

Thriving Work

*90 days of daily practice for transforming you and
your coaching, consulting or healing business*

A journey to your best self...



Ann Strong

"One part business coach, one part poetess, and one part priestess, Ann Strong has given us a transcendent new type of business book. *Thriving Work* serves as a guide for how to bring your divine human self fully to work."

~ Suzi Pomerantz, Author of *Seal the Deal*

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CHAPTER 2

Resistance

Your divinity, everything you desire, awaits you – just beyond your human comfort zone.

To bring your desires into reality, you will have to move through resistance and step out of your comfort zone. Okay, take a deep breath.

You can do it. Think about the price of not moving forward. Would you rather go beyond resistance and feel some discomfort, or live without those new clients, that passive revenue, your published book, that wonderful partner or more radiant health?

If you're willing to commit to moving through resistance in its many forms and to becoming comfortable with discomfort, you can have everything you desire.

The many faces of Resistance

As you're moving toward and moving into your thriving work, Resistance will pay you a visit. Or, more likely, many visits. Showing up in many brightly-colored, attention-getting costumes.

A few of Resistance's favorite outfits:

1. Overwhelm
2. Perfectionism
3. Self-doubt
4. Extreme busy-ness
5. 'Better' ideas
6. Money problems
7. Relationship drama
8. Delaying
9. Forgetting
10. Taking care of everyone else
11. Confusion
12. Habitual mind-changing
13. The 'spiritual bypass'

You'll know you've invited Resistance in for a visit when you hear yourself saying things like:

- "I do want to get to my work. I just can't right now because my son's sick."
- "I do want to get to my work. I'm just not ready yet."
- "I do want to call potential clients. I just can't right now because I'm too busy at my job."
- "I do want to hire an assistant to help me grow my business. I just can't right now because it will cost too much."

- “I do want to hire a business coach to help me grow my business. I just can’t right now because I have to pay off debt.”
- “I do want to get to my work. I just can’t right now because we’re going to move soon.”
- “I do want to get to my work. I’m just not confident enough yet.”

Resistance can get very creative, dressing up as ‘valid concerns:’
“But, my mother does need surgery...”

This list is nowhere near complete. It is meant to get you thinking. One of Resistance’s favorite ways to operate effectively involves changing forms abruptly and regularly, especially if an old favorite no longer works as well as it had in the past. Keep a written list of your habitual excuses and the new ones that pop up from time to time.

One of the trickiest forms of resistance: the “spiritual bypass”

One of the most insidious ways we keep ourselves from becoming the best of ourselves involves what one of my mentors, Stephen McGhee, affectionately calls the ‘spiritual bypass.’ I first ran into the spiritual bypass when I asked a coach from Boulder, Colorado if she was committed to growing her business. She replied, “I’ll see what Spirit has in store for me.”

At first, I felt confused. Listening to guidance, following Spirit, discerning the voice of the divine, the voice of God are all wonderful ways to know our divinity. So, why didn’t her response feel right in my body?

Ah, because it's Resistance, dressed up in its finest! It's an excuse, just like all the other forms of resistance.

I heard a variation of the spiritual bypass most recently from a cancer survivor. She told me that what she had learned during her cancer journey and from volunteering with hospice is that she is not in control. She is now giving the next phase of her life some space to see what happens.

Again, I felt some conflict in my body as I heard that. I am committed to creating sacred space in my own life on a daily basis. So, what didn't feel right to me? While I honor her understanding that we are not in control with so much of life, we still always have the precious opportunity to choose how we respond and how we move forward.

While I am not a cancer survivor and cannot even begin to imagine how it would change me if I were, I suspect that I would value the gift of life even more than I had previously after such an experience. I also sense that it would make it that much more precious to consciously choose the things I can control – what dream I'd like to move toward and what qualities of being I'd like to bring to the journey.

I have noticed with myself and my clients that committing to something – overcoming the fear of public speaking, moving to the mountains and/or growing a coaching business – and then becoming who we must become in order to speak in public, move to the mountains and/or grow the business, gives us a clear, strong sense of purpose and meaning.

For me personally, I've noticed it helps focus my excitement. One of my strong internal commitments right now involves telling the truth to the person in front of me – both about our glory and power as divine creators and also about our outdated human habits that keep us small. How great is it that I can keep discerning and

speaking that truth, even when I can't control so many things in my life?

The spiritual bypass is a highly effective way to resist our good because we tell ourselves that we'll wait to see what the Universe has in store for us or that it's God's will for us to remain small and still.

Don't get stuck out on the spiritual bypass.

We are the Universe. We are made in the likeness and image of God. We need not wait or wonder. We are the One we have been waiting for.

Daily practice: identifying and moving through resistance

Moving through resistance involves faithfully doing what is uncomfortable and taking care of what needs to be taken care of. Do whatever is uncomfortable and tend to your sick child, overcome an obstacle and pay off your debt. It's time to usher Resistance to the door. Show it the way out any time you hear yourself saying something like, "I just can't right now because..."

Start to become aware of your favorite forms of resistance. Write them down, in all their colorful variations, on the following page. We begin with simple awareness and calling Resistance by its name instead of giving it the pet name 'valid concerns.' Once you do this, you are well on your way to moving through the resistance.

If you are not moving through resistance on your own, ask for help. With blind spot assistance and insights from a trusted friend, colleague or coach, begin to put strategies in place to move through the resistance.

My Favorite Forms of Resistance

Daily practice: becoming comfortable with discomfort

One of the most effective ways to become comfortable with discomfort involves conscious practice. Keep a current, running list of things that stretch you out of your comfort zone and move you toward your best self at the same time. Then, regularly engage in those activities.

As the discomfort becomes comfortable or actually dissolves, then add new uncomfortable activities to the list, stretching yourself further.

Some of my stretches:

- Asking someone for help.
- Trying a new food.
- Pushing myself beyond where I've been in my yoga practice.
- Introducing myself to someone new.
- Dreaming bigger.
- Learning a new technical skill.

Of course, things that go beyond my comfort zone may come naturally for you. To begin, on your *Comfortable with Discomfort* pages, make yourself a list of 20 possible things to do that stretch you, make you stronger. Then, each day, pick something from your list, take a deep breath and begin to become friends with the Unknown – the place where all dreams begin!

Comfortable with Discomfort

20 things to do that stretch me, make me stronger...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Comfortable with Discomfort

20 things to do that stretch me, make me stronger...

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

16.

17.

18.

19.

20.

Releasing Fear and Doubt

*May I breathe into being fully present,
taking in this pure moment.*

*May I gently acknowledge my fears and doubts
and breathe through them.*

*May I acknowledge the many funny faces
of resistance
that try to keep me small
to keep me from courageously facing
and moving through
my fears and doubts.*

*May I continue to breathe deeply
to the center of my Self,
allowing the resistance to go play elsewhere
and allowing the fear and doubt
to naturally dissipate.*

*May I allow my own true radiance
to shine from, through and as my breath.*

*May I increasingly recognize and receive
the ideas and inspirations
that nudge me,
pressing to radiantly burst forth.*

*May I feel the flow of life
running through me.*

*May all beings breathe
through their fears and doubts
and laugh away their resistance
so they, too, may allow their own true brilliance
to shine more radiantly.*

All of Me, None of Me

Who I am is enough.

*I allow my self-conscious,
limiting ideas
about myself
to drop away.*

*I accept and embrace my
fragile humanity
and my infinite Divinity.*

I take myself lightly.

*With bemusement and love,
I acknowledge my
quirks, inconsistencies and attachments.*

*With delight and love,
I acknowledge my
powerful Presence.*

I am. I am not.

My First Knowing

*I've developed a bit
of a habit
of second guessing
myself.*

A habit that doesn't serve.

*So, I take a deep breath
and commit to
following
my first knowing;
releasing the need
to second guess.*

*I now take time
each day,
to allow
my first knowing
to stabilize into
my consciousness,
so that I may live the good life
that comes from my first knowing.*

*I continue to
trust and act upon
my first knowing,
so that I may live the good life
that comes from my first knowing!*

*No longer second guessing myself,
I follow my first knowing,
so that I may live the good life
that comes from my first knowing!*

Order *Thriving Work* today!

For you, your clients and your colleagues

Whether we are just starting our business or taking it to the next level, our human nature tends to cause us to doubt or second-guess ourselves. The most potent remedy is counter-intuitive. Instead of striving for "perfection," committing to imperfect vulnerability, expression and aliveness naturally evokes radiant clarity and confidence . . .

<http://www.annstrong.com/thriving-work-book>

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About the Author

Ann Strong has served as a business and life coach to hundreds of business owners and executives since 1997. She founded *Thriving Coaches* in 2005.

At age 8, she knew she would own her own business. And, she always has. When Ann was a kid, adults weren't always sure what to do with her inquisitiveness. Like the time she asked her grandma, "Have you ever wondered what your hair would look like if you didn't dye it for awhile?" The philosophy written on a plaque she made at age 15 for her other grandma became the foundation of her coaching work today: "We are what we make ourselves." As a junior in high school, her two favorite classes were world religions and psychology – more foundation for transformation.

In her late 20s, Ann studied to become a minister in the Unity church. Then she chose not to minister in a church because she came to understand that a church board of directors governing her work would not suit her entrepreneurial spirit. As an experiential learner, for decades she has enthusiastically hired her own therapists, spiritual counselors and coaches. She's an avid student of the *Enneagram* and the *StrengthsFinder*™ assessment. Her vocation and avocation involves studying and applying what brings out the best in human nature and each person in front of her.

Ann's own *StrengthsFinder*™ strengths clearly indicate that she is teaching, coaching and writing as she came here to do. As a Maximizer, she loves transforming strong you into superb you – more of the best of you, more of the time. With her Empathy, she sees the world through your eyes and your perspective. Through her Connectedness strength, she knows that we're all connected and that things happen for a reason. As an Activator, she makes things happen – turning thought into action. With her Individualization strength, she loves supporting people in their uniqueness and in living from their strengths. And, ever the Strategic, she cuts through the clutter to find the best way.

When she's not working, you'll find Ann practicing kundalini yoga, walking in City Park, soaking up the New Mexico desert, searching out a great new restaurant or enjoying an outdoor concert – preferably including Aaron Neville. She lives in Denver, Colorado two blocks from City Park, which she affectionately refers to as her big back yard.

Commit to Your Thriving Work...

- Commit to your Big Dream and partner with someone extraordinary to bring it into reality. Whether this involves hiring a coach, finding a dynamic business partner or seeking out a brilliant teacher or mentor, commit to partnering with someone who supports and invigorates you, gives you a fresh perspective, and, most importantly, holds you accountable to bringing your Big Dream into reality.
- Commit to partnering with your clients to bring their Big Dream into reality. Commit to moving through your own resistance to fully serve them, without stopping short at pleasing them. Commit to their thriving.
- Check back frequently for *Thriving Work* updates, surprises and gifts:
www.annstrong.com/thriving-work/
- Read the blog: **Strong You / Strong Biz**
www.annstrong.com/mentor-coaching-blog/
- Invite Ann to speak about Thriving Work at your next event. She travels four times a year to deliver keynotes or facilitate workshops.
- Check Ann's availability if you would like to hire her as your business coach. She works with only 10 one-on-one clients each year for one year at a time.

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