From Seed to Bloom

PeggyLee Hanson

“Start something good, and people will follow.”

~ PeggyLee Hanson

“Can you do that for me? I will pay you.”

These were the words that changed the trajectory of my life.

Upon the release of being inside the corporate world of the airline industry, the only thing I wanted to do—that I knew in my heart that I wanted to do—was to write.

What to write? I wasn’t all that certain. And again, not sure on what topic. My interests and opportunities at the time were endless and limitless. However, I did know that I wanted to write a book.

I also knew that writing a book wouldn’t pay the bills.

I began to research and delve into various industries. The year was 2009 when the world was not easy to reach or virtual as it is today. I began to explore all the things that piqued my interest: what I was good at, what I loved, and what I loved to do.

The personal coaching industry was beginning to unfold and take off and caught my eye. I was good with people and loved helping anyone answer and get results from questions they had. I was a Union Leader, therefore, a problem solver in the corporate world for a time. I learned about negotiations and compromise. I also learned more about empathy and compassion.

You might say that I began to embrace the fruit given to me by the Divine during this time.

So, what will I write about here? This book is about embracing your fruit, talents, wisdom, knowledge, and expertise. It’s about how you got to where you are now, the knowing. What is my “knowing,” though?

I have been asked by the editor, Ann, to share how I embraced my fruit along the way as life circumstances forced me to reconcile with changes, the route I had planned, and the one given me.

I could begin in the middle of my current story, yet I believe it is essential for you to know a bit of the back story of my journey.

Life-altering events, such as September 11, 2001, the untimely death of Minnesota Senator Paul Wellstone in 2002 following a plane crash, and the dismantling of the mechanics union at Northwest Airlines in 2005—in which I had played a hand in—made me realize that nothing in this life is guaranteed.

The memory of one day in 2006 remains vivid, sitting at my desk deep in thought of what was happening in the world around me. I was approaching my 50th birthday and pondering how my future life could look.

I pulled out my small yellow notepad and began writing a list of wants and don’t-wants by the time my 55th birthday rolled around. A few of the items were: not to have an 80-mile round-trip commute to work every day, to be able to work from home, to have a successful business (even though I had no idea what that might be), to travel with my husband, and to have the financial freedom to do what I want when I want, with whom I want, and wherever I want.

Little did I know that that list would begin jumping off the page a short three years later when I received notice that I would not continue with the newly merged airline after twenty-one years of service.

Because of the prep work in creating that fate-filled list a few years prior, I was not completely unhappy nor distraught about the news. This feeling, however, had been perplexing to my coworkers. “How can you be so calm?” they asked.

As the theme of this book suggests, I embraced my fruit—even though I started the manifestation process unbeknownst to me. Oh, what power I possessed!

I met with a coworker a few months after being released from the corporate world. He asked me how I was doing.

“I just wished I knew then what I know now,” I replied.

And then he told something prolific. “It’s all a process. You have to go through what you must learn and what you need to do in the future.”

What a curious outlook, I thought. My friend was right, of course. And because of that little exchange, big things were born—via a process all its own.

Now, whenever I go through a change or transition, I am drawn to the steps that got me to the other side, the side of thriving. I asked myself to recreate those steps— that process—and put them into words, so they are digestible to the human spirit.

Even though learning much on this journey, there are times when restlessness returns. I mentioned to a dear friend and confidante that I am in such a different space that a significant shift has occurred, yet not able to put my finger on it.

Still, as the saying goes, I feel cool, calm, and collected. Although, at night, I am uneasy, waiting for that other shoe to drop.

And then she told me, “That shoe doesn’t need to drop. It is okay to be cool, calm, and collected.”

The journey is about the steps, the walk, the pace, the valleys, and the peaks.

# Dreams in Tandem

Fruit could be another term for opportunities. Embracing what is in front of you can be rewarding and open doors and windows that may not ordinarily present themselves.

As mentioned, I wanted to write a book in whatever manner, so I began researching how to accomplish that dream.

While at the airline, I was elected first as a union representative and then vice president of the association to which I belonged. I learned negotiation, compromise, and listening skills in that leadership capacity. Along this line, I discovered that personal coaching was something else that intrigued me and something I could do and was good at.

I could perhaps mesh these two interests one day—embracing the possibilities of the given fruit.

By September 2009, I had my first self-published book that included a testimonial from Marcia Wieder, Founder and CEO of Dream University®, who I was to study under the following year to be one of her coaches teaching her signature system of how to achieve your dream.

In 2010 I wrote my second self-published book detailing my own signature system of what to do when you are “thrown into transition,” using the procedural steps of moving through unwanted or unforeseen and perhaps even chosen life changes with ease, poise, and dedication. Marcia wrote the introduction for this book.

By the end of 2011, I was both a published author on Amazon and certified in coaching verified through the International Coaching Federation.

I share this timeline with you in the hope that you can see how even going back in time, the wheel has watered the seeds of your fruit to grow.

# Competing Dreams

In the following years, I learned about building a business and marketing from one of the best in the industry. As I was starting, a vision or plan was not pouring forth. I had an idea of what I wanted to build, but that was it.

And then, a name for my company appeared—Personal Transition Guidance LLC.

“What does that mean? Who will you serve and to what purpose?” were the questions asked of my marketing mentor.

I could not answer him succinctly or sufficiently. The words did not want to be spoken, it seemed. More honestly, I did not want to say the words for fear that I would be told they were wrong or that I was not thinking correctly about my vision.

I did say that I have a dual purpose: to help people write and publish their books and realize their life dream.

My marketing mentor replied, “You can’t have two purposes. You must choose only one. Just decided which.”

And so I did. I picked the one bringing in the money at the time—the dream coaching. However, the book publishing opportunity became known once I made that decision.

The conflict began and continued for a few years more. Whenever I paid attention to a book client, a coaching client would step up.

“You can’t do both simultaneously—you need to decide!” were the words that hammered my brain.

One day, and after many days of unrest in my soul, I heard an internal voice that said, “Why not? Why can’t you do both at the same time? Figure out how to make it work. Just decide.”

Shortly after that, and after I had told a friend that I published one of my books on Kindle, she asked me if I could do that for her, as she “had a book” that she wanted to publish—and she would pay me.

My first publishing job! I was excited.

Ah, yes. Another piece of fruit embraced.

Once that happened, I had another opportunity to publish a print book—recipes and more—for someone in one of my mastermind groups.

The lesson here is that there was no conflict, no competing dreams—the only battle was my tentativeness at arriving at a decision. So now, these days, when I have a choice of A or B and am feeling uneasy, I remind myself to “just decide.”

Hence, Courageous Women Publications, a Personal Transition Guidance LLC subsidiary, was born.

# Organic Fruit

Because of knowing that building a business involves professional speaking, I joined the global organization of Toastmasters International, “where leaders are made.” I quickly stepped into a leadership role within my club.

Year after year, I moved up the leadership ladder from club officer to Division Director, as it is called these days. I heard hundreds of speeches telling stories with humor, poignancy, and personal tragedy turned triumphant.

Toward the end of my reign in Toastmasters and while listening to dozens more speakers, I became inordinately saddened that most of these inspirational tales would be left behind on the stage.

The story that touched my heart was told by a woman who was happily married now but shared a time when she was not. She spoke of being in an abusive relationship with the father of her two young girls and needed to get out.

Although I had not personally gone through a situation like this, friends and family members did. Had they heard this woman’s story of fear, strength, and courage, it might have made their situation better somehow, knowing they were not alone and feeling self-empowered to make their choice of leaving victimhood behind.

How often have you read a novel or heard somebody’s personal story that inspired and encouraged you to push forward? How did it make you feel?

The thought of these stories that could uplift and help others never to be heard of again weighed on me.

Until one day, my racing mind stopped on an idea to share these words of wisdom. After all, I am a book publisher! I have the ways and means to create and produce a book filled with many personal experiences that go from adversity to victory, bewilderment to enlightenment, and uncertainty to clarity.

And so I did.

More fruit (opportunity) embraced. Google defines “organic” as:

1. *relating to or derived from living matter.*
2. *produced or involving production without the use of chemical fertilizers…or other artificial agents.*

This explanation of how the multi-book series, “Courage Under Siege,” came about rings true about its organic creation.

However, getting the book off the ground and finding contributing authors was another story.

# A Seed in Waiting

The multi-authored book idea sat on the dream shelf for several months. Even though I participated in many compilation books myself, I was unsure how or where to begin production.

I had the website built for my business—a skeleton of content at best—and wrote a small blurb about the upcoming book when an appearance on a friend’s weekly internet broadcast show pollinated the book idea by mentioning it.

My heart dropped! I panicked! Wait! What? I’m not ready!

Being the ever professional, I went with her cue and began speaking about the book, its merits, and how anyone listening could be a contributing author. One person immediately registered and then got her friend to sign up!

Within a short time, I had filled the available author spaces—one even got on board the week we were to go to print! The first volume of “Courage Under Siege,” subtitled “Adversity to Victory,” launched on April 27, 2017, National Tell a Story Day, and became a #1 international bestseller on Amazon.

It took eighteen months to make this success happen because I got in my own way. If not pushed out of the nest (or embracing this fruit!) to help this project fly, who knows what could have happened—or not happened?

# Others Embrace Their Fruit

Every volume published in the series has a star author who took the storytelling to heart, creating success within a success.

In **volume 1**, “Adversity to Victory,” a corporate lawyer shares the story of traveling to Cambodia with her husband and daughter. While sitting in a canoe-style boat on Ton Le Sap Lake, a woman with a small child asked if they would pay a thousand dollars to take the child. Leigh’s life and career changed at that moment. Upon returning to the United States, she became general counsel to an anti-trafficking organization that fought child sex slavery abroad.

Although the above is a significant story inside the book, what happened after this volume was published is extraordinary.

Another author inside the book met up with a friend, who was also an attorney. She expressed interest in working in the global child sex rings. Julia pulled out a copy of volume 1, handed it to her friend, and said, “You need to contact this woman.”

I had no idea what impact this little book of stories of regular people sharing their lives would have.

In **volume 2**, “Bewilderment and Englightenment,” featuring spiritual intuitives and healers, one author—who auditioned by writing a 200-word essay—wrote about all her divine gifts, especially her healing touch. Her parents didn’t like talking about these things, nor did they want others to know.

Her mother passed a few years ago, and with her dad in the hospital, she wanted a copy of her chapter before publication so she could give it to her dad to read. Peg silently sat while he read the words. When finished, he looked at her and said, “I want you to know that I have always loved you.”

Since that time, Peg has flourished as an intuitive healer.

After volume 2 had been published and made its way around the spiritual group I belong to, more metaphysicians wanted to share their story.

And so they did inside **volume 3**, “Uncertainty to Clarity,” where a woman shares how she releases the souls of Gettysburg soldiers to cross over to the next realm and gain peace. Dr. Patty contributed the chapter to prepare for writing her solo book, as did other contributing authors who later published through me.

**Volume 4**, “Duress to Success,” held the space for two authors sharing for the first time health issues that they either kept a secret or rarely spoke of with loved ones closest to them. Both women, Carol and Gina, have gone on to take what they considered detriments and turned them into helping other women deal with ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) and alopecia (hair loss). By embracing the conditions (fruit), they not only healed themselves but others as well.

Inside **volume 5**, “Flight to Light,” spoke of personal loss and running away, perhaps, turned into a place of gratitude and happiness. This book is where the editor-in-chief of this compilation series, “Embrace Your Fruit,” Ann McLaughlin-Delisco, found her voice and vision. The process, the teaching, and everything about the experience lit a fire under her, knowing and understanding how she could accomplish the same feeling and success for her audience.

**Volume 6**, “Hurt to Healing,” saw the return of previous authors inside the “Courage Under Siege” series. Kathleen told of more secrets unveiled; Katie wrote of the Phoenix rising; and Bettina found purpose in life. They had more insight to share and knew that sharing their stories was the first step to healing.

As of this writing, **volume 7** is open for enrollment and awaiting the next impactful and inspirational batch of writers.

Before moving on here, let me offer my experience with the chapter “Lost and Found,” I contributed to volume 1.

I wrote about a time when I stood on a bridge, high above a river with large, sharp rocks below, wondering what it would feel like to plunge into them. The worries and fear felt then would be gone—there would be no more emotional pain.

Someone I knew read that story and shared hers with me. This person, too, was having a difficult time and went as far as putting a loaded pistol in her mouth, contemplating ending her life. She thanked me for sharing what I went through because it made her feel not so alone.

Let me tell you that when I set out with the first volume of this series, I had no idea how impactful or how healing these stories could be. I also had no idea how healing each personal story told would be for its author while moving through the process of writing it.

It took a lot of getting used to, acceptance, and stepping into the role of a healer—one more fruit to embrace.

The journey is all about the steps, the walk, the pace, the valleys, and the peaks.

# 5 Steps to Embrace Your Fruit

What five things, ways of thinking, and doing things helped get me where I am today? Read on to learn what they are.

**Know who you are.** Believing that I always knew who I was from a young age to my mid-sixties today, there were times when questions and doubts entered my mind.

What kind of person am I?

Who am I truly?

What do I believe?

Who do I want to be in the world?

I remember trying to find all this out in grade and middle school.

I was a cheerleader in sixth grade—nope, not for me.

I was a tough talker in the eighth grade, swearing up a storm—nope, not for me either.

Entering high school, I became softer yet stronger in my convictions.

I was a good friend.

I was honest and open.

I loved to love.

I loved to sing.

When I proceeded to the corporate world, I was a little older and wiser from reading and listening to personal development geniuses such as Wayne Dyer and John Maxwell. Even Oprah Winfrey, at that time, began to show her inner strength outwardly.

One lesson finally sunk in: I could not change anyone except myself. And I realized this even more when I understood that it wasn’t my rivals who needed to change—it was me.

And so, I did.

**Tap into your spirituality.** I believe we all have moments of clarity where a giant hand comes down from the sky and sweeps away the clouds. There is nothing left but the big, beautiful blue atmosphere above. The air is fresh. Our lungs take in the sweetness of new beginnings. This way of being may seem far out there for you, but for me, it is how I remember waking up to a new life, a new way of life, where I knew everything would be okay.

My mother-in-law suddenly passed from a brain aneurysm in 1991, devastating the entire family. I had to snap out of the way I was feeling, always sad. I knew that I was suffering terribly from the loss. Two years, maybe three, went by before realizing enough was enough.

I began to explore on my own and read books on grief, spirituality, who exactly God is, and what it all means. I found a place in my heart that was warm, peaceful, and filled with grace. Everything seemed to change, to open, and come alive. This experience was like heaven on earth to me, the manna—the nirvana! Riches began pouring in. New job opportunities with a paycheck reflecting a living wage. A happy life with a happy husband and kids. We bought our first house and adopted a dog to keep our cat company (well, the reality is the cat kept the dog at bay!). Life was good.

Tapping into your spirituality is a personal practice and process I recommend for everyone to explore. The fruit which grows here lasts a lifetime and keeps living long after we leave this earthly plane.

**Develop your skills.** In the mid-1970s, getting a college degree to get a good job was not a requirement or imperative. The market understood at that time working your way up the corporate ladder was a better plan for those not seeking a medical or professional license, such as a surgeon, lawyer, or certified public accountant.

Things are different now, though—or are they? As a witness of friends and relatives who went the college route, I saw many who did not get jobs in their field of study, so I decided to climb up the corporate ladder.

I learned practices and procedures that modernized businesses in every job I held.

Computers, programming, and data entry were all the rage in the late 1970s early 1980s.

The online world began to emerge in the 1990s-2000s, with company training delivered as a hybrid, both in-person and virtually.

Today anyone can create courses and apps and teach via video conference.

With each opportunity in front of me, I made sure there was something new to learn. This step kept me fresh and relevant to those who might hire me. It is the same inside the publishing world these days. I can now publish a book in all available formats: paperback, hardcover, ebook, digital, and audio.

**Go beyond the fray.** There is so much chatter out there these days.

Do this that way.

Do that this way.

Don’t listen to the other guy because they aren’t giving you the correct information.

Whew! It’s enough to make you go crazy! And sometimes you do.

Going beyond the fray could be a metaphor for *not worrying, being happy, or looking on the bright side of life*. (Are you a Monty Python fan, perchance? The song “Always Look on the Bright Side of Life” is now playing in my head!)

There is another saying: “Just because someone is inviting you to an argument or disagreement does not mean you have to attend.”

Something that has helped me rise above the clamor and chatter, especially inside the hot political atmosphere these days (which never goes away, it seems), is asking, “How does this affect me?”

If the answer is “not at all,” you can easily watch with unattachment, and no one will trigger your emotions.

**Release the past.** The problems created in my life were mostly of my own doing. When I was two, I played with the dog dish at a family friend’s house. He didn’t like it and took my small head into his large mouth. I got by with six stitches and a swollen face for a few weeks. The family dog was euthanized after that incident—the guilt followed me into adulthood.

A few years after my dad passed from the complications of Alzheimer’s, I got into a bit of financial trouble. Married, carrying our third child at the time, this problem could have devastated my entire family. The outcomes were only losing my job and declaring bankruptcy.

I worked especially hard once hired again to ensure and reclaim my integrity as an employee. I also worked especially hard to forget my mistake and move on. Although staying far away in the background, that cloud was always behind my shoulder. I couldn’t shake it.

As the decades passed, so waned the guilt of my sin. I finally told my kids what their momma did so they knew the reasoning behind one of the rules inside our household: *No matter what you’ve done, tell us. Allow us to be mad. And once through that emotion, we will figure out the solution together.*

I am blessed beyond measure for the people GUS (God/Universe/Source) has placed along my path to walk with me on this life journey. They have given me the knowledge and tools to return to myself, forgive myself, and release the past so I can continue the work I am to do while on this planet.

# The Biggest Fruit to Embrace

As I wrap up this chapter, reminiscent of decades passed, there is a theme surrounding my thoughts. Maybe you have heard about it? The theme comes with many renditions. The following are only two:

Perfectly imperfect.

Imperfect perfection.

One of these may be the title of my next book!

I am a human being on a planet with nearly 8 billion other humans who are perfectly imperfect. Perhaps this is an assumption I should not make.

One of the Four Agreements created by Don Miguel Ruiz reads, “Always do your best.” I strive for this every possible moment. However, mistakes and missteps occur daily, even by the best of the best—it’s how we learn.

To be able to embrace imperfection, to me, is a spiritual practice. If I can do this act, I can accept what it is and the people who have wronged me or others. More importantly, those I have wronged and hurt.

The experiences of the life I had led to the culmination of what I do now—which is to encourage everyone I meet to talk about and share their story—brings purpose.

I believe in my heart, down to my core, that if you and I told our story—and it doesn’t have to be the BIG ONE—we would be able to know our neighbor or the person standing in front of or behind us in the grocery store checkout line or at the local coffee shop.

If we could do this, the fear would fall. For when we get to know someone, even just a little bit, who looks different or speaks with a funny accent, the curtain can come down, warming our hearts or perhaps smiling at the response after saying the initial “Hello, how are you today?”

Imagine.

The lyrics of the John Lennon song come to mind. “Imagine… all the people ….”

Imagine all the people coming together for a common cause and purpose—to stand tall for the greatest commandment on earth—LOVE.

It is for this reason that I am more than just a publisher. I also believe to my core, that love is the only answer. And when we share our stories—that has been a way of life ever since life has existed—we share the feeling of love by embracing the fruit put before us-- ourselves.

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