



## **An Essay on Lifestyle: LIVING LEAN-When Downsizing Becomes a Way of Life**

**Author: Cathy EganMoinester** Copyright 2019 © All rights reserved

### Dedication

This work is dedicated to my Mother, Alice Lois, who left me with many fond memories, experiences, and love. She taught me to be true: do honestly with no airs, be down-to-earth, and tell it like it is. She also thought whatever I did was marvelous-even when it was clearly sideways. Thank you Mom!



### Introduction

It has taken me just over five years (beginning before the economic downturn and continuing into my senior years of retirement) to precipitate a changed attitude that enabled me to move from consumer to contributor without destroying my sense of self in the process.

This work highlights key considerations involved in experiencing such a change. It includes discussion of the emotions of loss and fear that usually occur along the way. It is, in actuality, an overview that points out ways to successfully commit to a leaner economic outlook. Adjustments that are critical to enable such a revised outlook to take place are discussed focusing on the changes required while maintaining a balanced, productive, and life enhancing attitude.

I can assure you that maintaining a life that encourages and allows you to downsize as an integral part of how you live will give you the space you need to enjoy your life. It will also relieve you of the excessive amount of stress that accompanies a life maintained by the continued intake of goods and services to showcase how well you are doing.

All of the activities that are integral to this change are predicated on the defining principle of the need to relieve yourself of the burden of debt. With debt reduction, actually the greater concept of debt avoidance, as a principle tenant of your new, changed lifestyle, you will inevitably come out on top-a better person with a better sense of self and a better bank account. Additionally, your effort will be aligned with a life enhancing approach. An approach that involves a renewed commitment, one that substantially values substantive personal time, meaningful relationships, greater energy availability, more and expanding excitement about life, and a passion for participation in the activities that support your individual goals and objectives.

I've found that it is essential to make these type changes over a period of time; as each segment involves a stripping away of long-held beliefs that tend to rip our embedded sense of security and identity right out from under us. So give it time. As you proceed to evolve and change the way you are doing life to produce a leaner, more enjoyable set of practices, know you will have reactions and experience emotions that will mimic a roller coaster ride of positive and negative responses. Let the feelings surface and exist with them as they hang around. Examine them. Observe them. Try and be clear about exactly what it is you are feeling.

Working through your thoughts and the new ways you are creating positive experiences will bring up important subjects. Questions will abound, giving you the chance to examine life as you delve into long-held beliefs. Perhaps you will examine how to live a changed life with questions like the following.

- Will you rent a place to live rather than own a home?
- Is a sense of failure pervading your desires to move forward or change your plans?
- Are you regretting decisions/mistakes made? Which ones?
- How is success measured by a plot of ground?

- What gives you courage?
- How is your family reacting to your revised thoughts and plans?
- What do your friends say about your new ideas?

All of these questions will arise as you remove layers of materiality that represent who we are and how we plan to be. Each time an item is reviewed, a part of the new paradigm reveals itself. More and more often we will find ourselves ultimately evaluating our actions relative to answering the overriding question, "Is it worth it?"

Keep in mind, that the money portion of the new situation we find ourselves in, is just that-a *portion* of the new situation. In order to thrive and not just survive, we need to reevaluate our priorities, adjust our consciousness, and perhaps remove key elements of our life that have represented the 'who' of what we are that won't fit with the 'who' we find it meaningful to be.

Friends who value the executive job title, family that push for more evidence of rising status, significant others displaying disappointment and less enthusiasm for a revised plan of living, may all be pushing you hard to 'stay the course'. Without compromising yourself, you can anticipate the need to offer different information to offset input which is designed to help, although, ultimately, it lines up to forestall any significant change.

But take heart. There is light at the end of this tunnel. Increased confidence, strength of survival, meaning in life along with courage, self-confidence, and determination are rewards waiting for you. Make the necessary changes. Do it, and your reward will be a life that truly represents your values and desires; leaving you free to enjoy yourself!

#### Downturn Driving Us Underground-Finding our Way in a Maze of Changing Reality

We don't have to be brain surgeons to know that the squeeze is mostly on. Newspapers, magazines, television-all delve into the harassing state of the world. If it is not the economy with its many twists and turns, it is the environment that is steadily dishing out some of the earth's worst disasters in decades. Folks who are the leaders of our world continually disappoint as the purpose of their work appears to revolve around...you guessed it-them! Add to this mix, the vapid state of our morals, scruples, and mores. Throw in an added dose of violence, coupled with rising famine, starvation, drugs, and death and believing things are 'rotten in Denmark' is a truism as clear to most of us as the sun rising and setting each day! Like that old Bob Dylan song lyric...*come away young fella wherever ye go...for the times they are a changin'*.

One of the main ways that the downturn permeates our lives is in the constant use and yes, fear of, the 'd' word, that being, 'downsize.' Downsize is a primary driving force behind the downturn that is (often without our realizing it) "driving us underground."

As most of us are familiar with the use of the term, I suggest that the actual application of the term is a much changed version of the standard acceptable definition and herein lies one of the basic problems we have in dealing with its implications.

In the traditional sense (via Webster's and Wikipedia), the term is defined as: "To make something smaller, to make a company smaller and more efficient by reducing the number of workers." It is also referred to as a verb. Information under the heading, "Full definition of downsize," relays the following describing it as a transitive verb: "1. to reduce in size, especially: to design or produce in smaller size, and 2. to fire (employees) for the purpose of downsizing a business."

I posit that in today's world, the term has a greater, more far reaching meaning that encompasses the entirety of how we live. It is broader in its application in that a 'downsize' mentality presents a mind that is entwined with fear of the unknown, constant mental pressure to succeed at all costs, awareness that keeps us comparing how we measure up to others, and insidious thinking that consistently evaluates our progress. It is more like a graph of our energy pattern that reveals underlying stressors that exist regardless of circumstances and an insidious pattern of thinking that builds to a crescendo of belief rooted in dissatisfaction. Nothing is good enough to stave off derailment of our plans according to this scenario, which ultimately ends up quashing or significantly reducing our happiness.

One of the first steps to Living Lean and, I might add, enjoying ourselves, is to realize the factors that influence our existence and know that most of these current factors do not lend themselves to steady support and continuing advancement. There is the possibility of downsizing which lurks in the background waiting to pounce on us rendering our plans and dreams useless. It is the true activity that spurs fear and distrust and it is one that is readily and constantly being used and/or warned of which forms the foundation to a societal outlook that plans for downturns. Living the lives we are currently involved in, ones vested in constant growth and expansion, does not adequately support us when we are surrounded with down turning occurrences. Suffice it to say, that most of us are living an existence spent underground in the sense that we do not come up for air and face the mounting evidence that is causing us to feel disconnected from ourselves and our lives. We portend to be in a state of growth and awareness when what we really are doing most of the time is barely keeping ahead of anticipatory derailments of our life plans.

#### Transporting Yourself-Realizing Change is Called For and Why

With the situation at hand, it becomes a good option for us to consider a corrected life position. Raising ourselves up from underground, we can face what is the reality of the world and, at the same time, understand what it takes to make life work under its influences.

Not examining the situation, assures that we will continue existing under the illusion that our life is better when we are surrounded by more things and that the work we do each day will prepare us for success. There are times when folks do succeed in the same pattern of life with materiality at its core, but more often, situations occur where success is thwarted. People feel disillusioned when what they have worked so hard to attain delivers confusion and keeps them in a state of anxiety about the way they are living and how they will continue to make it work.

Thinking of our investment in procuring growing amounts of material, we can realize that beneath all the goodies is a river that runs on fear defined as downsizing. Chasing our reward through consumerism, can negatively affect anyone at any time and indeed has, more often than not, paralyzed well-meaning people in our burgeoning electronics-driven culture. A guarantee of employment, housing, education, and business, becomes more of a crap shoot, where you might have the winning ticket some day if you keep on gambling and vest yourself in the wishful belief that your windfall will come sooner rather than later.

Better to take a hard look at what is and then decide what might be needed to respond to the changes that are keeping us unsure of the future and fearful of the dreaded downsize. Any situation can be affected by downsizing, be it work, home, family, vacation, friendships, and so on. It is widely present in our world and, more importantly, in our thoughts and awareness. As a possibility, it regularly looms as a cloud over our hopes and dreams and is a consistent influence that can undermine our most basic enjoyments.

Initially, it is best to know that what is called for in transitioning away from a downsized underground way of life is an exit from our current approach to a new, revised program. It is essential that we realize change is overdue and that, regardless of our circumstances, we are called to consider this an important step in the way we conduct our lives. Responding to a world that has changed dramatically around us, we are being led to fashion a new approach which will be revealed as we take action to help ourselves discover new ways of thinking and acting. Realize, however, that this process is not an overnight kind of happening. It is not a sudden complete vision, but rather one that will come in varying stages.

I'd like to offer a bit of simple relief at this point and include helpful encouragement for making the change an enjoyable experience. At least to give you a chance to breathe and relax into the myriad thoughts that will arise and a way to be kind to yourself in the process. When you are leaving one life to begin another-it's best to have on hand:

- Good Motivational Music,
- Candlelight,
- A good bottle of wine (\$10 or more),
- Chocolate and pictures, and also
- Supportive postcards from friends.

I am a true believer that the ceremony you begin with lights the way as you make necessary adjustments and sets the stage for helpful and hopeful behavior. Why not treat yourself and act like success has already been earned? Begin where you want to end. I know that sounds like a cliché, but treating yourself decently has never revealed itself to me to be a bad starting place.

Let's face it, whatever you decide to do, it might not be bad to start by being the embodiment of what it is you are envisioning for yourself. I say 'embodiment', but what I really am proposing is that you begin at the conclusion of your effort and not at the start. Usually in the beginning, you are at best hesitant and, more than likely, scared to breathe much less head out on a different/new path. Changing your life to incorporate a philosophy of 'living lean' means believing that your life is worth living with purpose and a belief that you have what it takes to be happy and successful. Learning the truth of this statement is an important self-revelation that will form the foundation for what you want to create.

### Breaking Free-Being Your Own True Self

Initially, it would be beneficial to conduct a review of what is important to you. You can begin by thinking about and lining out important spiritual values that you admire or aspire to. Is it Honor? Valor? Dedication? Truth?

You can then move on to evaluating your physical needs.

A home?

Place to work?

Friends?

There is also the mental aspects to your plan.

Peace of mind?

Calm?

Rest?

Any discussion of realizing and changing to counter the effects of downsizing (I prefer the gentler term of streamlining) including its influence on the psycho-social, physical, and financial areas; has to, of necessity, begin with the all too important attitude adjustment.

Once you have defined your needs, you can move on to discovering how to support those needs with an attitude based on cohesion with our desires and not one that keeps us prisoner to a societal view of what is necessary. The underlying belief based on having things in excess in order to feel good is fast approaching an illness which keeps us chained to a belief that stuff is the answer to our feelings of insecurity. Insecurity is a byproduct of downsizing and is inherent in our everyday messages about ownership as the answer to our fears. It's time to relinquish a philosophy that is designed to keep us trapped in a program that drives us to own 17 sets of towels in case guests come, or 50 cups for coffee to indicate a well-stocked kitchen, or two cars visible in the driveway of the latest models representing financial success. This type of thought process acts as a vulture to our desire for a better way of life.

A revised sense of security is better expressed in the things we 'need' now being defined as things that are essential, such as:

-a car,

-a pair of shoes,

-food, and

-a roof over your head.

### A Word About Moving Into Our Senior Years

One of the hardest, most complicated assignments is the one that looms as we approach our senior (older) years. How do we acknowledge and embrace-that's the key word I think here – *embrace*, the fact that our life has altered as our body has?

Where we were once very involved in entertaining or conducting family gatherings, many of us now face a dwindling score of guests and family that has been revised (downsized) leaving us more alone in our activities. Occasions that previously required numerous amounts of things (place settings, silverware, etc.), now can be handled quite simply requiring much less.

I find a good place to begin paring down our belongings is in the kitchen. Recently, while helping a senior friend home from the hospital, I realized that her living arrangements needed some (lots?) of streamlining. I began to clean and organize her kitchen. In one cabinet I found 50 coffee mugs. Now, these obviously covered a period of time, memories and the like, but downsizing thoughts ran to, "When will she share coffee with 50 people?" Realizing those days are long gone, people have moved on, and learning that she had no family around relegated 42 mugs to a box at the curb with a sign, "Free to enthusiastic coffee/tea drinkers." The remaining eight mugs were displayed in a nice, viewable manner on the counter.

In the following sections, I discuss a number of prime topics that arise as we endeavor to change our thinking to reflect a more resourceful approach to life versus our current lifestyle approach of expanding at any cost. These topics are not all-inclusive but are highlighted because they are continually at the crux of difficulties that become evident as we continue in this process. In adjusting our lifestyle, we will confront constant reminders that we are under pressure to keep things as they are even though we know that continuing to follow consumption of all we can is just a distraction to our peace of mind. We are further reminded that our lifestyle of senior living is one that can be encouragingly enjoyable when lived without regard to consistent reminders telling us that we need things in order to guarantee comfort in our old age.

#### No Stuff/No Stress-If it's Dusty...Dump It

Life is for the living, not the worried! A key element of our attachment to stuff is in the messaging implying that having it proves we're worthwhile. The underlying 'sell' behind having lots of material items is that we are now showing (the key word here is 'showing') in a tangible way that we are successful. How did lots of stuff equal success? I would answer in one word...merchandising.

Stress is an inevitable outcome of investing time, energy, and money into our mental existence. I say 'mental' as I believe that spiritually we know that success is not based on a marketing program that inundates our brain with mantras that sound like dollar signs ringing on a cash register. (In the next section, I will expound on the inculcation taking place because of the world's investment in the activity of merchandising especially in western culture).

Let's examine what our active involvement in the collection, storage, and display of the multiplicity of things we have purchased to showcase our success is doing to our body, mind, and soul. Regularly, we are reminded that there is an item that we must have. We are told over and over again that to provide for our families means making sure that they *have* everything and we are secure when we have the important purchases of home, car, clothes, and many toys, trips, and other goodies to occupy our 'down' time. The thing that is missing is the mention that to have all of these items means that we are not able to spend time enjoying any of them.

How many folks today are increasingly in debt to the activity of acquiring these important 'must haves'? So many of us have swallowed hook, line, and sinker the message that successful living means having things, that we worry most of the time about paying for our lifestyle. Worry over not being able to keep up or update our way of life means that we now have to spend inordinate amounts of money to ward off sickness and insure ourselves against illness taking us over. At both ends of this hamster maze we are chasing our tails. By this I mean that starting on the run we are chasing to keep up and then we are chasing not to get run over. All this chasing is nerve wracking, to say the least, and certainly not life enhancing.

Changing our perspective could go hand-in-hand with our need to change how we take care of our surroundings. Environmentally, the accumulation of stuff does nothing to benefit our planetary living conditions. Quite the contrary. Indiscriminate purchasing only thwarts our self-respect and much respect for our environment. We end up with piles of material goods that are discarded on a regular basis with landfills becoming unable to handle all the waste. The materials that are used to make the stuff also negatively impacts our air, water, and other life-giving necessities. At the same time, we are drowning in stress hurting our bodies

and creating mental states that contribute to detrimental physical influences like, high blood pressure, strokes, obesity, anxiety-related behaviors, and the like.

### Merchandising-A Method to Madness-If You Have to Buy it to Be it, You Ain't It

Along these lines and in this mode it is important to consider 'limiting' to be an important and viable activity. I've come to acknowledge that having things, accumulating belongings, gathering items is an exercise in distraction.

As consumers we are majorly involved in purchasing, storing, and displaying all that we accumulate. This activity consumes our time and resources and keeps us motivated by the theory that all this fits neatly under the banner of self- improvement.

According to Wikipedia, "In the broadest sense merchandising is any practice which contributes to the sale of products to a retail consumer." Herein, lies the danger. When we read the word 'any' with regards to a practice, we can be assured that the margins for application spread over a broad expanse of territory, including activities that have the potential to encourage a negative response when we consider our sense of well-being.

I would propose that today's burgeoning merchandising programs are a planned distraction. They keep us from personal evaluation of ourselves and attack our individual mandate and abilities to deciding what truly gives us satisfaction.

What is it that makes our blood run? Trading our passions for purchases leaves us in a state of reduced awareness and I propose involves us in a marketing scheme designed to steer us away from our own beliefs and values.

While distracted in this fashion, we focus our energy on getting and having things which completely or mostly obliterate our acknowledging what we should/could or must do to take care of ourselves, our life, our children, job, and so on. Why worry about upcoming expenses, consider a marriage gone stale, deal with children who are getting wilder each year? There's a new couch to purchase, wallpaper to change, a new outfit to buy to impress at the next holiday party bash.

There seems to be a built-in sense of accomplishment in the, 'owning is arriving,' theme so prevalent today. If we show up driving a new car, with a new model of computer, cell phone, I-Pad, the consistent mantra of success being directly related to what you buy and display is confirmed.

What is the new downsize that proposes to veer us away from adherence to the merchandising message? It emphasizes self-motivation and commitment to an overriding drive to honor what and who you crave to be. With a clear view of your situation you have a starting place. Evaluation criteria focused on the innate self-discovery found in considering personal questions, such as:

- What do I value?
- What do I really admire?
- How is it I like to see myself?
- When do I feel happy, really happy inside?
- What makes me smile?
- Where is my heart-felt passion?

A short story might help illustrate how honoring individual preferences can prove beneficial and supportive to the full enjoyment of our experiences.

I recall a time when my then, current boyfriend and I decided to vacation together. Plans were made to rent a car and drive from my home in Northern California up the west coast and arrive for a stay in Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming. There we would spend time experiencing all the park's segments; fishing in the lake, horseback riding in the Teddy Roosevelt section, walking the geysers, and everything in between- a real nature trip. News was, my computer managing boyfriend knew nature from books and I was a campfire girl gone bad. No matter. We were in love and happy to be out together adventuring.

The day we were leaving he picked up the souped up firebird he chose to rent and I packed the trunk with all-I mean all our essentials. We were not exactly camping, more like cabining, so the essentials I gathered were more minimalistic regarding camp food but included necessary rain gear, blankets, flashlights, and the like in case we needed them. Did I say that I pack like Butterfly McQueen in *Gone with the Wind*? In the movie when the Yankees were coming-to burn Atlanta while packing china she was panicked and screamed while tossing the china and crashing it into an open suitcase as gunfire erupted close by. No matter. Did I say that we were in love and happy?

As we ready to leave, wait my beau-did I point out that this lovely, Virgo gentleman was quite a detail freak? Well, he needed to place something into the trunk and nearly had a heart attack when he saw my willy-nilly trunk storage style (Sagittarian to the hilt). He began to exclaim about the jumble of items and distressed questioned how we would ever find anything in the pile of materials I had stored. I leaned into him, as by now I am out of the car concerned that his outburst meant he had injured something. When I realized that it was only the trunk's landscape that was of concern, I calmly reiterated our agreement that 1) I was assigned the task of handling the 'goods' and that I knew where everything was (he's still looking like he had seen a ghost), and 2) he got to pick the slicked up car we were driving. That said, I gave him a hug and kiss and got back into the car happy, ready to begin driving up the scenic highway to our glorious destination. He got in ready to leave while laughing and shaking his head.

A review of the inner viewing platform in this story, I believe reveals that I knew some very important basics which were essential to life's enjoyment, most particularly to me, which is the only entire area that I control.

- Keeping agreements is important,
- Honoring what each other needs without compromising internal values is a must, and
- Living in the moment makes me happy especially when I am travelling.

Needless to say, we both thrived, obviously survived, and by the third day my partner's button-down shirts and pressed jeans and immaculate Dockers were replaced willingly with plaid, polyester pants, old ripped sneakers, and a short, faded T-shirt with Fossie bear and stars on it.

You see, how we looked became what we were comfortable in. I myself was the epitome of camp-side sheik with my oversized, bright pink jogging pants and matching hoodie, striped purple and blue knee socks that pulled up over the bottom of the too-short pants, along with my hair in all sorts of pig tails with mismatched bows, topped off with plastic orange rain boots. We were a pair of happy campers who would scare away anything or anyone who came close and we did. You couldn't ask for more.

#### If It Makes Your Blood Run-Run After It

Suffice it to say, that honoring what it is that has meaning for you, regardless of what the world around you thinks, gives rise to a truly independent spirit. This inner knowledge allows you to move with the ease and grace of true grit and puts the 'P' for passion first. Often, people are what I call, living life in layers and the real energy that motivates them, (runs through their blood), is filed for a later time. But later may be too late. Some of what I include here may seem quite simple. Honestly, it is. But simple does not necessarily mean 'easy to apply'. We may be cognizant of one thing and situationally resort to a completely different philosophy about another item. Human beings operate this way sometimes. The trick I think is lining these two positions up-parallel to each other so you can choose the best option to apply.

Let me give you an example and one that quite directly applies to the topic at hand. We realize that getting to work on time is required. It is a simple thing. However, if we fairly detest the work we do – our job – we grudgingly drag ourselves out of bed in the morning and then have to race to work all stressed up and anxious, barely making it in on time. Sometimes, more often than not, we get delayed (due to traffic, when we forget to bring our work and have to go back home to get it, maybe there is no available parking, etc.) and we're late. We ask ourselves, "What then is the 'disconnect' between simple and 'easy to apply'?" What is preventing one leading to the other? When an underlying principle does not support required behavior there is a 'disconnect' negatively affecting the application of simple behavior.

Reverting back to the main message in this section; the blood running and what we do with this news when we realize there is or could be a disconnect in our personal desires/beliefs and our behavior? We could choose to-

- Run and face it.
- Veer off.
- Run away.

We come to understand that veering off and/or running away as options surely, and most often, confirm the disconnect, causing the 'easy to apply' function to go haywire. 'Easy to apply' becomes a drag that does not support our success but rather convinces us that success is out of our reach. Thereafter, a pile of excuses arrive justifying the 'disconnect' and life quickly becomes anything but easy.

Running to and facing it is an underlying factor in changing to a style of life that aligns our personhood with our actions. Living Lean means adjusting this program to ensure that 'simple' and 'easy to apply' go hand-in-hand and we begin by clearing out the debris that lies between these two principles. Most often we are and have become ensconced in needs which dictate the drive that is propelled by outside influences rather than our own innate passions and heartfelt desires. It is a sincere effort to downsize in this situation which will free us from the encumbrances so we can live life from a place of passion. During this process, we hone in on our needs, simplifying them and releasing our reverence to their almighty altar of deliverance.

#### Don't Look Sideways-You'll Trip Over Yourself

Become your own best friend. If you are considering a change, or a new way of handling your life, it would be helpful to keep facing forward. Stay focused on what you know to be good and true for you. When we let others influence what we are contemplating, other than offering asked for advice, we are opening ourselves to an influx of information that may make things harder.

Especially when we are contemplating life change, it is important that we stick to what is making us want to change and why that is important. It is to our good to keep in mind what our evaluation has revealed to us about our intrinsic beliefs and desires, and keep reminding our self that 'importance' is a label we place on something, not what outsiders think we should apply the label to.

Remember, this process is a step-by-step one and you succeed by being in it. Don't stop and continually reevaluate along the way because you may get stuck at a place that could change in the next stage. Each step, each realization, will bring with it corresponding action items that will suggest to you what choices are available. Depending upon the situation, the urgency, or the desire at the time, evaluate your options and act as you see fit. Don't be discouraged if a move you make is not one that brings the anticipated results. Keep forging ahead and make adjustments as needed.

One evaluative element to consider is that of emotions. What you are feeling about a situation or adjustment is often the deciding factor. Feelings indicate to us what is best for our situation and are key indicators that help us delineate between good and bad moves. Talk these out. Examine what you are feeling. Recognize how you might be dealing with your decisions and you will be better able to assess how to move ahead.

#### Money and Me-Make it Count and Count it First

Considering the amount of effort that it takes, not to mention the use of our time, to gain the resources to support ourselves, it is imperative that we consider how we are handling the process. What are we willing to trade to gain the needed support which will enable us to participate in life as we would like to? This may seem like a very obvious question, but many times I have encountered folks acting somewhat like robots going through the motions and spending time at work while the television, or their partners, or the family is inculcating them with ideas about their station in life. I call this a station in life as if it is a significant discovery.

Once we realize that we are working toward something that we erroneously believe looms over us as the ultimate plan but in reality only amounts to a point in time, we gain the freedom to enjoy taking things step-by-step. When we evaluate our money in terms of exchange, we are able to pinpoint the amount of our life time it

takes to gain the amount we have earned. Not using credit makes this exchange value absolutely evident and supports our devising a clear and accurate evaluation of our resources. We are then better able to decide when and how to exchange our money as it represents precious life-time and we are diligent in managing each exchange. Ultimately, budgeting becomes an activity that rewards our success handling money and a life of resulting prosperity.

#### Author's Profile-Where I've Been

Cathy EganMoinester is a Magna cum Laude graduate of Rutgers University with a B.A. in Sociology, minor in Psychology, and college-level course completions in accounting, computer sciences, and transpersonal studies.

Business and technical writing have been an integral part of her career with more than 11 years in the position of Senior Proposal Writer for a Fortune 100 company, as well as more than 10 years in management and leadership positions for innovative and advancing technologies in the high-tech trade association field.

She has successfully advanced her writing and presentation abilities, creating and producing materials encompassing a broad scope of deliverables in marketing, public relations, editing of engineering science doctoral thesis submittals, ISO health and safety applications, training and development manuals, as well as counseling and transformational class information.

Her wide ranging background and hands-on experience is further augmented by knowledge and experience in cultural/spiritual investigation. World travel is a passion and Cathy has added to her interests and understanding by visiting and spending time in communities and areas of differing cultures and religions.

For the community, Cathy has trained and performed as a Spiritual Care Provider assigned to assist patients on the orthopedic floor of Stanford Hospital, Palo Alto, California and fulfilled a three-year appointment by the Santa Clara, California County Board of Supervisors to the Commission on the Status of Women and Girls, where she was elected Chairperson for two-years of her term.

She is lucky to have the support and devotion of a very capable assistant, The Big Dew, her rescued orange tabby, who is a valued writing partner providing constant and meaningful inspiration; unless he is pursuing his own life's purpose-napping.



The very capable assistant!