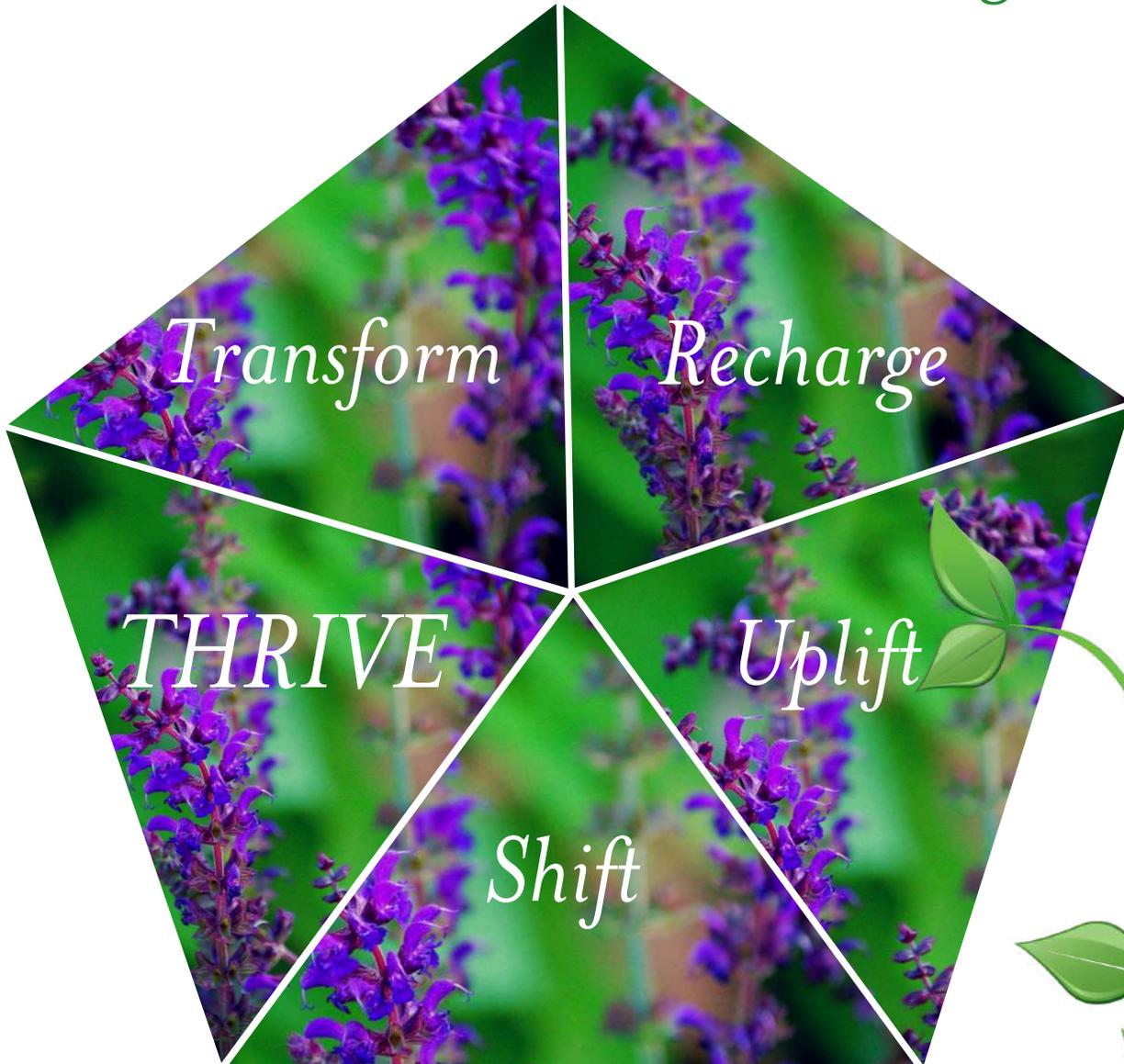


T.R.U.S.T.

5 Effective Strategies

So You Can Trust Your Heart Again



Transition
& *Thrive* with *María*

Certified Life & Career Coach for Women—Specialty: Transitions

María Tomás-Keegan

Hi, I'm so happy you chose to listen to your heart and download my T.R.U.S.T. Tips.

I created these because my clients and women I meet tell me that, after some life-changing events, like their divorce, a breakup or betrayal, it's hard for them to trust anyone again.

I hear that ... I've walked in those shoes, too—after my first divorce, and even more so after my second one. I learned a few things about trust through my journey—mostly about trusting myself. I learned that trust has to start at home—where your heart is. With YOU.

I hope you find these tips to be practical strategies that you can adapt and implement in your own life, so you can start to shine again.

From my heart to yours ...

~ Maria



#1 Trust that your emotions are normal

Whether you're feeling grief, sadness, loneliness, anger or fear—allow yourself to feel the feeling. The emotions are evidence of your healing. You have to feel them to heal them.

I remember a time when my emotions got the better of me. My former spouse had just left our home and I was curled up on the couch crying inconsolably. My cats did not know what to do with me. I felt relief, and sad at the same time. I could breathe freely again, yet I was scared, too. I was safe at last, and alone.

I knew from experience that it was no time to isolate myself. So, I reached out—I found a coach and a group so I could talk to other women who were going through the same thing. They created a safe space for me to experience the feelings, talk about them and learn how to control them, so they didn't crop up at inopportune times. I felt comforted that I truly wasn't alone.



#2 Trust that you can control your emotions

It takes time and practice to learn to control your emotions. But once you do, it's okay to take off the mask that declares "I'm just fine!"—because you are fine. You are becoming stronger and you're beginning to relax—it shows on your face.

I tested the waters after a major life-changing event while at work, where I most wanted to be in control of my emotions. Instead of pretending everything was okay, "stiff upper lip" and all that, I started to respond to questions about how I was doing with some real and vulnerable answers so I could practice keeping control of the tears with my staff and management team.

I kept my mask handy just in case I needed it—soon it was collecting dust in the corner. That's when I knew I could choose when and where to let my emotions out.



#3 Surround yourself with people you trust

... and trust what they tell you. When you're still raw with emotion when life flips you upside down, it's easy to be hard on yourself. Rely on those around you whom you trust to let you know that you're doing okay. Believe them when they say, "you're doing great" or "you're making remarkable progress" or "you're an inspiration to others." Take to heart what they tell you. You will see it yourself—and believe it—soon enough.

A close friend of mine told me that I inspired her by how I was handling my second divorce. She knew how hard I worked to save that marriage—I stayed in an abusive relationship five years longer than I should have because I didn't want to be that woman who was divorced twice!

She said she was inspired because I chose to surround myself with people who lifted my spirits and told me the truth. They helped me to trust myself again. I could believe what they told me. In time I could see the progress I was making and felt good about how far I'd come.



#4 *Trust that you are capable*

When you're alone after losing someone in your life, things may feel overwhelming, especially if you haven't done them before or for a long time.

Taking care of investments or fixing things around your home or making new friends may feel daunting at first.

Trust yourself. Know that you can do it; you can learn it and you can practice it till it comes naturally. Or you can choose to delegate to someone who is an expert in the area where you are not.

Fixing mechanical things was one of my biggest challenges. After he left, it seemed like everything broke! The toilet, the garbage disposal, the watering system. All the things that he used to take care of. At first, I was so frustrated trying to fix everything that I would end up in tears—and think “I wish he was here to fix this!”



Thankfully I learned how to reach out for help to a friend who was a mechanical wizard—and very happy to help me.

What a relief to know that I didn't have to learn stuff I didn't want to know; that I could ask for help and feel good about it.

Where do you need help? Whom can you ask?



#5 Trust that the people who leave your life are meant to leave

Often our friends divorce us when the marriage breaks up or we make a major shift in our lives. Sometimes our life-long friends don't understand how we are changing and can't support us in the ways we need. Life happens. People drift. It's okay to let them go.

A dear friend just couldn't be with me, when I chose to become an entrepreneur, without telling me how irresponsible I was and how much risk I was taking. I always felt worse after spending time with her, instead of encouraged. I thought to myself, "Being friends shouldn't be this hard."

I believe this: people come into my life for a reason, a season or a lifetime. When I recognize that the reason or the season has ended, it's easier for me to bless and release them. It creates a beautiful space in my life for new people who lift me up and delight me with the support I need the most. It's a blessing.



T.R.U.S.T.

Allow yourself to:

Transform

Recharge

Uplift

Shift

Thrive



About the Author

María Tomás-Keegan is the founder of Transition & Thrive with María and a certified Career & Life Coach for Women, specializing in Transitions, what she calls “the upside downs of life.”

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Website: www.TransitionAndThriveWithMaria.com

eMail: María@TransitionAndThriveWithMaria.com

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3 Brave Steps When You're Stuck in Your Comfort Zone



Transition
& *Thrive* with *María*

Certified Life & Career Coach for Women—Specialty: Transitions

María Tomás-Keegan

Hello ... I'm happy you're here.

Even when you're a smart, resourceful and successful woman, a major life event may happen and it can be easy to fall back into what's comfortable instead of doing the hard work ahead because something big is changing in your life.

And, sometimes you just need a gentle reminder that, in order for things to change, you have to do something different.

I hope these tips may become the catalyst for you to make a move forward.

From my heart to yours ...

— Maria



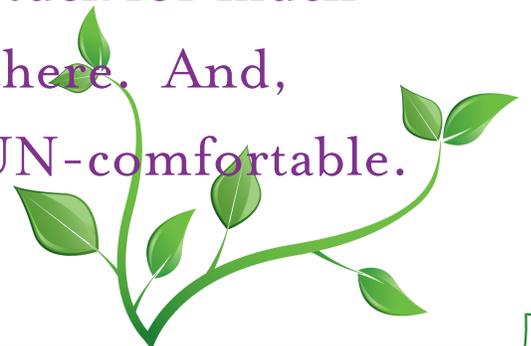
Going Through the Motions

I hear from clients all the time that they are stressed, overwrought, trying to keep it all together at work and at home as they navigate life events, like divorce, loss, care-giving and career upheavals.

They talk about the struggle to do what's needed to make the changes they want to make and heal themselves from the inside.

It's easier to just go through the motions and do only what's necessary to keep up. That keeps them safely within their comfort zone.

This comes as no surprise to me – I did the same thing. What I know for sure now is your comfort zone can be a trap that holds you stuck for much longer than you really want to be there. And, stretching beyond it can get very UN-comfortable.



If I stayed in my comfort zone for too long in my corporate career, I'd get passed by for new projects, promotions and growth opportunities.

The same thing happens in our personal lives if we stay in our comfort zone for too long – we get passed by – exciting visions of our future, new life experiences and growth opportunities never see the light of day as we sit quietly and safely in our comfort zone.

So here's your gentle reminder, and a nudge, with three brave steps you can take when you feel stuck in your comfort zone.



3 Brave Steps

1. Know that you don't have to do this alone.

Reaching out for help can be scary and far beyond what's comfortable. Just thinking about telling someone you don't know your deepest, darkest secrets, how you feel and what you're really thinking can hold you back from taking the action that will move you forward.

Trust that you will feel better when you find someone safe to talk with, who will hold the space for you to share, cry and eventually heal. That's when you start to grow and your comfort zone grows with you.

I start by telling women why I do what I do and a bit of my story, so she knows I've been where she is. I create a safe space for



her to open up and explore the possibilities that stepping beyond what's comfortable can hold.

Who can you reach out to?

What can you do differently that will change how you feel about what's going on now and what's possible for your future?



2. Remember a time when you did it successfully before.

Often we just need a reminder that we've lived outside our comfort zone before and the emotional upheaval we're feeling right now is causing us to fall back into old patterns and habits. It's like muscle memory.

Here's a suggestion I share with clients to help them exercise their comfort zone muscle: Think back to when you felt in control and brave, able to take a risk and reap the reward for your success.

How did that feel? Sit with that feeling again.

Write about it in every detail — what you were doing, who was with you when you did this, what you were wearing, what you were saying, how did you feel when you succeeded?



Getting back into that feeling of exhilaration and positive energy makes it easier to step out of your comfort zone again.

You've done it before — it reassures you that you've got this.

Repeating the risk taking, however small and calculated, builds another muscle, as well. Your resilience muscle.



3. Test the waters before jumping into the ocean.

Baby steps are the best way to explore doing something that doesn't feel comfortable.

Course correction from a baby step is easier, and less risky, than from a giant leap into a big pond.

Taking a page from basic project management techniques, here's an idea:

Decide what it is you want to do — describe the big hairy audacious thing you want to accomplish that has your knees knocking.

Now, break it down into small chunks. Tackle one small chunk at a time. Baby steps. Get one done — celebrate the accomplishment — and move on to the next one.



Before you know it, you've completed that big hairy thing and you've stretched more than you thought you could reach.

Your comfort zone is now bigger and you're more confident about stepping beyond it. This technique works for business projects AND personal projects.



Getting Centered

When you feel more centered around what you value most, have a very clear vision of where you're heading and engage in passionate action to take you there, your comfort zone expands exponentially.

Allowing yourself the time to heal things in your personal life will help you become more confident in every area of your life. You will be able to show up feeling in control of yourself, with dignity and grace.

Having a strong support system, remembering that you've done this before and taking action in baby steps is a tried and true approach. I hope these tips are helpful to you.



About the Author

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5 Steps to Get Unstuck from Your Story



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María Tomás-Keegan

Hello ... I'm so happy you've joined me here.

We're talking about the stories we tell ourselves and how we can get so stuck in those stories that we can't free ourselves from them — and what it costs us to stay stuck there, both personally and professionally.

I share a bit of my own story of stuck-ness to illustrate the point. You may see yourself in my story, or you may have one of your own.

I hope the five ways I found to work for me will help you, too.

From my heart to yours ...

— Maria



What Is Your Story?

What is that endless, repeating loop in your head that keeps you from seeing new possibilities? Are you allowing the old stories of your life to dictate how you behave in the present? If that's the case, it may be time to let them go.

Think of yourself as the “driver” of your life. You're the only one who has the keys to your car. And only you can allow someone or something else to borrow those keys. So, you get to decide your destination and the road you take to get there.

If you give permission for your stories to take the wheel, then that's a choice you've made. If you make a different choice and decide to take the wheel yourself, you step back into the power you have as the driver of your life.



I love this analogy of driving your car. I use it often with my clients when I see them allowing old stories to overshadow their lives. It's like always looking in the rearview mirror.

Do you find yourself often looking to the past? Are your eyes, mind and spirit looking backwards? If you do, don't worry because it's not unusual. Normal, really. The good news is, you can change that.

What if you turned your head just a few degrees while you're driving and look through the windshield?

Might you see a new road to explore?



How I Got Stuck in My Story

One of my stories was, “I’m divorced twice. I’m a failure at relationships. I can’t trust myself to make good decisions. If I’m a failure in life, I can’t possibly be successful in my career.” And on and on, like an endless loop of irrational negative thoughts that beat me up daily. I was looking in the rearview mirror constantly.

It cost me a lot to be stuck in this story. I felt sorry for myself. My confidence had cracks in it too wide to leap over.

Decisions at work became hard—my usual quick assessments, attention to detail and decisive actions were nowhere to be found. A client contract was at risk. My management team, while patient at first, had a business to protect.



With great kindness, my manager came into my office, closed the door and asked me to sit with her for a few minutes. We moved to the couch for a very personal conversation.

We talked about many things—the business I managed; how my staff was feeling; the attitude of my clients towards me; my future. It was hard to hear.

She said something to me that hit home, and it has stuck with me ever since – helping me still when I get stuck in my story, whatever it is.

“Look what it’s costing you to stay stuck in your story. Is that where you want to stay?”



I left work early that day. At home, in my quiet sanctuary, I pondered her question.

The answer was so clear to me. “Of course that’s NOT where I want to stay! The cost is too great to me—and it is costing people I care about, too.”

The next question, though, was a tough one to answer. “How do I move past my story?”

I’d like to share what I’ve learned that now helps my clients, too.



5 Steps to Get Unstuck from Your Story

1. Stop Talking About It.

The more you talk about it, the more it stays in your present world.

Kick it to the curb.

Stop engaging in conversations with family, friends and colleagues about what happened to you.

Let them know this is not a topic you will discuss any longer. It's time to move on.

That's a choice you get to make.



2. *Shift How You Think About It.*

This much I know for sure—just because you've stopped talking about it with others doesn't mean it's not still in your own thoughts and feelings.

It will be—that's normal.

The choice you have is to think about what happened differently.

Where is the blessing in disguise? What are you gaining for yourself? Who can you become now that you are firmly taking the driver's seat in your own life?

Asking questions like these can bring powerful answers and insights.



3. *Rediscover What You Value Most.*

In many situations, you may lose the connection with your own values. You may have compromised them to keep the peace, for instance.

This can happen if you've been married a long time or if you've worked for a company whose values have changed and no longer align with your own.

Your values are a guiding light and a checkpoint for any choice or decision you make.

What are your values? Is it Family? Independence? Freedom? Ask yourself, "Does this choice I'm about to make honor my value of Independence?"

Using this checkpoint will help steer you in the right direction. Every. Single. Time.



4. *Care Less About What Others Say or Think.*

This is a tough one for many women, including me. I've been a people-pleaser since I was a child, and it's hard to let go of the belief that, if I'm not making everyone around me happy, I myself cannot be happy.

What I've learned to believe instead is, if I'm not happy no one around me will be happy.

So, I started to care less about what everyone else was thinking or saying about what's good for me or what I should do or who I should be.

By clinging to my own core values, I was able to let my intuition be my guide. I started making choices that made me happy. And, guess what? Everyone that I cared about followed my lead. Those I didn't care about didn't matter. AH-HA!



5. *Dream Big.*

It's hard to dream new dreams when the old dreams have been shattered.

But, to really move on—leaving behind the old story and writing your new story—a big beautiful vision is required.

Don't hold back. Don't let anything you've heard before stop you.

Did someone say, "You can't do that!" Ask yourself, "Is it true?" If it's not true, you don't have to believe it anymore.

You get to do and be whatever and whomever you want. It's your dream.



Stop Talking About It!

Shift Your Thinking!

Reconnect with Your Values!

Care Less!

Dream Big!

Simple, right? Not always easy, though.

At least it wasn't for me at first. If it's not easy for you, reach out for help. Those of us who have been where you are now can help make it easier.



About the Author

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3 Ways to Love Yourself to a Thriving Life



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Certified Life & Career Coach for Women—Specialty: Transitions

María Tomás-Keegan

Hello ... thanx for joining my community. As I write this, I'm reminded of the many roles women play. Many are mothers to their own born or adopted children. Others have nieces and nephews or godchildren in our lives, and we are so close to them they're like our own children.

And then there are those who adopt or rescue furry-children who need our love and protection because they can't do it themselves. And, if the mother role were not enough, we're also professionals with busy careers, sisters, friends, spouses, care-givers, volunteers, nurturers, homework helpers, researchers and so much more.

With all that going on in your life, it's important to ask yourself the question: Do you love yourself enough to take care of YOU?

Because, you know ... no one can take care of you better than you.

From my heart to yours ... ~~~~~ Maria



You Don't Have Time, You Say?

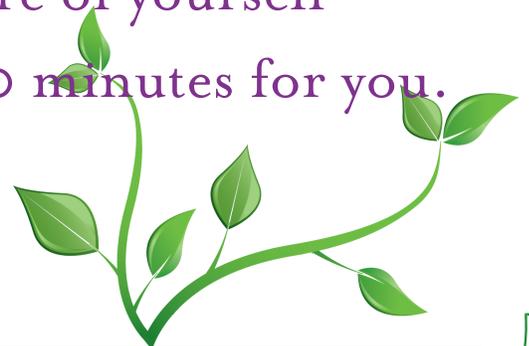
Is it time to make time?

Let's talk about the time it takes to love you.

As you look in the mirror each morning while brushing your teeth, can you say, "Hey Gorgeous! I love you and I'm going to take care of you today!"

Don't laugh. Try it. This takes no additional time and it begins to set aside self-judgment and opens the ways for you to believe you deserve to be well taken care of. And who, better than you, knows what YOU need to feel good?

As you pour your morning coffee or tea, set aside 5-10 minutes to sit quietly and think about your day. How can you make time to take care of yourself today? You've just carved out 5-10 minutes for you. Good job!



You Don't Have Time, You Say?

Is it time to make time?

After you've dropped the kids at school (or whatever your morning routine) and you're on your way to work, put on some soothing music, take some deep breaths and relax your mind as you prepare for the day. No additional time taken. Time well spent.

See what I mean? You can grab snippets of time while you're doing other things to focus on your own well-being. This is a loving practice that is easy to integrate into your daily life.



Make Self-care a Priority

What are some of the other things you can do to prove that you love yourself enough?

Think of doing things that serve different areas in your life that matter to you.

You can choose from one of these areas, or add your own:

~~Your Physical Self

~~Your Intellectual Self

~~Your Creative Self

~~Your Emotional Self

~~Your Spiritual Self

The ideas I'll share next are simple ones and I'm sure you can add to this list based on what lights up **YOUR** life.



For me, the times I spend in deep relaxation are the times that re-charge my batteries the most. I love to go to the day spa and get a massage or facial (and sometimes both at the same time!). This allows my whole body to relax (physical). It quiets my mind so I can get in touch with my innermost thoughts (emotional & spiritual).

Another pastime that feeds my creative soul is designing floral arrangements and accessorizing areas in my home or in the homes of others. As I immerse myself in this creative process, time stands still and it flies all at once. I'm exhilarated by this process and I get to enjoy the creations for a long time to come. (Creative plus emotional and spiritual.)



Taking time to research a topic of interest can take my mind off other matters that are weighing on me as it stimulates my intellectual side. For instance, I love researching new healthy recipes and testing them out. This serves the creative and physical sides of me, too.

Spending quiet time, listening to music or guided meditations, and thinking about everything and nothing in particular are good ways for me to get in touch with my inner wisdom, and touch the emotional and spiritual areas of my life like nothing else.

What are the activities that light up your life? How do you like to relax? Can you make time for some of those today or over the weekend? Carving out time in your busy schedule is an important commitment that only you can do.



Make a List. Check it Often.

What are the things you can do for yourself that will take care of those areas of your life that need to be recharged?

I suggest to my clients to make a list.

What are the areas in your own life that are important to take care of? You could use these five for starters, from my suggestion above: Physical, Intellectual, Creative, Emotional and Spiritual. Then list those things under each category that you can do to love yourself enough each day.

Read a book, write in your journal, practice gratitude, take a walk, ride your bike, play with your pets, spend time with friends, knit/crochet, write poems or songs, watch the clouds pass by or sit by the river and listen to the sounds of nature.



Commit to doing at least one of the things on your list each and every day. Do more than one whenever you can.

Make this a practice and you'll never regret the time you spend to love yourself enough to a thriving life.

Do you know the secret behind all of these things you can do for yourself that will make you feel loved and cared for?

Here's the secret: Become conscious and aware each time you do something for yourself. Even if it's just stopping at your favorite coffee shop and adding a splash of hazelnut to your morning coffee ... it's a treat you don't normally do and if you stop, take notice of how good it tastes to you and smile, you'll have done something to love yourself. It's really that simple.



Stop. Breathe. Take notice of what you want.

Do something that makes you feel good and special.
Do it for yourself. Don't wait for someone else to
do it for you.

When you treat yourself well and take care of
yourself, everyone around you will notice and start
to treat you as they see you treating yourself.

Because – YOU DESERVE IT!



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5 Ways to Shift from Surviving to Thriving



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María Tomás-Keegan

Hello ... Thank you for your interest in my thoughts about life changes and transitions. I love sharing what I've experienced and learned with you.

This time, I'd like to share a bit of my story to help you understand why I believe that it's possible to move from just going through the motions and surviving to thriving in this life.

I hope some of these thoughts resonate with you. I love to learn new things, which is why I share ideas openly--hoping you like to consider new things, too.

As I hear new things, I get to adapt what I learn to my own life, apply the new ideas and practice them. When they fit like a glove, I get to integrate them, so I become a better me. It's a process that works for me ... I hope it will work for you!

From my heart to yours ...

~ Maria



A Bit of My Story

Have you ever had one of those days? I woke up in a deep funk. I remember it so well. Is this what they mean by “life happens?” My divorce hit me hard, for the second time.

Everyone thought I had the perfect marriage, but it wasn't perfect at all. I denied it for years. I told friends, family and colleagues that I was fine. I wasn't. The truth was I did NOT want to be one of those women whose second marriage ended in divorce, too. Not a great reason to stay in an abusive relationship, I know.

But, I decided to work my tail off to make it right this time. I even agreed to renew our wedding vows again. Early on, we decided to celebrate our marriage with a renewal every five years.



The first one was great. By the second one, I felt a bit dishonest. When it came time for the third one, I just couldn't do it. I realized that I wasn't being true to myself. I was working really hard to fix something that was beyond my power to fix.

Although the circumstances around the ending of my first marriage were quite different, how I was feeling inside was quite the same.

I felt numb – afraid to feel much of anything at all. Then, I felt a lot of anger. The fear set in next. Then the panic. I was immobilized. I felt isolated. I was just going through the motions – just surviving. How am I going to get beyond this?

What happened next was an important awakening.



I Started to Notice

There was something different this time around.

After soul searching (and reaching out for help), I began to realize I had some tools that I learned before – some things that I could apply here.

I realized that first experience of my marriage ending could be used to inform, motivate and guide me. As I started to use a few of the lessons I learned, I noticed they got me moving faster than the last time.

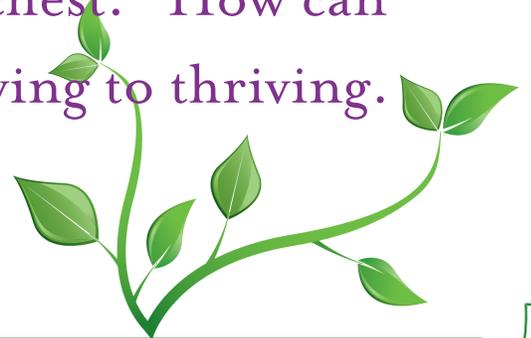
They helped me feel less like a victim and more like the powerful woman I am. The fog – and the fear – started to lift.



Many of those same lessons have helped me manage other times when life turned me upside down—changing careers, moving across country, the loss of my parents, being laid off, the loss of two of my three brothers three months apart, starting a new business, caregiving for my husband.

The first time, when life hit me hard, I didn't know what to do or where to start. Now that I have more experience with this life stuff, I'm more confident in the knowledge that I can handle just about anything. My resilience muscle got stronger each time.

Is life happening TO you? Let me share some of the lessons learned as life happened FOR me. As you read this, think about the lessons you've learned. I call these “tools in your treasure chest.” How can they help you to move from surviving to thriving.



5 Steps to Move Beyond Surviving to Thriving

1. Remember That You Are Not Alone

Life happens to everyone at some time or another.

Some struggle through, while others seemingly let it roll right off their back. Some are in denial while others face it head on.

You can choose which way you want to handle yours.

There are many resources available through research, support groups and coaching. Reach out.

As you speak with people going through similar experiences, you'll feel comforted that you are not alone and their experience may inform your next move.



2. Take Small Steps

Baby steps help to build confidence.

They also help to ensure you are heading in the right direction. Taking a wrong turn from a baby step forward is an easy correction.

Dig into your treasure chest of life lessons. Think about how you manage a complex project at home or at work. Break it down into phases. Break the phases down into activities. Break the activities down into steps—and take one step at a time.

The same principle applies here. It's the fastest path to a successful outcome.



3. Reach Out to People You Trust

A strong support network of family, friends and professional resources that support you in a positive way is essential at a time when life is changing dramatically.

I call these people your Personal Board of Directors. These are people who want to help, have your back, are a sounding board, a shoulder to cry on, ask tough questions and play devil's advocate.

They offer positive reinforcement, encouragement and constructive feedback to keep you on a track that feels right to you.

Just like in business, you search for the most qualified to help you solve a problem. Your best chance of success is shared with a powerful team.



4. *Explore options*

Don't be afraid to brainstorm different ideas. Put your imagination to work.

This kind of brainstorming helps to open your creative mind to explore all the possibilities before you select the one that suits you.

After considering many options, it's very likely that the one you do choose will FEEL right. Build your personal mastermind group to explore with you. Use your Personal Board of Directors to help.

Their zone of genius will complement yours and you'll discover an awesome set of options available to you that will light you up and set you in motion.



5. *Don't let your past situation define you*

“Your present circumstances don't determine where you can go; they merely determine where you start.” ~~~Nido Qubein

The best place from which to start is right where you are. Think about that place in the most positive terms.

I made it. I am fine. I'm feeling good. I'm ready for my next move. The sky is the limit.

Only you can hold yourself back now. Stop looking in the rearview mirror and start looking through the windshield.

Look forward. Lean forward. Step forward.



And, next time ...

The fact that you have choices can be both comforting and confusing. By following these few simple strategies—remember you're not alone, take small steps, surround yourself with positive people, explore options and start from where you are today—your direction forward will become clear.

The fog will lift. The fear will fuel you. You will feel more empowered to make great decisions that set you on the right path. This is how you shift from just surviving through it to thriving despite it. You choose.

And, since we know life happens to the best of us—and when we least expect it—the next time life hits you square in the face, say “I’ve learned this lesson before, I have this tool in my treasure chest, and I know just what to do this time!”



About the Author

María Tomás-Keegan is founder of Transition & Thrive with María and a certified Career & Life Coach for Women, specializing in Transitions, what she calls “the upside downs of life.”

She inspires women to take life changes in stride, at work and at home, while learning to heal on the inside, so you can design a new life chapter based on Values, Vision and Passion.

She is your bridge and will guide you from where you are today, to where you want to go as you become whom you want to be.

Are you ready to step onto that bridge and find your unique path? Is it time for you to look forward, lean in and take steps in a new direction, but you don't know where to start?

Schedule a private, complimentary [chat with María](#) and discover the first steps you can take.





Transition & Thrive with María

Certified Life & Career Coach for Women—Specialty: Transitions

Website: www.TransitionAndThriveWithMaria.com

eMail: María@TransitionAndThriveWithMaria.com

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Unwrap the Gift of a New Beginning after Loss



Transition
& *Thrive* with *María*

Certified Life & Career Coach for Women—Specialty: Transitions

María Tomás-Keegan

Hello brave lady ... I'm honored that you've chosen to read this.

Do you believe that things happen for a reason? What about the other adage that there is a silver lining in every cloud? I happen to believe in both. Events in my own life have proven them true. And I also believe there is a gift to be received from loss. It's the gift of a new beginning.

Loss comes in so many flavors. The first thing you may think of is the loss of a precious person or pet in your life. You may feel loss after a divorce or when you are laid-off from a career or when you retire or face an empty nest when the kids grow up. So many different kinds of loss. And each one holds a special gift for us to unwrap—if you choose to receive it.

The journey through loss can be a long and windy road. It may not appear, at first, that there is gift anywhere on that path. Open your eyes and your heart so you can recognize it.



*Once you find it, I believe there are three simple ways to unwrap it
and receive the gift inside.*

From my heart to yours ...

~ Maria



The Thing About Loss

Some losses are expected, and some come out of nowhere. For instance, no one walks into a marriage planning to get divorced.

A company downsizing may be common knowledge, yet when the pink slip gets handed to you, it is still a shock. Or, it could be sudden heart attack. An accident.

Each one of these major life events can turn you upside down. And there is plenty of grief, loss and overwhelm to keep even the strongest among us in a blurry bubble for a long time.

Giving yourself some time to adjust to the shock, deal with the emotional roller coaster and work toward finding a new normal are all necessary steps at the beginning.



What you do next matters.

Assuming you believe there is a gift in what life dishes out, it's important to notice it. Receive it. Then pick it up. Because, unwrapping that gift will put you on an amazing path to a new beginning.

The choices you make in your personal life will affect every aspect of your life. How you choose to heal from the inside will color the way you show up on the outside—in business, at home, with friends.

I've learned from my own experience, and from the stories my clients and friends share, that there are at least three things you can do to carefully unwrap the gift that awaits you after loss. I share the first three things here:



3 Ways to Unwrap the Gift

1. Invest Your Time

One of my favorite things is getting a massage or facial. It helps me relax and feel more cared for—by me. I do something for myself at least monthly. I feel even better when it's weekly--and daily.

Self-love and self-care rituals are important investments. Make time to eat well, exercise, meditate, be with friends who lift your spirit.

Do those things which make you feel better and take care of your overall well-being. These investments of your time will pay huge dividends as you start your new chapter after loss.

When you're busy at work, often throwing yourself into your work so you don't have to deal with what's



going on in your personal life (am I speaking to you?), it's easy to forget that you need to make time to heal from the inside so you can move on from here.



2. *Find Your Passion*

In the past, I spent more time taking care of everyone else and lost touch with the things that made my heart sing. Do you do that, too?

I resolved to never let go of my passions again.

Now, I tap into my creative juices every chance I get. Designing floral arrangements, crocheting gifts for family and friends and interior home accessorizing are my passions again.

What did you love to do and haven't done in a long time? Tune into what you're passionate about.

Engage in a hobby. Find a group to go hiking. Have you always wanted to turn pottery? Do that. Do you love to meet new people? Start a group of like-minded people and meet regularly.



When you include activities in your life which you are passionate about, it fills a special space in your heart each and every time you engage in them.

It takes a conscious effort to make time for you. If you're a busy woman, like most women are, you need to schedule it on your calendar and make it mandatory—at least once a week to start.

You'll learn to love those times so much that you'll find more times in your week that can be devoted to the most important person in your life—YOU.



3. *Focus on You*

One of the most valuable investments I made for myself was joining a group program facilitated by a coach—a mastermind group of sorts.

After a significant loss in my life, I found being with a community of like-minded women expanded my understanding of what was going on in my head and my heart.

My coach taught techniques to breakthrough old stories and beliefs that no longer served me well. She helped me reach beyond my comfort zone, feel the fear and do it anyway—all of which helped me regain my confidence.

In a short time, my perspective changed. I saw things differently. I became happier with myself.



The prospect of being alone and feeling fulfilled grabbed a hold of me. Everyone noticed. My career made a leap forward, too. The lessons I learned have been in my treasure chest ever since.

What can you do to focus on you? Who do you want to spend time with that will lift your spirits and encourage you to be your authentic self?

Find activities and people who will stretch you and build your confidence. It is a remarkable journey when you look back to see how far you've come.



What I Did Next

As a result of this experience, I became involved in coaching and mentoring women within the corporation for which I worked. When I left that career, I pondered my next move, and the value of this experience stood out for me again. It inspired me to help other women to do this life transition thing differently.

Who doesn't want to get through a major life transition easier and faster? With more dignity and grace. What I know for sure is when you're ready, and you invest your time, energy and money in yourself, it will be among the most rewarding investments you'll ever make. It was for me.

Working with a coach or mentor who understands what you're going through, can help you to recognize and



honor you own values.

She can guide you to create a crystal-clear vision for the future you deserve and help you to learn what passionate actions will infuse your new life with amazing new possibilities.

You'll soon unwrap the gift of a new beginning so you can move through the loss, whatever it is. You'll choose to move beyond just coping and surviving. And, you'll discover what it means to thrive.

What can you do today that your future self will thank you for? There are people ready to help make it an easier journey for you.

All you have to do is make the choice to explore the options and reach out to find the perfect guide for you.



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