"Anyone who reads *What's Possible!* will be motivated to think the impossible." —Wolf Blitzer, CNN anchor

Daryn Kagan

Former CNN anchor and creator of the award-winning website DarynKagan.com

What's Possible!

50 True Stories of People Who Dared To Dream They Could Make a Difference

lawkinses did, then all the hard work will be worth it.

Speaking of Benjamin's family, at first I purposely didn't share with hem what I was doing. I didn't want to cause them any more pain or emind them of that awful time. They had already given me an amazing econd chance. I didn't think it was also their job to cheer me on.

I found out recently that his parents know exactly what I'm doing, and hey're very pleased. They saw a video about Zingo and are spreading he word. Now some of their friends are considering starting a Zingo ranchise in Benjamin's hometown. That makes me feel better than I can ver describe.

I don't know where Benjamin's family found the strength to give me second chance. I do know that each time a Zingo driver heads out to et someone home safely, it's a tribute to my friend, giving both our lives neaning and purpose, even as his life was way too short.

or more information go to callzingo.com.

Smooth Mooove

Adrienne Simpson,
founder and president of
Smooth Mooove Senior Relocation Services

Getting laid off from my cushy corporate executive job is one of the best things that ever happened to me. Thousands face downsizing every year. I'm here to tell you, it can lead to a larger life with more meaning and purpose than you ever imagined.

I'm clear on this. I was a successful executive, focused, committed, and all the other things we learn in school that we need to be to get ahead. And I loved the life of an important job, travel, and an expense account. You can imagine my surprise then when I was downsized out of corporate leadership positions, not once but twice!

The first time, I had worked myself up over the course of 20 years from the position of clerk-typist to director of operations for a national health insurance company and was in charge of 300 people. I loved my people and my people loved me. Then the layoff notice came.

One thing they don't teach you in executive school is how to pick yourself up from the smoking crater that used to be your career. I was left to my own devices to figure that one out.

At that time I lived with my husband and daughter in Detroit. My job loss was an utter shock, but I figured I'd find another job quickly. Wrong!

y prospects were bleak, and to make matters worse my husband decided divorce me.

I had to get out of town. So I packed my daughter in the car and eaded to anywhere, which happened to be Atlanta. We were going to ve girl power and take on anything that came our way.

I was able to get a sales rep job in Atlanta, and in no time I was the p salesperson in the nation for another major health care corporation. hen the director of operations job opened, I grabbed it and quickly turned the whole corporation around. But wouldn't you know it, a few years later I was downsized again!

> lidn't want to move past the life of a corporate xecutive, but life came nd moved me along to a better place.

This time I hit the wall hard. I went from the executive life, perks, and income to being unemployed—again. I was very epressed and remember many days sending my daughter off to school, en going back to bed. I did this not for days but for months. I felt that y worth to a huge degree was dependent on what I did. Since I was oing nothing, I was nothing in my own eyes. So much for girl power. stead I felt like a meek little squeak. I knew I was finished.

Then a simple family event began to change my world. It started with y wonderful mother. Mom had moved to Atlanta to help me with my ughter as I rebuilt my life as a single mother. But once my daughter ew older, Mom decided her work here was done and she wanted to ove back home to Michigan. She wanted help with the move, and nce I was just sitting around depressed, doing nothing, I looked like the vious choice.

I figured I'd just look up a seniors' moving service and it would it all. I needed somebody to help me sort, clean, and pack and do it th a sensitive touch. News flash—there was no such service. I had to it myself.

I learned a lot with my mom's move. Moving seniors can involve any steps. It's not just the packing and moving. There are also clearing, rting, organizing, transporting, unpacking, estate sales, antique praisal, donations, heirloom delivery, cleaning, and primping the house

for its next life. There's also counseling older folks who can be very uncomfortable with change.

While I was doing all this work, my mother was going to church, telling all her friends, "I'm moving and I don't have to lift a finger. My daughter is doing everything!"

Once Mom was settled back in Michigan, those same friends started calling me, saying they needed help. Without even realizing it I started my new business and new life. Smooth Mooove is the moving company that specializes in moving seniors.

It took all the money I could muster from severance, unemployment, savings, retirement, and just plain scraping to buy a 14-foot box truck to launch the company. But the business exploded! Even without advertising, the business has grown 20 to 35 percent each year. I now have 12 to 20 people on my payroll at any time, depending on how many moves we're handling.

Even better, I found my life purpose. Moving seniors is a very tender responsibility. It can be traumatic for people who are leaving and grieving for the home they've lived in for most of their adult lives. If their grown children have careers and families of their own and can't be on hand to help, seniors can feel overwhelmed and admit, "I can't do this. I need some help." Smooth Mooove is that help.

When you ask regular movers to unpack, they take everything out of the box and leave it on the floor. We put everything where it is supposed to be. In fact we don't even call it unpacking. We call it resettling.

We set up the display of family pictures; we make sure the person knows where the television remote is. One of our trademark touches is to make the bed. We like to make sure that when we leave our clients, they can sleep, shower, and have a meal. We treat each client as if he or she were our own grandparent.

Of course, there were many lessons to learn in creating my first company. I had the customer service skills down from my corporate life, but being a mover, counselor, adviser, truck driver, confidante, motivator, and surrogate child was all new to me.

I also learned from all the elderly. For instance, it's important to involve them in the process and keep them involved as much as possible. Also I recommend giving a newly widowed person six to nine months

grieve and adjust to the loss of a spouse before encouraging a move. shing elderly people to suit your schedule is a bad policy. If they refuse nove but staying put isn't a viable option, get pastors and doctors olved; advice coming from these respected figures is more likely to accepted.

Maybe it's just part of human nature. Most of us don't like to move. now I didn't want to move past the life of a corporate executive. Life ne and moved me along to a better place. I like to think I'm doing the ne for my senior clients, moving them to a place and surroundings that l actually serve them better.

I wouldn't sell this business for $20 million! I get more pleasure than an say providing our seniors with dignity, respect, and understanding pport. If I can help take one obstacle out of their lives, I consider it a nooth Mooove.

more information go to wemoveseniors.com.

Dazyn's Takeaways

I love the way Adrienne Simpson has reinvented herself. Reinvention is really the chapter almost all of us eventually face. The opportunity could result from a corporate layoff, a divorce, or finding yourself with an empty nest once the kids grow up.

Eventually we each will face the time when the thing we did, the thing that defined us, goes away. Then what? It's time to reinvent.

It can either be the most amazing opportunity to build an even more meaningful life or it can beat you. It's a choice.

The Do-Good Junkie

James Burgett,
recovering drug addict, computer and people recycler

I've been homeless. I've been hooked on heroin and speed. But on the way to finding new purpose in my life, I've found a new thing to be hooked on: recycling computers—and people society has given up on.

If you look at my life beginning with my dysfunctional childhood, you could easily call me a bipolar, drug-abusing lunatic with a history of violence. I've become much more self-aware and now have better coping mechanisms as an adult. My safety net has been finding that it's cool to be addicted to helping people.

I now run the Alameda County Computer Resource Center. I have a building full of thrown-away people taking thrown-away stuff and turning it into something everybody wants: computers.

My challenges started with a childhood that was severely dysfunctional by any standards. I bounced around quite a bit. By the time I was 17, I had lived in more than 17 different houses. My parents divorced when I was young. I lived mainly with my mother and a series of stepfathers, including one who beat me.

I tried life with my father, which wasn't much better. At one time he was a successful software engineer. By the time I lived with him and my stepmother, he was involved in a cult and battling mental illness.