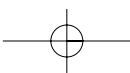
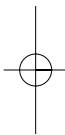
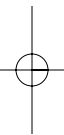


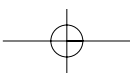
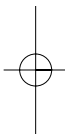
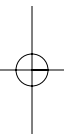


Daily Daring Habits

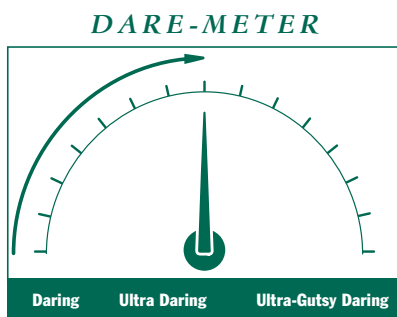




DF You might think that to be a Daring Female you have to go bungee jumping or drive around in a red convertible, rock 'n' roll tunes blaring. I couldn't disagree more. I mean, if conquering your fear of heights or exchanging your blend-in image for one that's more fun and in-your-face is something you're after, go for it. But a true Daring Female doesn't need to turn her life upside down to be daring. Instead, she infuses every day with a healthy dose of Daring Female attitude, pouring it into even the most mundane of activities. So don't wait for some special time to practice your Daring Female skills; make them part of your daily life. To get you going, here are a few Daring Female Daily Habits to spice up your life and to give you the tools to do with it whatever your heart desires.



Dare to Find What Makes You Ecstatic, and Do It for at Least Ten Minutes a Day



Happiness is not something you get, but something you do.

— MARCELENE COX, WRITER

I remember one particular day when I got to work and couldn't muster the mental energy or motivation to get cracking on my ever-long to-do list. I didn't hate my job—in fact, some days it was actually pretty energizing—but it would be a stretch to say that I was passionate about it. But on this day it was much, much worse—I looked at my e-mail in-box and felt utterly unable to read or respond to any messages.

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I couldn't very well just leave, nor could I just sit there and do nothing, so I decided to spend a few minutes warming up to my day by doing something that I knew would make me happy: working up a few ideas for a book that someday I wanted to write. Books and anything remotely related to books has long been one of my obsessive passions, that special kind that always makes me feel invigorated and excited and ready to conquer the world. I took out my Book Ideas Journal (yes, I actually keep one of those) and spent the next few minutes—okay, maybe more than a few—dreaming up new book concepts. I was in heaven. And to my surprise, when I was interrupted with a phone call, I was much more willing to get back to my daily world of financial models and impatient clients.

Dare to find something that makes you utterly ecstatic and do it for at least ten minutes a day! No, it won't solve all of your problems, bring you eternal happiness, or lead to world peace. But it will definitely, absolutely, no doubt make your days have a more positive slant, inspire you to remember what makes you happy, and give you that necessary life-energy shot in the arm. Our lives are filled with so much "I should/I must/I have to" that sometimes we forget to spend time doing things we really enjoy. I dare you to remember what those things are and to find time to enjoy them.

And don't dare use the "I'm too busy!" excuse. Most of us lead busy lives, and you might think you can't squeeze ten minutes out of your day to spend doing what you want.

The Daring Female's Guide to Ecstatic Living 7

But those ten minutes are there somewhere; with some organization you will find them, and probably more than just ten. Send one less e-mail, spend less time on the phone, wake up ten minutes earlier, but do whatever you have to do to find the time to let yourself enjoy a small part of your day. If you keep a daily to-do list, write “My Ten Minutes” on it and think of it as you would any other required task or activity. A friend of mine is an aspiring writer who also has a full-time job and is working on her master’s degree. Needless to say, her life is crazy busy, but she often e-mails me a few poems or short stories that she manages to write during her ecstatic moments.

It doesn’t matter at all what you choose to do with your ecstatic moments, as long as it’s something you absolutely love and enjoy. Juggle, stretch into a yoga pose, write poetry, read a book by your favorite author, work on the birdhouse you’ve designed, plant your garden, make jewelry, go for a long walk or run or swim or bike ride—anything, as long as it makes you ecstatic! This is your ten minutes to spend doing what you love to do instead of what you should or must or really have to. Use these minutes well and one day you might find yourself spending much more than ten minutes a day doing something that makes you really happy. The idea to write this book you’re reading was born during my daily minutes spent with my Book Ideas Journal and countless hours later I can cross an item off my Life Wish List and call myself an author.

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DARING FEMALE IDEAS FOR ECSTATIC MOMENTS

- Read your favorite book.
- Paint—walls or paintings.
- Call your best friend.
- Go for a long walk.
- Stand on your head.
- Practice your piano/guitar/violin.
- Dance around your house.
- Make handmade cards.
- Go to a museum.
- Sing along to your favorite CD.
- Watch a part of your all-time favorite movie.
- Organize your life.
- Make funky jewelry.
- Cook up your favorite recipe.
- Work on your scrapbook.
- Play silly with your kids.
- Go for an exhilarating run.
- Work on your novel.
- Read the Sunday paper from cover to cover.
- Write a letter to a friend.
- Meditate.
- Take a bubble bath.
- Spend a moment in silence.
- Spend time with someone you love.
- Redecorate your house.
- Sip a perfect latte.

TAKE ON THE DARE

Write down a few things that make you ecstatic and dare to spend at least ten minutes each day doing one of them.
