



WHOSE LIFE IS IT ANYWAY?

10 Tips To Get Your Life on Track

Lorna Blake

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Dedication

This e-book is a gift from the Universe. It is dedicated to the memory of my mother Ethlyn Clarke, my grandmother Matilda Clarke and to all the ancestors from whom I've come...

About Lorna Blake

For the past 10 years, Lorna has been helping people to transform their lives. She has delivered many workshops, seminars and presentations on self-empowerment. She is an inspiring, engaging and passionate individual.

Lorna's passion stems from her unique philosophy of embracing change, recognizing the gifts in adversity and choosing to live her best life. She has overcome many obstacles including abandonment by her father before her birth, childhood sexual abuse and an abusive marriage.

In her mid-20s, after leaving an abusive relationship she began to search for courses to help turn her life around. She used the principles taught in an Assertiveness Training course to transform her life and within three years of doing the course she followed her dream of going to university to study Social Work.

By the end of her course of studies she had become a mother of two yet she managed to graduate at the top of her class.

Currently, Lorna is a Life Coach and Speaker. She has read and studied many programs on empowerment and personal development. She has just written an online course on Assertiveness called "The Assertiveness Basics e-Course".

Lorna Blake – The Ideal Speaker For Your Next Event!

Lorna is the kind of speaker your audience will never forget!

***To Book Lorna To Speak At Your Event:
1 416 693-7347 or email: lorna@lornablake.com***

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Introduction

In January 1990 I experienced a breakthrough of sorts. It was the worst of times but it served as a catalyst to lead me to this time and this moment...

I had been married for about three years and I had just separated from my then-husband. I had been experiencing abuse in our relationship and I ran away. Literally.

I left on Boxing Day. Two days before our third wedding anniversary... He had gone out shopping and I took it as a sign. I hurriedly packed some clothing in a suitcase and left.

It was in that moment of leaving the relationship that I knew that my life was going to change. I knew it would never be the same. I just didn't know how. I was frightened by my decision to leave and yet empowered by it. In the weeks following the split I decided to learn about myself, take charge of my life and turn it around so that I got the respect I deserved.

I went searching for courses that could possibly help me get my life on track. I experienced some of my lowest lows at that time. I felt like a failure. I was supposed to hold the relationship together. What in the world was I thinking by making such a bold move.

I did an Assertiveness Training Course which really helped empower me. I learned that I deserved respect and that I had rights. I learned to begin to develop a relationship with myself. I learned to begin liking myself, to develop self-confidence and go after my goals and dreams. These turned my life around.

This book came out of my passion to help others by sharing some of the principles that have helped me. It offers simple suggestions to help you get your life on track.

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10 Tips To Get Your Life on Track:

- 1. Develop a Smiling Attitude**
- 2. Stop Complaining and Start Appreciating**
- 3. Begin the Journey to You...**
- 4. Become Aware**
- 5. Become Familiar with Your Rights**
- 6. Get a Dream and Start Working It!**
- 7. Understand the Power of No!**
- 8. Optimize Your Environment**
- 9. Take Time to Play and Have Fun!**
- 10. Get a Grip on Change!**

*"Knowing others is intelligence;
knowing yourself is true wisdom.
Mastering others is strength; mastering
yourself is true power." -Tao Te Ching-*

*"The way life treats you is a merciless
mirror image of your attitude toward
life." -Anonymous-*

*"And that was it. Right there. Right
there. That was the moment. I suddenly
realized that unless something changed
soon... And so I made the decision... I
decided to take control of my life."
-Bridget Jones's Diary (movie)*

1.

Develop a Smiling Attitude:



“A smile is a light in the window of the soul indicating that the heart is at home”. –Unknown Author-

*“A smile is a universal language. It crosses all boundaries and everybody in every language and cultural group understands it.”
-Lorna Blake-*

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I once had a Japanese student in a class I taught. He didn't speak very much English and he seemed to lack confidence in class but boy, did he ever teach me a valuable lesson I'll never forget. Talk about the student teaching the teacher...

One morning on my way to class I met this student in the subway. I hadn't slept well the night before and I hadn't eaten breakfast so I was feeling tired. I was also running late for class and I was traveling on a crowded train which is an issue for me so I wasn't in my element. We acknowledged each other but we weren't able to have much of a conversation.

After we got out of the train to walk the three minutes or so to class, my student initiated conversation with me by asking me: "Teacher, are you okay? You look tired today." I told him I was feeling tired. He went on to say: "I know you're a good teacher because you always smile. Your smile makes me comfortable."

Several weeks later we had a farewell party for him as he was leaving to return to Japan. Before he left we took pictures together and he came and hugged me. He told me thanks for being a good teacher and to keep smiling. A week later I got an email from him letting me know he had arrived safely in Japan and he said: "Teacher, keep smiling. Your smile reassures your students."

Your smile may help others who need reassurance.

"A smile is a frown turned upside down." –Unknown Author-

One of the best ways I know to turn a bad situation into a better situation is to smile. You've probably heard the saying "Fake it til you make it." Even if things don't look so great right now, putting a smile on your face can help to break up negative energies and signal to the Universe that you are ready for things to change.

"Lorna, smile! Your smile can charm a ratbat." This advice was given to me by an elder in Jamaica who was a mentor to me. I was 22 years old, had just gotten married and was starting to deal with some challenges in the relationship that left me feeling frightened. I thought I had no reason to smile.

This elder was giving me advice to cheer me up. By now you might be wondering what is a ratbat? Well, in Jamaican culture a ratbat is a really frightening, scary-looking creature like a vampire bat. I never asked my mentor friend what the term meant but I imagine it's a wise decision to charm this frightening, scary-looking creature so it doesn't harm you.

So how does this apply to you? Well, your ratbat could be any dark, frightening, or difficult situation in your life. Your smile may break up the negative vibes and change things around so your bad situation doesn't have such a grip on your life. It loses its power to harm or control you.

**"If you see a friend without a smile, give him one of yours."
Unknown Author**

Exercise to develop a smiling attitude:

Before you get out of bed in the morning visualize a pleasant memory. Hold something in your mind that puts a smile on your face. Keep that memory in front of you as you go through your day.

Smile at yourself in the mirror every chance you get. Smile with people you never smiled at before. Smile with those you interact with throughout the day.

If visualizing doesn't work for you, place a picture of something fun on your night table. In the morning, as you prepare to get out of bed to start your day take a look at that picture and smile.

Keep a picture that holds fond memories in your wallet and at intervals during your day take it out, look at it and smile. Smile and make eye contact with yourself in the mirror. Smile, nod and make eye contact with people.

Try this exercise every day for at least 90 days! Observe the difference it makes to your life.

2.

Stop Complaining and Start Appreciating

**“Never complain
about what you
permit. Change it or
be quiet about it.”
–Mike Murdoch-
Author and
Motivational
Speaker**

“Ungrateful worse than obeah.” –Jamaican Proverb-

This is a saying that I grew up with as a child. It means that living in a spirit of ingratitude for your life, your situation, your circumstances is worse than having someone cast a bad spell on you. In Jamaican culture if someone casts a spell on you, you can have it removed but if you live with a spirit of ingratitude it keeps you locked into negative energies. You’re forever experiencing unfortunate circumstances in your life because your attitude attracts bad vibes.

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It doesn't mean that people never complained but whenever we would begin to complain as children we would often hear the saying: "Ungrateful worse than obeh." It was a sign for us to get out of the attitude of complaining and start appreciating.

There's a story about an enchanted forest and the animals around it. A wise old owl stood at the edge of this forest. She was the gatekeeper. It was a place that many of the animals dreamed of.

It was magical and beautiful, it had lots of water and thick, lush foliage. Word had spread through the animal kingdom that life was beautiful for the animals who made it. What they didn't know was the password to get into this enchanted forest.

Each animal that came was asked: "What was it like in the forest where you came from?" If the animal answered: "It's a terrible place." The owl would tell it: "It's the same here. ". You won't like it here. It's a terrible forest. The animals are unkind to each other, there is very little food and water. It's better for you to return to your old forest." And the old owl wouldn't let them in.

If the animal answered: "The forest where I lived was a beautiful place. The animals are kind to each other and there was lots to eat." The wise old owl would answer: "Well, you're going to like it here. That's exactly what it's like in this forest. The animals are kind to each other and there is lots of food and water. Would you like to enter?"

This story reminds us that when we complain about a situation, we get locked into that very situation by virtue of our words. In the same way when we appreciate our situation we get a better situation.

***“Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates visions for tomorrow.”
-Melody Beattie- Author***

“When you arise in the morning, give thanks to the morning light for your life and strength. Give thanks for your food and the joy of living. If you see no reason for giving thanks, the fault lies in yourself.” –Chief Tecumseh- Shawnee Nation

Exercise for Cultivating an Attitude of Gratitude:

Every morning when you wake up, before rushing off into the day, take a few minutes to think about what’s good in your life e.g. your health, the people you love, people who love you, a roof over your head etc.

Every day find something and or some things, to be grateful for. Feeling gratitude lifts your spirits.

You can also make a difference to other people by expressing your appreciation to and for them. Notice when they do something right and tell them about it. You will feel better about yourself too! Try this every day for 90 days.

3.

Develop a Relationship with Yourself



“Resolve to be thyself: and know that he who finds himself, loses his misery.” -Matthew Arnold- English Critic and Poet 1822-1888

“You will always have to live with yourself, and it is to your best interest to see that you have good company.” -Orison Swett Marden- American Author 1850-1924 associated with the New Thought Movement

Begin to develop a relationship with yourself. One of the things that I found critical to my self development was beginning the process of getting to know me. I quickly found out that right up to that point in my mid 20s I had been living my life on auto-pilot. You know what I mean. The lights were on but I wasn't home...

I didn't know what I liked. Everything that I did (from what I ate to the colours that I wore) was what my mother had told me I liked. But did I really like them? I came to find out that many of them were my mom's choices. They weren't really mine.

And some of the other choices were my then-husband's choices for me... So where was I? I had given my power away by repeatedly using the phrase: "I don't know" to respond to "What do you want". So they chose for me.

To begin the process of getting to know me I started by asking myself what do I really like, what foods do I really like to eat, what colours do I like to wear, what movies do I really like to watch, what books do I like to read. I found out that I had very different tastes from my mom and then-husband.

My choices were very different. The colours I decided were my favourites were very different than the ones I had been used to wearing. The foods I chose to start eating were different.

Those choices really created a sense of freedom in my life. It's as though it opened a door into my inner world in a way that nothing else could have done. I then began to ask myself what do I really want.

I noticed that I was decidedly happier, I started smiling more, I felt more energetic, more comfortable with me. I quickly began to feel better about myself, my situation, my life by tuning in to me.

Have you heard the expression: If you treated your friends the way you treat yourself you wouldn't have any friends? That's because we very often are kind to everybody but ourselves. We give attention to everybody but ourselves. We seem to like everybody but ourselves.

There's a reason for this. As children many of us were taught rules like:

- *Always put other people first*
- *Disregard your own feelings to make others happy*
- *It's okay to let others make decisions for you*

And so it's not surprising that we lose ourselves along the way to becoming adults. As adults many of us are completely out of touch with who we really are, we don't like what we see in the mirror and we don't trust ourselves. So we panic at the thought of spending time alone and we beat up on ourselves by calling ourselves names like "stupid" "dumb".

*When we are so out of touch with our inner core, our inner self it's no wonder that we feel so unhappy, frustrated and stuck in a rut. It's no wonder we're so uncomfortable in our own skin because we haven't yet tried it on. And we also look everywhere outside of ourselves for answers.
We need to go within to find whatever it is we're looking for.*

*A human being has so many skins inside, covering the depths of the heart. We know so many things, but we don't know ourselves! Why, thirty or forty skins or hides, as thick and hard as an ox's or a bear's, cover the soul. Go into your own ground and learn to know yourself there." –Meister Eckhart-
German Writer and Theologian*

"Be that self which one truly is." –Soren Kierkegaard- Danish Philosopher

Exercise to begin connecting with your inner self

Ask yourself questions about your childhood likes and dislikes:

- I. What foods did you really like to eat as a child?*
- II. What colours did you like to wear?*
- III. What movies did you like to watch?*
- IV. What books did you like to read?*
- V. What were your favourite childhood treats?*

*Treat yourself to one of these every week for the next 90 days.
Once a week give yourself a favourite childhood meal, a
favourite movie, a favourite toy, a favourite treat.*

4.

Develop Your Self-Awareness

*“Look well into thyself; there is a source of strength which will always spring up if thou wilt always look there.” –Marcus Aurelius-
Stoic Philosopher*

“The outward freedom that we shall attain will only be in exact proportion to the inward freedom to which we may have grown at a given moment. And if this is a correct view of freedom, our chief energy must be concentrated on achieving reform from within.” –Mahatma Gandhi-

“It’s surprising how many people go through life without ever recognizing that their feelings toward other people are largely determined by their feelings toward themselves, and if you’re not comfortable with yourself, you can’t be comfortable with others.” –Sydney J. Harris-

“Until you make peace with who you are... you’ll never be content with what you have.” –Doris Mortman- Author

*“We wait all these years to find someone who understands us, I thought, someone who accepts us as we are, someone with a wizard’s power to melt stone to sunlight, who can bring us happiness in spite of trials, who can face our dragons in the night, who can transform us into the soul we choose to be. Just yesterday I found that magical Someone is the face we see in the mirror: Its us and our homemade masks.” –Richard Bach-
Writer, Philosopher*

Exercise for developing self-awareness:

Keep a daily journal or a log. Take time to reflect first thing in the morning and or last thing at night. In the morning write for 5 minutes whatever comes up for you.

Don't take time to second-guess or censor. Maybe you'll learn that there's something bothering you.

Take another 5 minutes to write what you'd like your day to be like. In the evening or before bed reflect on your day.

Write for a few minutes on what you liked about your day and what you would change. You may also use this time to express gratitude for the day.

Practice these powerful exercises for the next 90 days.

5.

Become Familiar with Your Assertive Rights as an Individual:



“The practice of assertiveness: being authentic in our dealings with others; treating our values and persons with decent respect in social contexts; refusing to fake the reality of who we are or what we esteem in order to avoid disapproval; the willingness to stand up for ourselves and our ideas in appropriate ways in appropriate contexts.”

–Nathaniel Branden- Psychotherapist and Writer

“The first principle of non-violent action is that of non-cooperation with everything humiliating.” –Cesar Chavez- Civil Rights Activist

You have:

- ✓ ***The right to decide what's best for you and your life***
- ✓ ***The right to be treated with respect***
- ✓ ***The right to say no without feeling guilty***
- ✓ ***The right to think about what you're being asked to do before responding***
- ✓ ***The right to experience and express your feelings***
- ✓ ***The right to change your mind***
- ✓ ***The right to offer neither reason nor excuse to justify your behaviour***

Learning my rights empowered me in a way that little else could. Growing up, I had been taught the importance of being nice, of catering to everybody's needs and of putting others first. So I was always quick to say yes to everything, felt I had to justify my behaviour and had to respond immediately when asked to do something.

Imagine my joy and surprise to learn that I had rights! I had no idea.

Once I learned that I actually had these rights I learned to begin asking for respect. I learned to say no without feeling guilty and I learned to stop and think about what people were asking me to do before responding. These three alone helped me move from feeling abused and mistreated to feeling empowered.

Exercise for Practicing Your Assertive Rights:

Learn these rights and begin to put them into practice in your life. If you're usually in the habit of saying yes to everything, the next time you're asked to do something, say: "I'd like to think about it and get back to you."

Take the time to think about what you're being asked to do and if you've decided to say no when you follow up with the person, you might say something like this: "I have had some time to think about what you've asked and I have decided not to."

If you're feeling disrespected in your relationships start expressing your feelings using simple I statements. Think about what you're upset about and think about an appropriate response.

***Think about what you'd like from the person who is disrespecting you. You may respond like this:
"I feel upset when you keep me waiting for an hour every time you ask me to meet you. In future I would like you to arrive on time."***

"The way we communicate with others and with ourselves ultimately determines the quality of our lives." –Anthony Robbins-

***"Take care to get what you like or you will be forced to like what you get."
-George Bernard Shaw***

6.

Get a Dream or a Goal and Start Working It!



***“You must go after your wish. As soon as you start to pursue a dream, your life wakes up and everything has meaning.” –Barbara Sher-
Author of I Could Do Anything If I only Knew
What it Was***

***Stop telling yourself that dreams don’t matter, that they are only dreams and that you should be more sensible.” -
Julie Cameron- Author
The Artist’s Way***

***“If you want to live a happy life, tie it to a goal, not to people or things.”
-Albert Einstein-***

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As I began to do the work of getting to know myself, developing my self-awareness I began to ask myself certain question like: what are the things that I really want, what really makes me happy, how do I want to make a difference in the world.

It was early 1993 and I was working at an insurance company as an accounting clerk. It was a good job, I had good benefits and I just had my first baby. As I tuned in to how I felt about the work I was doing I learned that as much as I enjoyed working with numbers and I liked the benefits and my co-workers, I didn't feel I was being challenged enough by the work I did. I realized that I wanted to work with people, helping them solve their problems.

I made the decision to quit the full-time job with good benefits and return to school full-time to get a Social Work degree. Many of my co-workers thought I was nuts. Why would I leave a good job with benefits to go to university full time just after starting a family? How was I going to live? What kind of quality of life could I offer my child if I wasn't working?

I was very clear that my dreams were very important and that pursuing this particular dream would make me happy. I listened to their suggestions and advice but I made the decision anyway. I quit the job in September 1993 to pursue full-time studies at university.

I had never felt as inspired and motivated to go after my dreams as I did then. I had to apply for student loans to pay for my education and it did become challenging at times. My baby was also diagnosed with asthma when he was two years old and I spent many sleepless nights and many nights at hospital emergency rooms as he developed frequent asthma attacks. I also became pregnant at the end of my second year at school and I made the decision to have the baby and to stay in school.

I had to negotiate deadlines and change schedules over that time but I never lost my drive and motivation to achieve my goal. I also had to put classes on hold for a couple of months after my baby was born but I kept going. I graduated a year later than the rest of my peers but I graduated with honours and with a feeling of exhilaration.

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It had taken me five years of hard work and determination. I had dreamed it seven years before and now I had done it! I had achieved my goal and dream!

As a side note, by the time I had finished my degree most of my co-workers at the insurance company had been downsized.

“Life is either a daring adventure or nothing.” -Helen Keller-

Exercise to Help You Get a Dream:

To figure out what you really want, ask yourself:

- *What do I really want?*
- *What am I inspired to do with my life?*
- *How do I want to make a difference in the world?*
- *What do I do that gives me energy?*
- *What do I love to do so much I would do it for free?*

You may need to get the help of a coach to move you forward.

Once you've figured this out, take one small step after another to move you in the direction of your dreams. No matter how bold or intimidating your dream may seem to you, it can be achieved if you think it's possible, if you really want it and if you keep going when the going gets tough...

7.

Understand the Power of No!

“The trick to gaining respect is you’ve got to be able to stand your ground and say no. But many of us find it hard because we’ve been taught that the nice thing to do is to say yes. And so we sacrifice respect so that everybody will think we’re nice.”

–Lorna Blake-

“It comes from saying no to 1000 things to make sure we don’t get on the wrong track or try to do too much.” – Steve Jobs- CEO, Apple Computer

“You just have to do your own thing, no matter what anyone says. It’s your life.” –Ethan Embry-Actor

“Half of the troubles of this life can be traced to saying yes too quickly and not saying no soon enough.” –Josh Billings- Humorist and Lecturer 1818-1885

It's very important to understand that you have rights as a person. One of your Assertive Rights is that you can say no to someone or something without giving a reason or excuse as to why you're saying no.

Saying no to other people's agendas or programs allows us to focus on our agendas and our programs. It allows us to put our needs above the needs of others. It gives us peace of mind where we may otherwise find ourselves feeling stressed and anxious because we have said yes to so many things, we've spread ourselves thin and can't keep up with our commitments.

"You have to decide what your highest priorities are and have the courage—pleasantly, smilingly, non-apologetically—to say 'no' to other things. And the way you do that is by having a bigger 'yes' burning inside. —Stephen Covey-

Exercise for Learning How to Say No:

This exercise takes practice, practice, practice. The only way to learn how to say no is by saying no. It's best to start with little things. It's also easiest if you begin to stop and think before responding to whatever people ask you to do.

Start by saying no even to things you would probably have fun doing so you begin to develop the habit.

Then the next time you're asked to do something you're uncomfortable with, stop and think. Check in with yourself.

Stop for a moment. Ask yourself: "Do I want to do this?" If the answer is no. Respond by saying something like: "I've had a chance to think about it and I've decided not to."

Practice saying No for 90 days. It may save you a lot of stress and perhaps save you money too.

"No one ever went broke by saying no too often." – Harvey Mackay-

"The art of leadership is saying no, not yes. It is very easy to say yes." – Tony Blair-

8.

Optimize Your Environment

“Your environment can either make you or break you... If you are not having success in reaching your dreams check your environment”. –

Lorna Blake

“You are a product of your environment. So choose the environment that will best develop you toward your objective. Analyze your life in terms of its environment. Are the things around you helping you toward success – or are they holding you back?” –

W. Clement Stone, American businessman, 1902-2002

“Your outlook upon life, your estimate of yourself, your estimate of your value are largely colored by your environment. Your whole career will be modified, shaped, molded by your surroundings, by the character of the people with whom you come in contact every day.”-Orison Swett Marden, American writer, 1850-1924

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When you make the decision to go after your goals and dreams it is very critical for you to have a supportive environment. Ask yourself: “Who do I have myself surrounded by? What kinds of books and literature do I read?”

What kind of news do I tune in to? What are the things that I tell myself, about myself, my life and my goals daily?”

I like to say, turn off the negatives and tune in the positives... How do you do that? You begin to develop your awareness of people, things and events that you have in your environment.

Once you’ve done the assessment, you can start to add the people, things and events that support you in reaching your goals and remove the ones that don’t.

“Success is a state of mind. If you want success, start thinking of yourself as a success.” – Dr. Joyce Brothers

Exercise for Optimizing Your Environment

- I. Every morning when you wake up, before your mind gets busy and begins to tell you otherwise, tell yourself: "I am special. I believe in my goals and dreams. I can do whatever it takes to reach my goals!"

- II. When the frightened part of yourself begins to replay negative programming like: "You're crazy, you're bad, you're stupid or you'll never do it." Immediately tune it out by saying: "Cancel, cut, delete, clear, reject". Whatever term works best for you.

- III. Avoid the daily news which tends to be filled with negativity and little positive. Whether it's newspapers, TV or internet news make a conscious effort to block it. When friends, family or colleagues begin to talk about the latest bad news, respond by saying something like: "That's interesting, isn't it?" Avoid engaging in the details.

- IV. Minimize contact or completely avoid where possible 'negative people' who have made you feel like a loser. If they are family members with whom you have to engage and they bring up negative stuff about you, internally cancel, cut, delete, clear or reject their ideas.
- V. Find people who are supportive and positive. Hire a coach, enroll a friend or join a class/group that motivates or inspires you.
- VI. Interact with positive people regularly and tell yourself some of the positives they tell you about yourself.
- VII. Read and listen to books and CDs that help you 'see' possibility!

Practice all the above for 90 days and watch your transformation!

9.

Take Time to Play and Have Fun!



“Playing is our inner joy outwardly expressed. It can be laughing, singing, dancing, swimming, hiking... playing a game or anything else we have fun doing.” – Elizabeth Kubler Ross

**“When people ask how they can afford to spend time playing I answer that they can’t afford not to. Play adds balance, and improves our mental states.”
-Elizabeth Kubler Ross**

“So many of my ideas and flashes of insight have come to me because I took time to play.”- Lorna Blake

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It's been said that the number one regret people have when they lay on their death beds is that they took their lives so seriously. In other words, they didn't play enough... They worked really hard but they didn't play.

What happens when we stop playing is that we start dying. There is a part of us that stays youthful, creative and vibrant, no matter our age, when we engage in play. There is a part of us that craves play time.

Did you realize that the Disney Worlds and Disney Lands are filled with not just kids but adults?
Do you understand why?

These are some of the few places that adults actually give themselves permission to have fun...

Some of us learned that it wasn't okay to play in childhood so we have gone through life feeling the need to always be "serious". Speaking for myself, that was my own childhood. I had a very strict mother who thought I was too playful and kept me in line. So I played very little as a child.

One day I grew up and recognized that inside me is a little girl who has never grown up and never will. What an amazing and incredible gift! I can play in the sand, sculpt clay and blow bubbles just like kids do.

In fact, those are some of my favourite play activities. I now have a life that includes play time. One of my all-time favourite things is playing in the sand so I have a sand box or a zen garden at home.

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Taking time to play and have fun has many benefits.

- Makes us younger
- Helps us become more positive in our outlook on life
- Relieves stress so it's good for our health
- Puts passion in our work
- Makes us more creative
- Makes us more productive
- Rejuvenates us so it's an excellent remedy for burn-out
- Helps our relationships thrive



Exercise to help you play and have fun

1. Make note in your planner to have a play date this week.
2. Take an hour that you call your play hour.
(This is an hour of undisturbed time which you are going to spend by yourself).
3. Reflect on your childhood and what you loved to do for fun.
4. Get some colouring pencils and drawing paper.
Draw and colour pictures.
5. Get a bubble blower and blow bubbles.
6. Chew some chewing gum, the kind that you can pop if you know how to.
7. Get glass bottles or jars filled with water and kitchen utensils like spoons or forks. Make music with the bottles.

This list is by no means exhaustive. It's just meant to give you ideas of the different things you can do to play. Have a play date and a play hour every week for the next 3 months. It will change your life!

“What we play is life.” –Louis Armstrong

10.

Get A Grip On Change!



“Your attitude towards change determines the success you experience in your life.” – Lorna Blake

“For everything you have missed, you have gained something else, and for everything you gain, you lose something else.” – Ralph Waldo Emerson

“They must often change, who would be constant in happiness and wisdom.” – Confucius

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"The bamboo that bends is stronger than the oak that resists." – Japanese Proverb

The oak is a very majestic looking tree. It can stand up to 20 feet tall and can live up to 200 years but if it's an oak that resists the mighty winds, what can happen? It can snap, break and or be destroyed.

Just like you. If you don't learn to bend with the winds of change, you can snap, break or be destroyed. So the next time life sends a wind of change or challenge your way, what are you going to do? That's right. Bend. Learn to be flexible. Be open to change.

It was June 1995 and I was feeling on top of the world. I had just finished the second year of my degree program with straight As. My three year old's asthma had stabilized and life had developed a sense of normalcy.

I was half-way through my program to becoming a social worker and I felt great.

**And then I found out I was pregnant...
What to do now? I went home and told my partner and he snapped.**

Then he began to tell me how I was good for nothing, I had no ambition, I never finished anything I started. Here I had just finished second year with two more years to go and I went and got myself pregnant.

He was very clear he wanted nothing to do with my second pregnancy. He told me I had better go and fix it. And from that point on, he never got involved with my pregnancy.

I decided that I hadn't planned to get pregnant but I wasn't going to have an abortion either. I went and saw a counselor and made plans to have the baby while continuing with school.

I had the summer to plan out my schedule, I contacted school to plan for the fall and I spread out my course load so I would graduate a year later.

I delivered a healthy baby boy in February 1996. I got the help of a labour support person to be with me during my labour and I had an easy delivery. Two months later I returned to school.

Later that year I parted ways with the father of my children-permanently. I had decided he was causing too much of a drain on my energy and I could no longer afford to live that way.

In June 1998, with my two boys, my mother and siblings watching, I crossed the podium to receive my Social work degree. I had completed my program with honours despite having a second baby, despite having two children to care, despite going through a terrible break-up.

How To Get A Grip On Change

- ❖ **Assess your situation**
- ❖ **Recognize that change involves loss as well as opportunity**
- ❖ **Accept the situation as it is, not as you want it to be**
- ❖ **Make a plan for success.**

Accept your situation the way it is and make plans for success.

- **Find a coach, a counselor, a supportive friend, a support group and with that person or group, get help with your situation.**
- **Take the time to grieve your loss but don't stay stuck in the grief.**
- **Take action to move your life forward.**
- **See yourself at the end of that wind of change achieving that goal you had set for yourself!**

You can do it!

To book Lorna for a speaking engagement, visit www.lornablake.com or call 416 693-7347

