

Lindy MacLaine gives you: “My Personal Story”



The 3 things that kept me from learning how to live
life for myself, how I overcame them,
and how you can too.

It took me nearly 4 decades to really go for my dreams, and when I did, they went “splat.”

Something in me died that day. **For the next three years, in fact, I would spend more time wishing I were dead than alive.** It felt like a slap in the face. ***Why would I be given this huge desire, if I were not to be given the opportunity to bring it about?***

I can tell you this story with the benefit of hindsight—a lovely tool that allows us to finally see the bigger picture. It’s my hope that you’ll not only relate, but that you’ll find hope for your own dreams from my hard-earned lessons. There were 3 major lessons I needed to learn—three major mistakes I kept making. Let me share them and what helped me to turn things around with you:

Mistake #1: Failure to Trust Myself

Over and over again, I’ve taken other people’s advice over my own inner knowing. When I look back, I see as a consequence **I kept putting my plan A on the back burner** while I lived plan B after plan B (for back-up plan), literally for decades.

At 8 years old, **I fell in love with the theater** when I attended a live performance of *A Christmas Carol*. When my 4th grade classroom presented its own version, I desperately wanted to be Scrooge. Much to my delight, I “beat out” the boys and got the part. There I was in my red and white-striped flannel nightgown, my straight blonde hair pinned up under a flannel cap, being crotchety and loving it!

My favorite role was Peter Pan in the classic J.M. Barrie play when I was 11. We had no special effects in our little black-box theater—our flying consisted of spinning around once and extending our arms. I was in *heaven*. This imaginary world of freedom and adventure filled my heart and my spirit. When I was on stage, I had the freedom to feel, and to express myself. I felt so very *alive* on stage.

The next summer brought the role of the Artful Dodger in *Oliver*. I loved the Dodger nearly as much as getting to be Peter Pan. With the advantage of

hindsight, I see how **these 2 roles were important “bones” in the architecture of my dreams.** Both Peter Pan and the Dodger were leaders creating a sense of belonging and purpose among others who might otherwise be called lost souls.

You’ll notice, however, that both these roles were boys. And, yup, I was a girl. I’d already learned as the only girl among 4 children: being born a boy was a much better lot in life. Boys got to have all the fun. This belief was a totally mistaken, of course, but like all beliefs learned early, it stuck around for a long time.

You can see how a desire was born in me to someday create an empowering place in the Neverland for girls. I’m a slow learner. It took me 40 more years to write and publish *The Curse of the Neverland*, the first book of the *Piper Pan and Her Merry Band* series.

Mistake #2: Being Run by Fear of Rejection, Fear of Not Being Liked

Fast-forward to my senior year in high school. My luck had turned on stage, as I grew into a young woman, I couldn’t play the plum boy parts, and I wasn’t the ingénue type. **I took this as a personal rejection**, deciding I must not be cut out for a life on the stage after all. ***It was more important to be approved of than to do what I loved.***

This was my first major life “creative U-Turn, as author and Creativity Coach Julia Cameron so aptly names them. When I chose a college to attend I did what I thought would please my parents. Rather than choosing one with a good theater program, I chose one with an excellent academic reputation that had been exclusively a men’s college until a decade before.

I was trying to prove that even though I was female, I could succeed in “a man’s world.” I put myself outside of the sphere of what I knew I loved, trying to fit in where I figured I would receive the most accolades – where I would be praised. Every child wants to make their parents proud of them, right? I tried to be a science major to fulfill my mother’s dreams, but basically sucked at that. Falling back on what came most easily, I majored in Romance Languages and had no idea of what I would do in the work world.

Mistake #3: Being Run by Guilt. (*"It's not nice to be selfish!"*)

After graduating Phi Beta Kappa with a virtually unemployable degree (I had no interest in teaching), I got a job at a great yuppie restaurant, first as a hostess, later as a waitress. I won't bore you with the progression of my plan B's. I kept picking them with the thought that they would allow me to audition, to work in the theater on the side. But of course, I didn't audition, just kept picking a new Plan B.

Instead of bolstering my foundation and courage to seize my Plan A, my Plan B's reinforced my poor self-confidence and fueled my frustrations. Receptionist, barrista, medical billing. Housekeeping, sales in a bakery, security guard on a construction site. The closest I came to my calling as a coach was working for several years helping people quit smoking through a telephonic-based tobacco cessation program.

I wasn't happy. I spiraled into depression. Somewhere in my 30's, I got over the "trying to succeed in other people's eyes" and momentarily **over the guilt of doing what I wanted when I should be... (whatever, you name it!)...** for long enough to get myself signed up for open-enrollment acting classes in a Seattle conservatory.

This was one of the smartest choices I had made so far. I had some of the best experiences in my life as I learned about authentic emotional expression. **It was safe to feel, and absolutely necessary to fully and authentically express a wide range of feelings** as dictated by the role. Finally, I felt alive again. As before, in hindsight, I can say **it was this experience of emotional freedom that I craved**, maybe more than actually being on stage.

I remember the moment I decided to really go for my dream. My husband and I were doing a self-supported bicycle ride, touring from Seattle to San Francisco. We'd reached Crescent City, CA, and I was ready to toss it in. Both of us got flat tires riding into town, we were staying in a tiny, moldy hotel, and I was just plain exhausted. ***Why am I doing this? I wondered. This isn't even something I think is that fun! It was my husband's dream, not mine.*** The next day we rode up into the Redwoods – into the famed "Hall of Giants," and I was entranced. These were ancient trees with enormous energy. You could feel it just riding along beside them. Those trees gave me the energetic overhaul I needed. I recommitted to our goal of reaching San Francisco.

That day, I thought to myself: ***If I can succeed at this, something I don't care about that much, just think how well I could do at something I truly love!*** It was a mind-blowing thought. Just like that, I decided to make a go of trying to be a professional actress. I would audition for MFA acting programs. I was 39 years old, doing what I would have done 2 decades earlier, if I had trusted myself, if I'd recognized the false trap of guilt, and if I'd been unafraid of disapproval.

Fast-forward to the results: I'd been turned down by every program so far, and I was waiting on a mailing from my dream school: the Old Globe Theater in San Diego. The envelope arrived—it was a little one. You guessed it: **a rejection.** Here's what my mind said: ***This is why I hadn't gone for it for so many years. I might not be good enough. Sure enough, I was right.***

[A quick editorial note: my emotional response and the decision to stop pursuing acting was entirely my own. Some want to argue at this point in the story that I can still act. Yes, that's true, and I take full responsibility—I decided if I could not act professionally the way I wanted, I wouldn't do it at all.]

Something in me died that day. **For the next three years, in fact, I spent more time wishing I were dead than alive.** I felt like the Universe, God, Source, whatever name you want to give your Higher Power, had said a big “No!” to me. It felt like a slap in the face. ***Why would I be given this huge desire, if I wasn't to be given the opportunity to bring it about?***

What kept me alive? **What kept me from acting on the suicidal thoughts that filled my brain day after day?** I suppose, in a way, my fears saved me. I didn't want to disappoint those who love me. I couldn't stand the idea of causing them that much pain. I felt too guilty making it all about me. (In this circumstance, this twisted thinking actually served me.) It wasn't their fault I was in so much pain. Somehow, I had to go on with my life, even if it was just one day at a time.

I coped by massively lowering my expectations of what life would offer me. I don't recommend it as a long-term strategy. It's a gray feeling, only half-alive. “Living lives of quiet desperation” is the quote that comes to me. That's what it felt like. I found if I allowed myself to get caught up in the dramas and challenges of everyday work, I could distract myself from my own despair.

I did get better over time, with professional care, with medication, with lots of love and patience from my husband, friends, and family. Nevertheless, it was most of a decade before I considered that **life might actually offer more if I let it.**

How I overcame these fears and mistaken beliefs:

1. Receiving Reiki

My self-esteem had fallen through the floor. I had to learn how to receive; it was a must if I were to feel worthy.

As women, we're taught that it's better to give than to receive. My family upbringing added a twist of martyrdom: some weird kind of valor in suffering. This, of course, was absolute nonsense. I was miserable, so I made those around me equally miserable.

While in this horrible muck of depression, I received my first Reiki session. Reiki is an ancient energetic healing art. It felt like liquid love pouring over me—and that was incredibly painful. It forced upon me the knowledge that it wasn't that God didn't love me, it was that ***I didn't love myself***. You cannot fully receive something if you do not feel worthy of it.

I had work to do. Practicing receiving is a daily thing—from accepting compliments gracefully, to saying “yes, thank you” when opportunities appear.

2. Received a Scientific Hand Analysis

I worked at receiving over the next 5 years, gaining ground bit by bit. I took in a lot of self-help information, and in the process, became aware of a group I hadn't known existed—women entrepreneurs who are thriving at all levels, including financially, doing what they love. For the first time, something in me woke up to the thought that more might be possible for me than “just getting by.”

I was captivated when I heard about Scientific Hand Analysis, I learned we each have a map in our hands; that our fingerprints, formed in the 16th week in utero, hold information revealing our life purpose and what we must do to get past our blocks and fulfill that purpose.

When the opportunity presented itself to give myself the gift of a Life Purpose Hand Analysis, I said yes, even though it took me beyond my spending comfort zone. I had wanted to know what in the world I was here for ever since I was old enough to forget, and this was my chance to find out.

I learned I am here to be a powerful, creative businessperson, and in order to be that, I must trust myself and spread my message. It's taken some time to see the message that's been blossoming in me all these years: **I dream of a world in which every girl has a dream and all that she needs to pursue it.**

That world is possible if every woman claims her own gifts, her power, and steps into her dreams. **We all need role models, even as adults.** As children, we rely on them to show us what's possible. Girls will never be empowered because we tell them "*You can be anything you want*"—they do what we DO, not what we SAY.

3. Found a Mentor

I finally had the answer to my question about why I was here, what I was to strive toward in life. That doesn't mean I knew what to do or how to do it! Far from it! But I had a tool that gave me a lot of insight into who I am, my strengths and my shortcomings. I took trainings, classes, did a lot of journaling and other creative projects as I worked to align my own heart and soul longings with this new information.

There were two things I had always loved about being on stage: feeling alive through creative self-expression, and moving the audience. There is an energetic exchange when you perform. When things are working well, you give your energy to the audience, and they give theirs back to you. I understood I needed to use my new direction to express myself and to try to reach the hearts of those listening.

None of this happened overnight, and the best of it happened after hiring a mentor. I found mentors who were further along in business and in personal fulfillment than I, who could show me the ropes. It's been the best investment I've ever made.

4. Found My Merry Band

The unexpected and most joyful outcome of my journey has been finding "kindred spirits" along the way. **Interacting with others who are on a similar journey, sharing our struggles and our victories, has filled my heart with delight.** Like my character Piper Pan in my book *The Curse of the Neverland*, I have found my Merry Band. I'd love to help you do the same.

As a recipient of my story, I'll be sending you a weekly "Note from Lindy" in your in-box. It's like sitting down together over a cup of coffee. A chance to chat about what's working and what's not working. I share books I'm reading, thoughts I've had while watching a movie, or struggles I'm undergoing in my journey. I always welcome your input, thoughts, perspective, etc.

I dream of a world in which every girl has a dream, and all that she needs to pursue it. To get there, we need every grown woman to step into her power NOW. I look forward to learning how I can help you step into yours.

With love, respect and gratitude,

Lindy MacLaine

P.S. The connection between the coaching work I do and my fantasy adventure book series for girls, is the theme of empowerment. I invite you to visit my book website: piperpanandhermerryband.com. Book one of the series, *The Curse of the Neverland*, comes out January 23, 2015. Opt-in to receive information on author appearances, contests, chances to win a free book, and related events.