



CAT COLUCCIO

GIRL! Get Over Yourself And Get In The GAME

**EMPOWERING WOMEN TO ROCK
THEIR MIDLIFE**

Girl, get over yourself and into the Game
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Cat Coluccio
*rocking
midlife*

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LET'S CONNECT

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DEDICATED TO

*All the women who still dare to dream,
To hope,
To secretly desire
That there is more.
So much more for them to achieve,
To discover,
To experience
And ultimately, make an **IMPACT** in their worlds.*

CAT x

DON'T FEAR CHANGE -
EMBRACE IT!

ANTHONY J. D'ANGELO

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATED TO	3
TABLE OF CONTENTS	5
1.ON THE BENCH	7
2. WHAT IS THE GAME?	11
3. GIVE ME THE SERENITY	19
4. BUT I'M NOT GOOD ENOUGH	23
5. I'M NOT WORTHY	29
6. IT'S TIME TO GET REAL	33
7. WHAT'S IN YOUR HAND?	37
8. BUT I'M TOO OLD	41
9. GIVE AND RECEIVE	45
10. GET UNSTUCK	49
11. THE VOICES IN YOUR HEAD	55
AN EXERCISE IN SELF-DISCIPLINE	62
CAT COLUCCIO	70
LET'S CONNECT	71
CONTACT US	71

CONSULT NOT YOUR FEARS
BUT YOUR HOPES AND DREAMS.
THINK NOT ABOUT YOUR FRUSTRATIONS,
BUT ABOUT YOUR
UNFULFILLED POTENTIAL.
CONCERN YOURSELF NOT
WITH WHAT YOU TRIED
AND FAILED IN, BUT WITH
WHAT IT IS STILL POSSIBLE
FOR YOU TO DO.

POPE JOHN XXIII

1. ON THE BENCH

It is the last quarter of your semi-final netball game and the pressure is on. (Don't know what netball is? Just think of Basketball with a whole lot more stopping, starting and ankle injuries.)

You are on the bench. Your heart is pounding, there is sweat trickling down your back and soaking through your uniform, the pungent wafts increasing your discomfort. The score is neck to neck. Suddenly their goalie takes the shot and the mix of groans and cheers erupting from the sidelines confirms that the throw made its mark. The game moves back to the centre, and after a series of rapid-fire passes from your team, there is a collective intake of breath as your goalie takes aim, doing her best to ignore the amazon goal keeper leaning over her. She shoots. She scores and the ball is passed back to the centre amidst more cheers and catcalls.

The goal for goal play continues and you watch the girls on the court becoming increasingly flushed and worn as they battle grimly into the final minutes of the game. The stakes are high as the loser will be finished for the season, whereas the victor will go on to compete for the ultimate trophy at the national finals.

You have been itching to get on the court for the entire game, however the coach has ignored your impatient tapping foot, choosing instead to keep starting team on. Despite the now obvious fatigue of many of the girls due to the intense pressure they have been under, she seems to have forgotten about you as she yells instructions from further down the line. You are fidgeting in your seat now as you watch one of your

team-mates fumble and drop the ball. You know that you could do better but something holds you back from getting out of your seat and reminding your coach that you are there, fresh and ready to fight.

Your team is obviously tired now and the other team pauses to put on a fresh substitute who immediately runs around your team's defence and shoots a goal. One of your team-mates who is struggling to keep up sends you an imploring look, motioning you to go to the coach and be sent out to replace her. You nod, feeling her need and knowing that you could help – yet you stay rooted to your seat.

You can feel the eyes of some of the spectators now boring into your back, hear the whispers about you and are well aware that everyone will see you get up and walk to the coach. What if the coaches ignores you or worse still, tells you to go back and sit down? It's embarrassing enough to have not been played up to this point, but it would be absolutely mortifying if you had to walk back to your seat in front of all of those spectators to sit out the remainder of the game on the bench.

The girl on court motions again, then calls your name desperately as the opposition push past her roughly and score. The coach is oblivious down the other end as she checks the timer that her assistant is holding. You KNOW that you need to get up and in your coach's face. You KNOW that you need to get on to that court and do what you do best which is to shoot goals. You KNOW that you are fresher than most of the players out there who are all puffing and tired. You KNOW that your presence out there could be the game changer.

But you sit.

You hope that the coach might notice you and promote you to play. You hope that the crowd behind you might not notice your embarrassment. You hope that your team might be able to pull it together and win.

But they don't.

And they look at you in disbelief as they walk back to their seats with heads hanging, cloaked in disappointment following their defeat. "You could have made the difference," they say. "You could have helped us win," they add. "We needed you - why didn't you get up and try?"

And you go home that night, asking yourself those same questions.

"Why didn't I try?"

"Why didn't I stand up for myself?"

"I DON'T WANT TO BE A
PASSENGER SITTING ON THE
BENCH NOT DOING MUCH,
EVEN IN MY OLDER YEARS."

FRANK LAMPARD

2. WHAT IS THE GAME?

“Why didn’t I get in the game?”

Girl - I am here now to ask you that same question. I’m trusting that you are reading this book because deep down, you KNOW that you are not fully in the game. You KNOW that you are settling for being a spectator on the bench while your life goes past. You KNOW that you are too scared / embarrassed / intimidated or feel too unworthy to put your hand up and say “Hey!! It’s my turn! I have lots to offer and I intend to live MY life to the fullest!”

Do you REALLY want to spend the rest of your days on the side-lines watching others, (who, incidentally, may even be way less talented than you) getting in the game and having a go? Is it satisfying for you to be hiding behind your kids, your husband, your job or whatever, when you have SO much more to offer the world?

Don’t get me wrong now - all of those things are wonderful, and if that’s what you WANT to do and feel fulfilled doing, then you be the best darn mother / wife / employee out there. But if you KNOW that deep down you were built for more, then I don’t care how old you are - it is time to get OFF that bench and into the game.

TODAY!

We've all heard the old analogy of the game being life. Yep, I know, nothing new here HOWEVER a competitive game is such a fantastic comparison to life that it bears revisiting. Especially as I have spent the past 20 years of my life being a soccer and aerobic gymnastic mum, and previous to that – a netballer and a soft-baller during my own school years. I KNOW competitive sports in all of its wonderful, crushing, manipulative, climactic and devastating glory.

Let's now look at the game of soccer. You are a wonderfully talented, incredible, gorgeous five year old – the apple of your parents' eyes, turning up for your very first soccer season. You are decked out in your huge socks, your shiny, unscuffed boots and a shirt that hangs to your knees. (Incidentally, I should confess right now that yes, I was one of THOSE mums. You know the type - wearing the wellingtons and faithfully in attendance field-side in all weather right from when my son turned five. Admittedly, this mother-cheerleader role was slightly more fun when we lived in Australia during my son's early years as games would halt as soon as there was a sprinkle of rain – possibly due to the fact that any rain was considered a rare occasion and I think games stopped out of shock. Here in New Zealand, we mums braved rain, hail and blizzards as the games were NEVER cancelled failing the pitch being 2 foot deep under water. Even then I should add, there was great debate.)

But I digress. Back to you - the amazing five year old! Definitely the cutest, most clever, talented child in the pack of fifty odd other five year olds, as anyone would be able to plainly see - right? Naturally your giftedness will be immediately noticed by the coach who will be sure to include you in the top team, just as your parents have told you to expect.

Naturally.

And so it begins. Season after season of having your place and ranking in the world determined by your actions on that one day of selection.

Of having to meet certain performance and behaviour expectations of someone else before you get to do that thing that you really love, which is simply playing the game.

Of having a different coach the very next season, which means that you need to meet a new set of performance and behaviour expectations to please this new gatekeeper to the game that you love to play.

Of having to bear the wrath, disdain and irritation of your fellow team-mates if you have an off day.

Of feeling the pressure of having to perform a certain way, by certain rules or else you are kicked out of the game.

Of feeling on top of the world one day, to top of the crap heap the next.

Of not feeling in control of the elements that affect you as you participate in this game.

Of having your self esteem and worth rise and fall according to your performance, which itself can be impacted by anything from not getting enough sleep the night before, to bad weather, to facing harsh opposition, to having unfair calls made by the referee and so on, and so on.....

Seriously – WHY would you want to put yourself through all this when you are at the mercy of everyone else's whims and rules? When you have no control whatsoever over your own participation in the game that you love and want to play?

EXCEPT that you ARE in control - of the one element that overrules all else.

You are in control of YOURSELF.

It may not feel like it when the opposition are cheating, the referee is acting like a blind man lost in a dark room, your coach is screaming at you and the pitch is muddy and sluggish. But YOU get to choose how you think. How you react. How you feel and most importantly? How you are going to move forward with your participation in the game.

Are you going to hang in there and finish this quarter?

Are you going to take time out to recoup from an injury?

Are you going to spit the dummy and sit out the rest of the season?

Are you going to walk away and start over in a new team?

Are you going to give up playing all together?

So many options! And despite what your feelings might be telling you, (and trust me honey, feelings can be powerful, overwhelming and LYING little gremlins when they want!), you DO have the power to make choices. You have the choice whether or not to weigh up the options wisely and to act rationally and proactively, or instead to react instinctively and irrationally.

Your Game. Your Choice. Your Action.

"But I'm not in control of the game." you say.

Obviously in soccer, there is a hierarchy. Depending on how large the club is, there might be owners, board members, managers, coaches, assistant coaches, strength and conditioning coaches, players, reserves, descending grade and age group teams, social teams, fans and so on. Right from that very first day that you, the excited five year old strapped on your boots and turned up for selections - you became part of a system where your progress is largely determined by the choices of others.

Coach doesn't like you? Chances are you may not make selection to the top team that he coaches, despite your fabulous skills. Referee holds an old grudge against your Dad? You may be in for a rough ride on the field when he looks away and the other team sticks the boot in - literally. Cafeteria lady unhappy with your attitude? Expect a smaller portion of hot chips after you come off the field.

Everyone has an agenda. Period. In soccer and in life. No matter how lovely, friendly or well-meaning someone might be on the surface, the quicker that you understand and accept this fact, means the quicker

that you will learn to master your emotions, and therefore your own choices and responses from a rational, non-reactive place.

Let's look at a common scenario. Is someone putting you down in your workplace? Taking little digs at you and subtly undermining your work and competence? You are feeling hurt, irritated and helpless to control the situation and these feelings are really starting to niggle as you find yourself dwelling on this person and their actions in the middle of the night, when you lay in bed struggling to sleep. You start dreaming of scenarios where you tell your co-worker how you feel in pretty profane language while all of your other co-workers applaud and you find yourself browsing other jobs online during your lunch break and while zoning in front of the TV at night.

Any of this sound familiar?

The obvious response is to address the person directly and talk it out, however this is not always the best first move - particularly if the behaviour is very subtle, and especially if you have not taken the time to think things through thoroughly. A knee-jerk emotional reaction will only hurt one person, regardless of how good it may feel in the moment of venting – and that is YOU. Before erupting, take it down a level or two and ask yourself these questions: What is this person's agenda? What is driving them? Are they threatened by you? Are they annoyed that you are not responding in a certain way to them? What is their motivation for bullying you?

If you can learn to determine a person's agenda, you can then form your reaction to their behaviour from a rational place. You might not be able to control them, but you can control YOUR emotions and responses

and make the choices that will directly affect YOUR life and YOUR participation in the game. Isn't this far more empowering than you simply reacting to someone else and possibly sending yourself to the bench?

Life is full of hierarchies and people who will consider it their job to subjugate you and determine your progress according to their criteria. It may not be as clear cut as knowing the rules of a soccer game, but you WILL run into these people as you journey through life. They may be in your workplace, in your family or amongst your friends. Some may have legitimate reasons for expecting certain performances from you such as in the workplace - but ALL will have their own agendas driving their actions and words towards you. On the surface it will appear that you are at their mercy - that your position and fulfilment in life is determined by how well you understand and meet the expectations these people are holding over you. To a tiny extent, this might be true. But in reality, YOU call the shots in your own life and girl - it is time that you stepped up and did so!

So what can we take home from this chapter?

We are all players in the game of life.

There are rules and hierarchies to be negotiated.

Everyone we interact with has their own agenda.

HOWEVER, WE get to choose how we react, and.....

It is ultimately OUR choice as to whether we are going to fight to be in the centre of the game or be content to be an occasional participant and hide on the bench.

The question is therefore: What are YOU going to choose to do?

YOU HAVE NOT LIVED
TODAY UNTIL YOU
HAVE DONE
SOMETHING FOR
SOMEONE WHO CAN
NEVER REPAY YOU.

JOHN BUNYAN

3. GIVE ME THE SERENITY

There is a very well known prayer that is used by many 12 step programs and this portion is particularly apt:

*God give me the serenity to change the things I can change
and to accept the things I cannot change
and the wisdom to know the difference.*

This might initially sound like a contradiction of the previous chapter. Am I now telling you to give up and accept things as they are? To make yourself comfy on that bench and accept your lot in life?

Absolutely not!

There is so much truth in this little prayer however, and if you are looking for a life motto - it's not a bad one to start with as let's face it – we ALL could use more wisdom in our lives. Right?

Let's unpack things a bit more...

What exactly is “serenity?” To be “serene” is to be content, to be unflappable and to be at ease within one-

self. Notice that the word is talking about you - about how YOU are feeling, and this feeling or state of being is entirely within your grasp. Your circumstances might be awful - but you can still be internally serene. If YOU choose to that is.

Combine this ability to choose serenity with having the wisdom to know the difference between situations that you can and cannot change, and you now have the ability to truly determine your perspective on life and ultimately on how you participate in the game.

Let's look at it this way. You are in a job that you don't really enjoy. The money is okay, the people are okay, the commute is okay. Sound like you? It certainly sounds like many of the folks that I meet every day. Some may have the occasional crisis where they have an obvious horrible situation that they are dealing with such as a nasty boss or a bitchy colleague. Most people however when asked how their work life is, will simply respond with "okay." That bland word that means "I'm not loving it, I'm not passionate about it but I also don't hate it, so I just live with it."

Any one of the factors above may well be the reason why "okay" is enough. Good enough pay, the office is close to home etc.....and if you are incredibly serene and completely okay about work being okay, then God bless you and you enjoy your life. If you are anything like me though, "okay" may cut it for a little while - but it won't take long until that little voice inside you that knows that you were born for a whole lot more starts getting louder and louder.

And that's where the part about "changing the things that I can change" comes in. You can choose to be serene even in the midst of a crappy workplace, but being serene is also not an excuse to park on that bench

and zone out. If you know in your heart that this workplace is where you are called to be despite the crap and that it is the best place for you to be using all of your gifts and talents, then you choose your responses and emotions accordingly and get on with your life.

HOWEVER – even if you are in control of your emotions and serene while in the mess of a crappy workplace – or even in a good one - but you know in your heart of hearts that this is NOT the right place for you - then changes need to be made. Are you going to settle for a life of “okay” and discontent, or are you going to get some fire in your belly and FIGHT for your life?

So I may sound a tad dramatic - but hear me out. Being myself someone who has at times settled for less than they should, trust me when I say that your serene spirit will not last long if you settle for a life of “okay.” Sooner or later you will start waking at night with thoughts of “is there more?” or find yourself looking enviously at other people doing the very thing that you would secretly like to be doing and thinking to yourself “what if?” You may even reach the point that I did some time ago when I broke down at work as I just KNEW that I needed to change my comfortable, safe existence. I had been fighting a growing inner discontent for sometime even though all was well on the surface, and I KNEW that I was not fulfilling what I was truly called to do.

Change can be exciting, but change can also be uncomfortable and downright scary. I’ve made a couple of major location changes in my life, including moving from Perth to Sydney when I was 17, (same country but totally different cultures, especially in the early 1980s), then my husband and I immigrated to New Zealand with our two young children when I was 34. I was so excited at the adventure of both moves, but the reality of the packing and saying goodbye to family and friends was almost overwhelming at times.

Then there was the adaption to the change once the excitement of the honeymoon stage wore off. The mundane tasks of having to find where the grocery store was, organising new doctors and dentists, finding my way around different health systems and school systems etc etc. Dealing with change on a near daily basis for that first 6 months or so was emotionally draining that I battled with depression for quite some time.

Fear of change is one of the main reasons why people settle for lives that are less than what they could have had. Change brings discomfort. It stretches you, it challenges you. You have to face your deepest fears as change doesn't always guarantee success and that's the real kicker. Are you prepared to let go of what is comfortable in your life, of what is "okay" in order to step out and change your situation, so you can reach instead for what your heart knows that you should be doing to take your place in the game?

Even if there is no guarantee of success?

4. BUT I'M NOT GOOD ENOUGH

When I was a music teacher - teaching both classroom music and private instrumental students - there was a phenomenon that I witnessed time and time again. In fact when I was working as a gigging musician myself, this phenomenon became even more apparent: I was often the only female muso in a band of approximately 25 professional musicians. Sure there were female singers and dancers - but 90% of the time - I was the only female playing an instrument.

Ironic really, as when I was teaching, the majority of the kids that I saw learning instruments and REALLY putting the time in to perfect their craft were the girls. When I studied for my degree at Australia's premier music institution, again the majority of my classmates were females. However, when you look at all the bands around doing gigs or videos, what do you see? Most of the musicians are male.

So what gives?

Why is it that I witnessed year after year, gifted young female musicians who were sitting high grades on their instruments, hiding away in the practise rooms afraid to get on stage or perform in public because they weren't "good enough?" I'd then see some young guy rock into class, pick up a guitar, learn 3 chords then go record and perform his 3 chord wonder song everywhere - and do really well with it!

The girls would be so knotted up over their music exams - coming out of their performances in tears, (I'm

talking from personal experience here as well folks!) while the boys would swagger out, not really giving a rip about what their mark was as long as they passed, as they were far more interested in the fact that they had a live gig down the local pub later that afternoon.

I call this “I’m not good enough syndrome,” and let me tell you, I was a card carrying member of this club for many years. It’s still possibly the biggest battle I face in everything that I put my hand to, and I can guarantee that so many women out there are also victims of this syndrome.

You can’t perform in public - who do you think you are? You just aren’t good enough!

You can’t write a book. There are so many better writers out there - who do you think you are kidding?

You can’tinsert what you want to do it this place!...you are simply NOT good enough!

Anyone else relate to this syndrome?

I have been literally crippled by these thoughts over the years. Whenever I wanted to attempt something, that inner voice would shut me down so quickly. Sadly, it didn’t matter that I had a supportive husband and kids, I was - and still am - my own biggest critic.

I could have dozens of people compliment my playing after a performance, and I would still be focussed on the fact that I was a bit off in one section and that so and so was a far better musician than me.

It took me YEARS to get my head around this “I’m not good enough” issue. After all, besides my own inner voice, there were plenty of times when others reinforced it; one huge one being the music tutor I had for the four years that I studied for my degree, whose teaching method was to tell me that I was his worst student ever. Supposedly I was meant to “rise up and prove him wrong,” but all those words did was crush my spirit.

Anyone else relate?

Anyone else had teachers, parents, coaches or tutors tell them how useless they were?

How they would never be good enough?

I can’t recall exactly when the penny dropped that I was proving this tutor wrong in the years after I graduated, (achieving my degree with distinction I should add!). Perhaps it was when I realised that I had been performing, recording, conducting, lecturing and speaking at conferences over the 12 years that stretched between my graduating and immigrating to New Zealand. Perhaps it was when I held the first finished copy of my own solo album in my hand.

Perhaps it was when I finally “GOT IT” that there will ALWAYS be someone better than me.

AND THAT THIS DIDN’T MATTER ONE IOTA AS THERE WAS STILL ROOM FOR ME IN THE WORLD!

Here's a hard truth that you might as well face: someone will ALWAYS be prettier, skinnier, more gifted, wealthier, more privileged, more talented than you.

Got it? Hard news indeed, but you might as well face up to it now.

HOWEVER - does this fact therefore negate YOUR gifts and talents? Does this mean that you are doomed to stay in the rehearsal rooms of life while someone else goes out and does the things that you had hoped to do?

NO WAY GIRL!

Someone else being better than you has NOTHING to do with YOUR voice having a right to be heard as well. We are all individuals, we all have something unique to give, so it is time to throw away the excuse of being "not being good enough" and while we're at it, let's get rid of her evil sister too: "my work isn't perfect enough."

Here's an extreme example for you to think about but hopefully it helps you "get it." Let's say that you are called to be a foster mum. You've always had a heart for children from broken backgrounds and have always wanted to provide a stable and loving environment for them. However, just because there are other incredible foster mums out there, does that mean that you therefore don't bother and the children that you would have given a loving home to miss out?

How silly does that sound? Yet we do it all the time with our other gifts and talents.

Was I the best saxophone player out there? HELL NO!! But I realised that I had my own unique sound to offer and that people were moved time and time again when I played.

Am I the best writer out there? An even BIGGER HELL NO!!! But this is the time in my life where I am saying “stuff it” and having a go anyhow. After all, what have I got to lose? If people don't like how I write, they can stop reading (which I really hope you don't, but you know what I mean!).

What have you been hiding from the world girl? Are you a closet singer? A closet writer? Are you staying in your boring corporate job because it is safe and you are too scared to show the world what you REALLY want to do because deep down you think you are not good enough?

I'm not saying throw all caution to the wind, chuck in the day job with no thought to how you will pay your bills and embark on your dream lifestyle over night.....however..... I AM saying that it is time that you brought that hidden talent of yours into the light and began to nurture it once more. And once you have nurtured it a little, it is time to share it with your world, in all of its imperfect and messy glory.

One more thing - I want you to look at yourself in the mirror. I mean REALLY look - and tell yourself three times “I AM good enough.”

Find this exercise hard to do? Then you'd better make it 5 times.

Every day.

For as long as it takes.

Until you really, truly GET IT. That your voice NEEDS to be heard and has a RIGHT to be heard.

Got it yet?



GIRL ...
THIS IS
YOUR TIME TO
SHINE!

5. I'M NOT WORTHY

“I’m not worthy” is the other nasty little sister to “I’m not good enough” and “my work isn’t perfect enough,” and trust me, she will do her utmost to hold you back from the game of life that you REALLY want to play.

She has certainly had her grubby little paws around my heart many a time. I could be in the flow, doing what I REALLY love, when suddenly, she will hit. For example, right now I’m writing in a quiet house - YES! The family are all out, the fire is lit behind me, the cats are all around and I have a lovely glass of wine alongside. This is absolute bliss for me - yet I will suddenly find myself thinking that I am not worthy of such moments.

When there is such horror and devastation happening in other parts of the world, how dare I enjoy my life? It is almost like survivor’s guilt and I’m sure that some of you will think I’m nuts, but then I also know that others of you will relate. I have a roof over my head, food on my table, a wonderful husband and two great kids - how blessed am I? Yet I feel guilt over that too, when so many of my friends have suffered broken marriages, or are estranged from their kids or desperately trying to feed their families.

There is no easy answer to “I’m not worthy,” because the reality is - I really am NOT worthy! I am not worthy of my safe life any more than the displaced refugee is worthy of their horror filled one. Life IS com-

plicated and it IS unfair. Crap happens to wonderful people, to innocent people and sorrow at some point touches ALL of us.

We ALL aren't worthy of the lives we have - HOWEVER we have a responsibility to LIVE those lives to the fullest.

You can feel crippled with guilt about the poor folks down the road from you OR you can step out and DO something using your talents that in turn helps them. If you can be who you are meant to be, how many other self-doubting, self-loathing people can be encouraged and inspired to be brave and step up to be the person they were always called to be?

Facing "I'm not worthy" head on and acknowledging that fact that no, you AREN'T worthy, HOWEVER you are going to press ahead regardless - takes the power away from that voice in your heart.

You may not DESERVE the life you want - and let's face it, life actually owes us nothing - but you are going to press forward and grab it regardless as you understand that it will not only bring you the satisfaction of knowing that you are in the right place, but that you will be able to make a difference to your world around you.

It's time to tell that inner voice where to go. YOU have a purpose, YOU have a life, YOU have something that the world needs and that is YOU in all of your wonderfully imperfect glory.

Look at the people around you. Your family, your friends, your workmates, the casual acquaintances you

make at the garage, or the dry cleaners, or the local shop - THEY are your world. If you hide away and settle for less, allowing your own insecurities and negativity to cripple you - THEY are the ones who will miss out on so much.

And you know something honey? So will YOU! I know that you don't want to be that old person at the end of their life who looks back and says "I wish I had been braver. I wish that I had tried harder. I wish that I had GOTTEN IN THE GAME."

Step up to the plate. If you know deep down that you are settling for a life that is timid and "safe" then draw a line in the sand today and say "ENOUGH." Determine in your heart now that you are not going to listen to any negative voices any more. They won't go away - trust me on that one - in fact, they may start clamouring louder than ever HOWEVER you are choosing today, right now, to not allow them to touch your spirit or to affect your life any more.

I've always loved the Australian film "Strictly Ballroom" and a particular line that the grandmother says has stuck with me for years:

"A life lived in fear is no life at all."

FREEDOM RINGS WHEN
YOU REALISE YOU
CAN BECOME WHAT
YOU NEVER THOUGHT
YOU COULD BECOME.

RICHIE NORTON

6. IT'S TIME TO GET REAL

Changing your life and stepping up to become an active participant in the REAL game that you were born to play takes a lot of courage.

Firstly, as we have already said, you need to address the negative inner voices. The more that you train your mind not to listen to them, the more that they will fade, becoming like white noise at the back of your brain. They will never truly, completely disappear though, which is why you need to be on your guard, particularly at certain times when you are really stretching yourself to try something new or stepping out of your comfort zone. These are the very times that those voices will SCREAM how useless, afraid and unworthy you are.

But you know better. Right?

When you train a muscle at the gym, you don't make it stronger by avoiding it, but by using it. Again and again and again - until you notice one day that the weights that you used to find so heavy aren't so bad anymore. So what do you do? Do you stay on those weights forever more, and cruise through your workouts from that point on?

No way! You go find heavier ones and you repeat the entire process again and again and again and so on -

until one day, you notice that these heavy ones don't feel so heavy anymore...

Are you getting it? It is the same principle with your thinking. As you reprogram your brain by not acknowledging the negative thoughts and by putting positive thoughts in there instead, you become stronger at keeping the right thinking, even when the situation around you looks bleak. Then one day, you'll notice that even if your situation hasn't changed, you don't FEEL so worn down by it anymore, so you stretch out a bit. You try something new or you expand your area of influence and those feelings come racing back at you again, and this time they bring back up...

Who the hell do you think you are?

There are dozens of people out there more talented than you.

You're making yourself look like a fool.

Why should you get ahead when the rest of your family are struggling?

Do you crumble? Go back to where you were, where you didn't rock the boat - yours or anyone else's? Put your head back down behind the parapet?

Girl - if that is your response every time that life gets tough, or fear grips your heart as you venture into new things - I can tell you now with no shadow of a doubt that you will NEVER be a front line, full time player in your own life. You will instead be the substitute player who spends a bit of time on the field, then

a bit of time on the bench watching as the other players score the goals.

In the movie *“The Holiday,”* (can you tell I love movies?) Kate Winslet is told this profound truth:

“You need to be the leading lady in your own life.”

Doesn't that just sum it all up? How many times have you abdicated that leading role? How many opportunities have come along that you passed on as you didn't feel good enough, brave enough, talented enough or worthy enough to take them?

No more!

Life is short enough as it is and if you are facing midlife - well honey, the clock is ticking. If you are EVER going to put your hand to that secret thing in your heart that you KNOW you were born to do - then GET OVER YOURSELF AND DO IT!

Too harsh? I don't think so.

If we aren't tough with ourselves, if we don't EXPECT ourselves to show up and do the work- even when we are quaking on the inside - then how can we expect to see anything change in our lives?

If you TRULY want to get into the game, into the sweaty, exciting, exhilarating life that you TRULY believe in your heart that you are called to, then....

Just. Start.

It's as simple as that.

START AT THE VERY BEGINNING....
IT'S A VERY GOOD PLACE TO START.
WHEN YOU SPEAK YOU BEGIN
WITH A B C
WHEN YOU SING YOU BEGIN WITH
DOH RAY ME...

THE SOUND OF MUSIC

7. WHAT'S IN YOUR HAND?

So you've been nodding along with everything that I've been saying thus far.

You decided that you are going to be braver.

Bolder.

You are going to step out beyond your comfort zone.

You are going to be truly, authentically you.

But.....there's a slight problem.

"Cat," you say. "I don't actually KNOW what I am meant to be doing!"

You know how to turn up to work, how to be a great mother and run a household, but that "thing?" That deep-down long held "thing" that you know that you want to do? You either have not yet defined it, or you have not yet released it.

I SO know how this feels! I remember asking my university saxophone tutor years ago what was the use in learning an instrument? He was pretty unimpressed with me I can tell you, and even more so when I said that maybe I should have studied something “useful” like medicine.

It is something that I have always wrestled with. Wanting to help people, yet not wanting to lose my creative side that played music, drew pictures and wrote. For many years, I would swing to one side of the pendulum - I would just wanted to perform, create and record, but then I would be drawn back to teaching, coaching and encouraging others in their craft.

I envied people who were “purists,” - people who threw themselves into their craft single-mindedly. I tried so hard to do likewise, putting in up to 3 hours of instrumental practise a day. But I couldn't sustain it, as I was also teaching others and helping run youth groups and doing all manner of other things too.

I loved music, but I loved helping others even more, so I kept a foot in both camps, being a performer and also an educator for many years. Instead of looking elsewhere for how I could help people, I used what was in my hand - my skill as a trained musician. I taught 1-1 and 1-small groups, then eventually founded a training college for young adults, preparing feasibility studies, writing the curriculum, hiring lecturers as well as lecturing myself and providing pastoral care for the students.

My work went so far beyond simply teaching students how to play music and I was in my element, encouraging, mentoring and inspiring these young adults to go out and impact their world.

Once I moved to New Zealand, my time was put into looking after my young children while my husband

travelled the country with his work. I took gigs on the side and threw myself into driving my children all over the city as their involvement in their various sports grew.

I homeschooled the pair of them through their latter years of high school, (there's a whole other story there!) and through that process, my philosophy of learning and education changed. Once my youngest enrolled into university, I knew that I didn't want to go back into the education system and I needed a new challenge. I needed to discover who I was NOW, and to re-enter the work force with not just a "job" but with a cause.

That desire to help others still burned and I surprised my entire family - and really, myself too - when I decided to become a personal trainer.

Long story short, I have been in the fitness industry for seven years now, and I can tell you that the relationships I have forged with my clients go so far beyond instructing them how to perform a certain exercise correctly.

We talk about their families, their jobs, their emotions. We discuss how they are feeling about their husbands in between reps on the chest press, and how sad they are at their child's estrangement while they are on the exercise bike. We celebrate their achievements, mourn their lows and through it all, they get a great workout!

I'm using what I have in my hand - my knowledge of training and my ability to teach - and I'm doing what really fulfils me. I'm helping others by reminding them that they are so much stronger than they think,

both in the gym and in their lives.

So what is in your hand?

It may be a skill that you already possess, or one that you are yet to learn. It may be something that you have up to now considered to be merely a frivolous hobby.

If it is tugging on your heart though, if it is something that you KNOW you are called to share with the world, then girl, I'm telling you that it is time to step up and get into the game. Consider what you hold in your hand and decide how you can use and SHARE it to impact your world.

Are you an artist or are you more practical in your skill set with admin skills? Let me tell you now that BOTH are of value and BOTH can impact the lives of others - if you just let that gift of yours out and let it flow through you.

You weren't born to contain your gifts and talents. They are the part of you that you share with others - and the exciting thing is, that when you do so - you feel joy and fulfilment too. Cool isn't it?

8. BUT I'M TOO OLD

This one REALLY gets my goat! Since when does being older in age equate to having to disappear and having no voice? Sure the heads don't turn anymore when you walk down the street - unless you are with your gorgeous daughter that is, and if you are like me, you then want to go slap the faces of the wolf-whistlers and tell them to stay away from your baby!

But again, I digress.....you may not be the head turning young beauty when you enter a room anymore, but don't let that worry you! It's actually LIBERATING not being noticed for your looks! It is freeing when eyes pass over you, as they search for the young, beautiful thing in the room. You now get to be completely and utterly yourself! You don't have to meet any "beauty-code," you don't even have to adhere to any politically-correct toeing the line crap. It's time for you to be completely and authentically YOU.

If you are already at this place - then well done girl! For many of us though who have spent years conforming to be submissive, non-threatening and non boat-rocking women, this midlife transformation is a huge revelation and can take time to come to grips with.

So I can hear you asking me... "Cat, are you saying that I can have an opinion? And what's more, I can VOICE it, and - even more shocking - there are people out there who will want to HEAR it??"

Absolutely sister! I'm saying that if ever there was a time to speak, paint, write, sing, study or show your truth in whichever medium you choose - NOW is the time to do so! And let's face it, if you don't do it NOW, then when?

You may have noticed that as we get older, the years seem to fly by faster. Summer holidays that used to stretch for ever when we were kids, now race by in the blink of an eye. The longer you wait, putting off that thing that you really want to do - the less chance that you will EVER get around to it.

The longer that you push down your desire to shine, and bury it under an avalanche of "should do's", the less chance that your voice will ever be heard - and those people who were meant to experience your voice / gift / talent? Well, they miss out on your wisdom, your experiences, your STORY.

You want to make a difference in other people's lives honey? Then forget about your age and get your ass into the game pronto. I'm telling you from experience that if you have energy, drive and PASSION, then age is irrelevant. In fact, if anything, the older you are, the more inspiring you can be to those older AND younger than you, so lose that excuse now and get moving.

You have no energy? No drive? No "oomph"? You know what I say to the bodybuilders in our gym who are going on the stage for the first time ever in their tiny suits to be judged by the world?

"Fake it till you make it!"

You want to live your best life, build a healthy, strong body and affect your world? Then you get your ass

out of bed and DO THE WORK regardless of whether you FEEL like it or not!

If you are not a morning person, (and trust me, as a former professional musician who used to get HOME at 3 am, I do NOT relish getting out of bed now at 3.30 am!) set that alarm fifteen minutes earlier each day until you hit the time you need to get up at in order to get everything done in your day. You don't FEEL like a morning person? Well, plaster on that smile and FAKE it honey, until eventually you will realise that you are no longer going through the motions, but that you are now actually DOING it!

I don't CARE if you need seven hours of sleep "now that you are older!" Go to sleep an hour earlier if need be! But when that alarm goes off in the morning, hit that ground running! Ageing is NOT equivalent to slacking off.

I'm going to write that again as I REALLY want you to get this one:

Age is NOT equivalent to slacking off!!

Sure there will be times when you are ill or injured and need to rest, but the majority of the time? You can be pushing towards that thing that you are called to do. Age means NOTHING in regards to self discipline - and without self discipline, you will NEVER achieve what you are truly called to do.

Want to get into that game of life instead of being a spectator? Then STOP using age as an excuse, get your butt out of bed and DO THE WORK!

I SHOW UP. I LISTEN. I TRY
TO LAUGH.

ANNA QUINDLEN (A GUIDE TO A BETTER LIFE)

9. GIVE AND RECEIVE

The older I get, the more that I appreciate other people's stories and viewpoints. I don't always agree with them I should add, but I do appreciate them.

I am an introvert by nature. This may shock some of my face to face clients who see me kicking butts on the gym floor - but after those few hours of extroverting at the gym, you can find me re-energising in my house, writing on my computer while surrounded by cats. (Yes, I am one of those crazy cat ladies that you read about online!)

I appreciate people – I really do, despite my introvert nature. I love my small group of really close friends, and I enjoy the friendships and camaraderie of all of the gym folks that I see in my workplace. The flip side of this however, is that people drain me. My idea of a blissful weekend is one where it is grey and drizzly outside so that I can legitimately stay indoors and do what I love, which is to write and read.

I LOATHE answering the phone, and when I'm home, I hate having to go out again. Some people would think that I am absolutely nuts to live like this, but I've learned what I need to best function, and that is time alone to recharge after the working week.

That said, if I am to make a difference in other people's lives - which is what I truly want to do, and what

I KNOW that I'm called to do - then I obviously need to connect with people. As much as I would often love to completely hide away and let my written words be my only point of contact with people, for me, I know that this isn't enough. I need to hear people's stories in their own voices. See the hurt, fear and desperation in their eyes and be able to hug them or squeeze their arm in compassion.

And you know what? I need to be open to their hearing my story too. To truly connect with people I need to be able to give and also receive from them. Conversation is a two-way street and be it via the written word or via face-to-face contact, I need to allow people to also speak into my life.

Take Mother Theresa for example - we venerate her for the unselfish work that she did amongst the poor and unloved - yet she would be the first to say that SHE was the blessed one because of the people she served.

To TRULY become the person you are called to be, you need to not only find your own voice, but you need to pull down those walls that prevent you from receiving from the people within your life. I'm obviously not telling you to be vulnerable to the naysayers and attackers who will get upset when you begin to rock the status quo by transforming, (and trust me, you WILL meet these people), but I AM saying that you need to keep an open heart to the people in your life. After all, HOW can you help them when you don't understand their needs?

An inability to hear, receive from and have empathy for other people can boil down to you being either too immature or too full of pride to receive from them. Harsh terms indeed, but then why would I start white-washing my words now?

If your pride is preventing you from truly hearing or understanding another person's reality, then who has the problem? I can tell you now that it is not them. Wake up girl! Pride can be such a subtle beast at times, yet it will prevent you from moving ahead in your life and mission. If you are too proud to allow yourself to be vulnerable and open to others, you lose so much. It is one thing to be self assured, it is another altogether to be arrogant and think that you cannot learn from someone else.

You want to find your mission? You want to get back into the centre of your game of life? You want to be the leading lady in your life movie? Then get rid of those things now which will hold you back from learning and experiencing the world from other perspectives.

This all sounds so basic that I almost can't believe that I am writing it however, at the same time I know how pride can prevent you from truly experiencing life. It can hold you back under the guise of wanting things to be perfect, or not really trying so that you don't risk failing.

Well guess what – NO ONE is perfect and we ALL fail at times. So what? So freaking WHAT? Does it mean that you don't ever try? Well if you are so caught up in protecting your damn pride, the answer to that would be "Yes!" Why try when you know deep down that you are going to fail and that people aren't going to like or receive you?

Be open, be vulnerable, be empathetic, be generous in your enthusiasm and acceptance of others' stories and input into your life - just as you would want them to be if the roles were reversed. In receiving from them you learn, you expand your understanding of the world and you are, in turn, built up and encour-

aged in your mission.

And who wouldn't want that?

I can't count how many times that I've heard the phrase "I'm stuck." Be it in regards to exercise and getting fit, to parenting, to relationships, to work - whatever - I don't think I'm out of order in saying that at some stage of life, in some area of life, EVERY woman faces this hurdle of being "stuck".

Being stuck means basically that you are paralysed. You don't know, possibly don't WANT to know or simply can't implement what is needed in order for you to move forward. It's a horrible sensation that can last anywhere from weeks to years - IF YOU LET IT.

10. GET UNSTUCK

I can't count how many times that I've heard the phrase "I'm stuck." Be it in regards to exercise and getting fit, to parenting, to relationships, to work - whatever - I don't think I'm out of order in saying that at some stage of life, in some area of life, EVERY woman faces this hurdle of being "stuck".

Being stuck means basically that you are paralysed. You don't know, possibly don't WANT to know or simply can't implement what is needed in order for you to move forward. It's a horrible sensation that can last anywhere from weeks to years - IF YOU LET IT.

Being "stuck" in your life can lead to all manner of downward spiral thinking and negative behaviours. It can be the forerunner to full blown depression (As a side note here - if do you think you have depression, although some of the tips in this book will help you work through it, PLEASE see your medical practitioner for support) and can cause you to lose YEARS of joy and fulfilment.

I've personally battled being stuck a number of times. After a good walloping of "You're not good enough" and "Who do you think you are?" thinking - the result would almost always be paralysis. After all, what is the point of "having a go" in life, of taking a risk, of putting your name out there, if you are going to be shot down?

Right?

WRONG!

Being stuck or paralysed is just another form of fear - only this time you have allowed the feeling of fear to become a chest-gripping, heart-pounding reality of fear. I'm sure that you've heard it said that one's perception can be stronger than their reality and this is exactly what happens when your own fearful thoughts become so intense that they cause you to stop living the life you truly want to live. Even though logically you can see that there is nothing really to be scared of, your inner thoughts have created a reality that now physically affects you, and this is when you may find that you struggle to get out of bed, to present yourself to the world or to do your work.

The mind is such a powerful thing and dwelling on negative thoughts that question your worth, your talent, your looks, and your abilities will eventually have a physical outcome that reflects in your appearance, your health, your work and your relationships.

When you are in the depths of such negative thinking, it can be hard to simply "snap out of it". The overwhelming desire to hide away from the world cripples you into inertia - and trust me, having been through both burn out and clinical depression in my 30s - I am speaking from experience.

The sheer effort of getting out of bed at that time to look after my young children felt overwhelming and all I wanted to do was stay in bed - day in and day out. I had to resign from my job, (which had been the major contributor to my crashing and burning) was put on strong medication to which my body reacted

negatively and I barely left the house. Life felt bleak, dark and smothering and I am truly grateful for the support of my husband and family at that time, as I barely functioned.

In short, I was completely and utterly stuck.

Things came to a head one day though as I sat and read the side effects on the box of the tablets I was taking. I remember clearly being horrified at what I read and determining that I couldn't keep living this way. In fact, I really was NOT living at all, and that was affecting not only myself, but my husband, my children and my extended family.

Things had to change, and I knew that it was up to me.

I decided that in the same way that you make your child take medicine when they are sick - even if they don't like the taste - I would do the same. My medicine was not pharmaceutical though; it was to do with finding medicine for my soul and force-feeding myself, even when I didn't like the "taste".

I devoured books on positive thinking. On one level I hated them with a passion, those smug people who spoke about thoughts shaping worlds. On the other level, I desperately wanted to experience what they were saying was possible. So I forced myself to keep reading and as I did, a flicker of something began to warm my soul.....Hope.

I took other action too. I have a long history of paying for memberships to gyms that I never attended past the first week. Gyms LOVE folks like me - they never have to look after me as a client, yet I contribute to

their costs faithfully, week in and week out for the length of my contract. Not this time though! My doctor had told me how exercise could be such an effective antidote to depression, releasing endorphins that affect mood and helping the body expend energy to assist the normalisation of sleep patterns.

I was overweight, totally unfit and completely uninterested. HOWEVER, I knew that in order to become “unstuck,” exercise was going to have to become another form of “medicine” that I had to ingest despite the taste. I found a down to earth local gym which ran small group training sessions for ladies and my life changed. I found that the stronger I got, the fitter I felt and the more frequently I attended, not only did my mood improve, but I was actually ENJOYING getting out of the house and meeting these women to train. What’s more, I was starting to FEEL good about myself! As my body slowly changed shape and I could see a bicep appear, I remember feeling so proud of myself.

Long story short, within a few months I had ditched the medications and was feeling strong and empowered enough to face our next huge challenge as a family - emigration.

If I had waited until I “felt” like tackling my issues, I’d probably still be house-bound and bed-ridden today. I had to face up, take full ownership of the fact that I was stuck, and take ACTION to become unstuck. Others could make all sorts of suggestions, but the reality is that NONE of them would have made an iota of difference. It had to be MY decision to take action and in the end, it was MY action that truly made the difference to my getting out of that dark place. All the drugs in the world could not have propelled me forward. They may have helped for a short season to stabilise me and prevent things getting worse, but in regards to getting back into the game of my life, I was the ONLY person who could make that happen.

Which swings the spotlight back on to you, girl. In what part of your life are you stuck? Is it in your career? Your relationships? Your body?

Or is it in ALL of the above? Being stuck in one area can easily lead to you shutting down and abdicating from ALL areas of your life - and there honey you will stay - stuck, frustrated, miserable and feeling like a total failure.

UNLESS - you step back up to that plate and TAKE ACTION.

Your action may involve the smallest thing - simply getting out of bed when your alarm goes off well before midday! It may be meeting with a friend on a weekly basis to check in and be accountable. It may be actually USING that gym membership and not just contributing to the owner's retirement fund, or feeding your mind and soul by reading and listening to positive, motivated speakers who you connect with.

Whichever means you choose - START TODAY! Pick up the phone and make an appointment or lay your gym clothes out and set your alarm for the morning.

YOU are the ONLY person who can TRULY cause you to become unstuck and get back into the fray of your game of life.

IT WAS CHARACTER THAT GOT US OUT OF BED,
COMMITMENT THAT MOVED US INTO ACTION,
AND DISCIPLINE THAT ENABLED US
TO FOLLOW THROUGH.

ZIG ZIGLAR

11. THE VOICES IN YOUR HEAD

I don't know about you, but I have a brain that refuses to turn off. All day - and most nights too as I sleep lightly - my brain seems to bounce from idea to idea. When I do sleep I have the most vivid dreams, which I often recall and ponder over for the next few days.

As well, there is that constant dialogue that goes on between Negative Cat and Positive Cat (you are really getting concerned about my mental well being now aren't you?). Negative Cat drones away constantly, repeating many of the statements that we have already discussed: "You're not good enough. You're not thin enough. You're not clever enough. You're too old. You're not worthy..." yada, yada, yada.....

Boring isn't it? Yet that negative voice is relentless - sometimes being at the forefront of my thoughts, sometimes at the back, and I'll bet that you have the same voice droning away in your head.

Positive Cat obviously is the counter to these thoughts: "Yes, I AM good enough, yes I AM fit and strong, yes I AM clever enough, no I am NOT too old and yes, I AM worthy.....". And so the day-to-day battle rages between the positive and the negative. Some days the positive voice is louder and I feel like I can take on the world. Other days, the negative voice wins out and I want to stay on my couch. Those days are far fewer though, as I have learned an important thing from the actions that I had to put in place during my battle with depression:

SELF-DISCIPLINE.

Without self-discipline, I remain on the side-lines of the game. I have no stamina, no skills, no understanding with which to compete and absolutely NO chance of winning the trophy of “Most Valuable Player” in my own life - a trophy which obviously SHOULD be mine for the taking!

And it is the same for you and your life sweetheart.

Self-discipline is the skill that you build into your life that brings your dreams to fruition. It is the thing that pushes you off that couch and into the gym. It is the force that propels you to read and study and learn when your friends are relaxing and holidaying without a care, and it is the behaviour that causes you to shut down those negative voices in your head and counter them with positive ones again...and again..... and again. As long as it takes - and the reality is, it will take all of your waking days - in order for you to power onto that game field and work your magic and LIVE your life!

You know the key to achieving anything you want in your life? it's doing the work, chipping away at the project over and over and over and over. Until you FINISH it. The self discipline is what takes you back to the task at hand repeatedly to continue this chipping - even when the final outcome seems so far away. It's not based on feelings either - otherwise we'd never get anything done!

My four years at university are a perfect example of self-discipline in action. In fact, to be honest I look back now in astonishment that I hung in there and completed my degree - and I am even more shocked that I was one of the few to receive it with distinction. If I had operated out of my feelings, I would never

had made class. I would have stayed away from every instrumental lesson in order to avoid the hurtful, negative comments of the teacher that I mentioned earlier.

I also would have stayed away whenever it rained. After all, who wants to take a 30 minute bus ride to the train station, to then wait for goodness knows how long to fight the business folks to squeeze into a packed train, to then have to change onto another packed train, to then dismount and walk through the city for a good 20 - 30 minutes to the appropriate lecture room - day in and day out, carrying two large instrument cases and a backpack with your books? Roughly 2 - 2.5 hours commute both ways.

Day in and day out.

Month in and month out.

Year in and year out.

Until I had completed the task at hand which was to get that degree.

Without self-discipline, you can dream and set goals until the cows come home. They will NEVER see the light of day however unless you can discipline yourself to turn up and DO THE WORK!

Day in and day out...

You get my drift.

It's not a "sexy" concept to talk about, and telling women that they need more self-discipline in their lives doesn't tend to make the front cover of the glossy magazines. We are instead so used to be looking for the quick fix or the latest "break-through" easy way to achieve our weight loss or dream job. It's not fun to be told that you need to be working Every. Single. Day.

So where to start? Self-discipline is like any other habit - it is created, then strengthened through daily use until it almost becomes an automatic action. I say "almost" however as there is ALWAYS something that will disrupt self-discipline.

YOU.

I personally get caught up in "bright shiny object" syndrome very easily. Remember how I said that I have an over-active brain that never shuts down? It tends to bounce from idea to idea, then something will catch my eye online, and we are off chasing down that idea. Then something else comes along and I am distracted in another direction. The time when this most happens? When I am trying to write. The actual sitting down at the computer is not the issue - the staying on task and producing the words is.

I've personally started ascribing to the "25 minute rule". I can't even recall where I first read about it, but have found that if I put my phone timer on for 25 minutes, I can cajole myself to stay on task, with the promise that I can check Facebook or whatever else once that 25 minutes is up. I've been known to reset that timer again and again, yet if I had sat down and determined to write solidly for a couple of hours, my

brain would have packed up and left the building within minutes.

When encouraging clients to build self-discipline in regards to exercise, I always suggest that they start by making it as easy for themselves as possible. For instance:

1. Find a gym close to your home or workplace that has easy parking.
2. Set your alarm - in fact, set TWO alarms if you are a heavy sleeper - but do NOT set a snooze alarm. Once your alarm sounds, you need to launch out of bed BEFORE your feelings can tell you otherwise and if you set a snooze - you are giving yourself time to talk yourself out of leaving for the gym. Trust me, I've been left waiting at the gym many a time by clients who pressed that snooze button one too many times.
3. Have your gym clothes / shower gear / work clothes etc all packed the night before. Such an obvious step but you would be amazed at how many clients miss their morning sessions when they can't find their socks or keys in the dark! Preparation is CRITICAL to establishing and maintaining self-discipline.
4. Offer to collect another person to take with you. You have less chance of backing out when someone else is relying on you!
5. CONGRATULATE yourself every time that you complete your workout! I make a point of doing this with every client after every session. The connection of that feeling of success along with the act of having completed the workout will reinforce the behaviour positively and assist you in maintaining your

self discipline the next morning when that alarm goes off and you have to make the same choices all over again.

You can apply this kind of preparation and thinking to any area in your life where you are trying to implement self-discipline in order to achieve a goal, and I KNOW that I will be covering this topic more with lots more tips and hints in one of my next books as there is just SO much to be shared!

Determine now - WHAT are you trying to achieve and WHAT steps do you need to complete in order to do that? Once they are identified, the self-discipline comes into play and YOU are the only one who can make those choices day in and day out. If your goal is THAT important to you, then make the RIGHT decisions that will propel you TOWARDS it.

You are sick of sitting on that bench aren't you? The splinters bite into your backside, the sun beats down on your shoulders and you are seeing moments in the game where you KNOW that you could have made a difference, where YOU could have been the person to take the winning shot at goal.

And it sucks.

This could have been YOUR time to shine, but you chose to remain safe on your bench. You didn't want to risk getting injured, you didn't want to risk getting fouled, you didn't want to risk messing up, you didn't want to risk the embarrassment of being rejected.....and in staying safe, you DID miss taking - and possibly MAKING - the shot on goal.

12. PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

The only person who was - and IS - holding you back from being the starring player in your own game of life is YOU.

“Oh but Cat,” you say. “You know nothing about my circumstances! My boss is horrible. My husband is doesn’t support me. My kids take advantage of me. My life sucks!!”

This all may very well be true. However I still contend that the ONLY person who can change how you respond to your circumstances / your boss / your husband / your kids is YOU. You alone honey hold the power in how you respond to the things that life throws at you.

You ALONE get to determine your thoughts towards both yourself and your circumstances.

You ALONE choose your responses to those people you interact with in life. Others might advise you - but no one is making your mouth move for you! No one is selecting your thoughts and attitudes and actions - YOU do that!

It’s called self-responsibility girl, and if you are going to determine to get off that bench, address the negativity in your head and your life, make positive changes to your outlook and put positive actions into place.....then you need to own up to the fact that the BUCK STOPS WITH YOU!

AN EXERCISE IN SELF-DISCIPLINE



SELECT YOUR GYM

1. Locate a gym close to your home or workplace with great facilities and parking.



SET ALARM

2. Set your alarm for one wake up time **ONLY**. **NO** snooze alarms!



GYM GEAR

3. Have your gym clothes and shoes laid out, your shower bag packed, your drink bottle, towel, entry card and car-keys ready to go.



TAKE A FRIEND

4. Offer to collect your friend on the way.



CONGRATULATIONS

5. Pat yourself on the back - you did it!! Now get prepare to do it all again tomorrow :)

I AM.
TWO OF THE MOST POWERFUL
WORDS;
FOR WHAT YOU PUT AFTER
THEM
SHAPES YOUR REALITY.

I know - NOT a new concept by any means - but one that is very rarely discussed. I'm just as guilty as the next person in looking outward for excuses to explain my thinking and my actions: "my husband upset me with a harsh comment so I ate that block of chocolate as I was so hurt, and now I feel fat." Then all of our well meaning but enabling girlfriends soothe our guilt by assuring us that "all men are bastards...it wasn't your fault....you poor thing...." etc etc.

Does this victim thinking with its consequent actions propel you towards the life that you want? To be a fit, healthy woman with a hot body? Or are you simply finding ways to excuse the fact that you have settled for less?

Did your husband tell you to eat that chocolate? Hell no! You chose that action yourself, so live with the consequence of your choice and don't complain. Do I sound uncaring? Perhaps, but I have heard COUNT-LESS women in the gym over the years tell me how much they hate being overweight, then two days later, tell me the very same scenario as above, while crying even more that they hate their size and moaning that they don't understand why the scale doesn't move.

ENOUGH ALREADY!

It is time to grow up honey. It is time to acknowledge that the REAL person that is holding you back from being the star player in your own life is YOU, and it is time to take FULL responsibility for your own thoughts and your own actions.

I have nothing but respect for the client who comes back into the gym after the weekend and says “well, I blew my eating goals for this weekend. I had an event to go to, and instead of pre-planning, I couldn’t be bothered and I ate a ton of crap. I feel bloated and yuck today but it was my fault so let’s get on with it.”

Life happens and you are never going to be 100% perfect in whatever goals you are aiming for. However, if you can quickly step up and take responsibility when you have screwed up, acknowledging where you went wrong and what you could have done instead - then the chances of you doing better next time are almost guaranteed.

Or you can simply continue being the victim. Blaming every situation and every other person for where you are at, and staying in that place even though you are unhappy.

Your life.

Your choice.

It’s now or never honey. You can choose to remain a captive to the thoughts in your own head, or you can choose today to get back into the game of your life as the starring player - and here is a practical way that you can start: All of those negative voices that we have mentioned? You can begin to counter them and the best way to do this is through making “I AM” statements.

I AM

Two of the most powerful words;
For what you put after them
Shapes your Reality.

(unknown)

Feeling useless?

I AM CAPABLE!

Feeling fat and unfit?

I AM HEALTHY, LEAN AND STRONG!

Feeling unloved?

I AM LOVABLE!

Feeling frightened?

I AM BRAVE!

Get the idea? Begin shaping your reality with your words - REGARDLESS of how you are feeling. I know of many successful people who from the outside, look like they have it all together, yet they too strengthen themselves every morning without fail through their “I AM” statements.

The exciting thing is that the more you affirm yourself with these statements, the more that you will believe them on a subconscious level and soon start to walk in them on a conscious level. Your “I AM” statements become the truth that you can hold on to when your emotions are telling you otherwise, or when circumstances arise that would normally cause you to crumble and retreat from life.

Your “I AM” statements birth and shape your reality, just as powerfully - if not more so - that your negative thinking once did, and what’s more, as your actions are shaped by your thinking, no longer will they be self-sabotaging and negative, but positive and in alignment with the life that you TRULY want to lead.

You’ll not only be back in the game honey, but now you will be playing the game of YOUR choosing instead of the one that you simply find yourself thrown into.

You’ll be in charge of your own words and responses, and you will be the one CHOOSING to take positive action that transforms your thinking, your actions and ultimately, your life.

Get off that bench girl.

It's YOUR time now to get over yourself and FULLY into the game.

CAT xx

CAT COLUCCIO

EMPOWERING WOMEN TO ROCK THEIR MIDLIFE

I get excited when I see midlife women empowered, motivated, and living fulfilled, purposeful lives. Regardless of whether they are in the same career they have always been in, or are completely reinventing their lives – seeing them thrive and make an impact in their world fills me with joy.

For many girls though, the journey through midlife can be a frightening roller coaster ride full of rampant emotions, hormones, and life changes. This is where I can help, by providing you with the encouragement, support and motivation you need to fully ROCK your Midlife to the fullest!”

Let’s connect! I love meeting new women who are determined not to settle for simply “growing older and disappearing!” Find me at www.catcoluccio.co.nz where you will be kept up to date with online and in-person events and workshops designed to encourage you to ROCK your midlife!

CAT xx

LET'S CONNECT



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Cat Coluccio
*rocking
midlife*