

As I explored in *Release Your Brilliance*, each of us is born brilliant—with special talents and genius in a deep vault within. And when we release our brilliance, we shift from waiting for the future to arrive to creating it every day by our actions. The potential to be CEO of You, Inc. already exists within each of us. So how do you harness this internal power? And how do you let it out?

Draw confidence from your personal gifts and talents by doing a quarterly assessment of your career/business portfolio. Examine your personal productivity, relationship currency, and skills inventory.

Here are three strategies to harness your power:

- Believe in Your Worth
- Think *Inside* the Box
- Distinguish Thyself

Believe in Your Worth

I once heard a story about the famous painter Pablo Picasso. He was dining at a five-star restaurant in a metropolitan city when a female admirer walked over to his table to tell him how much she loved his work. Sensing that he was receptive to her accolades, she asked if he would do a sketch for her. Picasso grabbed some paper and, with pen and pencil, promptly depicted the waiters carrying luscious ice cream parfaits. As the woman reached for the sketch, Picasso said, “Madame, that will be \$10,000.” Shocked, the woman replied, “But that only took you five minutes.” “No, Madame,” replied Picasso, “it took me 50 years.”

Simon T. Says... Dare to shift gears and see things differently when others are stalled.

To shift your brilliance, whether in your personal or professional life, you need to live life with bold confidence so you don't diminish your value. You need to believe in your own merit, regardless of what flaws you may have or what challenges you face. When you believe in your innate brilliance, you will find the confidence to take action.

Confidence comes from believing in your own self-worth. It's living out loud. It is the voice within that says, "I can, I shall, I will!" Confidence is the ability to go in your own direction instead of following the crowd. Confidence is your own quiet power. Without confidence, there is no ignition; there is no dream come true; there is no better tomorrow.

Confidence comes from hours and days and weeks
and years of constant work and dedication.

—Roger Staubach, Hall of Fame Quarterback Dallas Cowboys

Why would Microsoft make a bid to buy Yahoo? Confidence. Why would Richard Branson launch an airline called Virgin America? Confidence. Why would Sheila Robinson start Diversity Woman, a leadership empowerment online magazine for women who mean business? Confidence, my friend.

The problem for most of us is that confidence, the very thing we need the most these days, is in short supply. Our self-assurance has come under severe attack as a result of the reeling economy, layoffs, hiring freezes, cancelled contracts, reduction of benefits—the list goes on.

I was in Washington, DC, recently, enjoying a chai latte at one of the world's favorite coffee spots (Starbucks, of course) and having a fascinating conversation with a friend, Lana Kim, who is a political refugee from Russia. She was telling me about her latest

endeavor—writing a book. When I asked her why she hadn't done it sooner, she replied, "Simon, I lacked the confidence; I didn't believe I really could do it."

Let me tell you about Lana Kim. She came to America alone, with just a dollar in her pocket and no knowledge of the English language. Despite unbelievable difficulties, through years of hard work and self-education, she became a stockbroker and was actually inducted into the hall of fame in that role at PaineWebber. Today, she is also a Certified Financial Planner (CFP), a Registered Financial Consultant (RFC), and is completing her Master of Science degree in financial services. And this brilliant woman, who has achieved so much against all odds, was sitting there telling me she lacked confidence.

In her own words:

I had struggled nearly 35 years to have confidence, a gleam of hope, a belief that I could be somebody and make my life count for something. What I've learned is that confidence grows with you one day at a time, one encounter at a time.

Lana worked every day to boost her confidence by reading motivational books, listening to tapes, making new friends, and volunteering. But most importantly, she began to believe in her own worth. What about you?

Think *Inside* the Box

Power resides inside the box. Where in our cars do we keep our most valuable goods such as our registration, owner's manual, maybe even our money or keys? Inside the glove box.

To make any kind of change in your life, you must be able to draw strength and affirmation from inside your own box. Too many