



Q

The
Wow

Factor

Is You

Frances Cole Jones

The Wow Factor is you.

It's the knowledge that you've done the research, considered the risks, paid attention to every detail.

It's the calm that comes from no-regret living.

It's the confidence that says "I have something to offer."

Unfortunately, however, we rarely access our wow factor. We talk ourselves out of contributing with the one of the 3 mantras of self defeat:

- "I'm sure it's been done before."
- "It's a great idea, but it's just not me."
- And, everyone's favorite, "It'll never happen."

(There's a reason why you don't see these on bumper stickers.)

But as Lucius Annaeus Seneca tells us "It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare; it is because we do not dare that they are difficult."

How, then, can you find the courage to dare? How can you manifest your Wow Factor?

A critical component of courage is recognizing that it is *not* fearlessness. Instead, it is the quality that allows you to do what needs to be done in the face of fear—both yours and other people's.

Are there specific things you can do to help make courage an easier choice? There are. In fact, one of the most seemingly mundane things you can do is to start keeping checklists. That's right, checklists: those work-a-day items that inevitably get left on the front of the refrigerator when you leave for the supermarket. But before you stop reading, thinking this is too simple to be an effective tool for you, consider that both surgeons and pilots must complete rigorous checklists before they begin operations. Pilots have a list of over twenty five items that must be checked off, in order, every time they leave the ground, despite the fact that most of them know the list by heart, and December 2007's New Yorker contained an extraordinary article about a one-man crusade over the past seven years to make Intensive Care Units safer in our country. The work of this man, Peter Pronovost, has already, in the words of the article, "saved more lives than that of any laboratory scientist of the last decade." How did he do it? By instituting checklists. If you're still feeling skeptical, consider the saying in the Marine Corps (another world in which if you forget to do something, somebody dies), that "Checklists are written in blood."

Another element I would ask you to recognize is that what you're nervous about isn't failing—it's succeeding. You've had an amazing idea, been spurred into action by a cause, or felt an urge to throw yourself headlong into a commitment, and suddenly your creativity, your idealism or your passion are on fire—and you're a bit taken aback by how strong they are.

“It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare; it is because we do not dare that they are difficult.” — Lucius Annaeus Seneca

Because most of us aren't firing on all cylinders at all times, when our Wow Factor kicks in it can feel a bit like we're working with rocket fuel, and mucking around with rocket fuel has the potential to end very well *or* very badly. Not knowing which it will be can be nerve-racking. So, rather than feel nervous, (which is something our culture is intent on removing from our lives—not recognizing its power) we begin to doubt ourselves. We tell ourselves someone else has more to offer—something better.

But, in any success, the Wow Factor is the people involved. It's you. No one else has your unique mix of skills, talents, and passions.

Is there a way to change this mindset?

For me it's easier to work from the outside in. So rather than focusing on changing a mental habit, I try changing a physical habit and see what it does to my mind. This is because even small changes begin to retrain your brain. This phenomenon, called "Neuroplasticity" is a burgeoning field in brain research, and thanks to the latest brain scanning technology, it is increasingly clear that adults can—and do—sharpen their brains, heal learning problems, and more.

What you're nervous about isn't failing— it's succeeding.

Should you be skeptical, here's an immediate, tangible example of simple brain retraining: Stop reading this and interlace your fingers. Now, unlace them and re-lace with your other index finger on top.

If you are like most people this switch will feel awfully peculiar. The reason for this is that we generally interlace our fingers with the index finger of our dominant hand on top—it's our body's habit.

And, like so many habits, we accept it without question. But, as has been pointed out to me, your habits are your destiny—would you accept your destiny without lifting a finger to change it?

I didn't think so.

Here's what I'd have you recognize:

- New experiences can make you uncomfortable.
- Your choices also have the potential to make others uncomfortable.
- BUT that this doesn't necessarily need to add up to
- Making the anxiety go away by not contributing

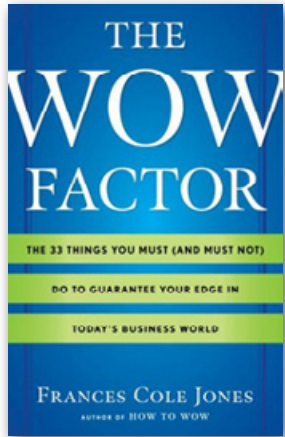
What to do?

With regard to others' anxiety about your choices, I would ask you to remember what Jalalud'din Rumi said: "What other people think about you is none of your business."

Would you accept your destiny without lifting a finger to change it?

As for you, I suggest that rather than labeling emotions such as nervousness or anxiety "bad," you see them as reminders that you are alive. (I aspire to hear more people say, "Wow, I am *nervous*—so watch out world, I am ALIVE TODAY.")

So go ahead—I dare you... get nervous. Show us your Wow Factor. 📌



BUY THE BOOK

Get more details or buy a copy of Frances Cole Jones's [The Wow Factor](#).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Prior to founding Cole Media Management, Frances worked at St. Martins Press, Viking Penguin, Doubleday, and Broadway Books as an editor of commercial nonfiction. The experience of helping authors translate their ideas into books that retained their unique voice is what makes her valuable to her clients. “There’s no point in my writing a perfectly crafted sound bite that you have to strain to remember,” Frances says. “You have to sound like you—you on your best day.” Beside authoring *How to Wow* and *The Wow Factor*, Frances has also written for *Centurion* and *Executive Travel*.

SEND THIS

[Pass along a copy](#) of this manifesto to others.

SUBSCRIBE

[Sign up for our free e-newsletter](#) to learn about our latest manifestos as soon as they are available.

BORN ON DATE

This document was created on January 13, 2010 and is based on the best information available at that time. Check [here](#) for updates.

ABOUT CHANGETHIS

[ChangeThis](#) is a vehicle, not a publisher. We make it easy for big ideas to spread. While the authors we work with are responsible for their own work, they don't necessarily agree with everything available in ChangeThis format. But you knew that already.

ChangeThis is supported by the love and tender care of 800-CEO-READ. Visit us at [800-CEO-READ](#) or at our daily [blog](#).

COPYRIGHT INFO

The copyright of this work belongs to the author, who is solely responsible for the content.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs License. To view a copy of this license, visit [Creative Commons](#) or send a letter to Creative Commons, 559 Nathan Abbott Way, Stanford, California 94305, USA.

Cover photo from [morgueFile](#).

WHAT YOU CAN DO

You are given the unlimited right to print this manifesto and to distribute it electronically (via email, your website, or any other means). You can print out pages and put them in your favorite coffee shop's windows or your doctor's waiting room. You can transcribe the author's words onto the sidewalk, or you can hand out copies to everyone you meet. You may not alter this manifesto in any way, though, and you may not charge for it.