

## — EPILOGUE —

### Learning to Live With Success

Congratulations. You're there.

Where? Maybe this is the day when you've actually reached your first target. Maybe you've arrived at the first major milestone on your way to it—you've written a whole chapter, gotten through a job interview and felt good about it, lost ten pounds, drawn up a business plan, or learned to use a camera. Or maybe you're just at the end of your first week—or day—of directed action. *Each small step you accomplish is going to feel like success—not just the big ones.*

Winning is a process, not a product. And as soon as you get out on your path, you're doing it. Now you've got to learn to live with it. That isn't quite as breezy as it sounds. You may not be used to being out there making things happen, and it can sometimes give you a headache. But it's worth it. It feels so much better than the depression and boredom you suffered just sitting around. And there's an art to making it easier for yourself.

*1. Hurray for Me!* Don't ever let anyone tell you that there's anything wrong with self-congratulation. When you've done something hard, you deserve cheers, from yourself and everyone around you. When you've done something hard and it's worked, you deserve a banquet! You may remember that when you were setting your target and your target date, I told you that you would need to be able to know beyond a doubt when you had arrived—at

your goal and at each big step on the way. I can tell you now that part of the reason was so you would know when to celebrate!

Pausing to savor your own accomplishments and feel proud of yourself isn't "conceited" or "self-indulgent," the way our Puritan culture taught us it was. It's food for your unfolding self. And you don't need to worry about "resting on your laurels." You've got to rest on them a little bit, if only to catch your breath! Then you'll want to move on. So enjoy this moment of triumph, in private and with the people you love. Give yourself one of those big rewards we talked about in Chapter 9. Take a vacation. Throw a party.

2. *Fake It* . . . The party's over. It's the morning after. You got the job of your dreams—and now you have to walk in there at 9:00 A.M. and *do* it, and not just tomorrow, but every day after that! You got the contract; now you have to write the book. You came through the audition with flying colors, and they gave you the part; now you're going to have to get up in front of a real live audience and act.

Each new level of success (and this is true of even the smallest steps) brings new tasks, new challenges, new stresses, as well as new opportunities. The operative word is *new*. You're navigating in unknown waters now. But don't think that means all your old, familiar fears and uncertainties are going to vanish as if by magic. No way! You bring them right along with you, and they will be doing plenty of kicking and screaming long after the rest of the world considers you a dazzling, invulnerable success. If your history is anything like mine, for a long, long time you're not going to believe you can do something even when you've just done it and the evidence is right in front of your eyes.

So I would like to share with you my simple, one-sentence formula for how to live with success:

#### FAKE IT TILL YOU GET USED TO IT

The first time I was invited to be on national television, I said, "Yes!"—not because I was ready, but because it was too good a chance to pass up. (Success, no matter how long you've waited for it, always comes before you're ready for it.) Then I freaked out. "I can't do it. I'll open my mouth and nothing will come out. I'm too fat." And so on. But by this time I knew a thing or two. So I made a resolution—the very rare kind that really is

written in blood: “I will not, repeat, will not sabotage myself, no matter much I may want to.”

I got everything ready—the clothes I would wear, my plans for what I was going to say. Then I was hysterical for two days before the show. On the big day, I pulled myself together, walked in, carried it off almost as smoothly as an old pro, thanked everyone (they were very impressed), went home and got hysterical again. Nobody who watched the show ever knew that they had been watching a total fake. Only my family, who had to live with me backstage, knew that there were two Barbara Shers.

There are two tricks to faking it. One is the Hard Times before-and-after technique you learned in Chapter 9. You need to express your hysteria without ruining your performance. So just do it in the wings! Be your nervous self until they call your name, and then go out there and be a pro.

The second trick is *costumes*. Every actor and actress knows that getting into costume is a tremendous aid to getting into a role, and that there’s a huge difference between the last rehearsal in jeans and leotards and the first one in full dress. You can do the same thing. If you are now, by definition, a doctor, lawyer, wilderness guide, salesman, businesswoman, executive, or college teacher—that is if you’re doing the thing—*dress the part even if you don’t feel like it*.

I know two former college roommates, now both successful—one a lawyer, the other an executive—who made the mistake of waiting until they felt self-confident in their professional roles to start dressing for them. They may actually have slowed down their careers, because dressing like a college kid or a stay-at-home mother creates a vicious cycle: it provokes the people you work with to treat you as someone not quite grown up or serious, and you’ll respond in kind. On the other hand, something magical happens when you look in the mirror and see someone you don’t recognize as ordinary you. (By the way, there’s an “ordinary me” hiding behind the confident face of every celebrity, bar none.) Even if you still feel ordinary inside, believe me, the ham in you will rise to the occasion.

Note: The days when you least feel like dressing for the part are the days when you absolutely must do it. For two reasons. One: When you’re feeling great, you can look rotten and nobody will notice because you’ll be so radiant. When you’re feeling down, you need outside help. Two: if you drag

yourself groaning to the mirror and get your makeup on or your tie straight, you'll start feeling better.

Sooner or later, the day will come for you that came for me: I'd bought a dress to fool everybody . . . and I put it on . . . and suddenly I realized that the only person I'd been fooling was myself. *I belonged in that dress.*

3. *Until You Get Used to It.* The scenario of my first TV appearance repeated itself, with decreasing intensity, for about a year. It got a little easier each time. And now? Now I'm absolutely greedy about it! I love to show off and can't wait for my next chance. I speak in front of large groups, go on TV and radio, and have a wonderful time. My stage fright has diminished to a pleasant champagne-like tingle. Nobody knows I've changed but my very patient family, who no longer have to put me together like Humpty Dumpty beforehand and pick up the pieces afterwards.

When you reach this point, you've really arrived. You'll wake up one day and realize that you are living a version of the Ideal Day you dreamed about all those months or years ago, when you first started moving. It may or may not be just the way you imagined it, but in one crucial respect it's different—and better: this is real. There's something else that's better about it, too. You're not alone, the way you once feared you would be. On the contrary, you have to take the phone off the hook every once in a while to get some peace. Success is sexy. It puts roses in your cheeks, a swing in your stride, and a warmth and enthusiasm in your presence that people can't resist. If you ever notice that someone you care about is feeling left behind, don't feel guilty. Grab that person, say, "Stop crying in your beer, get up out of that chair and come with me! I want your company. If I did it, believe me, you can. I'll help."

At this point, it is also in the nature of the human animal to say, "What next?" Remember, I told you that when you had attained self-confidence in one thing, you would start looking around for something new to do in which you would have *no* self-confidence. But you've got something much more important than self-confidence now. You've got experience and skills. When my friend Matthew said, "I know now that I can do anything," that wasn't a delusion of grandeur. It was a statement of fact. He could go on from painting to playing the piano because he had acquired a *metaskill*: he had learned how to learn, he had gained mastery of the process by which things

get done. When you reach your first goal, you've done this too. Now you've really got the luxury of choice.

Look at the next five years on your planning wall. Are you ready for the next goal? Do you still want to run a printing press, or would you rather study the Spanish Civil War? Do you want to go on running a business or would you like to be a beachcomber for a while? The shape of things has changed. Your efforts have changed it. So what about the shape of things to come? What would you like to do now?

What I always do is imagine a new Ideal Day, in detail and in full color. It is always completely different from the last one, and often quite the opposite of the life I'm living. That helps me set my course for the next *two* years.

You've discovered the ultimate secret all winners know: that "the journey, not the arrival, matters." Being on your path is what it's all about. Each destination you reach only opens out into wider horizons, new and undiscovered countries for you to explore.