

BRAIN SNACKS



Little life tidbits to energize your mind!

By Lisbeth Calandrino

(With fairly accurate punctuation)

Illustrated by Randy Rumpf



About the author...

**LISBETH
CALANDRINO**

For more than 25 years, Lisbeth Calandrino has helped entrepreneurs as well as corporations get to the next level in their industries. She is co-founder and vice president of Peachtree Communications, a full-service communications, training and marketing firm which publishes *Fabulous Floors*, one of the top consumer magazines in her industry. She has written for several trade magazines, including *Floor Focus*, and publishes a daily business blog on her website: www.lisbethcalandrino.com

As a public speaker, Lisbeth has spoken to thousands of people at seminars across the country. Lisbeth stays on the cutting edge of business and human performance practices. Her inspirational, humorous and high-energy approach to speaking has made her a highly sought-after business management coach for businesses ranging from independent retail stores to Fortune 500 companies.

She is active in her community as a program planner and volunteer for Gilda's Club.

Lis,

Your love for life and people inspires and brings a smile and laughter to those you touch!

It always seems that when I need a little bit of cheering up or just a smile...there you are! I can't wait to read this book! It will become my all time favorite and be #1 on the charts!

Thank you, Lis, for caring!!!

Kathy McWorter

Events Coordinator for Mohawk University Retail Group

j

WHY DID I
WRITE THIS
BOOK?!



I wrote it because of you dear readers! And I dedicate it to you, who like me, want to get the most out of life and are relentless in the pursuit of self-understanding! And I dedicate it to those that want more joy and are willing to take the journey.

I want you to :

Decide it's worth it to be you, no matter what.

Stop wasting valuable time, pretending things are bad when they're not.

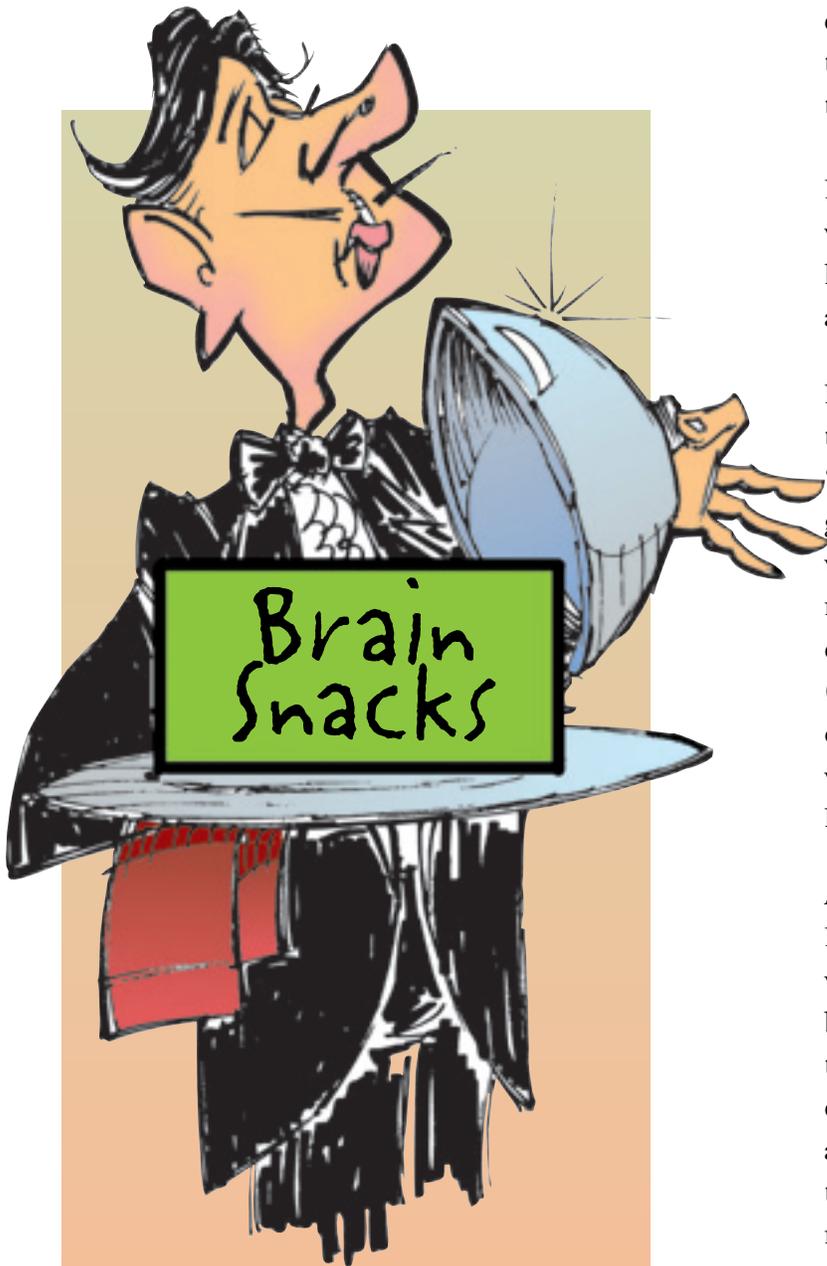
Decide that you are great and can get even better with just some thought.



I encourage you to get a pencil and some paper as you read this little book, as I'm going to ask that you do some homework. (Don't worry, you won't be graded...Unless of course you want to grade yourself!)

Please send me your stories and we'll take the journey together. It will be more fun: www.lcalandrino@nycap.rr.com

Introduction



For a good portion of my life things were eating at me. I don't mean lions or tigers or bears. I mean "life things". I took everything very seriously and life was devouring me, sometimes in small bites and sometimes in great mouthfuls. If life was a banquet, I thought I was the main course.

If a day started out on a sour note I was convinced the whole concert would stink until bedtime, and would hope the following day wouldn't be an encore performance.

Now, when you're the main course, you're convinced that all those in your life are either the "cooks" or the "diners". I wasted years thinking I was laid out on some great platter with an apple in my mouth. I had convinced myself that that was just the way it was. I blamed my parents, ("Please pass the salt"). I blamed my teachers, ("Too much oregano!"). I blamed my ex-husband, ("Would you like some creamed carrots with your slice of Lis?"). I blamed my ex mother-in-law, ("Oh! If you want a bland diet you must meet my daughter-in-law, Lis!").

At some point my life started to change. At some point I started questioning. I started listening to others. They viewed life differently from me. Were they right?! I began to discover myself too. There were pieces of me that I had either stored away or didn't even know existed. I wasn't stuffed with stuffing after all! I spit out the apple. I jumped off the platter and removed myself from the menu! I wasn't going to be "life's leftovers" anymore.

This book is a collection of "Brain Snacks", little life lessons that I've learned. I encourage that as you read them, let your mind chew on them.. They contain no cholesterol, calories or preservatives. I hope you find them good food for thought. If they nourish your soul or inspire you, that's great too! I address some serious subjects, but if I make you laugh occasionally consider that as dessert. I've learned life isn't all that serious anyway.Bon Appetit!

Brain Snack #1

Cleaning out your "Cranial Closet."



One day while rummaging through my closet in search of a particular sweater, a sweater I was desperately inclined to wear, I made a discovery. A discovery that was far more important than any sweater. I came across an old dust-covered belt. A favorite belt; a belt I had long stopped looking for. I was filled with glee! That belt was like a reunion with a dear old friend.

Now, you may think that belt was my important discovery. Not exactly. That dust-covered strip of leather that once held my pants up got me thinking. Was my mind like some "cranial closet"? Were there thoughts and feelings in there that were put in some dusty corner? Was there good stuff that I had long forgotten? That was my important discovery!

I ask you, how much stuff do you have packed away in your "cranial closet"? How much have you put in there and how much have others stuffed in there for you? As you rummage through your mind what thoughts, ideas, ideals, notions and emotions did you personally stuff in there? How many were put in there by your parents, friends, talk show hosts, your goldfish and every body else? To that I say, you put them in your "cranial closet."

Others may have handed them to you, but YOU put them in there! At least that's the conclusion I've come to... Wow!... Discovery number two!

I encourage you to go into that closet, sift through the clutter and look for YOU. Look for what you think, what makes you happy, what you desire. (In the process if you find my sweater please let me know!). The fact of the matter is, it's hard for many of us to engage in such mental housecleaning, but like finding my old belt, it's a joyous feeling when you discover them.. Why? Because they're what makes up the real you.

We are bombarded with information, advice, experiences, and all the goings on from the time we're soiling diapers to the time we're soiling our Depends. We rarely take the time to explore what we really think, how we really feel and what is real anyway?

Is it Reality TV? It's all the rage. There must be something to it, right? Flip on the High Definition TV and go looking for...REALITY! Here it is! You found it.. Channel 364. Ten beautiful young women. Ten perfect smiles. They could be poster girls for Colgate toothpaste; high

cheekboned, perfectly symmetrical faces, their hair; softly cascading down and framing their drop - dead cuteness. And those perfect faces are connected to their delicate shoulders by fawn-like necks, and those necklines lead to...Oh my God! Are those real!? And all this is connected to the floor by two long perfectly proportioned legs. These ten flawless specimens are vying for the "love" and affection of one lucky man. ..But wait! He's not just a man! He's an "Adonis"! He's tall. Not a hair out of place. A jaw line worthy of Mount Rushmore! And beneath that Armani suit, (loaned to him by the TV studio), he's well - muscled, from his shoulders to his rippling "six pack". Even his ears are perfect. His left ear is, a perfect clone of his right ear! Adonis' mission: the elimination of one beauty after another as Adonis, through attrition, decides on his final soul mate.

Reality??? HMMM? don't think so. "Adonis" as it turns out, loses his looks as it becomes evident that he possesses the personality of a putty knife, and he's about as deep and as annoying as a paper cut. The lovely potential "soul mates" lose a lot of their lustre as you discover

their hobbies include backbiting, deceit, and playing to the camera. They're vipers camouflaged in borrowed bodies that will eventually succumb to those unalterable laws of physics...time and gravity. Now that's reality!

I learned a long time ago that the only thing our physical appearance tells the world, is what we look like. I'd wager that if we had our choice, very few of us would choose to look like Albert Einstein, but wouldn't we love to experience his amazing mind! Not many of us would choose to look like Mother Theresa, but wouldn't we love to have her selfless dedication to a kindness and caring of immeasurable depths? Few of us would choose to have Abraham Lincoln's craggy, war weary homeliness, but oh wouldn't we love to have his courage and unwavering resolve? Three faces : Perhaps not physically pretty faces, but oh how beautifully memorable they are! I think all three had the ability to look within, to go inside those dusty corners of their minds. I think they found what was in their "cranial closets" and discovered their true selves. They grew comfortable with who they were, what they were capable of, and did it! ■



Make a list of 10 things that you can throw out of your "cranial closet".

Make a list of 10 things about yourself that are wonderful that you can replace them with.

Read this list out loud when your "cranial closet" starts filling up with non-essential clutter.



This concludes your "How to deal with reality" lesson for today.

Brain Snack #2

It's O.K.
to be
Happy!



In order to make good stuff happen in your life, look into that closet you call your brain. Seek out what makes you happy. Find those things that make you feel unhappy or uncomfortable. Keep the good stuff. Throw out all the bad stuff you can and replace it with something better. Look for the real you. I guarantee you'll feel pretty good with a bit of housecleaning.

It is good to feel good. It's my experience that most people report that joy is not common and their enthusiasm is limited. People ask me, "What does it take to have enthusiasm all the time? Can you really have it all the time? Where do you get your energy from?" I wasn't always this way. (I'll go into that a bit further on). I am convinced though that enthusiasm and joy is there for all of us. The French call it "joie de vivre" which translates to "love of living". The trick is to bust through that "guilt over feeling good" shell and let that joie de vivre bubble out. You'll love it. It tastes like good French wine!

Now I'm not so naive as to think that we can be joyous and enthusiastic all the time. There are events in our lives that result in a bucket or two of cold water being tossed on the flames of enthusiasm. Heck! Sometimes it's a small lake! But, if you dig deep and think positively,

the waters will recede, and those feelings of joy and enthusiasm will act as a pair of "swimees" and keep you afloat until they do.

There are a great many people who don't feel good about themselves, their condition, their personal lives, their jobs, etc.. So many of us think we can change all that with a prescription, or at least something over the counter. Penicillin cures strep throat, right? Nexium takes care of acid reflux, right? There has to be something out there to make me feel happy. There has to be a pill for melancholy. Far too many of us think there's a pill for everything..."You're feeling a bit depressed today? Here...Take this. And if this doesn't work, take this orange capsule to go with it."

"What are the side effects?," you ask. Hmmm? Let's read the label: "Taking this medication may cause you to think you're wearing clothes when you are not. You may suffer a temporary delusion and think you are Napoleon. When taking this medication with too much water, the growth of tentacles may occur." WARNING: Taking this medication does not solve any of your problems. It just makes you think you have none for a while.

Please don't think that I'm insensitive. There are some who suffer from chronic depression. For those folks, clinical treatment may be absolutely necessary. But for those who just don't feel joy, happiness, or enthusiasm, again I urge you to look inward. Think about why you lack those things that could make you feel happy. Rummage through your "cranial closet". Find that old belt you misplaced. Buckle it up and go walk about for those things that make you feel good. I promise your enthusiasm level will rise. When it does, hang on to it!...At least you'll know whether or not you're wearing clothes! ■

What are five areas in your life where you can replace fear and sadness with excitement?

When you find yourself becoming frightened or sad, come up with a code word which triggers you to dump those feelings!