

Taking Back Power Back Tips for Restoring Balance and Focus

By Kathy Caprino, MA

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Since my book published this Fall, I've been inundated by activity around launching it, publicizing it, and speaking about it. I enjoy much of this activity, as it involves marketing and promotion, which I'm comfortable with (it was my professional specialization in my corporate life, and also it fits my "socializer" personality). I also believe in the book's messages, so it's a joy to speak about it.

But what I didn't realize was that, day by day, hour by hour, I began to feel less and less powerful, and more and more focused on "outer" events and accomplishments, and things beyond my control, rather than inward milestones.

This book, while in one way launching me as a "national women's work-life expert," also propelled me into the land of the non-expert - particularly in my new role in speaking to the media. The learning curve on this has been somewhat steep, but I've felt I *had* to master it, as I'm being offered large opportunities with major media (magazines, newspapers, etc.), and I certainly don't want to blow it!

What I discovered during this past year was that this process has the potential of making me feel unbalanced in the following ways:

1. Focusing too heavily on what I can't control (i.e., will the world like my book?), and not enough on what I can control
2. Getting caught up in ego-trappings
3. Caring too much about what others think

This led me down a path of losing myself and my connection to who I am. So I decided to take back my power.

Here's what I've done:

1) Shift my focus to what I can shape and affect.

Focusing on a future dream (being a best-selling author, for instance) can be a tricky thing. Yes, visioning -- seeing yourself there, and *feeling* it -- is essential. But spending an inordinate amount of time, energy, and focus on what you want in the future takes away the power and efficacy of now.

Of course I hope my book will make a huge impact. But that's not up to me; it's up to the universe. I'll do my part, but then I must let it go. Instead, I've decided to re-energize my efforts in building my business, developing great new partnerships and programs, and attracting ideal clients and audiences with whom I love to work. I've recommitted to spending a bit of time each morning envisioning my dreams and feeling them occurring. But then I'll move on to what I can do each day to shape and mold my work and life as I wish it to be.

2) Calm my ego down.

Sometimes our egos get a bit carried away (mine does anyway!). I can be swept away with

egocentric thoughts, which only ends up making me feel unbalanced. Going forward, I'm strengthening my focus on calming my ego by giving it what it needs - inner validation. I do this through my morning meditation and calming practice, which helps me center and relax myself, and focus on my inner worth (not my outer achievements).

3) Let go of what others think.

When we've been placed in a role that's new and unfamiliar, an informed critique is certainly beneficial to help us step up with success. However, at a certain tipping point, we have to let go of what others think of us, and of our striving for their good opinion. After all, we really can't control others' opinions of us, can we? (I learned in my therapy training that what others think of us is much more about *them* than us.)

Further, when you put yourself out there in a big way, your wings spread larger, and you begin to bump into a wider expanse of people and things. This creates greater opportunity for conflict, tension or misunderstanding, and for folks to attempt to siphon off your power and energy for their own benefit.

I've decided that my boundaries need even more strengthening right now. Individuals will share their thoughts or express their opinions and needs, but it's time for me to get even clearer on what I believe and what feels right to me, and let go of the rest. I'm also committed to speaking up about what I need, and what I'd like to see changed or shifted in my relationships and interactions.

Finally, in an effort to filter out all the "noise," I've asked my publicist to send me only information that's "need to know" in my dealings with the media. I'm pulling myself back from the frenzy. I've found that if I'm overly focused on what others are doing and saying, I'm not attending to the key business at hand - growing and strengthening myself as a vehicle of help and service.

I believe that life is all about remembering that you are powerful, and taking back your power when you let it slip away. Here's a new chance to walk my talk! I'm going to take it. I hope you'll join me.

Bio:

Kathy Caprino, MA, is a nationally-recognized women's work-life expert and author of *Breakdown, Breakthrough: The Professional Woman's Guide to Claiming a Life of Passion, Power, and Purpose* (Berrett-Koehler, 2008, www.breakdownbreakthrough.com). Founder and President of Ellia Communications, Inc. -- a women's career and work-life coaching and consulting company dedicated to helping women achieve *breakthrough* -- Caprino is a trained psychotherapist, seasoned career and executive coach, and sought-after writer and speaker on women's issues. She is a popular blogger on business, workplace, and career topics and trends, and as a top media source, she has appeared in more than 100 leading newspapers and magazines and on national television. Contact her on the Web at www.elliacommunications.com.