

Leveraging Uncertainty



**HOW TO GROW
WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW**

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***This booklet is
dedicated to all that have stood in a
place of not knowing
and wondered...***

what if ?

Dear Fellow Seekers

**Your life is the greatest adventure on which
you will ever embark.**

**Everything in your life happens for a higher
purpose.**

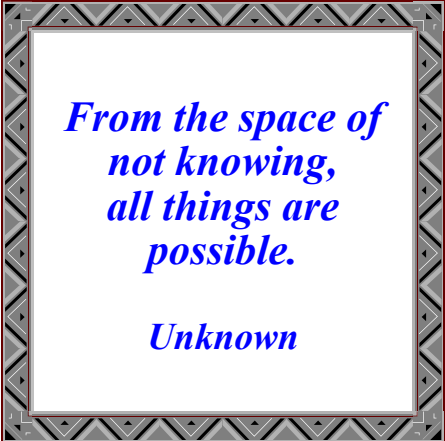
**You are perfect just the way you are...
and you can be, do and have much more.**

**May this booklet help you become a finder
—as well as a seeker.**

KAREN

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*From the space of
not knowing,
all things are
possible.*

Unknown

INTRODUCTION

It happens in an instant. Life as we know it goes away. A solid constant moves from what *is* to what *was*. A gap opens. Suddenly, we are in-between. We are confronted with the unknown. We scurry to get our feet back on solid ground. But there doesn't seem to be any around at the moment. Change is all around us. But we don't know what that means. We don't know what to do to get back on terra firma. In fact, we don't know much of anything right now.

Disease. Downsizing. Divorce. Death. Disillusionment. Disasters-natural and man-made. These events throw our lives into seismic shifts. We leap into survival mode, rising above the immediate impact. But then what? Disoriented, angry, hurt, grieving, we begin seeking for answers. But things just don't make sense. Right now, we just don't know what to do.

Welcome to the "Don't Knows"- an amorphous place between what was and what will be. A place of self exploration if you are willing to take a breath, slow down, sit for a spell, and look for messages in the swirling clouds inside of you.

We can't avoid the Don't Knows. In our fast changing world, they will be more and more present in our lives. But we can use them wisely and consciously to walk forward into a deeper understanding of ourselves and the lives we are capable of living, and want to live.

In **Leveraging Uncertainty: How to Grow When You Don't Know**, we explore uncertainty and use Tackling Tips that turn fear, disillusionment and confusion into curiosity, anticipation and internal exploration. Then on the other side, when you know again, you will have a new awareness of what truly matters to you, and you will be ready to design and walk toward your chosen, compelling future.

Life isn't meant to be lived perfectly...but merely to be LIVED. Boldly, wildly, beautifully, uncertainly, imperfectly, magically LIVED."

— Mandy Hale, Author

MEET THE DON'T KNOWS **(Better known as the DKs)**

The DKs have a life style all their own. Just as your previous “in the know” life had its special rhythm and components, each DK experience has its own personality. Spend time getting to know it, just as you would a new acquaintance.

Here are some common qualities of not knowing, and some hints to help you navigate the Don't Knows.

- “Not Knowing” takes longer than “knowing”. Allow more time for pondering, picking through and planning.
- Let your old routine fade away and listen for a new beat. Find your natural pulse. Design a new routine that serves your life now.
- Look all around you—not just behind you or ahead of you.
- Listen a lot. Be the student rather than the teacher. You are in a learning phase. Be gentle and expect trial and error
- Don't force an opinion or decision until you have more information. Explore rather than decide.
- Expect a variety of emotions. Ride the ups and downs like gentle waves—and know the beach is just a few strokes away when you need to ground yourself.
- Expect more questions than answers.
- Practice being curious, rather than being sure.
- Allow things to be different.
- Keep a pen and notebook with you. Write down your discoveries.
- Expect surprises!



PRACTICE THE BASICS

Going through the Don't Knows is stressful. It requires mental, emotional, physical and spiritual energy. Whether an external event has knocked you off your feet, or an internal disillusionment is throwing you for a loop, you need time to regain your strength. You need time to heal, just as you would from a physical injury.

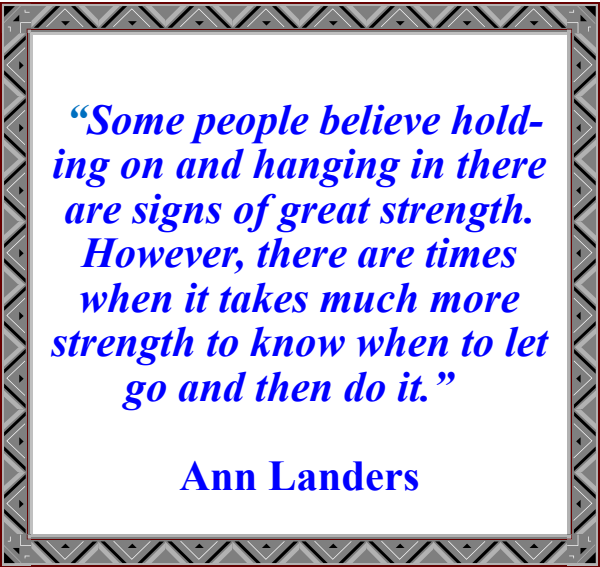
Listen to your body and practice the basics. Eat well. Sleep as much as your body needs to. Spend time with people who will nurture you. Drink more water than usual. Get massages. Ask for hugs and hearing ears. Take walks. Exercise. Practice yoga. Create gentle physical movement in your life. Take lots of deep breaths.

Then begin to test the waters. You will know when you are ready to begin the journey of sorting through things and taking the next steps.

But first, take care of your body and your spirit. The rest will come in its own time and in the right and perfect way.

Right now, take it easy. Rest. Be gentle with yourself.

And begin to heal.



“Some people believe holding on and hanging in there are signs of great strength. However, there are times when it takes much more strength to know when to let go and then do it.”

Ann Landers

Tackling Tip #1

SURRENDER TO NOT KNOWING

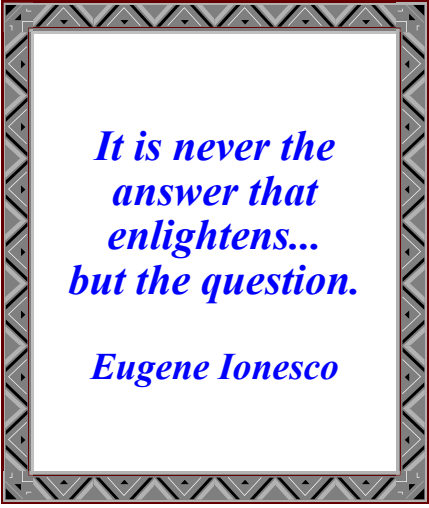
In some thought systems, not knowing is considered to be a weakness. We humans, especially those living in western cultures, are “supposed to know.” It may be OK to read mystery books, but it is not considered to be OK when your life’s plot is going through seemingly uncontrollable twists and turns, with no discernible end in sight.

Your ego is especially uncomfortable with the Don’t Knows. Knowing is one of its main jobs. In order to get the most out of the Don’t Knows - to really explore the transition you are going through and emerge on the other side with a more expanded view of YOU— it is important that you admit that you don’t know.

Make a deal with your ego. Let it know you are not firing it or taking over its turf. Assure your ego you will need its protective wisdom again once you have spent some time not knowing.

Then go one step further. Sit quietly and find that special space inside of you that wants your life to be different. Find your inner wisdom that wants to take advantage of this opportunity. Exhale and surrender into the space of not knowing. It’s OK. This won’t last forever. It is just for now. Surrender into living in the mystery.

Commit to not knowing for awhile.



*It is never the
answer that
enlightens...
but the question.*

Eugene Ionesco

Your commitment to you

**I, _____, commit
to not knowing for a while.**

**I will explore the
Don't Knows.**

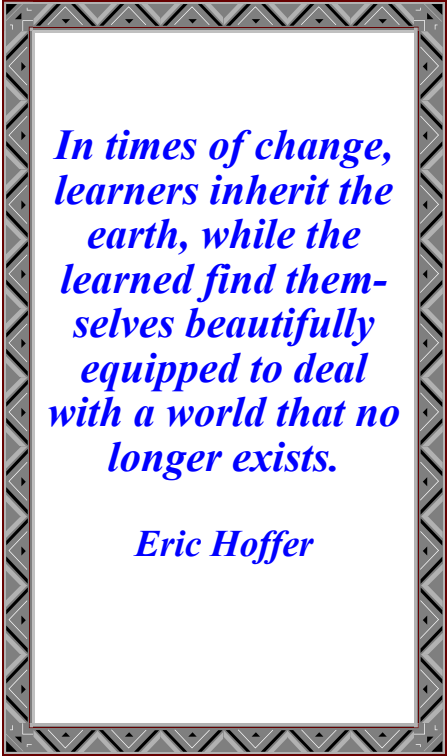
**I will learn what truly
matters to me.**

I will be open to surprises.

**I will have a
successful
and inspiring
Don't Know Experience.**

(Signature)

(Date)



*In times of change,
learners inherit the
earth, while the
learned find them-
selves beautifully
equipped to deal
with a world that no
longer exists.*

Eric Hoffer

Tackling Tip #2

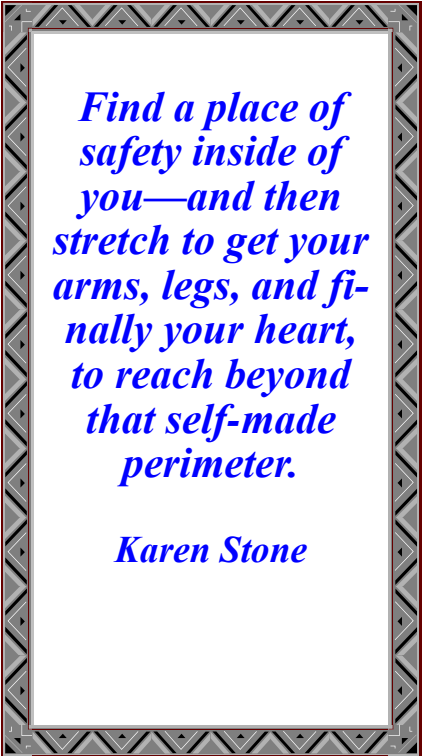
LEARN TO DANCE THE LIMBO

If you feel like you are in limbo, you are right on track! You have left behind a part of you - your old life and the comfortable identity and status you had attained - and you have begun your journey to a new awakening. A new beginning where you get to choose your new identity and how you want to live is up ahead.

So, why do you feel so out of sorts? Why don't things make sense? Why are you frustrated, afraid, uncertain, tired, depressed, angry, unfocused and down-right hard to be around? Because you are in the middle phase of an official, but most likely unacknowledged and unnamed, rite of passage. This "in between" space is the place of tests and challenges, beautiful visions and sweaty nightmares, sweet moments and tart bites, baby steps and quantum leaps. In this place, you gain the strength and wisdom to discover and hold the new identity and status you will soon claim.

For alchemy to take place - for one thing to be transformed into another - a force must be applied that rearranges the existing elements into a new form. The middle phase of a rite of passage is the crucible of change. Your hopes, your doubts, your fears, your thoughts and your emotions are the forces being applied to your psyche. If you let them do their job, change will happen inside you. And that is the beginning of change happening in your outer world.

Practice dancing the limbo. Embrace the ups and downs. Explore new moves and steps. Some of your new discoveries will become vital parts of who you are becoming.



*Find a place of
safety inside of
you—and then
stretch to get your
arms, legs, and fi-
nally your heart,
to reach beyond
that self-made
perimeter.*

Karen Stone

Tackling Tip #3

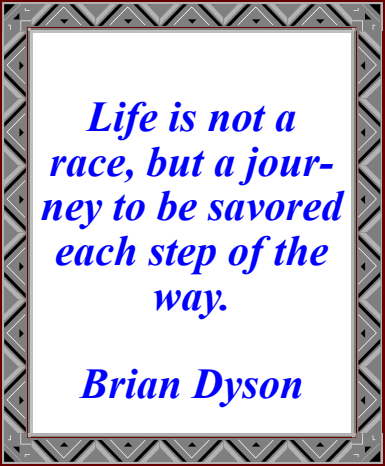
DEFINE YOUR EXPLORATION ZONE

For most of us, when transition rocks our world we respond by going into survival mode. This is a valuable instinct that we can use constructively when we encounter the DKs. Because we live “in this world,” we can take tangible steps toward leveraging uncertainty by assessing and managing the necessities of our daily life in the midst of even the most tumultuous of transitions.

When you find yourself in a DK experience, use your instinct for survival to create a safe place. Take a realistic look at your current situation. Plan how you will take care of your immediate needs: shelter, food, finances, a human support system and a private, healing place that is your safe space. These parameters will define your Exploration Zone, where you will continue to heal and regroup. Soon, from this place, you will begin to explore.

Now, make a self-exploration plan. How much time, and in what kinds of chunks, can you dedicate to seeking, wandering and wondering? Create an Exploration Zone based on reality and use that space to let yourself be with you. If you only have a few minutes a day that are truly your own, take that time and treat it as sacred. Focus on asking questions, rather than seeking answers. Be curious about who you are inside and how you can use this time of transition to uncover your strengths, your values and your dreams. Connect with the feeling of not knowing, follow your curiosity and explore.

When you carve out the time and space for self-discovery, pay attention to the new insights that come to you. Write down or draw your thoughts, feelings and insights, even when they don't make any logical sense. Remember, you are spending time with your soul and spirit, and giving your brain a much needed rest.



*Life is not a
race, but a jour-
ney to be savored
each step of the
way.*

Brian Dyson

Tackling Tip #4

SLOW DOWN TO TAKE THE CURVE

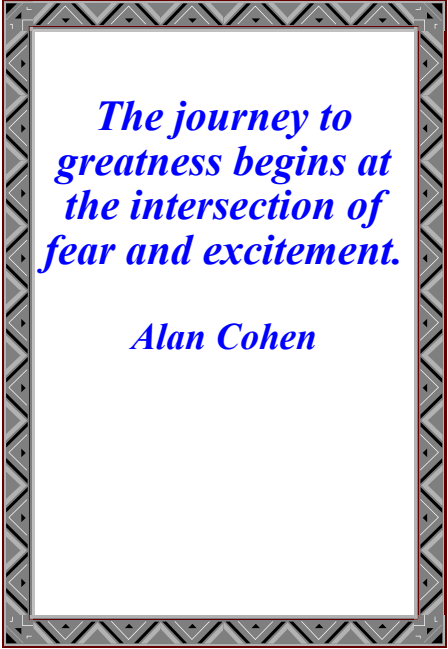
I used to go through brakes and tires like crazy. I craved the thrill of heading into a curve on the highway and accelerating, praying my tires and torsion bar suspension would hold me to the road.

I used to do this in life, too. Heading into any challenge or threat at full speed was exhilarating. During most of the changes in my life's direction, my human vehicle held on well, just brushing the guard rails of life and heading off again into the straight stretches.

But, sometimes when life brought a big, sharp curve my way, my vehicle was not up to the stress. I just couldn't hold my wheels on the road with the weight of a major Don't Know on my shoulders. That's when I began to explore the DKs and found a way to leverage uncertainty without crashing.

When you are changing directions in life—especially when you don't know what direction you will head in next—it is much easier - and safer - to take the turns if you slow down. Part of being in a Don't Know is taking time to look at your internal scenery. You can also gain strength from enjoying the external scenery of our beautiful world. It's hard to do either if the worlds inside of you and outside of you are a blur because you are hurtling past them.

The Don't Knows are a winding road. Take time to explore the curves. Slow down. Look around and within. Life is a lot sweeter when it doesn't smell like burning rubber.



*The journey to
greatness begins at
the intersection of
fear and excitement.*

Alan Cohen

Tackling Tip #5

FIND YOUR SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE

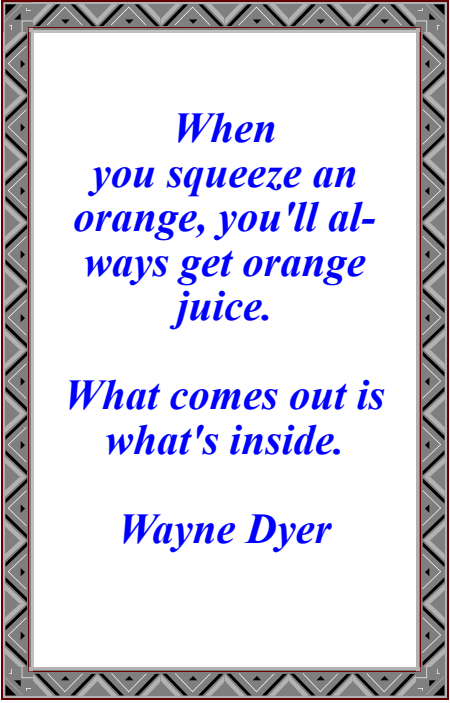
In my early thirties, I went on an official “vision quest.” I backpacked into the wilds of the Canyonlands with a spiritual studies group, carrying 10 pounds of M & Ms with peanuts, a six pack of Coke and a 24-ounce jar of crunchy peanut butter. After a few days of preparation, we all split up to spend three nights and four days alone, communing with the spirits of that beautiful place.

As I walked away from the group, I had no idea where I was going. I wasn’t sure what to expect. I had never even set up a tent by myself ! But I knew with the help of my security foods, I would at least emerge from the wilderness intact. That is, of course, as long as I didn’t turn out to be the comfort food of choice of one of the area’s animal kingdom residents.

Once I surrendered to the beauty of the desert and the penetrating sound of non-mechanized quiet, I found a peace and childlike joy I had not known for years. Here I was, in the middle of no-where, by myself, and I was not afraid. In fact, I was filled with the adventure of being in a completely different place and finding out who I was when thrown into the unknown. I surprised myself. I discovered I am really pretty resourceful when I don’t know what is around the corner.

When you engage your spirit of adventure, you too will find that you are resourceful and actually unafraid of those things that would normally stop you in your tracks. You will find that fear is just excitement in disguise.

Not knowing can be a state of high adventure, when you let yourself embrace it.



*When
you squeeze an
orange, you'll al-
ways get orange
juice.*

*What comes out is
what's inside.*

Wayne Dyer

Tackling Tip # 6

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF “BEING SQUEEZED”

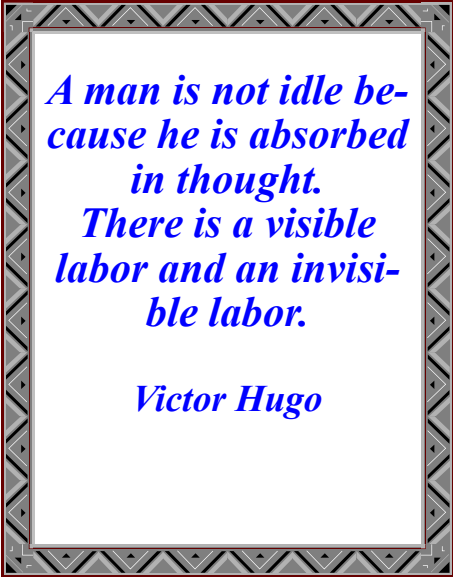
One of my favorite personal development teachers, Wayne Dyer, has a saying that has become one of my favorites. He teaches that when a person is squeezed, you find out what they are really made of.

It is easy to be our “best selves” when life is cruising along under blue skies. It is the trying times that show us what we are truly made of inside.

When we are thrown into a Don’t Know Experience, our default personality traits pop up. These mostly unacknowledged and usually hidden parts of ourselves rear their heads in all sorts of ways as we struggle to negotiate a transition situation.

Here is the good news! When life squeezes us, we get a chance to see first hand what our core beliefs are. For example, if we are generally pessimistic and have a victim hiding inside, a “woe is me” personae will come rushing out. If we are optimistic and believe that everything happens for a good reason, our curiosity will fuel our spirit of adventure as we tackle our transition.

Here’s more good news! Once the squeezing begins, we can step back and observe what comes out—and then consciously choose if this is how we want to show up. If our default response does not serve us, with some retraining we can change it!



*A man is not idle be-
cause he is absorbed
in thought.
There is a visible
labor and an invis-
ible labor.*

Victor Hugo

Tackling Tip #7

BE PRODUCTIVELY UNPRODUCTIVE

There's nothing like checking something off of a "to do" list. The feeling of accomplishment you get when you mark through a task can make your day.

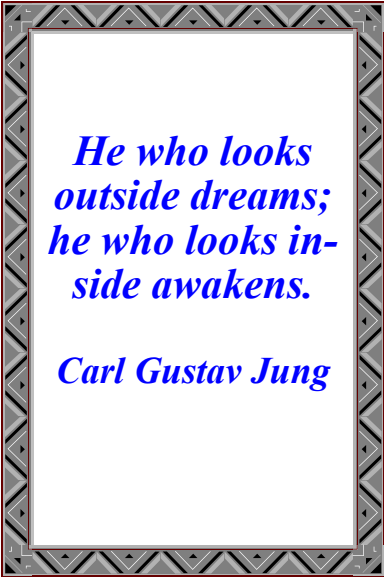
But when you are in transition, it is hard to come up with a list in the first place.

"Do this, do that and this task will be completed" does not apply to the big internal questions you are facing in the DKs. What you are going through is not a "to do" thing. It is a "to be" thing. And the only way to accomplish a "to be" thing is to, well, be.....and to spend time allowing yourself to listen to your insides.

Whether you meditate, journal, take long walks, read, nap or pray, take time to sit, be quiet, listen and receive the wisdom that is inside of you.

When you are overwhelmed by frustration and feel like you are not making any progress, do a simple task that has a clear beginning and a clear end and that can be done in a few minutes, like cleaning out the dishwasher. When you are done, pat yourself on the back, check it off your list, and go back to "being" for a while.

Remember—being internally productive may look unproductive to the outside world. But it is where all authentic discovery and movement starts.



*He who looks
outside dreams;
he who looks in-
side awakens.*

Carl Gustav Jung

Tackling Tip #8

SIT INSIDE THE CIRCLE OF YOUR LIFE

The business world thrives on “thinking outside the box.” Innovation is rewarded, as long as it doesn’t completely overthrow the status quo.

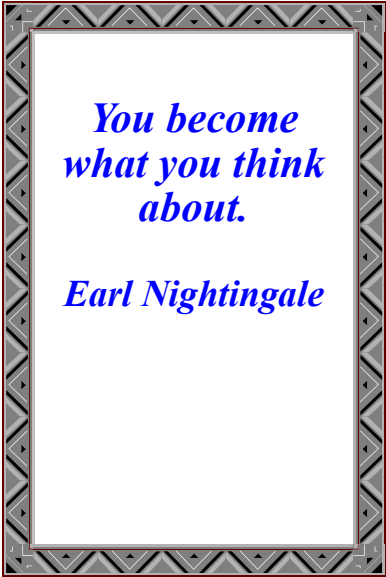
When you are in a “Don’t Know”, your status quo has already been overthrown. The walls of your box have closed in and you are momentarily covered by the rubble of the world as you knew it.

As you sit, wondering when and where the next opening door will appear, envision yourself sitting in the circle of your life, rather than in the crumbled box of your old world. Take the sharp edges of that box and mold them into a wheel. Your soul, your spirit, your dreams, sit in the center of that circle. And all the experiences of your life surround you, radiating out as spokes that have led you to this place, where, for a moment, the wheel slows.

And you are at choice. You can make a difference in how the wheel of your life rolls - and in what direction. But first, just sit inside the circle, and be grateful for the fullness of your life and the journey you are on. Take care of your spirit. Honor your soul. Love your authentic self that knows your heart’s desires.

Sit inside the circle of your life and know that you are a part of **all that is**. You matter in the circle of your life and all life.

There is more to come. For the moment, enjoy the mystery of not knowing and celebrate the circle of your life.



*You become
what you think
about.*

Earl Nightingale

Tackling Tip # 9

WHAT YOU FOCUS ON EXPANDS

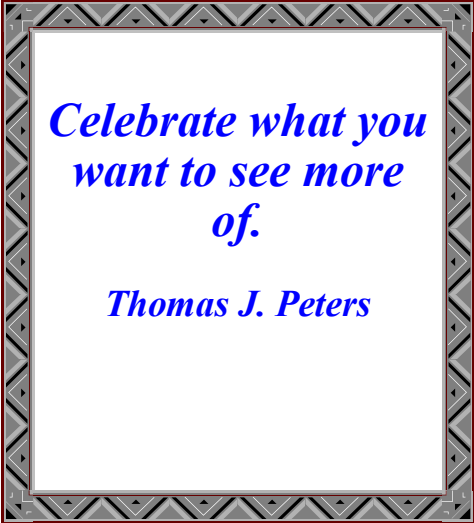
Quantum physics and string theory have proven that the same power that created universes lives inside our heads and bodies. When an observer observes something, the act of observing effects the organization of matter and the flow of energy and turns possibility (energy waves) into reality (matter).

This means our thoughts are powerful creative forces. Put even more simply-what we think is what we get. If you want more of something, focus on having more of something, rather than not having enough of something. Because, guess what? If you focus on not having enough of something, that is what you will get - not enough of something.

By focusing your thoughts on what you want, you have the ability to create your life as you want it to be.

And, here's the best part: all you have to focus on is what you want. You don't even have to know how you will get it. You will attract the how to you. Just pay attention, stay aware and wait for the next right step, person, idea, etc. to show up. Ask yourself if what shows up feels like it is taking you closer to your dream or goal, and take action if the answer is "yes."

But wait.....you are in a Don't Know. Your mind may not be able to come up with a clear "yes" or "no." In that case, trust your gut, your intuition and your instincts. They are the messengers of your heart and spirit—and they will never lead you wrong. Just focus on what you want. At the perfect time, the "how" will show up.



***Celebrate what you
want to see more
of.***

Thomas J. Peters

Tackling Tip # 10

CELEBRATE EACH STEP

Each step of your Don't Know journey is a vital part of your growth. Even the ones that don't seem to move you forward. And, yes, even those that feel like they are pulling you backward.

No step is wasted or insignificant. Each step brings you closer to becoming more of who you want to be and how you want to show up in the world.

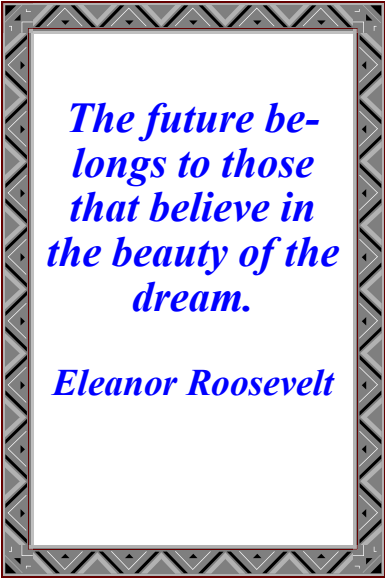
So celebrate each and every step you take—no matter what that one step looks like.

Each step gives you a new point of view. You will discover or refine what you want or get a chance to clarify what you don't want.

As you take each step, celebrate what you now know to be true for you. As you celebrate taking each step, you will be guided and supported in taking the next step...and the next.

Celebrate the joys, precious moments and insights you experience and you will get more of those things. Celebrate your willingness to take a stand for the life you want. Celebrate the journey itself.

First and foremost, celebrate you. You are amazing. There is only one of you in all space and time. You are unique. You matter. You make a difference. You are a gift. Celebrate you!



*The future belongs to those
that believe in
the beauty of the
dream.*

Eleanor Roosevelt

BELIEVE IN POSSIBILITIES

When you are in the Don't Knows, it may be hard to believe in anything. Being disillusioned is a big part of a DK experience. Old beliefs, rules and constructs are breaking down. The world looks, feels - and is - different.

Out of breakdown, you can open to a new perspective. This may soon lead you to a new beginning. Remember, the DKs are your test period. You are not supposed to know right now. Try things out. See how they feel. Explore. Envision different scenarios. Take the lessons from this time in your life and create a life that mirrors you and how you have grown.

Most importantly, believe in possibilities. If there was not something bigger, better, fuller, richer, more satisfying for you, you would not be having a DK experience. Bottom line, when the DKs come your way, it means you are ready for something different. Your insides know it. Your outsides just needed a little push to get the journey started.

When the Don't Knows come your way, you get to decide if you will embrace the opportunities and possibilities before you. You get to choose if you will reach for a richer, fuller, more satisfying life.

When you embrace times of transition, you will grow when you Don't Know. And, as you grow, you will know more about what you want and what matters to you.

Once you know that, you will create a compelling future vision that reflects the best of you. Then, sure-footed, you will walk toward that vision—one step at a time.

**THIS IS WHAT I KNOW RIGHT
NOW...**

WHAT YOU KNOW RIGHT NOW

In the midst of every Don't Know,
there are always things you do know.
Write these down and keep them close to your eyes
and your heart. They will guide you through the
Don't Knows and anchor you to the truth of who you
are now and who you are becoming.


Ponder these questions and write down what you
know right now.

What are your core beliefs?
What do you know to be true?
When the world swirls around you, what do you hold
onto?
What principles do you live by?
Where do you find comfort?
What brings you peace?

**WRITE YOUR THOUGHTS, HOPES
AND DREAMS HERE !!!**


*Make time to sit awhile and think and feel
and wonder.*

**ROOM FOR MORE THOUGHTS,
HOPES AND DREAMS...**



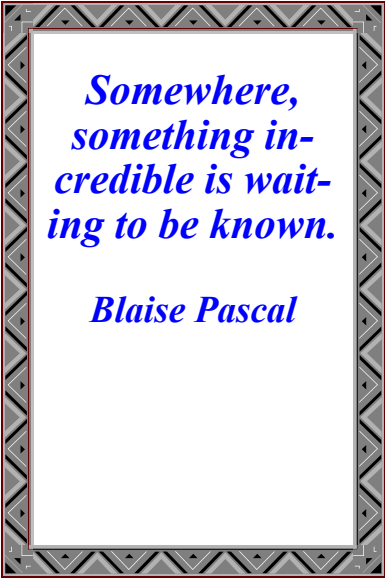
*When you feel penned in, pick up a
pen...and write.*

**ROOM FOR MORE
THOUGHTS, HOPES AND
DREAMS...**



*Life is either a
great adventure
or nothing.*

Helen Keller



*Somewhere,
something in-
credible is wait-
ing to be known.*

Blaise Pascal

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Karen believes that life is an adventure filled with exciting twists and turns that always lead to higher ground. As a life and career coach, writer, speaker and workshop leader, she uses her talents, boundless energy and love of life to guide people as they create the lives of their dreams.

Karen holds a Masters in Social Work from the University of Georgia and is a LifeWorks Certified Coach .She has been certified in rebirthing, group exercise instruction, yoga and personal training. She has also been trained in shamanism, voice dialog techniques, intuitive counseling, and group facilitation. Karen was a corporate executive in commercial real estate for over 30 years and has extensive experience in personal growth, marketing, team building, goal setting and transition management.

After successfully negotiating her own Don't Know experiences, Karen believes that from the space of not knowing, all things are possible. She lives in Atlanta, happily and gratefully, with 2,000 books, 1,000 pens, her spirit of adventure and her human and animal family.



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