

Two-Time Olympic Gold Medalist
JULIE FOUDY

LOVE
it
AND
LIVE it.

Where the
Magic Happens.

CHOOSE TO MATTER

BEING COURAGEOUSLY
AND FABULOUSLY **YOU**

LAUGHTER
permitted.

ESPN **W.**

Because
YOU CAN.

HOW THIS BOOK HAPPENED

I have always thought,
wouldn't it be fun to write a book?

Not a *let-me-tell-you-about-all-the-things-I-have-overcome* book
(from a middle class white kid in suburban Orange County,
California . . . hmmm).

Definitely not an X's and O's sporty book.

And certainly not a *look-at-just-how-perfect/cute/adorable-I-am* book.



(I JUST BURPED. . .)

Nope. The book I have always wanted to write is for the teenager starting her journey, or the woman at a critical fork in her journey. It is for every person, wherever you may be on your path, who needs a little nudge. Who needs a little courage. Who needs someone to tell them they can do it. Because you can.

This I know: **Life doesn't just happen. You happen to life.** You dictate what you want out of life. And good things follow. So many of these life lessons were taught to me by a bunch of amazing, funny, strong women on the U.S. Women's National soccer team. They taught me the value of being courageous, dreaming big, growing daily, and finding joy in all we do. They taught me the value of acting instead

of reacting. We all need those types of friends and people in our life. They're the people who push us to feel more, and be more. People who encourage us to take off the label of what you think you should be, and instead just be the person you want to be: label-free. And we need those types of examples in our life so we are inspired to push ourselves forward.

In honor of what I've been preaching to our Julie Foudy Sports Leadership Academy (JFSLA) girls for years:

Don't just dream it;
sing it (say it out loud!). . . .

I did. To Disney Publishing (gulp).

I said we need a book for teen girls and young women that speaks to them authentically. Not princess-ey, not sparkly, just real—a book about finding your voice, thinking differently, and empowering others. A book that chats with incredible, silly, grounded women with diverse backgrounds who share their journey of growth so that other young women can live courageously as well.

And what do you know? Disney Publishing actually said, "YES." To which I thought, *Oh dear lord*. Then I took a deep breath, smiled, and thought, *Well we might as well rock the heck out of this first one before they change their minds*.

So we summoned a group of amazing women to come chat with me . . . feet up, shoes off. **#SockTalks** we call them (thankfully, not a scratch-and-sniff book). I spoke with the following women:



Good Morning America cohost
ROBIN ROBERTS.



Softball star and television trailblazer
JESSICA MENDOZA.

Soccer superstars
MIA HAMM and
ALEX MORGAN.



Eleven-time NCAA Softball
championship coaching legend
SUE ENQUIST.



Facebook superwoman and
LeanIn.Org founder
SHERYL SANDBERG.



Purveyor of positivity **AMY LISS**,
who was born with cerebral palsy.

Award-winning Irish scientist,
philanthropist, and teen protégé
SOPHIE HEALY-THOW.



Beautifully inspirational teenager from
Afghanistan, **FAHIMA NOORI.**



Seventeen-time (yes, seventeen)
Paralympic Games medalist
TATYANA MCFADDEN.

This book is about getting comfortable when you're uncomfortable, choosing to matter, and, equally important, being authentically you. This book is a road map to help you unleash your most courageous self. There is a method to the madness . . . or at least I like to pretend there is. I, along with the incredible women involved in this book, tell stories, share lessons, and pass on some insight and wisdom. My goal in all of this is to make you laugh, make you think, make you excited to embrace life and make you eat more donuts. But before we jump in, here's a little bit on how the book is structured.

CHAPTER 2

FINDING THE CONFIDENT YOU

“Become so wrapped up in something you forget to be afraid.”

—Lady Bird Johnson

So, now to that pesky *choosing* part of the quote “Leadership isn’t a matter of chance, but a matter of choice.” The part about having the *confidence* to say, *Yes, I can do this . . .* having the confidence to take that step forward even when everything in your body screams DON’T MOVE; and having the confidence to raise your hand when you’re not sure you are ready to put yourself out there. We’ve all been there. And *ahhh*, it is a terrible feeling. Until you recognize you are not alone. You just have to figure out strategies to get through self-doubt. Because once you do, you find out you are not just surviving, but thriving. My personal trick on how to find confidence when it was hiding was to do something totally dorky, because, well, I’m a big dork.

You may not have seen that *Saturday Night Live* skit where the fictional self-help guru Stuart Smalley does his daily affirmations by looking into the mirror and saying aloud to himself,

“I am good enough, I am smart enough, and gosh darn it, people like me.”

(If you haven’t seen it, don’t worry . . . the only thing you need to know is pour on the cheese.)

Well, I would do that into a mirror (I cannot believe I am confessing this out loud). I’d say it to myself jokingly *of course*, but also nudging myself in a healthy way. Go ahead, try it. Go look into the mirror and say it with great authority, full cheese, with a big grin:

“I am good enough, I am smart enough, and gosh darn it, people like me.”

The point is that finding confidence takes some self-talk. (*Actually, that’s a lie. It takes lots of self-talk.*) And talking to yourself is not the most natural or normal thing to many people. But, it’s like building a muscle—it takes work and effort. Having doubts about your ability is normal. You are not alone. In fact, everyone at some stage of his or her life—actually, at many stages—feels an overriding sense of, “OH, MY GOODNESS! What the heck am I doing here? I cannot do this.” (It’s how I felt my first ten years on the National Team.) The issue is, what do you do about it? Do you agree with that doubting voice in your head, or do you figure out ways to turn the negative thoughts into positive ones?

Meet **JESSICA MENDOZA**, an all-American from Stanford University; she’s also a two-time Olympic medalist (gold in 2004, silver in 2008) with the U.S. Softball Women’s National Team, and is now an ESPN commentator for baseball (yes, as in Major League Baseball [MLB]). This is so rad: Jessica became the first woman ever to call a playoff game for MLB and now

the respect of people listening to me, I need to build that relationship for all of my teammates.”

THE ONE HOLDING THE UMBRELLA? THAT IS NOT ME!

Yes, leadership can and will evolve . . . Alex has grown into that bigger leadership role and feels more confident in knowing when to talk, and how much to talk. But I love that Mia and Alex always keep coming back to their style, their personality. That is critical. One of the hardest parts of finding your style is being OK with your style. Not trying to be someone or something that you are not.

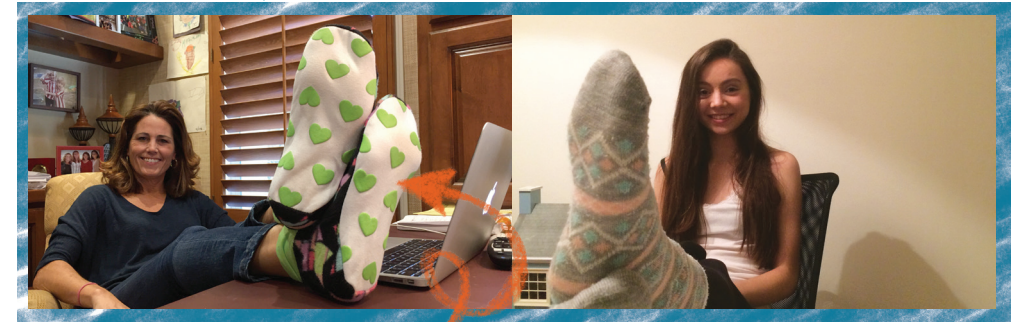
Eighteen-year-old **SOPHIE HEALY-THOW** is an Irish scientist who won Google’s top award for teenage scientists (as in *top in the world*), along with her friends Ciara Judge and Emer Hickey. The trio investigated how natural bacteria in plants could be used as a growth aid for crops. And after they did over twenty thousand experiments (yes, I just said twenty thousand), they found out that they could actually increase crop yield by 50 percent with the bacteria. Not to be Captain Obvious here, but *this was a huge discovery*. (And one that **EXPERTS** told them couldn’t happen, wouldn’t happen. Yep. More on that later.)

Sophie took time away from studying for her high school finals to discuss science, leadership, and life **#SockTalksKype** style.

I first asked Sophie how she best defined her personal leadership style. Her response:

SOPHIE: “I guess the only way I can describe my leadership style is when you see a tour guide, and they’re holding the umbrella in the air, and they’ve got the group following them? I eventually realized that’s who I’m NOT. I’m not the person in front of the group with the umbrella telling everybody where to go [Sophie laughs].

“I think my leadership style is more of a quiet leader. I like pushing everybody forward. I like making sure that everybody’s individual strengths and talents and tools are being seen, and that as a leader I can make everybody else a leader, too.”



I WORE MY LUCK-OF-THE IRISH
GREEN HEART FAVIES FOR SOPHIE...



Maybe your style is louder and more verbal. Maybe it is more cerebral. You must think and process before you act. Maybe it is leading by example as Mia talked about. Whatever it is, make it you.

Go find your style. Go find your way. Leadership is many things, and most important, it is **YOU**.



that—I'm not gonna sugarcoat it. It was *hard*. I was very good about writing a journal: the first day is OK, but the second day, third day's really bad. I'd write down little things that would bother me, and it was my personal journal on how to go through all these months and weeks of treatment. But I really found the key for me was *positivity*. Optimism is like a muscle that gets stronger with use. You've got to use that muscle."

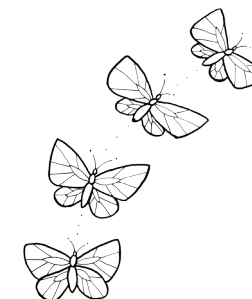


WE STUCK WITH THE ANIMAL THEMES . . .
SO YOU COULD HEAR US ROAR.

The key for me was positivity. Robin consistently replaced bad thoughts with good ones. She chose to react to a terrible situation in a positive way, even when things were at their worst. Train your brain.

- **TRAIN THE BUTTERFLIES:** For many, many years on the National Team, I would get very being nervous before games, feeling like I did not belong on the team or maybe

nervous about someone in the stands who was there watching me. Or maybe just not feeling up to the task at the moment. I used to dread the butterflies until the same awesome Dr. Hacker said to me, "Butterflies are a great thing. They mean **YOU CARE**. Now just teach them to fly in formation."



One of my strategies on how to channel that energy in a positive way was my hair band again (a quick reminder that nerves are a great thing and to embrace the pressure of that moment). And **Billie Jean King**. The legendary tennis player and social activist is a friend and has always been a wonderful supporter and adviser to our U.S. Women's National soccer team. I remember telling "The Kinger" (my nickname for her because she is pure royalty) before the 1999 World Cup here in the United States that there was a lot of pressure on the team to do well. To carry the tournament. To fill the stands. To show the world what a women's sporting event should look like. She looked at me with a huge smile, as if to say *of course there is you dummy . . . that is what makes it so great* and said (well, roared in my favorite BJK voice dripping with passion):

"PRESSURE IS A PRIVILEGE FOUDY! You've done the work, now go enjoy it. People would give so much to be where you all are. GO BE GREAT."

I thought, **YOU'RE DAMN RIGHT IT IS.** It's so true. Embrace that. *Pressure Is a Privilege* became our mantra for the entire '99 World Cup tournament. And wouldn't you know it, from then on, pressure (and butterflies) became something I craved.

- **BREATHE AND BELIEVE:** Take a deep breath. Laugh out loud. Smile. Remember, we all go through these insecure moments. You are not some freak of nature.

Self-doubt, when channeled properly, has defined the best in the world. It is what pushes them to be better, smarter, faster, and fitter.

- **HAVE A STRATEGY:** And not just any strategy. Find a strategy that works for **YOU**. Recognize when these moments of doubt creep in and proactively counter them. This may take time to find, as strategies are personal, as Mia and Alex shared with me. Here is what works for them:

MIA: “For me it is just trying to simplify what I am doing because I think a lot of the times you feel it’s this merry-go-round that’s going so fast, you’re just trying jump on at the right moment. And rather than worrying about everything that’s going on, just breaking it down to one . . . simple . . . task . . . at . . . a . . . time.”

ALEX: “I do think being able to control *what you can control* at the time is something that you can always rely on, something I always fell back on. There’s some things that are just out of your control, but focus on the things you can control: your attitude, your work rate.”

FAKE IT 'TIL YOU MAKE IT

Or you can always try this—it’s one of my personal favorite strategies, and we perfected it on the National Team: **FAKE IT 'TIL YOU MAKE IT (FITYMI)**. Similar to my looking into the mirror and doing my silly Stuart Smalley impression, it is crazy how well *fake it 'til you make it* works when you try it.

It is part of the “**Train your Brain**” concept mentioned

earlier. If your brain can only process one thought at a time, then dictate what goes in that pretty little head of yours. It only took me about three decades to come to this epiphany, so I am trying to give you a head start. Dictating which thoughts go into your brain is really the trick to unlocking that reservoir of confidence inside you (because that reservoir is indeed there). Dictating is the operative word here. You keep it positive, and you make sure it stays positive. Don’t let anyone, anything, or any comment deter that goal. Easier said than done, you may be saying. Perhaps. Or maybe your confidence just needs some convincing . . . even if you have to **FAKE IT 'TIL YOU MAKE IT** to convince it to come on out. Exhibit A:

The scene: the Rose Bowl on a scorching hot July summer day playing in front of a sold-out crowd of 90,185.

The game: the finals of the 1999 Women’s World Cup tournament, and we are tied 0-0 versus China after 120 minutes of regulation and overtime play.

The situation: Penalty kicks are going to decide which country hoists the World Cup trophy.

The reality: *ARGH. Penalty kicks to decide it?!* I say to myself. No soccer player ever wants penalty kicks to determine the outcome of a game, let alone a World Cup final.

The Fake It 'Til You Make It solution: Before the PK’s start, you can hear statements like:
 “We are fine.” “We are so fine.” “The Chinese are tired.” “Look at them.” “They are *exhausted*.” (We had no idea if they were tired.)
 “Gosh, it is not even that hot. I so wish it was even hotter.” (It actually was so hot, it felt like my cleats were melting into the field.)
 “We have been practicing penalty kicks tons.” (Lie.)
 “The Chinese are in trouble.” (That one we truly believed.)
 “I love penalty kicks. I LOVE PENALTY KICKS!”

EXERCISE:

Thanks to Eleanor and Elly, I try every day to do something that scares me. And now you will (eventually you will thank me for this). I will ease you into it. At every Julie Foudy Sports Leadership Academy, we kick off the first evening session with a fun game called “I Am Comfortable with Crazy.” Try it.

Start first with finding a friend. Turn to your friend and perform one of the following

I AM COMFORTABLE WITH crazy ACTIVITIES:

1. LAUGH WITHOUT SMILING. (YES, I SAID NO SMILING!)
2. SING YOUR FAVORITE SONG OF ALL TIME, BUT IN YOUR BEST BOOMING OPERA VOICE.
3. AND MY ALL-TIME FAVORITE . . . YOUR BW. YOUR BEST OF YOUR WORST DANCE. THAT’S RIGHT. PERFORM YOUR ABSOLUTE WORST DANCE TO THE BEST OF YOUR ABILITY . . . MEANING THE BADDER THE BETTER. IT DOESN’T HAVE TO BE LONG, IT JUST HAS TO BE BAD. THE BW (BEST WORST) WAS A U.S. NATIONAL TEAM TRADITION BY THE WAY. WE SPENT FAR TOO MANY HOURS IN LOCKER ROOMS AND HOTEL ROOMS DANCING REALLY POORLY. SHOCKINGLY, I AM A NATURAL AT THIS.

Now that you are approaching a comfortable state (though you are still not done), find someone you don’t know well. (That is the scary part; it has to be someone you do not know well—or even better, that you don’t know at all. Bring a friend with you if you need support.) Do another one of the activities, preferably one you haven’t done yet. And repeat.

JULIE FOUDY is a two time Olympic gold medalist, two time World Cup champion, and a former captain and midfielder for the United States Women’s national soccer team. She founded The Julie Foudy Sports Leadership Academy which is a unique, transformational soccer and lacrosse camp for girls twelve to eighteen years old. Julie is currently a reporter and analyst for ESPN, contributor and writer for espnW, motivational speaker, proud mother of two children, Isabel and Declan, and the best chocolate-chip pancake maker in the entire universe (source: Isabel and Declan).

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#CHOOSETOMATTER

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This is an uncorrected chapter sampler. It is not a finished book and is not expected to look like one. Errors in spelling, page length, format, etc., will be corrected when the book is published several months from now. Direct quotes should be checked against the final printed book.



JULIE Foudy

taps into the wisdom of other incredible leaders. They chat—shoes off, feet up (#socktalks)—about their vulnerabilities, their growth, and their approach to living boldly.



Among those interviewed are:

ROBIN ROBERTS, *Good Morning America* cohost

SHERYL SANDBERG, LeanIn.org founder and Facebook superwoman

ALEX MORGAN and **MIA HAMM**, soccer superstars

SOPHIE HEALY-THOW, the teenager who's an award-winning Irish scientist and philanthropist

JESSICA MENDOZA, women's softball star and ESPN baseball analyst

TATYANA MCFADDEN, seventeen-time Paralympic Games medalist

SUE ENQUIST, the eleven-time NCAA National Championship-winning coach of UCLA's women's softball team

AMY LISS, purveyor of positivity with cerebral palsy

FAHIMA NOORI, beautifully inspirational teenager from Afghanistan

With a nickname like “**Loudy Foudy**,” it’s no wonder Julie wants to scream her message at the top of her lungs.

Actually, **SHE’S SINGING IT**, which is why there’s that loud buzzing in your ears right now.

