AGELESS WAY

KAREN SANDS>

THE GREATNESS CHALLENGE

8 (R)evolutionary Axioms for Reshaping Your Future

Praise for THE GREATNESS CHALLENGE



"Always ahead of her time, Karen continues to turn the future on its head, a boon for women and men."

~ Nelson Broms, Ph.D., Social Entrepreneur Extraordinaire, Former Chairman/Holding Company, Equitable/AXA

"Karen is a Visionary Woman Futurist who empowers us to make change happen by unleashing our greatness. She is brilliant along with able to integrate her extraordinary knowing with deep meta thinking to shift perspectives and outcomes. But that's not all, she also has the creds, too!"

> ~ Jeanne Lombardo, Futurist, Editor and Co-author of Mind Flight: A Journey into the Future

"This is a definitive book for our time. Sands encourages us masterfully, and every which way she can, to meet the greatness challenge of our time with the power and grace that is ours to claim."

~Elsie Maio, Founder of Humanity, Inc./The SoulBranding™ Institute

"A trusted guide and masterful approach to challenge the status quo by empowering readers to rise from good too great to greatness, grounded in sound knowledge, cutting-edge ideas, and rich insights for everyone to create a future we can be proud to live and leave."

> ~Dan Abelow, Patented Inventor, Author, Speaker, Consultant

KAREN SANDS>

THE GREATNESS CHALLENGE

A Manifesto for Visionaries

8 (R)evolutionary Axioms for Reshaping Your Future

© 2004, 2017, 2018 Karen Sands/Sands & Associates, LLC www.KarenSands.com

Broad Minded Publishing PO Box 43 Roxbury, CT 06783-0043 Cover design by Gloria Owens/Fishcat Designs Back cover photo by Mary Madeiras. Author profile photo by Lisa Levart/LUSH Photography

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic or mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Capitalization of terms and phrases indicates trademark.

ISBN: 978-0-9995-155-0-1

DISCLAIMERS

By using any content in this manifesto or on the KarenSands.com or *The Greatness Challenge* websites (pages), you are agreeing to the "Terms of Use" found on the KarenSands.com website and referred to those items for the specific application described there.

Want to use excerpts in your e-zine/newsletter, blog, or website?

You may as long as you include the following text in its entirety:

"Excerpt courtesy of online entrepreneur, publisher, author, and leading GeroFuturist™, Karen Sands, ICF-MCC and CCE-BCC, publisher and Editor-in-Chief of the complimentary Ageless Beat newsletter and blog.

To sign up for her gratis newsletter and blog, and to learn more about her tools for positively transforming and evolving yourself, your work, and your world, visit www. KarenSands.com as you honor and meet your Greatness Challenge."

OTHER TITLES By Karen Sands

The Ageless Way

The Ageless Way Reflections Journal

Gray is the New Green

Ageless Reinvention

An Ageless Story

Crossing the Canyon

Mastering Reinvention

Visionaries Have Wrinkles

Visionaries Have Wrinkles Reflections Card Deck

Visionaries Have Wrinkles Reflections Journal

A Glimpse of Tomorrow's Promise

DEDICATIONS

Thank you to all my readers who are visionary leaders, conscious social entrepreneurs, audacious world shakers, change makers and trailblazers-in-the-making.

Your Future Starts Within These Manifesto Pages

Get ready to answer the call to meet THE GREATNESS CHALLENGE!

Take the Greatness Challenge Quiz:



http://www.karensands.com/greatnesschallenge/

THE GREATNESS CHALLENGE

- Table of Contents

About Reflections iii		
CI	HAPTERS:	
1.	The Greatness Challenge	3
2.	Star Formation	29
3.	Life's Eruptions	47
4.	Imaginal Cells and Reinvention	57
5.	Eight (R)evolutionary Axioms	65
6.	The Age of Greatness	87
Resources		91
Ab	out Karen Sands	95

GRAY IS THE NEW GREEN

GRATITUDES

would like to first thank my family—most of all my awesome husband, Mark, for believing in the work I'm doing and the books I'm sharing with you.

I am also grateful to the remarkable women and men whose shoulders I stand on, and whose pioneering work shaped my thinking about business, visionary leadership and the future. These great visionaries and change makers encouraged me to sound the clarion call to those who follow in my footsteps in the sands of time. There are too many to name here, but a few I am compelled to thank: Nelson Broms, "social entrepreneur extraordinaire," who honed me into the global thinker, strategist, and futurist I've become; Ruth S. Bloch who showed me the feminine way of leadership in a man's world; Mack Hanan who encouraged me to make customer- centric marketing and sales a cornerstone of my business thinking; Dr. W. Edwards Deming, Ph.D., who catapulted my thinking to a whole new level anchored in continuous quality improvement; Peter Drucker who influenced my nascent management approach; Peter Senge, C. Otto Scharmer, and Marshall Thurber, who together introduced me to visionary leadership; Michael Port who confirmed my entrepreneurial vision for the future; and Alvin Toffler, one of my earliest futurist-heroes. To all of these truly greats, I thank you!

I've been blessed to study and work with many gifted professionals along the way. I bow in thanks for your commitment to bring *The Greatness Challenge* into your hands.

THE GREATNESS CHALLENGE

ABOUT REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Questions at the end of each chapter to help you find your distinct path to meet **The Greatness Challenge**.

ach new story or phase of life needs a creative approach to move beyond the past into a creative new hope-filled future story with the new tasks that it encompasses.

I'd like to shine a light to guide you on your quest to *The Greatness Challenge* by including some suggestions for getting the most out of this book. Consider my suggestions as a guide.

I've included *Reflections* at the end of each chapter to translate the substance of each chapter into portable tools for your own illumination. These *Reflections* are intended as jumping-off points for you to dig in to the chapter material as deep as you desire. I have arranged these in the general order as they arise by chapter.

Putting something in writing often solidifies new material in our minds, and allows new "ahas" to arise unimpeded. Consider writing down your answers to the *Reflections* provided at the end of each chapter instead of just scanning or reading them and moving on.

My suggestion is that you familiarize yourself with these reflective questions and exercises by doing them once through in the order they appear. However, once you've read through the book, or a particular chapter, I encourage you to use them in any sequence that suits you.

What works well is to make a copy of the *Reflections* and then spend focused time reflecting and writing down your answers. Commit to returning to these questions regularly to see how your answers change over time.

THE GREATNESS CHALLENGE

When you are ready to give your focused time to a chapter's *Reflections*, find a quiet space for reflection at a time when you won't be disturbed. You may want to settle into your favorite comfy chair or another spot that is your special chilling out, meditating, or time-out reflecting place. Relax using any process that has worked for you in the past, perhaps using a series of deep breaths and slowly relaxing and letting go wherever there is tension in your body. You'll know when you are ready to gently come back into the room. Be sure you have a pen and the list of *Reflections* you will be working on close at hand. Give yourself at least fifteen to twenty minutes at each sitting to journal your responses and insights gained. I have found that these *Reflections* will provide invaluable insights if you give yourself the gift of reserved, uninterrupted time to be with yourself.

If you have any questions or you want to share your "ahas" or stories, please send them to me directly at Karen@KarenSands. com, putting "TGC queries" in the subject line.

Thank you for joining me on the quest to meet *The Greatness Challenge.* >



ABOUT REFLECTION QUESTIONS

THE GREATNESS CHALLENGE

INTRODUCTION:

CONSCIOUSNESS & THE EVOLVING SELF





We are moving into a new paradigm, leaving the world of the old structures behind. Where do we go for our guidance? I suggest to you that we have no place but our own well. We all have this well inside.

~Marion Woodman

If we are to continue our evolutionary journey, it is imperative that we now make some equally prodigious leaps in our ability to transform our minds. We must wake up and develop the wisdom that will allow us to use our new powers for our own good and for the good of all. This is the challenge of our times.

~Peter Russell

Our Earth was born 15 billion years ago.

and then hominids from its fertile lands and waters. Our first cousins discovered fire, tools, cave painting, and above all learned that while other animals were larger, toothier, and hairier, we had an amazing gift: *consciousness*.

Small in stature compared to the looming threats that stalked their plains and valleys, our ancestors developed the tools and social organization that allowed them to endure: Foraging. Fire. Language. Tool making. Ceremonies to mark death and birth. The very things that allowed us to survive and *thrive* were rooted in humans' evolving ability to create meaning of their world.

Now the threats we face are not saber-toothed tigers or woolly mammoths but beasts of our own species' making: pollution, terrorism, corruption, and collapse of the very social and economic structures that once led to our flourishing. We are called once again to use the very tool that enabled us to survive millions of years: *our consciousness*.

It is through evolved consciousness that we will find solutions and connect to a greater meaning, thriving as individuals and as a collective. *The Greatness Challenge* is a manifesto for expanding consciousness, so you can prosper with a purpose, and live authentically from the Soul. As you do, you add value and transform everything around you. Live your true greatness, and you contribute to the continuing life of our species and the

sustainability of our precious planet. Each of us is needed. Each person's gift is vital.

We are brought together on this odyssey

Into a greater future as we evolve together from good to great to greatness.

Thank you for coming along.

INTRODUCTION ~ Reflections

The questions and exercises below are to help you find your distinct path to meet the Greatness Challenge.

- 1. What does consciousness mean to you?
- 2. In this moment what vision do you have of your life's purpose and what are the gifts you bring to it?

INTRODUCTION

THE GREATNESS CHALLENGE

Chapter 1

THE GREATNESS CHALLENGE





Within a few generations, perhaps within our own lifetimes, we could reach the end of our evolutionary journey.

~ Peter Russel

Only challenge produces the opportunity for greatness. Given the extraordinary challenges the world faces today, the potential for greatness is monumental.

~ James Kouzes and Barry Posner

t is easy to believe the world may be on the verge of collapse, especially as we look back through the last decade which rose out of the ashes of the receding Great Recession. We as a country, and globally, pulled ourselves up by the proverbial bootstraps to begin yet another Phoenix rising.

Not to worry.

We are right on time.

We are on the verge of a process of a process of renewal.

All processes of nature are forcing us to spring forward from hardship and uncertainty into a greater future. The big challenge for all of us is putting Greatness, a "New Age" meme, into real time.

Spiraling forward in our personal and planetary development (just like adolescence or the midlife renewal process), we must accomplish required developmental tasks if we are to move through the sequential stages of our life course—our time here on earth.

Our world is undergoing a major cleanup. A major tug of war encompasses the globe. As always, it's about power and control over resources, peoples, and landmass. Pushed past its natural limits, our planet, and life as we know it, is destined to break down. Self-correcting, the earth always jumps into the next phase of her development. If we move quickly to take collaborative action, we will move from breakdown into breakthrough in the U.S.A and around the world, as well as to preserve Mother Earth. Best hurry or we could very well morph into something we never intended. And certainly, don't want.

We are being asked to meet The Greatness Challenge.

That's why we've experienced an accelerated return to spirituality since the dawn of the new millennium. We all yearn to make every moment count. Each of us, at every age and stage, wants significance as a result of our action-taking. Soul and money are being integrated, thus elevating the importance of making a positive difference in our world. Our mantra has matured to, "Doing well doing good." Thank goodness we who are Baby Boomers are projected to inherit upwards of \$11 trillion dollars as our generation moves to the front line. Combined Baby Boomers and 70+ers are expected to control far more than that. Based on projections by consulting firm Accenture (2014) Baby Boomers are expected to pass on their own inheritance and life savings to their heirs over the next decades to come a staggering \$30 Trillion to younger generations. More good news is that Millennials are far more savvy about their long-term financial future than their elders were...a growing number of our younger generation are beginning to save now for their future retirement. By necessity, fiscal literacy is in vogue. Together across generations we can amass and leverage a whole 'lotta clout!

The timing couldn't be better.

Collectively we the people do have a lot of power to realize a future we will be proud to leave behind. Legacy making is topping a growing number of bucket lists.

Now, at last, the symbol of the Feminine in all of us, our Mother Earth, is calling to us. She is challenging us to self-correct, and quickly.

We've had plenty of warnings.

From global AIDS epidemics, bird flu, killer super bugs and surging breast cancer to the breakdown of our beloved institutions. The intensity of the alerts is getting deafening. Aberrant weather patterns and the dying off of whole species are clearly bell-weathers. And now, global warming is on its way to becoming irrevocable.

This is our wake-up call. This is not a test!

As Americans, we've been shaken to the core to find that our basic foundational tenets are being tested. Our skill gaps are widening and our less-than-adequate education leaves us vulnerable to foreign competition. Morale is at its lowest. All these factors contribute to our diminished position as the world's greatest innovator and model of social, religious, and economic freedom as the populist movement rages around the once free world in tandem with the radical right religious movements the free world rails against.

I sometimes feel that I'm in some modern-day epic unfolding before my eyes. Some part of me believes we will all be saved. I guess that's why I still love the Star Wars series. So I admit it. I do trust the force!

No, we can't go back to how it used to be.

But we can continue to ask the important questions of ourselves, and of our elected leaders. The first and foremost question I put before you to consider,

"Is this a cyclical change or a structural change?"

When I step back to get a big picture perspective...much like looking back at the earth from out in space, I find it's far easier for me to dissolve my protective shields and drop into an open clear inner space. Doing so allows me to disengage from preconditioning, expectations and judgments that cloud what I see, and hide what I don't want to see.

Please take what I've learned to call "Taking a God/Goddess' View" of the world story, my story and yours. By delineating the many varied, plausible, and very possible narrative versions or allows us to cover our bases in preparation for all contingencies...to the best we can. Summing this up better than I can are the words of the award-winning comedian, actor, writer and producer, Mel Brooks, "Hope for the best. Expect the worst."

I, like most of us, prefer the "Aspirational Future" story of my choosing vs. winging it. Your choice. Either way, please step back so you too can see what's coming versus only what's right in front of you...and us.

The swing of the pendulum in this cycle of change is far greater than in 2000 or 2008. The real question we all need to ask is how wide and lasting a swing is this?

It's been since just before I was born that this same demonic cycle had been stopped in motion. Who ever thought we'd ever see this again? That was before we knew about cyclical change. Not even 100 years have passed, yet here we are again at the quintessential battle-ground with lines drawn between "good and evil" and the "the light versus the dark." Taking on the personae of our own treasured Star Wars hero and heroine, Luke Skywalker and Princess Leah, we too will have to step up and out, willing to joist against the demonic Darth Vader and his evil forces to save our world and our very way of life.

Rallying, marching, organizing, boycotting, speaking out, running for office, voting and more is our modern-day Kryptonite against the powers of evil. Our joisting will sap the power of the demonic forces of the far right/alt right until this cycle completes itself or aborts on its own, or due to fomenting civil unrest which is mounting day by day.

I asked a well-known and highly regarded centenarian—a transformational leader-of-leaders in her own right, what her perspective is on our current U.S. and global turn to the radical far right and populism. Paraphrasing her words, she shared her wisdom earned, "...It will cycle back to center, it always does. But this time, it may take a long time to return."

It is my take that we are still in-the-midst of a structural change, cycling through as we move between endings and new beginnings. We trek the Great Transition, (or as it is also called, The Great Shift, or the Great Wheel Turning,) that started with the New Millennium.

What is important to take note of is that our shadow partner is taking his turn at leading the dance. So we must be willing both personally and collectively to be out in the world to embrace the cycles of dying and birthing as we move into new times.

But what if this is a structural change we are undergoing—a change that is permanent, long-lasting eliminating or morphing everything in its path. Think of events like the emergence of the computer chip, mobile devices, genome slicing and robotics to name a few?

A differentiating factor of structural change from a cyclical change is that when a structural change births out of societal or cultural upheaval, there are only two outcomes: to totally dissipate, e.g., go Poof! Or, to morph into a higher evolutionary plane of existence than ever before.

Which leads me to the next question for us to ponder: What will be the catalyst for our democratic experiment to tip into its demise or to evolve into its greatness?

Our gift in this seismic shifting time is that this crisis has brought together multiple generations, races, creeds and religions, all genders, both rich and poor, young and old, disabled and able, and so much more...around what matters, that is, what makes us Americans and global citizens.

I am blessed to witness the new women's movement (maybe the fourth wave of feminism rising) alongside all human and planetary rights movements.

I'm brought to tears as younger women awaken alongside those of us who have been there, done that who now are reawakening to the call to greatness. Women together are leading the way to a new greatness like never before.

In due time we will know which kind of change we are truly in. In the meantime, we can prepare for our Aspirational story to be revealed.

While we wait for all to be unveiled, we can either deter or eradicate the potential demise of our democracy and this planet— our piece of the universe—and our place in it...by our actions today.

This is the time for greatness.

Get Ready! There's a new meme moving through our consciousness. It's gaining momentum.

Will you be its "tipping point" or be left behind?

I know it's hard to think about greatness in the face of so many threats at our borders and daily disruptions in our very own space in time. Besieged by bad news, feeling squeezed in every way, and witnessing rampant corruption and falling icons, and rising tyrants, it's easy to get caught up in our iPads and YouTube. We just get too busy doing our life and being successful to give greatness more than a cursory glance—or newly unemployed, we panic as we think, "How we will survive if I rock the boat?!" It's become harder and harder to push away our everyday stressors. No matter what, we still have to pay the rent or mortgage, make payroll, manage braces and tuition, and all the rest. And let's not forget, we still want to grab a vacation in Costa Rica or Mexico. And these days, how many of us can? Even if we can, who wants to risk the new "normal" that potentially awaits us at our borders.

With discontinuous change accelerating, we don't want to make waves. Only a short time until the day ends, vacation starts, or retirement looms. Why think about greatness?

Because it's the only way to go. Why would we want anything less?

If you aren't having a great life or heading toward greatness, what are you waiting for? If you're already well on your way, let this manifesto serve as a friendly reminder and resource. Either way, let's teach others to reach for their greatness.

Most people can't imagine that they have the potential to reach greatness. More often than not, folks respond much like this accomplished woman: "When I think of greatness, I think of the really great like MLK or Mother Teresa or JFK or the Obamas, and can't imagine that I am like one of those people." It's not surprising then that when surveyed, community college students routinely said they wanted to reach greatness, but when asked what that meant for them, they drew a blank.

From the time I was a little girl, I gorged myself on stories of people of greatness—Madame Curie, Einstein, Ben Franklin, Helen Keller, Eleanor Roosevelt, Babe Ruth, Harriet Tubman, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Carl Jung, Anne Frank, Piaget, and so many more—and left adolescence with icons like JFK, MLK, Golda Meir, Gloria Steinem, and Muhammad Ali. I wanted to be just like them. I dreamed of having a life like theirs... to make my life be about standing up for what I believed and showing up in times of crisis. I envisioned taking emboldened stands while dipping into a seemingly never-ending source of pure divine inspiration and unlimited energy to persevere. Like them, I committed early on to adding value, to making my work and life matter.

Being what I have coined as a Wounded Learner[™], my earliest calling was to awaken the untapped potential in myself and others. Educating preteens and adolescents in the mid to late sixties, I used the "new sciences" to turn them on to their own unique greatness and to live it in every fiber of their being. Each of them touched their greatness--whether it was merely a spark or fully ignited. Early on I learned that greatness resides in us all.

Whether you are a schoolteacher, a mad scientist, or a driven CEO, we all are made from the same stuff. After all, we only use a mere 5% of our available brain power. If we only doubled what we use, we would be making quantum leaps for humanity. It is the same with our innate greatness.

We all have enormously untapped reservoirs of greatness, just waiting to be released. No matter what life cycle or stage of life we are in, be it a stay-at-home mom or a soon-to-be retiree, we can bring our unique brand of greatness to whatever we do and to all we engage. It is our divine- given gift, and thus our responsibility as conscious human beings to share it with others so that they too may ignite it within themselves. No matter what you are doing in the moment, whether it's planning for a climate

change initiative, changing diapers, mounting a fund-raiser, taking your company public, sitting on a board or leading your own business, bring your greatness to it. These times demand it.

In broadest terms, greatness is a vague concept that is almost completely dependent on a person's perspective and biases. Without a clear personal definition, we can be assured to never reach our own greatness, much less catalyze someone else's.

I know that when I'm in my greatness I "ring true." Like a tuning fork, I vibrate with my own unique tonality. In those moments, I am on purpose, in total alignment with my biorhythms, in touch with all that is and able to access my deepest knowing. It may present itself as I magnetize a team of senior executives to perform beyond all expectations, or when I touch someone so deeply when they most need to be inspired to bold action and to live their truth in the face of unnerving odds.

Personal greatness is reached when we are living our truest sense of purpose, fulfilling our core values with passion and attaining a heightened sense of satisfaction and joy when we come into our own actualization. This greatness is only to be exceeded by that exhibited by those in whom we engender the same. To borrow from author Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, when we are in our "flow," we are guaranteed we are living our greatness!

As history teaches us, extraordinary greatness arises when we are faced with daunting challenges. In those harrowing moments, we are called to take emboldened stands for what matters most to us. This kind of greatness may come as if out of nowhere, brought to the forefront by unexpected momentous events. In June 2009, President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama launched their Summer of Service, in which they called upon Americans to share their talents as volunteers

during this time of crisis. In nonprofit organizations across the nation, there is a reported increase in volunteer participation with a rise in greater civic responsibility.

Stories abound from the heroic efforts of complete strangers in the aftermath of 9/11 or 3/11 train wreck in Spain and the Boston Marathon massacre to more recently the heroism displayed by ordinary citizens, tourists and first responders after France's Christmas 2016 market slaughter by a truck-driving terrorist. It doesn't stop with terrorism related heroism and more, and more horrific school shootings here in the U.S.A. The stories don't stop with terrorism related heroism. Consider also the elderly women villagers who protested against pollution from nearby factories in Huaxi, a village in southeastern China. Or when thousands of U.S. farm- workers won a sweet victory in their struggle against fast-food giant Taco Bell, one of the largest buyers of tomatoes in the country, for decent working conditions and un centavo mas—one cent more—per pound of tomatoes they pick. Or the young people in Oakland, California, who wanted to talk about real solutions to the poverty, racism, and powerlessness they grew up with. Frustrated by the violence and mind-numbing entertainment fare offered by all the city's hip-hop radio stations, a feisty collaboration of young people confronted a major radio conglomerate—and won.

Today it's the "People" coming together, peacefully marching, speaking out and against,—unintentionally, while others knowingly, are memoralizing this period of time in American and world history. We must never forget.

For others, it is a conscious choice to live and lead from their greatness. These are the visionaries we all recognize, the very great among us. These enlightened leaders speak their truth and act in ways that support a greater future for us all. They bring their Visionary Greatness into the public forum as leaders in business, the arts, politics, the sciences, spirituality, and social services. These enlightened leaders lead from a deeper sense of purpose and vision, in ways that positively transform the many and the world around them.

Getting from good to great to greatness is is a moment-bymoment endeavor. It takes fortitude, focus, great passion, and a total commitment to what is at hand. It also demands courage and enormous "Humanility"...a pure state of utter humbleness and awe of our shared unveiled humanity. Perhaps most of all, it demands that we accept that getting to greatness is a process of continuous improvement, a lifelong endeavor.

The goal of striving for greatness is not perfection, but rather to be all you can be in every moment, to be the change you want to see. Remember, most of the truly great are so focused on their vision for the future that they don't stop to define what it is they exhibit—they just live and lead with greatness as a matter of course.

The time is over-ripe now for those of us who want to take a quantum leap to go from doing great to leading with greatness for the common good. Every great epoch and life stage gets birthed into existence by a collision of forces. Take a look back at planetary as well as human history. Even family history. It takes a great force to catalyze quantum leaps of growth and development.

"Life is so short!" writes Bonnie, a 50- something powerhouse caught between elder-caretaking and her life passing her by. We are making history and Herstory right now...for generations to come!

"How do I lead and live in these turbulent times?" asks a 46-year old family business owner.

"I'm yearning for something I can't quite get my arms around," laments a 38- year old CEO who's got it all.

"It's all such B.S.! No more spin. Teach me how to be real," implores a 41-year old CFO of a Corporate 500 company.

"Why bother? There is no future!" exclaims an exasperated 29-year old tech start up entrepreneur.

All generations are afflicted with this renewed malaise and many of us are going back to the basics: seeking more meaning and quality time. Some of us have been forced to downsize as we have lost clients or contracts or have been outplaced or forced into early retirement. Others are coming out of retirement and having to retread their lives. Some are leaving high-paced lives and choosing new lifestyles and directions in favor of lives that give them greater freedom and flexibility.

Whether you're focused on your job, determined to lead your company through these tough times, making a difference in your community, or simply wanting more time with your loved ones, major change is in the offing—and it is time you learn tools for reinventing yourself and your professional life and identity. If you wait for others to define you, you will miss your chance to fully realize who you are and what is possible.

Thankfully, we are in charge of our own greatness. We are each on the vanguard of change. Our willingness to catalyze greatness in others will lead us into a far greater future. On a personal, community, and organizational level, we as leaders have to turn our attention to tapping the greatness within.

For those of us who envision a greater future, now is the time to go for it! New skill sets, knowledge, and perspectives are required. Old habits don't go easily. We weren't trained for this new tour of duty. Change is the norm. Time is moving rapidly with little to spare. That's the nature of life these days.

In this manifesto, I beseech you to belly up to the realization that we can no longer afford to rest on our laurels. The world is shifting to a different playing field, one *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman says is "flattened by instant connectivity."

With our freedoms attacked, free of speech eroding, partisanship over-ruling our democratic values and the very foundation of our republic. It's no surprise that we the people have lost access to universal connectivity, the gateway to education and global awareness. This Trickle Down approach is meant to push the most vulnerable among us to the back of the que.

How then will we retool? If we don't wake up in time to retool for this new epoch, we may find ourselves sucked into the backdraft of the future.

Do not despair. Know that from the vibrating heart of our dissipating structures comes the promise of our true greatness: a greatness of awareness and action that will change the world.

From the midst of the evolving Great Transition, we leave the Great Recession and the uplifting Obama era behind us. As we enter an unknown, unchartered new cycle of populism and radicalism ripping our valued democratic tenets along with the Rule of Law to shreds, thus putting each of us on the line. This backwards turn to a traditional patriarchal model, steeply rooted in the "old game"—of win/lose is rapidly trying to recover its hold. This animosity to win/win/win is not only disrupting the world order, it is endangering all of humanity's future.

No doubt about it, the underlying problem is not a male versus female one. These chaotic times demand the integration of both our Inner Feminine and our Masculine strengths, as well as the collaboration of all genders in the outer world.

What is apparent, is that the female experience and worldview provides a growing awareness that our system is entering breakdown, that we must avert breakdown and move toward breakthrough. By the very nature of their discontinuous changing roles and life cycles, women are more apt to ride the waves of sudden change and disorienting breakdowns. Far more in touch with their inner world, women will more readily align to this deep Feminine force desperately calling us to transform.

From the hallowed halls of academia to the towers of global corporations, and all in between, things need to change fast. And they are changing. "Every 12 seconds another woman leaves corporate America to start her own business," according to the National Foundation of Women Business Owners. (This is twice the rate for men.) And now, thousands more are leaving without choice as businesses downsize, and women are looking at new ways of creating home-based businesses.

Women can no longer sit on the sidelines. We are gathering and marching. We must come to the forefront, bringing our deep Feminine wisdom to bear. The timing couldn't be better.

Recent studies suggest that 44 percent of new women business owners are leaving corporate life after banging into the glass ceiling. Further, the majority of these women adamantly declare that nothing will bring them back. Lack of recognition and upward mobility may only be the presenting reason. Our departures are indicative of our dying Souls seeking new reasons to express our collective unrealized Feminine aspect.

Our current win-lose, short-term profit-driven system thwarts passionate self-expression and leaves no room for values-driven self-fulfillment women crave. More recently, this growing disconnect is observed in all genders, across generations and diversities. Now more than ever, we are buying, watching, and voting not only based on value-added, but even more so based on our values.

Women in the largest numbers ever are now in positions of power, albeit not the dominant gender, but nevertheless having a significant impact in all walks of life...and in the voting booth! They Women have reached for their dreams. In the process, we have broken many of the self- limiting ancestral beliefs such as "A woman's only place is in the home.", and "Nice women don't succeed.", that were handed down from grandmother to mother to daughter: However, in the process many women have traded in their most precious assets—their deep Inner Feminine knowing and expansive capacity for nurturance and healing—for their share of the game chips.

Now in midlife and moving toward elderhood, droves of women are rediscovering the wholeness of being female. The best news yet is that the bulk of the \$11 trillion-plus in assets projected to be passed down to Baby Boomers and 70+ers, topped by the staggering projections of \$30 Trillion to be transferred from Baby Boomers to younger generations, will eventually end up in women's hands—lovingly I jest, this will be our version of the Widows' Welcome Wagon. Thus, we will hold the financial reigns of a new paradigm.

American women, from the time of the earliest suffragettes, have been on the front lines of change, blazing new trails. Going forward, "Old Girl" networks will proliferate as more women

rise rapidly through the ranks to the executive suite and stand at the helm of their own companies. Being at the threshold, we are being called forth to breathe fresh life into our Visionary Feminine. It is from this new vantage point that women around the globe will lead the way with a new greatness.

As more and more women move toward a new worldview, the men in their lives are coming forward to join them. Together they are ushering in a new epoch. Men, too, are looking for a greatness that is all encompassing, allowing them to fully potentiate. Together as men and women, we are evolving to a more authentic, enlightened approach to life and work that will engage our total being in birthing a better road to the future... full of possibility and greatness.

The Greatness Challenge invites you to an evolutionary journey into the future. Each chapter opens with a scientific metaphor that ties into my background in the new sciences, human potential, change and transition, transformation, and life course development. Weaving together natural phenomena with concepts in consciousness, I will ask you to join me on a quest that will shift the way you perceive and interpret (y)our world so that you can take new action—from the boardroom to the bedroom, and around the kitchen table.

As with any venture or journey, we need to know where we are headed, how to get there, what to take with us or leave behind, and what to do once we get there. So, if you aspire to greatness, craft your own personal definition to guide you into the future. And if you are leading others, be sure to communicate your vision so that together you can create an extraordinary future.

The time is overripe now for those of us—of all ages and stages, who want to take a quantum leap from "doing great to leading with greatness."

As each of us evolves a more authentic and conscious life, society as-a-whole evolves as well. When we create lives that reflect our core beliefs for the common good, then it is inevitable, our world will improve.

Will we choose to succumb to the terrors of our day and our possible extinction—or choose our greatness?

The Greatness Challenge is a manifesto for the growing wave of us who want to add value in all we do and who are being called to personal and collective evolution—from dentists to doctors, executives to engineers, artists to teachers and visionary leaders and futurists who are looking to redesign their lives so that every moment counts...for those of you who seek work that not only fills your bank accounts but your "values" bank as you yearn to do well doing good...for leaders who seek a pathway to visionary leadership, so the impact you have is of the greatest benefit for all. This manifesto is also for those longing to transition out of jobs and careers that pay the mortgage but leave the Soul bankrupt.

As Abraham Maslow, renowned father of the human potential movement, explained, there is a developmental hierarchy of needs. The lower rungs are safety and survival-based needs; once those needs are addressed, the pathway is open for greater self-actualizing and transcendent understanding. Indeed, as a long time ICF and CCE Master & Board Certified Coach, strategic consultant I see more and more accomplished clients and readers who have fulfilled their basic shelter and food needs and are looking for greater purpose and meaning demanding

authentic communication and connection. Having realized success at great personal cost, they look for a more balanced marriage of their work, family, and personal lives. Their new priority is to have time for what really matters most.

What better antidote could there be for a world of accelerating chaos. Our current model of win-and-consume-at-all-costs is damaging both to individuals and the planet, and multitudes are now beginning to question developed countries'—especially America's—way of doing business, and the very real threat of plutocracy and tyranny as populism threatens to overthrow of the rule of law. As we face the challenges of our conflict-ridden and increasingly fast-paced lives, a new paradigm is being born.

We are in fact in the throes of a shakeup...and shake out down to our very core. We, each of us—all of us—are being besieged by new threats in the world and are responding by asking, "How can we make the world more whole? How can I make choices that benefit the world and not only myself? How can I lead in a way that is keeping with my values?" As we look toward greater balance, we are potentially moving toward the creation of an enlightened leadership that no longer focuses on the bottom-line only, but rather at the Triple Bottom Line of people, planet, and profits.

The Greatness Challenge is based on my 40-plus years' experience in combining foresight with insight to prepare for alternative futures via coaching and convening accomplished women and men who are looking for what's next in their lives. My (R)evolutionary axioms have set the foundation for thousands of people to develop personal and collective greatness by identifying their core values and building lives and workplaces consistent with them. It could mean riding a bike to work or changing a

company's structure to be more environmental or family friendly. Or it may show up as incorporating a philosophy of lifetime employability, portable retirement savings, and health coverage so that we all have the security to move with the quicksilver shifts of global markets and workflow at home.

We can all move into a future built on elevated purpose—and in this way, go from doing great to living our greatness. As Peter Russell noted "If we are to continue our evolutionary journey, it is imperative that we now make some equally prodigious leaps in our ability to transform our minds. We must wake up and develop the wisdom that will allow us to use our new powers for our own good and for the good of all. This is the challenge of our times."

The Greatness Challenge is a transformative consciousness manifesto for those who are being called to personal and professional visionary leadership as well as collective evolution. The manifesto offers readers a clear set of eight (r) evolutionary axioms that lead to enhanced awareness and a greater life for all. Its perspective is not limited to one religion or spiritual orientation and does not restrict itself to solely an organizational or personal perspective of greatness but instead shows the interplay between individual and collective evolution.

There are others championing greatness; however, this manifesto offers a uniquely female perspective to human potential, consciousness, and greatness. The greatness we most need now is new, emerging out of a holistic view of the world that emphasizes connectedness, collaboration, inner knowing, ancestral wisdom—and most of all, truth telling. These are the characteristics assigned to the archetype of the Sacred Conscious Feminine in us all. This feminine perspective is a necessary counterpoint to the more traditional patriarchal view rooted in

the "old game"—one that is rapidly falling apart and endangering all of humanity's future.

Clearly the underlying problem is not a male versus female one. These chaotic times demand the integration of both our Inner Feminine and our Masculine strengths within, as well as the collaboration of all genders in the outer world.

What is apparent is that the female experience and worldview provides a growing awareness that our system is entering breakdown, that we must avert breakdown and move toward breakthrough. By the very nature of their discontinuous changing roles and life cycles, women are more apt to ride the waves of sudden change and disorienting breakdowns. Far more in touch with their inner world, women will more readily align to this deep Feminine force desperately calling us to transform.

From the hallowed halls of academia to the towers of global corporations, and all in between, things need to change fast. And they are changing. "Every 12 seconds another woman leaves corporate America to start her own business," according to the National Foundation of Women Business Owners. (This is twice the rate for men.)

Women can no longer sit on the sidelines. We are gathering and marching. We must come to the forefront, bringing our deep Feminine wisdom to bear. The timing couldn't be better. Recent studies suggest that 44 percent of new women business owners are leaving corporate life after banging into the glass ceiling. Further, the majority of these women adamantly declare that nothing will bring them back. Lack of recognition and upward mobility may only be the presenting reason. Our departure is indicative of our dying Souls seeking new ground to express our collective unrealized feminine aspect. Our current win-lose,

short-term profit-driven system thwarts passionate self-expression and leaves no room for values-driven self-fulfillment.

Women in the largest numbers ever are now in positions of power, albeit not the dominant gender, but nevertheless having a significant impact in all walks of life. They have reached for their dreams. In the process, they have broken many of the self-limiting ancestral beliefs such as "a woman's only place is in the home" and "nice women don't succeed" that were handed down from grandmother to mother to daughter: However, in the process many women have traded in their most precious assets—their deep inner feminine knowing and expansive capacity for nurturance and healing—for their share of the game chips.

Now in midlife and moving toward elderhood, droves of women are rediscovering the wholeness of being female. The best news yet is that the bulk of the \$11 trillion-plus in assets projected to be passed down to Baby Boomers and 70+ers, topped by the staggering projections of \$30 Trillion to be transferred from Baby Boomers to younger generations, will eventually end up in women's hands—what I lovingly jest will be our version of the Widows' Welcome Wagon. Thus, we will hold the financial reigns of a new paradigm.

American women, from the time of the earliest suffragettes, have been on the front lines of change, blazing new trails. Going forward, "Old Girl" networks will proliferate as more women rise rapidly through the ranks to the executive suite and stand at the helm of their own companies. Being at the threshold, we are being called forth to breathe fresh life into our Visionary Feminine. It is from this new vantage point that women around the globe will lead the way with a new greatness.

As more and more women move toward a new worldview, the men in their lives are coming forward to join them. Together they are ushering in a new epoch. Men too are looking for a greatness that is all encompassing, allowing them to fully potentiate. Together as men and women we are evolving to a more authentic, enlightened approach to life and work that will engage our total being in birthing a better road to the future... full of possibility and greatness.

The Greatness Challenge invites you to an evolutionary journey into the future. Each chapter opens with a scientific metaphor that ties into my background in the new sciences, human potential, change and transition, transformation, and life course development. Weaving together natural phenomena with concepts in consciousness, I will ask you to join me on a quest that will shift the way you perceive and interpret (y)our world so that you can take new action—from the boardroom to the bedroom and around the kitchen table.

As with any venture or journey, we need to know where we are headed, how to get there, what to take with us or leave behind, and what to do once we get there. So, if you aspire to greatness, craft your own personal definition to guide you into the future. And if you are leading others, be sure to communicate your vision so that together you can create an extraordinary future.

The time is overripe now for those of us—of all ages and stages, who want to take a quantum leap from "doing great to leading with greatness."

As each of us evolves a more authentic and conscious life, society as-a-whole evolves as well. When we create lives that reflect our core beliefs for the common good, then it is inevitable, our world will improve.

Will we choose to succumb to the terrors of our day and our possible extinction—or choose our greatness?

The Greatness Challenge is a manifesto for those who are ready to meet the challenge as we move deeper into the twenty-first century.

So get ready. Greatness awaits. >

CHAPTER 1 ~ Reflections

The questions and exercises below are to help you find your distinct path to meet The Greatness Challenge.

- 1. How is your life different today than it was a decade ago?
- 2. What changes have you experienced or felt around you and within you?
- 3. How are you handling the (R) evolutionary shifts that have shaken most of us to the core?
- 4. Are you confident you have the tools to answer the call to meet **The Greatness Challenge?** What is your vision and intended outcome relative to each trend?

THE GREATNESS CHALLENGE

Chapter 2 STAR FORMATION





Stars form when enormous compression waves traveling through gas clouds create dense knots of gas in the cloud....As a knot grows, its gravitational force increases, and it attracts more gas particles. Eventually, the knot coalesces into a growing sphere of compressed gas that reaches internal temperatures of a few million degrees. At this point the gases in the knot's interior become so hot that their atomic nuclei begin fusing, creating large amounts of nuclear energy and forming a new star.

~ Encarta, "Star Formation"

As new stars were formed, tiny condensations of matter accreted near them...that would become the planets.

And on these worlds, organic molecules formed made of atoms that had been cooked inside the stars...We are star stuff.

ou wake up in the morning, crack open your eyes, look up at the ceiling, and take a long deep breath as you pull away the covers. You hear the words inside your head, "What's next?" That's a sign it's time to get started... You are being called to greatness.

You may not yet know it.

However, this stirring inside is an invitation to a new life.

For all of us.

Greatness may begin as restlessness, boredom, disillusionment, or a hunger for something greater. It could be a thirst for the mystical, a longing for the adventurous, the pangs of a heart that wishes to break out and have an even more lasting impact in life. Are you living in monochrome instead of full spectrum color? Are you driving to work through a maze of honking cars and familiar blurred landscapes wondering where it is taking you? Are you shuffling through the papers on your office desk asking, "Is this all there is?"

Now is the time to take the next step. And you are not alone.

I first began to question one day when I looked around my highly-coveted corner office. The sun streamed in, warming me and illuminating the piles of memoranda, research, and unanswered telephone messages stacked up on my glistening lacquered desk.

I leaned back in my executive chair and wondered why I was there.

It had begun on another bright sunny day, ten years earlier, when I was walking down the Avenue of the Americas with my lover. We were both running successful businesses and creating a wonderful life together. The whole world seemed to be ahead of us as we strolled along, sharing our dreams. I pointed to the top of a cluster of skyscrapers, the bastion of big business, and proclaimed, "One day, I will have an office up there, and I'll be making a seven-figure income!"

But the view from the top proved to be very different from my original view from the street. I'd got what I wanted and even more...but at what cost?

I thought of the abusive, driven bosses

I had tolerated along the way; my "real woman" role model—powerful, vulnerable, and compassionate—outmaneuvered and scapegoated by her most trusted allies. I thought of our two "little ones" who would be graduating soon. Custody conflicts had kept me from them when they were small. Now they were home with us, and I was an absentee mom—and an absentee wife to the wonderful man who had made my kids his own. I was always at the office working late, dragging home an enormous briefcase on weekends.

The sunlight continued to stream through my window, but I felt cold. What had happened to my aliveness, my juicy feminine passions, the freshness I'd had when I'd started out on this path to "fame and fortune"?

I was in a hurry, but where was I going? Where had the time gone? What was I trying to prove—and to whom?

The product area in which I excelled was private pension planning and retirement services, which early on led me into a deep study of the "Graying of America" and the globe. While I was learning about the age wave, I was also applying principles

of transformational management and visionary leadership, and those I hired had to be willing to buy into the (r)evolutionary model.

Employees were collaborative and communicative and were willing to grow as people and employees. They had to be open-minded and not hierarchical— willing, for example, to brainstorm in workshops with people from receptionist to the vice president, internally, across functional boundaries, and with our external vendors and key resources. They could see beyond title and position and just roll with the punches. And, of course, they had to be willing to work with joy.

Sheer joy was a fundamental component of making our team the most successful in the nation; within a few years, our stand-alone division broke every record in the industry. However, while we were doing well, the rest of the company struggled under traditional leadership and massive top-down outplacement.

On one hand, I sat in the beauty of my office, in delight of what we as a group had created—a model for enlightened management and Soul at work. On the other hand, I watched on the sidelines as mentors, friends, and colleagues were scapegoated, lied to, and fired as turf wars raged and the larger company struggled to survive.

I decided after ten years it was time to move on. I looked at the world from my window. What was next?

I was moving down a path without a known destination. A great inner force urged me toward something that was not yet apparent. I'd take a short sabbatical, six months to a year. That is what I would tell everyone. Especially the headhunters! It felt so good to turn down what used to be world-class gem

opportunities I would have danced in the street for before. Ah, delicious! Ah, delirious! Travel with my husband...time to play with my wonderful teenagers. Doing what I wanted, when I wanted to do it.

It was all a reverie for me until my pre-determined deadline came and went. It dawned on me that I didn't know what I wanted to go back to. What were my real desires? What was I striving toward?

Suddenly I had no goals. I had nothing to prove. But if I had no goals, what was I? Who was I? The not knowing was sheer torture! I fought with it. I wrestled with it. I wasn't a somebody anymore! I had no title. I belonged nowhere. I no longer had a suitable answer to "And what do you do?" Uneasy, I quickly made up business cards with my name and Enterprises following. God forbid I should say, "I'm in between." I clearly had to be a this or a that.

My kids would be leaving home soon. Not a corporate something, not a mother, certainly not a full-time wife. But what was I? I was desperate to be doing something.

As I tried to force myself into high gear, to go out and get myself going again, I felt the spirit drain out of me. I can remember lying on my living room couch, wanting to get up to go across the room, unable to summon the energy. I had to *stop* and be still. I had to listen to my inner cries. I had to surrender. In some deep recess of my Soul, I knew that I was going through a death that had to be. I had to trust that a rebirth would come.

There is a figure emerging from the shadows, draped in layers of black. As the figure turns, I recognize the female, with flaming red hair: my beloved aunt, long since dead, but now alive, apparently... or back to haunt me. She lets out a cackle that sends chills up and

down my body. Her eyes pierce through me with an underworld glare. I awaken in a cold sweat.

"They" asked, "What do you want?" I couldn't answer.

They asked, "What do you feel?" I didn't know.

I was as removed from my deepest feelings as I could be. And now, incredibly, two years had passed since I had left on my sabbatical. I felt despair, shame. Still lost, still nowhere to go.

My daughter had left home for college; our son would soon follow; my husband was involved in his business, and me, I was sinking deeper and deeper. It was like gravity pulling me down, down, down into the farthest reaches of my psyche. I'd pull off one layer, only to find another. Still I had no idea of who I really was.

An eerie experience turned into a harbinger of my future. My husband and I were out of town for a friend's wedding. I walked from the powder room into the sitting area, passing a large gilded mirror, as I casually glanced at myself. The reflection was me, but with the skin of an elderly woman. An ancient woman. Eyes seeing, yet seeing forever. Those eyes spoke to me. No words forming on her lips, but I could feel her message. My ancestral line. Our collective heritage. I tried to shake my head, to clear the image. My husband, a few steps away, reached out, touched my shoulder—he'd seen her too.

I called her Ancient Future, staring at me with the image of who I was becoming and the connection to all that was past. In her apparition, I sensed somehow the deepest truth of my Soul. A lost connection to my own inner knowing began to emerge. I saw that for so many years I had stepped on the pipeline to my Soul. I had stopped the flow of my passion. I had almost

completely extinguished my spirit-fire. Somehow, I'd done that, perhaps many times.

Over the years, I'd climbed up the ladder of success, I, who had prided myself on being a business visionary, an agent of change. I'd been outspoken, I'd been a risk- taker, but I had cheated myself of my greatest gift: my authenticity. I had become one of them. I fit in. I was accepted. I thought I had wanted that. But what of *me*, the whole of me?

One day, as I moved to an inner sacred ecstatic rhythm during a dance class, a voice gripped my throat, literally, and it came ringing out of my mouth and reverberated against every wall and window. It rang with such a power that it seemed to come from the old weathered lips of Ancient Future, from the very core of my Soul. The vibration shook through me with a power I have never-before experienced, and I knew then that it was the essence of her vibration that I was to bring back with me into the workplace. And my time had come. The depth of her spirit began to speak out in all I did from that moment onward.

The gift of the midlife crossing is that we are guided to take time out, to return to the inner spiral of our Soul. Native Americans use the spiral to symbolize the continuum of life. The early years they picture as a *going out from* the center of the spiral. Later years, *going into*. Midlife is the internal wake-up call. If heard, it beckons us to move toward wholeness by going within.

When I finally allowed myself to dip into the spiral, I was guided on my life's path to my renewed work. While I had been coaching throughout all these years, I formalized my new foundwisdom in 1988 when I established myself as a transformational Master Certified Coach & Mentor, speaker, thought leader on the Longevity Economy, storyteller of the new story of our AGE,

and leading GeroFuturist™, bringing with me more insight into the midlife transition and aging agelessly, as well as new tools from the quest into the Canyon of the Soul. I now would share what I learned about connecting to the parts of ourselves that lay dormant and forgotten, whose very essence and voice could reawaken us again.

It would have been easy to go back to a corporate environment. I was a desirable catch: a young experienced female social entrepreneur-turned visionary intrapreneur. When it was time to take a leap, it became clear to me that my real Soul gift was to serve those adults who are on the vanguard—I committed to serving evolving women and men in an evolving world-- all looking to create careers and innovative, leading-edge businesses and/or non-profits that emanate who they really are at core: visionaries leaders and change makers.

My clientele includes those who are already in leadership positions seeking to integrate their whole being, becoming what Dana Parry and Peter Block refer to as the new earth "stewards," so they can bring meaning and positive change to our world.

My Broad Minded focus allowed me a balanced life where I could fully live the principles I believe in—and it was just the beginning. From there I grew into my next role as the leading GeroFuturist.

Now, in 2018, I lean back in my chair. I look not at some corporate office, but at my own home, filled with symbols of a well-lived life. From my journey through the midlife passage into embracing and owning my role as Ancient Future, a wise elderwoman, I understood: My work is in untapping greatness in others. My gift is star formation.

Do you want to transition out of a job that pays the mortgage but leaves your Soul bankrupt? Are you asking yourself should you stay or should you go, in the light of troubling times? Want to re-design your life, so you have greater positive impact on your family, colleagues, and community? Are you a leader who is looking for a pathway to enlightened leadership, so the impact you have is of the greatest good for all?

We are moving toward lives that are inwardly focused, based on who we are and not just what we do. Almost 80 million Baby Boomers are entering what psychologist Erik Erickson identified as the fall and winter of our lives, when reflection and inner focus become critical. These are the years when after having accomplished so much, many of us want to build on our success to create legacies, healthier relationships, and happier lives.

John Sutton sits at the edge of a ridge in Sedona, Arizona, overlooking the incredible landscape of jutting red mountains and canyons, feeling like he is at the edge of the world, high above the dry desert. He has come here for retreat, to find time alone as he longs to make sense of his life and his growing restlessness and dissatisfaction. It's not that his life is so bad. Matter of fact, by most people's standards, he is a huge success. An investment banker, he has been married for twenty-five years to the same wonderful wife and has two great kids, who are surviving adolescence as gracefully as possible.

He looks up at the stars as they emerge, one by one.

He thinks of when he was a boy, and he and his father would stretch out on sleeping bags on their camping trips alone.

"The stars you see now were born thousands of years ago."

John recalls looking into the skies, wondering how their light traveled such distances, imagining the planet in the days of dinosaurs.

"Those stars we see today are made of the dust of dying stars from thousands of years ago," his father explained.

Now at 46 years old, John Sutton sits breathing the clear twilight air. He thinks of crowded subways, rushed cups of morning coffee, humid hot summer afternoons, feeling choked in his suit. He remembers once having more time for walks in the woods and camping trips, and although his family still takes them, it is as if he never fully settles into the Earth to make a real connection to himself, to the trees, the grass, the riverbed. Life just seems to keep accelerating. There is no time, it seems, for stargazing.

Years earlier, he became pulled into the currents of booming economies and breakthrough technologies where wireless wonders and the Internet sent him and the economy into a quickening spiral. He thought of how the promise of his brother's dot.com led to one disappointment and then another as he watched portfolios shrink by hundreds of thousands of dollars. He thought of the increasing tensions that led to September 11th, then his father's bout with cancer...each year, a loss of greater innocence—as an American and as a human being. "Where do I belong in all of this?" He wonders. He looks up at the stars as he did as a young boy, giving himself to the vast beauty of the heavens, hoping to find answers there.

And they are there. In part.

Greatness arises from the transitions of life, particularly at midlife, when what once seemed defined and solid becomes as vaporous as the gasses that give rise to forming stars.

You may have the house, the car, the children, the money, and the office suite. You have come far in so many ways, but now you are not satisfied. Or perhaps you have lost it all, or despite great gains seek to leave something of meaning behind. As the great philanthropist Andrew Carnegie said, "Any man who dies rich, dies disgraced."

Something deep within is speaking. Listen. It is the still small voice of your evolutionary self asking you to reach for your greatness.

Paul Kastner sits in his office on the 27th floor; the large glass windows face San Francisco's Bay Bridge and a fluttering of sailboats on the ocean. He pulls out a sack lunch with an apple and a cheese sandwich along with the thick manuscript that has become the focus of his free moments. "This is my real work," he smiles between bites.

A leading San Francisco lawyer, he earns six figures and enjoys two homes: one in Hawaii and the other nestled in the exclusive Marin community of Tiburon. "What I wanted to be was a writer. But my parents and everyone around me told me that no one makes money writing. Do something practical. So I did, and for a while I loved it. I loved the power, the energy, and the rush. But there was always this thought, 'Someday I will write.' Then the first divorce...and now the second...and all the headaches of keeping everything in balance—four kids, two ex- wives, law firm, two houses...I write my novels before work and during lunch. I am being called when I write. I never felt that with law. I never felt I did anything to make the world greater. When I write, I am tapping something deeper, human, universal. I care about what is human...relationships...family stuff. I failed at two marriages and am struggling through a

third. When I write, I explore relationships and the themes that I think really matter."

Paul Kastner wanted to find a pathway of transition out of his life as lawyer to that of novelist. "The hardest part was taking the steps to change my life, to understand what my choices were. My current wife doesn't want to give up the lifestyle, and in truth, it was hard facing the sacrifice I would have to make, but I know I have a gift for words, and I want to use that gift to shed some light on how people love."

Marianne Evanson was one of the top publicists for a large New York agency. One afternoon after a meeting, she became sick to her stomach. Her new client was a large corporation with a known history of human rights and environmental abuses. Mary had spent her childhood in Vermont, which inspired in her a love for the pristine beauty of nature. "I knew my time here was short, and that day I asked myself why I was putting my energy every day into projects and companies that didn't share the same values as I did. If I had one cause to live for it would be the protection of the environment. I was sick to my stomach living a life so far from my values."

Marianne made a commitment that day to change. Months later she started her own agency with an environmental edge. She showed companies that being greener could mean a vastly improved image, which translates into greater profits and increasing market share of consumers who more and more want to buy from socially responsible companies. She specializes in grounding her publicity campaigns in environmental and natural images and themes. They work because she is not the only one who cares about and loves the environment.

"Who doesn't want a greener planet? Most people do. And business is booming for me, even in this tough economy because companies are seeing both the savings and marketing potential in going green. Every day, I am actively promoting messages I believe in. I used to leave meetings with knots in my stomach. I became ill from staying quiet. Now if a client doesn't agree with my special focus, then I don't have to work with them."

Marianne Evanson took an active stance on something dear to her heart. She is living congruently and authentically. Every minute another species becomes extinct, and we now face the terrifying reality that we may pollute ourselves out of existence. Large corporations continue to spill tons of toxic chemicals into the air and waterways without any accountability.

Marianne is expressing her leadership through her work and is enjoying greater financial success than ever. Paul Kastner is hoping to shed light on the complexities of relationships and family through his novels and writing. He has spent a lifetime defending corporations, and now he is intrigued with the frailty of human connections. He is concerned with what hasn't worked, and he still longs for loving family and relationships.

Disillusioned by corporate and political corruption, many Americans are demanding greater honesty and responsible leadership and questioning the traditional competition-at-allcost policies of American business. Like Mary and Paul, they are looking to find new ways to live successfully from their core values.

The magazine *Fast Company* asked their readers on May 25, 2002: *Do you feel betrayed by corporate America?* Although the sample was small (418) and unscientific, the results are worth noting: 81 percent said "yes." My sense today in 2017 is that

this sentiment has only grown more severe with the distance between the haves and the have-nots increasing by leaps and bounds. In another poll, one out of four respondents has seriously thought of leaving her job in the last year. More than one in ten has either downsized, cashed out of a high-overhead lifestyle to a simpler one, or taken lower-paying jobs with greater satisfaction. Stress-related disease and fatigue is the number one cause of absenteeism in industrial countries. One in four will experience clinical symptoms of anxiety next year or become clinically depressed. More and more are feeling burned out, bored, disillusioned with the old models of doing business. In a 1999 Roper Poll 87 percent responded that they would leave a higher-paying position for a more modest-paying one if it meant making a difference and healing the planet. I doubt this preference has waned over time. In fact, Sacred Activism and Conscious Capitalism are the keywords of our new times.

In our increasingly automated world, we face the risk of becoming automatons ourselves—and many of us don't want to live like machines anymore. "I feel like I am on automatic pilot. I wake up, eat breakfast, go to work, eat dinner, go to bed, wake up..." shares Janice, a 42-year-old merchandiser, "Just moving through life without any real energy or passion for what I do. Even playing with the kids and making love to my husband feels mechanical. There has to be more to life than this." Having lost connection with our inner life and nature, we are like Stepford Wives and Husbands depicted in the 1972 film (based on Ira Levin's novel) as women walking through our well-manicured lives, lives that didn't prepare us for the upheaval and uncertainty of the recent economic crisis and the jarring discontinuous chaos we experience on a daily-basis.

We have reached a crossroads, and many are asking, "Where do I go from here? What is my vision for tomorrow, and how can I create the changes that matter?"

What may seem like a personal quest for meaning is also a mandate for each of us to shine our light onto the troubled world, creating with others a new constellation for greater tomorrow. In the chapters ahead, you will be given the tools to fully live these axioms on this quest for greatness. You will become the star you are and light up the world with your authentic gifts—whether as an entrepreneur, an artist, a business executive, or a scientist.

As in the heavens, new stars are formed from the gasses and vapors of the old; we are being called to create a new consciousness and a greater world from the dust of our collapsing institutions and identities. Intensifying challenges confront us: terrorism, war, global warming, church scandal, corporate corruption, dissolving families, the Great Recession and now, a return to populism and extremism. The road ahead will be illuminated by those of us who discover and live our light, who discover and live our true purpose. Once again, human survival relies on our gift of consciousness.

Will we respond to The Greatness Challenge?

choose to spend their money on products and services that in some way go toward healing our Earth. In other words, when given a choice between two companies with essentially the same offering, consumers are increasingly choosing the one that goes that extra step toward making a difference in the world.

Think about where this trend is going. People and businesses that find a way to combine a larger visionary purpose with their business model will be the most profitable. More people and businesses will follow their lead until visionary business

THE GREATNESS CHALLENGE

practices will become the norm. Not riding this trend now not only means missing out on a larger market, more money, and greater impact—it could make your ideas and your business ultimately obsolete.

CHAPTER 2 ~ Reflections

The questions and exercises below are to help you find your distinct path to meet The Greatness Challenge

- 1. What are your real desires?
- 2. Do you know why you are here on the planet at this time?
- 3. Have you claimed your destiny path?
- 4. What are you striving toward?
- 5. What next steps do you want to take?
- 6. What does your star formation look like when you stargaze?

THE GREATNESS CHALLENGE



LIFE'S ERUPTIONS





Don't fight forces. Use them.

~ Buckminster Fuller

Greatness is where you least expect it.

~ Tom Peters

hen a volcano erupts, everything around it shakes with its explosive vibrations, and then the lava that pours forth over the land, rivers, and seas begins in time to harden, creating new shores and banks, and becoming home to emerging plants, insects, and animals. From the molten lava and ashes of volcanic disruption can come new life—but also a trail of death and loss.

I link the idea of eruptions to Nobel Laureate Ilya Prigogine's Theory of Dissipative Structures, which explains that a system that is perturbed sufficiently will either shake up or shake out—will vibrate into extinction or vibrate into a whole new and more evolved system. Both natural phenomena offer valuable lessons for us. When structures reach the collapsing or explosive point, there are two possibilities: destruction or transformation.

This is the choice of our time.

Not only are 79.6 million Americans currently in midlife or moving through their 60s and into their 70s, scientists estimate that we are midway through the anticipated life span of the solar system. We are moving through a momentous transition point. As people face the critical questions of life purpose and meaning, they also face the urgent and sometimes harrowing questions of sustaining our way of life on the planet. Potentially, the pursuit of greater personal meaning during times of explosive crisis will lead us to new solutions. History shows us that greatness is often born of crisis. Perhaps like the hot lava that spews from the volcano mouth and courses into the ocean, this troubling time, with all its destructive force, will lead to the forming of new flourishing formations in business, education, family, politics, science, and spirituality.

Certainly, our current institutions are failing us: churches are barely recovering from the widespread revelations of sexual abuse; schools are suffering from violence and lack of resources; corporate greed and dishonesty have been exposed over and over again; our domestic divas and investment gurus are sentenced to jail time; families are breaking apart and forming new ones with all the complications and stresses that come with two working parents and stepchildren; and we all watch in horror as symbols of Western economic supremacy crumbled when terrorists invade and continue to threaten our homelands and our democracies. The disintegration of our established institutions is not unlike the dissolution of ourselves that we may experience as we move from the familiar structures of our youth into the formless, foggy pathways that leads us into midlife and toward our elderhood. Inevitable is the collapse that signals change.

In our own lives, we experience eruptions. And we ignore them at our own peril. Most of us don't even think about what it will cost us if we don't put our needs and values first. Thinking we can maintain the status quo, we often ignore the subtle warning signs, setting ourselves up for one or more of the following breakdowns. The longer you resist, the more significantly you'll be affected by these self-denial symptoms

- Relationship Breakdowns: Expect to burn out a marriage and/or lose people who are very important to you.
- Physical Breakdowns: Expect to be hit with chronic fatigue, female issues, back trouble, fibromyalgia, or pneumonia. Wherever you're physically vulnerable, you will be affected.

 Spiritual Breakdowns: Expect to experience confusion, internal churnings, disconnections, desperate yearnings, and fruitless seekings.

In nature every winter, rows of trees stand bare without any apparent purpose, their old leaves crushed into the snow. But with the coming of spring, the very branches that were barren become lush with blossom. What once was in full bloom gives way to the rays of a summer sun and melts into a mulch that nourishes the earth for the next April bouquet. The very basic principle of continual death and rebirth in life informs everything; as one thing dies and changes form, something new is born. Collapse is an inevitable precursor to rebuilding both individuals and societies. Not only do we as individual organisms transform through the seasons, but we as a species evolve over time.

We are all witness to and part of a new shift in consciousness. As consciousness evolves, we are, of course, called to evolve with it. The general malaise I see in clients of all ages reflects an exciting new trend. While bright and ambitious adults were once satisfied merely with the two fancy cars and the nice home, more and more people at younger and younger ages are facing a crisis in meaning and values. The cars and homes are great, they will tell you, but life does not start and end there.

In a post-9/11 world, now still recovering from the Great Recession and leaving the Obama era as part of our past history, we have found ourselves mired in a new shift to global populism and the alt right in the mid-2000s, more and more people across generations are looking themselves squarely in the mirror and want to make a difference. Baby Boomers and Generation Xers seek spiritually oriented approaches to family, work, and business. Conscious Capitalism and Sacred Activism is becoming a predominant act of resistance. "People cannot bear spiritual

aridness," explains therapist Susan Smalley. "Suddenly you are aware of a gnawing dissatisfaction with what you see around you, and you find you are quietly (or not so quietly) seeking a setting where you can express your own meaning and purpose in life...a place or a role through which you can 'sound your own note." Living a life that is only bottom-line driven is not enough anymore.

A Gallup Poll revealed increased "interest in spirituality" from 20 percent of those polled in '94 to 78 percent post-9/11, which has grown exponentially into today. The growing spiritualization of America is seen in the number of associations that aim to bring higher values into the workplace, such as one of the early groups, Association for Spirit At Work (8,000 affiliated, and 30 chapters throughout the United States and other countries), World Future Society (25,000 members), Association of Professional Futurists (250 members), Noetic Science (300 groups worldwide), the World Bank (a sponsored 400-member study group, The Spiritual Unfoldment Society, included large corporations such as Boeing and Merck).

Every March, Boston hosts the well- attended International Symposium on Spirituality & Business. Manhattan's Open Center and retreat centers across the country, like Omega's and Kripalu's offerings have included popular author and speaker Marion Woodman's work, "Being at the Threshold: Searching for the Rising Light in Dark Times" and her day-long workshop "Power of the Unconscious and the Emerging New Consciousness." Included also was Paul Hawken's *Blessed Unrest*. Today all around us books, magazines, and television shows speak to the Soul of a spiritually hungry America. Sacred Activism is growing to meet the challenges of our times just as commitment to Conscious Capitalism is on the rise.

Our nation's point of focus is turning inward, as many seek a deeper connection with Soul, Spirit, God, Divine Presence. We are longing for transcendence. Abraham Maslow coined the term of "transcender" for self-actualizing adults whose transcendent experiences were important and even crucial. These folks were motivated by a "unity consciousness" and a sense of destiny, having had "illuminations or insights or cognitions which changed their view of the world and themselves." In the early eighties, Marilyn Ferguson noted a new trend of people who are "quietly but powerfully" bringing about social transformation. She describes this group as being held together by a unity consciousness and common vision. "They merge...the practical and the mystical views of reality, transcending the dichotomy between those alleged opposites. They value all in life's experiences and are more concerned with process and patterns than with content and specific events."

Author and researcher Paul Ray reported that his San Francisco-based consumer research company, America Lives, has identified a growing subculture of "Cultural Creatives" who are far more receptive to psychological, spiritual, and holistic thinking and approaches to issues. They are looking for more purpose in their lives. Traditional success and relationships are no longer enough. Twenty-four percent of adults—44 million Americans—now fall into this category—and this number is rapidly increasing going forward.

In the voices of my clients and readers, I hear the longing to live life with greater self-awareness and increased alignment with Soul. They are looking for more purpose in their lives. Traditional success and relationships are no longer enough. They now seek greater meaning, balance, and CoHERency in their lives; they have climbed the ladders to success and are now

looking behind them and wondering where to go next and how to heal their world. A voice of emerging leadership calls from within each of them, a voice longing to find expression that transforms the world and brings meaning. They want to create a legacy that is born of who they are; they form the vanguard of Cultural Creatives, emerging from these troubled times. There is not a moment to waste: we are being called to our personal and collective evolution.

CHAPTER 3 ~ Reflections

The questions and exercises below are to help you find your distinct path to meet The Greatness Challenge.

- 1. What breakdown events in your life "vibrated" you enough to catapult you into a whole new and more evolved system?
- 2. When these breakdown events reached the collapsing or exploding point, in what ways were you transformed? What new learnings can you bring forward to apply to future upheavals?
- 3. Did these breakdown events prompt you to redefine what matters most to you? How did this breakdown lead you to a breakthrough? As a result did you re-claim your life's purpose?
- 4. Are you applying what you learned to live your destiny?
- 5. In what ways are you called to Sacred Activism and Conscious Capitalism at this time in your life?

THE GREATNESS CHALLENGE

Chapter 4

IMAGINAL CELLS AND REINVENTION





What a man can be, he must be.

~ Abraham Manslow

The Only thing standing between me and greatness is me.

~ Woody Allen

All great transformations start from within. One of the most incredible is the caterpillar's metamorphosis into a butterfly. Anyone who feels that a life change is impossible to make need only look to the chrysalis to see that nothing is impossible with vision, internal transformation, persistence and collective action.

Within the chrysalis, the caterpillar first disintegrates into a clump of cells, the larva, which is formless and chaotic—much like the chaos in our lives and in our world from which the greatest transformations are born.

Within this larva, a new kind of cell emerges, which scientists refer to as imaginal cells. These cells are where the butterfly-to-be is first imagined. At first, the caterpillar's immune system destroys these cells because they are foreign to the organism and therefore seen as a threat—just as society tends to react to any new idea, any vision for truly Great, momentous change.

But the imaginal cells persist and group together as *imaginal disks*, forming bonds that not only strengthen them but allow them to pass genetic information among cells. The more they cluster, and the more they share, the stronger and more numerous they become until they reach a tipping point—becoming the primary cells in the organism, forever changing the consciousness of the caterpillar to that of a butterfly.

Much like stem cells in the human body, the imaginal cells transform themselves from blueprints for the entire organism to specialized cells for different tissues—muscles, nervous system, even the heart. Four imaginal disks will become the butterfly's four wings. In other words, the imaginal cells create the butterfly from the inside out.

These amazing cells don't simply appear out of thin air. They are within the caterpillar from a very early stage of development, yet they can't work their magic until the caterpillar reaches the last stage of its life as a caterpillar. Only then are these dormant cells able to emerge, work together and completely transform the caterpillar into a butterfly.

The message for us is clear: Our potential for greatness, to Radically Reinvent ourselves dramatically, does not wane but is at its peak as we age. The transition to midlife and later years is the larva from which we can reimagine ourselves and fly.

We're in This Together.

Learning how to evolve consciously will not only benefit us as individuals but will benefit all of humanity. Imagine the effect we can have on the world if we no longer discount the contributions we can make beyond midlife but instead collectively transform ourselves to be even greater, to fully express our gifts and passions, and to lead the world into the Age of Greatness.

Instead of the single imaginal cell dying off under the attack of personal and global tragedy— job loss, market crashes, recession, loss of loved ones, poverty, climate change, terrorism and war—we can work together to reinvent the world as we reinvent ourselves. The more we own our greatness, the greater the impact we can have on the world.

Radical Reinvention is a process of personal evolution. There's no magic wand, however, there are some pitfalls to avoid.

Reinvention most often backfires when:

- We fail to properly research what we think we want
- We are lacking the inner resources required to fuel the change process
- We begin following a road that is not on our map Professional reinventions go hand in hand with personal reinventions. Radical reinvention is not an intellectual process but one of mind, body, and soul. Before undertaking a reinvention, assess carefully.

You may have so many interests or options that you can't immediately discern what you want, or you may be so burned out that you can't even determine the "right" questions to ask.

Consider working with a pro steeped in Radical Reinvention expertise. If you serve and/or are 50+ be sure your advisor/coach specializes in the needs, concerns and wants

as well as the challenges of ageism and sexism that face professionals and executives in midlife and beyond.

For more in-depth exploration of personal and professional Radical Reinvention, please check out my other stand-alone mini-series titles, *Mastering Reinvention* and *Ageless Reinvention* (also as Chapter 9 in my foundational book, *The Ageless Way*.

CHAPTER 4 ~ Reflections

The questions and exercises below are to help you find your distinct path to meet **The Greatness Challenge**.

- 1. Get started by asking yourself these starter questions to trigger and seed your reinvention process:
 - a. Are you a good candidate for reinvention, or are you a high risk?
 - b. How can you best prepare yourself for this process?
 - c. Where you are you now?
 - d. Where you want to go?
 - e. Why you want to go there?
 - f. What's really important to you?
- 2. Now for starters, check your underlying assumptions for unmet needs or overridden values:
 - a. Are you simply bored?
 - b. Does the grass look greener "over there"?
 - c. Are you following a societal dictate?
 - d. Are you doing what other's expect?
 - e. Are you following your own heartfelt yearning?
- 3. Recall a time when you went through an unexpected major life change. What elements of you were transformed in the metamorphosis, and what greatness emerged in the process?

THE GREATNESS CHALLENGE

Chapter 5

EIGHT (R)EVOLUTIONARY AXIOMS





Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is not path and leave a trail..

~ Muriel Strode

Destiny is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of choice; it is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved.

~ Williams Jenings Bryan

he **eight** (**R**) **evolutionary axioms** in this chapter are based on four-plus decades of coaching, training, and convening visionaries. These powerful principles have lit the way for legacy building and social change that reflects this new evolved materialism:

- 1. Align with your soul purpose
- 2. Access untapped reservoirs of potential by embracing the shadow
- 3. Integrate the Inner Feminine with the Inner Masculine
- 4. Shift your perspective because thought is energy; thought is creative!
- 5. Invite mastery and mentoring
- 6. Commit to enhanced consciousness and social responsibility
- Course correct for continuous quality improvement
- 8. Transform yourself so you transform (y)our world

These axioms lead to the personal greatness and visionary leadership that are becoming increasingly critical in these times of historical, social, environmental, and economic crisis. As we Americans shift our definition of "success," we positively redefine not only our country but our contribution to the world as well. The individual's quest for more

meaning in life and work is a collective quest for the survival and thrival of the species as a whole. As each individual evolves, the world also evolves.

(R) evolutionary Axiom 1: Align with Your Soul Purpose

Aligning with your Soul purpose is the first essential evolutionary axiom leading to greatness. It means connecting with your core values in a profound way. As people gain greater success, many grow dissatisfied with a life that is focused on external rewards and pressures. With the recent shifts in the global economy, even more people find themselves facing an uncertain future.

Clients tell me that they chose careers or businesses because they "fell into my lap" or "seemed practical" or "were just expected." They explain to me that they have beautiful homes, loving spouses, and adoring children, but they walk through their lives as if they are sleeping and are wondering what is wrong. There is a deadness, many say, and they long for the aliveness of their first days of being in love or first starting on their career path. "My life feels monochrome," one client explained, "when it once was in living color." As midlife approaches, many begin to question their life choices and quality-- and long to build legacies that reflect what really matters. An unsettling dissatisfaction and a voice from within cries out.

An increasing number of others quite content with their careers and significant relationships still feel a general malaise. I refer to these feelings as Soul Seismology when the authentic Self cracks through the cultivated exterior of people to turn them inward. These inner rumblings are an invitation to traverse the Canyon of the Soul, where our footing gives way into a deeper landscape, one that demands we look at ourselves in a manner we never have before. The deeper we journey into the walls of the canyon, the more we will discover who we are, truly are, for the Soul of each person lives in the dark crevices, where the ravines are treacherous and the pathway uncertain. The descent—also known as the "the dark night of the Soul"— is necessary for connecting to what really matters most to us. Some need to travel longer and more deeply than others, but with guidance all will ascend with greater alignment to their core Self and with greater clarity of what truly matters.

This descent is not unique to us; it is a universal deepening described in mythology in tales such as the Sumerian myth of the Descent of Inanna, and, also in discussions of transition, liminality, and rites of passage in anthropology, psychology, and adult development.

(R)evolutionary Axiom 2: Access Untapped Reservoirs of Potential by Embracing the Shadow

Accessing untapped reservoirs of potential by embracing the shadow is the second essential (r)evolutionary axiom leading to greatness.

In the natural world, dark matter is often invisible but it still exerts an undeniable force. For example, black holes cannot be seen, but their gravitational force is distinctly felt in space. In the same way, the "dark" aspects of our psychology may not be apparent but can exert a strong force on our actions and thinking. Questing the Canyon of the Soul, people discover repressed and forgotten aspects of themselves. These are what renowned psychologist Carl Jung called the shadow.

For the workaholic executive, it could be the part of her who wants to eat bon-bons and watch television all day; for the diligent accountant, it could be the sloppy fun-loving four-year-old within him who wants to spill paint all over the kitchen floor and express himself on large wild canvases; for the customer relations executive, it may be the angry warrior who recoils in anger, "Leave me alone. Go take care of your own problems!"

These voices often remain repressed, so people can be accepted, loved, successful—not make waves—but without our awareness, these selves can sabotage or drain us. Many

of my most successful clients live in fear of being "found out" for being a sham or a fake; others carry within them the image of the bag lady or homeless man and live in dread that someday they will be roaming the streets with their possessions stacked in shopping carts.

When you really face the images that drive you, you discover your core fears as well as your core desires. You discover buried selves that live inside you like buried treasures that offer new vitality and creativity: the Inner Visionary, the Rusty Knight, the Sleeping Ingenue, the Rising Leader, the Inner Wise One, the Truth Teller. With the shadow illuminated, you discover aspects of yourself that were once put away as part of the quest for success; now, given the chance to delve deeper, you will discover a rich universe that gives way to more energy, compassion, and insight at the heart of greatness.

(R)evolutionary Axiom 3: Integrate the Inner Feminine with the Masculine



The best thing about getting older is that you can really begin to think about your calling, your passion...

When I look into the future, it is so bright, it burns my eyes.

~ Oprah Winfrey

Integrating the Inner Feminine with the inner masculine is the third (R)evolutionary axiom that is essential to greatness.

There is no stronger force in nature for softening the hard edges of stone than water. In the same way, no influence is more healing in taking away the edges of living in a high-pitched accelerated world than that of the Sacred Feminine. The traditional Masculine qualities of competitive achievement, hierarchical organization, and goal-orientation have been at the foundation of our institutions and our very way of life. Both men and women who are successful have to internalize some or all of these values in order to succeed in the mainstream.

As more and more people feel their lives out of balance, they yearn to integrate their masculine qualities with the inner Sacred Feminine: that which is intuitive, connected to body and nature, the Soul's access way to the transcendent, and which allows a softer way of living. As people quest into the Canyon of the Soul, they often discover their own Sacred Feminine waiting for them like a pool of still water at the heart of fallen stone or the transformative waters of a tsunami eroding what no longer works, leaving a sculpted, newly revealed essence. By connecting to the Sacred Feminine in all her qualities, we forge a more balanced life and a more collaborative, unified way of relating to the earth and ourselves. It is through the Feminine in us all that we discover an innate wisdom that sees connections in all things and the longer view. The Sacred Feminine is rooted in our bodies as is the Soul—what Jung called the Inner Feminine, or Anima. Body, Soul, and Earth, the Sacred Feminine returns us to our sacred roots.

Listen to the voice of the Black Madonna, for she is also part of the archetypal Sacred Feminine and has many faces that emerge across the world. Renowned Jungian analyst and prolific author Marion Woodman tells us of the Dark Feminine, "her darkness is associated with the unknown, repressed side of our femininity" and appears all over the world as Sophia, Shekinah, Lilith, and Kwan Yin. Her truths are uncompromising, and when we listen to her, and voice her discerning truth, the world will change.

Not only are we being called to connect to the Sacred Feminine within ourselves— men and women alike—but we see an increasing emergence of women leaders who are blazing the trail. Conferences, workshops, books, and associations are appearing throughout the country because women are taking on new leadership. Unlike years past in which women tried to lead like men, these new leaders are encouraging a more sustainable and long-lasting view based on feminine principles. Greatness is not possible without the Sacred Feminine; only through the marriage of the Inner Masculine and Feminine polarities can we evolve as individuals and as a society.

As we get older, the traditionally "male" strategies that may have worked in our youth to gain success may not work anymore or may no longer be satisfying. After tough financial times, many people are seeking new pathways to create financial resilience while also bring more Soul and purpose into their lives.

(R)evolutionary Axiom 4: Shifting Pepective: Thought is Energy; Thought is creative.

Shifting perspective based on the scientific principle that thought is energy is the fourth (R)evolutionary axiom. Quarks are subatomic particles that teach us not only about matter but also consciousness. Scientists have discovered that just the presence of a researcher can affect the movements of a quark. Our consciousness, therefore, influences matter—even at the subatomic level. If consciousness influences quarks, then clearly, what we think shapes our world. Our thoughts create our reality.

We can actively reconfigure the archetypes, myths, and stories of our day, from the old stories of Inanna, Odysseus, and the Old Testament to contemporary myths such as ET and Star Wars, all with messages that are a potential antidote to the negativity of our daily news stories. *Chicken Soup for the Soul* is an example of the cultural hunger for rewriting our future, with an emphasis on the inspirational. Just as stories move and touch us just when we need them most, so do messengers, people, and guidance that arrive just at the right time to lead our way.

How we see the world and ourselves completely creates what comes to us. Both natural and psychological processes confirm over, and over again that how we perceive the world is how our world manifests. For example, when we

THE GREATNESS CHALLENGE

live through the lens of more positive thinking, we tend to create a more positive world. By understanding how images and perception shapes reality, we become masters of one of the critical principles of greatness, that thought is creative.

(R)evolutionary Axiom 5: Invite Mastery and Mentoring

Inviting mastery and mentoring is the fifth (R)evolutionary axiom that leads to greatness. No one creates greatness alone.

This is the very principle of being human: We are birthed of the dual contributions of our mother and father. Even at the very microscopic level, we are encoded through a double helix, having been created by the chromosomal contribution of our parents.

The double helix is a beautiful metaphor for the duality at the root of all creation. We cannot do anything sustainable alone, which is why it is so important to develop mentors and become a mentor oneself.

Choose your mentors well, as mentorship leads to mastery, and those who teach us are critical to how we learn. Through mentorship, we develop mastery impossible to achieve alone. And as mentors, we pass on our wisdom, leaving a legacy, sharing what we have received with others. Great mentors not only pass on the fundamentals of mastery in work but share their wisdom about relationships, spirituality, and personal growth. Greatness is possible when we stand on the shoulders of those before us—and offer our shoulders to those who are newly arrived.

(R)evolutionary Axiom 6: Commit to Enhanced Consciousness

Committing to enhanced consciousness is the sixth (R)evolutionary axiom that leads to greatness.

If none of the stars sheds light, there can be only darkness. We must first find the light in ourselves before bringing light to the world, as part of a constellation of stars. Many people believe that if they can only achieve and achieve, they will reach greatness. On one hand, it is true that we can gain great success through outward focus; however, over and over again, I have seen that the truly great know themselves, and as their self-knowledge deepens, they transform others.

Many midlifers realize that their whole lives have been focused on external reward, and as they are called into the Canyon of the Soul, they discover that as they heal themselves, they heal others in new and powerful ways. Greatness is not only about achievement but also the power to change. Your professional and personal life will flourish as you take the evolutionary path to self-transformation. As we ourselves become stars, our presence is deeply felt through the lights of the whole constellation.

Change begins with changing who we are as we align with our Soul purpose, integrate the masculine and feminine aspects within, embrace the shadow, and understand our thoughts, our dreams, our stories, and our messengers. Through self- knowledge, we know our world. Each person's enhanced consciousness adds to the consciousness of the collective.

R)evolutionary Axiom 7: Course Correct for Continuous Quality Improvement

Course correcting for quality improvement is the seventh (R)evolutionary axiom essential for greatness.

In nature, there are many examples of self-correcting systems, where elements of a greater whole are continuously brought into balance. This is called homeostasis. Living greatness requires continual self and system correction targeted at bringing the internal and external into balance.

Course-correction tools can direct us to areas that need improvement and allow us to adjust accordingly (and continuously). Greatness is an evolutionary process, and course-correction strategies allow an ongoing appraisal of where we are and where we need to go as we continually seek balance in work, family, and community life.

We know that the midlife crisis is a universal transition point as we self-correct and repurpose in preparation for our older years. The midlife shake-up leads often to questioning and reviewing our lives and looking at the core issues that really matter, as critical and typical as the awkward years of adolescence.

In the same way, as we come into greater balance through our midlife passage, we are also shifting the general priorities and focus of American life because many of us, almost 45 percent, are in midlife and looking for greater purpose and choices that lead to the greater good. It is almost as if when we most need another evolutionary step forward, we are together

(R)evolutionary Axiom 8: Transform Yourself So You Transform (Y)our World

Transform yourself, so you transform (y)our world is the eighth and final essential (R)evolutionary axiom that leads to greatness.

To survive the natural world, species must adapt to the changing conditions in the environment around them. So is true with humans. As we create organizations, systems, and relationships that foster sustainability and greater meaning, we adapt successfully to these challenging times.

We can lead the world into a new model for the twenty-first century, one that is focused on the triple bottom line: People, Planet, and Profits. We can live a new "evolved materialism," prospering while doing work that is humane, collaborative, and environmentally sound. The sustainability of this planet depends on the ever-growing wave of Baby Boomers, 70+ers and others who are looking to transform the world and recalibrate to the new economic realities.

What has been commonly called the "midlife crisis" is acting as an "evolutionary crisis" through which people are seeking expanded purpose and ways to add value in their everyday lives and the world at large. Add to this the rising civic involvement in politics and government, along with renewed support "for the people by the people," and to save the planet, more and more people are rejecting the

current model of win-and-consume-at-all-costs and are looking toward conscious choices that will result in a more sustainable tomorrow.

This is truly the ultimate goal of the eight (r)evolutionary axioms. By awakening the visionary within you, you—we—can do nothing short of saving the planet and ensuring a breakthrough of evolutionary proportions.

CHAPTER 5 ~ Reflections

The questions and exercises below are to help you find your distinct path to meet **The Greatness Challenge**.

- Align with your Soul purpose Can you name your Soul's purpose? If yes, how will you claim it?
- 2. Access untapped reservoirs of potential by embracing the shadow In what ways can you embrace your shadow selves?
- 3. Integrate the Inner Feminine with the Inner Masculine In what ways have you denied your Inner Feminine? How will you integrate both the Sacred Dark and Divine Feminine into your life?
- 4. Shift perspective because thought is energy How will you change your thoughts which hold you back? What changes in your thinking will expand and shift your perspective so that you will be able to create your future greatness?
- 5. Invite mastery and mentoring Who have been your life mentors? What did you learn from them, and in what ways did they add value to your life? How can you become a masterful mentor?
- **6. Commit to enhanced consciousness** Do you have a regular practice that enhances your consciousness?
- Course correct for continuous quality improvement Recall a time when divine dissatisfaction prompted you

- to make a course correction. What did you learn from this experience you can apply going forward?
- **8.** Transform yourself so you transform (y)our world What legacy do you want to leave for the next seven generations and beyond?
- 9. Are your ready to Meet The Greatness Challenge?

THE GREATNESS CHALLENGE

Chapter 6

THE AGE OF GREATNESS





Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

~ Margaret Mead

The best way to predict your future is to create it.

~ Erich Fromm

We are at a critical historical juncture. A wave of thought leaders, including John Renesch, Tim Collins, Jean Houston, Barbara Marx Hubbard, Peter Russell, Tom Peters, Marion Woodman, John Chambers, Michael Ray, Fritoj Capra, Margaret J. Wheatley, and Mark Albion, are leading the vanguard. They are the new Cassandra—prophets in their day— offering both words of wisdom and words of warning: We can prosper or we can perish. Human beings are on the verge of either completely dissipating and destroying all, or answering the call to **The Greatness Challenge**

In my 40-plus years as the leading, GeroFuturist™, best-selling author of 11 titles, speaker, and Master Coach & Mentor, I have seen an increasing number of people longing to create a future that is humane, sustainable, and conscious. Reaching a positive tomorrow starts today, and it starts with developing personal greatness through the eight (r)evolutionary axioms discussed in this manifesto. We can choose hope or hopelessness; the future is in the hands of every one of us.

I wrote *The Greatness Challenge* with faith in our ability to use the human gift of consciousness. Potentially, our longing for deeper meaning will save us. Victor Frankl, Jewish psychologist interned at Auschwitz during World War II, noted that the prisoners who possessed a guiding purpose best survived the camps. For many of us who are Baby Boomers and 70+ers, the call is coming at midlife, and for some, even earlier, to live a life that matters. As

we answer the cry for meaning, we are also ensuring our survival and thrival. Those who bring their unique gifts for the common good bring the light of their work and being into the constellation of the collective. We are evolving in an Age of Greatness. I offer my work and the work of others as an evolutionary roadmap to ensure that we meet **The Greatness Challenge**.

Take the Greatness Challenge Quiz:



http://www.karensands.com/greatnesschallenge/

Want to congregate with those who are answering the call to meet The Greatness Challenge?

Join our exclusive Facebook Group Here:

https://www.facebook.com/groups/164054610749003/

THE GREATNESS CHALLENGE ~

Resources

You've Always Known You Were Meant For More

Reading about what is possible for you and for our world can spark your own realizations, discoveries, and BIG ideas. Don't let them slip away!

No matter your circumstances or your age or life stage, you can start acting now to fulfill your potential to transform your life, your work, and your world.

And you don't have to go it alone.

You will find books, card decks, and coaching and consulting services available for purchase, as well as numerous **FREE** tools for taking the next steps, at www.KarenSands.com.

Check back regularly for ongoing information about the future and a continuous stream of new offerings. (You can also follow Karen on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and Pinterest to get the latest updates.)

Here are just a fraction of the resources you will find at www.KarenSands.com today and in the near future:

No matter your age or stage or what you do, Karen's **Ageless Beat blog** offers a wealth of information, strategies, and guidance for you to make **the next several decades**

your most visionary yet (at www.KarenSands.com/ageless-beat-blog). If you are so moved, please contribute your own guest post!

Download **FREE** and low-cost e-books and mini print books, such as A Glimpse of Tomorrow's Future, Mastering Reinvention, An Ageless Story, and Crossing the Canyon, at www.KarenSands.com/bookstore. Many more are in development.

Also download **video and audio interviews, reports, how-tos,** and much more at www.KarenSands.com.

Get your copy of *Visionaries Have Wrinkles* (print and e-book) which continues receiving rave reviews for conversations with women visionaries who share their no-holds-barred inspirational points of view on growing older boldly, wisely, and visibly to reshape the future of aging for all of us. Or download a pdf chapter to get acquainted with these visionaries. Make sure you check out the companion card deck, *Visionaries Have Wrinkles Reflections Card Deck*, and the companion workbook, *Visionaries Have Wrinkles Reflections Journal*. Available at www.Karen-Sands. com/bookstore and Amazon.

Sign up for the **FREE Ageless Beat newsletter** (www. KarenSands.com/ageless-beat-newsletter) to follow the latest conversations about how post-40 women and those who serve them can transform their lives, businesses, and the world

Find out more about **FREE** interactive forums, webinars, upcoming podcasts, workshops, and retreats.

Check back regularly for **new readings and links** at www.KarenSands.com/ageless-reads- links, or share your own recommendations at Karen@KarenSands.com.

Find out about **Greatness coaching tailored for you** at www.KarenSands.com/greatness-coaching. Get one-to-one and group coaching.

Learn how to be the trailblazing visionary you are meant to be. Read more at www.KarenSands.com/media and www.KarenSands.com/speaking.

Find out more about **FREE** interactive forums, webinars, upcoming podcasts, workshops, and retreats.

Check back regularly for new readings and links at www.KarenSands.com/ageless-reads- links, or share your own recommendations at Karen@KarenSands.com.

Contact Karen about corporate trainings and speaking, on how to go from great to greatness, while inspiring intergenerational collaboration and innovation in the workplace. Read more at www.KarenSands.com/media, and www.KarenSands.com/speaking.

You are invited to send your stories and recommended readings on how you and others are responding to The Greatness Challenge to Karen at Karen@KarenSands. com so she can share them with other readers on her site and her blog at www.KarenSands.com/ageless- beat-blog.

THE GREATNESS CHALLENGE

ABOUT KAREN SANDS

aren Sands, leading GeroFuturist™, Visionary Trailblazer, best-selling author, storyteller, dynamic speaker, and thought leader on the Longevity Economy, 40+ market, meeting the Greatness Challenge and Ageless Leadership is at the forefront of transforming the future. She is



a bold advocate for The New Story of Our AGE. As a Consultant-Strategist, Trainer and Certified Master Coach and Mentor Coach she guides and mentors leaders and their organizations toward the Triple Bottom Line, encouraging us to engage in sacred activism and conscious capitalism, while supporting us to leverage the Longevity Economy as we find and anchor our niche in the 21st century global business climate.

Karen brings together the best practices of sustainable business and leadership development integrated with avant-garde approaches and processes to prepare us to rock our AGE by generating and utilizing innovative, intergenerational business and services partnered with civil engagement to create positive social impact and legacy making, as well as money-making futures that matter.

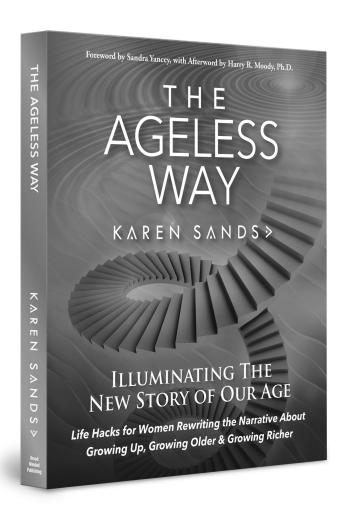
She is a "Visionary with Wrinkles," a CCE-BCC and ICF-MCC certified Master and Mentor Coach, a TED support Master Coach, the leading GeroFuturist on the Longevity Economy, and author/creator of *The Ageless Way* ground breaking book, services, and programs., and its companion titles: *Visionaries Have Wrinkles, Gray is the New Green, The Greatness Challenge, Ageless Reinvention* and more. Sands is also an online entrepreneur, speaker, publisher, and multi-book author/blogger. Karen's vision of an institute to share her breakthrough teachings, approach, processes and tools are being realized in her newest (ad) venture to realize her dream to make her teachings and coaching models available to the many under the umbrella of TheAgelessWayAcademy.com

Karen Sands propels women and men across generations to usher in The Ageless Way and radically reinvent our future so each of us, and together, can meet the Greatness Challenge of our times.

Want more of The Ageless Way?

GET THE COMPLETE BOOK

at www.KarenSands.com



More of us than ever before are ready to reshape the chaos of our lives and planet, to change what aging means while transforming our lives and our world. The old story of aging no longer applies - if it ever did. We have more to give, not less, with each new year.

Why deny age when we can transcend it? We can live beyond time, beyond age.

We can be Ageless.

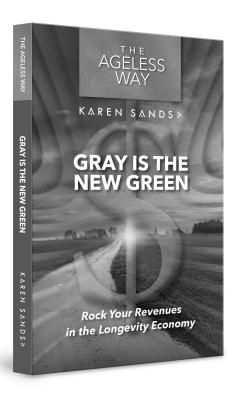
Join leading Educational GeroFuturistTM Karen Sands in an exploration of past, present, and future stories, from the ancient oracles to modern trends in everything from entrepreneurship and the economy, science and technology, health and beauty, community and politics- stories and trends that lead to one extraordinary conclusion:

We are on the cusp of the new story of our age, as individuals and as a planet, a story in which multiple generations have an opportunity to redefine age and reimagine the future together, and in doing so, transform the world in visionary ways. It's time for us to illuminate this new story about what it means to age across our life course, a story in which we step forward to be not who we should be as we age but who we can be.

Let the old story go. Let the new story begin.

Usher in The Ageless Way now - at every age.

It's our time to radically reinvent growing older!



The old story, that youth rules, no longer applies. Our future hinges on recognizing the needs and contributions of the 40-plus market, Most importantly, Ageless Boomer women who mean BIG business!

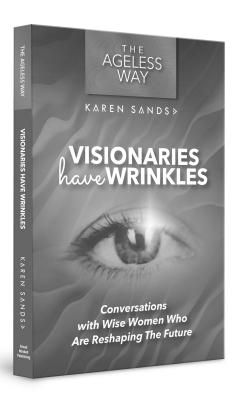
A paradigm shifting business book for visionary leaders, savvy marketers, and innovative entrepreneurs who are ready to rock their revenues in the Longevity Economy by staying in sync with the people who keep them in business.

Discover how demographic trends coupled with cuttingedge findings will positively influence your future leadership, business development, market reach, and succession planning.

Learn why and how to communicate with the 40-plus market - how to leverage their talents as leaders, employees, and employers, how to develop products that serve their needs and how to market them to generate a positive purchasing response.

If you snooze, you lose! Now is the time to drive your business or firm to join the innovative product developers, attuned marketers, savvy service providers, and future-forward employers who understand what is coming, leaping ahead to snatch up segments of this booming market.

Leading GeroFuturistTM and thought leader on the Longevity Economy, Karen Sands shares her unique perspective to usher in an evolutionary change in the business community by engaging with the workforce and the market-place to communicate with the 40-plus women's market. That's not all, she also guides the reader in how to leverage their talents as leaders, employees, and employers, how to develop products that serve their needs and how to market them to generate a positive purchasing response. Women visionaries share their no-holds-barred inspirational points of view on growing older boldly, wisely, and visibly to reshape the future for all of us.



Women visionaries share their no-holds-barred inspirational points of view on growing older boldly, wisely, and visibly to reshape the future for all of us.

Join Karen Sands, ICF & CCE Master Certified & Board Certified Coach and Mentor Coach, leading GeroFuturist[™] for insightful, inspirational, truthful conversations with innovators, activists, artists, teachers, healers, and leaderswomen who have stepped beyond society-imposed (and self-imposed) limitations on women and expectations about

how we should age and who we should be in our fifties, sixties, seventies, eighties, and beyond. These women don't just tell it like it is. They tell it like it can be. For all of us. Women like Elly Guggenheimer, Carole Hyatt, Marion Woodman, Belvie Rooks, Josie Cruz Natori, and many more bring their unique gifts and wisdom to the issue of aging and what that process demands of us. Perhaps because they are keenly aware that their time is limited, they have wasted no time pretending to be less than who they are-extraordinary women living their visions with more passion, wisdom, and focus than ever before, not despite their age but because of it. This is true for us as well: There is so much more for us to live in the time left to us. We don't have to age the way we're "supposed" to-quietly, gracefully, invisibly.

Since when has our generation ever done what it's supposed to do? The same women who worked to shatter the glass ceiling are now soaring beyond the silver ceiling, and in doing so, they are leaving a visionary legacy for generations to come.

Praise for THE GREATNESS CHALLENGE

"This is a definitive book for our time. Sands encourages us masterfully, and every which way she can, to meet the greatness challenge of our time with the power and grace that is ours to claim."



~ Elsie Maio, Founder of Humanity, Inc./The SoulBrandingSM Institute

"A trusted guide and masterful approach to challenge the status quo by empowering readers to rise from good too great to greatness, grounded in sound knowledge, cutting-edge ideas, and rich insights for everyone to create a future we can be proud to live and leave."

~ Dan Abelow, Patented Inventor

Lead Others in Ways You've Never Before Imagined

Historically in moments of political, personal and social unrest, conditions are set for the emergence of greatness in leadership. This greatness is now appearing in all sectors - and particularly in business as we move towards increasing sustainability for people, planet and profits.

Learn the fundamentals of creating and living greatness, applying the 8 (R)evolutionary processes, models and principles from her 40+ years as a

consulting futurist and masterful coach for conscious leaders, social entrepreneurs, super stars, sacred activists, and "movers and shakers" to Meet The Greatness Challenge of Our Times!

The Greatness Challenge is an inspiring and transformative manifesto if you are seeking to bring positive change to your life, your workplace and the world.

Game Changing Futurist, Trailblazing thought leader on meeting the Greatness Challenge of our times, multiple best-

selling author, storyteller, dynamic speaker. Karen is a bold advocate for The New Story of Our AGE. As a Consultant-Strategist, Trainer, Certified Master Coach and Mentor Coach she guides and mentors leaders and their organizations toward the Triple Bottom Line, encouraging all of us to engage in sacred activism and conscious capitalism, while supporting us to leverage the Longevity Economy as we find and anchor our niche in the 21st century global business climate. Sands propels women and men across generations to radically reinvent our future, so each of us, and together, can

Meet the Greatness Challenge of Our Times!

KarenSands.com