



Wake Up Inspired: Fuel Healthier Success and Love the Life You're Meant to Lead

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Master certified coach Marian Baker

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While a yearning and search for meaning is not new, millions of hard-working achievers (especially women) are discovering that something is missing in their drive to succeed. As dissatisfaction reaches epic proportions among aging Boomers and their younger counterparts, numerous gurus have offered assistance.

This author, a Master Certified Coach selected as one of fifty top coaches in America, offers enthusiasm and humility in an unexpected yet effective package. A former six-figure-income executive, she has lived through crises to blaze a trail. Baker explores a productive and holistic middle way that bridges the chasm between ambition and spiritual awareness, "bringing the best of mind-body-spirit wholeness to professionals without too much ... woo-woo."

Even more appealing is the likable personality that comes through her writing, reflected in refreshing comments such as: "I'm asserting that we can be on a quest for higher consciousness and a great shoe sale in the same lifetime."

Spotlighting this search for authenticity, she notes: "The revolution I speak of is a movement towards becoming whole and experiencing a harmony between who you are deep inside and how you function in the outer world." The constant juxtaposition between working on one's inner being and at the same time creating results in the outer world is a challenge that is too often shunted aside for quick and easy fixes in the either-or category. (Either people are working on ambitious worldly success, or they're on an inner spiritual path.) Few have the courage to draw the two together with a comprehensive and holistic approach. Baker does so with distinction, wit, and good cheer.

Dubbed "The Queen of Powerful Questions" by a leader at Coaches Training Institute, Baker asks productive questions meant to unearth potent insights when used mindfully. For example, "How do I combine spiritual growth and real world achievement? ... Am I willing to love myself enough to create the life I am meant to lead? ... What are the most compassionate and smart ways to set yourself up to succeed?" and one that reflects the process of conscious choosing in any given moment: "What choice would have you feeling taller?" Pondering that question for a moment will provide a taste of the magic that Baker's work unleashes.

These questions are embedded throughout the text, not just segregated in sections devoted to exercises. Along with the author's insights, questions like "Who am I meant to be? ... The truth of who you are is already within you," or "Just asking yourself, 'Is this how I really want to live?' is a significant step toward shaping an inspired life for yourself," engage the reader's curiosity, an important, overlooked ally. Gentle reminders reinforce the importance of taking small steps that cumulatively make a big difference in people's lives, even as Baker shares snippets of her own turning points.

The author sets the stage in Section One, laying the foundation with an opening discussion of “Waking Up to a New Story” while inviting readers to explore “Three Layers of Inspired Living.” Baker surprises these achievers (often compulsive planners), with the counterintuitive position, “Having a Plan is Not the Answer.”

If the plan is not the answer, what is? The metaphor at the heart of the book and Section Two is “Your Inspired Fitness Trail.” (Think of stations on a physical fitness trail—push-ups, sit-ups, chin-ups, etc.) It’s a path to achieve integration, getting stronger with each repetition. While Baker’s path isn’t about physical fitness, it doesn’t ignore the body, with Station Two called “Get Back in Your Body.” At Station Four, “Make Room,” an exercise illustrates Baker’s lighthearted approach to these tools: “Imagine me handing you a magic pair of pruning shears. Imagine walking through the areas of your life.” It’s a vivid method to identify and prune what she calls “energy suckers.”

Exercises like “Hit the Pause Button,” reading an internal “energy meter,” and connecting with the “Inner Champion” offer user-friendly jump-starts. The tools to integrate the work include a thirteen-week program plan, interactive exercises, charts, and list of resources by chapter. The author’s check-in form and “compelling charter” add specificity to the array of tools.

Anyone seeking more vital and meaningful life and work, especially women experiencing dramatic life changes, will want to consider *Wake Up Inspired* as they take a spin along Baker’s Inspired Fitness Trail. While the holistic concepts are not new, Baker has performed quite a feat of service by weaving previously divergent world-views into a cohesive whole that is both pragmatic and inspirational.

BOBBYE MIDDENDORF (October 4, 2006)

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