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Dynamic Entrepreneur Natasha Kogan Reveals the X-Factor of Successful Women: A Daring Spirit in the Face of Fears and Naysayers

**THE DARING FEMALE'S GUIDE TO ECSTATIC LIVING
30 Dares for a More Gutsy and Fulfilling Life**

Natasha Kogan

To be the first woman to achieve in a realm dominated by men is an extraordinary feat of both will *and* imagination. How is it that women like Oprah, Helen Thomas and Kimberly Peirce and so many other successful women are able to envision an uncharted future, pursuing their goals and dreams with all their energy and passion despite the naysayers, not to mention their own fears? Oprah dared to become a news anchor when few black women or men filled those posts. Helen Thomas dared to become the first-ever female White House reporter. Kimberly Peirce dared to overcome her inexperience and find funding for and direct the powerful and controversial film, *Boys Don't Cry*.

The stories of these and others bring to life the core message of a powerful new book titled **THE DARING FEMALE'S GUIDE TO ECSTATIC LIVING: 30 Dares for a More Gutsy and Fulfilling Life** (Hyperion; \$12.95 trade paperback/\$17.95 Canada; March 2006). But if you want to follow in their footsteps and get the most out of your life, observes author Natasha Kogan, you'll have to *dare yourself* to overcome the fears, inertia, and self-limiting beliefs that are keeping you from realizing and exercising control over your own life.

"A Daring Female doesn't need to jump off a cliff or turn her life upside down to be daring," observes Kogan, a venture capitalist with a well-honed knack for sticking her neck out. "She infuses every day with a healthy dose of Daring Female Attitude, pouring it into even the most mundane activities." Kogan knows first hand the power of a well-engrained habit for pushing yourself beyond your limits in all aspects of life. At the tender age of three, Kogan stubbornly planted herself on a bench and refused to budge until hours later she had taught herself how to tie her own shoes. At fourteen, her family emigrated from Russia to the United States. Mocked by her peers for the way she spoke and dressed, Kogan was desperate to sound like every other American teen and made up her mind to lose her accent completely despite being told that it was a linguistic impossibility for a teenager. After spending hours of free time after school, year after year, watching TV and imitating the sounds she heard, and looking up hundreds of words in the dictionary, today Kogan sounds more American than Katie Couric!

Each of the thirty dares found in **THE DARING FEMALE'S GUIDE TO ECSTATIC LIVING** offers a distinct pathway to knowing and exercising your power to control your life, observes Kogan. Inspirational stories and practical examples of the many ways these dares can be put into practice – some in just minutes – fill this “tool kit” for getting the most out of every day. Kogan offers the following dares promise to both add spice to life and put any woman on a new road to achieving her heart's desires:

- Dare to create a Life Wish List to remind you of what you want from life and make sure you cross something off every year.
- Dare to get on the first train and then worry about where it's going. When presented with an opportunity, don't spend time overanalyzing – give it a whirl.
- Dare to find what makes you ecstatic and do it for at least ten minutes a day. Read a book. Take a walk. It won't solve all your problems, but it will inspire you to remember what makes you happy, and give you that necessary life-energy shot in the arm.
- Dare to learn something new every day. Take a different way home. Learn a new word. Constant learning offers new opportunities and paths that we might never consider.
- Dare to look forward more often than you look back. Stop wallowing in self-pity and regret. It's too easy to get lost in thoughts of the “would/could/shoulda” variety. Admit your mistakes and make sure you don't make them again.
- Dare to take risks if you can live with the worst-case scenario. If you can live with the rejection or failure, then go ahead and jump in!

Kogan's guide is an invaluable resource filled with ideas for overcoming fears and limiting self-labels; reflections for getting in touch with passions and creativity; as well as inspiring examples of Daring Females. In her book and website (www.daringfemale.com), Kogan dares women to use her book as a springboard to launch themselves into a more rewarding, exciting, interesting and fun life.

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Self-Help/Inspiration

NATASHA KOGAN grew up in the Soviet Union and immigrated to the United States with her family at the age of 14. After graduating from Wesleyan University, Kogan joined McKinsey & Company, a top-tier consulting firm. She has worked with several start-up businesses as part of their senior management team and she and her husband started their own company, Natavi Guides, to publish a series of unique guidebooks written for students by students. Using her consulting and investment experience, Natasha has worked with many women to help them start and grow their own businesses. She now lives in New York City where she is a managing director at a venture capital firm.