



The Gutsy Girl's Guide to Success

How to be **Extraordinary** on Your Own Terms

By Molly Hoyne
Founder and Executive Director of Stratejoy, Inc.

WHAT I KNOW FOR SURE

★Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?" – Mary Oliver

There are a few things I know about you already.

You are a Gutsy Girl. You want to be Successful. You get all tingly at the phrase "Extraordinary on Your Own Terms".

You and I have a lot in common.

If you're shaking your head already, thinking, "Oh man, I wish I were gutsy" or "I'm about as far from successful as one could be right now" or "Extraordinary? Hah! I'll settle for ordinary" – *Stop it right now. Stop thinking yourself down and out.*

Give yourself credit for taking the step to obtain this Guide, downloading it and actually reading it! Believe me, it's a lot further than most people will go. You've got to celebrate the small stuff!

Before we go any further, I want to make sure you're the right woman for this Guide. I don't want to waste your time if you're not up for the challenge I'm about to deliver.

IS THIS YOU?

You downloaded this Gutsy Girl's Guide to Success hoping it was a:

- Checklist of 10 life hacks you could conquer and then – POOF! – instant success
- Quick read that you could cruise and then ignore, continuing on with your safe life
- Self help ego boost telling you that you are already perfect and thus a success and thus Extraordinary

If any of those ring true, I'm afraid you might be disappointed. Let's chalk it up to "no chemistry" and go our separate ways. No harm, no foul.

ON THE OTHERHAND, IS THIS YOU?

You downloaded this Gutsy Girl's Guide to Success hoping it was a:

- Juicy, thought-provoking Manifesto on living an Extraordinary Life
- Inspirational Guide to discard stagnant expectations, create your own happiness or break out on your own
- Way to learn what Stratejoy is all about and to find out how to join the Authentic Happiness Movement

If those sound more up your alley, rock on. We're already starting off on the right foot! Perhaps a pasta-fueled, Lady and the Tramp, candle lit kiss is in our future. You know, due to our incredible chemistry together!

In case this wasn't already obvious, I'm Molly, the founder, voice and big dreamer behind Stratejoy. I lead lifestyle design workshops online and off, provide keynotes on authentic happiness and head a website full of resources and inspiration to conquer the Quarterlife Crisis*. I love what I do.

Oh, and it is not pronounced Straight-Joy. It is Strata-Joy, as in Strategies for Joy. That is something I know for sure.

This guide is my public proclamation to help "The Tribe" kick ass as you realize your own authentic success and joy. Welcome to The Tribe!

WHAT ELSE DO I KNOW FOR SURE?

I know that by clarifying your personal definition of success and cultivating powerful habits, you can lead an authentically joyous life. I believe in your capacity for growth, for success, for truthful living. I know that the day-to-day can be more than a to-do list. I believe that you can feel at peace with yourself and energized about the path you are on.

*You do not need to be in the midst of a Quarterlife Crisis to read this guide. But if you are, it will be insanely useful.

I know that being extraordinary means you are living deliberately, sharing with the world the very best you have to offer. I believe that you have unlimited power to contribute, as long as you practice unconditional self-love.

I know that settling is never the answer, that fulfilling others' expectations is useless in the long run. I believe in your uniqueness.

I believe in that big, bold juicy version of your life and your ability to embrace it, to create it, to make it your reality.

I'm providing this **Guide to Success** because I love when we're all on the same page. And trust me, this is an incredible page to be on together. It is a declaration to the Universe that you believe in your capacity to create an extraordinary life on your own terms.

Hold on to your hat sister. The road ahead is full of surprises, pit stops for Rainier cherries & dancing in the moonlight. We'll probably have to change a flat or two. We're going to be awed by vistas undiscovered, fueled by roadside lemonade and amazed by every new town, every new friend.

Why? Because life is Extraordinary. You've just got to be following the right map. Your Map.

THE JOY EQUATION

The Joy Equation is the basis for this Manifesto and for the Authentic Happiness Movement. It's the backbone of the **Guide to Success** and being Extraordinary on your own terms.

It's not the end all, be all – but it is a remarkable process to start living life on purpose.

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{CONNECT WITH YOURSELF} \\ + \\ \text{DEFINE SUCCESS} \\ + \\ \text{CULTIVATE POWERFUL HABITS} \\ + \\ \text{COMMIT TO YOUR HAPPINESS} \\ = \\ \text{AUTHENTIC JOY} \end{array}$$

Ready to break it down?

CONNECT WITH YOURSELF (Step One of the Joy Equation)

If you stripped down to the very base of yourself – if we took away your job, your bank account, your schooling, your relationship status – who would you be?

This can be difficult. I get it.

We are so full of others' expectations – starting with our families, our peers, our bosses/teachers/gurus – of who we should be, that we frequently have no idea who we actually are. Am I the smart, bossy eleven-year-old that my childhood teachers think? Am I the overachieving independent good girl with a hankering for dramatic relationships that my high school friends remember? Or am I the selfish, big dreaming, fun-loving woman my parents believe me to be?

Another roadblock in uncovering our true self is the social personas that we've developed. We've formed these personas to deal with difficult people, with situations we find uncomfortable (like an ill-fitting job) or with society's version of what is important. The social personas are like cloaks we slip off and on: your saleswoman self, your sorority girl party animal self, your never-say-no helpful self.

And all of this is dangerous! In the midst of other's expectations and social personas, you can easily end up chasing a life that won't fulfill you, because you don't recognize who "YOU" are. You just keep fulfilling expectations or changing cloaks to fit into situations, to please others, to behave appropriately.

I don't know anyone who did anything amazing by behaving appropriately...

I am giving you permission right now to be "YOU". You don't need a handy little tag line – the nice girl next door, the wild adventurer, the wicked smart corporate go-getter – you just need to allow yourself to shine through. Explore your whims. Relax into your quirks. Celebrate your strengths and accept your weaknesses. Allow yourself to practice authenticity in aspects of your life. Trust that "YOU" are enough.

How? Good question. Do whatever it takes to recognize who "YOU" are and how "YOU" show up in the world. Practice listening to your intuition, voicing an opinion instead of relying on, "I don't care, whatever you think", making lists of YouJuice*, standing up for yourself, allowing space for exploration and shooting down limiting beliefs.

Questions To Ask to Connect with Yourself:

- What do you have to offer?
- What makes you extraordinary?
- What repels you? What attracts you?
- What makes you feel alive?

My clients' favorite exercise in connecting with themselves is identifying their core values. I once

*YouJuice is anything that reminds you of yourself: quotes, lists, pictures, people or places.

heard values described as "habits of your heart" and this phrase has become engraved in my brain.

What do I really care about when the chips are down? What are the true habits of my heart? When you clearly identify your values, you'll feel a sense of relief because you've articulated what's most important to you.

Just in case you're interested, the values I'm operating from right now are Love, Authenticity, Dedication, Inspiration, Delight, Connection, Vitality, and Exploration. Yes, I have those memorized. And yes, they required lots of self-exploration to really nail them down.

DEFINE SUCCESS (Step Two of the Joy Equation)

It's a big word. Success. What does it conjure up for you? Unless you live in a cave, there are probably aspects of money, power and perfection woven into your vision. These are the social definitions of success present in our western world. Not that money, power and perfection are inherently evil. We need a bit of all of them to make a difference in the world.

And I'm not turning down a big lotto win or speedy metabolism if they happen to fall into my lap...

It's just that in order to truly be successful, you need to be successful on your own terms. And in many cases, society's darlings – money, power, perfection – may not actually play a big role in your version of success. You need to shine where it counts for YOU. And that takes defining success on your own terms. And defining success takes self-awareness and guts. Self-awareness is a process of understanding who you are and what makes you happy. As I'm sure you've already realized, self-awareness plays a large role in The Joy Equation.

Many ordinary people let life slide by falling into a mediocre acceptance of convenience or bad habits or “good enoughness”. They refuse to be self-aware. They don't want to tackle the work of setting their own course for their life, for really striving towards their big dreams. Whether it is fear of failure, lack of self-esteem or shortsighted vision, ordinary people just accept life at face value. Even if that face value, well, sucks.

But not you! You've already declared yourself to be Extraordinary. You're here to shake things up! You're here to bust out of your Quarterlife Crisis or your bored funk. You're here to define success on your own terms and go after it with enthusiasm and belief!

I'm so glad. I feel honored that I've got your attention for this short amount of time. You're going to be one of the amazing women who will take the

time and energy to figure out what it's really going to take to rock your world.

Pat yourself on the back, hot stuff.

So what's the reward for working towards your version of success? Authentic joy. Kicking ass on your own terms. Inspiring others to examine their priorities. Sparkles and laughter and a rich fullness to life. Feeling like the hard work, blood, sweat and tears are worth it. Living in alignment with your values, on a platform built from busted assumptions and closely examined expectations.

Questions To Ask to Define Success

- What do you want your life to stand for?
- What is the sphere of influence in which you wish to work?
- Who are your role models, living a life you desire?
- What can you sacrifice in order align with your success?

★“Don't ask what the world needs, ask yourself what makes you come alive and then go and do that. Because what the world needs are people who have come alive.” – Harold Whitman

I've seen success defined by hundreds of different factors. Don't be afraid of your imagination. Go wild here! Use your grandest self to really create the best version of you.

In this day and age, a woman's success is no longer a cookie cutter process of graduating, getting a real job, finding a partner, having children... We have choices and freedom that allow us to design our own version of success, incorporating the pieces that reflect our best life.

Maybe you want to travel around the world, create art, launch a business, run for office, or be an advocate for social change.

Maybe you want to go back to school, move out of the country, become foster parents, design gowns for the First Lady, travel the states in an Airstream, create an urban commune, or invent a new jelly belly flavor.

Maybe you want to publish a bestseller, film a documentary, dance, raise a large family, compete in the Olympics, be a teacher, break a world record, or make millions selling your start-up.

Which of those ring true for you? **Take the time to figure it out and set an authentic course for your life.** Define your success!

One of my favorite methods of drawing our attention to our definition of success is to create a personal mission statement or mantra. This is a little gem that you carry around with you to remind yourself why you do the things you do.

My mantra is, "To celebrate life authentically and inspire others to do the same."

On those really tough days when I lose focus on my goals and feel a whim to go back to a corporate gig, I repeat my mantra and realize that relying on a fatty paycheck for work I will likely loathe is NOT celebrating life authentically! And I must celebrate life authentically!

Whenever I start isolating myself in the office because it's easier than living out loud all of the time, I repeat my mantra and realize that holing up and avoiding making new connections is NOT inspiring others! And I must inspire others!

Get it?

CULTIVATE POWERFUL HABITS (Step Three of the Joy Equation)

I know *The Secret* is still all the rage these days, but success is not just about visioning, imaging it so, or thinking it real. I certainly believe in the power of your thoughts to change your experience of reality, but I do not believe you can manifest a Honda Fit to appear in your driveway.

Sorry, girls, I just can't go there.

But I do know there are certain powerful habits you need to cultivate in order to be Extraordinary, to experience authentic joy. I've detailed five of my most essential habits – pursuing worthwhile goals, protecting your personal resources, practicing gratitude, meditation, and giving out – in this third step of The Joy Equation.

FOCUS ON PURPOSE

Pursuing Worthwhile Goals: Now that you've defined success, it's time to create goals that will help you create forward movement towards that vision of your best life. This is big. Setting and tracking proper goals is essential to measuring your journey and knowing when to celebrate or when to plot a new course.

I have plenty of resources on how to set proper goals, but that's not what this Manifesto is about! I don't want to leave you empty handed however, so I'll share a few of my top tips

- Create clear, specific, measurable goals with a deadline
- Write them down
- Make them public
- Design accountability into the process
- Seek support
- Be willing to make sacrifices

Protecting Your Personal Resources: We have just a few resources that we truly control. Our time, our

energy, our money and our care. Are you spending them on the right things? On the right people? I firmly believe we don't have to do anything... You don't have to stay in that job. You don't have to stay in that relationship. You don't have to slave away at the gym to validate someone else's perception of attractive. You have power to make changes in your life, both large & small.

Gutsy girls examine their lives closely. They ask themselves, "Why?" Why do I work overtime? Why do I spend time with these specific friends? Why do I increase my debt by shopping online? Why do I wake up at 5:30 a.m. to go to the gym?

Sometimes the question is, "Why don't I?" Why don't I quit my job? Why don't I forgive my ex? Why don't I make time to meditate? Why don't I write poetry? Why don't I dance in the fountain in the middle of downtown?

With that kind of powerful self-examination, you can make conscious decisions about spending your personal resources. It's the little things every day that add up to your experience of life, so be deliberate in what you do!

I call it living life on purpose.

FOCUS ON THE PRESENT

Practice Gratitude: Gratitude is larger than the simple expression "thank you" for a gift or kind act. Gratitude is appreciation for your present reality,

expressing love to those you care for, not taking things for granted, being present to the wonder and fortune in the moment, thanking your higher power and savoring the sweet. You can practice gratitude by keeping a journal where you record what you were thankful for that day or that week. This may seem like a small habit, but the payback in your happiness is strong and lasting.

Meditate: Take time to simply be by sitting quietly and clearing your mind. Concentrate on your breath flowing in and out through your nose or on a simple mantra. When you catch yourself thinking about something else, simply label the thought “thinking” and then return back to your breath. There you go! My three sentence direction to mindfulness meditation.

Meditation is a powerful habit of training yourself to live in the present. Even if it's not something you're familiar or comfortable with, it is absolutely worth the time exploring this habit.

Give Out: Mentor, contribute, practice random acts of kindness, express forgiveness. Make a loan, give your time, be fully present for your family, change the world. There are a million ways to give of yourself. Do it big, do it small, just do it. It's one of the most positive equations in the world: You give of your time or resources, which improves someone's quality of life, which makes you feel appreciated

and valuable, which in turn improves your quality of life. We're all better off. Magic.

A habit is “an acquired behavior pattern regularly followed until it has become almost involuntary.” These powerful habits will positively contribute to your authentic joy. Make good use of them. Word.

COMMIT TO YOUR HAPPINESS (Step Four of the Joy Equation)

Striving to be all things to all people is exhausting. It's a common expression of women, of the caretaking role we're conditioned to fulfill: How can I help you? How can I support you? How can I take care of you?

Why don't we try asking ourselves these same questions? How can you support yourself? I'd like to suggest the fourth step of The Joy Equation.

Commit to your own personal fulfillment and happiness. Commit with your whole heart. Commit with your full sense of self.

Perhaps this means clashing with society or the expected or the persona your partner or friends or family expect you to be. I'm asking you to be okay with that – to step fully your own happiness and reflect yourself authentically. To challenge the status quo. To be brave enough to speak up, look up, live it up.

This is your life after all. This isn't a dress rehearsal and we don't get a do over.

★This is our shot to be Extraordinary.

And by being Extraordinary, by living life on your own terms, you're setting off a chain of positive reactions. You're allowing others to see the true you, the one that's been buried or burnt out or scared. You're inspiring those around you to seek success that is authentic to them. You're teaching your children to express their uniqueness, to have faith in their individual worth. You're setting an example of truth, an example of courage.

Are you up for it?

Committing to your own happiness guarantees your success. It gives you a safety blanket when the going gets tough. You've already made the commitment to travel this road, so just wrap that blanket of commitment around you and face the icy patches with your chin up.

You may have to adjust your course, but you've already made the commitment to move forward. There's no option to bow out or retreat, only to respond to the challenges with gracious flexibility and patience for pit stops.

This commitment is essential. This commitment to your happiness is necessary.

Are you with me? Yes? Wooooo Hoooooo!!

Now, do something about it.

A commitment requires some sort of pomp and circumstance ritual. This can be anything you like, but make it official! Tell someone. Head over to the Stratejoy Facebook page and leave your commitment on the wall. Hold a ceremony for yourself. Create a vision board that expresses your vision of success & your commitment to seeing it through. Write yourself a letter dated to open 10 years from now.

I'm challenging you to make it real.

THE STRATEJOY TRIBE

This is not meant to be a Guide that you read once and set aside. I wrote this Guide as a call to action.

If you want to join me on this quest for Authentic Happiness, I'd be honored to walk with you. Our paths may be different, but our destinations of fulfillment are the same. Let's do our part to make life a celebration, a joyous occasion to make a difference by living authentically.

Drop me a note on our [Facebook Page](#) or send an email to molly@stratejoy.com if you'd like to share your journey. I'd be thrilled to hear from you.

If this Guide inspired you and you'd like to help spread the word, please encourage your girlfriends, coworkers, neighbors or daughters to download their own copy. The more the merrier! Literally!

If you'd like to stay connected with more of my writing and that of other Extraordinary women, you can subscribe to the blog by [RSS](#) or by [Email](#). Or join in the discussions on the site! Your voice is important to the world and your contribution appreciated.

ONE LAST THOUGHT

Can you imagine the amazing things that might happen if all Gutsy Girls out there decided to be Extraordinary? What if we all gave up the idea of settling and instead decided to push forward, celebrating the journey towards our big, bold, thrilling dreams? What if we all woke up excited to tackle the day ahead?

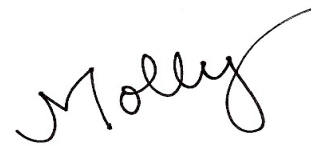
What kind of incredible movement might occur if that was the case?

That's a world I'd like to live in. That's a world I'm doing my part to help create.

So I ask, what is your Success? What does your Extraordinary look like?

I'm immensely grateful that you took time out of your busy life to read this manifesto. I truly hope it sparked something for you -- a little flame of possibility, perhaps?

Until next time, Gutsy Girl, wishing you peaceful contemplation and boatloads of joy,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Molly". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter 'y'.

p.s. If you just read through this Guide without stopping to do the work, go back and do the work!

p.p.s. If you'd like to explore the ideas in this Guide with more support, take a peak at my online course, [The Joy Equation: A 30 Day Guide to Living Life on Purpose](#). It's a great antidote to a Quarterlife Crisis! You get a Joy Plan in the mail with highly detailed guided activities, 30 days of inspirational journal prompts, and four 90 minute audio sessions explaining it all! Word of warning however – if you're not ready for some intense personal exploration, you're not ready for the 30 Day Guide.