



# FLIPPED IT!

*Inspiring Stories of Successful Reinvention*

Melody Biringer



Flipped It! Inspiring Stories of Successful Reinvention

A publication of The CRAVE Company

1805 12th Ave W #A

Seattle WA 98119

[info@thecravecompany.com](mailto:info@thecravecompany.com)

[thecravecompany.com](http://thecravecompany.com)

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# Foreward

Have you ever considered doing the exact opposite of what you're doing in your business right now? Maybe with your whole business, or just a part?

If we thought about doing the opposite of what we've been doing, could it provide a fresh look at things, provoke ideas we've never considered? Could it potentially give us the perspective that strikes a game-changing nerve?

Wanting to explore this idea with other

entrepreneurs, I invited them to this conversation to share their real stories of successful reinvention. Those we chose to include represent a variety of businesses, but a single impact: they all had to be inspiring.

We'll start with the takeaway: before you give up a business/idea, turn it up upside down and try doing the opposite.

"Flip it before you ditch it," I like to say. There's only one way out of a dead end.



# Introduction

My favorite *Seinfeld* episode is the one where George decides to fix his miserable life by doing everything the opposite. If all his choices had been wrong, then, as Jerry tells him, "...the opposite would have to be true." I like it because it's radical and there's something to it.

About ten years ago I made an "unhappiness" list of all the things in my business/personal life that I really wanted to escape. The irony was I'd worked hard to get where I was. It was all about more, bigger, busier... the stuff you're supposed to strive for.

But I hated commuting two hours a day to a warehouse full of employees I couldn't manage. There were so many mouths to feed, mortgages, loans, taxes, theft,

overhead, equipment breakdowns, health inspectors and chasing receivables. My food business had become a well known brand with way too little to show for it.

Life was a "groundhog day" routine with no time for girlfriends and no girlfriends.

So what was the opposite of all this? My "George" moment. What would a business life that I could love look like?

My new business manifesto included:

1. A business I could run from my laptop in bed... in an Amsterdam apartment or anywhere... on my schedule.
2. A small kick-ass employee team... we hang at the local coffee shop.

3. Outsource everything I don't want to do, or can't do well, to subcontractors, short-term project partners and apprentices.
4. Make a maximum return on time, energy, investment spent.
5. Keep it small and keep it (\$) all.
6. Reject everything that isn't KISS (keep it simple sweetheart).
7. Spend time and connect with fellow women entrepreneurs.
8. Fulfill my innovative, feminine cravings.
9. Have a "serendipity" plan instead of a five-year plan.
10. Get some girlfriends...start CRAVE Party.

The above remain, some more, some less, works in progress.

I'm a self-professed "start-up junkie," with about 20 businesses started over the past 30 years. In 2011, I wrote *CRAVING SUCCESS*, which is described as "a readable romp through the up-and-down lessons of being an adventurous independent businesswoman." The main theme is all the mistakes I've made and the lessons learned. The 132 tips I include are mostly what I should have done.

My writer friend, Sally Reavis was enlisted as co-author. She could make me sound like me, but be readable. One day she commented that I was using the phrase "flip it" quite often. What was the deal with different business efforts being "flipped"? I wasn't aware of this, but knew it was my subconscious verbal shorthand for "George" moments: get me out of this dead end by flipping in the opposite direction.

My business experience was summarized in 10 Lessons, and Flip It! became number 10: "Flip your model upside-down, inside-out, or sideways, and think about doing the exact opposite of what you've been doing.

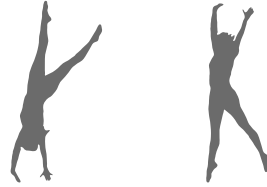
This will give you a fresh look at things you've never considered before and it can potentially give you the perspective that strikes the nerve."

I'm currently facilitating an ongoing CRAVING SUCCESS MASTERMIND with about 10 women per class. One of the weekly assignments is to identify something that's not working well in their business. How could they flip it? What would doing the opposite look like? We think better for each other than we do for ourselves, so the insights are powerful. Get yourself a Flip It! brainstorming committee and make magic happen.

Thanks to all the women entrepreneurs who sent us their stories of courageous and inspiring reinvention. Check them out further at their websites.

**—Melody Biringer**





# FLIPPED IT!

*Inspiring Stories of Successful Reinvention*





# *Avani Patel*

TrendSeeder

Years in business: 1

Location: New York, New York

[trendseeder.com](http://trendseeder.com)



## ***What did you flip?***

I went from being a lawyer with a fashion line to being a CEO of a fashion/technology company.

## ***Why did you flip it?***

As much as I enjoyed practicing law, I knew that wasn't my end-game. I was a corporate lawyer and loved the business side of things. I always pictured myself in the seat of my clients. So one day I took the plunge just before I would have been up for partnership at my law firm.

## ***What triggered/inspired the flip?***

I have always been a person who follows my gut. I felt like it was the right time to go back to fashion—so I did. I always say you should do what you want in life. It was inspiring to see so many changes happening in the fashion technology space and I was ready to be a part of it. I decided to jump in head first—it's a little scary but I have had the most wonderful support system in my friends and family. I couldn't imagine doing anything else.

## *How did you flip it?*

I decided to quit my job as an attorney and start working on my fashion technology company but realized it might do me some good to go to business school. So I went back to business school and started working on my company, TrendSeeder.

## *What is the result of flipping it? The financial/ lifestyle benefit?*

It's been an amazing journey! We went from concept to beta launch last year. We have raised a seed round of \$500,000, have over 50 designers signed on the platform, have been featured in the Refinery29 and the Huffington Post along with many other publications, have over 58,000 facebook fans, have over 20 different partnerships in the works and I have an amazing team. We are growing every day!

## *What feeling do you have in your life as a result?*

I love what I do every day! Work is not just work for me anymore. I am very happy. Even though I work probably as much as or more than when I was an attorney, it's great! It is important to note though, I don't regret being an attorney at all—I use what I learned every single day.

*“I love what I do every day! Work is not just work for me anymore.”*





# *Betsy Talbot*

## Married with Luggage

Years in business: 5

Location: International

[marriedwithluggage.com](http://marriedwithluggage.com)

"This book is an anthem for all women who are tired of hiding their light behind the expectations, opinions and stereotypes of others."  
— Maria Ross, *Robbing My Date: How a Freak Accident Reformed My Life*



BETSY TALBOT

### *What did you flip?*

I have always wanted to be a writer, but I never could get my foot in the door with a publisher. I was killing myself with book proposals and writing on spec with no real chance of getting a book deal. When my husband, Warren, and I decided to sell everything we owned to travel the world in 2010, we needed to come up with a way to make a living when our savings ran out, so we looked for a way to make writing finally work.

### *Why did you flip it?*

We flipped it because we had a website

documenting our big life turnaround. Our audience was growing and we finally realized we did not need a traditional publisher to bring us buyers. We had a built-in audience and name recognition of our own and it was high time we did something with it. Why wait for someone else to give you what you already have?

### *What triggered/inspired the flip?*

The more we worked to create the life we wanted, the more we began identifying workarounds, loopholes and new ways of doing things. It morphed from our lifestyle

to our work pretty easily and now I can never go back to the traditional way of thinking. It is always a “how can I have it all?” question instead of a “what can I hope for?” question. It’s a great mind shift for your entire life.

### ***How did you flip it?***

We became our own publishers. Kindle was gaining popularity and print-on-demand services were becoming less ‘homemade’ and more feasible for a business, especially a mobile one like ours. Warren did all the research and become our own layout designer. We project-managed the entire thing ourselves with subcontractors for cover art, editing and promotion. We now sell 3 books on every major bookseller website plus in print and we have plans to produce a new book or course supporting a book every year.

### ***What is the result of flipping it? The financial/***

***“Now I can never go back to the traditional way of thinking.”***

## ***lifestyle benefit?***

When we stopped chasing the traditional publishers and became our own, we were able to almost immediately realize an income it would have taken us months or years to earn with a traditional publisher. Not only that, but our continuing marketing of our books has resulted in a steady monthly income to support our traveling lifestyle. Where we could have hoped for \$1/book royalty from a traditional publisher (paid in six-month installments), we now get up to \$7/book and get paid every month. Not only that, but we would be doing about the same marketing work anyway since traditional publishers are running so lean these days. It is a no-brainer to get \$7 instead of \$1 for the same amount of work!

## ***What feeling do you have in your life as a result?***

The reason we left on this journey in 2010 was to live a life of freedom, creativity and discovery. We saved a lot of money before we left, but we knew at some point we would have to trade a bit of our freedom for work. This is the perfect blend of work and living because we're our own bosses and we create books that are changing people's lives. It is a very good way to make your way in the world.





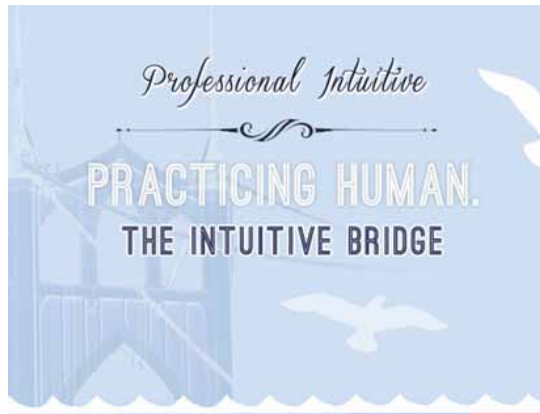
# *Bridget Pilloud*

## Intuitive Bridge

Years in business: 4

Location: Portland, Oregon

[intuitivebridge.com](http://intuitivebridge.com)



### ***What did you flip?***

Through my business, the Intuitive Bridge, I help individuals by looking at their energy and at the energy of situations, and helping my clients discover the best way to resolve problems and make the most of opportunities.

### ***Why did you flip it?***

My business was a hot mess. Prior to being at Intuitive Bridge, I was in strategic information technology marketing for about 15 years. So I know marketing and business strategy like the back of my hand.

Conventional wisdom for my industry is to build a big presence online and create as many products and offerings as you can. I spent two and a half years trying to do conventional wisdom. I guest-posted and interviewed as much as possible. The other conventional maxim is that people pay more (and more often) for business services than personal services. So I did that: I offered many different classes, services and products, for both personal and business.

I killed myself trying to market all of these offerings. I felt like I was some sort of tap-dancing spider with too much on my plate and making very little

money for the amount of work I put in.

I could not do this model. It works for other businesses, but it did not work at all for me. My heart was not in it. I was not doing the one thing that my business is supposed to do, which is to significantly and positively change the lives of people.

## ***What triggered/inspired the flip?***

The realization of how far I was from the idea of what my business was supposed to do.

I found myself not caring for my clients. They were seeking my help and I was not invested in their success. I was phoning the caring in because I just could not take it. I did not like that about myself.

I was depressed at the amount of money I was making.

The moment was when I went into my office and saw that it was a mess and I could not find time in my schedule to clean it, and I could not quite afford to hire someone to organize it for me. I had to sit in my messy office and try to work. It felt awful. I felt like if people could see me,

they would realize that I didn't walk my talk. I was a hypocrite in a messy office.

I was scared to let things go. I felt like a failure. I also felt like I could not keep doing what I was doing. I felt a lot like how I felt when I left corporate America. Like if I kept doing what I was doing, I was going to die. I was very surprised that intuitive work could do that to me, until I realized it was not the work, it was everything else.

## ***How did you flip it?***

I took down all of my products from the Intuitive Bridge site. I closed down my product site (shopatthebridge.com) that featured inspirational t-shirts, letterpress cards and sacred stone jewelry. I stopped offering any kind of business coaching and referred my business clients to professionals who could do well by them. I shut down my classes. I narrowed my offerings to two services: Life-Shifting, and Monthly Mentoring. I stopped blogging daily and started to write about two times a week. I slightly changed the copy on my site, making it simpler and easier to understand. I rented an office in Portland and started seeing clients in person (most clients had been served by Skype

or by phone). I started focusing directly on the Portland market. I drastically cut my social media presence. I went from 54 tweets a day (on average) down to no tweets for 3 months, and now about 3 tweets a week. Everything got very simple. I do one thing. I do it really well. It is something that many people need.

## ***What is the result of flipping it? The financial/lifestyle benefit?***

It was scary to let all that go. It bruised my ego too. I knew intuitively that this was the right thing to do (I started using my intuition for myself as well as others!).

I felt validated right away, though, because I started making significantly more money. I did not expect this. I just knew that I could not keep doing things the other way.

Most of my clients find me by word of mouth. Some come across my writing, but the vast majority of my clients are referred to me. My clients are so happy with the work I do that they choose to buy more from me than they did.

My schedule is regularly booked about two months out now (before people could get in anytime).

My monthly mentorship program is a huge success that brings me consistent income and enables me to see how my services can work with clients over a longer period of time.

I am doing well in my business, and I have time now to plan how I want to grow it. My plans are very simple. I am working on writing a book and continuing to grow my local practice.

And my clients are better. They are more focused and motivated. They are more fun and interesting to work with. And they love the work that we do.

I have time to do things for fun. I started fostering dogs for a local rescue. I spend more time with my kids and my partner.

So what did flipping do for my business?

My job got easier. I made more money. I had less stress. My house is cleaner.

I am mentally and physically healthier. And all because I shut so much down and got very clear about what I do.

I am going to simplify even more. I am taking my blog down. I am going to stop blogging. I am going to write longer pieces. I am removing “packages” from my site and going down to a straight hourly model (which is very scary).

## *What feeling do you have in your life as a result?*

Relief. Groundedness. A deeply-felt enthusiasm.

*“I was scared to let things go...I just knew that I could not keep doing things the other way.”*







# Cathy Green

UpperCrust Maids

Years in business: 5

Location: Hyattsville, Maryland

[uppercrustmaids.com](http://uppercrustmaids.com)



## *What did you flip?*

I flipped my company's image and re-branded. My company had jumped on the "coupon/50% off" bandwagon in 2010. We sold 1,400 coupons and the majority of those who purchased the coupons cashed in, but never became clients. That left us close to bankruptcy, unable to hold onto employees, because the "coupon houses" generally belonged to people who had not cleaned in years and wanted my employees to turn their filthy homes into palaces for a really low price.

The "coupon purchasers" were then going to social media and bashing us for not

being able to accomplish the impossible—to transform their houses and to put them on schedule immediately. And because we sold so many coupons there was a wait for our services. Our image was shattered and I was at a loss, in free fall, wondering what to do about it. I thought about giving up and filing for bankruptcy.

## *What triggered/inspired the flip?*

The will to win and not fail in the face of tragedy and financial losses was what triggered me to totally flip the company's image and our financial situation.

The inspiration came from an inner boxer, the boxer that resides inside of all of us. My inner boxer encouraged me to fight and not go down.

## *How did you flip it?*

I dug in my heels. I borrowed money from my parents. My church gave me some money based on how loyal I had been to them when I had cash. My husband borrowed some money. We were determined to stay in business and to complete the coupons even though they were ravishing us financially.

- a) We honored the coupons. Everyone who purchased a coupon was serviced or received a refund.
- b) We got a new website and re-branded.
- c) We hired outstanding employees who take pride in their work.
- d) We joined networking organizations and made ourselves known in the community.
- e) We offered free cleaning through charity

events even though we couldn't afford it at the time.

## *What is the result of flipping it? The financial/lifestyle benefit?*

We started to pick up a loyal base of clients. We won the Angie's List Super

Service Award in 2012! And we were able to pull out of the financial hole that we were in and are now making profit.

*“The will to win and not fail in the face of tragedy and financial losses was what triggered me to totally flip the company's image and our financial situation.”*





# Claudia Pasch

## Success@Work

Years in business: 20

Location: Amsterdam, The Netherlands

[claudiapasch.com](http://claudiapasch.com)



### *What did you flip?*

Work: I flipped my entire career from a corporate vice president at TomTom to a solo entrepreneur. I had spent 20 years in the corporate world and flipped myself into a startup business.

Personal: From being the most shy and unconfident woman to a successful business networker in 12 months.

Location: From East Berlin (lived 20 years behind the walls) to Amsterdam.

### *Why did you flip it?*

Work: I woke up—after a personal disaster combined with a mid-life crisis around age 40—and asked myself “What would I do if I only had six more months to live?” The answer was clear: quit my job.

Personal: I was not well; at times I did not even dare to go out on the street and meet other people. I could not live with a self esteem below zero anymore.

Location: The situation in East Berlin in 1989 was unbearable; everyone wanted to leave communism and live a better life outside.

## *What triggered/ inspired the flip?*

Being very unhappy and unfulfilled around age 40, when I was most successful in my job, made me stand still and so I asked myself better questions like “What makes me happy? What do you want to do in the next five years? Who am I without a title and money? What is important to me and what would my ideal world look like?”

There is also certainly a shift of change that most of us feel. Whether it is the Mayan calendar or the Yin/Yang story, who knows. It is certainly time to focus on more collaboration, win-win and bring intuition and mindfulness into this world.

## *How did you flip it?*

Work: I quit my successful job, leaving the title and money. Everyone thought I was crazy and fearless.

Personal: As an introvert I needed to know what was “wrong” with me. Determined to fix it, I discovered the world of personal

*“It is certainly time  
to focus on more  
collaboration, win-win  
and bring intuition  
and mindfulness  
into this world.”*

development and read about 100 books, attended seminars all over the world and qualified in NLP and Coaching.

Location: At the time you could request to “leave” East Berlin, which my mother did in 1988 and one year later we got approval. Unfortunately, this was four weeks before the wall came down so I had to watch it on TV in another city. Meanwhile, I have traveled the world and have developed a global mindset.

## *What is the result of flipping it? The financial/lifestyle benefit?*

Work: I am my own boss. I have my own company. I can work whenever, how much and with whom I want. My mission is to support others with the same desires. I have had countless successes since then, (ie: being invited to a global women’s conference in Italy and coaching some of the 900 attendees).

Personal: Entrepreneurship is, most of all, a personal journey where you come across all your shortcomings and there is only one way: get over it. At 43 I can say I never felt happier, stronger, and lived with so much passion and purpose.

Location: I love Amsterdam, I love my freedom. I can do whatever I want. There are many like-minded people. Still, my home is global.

## *What feeling do you have in your life as a result?*

I feel great, positive, energized and most of all grateful. There is a Universe that has gifts for all of us if we follow our path and overcome our fears. I was the last believing in it, but now I do.





# *Danielle Laporte*

daniellelaporte.com

Years in business: Countless

Location: Vancouver, British Columbia

daniellelaporte.com



## *What did you flip?*

I flipped my identity. I had a lifestyle media company—which is just a fancy term for a cool website with a consulting arm. I had a partner, shareholders and an advisory. And when that all went south, I went rogue, solo, free.

I stood up my own “brand” and never looked back. It was time to fully claim what it meant to be an entrepreneurial artist. So that meant no dumbing down, full disclosure about my beliefs, dropping the F-bomb if it was called for, taking creative risks, and making my personality and viewpoint central to everything I offered.

## *Why did you flip it?*

It was a forced flip. Essentially, I got fired from my own incorporation. Ousted in a battle of creative and economic wills, you might say. (FYI, they declared insolvency three months after they canned me.)

## *How did you flip it?*

I had to hit the ground running to make money—rise from my own ashes, as it were. I started writing about what I really wanted to, I stood up a strategy consultancy and spoke to any entrepreneurs who would invite me to their city.

***What is the result of flipping it? The financial/lifestyle benefit?***

Creative sovereignty rocks. I'm a million-dollar-plus business now. I'm deeply fulfilled in my creative expression. I adore the people I work with. I'm unfolding more of me and my potential—and my team's potential, all the time. It's bliss.

***What feeling do you have in your life as a result?***

I have a fierce but flexible relationship to goals. I feel like I can create absolutely anything that I want to. And as far as I've come, I feel like I'm only just getting started. I'm thrilled—which is how I always longed to feel about my vocation—thrilled.

*“I feel like I can create absolutely anything that I want to.”*






# Debbie Whitlock

Femmenation™

Years in business: 17

Location: Seattle, Washington

debbiewhitlock.com



"Debbie Whitlock is influential in women's lives because of her authenticity and unique ability to connect with them on what really matters.."

~ Sandra Yancey  
Founder and CEO eWomen Network, Inc.

## Debbie Whitlock

Create the Prosperity and Good Fortune You Deserve

### *What did you flip?*

I flipped my 17-year career as a financial advisor into a global business that empowers women to create sustained economic independence and prosperity.

### *Why did you flip it?*

The narrow walls of my industry were limiting the message I wanted to share. Everything I said had to be approved by a compliance officer. Every message I shared was delivered through someone else's lens of meaning. Every program and message I wanted to deliver was too big to fit in the space of a very structured



industry. The time had come for me to stop trying to “contain” my message.

## *What triggered/ inspired the Flip?*

It was a beautiful tapestry of people and events over the recent few years, combined with a deep desire to change women’s relationship to money and power, which helped me take the leap. In the midst of the market mess of 2008, our country took a significant shift to a scarcity and fear-based mentality.

Main stream media outlets had experts focusing on the problems with little-to-no conversation to the solutions, and a heavy blanket of guilt and shame related to personal and business finance covered the country. It was too much for me to watch.

So if I can return a lightness, confidence and competency around money—empowering women to make confident decisions around their business and personal finances—I will have left the world a better place.

*“I have a lightness and freedom that had been missing for years. I can’t wait to start my day and work with start-ups, entrepreneurs and small-business owners.”*

## *How did you flip it?*

In the fall of 2011 I was walking in the rain along Alki Beach, in Seattle, and wrestling with some personal alligators, feeling the weight of the world, when I said aloud to myself, “I don’t want to be a financial advisor any longer...”

As I waited to be struck by lightning, I began to cry—that was my bathroom floor moment. Thankfully, several years of personal work had led me to a place where I knew I didn’t need to know in that moment what was next, and I didn’t need to know the how. Simply saying it out loud had already put the wheels in motion to bring me and my opportunity together.

In the spring of 2012, as I sat having dinner with a mentor and a friend, the opportunity I didn’t know I had been working toward was presented to me. By October of that same year I had taken the necessary steps to be able to take the leap transforming myself and my business.

## *What is the result of Flipping it? The financial/lifestyle benefit?*

I have a lightness and freedom that had been missing for years. I can’t wait to start my day and work with start-ups, entrepreneurs and small-business owners. To be present to their situation and give them the best I have in my favorite one-on-one format.

I have a global business, with unlimited financial potential, that I can run from anywhere there is internet connectivity on the planet. I can serve women who are ready to make healthy decisions about their business through the lens of money, regardless of the continent they call home!

## *What feeling do you have in your life as a result?*

For the first time everything is possible! No more filters, no more asking who I am. It’s just me, showing up and doing my best work.



*“I could have filed for bankruptcy and totally given up. Instead I fought for my company, re-imaged it and we are not only standing, but glowing.”*

*—Cathy Green*

UpperCrust Maids

Hyattsville, Maryland

[uppercrustmaids.com](http://uppercrustmaids.com)



# *Debra Trappen*

d11 Consulting

Years in business: 2

Location: Seattle, Washington

[d11consulting.com](http://d11consulting.com)



## *What did you flip?*

Like many of us, I worked, thrived in and climbed “the ladder” in corporate America for many years. My final corporate gig was as a Chief Experience Officer focused on building a company through attracting/training/retaining entrepreneurs—with an intense social media and industry relations twist. After seven years of being an “intrapreneur” for this company I decided to flip it by breaking into the world of entrepreneurship and start my own consulting firm. The interesting element is not that I went from working for “the man” to breaking out on my own... that lies in the why and how.

## *Why did you flip it?*

That moment happened. The one where I “hit the proverbial ceiling,” realized I had outgrown my job and was no longer living up to my potential. The reality was that—through social media and the ability to create and cultivate relationships across the globe—my influence, connections and ability to inspire change had grown beyond my backyard. It was time to take that on, to make a bigger mark and that concept did not fit into my current employers regional vision. Bottom line: if I really wanted to be part of the change I was seeking to inspire, I had to take a risk and step out.

Then the ideas of helping others uncover their purpose, build a strong life/brand foundation, focus on a few vital elements they were passionate about, and have fun doing it totally fired me up! Pairing that with my unique skill set of working with entrepreneurs and business owners on how to take each of these puzzle pieces and translate it all on social media (not

only to build/nurture relationships, but also a strong brand reputation and prosperous business) was what pushed me over the edge into entrepreneur heaven!

## *What triggered/ inspired the flip? Who, what, how did the inspiration happen?*

You have heard the saying “it takes a village...” well, that describes how my “flip” finally came to fruition. It was a steady process of building relationships, surrounding myself with wisdom-sharing

mentors, learning lessons, gaining knowledge, and being brave and comfortable with being uncomfortable. I can hear my 2006 self saying, “I love being an intrapreneur, I’m so sure I’ll never desire to own my own company.” Never say never is so true! I recall one conference where the founder of the event was interviewing a panel of women business owners. They were sharing their successes and failures and the question was posed—Are you taking risks or being safe? I had to admit it—I was being safe and that woke up the fiery redhead roar in me. The rest is part of my sassy story and will forever be woven into my future.

*“I had to admit it—I was being safe and that woke up the fiery redhead roar in me.”*