

# My Mid-Life Courageous Changes

## Taking a Leap...

In 2010, I felt an increasing desire to relocate to another part of the country. I thought it would be helpful to go and visit different parts of the country to gain more clarity. However, that would require taking more extended time away from my business, four to five weeks. I had concerns and significant fear at the time, as it felt like quite a risk to my business. Would I lose a third or half of my clients if I did so?

I hired a coach to help me process my feelings, explore my options, and connect with my courage to take what felt like a leap at the time. The coaching was incredibly helpful, and my decision to take the risk and honor my spirit's leanings was a very good one.

## Writing a book...

By 2011, I began seeing how transformative my work with clients on self-care and boundaries was and had a growing desire to have a larger impact than one woman at a time. A colleague and friend of mine had expertise in stress management, and one day I said to him, "Why don't we write a book together?"

It was exciting to think about the positive impact a book on stress management and self-care could have. However, neither one of us was prepared for the numerous challenges, overwhelm and discomfort the journey of writing a book brings. There was a huge learning curve related to writing, editing, compiling it into a book, and deciding on self-publishing or traditional marketing, sales, and promotion.

This was a whole new world to both of us, and much uncertainty and fear came up throughout. It took significant courage, self-trust, support, determination, and a strong Why to sustain us over the three years it took to complete and self-publish on Amazon in 2014.

## A sabbatical in Costa Rica...

In 2014, I felt restless and questioned whether I was experiencing burnout in my practice of many years. During this time, I was also diagnosed with a potentially life-threatening health condition, which required surgery. My whole being longed for a break and to be near nature.

I decided to close my practice for two-plus months to take a well-needed sabbatical to heal and restore my Self in Costa Rica. It involved risking losing all of my clients and my practice. Fear again rose up. However, going through a frightening health issue and surgery and closing my practice in 2010 gave me the courage to take this risk. It was one of the best decisions I've made so far. I returned renewed, energized, and happy to resume my practice!

## A reason, a season, or a lifetime...

In 2018, a close friendship of thirty years, which felt more like family, took an initial detour, then ended. I had sensed that our friendship had become imbalanced. Unfortunately, my friend was becoming increasingly unhappy in her life. This contributed to her being unable to be happy for me in general. I made several efforts to set healthier boundaries to improve our relationship.

Finally her unhappiness led her to cross a line in our friendship. Initially, it was quite painful to step back from our friendship of so many years. Processing my feelings in therapy and journaling was very helpful and guided my decision to ultimately let go. Letting go of a close relationship no longer serving us takes significant courage and an honoring of our Selves. Fortunately, the grief lifts over time and is replaced with peace and confidence.

## From entrepreneur to organizational life...

In 2019, an opportunity to work in an organization affiliated with a well-known university came up. I would be able to use some additional talents, such as teaching and leadership coaching, and the salary and benefits would be excellent. It required me to close my business of thirteen years in CT, say good-bye to all my clients, and relocate to RI.

I had felt like I wanted a change and to challenge myself professionally in different ways. However, it felt like a tremendous risk – letting go of the security and benefits of having my own business, schedule, and wonderful clients, and starting a position

working for an organization. After much consideration, I decided to take the risk. There was significant fear about making this change. Some feelings of grief to process around the closing of my business.

After four to five months in the new position, I realized I would not be able to use those key talents I was excited about applying for. Despite several attempts to set boundaries and address expectations, the lack of autonomy and minimal work/life balance was very difficult and draining.

Around this time, the onset of the recent global crisis began and contributed to the increasing strain and concerns about my well-being in this position. After much reflection and acceptance of the reality of my situation, I made the very difficult decision to resign at one year. One of the gifts that came from this tough period was the renewed appreciation and excitement to relaunch my business – with new services that utilized my broader talents and passions. One of these is my courageous change in the individual and group coaching programs I now offer.

## My biggest leap...

In 2020, after experiencing the extraordinary fear and tragedies of the pandemic, another health scare, and the disillusionment of the new position, I sensed there was another dream I no longer wanted to put off.

I had wanted to relocate for a while, and through a series of serendipitous experiences, the surprising destination for me became clear – Las Vegas, Nevada. This was also a very difficult decision. It required leaving family and friends, transitioning to a long-distance relationship, getting there while still in the early phase of the pandemic, and arriving in an area of the country that was largely new to me.

After tuning in to my Self, and doing much research, I decided to drive across the country to Vegas from Rhode Island. Leaving required prioritizing my own happiness and boundaries – as some were unhappy about my leaving, and others were afraid for my safety given Covid.

Fortunately, nine days later, I arrived safely in Las Vegas to the beautiful sunshine and palm trees. Five weeks later, I found a lovely place to live. Shortly after arriving, an unexpected peace settled over me. I felt aligned in body, mind, and spirit with this transition.

It is the most courageous change I've made so far, as there was tremendous fear at times and waves of other emotions. One of my favorite quotes is, "If your dreams don't scare you, they're not big enough."

This scared the bejeezus out of me at moments. 😊

## It's been an extraordinary adventure so far!

These changes required significant courage, self-trust, honoring my needs, setting boundaries, and the decision to prioritize my happiness.

Another critical component was support – from friends, a coach, a therapist at varying points, and my strong spiritual foundation.

*Each courageous change builds on the next, giving one increased confidence and self-trust to make another.*

– **Dr. Dana**

