

Confessions of a Resilient Entrepreneur



**PERSEVERING
TO SUCCESS**

Frumi Rachel Barr, Ph.D.



SAVVY  ABOUT



“Confessions of a Resilient Entrepreneur” Book Excerpt

Persevering to Success

By Frumi Rachel Barr, Ph.D.

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New Adventures

In the early seventies, a patient of mine invited me to tour his office furniture factory while the physical therapists were on strike. That little tour resulted in my taking a position in the factory that evolved to the Chief Operating Officer—although we didn't call it that in those days. Along the way, I married the owner.

December, 1970

Before Richard and I split up, my parents took me with them to a beverage-industry trade show in Philadelphia. There I was, thin as a rail with my hair just starting to grow back, working at my father's booth, giving away chocolates filled with his cola substitute.

One particular fellow from Coca Cola came to the booth every day. He was thirty years old, blond, blue-eyed—and hitting on me. By the third or fourth day, this was very flattering. I spent a couple of wonderful afternoons with Jim. He would tell me I was a mess, which was his way of saying he found me attractive. I thought, *Wow, I'm still a woman. I don't have to not be kissed.*

I'm a very loyal person but I've done this a couple times in my life. It was the only way I knew to get out of a situation in which I felt trapped. It wasn't a strategy on my part—I didn't expect it, I wasn't looking for it. It just popped up. And I was shocked; I'd never realized I would do such a thing. But it was wonderful to feel like an attractive woman again after living all those months with Richard, who made me feel undesirable, rejected and pushed to the curb.

Richard later said he knew something was up because when I got back to Montreal, I didn't stop at the store to see him, I just went home. A week or so later, I told him I wanted a divorce. We both sat in the living room and cried. I knew I was still sick and facing a long recovery but I also knew I wanted to live, and my "Unknown" prognosis terrified me. The anxiety and panic would build up in my chest every day. Not only couldn't Richard do anything to help it, his constant fear that I would die just made it worse. After the affair with Jim reminded me that I was a viable, attractive woman, I finally realized I could deal with the situation better on my own. Richard and I certainly weren't going to make it together. It was time to move on.

So I moved back in with my parents, who transformed their basement into a little apartment for me, and went to see an attorney.

"I can get you lots of money because his parents are rich," the lawyer said.

"How long will that take?"

"Well, divorces can take as long as three years."

At that time in Canada, you had to either prove adultery or claim some mental cause to get a divorce. Richard had already said he would make it easy for me. He'd get pictures taken of himself having an adulterous affair—just as long as I didn't ask him for money. So I told the lawyer, "It's not about money. I just want to be free. If I fight about money for three years, I'm going to be dead. I don't want that. I want to totally focus on being alive."

And that's how I left my marriage with only the money from our joint account: \$100. I had given Richard every penny of what I'd earned for two years. It wasn't big money but it wasn't shabby; physical therapy is

a profession. I had expected to find more in our joint account. Richard said he lost it all to poor investments. I didn't understand that but I didn't ask for an accounting of it either. I was traditional. A nice Jewish girl. Leave the financial matters to the man.

**

My parents were thrilled to have me back. I was the first of the boomerang children. I still had my job, which meant I could make money, live rent-free in the basement, and get back on my feet. So, of course, the first thing I did was buy a car: an MGB convertible.

It cost \$2100. I only had \$500 and had to pay the \$1600 over twenty-four months. Even worse, it was the most ridiculous car for Montreal winters. Dr. Steiner took one look at it and said, "That's a car for someone in the fast lane."

"Yeah, but if I die in the next five years, I want to at least have lived a little."

It made sense to me.

At that point, I was Dr. Steiner's physical therapy specialist. He had open-heart-surgery patients and amputees. He also had a little girl patient with lupus.

Beth was eleven years old and dying. She asked her parents if I could be with her when she died. All through my entire ordeal with Hodgkin's and the rape in Israel and everything I went through with Richard, I'd never had one Valium, but when that little girl died, my mother had to come collect me. I was a puddle. As I took a Valium, I decided right then that I was too raw. I couldn't do physical therapy anymore. I was in the midst of five tough years, where every time I was happy I was afraid I was going to die and every time I saw something tragic, I came unglued. So I gave up physical therapy.

It was almost that simple.

**

Within a few months of leaving Richard, I started dating again. Mostly I dated doctors because that's who I met at the hospital. It seemed like every one would eventually say, "You're so great, we have so much fun together. I'm really falling for you. But ... we don't know your prognosis. I think we should break it off."

Ohmigod, I thought after this had happened several times, *I'm never going to have a normal life ever again! Everyone thinks we have to wait five years.* And I was in a hurry. At twenty-three, five years is a very long time.

So I went to Florida with my girlfriend Evelyn to relax. Along the way (and unbeknownst to my parents), I took a short side trip to visit Jim, the Coca Cola guy. We spent a weekend in Atlanta enjoying the falling snow—and that was the end of that. We kept in touch for a couple of years. He was very sweet, but there was nothing more to it. He'd been a catalyst for me, a means to an end, not the end itself.

On the way up from Florida (and Atlanta), Evelyn and I went to Baltimore, where she introduced me to a doctor friend of hers, Andy. I guess he must have fallen for me hard because he decided to come visit me in Montreal where, unbeknownst to *me*, he called on my father. "You know, your daughter has had a really tough time, and probably no one would marry her because she's been sick. But I'm a doctor and I can take good care of her. I'd like to marry her."

"Have you talked to her?"

"No, I thought I'd talk to you first."

"I have nothing to do with it," my father said. "I think you'd better talk to her."

In retrospect, it was awfully sweet, but at the time I didn't see anything positive about it. Andy went back to Baltimore and I went back to work.

Meanwhile, the divorce was moving forward. By the time I met Kenneth, Richard had undergone an attitude adjustment. He felt so guilty about not being able to handle my Hodgkin's that he decided the least he could do was make me look good. If I was going to be single, then I was going to look gorgeous. He would invite me to the store and

shower clothes on me: a fur coat, mini-skirts, hot pants, all kinds of outfits. I'd never had so many clothes in my life. I looked great. The shrinkage in his stores was very high that year.

I actually met Kenneth before I had my epiphany with Beth. He was in the hospital for elective surgery on a bone spur and needed crutches. I went up to the ward and gave him the crutches—and from that point on, he pursued me relentlessly. He was thirty-two years old, British, never married and sure I was “the one” for him—but he never told me the one-hundred percent truth about anything.

Everything was “show” to Kenneth. He had a lot of British class-conscious issues. He lived in a really nice apartment—without a stick of furniture in his living room. He claimed he owned “a fleet of cars.” They were only two little station wagons, one for him and one for his brother-in-law, but he had a need to present them a certain way. My parents found that odd. They actually didn't care for him anymore than they had for Richard, but he fell for me hard.

When the physical therapists went out on strike, Kenneth invited me to tour his factory and see where he worked.

I was so taken with that factory! I'd never been to one before other than my father's shop, which was really a lab that made soft drinks in great big vats rolled around on enormous dollies. Kenneth's company made acoustical office panels and decorative plants, two businesses in one, both for offices. Walking around with him, I was amazed at everything I could see—and had a million-and-one suggestions. “Why don't they do this? Why don't they cut the fabric this way?”

Kenneth was an industrial engineer yet here I was coming up with all these concepts. He was as amazed as I was. “Well, hot shot,” he said, “why don't you come work here while you're on strike and see if you like it?”

So I did.

I ended up working with him even while I continued as a physical therapist. When Beth died and I fell apart, I knew where I really belonged—in Kenneth's business. I started doing the purchasing. Then I pretty much took charge of operations. We got engaged that summer

and married in November, shortly after I turned twenty-five on October thirteenth and just a few weeks shy of a year after my divorce from Richard. But first, while I was still living at my parents' home, Kenneth sold his car.

"How can you just sell your car without talking to me?" I said. "What are you going to drive?"

"I'm going to drive your car. When we get married, I'll drop you at the hospital and then I'll take your car and go to work."

"No. Oh no. It's my car. You can't do that."

My car was a symbol of my independence. The whole time I'd been married to Richard I'd had to take three buses to get to and from work, and had been totally dependent. I could never come and go as I pleased. That was not going to happen again. But by the time we had this, our first big blow-up, he had *already sold his car*.

I've never been smart enough to see all the red flags before a marriage. Kenneth wasn't really making any money; he just appeared to be well off. He claimed he sold his car because his mother never drove; it was normal for him to have only one car in the family. But mine was an MGB, a two-seater. The stupidest car you could have! It didn't make any sense as a family car. I think the truth is he really liked my zippy little MGB and just figured he'd take it over. I was adamant that he wouldn't, so in the end he figured that his father, who was in the business with him, would pick him up.

Because I'd been married once before—my parents had spent \$10,000 on that wedding—I didn't want to have a big affair again, so we got married in my parents' house. It was almost like a competition. We figured we could get seventy people in the house, thirty-five of our family and thirty-five of theirs. They didn't have thirty-five family members; they had to scrape to find people to invite. But they never said, "You know what? We only need ten people; you can have sixty." It was never like that. It was, "You're having thirty-five? We'll find thirty-five!" An interesting relationship from the beginning, although I got along with his family for the most part.

But not entirely.

My parents didn't believe in celebrating Canadian Thanksgiving because they were Jewish, but Kenneth's parents did. So there we were, married two years with a baby—Michael was born by then—and they invited us to their house for Thanksgiving. The night before, we happened to be over there and my mother-in-law said she was having trouble with her oven. She gave me the turkey to take home to prepare for noon the next day.

Now, I had never prepared a turkey in my life. I had no idea what to do but I wasn't going to tell her that. There was this little underlying rivalry between us and I think she kind of wanted to show me up. At least I took it that way. So I just said, "Okay, I'll bring the turkey back by noon."

As soon as I got home, I called my mother. "I know you have a really quick turkey recipe, my aunt's recipe. How do you do that?" The system had to do with wrapping the turkey tightly in tinfoil so it only took twelve minutes a pound to cook. Well, it was the second Monday in October, already snowing, and there I was, driving all the way across town in the snow, to pick up long tinfoil from my mother so I could get the turkey ready by noon for my mother-in-law.

My aunt's system worked: it was an unbelievably succulent turkey, not a dry morsel on the bird. My mother-in-law was blown away. She wanted the recipe but I never gave it to her. Maybe if she had told me what to do or been nice to me ... but no, she didn't and wasn't, so I never, ever gave her the recipe.

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After we got married, I transitioned to working full-time with Kenneth in the factory. He reasoned that because he had invited his father into the business, it would be good to have his wife in the business especially, as I learned over the years, because he was very over-protective and needed to know where I was every minute. I reasoned that since we both knew we wanted children, working together was a sensible way to integrate our work and our personal lives.

And I loved the factory! Every day, there were issues, problems, and challenges. I really got my teeth into it. I began to realize that I was an entrepreneur at heart, so this was a natural progression for me. I was coming up with all kinds of ideas and implementing them—something

you don't get to do when you're working for someone else who has the final word on which suggestions to implement and which to ignore. Many employers don't even appreciate employees coming up with new ideas. But when you own and run the company, you can make any changes you see fit.

For example, they would get an order for fifty acoustical screens. They would cut one piece of material, put it on the frame, and move onto the next. I said, "Why are you doing that? How are you keeping order that way? Why don't you cut fifty pieces and put them to one side so that when you're ready to do this order, they're already waiting? We can move the screens out faster."

Speed was an important issue because the orders always got out late. The factory wasn't systematic at all. Kenneth had an engineering degree but he hadn't applied any logical system to his production sequence. Once again, it was a time-management problem: here are the symptoms, this is what we aren't doing, here's how we fix the problem. That's exactly how I looked at everything.

I started keeping ledger cards to figure out how many frames we needed, how much fabric, how much fiberglass, how much this and how much that. It wasn't all that difficult and I enjoyed it. Then I set up schedules: if it's Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, we work on this order, then we work on that order. For the first time, the company was actually growing and providing delivery when we said we would provide delivery.

Fortunately, my husband didn't feel threatened by any of this. It worked for him. He only felt threatened when there was something that didn't work for him. But we were making progress and soon, we were making money. We ended up being able to buy a house. Then we were able to buy a bigger house. Then we could afford to have two cars.

It all just worked.

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How Coaching Works

Yes, I'm a Certified Coach—but even more, I'm a business advisor. Coaching is how I go about doing my advising. I provide the catalyst for the change in people's lives. My clients tell me that when I start uncovering things, it's a positive "Frunami" of change.

Most people are used to thinking just one way: work is work and life is life. Coaching clients begin to think creatively so they can learn to holistically blend their work into their lives and their lives into their work. Before I got into coaching, I'd never consciously thought of living that way. Why? Because no one had ever asked me the question. That's the advantage of coaching. These ideas don't just pop out of us on our own, especially when we're totally wrapped up in creating, developing, and maintaining a business.

**

Before you begin working with a coach, make sure you have a common pace between the two of you. For instance, I'm a very "fast" person—my energy is always on high, even when I dial it down—so if someone is very slow,

I find it painful. I don't mean I expect people to be able to make decisions on the spot. We all have to sleep on things and think them over first. I'm talking about the ability to pick up things quickly. Leaders are typically smart, dynamic, fast-paced individuals. That makes a good fit with me. You have to figure out what makes a good fit with you.

When I coach, I never worry about the issues. Whatever they are, they're solvable. I'm more concerned about the personality and integrity of the person. I think most coaches would agree with that approach. I maintain strict confidentiality; I like to provide a "safe place to land" for my clients. When you look for a coach, check to see if that guarantee is part of his or her standard contract.

It's a two-way street; coaches need to feel safe with their clients, too. After all, most coaches are like me: I will go to the client or meet them halfway, both physically and emotionally. Some people choose to have breakfast while others prefer lunch, a coffee shop or meeting on a park bench. I meet them wherever they want, physically. Meeting them where they are emotionally demands skill. Ask your potential coach where she or he expects to meet; is it comfortable for you?

I usually work with my clients for an hour every two weeks. You may want to meet more or less often. If my clients say something relating to a prime concern on the fifty-ninth minute of the hour, we'll keep going. I figure if it takes that long to get it out, it's important and we'll see it the whole way through. Ask your potential coach about his or her session-limit policies. At the end of every year, my clients and I hold strategic sessions to talk about what's worked, what's gotten in the way, and what could be better next year. Does your potential coach have a similar practice? Is it adaptable to your needs?

Between sessions, my clients can email or phone me for what I call "just in time" coaching. Sometimes, for example, a client wants more input right before or after a difficult conversation. When someone gets into a crisis, whether it's a turn of the conversation or an emergency decision, I'd rather they call than wait two weeks until their next session. By then, it's too late to do anything about it. This is an invaluable part of coaching. Will your coach be available to you during emergencies?

One great coaching benefit is the opportunity to think out loud. As soon as something comes out of a person's mouth, they're listening to it along with me. That can lead to astounding things, because sometimes the spoken idea just doesn't sound as good as it did in a person's head. Sometimes it might even sound more reasonable. When you work with a coach, you not only expose your dreams and plans but your fears and foolishness as well. Does your potential coach have the right kind and level of empathy for you? Trust your instincts.

I've taught coaching at Chapman University—"Here are the steps: you help leaders find their voice, you help them find their vision"—but the act of accomplishing that transformation requires intuition and art. I need to hear things in someone's voice or see it in their body language. When I was first studying coaching, I missed something very important when someone laughed; I now know that laughing is as important a reaction as crying. At this point, nothing escapes my curiosity. If anything is different from what a person usually does or presents, I ask a question. Part of the coaching art comes from curiosity. Where a coach can safely ask questions out of curiosity, simply demanding an answer is intrusive. Your coach needs to trust his or her intuition about you—and you need to trust yours about him or her.

**

I truly believe that we get whatever we focus on; we can manifest our desires by focusing strongly on what we want. First, of course, we have to reach the right vibrational level to allow what we're seeking into our psyche, which means we have to be self aware enough to use our emotions as a guide to attracting whatever we want. I tend to attract the type of clients who don't find that kind of concept ridiculous. They are business people who are aware of their own spiritual natures and are grateful to find another spiritually oriented person in the business world.

And I do mean spiritual, not religious. I'm referring to the kind of thought process that acknowledges we are all spiritual beings in human form. Those are the people I feel best equipped to help the most.

What kind of vibrational level are you comfortable with? What type of spiritual, religious, ethical, organic or moral nature would make the best fit for you and your coach?

**

I always use one client as an example of a coaching failure, although he would not agree on that term. He was in partnership with two other people and I kept harping on the fact that they were not addressing a shareholder's agreement. He kept telling me he had everything under control.

After two years, the shareholder's agreement still had not been signed and the client was left with no choice but to abandon the business. He had wasted two years because he would not listen.

Another time he accepted a CEO position in a company that didn't offer him equity. I pointed out that if he didn't get equity in his contract, the company might not renew it when it expired. He nevertheless spent eighteen months building the company's profits from zero to seventeen million, after which, as predicted, they didn't renew his contract.

When he came back to me *again* with yet another idea he wanted help with I said, "You may not realize this, but I regard my relationship with you as a failure twice now. The first time because you didn't listen about the shareholder's agreement and the second time because you didn't listen about getting equity in this business. What's going to be different the third time?"

"I don't consider either of those situations as failures," he said. "It's not like you hadn't mentioned those things. I knew what you thought when I ignored your advice." It turned out we had totally different values: he wanted the experience and I wanted to keep him financially secure. Now I know to determine up front exactly what the client wants to achieve so I can determine whether or not I can really help him.

You and your coach have to be on the same page, even if you do not know exactly what you're trying to achieve when you first begin working together. Your coach cannot help you if she or he is trying to steer you toward something you don't care about, or away from something you do.

**

Most people I work with have issues about choosing the right people with whom to partner because most large businesses are partnerships: Hewlett-Packard, Lord & Taylor, and so on. Few large successful businesses grow from single entrepreneurs working sole proprietorships. It's hard to find the right partner; so much needs to be established up front.

Partners always fear losing the other partner. They fear they can't do it on their own. Consequently, instead of saying up front that they don't feel the split should be fifty-fifty, for example, they'll go along until the pressure of the status quo becomes unbearable. But it's even harder to say, "I'm doing this and you're not doing that so we need to change our partnership agreement," two years down the road. What happens if their partner runs out on them then? They'll really be stuck.

I think partner problems have become more acute due to today's ever-increasing technological pace. People need to start off agreeing on the rules of the road; how to make decisions together, how to use the resources of the company, what people to hire, how to spend money, when to move to new premises. Each partner has a different filter; each partner comes from a different place in the decision-making. All partners, whether their business is large or small, struggle to resolve these same issues.

They all also struggle with denial. From time to time, everyone gets to the point where they don't want to look at themselves in the mirror anymore. This usually happens when they start to see things about themselves that they don't want to see, things that are getting in their way. People don't always want to face reality. That's the time they need me the most. In fact, I even warn my clients about this right in the beginning. I tell them, there will come a point when they just don't want to see me. That's usually the exact time when something significant is about to happen. You have to trust your coach to have your best interests at heart.

**

Another focus in both my clients' and my own life involves noticing everything. How are the relationships working? Are decisions being made as conscious choices or automatic reactions?

Since becoming a coach, I've started to recognize how all the choices I had made up to that point had affected me. We always think, "Well, those are my choices and I'm stuck with what I chose, right?" No. We aren't stuck. We can make choices about what we want next. In fact, we can change the choices we've made so far: "Wait a minute, that's not what I want anymore." Whether concerning relationships or work, just realizing that you can make a conscious choice—and that it can be flexible, revised or even discarded when it becomes unnecessary, obstructive or destructive—is one of the most empowering learnings a person can experience. This is one of the greatest benefits of coaching!

**

Picture this scene: a little girl comes down for breakfast. Her father is sitting at the table about to drink his coffee. Excited, she jumps on him. His hands go up and the coffee spills.

Dad now has two choices. In the first scenario, he gets upset and yells at the little girl. He growls that they have to be at the school-bus stop in five minutes so she'd better get ready, then leaves her alone while he goes up to change. She's so upset she doesn't get into her clothes properly. He ends up leaving his briefcase behind as he runs out of the house to drive her to school. Result: his whole day is messed up—and so is hers.

In the second scenario, he takes a deep breath and says, "That's okay, honey. Stuff happens. I'm going to go upstairs and change. We need to be out at the bus in ten minutes." He changes, she gets dressed, they get her to the school bus on time, he remembers his briefcase, and they both have a wonderful day. All because of a choice he made from the onset about how he was going to treat his daughter.

Everything is about choice. We can even choose our attitudes and reactions. For example, when the father in the first scenario gets to the office all upset and calls me, I listen, acknowledge his decision and feelings, and then talk about what different decision he could make

next time. One of my questions would be, “What conversation should you have with your daughter when you get home?” By the end of the conversation, he would recognize the reaction options he had for these kinds of situations instead of simply falling back on his automatic emotional ones. We wouldn’t ignore the problem or leave it alone. We would explore his emotions and create a set of options to handle them effectively and satisfactorily. In other words, we would look for symptoms and strategize solutions.

**

My coaching comes down to three things: Clarity, Communications and Results. Clarity refers to being very clear about who you are, where you’re going, what you want, and what you don’t want. It means understanding how you made decisions before, and how you want to make them in the future. That’s the first thing we work on.

Communication means not only communicating those thoughts but also being more courageous about what conversations you need to have, who they should be with, and when they should occur. I often find that people’s relationships aren’t as rich and authentic as they could be because they aren’t having the conversations they should have. If you don’t communicate in a work situation with the people over you or under you, for example, how do they know whether they—or you—are doing a good job? Communication is all about asking key questions and getting feedback.

Results mostly involve preparing people for conversations they don’t want to have, usually because they don’t know how to have them safely. We all know that saying, “We have to talk, things aren’t the way they should be,” could be paralyzing to the other person. I help people learn how to approach their conversations more effectively. “I value our relationship and I’d like it to get even better.”

When you start a conversation that way, the other person is immediately curious. “What are you talking about? How are we going to get better?” If you then tell them the positive outcome you want, you’re more likely to have a richer conversation and obtain those results.

These simple components—Clarity, Communication and Results—can make a big difference in a person’s life. They can change how you relate to just about everyone.

**

Coaching is not therapy. To me, therapy means looking in the rear-view mirror: what have you done, why did you do it, what was your belief system at that point, how did your parents and their belief system affect your decisions? I do that only once with a person so I can understand the context of their current situation. I need to know, for example, if they’ve been making certain life decisions because their father committed suicide when they were nineteen. One session of “therapeutic questioning” helps me understand my client’s attitudes and strengths and the value/belief system with which we’re starting. We may refer to those aspects occasionally but coaching is about forward through the windshield. Rather than sort through, “How did I get here,” we work on, “Here’s where I am now, here’s where I’d like to be, how do I get *there*?” That’s the first layer of coaching.

The next layer involves, “What resources do I need? Do I need certain skills? Do I need to meet certain people?” I help clients figure out how to determine and find those resources.

The third level happens while the client is on the way to acquiring those assets. Once things have been set in motion, new situations, conversations and relationship issues will come to light that, if not addressed immediately, might prevent him from getting where he’s going. That’s the value of “real-time coaching.” We create an underlying plan in our regular sessions but I’m always there to help with the implemental conversations and situations as they occur.

I like to think of the process in terms of a closet. All your life you’ve been putting things in the closet, throwing in one item after another. Along comes a coach like me, a catalyst for change, who opens the closet door. As things spill out, I hold a light on them so we can look at who you are now and how you can get to where you want to go. It’s all a matter of becoming self-aware. Once you’re aware, you can start making changes.

For example, I sometimes coach people to help them change certain behaviors, such as a management style that's tough on everyone else. When someone becomes aware that just before they blow up the pit of their stomach starts to writhe, they can learn to think, "Oh, there it is. I'm about to blow my stack. I'd better stop." That's a significant and very positive change.

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People come to me when they're healthy and want to move on, when they want to know how they can move forward faster, or when they need help coping with an avalanche of change. They want someone in their corner. It's the person locked in the tower—"It's lonely at the top"—who has no one to talk to because everyone around has his or her own agenda. Or it's the person who wants to quit his or her job and do something different, only to have the spouse say, "But what about the mortgage?" Or it's the CFO laying off fifteen people and thinking, "Oh, God, what if I'm next?"

Where can they turn for an impartial opinion? The advice and input they get from the other people in their lives comes complete with that person's own fear. I only have one agenda with my clients: a retainer check. Otherwise, everything that happens in their lives is theirs. Consequently, I can be much purer in my advice and in helping someone achieve his or own clarity. People come to me because of my knowledge and experience but *they* choose what advice to accept or ignore, and *they* bear their *own* consequences. They have to make choices with which they can live, and arrive at those decisions that are in line with who they are.

In a way, I'm a paid friend. I get to know someone's inner heart, fears, and doubts. Almost every business leader I work with starts out by saying, "I know everyone thinks I'm big and successful, but I'm really a fake and a phony." They have no idea how they got to their position but they want to know how to stay there and become the leader they're supposed to be. That's where the fun begins, because when I can help those people, it's a beautiful thing to watch.

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If you've read this far, you probably understand why people call me a catalyst for change but it took my own coach to help me see it for myself.

MaryWayne and I were working on figuring out who I am at my core. The more questions she asked, the more I realized that nothing ever stayed the same when I showed up. Interestingly, as soon I realized that, I started getting affirmations in emails from people going back thirty years!

One was an old boyfriend with whom I'd gone to senior prom and who, much later, had been my brother's economics professor. Morrie ran into him in Montréal and gave him my email address. During our subsequent Internet exchange, he commented that knowing me had been very significant for him—in fact, it had changed his life. A couple of weeks later, another former classmate found me through Classmates.com and wrote something similar: he'd never forgotten me and how I had changed his life.

I kept thinking, "What did I do?" How could I have changed anyone's life that long ago?"

But I've come to realize, nothing ever stays the same when I come on the scene. I am a catalyst for change in people around me. My friends call to ask me for a "Frumi Fix."

So, when it comes right down to it, my coaching is all about providing executives with a Frumi Fix. In the next few chapters, I'd like to provide one for you.

Don't just answer the questions at the end of each section with the first idea that comes to mind. You'll get more out of the exercises if you reflect on the concepts instead of dashing off glib responses. Thinking through the answers will bring you closer to self-awareness, which will bring you closer to change. Remember, there are no "right" or "wrong" answers—just honest and unaware ones.

Ready? Let's get started!

About the Author



Frumi Rachel Barr, Ph.D., a veteran entrepreneur, has founded or been a partner in numerous companies, holding both Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) positions. Her hands-on experience ranges from manufacturing to service industries to direct-marketing enterprises; her consulting and coaching experience has taken her into virtually every type of corporation and small business. Her success has been so encompassing that clients, associates, and fellow coaches have dubbed her a “Catalyst for Change.”

Dr. Barr specializes in inspiring leaders to rediscover the strengths and values that energize them so they can, in turn, renew their colleagues, employees and business operations

and has a proven track record for helping entrepreneurs and leaders balance the needs of growing their businesses with the needs of their personal and family lives.

Dr. Barr holds a Bachelor of Physical Therapy (BPT) from McGill University in Montreal, Canada, a Masters in Business Administration (MBA) from California State University, Fullerton, California (CSUF), a Coaching Certification from Hudson Institute, Santa Barbara, California and a doctorate in Business Administration from Pacific Western University. She is a board member of The Entrepreneurship Institute in Orange County and immediate Past President of the National Board of the Professional Coaching and Mentors Association (PCMA). She has also been a member of the advisory board for Chapman University's new Business Coaching Certification Program, International Coaching Federation (ICF), and the Mentorship Program of NAWBO (National Association of Women Business Owners).

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