

## HOW TO BE HEARD WHEN EVERYONE ELSE IS SCREAMING

Some people are naturally shy, but desire to shake their silence. There are others who don't need to scream to be heard nor do they need to stand out to be seen. They are comfortable functioning in the leading supportive role. Their silence is power. When they decide to speak their voice, although gentle, is strong, commanding, and impactful. Yet, there are still others who attempt to be heard, but because everyone else is screaming they step back, quietly look around, question the significance of their existence and remain nameless, faceless, voiceless—invisible.

As the fourth of five children there were times when I felt invisible. Although my young parents tried to be equally attentive, I became the people pleaser. I suppressed my natural leadership quest and fell in line under the success shadow of my father or my three older siblings. Why wouldn't I? It seemed everyone including my teachers, counselors, principals, and friends referred to me as “Bill's daughter. You know, the great mason” or “Joe's little sister.” Joe is my brother who is four years older than me. He was popular, athletic, and smart.

Until age 13, like a butterfly in its third stage of development called the pupa or resting stage, I stood obediently in line just where it seemed everyone expected to find me. Although resting, I wanted to crack the shell of public perception and create my own identity. In search of my uniqueness, I opened my first book on personal and professional development: Zig Ziglar's *See You at the Top*. At that point, the shell began to crack.

Within two years, I had my own name, face, and voice. Today, I am known as S. Renee, the motivational speaker and author. This spotlight position, alongside other family members as they stand in their own individuality, has evolved over time. Using the following three steps, as I have and still do, will help you to begin the process to finding and using your voice:

**Perform self-assessments.** Understanding who you are and why you are here is the best gift that you can give yourself. We have various beliefs about ourselves—many of which have no legitimacy—about ourselves, life, and people. These beliefs or falsehoods were given to us by our parents and those we trusted. Too often they groomed us for their dreams or over protected us from their missteps.

Their intent wasn't malicious, but it was wrong. The only reason why the principles that you learned appear to be truth is because the moment your innocent mind processed the information, it began looking for the evidence to show up in life. And voilà—it did! What you look for, you find. After you find it, you validate it. It then becomes your truth. By spending time alone you can re-evaluate, adjust and change your life.

**Develop your personal brand.** Image is how others see you. Personal brand is the value of your image. Everything you say and do should flow from your life's mission, which is the problem you are here to solve. When you consistently present yourself as a problem

solver, your personal and professional value continuously rises. Now, ask yourself the following: Do I create problems? Do I solve problems? What problem do I solve? Who is looking for the solution that I have to offer?

**Invest in your development.** How do you spend your time? How do you spend your money? We are a materialistic society that focuses on images and perceptions. For this reason we are shocked when someone in a “prestige position” falls from “glory.” External power isn’t internal peace. Unfortunately, very few people are taught in their youth the importance of authentic self-empowerment. Investing in resources that will aid you in your discovery of personal power will free you from the controlling demands of other people’s perceptions.

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