

"By reputation, Christine is the woman you want to partner with."
—*Newsweek*

RULES FOR RENEGADES

how to
make more **money**,
rock your **career**,
and revel in your
individuality

CHRISTINE
COMAFORD-LYNCH

Dear Reader,

Do you want to have an exceptional career *and* a fulfilling personal life? Do you want to be successful at work *and* retain your individuality? Renegades are people with the passion to improve the status quo and the commitment to follow through—in unconventional ways if required. Renegades are innovators, risk takers, trailblazers. To succeed as a renegade, you need rules. Corporations have paid me millions to teach them these rules. This book excerpt offers the first of the ten Rules for Renegades.

The Rules for Renegades enabled me to retire within ten years of discovering them. But the phone kept ringing and the emails kept stuffing my inbox. People kept asking how they too could get more power and prosperity without sacrificing themselves on the altar of success. They thought with a background as varied and unusual as mine--and a track record as substantial--maybe I'd share some insights. They were right. As a seasoned entrepreneur and a consultant to 300 small businesses and 700 of the Fortune 1000, I've helped renegades thrive in both settings. Now I'll do the same for you.

So, my fellow renegade, let's get started.

Christine



To order *Rules for Renegades*, please visit www.RulesForRenegades.com.

To book Christine for your next corporate event, or to inquire about consulting services, please call 707 255 6246 or email Contact@RulesForRenegades.com.

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I'm in my forties. My memory isn't what it used to be. Some of the dates I've stated may be off by a few months or even a year. Except for the famous people, most other names have been changed, along with some identifying characteristics in a few cases. In the event that a living person actually does resemble one of the non-famous people I mention in this book, that's one heck of a coincidence, and not what I intended. For brevity, there are a few composite characters. The advice, ideas, and techniques in this book have worked for me. They may not work for you. I trust you understand that.

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Preface

You're a renegade—you have a level of passion and commitment that others don't. You're apt to break the rules that are blocking you from getting things done. You're a renegade because you want to build something great, have a fulfilling career, and not be required to sacrifice yourself on the altar of success. Whether you are (or want to be) an entrepreneur leading your own company or an intrapreneur within someone else's, whether the company is large or small, for profit or not, it doesn't matter. Maybe you're even returning to the workforce or heading into it for the first time. I know how it feels because I was a renegade too, whether I knew it or not.

My journey into the world of business never bulleted down the express lane. At age 16 I ran away to New York City to become a model. Six months later I talked my way into college without a high school diploma. Neither New York's fashion scene nor academia satisfied my yearning to make a difference in the world, so I became a Buddhist monk. At 24 I broke my vows. At 25 I got a burger, a boyfriend, and a bottom-rung job at Microsoft. I embraced my inner geek, but I also figured that the way to make my mark and help others was to start building companies. At 27 I decided to become a millionaire. Ten years later, I had made over \$10 million and given \$3 million of it away to assorted nonprofits. At 40 I retired, having consulted to 700 companies in the Fortune 1000 and hundreds of small

businesses, created over 5,000 jobs, found the man of my dreams, got married, and became a step-mom to an incredible son.

Sounds fantastic, right? That's the stuff for the front page of the résumé. Here's the stuff that isn't exactly front-page news: I also screwed up royally. Lots of times. I lost sight of the good intentions that sent me into business in the first place. I gave power over my life away to other people again and again, letting them decide whether I was worthy enough. I chased after impossible standards of beauty, bleaching my dark hair blonde so aggressively that it broke off at the roots and I had to wear a wig for eight months. I fell in with a cult and almost ruined my hard-won reputation and business career digging myself out. I was so busy expanding my Rolodex that I blew off a bunch of great friends. I turned myself into such a molar-grinding, burned-out ball of anxiety that I needed a facelift at age 38 and had to have all my teeth recapped at age 42. Oh, and did I mention that I made a little business mistake that cost me \$8 million? It took some major wake-up calls—including, sadly, helping to care for my dying father—to get me back to the necessary work of reclaiming my life's purpose.

Today, at age 44, I'm still a work in progress. I've rejoined the workforce with a job that feeds my soul: I help accelerate businesses, big and small, by showing people how to develop their inner entrepreneur. I write, deliver seminars and speeches, and am an active volunteer. I still mess up, but I do it less often and with a broader perspective.

Your path is different from mine, but I'm guessing we have some things in common. You want a fabulous life and career—maybe you have a vision that you want to make into a reality. You want to succeed without totally sacrificing your personal life. I wrote this book for you. Depending on where you are in your career, you may need what's in some of these chapters more immediately than others. Read them in the order you want. Ultimately you'll want to read them all, because there's something in every chapter that will be helpful. And if you skip some, you'll miss a lot of good stories.

This book is the distillation of what I've learned as I've succeeded (and failed) in business, built strong, loving relationships (and some disasters), and evolved in my spiritual life. I didn't start with any advantages—mega-brains, status, or money, for instance—so if I did it, anyone can. If you simply want to become financially independent, this book can help. If you want a meaningful life full of rich connections, this book can help. If you want to integrate spirituality with your work, this book can help. If you want to have more self-confidence and self-esteem, I can help. If you want perfectly toned abs, killer buns, and thinner thighs in 30 days, sorry, this book can't help.

My plan was to show you how exhilarating and creative and kick-butt business can be by telling you a lot of funny stories about my career, so you could laugh and gasp as you read about the total triumphs and absolute train wrecks I've presided over. There's a lot to learn from both. But as I mulled over my life as an entrepreneur, I realized that there was a bigger story to tell—the hard-won

wisdom that emerges from building a fulfilling life while rocking your career.

I'm guessing you love freebies as much as I do. I'll always treasure my hand towels from the White House (okay, maybe they didn't exactly *give* them to me). So I've filled this book with lots of cool free stuff: links to a sample business plan outline, tutorials on sales and marketing techniques, tools to help you build your own power and deal with rejection, and much, much more.

I hope you'll learn from my stories that the return on the investment in your career and life is worth ten times the cost. You'll gain power, courage, confidence, and optimism. You'll know that whatever challenges come your way, you'll emerge triumphant. You'll thrive, not simply survive. Okay, renegade, let's rock.

Christine Comaford-Lynch

Rule 1

Everything's an Illusion, So Pick One That's Empowering

Pulling a Company Out of Thin Air and Making a Few Million

Reality is merely an illusion, albeit a very persistent one.

Albert Einstein

Renegades design the right reality—both for themselves and for their company. But what is reality? Are you sure? When I began my study of human potential in my teens, one of the oft-repeated refrains was the concept that everything is an illusion. I remember thinking, Heck, if that's true, I can be anything!" When I say "illusion," I don't mean that everything is fake, like the *Matrix* world. I just mean that our lives are things we create ourselves by the way we think and feel. Shakespeare knew it too: "Nothing is but thinking makes it so." We create illusions every minute of every day at every stage of our lives. These illusions can be positive or negative, growth inducing or destructive. Only when we recognize our propensity to

create our own reality can we do it consciously, fostering happy, progressive illusions instead of unhappy ones that hold us back.

Snap judgments happen all the time. You make them about others; others make them about you. First we need to change the judgments we make about ourselves. Then we need to take on the judgments of others. We won't always be able to change them, but we will be able to apply our influence by offering others a more positive impression. Remember that our self-definition is an illusion—and often a rigid one.

Sometimes I've been totally psyched out by a new role I wanted to take. I've wrestled with self-doubt. *I don't have what it takes, I don't know the right people, I'm poor, I'm scared, I'm unpopular, I'm dweeby and lack social graces . . .* Do any of these sound familiar? This is fostering destructive illusions. Here's what I've learned: you will stay small, and your life will stay small, until you drop all that emotional baggage. Dumping baggage is hard work, and I don't want to minimize the challenge. Please forgive me if I proceed to give you a compassionate kick in the pants. I wasted a lot of time and energy battling these demons and would like to spare you the same suffering. Dump your baggage; abandon your destructive illusions. If you want to race toward your dreams, it helps to travel light.

Like most people's childhoods, mine wasn't perfect. When my dad told me that he wished I'd been a boy, and that as a girl I wasn't smart or pretty enough, I took it to heart, I embraced this destructive illusion, morphing by

turns into a controller, rescuer, and manager. I was obsessed with proving my worth so I wouldn't get tossed out of the boat. It took me decades to figure out how to reframe things; my dad's criticisms were my motivation to find my own value, to convert pain to action to results. To a great extent, my self-sufficiency and skills for motivating others were born from my dad labeling me as deficient. I had to find my own worth, bring it forth, and show myself I had more value than I'd been told. And as I did, something supercool happened: over time I realized that my father didn't mean to discourage me at all—his intention was to toughen me up, to prepare me for the world. Eventually my father became a trusted advisor. *More often than not, our destructive illusions can be turned into something empowering.*

I believe that when we're born, we're all given exactly one unit of self-worth. No more, no less. No one can take it away; no one can add to it. Sometimes, though, we've forgotten we have it, and we need to recover it. Self-worth is a story, just like feeling unworthy is. So go ahead and declare yourself worthy. It's all an illusion anyway.

Twilight of the Dark Lord

The Human Resource Junior Executive. I'm sure you've run into this prototype. We have them at Microsoft, and the most tricky one has been a guy I'll call "Dick." Don't let his 20-something preppy look fool you. Beneath his navy jacket and khaki pants, beneath his Nordic beauty, he behaves as if

he's the Dark Overlord of HR. But try as he may to wield his positional power over us, we contractors know we're 20 percent of the engineering workforce. He needs us.

When I pass him in the hallway, Dick greets me with my e-mail address, stressing my temporary status. "Hello, t dash chris c." His superior stance, his puppy snarl, his tiny bared teeth seem to say, "You may be here, but you're temporary: your e-mail starts with 't dash.'" Never mind that we share the fridge with the permanent employees, enjoy the eight different flavors of free juice, six varieties of free milk—the "t-" defines our rank.

Microsoft has hundreds of independent contractors—in programming, software testing, you name it. Many of us have worked here for years, and as defined by the IRS, we're actually employees. This means Microsoft should have been withholding taxes for us, but it hasn't. So the IRS is pissed off. Big time. They've hit Microsoft hard. It's 1989, and in Berlin the Wall is tumbling down; in Redmond, Washington, Microsoft's HR department is tottering too. I like when things are falling down, because if you move fast, you can grab something good.

Dick has summoned us contractors to the conference room for a mandatory meeting. "Attention . . . attention everyone, let's begin." Most of us continue softly talking, so Dick clears his throat and cranks up his volume. "At Microsoft, our policy is to employ top talent." Dick stands at the podium and nods at

two young guys in blue suits standing to his right. “And if that talent won’t be an employee, we’ve let it be an independent contractor. Until now.” He pauses for impact, hoping the crowd of 300 will hold its collective breath, but our conversations continue. Dick’s face is burning red. He hates that we don’t respect him. “Bottom line, somebody needs to pay your taxes. To make sure that happens, you must become employees. Pronto.”

The last thing we want is to be employees. We work for ourselves. We’re making major bank here, clocking full pay for our 80-plus hours a week, making three times what the salaried employees make. Okay, so we don’t have stock options or health benefits, but this company has been public for only a few years—it’s still super-risky. Cash over Microsoft stock options? Any day. I may be young, but I’m not *stupid*.

“If you don’t want to be a Microsoft employee—and I don’t know who would pass up the opportunity—then Volt Technical Services will employ you.” He nods to the two blue suits. They leer at us like hungry wolves. Why be pimped by a massive job shop? They’ll take a huge cut from our paychecks for the “service” of withholding our income taxes. I’d rather service myself, thanks.

My former officemate, Dan, is next to me. He leans toward me, looks up through his stringy brown hair, fluorescent lights reflecting in his granny glasses. “Hey—,” he says, “These Volt guys—they’re

going to make a mint. Just for writing checks and withholding taxes.”

I scan the room, doing the mental math. About 300 contractors, with an average margin of maybe \$10 per hour—*whoa!*—that’s \$3,000 per hour in gross profits, \$24,000 per day, just for handling payroll and income tax reports. No wonder the Volt guys are licking their chops. Payroll . . . *hmm* . . . How hard can that be? I could probably figure it out. And if I can’t, Dad can. Yeah, I could work at Microsoft by day, and run a contracting firm by night.

I hoist my hand up, start waving. “Hey, Dick. Dick, I have a company.” I rise. “I’ll employ everyone.” Dick’s chilly blue eyes freeze. They’re all looking at me: the scrappy contractors, the suits from Volt, Dick; they’re all staring. They’re all silent. Dick’s eyes try to push me back into my seat, try to pull the air from my lungs. He’s attempting to use the dark powers he thinks he has. I activate my deflector shield, an inside joke we engineers have, by pressing the right front belt loop on my jeans. Dan does the same, whispering, “Deflector shield activated!”

“Plus,” I continue, “my firm takes a smaller cut of the employee’s paycheck than Volt.” My *firm*? *What* firm? As soon as this meeting ends I’ll call 1-800-INCORPU and set one up. Volt’s cut? Don’t know how high it is, but I’m going to undercut it. In business that’s called a *differentiator*. I read about it in *Inc.* magazine. I feel the folded magazine press against my back pocket, pushing me forward.

Turning, waiting, I gaze into the faces of the mostly male crowd. *C'mon, I think. Come with me. I have a better deal for you. C'mon.* Slowly, a few faces start to spark. They shine with the recognition that they are needed here, that they have a choice. "A chick boss?" "In what division?" The whispers start, and then amplify, multiply. "Software engineer or marketing babe? Better deal than Volt's?"

Dick twists his face, turns to me. "Well, that's an, uh, *interesting* proposal, Christine." He hates that I'm the first female contractor in the Operating Systems division. He hates that I have no degrees—not high school, not college. He hates me for tainting the Microsoft gene pool, the pool that was pristine and overflowing with Ivy League talent until I showed up. He hates that the contractors are considering me.

"Quiet down, everyone," Dick commands. No one hears him. The whispering has flared into talking, and 300 voices make a lot of noise, 300 voices generate a power that is palpable, so glaring you can feel the heat. "Everyone, everyone, listen up." The room is roaring. A tiny bead of sweat slides down Dick's crimson face. "Everyone, everyone ... SHUT UP!" Dick shouts.

Affirmative, I think. This guy is unstable biomatter.

The two Volt guys are looking out at the crowd, shaking their heads, loosening their ties.

"So, everyone, go with Volt," Dick sputters.

I stand up, turn, and scan the crowd, making sure

they see me. Me, their other option. Me, their Plan B.

“Oh, for Chrissakes,” Dick says, his top lip curling, “or go with Christine’s company. But become an employee within a week or you’ll be *terminated*.” He steps from the podium, straightens up, shakes hands with the suits from Volt. They glower at me, try to fry me with their thoughts. But they can’t penetrate my deflector shield.

A small group of guys gather to hear my pitch. I stress that I’m an engineer and will undercut Volt by 5 percent. I hand out my e-mail address, tchrisc@microsoft.com. Yes, I am a “t dash.” Yes, I am temporary. But I’m here. I’m here now.

As everyone leaves the conference room I lag behind, looking for a phone. Ducking into an empty office, I slide the crumpled copy of *Inc.* magazine from my back pocket with tingly wet hands. *Dial. Dial the number.* What if I set up a company and no one wants to work for me? Or what if dozens do and I can’t handle it? I still my trembling fingers. *Just dial. Dial the number.* Ten minutes and 100 bucks later, I have a Delaware corporation, Kuvera Associates. My mouth is tinny with the taste of fear.

Second call: an executive suite service. I need a temporary office. Like, now.

Third call: “Dad, payroll—how does it work?” He launches into a lengthy discourse on payroll taxes, the Employment Development Department (EDD) and the IRS. “Whoa!—what’s the short version, Dad?”

“Tiger Baby, make it easy. Outsource to a payroll service. Let them handle it.”

By the following morning I have e-mails from 35 contractors. Omigod. I meet with each prospective employee in my office rented by the hour. I wipe clammy hands on my new Ross Dress for Less pantsuit before the shake that seals each deal. By evening I have 35 employees.

I am in *way* over my head.

When I first became a CEO I had no idea how to do it. I dove into business books and found out something super-fast: to some extent, all first-time CEOs are making it up as they go along. This is what you do with a new job, a new role in life or business, a new community you are joining. You're declaring yourself to be something you aren't yet. You are intending it. You are *choosing* it. You're declaring victory as you step onto the battlefield. Then you're doing what it takes—applying the required skills and the hard work—to succeed in this new role.

Be a Quick-Change Artist

The best part about picking an illusion, which also could be called a self-image, is that you can change it if it doesn't work. Some illusions didn't empower me, so I moved on. Don't like what you see? Reinvent yourself!

The key is finding out what feeds your soul: which job, relationship, lifestyle, or type of community service. The tricky part is when you've invested a lot in a given illusion and it's not working for you. Will you know when it's time

to cut and run, to stop throwing good time and money after bad? Will you be honest enough to know whether it's time to move on or whether it's time to stay and stretch? Will you have the courage to follow through? Here's how to find out. Ask yourself the following questions:

- What does my current self-image “say” to others? What message does it project?
- Do I feel powerful and capable with my current self-image?
- If you're not satisfied with it, what's keeping you from changing? Complete this sentence: “If I could only [fill in the blank], I'd rule.” Now go out and do what it takes to fill that blank in.
- Does my current self-image have untapped potential? Can I stretch/extend it to take me where I want to go?

An honest self-assessment based on answers to the questions above will help you determine if it's time to be a quick-change artist. One of my friends, Walter, is a talented and prolific writer. He often moans about the publishing industry, about how it feels closed to newcomers, how first-time authors have such a slim chance of getting published. I asked him how he saw the industry and his position in it. He said he sees the publishing industry as this enormous mansion, with manicured grounds. He's not even working in the garden—he's a farmhand way out on the South 40. The impressive entrance is barely visible from his distant field. As an indentured servant; he'll never even get *near* the publishing mansion.

I blurted out, “But everything’s an illusion—so why not pick one that’s empowering?” Walter asked how I, also new to the publishing scene, saw it. I said that to me the publishing world is a complex software system, and I am a talented hacker. Every day I make more progress navigating the system and getting closer to understanding how it works. It’s a cool adventure, and I know I’ll figure it out. Walter was silent for a moment, then said, “Wow. No wonder you have a terrific agent and a book deal.” He took this to heart. Walter is changing his self-image and illusions of the publishing world, and I know one day soon he’ll sell his first novel.

Sometimes you’ll need to take several factors into consideration. You need to time your “quick change” in order to take into account money, family, and other factors. We need to be practical. Not everyone can move at an external speedy pace while still being responsible. I’m not advocating quitting your job before you’ve got your next gig lined up. I am, however, advocating quitting your destructive illusions—and pronto.

I came to a crossroad several years ago with a start-up where my cofounder and I had some serious disagreements. First, he wanted to be the chief executive officer (CEO), a new position for him, and I reluctantly agreed because he had deep knowledge of the industry we were targeting. I became the president and chief technical officer (CTO). Then we had a clash over both managerial style and treatment of people. I felt he wanted to undercommunicate with our staff, telling them the minimum they needed to know in order to keep them in the dark so he’d have

the upper hand. I wanted to keep everyone in the loop, even overcommunicate, while the team was in the formative stages. Bear in mind that I had done the usual entrepreneurial thing: worked without salary for a year, clocked 80-plus hours a week, and made significant personal sacrifices. I invested nothing short of my heart and soul. And still it wasn't enough. The environment didn't work for me. I couldn't fix what was broken, and the board wouldn't help me either. A day came when I had to look in the mirror and admit defeat. I had to bail on an illusion that meant a lot to me: cofounder and CTO of this particular start-up. Moving on was a wrenching decision, but it was the right one.

The good news is that I moved on and started another company. The better news is I kept in touch with the company I'd left, offered help when asked, and ultimately was able to sell some of my stock to a new investor. It was a multi-million-dollar financial gain, and yet I was able to respect myself by leaving a bad situation and to respect the company by continuing to help out from a healthy distance.

My greatest challenge when working with businesses is getting them to change course after they've poured tremendous resources into making something happen that isn't working. *Remember: an illusion is something you use to change the reality around you. A delusion is something that prevents you from seeing the reality around you.* The companies suffering under delusions prefer to die a slow death by staying with a losing proposition rather than accepting the risk that comes with being a quick-change artist.

One company I worked with had invested 24 months and millions of dollars in developing its product strategy. I was called in because the product wasn't selling well and complaints about it were mounting. It was clear that they could attract more customers, and more quickly, by changing their product strategy. If they offered a more accessible, Web-based product, their customers would be less reliant on expensive consulting services. The company would attract more customers, get a more diverse set of them, and have a faster, less expensive sales cycle.

The CEO, Tom, and I had a lively discussion that went nowhere. He had so much money, time, and ego invested in his original vision of the product plus how to sell it that he couldn't make a change, even after the board of directors recommended what I'd suggested. A new CEO, Henry, was brought in, but the story doesn't end there. Henry was so invested in his ideas about sales that he couldn't be a quick-change artist either. He spent time and money scaling up an expensive direct sales force, pushing the more accessible Web-based product onto the back burner. It was finally released about six months late, by which time the company was seriously short on cash. The company ended up being sold—to another “old-school” software company that was also late to the Web-based software party.

Fast-forward 12 months. Tom finally has a Web-based product—the very kind he'd protested against so vigorously—at his new company. Sales are going through the roof, and it's a belated happy ending—for him, at least. Henry is now working in obscurity at a huge company.

Both CEOs could have spared themselves and their companies a lot of wasted energy and money if they'd been willing to let go of their ego investment in delusions that didn't work for them.

Sometimes you need to be a quick-change artist several times before you get it right; it takes courage and vision to change direction. One company with which I worked started out as a consumer-focused business. After 12 long months of struggling to target a specific consumer niche with little success, they called me in. Together we decided that it would make more sense to focus on small businesses. The company had to rebrand itself with a new name, identity, and Web site, which required a huge outpouring of resources. Six months later, some of the company's biggest clients were large companies. They realized that the "small-business" client they were seeking was in reality a department within a large company. They tweaked their marketing message and homed in on work groups—whether in small, midrange, or big business. This final strategy worked; today their customers have virtual enterprise installations—built one work group at a time. This business made the transition and became successful and profitable because it was able to abandon its *delusion* of its target customer and serve its *real* one. The most successful executives are comfortable being quick-change artists; they have the vision and flexibility to let go of delusions and truly lead their teams.

Sometimes everything works too well. You're content, flourishing—but you're not growing or stretching, and you're possibly getting a little bored. You're ready for a

new challenge; it's time to try a new illusion. For five years I wrote a column for the former Ziff David magazine *PC Week*. I received hundreds of e-mails each month, keynoted countless conferences, and really felt that I was making a difference for my corporate readers who were struggling with rapid information technology adoption. But I knew I wasn't stretching any more. I'd settled into a too-comfortable groove, and I needed to let go and create space for something fresh to show up. So I asked myself the following questions:

- Can I see what the future will be like if I continue with this illusion?
- Do I feel excited and challenged by it?
- Would I have any long-term regrets by changing course now and designing and embracing a shiny new illusion?

With my answers (yep, nope, nope) I knew it was time to let go and leap. So I thanked my old illusion, which had taken me as far as it could, and transitioned out of my weekly column. That gave me the creative flexibility to look into myself for something that would help me grow, which turned out to be Artemis Ventures—a consultancy that did a little quick changing of its own and became a venture capital firm. There are two ways to approach life. One is to wake up each day and say, "I know what my life is going to be like today and that's what I want: predictability." The other is to say, "I have a rough idea of what my life is going to be like today and I can't wait to see what adventures show up! It's gonna be awesome!" I

prefer the latter approach, which is why I love being a quick-change artist.

One of my friends, Diane Conway, author of *What Would You Do If You Had No Fear?*, challenges readers to describe their dream lives—and asks them to ponder the fears that are holding them back from realizing those dreams. Her current book is about what we'd do with our lives if we could start over. She and I did a reading a while back where she asked the audience, “How many of you would start over if you could?” I was stunned by the audience's response—about 80 percent of the people said they'd take the do-over. I'm amazed at how many people lead lives of “quiet desperation,” as Thoreau said. They're going through the motions, knowing that what they're doing isn't working, but they're too stuck, comfortable, or scared to change it. These are exactly the kinds of people who need to be reminded that everything is an illusion. It's never too late to pick an illusion that's more empowering.

If a new illusion doesn't work, don't get mad; get material. Your past is useful. Look at it, but don't stare. All experience is good. Ask yourself the above questions about changing illusions and design another one. Then make it come true. And always remember that if you don't select an illusion, a self-identity, someone will select one for you. Wouldn't you rather be the decision maker?

Evicting the Vile Bitch

So what's stopping you? Well, if you're like most of us, fear raises its ugly head just when the fun starts. But here's the good news: your fears too are only illusions. Some fear

is good. Fear that is survival oriented is essential. Fear that is motivating helps us keep going on the tough days. But mostly our fears are just a kind of illusion, and not even a special kind. When I work with entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs, I find we share a lot of common fears.

So, how can you banish them? Since fear is mostly about ignorance, the best part is that it's as temporary as you choose. I used to make "fear lists" and tackle one a month, reviewing the lists at least twice a year to see if I'd successfully banished the demons. Now I just tackle my fears in real time, as they come up. Some of my past fears included attending events where I felt inadequate (not important enough) and ignorant about socializing with superpowerful people. My palms would get ice cold and clammy, and my posture would be "small" and a little hunched. It was clear I didn't feel in their league. I wanted to play at this level of society but was scared.

Shortly after I decided to nail this fear, one of my mentors invited me to a dinner party in New York. I was seated at a table with Connie Chung, Maury Povich, and several other famous and powerful people. I had to shake a ton of hands and make small talk for 90 minutes when I had no idea what these people were interested in. I adopted an illusion that I too was a player, powerful and famous, and willed my palms to be dry and warm. I asked a lot of questions. I was confident. And the result was that now I can meet anyone, speak before any size crowd, and hold my own.

Identify that inner critic, that fearmonger, inside your head. Draw a picture of her or him and write down what

she or he says. Mine is quite the blabbermouth: *Stop making so many mistakes! You're fat, work out more! You're not making a big enough contribution to the world—work harder, do more, give more! You're a fraud—you're not as smart or accomplished as you think you are!* Maybe your inner critic is a schoolmarm, an icky blob monster, or a dominatrix. Name yours, if you want. My friend, comedienne Terri Tate, calls hers “That Vile Bitch Upstairs.” Then when you hear her shrieking, say, “Thanks for sharing. Please take a: vacation/chill pill/nap.”

What are you afraid of? Why? Are you afraid you won't be liked? Get over it. Renegades rarely win popularity contests. It's not a choice: you have a passion you're pursuing because you have to, not because it's going to make people like you. Female executives seem to struggle the most with this, because some of us are told that ambition is bad. If this resonates with you, read Debra Condren's book *AmBITCHous* to get clarity on this misconception. I worked with one woman who deeply believed that leadership was about getting the consensus of her team. It's not. Leadership is about listening to your team, and then making decisions on your own. This exec was so desperate to be liked by her team that she dithered over the simplest decision, hoping against hope that she would get unanimous approval. The result? Countless missed opportunities, products late to market —appearing behind those of even the slowest competitors —and a company that's what I call “living dead.”

Are you afraid your emotions will get in the way of your success? Jealousy's a big one. I've fallen prey to this

energy zapper personally and professionally. *Jealousy and envy are often about comparing our insides to someone else's outsides—a symptom of our externally focused world.* But how can you really know what it's like to be someone else? Maybe inside they don't have such a great life after all. You'll probably never know, and I've been amused to discover how many times I've been flat-out wrong about someone else's situation. The tabloids are all about this: people devour gossip about celebrities and their "ideal" relationships, only to find they've been living in misery and are divorcing months after their "happy couple" photos were plastered all over the newsstands. The net-net is that they have *their* life. Let them. Focus on living *your* life. As Jack Canfield told me, you're the composite of the five people you spend the most time with. Are the dominant people in your life positive and uplifting? Or negative and draining? (Or are *you* negative and draining? Introspection is not synonymous with whining.) Assess and make your choices wisely. Your energy is precious; spend it only where you want to.

Afraid that there's only so much of "it" out there, and you have no chance to get it? No way; that's just another illusion. Scarcity is a lie. There's plenty for everyone. Every day the Department of the Treasury is printing more money, the sun is generating more energy, new people are coming into your life, new opportunities are being created. That's how the world works: everything is in motion. Atoms teach us this. Equilibrium is a dynamic state.

Think you need to be more like someone else to succeed? Forget it. The second you start thinking that way,

you'll become a counterfeit version of both yourself and your model, and believe me, that won't make you a success. Learn from other people, people you know and people you read about, but make what you learn your own.

Afraid you'll fail? That's a big one, big enough for its own chapter. But don't worry—there's no such thing as failure. We'll dive into this in Chapter 5.

Until you've learned to ignore your inner critic, your fears will feel like reality, not illusion. Anyone can fall into this trap. I have a friend who's a communications coach. A dynamic, intelligent, single woman, she really wants to be in a relationship. But she told me that while she's dressing to go out, she'll look in the mirror and say, "I'm old, I'm fat, no one's going to want to talk to me, I'm not going to this party." Years ago, I had a friend who was five feet tall and a size 14. She was a regular gal, no high-powered job, no major advantages in life. Every day while she was getting dressed, she'd look in the mirror and say to herself, "Honey, how could you get more gorgeous? I just don't know!" She'd date the most stunning guys right out of a *GQ* spread! She was attracting guys that matched the way she envisioned herself: HOT.

Meanwhile I was attracting guys who matched what I thought I deserved: bad boys who didn't treat me with respect. That only changed when I remembered it's all an illusion. So I picked an illusion that's empowering and started meeting smart, nice, cool guys. Recruit a trusted friend to be your sounding board, both for your self-image and for your body language. You need to be aware of the nonverbal messages you are sending to the world, because

people are definitely reacting to them. I often get all sorts of crazy favors, such as fabulous hotel room upgrades and reservations at fully booked restaurants because my body language and tone of voice convey that I am worthy of these perks. I don't convey a vibe of entitlement, which can put people off; it's more of a "surely we can work something out together" vibe that includes the other person in the inner sanctum that I want access to. If you're speaking professionally, hire a coach to check out your body language. Learn to stand and speak in a way that conveys: I'm here, I have value, I'm holding the floor.

A phrase I've heard a lot is "fake it till you make it." Believe me, I know the fear that phrase is born from. Imagining yourself into a different place doesn't mean you should be a fake or act fraudulently. It isn't about faking out others: it's about faking out the vile bitch exercising squatter's rights over your psyche. Once you realize that just about everyone is making it up as they go along, it gets a lot easier.

I prefer "*Act it until you ARE it.*" Act as if you know how to be a CEO, act as if you've already received the promotion when you pitch your boss for it; it'll help you transcend the fear and self-doubt inherent in taking a career leap. Act as if your company is substantial and important when pitching your product to a key executive of a huge multinational company; you'll transmit your confidence and belief in your business.

Yes, I still have some self-doubt. Yes, I still obsess sometimes. But neither of these fear-driven behaviors has the power to sabotage me anymore. With the tools

described in this chapter, I've learned to banish many of my fears and manage the few that persist. I've learned that sometimes my strongest supporters will be baffled by my trying on a new illusion, because I "sold" them so well on my previous one. But the only true opposition is the evil bitch upstairs. When she offers me unwelcome judgments or advice, I remind myself, "Heck, it's all an illusion."

Christine's Quick 'n' Easy Way to Set and Achieve Goals

Goal setting is the best way to build your dreams. Desire comes first; you've got to want something badly. Then goals become the way you'll manifest your desires. Set *specific* goals based on your desires, see and feel them happening. Put yourself in that glorious future in your mind. Then *get out of the way*. There's no room for doubt or self-sabotage here. To quote Einstein, "Imagination is everything—it is the preview of life's coming attractions."

- Set one to three goals in each of these seven categories: Financial/Wealth, Career/Business, Free Time/Fun, Health/Appearance, Relationships, Personal Development/Learning, Community/Charity. If this feels too overwhelming, just pick your top three goals and focus on those. In time you'll be ready to add more. This isn't homework — it should be fun! You're shaping your future and bringing what you want into your life. How cool to know that this is something you can effect!
- Write one goal per index card. Write in the present tense, starting with "I am" and using an active verb.

Give it a due date, and then be sure to append “or sooner” to the end as well as “or more” or “or less” to amounts. Example: “I am enjoying weighing 125 or less by September 30, 2007 or sooner,” or “I am celebrating \$10 million or more in revenue for my company by December 31, 2008 or sooner.” Now you have your goal deck of seven to 21 cards.

- Go through the goal deck at least twice a day. Visualize achieving your goals, experiencing the good feelings associated with your success. After reviewing your deck in the morning, write down three things you can do today to help achieve your number 1 goal. Also write down any ideas that float up while you’re visualizing your success; you’ll act on them later.
- Create a “dream board” as described in Chapter 2 of pictures you draw or clip from magazines illustrating what you want to achieve, to become, or to get.
- Mark time out on your calendar for growth and personal development. I go to two or more self-improvement seminars per year, in addition to solo retreats. You’ll return to your life, work, relationships, and service with new insights and renewed energy.
- Remember that focusing on your goals isn’t enough. You need to keep your ears and eyes open for opportunities and do the work required to achieve these goals.

If you need more help blasting through negative illusions, here are two fantastic resources. Read *Ten Days to Self-Esteem* by Dr. David Burns, and actually *do* the exercises—I got more from this workbook than I did from over \$3,000 in therapy—and all for \$15! I also recommend Jack Canfield’s *Breakthrough to Success* training. This intense week-long seminar will change your life. You’ll leave feeling lighter, more present, more in touch with who you are.

Cool Free Resources

Go to www.RulesForRenegades.com and download “Goal Setting Worksheet,” “New Illusion Worksheet,” “Future Planning Worksheet,” and see the Personal Development section, too.

Christine Comaford-Lynch

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