not mean conflicts do not appear during the process.

There are many good books encouraging and supporting courageous choices - from *Women Who Run With The Wolves* to *The Road Less Travelled* and its successor, to Marsha Sinetar's books on the self-actualized life. These books extol the virtues of having the courage of one's convictions. They are helpmates along the way. They help you have the strength to take the turnoff onto your own road. But how do you get the energy or fuel to keep going forth on that road? What can you do to increase your strength, power and forward progress while lessening the negative influences?

The time in your life when you will need the most strength, the most conviction and the most courage may range from entering a new and risky career situation, to seeking alternative or experimental solutions to health problems, to remaking your lifestyle in a manner which is not even within the realm of consideration of most people. How do you build up your psychological and spiritual reserves while deflecting the attempts to undermine your determination?

There are two basic parts to constructing a framework to get you through your situation successfully: increasing the positive and decreasing the negative.

To increase the positive energy or influences, consider the following suggestions:

1. Take strength from role models.

You may find these models in real life, in the written word, or in films. Try all modalities. Look for risktakers in a variety of areas. Portraits of courage will help even if the field or endeavor is different. There will be times when you are feeling sorry for yourself, but think of Helen Keller, or the life of Dian Fossey, and it will be hard to feel too sorry for yourself. After all, you're not living with a bunch of gorillas in the middle of a jungle.

Search out models. If you are going to become a self-sufficient backwoods woman, look for models in publications like *Backwoods Home* magazine or pick up copies of *Woodswoman* or *Beyond Black Bear Lake* by Anne LaBastille. Look up the lives of the frontier women, or the first female doctor in the west. Look to real life and the written word for inspiration from others who have gone before you.

Many a time, you will say to yourself -- if they can do it, I can do it.

2. Sift through your circle of acquaintances and friends.

There will be those who are positive, uplifting and supportive. Those who are negative we will talk about later. Maintain substantial and consistent contact with friends who give you positive energy. Meet for breakfast or lunch. Talk frequently. If they are long distance, consider your phone bill as a mental health expense.

Life is an exchange of energy. Select those people with whom you have an equal exchange of energy. You can't afford to spend time with those who drain your energy.

3. Nurture your spiritual side.

Whether your belief system is a formalized religion, or a more amorphous form, embrace it. Take sayings, proverbs, or beliefs that sustain you. Make signs of those that have the most meaning for you and post them on your bathroom mirror, on the refrigerator, on your dashboard. Make your own notebook of inspirational quotes and read a portion of it each day.

4. The physical side of energy.

Maintain or create an exercise regimen that is appropriate for you. The physical movement will help keep your mind/body relationship in balance. Don't allow the emotional, cognitive challenges to overwhelm the physical. Select and maintain a healthy way of eating. Whether you are a vegetarian or into natural foods, it is imperative that you feed your body an abundance of healthy food. Your energy and optimism comes both from your psychological/mind and your physical realm. Spend time providing fuel for your journey.

Now that you have taken steps to increase the positive influences in your life, what can you do to diminish or counteract the negative influences?

5. You will have to make decisions regarding those people you choose to retain in your inner circle.

Most people live in mundane worlds, or they try to. When events occur that jar them into reality, they try to ignore it or suppress the aberration in hopes it will disappear. This attitude doesn't exactly help our world progress, but it is prevalent. When you attempt to embark on a journey that deviates from the norm, it forces people to reflect on their own lives. Rather than do a painful analysis of their own stuckness, it is easier for them to cope if they negate your venture. These people will be happy to be your pallbearers. As you build a foundation, they will undermine it. While you need to look at and weigh all the variables in your individual challenging situation, you don't need pessimism washing away the sand from beneath your feet.

Screen and limit your social interaction with the toxic types. This may include cutting back on social events or occasions. Some groups of people, clubs, or gatherings can be playgrounds for pessimistic remarks and you do not need to subject yourself to that.

Eliminate or put on hold those folks who would be detrimental to your gathering strength. They aren't really your "friends" if they are consistently discouraging. They belong in the acquaintance category. Friends are support systems, not demolition experts.

continued on page 2



“Negotiation Skills for Women”

You are in charge of how much you expose yourself to negative energy, vibes, or attacks. In terms of your particular challenge, you will have some tough encounters you can't avoid, so eliminate those over which you have control.

Those people who are not risktakers will not build up your energy level. Could be Dian Fossey was better off working with gorillas than people!

6. The other negative person you face is yourself.

When you are engaged in a life changing event, it is easy to ruminate on any tiny detail. You wouldn't normally worry about some trivial thing, but now that you are being courageous, under stress, you begin to question yourself. You who have been successful for ten years in your field are suddenly worried no one will like you, or no one will believe in you, or you will fall on your face giving a presentation. Such regression is understandable and is often the effect of the immensity of your current challenge. Each time you start to doubt yourself, look at yourself. Apply rationality to your thoughts. “If most of the choices in my life have worked out well, why am I questioning my choice now?” Look at each case, your doubts are usually not realistic, but the result of the risk taking, challenging the road that you have chosen.

The rewards in life come from taking the risk, taking on the challenges. Life safe from disturbance is more like death. Whatever your goal, you do have the courage. Courage being brave enough to do what you feel is right. Often it is hard and it tears you up, but it is the right thing to do -- maybe not the politically correct thing, the right thing. Surround yourself with all the energy giving, supportive systems you can; from the written word, to the visual medium, to friends. Take care of your body as your mind takes on the challenges. And get all the hitchhikers off your road. Don't even slow down for them. Keep right on going; you are doing the right thing. You now have your ready mix package of courage. Many courageous women will be there to meet you at the end of the road.

Dr. Ferne Cherne is a freelance writer and psychologist living in California. Adapted from the *Voices of Women* web site at voiceofwomen.com.



“Self-Defense for Women”

In today's world, ensuring that your personal safety is not at risk can often be an overlooked essential of life. Generally, just accomplishing the whirlwind of personal and professional responsibilities facing us daily can be daunting.

To aid in developing or refining those personal safety measures, Ruth Evers, co-owner of Evers' TaeKwonDo PLUS, will return on February 11, 2004, for “*Self-Defense for Women.*” Evers will discuss prevention and resistance strategies, along with identifying patterns of sexual assault, during this hands-on Lunch Break Seminar.

Evers has been training since 1989, in the martial art of TaeKwonDo. She is a 5th degree certified Black Belt and Criminal Countermeasures Rape Prevention Instructor. Evers and her husband, Scott, not only provide training in the martial art of TaeKwonDo, but also offer adult fitness training in a variety of physical fitness programs at their North Roan Street location in Johnson City.

Location for this seminar is the East Tennessee Room, D.P. Culp University Center, at noon. For additional information regarding this seminar, contact the Women's Resource Center at 423-439-7847.

Do negotiations make you nervous so that you end up just settling for less? Are you unsure of the techniques for successful negotiations? Do you lack the confidence to negotiate for what you want? If any of these questions sound familiar, then join us for the three-part series, “*Negotiation Skills for Women.*” Margaret Kellogg, L.C.S.W., will conduct the interactive series.

Scheduled for January 23, 30, and February 6, the series will provide practical techniques that can be implemented whether you are negotiating for that big raise, a promotion, or just buying a car. Kellogg will share the top three secrets successful negotiators use, along with other useful techniques that will better enable you to keep your focus under pressure.

All sessions will be held at the Women's Resource Center, Panhellenic Hall, basement suite 2, at noon. **Reservations are required.** For additional information regarding this series, contact the Women's Resource Center at 423-439-7847.

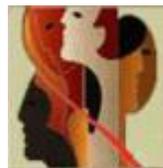


“Legal Options for Women” Encore

During February 2004, Deborah Yeomans, practicing attorney with Legal Services of Upper East Tennessee, Inc., will be back for a return run of “*Legal Options for Women.*” Date for this Lunch Break Seminar is Tuesday, February 24, 2004. Location and time, for this must-have seminar, is the D.P. Culp University Center, Forum Room, at noon.

Topics to be discussed by Yeomans will include legal options related to legalities surrounding divorce and domestic violence situations. Also, child support specifics will be addressed.

This Women's Legal Series Seminar is co-sponsored by the Counseling Center and Women's Resource Center. For more information concerning this Lunch Break Seminar, contact Kim Bushore-Maki at 423-439-4841 or the Women's Resource Center at 423-439-7847.



March 2004
Women's History Month Theme

“*Women – Inspiring Hope & Inspiration*”



**ETSU Women's Resource Center
NEWSLETTER**

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Harriet P. Masters, director
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ETSU Women's Resource Center Calendar of Events

For more information on the events listed contact the *WRC* at 423-439-7847.

DECEMBER 2003 – FEBRUARY 2004

EVENTS - Main Campus

Wednesday, December 17

Book Review Group. Participants will meet to discuss *The Dive from Clausen's Pier* by Ann Packer. New readers welcome.

LOCATION & TIME: Women's Resource Center, Panhellenic Hall, Basement Suite 2, noon.

Wednesday, January 21

Book Review Group. Participants will meet to discuss *Five Quarters of the Orange* by Joanne Harris. New readers welcome.

LOCATION & TIME: Women's Resource Center, Panhellenic Hall, Basement Suite 2, noon.

Friday, January 23

Friday, January 30

Friday, February 6

"Negotiation Skills for Women" – Special Lunch Break Series. This three-part series will focus on practical strategies that can be implemented during those critical occasions requiring expert negotiation skills. Margaret Kellogg, L.C.S.W., personal and professional development coach, will conduct the series. See article page 2.

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED.

LOCATION & TIME: Women's Resource Center, Panhellenic Hall, Basement Suite 2, noon.

Tuesday, January 27

"Biological Superiority of Natural Vitamin E" - Women's Health Series Lunch Break Seminar. Robert V. Acuff, Ph.D., F.A.C.N., C.N.S., director of the Center for Nutrition Research at ETSU, will discuss findings from his research surrounding the synthetic and natural forms of vitamin E. Over the past several years, the ETSU Center for Nutrition Research has been collaborating with other groups in the U.S. and Canada, all of which have been exploring the differences between natural and synthetic vitamin E. See article page 4.

LOCATION & TIME: Forum Room, D.P. Culp University Center, noon.

Wednesday, February 11

"Self-Defense for Women" - Special Lunch Break Seminar. Ruth Evers, co-owner of Evers' TaeKwonDo PLUS, will return to share prevention and resistance strategies related to self-defense, along with identifying patterns of sexual assault. Evers has been training since 1989, in the martial art of TaeKwonDo; and is a 5th degree certified Black Belt and Criminal Countermeasures Rape Prevention Instructor. See article page 2.

LOCATION & TIME: East Tennessee Room, D.P. Culp University Center, noon.

Wednesday, February 18

Book Review Group. Participants will meet to discuss *Black and Blue* by Anna Quindlen. New readers welcome.

LOCATION & TIME: Women's Resource Center, Panhellenic Hall, Basement Suite 2, noon.

Tuesday, February 24

"Legal Options for Women" - Women's Legal Series Lunch Break Seminar. Deborah Yeomans, J.D., practicing attorney with Legal Services of Upper East Tennessee, Inc., will return to discuss legal options related to domestic violence situations. Also, child support specifics, along with the legalities surrounding divorce will be covered. Co-sponsored by the ETSU Counseling Center and Women's Resource Center. See article page 2.

LOCATION & TIME: Forum Room, D.P. Culp University Center, noon.

ALL THE ABOVE EVENTS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.



Women's Health Series

Almost on a daily basis, there are reminders telling us to protect ourselves from oxidant free-radical damage throughout life. Often seen as playing a significant role in that protection is vitamin E. Over the course of the last two decades, vitamin E has received a great deal of research attention resulting in the implication that vitamin E may reduce the risk of cancer, cardiovascular disease, onset of cataracts, and slow the aging process.

To provide more insight on the current research being performed on vitamin E, Robert V. Acuff, Ph.D., F.A.C.N., C.N.S., director of the Center for Nutrition Research at ETSU, will present ***“Biological Superiority of Natural Vitamin E”*** on Tuesday, January 27, 2004. During this lunch break seminar, Acuff will discuss findings from his research surrounding the synthetic and natural forms of vitamin E. Over the past several years, the ETSU Center for Nutrition Research has been collaborating with other groups in the U.S. and Canada, all of which have been exploring the differences between natural and synthetic vitamin E.

Location for the seminar is the Forum Room, D.P. Culp University Center, at noon. For additional information, contact the Women's Resource Center at 423-439-7847.

ETSU Counseling Center & Campus Recreation to sponsor



RAD: Rape Aggression Defense Training

DATES: TBA for Spring Semester 2004

[5 p.m. – 9 p.m. each day]

No cost for students. For more information contact Kim Bushore-Maki at 423-439-4841.

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