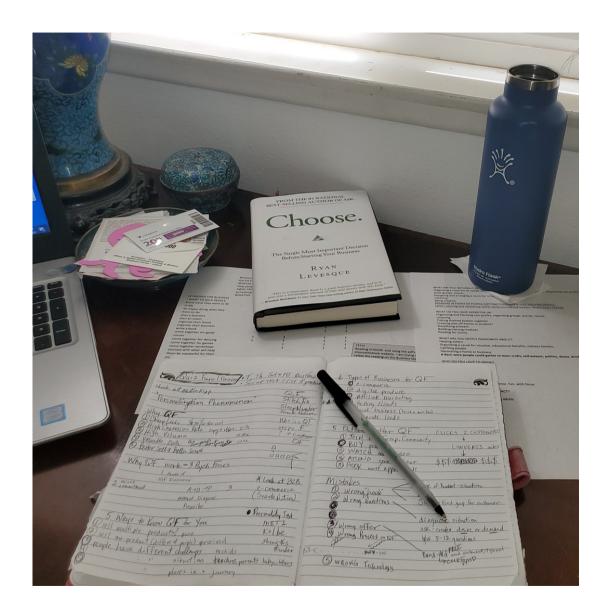
Anecdotes for POSITIVE LIVING

by The Evolving Mother



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Must have specific actionable plans to transform good intentions into reality.

> --Tom Rath, How Full Is Your Bucket

Introduction

As a small town girl, a traveling military spouse, and mother of two, all while being a community advocate, I dubbed myself the evolving mother. I had planned to go to college then get married and have kids. Once they were grown and my husband and I retired, we would travel the world. The best laid plans. Life keeps happening as we evolve. Are we choosing to be who we were created to be or are we allowing society to dictate who we are. It is challenging to know who you are much less be true to who you are. I have created a company to help you dig, evolve, and live! Evolve with me, the best is yet to be. -- The Evolving Mother

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DIG

Our personal life needs tilling from time to time for our roots to thrive. Dig into your personal garden of life.

*Learn which seeds you want in your garden *Test the soil to know which nutrients are needed. *Discover the satisfaction of sowing your own destiny.

This ensures they will grow well.

Now...dig in.



Oh What A Tangled Web We Weave

'When first we practice to deceive'. Are you talking web-sites or spider webs? Actually I along with Walter Scott am talking about life-webs. Even though websites and spider webs can be tangled and deceiving too. My life web is tangled, but one aspect of my life can be controlled. That would be my curly hair, although my hair dresser would roll her eyes, as I complain about its unruliness when I'm in her chair. She winds up doing the same cut and style every time as it is just easier and safer that way. As for me, when I'm in charge of the crazy curly hair, it is typically in a ponytail or braid. If you run into me around town, you may think I am just laid back honing that easy pull back look. But as a matter of fact, look out! I am usually on a mission. When my hair is under control, my attitude is under control, otherwise, would be a tangled messy web.

While I don't know exactly why I need my hair in a pony-tail when I am really focused, I do know I like my hair long. Therefore, I have a juxtaposition. So I learned how to braid my hair to offer nay-sayers that think I should don a different 'do' on occasion.

I can remember the exact time, place, and who taught me to braid my hair. What does that tell you about me? That some events in your, ok MY, life are important!

If spiders had hair, I bet they would have beautiful braids since they can weave beautifully intricate webs. The webs only become tangled when we mess with them, right? Weaving on...if I could only weave my lifewebs so beautifully and effortlessly. It is best for me to use the simple three braided strand that is tightly woven together. And just because I prefer that, I cannot even keep it from being disheveled for long. This is indicative of my life.

I wonder if the webs that are not intricately woven are ones that find the spider in a predicament. While I never, truly never, thought I would compare myself to a spider...when the web fits. I'm not sure spiders can manage their days better than we can. I do know we can start our days knowing the kind of web we want to weave. And like spiders, we cannot always choose when someone is going to come along and decide to clean house. The best we can do each day is begin weaving the best design for us and be on the look-out for Raid. There are days when my three-stranded braid doesn't stay together well increasing the changes of my intricately woven day having a few tangles. I just hope that the person rearranging my web understands what that sternsideways-stare means. They should move on while I keep calm and weave on.



Fullfillment

A friend once said to me, 'Have you ever allowed yourself to be happy?' She was subtly letting me know it is ok to be happy. Her words were simple yet profound. What I realized is that my expectations are really complicated. I intend to start living positively daily. Now for the hard part. Where to begin...

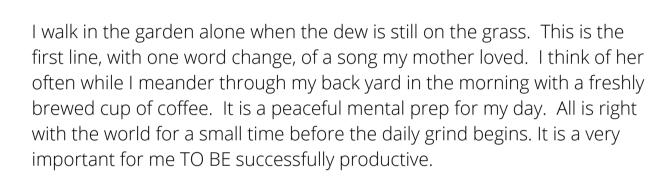
I started with Simon Sinek's Start With Why and Find Your Why books to help me understand the difference between being happy and being fulfilled. Basically, happiness, while wonderful, is temporary. Fulfillment is lasting. Simon writes, 'The difference between happiness and fulfillment is the difference between liking something and loving something.' We may not be happy in our jobs every day. However, we can find fulfillment when we choose work that feels part of something greater than ourselves.

My energetic personality was clamoring to make a difference in the world when I was young.

Little did I realize being on student council and a class officer, would pave the way to being a community advocate. A name that identified me.And for over 30 years, I advocated for military families and families in local schools because it resonated with who I was and what I was good at. I found happiness obtaining resources to help people. My fulfillment comes from knowing I am contributing to a higher cause that will make a big impact.

Happiness is WHAT we do. Fulfillment is WHY we do it. My life has been blessed raising children, supporting my husband's career, and moving frequently. Now my children are grown, my husband is retired, and I am eager but nervous to see how my talents can continue to help others. Growing, or as I like to say these days-evolving, can be challenging, but can also produce results that make the growth fulfilling. I am digging into life once again with my list in hand!

To Be Or Not To Be



I am not alone in my garden or in my thinking. There is a trick to this productivity plan, key word trick. While in my garden, I am also not alone as our family tortoise is around, somewhere, along with many birds. More recently two beautiful ones have made a home with us and I check on their productivity, or the lack there of, every morning. You guessed it. We have two chickens that are NOT laying eggs. (talk about expectations) So much for my quiet lovely mornings in my backyard. Truth is, this change in my routine has shown me the importance of our expectations regarding productivity. More specifically, how being in a routine for the sake of happiness is what is important to our productivity. I want to just get up and get to work right away. I don't sit still for long though and I find it hard to do only one thing at a time. It's so inefficient not to do so. I can't help myself but to pull weeds while I am in the backyard. And is it really work or is it merely the transition to the beginning of my day, stretching my muscles as I bend to touch the ground. Then exhaling as I toss the weed into the chicken coop.

Heading back into the house to the daily grind of coffee, not just the calendar; my mood can shift a bit depending on what's on my calendar. The next decision is to have more coffee or not to have more coffee. (bitmoji with coffee mug) I have already organized my day the night before actually. It is part of my bedtime routine. Stormy weather may lie ahead for my calendar no matter how hard I try to manipulate it. The weather doesn't bother my mood as much as not getting my day organized to improve productivity. There's that word again, to be or not to be productive.

The constant in my life is knowing I need routine in order to be productive. The work lies in the decision to be happy instead of not to be happy. The hard part is knowing the trick to happiness. Focusing on what really needs to be achieved and knowing our expectations is the secret to the trick. Our minds as well as our calendars are challenged enough normally...and these days are not normal days. Develop a calendar of expectations to be happy and you will have a routine of success at being productive. I wish you happiness now.

When I Grow Up



Perhaps you have said the common phrase, When grow up I am going to... I am still saying it and I am in my fifties! Yeeks! When did that happen, right? I'm not laughing out loud but I am chuckling because I am generally good humored. And THAT is just one secret to life if you want to be happy. This writing is not primarily about what you are going to do when you grow up, it is about being happy and valuing what you are doing at every age.

At what age are you considered a grown up anyway. I remember telling my son when he was a toddler how he needed to be a big boy, but then I would turn around and want him to stay little and innocent. No, this writing is not about consistent messaging. Or is it?

When my children were teenagers, it was really challenging to be consistent with my expectations especially if you have more than one kid. Then you have more than one reality to keep track of. Which age level am I working with right now!? We know brains are not fully developed until around 23 years of age, and there is value in the growth process. My daughter taught me a noteworthy lesson when she was a senior in high school. She didn't make the volleyball team that year after being an influential part of the team for three years. It shocked everyone but the head coach dismissed her. She went on to be an assistant coach because her teammates needed her as a team builder and the coach eventually did as well. (Interestingly, the only game the team won that year was when my daughter coached against the hardest team in the league.)

I have been an advocate for over thirty years, learning and implementing alternative aspects to solving issues. Yet, here I am at 52 still wondering what am I going to be when I grow up. With my children all grown up, I am focusing on what I have done and know that I am capable of doing more. The 'more' just may have to look different for me in the future. And so it took a pandemic to help me see me focus. No, this writing is not about life altering experiences making changes in our lives. This writing is about making sure you are doing what you value and makes you happy.

When you don't even like what you are doing, you need to change what you are doing. I did just that today. A friend helped me see the shift I made because I had not realized I had made it. Sometimes we don't see our progress because we are too hard on ourselves or have unattainable expectations in the time we give ourselves. This is why I have been delaying the next chapter in life. When my friend said she is still trying to figure out what to do when she gets old, I realized I have a similar mindset that she has. This encouraged me as she is twenty years my senior! Life is truly what you make it, at whatever stage of life you are at. We evolve! The message here is to focus more on doing what I value and being happy, and do it consistently.

EVOLVE

Digging into our personal life helps us to grow. Evolve into who you were created to be.

*Learn the amount of water needed to thrive. *Test the growth of maturity. *Discover the fulfillment in your garden.

This ensures they will grow well.

Now...evolve with me.



Choices

'Choices...so many choices'. I think of the musical my daughter was in as a teenager. Why would these lyrics stick in my mind so long after so many years? Most likely because the event, as well as the song, are indicative for life. We don't always have choices to choose from. Of course, some choices are easier than others. I will take a piece of chocolate over a vegetable any day. However, if I was offered a carrot cake, the decision gets harder. But life's decisions are not all about chocolate and cake!

When I was young there were many times my parents made choices for me. As an adult, my personal choice was still influenced from the mindset of my parents. We were raised on Disney and Lawrence Welk. With a little bit of Hee Haw thrown in. Interestingly I live close to Disneyland and the land of tiny bubbles now.

As an adult, I control my mind better than when I was younger. I was brought back to reality quickly after visiting Disneyland recently. Almost humorously, the Welk Resort is a more familiar feeling as the area we live in is full of retirees.

As much as my heart has a fondness for some of the comforts in Texas where I grew up, my family is better suited in California. And I am quite the entertainment at football games here. The area we live in looks similar to the area I grew up, in with olive trees that mimic mesquite trees and rolling hills like the Hill Country in Texas. The lake nearby is smaller than back home but it suffices my water urge I didn't realize I had. Our neck of the woods in California is very much as reported, almost paradise, for the United States anyway. Most importantly, I am happy here as I feel more like who I am meant to be.

The choices I have made over the years were not always easy, especially the one not to return to my native State, but I look at them all as growth spurts. Some hurt more than others. Some I wish I could do over. Some I can still smile and enjoy the memory. The most important realization is to learn and evolve from them rather than allow them to stunt your growth. Give yourself space to grow whether it is on 5 acres or a studio apartment downtown. You deserve to be all you were meant to be.



Evolving

I didn't realize I liked to journal... until I did it consistently inconsistent for 3 years. Yes. I wasn't 'religious' enough to do it daily. I did find a daily reading that helped me get through my mother's death. From time to time, I would write a note alongside the text because I was overwhelmed and just wanted to see if journaling would help me see patterns, good or bad. As luck would have it, or maybe it was just time, I began to see my perspective on matters and how I faced them. Enlightening but also frightening. After three years, it dawned on me, I can be hardheaded, but I was growing. Frankly, I don't like that word 'growing' because my body has grown in the middle and I am not expecting a wee lit'I joy. The word I choose to use is evolve. I am evolving into menopause. Ugh! Ironically, I nabbed an email the summer before my mother died. It was called theevolvingmother@gmail.com.

Although, I have evolved into a great mom and community advocate, it

took losing my job and a pandemic to get me to realize I didn't value what I had accomplished. I said I am hardheaded, and I guess we can add stubborn to the description.

However, these traits have also helped me persevere in times of trouble. It was challenging being a mother of two, traveling military spouse, and community advocate. Many of you know my passion is strengthening families and communities. For this next season though, I will be taking a chance on me. Now I am singing the song by ABBA with that title. And though I have accomplished many things these last seven years, my biggest revelation was journaling in my devotional by Sarah Jacobs. Her inspiration helped me get through some of the most challenging growth spurts; my mother passing away and my children graduating from high school and growing up. What's more interesting to me is how many people gave me the same book over these years. Inspiration or Insinuation.

Sara has written two words that have helped me focus on evolving and appreciating my accomplishments so I am not so hard-headed. These words are so common we often take them lightly and forget, when written in tandem, can help us profoundly--present moment. It is absolutely hard to be happy all day every day but you can choose to be happy in the moment at present. Wishing you happiness now.



What to Expect When We Are Expecting

You may have heard of the book with this title for when you were expecting a baby. It is a good read. I dog-eared a few places, highlighted few places, and a couple pages are worn out. There is a whole brand now that takes you beyond the pregnancy. Except the one about what to expect once the kids are all grown up or at least at school. Wait! You mean raising kids is a job.

I didn't look at being a 'mom' in the same way as I did a typical 8 to 5 position. Of course not, you say, it is more like a 12 hour a day job and on sick days, it can be 24 hours. What this proves is we all have different perspectives. Parenting is a full time job actually, a career that never ends. Yet where are the retirement benefits? Oh yea, grandchildren. Right now, I am expecting to get a paid job outside of my mom-position and it has been a struggle.

Yea. Sure. There is a pandemic right now but not everything can be blamed on it. So rather than complain and be more frustrated, therefore delayed in action, I am forging on with what I can do. Rather than complain and be more frustrated, therefore delayed in action, I am forging on with what I can do.

Remember the message 'Can Do Spirit'. Yea. I read my blog again and happen to be wearing the t-shirt! So that is my inspiration to Keep Calm and Evolve On. I am picking up the pen and writing this message as it is one more for the books, or the blog. There. I made progress today and accomplished something I wasn't expecting to do.

Currently, I am expecting to get results from a marketing training as business is performed in a new atmosphere now. The trainer, Ryan Levesque, has given me a new saying, "Do the one thing you can do and not fail". This keeps you in a forward motion. Some steps the foot is in the air for a while before it touches the ground, as you are a bit apprehensive about your action. But hey...think of the calories you burned in the process. I burn even more calories at times because I go around in circles. Thank goodness for coaches and trainers as they are the dance partner to hold on to while I learn these new steps.

When you find yourself in a quandary and are expecting outcomes in your life, put on your favorite motivational song and dance. Remind yourself 'what determines the successful are the expectations they have for their lives'. When you get the chance, I hope you dance. If you need a dance partner, email me, I know a great coach. It will also help me accomplish one of my expectations of a paycheck.

Somethings Gotta Give



As I prepare to start a new job that will become full time, I am anxious about my home falling apart. Not in a structural sense but certainly the internal flow. The laundry getting done and preparing healthy meals. My coworkers will appreciate me eating breakfast because I can be crabby when I haven't eaten. You can tell the crabby people on a Zoom call! During this pandemic, working from home, I have more time with no commute. It isn't the time that makes me anxious though. My brain never checks out of one job before checking in to another.

My daughter and I talk almost daily and discuss life scenarios. Even though we talk often, she's happy I'm not a counselor because I analyze and philosophize almost everything. OK. EVERYTHING. The conversation my daughter and I chat about frequently is work life balance. Is that a thing or just a saying? There are many sayings that are just sayings until they fit. Ha! I'm snickering. One relevant for my family is 'Something's Gotta Give' which is a movie title, but not my family's situation, of course. (wink)

The hardest part about work life balance is the choice of what to 'give'. I look at this two ways. The first is choosing your priorities and the other is 'giving'

them away. So the challenge begins. My two priorities are laundry and meals. I am giving away the meals. My main reason is due to a full-time job interview I had, but not for the reason you may expect. I mean, I am going back to work and my brain doesn't like to shut off. The planning, prepping, and cooking is not enjoyable when I am stressed out, but the reason is the interview was with a non-profit for unsheltered neighbors. They have no idea when they will have their next meal much less have to think about prepping it. Their prep work has more stress involved than mine.

My brain can check out about the meals now. The choice to give up daily home cooking didn't have to be easy. I chose for it to be easy. I contend that we make our life harder than it has to be sometimes because we don't want to make difficult choices. The problem comes when we don't own the decisions we should make. I would have been irritated every night if I had to make all the meals. I am choosing not to be irritated, therefore cooking less, as I traverse this next chapter of my life. When I doubt, I ask myself why I chose to make meal time less stressful and then I don't feel so bad.

Simon Sinek in his book "Start with Why" helped me understand the importance of life choices and how better to define work life balance. For when you know why you are doing something, you have your focus to hold on to. And remember what makes you successful are the expectations you have for yourself. Thank you J. D. Vance for writing your book the "Hillbilly Elegy". Write to me about your choices, expectations, and accomplishments. Don't leave out the last, without them you will lose hope.

LIVE

Evolving strengthens our fortitude to thrive. Live the life you were meant to have.

*Learn which plants bring you gratification and fullfillment.
*Test and determine the best location of each plants.
*Discover and appreciate the design of your garden.

This ensures living your best life.

The best is yet to be!



How Does Your Garden Grow

When my first child was born, I bought a beautiful book of nursery rhymes because I read to her daily. Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary/How Does Your Garden Grow. Well, I learned that these nursery rhymes were indeed contrary and frequently terrifying, even if they were meant as teachable moments. Gardening is similar to raising our children.

It is also a lifelong practice which I have now use for my company motto, Dig-Evolve-Live. Cute or contrary? The intent is to exercise by digging to strengthen you. Let the warmth of the sun give you the energy to evolve. So that while you live, enjoying the fruits of your labor, you can see the wonder of life. As with gardening, you will need to annually, and sometimes seasonally, dig and evolve and live to get your best crop. What?! You think you just till the garden once and you are done.

Raising kids is like gardening. You both test the soil to see what will grow.

As parents tend the soil with instruction. Kids like seeds evolve within the soil. As the growing occurs, parents nurture the kids like seedlings. When the harvest is picked the living occurs. Sometimes you have to alter the soil depending on the results or the harvest.

Another book I read annually, and sometimes seasonally, to keep my skills tuned was Teaching Your Children Values by Richard and Linda Eyre. I learned that some kids, like seeds, do better in a particular soil. Consequently, I would make amendments to see if the results were helpful. Pulling weeds, removing caterpillars, and watering carefully were daily chores that allowed the best environment for successful maturity. My garden produced hearty characters and I believe it was because of the thoughtful conversations and variety of opportunities that transpired over the years.

Practice what you preach and your home garden will thrive. Occasionally when cutting onions there will be a dramatic mood change. In our case it was figuring out my son's special needs and losing five family members in four years. It's how we respond and nurture the soil that determines the heartiness of the harvest. Digging into life can be challenging and exciting. Evolving is exploring the discovery you dug into. Living Is just as rewarding as you enjoy your harvest and share it with others.



Great Expectations

There was a time not long ago when I was feeling deprived. Even when I followed a daily routine, I felt a sense of longing. Then this thing called a pandemic happened. I just thought I was deprived! So for the first two weeks of the stay-at-home order, I didn't accomplish much. Or did I?

I sat in my family room looking at my back yard mesmerized for long periods of time. I WAS out of bed though. Smiley-face. I wasn't satisfied. I found I was feeling deprived because I had not accomplished something for me in all these years. Sure. I finished my degree after 20 years, have two wonderful kids, a spouse that supports my continuous community service projects, and we live in America's finest city.

A friend recently said my name and the word sedentary do not belong in the same sentence, because I am not one to sit still for long. So one day, I decided that since I no longer have a job and everyone is pretty much stuck at home, I would put more focus on the weekly sessions with my coach. Six months ago, I had hired a coach to help me start a business. The first meeting was reevaluating the plan. Or should I say actually

getting serious about taking myself serious; even though I have been a compassionate advocate for thirty years, board member of several community organizations, and run for public office. Did I mention I have traveled the world for closer to forty years as a military brat and then a spouse? It wasn't until I made time to make ME important that I finally felt confident again and ready to tackle another chapter in my life. What a great opportunity to use the statement 'no better time like the present'.

Oh, I'm anxious because this isn't a one day solution. This is a commitment for life. I had to read through my kudos box upon advice from my coach to realize I am enough, thanks to the picture of my young adult niece. Inspiration can come from anywhere. The tear jerker came after reading a girlfriend's letter to me after I ran for school board for the second time and lost. Only her words showed conviction and courage for my challenging public endeavor. She wrote a profound statement that continues to motivate me, 'I deeply respect the person you are and the true kindness of your heart. You are modeling for many women, including me, such strong qualities.'

This time of reflection helped me see that I can work to be fulfilled again. I vow to live a favorite quote of mine from the Hillbilly Eleby, 'What makes the successful are the expectations they have for their lives'. I am stepping into the expectation I have for myself which is to keep evolving. And one last thing, 'The future looks bright. I have to wear shades'.



Can Do Spirit

You have probably heard of the Can Do spirit. I heard about it when I was dating my husband. He was a Seabee in the Navy. I have adopted this spirit because I like why the bee was chosen as their mascot. I can relate. You see a bee will not attack except in self-defense. Seabees used to build fleet sites and only used their guns when attacked. Hence their slogan, We Build, We Fight. If I really want to do something, I will get it done. No matter how long it may take or what I have to do to produce it. Interestingly. I love intrigue but only for a short period of time. I digress.

I coin the can do spirit because it is catchy similar to Rosie the Riveter. Basically, both Seabees and Rosie have passion behind their motivation. The Seabee's became well known after WW I, when they built bridges and roads for troops to get to the next battleground.

My great uncle was a Seabee during the Korean War but I didn't learn that until after his death. I watched The Fighting Seabee's movie with John Wayne and thought of him and what he might have built. Nonsequitur, my son loves this movie and torments my husband at times by telling people he loves it because of John Wayne not the Seabees. Rosie,may be more familiar with people, after building the bridge of employees rights in factories around the same era.

Both have continued their legacy but have developed into amassadorship and causes. Seabee's have helped build structures in foreign lands to empower a community. Rosie continues to be the icon for motivation and community activism.

My can do spirit exhausts my husband as he is a simple man. 'Can't I serve my country during my 9 to 5 job and be left alone afterwards', he says. I laugh. He doesn't and never has had a job like that. I keep him busy with my can do hobbies as I like to fix things too. Stay tuned to read about one of my fix-it, or can do projects that entertained over 200 teenagers overnight. Yep, and I still keep evolving!



Procrastination vs Perfectionism

I had this epiphany one day when I was so frustrated with myself on not accomplishing more work. More specifically not tackling what I knew I had to do. Being articulate is not a strength of mine but there are two words that are pretty straight forward in the English language. Perfectionism and Procrastination.

If you are a person that thinks in clear terms then you identify with either side of the spectrum these two words have as bookends. I urge you to rethink the number of books, so to speak, in between the bookends and allow for a book for every aspect of your life. We are not designed to be perfect, therefore, we should not expect perfectionism in all we do.

I find it very fascinating and irritating (bookends) with the evolution of science, knowing we each have a different DNA from each other, many people still strive to be identical to others. Striving for good habits is commendable, but striving to be just like someone is detrimental.

In my research on understanding why I procrastinate certain endeavors, I came across a website that appealed to my reasoning about this issue. Below is some of the author's thoughts that helped me be kinder to myself about having perfect standards. For those of you who know me you can chuckle and say 'You have always been hard on yourself'. Well friends, allow me to grow and embrace my awkwardness please as I embark on this new journey that while not perfect, I am no longer procrastinating. So my new motto is Done Is Good, otherwise no one will ever see it.

What is your

This book was written to help you utilize your Positive Living Potential. Maximizing your full potential requires you to step outside your comfort zone. Whether you need to dig, evolve, or live at this time of your life, this book is to encourage you to not do it alone.

I captured quotes, scribbled in my devotional, and wrote editorials. Through these enjoyable little tasks, I realized they helped me pull my thoughts together to walk into the next phase of my life.

Along my journey, I discovered five identifying personality's to help identify our positive living potential. They express main character traits and the strengths and weaknesses of each. The acronym for the personality's is O.C.E.A.N. This is helpful as we can identify with each personality at times while we live primarily as one.

Knowing your potential is the key to digging, evolving and living. It allows you to be confident and comfortable as you be all that you were created to be.

Positive Living Potential?

Average people do average things, get average results, and live average lives. Extraordinary people do extraordinary things, get extraordinary results and live extraordinary lives. Each of us have a potential to live and thrive. To learn your specific positive living potential and live an extraordinary life.

Check out my website at www.TheEvolvingCompany.com to take a short quiz. Learn your positive living potential, O.C.E.A.N.

We can evolve when you SUBSCRIBE to my blog at www.TheEvolvingCompany.com

The best is yet to be! -The Evolving Mother

DIG, EVOLVE, and LIVE!!! Because I said so. --The Evolving Mother

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