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Dianne Bischoff James
Interview

Dianne Bischoff James: The Real Brass Ring

The Real Brass Ring: Interview with Dianne Bischoff James

OMTimes: What events in your life led you to write your book, *The Real Brass Ring*?

Dianne Bischoff James: I gave myself a fun present on my 38th birthday, a reading with internationally known psychic, Sonia Choquette. I had expected her to tell me that I was on track for joy and success because I had been working for nearly twenty years to obtain the American Dream- a big education, lucrative career, long-term marriage, mini-mansion and the latest new gadgets. I was also a diligent helicopter parent with three young children. Instead of singing my praises for leading a fairytale life, during my visit, Sonia called me out on my dirty little secrets and bashed me over the head with them. She claimed that I was an unlit Christmas tree and none of the bulbs were firing. I was chronically depressed, trapped in the wrong career, a loveless marriage, obese and my physical body was breaking down. She instructed me to become an actor, author, teacher and healer. Before she left the session, she delivered a final warning, "If you don't hurry up and grab at 'the real brass ring' it's going to be too late!"

OMTimes: What do you think readers will gain from reading your book?

Dianne Bischoff James: This book is for anyone who feels stuck, depressed and unfulfilled. It's for those standing in the middle years who have worked hard in their careers and caring for their families but finally wake up and ask themselves, "Is this really where I ended up... sad, lonesome and empty? By now, I thought I'd have a happy life." *The Real Brass Ring* allows readers to know that they are not alone in their midlife struggle and disappointment. It gives them a sense of empowerment to create an existence filled with passion and meaning. It also provides the 14 Shortcuts for Happy Living which are guideposts for consciously retraining your mind so you can take the steps to reboot your life.

OMTimes: You describe how you changed your life on all levels, emotional, physical, mental and spiritual. Can you tell us a little be about each one, where you were before you began your transformation and where you are now?

Dianne Bischoff James: I represent life's dichotomies: depressed to happy, size 18 – 4, physical weakling to practicing yogi, corporate slave to actor and author. The greatest initial challenge in the





transformation was putting my intellect on the backburner. As children we were trained to keep our logical mind in the driver's seat and suppress all feelings. I turned to Hoffman Institute in California to get the help needed to excavate decades of hurt and pain and change old mental tapes so I could start to pursue my lifelong passion in the area of acting. It was also important to take full responsibility for the terrible state of my physical health which included plantar fasciitis, sciatica, and a rotator cuff tear and committed to physical therapy, practicing yoga and speed walking to gain back strength and mobility. After a lot of practice, I also learned how to spend some time each week in stillness and quiet. Eventually, I opened up my spiritual core and started listening to the divinely guided messages from my higher guides. This allowed me to take risks and trust that every area of my macro reboot would eventually have a positive outcome. In combination, the alignment of the emotional, physical, spiritual and mental quadrants assisted me in manifesting a healthy, passionate lifestyle.

OMTimes: What is the hardest part of your transformation, where did you meet the most resistance?

Dianne Bischoff James: The romance with Jeff, the manipulative alcoholic was probably the hardest part this transformation. After my divorce, I fell deeply in love with a man who claimed to be my perfect soul mate. Although he hid the truth about his addiction for several months, he eventually revealed himself as a deeply troubled alcoholic and I risked almost everything, including my personal safety to rescue him. According to Codependents Anonymous, anyone who seeks the approval of another person for what we think, feel or behave is codependent. As a result of the tumultuous experience, I learned to avoid unhealthy personal attachments and establish clear boundaries in all areas of life. Most importantly, I don't stay in relationships anymore simply to avoid being alone.

OMTimes: What is the best thing that came out of your reaching the 'real' brass ring?

Dianne Bischoff James: I believe that when we die and stand at the entrance of the pearly gates, our highest guide arrives to greet us and asks only one question, "Did you love your life?" With this in mind, reaching for the 'real' brass ring is imperative- identifying your life's work, pursuing activities that feed the soul and grabbing at every possible opportunity to live your highest good. Dianne Bischoff James_OMtimesThe best part about living with total authenticity and gusto is that you will feel the satisfaction that comes with a purpose-driven life and feel surges of positive energy resonating throughout the day. Having gone through an intense personal transformation, the depression lifted and I now wake up excited about the world of possibilities.

OMTimes: You are now an actress with parts in movies, television and stage. Tell us how that came about.

Dianne Bischoff James: When I decided to go back to acting, I was forty, weighed 190 pounds, had not been on stage since high school and was terrified of rejection. Despite these obstacles, I mustered up the courage to audition for a community theatre production of Oliver and delivered by far, the worst audition of my life. I probably should have been mortified with embarrassment, but instead, I left the room beaming with joy because I had had the courage to show up. As a result, I was offered a part in the chorus and it felt so good to be on stage, my energy soared and I lost thirty pounds.

OMTimes: You write about all the different self-help books you used and read. Of the teachers you have studied, which one was the most valuable to you?

Dianne Bischoff James: In my opinion, Mellen Thomas Benedict is a modern day prophet. He is a near death survivor who traveled to the other side and now is an encyclopedia of the afterlife. I have seen him in person and he has an angelic presence. One of the great lessons that I learned from his teachings is that we serve as our own personal judge and jury after passing on from this life. Objectively, lovingly, yet judiciously we evaluate ourselves and our progress toward our goals and sacred contracts. Consequently, have the power to save, redeem and heal ourselves while we are here on Earth. This information reinforced the fact that I needed to increase my personal accountability for living in truth and confront any blocks that stood in the way of personal growth.

OMTimes: Tell us about the strategies you used to stop you from giving up when the going got tough.

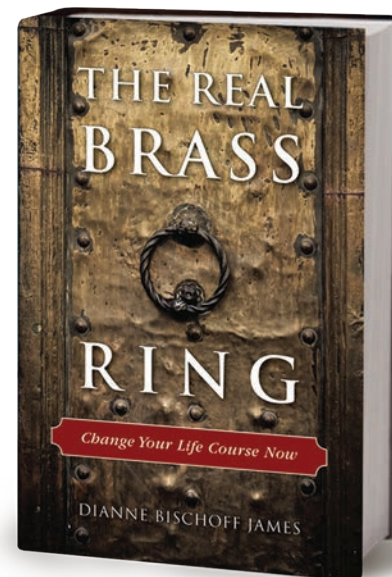
Dianne Bischoff James: Fear and a sense of lack usually are the culprits that stop us from reaching success. One of the best strategies for overcoming stinking thinking and dark, negative mental messages is to utilize several of the Shortcuts for Happy Living- 1) Manage Your Wave and 2) Learn Your Lessons to move past the setbacks. We are beings of light and our thoughts resonate in the form of waves. Therefore, in every situation, we have the opportunity to reach for a thought that will make us feel better, the positive side of the energy wave. Plus, whenever you are tempted to sit in the victim chair, step back and identify lesson to be learned. If it is a repetitive issue, call it out, make changes and learn your lesson quickly so you don't have to repeat it.

OMTimes: How did the people around you change as you began to change?

Dianne Bischoff James: I've noticed a huge improvement in the relationship with every member in my family. Prior to rebooting my life, I was highly reactive and would fly off the handle when the children made seemingly innocent mistakes, spills or messes. With greater personal alignment and practicing the Shortcut- Speak Your Peace, I have learned how to stop stuffing and articulate my truth in the moment in a healthy way. This has allowed me to parent from a place of open compassion and understanding. As a result, we have a very peaceful household with open dialogue and very little drama. The beauty is, the children have learned that it is safe to express their point of view and have the skills to manage conflicts and disagreements in the moment. Nothing gets built up or swept under the rug.

OMTimes: What's the one piece of advice you would give to people who want to reach for the 'Real' Brass Ring?

Dianne Bischoff James: Your birthright is joy. Therefore, it is critical to starting living in your authentic life because the highest experience of love is the realization of what you believe in, who you are and what you love to do. It's also important to remember that the heart will not invest in compromises. So, the sooner you take even a small step toward creating a life you love, the more you can expand into wholeness of who you meant to be and feel happy. Future is lined with infinite possibilities and the middle years can be the greatest time of your life!



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