



peace love and lemonade:

a recipe to make your life sweeter

Created and Written by
Nancy Stampahar

First Edition

Peace, Love and Lemonade®:
A Recipe to Make Your Life Sweeter

Nancy Stampahar

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This book is dedicated to my mother,
Carol, whom I love and admire
for having the courage to make a better life
for herself and her children;
and to my very gentle brother, Jeff,
whom I called “Bro” and deeply loved.
His spirit will live within me forever,
and I will always remember him.





TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction		1
Chapter 1	Lost in Life	13
Chapter 2	What are Lemons?	21
Chapter 3	Lemon Seeds and Lighthearted Zest	31
Chapter 4	Stir Up Your Greatness Potential Sweeteners	71
Chapter 5	The Best Lemonade Ever	109
Chapter 6	The Peace, Love and Lemonade Ingredients	121
Chapter 7	The Purpose of Tough Times	149
Additional Worksheets and Note Pages		159
Further Reading		170
About the Author and Silver Lining Solutions™		172
About the Over 21 Disabilities Project		174

To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived.

This is to have succeeded.

-- Ralph Waldo Emerson

INTRODUCTION

I was born into inspiration. In 1963, when I was two years old, my mother decided to divorce her abusive husband after five years of marriage. In retaliation for this courageous act, my mother, my four-year-old intellectually-disabled brother and I were locked out of our row house, with some of our belongings scattered out on the lawn. That day, the lives of my family of three changed forever.

As my childhood evolved, I had a very difficult time feeling good about life, and more importantly, feeling good about myself. I felt damaged and thought that I was not worthy of having a good life. I could not cope with my hardships of being poor and living in a single-parent house with a “different” and limited sibling. When I was in my vulnerable teens, at the age of thirteen, I escaped my stress and pain with excessive partying, which included drugs and alcohol. First, I dropped out of life. Then, I dropped out of high school.

As my young adult life evolved into adulthood, I took steps forward and backward until I came into this great place of happiness and fulfillment. The steps I took represented the choices I made; some were wise and some were not. I eventually earned my college degree in human resource management and created my own organizational training and keynote speaking business to empower people to improve their work performances and live great lives. I learned firsthand



how to go from nowhere to somewhere by watching my family's ability to triumph over tough circumstances. I learned the power of choice. I learned how to make lemonade out of lemons.

Life is hard for everyone some of the time. At times, we all experience the sour, bitter taste of lemons. How we react to each tough experience, however, is a choice we can make--not one that others make for us. We can either choose to face the challenges we encounter and take control of our situations or we can wallow in them and let life and work difficulties direct us.

Are you embracing life and fully living or are you waking up each day just existing in this world? Do you like how you are living your life? Do you keep finding reasons for not doing what you really want to do? What takes up your time and drains your energy, making you exhausted and miserable? What causes you undue stress, physical ailments or accidents? What needs to be fixed in your life? What is making you lose who you are and what you want in your life? What are you dealing with in your life that you just can't take anymore? Who is taking you for granted or taking advantage of you? Why are you letting them? What will it take to make you want to do something differently to live a happy and fulfilling life?

Many people in our society are not truly happy and not living the life they deeply desire. In today's fast-paced, multi-tasking society, many people are not getting involved in living.



They are choosing the path of least resistance, which leaves them complacent and stuck. They keep responding to situations in the same ways, and keep getting the same results. People can let themselves go or never find their power of choice.

Perhaps you feel that you simply exist in this world by going through the motions and not questioning who you are, how you became who you are, and more importantly, how you *could* be. Even when you face hardships and overwhelming circumstances, you can make peace with your past, instill love within yourself and create lemonade for your future. This book will show you how.

No matter how tough our lives have been, we can reach “our greatness potential.” It is deep inside us. For some people it is easy to find; others have to try a little harder. By trying, we find courage to move beyond our comfort zones. Our courage helps us to become more assertive, to ask for what we want and need, and to discover our unique passions. When we find courage, assertiveness and passion, we have found our greatness potential.

As a result of my family’s ability to triumph over tough circumstances, I have chosen the trite yet powerful phrase: “When life hands you lemons, make lemonade,” as the primary theme through this book. “Lemons” are commonly referred to metaphorically as unpleasant, tough experiences that



can make life difficult to enjoy and manage. They can come from some typical parts of life, or from extenuating circumstances and extreme hardships. You make lemonade by squeezing the lemons, removing the seeds, grating the zest and adding sugar. When you choose to make lemonade from these metaphoric lemons, you decide to do something positive as a reaction to your unfortunate circumstance. Choosing to make lemonade will help you change your perspectives and behaviors, so that good things can happen for you.

While some people choose to make lemonade, some remain bitter. It's easier to take the path of least resistance; it's simpler and faster not to think and question, not to ask for help and not to deal with our situations and feelings. When we choose not to make our lives better, we are also choosing not to take responsibility for our own happiness. On the flipside, when we choose to make our lives better, we are choosing to do something positive and productive to bring happiness and fulfillment to our lives. It's a matter of choice.

The lemons themselves do not influence a situation as much as the lemons' seeds and their skin. You will discover that the lemon's seeds are the emotions of anger, fear, guilt and shame. These seeds need to be removed because they are taking up too much room, time and energy. They take away our power and shift our focus. They can cause us to think, say and do things we



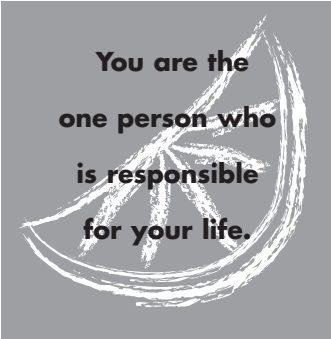
did not intend. They can keep us from living the life, working the work and having the relationships we deserve and deeply desire.

The skin of every lemon contains something wonderful that gets us through tough times. The skin holds the lighthearted zest, which brings us positive energy. It should be grated off our lemons. We need it to bring fresh flavor to our lives and keep things light every once in a while. The lemon's zest helps us smile, laugh, act playful and have fun. How aware or unaware we are of our own lemon's seeds and zest greatly affects our ability to make peace, love and lemonade. Even in times of heartache and tragedy, lemons teach us the lessons necessary to grow and become happier people.

I created a lemonade recipe to make your life sweeter. It will help you with the "how to" once you decide you are ready. In a straightforward, organized process, it will show you what to do when you "can't take it anymore." It can bring you positive results if you continuously try and commit to give it your best. The self-development process will help you discover your greatness potential to live a happier and more fulfilling life. In return, you will have to make a lifetime commitment to adapt your thoughts, feelings and behaviors when you encounter tough times. You are the one person who is responsible for your life.

Through true stories and examples from my life and





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reflections on your own life, you will discover practical techniques and wisdom to overcome the obstacles you encounter in your life and work. You will come to see that the same basic principles and applications can be used both at work and at home. You will gain a keen awareness and understanding of some effective life skills and character traits that can be applied in both your professional and personal lives. These life skills and character traits shape our behaviors. They are the foundation for success and happiness. You will feel inspired when you realize that in our own way, in our own time, my family of three discovered how to make our lives better. You will feel pride once you begin to make your own life better in your own way and in your own time.

The self-reflection questions and worksheets throughout this book will give you the opportunity to see, through your own writing, how you are living, working and being in this world, and more importantly how you *could* live, work and be in this world. You will gain the most benefit when you make a commitment to yourself to complete the worksheets and stay focused on *your own personal growth*. The reading, writing and reflecting necessary for your happiness will take some soul-

searching that might make you cry tears of triumph and disappointment. When you choose to do something different and unfamiliar, you must accept that it is not going to be easy. If you want an easy, magical solution, this book is not for you. It will require mental and emotional time and energy.

If you want some things in your life to be different, this book is for you. Personal growth is ongoing. The process will require you to say and do things differently. You may feel afraid or awkward. This is normal and okay when you are trying to change how you act and react towards people and situations. If you cry as you move through this book, notice what makes you cry sad tears and happy tears. Tears represent truths. To bring genuine happiness into your life, you must discover your own truths.

Oh, and lighten it up once in a while by remembering to laugh at yourself, and at me too. That's why the zest is on lemons. It brings enjoyment and reduces stress. Once you begin to know who you are and what you want in both your personal life and your professional life, you will find authentic happiness and fulfillment.

Once you decide to make lemonade from your lemons, you will become more open to pinpointing your unique lemons, your lemons' seeds, and their zest. This is the great beginning.

Then, you can begin to stir up your greatness potential



When you make something positive out of negative, tragic, or painful circumstances, you can more easily deal with them.

sweeteners of courage, assertiveness and passion. Finally, you must blend in the main ingredients to make your best lemonade ever. They are: one-third cup accountability, one-third cup attitude and one-third cup action. This full cup of ingredients will create your strategies and action plans for improved results. They will help you

achieve your own desired outcomes and goals. You must set goals if you want to make lemonade out of your lemons. You must set goals and take action on them if you want positive results. You must follow through and make wise choices.

In this brief read, you will connect in varying degrees with the circumstances and the reactions that affect many people when tough times occur. You will see through my real-life success and failure stories how powerful choices are. The most important message of this book is that when tough times come your way, the way you react to them will have a tremendous impact on how sweet or sour your life will be. When you make something positive out of negative, tragic, or painful circumstances, you can more easily deal with them. My mother had a choice: to stay complacent and stay on welfare, or to make something of herself and her life. I'm glad she



chose the latter because she became a great role model with her career-focused determination. It became ingrained in me that people have to work hard for what they want, especially if they don't want to settle for less than they deserve. I learned that I must never give up when I am struggling to achieve my goals because the rewards will be better than the unhappiness and pain. I made a choice to drop out of high school, which did not follow the path of my role model. When I made a choice to drop back into high school, I proudly realized that I inherited some great traits from my mother. Over the years, I have learned how to keep making good things happen--not only in my life, but also in the lives of others. I am empowered to live; but more importantly, I am empowered to do what it takes to live the life I truly want. If you want to make yourself more happy and your life better, get ready; you're about to discover how to make some sweet lemonade!



How to Make Your Life Sweeter

Choose to Make Lemonade

Gather Your Lemons

Remove Your Lemons' Seeds and Grate Off the Lighthearted Zest

Stir Up Your Greatness Potential Sweeteners of:

Courage

Assertiveness

Passion

Blend in the Lemonade Ingredients of:

1/3 Cup Accountability

1/3 Cup Attitude

1/3 Cup Action

Sip Your Lemonade Slowly and Enjoy Your Sweeter Life!



INTRODUCTION:
SELF REFLECTION QUESTIONS

If you connect with any of the following questions, you must decide whether you want to make yourself happier and your life more fulfilling. If your answers to the following questions are mostly “yes” or “often,” it’s time to consider making some positive changes in your life. Remember, you have the power to make choices for yourself. You have the power to live a great life. You can choose to make lemonade.

How often do I catch myself saying, “I don’t have time to deal with this!” or “I just can’t take it anymore!”?

Have I “let myself go,” in that I no longer take care of myself physically, mentally or emotionally?

Do I stay in my comfort zone and resist change?

Do I tend to have perfectionist, people-pleasing tendencies?

Do I carry grudges and have a difficult time forgiving others, as well as myself?

Do I let people take advantage of me?

Am I so afraid of conflict that I do not express how I honestly feel and what I want to see happen?

Do I find it challenging to give myself some “me-time”?

Have I lost my passion?

Do I think that I may never have found my passion?

