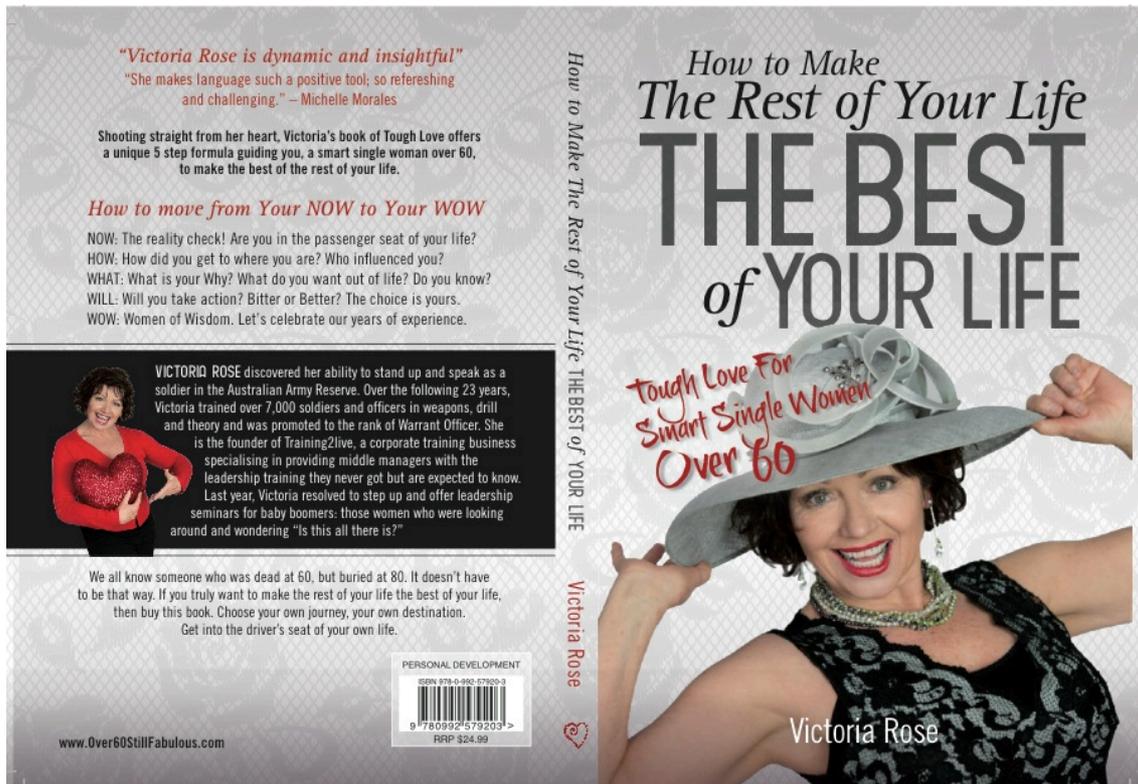


## How to Make The Rest of Your Life The Best of Your Life



Are you a smart, single woman over 60 who still feels fabulous? Or do you feel absolutely well past your use by date? Are you a quitter, or do you think you deserve to live a life full of energy, inspiration and fulfillment?

### **It's never too late to smell the roses**

This book is a celebration of smart, single women over 60 and the many roles they play over their lifetime. But wait, by what criteria can you be deemed smart? That's easy ... you deem yourself as smart, no outside authority is needed, is it?

For many baby boomers, outside authority is needed. Someone else's approval is necessary. That's a major reason for writing this book. I think we're grown up now; I believe we can grant approval to ourselves, to choose how to live our own lives, can't we?

*How to Make The Rest of Your Life The Best of Your Life* gives smart, single women over 60 a road map to a destination of their own choosing. If you're sick of living on the Island of Lack, lack of courage, lack of confidence and lack of celebration, then this book is for you. Working through the five-part formula in 'From NOW to WOW', you'll discover many signposts guiding you to living a happier life. As a courageous, confident woman, you too will stand up and say "I'm over 60 and I'm still fabulous!"

Enjoy :)

*Victoria Rose*

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## **PART ONE: NOW I'M HERE MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL**

It's reality check time! Time to get clear on where you are right now.

Are you in the driver's seat or the passenger seat of your life's journey? Perhaps you've always preferred to sit in the back seat? Recently, a woman shared she felt like she was trapped in the boot! When is it time to step up and get into the driver's seat of your own life?

To truly do that, you need to make a decision: to take the Blue Pill or the Red Pill. If you too are a fan of The Matrix movies, the significance of this choice is obvious. The Blue Pill takes you back to your make-believe world, where you pretend to be happy and where it's okay to be denied significance. You choose to live in the blissful ignorance of illusion. And that's your right to do so! Taking the Blue Pill means you'll probably want to stop reading this book.

The Red Pill signifies embracing the (sometimes painful) truth of your reality. This book is about taking the Red Pill. Taking the Red Pill signals that you want to find the courage to look at the reality of your life. No journey can be planned and no destination reached if we don't know where we are right now.

PART ONE is here to establish who you are and what you feel right now. Some of it will be good, some will be distressing. Either way, you can't reflect on or change that which you don't recognise within yourself.

Are you ready? We're about to find out who you really are!



"It takes courage...to endure the sharp pains of self discovery rather than choose to take the dull pain of unconsciousness that would last the rest of our lives."  
-Marianne Williamson

## **Chapter 1**

### **Flushing Out Your Values**

To make the best of life you must know what's important to you about life; not knowing what you value in life is like a boat without a rudder. Your journey will be aimless, going this way then that way. Our values guide our every decision and the satisfaction or violation of them can produce strong emotional reactions.

#### **Your values help you live life on your terms.**

No one can tell you what to value in life. That decision belongs to you alone. I have values for both my business and personal life. These are my top three business values:

1. Integrity
2. Freedom
3. Abundance

Looking at my top value of 'integrity', this word represents a whole set of experiences and emotions that are mine alone. Your experiences of what you consider represents 'integrity' cannot be exactly the same as mine. Integrity, freedom and abundance are abstract words with a wide range of possible meanings. When using abstract words, we must clarify our meaning of them.

#### **What are your values?**

Discovering your values involves a step-by-step process.

#### **The values process**

As a rule of thumb, values can be written in one to three words. A variety of questions help you discover your values in life. This one is my favourite:

What's important to me about \_\_\_? (The blank space identifies the area to be explored.)

You may wish to drill down to discover your values in life categories such as social, family, personal development, spiritual matters and purpose. For now, we'll look at your whole life perspective.

Please read through the first part of this process before starting to write.

Sitting comfortably with pen and paper (or at your computer) get ready to answer a simple question. Proceed to write down whatever pops into your mind. Eventually, you'll come to a blank space. Because your mind is a 'blank', you'll think you've finished. Not true. Keep asking "What else is important to me about my life?" and you'll discover more to write. Again, you'll experience another blank space. Don't give up! Push through. Continue to ask and finally more will come. Although some brave souls push through three blank spaces, for now we will work through two blanks.

Ensuring you follow these directions, start the process by asking: What's important to me about my life?

Now write. Remember to push through two blank spaces.

Excellent! You have now identified a list of values important to your life. That list may contain words like love, children, parents, friends, helping others, holidays, being honest, health, vitality, and having connection. Or happiness, intelligence, family, laughter, grandchildren, wealth, acquiring more knowledge, agility, peace or finding security. Now you need to find out, from that list, what matters most to you.

### **What matters most to you?**

The next step clarifies each value by ranking their order of importance. Asking the question "Of these values, which one do I consider most important?" helps achieve this. Working quickly down your list, mark the one you deem most important as number one. Mark the next most important as number two and so on until all values are prioritised. During this step, you may choose to eliminate some values. (More than ten values become unwieldy and unnecessary.)

Now look at your top three values. Are you surprised? If we don't know what we value in life, we struggle to design goals that have the best chance of working for us. If our goals don't conform to our true values, we sabotage ourselves, every single time. For instance, valuing 'freedom' may require starting your own business. However, if you also value 'security' and rank it higher than 'freedom' you have a conflict of values. This creates an extremely uncomfortable situation. As many new business startups will testify, if 'security' was a top value they would've stayed in their jobs. Thankfully for me, 'security' didn't even make my original list.

### **The Litmus Test question**

Time to test the reality of your prioritised values list. This is the final part of the process to determine what you truly value. Some Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) practitioners call this 'The Squirm Question'.

Looking at your prioritised list, ask "If I can have my No. 1 value but NOT have my No. 2 value, would that be OK?" If your answer is "Yes!" then you have the correct order. But if your answer is "No!" then you must move your No. 2 value up into No. 1 position.

Let's illustrate using my business values. I'd always thought 'freedom' was my No. 1 value. However, asking the Litmus Test question revealed the truth. Although 'freedom' was important to me it was not important if I did not have 'integrity'. Without 'integrity', 'freedom' meant nothing. Therefore 'integrity' moved to No 1.

Having clarified your No. 1 value, now ask "If I can have No. 1 but NOT have No. 3, would that be OK?"

In my case that reads "If I could have 'integrity' but NOT have 'abundance', would that be OK?" My answer is "Yes!" because 'abundance' without 'integrity' means nothing.

Continue working down your list, comparing your No. 1 value to all the values below it. This will not take long. Remember, a list of more than ten is unnecessary. I completed this activity quickly because my list identified only my top five prioritised values.

The next step is to discover if our No. 2 value deserves to sit in that spot. Therefore, my question would be "If I could have 'freedom', but NOT have 'abundance', would that be OK?" This one seems a bit tougher to answer. Even so, my answer is "Yes!"

You may struggle with assessing the importance of a value. To gain clarity, consider swapping the values around. In my case, I would now ask "If I could have 'abundance' but NOT 'freedom' would that be OK?" For me, the answer is a resounding "No!" An example is a marriage where there is an abundance of material goods, yet a wasteland of love. Trapped in a loveless marriage, no matter how far you drive your Mercedes, is not freedom. Therefore for me, 'freedom' belongs at No. 2.

Continue working down your list, comparing your No. 2 value to all the values below. Then do the same for your No. 3 value and so on. You get the picture.

A final order soon emerges. Knowing what you truly value sets the compass needle. Knowing your true values means you will rarely drift off direction. Even when false promises and glittering objects attempt to lure you on another course. Do not be led astray. Stay true to your own values for they give you the greatest chance to find happiness.

### **Things and people change**

We have noticed this on our journey through life, haven't we. What you once valued may no longer hold true. Discovering your values is the first step. Take the time to reassess every now and again. Values and beliefs are intimately linked to each other. This reassessment challenges and liberates you from beliefs that do not belong to you. To find out more, a simple Google search using the NLP keywords 'eliciting values' will bring you tons of information and processes. Do the search; have fun.

Flushing out your values is the first chapter of this book for a very good reason. As you work through each part, you may make changes to how you perceive life. It will be useful to reflect on whether or not your values have changed. At the end of this book, I've asked you to do this values exercise again. You may be surprised at the shift if there is one. When you embrace what you truly value, only then can real change occur.

### **NOW Chapter 1: Flushing Out Your Values – Three Rays of Light**

1. What are your top three values?
2. Workshop the values question around another life category: What's important to me about \_\_\_? (My relationships, family, friends, career ...)
3. Knowing your values clears the clutter of confusion. This example shows how. You're excited! Uncovering your true value of 'freedom' supports your cherished goal of starting your own business. Unfortunately, no matter what you do things go badly. Eventually, finding another job seems the only option. You feel like a failure. Further probing may've uncovered you value 'security' higher than 'freedom'. It now makes sense. A new business gives little sense of security. Your bold new venture was doomed from the start because of your strong value in security.

Identify Your Ray of Light: take a moment to write down what you got from this chapter.

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## Summary

- Your values help you live life on your terms.
- Use the values process to determine your true values:
  - What's important to me about \_\_\_?
  - Of these values, which one do I consider most important?
  - The Litmus Test question - If I could have (No. 1 value) but NOT have (No. 2 value) would that be OK?
- Don't be worried if your values change over time, they should.



## Chapter 2 The Stranger Staring Back

I well remember the day it happened.

Standing at my bathroom mirror, someone I didn't know was staring right back. A stranger in my bathroom! What trickery was this? Surely that woman couldn't be me. Look at those bags under her eyes, those deep lines etched into her face and those brittle strands of grey hair refusing to be smoothed down. One thing shocked me even more. This stranger's eyes were dull and lifeless and they were staring right back at me.

Yes, I remember that day well, the day I truly saw myself in the mirror.

### Who's there?

So, did I suddenly age overnight? How come I'd not noticed the bags, lines and grey hairs before this day? Apart from refusing to see them, the reason is clear.

Let's say we only look in a mirror three times a day (although it would be more). On average, that means we've seen our reflection around 657,000 times by the time we've turned 60, so how can I say we don't truly 'see' our image? Because when we look in the mirror, all we see is what needs fixing. This need could be applying lipstick or foundation or plucking those unruly eyebrows and shaping our hair. Or simply checking to see if we have parsley wedged in our teeth (because no one ever tells you about the parsley).

We glance at ourselves in the shop window as we walk by, but not to congratulate ourselves on our choice of outfit. No, we notice our bottom drooping down or our tummy sticking out or our hair sticking up or a myriad other things that are not quite right; so familiar feelings of not being good enough creep in. And that 'not being good enough' further affects our posture, our smile and our eyes as we step forward and introduce ourselves to that new person in our life. This could be our new boss or the first meeting with a romantic interest or a new prospective daughter-in-law or your bank manager. The issue is this; no matter who they are, at some level, they will pick up how you feel about yourself. And that's how they will relate to you. This then further cements your fears about not being good enough.

### **But what made this day different?**

As I stood in front of my bathroom mirror, judging my reflection, I couldn't help but wonder what made this day different? Why am I noticing my true reflection today?

Oh by the way, I should warn you of a character trait of mine, which some find very annoying. I always wonder why a thing is so, why an event turned out the way it did, why people do what they do; the list goes on. This intense curiosity has turned out to be an incredible asset because it means life is rarely boring. When one is always asking, "Why is it so?" there are new discoveries to be made, exciting ideas to take on board and an opportunity to understand the many mysteries of life. It's a shame few seem to appreciate my gift.

I never did figure out why that day was different, but I did work out why I needed to acknowledge the stranger staring back.

### **Have you ever truly looked at yourself in the mirror?**

This means not criticising or judging what you see as not being good enough.

Here is a simple activity I encourage you to do. Read the next paragraph then put this book down and go do it.

Stand in front of a mirror and look deep into your eyes. Breathe slowly and deeply; relax. Do this for five minutes (yes, five minutes). Notice what happens.

Welcome back. What happened? Perhaps nothing, apart from feeling ridiculous and noticing how long five minutes is? However, if you lasted the whole five minutes, did you feel strong emotion start to rise? When I did this, tears welled up and rolled down my cheeks. I don't know why, except to say it was like lifting the many veils shrouding the self. Others describe this experience as peeling back the layers of an onion, some talk about taking off the mask. For me, the tears were in recognition of a connection I'd not felt for a long, long time. A connection that went much deeper than the visual. It was a beautiful and grounding experience of re-connection with that stranger in the mirror. It was a realisation those 'dull and lifeless' eyes actually sparkle and shine when engaging with others. It was the realisation my visual appearance was not my true identity.

### **What is your true identity?**

My true identity involves more than wanting to look and feel 20 years younger, of being caught up in our society's obsessive adoration of youth. Continuing to look in the mirror, I see a woman moulded by genetic programming, culture, society, family and friends. I see a woman who wants to be loved and accepted. This woman remembers the vibrancy, the spontaneity, the dreams and the daring to live life her way. I see a woman who wonders at how quickly the years have sped by, who has lost count of the many veils needed to hide her true identity.

### **Why do we hide our true identity?**

Over the years, the most common answer has been the fear of non-acceptance. The fear that who we really are will not be deemed as good enough by those we know and love. So we live a lie, pretending to be who we're not and spend our days hiding our true 'unworthy' identity.

As women over 60, we've seen a bit of life right? We've been there, done that. We've learnt the rules of society, been tamed by our family dynamics (or not) and had our fair share of drama and pain. The many twists and turns of our life's journey may have brought happiness or created a longing for that 'missing something'. Perhaps we remember little of life's details, especially from our younger years, but even if we could, would those memories be a true rendition of what truly happened?

That's most unlikely.

### **The stories we tell ourselves**

Looking in the mirror, do we see opportunities lost, challenges avoided, love denied? We all have stories we tell others and ourselves about our past. Often these stories paint a dark picture of resentment and dismay for the path we chose along the way. I believe we can change those stories. Who knows how true they are anyway. What if we did that? What if we went back, way back to review the timeline of our life? With our wisdom and experience as women over 60, how could we interpret events differently? What would we see now that we were blind to before?

### **Our stories reveal where we live**

As I look back on my life and my many sad stories, one thing is painfully clear. Regardless of my true physical address, I've always lived on 'The Island of Lack'. Sadly, I've discovered thousands of other women live there too.

Take a moment to revisit your life stories. Do they talk about the many 'lacks' you've experienced in your life? Do your stories talk about the many things you wished you'd had or done or been? When you get in your car, do you tune into the same old 'my sad story' radio station? Well I'm here to tell you there's never been a better time to live a better life. To do that though, we need to understand where we are and how we got here.

### **Why go back to where we began?**

Why? So we're not seduced into taking the same turns, side streets and detours we've taken before and suddenly finding ourselves in the same fine mess.

If we looked at our personal stories in terms of 'lack', how many 'lacks' are there? The only true answer is 'lots'. But how can we tackle lots without going into overwhelm? From countless women sharing their stories over the years plus my own experiences, the main issues became clear. We can create a better life by addressing just three core issues of lack:

1. Lack of courage
2. Lack of confidence
3. Lack of celebration

Are these three 'lacks' the main themes of your stories? Imagine how different your life would be without the restraint of these three 'lacks'?

By the way, am I saying you've never been courageous or confident or had fun? Absolutely not! Of course you've expressed and exhibited those traits and behaviours, especially in your younger years. What I am saying is, even though we are women over 60, we choose not to rock the boat. We choose not to speak our truth, deciding to say something nice instead. We choose to deny our own needs to keep the peace. We eventually wither away, becoming little old ladies.

### **I believe life is more than this**

It's never too late to consider a new story, to rewrite the chapters of your life, to get back into the driver's seat. I don't live on 'The Island of Lack' anymore and am much happier with my new address, 'The Island of More'. This island is not about more money, more clothes, more shoes and bags, more holidays, more jewellery, more investment properties, more cars or more material things. As you know, one can have all these things and still live on 'The Island of Lack'. If you relentlessly focus on unpaid bills, past hurts, sickness, being hard done by, uncaring kids and the inconveniently bad weather, no matter how much money you possess you are poor.

### **Living with more happiness**

Living on the 'Island of More' means choosing to live with more happiness. Twenty-three hundred years ago, Aristotle said that more than anything else men and women seek happiness. Looking at our consumer driven society of today, more 'stuff' does not guarantee happiness. I agree we can be happy in that hot flush of new stuff, but have you noticed how quickly it wears off? All these things are valued because we believe they will make us happy.

And happiness does not just happen. Personal development courses identify happiness as an emotional state we alone control. Yes, happiness requires control of our inner experience. Mastering that control becomes a necessary part of our life's journey.

You are invited to share that journey with me, to discover what it means to live on 'The Island of More'. Focusing on being grateful we will recognise how rich our lives already are. But before we do that, we must dive deep into why we continue to live a life of 'lack'. Be thankful for what you have; you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough. We must ask why we've let others drive our lives, why we've allowed ourselves to be 'under the influence'.

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Do not put the key to your happiness in someone else's pocket.

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It's time to find the courage and the confidence to speak your truth. After all, if we can't do that now, as women over 60, when can we?

"Without death, time would not be precious." - Alexander Green

When is it the right time to decide to live before you die? If that sounds harsh to you, then this book isn't for you. The definition of 'Tough Love': straight talking from my heart to your heart. I hope you decide to continue this journey with me.

Your time is precious; spend it well.

## **NOW Chapter 2: The Stranger Staring Back– Three Rays of Light**

1. Do the five-minute 'staring into your eyes' activity. There is no right or wrong result; only your result matters. Please take the time to do this. I promise you'll discover something you don't know now. Even if you don't last the full five minutes, that's still a result. If you're not used to asking WHY ... use this experience as a good reason to start.

2. Admit it: you talk to yourself often. What stories do you tell yourself? What stories do you tell others? If you feel sad, miserable, fearful or just plain old angry, I guarantee the stories you tell yourself will have 'lack' as the theme. Do you lack the courage and the confidence to change your stories? Is it okay to have fun in your life? If not why not, who says it's not okay? Hint: probably not your friends or your children.

3. Decide to live before you die. Yes, that is a ray of light. Only you can make this decision. Decide to get into the driver's seat of your own life. Lying on your deathbed and regretting your life's journey is not the best destination.

Identify Your Ray of Light: take a moment to write down what you got from this chapter:

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### Summary

- Take the five minute look in the mirror at who you are.
- We hide our identity because we think it's not good enough.
- We all have stories about the past, but we can change how we paint those stories.
- If you live on the 'Island of Lack', don't worry, you can decide to move.
- The three common areas of lack are courage, confidence and celebration.
- Living with more doesn't mean material goods, it means more happiness.
- The time to decide to live is now.

### **How you can read more:**

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Thank you

*Victoria Rose*