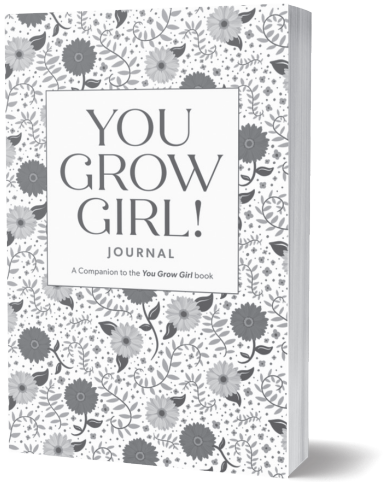
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YOU GROW GIRL!

Plant and Pursue the **Power of You**

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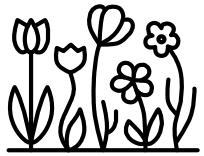
This book is dedicated to all the people who have helped us grow along the way—family, friends, mentors, teachers, leaders, pastors, teammates, and everyone we learn from in all aspects of life. And most importantly, it's dedicated to YOU, your growth, and your purpose. Thank you for planting and pursuing the power of you with us!

– Julie and Amy



CHAPTER 9

Explore the Possibilities



This last element of the CULTIVATE structure makes our hearts leap with joy when we consider what is ahead for you. As we think about exploration and possibilities, all we can envision is the unlimited potential of *you* coming to life.

So what does it really mean to explore? It means adventure. It means to examine something in order to find out more. Explorers go where no one has gone before, blazing new trails and experimenting. Stories of exploration captivate us and remind us to live fully alive.

Let's start with one modern-day explorer, Alyssa Azar.

Alyssa was born into an adventurous family; her father was a guide on the Kokoda Track in Papua New Guinea. At age five, she joined her father as he led his clients up for a trek. She begged her father to begin climbing more challenging routes with him. He supported her, and she started achieving some incredible feats. She completed the Kokoda Track when she was only eight years old. She then climbed Kilimanjaro at age fourteen. Next, Alyssa wanted to conquer Mount Everest. After multiple attempts, Alyssa summited the peak of Mount Everest at only nineteen. From there, she kept going and completed the amazing feat of summiting from both the south and north sides, becoming the youngest woman to do so at age twenty-one. WOW!

Her next adventure was to start a podcast called *Girls Can Do Scary Things Too*. The idea came on her return to Australia when she told her younger sister's eight- and nine-year-old classmates about the experience of climbing Everest and saw how much the stories impacted them. The podcast is all about assuring young girls that they can do anything![11]

Now, think of the opposite of exploring what's possible. You may think of words like impossible, unfeasible, unlikely, long shot. These words are extremely disempowering. When we live in this space, it looks like disappointment and regret. Some people stay home and never try

11 Sahar Aman, "7 Modern Female Explorers Who Inspire Us," Tourradar, March 5, 2019, https://www.tourradar.com/days-to-come/7-modern-female-explorers-who-inspire-us/.

anything new. They let their fear hold them back, and they turn away from the visions that come through their minds and burn in their hearts. If they see an opportunity they make excuses about why they are not ready, and they certainly don't prepare and train. Most of all, they do not love themselves.

We don't want this for you, so let's shift back to exploring the possibilities! Even as we share these examples, we recognize that exploring doesn't happen without obstacles, detours, and sometimes darkness. Our vision and purpose must stay in view; we must keep taking steps forward, even if they are small. We can climb over, go around, or push through the obstacles in our path, just like the ladies who will follow.

A female entrepreneur we both admire is Sara Blakely, the founder of Spanx. As we read *Success* magazine's article from March 2023, the article shared that Sara got the idea for Spanx in 1998 when she was selling fax machines door to door. She wanted to get rid of her panty lines when she wore lightweight pants, so she "cut off the feet of her pantyhose and wore the cropped pantyhose under her pants to smooth the lines." She knew she wasn't the first person to ever do this, but she calls this her 'aha' moment. She had been planning and visualizing and dreaming of a big idea and she knew this was it! She knew at that moment that she had to take her idea and bring it to life. *Success* magazine continues,

> "The reason I believe I took the idea and ran with it was because of all of the pre-work I had done," says

> Blakely, referring to the *in-depth visualization* she had done for an idea—*the* idea—to come into her life. "I knew I wanted my life to be different than it currently was, so I took inventory of my strengths and weaknesses. I recognized that one of my strengths was selling. I really enjoyed it and knew I was good at it."

She knew she was great at sales, and she wanted to start selling her own product—not someone else's. She wanted to sell to millions of people, and she wanted it to make them feel good. Before she ever came up with the idea for Spanx, she already had manifested her dream—she wrote about it, she believed in it, and she took big action:

> I wrote that specifically in my journal, and I just kept looking for when it was going to show up in my life. I was on high alert. The day I cut the feet out of my pantyhose, I immediately started pursuing it. I didn't know if that idea was going to ultimately be "the one," but I was immediately in motion after that happened.[12]

Another example of seeing a problem, having an idea for a solution, and discovering what's possible is the journey of Melanie Perkins, the co-founder of Canva.

12 Jill Becker, "Shaping Sara Blakely: Meet the Billionaire Founder of Spanx," *Success*, March 31, 2023, https://www.success.com/shaping-sara-blakely-meet-the-billionaire-founder-of-spanx/.

Melanie is a former graphic design tutor who noticed a common struggle among students trying to master complex software like Adobe Photoshop. She wanted to create a platform that made graphic design easy and accessible for everyone, and that turned into what is now the design program called Canva. Like so many entrepreneurs and creators, Melanie faced many rejections along the way. Despite countless "no's" from investors, she kept going. Canva is now used by millions globally, helping transform the way design is approached and executed. What a great example of a small idea turning into a worldwide phenomenon![13] If we can successfully use it, you know it's easy!

These are examples of women entrepreneurs who explored the possibilities in their business as well as other areas of their life. There are thousands and thousands of women throughout history we can look to for inspiration in this area. They are all planting and pursuing their power in different ways, and we believe it is valuable to seek out diverse examples. I (Amy) found it helpful to learn about women in history who broke new ground. I met Linda Sittig, who writes books about strong women in history and also has a blog by that title. The first of her books I read was *Cut from Strong Cloth*. It is about a woman in 1861 whose path through entrepreneurship

13 Alex Konrad, "Canva Uncovered: How a Young Australian Kitesurfer Built a $3.2 Billion (Profitable!) Startup Phenom," *Forbes*, December 11, 2019, https://www.forbes.com/sites/alexkonrad/2019/12/11/inside-canva-profitable-3-billion-startup-phenom/.

was blocked many times over. Ultimately, she succeeded through her many hardships. Pursuing other examples of strong women and their visions helped me explore the possibilities connected to my own.

Whether it is in business, science, motherhood, partnership, politics, medicine, or technology, learning about women exploring possibilities helps us see the infinite nature of possibility within all areas of our lives.



Seed planting pause:

Look up two or more women from the options below (or choose your own) and learn more about how they explored the possibilities in their lives. This is a list we put together to represent different areas of impact, and there are limitless other women you can learn from. It could be someone sitting right next to you, or it could be someone you studied about in a history class. Take this time to discover a couple new examples to fuel your own ongoing exploration.

Learn more about Indra Nooyi, Lisa Nichols, Christine Darden, Katherine Johnson, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Malala Yousafzai, Amanda Gorman, Reshma Saujani, Susan Catherine Koerner, Laura Boccanfuso, Shonda Rhimes, or your selections. A list like this could go on for hundreds of pages. The point is to examine the beautiful examples that exist all over the world today and in history.

Take five minutes each month to study two women and write down things you notice about the way they explored possibilities in their lives. We encourage you to create a monthly practice. In one year, you will have learned about twenty-four different women by investing a mere two hours.

Explore *your* possibilities.

Scientists have discovered that the best predictor of creative output is capturing.[14] People who pay attention and capture their passing ideas, even if they are small or weird or seem stupid at first, are significantly more likely to turn them into something real.

Some of your ideas may never go anywhere, but others may inspire you to further nourish and water them and give them an opportunity to come into the light. Let's call each idea you have an Idea Seed. Write these seeds down. ~~Now that you have created~~ the habit of capturing them, we suggest bringing a regular cadence to look-

14 Robert Epstein and Victoria Phan, "Which Competencies Are Most Important for Creative Expression?" *Creativity Research Journal* 24 no. 4 (November 2012): 278–282, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10400419.2012.726579.

ing at them, like once a month or once a quarter. You can and should regularly reorganize the order of the list, prioritize the ideas that energize you, and move others down on the list. You might delete the ideas that no longer fit with your vision of success, or just keep them at the bottom for future review. Just because something isn't going to sprout now doesn't mean it never will. This is all a part of exploring the possibilities. You may even group Idea Seeds together into your own seed packet of related ideas; those passing ideas that seemed insignificant, small, or weird at first may not have been much separately, but together can become something special and build a bigger garden.

To be sure your ideas have a chance to grow and thrive, start capturing.



Seed planting pause:

Grab a piece of paper or start a note on your phone and call it *Idea Seeds*. Any idea counts as a seed.

When something pops into your head, add it to the list. Continue to add to the list as ideas come to you—the longer the list, the more possibilities and combinations.

Your ideas are a gift to the world, but they can't exist until you capture and put energy into developing them.

Your ideas can't grow without your taking the time to nourish them.

Begin planting.

Wow, look at all the possibilities to explore! How do you decide which seeds to plant and cultivate?



Seed planting pause:

Look back at what you just created, the single seed ideas and the idea seed packets. Which ones energize you the most?

Which ones are aligned with the vision you created in Chapter 6?

Now you are ready for action! The ideas you just captured are the ones you will plant and pursue. What will you do first? Get specific about how you will pursue your ideas. Each seed will likely have an action attached to it, so capture those actions in a way that works for you—on your to-do list, in your planner, on your phone, in your journal, wherever it needs to be in order for progress to continue. Get moving and start tackling your ideas one at a time. Notice and appreciate your progress as you go, and let it inspire you to keep moving forward. One step, one action at a time.

Trust that the idea seeds that take root are meant for you. You are the best person to accomplish your ideas. That is the power of you!

YOU ARE THE BEST PERSON TO ACCOMPLISH YOUR IDEAS. THAT IS THE POWER OF YOU!

I (Julie) was on the Peloton the other day for a ride by Ally Love called "Sundays with Love". The ride was all about love, connection, and belief, and it was so inspirational. I am the girl who is typically groaning through the rides because they are so hard for me, but this time as we were nearing the final push, Ally shared a story I hadn't heard before. It inspired me so much and kept me going. I knew it needed to be in this section. The story is about a king who wakes up every morning to admire his beautiful garden. One morning he noticed something odd; everything in his garden had died. He went out onto the balcony and asked the pine tree, "Why have you given up?" and the pine tree replied that he wasn't as beautiful as the rose bush. He went over to the rose bush and asked, "Why aren't you blooming bright?" and the rose bush replied that he couldn't give the king fruits like the fig tree. The king then moved over to the fig tree and asked, "Why no more fruit?" and the fig tree said that he just wasn't as strong as the oak. He moved to the oak and asked, "Why?" and the oak said, "When I looked around, what I was offering wasn't good enough." The king walked around the garden and found a tiny green

plant that was thriving and asked, "Amongst all of this death and lack of belief, why are you still thriving?" and the green plant said, "If you wanted a pine, if you wanted a rose, if you wanted a fig, if you wanted an oak, you would have planted those, but you planted me, because you wanted me for me."

WOW. These words moved me, and I hope they move you, too. This story brings us back to the concept of comparison, which we have touched on several times. We keep returning to this topic because comparison often steals our joy and holds us back from growth. Comparing ourselves to others stops us from thriving; stops us from being exactly as we are and were created to be. We have the power to look at others in admiration and support and do the same for ourselves. There is freedom when we can see the unique beauty and strength in ourselves and others.

We are not fig trees, but we can admire and support the fig for its soft sweetness.

We are not oaks, but we can admire and support the oak that symbolizes safety, strength, and resilience.

We are not roses, but we can admire and support the rose for its soft petals, rich colors, beautiful scent, and even its thorns, which protect it.

You are your own unique tree, flower, or other plant waiting to take root, bloom, grow, and thrive in the place, time, and style that is right for you.

Own your power.

Take advantage of the present. The past is done, and the future is yours to create.

You can cultivate new growth now.

We all have powerful possibilities within us, and they are FOR US; we just have to find and be open to them.

You're never too old, and it's never too late. At the end of their lives, people do not regret the things they tried. They regret the things they did not try. So go explore the possibilities. The world needs the power of you!

YOU GROW GIRL!

Afterword

Thank you for investing the time to read this book and cultivate together.

Now that you've finished reading, you've reached the beginning. We want this ending to be your beginning of new exploration and growth.

We want you to have a new community to support you and cheer you on.

The key is YOU. We titled the book *You Grow Girl!* on purpose.

YOU are the only one who can plant and pursue the power of you.

We are here with you, and we look forward to exploring the possibilities together.

Visit www.you-grow-girl.com for additional resources for the journey.

About the Authors



We would love for you to continue to grow with us! Here's how we can stay connected.

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