

FINDING EXTRAORDINARY
STORIES IN AN ORDINARY DAY



THE
MESSAGE
OF YOU
Journal

JUDY CARTER

BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF
*THE MESSAGE OF YOU: Turn Your Life Story into a
Money-Making Speaking Career & THE COMEDY BIBLE*

THE MESSAGE OF YOU JOURNAL:

Finding Extraordinary Stories in an Ordinary Day

BY JUDY CARTER

Author of *“The Message of You: Turn Your Life Story into a Money-Making Speaking Career”* & *“The Comedy Bible”*

NOTE: *This journal is available in print and as an Interactive PDF that will work on your PC, Mac, iPhone, or Android. More information at <http://judycarter.com/Journal.php>*

OTHER BOOKS BY JUDY CARTER:

The Message of You: Turn Your Life Story into a Money-Making Speaking Career (St. Martin's Press, 2013)

The Comedy Bible: From Stand-up to Sitcom--The Comedy Writer's Ultimate "How To" Guide (Simon & Schuster, 2010)

The Homo Handbook: Getting in Touch with Your Inner Homo (1996 Lambda Literary Award Best Humor Book, Simon and Schuster)

Stand-Up Comedy: The Book (Random House, 1989)

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION 5

BENEFITS OF THIS JOURNAL: 6

FINDING EXTRAORDINARY STORIES IN AN ORDINARY DAY 17

DAY 1	17	DAY 12	83
DAY 2	23	DAY 13	89
DAY 3	29	DAY 14	95
DAY 4	35	DAY 15	101
DAY 5	41	DAY 16	107
DAY 6	47	DAY 17	113
DAY 7	53	DAY 18	119
DAY 8	59	DAY 19	125
DAY 9	65	DAY 20	131
DAY 10	71	DAY 21	137
DAY 11	77	DAY 22	144

ACTIVATING THE MESSAGE OF YOU 144

DAY 24-32 155

ABOUT JUDY CARTER 156

*Here's to changing the world,
one story at a time....*



Introduction

Today's mess becomes tomorrow's message...

Have you ever had a day when something really wonderful, inspiring, or educational happened and you wanted to remember it but by the time you stopped driving, got home, made the kids their dinner, cleaned the house and prepped for bed, you'd totally forgotten to write it down? Life moves so fast and you are on to another day, then another day, and the stories of your life slip through your fingers.

Even the most *ordinary* day can produce an *extraordinary* message, provided we are not too busy or oblivious to recognize it. We may promise ourselves we will remember the tiny details, the funny thing that was said, the challenge we overcame, the action we took that changed the course of our life or of someone else's, but... time passes and, all too often, those precious, fleeting images get lost.

I'm asking you to slow down for three weeks, make the commitment to pay attention, and to record these stories now.

Because there will be a time when people tell your story for you – at your funeral. Wouldn't you like to have some say in how you are remembered? Wouldn't you rather be sharing those stories now, while you're


alive and you can see the results of your life? I'm committed to helping you find your story NOW, while you're alive, so you can understand who you are and what you stand for.

Get ready for a journey of self-discovery, where your present uncovers your past so that you can create a conscious future.

Benefits of this journal:

- Uncover stories for speeches, TED talks, blogs, social media, TV appearances
- Become conscious of your effect on others
- Discover what holds you back from success
- Control your experiences rather than letting them control you
- Become a passionate leader and a motivational force in the world
- Capture the details of your day
- Discover lost childhood memories
- Find and live The Message of You

Why I Created The Message of You Journal

When my new book, *The Message of You*  hit the shelves, I received many inquiries from readers asking if there was an ongoing way to capture stories and to uncover meaning in the daily mundane. My response was to urge them to keep a journal. Then I realized, I should probably heed my own advice. I've been telling the same ten stories forever! I'm in serious danger of dinner guests sending me royalty checks at this point. So, this journal is actually a NOTE TO SELF, reminding me to be more respectful and observant of my life, to understand what it stands for, and to write it down. And I know these stories will serve me well. They can be turned into a TED talk, a memoir, stand-up material, or just something a little less stale to serve over dinner.

But the inspiration for creating this more structured journal workbook started the way most things in my life start – with one, big MESS. The journal I started keeping was a disaster. I was unable to decide what was important. I had questions: Should I be writing what I DID, or how I FELT? Should I write daily, or wait for something IMPORTANT? To find out, I made a note of everything. EVERYTHING! Seven

days later, I read what I'd written. It was a mess. My journal wasn't a compilation of dazzling stories, but a boring litany of chores. I'd covered what I'd eaten for breakfast and how fat I felt. I had listed the exercises I did with data from my iPhone exercise app, and the guilt I coped with when I hadn't worked out. If that wasn't boring enough, I threw in rants about how much I hated email and a list of stupid things people said along with stupid things I said (I'm an equal opportunity critic). And even though the journal was about my favorite subject – me – the only message there was, “Get a life!”

“Why bother with this dreary, narcissistic narration?” I wondered. Clearly, I would have to transcend self-absorption and find a strategy to make the writing inspirational. Was I capable of this? I've written how-to books on topics that initially seemed impossible. If I could write a book on *how to be funny*[☞], I thought creating a structured journal might be possible.


My *speaking workshops*[☞] create an opportunity for experimenting with exercises and I've become quite the expert at helping people hone in on their best material in a fast, effective way. What we're looking for is that great story, that “Aha!” moment and often, I have found that these “Aha!” moments take place during the mundane moments in life when we are stuck in traffic on the way to the airport, when the dry cleaner can't find our winter coat, or Starbucks gets your order wrong, or even just putting your kid to bed. It's these ordinary moments woven together that provide us with our own personalized Message of You – what we truly stand for and what our lives mean.

It's all about your childhood...

While developing the step-by-step exercises in this journal and testing them with my students, I found that the ways we respond to our current events are powerfully linked to our childhood. Even the most seemingly inconsequential event in our present life, such as an overbooked day, is laden with emotion from our past. We get triggered by events in our present but, if we're not paying attention, we don't connect it with those childhood memories. Once we reunite our current life with our childhood, we not only understand ourselves better, but we truly learn life lessons and are able to teach them to others.

For example, one of my students was working the steps in this journal, writing about her guilt from missing an appointment with a friend. It sparked a forgotten time in her life when she was in foster care, waiting for her mother, who never showed up. In that moment, she realized why she was so disturbed

about disappointing her friend. She realized that her strong feelings were feelings of an old abandonment not appropriate for her current situation.

But, this journal isn't just about self-discovery. It will also help you find your message of inspiration for others. Self-revelation becomes an act of narcissism if you don't do something with it. When we realize our messages, we then have something to *Tweet*  to the world, to create our TED talk and to design our future. We learn from our past experiences in order to stop making the same mistakes. And we get to turn our messes into successes. The past is useful, assisting us in consciously creating a future where we serve as a beacon of light to create better tomorrows for ourselves and for others.

Becky was a CPA, dissatisfied with her job, yet not knowing what to do with her career. Working through these exercises, she realized why she was so emotional with a client whose husband had died, leaving her clueless on how to handle her finances alone. Doing the journal exercises, Becky remembered when her own father died, leaving her and her mother on welfare because her mother didn't know how to handle money. She realized the true message of why she is a CPA, quit her corporate job, and established a successful business empowering women to take charge of their own retirement.

Working through this journal Laura wrote how seeing a dog alone at the side of the road reminded her of a moment when she was seven years old when her parents were fighting and how her dog jumped into bed with her, licked her face, and made her feel loved. Uncovering that moment put her in touch with her commitment to animals and she began volunteering at the local animal shelter.

With most of my students, discovering their message meant depression lifted as purpose filled its place. In telling these stories, they came to understand the significance of an ordinary day. And, examining each day with this method, they found that there is no such thing as an ordinary day. My mission is to help you do the same thing and discover The Messages of You.

Here's to finding your stories, sharing them, and changing the world one story at a time.



How To Use This Journal

This journal workbook is a pro-active accompaniment to my book, *The Message of You* [↗](#). It will help you process your intentions and obstacles, which will then allow you to share your messages. Your collection of stories will support the project you have chosen, whether it's speaking, writing or simply understanding who you are.

I am asking you to make a 21-day commitment to focus on your day. Your assignment is to do a 10 to 15 minute exercise for a period of 21 days. They need not be consecutive; you can take longer than 21 days. But, once you have 21 days recorded, the exercises will then help you make sense of what you wrote so you can achieve your career goals.

You are not, however, going to wait 21 days before you send your message out to the world. Each day, you will be Tweeting a message. That message will be read by others working through this journal, building a ripple effect of inspiration and expanding your network.

Become the Hero of Your Life

This journal workbook will be a collection of stories about your life with YOU as the hero in a movie about you. Scrutinizing your life for stories and messages, as put forth in *The Message of You* [↗](#), transforms you from victim to victor. You will own and control your experiences. Examining the themes of your 21 days prepares you to “walk your talk.”

CRITIC ATTACK WARNING:

When you start writing about your life, you will most likely have a bout of self-criticism. For the first week, most of my testers for this journal found themselves thinking: *“Am I doing this right? My life is boring -- why am I doing this?”*

Just know that it takes about a week of writing regularly to get past negativity and ramp up your momentum to finish 21 days.

Let's take a look at how this works:

Judy's 9 Step Story Process

Please review the following samples so you know how to approach your journal. You can write at night about your day, or in the morning about yesterday.

STEP 1: The SCENES of the day were:

View your day as if it were a movie and, using short sentences, write down the “SCENES” that occurred, no matter how seemingly insignificant.

EXAMPLES:

- *Walking my dogs with my neighbor, Kara*
- *Did call with “Psychology Today” editor*
- *Went to the dry cleaner to pick up a dress*
- *Watched Duct Man clean out my heating ducts in house*
- *Had a Thai massage*

You will probably find most of your life mundane and might ask yourself, “Why would anyone be interested to hear this BS?” Most people feel that their day is not worth writing down. But... trust this process – it works. I have found the most amazing messages in a seemingly boring day. Don't censor yourself. Allow yourself to be boring or dull. Please... trust me on this.

STEP 2: Pick a scene with the most conflict, hardship or aggravation.

Although some students have found compelling stories in, “Waking up and turning off my alarm clock,” I recommend finding scenes with some kind of emotion – tension, anger, frustration, or aggravation. For example:

Went to the dry cleaner to pick up clothes, which weren't ready.

A scene like this has inherent conflict. “*I want my clothes but I can't have them!*” And, that brings us to...

STEP 3: Identify what you DESIRED or WANTED in the scene.

See yourself as a character in this movie. A story requires that a character be driven by their desires. The desire might be internal, as in, “*I needed to have peace and quiet.*” But an ACTIVE desire, “*I am running late and I need my daughter to cooperate and go to school*” is better than something passive, i.e., “*I want the weekend to come.*” Regardless of what you do, the weekend will come, so dig for the specifics of what exactly it was that you wanted to make your story dynamic and relatable. Again, don't worry about the story being dull.

What I wanted in my “Dry Cleaner” scene was simple: *To pick up my dress so I could attend a big party that night.*

STEP 4: Identify your obstacles.

The EXTERNAL OBSTACLES that stopped me from attaining my goal were:

Find the obstacles that prevented you from getting what you wanted. For instance: *traffic, weather, the unintelligible announcement at the airport, not having clean clothes, a bouncer deeming you too old or unhip to be admitted to a club, etc.*

Obstacles, however unwelcome and resented at the time, propel your story. So obstacles are, in fact, your friends.

In my “Dry Cleaning” scene, the external obstacles were:

- *Heavy traffic that slowed me down and frustrated me*
- *My car was low on gas*
- *I couldn't find the dry cleaning ticket*
- *It was hot in LA*
- *I had to wait forever for a parking spot*
- *The dry cleaning woman was taking care of other people*
- *And then she couldn't locate my cleaning and ended up saying it wasn't ready*

The INTERNAL OBSTACLES that stopped me for getting what I wanted were:

The internal or psychological baggage we bring to a scene are also great obstacles to explore. Inner conflict or emotion can prevent us from attaining a goal. Inner obstacles can be anger, a lack of self-confidence, fatigue, hunger, loneliness, ADHD, fear, regret, etc.

For my dry cleaner confrontation, my inner obstacles were:

- *My frustration with time*
- *A readiness to get angry*
- *Feeling powerless, like a child with no leverage*
- *Feeling I would be shamed by not having the “right” outfit*
- *Feeling let down by an adult*
- *My worry about not being beautiful or appearing “put together”*

STEP 5: Write the Scene

Now that you've done the background work, write the scene by first stating what it is that you wanted with perhaps a little backstory about why it was important to you. Then write about each obstacle and how you tried to get around it. Complete it by telling how you got – or didn't get – what you were pursuing. Check to be sure you've been explicit about your goal and what got in the way of your achieving it. Adding dialogue is great as well.

For example:

(BACK STORY) My friend called and said, “I’ve got an extra ticket to this VIP fund raiser. Wanna go?” The first thing I thought of was, “What will I wear?” It had been so hot in LA, that my one fancy dressy dress had sweat stains and needed to be cleaned. The dry cleaner told me it would be ready the next day. “Great!”

(WHAT I WANTED WAS) I wanted to pick up my dry cleaning.

(SCENE WITH OBSTACLES) I had a hard time getting to the drying cleaner. It was a busy day filled with chores. And it was a Friday, which is a huge traffic day in LA. I was going crazy stuck in traffic, panicked that I wouldn’t make it to the dry cleaner before it closed. I finally got there and there were two customers ahead of me. I was biting my nails looking at the clock thinking, “Oh, this will look good – nails chewed down to nubs.” Then, I can’t find my dry cleaning ticket. “Oh no!” I was freaking out. Then the woman looks up my order, finds it, and then disappears in the back for what seemed forever. And, she comes back WITHOUT MY DRESS! “I’m so sorry, but the delivery truck got stuck and we don’t have it. Come back tomorrow” she said.

That’s when I lost it!

“What?!!!! You promised! It’s got to be ready!!! This is just not right,” I screamed at the poor girl. As she was trying to say something, I just walked out in a huge huff.

STEP 6: Childhood Backstory

I experienced a similar obstacle in my childhood when:

This step is usually a Eureka Moment for writers. This is when we realize why we aren’t getting what we want because we are constantly being triggered by childhood events.

Think back to when you felt a similar obstacle in your childhood and write the **FIRST THING** that comes to your mind. For many of us, our childhood is vague. Actually, if you think you are making it up, that is fine. There is probably more truth when you write than you realize. And as you write it – it will become more real to you.

A 75-year-old Myanmar man named Soe wrote in his journal a scene about how he had spoken at his retirement dinner and wanted to show his appreciation for his fellow co-workers with whom he worked

for 42 years. His obstacles were his fear of giving a speech and procrastinating writing his speech. After giving his speech, he felt horrible when he realized he forgot to thank an important coworker. As he explored a related moment in his past, he remembered the pain of someone else being left out. He wrote a very moving story about when he was ten years old. It was right after World War 2 and the Americans had donated parachute material. His mother made him a pair of shorts out of the material, but there wasn't enough material to make his sister a dress. He felt the pain of his sister being left out. This childhood memory turned an uneventful scene into an unforgettable story.

Pick one of the obstacles you faced in that scene and ask yourself, “*When did I experience this obstacle when I was a child?*” “*What memory does this obstacle trigger?*”

Close your eyes – feel the emotion and then attach it to a specific event in your childhood. You will always be right if you are specific.

In the Dry Cleaning scene what came to mind is:

The emotional reaction was being disappointed by a promise that wasn't delivered. It brought back a memory of my parents repeatedly saying they would take me to Disneyland, then canceling the trip because they had hangovers. No wonder that I react so strongly to people who don't come through for me.

STEP 7: Life lessons.

From looking at my childhood story, what I learned was:

When we examine our lives, we learn something we hadn't realized. That's true whether or not we got *what we wanted*. The lesson is what's critical – what we see NOW that's new (and news) to us.

Usually, when we connect with a childhood memory – it is a wake up call -- a realization of why we have the emotion we do, why we care so much, or why we react, or even overreact. In many cases, this opens our hearts to be more caring of others, to be more careful, or to be more honest.

For instance –

The lesson I learned was that I'm particularly sensitive to being let down, thrown when something is promised and not delivered. This extends to lovers who cheat on me, hired help who don't do what they've agreed to do, even to friends who forget or cancel a plan. This sensitivity is why I've repeatedly over-reacted.

I now see the need to work out my past disappointments and not dump on someone (particularly someone earning minimum wage) who failed me despite having tried. Because of my anger, negotiation wasn't an option. It was my anger, and not the situation, that ruled out my getting what I wanted.

STEP 8: Taking action.

Tomorrow I commit to:

The life lessons we learn from today can improve our tomorrow if we take action. In this step, we commit to making a simple, small, change in our lives, such as: *Stop emotional eating by waiting 20 minutes before eating a donut, acknowledging when we are triggered by the past, apologizing, showing more appreciation...*

In my Dry Cleaning story, realizing how disappointment triggers anger, my commitment became: *When I get angry, stop, breathe, and know I'm being triggered.*

STEP 9: Tweet your message of inspiration to the world.

The meaning of our life story lies in how we influence others. Consider your story and what you learned. In 140 characters or less, write a piece of advice for others. Tweet the message, sharing what you've learned with your followers. **Do NOT use the words, "I," "Me," or "My," but rather YOU, WE, US.**

After writing my Dry Cleaning story, my Tweet was:

Before blowing up, stop and breathe. Anger is NEVER an effective form of communication. #TMOY

End your Tweet with a hashtag. Until you discover your own hashtag, feel free to use mine #TMOY (The Message Of You). By using this hashtag, your hashtag will appear on Judycarter.com as well as on the feeds of my followers. If you mention me in your Tweets use: @Judycarter <https://twitter.com/judycarter>

I will also be re-Tweeting your messages, sending a ripple effect of inspiration to the speaking and comedy communities. (For information on how to set up your Twitter account, [click here](#) [📧].)

LET'S BEGIN...

Finding Extraordinary Stories in an Ordinary Day

DAY 1

Today's date is:

STEP 1: The SCENES of the day were:

SHORT sentences of the various events without going into what happened.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

STEP 2: Pick a scene with the most conflict, hardship or aggravation.

Pick one scene from Step 1 and COPY and PASTE it here:

STEP 3: Identify what you DESIRED or WANTED in the scene.

What I wanted to attain in that scene was:

Write here a simple sentence of what you wanted. Best to put in positive form rather than, “*I didn’t want to make mistakes...*” Rather, write: “*I wanted to give the perfect presentation...*” Other examples are: “*I wanted to be alone... to win the race... to get there on time... to book the job...*”

STEP 4: Identify your obstacles.

The EXTERNAL OBSTACLES that prevented me from attaining my goals were:

These can be weather, people, loud music -- anything that gets in the way of your desire in Step 3:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

The INTERNAL OBSTACLES that stopped me from getting what I wanted or desired were:

Check in with yourself. What were you feeling? Internal obstacles can be: *“fear, worry, guilt, lack of confidence...”* Be specific. i.e. *“I was scared to be late for fear I would disappoint my friend...”* “

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

STEP 5: Write the story.

Start the story with what you wanted (STEP 3) and mention the obstacles you outlined (in STEP 4) and how you dealt with them. Write this story as quickly as you can, not worrying about grammar or punctuation. Let it flow and if it goes off in another direction – that’s okay. Make sure you include your INTERNAL OBSTACLE and how it affected you.

STEP 6: Childhood backstory.

I experienced a similar obstacle in my childhood when:

This is where you close your eyes and write whatever childhood memory comes to you. Most people have vague recollections of their childhood and are worried that they are making it up. That's OK. This step works best if it's a SPECIFIC CHILDHOOD SCENE. Rather than, "*I was overwhelmed in my childhood because of all the stuff my mother planned for me.*" Write a specific scene, "*I was on the balance beam at 10 years old and my mother was standing in the doorway waiting to take me to dance class and I fell and...*"

STEP 7: Life lessons.

From looking at my childhood story, what I learned was:

Usually, when writing about our childhood, we have a better understanding of ourselves. We understand why we get aggravated, feel left out, or why we are always late. What did you learn about yourself? How can you use what you learned?

STEP 8: Taking action.

Tomorrow I commit to:

Short sentence of action you can take tomorrow:

STEP 9: Tweet your message of inspiration to the world.

Compose your Tweet here, then post it to twitter.com and use #TMOY and/or invent your own hashtag, i.e. #LoveNOW #Healthy4life

The message I'm Tweeting to others that will help them is:

STEP 1: The SCENES of the day were:

SHORT sentences of the various events of yesterday without going into what happened.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

STEP 2: Pick a scene with the most conflict, hardship or aggravation.

Pick one scene from Step 1 and COPY and PASTE it here:

STEP 3: Identify what you DESIRED or WANTED in the scene.

What I wanted to attain in that scene was:

Simple sentence of what you wanted. *“I wanted to be on time...” “I wanted to leave work early...”*

STEP 4: Identify your obstacles.

The EXTERNAL OBSTACLES that prevented me from attaining my goals were:

This can be traffic, tight pants, having allergies... anything that gets in the way of your goal in Step 3:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

The INTERNAL OBSTACLES that stopped me from getting what I wanted or desired were:

Internal obstacles can be: *“fear, worry, guilt, lack of confidence...” Be specific. i.e. “I was scared about getting feedback from a client so I didn’t ask.”*

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

STEP 5: Write the story.

Start the story with what you wanted (STEP 3) and mention the obstacles you outlined (in STEP 4) and how you dealt with them. Make sure you include your INTERNAL OBSTACLE and how it affected you.

STEP 6: Childhood backstory.

I experienced a similar obstacle in my childhood when:

Look at your internal obstacles and write about the first SPECIFIC CHILDHOOD SCENE that comes to you.

STEP 7: Life lessons.

From looking at my childhood story, what I learned was:

What did you learn about yourself? How can you use what you learned?

STEP 8: Taking action.

Tomorrow I commit to:

Short sentence of action you can take tomorrow:

i.e. *“Tomorrow I commit to walking 10,000 steps, meditating in the morning, cooking for my mom...”*

STEP 9: Tweet your message of inspiration to the world.

In 140 characters or less, Tweet the message, sharing what you’ve learned with your followers. ***Do NOT use the words, “I,” “Me,” or “My,” but rather “YOU,” “WE,” “US:”***

DAY 3

Today's date is:

STEP 1: The SCENES of the day were:

SHORT sentences of the various events of yesterday without going into what happened.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

STEP 2: Pick a scene with the most conflict, hardship or aggravation.

Pick one scene from Step 1 and COPY and PASTE it here:

STEP 3: Identify what you DESIRED or WANTED in the scene.

What I wanted to attain in that scene was:

Simple sentence of what you wanted. *“I wanted to be on time...” “I wanted to leave work early...”*

STEP 4: Identify your obstacles.

The EXTERNAL OBSTACLES that prevented me from attaining my goals were:

This can be traffic, tight pants, having allergies... anything that gets in the way of your goal in Step 3:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

The INTERNAL OBSTACLES that stopped me from getting what I wanted or desired were:

Internal obstacles can be: *“fear, worry, guilt, lack of confidence...” Be specific. i.e. “I was scared about getting feedback from a client so I didn’t ask.”*

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

STEP 5: Write the story.

Start the story with what you wanted (STEP 3) and mention the obstacles you outlined (in STEP 4) and how you dealt with them. Make sure you include your INTERNAL OBSTACLE and how it affected you.

STEP 6: Childhood backstory.

I experienced a similar obstacle in my childhood when:

Look at your internal obstacles and write about the first SPECIFIC CHILDHOOD SCENE that comes to you.

STEP 7: Life lessons.

From looking at my childhood story, what I learned was:

What did you learn about yourself? How can you use what you learned?

STEP 8: Taking action.

Tomorrow I commit to:

Short sentence of action you can take tomorrow:

i.e. *“Tomorrow I commit to walking 10,000 steps, meditating in the morning, cooking for my mom...”*

STEP 9: Tweet your message of inspiration to the world.

In 140 characters or less, Tweet the message, sharing what you’ve learned with your followers. ***Do NOT use the words, “I,” “Me,” or “My,” but rather “YOU,” “WE,” “US:”***

DAY 4

Today's date is:

STEP 1: The SCENES of the day were:

SHORT sentences of the various events of yesterday without going into what happened.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

STEP 2: Pick a scene with the most conflict, hardship or aggravation.

Pick one scene from Step 1 and COPY and PASTE it here:

STEP 3: Identify what you DESIRED or WANTED in the scene.

What I wanted to attain in that scene was:

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i.e. *“Tomorrow I commit to walking 10,000 steps, meditating in the morning, cooking for my mom...”*

STEP 9: Tweet your message of inspiration to the world.

In 140 characters or less, Tweet the message, sharing what you’ve learned with your followers. ***Do NOT use the words, “I,” “Me,” or “My,” but rather “YOU,” “WE,” “US:”***

STEP 1: The SCENES of the day were:

SHORT sentences of the various events of yesterday without going into what happened.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

STEP 2: Pick a scene with the most conflict, hardship or aggravation.

Pick one scene from Step 1 and COPY and PASTE it here:

STEP 3: Identify what you DESIRED or WANTED in the scene.

What I wanted to attain in that scene was:

Simple sentence of what you wanted. *“I wanted to be on time...” “I wanted to leave work early...”*

STEP 4: Identify your obstacles.

The EXTERNAL OBSTACLES that prevented me from attaining my goals were:

This can be traffic, tight pants, having allergies... anything that gets in the way of your goal in Step 3:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

The INTERNAL OBSTACLES that stopped me from getting what I wanted or desired were:

Internal obstacles can be: *“fear, worry, guilt, lack of confidence...” Be specific. i.e. “I was scared about getting feedback from a client so I didn’t ask.”*

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

STEP 5: Write the story.

Start the story with what you wanted (STEP 3) and mention the obstacles you outlined (in STEP 4) and how you dealt with them. Make sure you include your INTERNAL OBSTACLE and how it affected you.

STEP 6: Childhood backstory.

I experienced a similar obstacle in my childhood when:

Look at your internal obstacles and write about the first SPECIFIC CHILDHOOD SCENE that comes to you.

STEP 7: Life lessons.

From looking at my childhood story, what I learned was:

What did you learn about yourself? How can you use what you learned?

STEP 8: Taking action.

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Whoop-Hoo!!!

Congratulations! You have successfully spent 21 days examining your life, taking action, and spreading your messages of inspiration to the world.

Here is where we transform those 21 days into three stories that will become your signature story, your book, your speech, your TED talk, or simply open your eyes to the powerful presence you have in other people's lives.

Activating The Message of You

DAY 22 Identifying Your Action Steps

Every day in Step 8, I asked you to take a daily Action Step. Whether you pledged a commitment or you actually took action, this was an important part of the process. For those who actually DID the Action Step, I hope that you found your life shifted a bit. That means that you are *walking your talk* – that you are not only giving advice to others, but also implementing it in your life. In *The Message of You* ⁵ Chapter 12, I refer to these Action Steps as your Methodology. Examining the steps you took and their results can become the Core Content of your speech or even a book.

Let's first examine the steps you took. In the following exercise I'm going to ask you to read through Step 8 in each entry of your journal and identify the Action Steps that you actually implemented, as well as the positive results you saw as a result.

For example:

The Action Step I took was: *When I had an urge to eat something off my diet, I waited 20 minutes before I ate it.*

The result I got was: *75% of the time, at the end of 20 minutes, the urge went away. The other 25% of the time, I ate it. But the results were that when I gave into the urge, I didn't feel guilty because I was following my rules. And, since most of the time the urge went away, I lost weight. Not only that, my sense of powerlessness went away. I felt in charge rather than being ruled by my impulses.*

This Action Step can be of value to others because: *Many of us hurt our bodies, relationships and careers due to compulsive behavior. Using the 20-minute rule can assist others in controlling damaging behavior and feeling more in charge.*

Can you see how this Action Step can become a motivational speech and a book? This is exactly how best-sellers are born.

Now let's explore your Action Steps:

Identifying Action Steps Exercise

Read through every Step 8 of your Journal and find at least 5 Action Steps you took that made a difference in your life.

ACTION STEP 1

The Action Step I took was:

The result I got was:

This Action Step can be of value to others because:

ACTION STEP 2

The Action Step I took was:

The result I got was:

This Action Step can be of value to others because:

ACTION STEP 3

The Action Step I took was:

The result I got was:

This Action Step can be of value to others because:

ACTION STEP 4

The Action Step I took was:

The result I got was:

This Action Step can be of value to others because:

ACTION STEP 5

The Action Step I took was:

The result I got was:

This Action Step can be of value to others because:

Congrats!! You now have found Action Steps that can be the core of your book, speech, or TED talk. Tomorrow let me show you how to use your stories to effectively communicate your steps.

DAY 23 Identifying Your Stories and Eureka Moments

Here is where we put it all together – combining your Action Steps with a story to turn you into a powerhouse of inspiration. When writing a book, giving a speech, or simply giving advice to others it's always more appealing to hide the advice in the form of a story. Nobody wants to be lectured to. But everyone loves a great tale. Thanks to your journaling, you now have a great story – the story of how you found your Action Steps. Each Action Step has a story of discovery. Let's now attach your Action Steps to a story.

Read through the Action Steps from the last exercise and pick the THREE most effective ones and copy them below. These were the actions you took that improved your life – the steps that made you healthier, happier, or even, richer. Go through your journal entries and select THREE stories/scenes that correspond to how you found that Action Step. COPY AND PASTE THEM HERE:

For example:

ACTION STEP 1: When feeling angry, walk away from the situation and take 5 deep breaths

Scene/Story: Dry Cleaning Story about how I got angry when my clothes weren't ready

Now, you fill in below:

ACTION STEP 1:

Scene/Story:

ACTION STEP 2:

Scene/Story

ACTION STEP 3:

Scene/Story

Now, it's time to transform your Action Steps into a Call-to-Action:

If we're going to change the world, we've got to get people out of their seats and motivate them to actually DO your Action Steps. This is your Call-to-Action. It is the ultimate motivational moment, delivered right after a story, asking the audience (or your readers) if they're willing to consider taking action in their lives.

Story Formula

1. **ACTION STEP:** Describe the Action Step (as you did in the exercise on page 145)
2. **STORY:** Tell the story about how you discovered this Action Step complete with relating it to your childhood, discovering the Action Step, and the positive result it gave you.
3. **CALL-TO-ACTION:** Start with a question and then teach your audience the Action Step.

For example:

1. **ACTION STEP:** When you feel a burning desire to eat something, or to criticize or yell at someone – wait 20 minutes.

2. **STORY:** Story about being at airport so bored and grabbing donuts.

Childhood memory about eating a cheesecake when my cat was in a tree.

Putting 20 minutes between me and food gives me back my power. Doing this, I immediately lost weight.

3. **CALL TO ACTION:** How often have you gone on autopilot and found yourself finishing an entire carton of ice cream? Could you wait 20 minutes? The results will be that you are back in control and not your compulsions.

Now you try it. Look at the three Action Steps and stories you wrote in the last exercise and add a Call-to-Action.

ACTION STEP 1:

Story 1:

Call-to-Action 1:

ACTION STEP 2:

Story 2:

Call-to-Action 2:

ACTION STEP 3:

Story 3:

Call-to-Action 3:

Whoo-Hoo!!!

You now have done the work that most people don't take the time to do – examining your life to help others and make the world a better place.

Of course, that feels great, but what about getting paid for your messages?

As a part of this process, you have been Tweeting your messages via social media. Your social media followers might currently be your friends, relatives, or your charity group. But, now it's time to find those strangers who would be interested to not only hear your message, but pay you to speak it and or pay to read it.

1. **WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE?** Which audience(s) would benefit from hearing your message? *i.e. women, writers, parents, sales people, admins, entrepreneurs, healthcare workers, cancer survivors...*
2. **GOOGLE WHAT CONFERENCES WOULD BE A GOOD FIT FOR YOUR MESSAGE.** Make a list.
3. **USUALLY ON A WEBSITE, THERE IS A SPEAKER FORM.** Fill out a few. (*At first you will be speaking for free, but read in Chapter 18 of [The Message of You](#) – Marketing Tips to Go from Free to Fee.*)
4. **CREATE A BLOG EXPANDING THE STORIES YOU WROTE.**
5. **SUBMIT YOUR STORY/MESSAGE TO A TEDX CONFERENCE.** There are different TEDx events in all parts of the world and they have different instructions for submissions. Here is a [link](#) for guidance.
6. **SUBMIT YOUR STORIES FOR A PERFORMANCE AT THE MOTH OR OTHER STORYTELLING EVENTS.** Google a place near you.
7. **CONSIDER TURNING YOUR ACTION STEPS/STORIES/CALL-TO-ACTION INTO A BOOK.** Download [here](#) a form to submit your book to a publisher.
8. **TAKE ONE OF YOUR IDEAS AND COMMIT TO IT.** Let me help you stick with your commitment!

Go [here](#) to put in specific dates and I'll send you gentle reminders to keep you on track with accomplishing your goals.

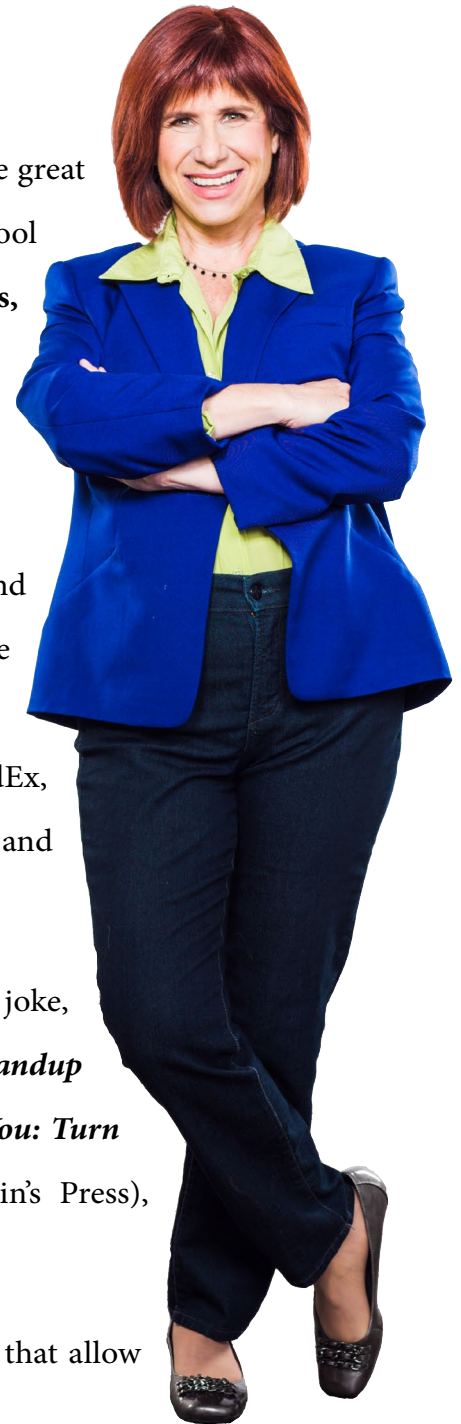
About Judy Carter...

At an early age, Judy Carter discovered that the messes in her life were great comedy material. Judy's message of using humor as a transformational tool led to her being featured in the **Wall Street Journal**, **New York Times**, **The Oprah Winfrey Show**, **CNN**, as well as being a frequent contributor to National Public Radio's "**All Things Considered**" and a weekly blogger for **Psychology Today**.

Currently, Judy is an international keynote speaker, speaking coach, and workshop leader on the power of personal stories and humor to inspire others and decrease workplace stress. Her "wake-them-up" keynotes have thrilled attendees at many Fortune 500 companies including FedEx, Oracle, Disney, Boeing, as well as hundreds of Financial, Healthcare and Women's events.

As an author, Judy doesn't like to brag, but she did write the Bible. No joke, she's the author of *The Comedy Bible* (Simon & Schuster) as well as, *Standup Comedy: The Book* (Dell Books). Judy's latest book, *The Message of You: Turn Your Life Story into a Money-Making Speaking Career* (St. Martin's Press), teaches readers how to become her competition.

Judy lives in Venice Beach, California with her dogs and 6-toed cats that allow her to live with them as long as she feeds everybody.



For inspiring DVDs, MP3s, books, Teleseminars, and workshops on how to get your career in gear, go to <http://judycarter.com>.