

CREATING ENCORES

A WAKE UP CALL FOR WOMEN LEADERS



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About Me

When writing this book, I became aware that this section was going to be the hardest. It brings up areas of my life where I have been challenged, where I may have appeared confident and successful, yet underneath was fearful and afraid that I would stuff-up and be unable to financially support myself.

What I realised was that, if we are to lead an authentic life, tough stuff is going to happen. So how do we move through it, especially in the business world and at the age of around 40? If we have lost passion and purpose for our career, how do we find these important parts of us again? Perhaps the ladder has been against the wrong wall – a wall that has no real connection with the person we have grown to be.

I believe that we have an opportunity to get to know the woman that we truly are, warts and all; to take hold of her and steer her through challenges, knowing that there can be meaningful transformations in her life when we commit to change.

To better explain this I want to share my life story so far. It will show you how a creative and inspired high-

achiever navigated a life both uplifting and challenging.

My life story script

Discovery of music and teenage years

At 10 years old I was fortunate to find a passion and purpose in music. I remember one Christmas holiday in the New Zealand seaside town of Timaru when my father took me to a music store to buy a recorder. (I like stylish things in my life, so I'm proud to recall that I chose a lovely wooden instrument and not a cheap plastic one.) I have very few childhood memories, but can still remember taking it back to the holiday house, sitting on my bed, and teaching myself to read music and play the recorder. It was one of the most exciting times of my life.

My world had changed from black and white to colour. I was in love with music and I was transformed as music took over my life. A year later, I started playing the flute and realised that I wanted to become a professional flautist.

The years that followed revolved around music and I used it to spirit me away from the realities of my life. Christchurch in the 60s was small and provincial, (I recall a visit from the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra was like a circus coming to town), and the traditional Anglican girls' school I attended encouraged us to pursue teaching, nursing or secretarial careers.

However, at 17 I met a guitarist called Jim. He and I, along with his friends, would spend hours playing jazz numbers like Dave Brubeck's *Take 5*. I dreamt of escaping

to a culturally vibrant part of the world and moved to Adelaide University, moving on again not long after. I had already begun to set myself up for a life of change, reinvention and leverage of careers.

Life as a musician

I landed a job in the band of the stage show *Jesus Christ Superstar* in Sydney and transformed myself from a classically-trained musician into a rock star. I thrived in this world – and was also paid for doing something I loved which, for a young musician, was the ultimate. As well as being part of this most exciting show, I taught flute, worked as a backing musician and starred in a movie about the life of the conductor Bernard Heinze. Life was full. Men were all around and I was living the kind of life that most 22-year-olds could only dream about.

After a year in the show I moved to London to study flute and experience more exciting times. (It was then I realised that Europe was one of the joys of my life.) Once again I was exposed to a world of high-end performing arts – this time in 70s London. I studied, waitressed, and worked as an *au pair* for the television actor Warren Mitchell and his wife Connie. They were wonderful people to live with. I had only to take the children to school and help with cooking, which was fantastic as great food was one of my passions. I learnt to cook really well (especially Boeuf Bourguignon and Lemon Syllabub). I thrived there, in that house in the quaint and exclusive village of Highgate with its tennis court and swimming

pool. How fortunate was I when many of my friends from New Zealand and Australia were living in basic accommodation in very ordinary parts of London?

After a year of study I came back to Sydney to work in the Elizabethan orchestra at the Opera House. Soon after, I moved to Melbourne where I performed with their sister orchestra. However, at this stage I knew that my time as a professional flautist was limited: sadly I was having hearing problems that were getting worse. I knew that I had to leave the orchestra or else get kicked out. It was a decision that, at the age of 26 made me feel alone, depressed and at a loss at what to do. I had to think of something other than music that I was passionate about.

A passion for food brings another career

Finally, I hit on my love of food and cooking. Before I left the orchestra I put together my next move: I would open a gourmet cookware shop – a shop that sold beautiful European speciality cookware. I researched the cookware market in Melbourne and though at times I knew I was out of my depth, I was determined to stick to my plan. I did – and *Sally's Cookshop* was born! It was a great little shop in South Yarra, piled high with pots, pans, white plates, glassware, and utensils hanging from the ceiling. It had the ambience of a small European-style emporium that had been around for years.

Since I had no back-up plan, I was scared and apprehensive when I opened the shop. If it failed I'd have to go back to Christchurch, something I did not want to

happen. Fortunately the shop thrived and after several successful years, I was asked to join the buying team of a tired department store, *Buckley and Nunn*. My brief was to inject boutique style into the homewares division. I loved setting up a bigger version of *Sally's Cookshop* and going on yearly trips to the USA and Europe to buy unique cookware for the store. I was incredibly lucky to be able to develop my passion, personality and style in this way.

After several years in the homewares industry, sourcing and procuring products from Taiwan, Korea, Europe and the USA, it was time again for me to make a change. I was married to a wonderful man, Tony, and all was going well. For the first time in my life I had financial support, yet I missed the world of performing arts and wanted to return to my original passions.

A move into arts management

The change meant reinventing the performing artist in me into a management career and I started by running the *Bartuccio Dance Studio*, where I gained enormous experience in the area of commercial dance: supplying dancers for fashion parades, television, advertisements, movies and stage shows.

Then, in 1988, I moved into my dream job as Corporate Development Manager at The Australian Ballet. I remember achieving some extraordinary feats in this role. For example, I spent three months in London putting together the ballet's Royal Gala, where Princess

Diana was in attendance. These were some of the happiest times in my life: I was living in a chic Covent Garden hotel; my office was in the magnificent building of the Victorian Consul General; I jogged daily past the Royal Opera House and other beautiful and historical parts of London. Life was good. I was far away from the challenges of my personal life – and this gave me some respite – yet I knew that I'd soon go back to Melbourne and have to face up to a crumbling marriage and take stock of my career.

After this brief but joyful interlude I returned to Melbourne. The year was 1992 and though I loved my job I was exhausted from travelling and the burden of business problems in my husband's life, so at the age of 43 I resigned from The Australian Ballet. This was challenging, although deep down I knew that I had to sort myself out psychologically – until then I'd been able to mask my emotional hurts and disappointments behind my job.

I desperately needed time-out to think about how I would move forward in my life. I knew I'd been band-aiding parts of myself together. I saw a psychiatrist who helped me with the move from the ballet, my failing marriage and, following a disastrous real estate investment, the collapse of my financial security. I felt alone and for the first time in my life I didn't know what I wanted to do. All I knew was that I had to keep working on myself psychologically or else fall in a heap.

Mind, meditation and personal growth

I'd always been interested in the mind, meditation and personal growth and, over the next few months, I began to gain clarity on the direction my career should take. In 1995 I decided to study psychotherapy and, as I wanted to stay in the arts world and also enjoy the challenge of mixing with smart business leaders, the path became clear: my next business would contain programs and coaching where there was an intersection of business and creative thinking for senior executives and their teams.

I enrolled in Soul Centred Psychotherapy training in St Kilda, Melbourne and spent the next four years in intense training. I was amongst people who weren't part of the performing arts or business world. It was a shock since it seemed that these people spoke a different language. I had to learn to become part of this new world of psychotherapy and personal growth – a world where without the arts to escape to, I was exposed. I'd rather have fundraised millions of dollars than be put through some of the confronting personal learning that made up this training but I knew it was essential for my psychological growth and future role as an executive coach.

Psychotherapy training was the most personally challenging time of my life. I could have jumped ship, yet I knew that I must do the hard yards. I was emotionally drained after all the life and business problems that resulted from the loss of Tony's property business. And so it was a case of, *'Knuckle down and do this'*, or else be an unhappy and unfulfilled woman for the rest of my life.

During my training, every emotion and feeling that I'd tried to hide through the years was exposed. I was stripped bare yet had nowhere to run because we had to understand our own '*shit*' before we could work with clients. I remember looking at the group and thinking, '*What am I doing here? I want to wear my heels and beautiful clothes again.*' But underneath I knew I couldn't face the corporate world yet. I needed a sabbatical.

And yes, I learnt that there was a big part of me, ashamedly, who thought herself above others. I had worked hard and achieved great results – so '*look at me, look at me!*' But that didn't happen with the group at the Kairos Centre. Here, I had to confront my demons and consciously understand damaging psychological patterns so that these behaviours didn't have a stranglehold over me as I moved along a path of transformation.

I spent part of 1997 in the USA at Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California. This experience helped me to understand myself in a creative and insightful way. People of all ages came from around the world to this magical place to practice Zen meditation, dance, move, and grow. Above all, they came to experience the healing arts program that features the Esalen Massage – reputedly the best massage treatment in the world. Massage tables are on a deck high above the coastline of Big Sur, with hot tubs below. Pure bliss.

My year in the USA also included several months in Boulder, Colorado, amongst the magnificent Rocky Mountains. I attended the Naropa University Buddhist

summer school, enrolling in the Jack Kerouac Summer Writing program and studying Jungian dream work. I ended my year in the USA with three months in Santa Fe living in the Upaya Zen Centre. Joan Halifax was the Roshi and a wonderful teacher in practical applications for Zen practise in life.

During this year I learnt to build resilience and trust my inner-sense of self. Though at the ballet I felt I was invincible, I had suffered a loss of confidence since leaving. Here, I learnt not to get caught up in the trappings of success or even the teachings of gurus and instructors. (Life happens. Shit happens. People are challenged – even those we put on pedestals. And it is precisely because they have been wounded by challenges that they are able to help us through ours.) Looking internally rather than externally for inspiration and self-belief was a steep learning curve, and forms part of the foundation of this book.

When I returned to Melbourne and finished my psychotherapy training, I was ready to start working again though this too was confronting. My high-achiever gene told me I could simply set-up shop with a creative coaching program, yet this did not turn out to be the case. I had to learn how to set up a sustainable business model using creative thinking and move back into my passion for music in a whole new way. I constructed the initial program on my own – the self-reliant sits well within me!

Founding Corporate Creative Directions

In 2002 Tony died from prostate cancer. Though we'd divorced several years previously, his death prompted me to move to Byron Bay where I felt I'd be energetically supported, and that all my business plans would fall into place. I knew I must create a career path that inspired and gave my life meaning (as well as financial security). However, I began to realise that I needed to put this program into a format that business people would understand.

Though the name of the program *Corporate Creative Directions* was born, and my good friend Luella put the copy together on my methodology, the website went live and then not much happened. I thought I'd be travelling regularly from Byron to run my coaching and training programs in Sydney and Melbourne – but I learned from a well-respected friend and CEO that I hadn't a hope in hell getting it running from Byron. If I was to get things moving, he said, I must return to Melbourne.

So in 2008 I sold my home in Byron Bay and came back to Melbourne. (In hindsight I should have done this earlier as I loved being back in this great city.) I set about getting *Corporate Creative Directions* (CCD) up and running, resurrecting old networks and setting up new ones, which was tough initially. However, once I'd put the time and resources into birthing CCD in Melbourne, it took off.

The lessons I've learnt have been enormous and I believe that through journeying this path, I can help you move through the maze of your Work–Life challenges.

There's no one better to guide you in life than someone who has been there before.

As a business coach, I work with executives in the areas of Work Life Balance and career reinvigoration, helping clients unlock their creative mindset to solve their personal and professional challenges.

So, after reading my story, start to imagine how you could reinvent your life when faced with change, change that takes you into new areas of your life path, areas that ignite the passionate woman within ...

How to use this book

In each chapter there will be questions and exercises to reflect upon and answer. These will ignite the flame, internally connecting the true 'You' to those passions, talents, skills and achievements that you may have forgotten.

This will begin to bring together an unearthing and development of your next stage. It will help in several ways to reinvigorate your career, by bringing new thinking and intuition into your professional and personal life.

Throughout the coming chapters, I'll continue to remind you of the enormous creative, insightful potential that you have hidden within. I call it the *gold* and I want you to find access to it hidden in your vault. Go within, find the combination, and connect with your inner wisdom that resides there. We all have this place within and yours will help you create your own encore.

Questions

Don't over think these questions – just write, and don't let the perfectionist try to correct your grammar and punctuation. A good trick is to use pen and paper and not take the pen off the page until you're finished. What you're doing at this stage is setting the framework for the rest of the book. Enjoy.

1. Write a brief outline of your life – a page is sufficient.
2. What parts of your career do you love?
3. What parts of your personal life do you love?
4. What is challenging in your career at present?
5. What is challenging in your personal life at present?



About You

Creating your life story scripts

Now that you have read my story, I'd love you to put together a couple of your own. The first one is your story until now and the second is your story 10 years from now.

As a woman of 40+, I imagine that you've had a rather interesting and perhaps challenging life. Now is the time to let it all out. The telling of your story is for you only – it's not necessary to share your story with others – and this experience, in itself, is empowering and cathartic. It's about having the courage to tell your story as it truly is. I know this to be true from my own experience. I was told for nearly 20 years to write a book about my life – its challenges and its fabulous times – yet I could not put a sentence together that sounded authentic until now.

Did you know that we somehow forget much of our life's challenges and successes? I'm constantly asking clients to tell me more about their achievements, yet it's like amnesia happens around these experiences! Aren't we meant to celebrate them and include these 'wins' in our life's story? Of course we are! Most women forget

times when they've had success, yet when they dig deep they find that these stories are powerful and important reminders of what they've achieved. Be reminded of your 'gold star' moments and reframe your challenges with new eyes; recall long forgotten resources that worked for you; inspire yourself so that you can move into challenging situations with confidence. These methods worked in the past – do not forget them.

I remember a challenge that a coaching client faced several years ago. She was a woman in her 50s and a high-level business leader. She had achieved great career success and wanted to climb further up the ladder. However, she felt that younger staff members were making her doubt her strong business skills and background. I asked my client to write her life story and I was quite astounded when she shyly handed me her notes. The woman sitting in front of me did not resemble the woman in the story. The woman sitting in front of me was tired, exhausted, had lost her passion and purpose, and had a lack of self-belief. She reminded me of a trapped animal, not knowing where to turn or how to escape a dangerous situation.

When we transcribed all her career highlights onto one page, my client was amazed – there were so many reports and articles on her successes that she had 'conveniently' forgotten. We worked on her behavioural challenges which helped her to understand how and why she reacted to situations when feeling threatened. This was a significant turning point in her life and I saw a spark and the lights go on in her eyes. It was fantastic! Several months later this

client told me that, at that moment, she had finally become aware of the part of her that could sabotage the successful woman, and that now she was alert to this behavioural pattern, she was able to take steps to prevent it from making her feel inadequate, especially when challenged.

What happened in putting her story together was that the block she had put up around life achievements was exposed. Following this we were able to work on ways to change this behaviour pattern. This situation is common – many clients forget their achievements. It can result from peer group pressure as we grow up when we're encouraged to 'not stand out too much' or challenged by the question, *'Who do you think you are?'* In response to this we suppress our wins with words resonating deeply within us such as, *'This win was a surprise. Am I really smarter than the others, and do I really have the talent to keep moving ahead?'*

I find it really sad that for many people success is not a cause for celebration. And, yes, until my 40s successes were pushed to the back of my mind too. Unconsciously I didn't want to show myself as the high-achieving woman I was. When I made, or had forced upon me, the need to make a career and life change in my 40s, I entered a different world – a new world of friends who supported me regardless of what happened in my life; friends who would come round to my house with gourmet treats and a bottle of wine. I learned how to acknowledge and celebrate my successes, rather than moving straight onto the next challenge. I realised the importance of celebrating small

wins and of reciprocating and acknowledging my friend's successes too.

Writing your life story script

Writing your story can be transforming – both personally and professionally. I suggest that you lock yourself away in a quiet place and start writing. Handwriting your story rather than using a computer is best since putting pen to paper is a positive kinesthetic way of getting in touch with the real 'You'. A great tip is to not take your pen off the paper for 10 minutes – and just write. When you do this you're able to stop your critical censor entering into the story – the part of you that can jeopardise the true 'You' being heard. Write your story in 10-minute blocks. Do it in one go, if possible, as the energy must keep moving forward. When you've finished, read the story but do not edit. This is not for publication – this is *your* story and I imagine you'll be amazed at what you have written.

There will be parts of your life that you've forgotten – success and challenges. The unfolding of your story is a bit like the television show from many years ago, *This Is Your Life*. Do you remember how the subject was overwhelmed and exhilarated as colleagues and friends recalled significant events from their past? It's amazing how much we pack into our lives! I know that when I wrote my story for psychotherapy training many years ago, I felt humbled as I remembered parts of my life that I'd forgotten – particularly the achievements. I was amazed at what I had accomplished.

As you read this you may be telling yourself that you've nothing worthwhile to write about. This is common with many women and I imagine it's not true. All you need to do is to get the first significant parts of your life out on paper.

Perhaps you'll unearth, as my client did, an understanding of behavioural patterns from the past that are not serving you now. This is the *gold* – the uncovering of coping mechanisms that may well have been around for many years. You can now become aware that they are outdated and can interfere when conflict happens. Once you get the 'ah-ha' moment of revelation, their power over you is diminished. You can move forward in your life. It's liberating.

What's developing in this chapter is a creative way to re-engage with the woman you truly are. Creativity adds another dimension to our lives. When we tell our story, we connect with our internal self and a world of possibilities; the part of us, (recognised and embraced by performing artists), that creates flow and joy in our lives, not just on the concert stage – but also in our workplace and at home.

Writing your life story script 10 years from now

The next story to write is in answer to the question, '*In a perfect world, with nothing to stop you, where will you be and what will you be doing in 10 years' time?*'

Before starting your story, I suggest that you put on some music that inspires you, whether your preferred

style is classical, jazz, rock, lounge or otherwise. Become the director of your show. Let your imagination run wild. Do not censor your writing. Write for 10 minutes without taking your pen off the paper. Stop and keep going for another 10 minutes. Just be mad, creative, outrageous. Let whatever is inside of you come out.

When you've finished, keep the music playing and read what you have written. I imagine that you will feel alive, inspired and energised by this act of writing. Your story will contain some powerful information that will help move your career and personal life forward in a more fulfilling direction. Your story might even include some unconventional ideas, and that's great! There are ways to leverage this inspirational thinking into workable parts of your life, and in the chapter on creative thinking you'll find examples from my life and more.

Now, if you're feeling exhilarated by the exercise, you may want to put this fun piece of writing together. I was inspired by this concept when I saw a movie recently, a smart screenplay and very funny. The main character, a woman in her 40s, suffers a head injury in a car accident. When she comes out of a coma she is her teenage self, however, she still retains her 40-year-old knowledge and is therefore able to live as her younger self with the benefits of her life experience. She becomes a leader of her school peers and prevents friends moving into relationships that will not work. She can do this because she has access to past memories. The question for you is this, *'If you knew what you know now, what would you change as you grew up?'*

I suggest you write one page about how you would live your life as a teenager now. Go back into your past using your life experience from today. What changes? Perhaps your school years would be different, or where you lived. Have fun with this exercise. What this is doing is building up the creative 'You' – getting ideas, thoughts, concepts and passions out of your head and onto paper.

When I first did this exercise, some of the awareness that came up was that I would have gone to a performing arts school; that it would have been in Paris; I would have spent heaps of time at concerts; eating great food (especially cheese); I would have had a number of handsome French boyfriends. It would have been a lot different to growing up in Christchurch, New Zealand!

Over the next days and weeks, keep going back to read the stories you have written. In doing so, you will create a foundation from your own life experiences that will support your creative growth – and you will find new ways to inspire yourself to reach your true potential. Your stories are like a feast. Let your feast nourish you.

Explore fresh new horizons.
Create a life full of balance and possibility ...

Do you want to look back on your life in 10 years' time and find that you're stuck in the same unfulfilling career or relationship? Have you often wanted, but been unable, to become the woman you believe, deep down, that you are? Has a safe career path and mindset held you back?

If this sounds like you, then here's the 'wake up call' to pull you out of this thinking.

Creating Encores is brimming with authentic life-changing stories from the author and her female clients. Questions and examples in each chapter show you how to gain clarity in your own situation, and reveal simple and effective strategies for creating work-life balance and career transformation.

Creating Encores shows you how to get in touch with your inner femme fatale and trust her to support you on an invigorating new path. There has never been a better time for you to look forward to greeting that smart sensual woman within.

'Sally has helped me to fulfil my potential as a performer ... and take my career to the next level.'

Adrian Burnett, choreographer and former dancer, The Australian Ballet

'Sally Arnold is a breath of fresh air!'

Anita Beasley, marketing communications expert

Sally Arnold is a trained psychotherapist with a distinguished musical and business management career. Her successful and sought after corporate coaching programs help businesses and individuals fast-track their development potential. She specialises in the field of work-life balance and career reinvigoration.

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