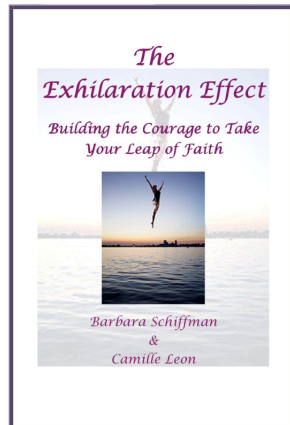


Sample Chapter



THE EXHILARATION EFFECT: Building the Courage to Take Your Leap of Faith

written by

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What could your life be like tomorrow if you had the courage to take a Leap of Faith today?

Over the past 20 years, we've both experienced countless personal and professional breakthroughs. We've also survived extreme activities – from fire walking to climbing the Great Wall of China to starting national organizations – that we sometimes didn't think we would. Each life-altering event or internal shift has propelled us forward, onward and more deeply inward.

Along the way we learned valuable secrets about how to purposefully take Leaps of Faith and *thrive*. We are eager to share these secrets to help readers consciously and courageously move from "I should (or must) do it but I can't" to "I did it... now what else can I do?" in their own lives.

In **THE EXHILARATION EFFECT: *Building the Courage to Take Your Leap of Faith*** we guide readers through a six-stage process of moving from Expectation and Exploration through Experience and Examination to Extrapolation and Expansion. We share some of our experiences plus stories of dozens of others who have taken inspiring Leaps of Faith. In addition, we present powerful coaching tools to help readers gain more clarity, confidence and courage along the way.

This book is for people who have been distracted by life's demands or feel it's impossible to pursue their dreams while taking care of families and working to pay their bills. By consciously doing things they've never done before, our readers will discover new ways to expand their comfort zones and also enrich their current lives. These inspiring experiences will naturally empower them to take bigger and bolder actions and build the confidence needed to begin fulfilling their dreams at last.

THE EXHILARATION EFFECT encourages readers to bravely step into their own "hero's journey" which starts wherever they are now. It's not just a book to be read --- we expect them to go beyond watching others do amazing things as they create their *own* exhilarating experiences. Our book offers suggestions of adventurous activities designed to help readers build momentum toward their next Leaps of Faith. (*According to Camille: "There's nothing like jumping out of an airplane to get you in touch with your faith!"*)

In addition to true examples and empowering experiments, it includes insights from current psycho-neurological research to explain how and why The Exhilaration Effect works. We help readers understand what's happening internally while facing a big leap in life or when their desire for change finally outweighs their need for security (*as in leaving an abusive relationship or exhausting job*).

Throughout the book, readers will receive support and suggestions they can use right away. They can also join a growing online and in-person community of people who are facing and taking their own leaps. In addition, we envision future **EXHILARATION EFFECT** books for women, men, couples, teens or families, and others focusing on relationships, career, creativity or health which offer stories from readers and famous contributors plus insightful and exhilarating tools. We hope you will join us!

***THE EXHILARATION EFFECT was selected as one of Top 25 Books
(out of nearly 3000 entries) in the 2010 Next Top Spiritual Author competition.***

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THE EXHILARATION EFFECT:

***Building the Courage to
Take Your Leap of Faith***

by

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## ***Chapter One***

### ***INTRODUCING THE EXHILARATION EFFECT:***

***Take a Leap With Us...***

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“Life begins at the end of your comfort zone.” ~~ Neale Donald Walsh

“If you want a guarantee, buy a toaster.” ~~ Clint Eastwood

What could your life be like tomorrow if you took a Leap of Faith today?

Could you do more... be more... enjoy life more?

The challenge of taking a Leap of Faith is that ***there is no guarantee***. What if you don't get the results you seek?

But what if you get even more than you'd expected? If you've been shy, you might try new things and go new places or reach out to people who seemed unreachable. If you usually put others' needs first, you might begin nurturing yourself and recharging your energy so you won't burn out.

You might even discover that taking Leaps of Faith can be fun and begin taking bolder leaps from now on!

Since you're reading this book, you may need a bit of additional courage to face a leap that feels daunting right now. It might be a leap you think you should take, wish you could take or are being forced to take by circumstances beyond your control.

It may seem small to others but feel enormous to you. It might be private and personal or highly public and world-shaking. It could look impossible but actually turn out to be simpler and faster than you imagined. Realistically, you won't know until you take it.

Evolving and expanding your life takes support, commitment and time. Each journey starts with the first step – a cliché that is all too true.

Consequently, the whole world can change in an instant, especially if you properly prepare for that Quantum Leap. Once your life recalibrates and settles into a new configuration, you'll likely notice you have more breathing – and living – space for your soul to grow.

You'll also discover it gets easier to hang out at the edge of your comfort zone. You might even go further, like Robert Evans (*creator of The Messenger Network*) suggests: “Learn to love and to hang out at the end of your comfort zone, and even to go beyond it.”

After doing some research, we've concluded that taking a Leap of Faith is actually a scientific process as well as a personal quest. By doing what you've never done before and taking an actual risk, you're propelled into an emotional vortex which seemingly has no safety net. It helps to trust that you'll sprout invisible wings, so to speak, and soar even if you fear you'll plummet to earth like a stone. While free-falling, however, don't be surprised to feel the inevitable adrenaline rush that comes from doing something for the first time.

This Exhilaration Effect sometimes feels like a roller coaster of neuro-chemicals, emotional waves and spiritual expansion. The sensation can be especially strong if your leap involves financial or romantic risks, perceived embarrassment or physical danger.

What is actually happening under the surface is a biochemical infusion washing through your cells. Its purpose is to provide enough energy so you can either flee from the risk you're facing or stay put and fight the danger.

In modern times, most people freeze when confronted with change &/or potential loss, especially when it's unexpected and unwanted. Some remain stuck there for the rest of their lives. Meanwhile adrenaline keeps flowing as their inner regulator -- which should tell their adrenal glands to shut down – also freezes. This causes what doctors call Chronic Stress, a condition of modern life which inevitably depletes people's emotional, mental and physical reserves.

By expanding your awareness and trying our practical tools to help you make the most of the Exhilaration Effect, you will learn how to use this adrenaline rush to advantage. It works like natural jet fuel to propel you forward and upward as well as more deeply inward.

The after-shocks of exhilaration literally forge new brain synapses which keep your brain, mind and body young. They also silence negative emotions and thoughts – at least until old social conditioning and limiting beliefs kick into gear again.

This can feel disconcerting at first. As you begin to see the world from a higher perspective and consider a wider range of options, however, your soul supercedes your ego. And with your soul in charge, you can't possibly fall or fail.

WHAT IS A LEAP OF FAITH?

Taking leaps in any part of life requires "believing or accepting something intangible or unprovable, without empirical evidence" according to Wikipedia's definition of Leap of Faith. Even esteemed scientist Albert Einstein admits, "I never came upon any of my discoveries through the process of rational thinking."

Author-naturalist Henry David Thoreau said, "We must walk consciously only part way toward our goal, and then leap in the dark to our success." It's easier to leap in the dark when we have reserves of courage. But these reserves must be built before you need them and replenished after you draw from them. Learning how to do this is what The Exhilaration Effect is all about.

Building reserves of courage and confidence can be achieved by taking small leaps for practice. This works the same way that lifting five-pound dumbbells strengthens athletes' muscles to prepare them to heft 50-pound free-weights with ease.

One way to build the strength to do audacious things is by doing simple things you haven't done before -- even something as simple as taking a new route to work or cooking a dish you've never prepared before. Breaking out of old routines and trying anything new often provokes high anxiety for people who prefer to feel safe. After you've successfully accomplished a few new tasks by choice, however, taking larger and more unpredictable leaps becomes more comfortable.

For some people, a Leap of Faith might be speaking up for themselves to an authority figure or domineering relative. For others, it could be giving up addictive behaviors or self-destructive thought patterns. It might be quitting a job that's been draining your energy so you can start a new business or artistic endeavor, one that won't be instantly profitable but makes your heart sing. For many of us, it can also be saying "Yes!" to life and stepping into our own spotlight after hiding in the shadow where it's safe but joyless.

***You've got to go out on a limb sometimes
because that's where all the fruit is.
~~ Will Rogers***

WHAT IS THE EXHILARATION EFFECT?

The Exhilaration Effect is how we think of the automatic adrenaline rush that comes from doing something new, risky, scary, exciting &/or invigorating. Any accomplishment can create an Exhilaration Effect if we so choose. You know the feeling – that rush of energy or relief, or both!

It's also what we call our unique 6-step process which follows the stages of moving through any Leap of Faith, no matter how big or small. (*We've shortened The Exhilaration Effect to E^2 – or **E-Squared** – throughout this book to reflect how Exhilaration expands exponentially from the inside out and the outside in.*)

While exploring and researching how Leaps of Faith transform people, we discovered every leap follows a predictable path whether it takes a lifetime or merely an instant. Ultimately each Leap of Faith we take makes the next one more possible, even when the next one is more daunting and life-changing than the ones that came before.

By surviving our own life challenges and our experiences as coaches helping thousands of people take leaps in their careers, relationships, creative endeavors, health and lives, we developed a unique series of experiments and processes which help people build courage organically. These tips, tools and techniques are designed to serve as invisible free-weights to strengthen all of your emotional and creative muscles.

You can't just read about taking a Leap of Faith – ACTION IS REQUIRED to build enough inner strength for your adrenaline to flow and your spirit to soar.

If you hesitate over taking action because it's risky or uncomfortable, you might stop reading and put this book back on the shelf. Still, we encourage you to keep reading anyway...

CAMILLE'S STORY:

One of my favorite Exhilaration Effect experiences was a trip I took to Bolivia and Peru.

I had been working for a year on a project under a woman I didn't get along with. She wasn't the manager I really wanted and my salary was not all it could have been. I had been networking to get a promotion and a raise for a year. I had done everything I could do. One morning I just woke up and said, "I'm feeling stuck... if I'm not going to get this promotion and raise, I need to figure out a new solution."

It seemed that a good way for me to get out of this stagnant situation might be to put myself in a different environment. So I found a community development group that was taking a small group of Quakers to Bolivia and Peru on a two-and-a-half week tour. We'd visit their projects in Bolivia, then go on to Machu Picchu in Peru. The group consisted of eleven Quakers from the United Kingdom and United States all traveling together in a van.

I think my Exhilaration Effect started the moment I landed at the La Paz Airport, which is the highest airport in the world. My friends and fellow travelers had warned me about altitude sickness, but I grew up in the mountains so that had no meaning for me. When I moved and turned around very quickly soon after we landed, my head got light and airy, and I went, "Oh, this is what altitude sickness is all about!"

During the trip, I found myself relating to people differently than I had back home. I practiced new communication skills and learned about myself in fresh ways while also helping my new friends see me differently.

When I got home, things were definitely different in a variety of ways. I arrived back at the office for the first time after my trip on a Friday. That morning my boss' boss called me in and said, "How'd you like your boss' job?" Unfortunately, he offered me my boss' job at the same salary I currently earned. I took this as an opportunity to negotiate for myself in a way I never had before. The result was getting the promotion with a \$10,000 raise plus an additional \$10,000 after my positive three-month review.

Through this exhilarating experience I realized that to get the success I want I sometimes need to get out of my own way so other people -- or the Universe -- can do for me what I can't do on my own. After all, I can't take care of *everything*!

I learned that getting away from it all can not only give me new solutions but also allow others to work on my behalf. In addition, I came back with negotiation and communication skills I didn't have when I left. I had fun and I experienced the added benefit of amazing growth after I returned.

***Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run
than outright exposure. Life is either a daring
adventure or nothing. -- Helen Keller***

$E^2 = \text{QUANTUM PHYSICS} + \text{METAPHYSICS}$

Our approach to consciously creating breakthroughs by deliberately taking Leaps of Faith is not only inspired by metaphysical principles but also by recent discoveries in brain science and Quantum Physics.

In Chapter 3 we'll share some of the scientific research that relates to the Exhilaration Effect. Throughout this book we'll also share inspiring stories from our own experiences plus those of other people we've coached, known or admire.

As noted before, this is a process that needs to be experienced if you want it to change at the cellular level. We urge you to put our tips, techniques and treasured secrets to use so you'll at least be ready to take the Leap of Faith that's facing you now -- or an even bigger and better one -- by the time you finish reading this book.

Since we know taking your leap will enable you to do more than you think you can, your mission at that future point – like ours is now – will be to share your newfound exhilaration, enthusiasm and encouragement with others in your life by inspiring them to take their leaps too. Imagine how invigorated the world will become if we all begin doing what we think we can't and discover how courageous – and empowered -- we are!

We personally understand what you're going through, and what you will go through if you take on the challenge of living The Exhilaration Effect everyday. Both of us live the principles we coach and teach here – so we won't ask you to do something we aren't willing to do ourselves. You will never be alone in The Exhilaration Effect process. We will be at your side via these pages and our website throughout your leap – and beyond.

***May your dreams defy the law of gravity.
~~ H. Jackson Browne***

BARBARA'S STORY:

One memorable Exhilaration Effect experience which made a huge difference for me was training for and completing a half-marathon walk (13.1 miles) on the Big Island in Hawaii during the summer of 2003.

My parents both had several strokes over many years and in November 2002 my dad died of complications from a stroke. When I got a postcard in the mail in January from the American Stroke Association offering a support program in my area to train for a marathon in Hawaii, something about this idea rang a bell in my head and also my heart.

I was never interested in doing a marathon before and hadn't been a fundraiser for causes. I sensed this would be the perfect memorial for my dad, however, and realized it could shift my

resistance to exercise. It could also help me avoid getting a stroke from not taking care of my body as well as I should.

So I took on the challenge and went from no exercise to walking 13.1 miles along the Kona coast (on the same road as the Ironman Triathlon) in only four months. I had to use everything I'd learned from the breakthrough coaching work I'd done &/or taught other people. For example, I told everyone I knew I was raising at least \$3,500.00 for the American Stroke Association in order to do the marathon. In the end, I raised \$5,000.00 and gave my "extra" funds to two young women in the training program whose dads had also had strokes. They needed help fulfilling their fundraising so it was a pleasure for me to "pay it forward" and help them get to Kona, too.

In addition, I needed to become determined enough to do this to make exercise a priority. I had to walk every day to gain enough stamina to walk 13 miles in one stretch without dying. The week before going to Hawaii, I actually walked 12.6 miles to prove I could, accompanied by friends who each walked one 3.2-mile loop with me around Lake Hollywood until I'd done it three times.

Going to Hawaii and actually doing the marathon with my husband Glenn there to cheer me on was amazing. We also got to take a few days of vacation for the first time in ten years!

While I was walking -- which took five hours -- I was so immersed in the experience and determined to finish that I felt big shifts just by being there. Afterwards, I had the sense that I could do anything. Having survived a marathon, when challenges now arise I know I can handle them.

***All glory comes from daring to begin.
~~ Eugene F. Ware***

WHAT IT'S REALLY ABOUT – THE 21ST CENTURY HERO'S JOURNEY

We believe The Exhilaration Effect is a key part of every 21st century Hero's Journey. In his book *"The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Storytellers & Screenwriters,"* Hollywood script consultant Chris Vogler echoes the ground-breaking work of mythologist Joseph Campbell as a template for the "common structural elements found universally in myths, fairy tales, dreams and movies."

According to Vogler, “The beauty of the Hero’s Journey model is that it not only describes a pattern in myths and fairytales, but it’s also an accurate map of the territory one must travel to become a writer or for that matter, a human being.”

To take your Leap of Faith, you will pass through six identifiable Exhilaration Effect stages which we explore in depth in this book: **Expecting, Exploring, Experiencing, Examining, Extrapolating and Expanding.**

Our E² stages are related to Campbell and Vogler’s mythic template which includes twelve steps within the three acts of a story. Vogler’s steps take the Hero from hearing and refusing the call to adventure while still living in the ordinary world through crossing several thresholds, enlisting allies, surviving tests, encountering enemies, and eventually reaping rewards.

Vogler reminds us “the Hero’s story is always a journey” regardless of whether it moves inward or outward or both. Along the way the Hero inevitably changes, “making a journey from one way of being to the next: from despair to hope, weakness to strength, folly to wisdom...”

By looking at popular movies and novels, it is easy to see how most Heroes’ Journeys include at least one Leap of Faith. We propose that at the heart of every 21st century Hero’s Journey, a Leap of Faith is usually required to make the choice between success or failure, life or death, romance or loneliness, exile or claiming the kingdom.

Dan Millman (author of “*Way of the Peaceful Warrior*”) reminds us that “Faith is our direct link to universal wisdom, reminding us that we know more than we have heard or read or studied – that we have only to look, listen and trust the love and wisdom of the Universal Spirit working through us all.” As the 21st century Hero of your own life, we invite you to trust there’s a safety net below even if you can’t see it yet and to sense your wings emerging as you step off the edge of the cliff.

A Hero whose Leap of Faith has inspired us is **Sister Jane Meyer**, a 71-year old nun and Catholic school principal in Houston, Texas. She promised to go skydiving if her students raised at least \$25,000 for Haitian earthquake relief by Ash Wednesday 2010. When they raised over \$85,000,

Sister Jane took her skydiving leap at 14,000 feet – and loved it! Back on the ground, she later told reporters “I always tell our students they have to take good risks and stretch themselves.”

Actress **Susan Sarandon** also took a leap in 2010 by splitting up with long-time partner Tim Robbins. In “Entertainment Weekly,” Susan compared being on her own again after 20 years to flying in a glider which she did on a movie shoot years earlier: “You get towed up in the air by a plane. At some point you pull the cord and you’re suddenly floating, and in your mind it makes absolutely no sense. But it’s exhilarating and terrifying at the same time. That’s where I am now.”

While keeping both feet on the ground, Camille’s friend **Lauren Kelly** took a leap and became a 21st Hero in her own life the year she turned 50. A certified Project Management Professional (PMP) who consults with a national healthcare insurance company, Lauren is also a grandmother and has served on the Board of Directors for Toastmasters International.

To celebrate her 50th year, Lauren selected a wide range of exhilarating activities – she completed a 12-mile hike through the Havasupai Indian Reservation, went whitewater rafting on the Gnu River in North Carolina, finished the Rock n’Roll Marathon in San Diego in four-and-a-half hours, and later climbed Mount Whitney for the first time. “Each of these adventures was a first for me,” she claims, “and each stretched me physically, emotionally and mentally.”

After fulfilling her mission, Lauren admitted that “Whitney was a major shift. The first time was extremely dangerous and difficult; there was snow in June and the elevation has physical effects that are difficult to prepare for. The trail is steep and treacherous. At the end of the day, our group was exhausted, out of food and almost out of water. My memories of it are still vivid. The real crossroads was facing my own fear and maintaining a sense of loyalty to a team member who was lagging behind.”

She realized that “in retrospect, there is very little in life that I need to be fearful of, because I’ve faced death. I had to keep going forward no matter how frightened I was. That’s often true in life; I have to keep going forward because staying put or going backwards aren’t really good options.”

Like other seasoned leapers, Lauren expanded her experience to notice that climbing Mt. Whitney “may have impacted me indirectly more than I would’ve expected. I can work through fear

more comfortably. I know what it takes to commit to a goal in terms of the team as well as time and money. I've since committed to and completed my Project Management Professional certification and now have a full-time position as a Project Manager with a six-figure salary. I also ran a winning campaign to earn a seat on the Board of Directors for an international organization serving over 200,000 members (Toastmasters International).”

Lauren now urges others who may be considering a similar experience to “Own an adventuresome heart. Experience life. Try what you haven’t tried. Experience failure. You don’t have to be perfect. There is so much to enjoy and appreciate.”

At the beginning of our journey together, this is great advice to keep in mind. As you read on, you’ll discover why you can also take these words – and actions – to heart.

“Brighten the corner where you are, and you will light the world.”

~~ Dean Koontz

(author, “From the Corner of His Eye.”)

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