

EXCERPTS FROM THE NOVEL



# Sunshine<sup>☀</sup>

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**Wise Words From a Woman Who Has  
Been There, Done That, and Has  
Good Advice to Share**

LEE SILBER

## INTRODUCTION

# Wise Words We All Need to Hear

When my friend Sunshine called to tell me she only had months left to live, I had no idea how much that would impact my life.

She asked me to write about her extraordinary life and I agreed. We met once a week and she told me all about her adventures and I turned her life story into an award-winning novel.

Her reason for wanting a book about her to come out was she had a very powerful message to share based on her life experiences. I weaved her wise words into the story, but I wanted to pull out and the most important messages and turn them into a mini book. This is that book.

You can also read more about her amazing life in the novel, *Sunshine*, available from Amazon in paperback and Kindle.



*Sunshine and I met on Wednesdays at Sole Luna Cafe in San Diego to work on her book until the day before she died. Sadly, Sunshine was not alive to see and celebrate the book about her life, but you can bet she is smiling down on us all.*

—LEE SILBER

ABOUT BARBARA "SUNSHINE" BLAKE

# Lessons From a Life Well Lived

When Sunshine was a teenager she made a promise to herself to see the world and live a glamorous life, nobody believed she could do it. Why would they? She was abused and abandoned by her parents and shuffled from foster home to foster home in the poorest parts of the country.

Yet Sunshine accomplished everything she set out to do. She traveled the world, succeeded in real estate, founded a cosmetics company, hung out with Hollywood's elite, married in Morocco, appeared on television, sang on a country record, explored Europe in a camper van, ran a resort in Fiji, and raised two sons as a single mom.

Sunshine's extraordinary life was a wild and exciting ride with twists and turns, ups and downs, and adventures all over the globe. She lived, she loved, she succeeded, and she failed. Her story holds clues to how we can all live a full life with no regrets, no excuses, and no worries.



*It's impossible to find a photo of Sunshine where she isn't smiling. This, despite being orphaned as a child, widowed three times as an adult, losing all of her money in a real estate deal gone bad, and having her house burn to the ground with all of her possessions in it. She was a survivor . . . until she wasn't.*



PART 1

# LIFE LESSONS

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Seven key concepts that Sunshine  
believed in and held dear that  
can help you with your life



## LIFE LESSON NUMBER 1

# No Excuses

Don't use your past as an excuse for not living a full and fruitful life today. No matter how bad you had it growing up, Sunshine suffered worse, but she chose to not dwell on the past or let her past determine her future.

“Where you come from isn't as important as where you are going,” she would often say. Don't blame others, instead learn to make better choices. Don't use your early life as an excuse for your problems and failures today. Whining about how you were mistreated or wronged makes you look like a victim, and the last thing Sunshine wanted to be was seen as helpless.

Instead, she used what burned her up as fuel for the fire that motivated her to take charge of her life and make things happen. There is no other way to explain how Sunshine could overachieve to such an extent that others came to her for help with their projects and business problems.



*One of the scenes from the novel was something Sunshine shared that was heart wrenching, but she wanted me to include it in the book. When she was a child her father wanted nothing to do with her, but she found out where he was living and went to the door with a handmade Father's Day card. He told her to go away and slammed the door in her face.*

# Opportunities Are Everywhere

The universe provides you with everything you need to succeed and find happiness. Everywhere you turn opportunities are presented to you. These opportunities are sent to you as a gift.

What you do with these chances determines what your life becomes. Pay attention to what the universe is trying to tell you to do—and then do it, knowing it was a personal invitation to change and improve your life.

Sunshine believed in abundance. She felt that around every corner (even after a “failure”) the next big thing was waiting for her and she would keep a watchful eye out for any sign as to what it might be.

“If you believe it will work out, you’ll see opportunities, if you believe it won’t, you will see obstacles,” said Wayne Dyer, who like Sunshine, shuffled between foster families.



*Sunshine did not go to college, yet found a way to make a good living in sales, real estate, and by starting several businesses. Not every one of these ventures ended in success, but she never gave up and always found a way to find the next big thing. Of all the things she told me, it was the concept that the Universe wants me to succeed and is giving me opportunities to do so that meant so much.*

# No Regrets

Live life to the fullest—travel, meet people, fall in love, love what you do, but don't wait until it's too late. "Happiness is not something you postpone for the future—it is something you design for the present," said Jim Rohn, Sunshine's favorite person to quote. To Sunshine, we are the sum total of our experiences and doing things is better than owning things. She hated the phrase, "Time is money," and would often remind the person who said it that time is far more valuable than money, so spend it wisely. Time equals our life, which means we use our time to earn the money to buy the material things we own. Since we trade our time for money (working, commuting, shopping) we should be careful about what we spend it on.

People sit on the couch (or in an office or a car stuck in traffic) watching life pass them by looking out of a window or on television. Sunshine would say to them, "Get out there and live your life and see things for yourself. Live like there is no tomorrow—because there may not be."



*This photo was taken days before she died. On this day she came to my book signing at Upstart Crow—even though it was on the second floor of the store. Earlier that day we met for the last time and she told me a few new things I did not know. I never expected her to make it to the signing, but then again, I should have known she would find a way. I miss you, Sunshine.*

## LIFE LESSON NUMBER 4

# Say Yes

Just say “yes” was Sunshine’s philosophy because she wasn’t afraid of failing, hearing “no,” or looking silly. She wouldn’t let what she couldn’t do interfere with what she could do. Sunshine believed fear held us back from our true potential, so she would try doing something every day that scared her so she was comfortable with both fear and failure—and it worked.

Things always work out and worrying about outcomes creates fear. When we just act and react we are much better at what we do.

One of Sunshine’s favorite quotes was from hockey great Wayne Gretsky. “You miss 100 percent of the shots you never take.” So she took chances because she believed it was better to try and fail than to not try at all.

What Sunshine was afraid of was missing out on an opportunity.



*This photo is of Sunshine at one of my retreats. She led a drum circle, a yoga class, and gave a speech. The funny thing is, I don’t even recall inviting her, but there she was. For many of the most important moments in my life, Sunshine was there—including when we brought our babies home from the hospital. Sunshine was the person you could count on to be there no matter what.*



# Make Memories

To Sunshine, the best gift she could give or get was a photograph. Her favorite thing to do was capture and celebrate the magic moments in her life (and yours) and share them. Since she saw so much change in her life she was aware that some things would happen only once, and she wanted to remember and revisit that moment in time long after it passed.

C. S. Lewis said, “It’s funny how day by day, nothing changes. But when you look back, everything is different.” Stopping to take a picture to slow down time allowed her to appreciate and celebrate something others may have missed. Today we have no excuse to not stop time with a picture (or video) since we have the perfect tool in our pocket or purse (a smart phone) to do so. Before social media, Sunshine sent pictures (through the mail) as a way to stay connected with people.

I know I was the recipient of hundreds of photos over the years. These pictures make me smile at the memory and kept Sunshine in the forefront of my thoughts.



*Sunshine was the most supportive friend you could have. No matter where she was or what she was doing she would find a way to be there when you needed her most. For the release of one of my books my co-author and I performed with a group of talented musicians and of course Sunshine was there. We played for four hours and Sunshine was the first to arrive and the last to leave—as usual.*

## LIFE LESSON NUMBER 6

# Don't Worry, Be Happy

Everything happens for a reason. Sometimes your seemingly bad luck turns out to be good luck in the end. Whatever happens to you may help you later on and be the best thing that could have happened in hindsight. If we could all take a page from Sunshine's book and just let go and let things happen and trust that no matter what, everything will work out, we'd have a lot less stress.

Sure, she was always upbeat and optimistic, but as she would say, the alternative is to focus on the negative and you get what you focus on. To her, attitude was everything—and a positive attitude is better than a negative one.

If we head for the light, we will be fine because where we end up is where we were supposed to be all along. Sunshine believed there are no accidents and everything—good and bad—happens for a reason.



*We BOTH look so young here. If Sunshine was afraid of anything, it was of missing out on an opportunity to connect with others. This photo was taken on my boat as we headed for a party for the members of Goal Stars, our club of goal-oriented people. Each month members would partner with someone and Sunshine was always the one people picked.*

# Live Your Truth

Don't be so concerned with what others think of you. Instead, you should be more concerned with what you think of yourself. In other words, live your truth.

Do what feels right. Don't worry what others will say or think. You have to live your life the way you want. You are in charge of your life. What makes you happy and brings you joy? Pursue that, and as Marsha Sinetar said, "Do what you love and the money will follow."

Sunshine's theory was it is better to give than to get. If you selflessly give others what they want you will always get what you need.

Let people know how much you care about them and they will be there when you need them most.



*This is a photo of Sunshine a couple of weeks before she passed. Even though she was just a shell of herself, she was still smiling and joking around. The photo was taken by Ruth Klampert, a cancer survivor AND a Holocaust survivor. Ruth was with Sunshine when she passed, and I'm so thankful she was.*



PART 2

# FAVORITE QUOTES

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Some of Sunshine's favorite quote  
from some of her favorite people.



## WISE WORDS

# Favorite Quotes

“Don’t wish it were easier, wish you were better.”

—JIM ROHN

“It’s not what happens to you that matters, but how you react to it that matters.”

—EPICTETUS

“If you have time to whine and complain about something, then you have the time to do something about it.”

—ANTHONY J. D’ANGELO

“Life is trying things to see if they work.”

—RAY BRADBURY

“Don’t let what you can’t do interfere with what you can do.”

—JOHN WOODEN

“We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give.”

—WINSTON CHURCHILL



*Sunshine was always sending cartoons, newspaper clippings, and quotes through the mail. (Oh how she would have loved social media.) During one of our long lunches I asked Sunshine to give me her five favorite quotes (by others) and the following are the five she recited verbatim and without hesitation—plus one more... which was so Sunshine.*



PART 3

# BOOK EXCERPT

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Here are a few pages from the  
award-winning novel by Lee Silber  
and available from Amazon



1956

# The Unwanted Girl

EIGHTEEN YEARS OLD

Sunshine had been through a lot of storms in her young life—both literally and figuratively—but the fierceness of the weather on a summer evening in Biloxi was downright frightening. She was accustomed to winter storms where everyone hunkered down to wait out the snow in the north, but this was her first severe storm down south, and her first hurricane—and it was going to be a doozy.

She was holed up in a small motel room with three other teenage girls. The four decided to watch television to distract themselves from the potential disaster of the developing storm just outside their flimsy door. But the gale force winds must have blown the antenna from the roof because the stations were static instead of the black-and-white picture they had hoped for. The resourceful girls wheeled the bulky television across the room to use as a wedge to prevent the front door from being blown wide open.

The wind blew the rain sideways against the windows of the small room and sounded like machine-gun fire. The immediacy of the storm had all four on edge. The sporadic thunderclaps in the distance made the girls' hair stand up and reminded them the worst was still to come. The howl from the wind was so loud it seemed as if a train was passing by at full speed. The clanking of the rigging on the boats just a block away meant the raging ocean was right around the corner.

The two-story motel seemed safe since it was made of brick and the

front faced away from the nearby harbor. The girls were given a corner room on the second floor just in case there was a storm surge and the first floor flooded—which had happened to the motel in the past. The motel manager checked on them earlier in the afternoon and assured them they would be fine, but the truth was, none of them wanted to be there in the first place.

Since the girls were traveling as part of a group selling magazine subscriptions throughout the South, they couldn't just hop in a car and outrun the storm since they didn't have a car, or control over their time. Instead, their boss (and probably his boss at the Union Circulation Company in Atlanta) decided it was better to stay put—but only after the girls met their sales quota for the day. Sunshine was new to the group and didn't dare speak up, but the others weren't happy with how their day had played out and the danger they were in.

Since Sunshine was the newbie, the other more experienced girls insisted she be the one to go outside and see what was happening—and buy them each a Coca-Cola from the vending machine next to the lobby. At ten cents a pop, Sunshine was reluctant to spend her hard-earned cash on soda, but agreed to go for the good of the group.

Dressed only in peddle-pusher pants, a short-sleeved blouse, sneakers, and a kerchief to hold back her hair, Sunshine forced open the door and was blasted by the wind and rain. She had to hold onto the railing to make her way along the balcony and down the stairs, shielding her eyes as she went.

On her way to the front office she glanced up for a second to look around and noticed the parking lot was completely empty. She feared she and the girls had been abandoned by their boss, which was exactly what had happened. The white Pontiac station wagon they arrived in



was gone, as was the motel manager's beat-up old Ford that she saw him loading up earlier in the afternoon.

Scared and angry, Sunshine put her head down and rounded the corner to where the lobby was located. The wind was steadily increasing and Sunshine watched in horror as a large portion of the motel's signage was ripped off and carried away by the storm. The lobby was locked and it looked like nobody was inside. Frightened and frustrated, Sunshine yanked hard on the door, but nothing happened. Something off to her side and behind her caught her attention and she jumped out of the way just as the soda machine was blown over and into the glass door—shattering it.

Sunshine hesitated before stepping over the glass and into the lobby. Always one to do the right thing, she decided that if she made it through the storm, anything she took would be returned or paid for when it was all over. She looked around the lobby and began to fill an empty trash can with whatever supplies she could find. She rushed back to the room—banging on the door until the girls heard her and let her in.

“You're drenched,” Dottie yelled, and forced the door shut.

Bobbi handed Sunshine a towel and asked, “What the heck is going on out there?”

Drying herself off, Sunshine smiled and said, “Well, I have some good news and I have some bad news, which do you want first?”

Kat, who was sitting on the floor with her knees to her chest asked, “What's the bad news?”

“Okay, first of all, we're all alone here at the motel.”

“Whatta ya mean, all alone?” Kat wanted to know.

“I mean, everyone left, and left us here alone. Even the motel man-

ager is gone.”

Kat pulled her knees even tighter to her chest while the other two girls paced around the room. “I can’t believe the crew leader left us here all alone. I’m gonna kill him when I see him,” Dottie said with conviction.

“You said you had some good news,” Bobbi wondered.

“Yes, I was able to get into the lobby and bring back a bunch of supplies,” Sunshine said, pointing to the trash can on the floor filled to the brim with goodies.

The girls pounced on it and pulled out several bottles of Coca-Cola, a pack of Lucky Strikes, a Zippo lighter, a Philco portable radio, two flashlights, an assortment of batteries, candles, Oreo cookies, a box of Ritz crackers, a jar of Planter’s Peanuts, and a bottle opener. The girls were thrilled with the haul and almost forgot about the storm.

Kat was the one to ask first, “What’s it like outside?”

“Obviously, it’s really windy and the rain is coming down pretty hard—and sideways. There’s nobody on the street, and the front door to the lobby just shattered, but other than that, it’s not as bad as it sounds.”

Kat wasn’t convinced. “Is the water going to cross the street and flood the first floor of the motel?”

“Even if it does, so what? We’re on the second floor,” Sunshine pointed out in as positive a tone as she could muster.

Kat just rocked back and forth on the floor.

“Let me change out of these wet clothes and I’ll tell you more about what I saw outside,” Sunshine said. She handed Kat her current issue of Life magazine she used as a sample to sell subscriptions. “Why don’t you read this?”

When Sunshine came back from the bathroom in clean, dry clothes, Dottie, Bobbi, and Kat were all sitting on one of the beds smoking cigarettes, listening to Elvis on the portable radio, and poring over Life magazine. “Look, here she is again in a Revlon ad.”

“Who are you talking about?” Sunshine asked, feeling a little left out.

“Suzy Parker, of course,” Kat replied, clearly feeling better and forgetting about her fears—for now. The sounds of the storm were still loud, but now they were familiar and not nearly as terrifying. The radio also helped to drown out the wind and rain to some degree.

“Who?” Sunshine asked.

“The model on the cover,” Dottie said, turning the magazine over so Sunshine could see. “She leads the most interesting and glamorous life.”

“Her real name isn’t Suzy, you know, it’s Cecilia,” Kat proudly pointed out.

“Is Sunshine your real name?” Bobbi asked.

“No, but it’s what I’ve been called for as long as I can remember.”

“What is your real name?” Bobbi wanted to know.

“Barbara, but nobody calls me that,” Sunshine said, watching Kat turn the pages of the magazine as she looked over her shoulder.

“Not even your mother?” Kat asked, looking up at Sunshine.

“My mother,” Sunshine said, and blew out a long breath of air. “My mother doesn’t call me anything, because I don’t talk to her anymore.”

“You don’t talk to your own mother? Really?” Dottie asked. “I call my mom every day from the road, and it ain’t cheap.”

“It’s a long story,” Sunshine sighed.

*Excerpted from chapter one of “Sunshine” by Lee Silber.*



PART 4

# BACK STORY

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Read about the author and how  
you can get a copy of the novel  
this mini book is based on



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

# Lee Silber

Lee Silber is the award-winning author of 22 books including 18 works of non-fiction, three novels, and one book of short stories. This book is a unique combination of both fact and fiction, and wouldn't have been possible without Silber's extensive experience writing in both genres. Everything up to this point in Lee's life led him to write this book—and write it for his friend.

In addition to sharing Sunshine's story in print, Silber brings her lessons to life in his presentations and by teaching by sharing innovative and insightful ways to get the most from our time and talent. Lee is a highly sought after speaker working with organizations both big and small to make a difference by encouraging audiences to think, laugh, and learn.

Lee lives in Mission Beach, California with his wife and two sons.

You can contact Lee at: [leesilber@leesilber.com](mailto:leesilber@leesilber.com)



*In the last few months of her life several different friends took turns taking her in. She asked to stay with me, but I didn't have the room. On a trip back from Palm Springs, my family and I stopped by to see her to make sure she was okay where she was staying. It's hard to tell, but she has a large bandage on her chest and was in a lot of pain—but look at that smile.*

LET THE SUNSHINE IN

# Buy The Book

This mini book comes from my award-winning novel based on the real life of my good friend, Barbara “Sunshine” Blake.

Sunshine had every reason to be miserable. She was orphaned by her parents—not because they died, but because they didn’t want her. After years of neglect and abuse in various orphanages, she set out to make it on her own.

Over her lifetime Sunshine was a single mother who made and lost a fortune, was widowed four times, had her home and all of her belongings burn to the ground, and endured a great deal of hardship. Through it all, she was the most upbeat, positive, and happy person you could ever hope to meet.

Her story is an inspiration to us all and if she were alive she would have given you a copy.

***Sunshine* is available in paperback and for Kindle on Amazon.com.**



*I won't lie to you, sales of Sunshine have been disappointing. I feel like I failed her in some way because the book didn't get into as many hands as we hoped. The goal all along was to spread her message to as many people as possible. The cost of the paperback is only \$11.00 and the Kindle version is \$2.99 and well worth it.*



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*\* If you would like to distribute this booklet to others please contact Lee Silber first.*



*Lee is available to speak to your association, organization, book club, or writer's group about Sunshine or a number of other topics.*

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