

# RE-AWAKEN THE GIRL AND BRING THE REAL 'YOU' INTO YOUR CAREER

Imagine if the 'you' in your workplace and the 'you' in your life outside those doors got together and became soul mates. Imagine what a favour you'd be doing your organisation if the 'outside' you showed up a lot more. How vivid and inspiring the world of work would be if you dared to be a bit more you! Women can be particularly hard of hearing when it comes to permission to bring the real you into your career.

By Diana Theodores



## IT'S TIME TO RE-AWAKEN THE GIRL WITHIN! HERE ARE SIX WAYS TO REAWAKEN YOUR INNER GIRL:

### 1. REMEMBER WITH A PHOTOGRAPH

Reflect on the girlhood passions that still show up in you today. Keep your favourite photo of you as a girl visible at all times! Write down as many memories as you can starting with the words, "I remember..." Write fast and fill the page. Reflect on what qualities and attributes are still true of you today. Enjoy the discoveries and reconnect with that girl. She is your greatest ally. Bring her along with you!

### 2. THE 'I'M NOT CREATIVE' STORY IS A MYTH: IF YOU'RE ALIVE YOU'RE CREATIVE

In the everyday performance of our jobs and responsibilities, we forget parts of ourselves for periods of time, sometimes for whole chapters of our lives. Often, these parts are what we might call our

creative selves, and they go dormant. The piano not touched for a decade, the favourite poems not read since school, the voice that once sang now speaking only workplace jargon behind a PowerPoint deck, the sketchbook abandoned for spreadsheets. Where is my doodler-dreamer, my secret songwriter, my fashion illustrator? So long lost. We tell ourselves: 'At some point there will be time for me, but not right now.' So, make creativity dates with yourself: step inside that art gallery you pass every day, register for that workshop, join that choir, take out your sketchpad. Start today. Your acknowledgement of your creativity can boost your professional story.

### 3. STOKE THE FIRE

Notice how your voice, energy, body language, and belief comes alive when you talk about one of your passions. Whether it's cooking or travel, reading poetry, dancing or sketching, gardening or

mountain climbing, quilting or singing in a choir – whatever connects you to your passion and your creativity – notice how animated you are and put that quality into your communication, and presentations at work! Bring the voice that reads poetry so thoughtfully or the voice that sings with such heart and enthusiasm in the choir into those stories about the numbers in your slide deck!

#### 4. PLAY!

When we play, we open our bodies, hearts, minds, and senses. “I haven’t played since I was eight!”, I hear you say. Clearly, it’s time to return to that state of wonder. Children at play, in their immersion and flow, in their innocent confidence, are profound and magnificent role models. We need to tap into that child within.

Embrace those wild and whacky ‘ice breakers’ you’ve experienced in training programmes and break through the resistance of professional masks and job titles. Playing is a fast track to bringing forth our humanity. In the act of playing together, we warm ourselves up to ourselves, to one another and we warm up the environment itself in which we can make something meaningful happen. Encourage off-sites with your teams as often as possible for creative thinking time. Invite everyone to create fun physical and imagination energisers, and to share stories.

#### 5. EMPOWER YOUR INNER CAST OF CHARACTERS

Look at a photo album of your life – literal or visualised. Reflect on the

different chapters of ‘You’ – what you looked like, sounded like, experienced – from ingénue to leader. Give your different personas, traits and energy qualities an airing! Exercise them as required.

**Diana Theodores:**  
Leadership expert  
and author



Remember: Being authentically you does not mean being the same all the time. It means having the capacity to tap into all your behaviour styles for your best performance. When you assert different energies, you are playing you: the Rottweiler, the Nurturer, the Motivator, the Challenger, the Seducer, the Authoritarian, the

Creative and so on – all you. You possess a whole palette of expressive possibilities. Play them as you need them!

#### 6. MOVE!

Moving opens us up and brings a more animated self forward; something more truthful is revealed. It releases us physically, vocally, emotionally and energetically. This means literally moving in the space, getting physically warmed up, stretching, gesturing, lifting our posture up, opening our mouths, voices, eyes, faces, and hearts. Your open, uplifted body shifts your feeling state and injects you with positive energy. You are in the act of warming up to yourself. It can take you instantly from a tentative, apologetic, defensive or anxious state to a confident, energised and optimistic state.

So get moving. Here’s to your next dance class, run or (just for a minute) going wild to some music. Close the door and let it rip!



**Diana Theodores is an international women’s leadership expert. Her new book *Performing As You: How to have authentic impact in every role you play* is out now, priced £12.99.**