

I want to share my story that illustrates how easy and fun it is to bounce, even when you're not faced with a crisis.

I am 54 years old, have a blessed life, great husband, wonderful teenagers (as wonderful and teenagers can be), free of financial concerns, surrounded by wonderful family and friends and I am healthy. Before I married for the first time at 38 years old, I had far exceeded my financial and career goals so my self-esteem was flying high. I had my daughter at 39 and my son at 41. Who could possibly ask for more? Who wouldn't consider this the kind of life everyone dreams of.....I surely had.

When I decided to retire and let my business dissolve some of my friends who had gone before me cautioned me not to completely let it go. "You won't believe how fast your self-esteem will start to dwindle," they warned. I respect my friends, most of whom had their kids at the normal time of life so, knowing that there must be something to what they were saying, I filed it under "better remember this" and retired anyway.

About four years ago I started noticing that I was low on the energy and enthusiasm that had always been a part of my make up. A friend called me and invited me on a trip to Africa to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro. I decided to go and found that the fear of finding myself half way up the mountain and having to turn back was enough to motivate me to train... hard. I had a goal, it involved lots of exercise outdoors, and it was a great feeling. I went to Africa, I summated, was inspired by the African people and I was sure that when I came back everything was going to be different..... And it was.... for awhile.

About three months later I was using lame reasons to excuse myself from maintaining the fitness level that I had reached, I was using traffic as an excuse to stay holed up all day and was growing increasingly annoyed with my husband and snapping at my children. My friends told me I was "going underground," I was very happy to lie around and read for the better part of my days. I was sure that if we could move to a smaller town and my husband and kids would shape up, everything would be great. Of course, I was also burdened with the guilt that comes with being blessed and still wanting more, so I pushed that out of my mind whenever it surfaced. I knew I should be "giving back" but all that took was a check to a charity and another to the family I had met in Africa and I had covered that base (at least that's what I told myself). I had convinced myself that the only people that attended charity events were ones who needed their egos stroked.

I have faced numerous challenges in my life, recognized when I was faced with one and always used 150% of my resources in successfully solving them. At 54 I knew how to manage life's trials.....or so I thought.

One day I got an invitation from Dr. Lana Staheli whose counseling had been instrumental in helping me make good life and career decision years earlier. Our relationship had morphed from doctor/patient to friendship but I hadn't spent time with her for a long time. She was inviting me to her 60th birthday bash. I almost declined at the prospect of the wasted hours I would have to spend in traffic. I decided that I had to attend, out of gratitude and friendship.

Lana later confessed that her true motive for pulling me out of my life on the eastside was because she needed me to help her work on finishing and launching her new book. Feeling incredibly indebted to her for the years she had helped me, of course I couldn't say no. What is this "Bounce" thing? I wondered before I went to see her. The website looked like it had something to do with Children's Hospital and the emotional trauma associated with illness and death. "Oh, no she wants me to get involved in a charity thing with a group of women. How could she? She knows me better than that." "I need about 4 days of your time," she told me.

The second time we got together I was finally able to spend enough time with her to gain an understanding of what "Bounce" was all about. We talked, went to lunch by boat and brainstormed on the deck of her tiny houseboat on Lake Union. Lana shared the latest research articles about the advancements they are making in understanding how the brain works. These articles clearly illustrated that you really can change the wiring in your mind and change your life. Within about 4 hours that day I found myself fascinated and revved up. Hmmm.

That night I drove home thinking that the only way I could support Lana in this venture was if I really believed in it. I had asked her the question, "What's new about these concepts? Isn't this just another 'self-help' book with a scientific backdrop?" Good question. We were both going to think about how to answer it.

It has been only about two weeks since I started working on this project and my life has completely transformed. I never would have thought it could be this easy. Lana is right, it is also fun! I have my energy back, I treat my family differently. Funny; they treat me differently too. My husband responds like he has gotten his girl friend back and I am "driving" to see my friends. I came into this knowing about most of the concepts; I just hadn't experienced what it is like if you put them all together in the way she was suggesting. I could see why Lana wanted to share this.

I realized that it wasn't "more" that I had wanted; I just wanted my energy and natural enthusiasm back. It's back!! I am thrilled that I can "give back" now, in my own way.

The answer to the question; "Is this just another self-help book?" is, no. As a matter of fact, if the entire world approached life this way we surely wouldn't be destroying the planet and killing each other.

I invite others to give it a whirl. At the very least, it's fun.

Deb