

# Author en-lightens in visit

Are there "dragons" in your life dragging you down? There are four L's that can help lighten the load, according to author, professional coach and motivational speaker Ann Ernst, who advises you counter that dragon by releasing your inner, mischievous imp.

She brought her message of optimism to the Hanson Public Library Thursday, Sept 29, as she discussed her book "The Lightness of Being You," a self-affirming guide to living a more enjoyable life.

The Newington, Conn., resident is founder of The Fox-hill Group, a consulting firm specializing in organizational and leadership development.



"This is bliss for me," she told the small group of area residents attending the author talk and book signing sponsored by the Hanson Library Trustees. "I'm just an ordinary woman who did something that I think is extraordinary — I wrote a book and I had it published. I majored in math in college so I did not have to write term papers."

What changed her path was the day she had to stop everything.

"A path is not necessarily linear," she said. "You don't know at 25 what you're going to end up being at 67. Life is really a set of way points."

About four years ago, she was sitting at her desk in her home office "paralyzed" by frustration. Her schedule was too full to complete all her work and her health was not where she wanted it to be,

After noticing a goldfinch landing on a branch outside the window, she knew she wanted to feel that light and carefree. She immediately cleared her calendar and when to work on her flip charts, playing around with the concept of light and life.

That was the first step toward a change in her personal life that inspired her — and others.

"Here's the secret," she said. "I was ready. I had had it. Sometimes we have to go to a really dark or heavy place in order to be ready to see the light."

The four Ls that are basic to her approach are Love, Limit, Laugh and Live lightness every day, she advised. That includes loving oneself, warts and all and what you do, while limiting the access "toxic people" have on your life.

"It's all about awareness," she said, "Finding the good in life and celebrating."

Her book focuses on the pros and cons as imps and dragons because she could relate to those images.

"This was all about me at that point, because I really didn't like what was happening," she said. "It's almost as if I gave myself permission to be me, and at that point I thought, 'Maybe I'll share it with others.'"

She peppered her talk with anecdotes of how her approach has helped her clients find a path to more fulfilling work and lives.

They were ready, because that is part of the key," she said.

"Barry the Builder" met Ernst while building a house for her. While he loved his work — especially design — the politics and regulations involved in the business were wearing on him. After reading her book about three times, he decided his love of music could help him. He still builds houses, but is now a member of a jazz combo that has recorded a CD.

A veterinarian in the UK was doing what made her joyful already, but was lamenting how her practice was hurting because clients whose pets she had to euthanize, related too many painful memories with her office to bring their other pets in for care. By offering a grief counseling service she was able to help her clients, keep her business and feel more fulfilled.

"Always ask yourself. 'What's the worst that can happen?'" she said. "I want to challenge you to listen to your heart, hear what its saying and take a stand for the life you want to live."

**By Tracy F Seelve, Express Editor  
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