

THE OPPORTUNITY

“Success is not to be pursued,
it is to be attracted by the person you become.”

— *Jim Rohn*
Motivational Speaker, Philosopher, and Entrepreneur

This book is a manual for making your dreams come true. It is a compilation of everything I've learned manifesting my own dreams, as a life coach working with clients pursuing their own dreams, and through the eclectic training I've received from all the different teachers life has sent my way.

I suppose the very personal force that has driven my life's work and consequently the writing of this book is that my history includes a long chapter of my life where I felt imprisoned by fear. Some of my earliest memories are those of being afraid. I was afraid I wasn't good enough; I was afraid of making mistakes; I was afraid of what people thought of me; I was afraid of disappointing people; when things didn't go as they should, I feared the worst. I worried all the time.

Although my inner world was one of constant worry and extreme caution, the outer image of my life portrayed a pretty, intelligent, smiling girl with a certain amount of privilege and plenty of opportunity. I got good grades. I did as I was told. My family was intact and involved in the community. I was well-mannered and always followed the rules. And despite my constant apprehension, I was a decent achiever.

What began as a childhood fear of chaos and a hyper-sensitivity to people's feelings, turned into the adult desire to control everything just so I could feel safe ... and so I controlled what I could. Instead of following my creative callings in college, I pursued a business degree because it would be safe and I was virtually guaranteed a financially secure job. If I let my walls down long enough to let a guy ask me out, I'd date only the ones with whom I could feel in control. Either they were emotionally or geographically unavailable, eliminating the terrifying threat of intimacy, or I felt superior to them so they could never really win my heart. I could never let myself feel anything; that would be way too messy and out of control. So I became the classic bulimic, stuffing a volcano of emotions down with food, while attempting to control weight gain through self-loathing purge episodes. Of course; all of this was shamefully private.

To the outside world, everything looked just fine. I was in control but in my inner world, I lived behind bars. I was the outsider looking in. I watched people engage with life. They had passions. They knew who they were and what they wanted. They were a part of the human race. These people were obviously comfortable in their own skins. They had a sense of humor about themselves. They were relaxed, spontaneous and *free!* I felt as if I was trapped in a bad dream, wanting to wake up yet unable to do so.

But somehow, despite the powerlessness I felt, there was a little flame of desire within me that never died. I'm convinced now that it was in allowing my *desire to live* that the

Universe sent me the inspiration, teachers, resources and life conditions that would help me wake up and break free. And so I did. Upon graduating from college, which represented the final to-do on my dutiful-daughter checklist of responsibilities, I finally asked myself, “What do you want to be when you grow up, Sonia?” I had no idea whatsoever, but I finally had permission to ask. And so my journey began.

My “prison break-out” took about seven years. There were defining moments that marked the beginning of what I consider my awakening, as well as the final feeling of liberation. Over the course of many years, I was guided from one teacher or healer to the next. When I felt done with one, the next one would appear. But my liberation was only the beginning. Once I was free, my hunger for creative self-expression expanded even more!

Throughout this journey, I have worked with therapists, self-empowerment gurus, relationship coaches, energy healers and personal achievement teachers. I’ve done workshops and seminars, read countless books and filled as many journals. I discovered who I was. I joined the human race! I discovered my passions, set goals, achieved them, and fell in love with life and myself. The experience of liberation and authentic self-expression was, and has been, so indescribably life-affirming that it’s all I’ve wanted to do ever since.

And so, the writing of this book is an expression of this passion. Nothing touches me more deeply than seeing the human spirit shine. There is nothing more fulfilling to me than watching those who have dared to dream embark on the journey of discovering their soul’s truth, to become who they truly are fully expressed. Additionally, I certainly would have benefited from having had a “how to” manual on my journey. Everything I learned came from gathering bits and pieces from many different places. I figured if I could offer one solid resource for people wanting to create a life of personal fulfillment and success, now *that* would be something. And so, here is my best effort in that direction.

This book is about much more than mere achievement. Achievement can be about accumulating trophies, literal or figurative, that collect dust on your shelf, leaving you wondering, “Is that it?” This book instead is about *success for the soul*. It is about *using* your desires as a vehicle for spiritual development. It is about the deeply fulfilling and enriching journey of discovering the truth of who you are by needing to *become* that person in order to experience success, how ever you may define it.

During my journey of spiritual liberation, I encountered the part of me that was very driven by the need to achieve. Even in the midst of my spiritual paralysis, I was a really “good achiever.” I achieved many things: recovering from compulsive eating, bulimia and a weight problem; getting a business degree; trading stocks and bonds with the “big boys” while making great money and becoming an assistant vice president by the age of twenty-four; going back to school later in life to get a masters degree in social work by the age thirty-four; completely changing careers to create my own private practice; meeting, falling in love with, and marrying my soul-mate; overcoming fertility challenges to have two healthy, beautiful children; buying and living on our dream vineyard; becoming wine-makers and sellers; traveling all over the world, healing family relationships ... and the journey continues.

I tell you this not to boast but to share the most surprising discovery I made along the way. Like many people, I wanted a lot. I thought that if I filled these wants, I’d be happy. However, as I started to reach my goals, I learned that happiness did not come from their achievement. Instead happiness came through discovering who I needed to *become* in order to realize these goals.

What happened was that, as I achieved some goals, I discovered that they did not represent who I was or wanted to be in my life. Consequently, my goals and dreams evolved as I allowed the truth of who I was on the inside to shine and be expressed on the outside. I began to see my true self expressing through my relationships, through my work, and through every commitment I made. I've come to a place now where every aspect of my life is an honest expression of who I am and what I believe in. *That* is success for the soul. And that is the opportunity available through this book. Now, here's a question for you:

Which areas of your life are HONEST expressions of who you really are?

Take a moment to really ponder this question. Listen for your answer before you read on ...

If you answered:

- Anything less than "ALL the areas of my life," or
- "I don't know who I really am," or
- "I don't understand the question,"

then this book most likely has something to offer you. If you answered: "Every aspect of my life is an honest expression of who I really am," then know that if you are compelled to read on, it's probably because there's something here that can help you to become even *more* of who you are.

So what I'm offering you are all the tools I know *work* to make your dreams come true and an opportunity to discover and express who you really are in the process of making those dreams come true. I'm sure you will find discovering and expressing who you really are is much more fulfilling than any dream you could ever realize. The realization of those dreams happen, but they become a by-product of the dream you may not have even known you had:

**Be yourself, your soul's truth,
fully expressed in all areas of your life.**

Enjoy the ride!

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

People read self-help books to help themselves, right? Right. But there's a problem with books. They only engage your cerebral self. It takes more than pondering a few good ideas to change your life. 90% of what it takes to manifest success for the soul is *not* intellectual in nature; it is spiritual, emotional and physical. So, just like anything in life, you will get out of it what you put into it. If you simply read the book, your synapses will fire for a while but your life will remain unchanged. If, however, you take the opportunity to give yourself to the exercises, questions and opportunities for reflection, you will be taking full advantage of this book's offering.

In your hands you hold a catalyst for a transformational approach to personal success. That being said, I'd like to offer you two ways you might approach this material. One way is to read the entire book from beginning to end, marking the exercises you'd like to return to later. This will give you the opportunity to first get an overview of the concepts. Then, when you return to the exercises, you'll have a broader context for the insights they might offer you. The other approach is to do the exercises that speak to you as you go. If you do so, you may experience this book as an unfolding journey right from the beginning. The advantage to this is that each insight you glean from the exercises will build upon the next as *The Mystic's Formula* reveals itself to you. If you go with this second method, decide right now that you will trust the process. You may not always know where you're headed, but you will complete the book having traveled a personal journey of opening and awakening.

As with all things, there is no right way to do this. There is only *your* way. Trust what feels good to you. If you try an exercise and it just doesn't click, move on. Don't let yourself get stuck if something isn't gelling for you. You can always come back to it later with fresh eyes and a new perspective. The main thing is to keep moving forward.

A Little Disclaimer

There is another thing about which I want to be perfectly clear: My objective through this book is to convey to you practical and completely "do-able" methods for making your dreams come true. A lot of what I cover in this book could be explained in very esoteric, scientific, complicated, and intellectual ways. Someone might read this and say, "Well, that's not entirely accurate." This book is not meant to be a scholarly endeavor for scientific research ... theorizing, hypothesizing, and proving. This book is for you to use! And so, for those who are not new to the realm of personal success, you may perceive some of these concepts to be presented in simple ways. However, just because something is simple does not mean it isn't powerful. I've discovered there are many people who have been into personal growth and actualization for years who still find themselves blocked or stuck. For you, I say, read on! Profound truth is oftentimes incredibly simple, and sometimes it is the simplified presentation of something that helps you break through those very blocks that keep you stuck.

THE “G” WORD

“You might as well not be alive if you’re not in awe of God.

— *Albert Einstein (1879-1955)*
Physicist, Nobel Prize Winner

The “G” word refers to the word *God*. Yes, I will be talking about God in this book – in different ways and with different words. The truth is, you can’t pursue success for the soul without talking about God. And, because this small, three-letter word can represent a highly charged subject for many people, it is important for you, the reader, to feel clear and comfortable about the meaning that will be associated with the word God in the context of this book’s message.

God means many things to many people. For some, the word and concept of God is very comforting. For others, it is quite uncomfortable and/or conflicting, complete with challenging emotions such as fear, guilt, anger or confusion. And yet for others, it is uncharted territory.

We will go into this with more detail soon enough but for right now, know that within the context of this book, God is defined as an infinite intelligence that is the source of all that is. Throughout the book, I’ll use terms like Infinite Intelligence, Source, Divine Spirit, The One, Consciousness and Energy. These terms will be used interchangeably. This infinite intelligence is the one power, the one presence, and the one life that expresses in, as, and through you, me and all the universe. It is the beginning and the end. It is eternal. He/She/It is all-loving, all-powerful, all-knowing and all-good. There is no talk of the devil, sin or evil. None of that. God is love. God is harmony. God is perfect health and infinite well-being. God is abundance and prosperity. God is peace. God is good.

As for the word *soul*, this refers to a deeper, broader aspect of you that has access to Infinite Intelligence. Since we assume here that there is one and only one energy, it follows that you *must be* a part of that same energy. You are an individualized expression of Divine Spirit. As a result, you embody, experience and express the very same qualities. You are made up of the same substance. And the only thing that has you experience yourself and your life as less than infinite and limitless is your consciousness – that aspect of your *human* consciousness that limits your perception through thoughts and belief systems. In this book, I use different terms interchangeably for the word *soul* – words like Higher Self, Inner Being, and Inner Knowing.

This book is about spirituality, not religion. You will not be asked to adopt or sacrifice any particular set of beliefs. You will simply be offered a way of looking at how the universe works based on universal laws. If something does not ring true for you, put it aside for the time being. It might have different meaning for you in the future. Or, see if you can reinterpret the idea in a way or a language that is more to your liking. Success for the soul is about discovering *your* truth, *your* heart’s desire, the source of *your* fulfillment and peace.