

“If you are an achiever who has been looking for that next big thing—this is the book for you. I highly recommend it!”

—JANE PAULEY, Host of *CBS Sunday Morning* and Author of *Your Life Calling*

THE ACHIEVER'S GUIDE
TO WHAT'S NEXT

L I V E
L A R G E



ELIZABETH B. CROOK

Advance Praise

“If you are an achiever who has been waiting for that next big thing—if you have felt the call for a larger life—then this book is for you. Elizabeth Crook is the career guide for those who thought they had it all. *Live Large: The Achiever’s Guide to What’s Next* is the book 2017 has been waiting for. I highly recommend it!”

—Jane Pauley, Host of *CBS Sunday Morning* and
Author of *Your Life Calling*

“Are you an achiever ready for your next big step? Are you ready to live fully and authentically without limits or constraints? *Live Large: The Achiever’s Guide to What’s Next* will not only align you with your true purpose, it is one of the most thrilling ways to go after what you want to accomplish and make a difference in the world. Elizabeth Crook is the real deal, and delivers great value in this book.”

—Jack Canfield, Coauthor of the #1 *New York Times* Bestselling *Chicken Soup for the Soul*[®] Series and *The Success Principles*[™]

“You’re successful, yet you feel that there’s something more for you. The challenge is that you don’t know what that ‘something more’ is, how to find out, or how to get there. Let Elizabeth Crook’s remarkable book, *Live Large: The Achiever’s Guide to What’s Next*, be your guide. This book combines Elizabeth’s insight as a business strategist with her genuine love of people to help you find your way to the next, quite possibly most fulfilling, stage in your life and career. *Live Large* isn’t just a great resource—it’s a treasure.”

—Joe Calloway, Author of *Becoming A Category Of One*

“In my field, I often come across successful business folks looking for their next big horizon. Elizabeth Crook, an accomplished CEO herself, who has helped build so many career success stories, has finally created the astonishingly effective Live Large process that moves you to your next great step. You will walk away from this ‘playbook’ forever changed in the best way possible!”

—Verne Harnish, CEO of Gazelles, Author of *Scaling Up: How a Few Companies Make It . . . and Why the Rest Don’t*

“Elizabeth tackles the question of ‘What’s Next’ for successful people ready for a new challenge. A big paycheck can feel hollow when disconnected from purpose. Elizabeth guides her readers back to their core strengths so that they can Live Large in their careers and personal lives.”

—Amanda Steinberg, CEO of Daily Worth

“*Live Large* is a practical and wise guide that integrates inner exploration with real-world grit . . . an inspiring and easy-to-follow roadmap for personal and professional growth.”

—Marc Lesser, Author of *Less: Accomplishing More*
By Doing Less and *Know Yourself, Forget Yourself*

“Elizabeth Crook captures the spirit of the entrepreneur in *Live Large*: that restlessness to see more, know more, be more. She illuminates for the reader a pathway to unlock our potential to do more than we ever imagined.”

—Michael Burcham, Founding CEO of Nashville
Entrepreneur Center; Faculty, Owen Graduate School of
Management, Vanderbilt; Serial Entrepreneur

“*Live Large* is for anyone who has already successfully achieved many of their life goals but may be just beginning to look at what’s next in terms of making more of an impact and possibly even changing direction. Elizabeth’s process will help you look back to look forward, be honest about who you are and who you are becoming, and create a life lived with purpose and intention.”

—Pat Obuchowski, Founder of Gutsy Women Win and Author of *Gutsy Women Win: How to Get Gutsy and Get Going*

“Elizabeth’s wise, conversational, and meaningful words inspire me to look deep inside, to reflect, to act, and to ultimately Live Large. I have no doubt that this book, and this process, will help successful people become even more successful and change lives for good.”

—Janet Miller, CEO/Market Leader of Colliers International

“I’m so excited to see this book coming to fruition! Elizabeth is a wise, experienced leader who has helped me in so many ways and has delivered big time whenever I refer her to others. She has been an essential part of my success, and I’m confident readers will say the same after reading through and engaging with the pearls of wisdom and practical insights contained in this volume.”

—Joel Solomon, Chair, Renewal Funds; Chair, Hollyhock;
Author of *The Clean Money Revolution*

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First Edition

To Lisa Quin Lorimer Donahue

"The real voyage of discovery consists
not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes."

—Marcel Proust

"The mind, once stretched by a new idea,
never returns to its original dimensions."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

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FOREWORD

At the time of writing this, I'm 52 years old, and I've been into personal development since I was a teenager. I've read hundreds of self-help books and attended tens of thousands of hours of personal-development training. In fact, I teach this subject to others and have written several books myself. As the host of the popular iTunes podcast *The Mind Aware Show*, I've interviewed over 300 thought leaders from around the world. Believe me—I have seen and heard it all, and this I can tell you: *Live Large* and its message stand out.

In March of 2013, I was sitting in the living room of Jack Canfield's house with 16 other eager future authors. We were piled on the big cushy sofas with the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* creator himself, as well as one of the stars of the runaway hit movie, *The Secret*. All of us waited with bated breath for our turn in the "hot seat": the chair at the front of the room next to Jack. Over the next two days, each of us would take a seat in that chair, talk about our respective books, and get advice from the man himself.

It was in this room that I met Elizabeth Crook.

Every person in the room was already successful in their particular arenas of life, and—speaking candidly—we had all paid a pretty penny to be there. (By “pretty penny,” I mean a sum of money that is large enough to make you embarrassed to say it aloud, for fear that you look like a groupie or just plain crazy to pay that type of money for a couple days in someone’s living room.) The reason I mention the expense is to stress the point that this was a room of heavyweights. This was a room of achievers. This was a room full of people who were stars in their respective fields, and in this room, Elizabeth shined the brightest.

When she took her turn in the hot seat, Elizabeth talked about her father’s success and about her own . . . and then she said something that made everyone lean forward: “I see things differently than other people. I see patterns. I can look at a person’s business or life, and I can connect the dots. I don’t know how I do it . . . I just do it. I’ve always been able to see these patterns, and that is my gift.”

From that point forward, Elizabeth became the darling of the event, with everyone clamoring to talk with her about their businesses and their lives, asking for advice on how to “connect the dots.” And she delivered.

I had my first of many personal “Aha!” moments during my discussions with Elizabeth over those two days. And in our countless conversations since that time, I’ve had the opportunity to observe who she is and why *Live Large* is such an important piece of work. First, she has spent decades working with powerful men—and they *listen* to her. CEOs and other achievers, men who are used to getting advice from, well, other men. In a culture that often doesn’t value women’s voices, Elizabeth’s is heard. This is a testament to

both the strength of her message and her ability to convey that message in a way that truly connects with anyone.

Second, she's *lived*. Her full life has been defined by many transformative experiences, and when she draws from them in *Live Large*, you immediately connect to her story. She's not just giving you advice—she uses her own experiences to give insights into what's moved her forward in life, and what might move you forward in yours.

Finally, Elizabeth is an original. *Live Large* is not regurgitated material written in a different voice. The Explorations in this book are fresh and one-of-a-kind. In the ocean of material that is available to us today, Elizabeth's book gives you ideas that are new and endlessly effective.

Live Large is more than just a book, or a workbook: It's the workbook of *you*. By completing the Explorations outlined in this book, you will rediscover yourself, and you will realize that you already possess everything you need to take your life to the next level. Just like Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, you've had it all along. Elizabeth simply helps you discover what "it" is and how to put it to good use.

It's always fun to have an "aha" moment, but it's even more fun to have a dozen of them. If you know that life has more in store for you, and you're ready to step up and be the person you know you were meant to be, then *Live Large* is the map you need—and Elizabeth is your ultimate guide.

—Dana Wilde, bestselling author of *Train Your Brain*
and Host of *The Mind Aware Show*

PREFACE



Imagine the Unimaginable

Perhaps you've surprised yourself by buying this book. You've lived a life people point to as successful: You've made the "right" decisions, reached the goals you set out to, achieved status in your industry, and been rewarded or acknowledged for your accomplishments. But while you have every reason to feel content, instead you feel restless. You want to know what's next. To someone who has already reached a high level of success, this question may seem risky, unreasonable, and immature . . . not to mention far out of reach. The answer would surely lead you to that wider horizon you believe might be around the corner, but between you and that horizon lies an abyss that feels too dangerous to cross.

The truth is, the wide horizon you are imagining is right in front of you. You only have to discover the path that leads you there. This book will show you how. We all have limitations on what we can imagine. It's time to imagine the unimaginable.

I've been right where you are before. And I've walked this road many times with people just like you: smart, successful people who were struggling with doubt about their next steps, about whether they really could achieve the greatness they held as a vision in their mind's eye. Once these achievers were led through the Live Large process outlined in the pages of this book, they experienced the miracle of being able to move beyond a life that had begun to feel limiting and toward one of fulfillment, joy, and living (very) large.

Live Large is a book about intention: the intention to honor that "what's next" feeling and to move forward even though you have already achieved so much. It is about exploring and acknowledging the depth of your talents and experiences and discovering how to use these abundant personal resources to align yourself with an even deeper purpose.

You may think, "Well, it's easy for her to say, she's already doing what she loves." This is true: I am one of the most fortunate people I know. Using my experience and unique set of inborn and cultivated gifts, I work with high achievers who support my creativity and are looking to generate positive influence in the world. In short, most of the time I am working exactly the way I have always wanted to with exactly the people I've always wanted around me. But it wasn't always like that.

In my midforties, I was a senior executive at a software company. We were on the bleeding edge, developing expert systems and working long, crazy hours. It was exhilarating. I loved the challenge of structuring a new company, positioning products, closing big contracts, and pitching the story to investors.

Then, about four years into it, the company started to go in a direction I believed would lead to failure. Eventually I found myself in a messy, political fight. Could I have "won"? Who knows?

Does it matter? Not really. What does matter is that one day, when I was driving home from the airport after *yet another* trade show, I realized I was working way too hard for something that I simply didn't care about—yet I was living as if I did.

Leave-taking is almost always messy. At first I was stunned. I had jumped off a train going a hundred miles an hour and hadn't waited for it to slow down. The landing hurt. What was I supposed to do with all of my full-speed energy? And what about my identity? I loved being able to say what I did professionally. I felt important and powerful. What now?

Luckily, the company repurchased my options, affording me time to consider what to do next. I wandered, wallowed, explored. I cried a lot. I wanted to find a new professional path—one that truly mattered to me—but I didn't have a clue where to look. I would love to be able to tell you *the light dawned, I just knew, or I talked to an expert*, but that's not what happened. Instead, as a forty-something looking to build a career from scratch, I felt *old*. I loved health and healing, but that was my father's gig. I was living in Nashville, where everyone was creating or producing music, but I felt my age precluded my pursuing something similar.

And then I took a good, hard look at my father. He was in his seventies and still going strong as a pediatrician who had founded an innovative medical clinic. In his late fifties, he'd decided to write books that would help people live healthier lives. At sixty-nine, he wrote a book called *The Yeast Connection* that sold over a million copies. He also worked to get sugar out of baby food, and wrote and spoke passionately about how nutrition played a key role in a child's physical and emotional health. He was nearly thirty years older than I was at that point. Suddenly I stopped wallowing and thought: "If I work at something I love as long as he has, then I

have at least thirty years to do something!” I had plenty of time. But what was it I wanted to do?

Like so many other soul searchers, I turned inward, became interested in the mind, body, and spirit connection and my own intuition. Around this time, a holistic healthcare trend was beginning to take shape far out on the horizon. Deepak Chopra, Larry Dossey, Dean Ornish, Patch Adams, and others had come on the scene, and even at this early stage, I could sense the power of the movement. Coming from a long line of physicians—from my great-grandfather and grandfather down to my uncle and my father—I used to joke that my family was “into health” before it became a national obsession. Though not a physician myself, I worked at Planned Parenthood as the director of volunteers and later as a public information officer for the State Health Department. Given my history, I thought health might be my next chapter.

Like so many people who think just one more course or one more degree will give us the ticket to dance, I was pretty sure I needed to go back to school to get more letters behind my name in order to garner attention for this work. A few months later, however, at a conference where the highest pantheon of integrative physicians and practitioners were speaking, I met a physician whose words shifted my thinking entirely. When I told her I was going back to school to make a difference, she said, “Don’t you think we have enough practitioners? If you want to make a difference in the world, do what you do best.”

We all hear about “aha” moments, and this was one of mine. Careers or professional paths aside, *what did I do best?*

As I pondered that question, I was reminded of a phone call I received many years earlier, while I lived and worked in Caracas, Venezuela. It was a very different place then than now—safe,

prosperous, sophisticated. While working as vice president of systems development and training, I received a call from a large international search firm. When they told me they were looking for someone to open a chain of doughnut franchises, I was completely bewildered. I didn't have food experience, consumer product experience, or franchise experience. On top of that, I don't even like doughnuts!

Unable to mask my confusion, I asked the caller on the other end of the line: *Why me?* The caller explained there was no one in Venezuela that had all the required experience for the position. Still confused, I asked, *So what were your search criteria?* "Oh," he replied, "we looked for people who had a record of success doing things that have never been done before."

This answer changed my understanding of my professional identity forever.

It was the first time in my life I knew what tied together all the things I had done to that point. Some people hear music and write poetry. I saw patterns, frameworks, and themes. I knew how to create what had not existed before. I knew how to fit pieces together to make things work better. I don't know how I knew to do this, I just did. Because of this, people were always asking me for advice about how to think and plan for what was next in their career and in their businesses. I engaged in these conversations naturally even before I realized that was what I was doing, but once I contemplated the physician's words—do what you do best—I became more aware, accepting, and intentional in using this talent.

I began interviewing those who asked for advice about their lives: what sang for them, what they had learned and been challenged by. Then we would explore the limitations that might be

holding them back, and the balance between risk and reward. We talked about how frustrated they could be or excited they could get about their definitions of themselves. And then we brainstormed what they most wanted. By exploring their deepest desires, people started to see their own themes and patterns. The process freed them from their job titles and industries and let them claim who they always wanted to be. I didn't have the answers—they did! And they used these answers to create a life they loved. After embracing my passion for facilitating others to find answers that worked for them, helping them to see possibilities in both individual and group settings, I started my own company, now known as Orchard Advisors. Orchards, after all, are places where things grow and thrive.

As the founder and CEO of my company, I work coast to coast and internationally with companies and company leaders to help them find fresh approaches, reach brand new levels of success, and become more effective at what they do. I knew this work had a powerful spark all its own when I was asked to speak to my first group of CEOs, all of whom were men. I already knew women could share—it's what we do. But I worried the guys would look at me like I was crazy when I suggested they turn to the person sitting next to them and talk about their insights and fears. Instead, they were completely focused on either speaking or listening. You could feel the connection, the excitement in the room. What a surprise!

I've since facilitated this process with attorneys, back-to-the-workforce moms, entrepreneurs, artists, and CEOs in workshops, boardrooms, and one-on-ones. I do it as a prelude to company strategic planning and in personal exploration sessions. I do it for million-dollar companies, and I do it for hundred-million-dollar

companies. And it's changed lives. A philanthropist became part of a groundbreaking team to help entrepreneurs create values-based businesses; a high-end men's retail manager started running a gallery/gathering place for artists and art lovers that became a social center of her city; a CEO partnered with an executive he admired and started his own business with plenty of time to see his family.

What Live Large Means

Live Large is an invitation, a challenge, an imperative, even a dare to embrace the entirety of who we are, and to create a life of potency and inspiration. It captures the celebratory feeling of affirmation that we are using our greatest gifts and talents to do work that energizes us and makes an impact. When we are living large, we get to throw our arms in the air and feel excited and inspired about what we do. So, whenever you see the words "Live Large" in this book, remember that it represents not only the invitation, but also the goal you are moving toward: a state of engagement and deep satisfaction.

At forty-six, I never felt unique enough, special enough, wildly talented enough (oh, maybe sometimes), or young enough to start anything life changing. I have come to realize that I am enough of all those things—and so are you. I have been called an irreverent, sometimes outrageous strategist, corporate shaman, witch doctor, mapmaker, magician, and coach, but whatever my title, I am doing what I love. *And you can too.*

That's why *Live Large* was born, to offer this process to you, to

reassure you that—yes!—you are unique enough, special enough, wildly talented enough, and at exactly the right stage in life to walk confidently toward that wide horizon. This interactive, self-searching, tried-and-true process will lead you down the road toward loving who you are and what you do, and living the life you've always imagined.

CHAPTER 6



Missing the Magic Show: What Kinds of Beliefs Hold Us Back

One of the most important and surprising things we can do when we want to Live Large is to take a really close look at our personal beliefs. Beliefs are something you hold to be true, whether they are or not. They are an invisible set of rules that have the power to limit what we can imagine, think, or do. Beliefs can contribute to negative self-talk (the Triple J) and self-defeating actions. But when we see our beliefs clearly, we are able to make choices based on clarity.

Beliefs turn into vows when we experience something emotional or even traumatic and our sense of risk is great. A vow is a hyperbolized belief, a promise to yourself, a declaration. We often know we've made a vow when *always* and *never* turn up in a

statement about what we believe. “I will *never* make that mistake again!”

When I was six, my father was going to take me to a magic show in a downtown hotel. You can imagine my excitement. Since my grandmother lived in an apartment in the hotel, my mother took me there to dress before he picked me up. At six I was a dawdler. I couldn't seem to do anything fast. I was frequently distracted, and in spite of my mother's urging, I didn't get dressed. When my father arrived, I was not ready. So, he left. The tears and floor-pounding went on until I was totally exhausted. I couldn't believe he had left me.

Of course I was too young to make a conscious vow, but my mother would always say, “Ever since that day her father left her, Elizabeth has never been late.” Years later, I found myself experiencing anxiety about being late for anything, even when it didn't matter. How much sense did that make? Not much, especially when I lived in Latin America where to come “on time” was practically considered rude!

Vows and beliefs come in all different (sneaky) packages. Understanding the potent ways they show up can help you identify when you have made one. Below are the three different types of vows and beliefs that may be sabotaging you.

1. **Vows or beliefs that were true once upon a time:**

- My mother told me when I was a child that I was selfish, so I must be selfish.
- When I was a teen I felt unattractive, so now I can't believe the praise or compliments from others.
- My alcoholic father made our home unpredictable, so now I need to control my situation no matter what.

All that may be true: When you were four, you didn't want to share your toys. As a teen you felt unattractive, and the braces and pimples didn't help. It *was* scary having an unpredictable alcoholic at home, and that made it feel safer to control as much as you could. But circumstances change and once-upon-a-time beliefs like these become irrelevant—yet they still manage to rule our lives.

2. **Beliefs that were never true:**

For centuries, people believed the Earth was the center of the universe and that the sun revolved around it. This was a belief that was never true. Just because learned scholars believed it still didn't make it so. Your parents probably told you that Santa could see if you were naughty or nice. Just because we believed doesn't mean this was *ever* true! What we call “old wives' tales” (don't go out in the cold after a hot shower . . .) provide other examples of beliefs that were never true. Of course, a favorite example is civilization's belief that the world was flat and if you sailed west from Europe, you would drop off the side. It's good to remember that it was only when that belief was challenged and discarded that real exploration for a new world began.

3. **Beliefs that were true for someone else but not true for you:**

Once upon a time, a husband noticed that when his wife cooked a roast she cut the ends off. When he asked her why, she said that was the way her mother did it. Curious, the young husband asked his mother-in-law why *she* cut the ends off the roast. The mother-in-law replied that

her mother always cooked her roast that way. They both believed this was *the* way to cook a roast.

A few weeks later, the young man told his wife's grandmother about the conversations and asked the older woman why she cut the ends off the roast. She laughed and said, "I don't know why *they* cut the ends off their roasts, but I just never had a pan big enough." It's so easy to do something simply because it's always been done that way. That roast in the pan is a small example, but it represents much bigger beliefs in our lives that we haven't thought to question. When a belief we hold was true at some time for someone else, but not for us, that belief can cripple us physically, intellectually, and emotionally.

• • •

Now that you can see some beliefs were never true, no longer true, or not true for you, you may notice how they tend to manage your life, keeping you stuck in patterns that resemble the looped track on a treadmill. The good news? Just reading about them can trigger insights about what may be holding you back. If you can name your particular Limiting Beliefs (we all have them, so it's nothing to be ashamed of!), you can move forward into the larger life that's waiting for you. This is some of the most powerful, life-changing work you will do in the book. As you move ahead into the explanations of how Limiting Beliefs show up and the explorations that follow, take them at your own pace. Do what makes sense for you, and remember: If you show up, you can't fail.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Elizabeth Crook is the CEO of Orchard Advisors, where entrepreneurs, business and community leaders, and philanthropists turn when they want to Live Large and grow both their enterprises and their impact. Elizabeth holds a BA from Vanderbilt University and an MS from Tennessee State University. A mother, grandmother, and ardent hiker, she lives on Music Row in Nashville with the love of her life, Umberto. Elizabeth believes that if we all loved our work, we could change the world! *Live Large* is her first book.

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