

PERSONAL GROWTH FOR WOMEN

balance

Spring 2007

**SHERRY
LANSING**

**OSCAR!
OSCAR!**

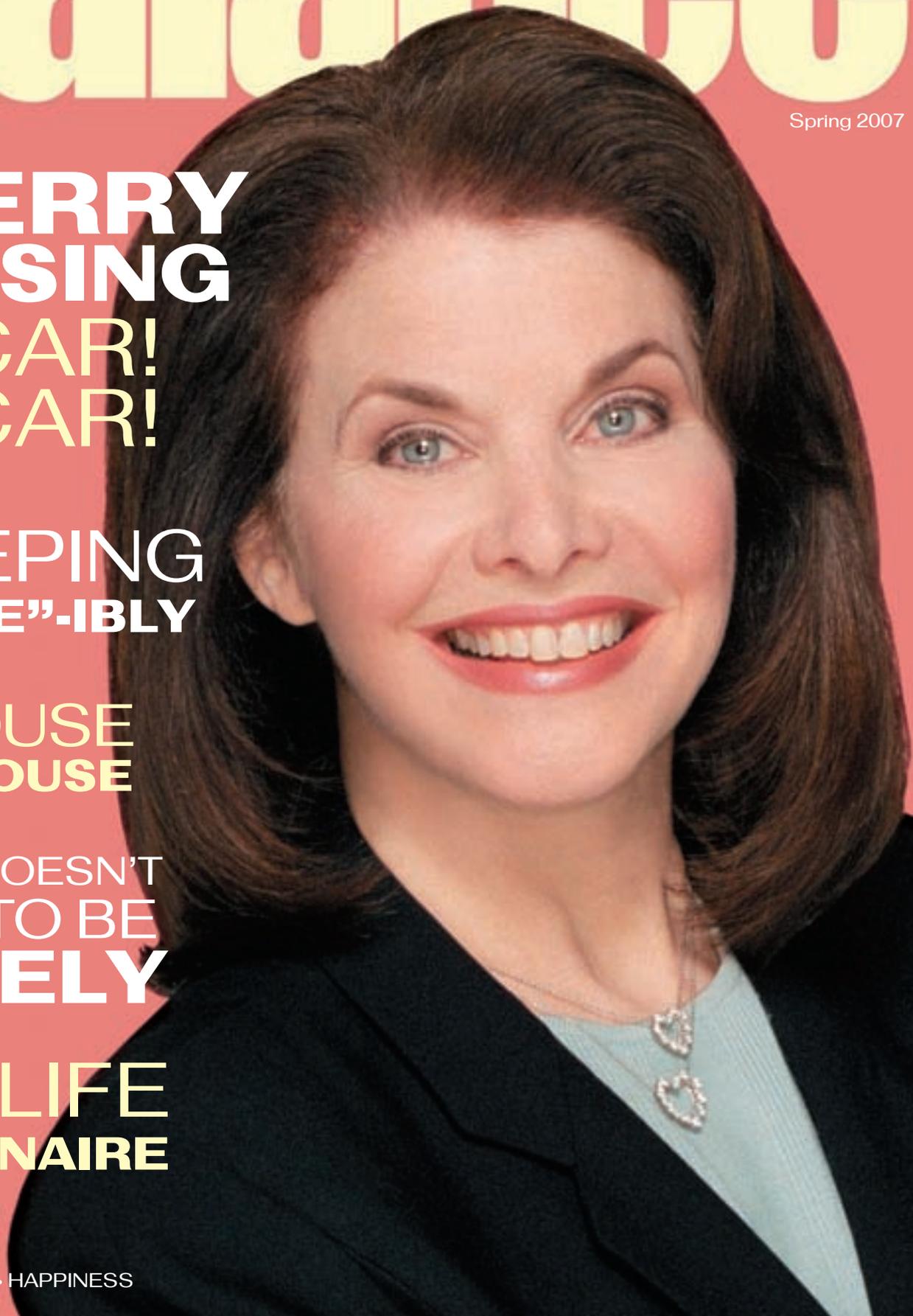
**SLEEPING
"SENSE"-IBLY**

**A SPOUSE
IS A SPOUSE**

**ALONE DOESN'T
HAVE TO BE
LONELY**

**MID-LIFE
MILLIONAIRE**

HEALTH • WEALTH • HAPPINESS



Those with whom we assemble, we soon resemble!

By Guy Finley



This simple old saying
hides a deep Truth that
can enlighten and
empower every aspect
of our lives: Who we
are—our very
essence—is continually
being transformed by
the company we keep.

choosing the company you keep

Stated differently, when we keep the company of what is light and bright, our lives get lighter and brighter. And when we keep the company of what is dark and discouraging, our lives can't help but be dragged downward.

This idea might sound a little simplistic at first, but its power soon becomes evident when we put it to use in the quest to realize our highest aspirations. The key lies in understanding that this principle is active on multiple levels at once. For instance, when referring to "the company we keep," we, of course, mean the people we spend time with every day—family, friends, co-workers, etc. However, on a deeper and more important level, "company" can also refer to the thoughts and feelings moving within us at any given moment. Have you ever been home alone in a fine mood, enjoying a meal perhaps, only to find yourself bored or depressed an hour later? That's a perfect example of the effect of hanging out with the wrong interior friends. When we are unconscious of the operation of our minds, any indigent thought or feeling that passes through us has the power to strike up a conversation and drag us into its dark circle of influence.

But just as it's possible for us to keep bad interior company that pulls us down, so is it possible to keep positive inner company that works to raise us up in any moment we choose to remember it. This not only means that we can choose not to get dragged down when we are alone, but it also means that we can choose not to get dragged down when we find ourselves in the presence of negative people as well.

How encouraging! When life places us in a situation where a run-in with someone is inevitable—perhaps at work, with a family member, in a store, etc.—we can choose to keep the company of good and true interior friends who can help keep us from falling into negative states. And therein lies the key: when we remember that keeping the company of negative interior friends is a choice, instead of an obligation, we are free to keep the company of compassion instead of anger, generosity instead of greed and patience instead of anxiety.

Building on this idea, let's look at four common types of people that can be identified by the four prevailing dark states that inhabit them. By learning to recognize and understand the interior workings of these four types of "toxic people," we gain important insight into what is dark and limiting inside of us. In this way, we begin the process of liberation from everything inside of us that stands in the way of knowing the peace, happiness, success and love that we long for.

- 1 **Muckrakers:** These negative spirits live to drag up old painful events and then revel in the anger, resentment, or bitterness that such unhappy memories hold. Stay away from any spirit, in others or in yourself, that wants you to dive into some suffering over what happened in any past moment.
- 2 **Mud Slingers:** These malicious spirits pull themselves up by pulling others down. They love to gossip, criticize, judge and denigrate anyone who ever had the misfortune of spending time with them. The only loyalty these denizens have is to their own pain, which they feed by involving everyone they can in their mudslinging.
- 3 **Swamp Dwellers:** There is a group of mired spirits that thrives on low vibrations, and that requires a human instrument to play out their endless dark dissonance. Easily recognizable, these misfortunate forces serve up dreadful mental pictures of past and future events for the sake of the unnatural reactions they produce. Ignore these corrupted spirits and they must take their evil speculations elsewhere.
- 4 **Life Haters:** These dark spirits perpetuate their hold on the human soul by resisting the beautiful gifts of life. They trick us into com-

miserating with their complaining, cruelty and irritation because without our unconscious consent, these chronically conflicted spirits can't spread their poison.

Just as harmful viruses require a human host to exist and thrive, so do negative states require the unconscious consent of human beings to carry out their dark mission. For what power does a negative thought have other than the power to convince a person to do its bidding? The answer is none!

When we begin to consciously withdraw our consent to associate with toxic people, and the toxic thoughts and feelings inside of us, we leave them with no place to thrive. Our real inner work is to sweep clean the places in ourselves where such creatures reside, which in turn brightens our life and the lives of everyone around us.

Begin today, this very moment, to withdraw any permission you have unknowingly granted these dark spirits to be in your life. Do not judge yourself, or those around you in whom these misdirected forces are active, but instead come awake and refuse to spend one more moment of your life lending your precious life force to their dark purposes.

This powerful, positive action will change your life. As you begin to refuse to consort with what is dark, you'll find that you begin to attract what is light, bright and cheerful. Your relationships will deepen, your professional life will take on new vigor and freshness, and the whole of your days will begin to resemble the radiant Life that you have deliberately chosen as your conscious companion. 

Guy Finley is the best-selling author of *Let Go and Live in the Now* (Red Wheel/Weiser/Conari) and 30 other works on self-transformation and higher success. He can be reached online at www.guyfinley.org.