

"This book really touched me. We all need encouragement and tools to keep believing in ourselves and to bravely forge ahead on the paths that call to us. Lois does this with wit, style and yes, plenty of SPARKLE!"

—Ophira and Tali Edut, *The Astro Twins*, authors of *Love Zodiac* and *Momstrology*

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CONTENT

# Courage to Sparkle

THE AUDACIOUS GUIDE TO  
CREATING A LIFE THAT  
LIGHTS YOU UP

LOIS BARTH

# **COURAGE TO SPARKLE**

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COURAGE TO SPARKLE

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## GEM 7

### FIRE YOUR PERFECTIONIST



**Perfectionism is Fear in Drag.**

**—LOIS-ism**

\* \* \*

I was at an event at Barnard College, an all-female liberal arts college in New York City that is part of Columbia University. Barnard is considered one of the most influential colleges, especially when it comes to cultivating female empowerment and feminism. I met Debora Spar, the president of the college. She is smart, accomplished, and very accessible. I'm passionate about and familiar with the contents of her terrific book, *Wonder Women; Sex, Power, and the Quest for Perfection*. Spar's book chronicles not only the history of the feminist movement but looks at the metrics of women's ability to break the glass ceiling in many male-dominated professions. While she clearly highlights how far women have come in many ways, it's revealing to consider the myriad of fields where the number of women in leadership roles still hasn't risen much. Spar also addresses how women are still plagued with perfectionism.

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I see perfectionism as a contributing factor to what stops women from breaking through what I call Shattering our Inner Glass Ceiling. I approached President Spar and we chatted about how prevalent perfectionism is and what a huge role it plays in stopping women from going after what they want. Spar underscored her thesis: that even when women aim ambitiously high, and even when they achieve their powerful goals, many still often have that “not good enough” feeling. As she was sharing her experience of the issues at hand, I offered a mischievous grin. President Spar looked at me in a quizzical manner.

“I have a LOIS-ism for perfectionism. Wanna hear it?”

She nodded yes, slightly amused yet curious.

“My LOIS-ism is, ‘Perfectionism is Fear in Drag!’”

She laughed out loud. “Oh that’s great—and so true.”

We chatted more about the impact of perfectionism that she sees not only in her students but with her very accomplished daughter as well. It’s clear that President Spar is deeply passionate and committed to not only spreading awareness of this issue but implementing some solutions. She’s a delightful woman. As I was leaving the venue, I heard her share my LOIS-ism with her other colleagues and they laughed as well. Hopefully, it went viral within the Barnard walls, but more importantly, drove my point home.

I see perfectionism as the silent thief. It steals our dreams, our vitality, and often our self-esteem. The overall sense of fulfillment that one would hope would accompany success often fades in the shadows of perfectionism. It is insidious as well as overt in its attacks. But when deconstructing perfectionism down to its core element, it is fear—plain and simple. What keeps a person stuck in the vicious cycle of perfectionism is often a deeply complex and unexamined, underlying belief

that we are not good enough, and therefore, nothing we ever do is good enough.

Perfectionism usually surfaces in two extremes. One scenario is what I call “I’ll never be perfect so why bother,” in which we make NO attempt toward a specific goal. We make this ridiculous demand of ourselves to be perfect and are unwilling to go through the uncomfortable, messy process of learning. This mode of perfectionism leaves us feeling stuck and immobilized. By the way, this is the largest deterrent to even starting something. Want to set up permanent residence next to a blank page? Tell yourself you’re going to write the next Great American Novel.

The second form of perfectionism is being relentless in trying to reach an unrealistic ideal we’ve created for ourselves, often bludgeoning ourselves in the process. It’s not because the standard is too high, but rather that the driving force is a belief of not being good enough. I liken perfectionism to eating a delicious healthy meal yet being unable to digest it fully. Instead of being properly nourishing, it just sits in our stomach, and we’re left feeling bloated and exhausted.

I often get pushback from hardcore perfectionists when I bring up how detrimental it is. “What’s wrong with wanting to be the best you can be in all areas of your life?” My response is that it’s a fantastic goal. But I call that *mastery*, which is not the same as perfectionism.

Mastery takes similar relentlessness and rigor to achieve. To me, that sacred place is where the human and Divine meet. To spend hours, weeks, months, and even years on a project that holds meaning for you and to get it to a level of precision in service of your own standards, brings about a certain satisfaction; that’s mastery. It’s awe-inspiring and terrific. When I speak about perfectionism, I’m not referring to a person’s desire for mastery.

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So what is the difference between perfectionism that is damaging versus attempting to achieve mastery in something that holds meaning for you?

The difference between mastery and perfectionism is rooted in our motive. Mastery is motivated by our passion for excellence that drives us to work on something, often relentlessly. You will invariably fall on your butt and course-correct along the way. You'll experience a divine restlessness when you fall short. There is, however, a sense of exhilaration. The journey to mastery is rooted in a deep desire for excellence and there's a tremendous feeling of worthiness and fulfillment even if at certain moments we are frustrated.

Perfectionism has a very different motivation. Perfectionism is often fueled by a deep wound of *never* feeling good enough or what I call experiencing the 3Ss: small, scared, and stuck. As a result, one creates an unreasonable and often amorphous ideal, a mythical bar to hit that is not rooted in reality. The motive comes from a desperate need to fix a part of us that feels broken, flawed, or is craving a sense of approval. It ultimately has nothing to do with the tasks at hand. It is housed within a fantasy that when we arrive in this mythical *perfect* place, then we will *finally feel good about ourselves* and heal our old wounds of not feeling good enough. But that won't happen. It can't and it never will. The emotional hamster wheel of perfectionism only leads to a contraction of our true self.

At this point you may be saying, "Hmmm... okay, I get the difference between the healthy pursuit of excellence and the unhealthy obsession with perfectionism, but what do I do about it? How do I tear down the wall of perfectionism that on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis stops me from believing in my own value?"

When dealing with core wounds and messaging from childhood, depending upon the level of severity or trauma that one

has experienced, therapy and therapeutic modalities can be very effective. I often suggest them to clients, and they have achieved successful outcomes. The techniques and principles that I am suggesting here are both a wonderful complement to the deep work of therapy as well as being very effective as standalones to loosen the shackles of perfectionism that most of us suffer from.

**When you creatively engage with your negative self-talk, you transform your relationship to it.**

**—LOIS-ism**

\* \* \*

### **Get to Know Your Inner Critic**

Inside every stuck person who suffers with perfectionism, there's an Inner Critic that hasn't been explored, identified, and repurposed. But once we do all three, magic happens. We claim that part of us that's scared, and we gain access to that energized part of us that "wants to do it anyway." Creativity is the bridge that joins both aspects of us together. Here's how that happened for me.

On a miserable rainy day, I was in my apartment attempting to work on my stand-up comedy routine. Training to be a stand-up comic is a difficult job that we often have to do in the least inviting environments. The training grounds for testing your material are often a host of open-mic nights in dive bars, with the occasional worn-out billiard table and uncomfortable metal seats filled with depressed comics and a few drunks hovering over the bar. Charming!

That day, the environment in my apartment was worse than all the miserable open mics I'd ever gone to. I had to stare down my worst enemy—my Inner Critic (IC) and that day my IC was



in full voice. While I have a whole cast of characters in my head that both taunt me and celebrate me, I focused on my Perfectionist, aka IC. I see my entire Itty-Bitty Committee—the scrappy crew of negative self-talk characters who clamor endlessly in my head—as neighbors in the same mental condo complex; separate units, but they share the same wall. You may open a dialogue with one, but the others get the message, too. My Itty-Bitty Committee was particularly relentless that day.

I was stuck, resigned, and in pain. Nothing’s worse than a belly full of passion and a head full of negative self-talk. Nothing I could do was right, and everything I practiced *sucked*. Or so my IC told me.

I’m both blessed with, and sometimes challenged by, a mind that churns constantly. For the most part, I get a daily delivery of what I refer to as *divine downloads*. They consist of ideas, concepts, stories, life lessons, acronyms, and alliterations being pelted at me non-stop—often before 9 a.m. While I’m grateful for how creatively my mind works, the challenge has and probably always will be the “Big Shiny Object Syndrome.” I become smitten with the new sparkly idea or concept, get distracted, jump around, and lose focus. This is something I see all the time with highly creative and entrepreneurial folks who can get easily distracted. Yay! I’m a triple threat!

However, that day I was in such deep despair, feeling so beaten up by my nasty IC that I became numb and collapsed on my couch. I was about to turn on the TV and watch anything, just to shut out those voices. All of a sudden the idea came to me: “I wonder what my IC even looks like. Is it man, woman, or creature? What is its name? What does it wear? Most importantly, does it accessorize?” I became intrigued.

I know from comedy that while every idea must come from a kernel of truth, you have to exaggerate it a bit to extract the humor and shift your perspective. There’s no better way to do

that than to recruit the rich world of your imagination. I started imagining my IC/Perfectionist as this character named Helga: part Viking, part army drill sergeant, part dominatrix. She has oversized combat boots, a ridiculous, too-big Viking helmet with horns and fur. She wears a breastplate made of E-Z Foil aluminum pie dishes over a jacket with oversized shoulder pads from the 1980s, and a whip that's made of a dirty mop. She's a cultural mutt, with a part-German, part-Nordic, mostly-Monty-Python-esque accent. Her mantra is "You will do it perfectly or you will do it not at all!" She then bangs her mop down and hits her toe in the process. I started laughing and walking around my apartment holding a mop pretending to be Helga. With each rehearsal, I made her more clownish and ridiculous.

My relationship with my negative self-talk was never the same. Not that it doesn't chronically visit me; it does. The difference is that when it does come up now, I try to isolate the individual characters that are expressing themselves. I imagine what they look and sound like. I create a healthy distance from them, utilizing the tools of creativity, compassion, and comedy to address the wounds that used to take me out for days, weeks, months, and even years. With tenacity and a whole dose of patience, I ultimately pry loose some of the criticism by having more than a fair share of visits with Helga.

That single practice of really identifying and bringing Helga out of the shadows brought miraculous results. I worked with her very consistently and started to break from the shackles of perfectionism. From having chronic stage fright, relentless writer's block, and self-criticism to a year later writing and performing my one-woman show called "Tea with the Demons." It was a show about making peace with our negative self-talk by turning them into over-the-top cartoon characters. I also wrote three more shows, performed stand-up, and became

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an arts educator, sometimes performing for groups as large as 1,500. It certainly didn't happen overnight, and while it wasn't the only work I did to address my perfectionism, it made a key shift in breaking open my resistance.

When I do this exercise with my clients and with my groups, they first need time to get past the initial "You want us to do what?" reaction. But they invariably have fun creating their own Itty-Bitty Committee, especially the Perfectionist/Critic. By far, this is the most widely identified member of the committee. If attendees are still feeling the sting of their critics, I urge them to make their committee members even more ridiculous so they can have a sense of humor about themselves.

The characters that my clients have come up with are of sheer brilliance: the Hermes Mom carrying the \$350 diaper bag; the Deranged Parochial Schoolmarm with a pitchfork; the E-Trade Baby having a temper tantrum; Thigh Woman, who is comprised of two 1,000-pound thighs stuck together; and the Whirling Dervish of Crapdom, a mythic character that swirls with disco lights in a tornado-like movement. While it's fun to come up with different characters in your imagination to help you lighten up and give you perspective when it comes to dealing with your negative self-talk, ultimately it's about implementing the exercise in a way that resonates for you.

One example is a client who was writing a book to share his expertise, attract more business, build his brand, and to be of service to his clients. While he's very talented and a great writer with a wonderful sense of humor, he was being stopped by his Itty-Bitty Committee. During a coaching session, he shared that he was constantly barraged by his Inner Critic. The negative voices would yell at him that he was doing it wrong. "Sometimes, it's so loud I can't even hear myself think," he reported. We talked about what his IC looked like and then created a practice that would help take away some of its power.

We came up with a plan for my client to start a daily writing session with the same empty chair next to him that we would call his Inner Critic/Inner Editor. Whenever he found himself derailed by his negative self-talk, he would look over at his chair and say, “We’re writing, not editing. When we get to editing I’ll enlist you, but for now, I’m going back to my writing.” Once he did that, the resistance (often at the core of the IC) calmed down and he was able to stay in writing mode. He not only completed the book, but he received rave reviews for it and positive feedback about how much value it provides for his clients.

For my client, the ritual of bringing the chair over to his desk was a practical and powerful strategy in acknowledging his Inner Critic while at the same time not giving it so much power. While we spent a bit of time exploring what his IC looked like, his ritual helped to signal the beginning and the end of each writing session. Doing that was his way of giving voice to the IC while reinforcing his own ability to take charge.

One of my female clients wanted to start a coaching business but was always judging whether she was “good enough.” Her IC, Hermes Mom with the \$350 diaper bag and perfectly coiffed hair who *had it all together all the time*, became a regular part of our coaching work. When my client was confronted with taking on a big action, I’d ask her to close her eyes, connect with her IC and ask what she had to say. What first started as yapping “You’ll never do it,” and “Unless you’re perfect, it won’t count,” eventually brought up deep feelings of fear and sadness. We were then able to identify core beliefs that were stopping her and worked diligently to shift them. By doing so, she was able to move beyond them and take the necessary actions to build a thriving business that inspired her and helped lots of women.

When we give voice to our IC and become creative with

what they look like, make them cartoon-like, we lighten up our perspective and are less likely to be so controlled and manipulated by them. I've done this exercise many times, and what amazes me the most is the energy that gets freed up. We create these wonderful characters in our imaginations which keep us entertained and engaged for hours. As adults, we have the power to leverage our creativity and to loosen the grip of perfectionism and move forward toward our dreams.

### *Suggestions*

**Connect with your IC before doing something that scares you.** The more you give voice to that part and see the absurdity, the more you'll connect with your most vibrant self and the part of you that wants to do it anyway.

**Pace yourself.** If this is new and confronting for you, simply do it for five minutes so you don't overwhelm yourself. Your capacity will grow.

**Learn how you learn.** How do you learn best? Are you visual (seeing), auditory (hearing), or kinesthetic (feeling)? Use whatever is your natural method of learning to do this work. If you're visual, you may want to collage or draw these characters. If you're kinesthetic as I am, you may need to put on music and move. If you're auditory, both music and talking out loud may be the way to go. There's no wrong or right way, there's only the right way for you!

**Try journaling/dialogue work.** Many of my clients find it invaluable. You may choose to dialogue with your IC and then write back as that part of you that is committed to moving forward on a project. It's okay to argue on the page with your IC if that's what comes up. See how you can create an open dialogue with both your IC and the part of you that is really excited about moving forward.

**Make peace with your Inner Critic.** The more you do this work, the more you'll find your IC is not as bad as you think. As you strip away the layers and stay in dialogue, you may discover that your IC is really not that ominous but is only hiding behind its loud bravado. I liken the process of getting to know our IC with that wonderful, revealing moment in *The Wizard of Oz* as Toto pulls away the curtain. We see that the Great Oz is merely a tiny little man perched on a stool pulling levers in an attempt to project an omnipotent image. The more we get curious versus critical of that part of us, the more freed up we'll become.

### *Reflection*

- What does your Inner Critic/Perfectionist look like?
- How will you powerfully choose to have some healthy distance from it?
- How can you find a way to have a sense of humor about it?
- How will you use it on a practical level to let the Itty-Bitty Committee know who's in charge?

### **Evidence List**

When we face new opportunities that both delight and scare us, it's essential to remind ourselves that we are way more competent, confident, and resourceful than we realize. Here's where creating what I call an "Evidence List" is really helpful.

One of my favorite definitions of fear is "False Evidence Appearing Real" (not a LOIS-ism). So much of what we fear is based on what happened decades ago and may have no relevance in our current reality even though we keep bringing it up. An Evidence List is a great opportunity to reinforce and

remind you of your myriad of talents, gifts, and accomplishment—basically, who you really are.

Here's a sample Evidence List for someone who needs to reinforce how resourceful they truly are: (i.e., a great way to support yourself when dealing with taking on a new project where you're not sure how to proceed).

1. I spearheaded a local food drive while having a young child by simply staying focused, doing one thing at a time, and asking for help.

2. I'm very skilled at asking the right people for very specific advice when dealing with a situation I'm not experienced in. Most people almost always feel a sense of satisfaction knowing they were of service.

3. With almost everything I've created in my life; I had no idea how it would happen. But the more I committed to it, and shared my excitement with others, the more I enjoyed the process and allowed others to join in.

You get the picture!

### *Suggestions*

**Write the list.** Now. Don't wait until you're feeling totally stuck to write the list since you probably won't be at your best and be able to see your natural gifts and talents.

**Read it regularly.** I'd suggest reading your Evidence List out loud on a regular basis, three to five times a week, especially in the beginning. Of course, if you're having a tough time, take it out, and read it. The more you can make it a regular part of your practice, the better. Grab a moment when you're online or in traffic and grab a peek.

**Write it down in your own handwriting.** When you write the list longhand, you'll access a different region in your brain that will evoke a far deeper emotional charge. Reading a list in

your handwriting is ultimately far more potent than a type-written list, which can look impersonal.

**Start with one list.** You can have multiple Evidence Lists, depending upon the particular challenges and ways you'd like to leverage your resourcefulness, but it's best to start with one at a time.

**List both personal and professional accomplishments.** Both are equally important.

**Keep it simple.** Make sure not to have more five or so items listed; three to five is preferable. If you write too many, you'll start to ignore all of them.

**Keep it handy.** Fold up your list and carry it in your wallet so it's easy to find.

**Be present.** Read it out loud and really luxuriate in each of those items listed. Think of each one as a delicious piece of chocolate. You want to take your time really enjoying each luscious morsel.

A client of mine found this Evidence List very helpful when transitioning from a long-standing staff position to venturing out on her own and reconnecting with her love of travel. When she felt panicked about her goal, she'd breathe, read the list, and look at all the previous changes she had successfully made in her life. She calmed down and was able to reconnect with her love of adventure and travel.

## **Good Enough is Great!**

Another way to fire your Inner Perfectionist is to firmly establish your version of Good Enough. The concept of *Good Enough* has been around for a long time, but it's usually given a bad rap. It's often synonymous with settling, or even being a slacker and getting by, but I actually think it's the complete opposite.



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As a recovering hard-core perfectionist, the concept of Good Enough has been an invaluable tool for me. I have found it to be very useful for me when I'm up against my perfectionism in the classroom of life. I was first introduced to the practical application of Good Enough about five years ago, and it has stayed with me ever since.

For most people, dealing with change, even those that they have worked very hard to achieve, is still very confronting for them. Change upsets the old paradigm and brings about a fair amount of anxiety in the process.

For two years, I was spearheading my mom's care, with my brother and sister, while she was in hospice. Before my mom entered hospice, she was in and out of hospitals for close to fifteen years. Her health issues were not only a huge challenge for her but put a considerable strain on myself as well as my two siblings.

My sister Lori, a very active member of Team Edie (Mom), saw me sweating it from time to time because I had forgotten to ask the doctor a small question that wasn't vital to Mom's care. Lori saw me beating myself up for the oversight. She turned to me one day and said, "Lois, never forget, it's a marathon not a sprint." Conversely my sister, who has five children and a packed schedule, would feel badly on occasions when she wasn't able to visit Mom with the same frequency that she usually did. I'd remind her as well. "Lori, remember, it's a marathon not a sprint."

As a family unit, my brother, sister, and I were all deeply committed to providing Mom with the Rolls Royce of care, given her limited mobility and pretty severe health issues. "It's a marathon, not a sprint," was our family's version of Good Enough, and it was really useful.

I share that exact phrase, "Good Enough," with clients who are dealing with long-standing issues with either difficult

people, situations, or projects that have many moving parts. Being given permission to not have to be *perfect*—whatever that means—calms us down.

## **The Science behind Good Enough**

I've written in previous Gems about the fight/flight mechanism deeply rooted in the part of the brain called the amygdala. When we are in the throes of perfectionism, we are stopped dead in our tracks and the amygdala has a field day with our nervous system. How many of us have sat down to do something that was both important but confrontational only to find ourselves glazing over and wanting to surf the net as a distraction?

When we adopt the principle of our own Good Enough, we can loosen the grip of having to be perfect and we can make some small but consistent changes in our lives. We can give ourselves the gift of celebrating our progress and acknowledge, "Wow, I've come a long way, baby." Day by day, when we commit to our own version of Good Enough, we have a far better chance of getting there. I strongly suggest you try on the concept of Good Enough.

## **Developing Your Good Enough Strategy**

Let's say your daughter dawdles in the morning before school and it drives you crazy. Right now, you're either having a power struggle with her where she knows she has something over you and you're losing it, or you've totally given up and feel resigned. You're trapped in a pattern. Your perfectionist might tell you that, "A good mother doesn't lose it, no matter how stressed out you are," or "You didn't say 'let's get going' in the nicest way."

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Think of your reaction on a continuum. Where are you versus where you'd like to be? Maybe your ideal version is the ability to be totally non-reactive, bright, and cheery. Nice on paper but given your time constraint and your lack of sleep, it is most likely not a possibility for you, right now. Your Good Enough may look like taking a few deep breaths and reminding yourself that being warm and fuzzy isn't feasible. Staying calm and focusing on the task at hand will have to be Good Enough. From there, you can ask yourself what action can help get you where you want to be.

By taking the pressure off yourself, you will find your resourcefulness. For example you may decide to wake your daughter up twenty minutes earlier and you being totally prepared on your end will give you greater wiggle room if she drags her heels. Or you may discover that mornings are not your best time. Perhaps you can swap getting your daughter ready with your partner and take on one of the evening chores when you have more mental bandwidth.

While many of the solutions you come up with may be based on common sense, when you're triggered, you're not always in the place to implement them. Adopting a Good Enough approach begins to create a sense of resourcefulness to do that.

### *Suggestions*

**Go through the entire process.** The first few times, I'd suggest you go through the exercise at the end of the Gem, write it down, and review your responses. After a while, you can go through the steps mentally and you'll start to experience what Good Enough means and a true sense of relief with it.

**Move from Criticism to Curiosity.** You'll notice this LOIS-ism a lot in this book. That's no accident. We can be relentlessly

critical with ourselves and the more you move from criticism to curiosity, the more you'll be able to shift and actually enjoy the process of moving forward. As you're trying on new ways of thinking and behaving, you will fall short of your goals and have setbacks. Look at a child who's learning how to walk; they stumble into cabinets, take a few steps, and then fall. Consistent encouragement and course correction (which is discussed in greater detail in *Gem 12*) allows you to make the shift.

**What Good Enough isn't.** To reiterate, when I say, "Good Enough," I'm not suggesting you label behavior that doesn't serve you, or is plain acting out, as Good Enough. I'm talking about being both compassionate and honest with yourself while supporting yourself in a way that works for you.

*Do a Good Enough Check-In.* When faced with the tyranny of perfectionism, stop, breathe, and ask yourself, "What would Good Enough look like for me, right now?"

# EXERCISES



## Exercise 1—Naming Your Inner Critic

Close your eyes. Take several deep breaths and imagine what your Inner Critic (IC) looks like. If you're a body person you may need to move around a bit or put on music that will help you connect with your IC. If so, keep your eyes at half-mast so that you don't bump into anything. I can assure you that your Itty-Bitty Committee will have something to say like, "This is stupid, you should be working." If so, you're on the right track. It simply means you're breaking down your resistance, and your resistance is feeling threatened. Keep going.

Think of the cruelest thing you ever say to yourself. That is where the core of your IC lives. At first, you may feel really triggered and stopped by it, but keep going. Imagine your IC saying that mean thing but add an element of absurdity—maybe an accent, baby talk, or gibberish. The bigger and more absurd your IC becomes, the more you'll be able to gain a light-hearted perspective of it. Keep going. Once you get the image, give it a name. Don't overthink it. My Helga IC used to be

named Magda—it doesn't matter. The first one is usually the most visceral, so go with it.

Now, see how ridiculous you can make this character look in your imagination. Embellish the character with accessories to make it a more fleshed-out experience. Exaggerate your IC character with huge gestures. When you start to smile or see how absurd the character is, you've hit gold. Explore, play, and have fun.

Open your eyes and congratulate yourself! It takes courage and moxie to really look at that part of you that's been operating in the shadows for so long. Life is precious, your dreams and goals are even more valuable. Don't let your IC be the deciding factor as to whether you live a fulfilled life or not!

Afterwards—really rest! When you start loosening the grip of resistance and giving a voice to your IC, there is often some backlash afterward. Make sure to prepare for it. You may experience a barrage of the Itty-Bitty Committee's "This is so stupid. You've been duped." Whatever. This is where journaling is really helpful, or doing something nurturing for yourself, like taking a bath, is essential.

## Exercise 2—Evidence List

- Select the top goal or issue you're looking to address in your life. Start with one thing and feel free to repeat using additional ones. (e.g., you want to take your business to the next level: what does that mean?).
- Identify the specific challenges and fears you have (e.g., I am not very good at technology, and I'm overwhelmed by how I will be able to handle many aspects of it).

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- Name themes and fears: Being Overwhelmed, Dealing with the Unknown, Asking for Help, Not Enough Resources (e.g., time, energy, or money).
- Write an Evidence List that shows examples in your life or themes where you successfully addressed being overwhelmed, dealing with the unknown, asking for help, and gaining resources.

### **Exercise 3—Eight Simple Steps to Get to Good Enough**

Pick an issue or a goal in your life (e.g., being impatient when things take longer than I'd like—as in all the time!).

- Rate where you are with no judgment (or as little as possible) on a scale of 1-10 (1 = lowest, 10 = highest) of how you'd like to be behaving in this scenario (e.g., 7).
- What does the least desirable scenario look like (e.g., least—I lose it regularly and people get nervous around me when I'm stressed; most—I rarely experience impatience)?
- What does Good Enough look like and what number is that (e.g., when I see myself get impatient, I'm able to stop, breathe, and calm myself down and focus on the task in front of me; that's a 7)?
- What action can you take to make that happen (e.g., plan out my day and leave extra time for things that may come up)?
- What support do you need (e.g., take fifteen minutes at the end of every day, sit calmly with a cup of tea and plan my day, and schedule an extra fifteen minutes for my top three tasks for the day)?

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- How will you know when you've arrived at Good Enough (e.g., I will feel more grounded and focused during my day. I will be breathing deeper, and I won't feel rushed)?
- How can you acknowledge or reward yourself for getting to Good Enough (e.g., I'll celebrate getting places on time or even early by taking out five minutes to read a book or relax)?

### **Check-In**

- What resonated for you in this Gem?
- How can you apply it to your life?
- What is one small action you'll take NOW?



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Lois Barth, Human Development Expert, Speaker, Leadership & Executive Coach, and author of *Courage to SPARKLE: The Audacious Guide to Creating a Life that Lights You Up*, brings more than twenty-five years of combined experience as a speaker, coach, actress, comedienne, singer, arts educator, and health care practitioner to the party.

Lois uses humor, stories, and powerful exercises backed by brain science in her high-energy interactive programs to help her audiences and clients to thrive personally and professionally. She sees having the *Courage to SPARKLE* as a metaphor to

shine bright, share your gifts, and make a difference. As a result, individuals and groups are more engaged and productive in their lives.

Lois has a B.S. in Human Development, is an ICF-certified life & executive coach, in addition to having multiple coaching accreditations, and was the life coach for three national makeover campaigns: SELF, Fitness, and FITSTUDIO (Sears) in which, thus far, 1.8 million people have participated in. She is the creator of SMART SEXY TV: What Nobody Talks About But Needs To Hear, her own YouTube series which brings a humorous, light-hearted approach to communication, motivation, and empowerment.

Lois was the “Stress Less...SPARKLE More” Lady for C.T. Style TV (ABC affiliate) has been published and quoted in the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Fast Company*, *Woman’s Day*, and *Elle.com*, to name a few. She has been the keynote speaker for many groups such as L’Oréal, Women in Trucking, American Red Cross, Capital One Bank, the Society of Women Engineers, and the United States Navy amongst many others. She is a contributing writer for three anthologies: *Have I Got a Guy for You*, *Empowering Women*, and *Money Talks; 100 Strategies to Master Tricky Conversations about Money*.

To learn more about her Courage to SPARKLE keynote, workshops trainings, and coaching, please go to [www.lois-barth.com](http://www.lois-barth.com).



Like spending time with a light-a-fire-under-you coach, loving friend, and stand-up comedienne all rolled into one, *Courage to SPARKLE: The Audacious Guide to Creating a Life That Lights You Up* is a go-to guide for the smart, sassy, and sophisticated reader who wants to be championed both personally and professionally. Lois' motivation meets methodology style opens minds and hearts with powerful solutions to live your truth, own your value, and create a fulfilling life. With Lois' GEMS you will learn how to:

- Clarify what makes you SPARKLE
- Communicate Powerfully and Advocate for Yourself
- Overcome Perfectionism and Shine Brightly in the World

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"*Courage to SPARKLE: The Audacious Girls' Guide to Create a Life that Lights You Up* is a wonderful blend of deeply spiritual principles combined with powerful solutions that guide us to step into our power, nurture our intuitive selves, support each other in doing the same and cheers us on in the process. Plus it's just a fun read! This is a powerful and transformational book that I highly recommend to all my clients."

—Aleta St. James, Energy Healer and Life Coach, Author of bestseller *Life Shift*

"This is the perfect guide to success and fulfillment. In these gotta-highlight/wanna-read-this-over/love-how- she-said-that pages, she gives us the tips—and tricks—we need to get there."

—Victoria Moran, author of *Living a Charmed Life* and *Main Street Vegan*

"Lois Barth has written this book to guide people who want a better life! This even helps boardroom cowboys to SPARKLE!"

—Jeffrey Hayzlett, Primetime TV & Podcast Host, Chairman, C-Suite Network



LOIS BARTH, Human Development Expert, Speaker, Certified Life and Executive Coach, and Author uses humor, stories, and powerful exercises to champion both individuals and groups to shine their light in the world and have the *Courage to SPARKLE*. As a certified executive coach she works with heart-centered mission-driven leaders to concretize their vision and works with their team in order to increase engagement, strengthen communication, productivity, and workplace culture. She was the life coach for three national makeover campaigns—*SELF*, *Fitness*, and *FITSTUDIO*—in which 1.8 million people have participated. She is the creator of *SMART SEXY TV: What Nobody Talks About But Needs to Hear*, addressing communication, stress, and empowerment with humor. The "Stress Less...SPARKLE More" Lady for *C.T. Style TV* (ABC affiliate), Lois has been published and quoted in the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Fast Company*, and speaks regularly at corporate, non-profit, association, entrepreneurial and leadership conferences.