

THE  
8 MYTHS  
of Making a Living

Getting Clear About  
Your Life & Work



Mary Lyn Miller

**THE 8 MYTHS**  
**OF MAKING A LIVING**  
**(AND THE TRUTH OF MAKING A LIFE)**  
**Getting Clear About Your Life & Work**

by

**MARY LYN MILLER**

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To protect client confidentiality, some of the names of the people who appear in case histories have been changed. However, all information is based on fact.

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## **WELCOME**

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You are probably reading this because you are not as happy as you know you could be. You are searching. Perhaps you're seeking a new path, a new career, a way to integrate your life more fully. You are clear that something is wrong, but you are not quite sure what. You try hard, but your efforts aren't producing the desired results. You feel lost. You lack a clear vision of your future. You may hate your job, your boss, your company, or your entire lifestyle.

There is hope! In all likelihood, the roots of your discomfort are planted in the beliefs that you have about work and life. These beliefs or "Myths" are the basic assumptions you have woven into the fabric of your life. Without you realizing it, These "myths" may be continually sabotaging your happiness, success and prosperity.

The problem with these "Myths" is that they seem very much like the Truth. If you have been told since childhood that the green stoplight on the corner of your street is blue, you would come to know it as blue. Of course, just because you were taught it was blue, does not mean it IS blue. Yet, it would not occur to you to challenge the color unless you hear someone else call the light green. At that moment you realize you have conflicting information and you need to discover the truth.

As a career consultant for the past 20 years, I discovered that the blocks to success and fulfillment are rarely lack of talent, education or ability. Rather, the stumbling blocks to happiness and fulfillment are underlying beliefs or myths about work, career, money, creativity, and purpose of life that has been passed onto us through our educational system, religion, society and family heritage. Our parents learned some of these ideas

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from their parents who were taught by their parents and so forth. These beliefs often have very little to do with our real possibilities and options; they are simply the myths we have been taught about making a living.

I am here to tell you that the light is green. I want you to know the truth. I want you to know that you are a magnificent creature with a unique design for living that is unlike anyone else in the world. As you begin to discover and express your very special design, you will find your mind, body and spirit coming to life. That feeling is called passion. You have an unlimited capacity to experience and express passion. This is your purpose. The more passion you experience, the more you have to give to the world. The more you give, the more you will receive. This is how you achieve great abundance. You are meant to experience all of this as part of your life's work. This is the truth of making a life.

If this is the truth, how did we go astray? This book addresses 8 of the most common and limiting myths that you may have been taught and have come to believe as true. When you fill out the following Belief Inventory you may be surprised what you really believe. Beliefs are subtle, but this book will help you not only identify what holds you back, but will also offer concrete exercises to begin shifting your perceptions, and thus, the outcomes in your life.

First, you need to identify beliefs and gain awareness about ideas that may be limiting you and your future. The next part of the book offers fresh approaches to old ways of thinking and offers exercises to help you integrate these new concepts into your lifestyle. At the end of each chapter is a short series of questions. You can use a journal, a pad of paper or the computer. Whatever you choose, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of answering the questions and doing the exercises. Reading is helpful in re-organizing your thinking, however, it is the relating these concepts to your own life that anchors these ideas into your heart. The last part of the book suggests time-tested tools to keep your thinking positive and supportive of your true goals in life.

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Interestingly, if you focus on altering the 8 beliefs discussed here, the rest of your life will begin to change, seemingly by itself. The core of almost all difficulties, struggles, and disappointments begin at the level of your beliefs. If you do only a small portion of the suggested exercises with focus and dedication, your life will change for the better.

How long will it take? Everyone is a unique individual; there is no time frame for change that applies to everyone. It took awhile to learn your original beliefs; it takes awhile to learn new ones. It depends on your readiness, your willingness and how seriously you implement some of the suggested new ideas. But you don't have to do it perfectly to get results. Also, you don't have to quit your job, move out of state, or get rid of the cat. You just start wherever you are. I can guarantee you this: if you make at least a few of the adjustments I recommend, you will become more aware of how you can become happier in both your work and personal life. This awareness will slowly guide you forward to making more changes, until, one day you realize you have built the life you want.

You are not alone. As you read further in the book, many of my clients and coaches have openly shared their experiences about how altering their beliefs significantly impacted their lives. They have grappled with exactly the same issues with astonishing success and many of their stories are chronicled here for you. This is a community that is available to you. Some have included e-mail addresses in the Appendix should you wish to personally address questions to them. Some stories refer to "Life Focusing" or the Career Clinic program. The Life & Career Clinic is the organization that implements the process of "Life Focusing" which is our self-discovery and lifestyle management program to personally discover a more passionate, purposeful way of living and working. ([www.l-cc.com](http://www.l-cc.com) or see Appendix for information.) Additional support is available to you through the Life and Career Clinic. Facilitators and support groups are conducted via the telephone (as well as in person). As you see changes occurring in your life, we want to add your story to our community. Since, as a society we have been taught not to seek

support, I strongly recommend that you reach out for it. Support not only accelerates the process of change, it makes it much easier.

Most importantly, other people's experiences can show you ways they have put this information to concrete use and changed their lives in ways that simply may not have occurred to you. This is a re-training process. If they can learn new beliefs, so can you.

I was not immune to the myths either. You will see from my story that I believed most of the 8 Myths as well. I have learned a very different way of being which is now producing much happier results.

## **MY STORY**

I find it amusing that I started in the career development business in 1980, when I wasn't sure that I even wanted to work!

To me, work was something you did that wasn't much fun. When I was young, it certainly held no appeal. I held summer and part-time jobs because it was good for my character, and it was expected of me. At school, I worked to make enough money to do the things I really wanted to do. I never viewed it as a particularly joyful or uplifting experience. After all, isn't work a lot of work? But, you don't have any choice if you want to have money, do you?

I took these attitudes into my adult life. I did what was expected of me. I built my character and held jobs just to make money, with little consideration as to how they supported and encouraged my natural gifts and talents. I expected work to be work; and, it was. Joy, passion and fulfillment were not part of my early work experience; nor did I think they should be.

I believed that the real key to being happy was to first figure out how to make enough money to live the way you really wanted to live. Once I knew that number, I reasoned (which I never did

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because of my beliefs about money,) then I would figure out what I had to do to make that amount and that would be my career! It was as if my career were the store where I could go buy my life. If money was the answer, and the way to get money is work, then, more lucrative work was clearly the solution. Anyone can see that.

I really believed this to be true and expended a tremendous amount of energy trying to figure out the career choices that would make the money so that someday in the future I could eventually have a life.

I eventually "put my money where my mouth is" and chose communications. But, I was insecure and my job choices were made to please other people: my bosses, my parents, my neighbors. Other people's approval and validation were my source of self-esteem. I worked long hours (after all, I believed in hard work), dedicated myself to my job, and made sure I didn't do anything that offended anyone. It did result in some success; I was eventually promoted to Director of Corporate Communications for a major financial organization, but despite salary increases, I didn't seem to have enough money to live the life I REALLY wanted (not that I knew what that was.)

There was another problem. The more recognition I received, the more obligated I felt to assume even more responsibility. After all, wasn't I striving to "get to the top?" But working hard and performing well left me with very little personal life. I came to believe that making a living required most of my time and energy. While I received raises, the costs of my work were high as well. I had no idea how to get off the treadmill.

I wanted to be more creative, but I was so exhausted after work that I had no resources left to do the activities I loved. My idea had been that this kind of work was a good strategy because it would provide me with the money to eventually do what I wanted. Yet, for all my efforts, I hadn't saved anywhere near enough to pursue my dreams. In fact, I realized it seemed to be costing me money to work. Wasn't that the reason I was

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working in the first place? What happened to my idea that more lucrative work would be the answer? What if this wasn't the truth, after all?

At this point, I thought the answer was that I needed more freedom, fewer authority figures. So, I decided to become an entrepreneur. Running my own company would solve my problems, right? But all the same beliefs came into play. I was still a people-pleaser, and thus, became afraid to make my fees too high for fear people wouldn't use my services. Instead of being driven by the demands of a boss, I was now driven by the demands of my clients, and worked nights and weekends to validate my career. Of course, now that I was totally responsible for my own business, I was still struggling financially. I had simply transferred all my unresolved problems to a new environment.

I was tired, frustrated and depressed. I had done all I knew to do, and none of it was working. Backed into a corner, my world suddenly and completely fell apart. I was diagnosed with cancer of the bladder. The prognosis was, at best, bleak. I was stunned; but it forced me to realize that I wanted to live, and I decided to do whatever it took to accomplish that. I saw that "living" did not mean being afraid of everything. I was tired of fearing what people thought of me. I was tired of trying to look good. I was tired of never having enough energy, time or money. If I had only a little time left, I wanted to explore and experience all the things that inspired me. Before I lost it, I was determined to know real "life" - in every meaning of the word.

I began to realize my life was based on a series of untruths, all discussed in this book. It was painfully clear that the way I had been living my life did not work well for me. In fact, it produced stress, frustration, and illness without the meaning and satisfaction I so craved. But, if my old thinking wasn't effective, what then, was the better answer?

I began by redefining what it meant TO ME to be alive. My illness made me aware that I had just been going through the

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motions. I had always done "the right thing," been a "good girl," done everything I "should" do, instead of living with a sense of passion. That was it! If I wanted to be truly alive, then I had to FEEL that excitement within me.

Oh, rats, another quandary!! Where in the world did that passion come from? How could I reproduce it in my life? I began to pay close attention to the times I experienced it. I noticed I was more invigorated when I had been in a social gathering. I would come home "high" on life. (I have since discovered that being social is part of my "inner design" or essence.) My heart would also quicken at the idea of going to the theatre or a concert. Sometimes it was a quieter experience. I could become passionately absorbed in a piece of piano music or a walk on the beach. The cancer itself was stimulating because I now know that I thrive on a challenge. Having to design a strategy for my own healing actually made me feel more alive than I had in years!

As I shared my thoughts with others I realized that passion is an intensely personal process. Everyone has their own unique design for passion. Each person's soul is touched and opened in unique ways. We all have different gifts, talents and abilities. What does it for me may not do it for you at all. What if I could figure out a way to get those "passion points" on paper so that I could see my map for success and happiness? What if I followed it every day? What would happen to me? What if I could do that for others as well?

That became my quest and my joy. Over several years I eventually evolved a process that accomplishes exactly that. Today that process is known as Life Focusing™. I learned that if I consistently stayed true to my inner essence and made choices based on "where there was life," instead of where there was fear, my life would open up in amazing ways.

I finally felt free. I stopped planning my life and began living it.

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In fact, I had no great plans at all. I followed my heart, tried to choose life-producing activities and do what was meaningful. As I grew, the work followed. My transformation was recognizable. (I have found this true of many of my clients as well; physical changes often follow the emotional ones.) I softened. I relaxed. I was happy. I glowed and looked years younger. It was noticeable. People asked what I was doing and I told them. They also wanted more passion, more joy. But, over and over again, the myths of making a living came up. "I'd like to do that too" they would say, "but, you know, I have to make money." (Incidentally, so do I.) "Of course, you do," I responded, "but why not build a life you love AND make money?" You short-change yourself when you choose mediocrity and fear. In fact, the greatest abundance you can receive comes from fully expressing your inner essence.

From these types of conversations, I began to conduct workshops and support groups. I implemented Life Focusing™ to help people discover their true inner essence. I developed a network of passionate people sharing their path with each other. In 1988, I opened the Life and Career Clinic, an organization dedicated to helping men and women from all walks of life and all parts of the world, successfully define their inner selves and walk a passionate path. What a wonderful turn my life took!

If it just seems too easy, it was. At the end of one year with virtually no promotion or fanfare, I had seen more clients, done more business and made more money than I had in any of the previous 7 years. I knew then that I was onto something. I was succeeding in a way that was never discussed in business schools, and it was working better than anything else I had ever tried. I knew I wanted to pass this information onto others.

Today, I feel healthy, vibrant and alive. I love what I do and am always supported in doing it. This is the life you are meant to live as well. You don't need as much as you may think. All you need insight, clarity and support. That's it. You are already smart enough, strong enough and good enough. You had the seeds of your talents at birth; they now require nurturing.

## **WE CAN DO IT!**

You may not feel you can do this. But we can do it. I wrote this book to help you release beliefs that trap you and to remind myself that I, too, must constantly be aware of how my thinking can limit me. If you choose to live with passion and truth, then we can all be free. This is an exciting and transforming journey. Together we will shift from the limited myths of making a living and into the truths of making a wonderful, prosperous and creative life.

If you're ready to find out what you believe NOW and open up the possibilities in your life, visit [www.L-CC.com/myths.htm](http://www.L-CC.com/myths.htm) to purchase *The 8 Myths of Making a Living*.



## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Mary Lyn Miller has assisted thousands of men and women in their quest for fulfillment through her workshops, seminars and personal coaching and consulting. In 1988 she founded The Life and Career Clinic in Redondo Beach, California, an organization dedicated to healing people's relationships with their life and work, and designed LIFE FOCUSING™, a breakthrough process for personal clarity and life direction.

She not only works with individuals from all walks of life, but has also developed transition, outplacement and motivational programs for institutions and organizations including IBM, TRW, UCLA, Los Angeles County Office of Education, Hughes Aircraft, and the Veteran's Administration.

Mary Lyn is an inspirational speaker, telling her story of how she recovered from cancer and burnout to finding a life filled with of passion and purpose. She believes this is the natural right of all human beings and demonstrates how it can be done.

She is also available for individual consultations, workshops and corporate presentations.

Feel free to contact her at (310) 378-4417 or [mlm@l-cc.com](mailto:mlm@l-cc.com).

## **Order Information:**

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