

A MEMOIR OF WISDOM  
WITH SANDY HOGAN



FOLLOW  
*YOUR*  
CALLING



*INTERVIEWS & REFLECTIONS  
BY LAUREL ELDERS*

*EDITED BY GINA LUZZI*

# *A Memoir of Wisdom with Sandy Hogan*

*May 14<sup>th</sup>, 1950 – September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019*

In honor of her greatness and a legacy that lives on in our hearts forever.

The following pages contain the interviews I completed with Sandy before she passed. I captured all I could and added my reflections that echo the impact of her mentoring over decades of being blessed to have her as a beloved coach, mentor and friend. The majority of my life's success, she was a catalyst for.

My hope is that you find enjoyment from her wisdom, and continue to cherish her brilliant capacity to empower others, throughout the years.

This series of interviews was dedicated to the topic of Following One's Calling and I've placed them in article format for current and future coaches to glean from. It was midwived forward after Sandy asked me, "What are you up to in your coaching nowadays?" I said, "Helping people follow their calling." She said, "Interesting! Do you have any questions about that?" My reply, "With you? Always!" And so, the journey began.

*With love,*

*Laurel*

# *Table of Contents*

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 1. "When Your Calling Calls Don't Hang Up!"             | 4  |
| 2. The Top 10 Reasons People Don't Follow Their Calling | 6  |
| 3. The 10 Steps to Following Your Inner Guidance        | 8  |
| 4. Handling the Regret of Missed Opportunities          | 13 |
| 5. Facing the Imposter Syndrome                         | 15 |
| 6. The Heart of Self-Worth                              | 17 |
| 7. When Your Life's Endeavors Feel Like End-Nevers      | 18 |
| 8. Seeking Mentorship                                   | 19 |
| 9. Steps to Seeking Mentorship                          | 20 |
| 10. Conclusion  | 21 |

*"When your calling calls,  
don't hang up!"*

As my friend and mentor Sandy puts it, "Develop your hearing aids".

Sandy's advice on knowing if you are called to something greater:

"Listening to the small callings is an invitation for hearing the bigger calling. Listening to the small along the way, in day to day life, prepares the path and grows our faith so that by the time the bigger calling shows up, we are ready."

"Not all callings are paid. You may feel called to clean up the neighborhood you live in, or start a community garden. You may feel called to pay for the elderly woman's groceries in front of you. Not every calling is a calling for fame and fortune. The most unfortunate missed callings are the ones that show up daily and are the simplest to fulfill.

"What is at stake by listening? What is the worst thing that could happen? What if you took a risk to find out? What if it became an adventure or you became a detective following the clues of your life more closely to see where they lead you?" Sandy asks us to reflect further, "How much does your personal comfort prevent you from answering?"

"What if I feel called, but fear it is the wrong number?" Sandy notes this as a common fear and then adds, "First, there is no wrong number. What seems like a dead end or an off-putting idea or conflicting ideas ruminating are all indicative of the true calling that will emerge when it is ready." Listening to the promptings you feel now paves the path for your future.

Sandy invited us to consider, "To access your calling, consider who in life do you admire? Then look at what qualities they embody. You may feel impressed by Maya Angelou, so look at the qualities she embodies. Strive to embody the qualities of Maya Angelou versus trying to measure your life against Maya Angelou."

"These qualities reflect your calling. Be careful to not be called into a *persona*. A true calling is authentic to you."

I believe we are all called to something greater. When we don't listen, we feel it. It becomes the empty feeling in the heart. Then we attempt to cover up that empty feeling with ice cream, TV, other people's ideals, texting, etc. It is the difference between a distraction and a healthy outlet.

Sandy said that the question to look at is, "To what is calling me?" She went on, "To explore this, I invite you to keep a "Calling Journal" for one month."

- "Note what called you. Did you follow? Did you not?"
- If yes, what happened?
- If not, what got in the way?
- No judgment, just notice.
- Reflect on whom you admire. What qualities do they embody? What does this reflect back to you?
- What have you felt called to do in the past? Did you answer? How did it go? How did this experience shape you now, positively or negatively?"

# *The Top 10 Reasons People Don't Follow Their Calling*

This last month has been bittersweet for me. One of my first coaches, mentors, and dear friend, Sandy Hogan, was diagnosed with cancer.

During my time with this truly amazing woman, she has opened up her wisdom to me on answering your calling. During my visits with her, she invites me to ask her a question and she then channels her wisdom as I write for her.

Today the question was "what are your thoughts on why people don't follow their calling?" To this, she gave the Top 10 Reasons:

- 1) "I am afraid to give up security."
- 2) "Why me? If I can do this, so can anyone."
- 3) "This has already been done before. Why do it again?"
- 4) "Who would pay me for this?"
- 5) "What a ridiculous thought."
- 6) "If (fill in the blank) were no object, then I would do it."
- 7) "I'm too busy."
- 8) "I don't have the means to make this happen."
- 9) "How can I sustain my energy if I head in a new direction?"
- 10) "The last time I listened to my heart, I got burned."

Do any of these stop you in your tracks?

Which one has the most grip?

Have you noticed the common thread above? Fear. Worry. Doubt. When we experience a negative emotion, remember that negative naturally connotes "the absence of." Something is missing.

What do you need to follow your calling? What is calling you that you are brushing aside? What will it take for you to face your calling?

For me, it was "I'm too busy." Yet, the truth was, all I needed to do was rework my priorities. And now 7 years later, the Coaching Institute is here. I felt called in 2009. It took me 19 months to answer. 19 months! I argued, doubted, ignored. But the calling wouldn't give up.

Sandy says, "The good thing is that our calling doesn't give up on us. But, we often give up on it."

Is there any area you've given up on? The good news is that it is never too late.

The above is a list of great questions to reflect upon so that you can get clear and own your life!

# *The 10 Steps to Following Your Inner Guidance*

We all have it. That inner knowing. That sensation within gleaming “yes” or dropping down in the pit of our stomach warning “no”.

Whether or not we follow it... Well, that is another question. I didn't really want the second helping of cake, I but ate it anyway out of rebellion.

The poet Rumi invites us, “Let yourself be silently drawn by the strange pull of what you really love. It will not lead you astray.”

When we respect our inner “yes,” we naturally generate rewards. Not because we are being rewarded, but because we are gaining access to live through alignment. Abundance abides here.

When we rebel against our inner promptings, lessons and repercussions are naturally generated. Not because we are being punished, but because when we disavow our own insight, we block the abundance available by living out of alignment with our truth. Dissonance abides here.

In the book, *The Anatomy of Peace*, one of the key teachings illuminates a concept found in carpentry. This is, when something is crooked, then it needs to be justified. In carpentry, justification takes something crooked and attempts to straighten it. If it isn't crooked, then it is already justified.

In our spiritual walk, we justify when our alignment or intentions become crooked. Something happens, our heart says, “Do this!” Then our ego kicks in and starts doubting and fearing and then justifying why we should do something else. Before we know it, all we see are our justifications. And, oh, those justifications are so seductive and convincing.

*This is called self-deception.*



This is why the Course in Miracles advises us to first get at peace, then ask “What do I want to come of this?” We cannot hear our heart's truth in the thicket of justification. It is too loud and distracting there. The heart's truth is gentle and presently waiting. It will never be loud and pushy, like the ego.

When you begin to unfold, step into your true calling, and follow your heart, there is little to no room for self-deception, if you wish to go far.

Below we will explore how to strengthen the inner-guidance muscles and learn to follow the “yes!” so that you experience the success you seek.

Before my mentor Sandy's passing, I had the honor of interviewing her. Sandy was a powerful beacon in my life who bravely and consistently invited me out of my self-deceptions and self-limitations so that I could soar. My hope is that any missing ingredient you are needing will find you below.

## *The 10 Steps:*

1) *“Understand how you receive guidance.”* Do you have an inner-felt sense of something? What does your “yes” feel like, versus your “no”? This is different for everyone, so be sure to recognize your signals to self. If you are not sure, Sandy advises, “Note prior times you listened & followed. What happened? When didn't you listen? What happened? What were the differences?” I also invite you to make of list of your justifications when you don't follow. Are there any patterns? What is the gist of the justifications?

2) *“Consider all of the ways you have felt called.”*

Did you receive a tap on the shoulder through others? Was it synchronicity showing up? Hunches? Your children, spouse or close friends? On the inverse: What don't you want to hear? What do you have a hard time being with? Sandy taught me how life first drops a pebble on your path, then a rock, and then if we still refuse to listen, eventually a boulder. Sandy said, “Spirit doesn't give up, but we often do too soon,” because we expect things to go a certain way.

### 3) *"Do you feel the calling and then attempt to modify it?"*

What parts of the calling feel uncomfortable? How does this push you off the path? This is an invitation to trust the calling fully. Callings may seem to take us off the path we envisioned. Callings are not linear, they will take you on stepping stones that add up over time. "Go here today." "Talk to this gentleman." "Meditate this morning."

They do not always make sense. I was listening to an Abraham-Hicks talk and a man stood up to share his testimony. He was driving one day and his intuition told him, "Drive on the sidewalk." What?! He thought that was crazy, but something told him to do it. As he did, he avoided an accident that happened right in front of him.

Often callings defy logic. We give up too soon out of disbelief. However, this also makes following our calling the adventure of a lifetime.

4) *"Learn to distinguish between fear and intuition."* How does fear feel in your body? Where does it show up? How does it feel different than intuition for you? I am horribly panicky about flying. I was committed to going on a trip to Germany, a nine-hour flight. A week before the trip, I swore my intuition was telling me that the plane would crash and I tried to back out. I ended up going and everything was fine. That was fear. Fear is panicky, emotional. Intuition is typically a calm and present inner-knowing. However, distinguishing the difference between the two is indeed a milestone in our own mastery.

5) *"Do not minimize your GPS."* Sandy always reminded me, "If it isn't a hell yes, then it should be a hell no!" Our inner yes is our very own personalized GPS. Or, someone once called it, our God Protection Service. It is personal to you. Value it. It will not lead you astray. You could also call it your conscience. We each have one. Learn to trust it. Ignore it all you want, but the good news is that it doesn't go away. Even if you have been ignoring it for years, there is no day like today to begin to wake up to its guidance.

6) *"Clear the runway!"* Sandy invites us to clear the runway for takeoff. What I've learned is that when we clear the past, we clear the path. Biases we accumulate over time become like a virus in our lives. Those inner wounds block our potential and then we feel as if we are not going anywhere, stuck on the runway.

Wounds also block us from attracting new opportunities. How can you tell if you have wounds? How reactive do you feel? Reactivity means we still have fear. Fear means our heart isn't clear. A cloudy heart is an indication we have not gotten complete with things in our past. Clear the past, clear the path.

7) *"Follow the inner yes."* First, get clear what your inner yes is so you can steer clear of self-deception. Next, act! Dare yourself to act. It may not make any sense at the time. Our promptings sometimes seem bizarre. Yet, there is a part of you that is connected to all that is and to other people. This part knows what to do, where to go next and who to talk to more than your conscious mind.

When we get real about how we *really* feel, we can sense what is in the best interest of the greater good of all concerned. Learn to trust it, even when it makes no sense. This is called walking by faith, not by sight.

Rumi teaches us, "Your heart knows the way. Run in that direction!"

8) *"Have faith in your yes."* Sandy shared with me that when Einstein had a new idea, he would imagine life with and without his idea to see how he felt. Not what he thought, but how he felt. Thoughts can deceive. The heart is incapable of self-deception.

If you feel relieved at the idea of not doing something, then it is a no. Sometimes an idea lights up the heart, but it is hard to implement so our fears take us down. Have faith that the "yes" will take you to that next great place.

Note to self: If you have a fear, it can feel like a "no." Beneath the surface of fear, your heart is always clear. Clear the fear and watch a new path to the "yes!" appear.

9) *"To say or do the truth is more valuable than the risk."* Consider Sandy's favorite quotes by Patrick Overton: "When you walk to the edge of all the light you have and take that first step into the darkness of the unknown, you must believe that one of two things will happen. There will be something solid for you to stand upon or you will be taught to fly."

What are you risking anyway? Staying small? Not listening? When you get tired of staying small, I invite you to step into the arena of possibility.

10) *"Give yourself grace."* Learning to follow the heart and stepping out of self-limitation takes time, willingness to course-correct, and to be open to being real. There is a Sufi saying, "May the face of the Real be upon you." Being real includes giving ourselves grace. It is the recognition that being human is to err. Sandy taught that "Mistakes are nothing more than missteps. Step again. It is ok to derail. It is ok to re-negotiate as we go."

*Many paths lead to the top of the same mountain.*

*Take your unique path to the top.*

# *Handling the Regret of Missed Opportunities*

This week we will look at how to handle the callings we haven't answered, how to let go of these so that they don't hold us back, and how to move forward.

As I've been looking at the concept of callings more closely through this series, I've had some realizations. For whatever reason, I'm great at answering my bigger callings. I will take on large community projects, donate my time, teach, coach, mentor or contribute in other ways. Yet, what stops me short are the daily promptings. The prompting to offer a homeless person my leftovers, make that phone call to an old friend or gift the last protein bar in my purse. The small ones, I find easier to argue with.

Regardless, it is all ok to not be perfect, but it is important to be aware.

Sandy spoke to me about how to best handle missed opportunities when we do not listen to our calling and "wake up one day to realize the bus has left the station and I'm not on it."

These are called regrets. Below are six of Sandy's tips for dealing with these regrets.

#1 - "There is a benefit to regret. You won't let it happen again. Disappointment helps the ego to understand the value of your gifts to life." In other words, you are disappointed because you care and value what passed.

#2 - "The clearer you are, the more willing you will be to take the step." As we examine our disappointment, we become clearer about what we value.

#3 - "Allow yourself to grieve dreams unfulfilled. Grieving and remorse may also act as a reset and adjust the calling in a more appropriate way that is in alignment with current resources. For example, I could have been a tightrope walker in my 20s. I'm now a tightrope walker between aging and saging in my 60s."

#4 - "Nature never wastes anything. If you don't hear the doorbell the first time, spirit will come around and next time ring it twice. Spirit doesn't give up. We do."

#5 - "Examine your commitment levels." Maybe you were not ready to commit yet. What might you need to say no to in the future in order to say yes to something greater?

#6 - "To relaunch your hope, answer what is immediate today. See your life as a gift today."

Reflecting on Sandy's wisdom reminds me of how powerful it is to place the mind in allegiance to the heart. Many people live in their heads and then wonder why they are filled with worry. Well, if the answers are in the heart, of course life would feel worrisome. We are looking in the wrong place for our answers.

What is your heart calling you to do?

What will it take to follow it?

# Facing the Imposter Syndrome

“Sandy, can you share more about your thoughts on the imposter syndrome?” I started our daily interview.

“Ahh, yes. It arises when an individual believes they are not as they present. It happens in all walks of life. It is not gender specific.

“You can identify it by catching your inner process. For example, if you hear yourself thinking thoughts like:

- “If they only knew...”
- “I couldn't even qualify for the job I hold now.”

Or, through comparisons:

- “Well, she gets paid more because she has the degree and I don't.”
- “I am not the real deal. I'm just standing in for...”

“When suffering from imposter syndrome, people go on high alert and become hypervigilant. They question: “What if they find out?” They seek evidence that others may reveal them as a fraud. When you admire something you don't think you have, you tend to give your power away through comparison and doubt.

“Nine times out of ten, this is all a myth. This is because people think about us a lot less than we think they do. When we are in negative emotions of fear, self-doubt, over-compensation, or shame, they take over and we find ourselves trying to prove our worth rather than *being our worth*.

“People who are susceptible to the syndrome also struggle with shame, conscious or unconscious.”

What I have learned from Sandy in this interview and over the years as her student:

- Be your worth.
- Worth is an inside job.
- We suffer when we place worth where it is not.
- Clear the shame and you clear the pain.

Furthermore, Sandy said: “The beautiful human needs that the syndrome is trying to mitigate are authenticity, inner-value, self-worth and contribution.”

Sandy suggests the following exercise to begin to unravel the syndrome in ourselves or help our clients through it.

*Exercise:* Identify someone who you find to be an exemplar of who you wish to be.

Questions to consider:

- 1) What qualities do they have that you admire so deeply?
- 2) What is the evidence of those qualities?
- 3) How can you emulate those qualities?
- 4) What will it take to believe in your own power?
- 5) When is the next opportunity to believe in yourself?
- 6) What do you wish to come of this opportunity?



## *The Heart of Self-Worth*

My daily question to Sandy was, "What do you see is at the core of having solid self-worth?"

Sandy replied, "Early and consistent positive validation. For people to know how their children are hardwired. Parents often parent as if they are their children. Parents provide validation when they develop conscious parenting approaches, unconditional positive regard, curiosity (aka "What does the child want?"), and emotional intelligence. Someone once said, "No matter how tall your grandfather was, you still have to do your own growing."

Sandy and I further discussed how not everyone has the luxury of such a childhood. Even those in a privileged home experience childhood wounding.

There is a theory in the roots of the Enneagram that our first wounding is what creates the defense patterns by setting a pattern of reactivity in motion. This pattern is what creates the predictability of the personality type. The more in our defense mode we are, the more predictable our behavior is. The more we self-developed we choose to become, and as we choose who we are going to show up as in the world, the less we are governed by our patterns.

Sandy taught me that self-worth is a redundant statement. "Self" should automatically equal one's worth. When it doesn't, something has gone wrong.

She also taught me that when we do not know that our childhood wounds, big or small, are causing our defense strategies as adults, it is hard to change them. However, she says, "Once you are aware, you can do something."

Sandy says, "We become aware of our woundings through painful experiences that seem to be happening to us." Those can either be a catalyst calling us to awaken to our true implicit worth or we can unconsciously continue the patterns of defense and personal suffering. The beauty is that the choice is ours.

What is at the core of having solid self-worth? You. You deciding to accept your worth truly comes from you being you.

## *When your life's endeavors feel more like end-nevers...*

Today I posed a question to Sandy that I find a lot of people asking, including myself decades before. "Ok, so I am answering my life's calling. Why does it feel so challenging? Shouldn't things just fall into place?!"

Sandy says, "You would think so. However, we no longer live in a world filled with community or emotional support, so we can easily end up feeling like we must go it alone or fight against the grain.

"First, many people are used to ignoring the call. So, by the time they listen, it is a new function. Therefore, a new learning.

"Second, following the call may require what seems like risk. Perceived risk is what blocks people from following their calling.

"Third. Limiting beliefs take over. For example, "People will think I'm crazy." Or, "I'll probably fail." Or, "Who am I to..." You get the drift.

"Lastly, many people do not realize there are mentors that want to help. Resources are also mentors. SCORE, for example, offers free business guidance. There are also mentors in spiritual communities."

Sandy then cited one of her favorite quotes by Anais Nin, "The day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom."

Sandy was a true mentor while I endured the challenges of waking up to my calling. She was also a coach. She wouldn't allow me to give my power away by giving her credit for the new awakenings I would have as I reached a new peak on my journey.

She was right. When we aren't raised in a society that fosters things like listening to what is calling, you kind of learn growing up to tuck it away, fearful of being seen as too frivolous. You forget how to listen. The callings become an echo of the past... unless we choose to listen and dare greatly enough to follow it.

Following your calling may not always be easy. However, *it is very worth it*. And, as our beloved Sandy put it, "When you step into your power, you invite others to step into theirs."

## *Seeking Mentorship*

When your life endeavors seem like end-nevers, it may be time to seek a mentor.

A mentor is someone who has come before, overcome odds, and succeeded.

A mentor has the heart to help.

A mentor will illuminate new pathways and possibilities.

Mentors ensure we unfold in the right direction and take the shortcuts in life.

Sandy was a mentor to me when I first started my coaching journey. With a twinkle in her eye, she offered, "Just bring me lunch and ask any questions you wish!"

What a deal! Because of her tutelage, passion, and care, I went from sore to soaring.

The following page contains a few of Sandy's recommended reflections to get headed in the right direction of finding and connecting with a mentor.

# *Steps to Seeking Mentorship*

In what areas in life could you use mentorship?

- What is calling me that is new to me?
- Where do I feel stuck?

What resources am I seeking? Info? Support? Other?

- Where could I use some guidance?
- What information is missing?
- If I'm not sure, who would know?

What mentoring format would work best for me? How about the mentor?

- Take the mentor to lunch? Offer a service trade? Paid?
- Support group? Mastermind? Coaching group?

Who, where, or what could help?

- Is there a book I could study?
- Is there an organization that teaches? Ex: SCORE offers free business consulting.
- Whom could I ask?

How might I access them or it?

- Reach out?
- Am I clear about what I'm asking for?

How can I express gratitude to my mentor? What do they value?

- Flowers? Lunch?
- Referrals? Testimony?

## *Conclusion...*

I hope you have found something in these pages that brings you guidance and inspiration around finding and following what is truly calling you. Sandy reminded me to not judge what is calling. It all serves. A calling may be as simple as starting a garden or volunteering at the neighborhood library. Or it might include being of service in bigger ways.

Sandy helped me answer the callings in my own life. My hope is that her words of wisdom resonate with your heart and give you a much-needed new perspective to start.

Many blessings!

*Samuel Elders*



*Sandy Hogan*

*May 14<sup>th</sup>, 1950 - September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019*