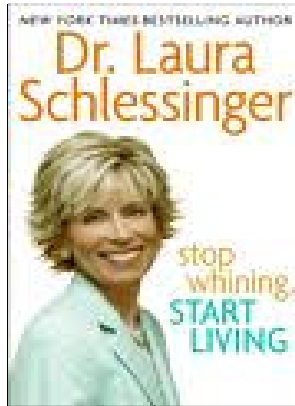


Stop Whining, Start Living



Author: Dr. Laura Schlessinger
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■ The Big Idea

Living life is about action: courageous, benevolent, worthy, wise, and productive action. Start living with some help from Dr. Laura Schlessinger...

She agrees that there are things worth whining about! A certain amount of whining allows for some venting of reasonable pain, disappointment, fear, frustration, or frank rage. However, staying stuck in whining mode can become a life-long problem. This is where Dr. Laura steps in with *Stop Whining, Start Living* to help folks conquer the temptation to retreat from living life to the fullest.

While it is healthy to vent occasionally, endless rumination on the negative only keeps you paralyzed in misery, reinforces hopelessness, and demoralizes those around you who feel helpless to bring any happiness into your life.

Instead, *Stop Whining, Start Living* encourages whiners to reject negative thoughts, emotions, and attitudes; shift perspective; open up to gratitude and goodness; and embrace obligations to loved ones and the world in general

Why You Need This Book

This book gives readers stuck in their suffering the jump start they need to break out of reactive mode and get proactive, moving in the direction of a joyful, meaningful, happy, fulfilling, and purposeful future.

PERSPECTIVE IS EVERYTHING

Look at every situation as an opportunity to add something positive to your life.

Close your eyes and picture the person in your life who is causing you annoyance. First picture all those things the person does that irritate you no end! Really work on that – get yourself rifled up!

Then pluck the person out of the picture of your world and see what would change, what you would lose and miss. If you had to and could choose, which picture would you want to keep?

Real life requires a sense of humor and a margin of forgiveness. The sense of humor helps you accept the things you cannot change by transforming them into smiles, and forgiveness helps you let go of the bitterness that gets in the way of loving life. Some quirks, weaknesses, and dumb habits are just not worth getting worked up over. Everybody's got 'em, including you!

It comes down to this: do you really think you'll be happy only when everything and everyone around you is and does things exactly the way you wish? Then, my friends, you'll never be happy; and neither will anybody be happy with you!

Sometimes the simplest change in perspective has to do with how you see yourself. If you see yourself as "crippled," then, of course, you'll "limp." If you see yourself as "healthy and strong," then you'll strut your stuff.

TALK! TALK? TALK! TALK?

Find the power in taking action instead of complaining.

Interestingly, there are always "fun and uplifting" things to talk about. What is the point of having blessings if you're going to bury them deep in order to build an altar to suffering and unhappiness? What status and ultimate satisfaction can there be in portraying yourself as oppressed, pathetically sad, and completely miserable?

While that portrayal might get you some immediate sympathy and solicitous behavior, ultimately you will lose people's interest and respect. Think about it: all the people you whine to have problems too, and they're putting those problems and their own pain aside to be caretaking of you. If you never "move on" with their loving support, they feel like frustrated failures and disconnect from you as there is no reciprocity of caretaking.

There are generally five things you can say to a person who needs to cope:

1. There is no cure for the reality and magnitude of what has happened to them.
2. Coping will happen in phases: shock, anger, denial, depression, and then, hopefully, the ability to put thoughts and feelings in a perspective that lets them make the best out of what is left.

3. It would be good to turn to those whom they respect who have “been there – done that.” If this doesn’t mean friends and relatives, then support systems of established helping groups are available.

4. Don’t push away those blessings that still remain – they will give hope, solace, warmth, meaning, and strength.

5. Never underestimate the power of hugs over words.

Have you ever been at a party, listening to the person in front of you, when suddenly you hear something interesting behind you, and you change your focus without turning your head? Sure you have. See? You can consciously decide what voices outside and inside your head to focus on.

Make the choice toward peace and joy.

JUST SAY “NO” TO HURT FEELINGS

Feelings can be sorted out and chosen based upon the selection of what you choose to focus on – so focus on the positive.

There is no life without disappointment and loss – things just don’t always go as planned or hoped for, or even needed. If life is like a salad, you could be always yanking out the olives, onions, and nuts. You do not have to rant about them existing – you just do what you need to do to make the salad a pleasure.

Focus on an olive – and you may scrunch up your face all the time. Focus on the romaine lettuce and Parmesan cheese, and you smile all the way to your main dish. You get to choose.

Somehow telling people to “count their blessings” tends to get them angry, as though that phrase, though trite by now, had no merit or wisdom. What makes it so difficult for you to accept what is light, when the darkness is so oppressive?

One would think that you’d enthusiastically jump toward the light! The answer is simple, really – you don’t want there to be darkness; you want to conquer, punish, or eliminate the darkness. Generally, none of that is possible.

Searching for the light is a better way. Switch from cursing the darkness to celebrating the light. Not only do the military, police, firemen, and such need to know that the person watching their back is strong enough to face all emotional obstacles with guts and tenacity; everyone you have a relationship with will test you at some point to make sure he or she can count on you.

If the person in your life is simply abusive, destructive, or dangerous, it’s time for you to find the door. Most of the time, though, you’re experiencing the growing pains of relationships and group dynamics. Don’t whine, don’t bleed. Face it all with ever-growing self-confidence and strength that you can get only from experience.

ALWAYS SO SA-A-A-A-D

Whining is not a bad thing. Salt in soup is not a bad thing unless you overdo it. A certain amount of whining acknowledges the truth of the attacks on your well-being and very life. Whining lets you get out some negative energy, like frustration, in a non-cataclysmic manner.

Whining basically presses the pause button and gives you time to think things through before you come up with a plan of action. Lastly, whining is an invitation for loving, caring friends and relatives to comfort you while you lick some wounds.

Whining is a bad thing only when you overdo it, marinate in it, and make it the only dinner course. The key is owning your own attitudes, decisions, reactions, behaviors, choices and emotional investment in the negative. Check yourself along the way each and every day.

Challenge your reactions; redirect your energies. Take control. Become the master, not the slave of situations and your weaker, less constructive emotions. Make lists, celebrate your successes, and learn from your slipups.

THIS RELATIONSHIP STINKS

Your marriage license is not a license to whine; instead it's an invitation to love and to be loved.

The whining mode creates a state of mind that seems to dig you deeper into your sadness hole. The more you contemplate, relive, and curse the hurt, the more miserable you grow to feel, and the more you become immune to acknowledging the good in your life.

Here are three essential points of the Proper Care and Feeding of Marriage:

1. Treat your spouse as if you loved him or her with your last breath – no matter how contrary to that you might feel at any one moment.
2. Think hard every day about how you can make your spouse's life worth living.
3. Be the kind of person you would want to love, hug, come home to, and sacrifice for.

Instead, married folks these days seem to lean toward not seeing themselves first as a “married couple” – but seeing themselves as “married individuals” who can always find things to be ticked off about with their counterpart.

Sometimes people even wait until after the wedding to start complaining about things that occurred while they were dating but never discussed, or even more astonishing, they start developing hurt feelings about things the other experienced before they met!

It's as though the marriage license was a license to gripe and whine instead of an invitation to love and be loved. Trust me, these days this behavior is just about epidemic. And when this continues... marriages end even if the legal divorce is postponed until children are up and out.

THE EARTH IS NOT THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE – AND YOU AND I AREN'T EITHER!

Don't drown in your own ego or pain, or discount the needs and feelings of others. We are ultimately dependent upon and impacting others in ways we don't even realize.

It is easy to drown in your own ego or pain and discount the needs and feelings of others because of your own pain. Have you seen the television commercial from an insurance company that shows a woman at a corner grabbing the arm of a stranger as he almost steps into the street when a car is coming? Another watches that act of thoughtfulness and helps someone else while being observed by yet another stranger.

This goes on until we get back to the original woman being impacted by viewing someone else in a good deed. This highlights one more important concept: we are ultimately dependent upon and impacting others in ways we don't even realize.

Think about it; you let somebody cut ahead of you in traffic, they are surprised and grateful, that reduces their stress and tweaks their positive energies so that when they reach home they give their kids and spouse a big hug with a smile. If you hadn't let them in with a kind wave, they might grouse all day and kick the dog before slamming through front door.

So while there is a natural reaction to be consumers with what is in your head, don't underestimate your value to others as well as the impact of the consequences of your actions and choices.

START LIVING

If you don't like your life, stop whining and change it! Do whatever it takes to make change happen, no matter how difficult.

When you gravitate toward negativity, it reinforces the negativity. When you pull yourself – albeit kicking and screaming on the inside – toward the more difficult concept of living life, it brings you toward a more hopeful and productive state of mind and being. So-called friends inhabiting your same murky pond are never going to challenge that strong, healthy part of you into swimming ashore; they wouldn't want to be alone, nor would they want to challenge themselves.

Therefore, get ready for their undermining of your progress. That's why it is a far, far better thing you'd do to find new friends... even if it means you are alone for some time. If you can't be along with yourself, who do you imagine would volunteer for that job?

It is soooooo easy to blame your situation, life experience, coworkers, parents, pimples, moon spots, spouses, or bad luck for what is, in truth, your own lack of effort, courage, patience, commitment, or plain common sense. The obviously good part of blaming is that it gets you off the hook from being responsible – and

without having responsibility, you don't have to make any changes in yourself or make apologies and redress with anyone else.

Whining is a form of despair. In the words of Rabbi Menachem Schneerson: "Despair is a cheap excuse for avoiding one's purpose in life. And a sense of purpose is the best way to avoid despair." In a nutshell, when you spend your time whining, justified or not, you lose time living. Don't make that trade-off. Make the story of your life an inspiration to a generation.

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