

50 WAYS TO OPEN YOUR WORLD TO NEW POSSIBILITIES

by Lori Deschene

“To get something you never had, you have to do something you’ve never done.” ~Unknown

Maybe you feel stuck. Or bored. Or frustrated. It’s not that you don’t like the life you live, it’s just that you suspect there’s something more. Some greater sense of meaning or excitement. New connections. New adventures. New possibilities.

The truth is those possibilities are always within your reach. You may not be able to quit your job or develop new skills by osmosis; but every day contains within it countless opportunities, all dictated by the choices you make.

Some of those choices may seem inconsequential when you face them. They’re the little things, after all. Why not do it how you usually do? Why not stay in your comfort zone when it’s just so comfortable there?

Do it for the possibility. The possibility that if you make one minor change you may set the stage for major fulfillment. Sometimes even the smallest shift in thinking or doing can create the biggest opportunity. Here’s how to get started:

GET OUT OF YOUR HEAD

1. **Challenge your beliefs about what you can and can’t do.** Maybe you are a good leader.
2. **Challenge your ideas about how things should work.** Sometimes when you decide how things should be you limit your ability to be effective in the world as it actually is.
3. **Have a vision session.** Write in a journal, create a video, sketch—anything that lets you explore what excites you most.
4. **Look for opportunities in a tough situation.** Eschew a victim mentality, and opt instead for a “ready for new beginnings” attitude.
5. **Remove something from your life that doesn’t serve you to make room for something better and new.** You never know what you might let in when you let something go.
6. **Commit to something you always say you’ll do** but always fail to start—and then take the first step right now.
7. **Turn your focus from something don’t want to something you do want.** This allows you to shift your energy from complaining to taking action.
8. **Replace negative thoughts with positive ones.** Positive energy creates positive results.
9. **Identify the blocks that keep you from breaking a bad habit.** Anytime you improve your habits, you pave the path for personal excellence.
10. **Forgive someone if you’ve been holding a grudge.** Removing that block will open you up where previously you’d shut down.

GET OUT IN THE OPEN

11. **Walk to work and open your eyes.** You may find a gym you want to join, or an organization where you'd like to volunteer.
12. **Talk to someone while waiting in line and ask what they do.** You don't need to wait for a specified event to network.
13. **Make an effort to connect with people you pass**—smile and make eye contact for a little longer than usual. Being even slightly more open can open up your world.
14. **Learn a new skill.** Start taking piano lessons or karate classes.
15. **Say yes to something you always talk yourself out of**—sing karaoke or take a kickboxing class—even you're afraid of you'll feel embarrassed.
16. **Take a walking lunch.** Walk around your neighborhood for a half-hour, with no destination in mind, and then eat at your desk when you return. You never know what will happen when you get out without a plan.
17. **Volunteer** at your local animal shelter or ASPCA chapter.
18. **Start something you always assumed it was too late to do.** Take gymnastics, learn guitar. If it moves you, get started today. It's never too late.
19. **Take up urban foraging**—the act of foraging for “free” fruits and vegetables around your city (where harvesting is sanctioned). According to worldchanging.com, “It saves money (free food!), it reduces waste (all that fruit isn't rotting on the ground) and it builds community (...by forcing interaction between strangers...)”
20. **Join an adventure club** to try new activities, like white water rafting and rock climbing, and meet new people at the same time.

GET IN WITH PEOPLE

21. **Offer to help someone else.** Sometimes it's the best way to help yourself, and not just for the warm fuzzy feeling it provides. You never know what you'll learn through the process.
22. **Carpool to work.** This gives you a chance to get to know coworkers better—good for socialization, and possibly good for your career.
23. **Compliment a stranger on something you notice.** Everyone likes to be appreciated, and it's a great way to start a conversation.
24. **Take pictures of things you find interesting that other people might not notice.** When you're trying to frame the smiley face of leftover food on your plate, people will naturally want to ask what you're doing. (I know this from experience).
25. **Do something you enjoy alone.** Go to a museum, or read a book in the park. You're more accessible when you're not engulfed in a crowd, making it easier for new people to approach you.

26. **Wear an interesting T-shirt, something funny or nostalgic.** You likely won't get through a day wearing a Gem or Alf shirt with at least one conversation with someone new!
27. **Move one of your friends into a new pool.** Take one from the "we keep things light and casual" pool into the "we share our dreams and confide each other" pool. Research shows people who have 5 or more close friends describe themselves as happy.
28. **Bring enough lunch to share with other people at work**—particularly childhood favorites. Nothing bonds like shared nostalgia.
29. **Pay attention to other people's body language and expressions** so you can offer assistance when they seem to need it.
30. **Help someone else get out of their comfort zone.** You just may set the precedent that you challenge each other in your friendship.

GET INTO YOUR WORK

31. **Show up a half-hour early or leave thirty minutes late.** You'll get more done; you may impress your boss; and you might open yourself up to opportunities for growth—particularly if your coworkers aren't around.
32. **Speak up in a meeting,** even if you don't feel fully confident or you're afraid you'll be embarrassed. Your ideas can only take shape if you put them out there.
33. **Hold your meeting outside.** People work and engage differently in new environments, particularly when they can feel sunlight on their faces.
34. **Hold a meeting standing up.** This will most likely make it shorter, meaning you'll be more efficient and create more time to work on something else.
35. **Create a business card that speaks to what really matters to you.**
36. **Start learning a new language.** The more people you can communicate with, the more valuable you become, particularly for work that involves traveling abroad. Only 6% of the world's population speaks English.
37. **If you don't work in your dream industry, volunteer within it.** This allows you to be your purpose now, even though you don't have the job; gain experience; and make valuable connections.
38. **Find a mentor.** Ask someone who does what you'd like to do for tips.
39. **Attend a networking event or conference that's big in your industry.** Collect at least 10 business cards, and follow up with emails the next day.
40. **Consider one of these creative ways** to turn everyday situations into opportunities.
Go to <http://tinybuddha.com/blog/7-creative-ways-to-turn-everyday-situations-into-opportunities/> for more information.

GET CAUGHT IN THE WEB

41. **Check the Craigslist Community section** for activities, events, and classes—and then send at least 3 emails today. Don't wait.
42. **Start a group at Meetup.com** to connect with like-minded people, or join one that already exists.
43. **Ask on Twitter if anyone can offer you any tips** to move forward with your dream.
44. **Learn to cook one tweet at a time.** @cookbook tweets entire recipes and instructions in 140 characters each.
45. **Learn how to do anything that interests you** on eHow, Instructables, or wikiHow.
46. **Have a “friend trade” day on Facebook.** Introduce your friends to one of yours, and ask them to do the same.
47. **If you blog, find other bloggers in your niche** and email them to introduce yourself.
48. **Work on personal branding to help market yourself** and attract new opportunities. Mashable has an excellent post about this here.
49. **Search WeFollow.com to find the most influential people in your niche**, then initiate contact them through Twitter or email.
50. **Join the TinyBuddha Facebook community**, where happiness-minded individuals gather to share their wisdom. (or subscribe to tinybuddha.com for more tips to live out loud!)

There's a lot of information here—way more than you can tackle all at once. But it's more about quality than quantity. Even just one small change can have a ripple effect into every area of your life. Of course it's up to you to decide what's possible.