



**DEBRA B. TAYLOR**  
Career/Personal Coach

**Discover Your Light** specializes in empowering professionals, small business owners and parents to design and lead careers and lives they truly love.

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- Career coaching
- Personal coaching
- Support for families dealing with mental illness
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- Laser coaching: Get Unstuck Now!

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- Work smarter
- Accomplish goals
- Reduce stress
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- Fulfillment & joy
- Life/work balance

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A certified career/life coach, and former hospital administrator with 20+ years of strategic planning and facilitation experience, Debra will support you in clarifying and achieving what matters most.

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# DISCOVER YOUR LIGHT

Your Career - Your Life: Take Charge!

**INSPIRATIONAL TIPS  
FOR FULFILLING LIVES**  
from Debra B. Taylor  
MHA, CPCC

## Optimizing Your Life Energy

**A**s the author of more than 30 books, including the bestselling series *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff*, Dr. Richard Carlson helped millions of people create lives of greater peace, connection and caring by focusing on the more important things in life. The last chapter of one of his books is titled "Live This Day As If It Might Be Your Last. It Might Be!" Ironically and sadly, Carlson died unexpectedly at age 45 on a plane flight to New York.

*How better to drive home his point?*

We really don't know how long we have in this life. Yet, we spend so much of our life energy mulling over what's in the past or worrying about what the future holds. We get caught up in the minutia of life, losing sight of the bigger picture of what's actually important.

How much energy would we free up by living more in the now? How can we optimize the time we have? Here are some ideas:

**Clarify your values and create a personal mission statement.** The clearer you are about what's deeply important to you (your values) and who you are at your core, the more likely you will succeed in living your life "on purpose." Your mission statement is the guidepost for knowing if you're going in the right direction and provides information to put you back on course if you're not acting in alignment with your values and mission.

**Let the past be in the past.** How often do you spend living in the past? Do you re-live old memories over and over, or think of clever things you should have said? Do you wish things were like they were in the "good ol' days?" Whether it's letting go of your anger at the driver who cut you off just this morning, or regretting the loss of your first love, living in the past keeps you from fully experiencing your life right here, right now.

**Release worrying about the future.** Mark Twain said, "I have been through some terrible things in my life, some of which actually happened." So much of what we worry about never happens, yet we spend countless hours and huge amounts of energy battling future problems. Notice how much time you spend in the future and gently remind yourself to return to the present. What action can you take right now that will move you forward?

**Keep things in perspective.** It's usually our attachment to things being a certain way that leads to frustration. Practice accepting "what is" if you want to experience a greater sense of peace. Everything that happens is our teacher. We might not have chosen each of our lessons, and don't necessarily have to enjoy them; however, if we choose the perspective that things happen "for us" and not "to us," life will be a much more growth-filled, joyous ride! ●

## Top 10 Ways to Chase the Winter Blues

*Winter Blues can color our mood and give us a touch of seasonal heaviness. Symptoms may include feeling a little sad, experiencing a lack of energy, boredom and maybe some loneliness. Following are 10 ways to relieve those Winter Blues.*

1. **Exercise** regularly and maintain a healthy diet.
2. **Keep** a regular sleep schedule.
3. **Treat yourself.** Get a massage, play a round of golf, attend a concert.
4. **Take a vacation.** Even weekends away can help.
5. **Make dates** for special occasions with friends and family.

6. **Laugh!** It's the funnest cure for blues any time.

7. **Tackle a project** you've been meaning to do, even if you can do only a bit at a time.

8. **Participate** in activities that enhance your spiritual well-being.

9. **Volunteer.** Give something of yourself to others.

10. **Do something creative.** Make art. Paint a room. Take dance lessons.

*The good news is that the Winter Blues will pass. However, if you're ready to get a fresh and empowered start on the New Year and would like some support in making uplifting choices, don't hesitate to call. ●*

DISCOVER YOUR LIGHT

# Self-Quiz How Well Do You Fulfill Your Basic Needs?

Humanist psychologist Abraham Maslow realized that the foundation for physical and psychological wellness had to do with getting certain needs met. He developed the "Hierarchy of Needs," from which the following quiz is adapted. Take the Self-Quiz to determine how well your basic and growth needs are being met.

True False **Physical**

- I get adequate sleep and rest.
- My basic nutritional needs are met.
- I have a place to live that provides warmth and shelter, and I am physically comfortable.
- Exercise and recreation needs are met through regular routines and planned activities.
- My need for sexual expression is fulfilled.

**Safety and Security**

- With few exceptions, I feel secure and safe from harm.
- There is adequate stability and routine in my life.
- I can expect consistency and fairness in my daily life.
- My need for meaningful work is fulfilled.

**Love and Belonging**

- I feel loved—important, wanted, valued and desirable.
- I am able to love myself as well as others.
- I have close intimate or affectionate relationships.

- I have a sense of belonging in my family.
- I have a few very close friends and a larger circle of other friends and associates.
- I am involved in communities, such as clubs, teams, or spiritual, cultural or professional groups.
- Though I am sometimes alone, I don't often experience loneliness.

**Esteem of Self and Esteem of Others**

- Most of the time I feel up to the rigors of day-to-day life.
- I trust my opinions, thoughts, ideas and intuition.
- My self-care includes physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual aspects of my life.
- I feel useful, that I make valuable contributions to others.
- I feel respected and appreciated by others.

**Self-Actualization**

- I am able to take risks and meet new challenges.
- I experience peace and well-being most of the time.
- My deepest desires are being realized.

Being self-actualized does not mean that everything is ideal, but if you answered True more than False, you are well along the way in your commitment to your personal growth. If you'd like to enhance any of these areas of your life, please do not hesitate to call. ●



What support do you need to get to the next level, whatever that is for you?

## Relevant Reading

*Simple-ology: The Simple Science of Getting What You Want*, by Mark Joyner

*The Best Year of Your Life: Dream It, Plan It, Live It*, by Debbie Ford

*The Biology of Belief: Unleashing the Power of Consciousness, Matter and Miracles*, by Bruce H. Lipton

*The Renaissance Soul: Life Design for People with Too Many Passions to Pick Just One*, by Margaret Lobenstine

*Ask and It Is Given: Learning to Manifest Your Desires*, by Esther and Jerry Hicks

*The Food and Feelings Workbook: A Full-Course Meal on Emotional Health*, by Karen R. Koenig

***“People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are. I don’t believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and, if they can’t find them, make them.”***

—George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) Irish Playwright

# Give Your Relationship a Tune-Up

**B**uy a car and you get a wonderful machine, ready to go for thousands of miles and, likely, many years. You also get a hefty owner's manual with operating instructions and lots of written reminders for yearly check-ups and tune-ups. Chances are you'll have several years of warranty. And, of course, if something is seriously wrong, you can take it back.

Find a partner—and you're on your own. There is no owner's manual. No operating instructions, warranty or guarantees for the road ahead.

"Think about it: the requirements for a driver's license are tenfold the requirements for a marriage license," writes Phil McGraw, Ph.D., in his book *Relationship Rescue*. He adds, "The very society that has taught you that it is good and right and natural to share your life with another person...never bothered to teach you how to do that."

Most of us can do without a car if need be, but few of us want to do without love. Within most of us there is a basic human longing for connection and relationships with others.

For many, the backdrop of a loving, committed relationship gives us the space to learn about ourselves and grow deeper as we age.

Like cars, relationships need maintaining and regular tune-ups. But because they don't come with operating instructions, below is a simple maintenance guide to help you keep your love relationship strong, healthy and on the road for years.

## Know What Kind of Driver You Are

Recent research has shown that several things strengthen a marriage and other long-term partnerships: communication, honesty and spending time together. Just as important is knowing yourself and what you bring to a relationship. When you connect with yourself, and work on those challenging parts of yourself, you create a stronger and better partner for someone else. That isn't just true in the first flush of falling in love, it's true for the many years that follow. "Being intimate with ourselves is the necessary foundation for being intimate with others," writes John Amodeo in *Being Intimate: A Guide to Successful Relationships*.

## It's Not Always the Other Driver's Fault

Taking responsibility for your feelings and your actions is one of the greatest gifts you can bring to a relationship. You know that "other guy" who's the worst driver on the road? That just might be you. Own up to what's yours, and be clear with your

partner about what you're feeling or needing. Try not to make your problems their fault.

## Watch the Warning Lights

Cars give us little signs that something is wrong—perhaps the wheels are out of alignment or the oil light goes on. Our partners or spouses also send little warning signs that something is not quite right, and it's better to deal with the problems in the early stages, so that everything is in good working order, should crisis hit. After all, when another car pulls out in front of you, that's not the time to wonder if you had the brakes checked.

## A Wash and Wax Doesn't Hurt

Staying with the car/driver metaphor, are you a road hog? An impatient and irritable driver? Do you refuse to let someone into line during traffic or lean too heavily on your horn? Try a little tenderness. Sometimes we treat people we don't know a lot better than the ones we've lived with for years, and we forget simple courtesies: a loving tone, a touch, a word of appreciation.

## Accept the Little Dents and Scratches

Even the "perfect" car turns out to have quirks and challenges. So do our partners—those "perfect" people we fell in love with once upon a time. Before you get angry, decide which issues are worth pursuing, and let the rest go.

## Bless This Car

How many of us are grateful for this metal conglomeration of thousands of parts that somehow work together to take us where we want to go? The same goes for our love relationships. Stop, turn off the ignition and take a moment to be grateful for your spouse or partner and the love you both share.

## Get Help Before the Engine Fails

Like a car, you can fix many of the small problems in a relationship by yourself. But sometimes that ominous clanking under the hood is a signal that something is seriously wrong and a quick fix won't work. That's when it's time to find a "relationship mechanic," someone who will help you diagnose what's wrong, and guide you in getting your relationship back on the road.

A relationship with another human being is so much more complex than owning a car. So, too, is the work required to keep a long-term relationship vibrant, passionate and strong. In the end, maintaining something that enriches us is surely worth the investment. ●

## BEYOND the Box

*The following questions are designed to broaden perspectives, to open vistas, to widen the lens. There is no one right way to approach them. You can journal about them, talk to friends, create art, ponder them while driving or working out, dance them—whatever helps you explore "outside the box."*

1. What if today or tomorrow were my last day?
2. How important will all this be in 100 years? 10 years? 5? 1?
3. What is my mission here? How well am I living it?
4. What's my relationship with the past? The future? The present?
5. How can I best utilize the energy of wintertime?
6. Which area of "needs" would it best serve me to focus on meeting?
7. What's my relationship with belonging?
8. What kind of (relationship) driver am I?
9. What needs "tuning up" in my relationship?
10. What signals am I getting from my partner?
11. How invested am I in being "normal"—or in NOT being "normal"?
12. What does being "normal" cost me?
14. How am I judging myself? Others?
15. What can I celebrate about me? About others?



## “Normal” Is a Very Big Playing Field

Harold likes to take his drum to the park, where he wails and beats on it in solitude.

Susan talks to her grandmother’s ghost.

Jamie has 60 potted plants around her house—all in purple pots.

Is there something wrong with these people? Are they normal?

Most of us live with an internal struggle. Each of us yearns to be different, special, an individual. At the same time, we don’t want to lean too far out of the tree—we also want to fit in, be accepted...be normal.

But what does it mean to be normal? Even experts struggle with the word; reference books use words such as “usual” and “not ill” and “conforming to a cultural norm.” However, what is usual to one group of people—tattooing, to give one example—may be completely weird and repulsive to another group. Does that make it normal or abnormal?

The real danger comes with labels—the ones we put on each other and ourselves. People who don’t fit in are often labeled as abnormal or different, and that stigma can eat into their feelings of self-worth and belonging. Our culture, with its narrow definitions and media depictions of the “right” way to be, doesn’t help.



We harm ourselves when we agonize that something we feel, believe in, dream about or just wear on our bodies is not normal, or when we feel shame and hide things. Normal is a very big playing field and most of us fit somewhere on that field.

Still, we worry about being normal. *Is it normal to sleep 12 hours instead of eight? Is it normal for my five-year-old son to dress in high heels and a pink tutu? Is it normal to grieve a loved one for years? Is it normal to be happy so much of the time? Am I at a normal weight? Is it normal to want to be alone a lot? Is it normal to spend hours on the computer? Is it normal to be afraid of dogs? Is it normal to be the only person crying in a movie theater when everyone else is laughing?*

We limit ourselves when we try to fit ourselves into a box labeled “normal.” It can be an awfully unimaginative, stifling, boring place to be. In trying to be normal or to fit in, we may shut down those parts of us that define who we really are. What if, rather than being something we want to change, NOT being “normal” is something to aspire to?

You may be different from most people you know, your behavior may even be a little strange in some areas—but most likely, you are as “normal” as the rest of us. So take a deep breath and celebrate what is unique about you. ●

—Po Bronson, author, Fast Company

*“Most of us don’t get epiphanies. We only get a whisper—a faint urge. That’s it. That’s the call. It’s up to you to do the work of discovery, to connect it to an answer.”*

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