



Confessions
of a
Resilient
Entrepreneur

Persevering to Success

Frumi Rachel Barr, MBA and Ph.D.

SAVVY ABOUT



“Confessions of a Resilient Entrepreneur” Book Excerpt

Persevering to Success

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MBA and Ph.D.**



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Introduction

My life has been about entrepreneurship from start to finish—or at least to present. I was raised by an entrepreneur who was raised by entrepreneurs. I married entrepreneurs and, although I started out working a regular job, I quickly became an entrepreneur. After building and running several companies, I switched my focus to helping other entrepreneurs learn how to impose a degree of balance between their passions and the rest of their lives.

So what, exactly, are entrepreneurs?

People who want to work independently, not corporately or for someone else. People who have an idea—or a whole series of ideas—that becomes their dream and drives what they want to do with their lives. People who want to build a business and control how it functions, how it grows—even how it dies.

Entrepreneurs will find any way to fulfill their dreams, even when people consider their ideas silly or a lost cause. In fact, they persevere in the face of tremendous odds specifically because entrepreneurship is the belief that *I can do what I want to do*.

Somehow, entrepreneurs find the solutions they need to do exactly that.

And it doesn't matter if they suffer through a whole series of failures before finding the one business that does work. Entrepreneurship is an approach to life that says *I'm going to keep doing it, keep doing it, keep doing it until I get it right.*

Corporate people have a different attitude. They want the security of knowing their paycheck will be there every two weeks. They're not interested in having an entire company's success or failure ride on their shoulders. Corporate people have a driving need to be financially responsible and secure, not for pursuing an all-encompassing dream and its inherent all-encompassing liability.

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As far as I can tell, I was probably hatched as an entrepreneur. My parents brought me up to think the phrase "You can't do that" only meant that I, as their child, could not do something *right then*—not that I, as a woman, could not do it *at all*. In my house, if you wanted to do something, you were encouraged to do it. I had no idea women were treated differently from, or had more obstacles in business, than men. When I discovered that truth later, I wished someone had told me earlier! But aware or not, being a woman never deterred me, because my parents' language and attitudes during my formative years were such that I was bred to be an entrepreneur.

Which is how entrepreneurs are produced.

The conviction that you can be an entrepreneur comes from an internal belief system created by your environment and by the way you are raised. It's all a question of language and attitudes. The Director of Entrepreneurial Studies at USC once explained it by describing a father playing catch with his son. Where some dads might say, "Oh, too bad, you missed the ball, " when their son misses a catch, the entrepreneur-breeding parent would say something more like, "Oh, you almost got it—if you just stretch one more inch, you'll have it."

It's never: "Too bad, those are the breaks." It's always the more motivational: "You can do it, you can do it, you can do it."

Of course, sometimes the desire to be an entrepreneur is so great the obvious gets ignored. People get so enthused about their big ideas they want to jump in with two feet without pacing themselves—which is certainly part of the entrepreneurial “I can do it!” attitude. As an affiliate of Startup Nation, I get calls all the time from young people saying, “I want to quit my day job and start this company.”

I say, “Wait, wait, wait—*transition* into this. If you have a day job, that’s great. Prepare your business plan. Let’s look at what’s likely to happen. You’re probably thinking you’re going to have money in six months. What if it takes two years instead—can you quit your day job on that basis?”

This book is for all those young, starry-eyed entrepreneurs. It’s also for all those well-established entrepreneurs who have made their success, and now want to somehow fit a life into their dreams. We all know people who claim to have twenty years of experience at something, but actually only have one year of experience twenty times over. Well, I’m one of those people with twenty-eight years of experience whose every year was brand new, and who learned to adapt the lessons from previous situations to the next thing I was doing—and use them to move forward.

You see, that’s what being an entrepreneur really means: being in a constant state of failure, even when you’re successful. The trick is to “fail forward,” as leadership expert John C. Maxwell says: to take the lessons you’ve just learned, add them to your strengths and leverage your learning in your next experience.

I’ve done a lot of failing forward. I hope my experiences will help you leverage the lessons of *your* next move.

Frumi Rachel Barr, PhD
February 2007

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.

Epilogue

Life is a journey and we all go through it continuously, no matter how expert we are in different areas of personal growth and development. More often than not, I seem to attract the clients who have something to teach as well as who need to learn something from me.

So, where are members of my family now? The children are all doing well. Michael is an attorney, happy in his new field and far from home. Jennifer is thriving as the western business-development manager for a company that offers paperless solution technology. Michele is graduating this year with a BA in marketing. She opened an office for her knife company last summer and was tenth out of 200 in the nation. Cody is at the top of his class at USC, taking a double major in finance and accounting.

As for my ex-husbands, I have no relationship with Kenneth at this point, possibly because our paths simply ceased crossing. He's still in Canada while I've been in Southern California for sixteen years. Sadly, we've never had the opportunity to work out the pain between us. It's a shame but that's the way it is.

My relationship with Ted, on the other hand, has evolved into being best friends and extended family. We have Sunday dinners together, often

with one of his girlfriends present. He's my "In Case of Emergency" number and I'm his. Sometimes the divorce works better than the marriage.

I'm loving life as an empty nester and continuing to grow my business. At this point, I am developing leaders within organizations less by coaching and more by helping them have conversations that count. By that I mean having conversations with my client that make them recognize how they may be letting their team down by not doing what they said they would or by creating silos within the organization. At the core of life, it's all about communicating.

I've discovered that life is a journey of becoming self aware, authentic and real, which is also what coaching is all about. The most important learning about one's self is recognizing that we are all human and we all will make many mistakes. Forgiving ourselves for our mistakes is the first step to forgiving and being empathetic and compassionate toward other people. Those are the kind of thoughts that show the maturity in the journey.

Part of my maturity is recognizing the real, biological differences between men and women. Although more of my clients are females, the majority of clients who pay me directly are male. Men seem more ready to understand the difference between making an investment in themselves and spending money. So the only way I get to coach women is when their organization thinks they're worth coaching. And even then I consistently get questions like "How much money are they spending on me?" and "I don't think I'm worth all of this."

Why? I believe it's in the female genome, in our DNA. Women have a basic need to be taken care of. It's only in the last fifty years that women have become really self sufficient and professional. Nevertheless, they still have that lingering sense that someone should be taking care of them and they almost have an anger about it. Men's DNA gives them the sense that they're supposed to take care of people; when they can't do it, they get angry. They're often afraid to get into relationships because they cannot support the woman. How could only fifty years change six generations of DNA, which is how far back our genes go?

As for me, I'm quite happy to be real in myself and let what wants to happen, happen. And even at this age I'm loving being old enough to recognize what it is that I'm experiencing.

Resilience and YOU!

We all have to be resilient at one time or another. In thinking about writing this chapter, I realized that opportunities come up several times every day to practice resiliency skills. Some of the issues are small (although some days, they don't seem that way) and others are enormous challenges. Regardless, the tools are very similar to navigate the world with resilience.

Dinner with the Family

Sunday nights are family night. With as many of my adult children as possible who can make it from Los Angeles or Laguna. They now arrive with their plus ones. The menu was set last night—a delicious assembly of tasty dishes and two chickens that needed to be cooked in the oven for a couple of hours. The oven, however, was not cooperating. (The temperature remained at 100 degrees and was not rising.) I had to chuckle...the maven on resilience gets to practice again. I fired up the BBQ, put the chickens in a pan on a rack with water (sorry I know this isn't a recipe book), and marched outside feeling undaunted.

Uh oh! Half an hour later the BBQ thermostat started to drop like a rock. The BBQ had run out of gas. So in spite of the excellent menu, we all went out to our favorite hole in the wall for a sumptuous dinner, and then came home for our berries and chocolate dessert.

The morale of this story: no one was disturbed by the lack of a home-cooked meal and a good time was had by all. This outcome would have been much different if I had been crabby or otherwise acted badly because of an uncooperative oven and the untimely demise of two chickens.

A PowerPoint Debacle

Have you ever sent your PowerPoint presentation ahead? Some companies prefer to protect their system by making sure that you do. I had a lovely presentation prepared with graphics galore instead of the bullet points that make people snooze. There was just one problem: that little red x showed in the corner of all the pictures. No worries. I had the presentation on a USB drive just in case a problem came up. So we plugged that in...with the same result. The computer had a defective graphics card so we weren't going to see what we wanted. What next? Handouts, of course.

The key to resilience exhibited in this story: I was prepared for every eventuality. And I didn't break a sweat. The audience was impressed and enjoyed the presentation. Had I exhibited anxiety or hysteria they would have had a totally different experience.

The Source of Resilience

How often have you heard that we are what we think? My friend Joanne says "thinking the right thoughts takes the work out of doing." In the past two years, with the change of the economy and the ebb and flow of clients, I learned something extremely relevant to this discussion about resilience. The most important work that we do is keeping our thoughts under control. I don't mean that we should have Pollyanna optimism, but if we don't stay focused on what we can do, it's easy to spin out of control and imagine only doom and gloom on the horizon.

I discovered for myself that a ritual of listening and reading the work of Wallace Wattles' 1910 classic called *The Science of Getting Rich* was what I needed to do to keep my mind focused. I listened and read that small book at least 400 times and talked about it to anyone who would listen. In a nutshell I learned that having a "why," a cause to align both my personal thoughts and my work, preceded the vision for my practice. With that in mind I think of what I am grateful for every day and allow the things I am seeking to come into my life. Truly the "allowing piece" is my biggest challenge. Every day, I do all that I can so that every day can be successful and productive (except when it isn't). And I use my will power to stay the course and keep my thoughts positive. Whenever I think "I can't," I ask myself what *can* I do?

One day, I decided to write an explanation of "Wally's" book, which incidentally was written seventeen years before Napoleon Hill's classic *Think and Grow Rich*. You can find a free copy of "Wally's Work" as I fondly call it (<http://www.thescienceofgettingrichexplained.com/>) and my explanation of the Words of Wisdom of Wallace Wattles (WoWW!) as well.

Best Practices for Boosting Your Resilience

Since this is my book, I can share my stories and my own resilience, but what about you? Here are twelve best practices to boost yours.

1. *First thing in the morning*: Start the day with some positive thoughts. Appreciate those around you—pet, a child, a spouse, an object of art, or your bagel and lox.
2. *Reset the clock*: If a day starts out poorly, reset the clock and pretend the day is starting again. After all, if you expect the day to be a disaster, you'll get what you expect. If you spill your coffee all over your clothes and have to change, why let that ruin your day? Start over.
3. *Smile big*: As you move through your day, smile at people. A smile is a universal language and it's hard not to smile back when someone smiles at you.
4. *Appreciate people*: Say something nice to people. I'm not suggesting that you be ingenuous, but everyone likes to be appreciated. Why not tell them what you appreciate and why.

5. *Boost your energy:* If you sit at a desk a lot, remember to move around. You'll get a lot more done if you get up every hour and walk around.
6. *Eat well:* You are not only what you think, you are also what you eat. Our bodies weren't built to eat processed food. Eat wholesome organic food. Eating is one thing we can control in a world that so often feels out of our control.
7. *Move your body:* No matter what your fitness level is, you can always do a little more to feel better.
8. *Build your support system:* My poor friends have to listen to me process events out loud. Having strong and supportive friendships is one of the secrets of being resilient.
9. *Ask for help:* What help do you need and from whom? Don't you like to help others? Well, guess what? People love to help each other, so why not ask when you need it?
10. *Allow opportunities to come to you:* People who are happy actually attract people and opportunities and can be even more successful.
11. *Remember to be grateful:* Record what you're grateful in a gratitude journal (really did I write that? I hate journaling!) or at least tell yourself or someone who will listen. This is especially a good idea at bedtime because you'll go to sleep with positive thoughts. Notice what you are grateful for and do more or encourage more of those things.
12. *Find rituals that support you:* My favorite is reading Wallace Wattles. Whether it's reading the Bible or meditation, find that special ritual that gives you energy to face the next hurdle. There will always be another one to maneuver.

Applied Resilience (Coping with Continuous Uncertainty)

The past couple of years have been difficult for many companies and individuals. As a business advisor, coach, mentor, and consultant, I suddenly found myself applying the best practices I mentioned daily in order to keep myself motivated and in action rather than curling up in a ball of fear and sucking my thumb!

Companies, as a result of their need to downsize, forced their executives and staff to do more work with fewer resources. This works for a while, but before too long people get burnt out and it gets harder to perform well. It's only by thinking differently that people and companies will be successful and break from the pack.

Sitting around the table with my Mastermind group, a group of several seasoned coaches, we challenged each other to think about how the concept of thinking differently applied to us. After all, giving the advice is one thing, but living it...well, that takes thought (first to come up with a plan, and then the courage to implement it).

My good friend and co-conspirator, Susan, and I decided to do something out of our comfort zone. We decided to go to a CEO Space weekend together to look for answers on how to change things up. While we were there we met a dynamic duo and tag team consisting of a branding guru and a PR expert. The two of them teamed up to create what they called a "Kidnap." Susan and I committed to three days of immersion to make our brands relevant for the coming decade. The promise was this: spend three days and emerge with a new brand, a one-sheet describing our work, and a designed website complete with content. This was a very tall order—and a very compelling one.

As you might imagine, everyone tried to protect us from ourselves. Other consultants and coaches played the devil's advocate. We heard warnings of "too much money," who are these people, don't do it, you might get burned.

We took a chance on thinking differently and it was the best thing either of us has done for our careers. Visit my website for yourself at www.frumi.com and send me feedback at ceoconfidante@frumi.com. You tell me if it was worth it.

You can't do the same thing harder to get better results, sometimes you have to do things differently. And without this important step I wouldn't have been able to close the loop in making my WHY come alive. One of the tabs on my website became The WHY Immersion instead of The WHY Institute. But now I'm ahead of myself. Let me explain.....

The Big Five for Life

For many years I was very pleased with myself, thinking that I knew my WHY, my reason for being, my cause, and taking action to put it into play. Once again Susan was part of the change that was about to happen. Susan became all fired up about John Strelecky and his books, *The Why Café*, *The Big Five for Life* and *Life Safari*, and I listened patiently. I was happy for her, that she was inspired, and his work sounded interesting. Susan arranged for John to come to California and offer his first certification program to coaches and Susan urged me to join her. I really didn't need another certification and had no idea what I would do with it if I earned it, but what are friends for? I took a leap of faith and signed up.

On an early Saturday morning in January, I walked into a somewhat cramped suite in the Embassy Suites Hotel in Irvine and there was John, very much himself, a wiry, fit looking man wearing a bush hat and looking well...like I was bursting to say.... "Livingston I presume?" John is an incredible story teller and I much enjoyed the first day, but truthfully, I was tired and glad when it was over.

I went to sleep that night asking myself this question: what was I doing there today and what am I supposed to get out of it? I am a strong believer in asking a "what" question and allowing my brain to work like the little computer it is to come up with an answer. And sure enough, some small seed must have taken root, because my eyes literally sprang open in the morning and I jumped out of bed and couldn't wait to get back into that hotel room. I walked in and my energy was literally bouncing off the wall. Why? Because I suddenly knew how to make my Why come alive! I determined right there and then to found the WHY Institute. But wait, there is more....

Stalking Simon

Life and the universe have a very strange way of aiding and abetting people with extreme clarity. And this was no different for me. When I met Sonia, another colleague and thought partner, the following Monday for lunch, I was bursting with excitement about my epiphany and the creation of the Why Institute. Sonia was carrying a book that

day and she held it out to me. It was Simon Sinek's new book, *Start with Why*. Have any of you heard of Simon Sinek or heard his TED talk?

For those of you who haven't, Simon is passionate about inspiring people. He has spoken at the UN, Congress, the Pentagon, and for many conferences around the country. In some months he speaks to as many as 8,000 people, and he is truly inspiring!

I quickly devoured his book and knew with great certainty that his simple "start with why" model resonated with me and that it would be the first component of the Why Institute's program. Now I needed to convince him to work with me. Why? Because I believed what he believed and I wanted to work with a kindred spirit.

That's when I began to stalk Simon. I called his office and was redirected to three coaches in San Francisco. A month or two later I was disappointed when nothing happened with that and was more determined than ever to talk to Simon. His chief of staff, Kim, didn't make it easy for me, but with much persistence one day, Simon looked at his schedule and there I was—lunch at the Little Greek on Larchmont with Frumi. And he thought to himself—WHO is Frumi? And why am I meeting with her?

I now proudly wear the token of inspiration that Simon gave me that day because he said I inspired him. I was so inspired that it took me about two minutes to decide to wear it around my neck! On the back of the coin are three concentric circles: clarity of WHY is the bull's eye, the circle around that says HOW, meaning the discipline of how you do what you do, and finally the last circle symbolizes the consistency of WHAT you do. Around the circumference of the coin are the words: "Remember why you do what you do" and "Think, Act, and Communicate from the Inside." On the front of the coin it says "Inspire Action: Certified to Inspire Greatness" as well as the words "If it Feels Right—It's Right."

I have found my inspiration. And clarity of purpose and persistence paid off. Simon knows that I believe what he believes and as he would say, "I make his message come alive." I now carry the WHY message of both John Strelecky and Simon Sinek forward, and as for me, I

consult and guide CEOs and their companies to find their Why, align behind it, and thereby attract the right people and make the best decisions to build cutting edge sustainable companies.

I hope that you have enjoyed reading this book. Feel free to contact me to explore your "Why," how to improve your business results, or if you are a CEO who wishes that there were two of you, reach out. I'm a great "Who" for lots of people.

A

Book Summaries

I'm an avid reader of books aimed at personal and professional development, and I chronicle my efforts in book summaries that I share with friends, clients and colleagues. I provide a list of these book summaries and recommendations at <http://www.frumi.com>. Please feel free to click on Books and Reports and peruse as many titles as you like. I update the list every month, so send me a note at bookreports@frumi.com if you'd like to be added to my email list.

Below are just a few examples of what you'll find at http://www.frumi.com/index.php/weblog/books_and_reports/

Book Summaries

The Attractor Factor by Joe Vitale

Building Trust In Business, Politics, Relationships, and Life by Robert C. Solomon & Fernando Flores

Change Your Questions Change Your Life By
Marilee G. Adams Ph.D.

***Confidence: How Winning Streaks and
Losing Streaks Begin and End*** by Rosabeth
Moss Kanter

***Confronting Reality: Doing What Matters to
Get Things Right*** by Larry Bossidy & Ram
Charan

Emotional Intelligence by Daniel Goleman

EQ Edge, The by Steven J. Stein, PhD and
Howard E. Book, M.D.

***Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things
Done*** by Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan

***Failing Forward: Turning Mistakes into
Stepping Stones for Success*** by John C.
Maxwell, Thomas Nelson

***Fierce Conversations: Achieving Success at
Work & in Life, One Conversation at a Time*** by
Susan Scott

Four Agreements, The by Don Miguel Ruiz

Good To Great by Jim Collins

Last Word on Power, The by Tracy Goss

Power of Full Engagement, The by Jim Loehr
& Tony Schwartz

Winning by Jack Welch

About the Author



Frumi Rachel Barr, PhD, 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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"No one is better equipped to coach and nurture female entrepreneurs than Frumi, herself a successful entrepreneur, mother, friend and community leader. If 'The Little Engine That Could' were re-written just for women entrepreneurs, 'Confessions of a Resilient Entrepreneur' would be it. Frumi understands an entrepreneur's excitement, temptations and fears intimately because she's 'been there, done that.' Reading her story is like swallowing a big dose of courage. You feel as though you could overcome anything because she has faced life's hardest challenges with aplomb and transformed herself into a stronger, happier and better woman each time."

Cara Good, President, WunderMarx Inc.

"The Frumi Fix is a recipe for turning yourself inside out so your true self can shine. Frumi reminds us it is in the stew of our total life experiences that we have every ingredient necessary to create, and serve, our special offering to others. What she delivers is not her personal ingredient list, rather the inspiration and courage to mix up our own - from the inside out. And that's the magic. Once you've digested the Confessions and get your first taste of The Frumi Fix, you'll experience inside-out at it's best. And I guarantee you'll return for a daily helping."

Ann Hult Crowell, A Recovering CEO, Author & Speaker

"Frumi Rachel Barr inspires us to not let catastrophes get in the way of our success. Sure, things can get crummy, but if we keep our focus up and our eyes open, we'll see doors open for us. In experience after experience, Frumi illustrates how asking ourselves the right questions allows the best answers to show up. Frumi's book is a page turner, and I loved the advice she gives at the end. This special book is a keeper!"

Joanne Rodasta Wilshin, Author 'Take a Moment and Create Your Life!'

"Don't miss this book filled with personal courage as Frumi bares her soul telling how she overcame whatever obstacles were put in her way. Resilience is Frumi's authentic real deal - what it takes to create a purposeful, fulfilling life. A definite must read for everyone (not just women) who wonders if they have what it takes to follow their dreams."

Marilyn August, Author, 'Journey to Wealth & Wisdom'

"An endearing account of a strategist's relentless quest for personal growth and fulfillment. Frumi is a role model and inspiration for all entrepreneurs whether practicing or aspiring."

**Katharina Martinka, Business Advisor and Attorney,
Martinka & Associates Consulting, LLC**

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