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Plus

Dr. Kathleen A. Begley
The Write Woman
KBegley@writecompanyplus.com
610-429-1562

How to Spring Back to Life

By Dr. Kathleen Begley, Book Author and Professional Speaker

Note to Readers: *This free e-newsletter, sent only upon request, comes from Dr. Kathleen Begley, owner of Write Company Plus communications training. She writes weekly on topics connected to business and personal success.*

I was born on Easter Sunday. To me, the timing of my entry into this world was a big deal. So, as a kid, I begged my mother to rename me Bunny. It struck me as much more American and modern than the Irishy and old-fashioned Kathleen. Thank heaven my mom used her Gaelic goodsense, and stuck with her County Donegal guns. I remained Kathleen – the full name without a diminutive such as Kathy, Katie, or Kay.

Despite this early failure at renaming myself to fit the season, I have always loved spring. During this time of year, everything seems to burst forward in the brightest of colors. As commercial as it sounds, I love looking at springtime retail advertisements: the yellow and pink girls' dresses at Kohl's; the fuschia and orange jackets at Chico's; the lime and lavender bedspreads at Kmart.

What a great time to toss about a Frisbee with your Marley or Max on your gradually greening lawn. I know, I know, I know. The grass will turn dark once your dogs start lifting their legs or hunkering down, but brown will give you a start on your fall wardrobe.

If you haven't already figured out my attitude about April and May, I think they provide a great reason to recommit to your work, whether you labor in a 9-to-5 position in the private or public sector; work 24/7 as an overstretched business owner; or struggle to replace the job you lost in the ongoing recession. Some ideas:

Organize your office. Extensive spring cleaning seems to work in the kitchen, bathroom, attic, and cellar. So I'm thinking it may have a positive effect on your work digs as well. Throw out old manila folders, order new stationery, follow up on outstanding proposals. I swear such efforts enable me to fool myself into thinking I have everything together.

Update your computer. If you still have every email you ever sent or received lurking around on your hard drive, take action. Now is the time to do one of four information uncluttering actions recommended by time management experts: act, forward, save, or delete. Did you know that most people do way too much of the third choice, and not enough of the fourth? So get ruthless with yourself, and banish those old how-cute-baby-animal slide shows and send-this-to-45-friends messages.

Invest in decorations. Flowers are always a pick-you-up, though in my case they need to be artificial. Yes, I have a really black thumb. If you share my bad luck with living plants, hurry over to an arts and crafts store such as Michael's and pick up some inexpensive yet amazingly authentic looking daisy arrangements.

Buy a new outfit. Why continue to wear navy blue and charcoal gray when nature looks anything but dark? Immerse yourself in the tightly packed racks at T.J. Maxx of Marshal's, and I guarantee you'll find terrific mens' pink shirts and even more fabuloso women's yellow jackets – the apparel kind, not the wasp ones.



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Go outdoors. Even in this era of super-convenient, computerized social networking, I dare say few five-figure deals are made without some in-person contact. You may want to show your beautiful face to prospects and customers, now that your eyelashes no longer will be frozen to your brows.

Believe. If your spirits slid into the dumpster last winter as if they were on an icy driveway, an experience common among the millions of people who suffer from seasonal affective disorder (SAD), work on your confidence that life soon will be better. To encourage your positivity, gaze upward at the blue sky, the bright sun, the billowy clouds. How can you not believe that all good things – including you – are getting a new spring back in their step.

Revise your goals. Having gone through a particularly bleak winter, I currently am brainstorming ideas to reposition myself in my speaking and writing career. Recently, I have been spending 90 percent of my time on the former, and only 10 percent on the latter. Wanting to tap more into my writing talents, I'd like to bring the ratio closer to 50-50; to get restarted, I'm willing to write romantic novels, chick lit, or downright trash novels – without using my real name of course. How's this for my new nom de plume: Bunny Hare?

Dr. Kathleen Begley has written seven books and gives corporate seminars on topics such as writing persuasively, presenting confidently, and managing positively. You can call her at 610-429-1562 or e-mail her at KBegley@writecompanyplus.com. She responds to everybody.