



# Stellar

## Coaching & Consulting

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### **L.A.U.N.C.H**

*Learning to be Authentic, Uninhibited,  
Naturally Confident & Happy*

*December 2007*

Welcome to the final edition for 2007 of L.A.U.N.C.H. , the newsletter specifically designed to have you take your life to new heights!

The holiday season is once again upon us, and now the countdown begins. "The countdown to what" you ask? I guess that depends on who you are. At the very least, it's the countdown to the new year. And it could be the countdown to family get-togethers, holiday-shopping-deadlines, and for some, the countdown to the (seemingly) inevitable post-holiday-bout-of-illness. Bottom-line, the month of December often seems fraught with chaos and the feeling of things snowballing out of control.

In this edition of L.A.U.N.C.H., I want to invite you to stop for a moment and pay attention. No, I mean pay MORE attention. It's about slowing down, and this month's feature article will show you how and why.

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Do you have a hectic-holiday story to share? A niggling question that you want to ask? If so, send me an email at [info@stellarcc.com](mailto:info@stellarcc.com). Your story and/or question may be featured in a future edition of this publication, and either way, I'll be sure to respond to you personally as well.

As 2007 draws to a close -- and given that our next newsletter won't be out until January, let me take this moment to wish you a peaceful, meaningful, truly special holiday experience!

Yours in possibility,

*Gail*

### **Monthly Quotables:**

The only real blind person at Christmastime, is he who has not Christmas in his heart. ~Helen Keller

### **Experience vs. Expense: What's Your Holiday Focus?**

Well, it's official. The holidays are literally just around the corner. Whether your family tradition focuses on Christmas, Hanukkah, Diwali, Kwanzaa or something else altogether, I'm willing to bet that your brain is just a-whirling with to-do lists, shopping lists and must-attend lists galore. Whether you're carrying your list in your head, on your blackberry, or in an old-fashioned notebook, I want to ask you to take your focus off the lists for just a moment -- or two. Why? Because when you're paying that much attention to all the lists, you're missing out on the implied experiences contained in the lists. And this lack of experience is, I believe, what leads to post-holiday burnout. Let me explain.

You see, each and every list that you're carrying with you, and indeed each and every item on your list, carries with it an implied expense. Whether the expense is monetary in nature, or less tangible -- an expenditure of energy or time for example -- is irrelevant. The fact that you are expending something, and not taking the time to experience anything is costing you far more than you realize. It's costing you joy, peace, love, harmony, and to some degree your sanity. That's right, the constant give, give, give that happens at this time of year is wearing you out!

Now, I can just hear the cries of protest. "But this whole season is about giving!", you say. Well, I disagree. This season isn't about giving -- it's about the EXPERIENCE of giving. Actually,



. Gail Barker, B.A., C.P.C.C.

Meet Gail Barker! Gail is the principal and founder of **Stellar Coaching & Consulting**, and finds fulfillment and joy in supporting others as they create the lives of their dreams. Her unique insights and experiences have allowed groups to work successfully on issues related to improving team function and productivity, and individuals to work towards achieving their goals without compromising a sense of balance. Gail is also co-author of "The Control Freak's Guide to Living Lightly: Manifesting a Life of Total Trust", which is available online at [www.controlfreakseries.com](http://www.controlfreakseries.com), or at select, independent bookstores.

To learn more about Gail, to ask her a question, or to arrange for a complimentary coaching consultation, visit [www.stellarcc.com](http://www.stellarcc.com).

**My Mission:**  
**To support 10 000 women in shifting their lives out of neutral and into high gear, by 2012! It's about losing the sense of overwhelm and finding peace, ditching the monotony and embracing possibility!**

the season is about EXPERIENCE. Period. As human beings -- particularly those of us living in the western hemisphere -- our focus tends to stay in the realm of "giving" as a commodity: "look at how much money I spent", "look at how much time I gave up", "look at all the effort I put in". Because our focus is on the quantitative aspect of the giving, we forget to experience the qualitative aspect. What would happen if you came at the holidays from a place of experience rather than expense?

Here's what I know for sure, having experienced (that's right) and witnessed such shifts myself. When you determine what you want your over-riding experience of the holidays to be -- whether it's joy, peace, love or whatever -- and then approach the holidays from that perspective, then you come out on the other side of the holidays feeling better. Actually, you come out on the other side of the holidays FEELING in general. You've created an experience for yourself that you can savour, rather than a to-do/visit/make list to overwhelm you.

Here's the Stellar bottom-line: when you find the holidays overwhelming, shift your focus from expense to experience. The results will leave you feeling an abundance of good things, which is really what the holidays are about. Happy Holidays!

## *Let's Lock It In!*

This section will provide you with some concrete ways to get into the experience of the holidays.

**QUESTIONS to PONDER:** These questions are of the "mull-it-over" variety, and are especially helpful for those cerebral-types out there. You may or may not have an answer spring right to the fore of your mind, so feel free to chew on them for a while, and see what shows up.

1. What do you want your holiday to be about? (e.g., "meaning")
2. Come December 31st, 2007 what word do you want to be able to use as you look back on your holiday experience?
3. What's the essence of the holidays, for you?

**ACTIVITY:** Use the following ideas to support you in shifting your approach to the holidays to one of **experience** instead of expense.

1. Let go of one holiday tradition that you do "just because we always have".
2. Create an experience that captures the essence of your answer to question #1 from above. (e.g., "meaning" = homemade gifts)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

*Back by Popular Demand!*

For our global audience:

### *Happy Holidays: Creating a Season of True Celebration -- The Teleclass*

Join us for this fun-filled hour of exploration, designed to have you clarify the holiday you really want, and develop a plan to experience just that! All you need is access to a phone, and 60 minutes to engage in a teleclass designed to have this be your most enjoyable holiday experience to date!

When: Dec. 5, 2007  
1 - 2 pm EST  
(10 - 11 a.m. PST)

Where: Bridge Line details provided upon registration

Cost: FREE -- other than your regular long-distance charges

Call: 519-245-8928 to reserve your space, or email [info@stellarccc.com](mailto:info@stellarccc.com)

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*Coaching Gift Certificates*

3. Fill in the blank: I will remember 2007 as the year we \_\_\_\_\_ for the holidays.

With all of the above suggestions, pay attention to what shifts -- what becomes possible when you approach the holidays from an experiential focus?

**CHALLENGE YOURSELF:** Knowing that "expense" -- whether of the monetary nature or something less tangible -- is at the root of all post-holiday blahs, make a list of 10 ways in which you can expend less this holiday season (yup, it's another list). Of the 10 things, choose and implement at least 5 of your strategies. share your experiences and learnings with me by emailing [info@stellarcc.com](mailto:info@stellarcc.com). I'd love to hear about your experience!

## Hey, You Asked!

*Dear Gail;*

*With the holidays approaching, I can already feel my anxiety level rising. I have such a different sense of how the holidays should look, compared to my family. I really want to focus on fun and family-time; but for my parents it's all about the gifts. And not just any gifts -- they must be expensive. How do I honour what's really important to me, without having to deal with a whole whack of criticism?*

*Eliza, Hamilton, ON*

Ah, what a common predicament Eliza! I know there are numerous people who undergo the same struggle year after year. The challenge is very real and absolutely increases anxiety levels, as you've indicated. The solution is simultaneously easy and challenging. It's time to let go of your need for everyone to think the same way.

Part of your challenge -- although you haven't said it outright -- is that you're holding the belief that the two perspectives can't co-exist. It's like you can either honour fun and family-time OR do the expensive-gift thing. Essentially, you're saying that it has to be one way or the other. But what if it could be both? Not that you have to DO both, but what if both values can be present at the holiday celebrations? What would be possible then?

I assert that, if you can get comfortable with the idea that each person is going to approach the holidays from a slightly different perspective, and then stand confidently in your desire to create fun and family-time, your anxiety level will decrease. Because then, your parents can do the expensive-gift thing and you can be okay with it without feeling the need to reciprocate. And you can find ways to create some awesome fun and family-time, and they don't have to feel like you're judging them. Truly, Eliza, both approaches can work. It's about knowing what's really important

-- perfect for that professional woman who's talking about making 2008 a "better" year!

Available in the dollar amount of your choice. Call 519-245-8928 or email [info@stellarcc.com](mailto:info@stellarcc.com) today to place your order

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for the bookworm wanting a light-hearted read with a life-altering twist!

Available at [www.controlfreakseries.com](http://www.controlfreakseries.com) or at select independent bookstores.

### ***Want to purchase a signed copy?***

Join me and my coauthor, Gail Nielsen, during these upcoming booksigning events!

**December 7, 2007**

6-9 pm  
Chapters South, London,  
ON

**December 15th, 2007**

2-4 pm  
The Village Bookshop,  
Bayfield, ON

to you, and then finding the nuggets that support that, even when viewpoints appear to be different.

Stay true to you, Eliza, and have fun creating some great holiday memories!

### ***Quick Links***

**Want more information? Check out the following sites:**

For information about Stellar Coaching & Consulting Services  
[www.stellarcc.com](http://www.stellarcc.com)

For information about other Canadian coaches:  
[www.coachescanada.com](http://www.coachescanada.com)

For general information about the coaching profession:  
[www.coachfederation.org](http://www.coachfederation.org)

To check out the buzz about "The Control Freak's Guide to Living Lightly"  
[www.controlfreakseries.com](http://www.controlfreakseries.com)