

The Starting Point To Being Bodacious

By Mary Foley
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Recently, after speaking to a group of 300 women I was asked a very honest question: **How can we learn to be bodacious without having to go through big life trauma** such as a divorce or the glass ceiling, like you experienced?

I heard the pain in the woman's voice who asked the question. She didn't want to go through more "stuff"; she just wanted to feel free.

"The fastest way to become a Bodacious Woman" I responded, "is to look within and trust your inner voice."

To help women wrap their head around what it looks like to live bodaciously, I created the easy to remember Bodacious Woman Mantra, four phrases that can change your life. They are:

Look Within
Think Strategically
Act bodaciously
Love Every Minute of It

In my book, "Bodacious! Woman: Outrageously in Charge of Your Life and Lovin' It!" I playfully describe my Bodacious Woman Mantra, but here's a quickie on the first part: Look Within.

When you live your life bodaciously, you get more of what you want; loving and respectful relationships, exciting work, and recognition for your contributions. But these are only the external manifestations of the Bodacious Way. Bodacious Women know these rewards come easily when you are bodacious within first. All the skills, techniques, and savvy in the world won't stick until you improve the quality of your inner messages. What you say to yourself *is* a major tool in building a fabulous life.

Looking within means doing two key things: Trusting your inner voice and protecting your self-esteem.

Trusting your inner voice means you first have to listen to what's going on inside you. **If you listen carefully, your inner voice will help you determine how you feel about yourself and what you want.** The Bodacious Woman trusts her inner voice and moves in that direction.

The second key aspect of looking within is to protect yourself from self-esteem busters. Unfortunately, our culture tends to confuse self-esteem with self-absorption, self-centeredness or just plain old selfishness, and this confusion leads women to be discouraged about taking care of themselves.

Guarding your self-esteem doesn't mean that you care for others any less, it means that you care for yourself more, probably more than you have. To have healthy self-esteem doesn't mean you spend hours gazing in the mirror. It doesn't mean you consider yourself the Queen of All That is Perfect. It means saying yes to those things that bring you joy and satisfaction and no to those things that don't.

This may seem a little over the top, but a few women recently encouraged me to share this. A number of years ago as a present to myself for handling my divorce with dignity, I traded in my mini-van for a black, Porsche Boxster! I felt a bit hesitant at first to buy this fancy-schmancy car. But, my inner voice kept reminding me I loved convertibles and that I was worth it. So, I took the plunge.

Now the only thing I think about is how good I feel every time I drive it! Seriously, if I'm having a particularly stressful day, often all I need to do to lighten me up is put the top down and crank up the tunes as I drive to my next activity. Of course, you don't need a Porsche to boost your spirits. What's important is to do something to help you feel fully alive and embrace life!

Look within; that's the first refrain in the Bodacious Woman Mantra. You have to look inside yourself to fully discover who you are and what you want. Listen to and trust your inner voice. Garner your self-esteem and protect it like a jewel. Remember, you're an amazing woman! Deep down you really know that. But don't keep the secret to yourself. We're dying out here wanting to know you in your full regalia! Bring it on, sister!

About Mary Foley

Mary Foley, author of *Bodacious! Woman: Outrageously in Charge of Your Life and Lovin' It!* and founder of the Live Like Your Nail Color Women's Club, inspires women to be bold, audacious – bodacious – while having a whole lotta fun! How bodacious are you? Find out by taking Mary's fun quiz today on www.GoBodacious.com.