



Staying in the Thriver Zone

A Road Map to Manifest a Life of Power and Purpose

Susan M. Omilian JD

*Reclaiming the Lives of Women
Who Have Been Abused*



Butterfly Bliss Productions LLC

West Hartford, CT

Staying in the Thriver Zone: A Road Map to Manifest a Life of Power and Purpose

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
About the Author	ii
About the Speaker	iii
Note from the Author — The Journey Continues	1
How to Use This Book	2
Getting Started – A Road Map to Manifest a Life of Power and Purpose	3
Map Point A – Get Positive Energy.....	15
THE EXERCISE: Quiet the Inner Critic	
THE EXERCISE: Create Affirmations	
THE EXERCISE: What Makes Me Happy	
THE EXERCISE: Connect with Happy Person Inside	
Map Point B – Focus Your Desires.....	31
THE EXERCISE: What Would I Do If	
THE EXERCISE: Create Abundance	
Map Point C – Overcome Your Fears.....	41
THE EXERCISE: Challenge Limiting Beliefs	
THE EXERCISE: If I Had No Fear	
THE EXERCISE: Choose Guilt, Blame, or Appreciation	
THE EXERCISE: Forgive Yourself	
Map Point D – Find the Real YOU	55
THE EXERCISE: Choose What’s Important to You	
Manifest Your Desires	65
THE EXERCISE: Manifesting —A Fairy Tale	
Create A Life of Purpose.....	87
THE EXERCISE: A \$10 Million Answer	
THE EXERCISE: Vision a New Life	
Reclaim Your Power After Abuse and Loss	99
THE EXERCISE: Craft a Woman of Power Statement	
The Thriver Survival Kit.....	111
THE EXERCISE: Make a List of What Keeps You Thriving	
THE EXERCISE: Write a Poem or Prose	
Resources	121
Including Books, Movies, Websites to Educate and Inspire You	



*My heart is moved by all that I cannot save:
so much has been destroyed.*

*I have to cast my lot with those who,
age after age,
perversely with no extraordinary power,
reconstitute the world.*

— ADRIENNE RICH

NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR – THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

On October 18, 1999, Maggie, my brother's nineteen-year-old stepdaughter, was murdered on a college campus by her ex-boyfriend, who then killed himself.

Shock, guilt, and a cry for revenge welled up inside me, but what was I to do? I couldn't save Maggie. No one had seen the danger she was in after she ended the relationship, not even Maggie herself. He had never physically assaulted or threatened her, and she didn't know he had a gun. Although I had worked as an attorney and advocate for women for many years, I too had missed the warning signs in the relationship, my long-standing work to end violence against women became more personal and immediate. I was determined to turn Maggie's tragic death into an opportunity to help other women move on with their lives after abuse as Maggie could not.

In the nearly two decades since Maggie's death, I have worked with hundreds of women who have experienced domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse and helped them take the journey from victim to survivor to thriver. These women long to move beyond the abuse, violence, and trauma in their lives, but they don't know how to make that happen.

This is the work I was born to do, and now I do it in Maggie's memory.

How do I do it? First, I developed a seven-step guide that helps women see their journey and find the positive, thriver energy inside them again. Second, I have crafted a motivational model that moves their positive energy into focused desires so they can manifest their dreams and find their real, authentic selves. With these tools, women have done remarkable things! They have gone back to school, gotten new, better jobs, started singing again, bought their first homes, and most of all, many have found new healthy, loving relationships.

They have entered the Thriver Zone and learned how to stay there so they can regain their power and find purpose in the fabulous life that lies ahead of them. I am so proud of them!

I hope that this book, the second in *The Thriver Zone Series™* following *Entering the Thriver Zone: A Seven-Step Guide to Thriving After Abuse*, will provide you with all you need to find a life of peace, joy, and freedom as a thriver!

—Susan M. Omilian JD



Getting Started

A ROAD MAP TO MANIFEST A LIFE OF POWER AND PURPOSE

With deliberate intention, fueled by POSITIVE ENERGY

and EMOTION, you can have what you DESIRE.

PUSH through your FEARS and RESISTANCE

and find the REAL YOU in a Life of POWER and PURPOSE!

Are you a dreamer?

Do you often have wild, crazy dreams about how you want your life to be going forward? Do you long for a future with limitless possibilities for you and your family? Don't we all want that fairy-tale "happy ending" we were promised?

I know. I'm a dreamer, too. I have been one ever since I was a kid. And I'm a lover of fairy tales. I'd love to have a "happy ending" in my life!

Funny, have you ever noticed that sometimes one of your dreams will come true in the most unexpected way? And you are amazed. Wow! I'm so lucky, you think. Then at other times something you have wanted and waited for a long time doesn't get realized no matter how hard you try. So sometimes this dreaming the big dream works and sometimes it doesn't.

But how does it work? Is it really magic or is there a method to it? Could some process to make your dreams come true work for you? I have an answer on that. Not that I'm so smart, but I have observed in my own life and in how the Universe works around me that there is a natural process we human beings go through to manifest our deepest desires and wildest dreams. The components to that process sometimes all work together and voila! Other times we get stuck in one place or the other, and none of it works.

Staying in the Thriver Zone

Why doesn't it work sometimes? For those of us who have experienced abuse and violence in our lives, the trauma caused by those acts can cause us to lose all hope of any success in our lives and derail our dreams, no matter what the process. But I do believe – and I want to share with you in this book why I believe – that whatever we dream can be ours, no matter what our circumstances, past experiences, or current stage in life. Young or old, rich or poor, smart or not so smart, we can manifest what we desire, particularly if our values and strongest passions match our wildest dreams.

Let me give you an example from my own life as to how this can work.

IMPACT OF MAGGIE'S DEATH

In October 1999, my nineteen-year-old niece Maggie was killed on a college campus by her abusive and possessive ex-boyfriend who then killed himself. While I had worked on violence against women as an attorney and advocate for two decades prior, with Maggie's death I felt a more immediate and personal need to make a difference. If I couldn't change what happened to Maggie, I wanted to help other women who did survive abusive relationships to move on and have the best life ever. So, with positive energy and a strong passion for the work, I focused my desire on starting a program in 2001 that I called the My Avenging Angel Workshops™. The workshop name was based on the idea that "living well is the best revenge," and that's what I wanted for myself. The man who killed my niece destroyed her and her chance for a wondrously full and happy adult life, but he was not going to destroy me. I wanted to find a way to shift the paradigm and find opportunity for myself and others in this tremendous loss.

But what was I thinking? I had no experience conducting workshops for abused women, no funding, and certainly little idea if I would even be successful. To tell the truth, the first session of my first workshop wasn't so great, but I didn't give up. Somehow – maybe it is magical! – people showed up to help me and things evolved. My second workshop was more successful, and by the end of it, I saw the women who attended it transform their lives in significant ways. They filed for divorce and left abusive relationships, went back to school to follow their career dreams, and took on challenges like whitewater rafting just to get positive energy flowing in their lives again.

It was amazing! I never dreamed that I could make something like that happen. But I did! How? First, I focused on my desire to do a workshop to help women take the journey from victim to survivor to thriver. Then I fueled that desire with positive energy and a deep passion for the work I truly wanted to do. So I invited women who had survived abuse to come and take this journey to thriving with me. But it was also an invitation to myself to move beyond the pain and loss of Maggie's death and do more than just survive. I could thrive too!

VICTIM  **SURVIVOR**  **THRIVER**

With all this positive energy and the passion I have for this work, I pushed through any fears or limiting beliefs I had about myself and my skills to conduct these workshops. And when the workshops succeeded, I felt an overwhelming rush of pure joy and pleasure that I could do such meaningful work, that helped and healed others. In time the workshops became more and more successful and I could feel my “Real YOU” (a concept we’ll explore more later in this book) being fed by my work. Discovering my authentic self in this process was a big surprise. I didn’t realize that there was a strong, vibrant part of me that was untouched by all that had ever happened to me or my niece Maggie. Feeding that spiritual part of me was so rewarding that I kept doing my workshops, helping more and more women as my work expanded and flourished.

Soon I had a new focused desire to write a book about the amazing work I was doing. Yes, I had a lot of fear and anxiety about succeeding at that too. But once again I fueled the process with positive energy and a strong belief that I could, so I broke down that wall of resistance. When my first book – *Entering the Thriver Zone: A Seven Step Guide to Thriving After Abuse* – was published, I again felt the rush and exhilaration of the Real YOU inside me. That voice told me, *You did good. This is important. It can change the lives of so many women.* And I believed it. YES!

A ROAD MAP FOR YOU

Here I am now with this book, ready to expand the reach of my work once more and articulate a process for you, my readers, that I now call ***The Road Map for the Journey to the Real YOU!™***. As I have been on this amazing journey, I want to offer you the chance to experience it too. You may have already had an experience like mine. Maybe a focused desire of yours

Staying in the Thriver Zone

was realized by giving it a lot of positive energy and pushing through your fear to get it done. But you may not have realized the full power and potential of this process. Yes, it is amazing to manifest a desire that can transform your life, but it can also be overwhelming and scary. It takes a great deal of courage and strength to push through your fears and resistance. Some would rather give up than face fear, or worse, defeat in not being able to overcome the fear.

My gift to you in this book is to make you more aware of this process and use it more consciously and successfully in your life. I don't want to make it feel less magical for you, because there is magic in it! But I do want you to have access to this way of manifesting your desires and finding the Real YOU in your life that is truly transformational.

Why is it important to find the Real YOU?

- **We can find out who we are!** Manifesting our dreams and finding the Real YOU helps us identify what interests and passions excite and nourish us.
- **That knowledge is power!** It can heal our broken parts and reveal more of the part of us that is untouched by all that has ever happened to us.
- **That power can help us find the true purpose of our lives.** Why are we here? What can we accomplish? What will we leave behind? By exploring what feeds our Real YOU, we can consciously direct ourselves into a life of power and purpose despite all that has happened to us.
- **In finding a life of purpose, we move closer to living well as our best revenge!** Living a life that is fulfilling to us and of great value and service to others could be our "happy ending!"

FINDING YOUR WORK

Since the murder of my nineteen-year-old niece, I have indeed found the work I was destined to do in this lifetime – helping women who have been abused take the journey from victim to survivor to thriver! That journey has transformed my life as it has transformed the lives of many of the women I have worked with. We enter the Thriver Zone to find that we really are on that journey to reclaiming our lives. If we stay in the Thriver Zone, we can manifest our desires and find the Real YOU in a life of power and purpose. Then our work in this lifetime becomes our life and our life is our work.

Here's an example of how this process works:

Some women I have worked with started their journey to thriving by manifesting a desire such as going back to school and adding to their skills and abilities. With this additional schooling, the women have gotten new or better jobs – another manifestation. For some, these jobs involved teaching children or being a social worker – positions in which they could greatly influence girls and young women. In encouraging these young people to pursue more opportunities in their own lives and not get involved in an abusive relationship, the women manifested even more and began to create a life for themselves of true purpose in helping others. A few who felt comfortable identifying themselves as former victims of violence, shared with the young people their personal journey beyond abuse. In doing so, they became role models for these girls, young women, as well as boys and young men that we all can survive and thrive!

You can see in the above example how each new manifestation along the way keeps us in the Thriver Zone, as we work to avail ourselves of opportunities to define (or redefine) the purpose of our lives despite the violence, abuse, and trauma we have experienced. We can't change what has happened to us, but we can transform how we see these experiences and how they shape our lives. We take this journey to a life of power and purpose.

MANIFESTING YOUR DESIRES

If manifesting your desires is at the core of this journey to thriving and can lead you to finding a life of power and purpose, let's explore more what it means to "manifest." A dictionary definition of the word *manifest* is "to clearly reveal something to the mind, sight, understanding or other senses." Let's look at other, diverse views of it.

- *You are here to manifest your innate enlightenment.*
 - Morihei Ueshiba, a martial artist, founder of Japanese art of aikido
- *We were born to manifest the glory of God that is within us.*
 - Marianne Williamson, a spiritual leader in A Course in Miracles
- *Life is about, every single day, getting up to manifest your truth.*
 - Cory Booker, U.S. Senator from New Jersey

Staying in the Thriver Zone

For some women it will be a major accomplishment after leaving an abusive relationship or dealing with sexual assault to manifest any desire, even something as simple as getting out of bed, seeing friends, or keeping their job. But it could also be a wish to go back to school or find a new or better job that could take their lives to a new and better place. Then the test is pushing through their fears and accomplishing something they thought they could never do. The feeling of exhilaration for the Real YOU when someone accomplishes that kind of goal is really the reward for taking the journey beyond abuse. Is it worth it? Yes! That's because thriving is an amazing state of mind and being!

Once you enter the Thriver Zone, you'll need a road map to stay in the Thriver Zone so you can manifest your wildest desires and find the Real YOU inside! And the ultimate goal of manifesting is to discover a life of power and purpose – the life of a thriver!

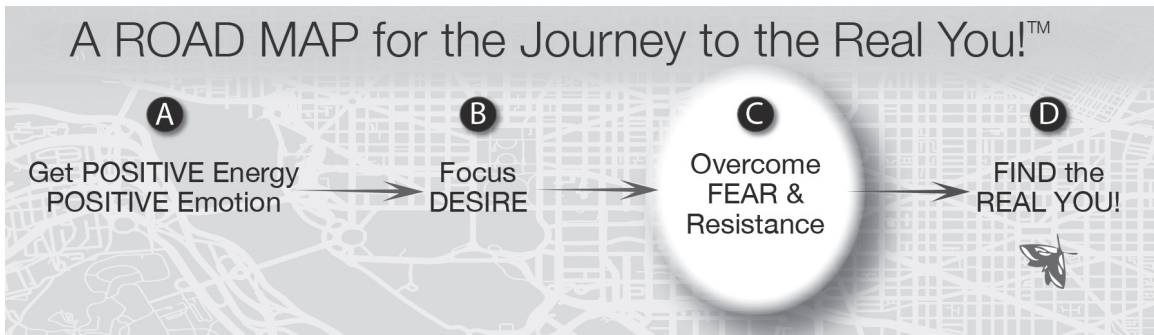
What is a thriver? Here's my working definition:

A thriver is a happy, self-confident and productive individual who believes she has a prosperous life ahead of her. She is primed to follow her dreams, go back to school, find a new job, start her own business, or write her story. She believes in herself and in her future so much that she will not return to an abusive relationship. She speaks knowledgeably and confidently about her experiences and is not stuck in her anger or need for revenge.

Living well is her best revenge!

With ***The Road Map for the Journey to the Real YOU!™*** set forth in this book, I invite you to take the journey to thriving and finding a life of power and purpose. But each of you will do this journey differently, and you may have many more obstacles to overcome than others. Just as I have heard that it takes a woman seven times to leave an abusive relationship, it may take some time and some healing before you can fully move beyond the abuse in your life.

What I have learned from my own experience and in working with women over the years is that the biggest barriers that keep us down are those that keep us from feeling positive about ourselves and our future lives. These obstacles put our fears right in front of us and dare us to get by, past, or through them to the other side.



That's another reason why I love the quote: *"Living well is the best revenge."* After all, isn't getting on with one's life the most exacting revenge against those who have beaten us down and told us we are nothing? But it is hard to face our stories! We will be judged about them. Can't you just hear the comments? *Why didn't you leave sooner? How could you be with such a man? What were you thinking?* We will also try to avoid the social stigma and shame of having been once abused or assaulted. Because of these kind of fears, I have purposefully not asked you in the exercises and activities in this book to disclose or relive anything about the abuse you have experienced in the past. But you can feel comfortable knowing that you are not alone in the circle; others have had similar struggles.

As a woman who has experienced abuse in the past, you may also face costly ongoing legal battles with your abusive ex-partner on such issues as property division, child custody, and child support. You may have substance abuse issues in your life as a result of the abuse, have little or no education, or no job or a low-paying job with little financial backing or support from your family or friends. Your culture or religion may also judge you about leaving a partner or marriage even if your partner is abusive to you. Finally, you may fear the possibility that you will return to an abusive relationship. Will you see the warning signs of abuse the next time around? Will a healthy, happy relationship ever come your way? These are real fearful thoughts!

But don't worry! You can overcome all these obstacles and learn more in this book about how to stay on course and thrive after abuse. First, as I described in my book *Entering the Thriver Zone: A Seven Step Guide to Thriving After Abuse*, you can be open to the possibility that there is a life beyond abuse – more than just surviving, but thriving. The steps I lay out in that book can get you on the path to thriving. But what I'll show you in this book is how to go

Staying in the Thriver Zone

deeper into that journey to thriving so that you can stay in the Thriver Zone and regain your power and find purpose in this life.

THE MOTIVATIONAL MODEL TO USE

The Road Map for the Journey to the Real YOU!™ is the motivational model that I have used successfully to keep my own life moving forward and find the work I was born to do. With this model, I have been able not merely to survive all the difficult things that have happened to me, including the violent and tragic death of Maggie, my niece, but I also have moved on to find a life of purpose helping others!

While I realize now that I have known this model all my life, it was only in trying to cope with Maggie's death that I became more aware of the natural process underlying it. Now I use it more consciously, and in doing so, I have uncovered my hidden talents, found the focus of my creative potential, and transformed my life in a positive, productive way. In the process, I have found the unique and innovative work that I do with women who have been abused, and, despite what happened to Maggie, I have been able to:

- ***discover opportunity in what I had considered as loss***
- ***find positive energy to push myself forward***
- ***dare to create the life I want, and,***
- ***overcome my fears to find the dynamic Real YOU inside me.***

After a quick introduction to the model in this chapter, the rest of this book will show you step-by-step – or Map Point-by-Map Point – how you can also use this Road Map to change and transform your life. I would love to see you transform and take such an amazing and exciting process. Wouldn't that be wonderful? Come with me, and we'll explore ***The Road Map for the Journey to the Real YOU!™***.

Does that sound exciting? It is! In fact, it is magical! I have helped hundreds of women use this Road Map on their journey, and they all have found it so amazing that when they get there, they always ask me, "Why didn't anyone tell us about this before? Why are we only finding out about this now?" I don't know the answer to those "why" questions, but I do know that there is a way to get there, so let's just let the magic happen. Don't feel shortchanged if you don't feel like you have ever been there in your life. Now is your chance, and you are in for a real thrill.

What is great about this ***The Road Map for the Journey to the Real YOU!™*** is that whenever I feel like I've lost my way, I can get out my map and see where I am stuck. Maybe I have to slow down a little or avoid a detour and then get back on the road to success. Over time, I have gone from only contacting my Real YOU for a few minutes each day to spending whole days, weeks, and even months in her wondrous company. In fact, what I have found is that connecting with our authentic selves is not that hard. It's just that when something really good happens to us, we think we are just lucky or that the stars in the heavens have lined up for once. If we see someone else getting what she desires, we think she is just special or has some "in" with the powers that be. But the process of making our dreams come true is how the Universe works, and the sooner we learn how to use it more consciously, the sooner we will be living in the Real YOU – our Happy Ending! – every single moment of our lives.

Enough talking about it. Let's do it!

Here is your point-by-point guide to staying in the Thriver Zone –***The Road Map for the Journey to the Real YOU!™***

Enjoy the ride! Let's manifest some of your dreams here . . . YES!

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***When we bring what is within out  
into the world, miracles happen.***

– HENRY DAVID THOREAU



