



## THE POWER OF ACCEPTANCE

### The Power of Acceptance: Celebrating My Talents

By Catherine Dowling

**I spent many years running community based workshops for women who had almost no concept of their own worth.** Struggling with generational unemployment and raising children in under-resourced neighborhoods, they had little time for self-reflection and few models for recognizing and celebrating their own talents.

To bring awareness to the issue of self-worth, we used to do an exercise that listed all the tasks they carried out during an average day. Most of the women were shocked at the number and range of skills they used each day and even more shocked when we added up the hourly rate those skills would command in the workforce.

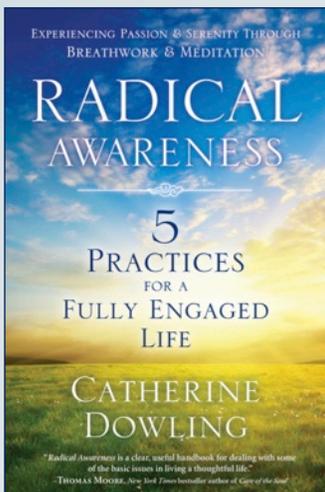
Sometimes it's difficult to recognize our own talents, much less celebrate them. If we do something every day and do it well, we ourselves often take it for granted. If we have a firm belief in place that we "should" be good at our job, then doing our job well becomes just something we do. It doesn't stand out as a talent to be recognized and sometimes celebrated.

Part of the difficulty is that we often have a narrow definition of talent. Talent is equated with stellar, publicly recognized performance. The software engineer who develops a brilliant new app, the actress who enthalls an audience with apparent ease, the writer who is lucky enough to get their book published, the CEO who leads a company through rapid growth, these are seen as talented people. And they're celebrated and rewarded. The data entry clerk, the amateur actress in a local drama group, the writer who slogs away without publication, the worker who carries out the tasks set by the CEO, these people may be regarded as valuable, but not usually as talented.

I've never met someone who didn't have a talent for something. But I've met many who don't recognize their own talents. If what we do is not publicly acknowledged as a talent, it's easy to dismiss it. The women in the self-development workshops were talented cooks, nurses, book keepers and teachers with a range of plumbing and carpentry skills thrown in. But because those skills were not legitimized with a diploma or certificate, the women barely noticed their own considerable talents and accomplishments.

Home based talent is even more easily overlooked than workforce or artistic talent. When a child comes through a crisis, we celebrate. But how often do we pat ourselves on the back for effectively parenting the child through that crisis? How often do we celebrate the ability to repair a leaking faucet, bake a delicious cake, listen to and counsel a friend in trouble? These too are talents. They are the talents that make the world function day after day and as worthy of celebration as any public lauded accomplishment.

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"There is no coming to consciousness without pain. People will do anything, no matter how absurd, in order to avoid facing their own Soul. One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious." ~ C.G. Jung